



Annual Meeting – April 3, 2024

REPORT FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT
Lisa Israel

On behalf of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board, welcome to the agency's 31st Annual Meeting. As we complete the seventh year of our seven-year strategic plan, we have already accomplished a great deal. This report lists some of the major accomplishments this year to date. It includes many changes and innovations.

DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

Commissioner's Representative in the Region

- On behalf of the Commissioner of Education, the District Superintendent has:
 - Served as the Chair of the BOCES District Superintendents, acting as a direct liaison between the Commissioner, her leadership team, and the BOCES District Superintendents.
 - Communicated key information regarding pertinent SED initiatives to component school district leadership.
 - Served as needed, at the request of the Commissioner, to provide input into formation of new and amended regulations.
 - Conducted multiple superintendent searches for component school district boards of education.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

- Recognizing the need for an increase in diversity, equity, and inclusivity (DEI) within the public education system, the District Superintendent:
 - Continued DEI training of all BOCES District Superintendents with an accomplished organization that focusses on institutional equity.
 - Continued to serve as the co-chair of the Suffolk County School Superintendents Association's (SCSSA) DEI Committee.
 - Facilitated the development of a DEI Repository that is being funded by SED and will provide access to DEI-related resources to stakeholders across the state.
 - Worked with the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Director of DEI to facilitate our DEI Agency Advisory Council.

District Visitations

- There are twelve new superintendents in the Eastern Suffolk BOCES region this year. The District Superintendent met with each of them in their school district. This is a continuation of the practice of informing superintendents about the services and support that Eastern Suffolk BOCES can provide, as well as learning firsthand what makes each school district unique. This practice continues to be a powerful learning tool for the District Superintendent.

Liaison between SED and the Region

- The District Superintendent supported school district leadership and boards of education within the region by:
 - Keeping component school district superintendents informed about the changing landscape within SED leadership, as well as helping them communicate with new and veteran SED staff members.
 - Assisted school districts in understanding and implementing new and updated guidance from SED, including the ***Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Affirming School Environment for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students*** guidance.
 - Collaborated with SED leadership to provide input into initiatives and communications that would reflect the needs of our region.

Federal and State School Support Initiatives

- In order to support the work of the Federal and State School Support Initiatives (FSSSI), the District Superintendent:
 - Continued the direct supervision of the FSSSI network directors.
 - Collaborated with ESBOCES Director of DEI so that she could lead the group in monthly discussions focused on leading DEI with their respective teams.
 - Supported leadership with existing grant-funded programs, as well as the implementation of the following new programs:
 - The 21st Century Community Learning Centers
 - American Rescue Plan for Homeless Children and Youth

Advocacy

- Acting as an advocate for the school districts in the region and the students that they serve, the District Superintendent:
 - Hosted the ESBOCES/SCSSA Advocacy Workshop for Suffolk County school district leaders and board members.
 - Served as Chair on an advocacy team with BOCES District Superintendent leaders to meet with elected officials from across the state to advocate for BOCES-specific issues.
- Maintained active membership in numerous coalitions, work groups, and organizations working to facilitate the pathway between K-12 education, higher education, and business and industry.

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

ESBOCES Budget

- Developed the 2024-25 budgets with stakeholder involvement at different stages of the process.
- Collaborated with the Associate Superintendent for Management Services and the Business Office to develop an administrative and capital budget that successfully met the growing needs of the agency, while being as sensitive as possible to the fiscal challenges of our component school districts.
- Successfully worked with Administrative Council members and budget planning teams to develop our various program budgets.
- Developed communication strategies to communicate the Eastern Suffolk BOCES budgets to all stakeholders.

Support to Component School District Superintendents

- Facilitated Chief School Administrators' meetings to update and inform school district leaders regarding SED regional initiatives, as well as ESBOCES initiatives.
- Attended and presented at formal and informal cluster meetings for the Brookhaven, East End, and Islip Clusters to update superintendents on SED issues, regional issues, as well as ESBOCES issues.

Strategic Planning and Middle States Association Work

- Continued work with Cabinet and Administrative Council members to oversee the implementation of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES Strategic Plan.
- Continued the implementation, monitoring, and oversight of the 2017-2024 Strategic Plan.
- Worked with the internal coordinator to gather information relative to our annual progress in preparation for our stakeholder meetings.
- Continued to work to improve the monitoring of the Strategic Plan so the process is more meaningful and effective when obtaining and sharing feedback.
- Developed an internal Reaccreditation Steering Committee to help guide the agency through the upcoming reaccreditation process.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and Student Assistance Services (SAS)

- Continued direct oversight of the EAP and SAS programs, including program development, budget oversight, grants management, and staffing.

DIRECTOR OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSIVITY

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

- Continues to serve as an internal and external resource for the eastern Suffolk Long island region by ensuring to align agency practices, policies, and procedures with an equity lens via the ESBOCES Board Policy 5124 and NYSED DEI Policy Framework.

Internal Coordination

- Attended and participated in several organizational committees to foster an equity lens. These included:
 - Strategic Planning Advisory Committee
 - Central Shared Decision Making Committee
 - Communications Advisory Committee
 - Special Education Shared Decision Making Committee
 - CTE Shared Decision Making Committee
 - DASA Committee
 - EAP Committee
 - Regional Curriculum Council and Curriculum Council Advisory Committee
 - Superintendent's Conference Day Committee
 - DEI Parent/Family Advisory Council
 - Student Voice Forum
- Partnered with ESBOCES instructional leaders to develop building/program equity action plans utilizing the NYSED's CR-S Education Framework and DEI Policy Framework.

- Provided support for the Division of Management Services, Educational Services, Regional Information Center, and the Human Resources Department to set goals for DEI with each department using the Building Equity form, and provided annual workshops.
- Provided an annual update to the ESBOCES Board regarding agency DEI goals and initiatives in compliance with Board DEI Policy and Regulation 5124.
- ESBOCES Monthly Cultural Heritage monthly flyer developed to bring awareness to the diversity of our agency and region.
- ESBOCES DEI virtual event series brings in guest speakers to focus on various inclusive topics for increased cultural awareness.
- Agency-wide implementation of “P.S. I Love You” week for mental health awareness and suicide prevention.
- ESBOCES annual Equity Champion awards to recognize those helping move educational equity forward.
- Partnered with Special Education to pilot the mentoring program with HAC staff members and JAC @ Oregon MS students.

Regional Advocacy

- Co-facilitate the monthly ESBOCES Regional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity Professional Learning Community (PLC) (27 school districts participate).
- Participated on the regional Curriculum Advisory Board to plan future Curriculum Council topics through an equity lens.
- Attend the monthly regional curriculum Council meetings, and present on DEI and CRSE in Curriculum and Instruction.
- Served on an expert educator panel for the Wake County, NC Equity and Innovation Summit.
- Served as keynote speaker for the Riverhead Central School District Superintendent’s Conference Day.
- Attend the monthly Regional Personnel Administrator’s Council (PAC) meeting and present on DEI and Human Resources.
- Provided support to Human Resources, and coordinated with the Long Island Black Educators Alliance, Long Island Asian Pacific American Council for Educators, and the Long Island Latino Teachers Association to plan and execute the annual ESBOCES regional career fair for culturally and ethnically diverse candidates.
- Co-Presented at New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) for workshop entitled “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity: A Policy in Action.”
- Presented at National Association of Black School Educators (NABSE) DEI Policy and CR-SE Framework.
- Presented two workshops at the Association of School Business Officials (ABSOU) conference entitled “Strategically Implementing DEI Initiatives with our Management Services Department” and “Supporting Civil Service Staff as DEI Leaders.”
- DEI Conference- “Equity and Joy: Strategies for Creating Inclusive Learning Spaces for All Students” with keynote speaker Dr. Ghody Muhammad.
- In conjunction with Stony Brook University, implementation of ESBOCES and Stony Brook University Equity Summer Institute Certificate Program.

