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Erie 1 BOCES
JOURNAL

erie boces

Summer | 2025



We're opening a new E1B campus!

Empowering students of all abilities to thrive

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EDGE Academy graduate finds purpose as teacher aide at Winchester Academy

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Celebrating the first year of the New Visions Plant Science program

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FUSION '25 Fashion Show highlights student designs

Check out our new website!

www.e1b.org



Erie 1 BOCES

WELCOME MESSAGE



A student dons a cardboard knight costume at the 3rd Annual Cardboard Arcade. Students from across the region took part in the arcade with some bringing games crafted with cardboard and other found items, while others got to playtest them!



Student panelists pose with Erie 1 BOCES Senior Coordinator Dan Lynch after speaking at the Creating Community Arts Conference. The students representing various districts talked about the importance of the arts in education.



Students from throughout the region participate in the 2nd Annual Student Art Competition where they have just two hours to complete an original work of art in a medium of their choosing. This year's prompt was about identity.



Students from Grand Island sit on a panel with area experts to discuss the impact of Artificial Intelligence in education at our first ever A.I. Day conference.

BOCES

We're opening a new E1B campus!

Dear Erie 1 BOCES Community,

Together with our component districts, industry partners, and community, we are thrilled to announce the development of a new and innovative campus to serve students of all abilities across our region. This project is a direct response to the growing demand for more comprehensive, inclusive, and innovative educational services, and it reflects our unwavering commitment to providing every student with the opportunity to thrive.

Located at 2911 Walden Ave. in Depew, at the corner of Dick Road and Walden Avenue, the new campus is anticipated to open in 2027. For Erie 1 BOCES students currently attending EDGE, Northtowns, or Winchester Academies, it is possible they will be moving to the new campus at this time. More information will be forthcoming as it becomes available.

The new campus will not only expand our capacity to serve students with exceptional education needs but will also provide an environment tailored to their unique social, emotional, and academic needs. From specialized work-based learning classrooms to sensory-friendly outdoor spaces, every aspect of the campus will be thoughtfully designed to support and nurture each child's potential. With the capacity to serve 500 students, this campus will be a beacon of hope and opportunity for families who rely on us for exceptional educational services.

Beyond exceptional education, the new campus will host Career and Technical Education (CTE) and Alternative Education programs, while serving as a hub for community partnerships and family resources. By creating pathways for all students to develop their skills and have access to supports they need, this campus will foster opportunities to succeed in both their educational and career journeys. By combining resources and expertise in one central location, we are ensuring greater efficiency and, most importantly, more opportunities for our students to succeed in an ever-changing world.

This is more than just a building—it is a promise to our students and our community that we are dedicated to their success and well-being. As we move toward the opening of this state-of-the-art campus, we look forward to the lasting impact it will have on the students, families, staff, and communities we serve. Together, we are building a future where every child has the support they need to grow, learn, and achieve.

Thank you for being part of this transformative journey with us. We are excited to share more updates with you as the project progresses.

Sincerely,



Michael Capuana, Ed.D.
District Superintendent/CEO
Erie 1 BOCES



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In December, the halls of Winchester Academy were filled with pride and joy as three remarkable students – Maxwell Bernstein, Stephen Borowski, and Philip Reyes – crossed the stage to receive their diplomas.



→ To learn more visit www.e1b.org/expansion



Erie 1 BOCES student credited with heroic rescue

The quick thinking and emergency preparedness training of Erie 1 BOCES student Brody Kaufman made all of the difference as he stepped up to help save the life of a kayaker in distress while traveling with family in Florida.

“Focusing on the end goal, it just made you keep going,” said Brody, a student in the Emergency Medical and Fire Services program at the Kenton Career & Technical Education Center. “That sense of pride, it’s immense.”

Brody, a junior at Clarence High School, had stayed in the car as his family parked in the area of Marathon and Duck Key on April 19 so his parents could look at tarpon feeding. While there, his mother texted Brody about seeing an overturned kayaker in a fast-moving current.

“I had a feeling I should check it out, and I’m glad I did,” Brody said.

Using a rope borrowed from a nearby fisherman, Brody and other people on an overlooking bridge were able to lower a rope to the kayaker to secure himself, eventually getting three ropes down to help secure the man. Brody had one of the ropes wrapped around himself to ensure the kayaker’s safety.

