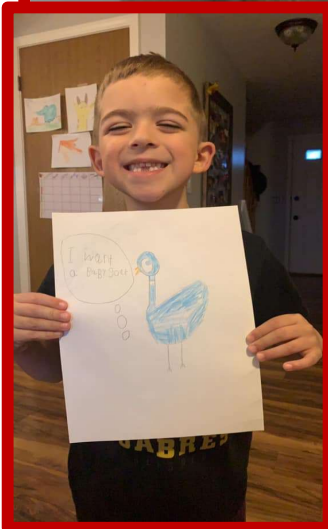
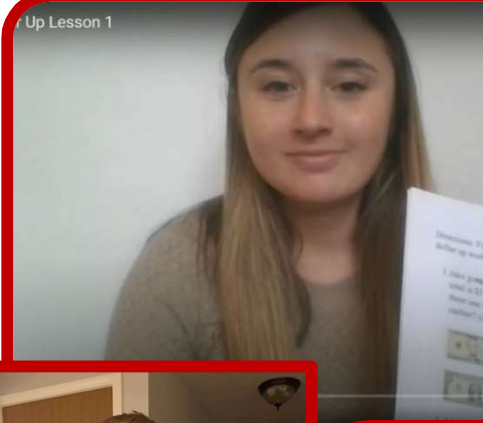


Our districts continue to serve their students and communities

See pages 4-10 inside for more examples of the extraordinary work being done by our member districts during the pandemic.



If you haven't already, mail in your district voting ballot NOW so it's received before the June 9 deadline.

News Scope

MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION
220 Idlewood Road, Rochester, NY 14618
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President – Kathleen Dillon, Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES, Churchville-Chili CSD
Vice President – Amy Jo Thomas, Pittsford CSD
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Executive Director - Sherry Johnson, Sherry_Johnson@boces.monroe.edu
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Coming soon: MCSBA's First 50 years



Celebrating MCSBA

50 years of serving Monroe County school district leaders



Seen above are the presidents of MCSBA who have led the Association since its formation in 1970. More on the work of these and other MCSBA members over the past 50 years will be featured in the next edition of News Scope.

From our executive director:

Lighting the Darkness

Dear Members,

Desmond Tutu said, “Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” In our community and across our nation, we can see and we can feel the darkness. The coronavirus continues to take lives every day while upending our economy. And now, this virus has been intertwined with the insidious disease of racism as it raises its ugly head to our collective consciousness, yet again.

Sadly, the horrific death of George Floyd is only the most recent event to be captured for all of us to witness.

Many people have evoked the words of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in their despair. But, I can’t imagine what Dr. King would say to us right now. He gave his life in the pursuit of finding every path possible for his dream that his children “would live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.” That speech was delivered almost 57 years ago in 1963.

A few years ago, I sat with a former fellow board member, who during a conversation about race, echoed what other African American women have said about how they had to raise their sons. I raised two sons, so to hear the stark warnings that those women needed to share with their sons to prepare them to survive in our society, shook me in a way that I will never forget.

You are leaders for children. You provide them the skills and the choices that help make them the leaders for tomorrow. But, education also provides them with the structures of hope. All of us, as education leaders, must demand that our children grow up in a society that values each and every one of them for the gift that they are to us, this nation and our world.

You are their example, their voice and their light, despite the darkness. Shine brightly.



Sherry Johnson

Sherry Johnson

MCSBA groups meet

During a zoom meeting on May 6, **board presidents** discussed on going activities for advocacy for both state and federal money as well as how the Governors executive order may affect their voter turnout for board elections and budget approvals. They also shared efforts on how they plan to honor seniors and any developing graduation plans. They will meet again on June 10. Seen at the right are board presidents at their May 6 session.

The **COAC** met and developed talking points on the need for additional state and federal aid to assure schools have the resources for every student to be successful in spite of the pandemic. The document includes background information as well as cost saving measures districts have been using. The committee also prepared a letter which districts could use as a template, to modify or use as is, to request the needed aid.



BOCES 2 programs provide online learning.



The gentle power of music in hard times

Even before the pandemic shutdown, Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Department for Exceptional Children’s creative arts therapists were exploring ways to connect with their students online. Department Chair Christopher Gold organized his team of music and art therapists and interns to launch a new YouTube channel: BOCES 2 Music Therapy. “Our therapists normally provide direct services to almost 200 students,” said Gold. “It’s especially important now to keep providing these supports.”