Professional Development

- Developed and facilitated professional development workshops on DEI with the following departments/groups:
 - ESBOCES August Leadership Day Presentation
 - Superintendent’s Conference Day “Annual DEI Update”
 - Administrative Council monthly DEI Learning agenda item
 - ESBOCES Board DEI Committee – Book Study Discussion: “Punished for Dreaming: How School Reform Harms Black Children and How We Heal” by Bettina L. Love
 - ESBOCES DEI Agency Advisory Council – Co-facilitated 5 meetings
 - Instructional Induction Program – DEI Book Study: *Culturally Responsive Teaching and The Brain* by Zaretta Hammond
 - ESBOCES Administrative DEI Book Study (four times per year) – “Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity” by Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple
 - ESBOCES School Building DEI Liaison CTE and Special Education (4 Meetings a year)
 - ESBOCES non-instructional programs DEI Liaison Initiative (4 meetings a year)
 - S.E.E.D. (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) workshops for all DEI Liaisons (9 workshops a year)
 - Present annually to all administrative meetings (i.e. CTE Principal meeting, Special Ed Principal meeting, ESS Administration meeting, RIC staff meeting, O&M staff meeting, etc.)

DEI CoSer

- Year three of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity shared service (CoSer) that strives to support school districts around DEI goals:
 - 27 school districts participate in the service on tiered levels (Basic, Enhanced and Premium)
 - Supervise and support 5 consultants
 - The DEI CoSer Service provides:
 - Consultation with School District Administration
 - District needs assessment report and end of year summary
 - Participation in the Regional DEI PLC monthly meetings
 - Participation at the annual ESBOCES DEI Spring conference
 - Professional In-District Support that are divided into three (3) strands: (Phase I, Phase II, and Phase III)

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DIVISION

Career and Technical Education (CTE)

CTE Enrollment

- Regional enrollment at the Eastern Long Island Academy of Applied Technology grew, with our numbers for 2023-24 reaching 2,245 (In-District, adult, and secondary CTE), an increase of more than 7%. In addition to our steady increases over the last several years, this year we experienced an unprecedented waitlist – 600 students primarily in the automotive, construction, and manufacturing trades. A total of more than 3,000 applications were received. The students either received a spot when a child or school

district dropped, enrolled in a second-choice program, or did not pursue a CTE course of study.

- This unprecedented interest and level of school district support is a bellwether of multiple trends that is likely to continue for the foreseeable future.
- The Career, Technical, and Adult Education Department provides a wide array of services to the students who attend our programs, as well as the businesses and industries that benefit from our talent pipeline. For students, we continue to seek and add student supports that will enrich their experiences with us, create more equitable opportunities for learners, and empower students to take on greater responsibilities as future leaders in our communities.

Special Career Education (SCE) Enrollment

- There are 434 students enrolled in our 12:1:1 programs and 115 students enrolled in our 8:1:1 programs for the 2023-2024 school year. The number of students in these programs has remained steady for the past three years.
- Internships continue to rebound at ICC and in all SCE programs. In 2023, 197 students participated in an internship and 523 participated in at least one work-based learning opportunity. ICC's mission statement "The mission of the Islip Career Center is to provide quality career education programs that will transition each student from secondary education to competitive employment" continues to drive programming and support students.

Career and Technical Education Department

- The 2023-2024 school year began with new instructors in twelve of our CTE/In-District programs.
- The agency's efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusivity can be seen and felt in each of the career and technical centers, with work being done in all four principles of the Culturally Responsive and Sustaining Education framework published by NYSED. Every building created an Equity Plan and actively works to create a welcoming and affirming environment where everyone belongs and is respected.

What's New

- Applications to attend the Eastern L.I. Academy of Applied Technology exceeded expectations for the 2022-2023 school year. Virtually all Construction and Manufacturing trade courses had waiting lists for the second consecutive year. An additional class was added where space was available. Our newest challenge is finding new space to expand our in-demand and new programs.
- The In-District CTE program at Southampton High School continues to do well. In its fifth year, enrollment in Carpentry/Residential Construction and Home Improvement has held steady. The Cosmetology lab space at Brentwood High School is currently accommodating 36 students interested in studying this career path. We are in conversations with other school districts to add similar programming in their high schools. This demonstrates the value of the In-District model in providing our school districts with opportunities to meet local industry needs.
- In the 2022-2023 school year, six programs were granted NYSED CTE Program Reapproval. This distinction allows students to access the CTE 4+1 graduation pathway, Technical Endorsement, and ensures that students have access to high quality instruction and meaningful outcomes like work-based learning and industry

certifications. NYSED's required program approval process includes a lengthy two-part application, completion of a thorough self-study involving internal stakeholders and a partner from Suffolk County Department of Labor, development of a self-study report, and external reviews that assure that our CTE programs meet the needs of business and industry, our component school districts, and post-secondary partners. All CTE programs are currently running as NYSED-approved CTE programs.

Special Career Education

What's New

- Project SEARCH students continue to work and learn at the Medford Multicare Facility for the 2023-2024 school year. Students in Project SEARCH practice independence and employment skills on the job, with the goal of employment at the end. Students arrange public transportation to replicate authentic work and work-related skills required in the real world.
- ICC continues a culture of care and intentionality through messaging the importance of inclusion and diversity. ICC's mantra, "ICC, the place to be!" is not only said, it's felt by students and staff alike.

Instruction – Adding Value

- Every building/program has created DEI goals specific to meet the needs of their students and staff. In addition, our CTE Shared Decision Making Committee continues to review data reports to ensure equitable outcomes and opportunities for all.
- Every program in the CTE department seeks to offer students certification opportunities in appropriate areas. OSHA, CPR, Narcan, and a plethora of other national certifications are offered to add value to our students' experiences with us.
- 2021-2022 marked the first year we were able to offer our early career teachers access to post-secondary coursework required for CTE teacher certification through the department's Induction Program. Via a partnership with SUNY Buffalo State College, new teachers were able to access up to nine of the 18 credit hours needed for their certification. In the 2022-2023 school year, five teachers utilized this opportunity to pursue certification needs.
- In 2023-2024, the department welcomed its fourth cohort of new teachers into the department Induction Program, which kicked off in August with a half-day session on launching a successful school year in the first days of school. We continue to elicit feedback from teachers to identify meaningful ways to support our newest teaching colleagues.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

Special Education Enrollment

- Last year we projected an enrollment of 1668. Based on our continuing upward trend analysis, we anticipate a three percent increase in student enrollment. As a result, we are projecting an enrollment of 1711 for the 2024-2025 school year.
- The Department of Special Education continues to support its component school districts in returning students to the home school district setting and providing ongoing support by providing consulting services.

Department Changes

- Due to an increase in requests for BOCES placements from component school districts, we continue to look for additional classroom space. We especially see an increase in enrollment for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder at the kindergarten level. To date, we have eleven kindergarten developmental classes servicing students with autism.
- The Department of Special Education continues to host Job Fairs to recruit Teaching Assistants and Special Education Aides. This recruiting approach has been instrumental in hiring staff members. Indeed, an online application, has also supported our hiring efforts. We receive applicants weekly from this online platform.
- The Department of Special Education continues to support our component school districts by providing services to students with psychiatric concerns at the elementary and secondary level. Eastern Suffolk BOCES, in collaboration with Sagamore Children's Center, will continue to offer intensive and therapeutic counseling services at three locations: Jefferson Academic Center, Tecumseh Elementary School, and Sequoya High School. We also consult with outside psychiatrists to provide support to our students at Bellport Academic Center and Islip Academic Center.
- Due to increasing enrollment at the elementary and secondary level for students with developmental disabilities, Eastern Suffolk BOCES continues to review staffing practices and pursue innovative approaches to accommodate growth in enrollment while supporting the needs of our students. Last January, we implemented a new instructional model at three of our special education programs. This new class size option 8:2:1 (eight students, two special education teachers, one teaching assistant and classroom shared aides) was developed to enhance curriculum and instruction and expand services to our component districts and students. This collaborative approach to instruction provides a lower student-to-teacher ratio, allowing a more individualized instruction to support student success. Since this co-teaching approach has been effective in improving student outcomes, this year we increased our classes and have also implemented this instructional model at Westhampton Beach Learning Center. To date, we have fifteen 8-2-1 classes, which is nine more than we offered last year. Currently, Brookhaven Learning Center has three classes, Sayville Elementary School has four classes, Premm Learning Center has six classes, and Westhampton Beach Learning Center has two classes.
- Last year, the Sequoya High School Program changed the class size ratio from an 8-1-1 to 12-1-1. This class size change allowed for a greater focus on academics and supported the program's goal of mirroring a traditional high school environment. Sequoya High School continues its partnership with Suffolk Community College to allow students to get a head start on college before graduating high school. Eligible seniors have the opportunity to participate in this dual enrollment program to obtain high school and college credits. Currently, four courses are offered: College 101, Math 101, Biology 101, and Freshman Composition.

