Newsletter
Winter 2026

GST BOCES INFORMED



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COME LEARN ABOUT OUR GST BOCES PROGRAMS AT
CTE AND NEW VISIONS EXPLORATION NIGHTS
CLASSROOMS WILL BE OPEN FOR YOU TO EXPLORE AND TEACHERS WILL BE AVAILABLE TO TALK ABOUT THEIR PROGRAMS.

Greater Southern Tier BOCES

Explore Our Programs

We're excited to invite **all interested students** and their families to our upcoming **Exploration Night** events, held at each campus! This special occasion is a wonderful opportunity to explore our programs, tour their program facilities, and meet the dedicated teachers who support their academic journey.

What to Expect:

- Walk through classrooms, labs, and learning spaces.
- Learn more about specific programs, including curriculum
- highlights, hands-on projects, and future opportunities.
- Connect with instructors, ask questions, and gain insight into
- this educational experience.
- Meet staff, and campus leaders who make our school community vibrant and welcoming.

Exploration Night is a perfect way to start your student's journey at GST BOCES. Mark your calendars!

Wildwood Campus: February 4, 2026 from 4:30pm - 6:30pm

Bush Campus: February 10, 2026 from 4:30pm - 6:30pm

Coopers Campus: February 11, 2026 from 4:30pm - 6:30pm

STEM Academy: March 7, 2026 from 12:00pm - 2:00pm

Messages

GST BOCES District Superintendent

Dear GST BOCES Region,

As we reach the midpoint of the school year, I want to take a moment to recognize the incredible work happening across GST BOCES. Every day, I see students pushing themselves to grow, educators pouring their hearts into teaching, and staff members working tirelessly to support our programs and communities. Your dedication is what makes this organization strong.

Mid-year is a natural time to reflect, recharge, and refocus. We have already accomplished so much together, and the months ahead hold even more opportunity. Let's continue to lift one another up, celebrate progress, big and small, and stay committed to creating learning environments where every student can thrive.

Thank you for the energy, compassion, and professionalism you bring to GST BOCES. I am proud of what we've achieved so far and excited for all that is still ahead. Let's finish the year with the same momentum and optimism that brought us here.

Respectfully,
Stacy Saglibene

GST School Boards Association

The Greater Southern Tier BOCES School Boards Association (GSTSBA) serves the school board members and school administrators from the 21 component school districts and GST BOCES. Its mission is to provide localized learning opportunities tailored to the needs of or constituents and to support legislative advocacy initiatives at the local, state, and federal levels

To those ends, the GSTSBA has organized and completed two events during the 2025-2026 school year. First, the GSTSBA sponsored a professional development opportunity titled:Student-Staff Relationships: Establishing and Enforcing Appropriate Legal Boundaries. This evening Zoom program was led by Jeff Black, Executive Director of the GSTSBA and Allison Marley, Esq. from the Ferrara Fiorenza iLaw firm with twenty-eight participants attending from across the BOCES region.

Our second event this year was our federal and state legislative preview. Over fifty local educational leaders from our BOCES joined Will Smith, Chief Of Staff for U.S. Congressman Nick Langworthy and Thomas O'Mara, N.Y.S. Senator to voice our legislative priorities and learn about their perspectives on federal and state legislative issues. Dr. Thomas Douglas from Horseheads CSD provided a summation at the end of the Zoom program.

Finally, the GST BOCES School Board and administration have been spearheading a survey process designed to garner feedback about the GST SBA and it's future direction. The survey window has ended and the BOCES Board is in the process of evaluating and interpreting the data to help determine how to best serve our constituents in the future.

We thank all who have participated in our GSTSBA sponsored events and look forward to serving your localized professional development and advocacy needs in the future!

Jeffrey A. Black, Ed.D
Executive Director GST BOCES School Boards Association

Crucial Accountability Book Study

Why it matters:
In every workplace, conversations shape outcomes. This study helps staff navigate unmet expectations, broken commitments, and challenging behaviors—with clarity, confidence, and respect.

What you'll learn:
- How to hold tough conversations without avoidance
- Strategies to improve collaboration and team culture
- Tools to make accountability a pathway, not a punishment

Format: Zoom
Facilitator: Sarah Vakkas
Who: All staff
When:
- Session 1: Feb 25, 2026
- Session 2: Mar 25, 2026
- Session 3: Apr 22, 2026
- Session 4: May 20, 2026

Time: 3:00–4:00 PM

Insider Highlights
Innovation

GST Drone Soccer League

The season so far:

A strong showing across the board as teams wrap up the regular season and look ahead to championship play.