“*I had a feeling I should check it out, and I’m glad I did.*”



In this screenshot from an onlooker's video, Erie 1 BOCES student Brody Kaufman, in the white hat on the bridge, can be seen holding a rope down to a distressed kayaker in the area of Marathon and Duck Key on April 19, 2025.

"Brody was at the helm of that rope, and he wasn't going to let go," said his mother, Kathleen Kaufman, a special education teacher in the Clarence Central School District.

After first attempting to drag the kayaker to the shore, Brody and other responders then decided the kayaker's fatigue and ill-fitting life jacket made it too risky to continue that approach. They would have to lift him up by rope about 50 feet vertically to the bridge.

"Even with the adrenaline and emotion, it was still very difficult," Brody said. "We got him to the edge of the bridge, and he was still really slippery."

The group worked together to pull the kayaker to safety where they were then taken to a hospital by ambulance.

"It's one thing to prepare to jump into an emergency situation, and it's another thing to actually do it," said Joshua Lembke, who instructs the Erie 1 BOCES Emergency Medical and Fire Services program. "It shows his commitment to others."

In addition to being a multisport athlete at Clarence, Brody has spent two years as a junior member of the Harris Hill Volunteer Fire Company, where he was recognized as the department's junior member of the year in January.

In addition to pursuing his dreams of playing college football, Brody said he wants to study a field like emergency management to potentially become a professional firefighter. Among his motivations is the ability to help others.

"The feeling after helping somebody, even if it's somebody having a rough day and being able to talk them through it, is a good feeling," Brody said. "That's a feeling I want to have for the rest of my life."



Brody Kaufman, second from the left, poses for a photo with fellow members of the Harris Hill Volunteer Fire Company.

Educator Hour



Educators got hands-on with improv—learning how “yes, and” thinking can improve communication, risk-taking, and resilience in the classroom.

Class dismissed... let's explore!

Since 2021, Dan Lynch, senior coordinator of the Arts in Education program for Erie 1 BOCES, has been flipping the script on traditional professional development. His philosophy is simple: field trips aren't just for kids. From that vision, the Educator Hour series was born. These after-school field trips are designed for teachers to explore cultural, artistic, and historic sites across Western New York.

The goal? To build a community of innovative educators who come together to explore sites across the region and bring back new tools, insights, and connections to enhance student learning in the classroom. With nearly three dozen sites visited since its inception, Educator Hour has become a beloved, engaging professional learning model. “It’s the hottest ticket in town! As soon as the schedule of Educator Hours is posted, they’re all at capacity within a day or two,” says Lynch.

Each stop on the Educator Hour calendar offers more than just a break from the

classroom. These experiences spark creativity, deepen content knowledge, and create authentic ways to connect students with real-world learning.

“It is a refreshing way to learn with colleagues,” said Faith Scott of Cleveland Hill Union Free School District.

Christina Rosch from Depew Union Free School District added, “It inspired creative changes to my lessons and approach to education.”

Educators walk away not only with lesson-ready ideas but with renewed energy and a sense of community. “Educator Hour is about more than visiting cool places. It’s about building a network of curious, inspired educators who bring the world back to their classrooms. When teachers feel connected and creatively energized, their students benefit tenfold,” adds Lynch.

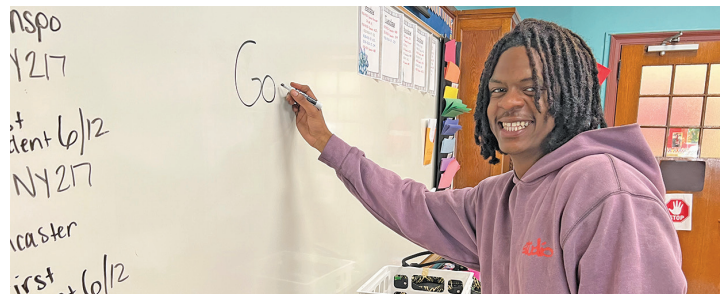


Teachers went behind the scenes to learn about career paths in sports management and operations while touring the Key Bank Center.



Teachers experienced the Explore & More museum’s STEAM-based exhibits and learned how to plan a successful student field trip, including tips on funding and logistics.

EDGE Academy graduate finds purpose as teacher aide at Winchester Academy



Zadok Middlebrooks leads by example at Winchester Academy, where he now works as a teacher aide.