- The Islip Academic Center Program shifted to a 6-1-1 class size option from an 8-1-1. Moving to the smaller class size ratio supported our students' behavioral concerns and improved overall student achievement.

Focus on Student Outcomes

- Our Special Education Summer Services Program will operate at all nine locations. Regents exams will be offered at the secondary level; however, again this year, the August exam dates fall outside of the summer school program. We will bring students and staff back for the administration of the Regents exams.
- We continue to offer accelerated classes at the Jefferson Academic Center Program. We are happy to report that the program currently offers seven sections of Algebra and eight sections of Living Environment. Currently, 63 students are enrolled in the accelerated classes.
- Lead Teachers continue to support all of our Special Education programs. Lead Teachers meet to share best practices, provide onsite support, and coordinate department-wide responses to the instructional shifts embedded in Next Generation Standards and Learning Tasks. Across all core content areas, our students are being asked to participate in learning and demonstrate their proficiency in new ways. We ensure that our everyday activities, as well as our long-term projects and learning goals, mirror the expectations of these new standards.
- As we continue our work with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI), our building liaisons work with the Director of DEI and building administrators to turnkey train while being building resources to both our students and staff. Every Special Education building now has a DEI Action Plan specific to the needs and goals that have been developed. We have also created a Student Advisory Council where our students can share their voices in this important work. Our DEI Action Plans continue to grow stronger with data to support our growth.
- This year we were able to obtain the Peace Grant. This grant will be used to help our students in our three high school programs to write, draw, and speak about their educational journey.
- We have extended use of the Active Floors and Learn Pro 2 system from the Active Floor Company located in Denmark. This new technology projects interactive lessons onto the floor and is responsive to touch by a foot or foam hockey stick. It has been a tremendous success. Every classroom teacher has access to a bank of lessons provided by the company. Additionally, they can create lessons at their desks. Lessons can be connected with our ULS lessons or other teacher made lessons. There are many sensory and movement programs that are also extremely popular with the students. All classes are benefiting from this new instructional enhancement. Currently, Brookhaven Learning Center, Premm Learning Center, Sayville Elementary School, Tecumseh Elementary School, and Westhampton Beach Learning Center are using the active floor. Both students and staff are enjoying this interactive lesson.
- The Department of Special Education, in collaboration with the Department of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, continues to expand career course offerings. Currently,

we offer three career components at Islip Academic Center: Introduction to Personal Enhancement, Introduction to Baking, and Introduction to Carpentry. At Jefferson Academic Center, we are currently offering Introduction to Culinary, with the hope of adding Intro to Personal Enhancement next year.

- In response to NYSED mandates for mental health education, as well as the unique learning and social-emotional needs of a great many of our students, Eastern Suffolk BOCES is engaged in developing and implementing new Mental Health modules. Staff members have begun providing a comprehensive set of training modules focused on educating staff members and raising awareness with regard to the multitude of mental health issues that affect the students we serve. Each of the modules has been planned strategically to scaffold knowledge and skill-acquisition for staff in order to maximize their ability to support our students. The training series, which is being delivered on a building level through our mental health staff members, begins with an introductory module on mental health in general, moving on to addiction.
- Expansion of the range of services offered by the Regional Alternative High School Program continues to provide fiscally responsible local programming to our region's students. Students have the opportunity to attend this twilight program, graduating with a Local, Regents, or Advanced Regents Diploma. Students may take advantage of the opportunity to meet requirements by participating in traditional credit accrual, as well as credit recovery, test preparation, or course tutoring. Currently, we host programs at Bellport Academic Center and the Connetquot School District, and provide services to four component school districts (Bayport-Blue Point, Connetquot, East Islip, and South Country).

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES (ESS)

Exploratory Enrichment:

- This program provides students and educators with experiences that support and enrich the New York State P-12 Learning Standards.
- This program provides visiting experts and includes programs in Science; Math; Engineering; Technology; Health and Wellness; Character Education; Social-Emotional Learning; Culturally Responsive Programs; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity; and more.
- On average, Exploratory Enrichment serves 27 school districts in Eastern Suffolk BOCES and, during the last few months of the school year, several Western Suffolk districts with approximately 400 enrichment experiences.
- Approximately 100 presenters and organizations provide workshops, programs, and in-school and field trip experiences under Exploratory Enrichment.
- Provide virtual STEAM Conference for Kids during winter
- Provide in-person STEAM Conference for Kids in June
- Increased the program offerings for motivational speakers providing social emotional learning and wellness for students.
- Send out Spotlights featuring new presenters, or programs that align to specific curriculum areas
- Continue to update program descriptions and search criteria to fit the needs of our schools and parent organizations.
- Continue to offer Virtual and Outdoor programs through the Exploratory Enrichment catalog.

Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (JROTC):

- Extend Leadership training and skills support to JROTC units across Long Island school districts.
- Continue to empower students in the JROTC program with comprehensive leadership training and skills and expand its reach welcoming more student participation within the three component school districts who participate in this program.

Summer Enrichment Programs:

- Provide Summer Enrichment programs for students in grades 1-9 in five school districts.
- Continue to seek new vendors and resources to provide both high quality and cost-effective enrichment curriculum and services.
- The Summer Enrichment Program in 2024-2025 will include more STEAM enrichment for all grades, as well as leadership and career exploration opportunities for middle schoolers.

School Year Enrichment Programs:

- Deliver School Year Enrichment programs to students in 26 school districts.
- Aim to expand the number of districts and students participating in Extended Day Enrichment programs in the 2024-2025 school year.
- Continuously seek new vendors and resources for high-quality and cost-effective enrichment curriculum and services for before and after school programs.

Arts-in-Education:

- This program provides students and educators with experiences that support and enrich the New York State P-12 Learning Standards for the Arts.
- Arts-based programs, workshops, residencies, field experiences, and more are provided through Arts-in-Education, which serves 68 school districts in Eastern and Western Suffolk.
- Programs address standards in the Arts through all artistic disciplines, including music, theatre, dance, visual, media, literary, authors, etc.
- Programs address other curricular areas, such as Character Education; Social-Emotional Learning; Culturally Responsive Programs; Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity; Science; Math; History; Engineering; Technology; Health and Wellness; and more through the artistic disciplines.
- We are projecting to exceed 3,500 performances/experiences this year on average the Arts-In-Education Program provides over 2,000 artistic experiences, including over 400 residencies.
- Our catalog includes more than 600 artists and art organizations providing performances, workshops, short and long-term residencies, licensing agreements for school performances, on-site and off-site experiences, outdoor programs, and related video conferences and virtual programs.
- Professional Development is provided to art and classroom educators, including district memberships to professional organizations.
- We have partnered with the Patchogue Arts Council to provide Professional Learning for the PEACE (Partners in Education, Arts, and Community Empowerment) program, a US Department of Education funded grant.
- We will provide an Arts-in-Education live showcase for district leaders and parent groups featuring several presenters.
- Our Spotlight features new presenters, or presenters who align with specific curriculum.

