MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



From the desk of Dr. Champagne:

"Experiential learning is a key part of Career and Technical Education. Every connection helps students move forward, building futures through experience."

Building Futures Through Experience

At the Morris County Vocational School District, meaningful learning begins in the classroom and grows through real world experience. This March, we highlighted how connecting students with opportunities strengthens the skills, knowledge, and relationships they are already developing every day.

Field trips and experiential learning continue to play an important role in this process. Throughout the month, students across programs participated in visits that connected classroom lessons to professional environments. By engaging directly with industry settings and professionals, students were able to reinforce what they are learning and see how it translates into real career pathways.

These experiences build on the strong foundation created in the classroom. As students step into real world environments, they deepen their understanding, gain confidence, and develop a clearer vision for their future. Exposure to workplace expectations and career possibilities helps students take what they have learned and apply it in meaningful ways.

Through ongoing partnerships with businesses and community organizations, MCVSD ensures that students are not only learning concepts, but also experiencing how those concepts come to life. These connections enhance classroom instruction and prepare students with the skills and perspective needed for success.

As we continue through the spring, we remain focused on expanding opportunities that support both classroom learning and real world experience.

Rising Stars

Full-Time MCST Students of the Month: Two Students from the Academy for Global Commerce

Congratulations, Diego Sabando on being named January Student of the Month!

Diego is a highly motivated student in the Academy for Global Commerce - Supply Chain Management. He approaches his work with diligence and consistently strives for excellence. Diego serves as the Director of Supply Chain for the VEI company, RHYTHM, where he played a crucial role in sourcing high-quality materials for the company's wristband, technology components, and sustainable packaging.

In addition to his leadership role, Diego represents his school as an MCST student ambassador and has achieved recognition as both a Microsoft Word national qualifier and a DECA state and national qualifier.



The Academy of Global Commerce equips students with essential business skills through project-based learning and real-world applications. Students develop critical thinking, innovation, and creative problem-solving abilities while gaining hands-on experience through simulated business operations, including running a virtual company.

Congratulations, Siddhant Pandit!

Siddhant is a highly motivated student in the Academy for Global Commerce - Finance and International Business who consistently prioritizes learning and academic excellence. He serves as the Director of Finance for the VEI company, RHYTHM, where he plays a key role in the department's success in securing company investors and negotiating out-of-network contracts.

Siddhant is also an active member of both the Robotics and DECA boards and has qualified for DECA competitions at the state and national levels multiple times.

In addition to his impressive academic and extracurricular accomplishments, Siddhant is a dedicated student who works diligently in the classroom and is an exceptional collaborator with his peers.



Students engage in authentic business scenarios, providing valuable networking and professional development opportunities. The program emphasizes continuous improvement through constructive criticism and includes participation in national business competitions that benchmark student performance against peers nationwide.

Celebrating Our School & Community

Cone with a Cop Brings Smiles to Denville

On March 11, students from the Education & Learning program proudly represented the "Teddy Bear Clinic" as they hosted a successful Cone with a Cop event at Denville Dairy.

More than 110 local children and their families came together to meet members of the Denville Police Department in a welcoming and relaxed setting.

The event created a meaningful opportunity to build positive connections between youth and law enforcement. Eight Denville police officers participated, engaging with children through conversation, activities, and shared experiences that helped foster trust and understanding within the community.

Bringing students and community together through service creates meaningful connections both inside and outside the classroom.

Students played an active role in organizing and facilitating the event, creating an engaging environment with a temporary tattoo station, Denville Police bracelets, and coloring books for young attendees.

A highlight of the afternoon was a special appearance by Mac, the Denville Police Department's K-9 therapy dog, who brought excitement and smiles to everyone in attendance.

This initiative reflects the heart of MCVSD's mission by combining hands on learning with community impact. Through events like Cone with a Cop, students gain valuable experience in leadership, communication, and service while making a positive difference in their local community.



Pictured: Air Group Representatives Jim Wargo and Patrick Melillo

Events like this demonstrate the strength of school and community partnerships and the meaningful role students can play in bringing people together.

MCVSD is proud of the students, educators, and local partners who made this event possible, showcasing the positive impact of connection, collaboration, and service.