Zadok Middlebrooks' journey from EDGE Academy student to a teacher aide at Erie 1 BOCES' Winchester Academy is a story of transformation, growth, and purpose. Starting his education career at EDGE Academy during his sophomore year, Middlebrooks wasn't initially convinced it was the right fit for him.

"I didn't want to be there at first, but it was cool. In the end, I liked it," he admitted. "The teachers try more than I've ever seen before. It's a smaller school, but you get used to it, and the teachers are beautiful [people]."

Middlebrooks' experience at EDGE Academy became a turning point. The school's tight-knit environment and supportive staff helped him excel academically and personally. His leadership potential shone through as he served as student body president, a role that prepared him for life beyond high school.

"Some fall, some rise, and they really don't leave anyone behind," he said. "They truly try to help everybody."

Upon graduation, Middlebrooks was accepted to multiple colleges, but he chose a different path—one where he could make an immediate impact. He joined Winchester Academy as a teacher aide, inspired by a deep desire to give back and shape the future.

"This is the next generation of leaders, this is our future, so it's so important," he explained. "I want to be a school counselor someday."

Middlebrooks' passion for helping others is evident in his work at Winchester Academy. He finds joy and meaning in his role, feeling that the hands-on experience surpasses what he might have learned in a college classroom.

Zadok stands proudly with the assistant principal of Winchester Academy—a reflection of his growth from student leader to respected educator-in-training. His journey shows the impact of mentorship and the power of paying it forward.



Now a mentor himself, Zadok supports and inspires the next generation of learners.

We're opening a new E1B campus!



Rendering designed by Kidney Architects.

A new education campus designed with purpose and intentionality: empowering students of all abilities to thrive

Every student deserves a learning environment tailored to their unique strengths and needs. The demand for specialized resources is increasing. According to NYSED data, the rate of students classified with special education needs has increased by 14% over the last decade, creating waitlists and pushing local agencies to operate at maximum capacity.

Erie 1 BOCES has a solution. The upcoming Instructional Services Expansion is set to construct a one-of-a-kind campus designed to serve students of all abilities across the region. This innovative project represents a response to the urgent demand for more inclusive and comprehensive educational services.

It also addresses the critical need for expanded special education programming in our community.

A commitment to every student's success: a place to thrive.

Located at 2911 Walden Ave., the renovated, one-story campus will sit on 12 acres and span 219,000 square feet. The space is purpose-built with the future in mind: flexible, inclusive, and designed to meet the evolving needs of today's learners. When construction finishes in 2027, it will emerge as one of the largest educational campuses in New York State.

"After nearly three years of collaboration, we stand at a defining moment," said Dr. Michael Capuana, District Superintendent and CEO of Erie 1 BOCES.



Students at the new campus will experience a multitude of enrichment activities and spaces, including, including sensory courtyards, nature paths, state-of-the-art physical and occupational therapy resources, and more.



To learn more about the expansion and how Erie 1 BOCES is supporting students across Western New York, visit www.e1b.org/expansion

“The commitment and support of our 19 component superintendents and boards of education have been instrumental in bringing this vision to life. This cooperative initiative demonstrates forward-thinking and unity in meeting the evolving needs of our students.”

“The new campus will be a space where every detail—from wide corridors, calming nooks, and 68 specialized classrooms to therapeutic rooms, outdoor courtyards, and unique learning labs—is designed to empower students of all abilities,” said Christa McHale, Erie 1 BOCES director of educational partnerships and Workforce Development programs. “It’s a place where students will not just learn, but thrive in an environment built around their specific needs and the teachers who support them.”

Designed for all students: a place of belonging.

The new Instructional Services campus promises to be more than just a school. It’s a beacon of innovation, excellence, and a model for educational inclusivity. Thanks to a strong partnership with our 19 component districts, the campus will serve over 500 students, including those currently enrolled in Northtowns Academy, Winchester Academy, and EDGE Academy. Additionally, the campus will be home to a broad range of services and programs, from special education to alternative education, career and technical education, teacher preparation programs, and a host of collaborations with higher education institutions, all designed to provide an unparalleled educational experience for our students and staff.

In partnership with Kideney Architects, Buffalo Construction Consultants, and Benderson Development, the new campus consolidates many of Erie 1 BOCES’ services under one roof. This centralized hub maximizes learning space, storage, and operational efficiency, all while fostering collaboration and growth.