- Our Star Newsletter highlights programs and news in the Arts.
- We will expand our Professional Development to include Collegial Circles.
- We continue to update our program descriptions and search criteria to make for a more user-friendly experience for our districts and parent organizations.
- Planning the design for an updated website and database to align with current industry and district security protocols and digital accessibility.
- In the process of adding the Instrument Program to the Arts-in-Education CoSer.

School Library System Automation:

- In the academic year 2024-25, our School Library System Automation stands as a pivotal resource, serving 42 school districts. Within this framework, 29 schools strategically employ the Follett Destiny automation system, while an additional 13 schools, including two nonpublic institutions, harness the academic advantages provided by the MediaFlex OPALS automation system. These meticulously designed programs contribute to an enriched educational environment, fostering streamlined access to resources and knowledge, thus supporting students in their academic endeavors and paving the way for their success in school.

School Data Bank Services:

- Fifty-five (55) districts participate in the School Data Bank Services - Levels of Service program, including the Introductory, Full, Inclusive, or Bantam levels of service. Customized data support and post-secondary reports are available.
- Thirty-four (34) districts avail themselves of the service of a Staff Developer/Shared Data Expert to assist with data initiatives.
- Five (5) districts subscribe to Ellevation Inc., a web-based software platform that enhances instruction, improves collaboration, and simplifies compliance requirements so educators may focus on helping English Language Learner students succeed.
- An initiative for 2024-25 is to pilot a custom data visualization web-based platform for Suffolk County school district administrators and teachers, and ESB department administrators.
- An initiative for 2024-25 is to pilot the Assessment Services – Full Service Scoring for Regents Exams. District will utilize this service to score the constructed response/essay with ESB via vendor OSC, replacing the need for districts to hire teachers to score in-house.
- An initiative for 2024-25 is to increase in-district participation of the Staff Developer/Shared Data Expert service to assist with data initiatives, to increase district participation in workshops and training facilitated by School Data Bank Services staff to meet districts' data initiatives and to support districts in navigating shifts in education and to further collaboration between the School Data Bank Services Program and internal department such as Student Data Services, DEI, Special Education, CTE and ENL and Bilingual program.
- An initiative for 2024-25 is to further refine the ESS/SDBS Regional Curricula and Instructional Technology Database by collecting and incorporating additional data points to advance the database.

Library Services/Media:

The Library Services program serves 46 school districts, including two nonpublic schools and three Western Suffolk districts for the Virtual Reference Collection (VRC). For 2023-24, it is anticipated that we will add various online resources to the VRC with minimal financial impact to our member districts.

Professional Development, Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment:

- The Professional Development Program serves the 51 school districts in our region. We coordinate and schedule a variety of high-quality in-person and virtual professional development workshops with local and national presenters. Workshop offerings are designed and offered based on NYSED and S/CDN initiatives as well as local district goals and evaluation feedback. Topics include, but are not limited to, leadership, strategic planning, best practices in instruction, and mental health/social emotional learning.
- Customized and targeted in-district professional development is also offered based on district's needs and goals. Coaching and embedded support services are available to teachers, administrators, support staff, and Boards of Education.
- Curriculum Writing services and Curriculum Printing are also available to districts who subscribe to the Comprehensive Curriculum Service. Districts can utilize the bid for printing through this service as well as receive assistance in the coordination of in-district curriculum writing.

Model Schools:

- Currently 43 school districts subscribe to the Model Schools Program.
- For 2024-2025, we will be providing support for newly established Esports service. We continue to explore ways to provide an ESBOCES custom league and NYS regional Esports competition.
- In response to the growing demand for artificial intelligence trainings into our educator workshops, enhancing the professional development offerings for 2023-2024, with plans to further expand and refine these AI-centric resources throughout 2024 and 2025.

Third Party Assessment Service:

- Third Party Assessments provides help desk and training support for nine third-party assessment applications. The systems supported and district participation are:
 - AIMSweb – 15 districts
 - Right Reason Technologies – 13 districts
 - Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) – 8 districts
 - Renaissance Learning STAR – 14 districts
 - LinkIt! – 3 districts
 - iReady – 29 districts
 - Panorama – 4 districts
 - Data Recognition Corp LAS Links – 9 districts
 - Education Analytics – 4 districts
- For 2023-2024, we anticipate adding Thoughtexchange to the program.

REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTER (RIC)

Virtual Learning Services:

- Services are currently provided to 66 school districts.
- Virtual Learning Service – In conjunction with multiple BOCES partners across New York State, we delivered a variety of virtual learning opportunities.
- Online Learning Academy – in conjunction with our vendor partners, districts select virtual learning solutions on a student-by-student basis (in the areas of credit/credit recovery, homebound instruction, electives, test preparation, blended courses, and content).

- Immersive Experiences is an easy entry point that allows students opportunities to engage with expert content providers, including access to free New York State collaborations, a videoconference directory, and Zoom access. Video conferences can add to lesson plans or just be for fun. In 2023-2024, the key focus is on continuing to offer services to help districts meet the diverse needs of their students. Key areas include, but are not limited to, tutorial services, language translations, KidOYO, various virtual learning services and opportunities, and Zoom licensing.
- A goal for 2024-2025 is to maintain district participation, enhance existing services, and continue to respond to the needs of our districts.

Technology Acquisition Services:

- Services are currently provided to over 45 component school districts.
- Acquisitions are associated with either instructional or administrative technology, as appropriate.
- Network copier projects are available through this program.
- Financed, multi-year projects are available for both instructional and administrative acquisitions; these projects require Board approval, NYSED approval, and bank financing.
- District support of Education Law 2-d compliant software agreements and security-related acquisitions was prominent. New services and offerings include device insurance, device repair, emerging technology acquisitions, and services.
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is to continue to support districts, with an emphasis on Education Law 2-d compliant software agreements and cybersecurity related acquisitions. Additional emerging technology and services will be explored and developed as appropriate.
- This service provides an opportunity to use ESBOCES for grant-funded acquisitions. While the acquisitions will not be BOCES aid-eligible and they will be considered district property, fees associated with this service may be BOCES aid-eligible.

Instructional Technology/Internet Services:

- Services are currently provided to 13 school districts.
- This service provides project management and maintenance of Internet Services, including level one network monitoring, monthly utilization reports, and trouble ticket management. Direct connection to Eastern Suffolk BOCES Regional Information Center for secure transit of hosted services is optional for an additional fee.
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is to continue to support districts in efforts to implement internet access redundancy and load balancing solutions in addition to DDoS protection.
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is to continue to increase district subscriptions and support bandwidth upgrades.

Local Area Network (LAN)/Wide Area Network (WAN) Support:

- Forty-one districts are participating in 2023-2024, and we currently have 36 districts proposed in 2024-2025.
- This comprehensive service provides LAN/WAN network support to all participating districts. Fees for these services vary based upon technical expertise of required personnel and scope of engagement. Project management oversight for installation and maintenance of LANs and WANs is included in this service, as well as various network solutions. This service does not include desktop computer repairs.

- Service also includes project management, oversight of installation, and maintenance of district-based fiber WAN connectivity.
- Security, Surveillance, and VoIP Services include design, implementation, and support for network-based video surveillance, door access control, and other systems.
- Initiatives for 2024-2025
 - Focus on security infrastructure enhancements and centrally managed network solutions, where available to strengthen RIC Cyber Security Posture
 - Expand number of subscriptions via outreach
 - Continue to strengthen vendor partnerships and district relationships
 - Work with vendors to ensure awareness of published security vulnerabilities

Hosted Network Operations Center (NOC) Management:

- Consists of centrally managed/private cloud computing infrastructure located in the Regional Information Center, and is transparent to school district end-users
- Possible hosted management applications
 - Facilities Management Applications
 - Financial Systems
 - Point of Sales Applications
 - Student Management systems
- Initiatives for 2024-2025
 - Increase the functionality of the disaster recovery site
 - Support the Data Warehouse migration to SQL Server with full disaster recovery
 - Continue to mature NIST compliancy and SOC Type 2 (Service Organization Control) initiatives through compliance maintenance
 - Continue to mature hosted applications within ESBOCES NOC (e.g., district shares, Nutrikids, facilities management, etc.)
 - Continue to mature security protections for hosted services covering confidentiality, integrity, and availability safeguarding data and resources from cyberattacks and data breaches
 - Continue to expand the coverage of multi-factor authentication for access to hosted NOC and SMS solutions
 - Expand the footprint of hosted nVision and increase the security controls for access outside of district boundaries
 - Decommission Legacy Infrastructure and Services in an effort to increase security posture and reduce cost

Security, Surveillance, and VoIP Services:

- Services include design, implementation, and support for network based video surveillance, door access control, and other systems.
- Visitor Management System implementation and support services are now available for the ScholarChip and Raptor systems, with other vendor solutions being explored for future offerings.