On the Field & Beyond

Athletic Highlights

Congratulations to the MCST student athletes from our winter sports who were recognized with "All Conference" honors. They are:
Madelyn Shanley
Girls Basketball
2nd Team All Conference

Julie Polachek
Girls Basketball
Honorable Mention

Leia Urriola
Bowling
1st Team All Conference

Vincent LaMorte
Bowling
2nd Team All Conference

David Angulo
Bowling
Honorable Mention

Albert Zhang
Boys Basketball
2nd Team All Conference

Evan Kalavrouziotis
Boys Basketball
Honorable Mention

Spring sports are underway despite the soggy and chilly weather! The coaches and student athletes on our Baseball, Softball and Golf teams have made the most of their chances to practice outside so far and they look forward to competing in scrimmages and games very soon.

MCST Athletics Department partnered with the MCST Athletic Booster Club to send our Baseball team up to the Skylands Stadium in Augusta, N.J. to practice like the professionals! This is the home to the Sussex Miners baseball team. The Miners are a minor league team in the Frontier League who have a beautiful stadium with a turf field. They were kind enough to open their facility up to high school programs and their families and fans who have not been able to get outside much due to the bad weather and our student athletes were thrilled to get this experience!



Participation in athletics and extra-curriculars promotes confidence and school spirit.

Clubs & Co-Curricular Activities:
MCST DECA had a very successful experience at their state competition in Atlantic City earlier this month.

5 students won "Mini Awards" for "Role Play Performance" in their respective events including Tramaine Cooper, Arushi Gondhi, Siddhi Maheshwari, Devsi Patel and Hope Raymond.

14 students came home with the coveted "DECA Glass" and their tickets punched to the National competition in Atlanta, Georgia in April.



Additionally, it is with great pride and enthusiasm, that we announce the recognition of MCST DECA Advisor Ms. Kim Delesky for her exceptional service and dedication to New Jersey DECA. She was presented with the DECA Certificate of Appreciation for 25 years of service to DECA as an Advisor. She also received the New Jersey DECA Hall of Fame Award for her efforts and contributions. Thank you, Ms. Delesky!

Share-Time Spotlight

Celebrating Student Achievement and Excellence

The Share-Time Programs recently celebrated students during a Student Achievement Awards ceremony, recognizing Share-Time students who have gone above and beyond in their programs. This event celebrated students who distinguished themselves through outstanding attendance, punctuality, and academic progress, qualities that are essential for success both in school and in the workforce.

These students exemplify the commitment, discipline, and work ethic that define Career and Technical Education. Their dedication not only supports their own growth, but also sets a strong example for their peers across Share Time programs.

In addition to these recognitions, MCVSD is proud to honor 12 students as recipients of the Rochkind Wagner Performance Award for the Fall semester in Auto and Construction Trades. The Rochkind Wagner Foundation has supported Vocational Studies Performance Awards since 2022, funding a total of 381 awards across eight schools. Each recipient was awarded $200 in recognition of their achievement and dedication.

This year's honorees include:
Nathalie Galvez Tapia, Auto Service Technology I

Nick Casale, Auto Service Technology II

Nick Petty, Carpentry I

Michael Najjar, Carpentry II

Robert Eggers, Electrical Trades I

Matthew Scharfstein, Electrical Trades II

Nicholas Patane, HVAC/R I

Nikolas Edelman, HVAC/R II

Julian Munoz, Plumbing I

Aidan Bavas, Plumbing II

Cobey Goldbach, Welding I

Jake Scardilli, Welding II

These students have demonstrated excellence in both technical skill and professional habits, reinforcing the importance of reliability, consistency, and continuous improvement.

The Student Achievement Awards ceremony highlights the strength of Share Time programs and the opportunities they provide for students to excel. MCVSD is proud to celebrate these accomplishments and looks forward to seeing these students continue to grow and succeed in their chosen career pathways.

Dedication, reliability, and hard work set these students apart and prepare them for success in thier future careers.



Satellite Academy Spotlight

Building Futures Through Experience



This spring, Academy for Aviation students are turning classroom knowledge into real world experience through hands on opportunities that bring the aviation industry to life.

The Academy for Aviation will be part of an event welcoming nearly 200 students from 10 schools to Roxbury high school, where the program is located.

The event is designed to introduce visiting students to the world of aviation, with Academy students playing a key role in showcasing the program. Participants will explore drone events, flight simulator experiences, and hear from guest speakers.

Bringing together student from across the county creates a powerful shared learning experience. Visitng students will have an introduction to aviation, opening thier eyes to career pathways in the industry.

For Academy students, this event provides opportunities to share thier knowledge, and represent their program. This exchange strenghtens both groups, builds awareness, communication skills, and a deeper sense of community.

Additional opportunities continue to build on these experiences for Academy students. Offsite at Morristown Airport in coordination with DM Airports Ltd, students will visit for an Aviation Day. An event exposing students to many careers in aviation, flight schools, and guest presentations. Additionally, students will watch the NJ State Police helicopter land, hear from Warren County Community College, Customs and Border Protection, and explore a multitude of static displays of aircraft, snow removal equipment, aircraft fire & rescue, etc.