Every unique learning challenge has its own solution

Video conferencing is not the answer for all students. For those in the Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Transition program at Village Plaza, a more flexible and supportive approach to distance learning is needed. Special education teacher Danielle Hickin and her classroom support staff members have listened to students and their families, trying different and better ways to connect. Hickin says, “My students are non-verbal and many need hand-over-hand support to learn. Since most of my families are working parents, our 7 a.m. – 3 p.m. schedule was not working either, so we created a YouTube channel ([Village Plaza Classrooms](#)) where students and families can learn on their own schedules!”



Ridgecrest Academy stays in touch

Every weekday morning finds Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES Ridgecrest Academy “family” gathering around a Zoom meeting for a virtual check-in. “The uncertainty in today’s situation has been overwhelming for all of us at times,” said Special Education teacher Kate Bulmahn. “It’s important to connect with students on both a social and emotional level to help them find healthy ways to cope.” The 7th - and 8th - grade students and staff play games, discuss life and participate in mindfulness activities. In addition to these meetings, several staff members have set up google voice numbers so that they can easily talk and text with students and families.

Text and pictures on this page courtesy of Chris Klem, Communications Specialist, Monroe 2 – Orleans BOCES.

WC connects to supporting online learning.

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m. the Wheatland-Chili teachers are invited to a coffee break. They have to provide their own coffee, but it is a chance to share stories, tips, and best practices for the fully online teaching they have all been doing for more than a month. Likewise, this weekly coffee break is online.

“The virtual coffee break helps us to keep human connections, a sense of our teaching community,” said Wheatland-Chili Teacher Center Director Cara Montrois. “All of the teachers are working hard to maintain student connections, but it is just as important to keep connected to our colleagues.”

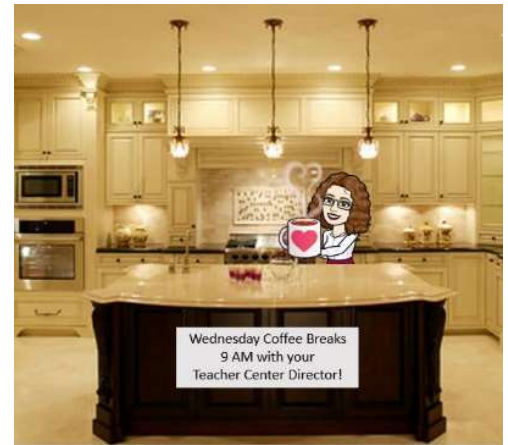
In her role as Teacher Center Director, Montrois has been helping teachers integrate online and virtual tools into the classroom for four years. When school closings became imminent, she arranged three optional planning meetings to hear what her fellow teachers needed. Montrois was then able to leverage the existing tools, Schoology, Office 365, etc., to meet their needs.

On Monday, March 16, no students attended school but the District staff prepared to close their classrooms and move to online education. “Our early adopters, teachers who have been using these tools in their classrooms for years, became our point people,” said Montrois. “These teachers and I hosted 30 minute breakout sessions to give our colleagues significant resources to use in the coming weeks.”

Though the school buildings are empty, Montrois continues to support the teaching staff. The Wheatland-Chili website now houses a series of How To videos. Some she made before the school closure, but some she has made since, at the request of teachers using the website’s Digital Solution Form. Montrois is also assisting teachers 1-on-1. These meetings provide an opportunity to screen-share and walk through specific problems and solutions.

“We have been slowly rolling out these tools for years,” said Montrois. “Now, teachers are learning new ways to use the digital platforms and personalizing them to best meet the needs of our students. We are just going to keep getting better. Even when the schools reopen, we will be able to use everything we’re learning now to further enrich our teaching in and out of the classroom.”

Story and images courtesy Gretchen Spittler, Communications Specialist, Wheatland-Chili Central School District.



Wheatland-Chili Teacher Center



Monroe One BOCES staff members support their communities.

Four Monroe One nurses who work in the Rochester City School District – Jacqueline Cleggett, Julie Seide, Audrey Seibert and Carla Dodgehave – volunteered to participate in a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course. The CERT course includes training in areas such as disaster preparedness, fire safety and suppression, disaster medical operations, search and rescue, incident command operations, psychology and terrorism. Following this eight-week course, these nurses are prepared for and able to assist schools and communities during crisis situations.