Financial and District Services:

- Services are currently provided to approximately 200 school districts (on average, approximately four to five services per district).
- Technology updates were performed on our off-site, out-of-region nVision backup services. Forty-eight districts currently participate.

- Blackboard Connect, ParentSquare, and School Messenger are Emergency Notification systems that complement staff and student management systems.
- Cafeteria Management systems continue to grow in response to district demand for a web-based solution. A total of 40 districts currently participate. In the area of Facilities Management systems, districts are offered a choice of three highly effective systems supported through the RIC:
 - Q Ware
 - SchoolDude
 - Master Library
- Election Management systems are offered to assist districts in managing voter registrations for local and other elections. School districts may choose between two vendors for these services:
 - BOLD
 - NTS
- Services are provided for capital projects management.
- Services are continuing for hosting enhanced offsite data backup and web-based point-of-sale.
- Web governance, secure email, and meeting management software are available.
- Data Privacy & Security Core Service has 48 participating districts. Resources, Inventory Tool and Professional Development help districts in compliance with NYS Education Law 2d. Admission to the NY Statewide Conference included.
- The RIC facilitates annual district clerk trainings.
- A focus for 2024-2025 is to continue to lead the effort in helping districts lower the impact of potential cybersecurity attacks by supporting their needs for data retrieval, disaster recovery, business continuity, and data privacy and security. All related shared services are expected to continue to grow.

District Data Protection Officer Service:

- This three-year-old service is currently being provided to 28 districts across Suffolk County.
- Service is designed to support a district's Data Protection Officer in the districts' adherence to NYS Ed Law 2d.
- Initiatives for 2024-2025 are to continue to develop and deploy this service and increase district subscriptions.
- The DPO Support Program has expanded to more Cyber Security and Governance related services including assistance to component districts with the creation and testing of Incident Response, Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity plans, Real Time IT Asset inventory control and security management and Professional Development for districts' IT Staff members.

Intellipath:

Services are provided to 52 school districts as part of a consortium.

Data Warehousing:

- All 69 Suffolk districts participate in required data warehousing services.
- Syracuse City School District contracts with Eastern Suffolk BOCES to manage required data warehousing services.

- Jewish Education Project (JEP) contracts with Eastern Suffolk BOCES to manage required data warehouse services involving grades 3-8 testing and Regents exams. This involves support of approximately 300 nonpublic schools across New York State.
- Student Data Services continues to grow the District Data Loading Service. This service includes a combination of data warehouse and student management systems support to help districts that may be in transition or in need of District Data Coordinator assistance. Currently sixteen districts subscribe to this service.
- Districts are required to survey parents/persons in parental relation of all students to determine Digital Resources and submit collected data to SIRS. Student Data Services has developed a Digital Resource Survey Service to assist subscribing districts in the collection and reporting of these data. This service continues to be very well received by districts, as currently eight districts participate. An initiative for 2024-2025 is to increase district participation in this service.
- One-on-one remote data help sessions are facilitated to assist District Data Coordinators in real time for all facets of data reporting and verification.

Student Management Services:

- Student Management Services provides help desk, hosting, training, and customization support for four student management systems. Each system provides web-based applications to support district needs related to scheduling, grades, discipline, and required State data reporting. All systems have appropriate data security implemented and are fully compliant with New York State Education Department (NYSED) data reporting requirements. The systems supported and district participation are:
 - eSchoolData – 34 districts and one Charter School
 - Infinite Campus – 16 districts – Infinite Campus districts have moved to the cloud choice hosting in order to purchase premium products
 - PowerSchool – 12 Suffolk districts, one district switched to another SMS and another decided to participate in the SMS service; three districts and one nonpublic school from the Northeastern Regional Information Center, one district from Rockland BOCES, and one district from Dutchess BOCES
 - SchoolTool – five districts and Western Suffolk BOCES Regional Summer School
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is continue to expand district participation in the Passport for Good program service.

Other Related Services:

- eBoard by Sea Cliff Educational Solutions – Five school districts subscribe to this service.

Test Scanning and Reporting Services:

- Generally, over 350,000 individual NYSESLAT, NYSITELL, NYS Grades 3-8 ELA, Math, and Science assessments, and approximately 250,000 Regents exams are processed annually.
- Extensive support is provided to school districts concerning NYSED data reporting requirements, deadlines, and accountability rules. This support includes generating reports and offering tools to help assure quality control and accuracy.
- An initiative moving forward is to continue ongoing support for 10 RICs across New York State plus the Syracuse City School District that utilize the ESBOCES Student Data Services developed New Test Scoring Software (NTSS).

- Student Data Services continues to develop the Regents Data Loading Service where Student Data Services test scanning team directly loads Regents assessment results to Level 1, and provides extracts for Student Management Systems. This service has been very well received by districts, currently twenty-one districts participate.
- Student Data Services continues to develop the Advanced Placement (AP) Advantage Loading Service where Student Data Services test scanning team directly loads AP exam results to Level 1, and provides extracts for Student Management Systems. This service has been very well received by districts. Nineteen districts currently participate.
- The New York State Education Department has released a timeline within which districts must administer computer based testing. This timeline will require districts to administer CBT to grades 5 and 8 in 2024; grades 4, 5, 7, and 8 in 2025; and grades 3-8 in 2026. An initiative moving forward is to expand Level 1 support to our component districts with the implementation of Computer Based Testing.
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is to increase district participation in the Regents Data Loading Service and the AP Advantage Loading Service. A second initiative is to expand our services to better support districts/schools with their transition to computer-based testing.

Special Education Student Management Systems:

- Student Management Services support districts in the utilization of a variety of tools to assist with the management of information related to special education students. All systems have appropriate data security implemented and are compliant with NYSED data reporting requirements. The systems supported and district participation are:
 - Clear Track 200-Special Education Data Management System – two districts and one nonpublic school
 - Frontline IEP Direct Special Education Data Management System – 53 districts
 - Frontline RTI Direct (Response to Intervention) – 10 districts
 - Frontline Medicaid Direct – 21 districts
- Student Data Services Special Education Help Desk supports additional software programs:
 - the n2y software suite, which includes: Unique Learning System, News-2-You, SymbolStix Prime, SymbolStix Squares, L3 Skills, Positivity, Polaris and Inspire - 12 districts
 - Branching Minds – eight districts
 - HearBuilder – five districts
 - Enome Inc. dba Goalbook – four districts
- An initiative for 2024-2025 is to expand district participation in services, including Branching Minds, HearBuilder, Enome Inc. dba Goalbook, and the n2y programs.

New York City Charter Schools – Data Warehousing:

- The RIC, through the NYC Charter School Data Collection project, is a vendor for the Board of Education of the City School District of the City of New York for the provision of data warehousing services for all charter schools in NYC: 274 schools during the 2023-2024 school year.
- The project hosts and maintains a separate and customized instance of NYSED’s data warehousing systems for the collection of NYC charter school data. The project also uses a shared license for Cognos/ReportNet, an IBM, product licensed by NYSED.
- Provide training, resources and help desk support to staff at each NYC charter school regarding technical skills and compliance with NYSED Accountability and data reporting requirements.