One of the standout features of this expansion is the significant cost savings achieved by selecting an existing property with major utilities already in place. This allows us to prioritize our resources on creating a safe and secure environment where students and staff can focus on what truly matters: the education and well-being of all students.

Throughout the planning and design phases, Erie 1 BOCES has worked closely with the Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) and a core group of superintendents, teachers, related service providers, transportation officials, and instructional technology professionals. Their input has been crucial in shaping the layout and design of the classrooms, ensuring that every detail serves the best interests of students and staff.

Biophilia and research-driven design: a place to feel welcome.

The design of the Erie 1 BOCES Instructional Services campus was driven by a deep understanding of the needs of students with physical, mental, and emotional challenges. Research into sensory environments revealed that overwhelming, sensory-rich spaces could be distracting and even stressful for many students. As a result, the campus’ corridors will feature soft natural colors, subdued patterns, and acoustic treatments designed to reduce triggers and enhance focus.

“Reducing stressors for both students and staff alike was one of the most important parts of the design, which is why the campus will embody the concept of biophilia or the idea that people have an innate wish to connect with nature,” said McHale. Internal courtyards will provide safe, enclosed outdoor spaces that support the therapeutic needs of students in a controlled and supportive

environment. Additionally, interior spaces not only offer views of these courtyards, but also display a nature-inspired mix of materials, colors, textures, and forms. Each wing of the building will feature its own theme, using color, texture, and graphics to make navigation easier for students and families.

This intentional, thoughtful design ensures that the space will foster a sense of belonging, making every student feel welcome and supported.

A vision for the future: a place for all.

“By maximizing the resources of our 19 component districts, this campus is specifically designed to serve students of all abilities,” said Anedda Trautman, assistant superintendent of Instructional Services. “It encourages creativity, innovation, and the development of programs that can address the mental and emotional health needs of all students.”

The Erie 1 BOCES Instructional Services Campus will be more than just a place to learn. It will be a place where every student, regardless of ability, feels a sense of belonging, support, and hope for the future.

To all our students, staff, families, and community: this is **your** place.



Rendering designed by Kideney Architects.

Maryvale Academy students win 2nd place in Erie County rain barrel painting contest



Maryvale Academy students paint the rain barrel in Tom Rojek's art class.

Where environmentalism meets creativity: Maryvale Academy students inspire through art and action

Environmental challenges require innovative solutions—and sometimes, those solutions begin with a paintbrush.

At Maryvale Academy, students recently demonstrated how environmental education and artistic expression can come together to spark meaningful community engagement. Through a collaborative project between environmental science classes and the art department, students explored the importance of stormwater management and rainwater conservation, then brought those lessons to life by transforming a functional rain barrel into a compelling work of environmental art.

This creative endeavor was part of the 2024 Erie County Rain Barrel Painting Contest, an annual event hosted by the Erie County Department of Environment & Planning. Open to schools

and youth groups across Erie and Niagara counties, the contest invites students to design and paint rain barrels that raise awareness about stormwater pollution and promote sustainable practices like rainwater recycling.

Guided by Melanie Kujawski, environmental science teacher at Maryvale Academy, students began by researching the causes and impacts of water pollution—particularly how untreated stormwater runoff harms local waterways. Their findings fueled the concept for their barrel design: a vibrant message reminding the community that rainwater is not waste, but a resource worth protecting.

Once the design was finalized, students worked with art teacher Tom Rojek to bring it to life. In his art classes, they primed and painted the barrel with care and creativity, combining scientific insight with visual storytelling. The result was a striking and educational piece that earned second place in a highly competitive field.

The students' rain barrel was recognized during the county's Earth Day Celebration on April 22, co-hosted by Erie County and Omega Mentoring. But the real success lies in the learning experience and the message it conveys: environmental stewardship is most impactful when it engages the mind and the imagination.

Projects like this show how education can go beyond the classroom to inspire civic responsibility and creative problem-solving. Maryvale Academy is proud of its students and teachers for their dedication to sustainability, their teamwork, and their ability to turn environmental knowledge into action.

