

## **Onondaga Citizens League**

**Study Session #9 January 23, 2017**

**“How CNY Works: Examining the Diversity of Our Economic Base – Past, Present and Future”**

**Meeting topic: “The Role of Career and Technical Education in Preparing Our Future Workforce”**

**12-1:30 p.m., Fowler High School**

### **Panelists**

Matthew Williams, Principal, Public Service Learning Academy at Fowler High School, Syracuse City Schools

Robert Leslie, Director of Career and Technical Education, Syracuse City School District

Mike Metzgar, Associate Vice President, Economic and Workforce Development, Onondaga Community College

Greg Avellino, Executive Principal, ESM

Donna DeSiato, Superintendent, East Syracuse-Minoa Schools

Phillip Grome, Career and Technical Education Director, OCM BOCES

Brian Kesel, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, West Genesee High School

Delores Jones, Student in the Entrepreneur Program, Onondaga Community College

Za'Reyah Brown, student, Fowler High School

Josiah McKenzie, student, Fowler High School

Martha Durocher, student, ESM

Ryan Hartman, student, ESM

Ryan Bristow, student, BOCES, CNS

Alex Ladstetter, student, BOCES, Westhill

Matthew Williams, Principal of the Public Service Learning Academy at Fowler High School, welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted that the school is dedicated to Career and Technical Education (CTE) programming and reviving how CTE is thought of within the district and beyond.

Study Chair Craig French began the meeting by asking educators to define CTE in regards to their educational institution.

(Each CTE program listed, through Syracuse City Schools, East Syracuse-Minoa, West Genesee, and BOCES, is accredited by New York State. Accreditation review occurs every five years.)

Robert Leslie, of Syracuse City Schools, said CTE is considered a pathway program for students interested in a certain career field. Students begin exploring this in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Classes and hands-on experience in the field enable students to experience the pathway and make sure it is the right field for them. In addition to classroom instruction, there are opportunities for job shadowing, internships and college coursework.

Donna DeSiato, of ESM, said ESM's CTE program has evolved over time in alignment with the district's strategic plan. She said she felt the term CTE is somewhat dated as we have now moved from an industrial age to a digital world. The focus is on preparing students to be college and career ready. She said there is no program that hinders students from making choices beyond their high school diploma. A student enrolled in CTE classes has college as an option. The CTE programs/classes are offered at the high school.

Brian Kesel said West Genesee offers a blend of CTE programs that are in-house and also available through BOCES. At West Genesee there is a technical advisory council that consists of business owners and technicians from around the Syracuse area who help design and move the program forward.

Phillip Grome, of BOCES, said that two campuses (in Syracuse and Cortland) serve close to 1,100 high school students. The students come from 23 school districts in Onondaga, Cortland and Madison counties. There are 17 CTE programs. There is also a New Vision program, which is a one-year immersion program. Grome said BOCES has been focusing on imbedded programs, where students spend half of the school day learning in a professional environment. For example, students studying physical therapy would learn and train at Upstate Medical Center, and students studying media marketing communications, would learn and train at WCNY.

Mike Metzgar of Onondaga Community College said that for 98 percent of students the community college is a stop onto where they will go next. Students are either headed to a four-year school or to a career. Metzgar said OCC's Workforce programs are generally short-term, (less than one year). He said the program is predicated on

two promises: Students are promised a job that will bring long-term self-sufficiency and employers are promised a great employee. Metzgar said a lot of attention is focused on the job market to ensure the jobs are available for students who want to train in a particular field. He said Workforce researches Department of Labor data to determine the number of jobs available in the area and also to ensure that the jobs pay a living wage. Metzgar also mentioned Burning Glass, which is a subscription-based service that provides information on available jobs in the area. He said it has been a great resource for his program.

French asked panelists how many students are involved in their programs.

Leslie said currently there are 1,085 students in 23 CTE programs in the Syracuse City Schools. The goal is to have 1,600 students enrolled, which would represent 25 percent of the high school student population.

DeSiato said the ESM program is integrated so that it is more difficult to pull out specific numbers. Some students may be taking a CTE class as an elective. The CTE programs are all in-house. Some students do attend BOCES for programs not offered through ESM. DeSiato estimated a fifth of the student population is involved in the CTE program.

An attendee inquired about the CTE programs in regards to the Regents Diploma. DeSiato explained that all students are still required to earn a Regents Diploma. She referenced the “4 plus 1 program” which she referred to as a “modest breakthrough.”

(Study writer note: For years, all New York State students were required to pass five Regent exams in order to graduate high school – one each in English, science, math, U.S. History, global studies/geography. In 2014 the Board of Regents advanced new regulations stating that students were permitted to take four Regents exams, and one comparably rigorous technical or arts assessment for the fifth requirement for graduation.)

Grome pointed out the skill needed to read a blue print and to understand technical writing. This is a skill that is taught in CTE courses.

DeSiato mentioned the credit union that CTE students at ESM are involved with. She said that through work experience with the credit union, students gain valuable experience in financial literacy, personal finance, and speaking professionally.

Grome said that the local business community is engaged and enthusiastic about students graduating from CTE programs. He mentioned in particular Driver’s Village, which is always looking for skilled technicians.

Co-chair Mel Menon asked about the backgrounds of CTE teachers. The educators agreed that the majority of their staff are people who have spent most of their career working in the field.

Leslie said the fact that some of these instructors do not have training in teaching high school students is a challenge.

Grome said there is a program through BOCES (that Syracuse City Schools also partners with) where teachers from a non-traditional background, without education training, complete 26 professional days geared to helping them teach/work with students.

Grome spoke about the need to fight the stigma of CTE programs. He said the idea persists that if a student is taking a CTE program he/she is not going to attend college. That is not the case today.

Metzgar said Workforce, the OCC program, measures success through tracking students who completed a program. If a former student is working in the field and making a living wage two years after completion, he said that is considered a win. He said an ongoing relationship with employers helps track this information.

Za'Reyah Brown of Fowler said she always loved science and is excited about the forensic science CTE program she is enrolled in. Josiah McKenzie is in computer science, also through Fowler, and hopes to attend Utica College to continue his studies. Martha Durocher from ESM is pursuing automotive mechanics and has been accepted to Morrisville College to complete her studies. Ryan Hartman from ESM hopes to go into the Army and to work as a diesel mechanic. "I'm a hands-on learner," he said. "I did not excel in the classroom. This is an awesome program."

Adult student Delores Jones talked about her experience with an OCC entrepreneurial work program, through which she takes classes and also cooks in a new restaurant, called "With Love." She began training in food service through a Catholic Charities program. She said she loves the program and plans to continue working in the field.

Alex Ladstetter, a student from Westhill High School, spoke about his experience through a BOCES program, where he is training in media marketing and communications. He said that early in high school he began to lose interest in his high school classes. In 10<sup>th</sup> grade he learned about career education opportunities through BOCES. He works and trains at WCNY and also earns college credit from OCC.

Ryan Bristow of CNS said he knew in 10<sup>th</sup> grade he wanted to pursue a career in a health field. He is in honors classes, and he said his counselor was surprised and unsure when he said he wanted to begin a program through BOCES. He is pursuing physical therapy. He entered the course his junior year. He said he has already made

an orthotic, a device used to correct an orthopedic problem, he is certified in CPR, he has spent time at Jowonio School, an inclusive pre-school in Syracuse, and has earned college credits.