Standings going into postseason:





1. Owego Blue
2. Bath Haverling
3. Watkins Glen
4. Campbell-Savona
5. Spencer-Van Etten Skeleton Crew
6. GST BOCES Stem Academy Black
7. Owego Blue
8. Corning-Painted Post
9. Prattsburgh
10. Odessa-Montour
11. GST BOCES Red
12. Spencer-Van Etten Commandos
13. Hammondsport

What's next:

Greater Southern Tier Drone Soccer League Championship
Was held on Saturday, January 24, 2026
GST BOCES Coopers Campus



District II Qualifier
Saturday, February 7, 2026
Corning–Painted Post Middle School

District II Championship
Sunday, March 8, 2026
SUNY Polytechnic Institute

National Championship
May 18–19, 2026
Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Daytona Beach, FL

Why it matters:

Students will be competing in double elimination tournaments aiming to advance from local competition to the national stage, building teamwork, STEM skills, and real-world experience through drone soccer.

Stay connected:

Follow our social media pages for updates, highlights, and behind-the-scenes moments from our Greater Southern Tier Drone Soccer teams and more.

GST BOCES
gst_boces
@greatersoutherntierboces

Fist Bump Fridays

Phoenix Academy's Fist Bump Fridays is a new trend this school year! Phoenix Academy invites local businesses and community members to line the sidewalks and fist bump our students on their way into the building for their school day. Our goal is to build stronger ties between local businesses and our school by fostering a visible sense of support and presence from the community.



While schools play a vital role in supporting special education students, the broader community also holds a powerful responsibility in fostering inclusion, understanding, and opportunity. Community involvement matters so much to us as a program because it promotes inclusion, provides real world learning opportunities, enhances support systems for our students, builds pathways to independence, and encourages civic responsibility.

In the fall, we welcomed Corning Credit Union and several component districts to join in on this fun. Students and staff really enjoyed this! We look forward to more businesses and community members this spring!





CULTURE

Insider Highlights
Regional Leaders

Leading the Way

Why It Matters:

Instruction is at the heart of everything we do in the Greater Southern Tier. As districts navigate evolving state expectations, shifting student needs, and increasing demands on teachers and administrators, having cohesive regional support has never been more important. As the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, LeeAnne Jordan plays a vital role in ensuring that every district—no matter its size or resources—has access to high-quality instructional services, aligned guidance, and timely communication with NYSED. This work strengthens coherence across all 21 component districts, supports equitable access to learning opportunities, and helps schools leverage state aid effectively through BOCES CoSers.

The Big Picture:

In this role, LeeAnne oversees all Instructional Support Services CoSers, ensuring that districts receive coordinated instructional programs that not only meet their needs but also create sustainable avenues for aid. Her responsibilities include supervising a diverse leadership team: the Director of Adult Education, the Executive Director of the Career Development Council, the Supervisor of Professional Learning, and the Supervisor of Innovative Solutions. Together, these departments support lifelong learning, career readiness, high-impact professional learning, and forward-thinking instructional practices across the region.

A central part of the work of the Assistant Superintendent of Instruction is serving as a liaison between NYSED and district leadership. This includes frequent collaboration with Superintendents; Regional Instructional Leaders; the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Advisory group; and principals representing all grade levels. Through these partnerships, GST BOCES works to ensure that the region's instructional priorities and implementation efforts are aligned with the statewide vision articulated in the NY Inspires Plan.

Zoom In:

Day to day, much of LeeAnne's focus is spent translating big-picture guidance from NYSED into actionable, meaningful support for districts. This includes:

- **Aligning regional initiatives with the NY Inspires Plan,** ensuring coherence in areas such as curriculum, assessment, professional learning, and equity-centered instructional practices.
- **Supporting district leaders through collaborative networks,** including RIL, CIA, and principals' groups; where we unpack state guidance, examine student data, and explore strategies that elevate student engagement and achievement.
- **Overseeing direct service delivery within Instructional Support Services,** from innovative classroom solutions to career readiness, adult education, and instructional technology.
- **Strengthening cross-district collaboration,** making sure that districts can learn from one another, share promising practices, and address regional instructional challenges as a collective rather than in isolation.

Each element of this work is interconnected—helping leaders make sense of complex requirements, supporting teachers' daily instructional impact, and ultimately improving outcomes for students across the region.

What's Next:

Looking ahead, LeeAnne's focus will continue to be on deepening alignment between regional priorities and the NY Inspires Plan. This includes expanding opportunities for regionwide professional learning, strengthening coherence across our instructional networks, and collaborating with district leaders to support long-term instructional planning.

LeeAnne's Instructional Support Services team continues to work at refining the Instructional Support Services CoSers to ensure they meet emerging needs, provide meaningful value, and maximize state aid opportunities for districts. Additionally, the team will creatively elevate regional capacity for high-quality instruction by integrating innovation, strengthening partnerships with NYSED, and expanding cross-district collaboration.