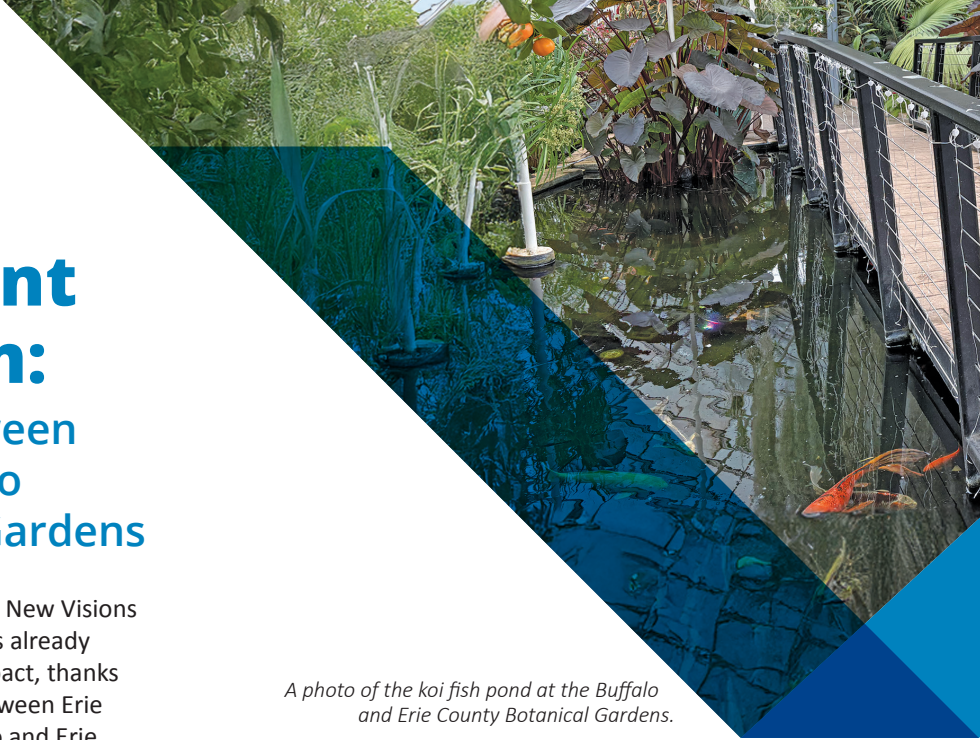
Congratulations to all participants—and especially to Maryvale's team—for using creativity to make a difference.



Lisa Chimera, deputy county executive of Erie County, presents the award to Maryvale Academy students.

Celebrating the first year of the New Visions Plant Science Program:

a growing partnership between Erie 1 BOCES and the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens



A photo of the koi fish pond at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens.



Instructor Emaleigh Odell showing a student project

In its inaugural year, the New Visions Plant Science program is already making a significant impact, thanks to the collaboration between Erie 1 BOCES and the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens. This exciting new program gives high school seniors a unique opportunity to explore careers in greenhouse management and horticulture by studying in a hands-on environment alongside professional staff at the Botanical Gardens.

Located within the lush surroundings of the Gardens, the program allows students to gain practical, real-world experience in horticulture while learning about everything from plant care and cultivation to sustainable horticultural practices. The partnership offers students not only a classroom experience but an immersive opportunity to learn in the very heart of one of the region's most treasured landmarks.

Emaleigh Odell, the instructor for the program, is proud to be part of this new initiative. "Teaching this program has probably been one of the most rewarding aspects of my career. To have these students come from such diverse backgrounds—many with little to no experience, but a strong interest in learning—has

been truly fulfilling. Being able to grow and pique that interest over the last six months has been the highlight of the program's first year," she said.

The program also has garnered praise from the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens team. Amanda Johnston, the director of learning and interpretation at the Botanical Gardens, spoke highly of the students' contributions: "It has been amazing to have them as part of our team. My staff members consistently tell me that interacting with the students is the highlight of their day. They enjoy spending time with the students, showing them new things, and sharing their expertise. The students have been a tremendous help, providing extra hands when we have big projects or need additional support."

With such a promising start, the partnership between Erie 1 BOCES and the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens is certainly one to watch, and it is poised to make a lasting impact on students, the community, and the field of plant science.



A group photo of New Visions Plant Science students after their Student Showcase at the Buffalo and Erie County Botanical Gardens.

