



Spotlight

Where are they now?

Photographer Jenna Gardner and other alumni updates

How we're managing AI

New school opens

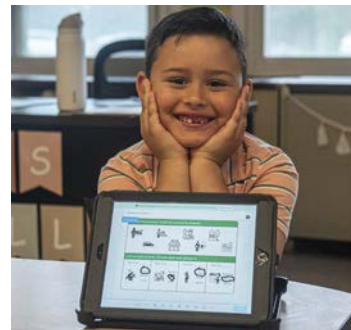
Para leer esto en español, vaya a www.esboces.org/spotlight

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 138
Patchogue, N.Y. 11772

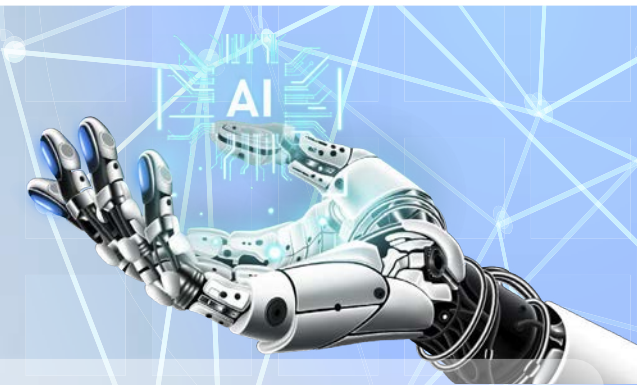
Eastern Suffolk BOCES
201 Sunrise Highway
Patchogue, New York 11772

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

Looking to learn about our industry-leading Special Education Department? Do you know someone aged five to 21 in need of special education services? Check out our website at www.esboces.org/SPEDPromoVideos. There, you'll find school promotional videos showcasing all the incredible things happening at each of our buildings.



Embracing AI Responsibly



As new and increasingly sophisticated versions of artificial intelligence continue to roll out with applications for an array of industries, its potential is not lost on the education community.

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to computer systems capable of performing complex tasks that, until recently, have only been done by humans. This includes reasoning, decision making, and problem solving, in addition to learning from experience, understanding natural language, and recognizing patterns.

A few examples of how AI has already infiltrated everyday life include digital voice assistants (Alexa, Siri), self-driving cars, online shopping recommendations, and autocorrect when texting. Going forward, AI will allow businesses to quickly analyze large and complex sets of data to provide insights for improved decisions; automate administrative tasks; and generate content such as music, text, images, and video.

A few ways that education may benefit from AI include using it to build curriculum content and quickly analyzing budgets and student data for improved outcomes.

Despite the excitement surrounding the technology, ESBOCES is currently engaged in a multi-year process to thoroughly investigate its advantages and applications, develop proper training for staff, create policies regarding its responsible use, and ensure that all infrastructure is safeguarded from security threats.

Said ESBOCES COO David Wicks, "The agency is investigating ways to implement AI to enable staff to be more efficient and creative, while properly preparing students to enter a world, post-secondary education, where it is employed. It is going to be widespread by the time they enter the workforce."

For ESBOCES, the implementation of AI will include input from the families of students. The agency has already opened up dialogue about it at its Parent Family Advisory Council. AI was the topic at the first meeting where participants discussed concerns, explained how ESBOCES plans to ensure that our young people will be safeguarded, and assured families that they will

be updated on agency decisions. "Students need to understand the responsibility they have when using AI," said Claudy Damus-Makelele, associate superintendent for educational services. "Teachers and parents are concerned about cheating and being able to identify inaccurate AI-generated content. However, AI is not going away. We could fight it, or we can say, 'Let's plan it out.' "

Over the next 10 years the technology will have a transformative effect on all businesses, including education. Even though the technology is still in its early stages, our students and staff need to be prepared because the implementation of AI tools can bring cybersecurity risks that must be proactively addressed.

All applications must be properly vetted. Those that lack the appropriate security could allow malicious actors to introduce malware, malicious code, unauthorized access to data, and more. Additionally, many AI tools don't provide transactional information, which is a data trail concerning its use, such as the date, time, and user of an application. This transparency is a requirement for all public entities, such as ESBOCES.

Said James Tietjen, senior manager of information technology, "ESBOCES is actively doing more than just 'keeping up.' We are in the process of implementing technology structures, operational tactics, and methods of training staff to be ready for a future driven by Generative AI."

As one of the three largest BOCES in the state, ESBOCES is a leader in the Long Island region and among the statewide public education network. Many districts look to us for the training, policies, and procedures we develop and AI probably won't be any different. "Our work on this forefront may benefit districts everywhere," said Wicks.

