



Spotlight



Dental Assisting Students Gain Pediatric Experience

Meet Our Student Board Members

Summer Programs for Everyone

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Classroom Happenings

LPN Blood Pressure 2026

LPN Adult Education students provided free blood pressure screenings to patrons at the Sayville Library. They helped residents while receiving valuable hands-on experience.



Early Childhood Visits Dental Assisting

Early Childhood Education students from Milliken Technical Center brought their preschoolers to the Dental Chairside Assisting program at Bixhorn Technical Center for a hands-on lesson in dental hygiene. The children learned the proper toothbrushing techniques by practicing on worksheets and toys, watching an educational video, and even sitting in the dental chairs for a screening to help them feel more comfortable with exams. The visit also gave Dental Assisting students valuable, real-world experience working with young patients.



The Wacky Science Show

The Wacky Science Show came to Westhampton Beach Learning Center! This comedy show let students experience science in a dynamic, multisensory way. The live, interactive performance made learning tangible, exciting, and accessible. Hands-on demonstrations, colorful visuals, and engaging narration sparked curiosity for all who participated.

Sharing Ideas, Strengthening Classrooms, Supporting Multilingual Learners



Eastern Suffolk BOCES' Long Island Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network hosted the Long Island Teacher Institute (LITI), bringing educators together to collaborate and share their expertise while showcasing the achievements and best practices for supporting multilingual learners in classrooms across the region. LITI 2026 was attended by nearly 500 Long Island English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) educators and administrators from about 80 of the region's 125 public school districts in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

The conference opened with an inspiring keynote presentation by Cornelius Minor. His address, "For Us and For Young People," focused on the shared responsibility of educators to support the development of the whole student—both educationally and emotionally—while also maintaining practices that sustain their own professional well-being, emphasizing the importance of culturally responsive teaching, meaningful student engagement, and building inclusive learning environments for all students.

Several distinguished guests attended the event, including New York State Regent Felicia Thomas-Williams; NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages Associate Commissioner Elisa Alvarez; and ESBOCES District Superintendent Dr. Jasmin Varela. Dr. Mariana Gil of NYSED/OBEWL provided an update on key state initiatives supporting English language learners, including the Portrait of a Graduate, Science of Reading topics for multilingual learners, and New York's upcoming entry into the World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment Consortium.

LITI's afternoon program featured three breakout sessions, each offering six concurrent workshops on a diverse range of topics tailored to grades K to 12, adult learners, and administrators. Workshops were presented by Long Island educators and administrators, creating opportunities for colleagues to share effective strategies, strengthen their support of English language learners, and highlight the innovative work taking place in public school districts throughout Nassau and Suffolk counties.



(l-r) Heather Rubin, Administrative Coordinator; Bernadette McHugh Schreiber, Technology Specialist; Christa Stevenson, L.I. RBERN Executive Director; Dr. Kelley Cordeiro, ENL Resource Specialist; Dr. Jordan González, Administrative Coordinator; Dr. Erica Flores, ENL Resource Specialist.

A Seat at the Table

Ex Officio Student Board Members Brought New Voices, Ideas, and Leadership to ESBOCES

When the New York State School Boards Association enacted a new policy on July 1, 2025, requiring school boards across the state to include student ex officio members, it marked a significant step toward elevating student voices in educational decision-making. At ESBOCES, three student leaders embraced the opportunity to take on that responsibility: **Dixon Busching** of Sachem CSD, **Jayden Iglesias**

of Comsewogue UFSD, and **Jasmin Montenegro Polanco** of Riverhead CSD. Throughout the school year, they brought firsthand student perspectives to the table, sharing insights, ideas, and experiences that helped shape conversations and strengthen connections between students and leadership. In the following Q&A, the students reflect on their experiences, what they learned, and the impact of having a seat at the table.

“It was an opportunity to bring student voices to the table and help improve my school.”

— Dixon Busching
Sequoia High School and
Gary D. Bixhorn Technical Center



“Hearing from staff members across schools showed me how complex these discussions can be.”

— Jayden Iglesias
Edward J. Milliken Technical Center



“Trying new things can lead to great opportunities.”

— Jasmin Montenegro Polanco
Harry B. Ward Technical Center



Eastern Suffolk BOCES ex officio student board members (back row) are pictured with members of the ESBOCES Board of Education, along with Board Clerk Maria Dell'Aquila (middle row, far right).

Q & A

Why did you want to become a student board member?

Dixon: I wanted to see how decisions are made behind the scenes and represent my classmates. It was an opportunity to bring student voices to the table and help improve my school.