ABOVE: Monroe One BOCES nurses who completed a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course.



LEFT: Monroe One BOCES nurses who volunteered to work with the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management.

Additional Monroe One nurses have also volunteered to work with the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management. These nurses include Betsy DeSmitt, Lynne Muth, Audrey Seibert, Nancy Hackett and Aishia Wall. They are assisting the Monroe County Office of Emergency Management and Department of Public Health in areas such as call centers, contact tracing, testing and triage.

SOURCE: Monroe One BOCES staff newsletter and Facebook page.

“These nurses stepping up and volunteering is beyond marvelous. I’m so proud to see their compassion, empathy, and willingness to share their skills and knowledge,” said School Health Services Program Coordinator Eileen Davis. “Nursing is an art of compassion, and it’s an honor to work with this reliable team. Thank you to our nurses and all health care professionals for rising to needs of the COVID-19 pandemic.”



CORRECTION: Hilton staff members help feed their community and support front line workers

The text and photos in the May issue describing Hilton staff members as volunteers were submitted by Grace Scism, Communications Specialist, Hilton.

Brockport teachers connect with families online.

Brockport's Ginther teachers connect with families online

Teachers at Brockport's Ginther School are using an online group, "Ginther Teachers", to share videos with students and families. Ginther classroom teachers, special area teachers, related service providers, instructional coach, school counselor and staff members have posted mini-lessons, resources, student art work and The Pledge of Allegiance.

Numerous Ginther teachers have posted read-alouds of their favorite books, inspiring students to respond with reactions, photos and suggestions of their favorite books. In a recent video, one teacher read "The Pigeon Wants A Puppy" by Mo Williems. She included a drawing activity during her read aloud, with students sharing their drawings through photo comments on the post.

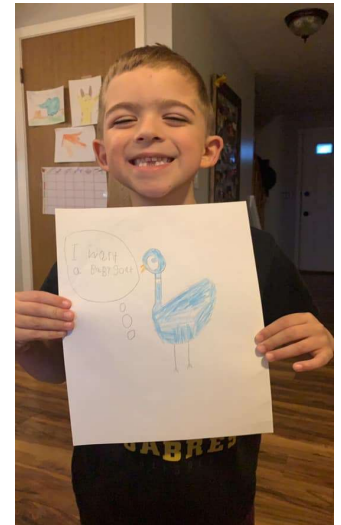
Another teacher encouraged students to take a virtual field trip to the Grand Canyon and then tune into the group page for a live read aloud of "Whose Tail on the Trail at the Grand Canyon" the next day. The teacher found the virtual field trip resource and shared with families on the Ginther Teachers page. The live video had 68 views, with families reacting in comments throughout the read aloud.

Ginther's gym teacher also uses the group page to encourage students to get out and get active while home. Videos demonstrating fun ways to get exercise are posted regularly by the teacher and her children. Sidewalk chalk is often used to create fun routines.

The page continues the connection between families and teachers by providing content and resources, as well as by promoting school culture and school spirit during this extended school closure. 432 families have followed the page and have responded favorably by expressing their gratitude through positive comments.

"The page has been a highlight for families and teachers as they visit the page each day to see familiar faces, learn about health, wellness, literacy, math and citizenship," says Principal Debra Waye.

Images and story courtesy of Ashley Decker, Communication Specialist, Brockport Central School District.



Correction: Holley principal sends daily messages.

Holley Middle School/High School Principal Susan Cory records a daily message for students in grades 7-12 and posts it through Schoology, their online learning system. CORRECTION: The district was mis-identified in the May issue.

Courtesy of Beth Nash, Communications Specialist, Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES.

East Irondequoit staff members maintain community ties.

The staff in East Irondequoit has been going above and beyond to stay connected to families and the community during this pandemic, and also doing whatever they can to show their students how much they care about them and miss them.

Through the middle of May the district's food service personnel along with transportation staff had prepared and distributed nearly 70,000 meals to residents, all free of charge through a grant from the Department of Agriculture. They also received a grant that allowed them to provide more than 400 art kits and 1,000 styluses during one day of the distribution.

All four of the elementary buildings organized parades for the staff members to go through the neighborhoods and see the students. There were plenty of smiles, and some tears, from the adults and the kids.