Continuing Education Corner

Shining Star

Congratulations to the MCVSD Adult & Continuing Education Department ESL/Basic Skills Student of the Month, Tatianna Auqulla!

Tatianna has made great strides in class and is always helping her classmates through their studies. Keep up the great work, Tatianna!

Integrated English Language and Civics Education (ESL) is a free program that provides educational services to immigrants and other limited English proficient adults to attain the basic skills necessary to function successfully as parents, workers, and citizens. Classroom activities cover skills in English language, literacy, and citizenship preparation. For program information, visit https://mcvts.augusoft.net

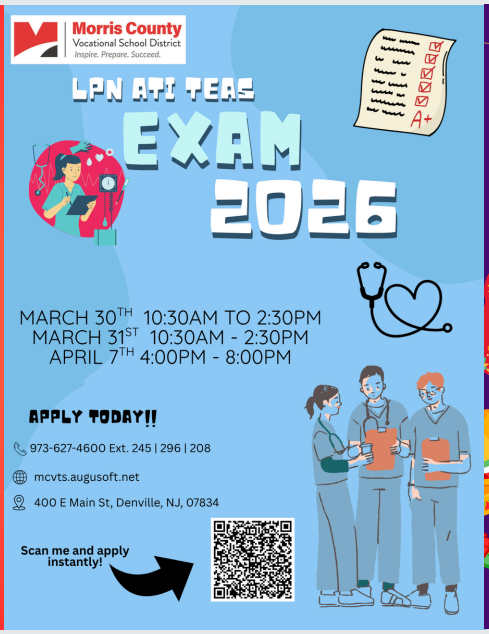


Tatianna Auqulla pictured here with her instructor, Ms. Sharon Ferreira

Learn more about
Adult Continuing Education at
www.mcvts.org/apply

Adult & Continuing Education Workshops







Advancing AI Learning

MCVSD Receives $25,000 NJDOE Grant

The Morris County Vocational School District continues to expand innovative learning opportunities through the Artificial Intelligence Technology in CTE Pathways Grant. This initiative will support the development of three instructional modules for students in the Academy for Biotechnology and the Academy for Global Commerce, focusing on real world applications of generative AI.

As part of the program, students will earn industry recognized certifications, including the Certified Artificial Intelligence Prefect (CAIP) and Certified Artificial Intelligence Prefect - Advanced (CAIPa). These credentials will be completed by the fall of students' junior year, providing them with valuable, career aligned skills early in their academic journey.

The program will culminate in a capstone project where students apply their knowledge to real world challenges. Working alongside industry partners such as Talon Biomarkers, Tara Innovations LLC, Humanity AI, and First Night, students will develop AI based solutions and present their work directly to professionals for feedback and evaluation.

Through this experience, students will build a strong portfolio that showcases their skills and prepares them for future college and career opportunities. This grant reflects MCVSD's continued commitment to innovation, industry collaboration, and preparing students for success in emerging fields.

Biotechnology Students Earn National Recognition

Innovation, collaboration, and real world impact on a national and global stage

It has been an exciting and impactful month for students in the Academy for Biotechnology. For the second consecutive year, the program was named a winner of the U.S. Department of Education's CTE Momentum Challenge, earning a $5,000 award for the school. This year's theme, Your AI Horizons, challenged students to develop artificial intelligence solutions that reimagine industries and future careers. Working collaboratively across grade levels, students formed teams of 9th, 10th, and 11th graders to tackle real world challenges. The winning proposal, AI Crop Monitoring to Guide Sustainable Farming Practices, demonstrated how drone imagery and machine learning can be used to monitor plant health and improve sustainability in agriculture.

Earlier in the month, 9th grade students participated in the World Food Prize Foundation's New Jersey Youth Institute, where they presented research on global food security as part of their Bioethics coursework. All participating students were recognized as Borlaug Scholars, opening the door to future opportunities including international internships and national fellowships. Two students, Sarah Hossain and Samantha Sarreal, were selected as regional delegates to the 2026 Global Youth Institute, where they will engage with global leaders in agriculture, public health, and food systems.
In addition, three teams of 9th grade students earned honorable mention in the national ExploraVision competition, a prestigious STEM program led by Toshiba and the National Science Teaching Association. Through this project, students explored current scientific challenges and proposed innovative, future focused solutions, demonstrating creativity, critical thinking, and strong communication skills.