Jayden: I didn't even know this role existed at first. When my principal told me about it, I saw it as a chance to give students a voice and help adults better understand what school is like from our perspective.

Jasmin: I knew it would push me out of my comfort zone. I wanted to challenge myself and learn more about how the Board of Education works.

What ideas have you shared at board meetings?

Dixon: I've shared some thoughts on budgeting and how resources could be used.

Jayden: We've mainly served as a voice for our schools and BOCES as a whole. Attending the LI Regional Student Forum was eye-opening as it showed me how many people don't fully understand what BOCES offers. Being able to share that impact has been meaningful.

Jasmin: I've talked about activities at my technical center that keep students engaged and how much students benefit from those experiences.

What have you learned from this experience?

Dixon: How important it is to include student voices. We're directly affected by these decisions, so our perspectives matter.

Jayden: How many different viewpoints go into decision-making. Hearing from staff members across schools showed me how complex these discussions can be.

Jasmin: This experience helped me grow as a leader and communicator. I've learned how to share ideas clearly in a professional setting.

What are your plans after graduation?

Dixon: I'm still a junior, but I plan to apply to Suffolk Community College for the Veterinary Science Technology program.

Jayden: I was accepted into the Culinary Institute of America in upstate New York.

Jasmin: I plan to attend St. Joseph's University and major in Child Study.

What advice would you give to future student board members?

Dixon: Be prepared and stay connected with your principal. Take notes and come into meetings ready to share your ideas. It also helps to talk with other students regularly so you can represent more than just your own perspective.

Jayden: It only takes one voice to make a difference. You're representing more than just yourself, so speak up and be confident. Stay open-minded, listen to others, and remember that your perspective can influence decisions and change how people think.

Jasmin: Don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone. Trying new things can lead to great opportunities. Take the time to connect with others, ask questions, and learn as much as you can.

.Upgrade. —Your— Summer

Take your summer activities to the next level with one of these seasonal programs, all of which are designed to support success for students and districts. Young teenagers can roll up their sleeves and immediately jump into hands-on career exploration, or grow as young

leaders in a dynamic camp environment. To prevent that summer slide, districts can partner with us to keep learning center stage while it's intertwined into a lively summer camp setting. Here's what we have in store:



| Summer Career Exploration

Students entering grades 7 to 10 can test-drive a career interest NOW. Attendees jump into action on day one to learn industry-specific techniques from professionals and gain hands-on experience using industry tools for three weeks in July. Programs include Audio Production, Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Computer Science, Construction Trades, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Dog Care and Training, Esthetics, Health Careers, and Welding.

| Pre-Employment Transition Services

This is a grant-funded program designed for youth ages 14 to 21 with a documented disability (IEP, 504, or medical documentation). Over two weeks, students explore various career options through a rotating schedule of classes and receive related counseling. Classes include Animal Science, Automotive, Culinary Arts, and Healthcare.



| Summer Enrichment

Traditional camp offerings for students entering grades 1-8, combined with academics and recreational opportunities, create a mix of fun, friends, and educational achievement. There are also field trips to New York Hall of Science, Adventureland, Splish Splash, and local swimming pools in this six-week program administered by ESBOCES. It takes place at five component districts (Bayport-Blue Point, Bay Shore, Central Islip, Comsewogue, and Connetquot) for students entering grades 1-8, depending on the district. Districts that partner with ESBOCES utilize the curriculum and administrative support to offer the program within local school buildings for students.

| Counselors in Training (CIT)

Designed for students entering ninth grade and above, the CIT program prepares teenagers to become leaders and enhances their communication and problem-solving abilities. CITs assist in the Summer Enrichment Program, where they guide younger students through STEAM activities, and help facilitate field trips and art projects. This hands-on experience takes place at the Comsewogue School District site, with a potential additional program at Bayport-Blue Point, contingent upon enrollment.



Scan the QR code for registration information:



Technology Visionary Honored

Congratulations, Mia Lafata! Lafata is an ESBOCES Education Technology Coach who works within **Sayville UFSD** as part of the agency's Model Schools Program. She was the recent recipient of the **ASSET Bright Light Award**, which recognizes standout contributions for use of educational technology in classrooms.

Lafata was nominated by the district she serves. Some of her innovative ways to employ technology include having students use green screens when making PSA videos, incorporating presentation software into independent reading projects, and training staff on implementing AI to elevate lessons and reports.



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Dixon Busching Jayden Iglesias Jasmin Montenegro Polanco

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