- Maintain a comprehensive website for 'one-stop shopping' of resources regarding all data collections managed by ESBOCES.
- Continue to offer for purchase, an original software, the Attendance Application, to individual schools within the five boroughs of NYC.

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

HR Operations and Contracts:

- Navigated transition of multiple Human Resources personnel, improving efficacy.
- Consulted counsel on labor law and contractual disputes, updating agency practices.
- Provided and contributed to staff communications and memos throughout the agency.
- Settled multiple collective bargaining agreements with agency's long-term interest.
- Supported 4,590 part-time/full-time employees across all HR functions.
- Continued to utilize appropriate measures to evaluate and approve NYS COVID-19 Leave.
- Successfully met all Affordable Care Act compliance requirements.
- Broadened the Human Resources webpage to provide transparency.
- Collaborating with the Business Office to research vendor who may be more cost effective for ACA reporting.
- Working with SchoolFront to increase utilization of system.
- Approximate number of Retirements Processed for the period of July 1, 2023 through March 29, 2024 was 38.
- As of March 1, 2024, additional number of retirements scheduled for April 1, 2024 through June 30, 2024 is 23.

Recruitment and Retention of a Culturally and Demographical Diverse Workforce:

- Analyzed multiple streams of data, preparing for future recruitment efforts.
- Transitioned to a digital system for employee recruitment and onboarding.
- Supported the revision of postings for certificated staff, including new posting platforms.
- Engaged with Civil Service during multiple high level meetings to improve processes.
- On-boarded over 600 employees with a large rate of new employees from a diverse background.
- HR will be hosting over 800 applicants who are seeking employment via our annual Career Fair.
- Collaborated to modify promotional language through lens of equity and inclusivity.
- Continued compensation on all postings ahead of NYS announcement of requirement.
- Cabinet is conducting their annual Pay Equity Audit review.

Employee Culture:

- Coordinated an Employee Awards Ceremony recognizing more than 22 employees.
- Returned to and facilitated regular in-person New Employee Orientations.
- Oversaw all compliance training, engaged in processes to improve virtual trainings.
- Provided multiple formal trainings to all administrators on strategic leadership thinking.
- Actively focusing on acknowledging and recognizing employees on personal and professional achievements.

Regional Support:

- Provided guidance and support related to the Health Care Worker Bonus Program.
- Held numerous countywide Personnel Administrator's Council meetings.
- Provided certification presentations and supported component school districts.
- Received over 790 certification applications; completed over 684 evaluations (Teacher certificate evaluations – 349; Teaching assistant evaluations – 174; and coaching license evaluations – 161).
- Shared resources related to Hiring Handbook and equitable committee processes.
- Conducted trainings on conflict resolution to regional leaders at multiple school districts.
- Built customized personnel guidance to school districts navigating complex issues.
- Offered direct services to school districts requiring personnel capacity support.
- Presented at the NYASPA state wide conference.
- Presented at the LIASPA conference.
- HR Administrator on the NYASPA state-wide conference planning committee.
- Creating a Safe, Supportive, and Affirming School Environment for Transgender and Gender Expansive Students (2023 Legal Update and Best Practices) presented to multiple districts as professional development.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES DIVISION

Administrative Services:

- Reviewed and updated, as needed, recommended insurance requirements requested from vendors in all agency bids to guarantee protection of the agency's interests.
- Responded to 136 Freedom of Information requests and over 650 student record inquiries.
- Received, inventoried, and securely stored over 19,000 English, math, and science assessments and Regents exams; and distributed over 750 of these exams to 24 school districts through distribution centers located at the James Hines Administration Center and the Westhampton Beach Learning Center.

Capital Asset Management (CAM):

- Sold \$70,827 worth of surplus equipment and vehicles for Eastern Suffolk BOCES and its component school districts.
- Completed full building inventories at the Bay Shore Adult Education Center, Brookhaven Learning Center at Samoset Middle School, Harry B. Ward Technical Center, and Sayville Elementary School including all of its satellite locations.
- Managed over 2,830 of the agency's record retention boxes.

Cooperative Bidding Program:

- Created the following new bids: General Motors / Chevrolet, Chrysler / Dodge and Ford OEM Repairs and Parts and HVAC Filters.
- Continued to hold Ad Hoc Committee meetings with school districts and other participating municipalities to refine and enhance specifications and/or to evaluate "alternate" submissions for: Custodial Supplies; Custodial Liners, and Gloves; Arts and Crafts Supplies; Music Supplies and Instruments; and Physical Education, Athletic, and First Aid Supplies. These meetings have continued to be successful using a virtual platform though we have transitioned back to in-person meetings.
- The Cooperative Bidding Program maintains and manages 65 contracts: 58 bids, and seven (7) RFP's, covering many commodities for its 76 participants.

- Continued active involvement with the Joint Procurement Council for Suffolk County's SuffolkShare Program, which is Suffolk County's response to former Governor Cuomo's shared services initiative.

Health & Safety and Security:

- Reviewed and updated the Public Employees Safety and Health (PEOSH) compliance templates, which are available to component school districts. Added a Mobile Elevated Working Platform template and Workplace Violence Prevention Program template.
- Provided multiple Health & Safety seminars for safety and facilities personnel.
- Joined the Suffolk County School Facilities Association Board of Directors and co-chair the Mentorship Committee to continue support for novice directors of facilities and other school facilities personnel.
- Ongoing meetings with the agency's Safety Team and Health & Safety Committee. The Committee invited a technical expert from NYSIR to provide additional Health & Safety training for staff based upon reviews of incident reports.
- Participated in building-level faculty meetings to review emergency response protocols and train on new procedures.
- Conducted lockdown drill debriefings with individual buildings after participation and review of the events to ensure an understanding of the lockdown protocols.
- Expanded participation by faculty and staff in the RAVE Panic Button application by presenting at each building's faculty meeting annually.
- Upgraded access control software and security hardware, added interior blue lights for lockdown procedures, deployed a centralized automatic lockdown procedure including automatic notification to emergency services, automated lockdown announcements, and automated email/text alerts to key administrators.
- Security camera additions agency-wide, reviewing new, more robust and user-friendly camera software.
- Provided additional training to building greeters on security protocols.
- Enacted gate reduction procedures to limit community traffic on our campuses.
- Conducted several assessments of campuses with Homeland Security.

Facilities:

- Continued the Chief Custodian Committee to discuss needs and projects within our buildings in an effort to build a team atmosphere and share best practices.
- Met monthly with O&M DEI liaisons and incorporated DEI activities into custodial supervisors' meeting and the interview process.
- Attended and chaired an East End Facilities Meeting, which included 12 of the East End school districts.
- Held Director of Facilities roundtable meetings with component districts. Discussed best practices and current initiatives that are common to many districts.
- Held Ad-Hoc Committee meetings with the Purchasing Department. The Ad-Hoc Committee meetings allow Suffolk County facilities directors to review and determine whether samples and alternative items submitted by vendors meet specifications.
- Continued to work with CTE, Adult Education, and Special Education programs to review and bring additional buildings online.
- Collaborated with BBS Architects on the capital facilities and master space plan.
- Continued to replace and upgrade rooftop HVAC equipment, as well as began integrating energy management systems. The new equipment is more energy efficient, provides better air quality, and uses smart technology for controls.

- Reviewed spatial needs and inspected additional spaces for possible lease.