The Instructional Support Services goal remains clear: to provide every district in the Greater Southern Tier with exceptional instructional support that empowers educators, elevates student learning experiences, and advances the shared vision for success across the region.

INTEGRITY

Insider Highlights
Together We Lead

New Faces, Shared Values

The first half of this school year, we were excited to welcome a talented group of new staff members to our GST BOCES community. Each member brings unique skills, fresh perspectives, and a shared commitment to supporting students and colleagues. Whether you joined us in the classroom, on a campus, or behind the scenes, your contributions are already making a difference. Thank you for choosing to be part of our community and for the energy and dedication you bring each day. We're glad you're here and look forward to all we'll accomplish together.

Alternative Education Team:
Nicholas Drake, Shaun Glise, Brion Munson, Shannon Pelrah, Candace Westfall, Maureen Williams

Career and Technical Education and PTECH Team:
Olivia Firtik, Nicole Folckemer, Amy Newton, Mary Nichols, Bianca Rose, Dakota Ruef, Stacey Wing, Michael Yochum, Sarah Enderle, Paul Keating

Central Administration Team:
Savannah Lavere, Angela Miller, Laurie Spencer

Exceptional Education Team:
Lori Andrzejewski, Rachu Arora, Kayla Bollen, Rosario Brown, Lita Bush, September Carpenter, Desiree Cook, Lenora Cook, Makaila Dapp, Amy Davis, Jocelyn Davis, Kaitlyn Drake, Sage Elliott, Marriah Faucett, Jolene Faulisi, Rebecca Fervan, Ja'nyah Harris, Sally Homolka, Nicole Ingram, Paige Janowski, Nathan Kellogg-Chilson, Madeline Kent, Payton Kepner, Jessica Kiesl, Debra Kimble, Sara Kuhnel, Brooke Lavallee, Mariah Loucks, Ashlie Madison, Kamryn Malay, Julianna Mason, Angela Mcafee, Tara Morales, Sheena Narosky, Molly Nelson, Tyler Payne, Scott Pedalty, Lisa Perkins, Alicia Putman, Taylor Ritz, Shauna Roberts, Alayna Robinson, Andrea Robinson, Ashley Rose, Patricia Rose-Morley, Makayla Rought, Ariel Russell, Cassi Shepherd, Mary Sherman, Ashley Smith, Sydney Smith, Jennifer Tremaine, Natasha Udeh, Tammara Van Gorder, Cody VanBenthuysen, Lauren Walden, Leah Watkins, Corbin Windows

Management Services Team:
Hunter Button, Skyler Callahan-Miller, Marjorie Gaylord, Jennifer Young, John Wakefield, Lorraine Wieziolowski, Breanne Gunn, Karen Randall

Operations and Maintenance Team:
Joshua Baker, Warren Driesbaugh, Tessa Mucha, Nicole Thomas, Bryce Updyke

We look forward to celebrating all new employees who join us during the second half of the school year in an upcoming newsletter.

PROUD TO BE GST

We are Hiring

We are currently seeking dedicated professionals to join our team and support students, staff, and school communities.

Open Positions Include:

- School Business Administrator
- Special Education Teachers
- Teaching Assistants
- Teacher Aides
- Registered Nurse (RN)
- Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Senior Computer Services Program Aide

These roles play an important part in creating safe, supportive, and engaging learning environments for students of all ages. Whether your strengths are in instruction, healthcare, operations, or technology, there is an opportunity to make a meaningful impact.

If you or someone you know is looking to grow a career in education, we encourage you to explore these openings and apply.

Careers at GST BOCES

Interested in a Career at GST BOCES? Our Hiring Interest Form allows you to list your skillset and let us help match you to an open position. https://www.gst-boces.org/o/gst-boces/page/employment

Going Paperless at GST

Over the past year, GST has taken a major step toward working smarter and greener. We've processed more than 13,000 forms using the InformedK12 paperless system—on top of the many forms completed through our GSTRIC-built InForm system and Adobe Acrobat eSignatures.

What does this mean for our organization?

- Faster approvals
- Fewer delays and lost paperwork
- Easier access to forms anytime, anywhere
- Less paper waste

Together, these tools are helping GST streamline workflows, improve efficiency, and move confidently toward a fully paperless future.

Insider Highlights
GST Gives Back

Community in Action: A Season of Service

Over the past few months, our organization has come together to support students, families, and our community in meaningful ways. Across campuses and programs, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to care, connection, and service—and the collective impact has been powerful.

Supporting Families & Neighbors

- Coopers Campus – Building Construction students collected 900 cans of food, donating them to the Lindley Food Pantry to support local families.
- The STEM Academy sponsored five families for Thanksgiving, providing turkeys and all the fixings, and supported two additional families during the Christmas season with gifts for students and their families.
- Coopers Campus SkillsUSA and the Counseling Department partnered to collect and donate winter clothing, helping community members stay warm throughout the winter months.



