CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATE

After months of hard work and dedication, while still in the midst of a looming pandemic, the TST BOCES capital project remains on schedule for completion! The facilities department would like to thank everyone in the TST community for their continued support and assistance throughout the planning and construction phases of the project.

The $8 million project included many upgrades to our buildings, classrooms, and infrastructure including: the resurfacing of campus parking lots, HVAC and ceiling replacements, safety/security updates, along with new doors, windows, and LED lighting.

Half of the $8 million needed to complete the project was funding that was secured by our former Assembly member Barbara Lifton, and we are all very grateful for her efforts in helping to make this project possible.

TST BOCES students and staff look forward to further utilizing our newly updated campus, as we continue to provide quality education services to our region!
SMITH SCHOOL STUDENTS HONOR MEXICAN CULTURE WITH HALLOWEEN SUGAR SKULL ART

Combine a few bags of colorful icing, skulls shaped from sugar, and a room full of eager elementary students, and you’ll have some fun. Throw in a passionate teacher with a natural flair for language, and you’ll see lives being shaped.

World Spanish Language Teacher Señor R.J. Santander Malabanan may have only joined the TST BOCES family three years ago, but he has already made quite the impact on his students. The high-energy classroom has quickly established itself as a safe place for learning, sharing, and growing for anyone who enters the room.

“Don’t be afraid to express yourself,” said Santander Malabanan. “No two masks should look alike,” he tells his students as they paint sugar skulls with rainbow-colored icing.

Last month, students learned about the Mexican tradition of Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead, and the way different cultures honor important people in their lives who have passed away. Some students chose to dedicate their works of art to athletes or celebrities they admire. Others, decided to honor family members they have lost.

“I am very proud of my students for opening up and expressing themselves the way they did on this project,” said Santander Malabanan. “Leading up to this project, we watched ‘Coco’ and had a great discussion about the Mexican traditions they saw in the movie.”

Señor Malabanan uses the exploration and appreciation of culture to teach language skills to his students. “It sparks a connection and makes a lasting impact,” said Malabanan. “I’ve found that when the students are excited and engaged in the culture, they quickly pick up the language.”

This year, the students’ artwork was showcased at Village Taqueria and Grill in Dryden. “It’s been very exciting for the students to know that their art has been on display for the entire community to see,” said Santander Malabanan.
VETERAN’S LIFE OF SERVICE CONTINUES IN THE CLASSROOM

Ask Travis Getzke about his time in basic training and his stories may surprise you.

The infantry soldier turned TST BOCES Health and Physical Education (PE) teacher has spent more than half his life dedicated to service and still carries the same drive with him he had nearly twenty-five years ago.

“Basic training was a whirlwind experience for me,” said Getzke. “The drill sergeants kept us busy pretty much all the time between training, equipment maintenance, and ceremony practice.”

Stories of long days spent training and short nights without rest are not a surprise coming from an Army National Guard veteran with nine years of service under his belt. His source of motivation to “drive forward,” as Getzke called it, was letters.

“My father sent me a letter every single day,” said Getzke. “The simple act of sending mail to me quite often kept my spirits up and helped me to drive forward.”

The act, however worthy, did not come without a price. Every piece of mail would cost twenty push-ups, Getze shared, which led him down another blissful memory.

“One day, during the mail call, there was a giant envelope addressed to me,” Getzke recalled with a smile. “My sister’s entire fourth-grade class wrote a letter to me! I received 25 letters that day and it was totally worth it.”

To hear the stories Getzke shares about his time in the Army is to know what kind of teacher he is at TST BOCES – a positive, hard-working, team-player who does not let obstacles impede his view or slow his drive.

Getzke has spent the past sixteen years at BOCES and thinks of his transition into teaching as a natural journey. “My father was a Physical Education teacher for 33 years, so I grew up around PE and athletics all of my life.”

There are lots of parallels between being a teacher and being a soldier, according to Getzke. The one difference is what now drives him forward.

“It’s the smile on a student’s face when they have a breakthrough and are able to perform a skill or task that was a challenge for them,” he said.