Operations and Maintenance:

The Operations and Maintenance department has overseen numerous facility upgrades that align with our current master space plan. These upgrades included:

- Major renovation of the playgrounds at the Bellport Learning Center, Westhampton Beach Learning Center, Sayville Elementary School, and the Samoset Middle School.
- Replacement of HVAC equipment at the James Hines Administration Center, Islip Academic Center, Islip Career Center, and Islip Office Center.
- Islip Career Center – Installed a new culinary kitchen and reconstructed the welding shop.
- Edward J. Milliken Technical Center – Reconstructed the welding shop.
- Samoset, HB Ward and Premm Learning Center – Install security vestibules.
- HB Ward building #4 – Replacement of auto body spray booth.
- Replacement of obsolete ceilings and lights at Westhampton Beach Annex and Bellport Academic Center.
- Continued the replacement of flooring materials at Gary D. Bixhorn Technical Center and Edward J. Milliken Technical Center.
- Continued the replacement of obsolete ceilings and lights at Brookhaven Learning Center, Bixhorn Technical Center, and HB Ward.

Leases:

- Renewed lease agreements beginning in 2024 with the Suffolk Cooperative Library System for the library services CoSer and Brentwood, East Hampton, and Southampton Union Free School Districts at the lower of 2% or the CPI-U for continuation of the in-district high school Career and Technical Education programs.
- Amended the lease agreement for 2024-25 for continuation of the Employee Assistance Program in Hampton Bays.
- Replaced the former Brentwood Adult Education Center at the Sisters of St. Joseph with the Family Service League building in Bay Shore to house the adult education, adult literacy, and GED programs for 2023-2026.
- Negotiated a lease agreement with the West Islip Union Free School District for the building and play areas to be known as the Masera Middle School for 2024-2034 for the Special Education Program.

Communications Services/Public Relations:

- Added four (4) new school districts to the Communications/Public Relations service, for a total of 57 participating school districts.
- Continued to support school districts in meeting their public relations and communications needs through the consulting firms on contract.
- Provided foreign language and American Sign Language translations and interpretations through an established RFP.

Nonpublic Textbooks:

- Processed applications and distributed textbooks for the start of the school year to non-public school students in grades K-12 who reside in 71 participating school districts across Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester Counties. Textbooks are distributed from four locations in Suffolk County. Program staff communicate directly with the non-

public schools and parents. Pooling both textbooks and operation resources results in a considerable savings of time and money for the public school districts.

Office of Communications and Research (OCR):

- Continued to provide high-quality public relations services, including graphics, photography, videography, press releases and newsletter articles, media outreach, and content that promotes Eastern Suffolk BOCES and Academy students, staff, events, and programs on the website and social media.
- Facilitated Superintendent's Conference Day for 12-month non-instructional staff, which was held on November 7.
- Supported the 20th Annual Regional Longwood Legislative Workshop that was held on February 3. The Communications Office aided Longwood's Director of Public Relations with graphic design, printing, and the logistics of the morning's program. The Research Office assisted the Chief Operating Officer in the development of his presentation for the event.
- Completed several annual research projects to support the advocacy efforts of the District Superintendent and Chief Operating Officer, including, but not limited to, analyses of school districts' budgets, trends in school district wealth, student enrollment/demographic trends, the Executive Budget proposal, and the Legislative Budget. Several projects were further developed for visual presentation and/or publication.
- Represented the agency on the Statewide BOCES Communication Committee. This committee meets to determine the priorities of New York State BOCES communications, and provides professional development opportunities for BOCES communications professionals throughout the state.
- Collaborated and met regularly with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) staff on the agency's work toward a more inclusive teaching and learning environment, and to continue to ensure that the diversity of students is represented in all print and digital publications.
- Facilitated the promotion of the Parent-Family Advisory Council and acquired translations and interpretations for all materials and events.
- Carried out several advertising campaigns for job fairs that took place at Sequoya High School. The fairs offered on-site interviews and hiring to fill vacant positions for Special Education aides and teaching assistants, as well as substitutes. The Graphics Department developed flyers for distribution, media support generated boosted posts on social media, and radio spots on WBAB and WBLI were created and purchased. The Communications Department also posted information about the fair and current job vacancies on the recruiting page of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES website. Additionally, outdoor "Hiring Now" signage was developed for placement at various ESBOCES locations.
- Continued participation in various workshops and trainings for ongoing professional growth in the area of authentic and inclusive school communications.
- Developed documents and surveys to assist with superintendent searches for several school districts.
- Facilitated the development of a student designed "Dedicated to Dignity" poster, which was printed and distributed agency-wide for display in classrooms and buildings. The content of the poster was also redesigned to fit on a sticker that students can adhere to their notebooks and planners.

- The Communications Office continues to support the agency's leadership in drafting important public messages and assisting with their delivery via ConnectEd phone and text messaging. In addition, the Communications Office secures Spanish translation for all messages that are then delivered to households that prefer communication in Spanish. When necessary, messages in the form of memos are also posted on the ESBOCES website in both English and Spanish.
- Completed the conversion of the Eastern Suffolk BOCES and Academy websites to a new platform. Training on how to edit assigned webpages was provided to over 100 content editors.
- Expanded the RFP for professional videography services to provide services to school districts.
- For the second year, the Communications Office sponsored an Eastern Suffolk BOCES student as a graphic intern. The hands-on work is expected to provide the student with experience in a professional setting, hone soft skills, expand knowledge and creativity, and enhance the student's portfolio.
- Completed the 2024 update to the Delegate Facemaps for Nassau and Suffolk Counties. The maps provide a photograph of each of the state legislators, along with a list of the school districts they represent. This year's update included the new legislative boundaries that went into effect.
- Continued support from the Public Relations Liaison Program helped new and seasoned liaisons in gathering quality and meaningful content for public relations. The program includes representatives from every instructional building, Educational Support Services, the Family Outreach Program, and the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity.
- The Research Department completed a special project for the Suffolk County School Superintendent's Association to support the ESBOCES District Superintendent and Associate Superintendent for Management Services in their continued advocacy for public education. The project entitled "Suffolk County: Our Story" is a collection of facts and data, which illustrate details about the county and the students educated within it.
- The Research Department also completed the collection and analysis of the data for the 13th Annual School Budget Impact Survey for the Long Island Education Coalition (LIEC). The survey for the 2023-24 school year continued to be useful in identifying the impact of the property tax cap, as well as highlighted the historical impact of the Foundation Aid Formula.
- Assisted the reaccreditation process team in the development of a survey, which was distributed to all ESBOCES stakeholders as part of a self-study. The survey results were then analyzed and reports developed to assist with the development of a new strategic plan.
- The ESBOCES ConnectEd tool was updated to include 11 languages other than English. ConnectEd is the mass communication tool that the agency uses to send telephone and text messages to students, parents, and staff.
- Through the office of the District Superintendent, the Communications Office has been aiding the Unkechaug Nation on the graphic design and organization of an Unkechaug to English glossary, as part of the Algonquian Language Revitalization Project.

Printing:

- Using state-of-the-art equipment, a large variety of items were produced, which include but are not limited to, booklets, brochures, business cards, calendars, letterhead, NCR forms, newsletters, postcards, posters, envelopes, and other creative educational visual

aids. A variety of paper types and finishing options are available. Post-printing tasks include collating, binding, trimming, folding, hole-punching, and stapling.

- Continued to provide high-quality printed materials to 16 participating school districts, reducing their expenses by outsourcing their printing and duplication needs. Printing capabilities range from quick-copy duplicating to custom printed materials. This service is available to all Suffolk County school districts and is eligible for BOCES aid, if the school district subscribes to the Library Services/Media base service. Materials which become the property of the school district are not eligible for BOCES aid.
- Provided pickup and delivery services to school district central offices at no additional cost.