The power of play

Did you know that kids have a right to play? In 1977, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Children’s Right to Play, recognizing play’s crucial role in cultural, social, and developmental growth. Unfortunately, as creativity researcher Mark Runco has found, by fourth grade, play begins to decline drastically in children, worldwide.

To combat this and help educators understand the importance of play and how easily it can be incorporated into the Pre-K-12 school day, Erie 1 BOCES hosted various professional development opportunities, all centered around one essential theme—PLAY. The trainings focused on how to ensure that children’s expectations, demands, and responsibilities remain age-appropriate, and prioritize protected time for play each and every day.

Erie 1 BOCES has led engaging workshops designed to help educators harness the transformative power of play in the classroom. The Creating Healthy Schools and Communities program hosted a consortium where teachers explored the science of play and how it boosts academic performance and mental health. This enriching professional development series

“Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood.”
-Fred Rogers

empowered educators and administrators with knowledge about play’s profound influence on child development and learning.

Then, this spring, the annual Digital Pathways Conference featured an eye-opening keynote by Joey Gawrysiak, Ph.D., a Syracuse University professor, who spoke about e-sports. A field often dismissed as “just computer games,” e-sports are, in reality, an international industry creating career opportunities and competitive experiences similar to traditional sports. His keynote explored the lessons kids internalize through digital play, including problem-solving, risk-taking, teamwork, and cause-and-effect thinking. These skills extend far beyond the game, shaping their approach to challenges in school and life.

So, what is play? At its core, play is fun! It can be an unstructured time where children take the lead, exploring their creativity and independence, or structured activities like games and sports. Science tells us that the most enriching play experiences happen outdoors, incorporating others, loose parts, and physical activity—but play isn’t confined to any one setting. Through play, kids develop leadership skills, emotional intelligence, impulse control, problem-solving abilities, and social competence.



Keynote speaker, Nick Kline emphasizes play at the Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Wellness Conference.

How to make play happen this summer?

- **Make the mundane fun**—Tasks like chores and errands can be made more enriching with a little creativity. For example, the next time you’re in a checkout line, start up a game of “I Spy!”
- **Set aside designated play time**—A set time ensures play remains a priority.
- **Put away the rule book**—It is important to let kids lead and explore freely. It has been found that unstructured playtime fosters creativity and the ability to expand kids’ thinking on a higher level.
- **Encourage risk-taking**—Playing often involves learning through trial and error.
- **Engage as a play partner, not just a guardian**—Join in the fun without leading the experience.

→ **By embracing play, we can nurture kids’ curiosity, resilience, and ability to thrive in an ever-changing world. So, this summer, get out there—climb, explore, create, and most importantly, play!**



Opening doors: how community partnerships create opportunity in Workforce Development programs

Opportunity is more than access—it's empowerment. It's the moment when a door opens and a person steps through with the skills, support, and confidence to pursue something better. Thanks to dedicated community partners, students in the Workforce Development programs are finding new pathways to success.

For many adults seeking to enter the workforce, financial constraints remain a major hurdle. Scholarships made possible by community partners help remove these barriers and affirm that everyone deserves a fair shot—regardless of where they start.


Through a collaboration with Say Yes Buffalo, students in the Erie 1 BOCES Barbering and Cosmetology programs can now receive scholarships of up to \$5,000. This opportunity provides more than just financial support—it gives students time and space to focus on mastering their craft and preparing for meaningful employment in an industry full of potential.

Similarly, the partnership with O'mazing O'pportunities reflects a shared commitment to helping individuals launch careers in the skilled trades. Thanks to this continued collaboration, funds have been directed toward scholarships for our Building Maintenance and other Trades and Manufacturing Workforce Development

programs, allowing adult learners to access quality training in high-demand areas like plumbing, electrical, general construction, and more.

These partnerships illustrate a powerful truth: when a community invests in its people, everyone benefits. Students gain the tools to thrive. Employers gain a skilled and motivated workforce. And society moves one step closer to equity. Erie 1 BOCES remains grateful for these continued partnerships and dedicated to the collective goal of helping to shape futures for skilled trade professionals.

“Providing opportunity means more than delivering curriculum—it means creating a support system that believes in someone's future,” says Christa McHale, director of Workforce Development programs at Erie 1 BOCES. “The work we do is magnified when we collaborate with organizations that understand the impact of lifting others up. That's how real change happens.”



Erie 1 BOCES Workforce Development Barbering instructor works closely with a student.