The Army veteran has traded in his letters for smiles, and this time, they won’t cost him 20 pushups.

TST BOCES would like to take this opportunity to thank all our veterans for your service, sacrifice, and for your dedication in all walks of life.
MEET YOUR REGIONAL SCHOOL SUCCESS STAFF: KATY CHARLES

Meet Katy Charles, Coordinator of School Library Systems. The mission of the TST BOCES School Library System is to promote access to information and ideas, coordinate resource sharing and facilitate library growth and development, thereby strengthening the school library program of its members as well as improving services to their users.

The SLS collaborates with the region’s teacher-librarians to support their library collection development, information literacy curricula and automation services (the Follett Destiny Union Catalog). In addition, the SLS works with technology staff at BOCES and in districts to ensure students, teachers and parents can locate and access online databases, ebooks and audiobooks, print and non-print resources that support teaching and learning in all academic disciplines.

For more information and resources, visit tstboces.org/sls.

RAS: HIGHLIGHTING PAULA GEARY

At the Regional Alternative School, we work together to provide a positive environment for students to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. Our staff members embody leadership and are committed to that growth. One of those individuals is Paula Geary. Geary is a Special Education Monitor at the school and is always lending a helping hand, whether that be helping kids get to class or talking with students in her office. One thing she does to make connections with them is fill up a white board in her office with photos of all the fun activities and memories made in school that year.

She states, “There are probably 200 to 300 pictures by the end of the year. Then after, I take them down and give them out to all the kids. It is pretty exciting! They will come up to me and say, ‘Where is my picture?’ or when the board is filling up, they will say, ‘Where’s the one of me?’ They love it!”

Geary understands how impactful just being a friend to students can be. One of the things she believes kids at the Regional Alternative School need is knowing there is an adult in their lives who is available and on their team.

She explained, “I am 100% every kid in this building’s biggest cheerleader!...The work we do here is critical to this community and this campus!” If you would like to enroll your child or want to learn more, please visit our website at tstboces.org/aras.
ADULT EDUCATION HEAT PUMP CLASS PROMOTES ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Most will say that owning your own business is the American dream. TST BOCES Instructor Thom Mayo says it’s something his students can come to expect with a career in heat pump installation.

“A student could expect to start as an assistant installer making at a minimum $20-$25 dollars an hour,” said Mayo. “With a pinch of ambition, students who have completed my advanced course can expect to make six figures owning their own business or working in sales for an established business.”

But what exactly is heat pump installation and how has it grown into the high-demand career it is today?

According to Mayo, a career in heat pumps installation, operation, maintenance, or sales is fundamental to the future of comfort.

“We are transitioning from the toxic fluid that is pumped into homes and businesses to clean renewable energy systems that heat and cool the built environment,” said Mayo. “Helping people to build the skills to displace this problem is very fulfilling.”

Mayo owns his own heat pump business and has seen first-hand the progression of building energy efficiency. His 13 years of experience in renewable energy and HVAC systems combined with his time as a TST BOCES Facilities Electrician and as an Adult Education student is what led him to propose the heat pump class last year.

“I joined the Heat Smart Tompkins Board last January to access the support and resources to start the class at BOCES,” said Mayo. “As a business owner looking for qualified help installing renewable systems, I needed a pathway to skilled labor. I reached out to BOCES after joining the board and proposed the class. I got buy-in right away, and it took about nine months to pull everything together.”

The beginner class Mayo teaches provides basic hands-on instruction and verification to an employer that various skills tests have been met and passed. Students who complete this course can expect to easily find work in the rapidly expanding market of clean heating systems. Students interested in gaining EPA certification will go on to take Mayo’s advanced course and take an exam.

Mayo is currently working with a member of the county legislature to get students local field experience and paid work installing heat pump systems in a new commercial space.