School Lunch Program:

- Working with both the Operations and Maintenance and Purchasing departments in designing a kitchen at the Masera Middle School in West Islip, which is expected to be reconstructed in the summer or fall of 2025.
- Planning with Whitsons, the Eastern Suffolk BOCES food service management company, on a plan to prepare meals for the 2024-25 school year at an offsite location and transport them to the new Masera Middle School to be served with a temporary serving line as an interim measure until the kitchen is constructed. The lunch program staff is developing detailed lists of required equipment and specifications for the Purchasing Department to prepare a bid for the temporary serving line. This serving line will be repurposed in the new kitchen when it is completed.
- Continue to operate, for three additional years, under the United States Department of Agriculture Community Eligibility Provision. This enables Eastern Suffolk BOCES to serve breakfast and lunch to all Special Education students at no charge. This program promotes educational equity as it removes the free and reduced-price application barrier, particularly for families who speak languages other than the languages in which the applications are written, or who lack reading and writing skills or fear completing applications because of their immigration status. The program reduces the stigma of participating in the school meal program as breakfast and lunch are provided to all student regardless of their ability to pay. The program supports families who struggle with food insecurity, but have incomes slightly above the limit for free and reduced-price meals.
- Both the breakfast and lunch program continue to experience tremendous growth, with a 9% increase in both the number of breakfast and lunch meals provided to students between July 2023 and January 2024, as compared to the same period last school year.
- Sustained efficiencies were experienced while operating under the Community Eligibility Program, as no free and reduced-price applications are required. This eliminates the need for Eastern Suffolk BOCES staff to collect, enter, process, and verify applications. Furthermore, the program eliminates unpaid school meal debt, thus, no staff time is expended in the collection or processing of payments.
- Received nearly \$47,000 in grants to help offset the increased costs of procuring minimally processed and locally sourced foods.
- Supported the nutritional needs of students attending non-traditional programs, including the evening Alternative High School Program, as well as served students at included sites on days the host school district was closed.
- Continued participation in the Fresh Produce Pilot Program, sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture, by diverting a portion of the entitlement to this program. A large variety of fresh fruits and vegetables have been received at no cost.

Substitute Services:

- Provided per diem substitute teachers, nurses, aides, assistants, custodians, and other employees for Eastern Suffolk BOCES programs and participating component school districts.
- Offered three (3) levels of service to the 37 component school districts and four (4) Eastern Suffolk BOCES programs.
- Focused on increasing recruitment by participation in Eastern Suffolk BOCES job fairs.

Technology Integration:

- The multifactor authentication (MFA) solution has been successfully deployed for all administrative level staff within the organization. This rollout encompassed a wide array of systems, including critical applications, remote access VPN, and sensitive data repositories. A comprehensive user adoption strategy was implemented by OTI, including targeted training sessions and informational resources to ensure a smooth transition to the new authentication process. The implementation of MFA represents a significant advancement in OTI's cyber security strategy.
- The Microsoft Exchange upgrade initiative represents a critical step in enhancing the communication infrastructure. The upgrade of the email system is proceeding as planned, with the migration to the new platform well underway. The new system offers enhanced features, improved security, and scalability to meet our organization's growing communication needs.
- The Office of Technology Integration continues to make significant network switch upgrades across the organization. This work represents a critical enhancement in our infrastructure to support the evolving technology needs of our agency's programs. The network switch upgrades across all sites are progressing according to schedule, with the installation and configuration of new switches nearing completion. The new switches are designed to provide increased bandwidth, improved reliability, and enhanced network management capabilities to support the growing demand for digital learning resources.
- The department continues to make progress in enhancing voice infrastructure stability. OTI is working with internal and external Avaya resources to enhance the agency phone system for increased resilience to potential failure and increase concurrent call capacity.
- OTI is working with the agency's external fiber provider to engineer a higher capacity and more resilient network backbone between all sites.
- OTI is working with the Facilities and Health and Safety Departments to upgrade all building electronic door locks to meet current security best practices. The new feature sets will include integration with law enforcement and provide for email and SMS alerting capabilities.
- Completed the deployment of next-generation Endpoint Detection and Response (EDR) solutions across our agency. The implementation of these advanced security solutions marks a pivotal advancement in our cyber defense strategy. The new EDR solutions are designed to provide enhanced threat visibility, proactive threat detection, and rapid response capabilities to bolster our cyber resilience.
- The deployment of laptop drive encryption is progressing according to schedule, with a significant percentage of laptops across the organization having the encryption solution successfully installed and configured. The encryption solution is designed to protect sensitive data, mitigating the risk of unauthorized access in the event of device loss or theft.
- Implemented a standard technology refresh life cycle to keep the agency's IT infrastructure current and better understand future funding requirements over a three to

five-year technology lifecycle. This comprehensive effort represents a significant investment in modernizing the technology infrastructure to better support the evolving needs of our educational programs. The upgraded hardware features enhanced performance, improved reliability, and updated software configurations to empower educators with modern computing capabilities.

- The implementation of an air-gapped data backup solution has been completed. This milestone represents a crucial advancement in fortifying the data protection strategy. The initiative encompasses the adoption of physical and logical air gaps, aligning with industry best practices to safeguard critical ESBOCES data. The physical air gap involves the literal separation of systems from other networks or devices, ensuring the stored data is inaccessible to the rest of the system without deliberate transfer. The logical air gap leverages software programs and protective measures such as encryption, access control, and systems security to create a digital isolation barrier.
- In conjunction with the RIC, OTI has developed a formal draft cyber security organizational structure. This structure aims to enhance the agency's resilience against cyber threats and ensures the protection of its digital assets. This organizational structure, in conjunction with newly created civil service titles, will allow the agency to better identify talent and manage the ever-evolving threats by dedicating staff with specific cybersecurity skills. Milestone achievements are as follows; identify and transitionally allocate potential dedicated resources for the establishment of the cyber security organizational structure. This includes additional personnel, budget, and technology infrastructure. Significant strides have been made in developing comprehensive cyber security strategies and procedures that align with industry best practices and regulatory requirements. A draft of the cyber security organizational structure has been outlined, defining roles, responsibilities, and reporting lines to ensure clear accountability and effective decision-making. Efforts have been initiated to enhance cyber security awareness across the organization through targeted training and communication. There are some challenges and mitigation activities that will be required. While resource allocation has been a top priority, OTI continues to address challenges related to job title definitions for specialized talent and acquiring advanced cyber security tools. Efforts include exploring partnerships and leveraging external expertise. The department is actively working to integrate the cyber security responsibilities seamlessly with existing business processes and functions to ensure minimal disruption and maximum effectiveness.
- Made significant progress in our cybersecurity exposure management and Penetrative Testing (PEN) capabilities. In the prior year, OTI has embarked on an initiative to increase our cybersecurity posture and resilience throughout the agency by implementing the use of enhanced cybersecurity testing and remediation measures. OTI has rolled out agency wide Tenable Vulnerability scanning. This product automatically scans network-connected devices and identifies security vulnerabilities within the organization. OTI has also introduced automation processes in an effort to increase productivity and control resource allocation in order to better patch our systems and software. This effort lessens the exposure to Zero Day and criminal activity.
- In conjunction with this software, OTI has also contracted with a third party (PEN) testing firm to identify any other possible cyber security vulnerabilities. This vendor brings additional experience and expertise to the table, strengthening the agency's systems and enhancing the security posture.

- Next Steps:
 - ✓ Implementation Roadmap: OTI is working to finalizing a detailed roadmap for the phased implementation of the cyber security organization, encompassing key milestones, timelines, and resource requirements.
 - ✓ Stakeholder Engagement: Engaging with key stakeholders across the organization to gather input, address concerns, and foster a culture of collaboration and support for the cyber security initiative.
 - ✓ Evaluation and Refinement: Establishing mechanisms for ongoing evaluation and refinement of the cyber security performance to adapt to evolving threats and technological advancements.

OTI remains committed to the successful establishment of the cyber security organization and is dedicated to ensuring that ESBOCES digital infrastructure is robust, secure, and resilient.

Transportation:

- Served 60 school districts in the 2023-24 school year with transportation and/or related services such as field trip and coach transportation and school bus safety programs.
- Provided regional special needs and non-public school home-to-school transportation to ESBOCES programs and district programs for 4,414 students in the 2023-24 School Year.
- Transported 1,462 students for transportation in the summer of 2023.
- Shuttled ESBOCES students between morning and afternoon sessions on various campuses.
- Offered shared transportation management services.
- Provided NYS DMV and SED Training programs for drivers, monitors, and attendants.
- Coordinated required drug and alcohol testing.