Questions regarding AI?

Contact David Wicks
at 631-687-3001
OR dwicks@esboces.org

School Lunch

Eastern Suffolk BOCES was awarded seven National School Lunch Program equipment grants totaling **\$43,334**, which will go towards refrigeration equipment and food warmers for four locations. These grants help reduce the inter-program charges to Special Education and Special Career Education budgets and will allow those savings to be spent on instructional needs.



SUBSCRIBE NOW

To our email Newsletter

Eastern
Suffolk
BOCES

NewsFeed
News for our Community

www.esboces.org/NewsFeed



Classroom Happenings

Here’s a quick look inside our many educational programs, which consist of Career and Technical Education, Adult Education, Special Education, and Special Career Education.

Tools of the Trade

To provide students with a strong foundation, Food Prep Teacher Jill Hamill at Ward Tech introduced a large variety of kitchen tools to her class with a hands-on lesson and a guessing game. After learning about the tools, asking questions, and handling them, students had to guess which tools classmates were describing.



Helping Patients Breathe

One of the first lessons students in our new EMT class at Bixhorn Tech learned was how to help patients breathe. They used an oropharyngeal airway instrument to keep the patient’s airway open, then chose either a bag valve mask (BVM) or a non-rebreather mask (NRM). The BVM forces air into the patient’s lungs if they can’t breathe on their own, and the NRM provides oxygen for those who can breathe but require assistance or additional oxygen. Here, Ricky Figueroa Rodriguez from Longwood CSD demonstrates.

Painting with Marbles

Sayville Elementary School students are painting with marbles. Using their favorite apple color, students place paint and marbles, along with their paper apple, inside a plastic container and tilted it side to side, allowing the paint-covered marbles to fill in the apple. This taught them how to use different art supplies, including scissors, paint, and glue.



Creating a Skilled Workforce for Long Island

In the last **five** years, over **1,100** secondary and adult students completed a technical program.



531

**Auto
Repair**

212

**Automotive
Technology**

109

**Autobody
Repair &
Customizing**

198

**Professional
Pilot**

92

**Marine/
Motorsports**



Alumni Gallery

Students leave the many ESBOCES and Academy programs prepared for success. Here are some of their stories:



Jenna Gardner
Professional Photography and Digital Imaging CTE Program, 2017
Social Media Specialist, Headliners Dance Championships, Morristown, NJ;
and Studio Manager, Robert Whitman, New York

For Jenna Gardner, what began as a hobby has evolved into a professional journey.

Gardner attended the Photography Program, learning everything she could. “The class showed me how to use the camera settings, and taught me about lighting and studio equipment. We took field trips to get a taste of environmental shoots. If I had not gone to BOCES, I would not be where I am today.”

According to her, the program is the reason she was accepted into Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in Manhattan, the highly selective arts and design school. “Elizabeth Grafer, my teacher, taught me everything I needed to succeed,” she said.

Gardner graduated from the Fashion Institute of Technology (FIT) in 2021 with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Photography and Related Media. This included videography and graphic design, which are invaluable in her current roles.

Today, she travels the U.S. as the Social Media Specialist and Photographer for Headliners Dance Championships. She handles their photography, videography, and content creation.

Gardner also serves as the studio manager for renowned New York photographer Robert Whitman, managing his social media and assisting with sales and exhibitions. She recently worked on shoots for cosmetics brands Clinique and Estée Lauder, as well as *Cosmopolitan* and *Women’s Health* magazines.

Gardner aspires to become a director at Headliners and manage the entire social media team. “It’s long hours in a high-speed environment, but it’s worth it,” she said.

Helen Filosa
Special Career Education and Adult Education Cosmetology, 2022
Apprentice, Hair Effex, Bellmore, New York

Since childhood, Helen Filosa’s goal has been to work in hair and makeup. Her pursuit of that goal began back in 2014 when she enrolled in the agency’s Cosmetology program at Islip Career Center while attending high school.

Filosa gained valuable knowledge and experience through various CTE programs, including Cosmetology at ICC from 2014 to 2018 and at MTC through the Adult Career and Technical Education Program from 2021 to 2022. “I learned all about structure and how to learn from your mistakes,” she said. “A lot of the techniques I learned, I took with me to my job at Hair Effex.”

Filosa’s dream started to become a reality in the summer of 2022 when she began working at Hair Effex in Bellmore, New York. “I started as an apprentice while also studying for the state boards,” she added.