“My favorite part of the job is that I have one degree of separation when it comes to having my children know that I did my best to be a part of the solution to the biggest problem their generation will face,” said Mayo.
COLLEGE VERSUS TRADE SCHOOL: LANSING STUDENT “PAVES THE WAY” FOR HYBRID LEARNING

As a high school student who is quickly approaching graduation, you are asked again and again the same dreaded question and no it’s not, “Who you are taking to prom?” It comes from your parents, guidance counselor, and friends, “What are your plans after school?” or “What college are you going to?” For millions of students, these important decisions lead back to the concern of saving money. Maybe you were lucky enough to have your parents save up since you were born, or you have a few grand from your high school job in the bank. But tackling this reality and fear of the post-secondary educational system is all too real for many.

According to Forbes, it was calculated that student loan debt has risen to about $1.7 trillion as of 2021 with the average loan debt costing around $37,693 per individual. Covid-19 has been a catalyst for exposing not only students’ struggles to get employment, but also brought to light who is considered an essential worker. In this time of need, trade workers have been called upon to keep clocking in as their collegiate counterparts stayed home. There has been a shift in the type of skill sets needed in today’s world.

Lansing graduate, Ivey Card has started her first semester at the Rochester Institute of Technology (R.I.T.). In typical freshmen fashion, she is learning about her new classes, meeting new friends, and joined the school’s volleyball team. However, six months ago her life looked very different. As a high school student, Card spent her senior year going to school for half the day and then spending the other traveling up the road a few miles to TST BOCES.

Every day, Card would hop off the bus making her way to the classroom passing by power drills, bolts, and machinery to take her seat as the only female in her class. She has spent her junior and senior years of high school as a heavy equipment student. The trade can lead to employment opportunities such as Equipment Operator, Engine Technician, Mechanic, and more. According to Indeed.com, the average salary for an equipment operator is $52,642 in NYS.

Card said, “I don’t think most people understand that from BOCES you can actually leave there getting degrees and certifications right out of high school...I am still really happy I took the class, because I learned a lot physically, mentally, and socially as a student. This type of learning really has helped me in college, because right now, I have three classes that are hands-on courses and only two lectures.”

TST BOCES provides students with the opportunity to learn a trade and enter the workforce or continue on to pursue more training or a college education.
Card said, “We would talk about different machine parts. My teacher would talk about safety and how to avoid accidents in the shop. People in class could walk around and see each other’s projects as well as help each other. Before the pandemic, we took two field trips, one to a local college and another to a lift manufacturer.”

In college, Card is currently studying Interior Design and eventually plans to attend a graduate program in Architecture. This decision was made from her experience at a TST BOCES school year event, the annual pumpkin carving contest. Each trade class takes on the challenge to carve a pumpkin that reflects what their trade does. This gives students a chance to get creative and work as a team toward their goal.

“Mr. Kinney, my teacher, had me help out with my class’ pumpkin carving contest and we only had a few days, so I had to think of something fast! I had to draw out on paper how exactly I was going to build this with my class, and I created a kind of blueprint. I realized soon that this process I just did was the same process in building a house and I really enjoyed designing it!” said Card.

This experience not only allowed Card to figure out her major, but her experience at TST BOCES allowed her to get thousands of dollars in academic scholarships at R.I.T because her background with her trade made her standout as a student.

When asked about advice she would give students curious about joining a trade, Card responded, “If you do not want to do it because you do not want to be in a male dominated field or are afraid if people will judge you, then that is the wrong reason to not to give it a shot. These are temporary thoughts that will eventually go away. Most people do not know this, but with this experience you can work almost anywhere. We learned a little bit of everything. This included auto tech, welding, and many more useful skills. You should go for it especially if Mr. Kinney is your teacher because he will make you feel right at home!”

For more information on Career and Technology programs, please visit tstcte.org or follow them on Facebook and Instagram.
Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga BOCES shall continue its policy of providing educational opportunities for all students who wish to enroll in any course without regard to race, color, creed, national origin, political affiliation, sex, age, marital or veteran status, disability, religious practice, ethnic group, gender expression and identity, weight, or genetic predisposition. TST BOCES provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

For information regarding the nondiscrimination policy, contact:

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