SkillsUSA: Leadership in Action

SkillsUSA students across campuses demonstrated outstanding leadership and service through multiple initiatives:

- At Wildwood Campus, the SkillsUSA Leadership Team and Criminal Justice program collaborated to collect 128 toys for Toys for Tots. A 10% increase in SkillsUSA membership also earned the chapter a $500 incentive, supporting continued student leadership opportunities.
- SkillsUSA members completed an impressive campus-wide food drive, providing essential support to local students and families.
- Through the Holiday Caring Program with Pathways, Inc., SkillsUSA officers selected a family of six and led every step of the process—fundraising, shopping, wrapping, and delivering gifts to help make Christmas morning special.
- Students, families, and friends came together to participate in Wreaths Across America at Bath National Cemetery, honoring fallen soldiers by laying wreaths in remembrance.
- SkillsUSA students also helped host a Holiday Cocoa and Popcorn event, serving cocoa and fresh popcorn to juniors, seniors, and bus drivers as they arrived on campus, spreading warmth and appreciation.







COMMUNITY

Insider Highlights
Celebrations

SERVICE

Spreading Joy & Holiday Cheer



- Coopers Criminal Justice students delivered 120 handmade Christmas cards, each featuring original artwork, personal messages, and a festive ornament, to residents at Three Rivers Absolute Care in Gang Mills.
- Wildwood Exceptional Education high school students brought holiday cheer to the community by caroling at Updyke's Willow Ridge Nursing Home, sharing music, smiles, and meaningful moments with residents.
- The Senior Cosmetology class hosted two rewarding days of service for Corning–Painted Post High School students, providing haircuts, facials, manicures, and styling. Beyond valuable client experience, students expressed pride in helping their peers look and feel their best for the holidays.

Organization-Wide Giving

- GST BOCES participated in a United Way basket raffle, raising funds through generous staff donations.
- Dollars for Denim across multiple campuses further showcased a culture of generosity and shared purpose.

Phoenix Academy: Community Partnerships & the Gift of Giving

- Phoenix Academy continued its Adopt-A-Christmas partnership with Higher Hope Church for the fourth year, bringing staff and community members together to support student families.
- The Phoenix Academy Holiday Gift Shop rewarded students for positive behaviors by allowing them to earn shopping "money" to purchase gifts for loved ones— creating meaningful opportunities to experience the joy of giving.

Together, these initiatives—and the many others taking place across our campuses—demonstrate the power of collective care. By working together, we continue to support our students, strengthen families, and make a meaningful difference in our community, especially during the holiday season and beyond.





Wellness Challenge

We use Wellness Challenges to strengthen our culture by bringing people together around shared goals and healthy habits. These challenges build connection, boost morale, and reinforce our commitment to employee well-being—showing that caring for our people is part of who we are, not just something we talk about.

Wellness Challenge Round 2:
February 2 – March 27

Wellness Challenge Recap #1
Congratulations to Phoenix Rise and Thrive:
31,820 points



Business and Industry Corner

Turning Curiosity into Career Opportunity

The big idea:
A simple question opened the door to a real-world writing opportunity for New Visions Innovation, Leadership & Business student, James Halpin, Odessa-Montour senior.

How it started:
Josh Wilson, an Elmira High School graduate now working with Sports Illustrated, shared insight into how young people can break into the sports media industry. When asked about pathways into the field, Josh connected our team with Austin Krueger, owner of the sports media start-up Sidelinr.

The connection:
Austin met with New Visions students via Zoom, sharing his career journey, lessons learned, and vision for his growing company. He extended an open invitation: If you want to write, reach out.

COLLABORATION

The result:
New Visions student James took that step. He's now writing with Sidelinr—and thriving. Read a recent article here: https://www.sidelinrsports.com/post/the-los-angeles-clippers-finally-hit-a-draft-pick-with-kobe-sanders

Why it matters:
This experience highlights what New Visions is all about: authentic industry connections, mentorship, and opportunities that turn student initiative into meaningful, real-world experience.

Looking ahead:
One conversation. One connection.
One student who said yes.
That's innovation and collaboration in action.

Get involved:
GST BOCES welcomes partnerships with professionals across business and industry. If you're interested in sharing expertise, mentoring students, or creating real-world learning opportunities with our New Visions or CTE programs, we invite you to connect with us and collaborate on what's next.

Business and Industry Spotlight

Wildwood Campus welcomed numerous business and industry partners for senior interviews. This valuable experience allowed students to practice professional interviewing techniques and refine their resumes for future employment success. Contact us if you are interested in attending an Interview Day at Bush or Coopers Campus!

BUSH CAMPUS



COOPERS CAMPUS