One County, One Community

Opportunities Through Culinary Innovation



Morris County continues to demonstrate the power of collaboration with the opening of the Center for Entrepreneurship and Culinary Science at the County College of Morris. This new facility represents a shared investment in education, workforce development, and the future of the county's hospitality and culinary industries.

Through its ongoing partnership with CCM, the Morris County Vocational School District offers a Share Time Culinary Arts and Hospitality program that provides high school students with hands on, career focused training. The expansion of CCM's culinary facilities will further enhance these opportunities, giving students access to advanced learning environments, modern equipment, and experiences that reflect real world industry standards.

This development highlights the strength of a unified approach to education. By working together, county government, higher education, and K–12 institutions are creating clear and meaningful pathways for students.

High school students in MCVSD programs will benefit directly from this growth, gaining exposure to expanded resources and strengthened connections to college level and career opportunities.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Culinary Science is more than a new building. It represents a commitment to preparing students for success in high demand fields while supporting local industries and economic growth. For MCVSD students, it opens the door to deeper learning, stronger partnerships, and a seamless transition from high school to college and career.

As Morris County continues to invest in innovative spaces and collaborative initiatives, it reinforces a shared vision of progress. Together, we are building a stronger future through education, opportunity, and community.

Recognizing Leadership & Impact

Celebrating Assistant Superintendent Shari Castelli

The Morris County Vocational School District proudly recognizes Assistant Superintendent Shari Castelli as she retires after years of dedicated service and lasting impact on students, staff, and the greater school community.

Since joining MCVSD in 2008, Ms. Castelli has played a pivotal role in shaping the district's growth, innovation, and commitment to excellence in Career and Technical Education.

Throughout her tenure, Ms. Castelli has been instrumental in expanding both full time and share time programs, ensuring that more students across Morris County have access to meaningful, career focused opportunities. Her leadership has helped strengthen pathways in high demand fields while maintaining a strong focus on student success and real world readiness.

One of her most significant contributions was helping to secure funding and support for the Morris County Career Training Center, a state of the art facility located on the campus of County College of Morris. Opened in May 2025, the $26.8 million, 46,350 square foot center represents a major milestone for the district. Developed through a partnership with CCM and supported by state and county funding, the facility provides hands on training in areas such as healthcare, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, and robotics. The expansion has increased capacity for hundreds of additional students and strengthened workforce development across the region.



Beyond her accomplishments in program and facility expansion, Ms. Castelli's greatest impact can be seen in the people she has mentored and inspired. LaToya Evans, Assistant Principal, shared "Shari has been a monumental part of my journey in science education and educational leadership at MCST. She interviewed me 15 years ago as a student teacher, and I was immediately inspired by her passion for science and her commitment to doing what is best for students. Her impact has been felt in every step of my growth here, as she has supported and poured into me from student teacher to Biology teacher to lead Science teacher to Achievement Coach to Science Department Chair, and now as Assistant Principal for STEM I am so grateful for her guidance and the lasting inspiration she has been throughout my career."

Her leadership has left a lasting impression not only on programs, but on the individuals who continue to carry forward her vision.

MCVSD Superintendent Dr. Anita Champagne reflected on Ms. Castelli's impact, sharing, "Shari's leadership has helped shape the direction of our district in meaningful and lasting ways. Her commitment to expanding opportunities for students and supporting our staff has made a profound difference. She has led with purpose, integrity, and a clear focus on what is best for students."

School & Community

Welcome, Assistant Superintendent

MCVSD welcomes Dr. Melissa España as Assistant Superintendent!

Dr. España joins us from the Paterson Public Schools where she served as Assistant Superintendent of High Schools since 2023. She has 29 years of experience in public education and began her career as an Elementary Education Teacher in the Elizabeth Public Schools where she also served as a Vice Principal. Dr. España then moved to East Orange School District to assume the role of Vice Principal at the Cicely L. Tyson Performing and Fine Arts Middle/High School before moving to the Perth Amboy School District where she held various administrative positions including High School Principal and Director of Professional Learning, Evaluations and Assessment.

Dr. España earned her Doctor of Education from Capella University and has a Master's Degree in Bilingual/BiCultural Education from Kean University.



Dr. España has a proven track record of enhancing instructional quality, expanding CTE pathways, strengthening operations, and leading equitable, student-centered initiatives. We are confident that she is a great fit for the district given her professional experience and educational background.

Upcoming





Morris County
Vocational School District

The mission of the Morris County Vocational School District is to provide vocational and enrichment programs that inspire and prepare students to succeed in today's world and pursue tomorrow's opportunities.