Erie 1 BOCES Workforce Development opens new schools of cosmetology and barbering

Erie 1 BOCES has officially opened its new Workforce Development Schools of Cosmetology and Barbering, located at Workforce Development North on Walden Avenue in Cheektowaga. These new facilities bring cutting-edge resources to students pursuing careers in cosmetology and barbering, offering hands-on training and access to top-notch equipment in professional salon settings.

The School of Cosmetology can now accommodate 38 students at a time, providing a spacious environment equipped with the latest industry tools. This new setup supports students aiming to become professional cosmetologists with a learning space similar to a high-end salon.

The new School of Barbering, redesigned as a professional barbershop, brings exciting changes, too. This program now includes daytime classes, giving students more flexibility to fit training into their schedules. Students gain hands-on experience through internships with experienced master barbers, a critical step in their career training.



Erie 1 BOCES and WNY leaders cut the ribbon to the new Schools of Cosmetology and Barbering.

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Fashion show



Harkness Fashion Design Technology student Nooralhuda Alhasan smiling for a photo before the fashion show begins.

FUSION '25 Fashion show highlights student designs

The creative designs of a record class of students in the Fashion Design Technology program at Erie 1 BOCES hit the runway during the FUSION '25 Fashion Show. The April 3 show, held at Salvatore's Italian Gardens, showcased the work of 24 high school fashion students from across Western New York. This year's group of showcasing designers was the largest since the runway experience was first held in 2009.

Among the highlights for the show was a newly added series of sustainably upcycled fashion designs created with clothing acquired by students with support from Goodwill of Western New York.

Instructors for the program said that record number of student designers in the show reflects the word of mouth among students about the program's offerings and a high level of interest in learning about the fashion industry.

The FUSION '25 Fashion Show, held at Salvatore's Italian Gardens, showcased the work of 24 high school fashion students from across Western New York.



E1B scene



Students brave the rain and embrace teamwork at the first ever Clay Throwdown hosted by Erie 1 BOCES in partnership with ArtPark.



Erie 1 BOCES Instructional Services division leadership attended O'mazing O'pportunities' Sweet Heart Gala, where funds were raised for various Trades and Manufacturing program scholarships.



Over 150 attendees gathered at the 3rd annual SMART May Meeting, a collaborative event addressing student mental health through community partnerships.



In March, EDGE Academy hosted an exciting event to help students explore careers, hear from guest speakers, and complete the 21st Century Exam – all steps toward earning their Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOP) graduation pathway! Student Amarionna Collins presented to fellow classmates on her entrepreneurial journey owning an Instagram-based flower bouquet business.



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Workforce Development opens new schools

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“We are thrilled to cut the ribbon on our new Schools of Cosmetology and Barbering,” said Christa McHale, Erie 1 BOCES’ director of educational partnerships and Workforce Development programs. “These state-of-the-art training hubs will provide our students with the latest industry resources, as well as greater flexibility in their education.”

The School of Barbering also welcomed a well-known local educator, Thomas Nichols, to lead the new daytime classes. Known to his students as “Mr. Nick,” Nichols has a wealth of experience from teaching barbering within Buffalo Public Schools and brings a fresh energy and vision to his role at Erie 1 BOCES. Nichols aims to prepare his students not only to become skilled barbers but also to become future instructors. “It feels good because it gives me an opportunity to touch more lives,” he shared. “I have a proven system that I may need to tweak a little bit, but I’m ready to take this class to the Super Bowl.”

“I am eager to see the positive impact that both the School of Cosmetology and the School of Barbering will have on our students and the salon and spa industry in Western New York,” said Erie 1 BOCES assistant superintendent of Instructional Services Anedda Trautman.

The grand opening ceremony took place on Wednesday, November 13, with Erie 1 BOCES and community leaders cutting the ribbon to celebrate the new spaces.



Students within Erie 1 BOCES’ Cosmetology program gain real-world experience in a state-of-the-art salon environment. Under the guidance of industry professionals, they develop skills in hair, skin, and nail care, preparing for careers in the beauty industry.



Students at Erie 1 BOCES’ Barbering program hone their skills in a hands-on environment, preparing for the New York State Barbering licensing exam. The comprehensive curriculum includes training in hair styling, cutting, clipping, and shaving, equipping graduates for successful careers in the barbering industry.