Two kindergarten teachers from Ivan Green Primary School decided to go the extra mile, actually fifteen extra miles. Lindsey VanVliet and Gretchen Guiler contacted all 22 families in their class to let them know they would be paying them all a visit at their homes-on bikes. They covered a little over fifteen miles to visit each child, distributing gift bags, and writing chalk messages on students' sidewalks and driveways.

Text and photos courtesy of David Yates, East Irondequoit Director of Communications.



Hilton parent honors teachers.

Parent Robin Winter really knows how to celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week! She organized two car parades for her children's teachers at Northwood School: Lauren Steinbach, Jennifer Ames and Julie Fiege. The teachers were invited to show up at the Winter's home at two separate times and stand on a specially marked spot where parents drove by with signs and gifts, honking their horns and saying "hello and miss you" through their windows.

Story and images courtesy of Grace R. Scism, Director of Communications, Hilton Central School District,



NYSCSH serves health needs online.

During this challenging time, the [New York State Center for School Health](#) (NYSCSH) team, which is part of the Department for Exceptional Children at Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES, has supported schools by gathering and verifying health information for school nurses, school medical directors, school health educators and other school professionals throughout the state.

“One of the Center's activities as a contract office for NYSED is to aggregate and curate current evidence-based resources for school health professionals,” said Center Director Linda Khalil. “Right now, an overwhelming amount of health information on COVID-19, some accurate and some inaccurate, is being shared through various media outlets, leading to confusion and anxiety. Our job is to be a one-stop source for credible information.” The Center recently launched the [#ThinkCheckCorrect](#) campaign, inviting school health professionals and others to take a pledge to make sure health information is reliable before using or sharing it with others. To make keeping the pledge easier, the NYSCSH created a resource page called [Finding and Using Credible Health Resources](#) that shares recommendations for evaluating credible health information along with links to trusted sources. This campaign is not limited to the present COVID-19 pandemic, but addresses best practices in finding, evaluating and using health information as a life skill. The NYSCSH website is updated several times a day with current, credible, concise information on COVID-19 and other issues from the CDC, NYSDOH, NYSED, Office of Children and Family Services, and other resource organizations in one place. It also includes resource pages for school nurses, school medical directors and school health educators, along with mental health resources, FAQs, real-time tracking tools, tips for avoiding online phishing scams, and new resources to use to work and teach remotely. NYSCSH collaborates with NYSED Student Support Services daily and are currently working on resources for school re-entry.

In addition to staying in touch with some 4,500 email-subscribers and over 1,000 [Facebook](#) users, the NYSCSH team also offers a suite of [professional development training webinars](#). Topics include a range of interest areas, from HIV prevention and asthma management to opioid overdose prevention and e-cigarettes. The newest course provides an overview of navigating the internet and using common computer shortcuts, which will help school staff now working and teaching remotely. The NYSCSH's sophisticated online learning management system (LMS) allows learners to easily track and measure their learning. Certified teachers and administrators receive Continuing Teacher and Leader Education (CTLE) credit upon completion.

Districts support and celebrate their seniors.

Hilton High School

seniors had a special visit as administrators headed out on a road trip to each of their homes to deliver not only lawn signs commemorating their graduation, but their caps, gowns, tassels and graduation announcements and a special treat from Rachel B Cupcakes in Hilton. “We wanted to wait until May 12, so we could deliver everything our seniors will need for our virtual graduation ceremony,” said Principal Dr. Jeff Green. Thanks to a donation from the Hilton Education



Foundation, every senior received a sign. Five small buses, each with one administrator, plus Crimson the Cadet, traveled different routes throughout the district visiting about 75 students each. Special thanks go to the Hilton Transportation Department, Greece Police and Monroe County Sheriff, Hilton and Lakeshore Fire Departments, and the many staff members who participated in the parades.

Story and photos courtesy of Grace R. Scism, Director of Communications, Hilton Central School District.



East Irondequoit honors its seniors.

No group is feeling the sting of this situation like the class of 2020 is.

East Irondequoit’s Eastridge High School has been showing how special its seniors are in a number of ways. Staff provided lawn signs to all of the members of the graduating class, and then they put their images up in lights. The school lit up with a slide show of all the students’ faces and names on the front windows of the school. It was on display for the entire month of May from 8-11 P.M.

The high school also made an even bigger statement. On May 14 it turned on the stadium lights at 8:20 P.M.; that’s 2020 in military time, for 20 minutes. It was a special tribute to the seniors who were missing so much.

Text and photos courtesy of David Yates, East Irondequoit Director of Communications.