Today, Filosa is still working at Hair Effex. “My goal is continuing to improve my skills in hair and makeup and start my own business. I really like special effects scary makeup; that is my true passion.”



Adam Sivak
Transitional Services Program, 2018
Employee, McDonald’s, Clayton, North Carolina

Hands-on learning and an internship provided Adam Sivak with the experience he needed to obtain full-time employment. Sivak attended the Transitional Services Program at Brookhaven Learning Center until he was 21. This program offers students with special needs learning opportunities in a variety of industries.

Sivak attended both the Retail and Culinary Programs, which take place in the school’s general store and café. Sivak learned to work with money, operate the cash register, assist customers, and cook basic meals.

He interned at a pizzeria and a McDonald’s which led to full-time job. He was there for several years when his family relocated to North Carolina. Said Julie Fox, his mother, “They loved him so much that they contacted the McDonald’s near our new home and gave him a glowing recommendation. They hired him.”

Sivak exhibits the strong work ethic and reliability that is common among employees with disabilities. He arrives early to work, volunteers to stay late, and takes his job very seriously. “They know they can always count on him,” said Fox.

Three years later Sivak is still there. He’s been Employee of the Month and his work nickname is “Fry Master.”

“Work has been amazing for him,” said Fox. “No matter where he goes there is going to be a McDonald’s.”

Camille Williams
Literacy and GED Programs, 2008
Licensed Practical Nurse/Private Duty Nurse

Camille Williams credits the Literacy and GED programs for opening the door to her nursing career. Before enrolling, she struggled with English, particularly sentence writing. “They helped teach me how to write full essays,” she said. “I would not have been able to succeed in college, become an LPN, and earn my bachelor’s degree.”

“I am very proud of the two certificates I received from ESBOCES,” Williams added. “It led me to further my studies in higher education.” After graduating from the ESBOCES programs, Williams enrolled at Medgar Evers College, where she received a Bachelor of Science in Nursing.

After college, she worked at Brookdale University Hospital and Woodhull Hospital before becoming a part-time private nurse in 2017. She transitioned to full-time during COVID.

Today, Williams remains a full-time private duty nurse with the goal of becoming a nurse practitioner.



Conner Mulhare
Auto Body CTE Program, 2022
Head Fabricator, PBE Ironworks, Cutchogue

Transferable skills are what fast-tracked Conner Mulhare onto his career path right out of high school. Mulhare attended the Auto Body Program for two years primarily due to the welding aspect embedded into the coursework. “I studied auto body, but my teacher also let me explore and hone my welding skills,” he said.

After graduation he was hired at PBE Ironworks in Cutchogue as a full-time structural steel fabricator, working on I-beams and columns for houses and mansions in the Hamptons.

When the head fabricator retired, Mulhare was promoted. He plans to continue to grow at his job and wants to become shop foreman. Eventually, Mulhare would like to own his own welding business. “I’d like to be doing similar work but also fabricate a wider variety of things,” he said.

Masera Middle School Opens

This September saw the opening of ESBOCES's newest instructional building, Masera Middle School on Udall Road in West Islip. The school serves approximately 120 students, all of whom are on the autism spectrum, in grades 5 through 8. The school was established to meet the growing needs of our component school districts.



Eastern Suffolk BOCES Board

President
Lisa Israel

Vice President
William K. Miller

Members

Arlene Barresi
Angelo Cassarino
Linda S. Goldsmith

William Hsiang
Kelli Anne Jennings
Susan Lipman

Joseph LoSchiavo
Anne Mackesey
James F. McKenna

Brian O. Mealy
Catherine M.
Romano

Robert P. Sweeney
John Wyche

District Superintendent
Jasmin Varela, Ed.D.

Chief Operating Officer
David Wicks

Eastern Suffolk BOCES does not discriminate against any employee, student, applicant for employment, or candidate for enrollment on the basis of sex, gender, race, color, religion or creed, age, weight, national origin, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, transgender status, military or veteran status, domestic violence victim status, genetic predisposition or carrier status, or any other classification protected by Federal, State, or local law. ESBOCES also provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. Inquiries regarding the implementation of the above laws should be directed to either of the ESBOCES Civil Rights Compliance Officers at ComplianceOfficers@esboces.org; the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, 631-687-3029, or the Associate Superintendent for Educational Services, 631-687-3056, 201 Sunrise Highway, Patchogue, NY 11772. Inquiries may also be addressed to the Office for Civil Rights at the US Department of Education, 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, 646-428-3800, OCR.NewYork@ed.gov.