

News Release

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Dutchess BOCES Launches New Center for Sustainability with Partners

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. – Dutchess BOCES has established the Dutchess BOCES Center for Sustainability and Climate Education to provide education, consultation, and support to school districts around sustainability for the future. The Center was formed in partnership with the [Omega Institute](#), [Mid-Hudson Teachers' Center](#), [Ashokan Center](#), and the [Cloud Institute for Sustainability Education](#). The goal is to empower participants to contribute to a socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable community for future generations.

“Through a number of connections I was introduced to over the last year, we at BOCES felt an urgency around sharing information and getting districts involved in sustainability and climate change,” Deputy Superintendent Cora Stempel said. “There are a number of groups with expertise and interest in the area. We all met and, as a result, BOCES made the commitment to start a center.

Sustainability and climate change are big topics in business and politics. It only makes sense that education tackles them as well.

"We are honored to be a founding partner in this innovative effort, as both a convener and facilitator of bold ideas through climate education. We look forward to empowering students, teachers, families, and communities to envision and ensure a healthy and just future for our planet, together," said Lauren Mathis, assistant director of the Omega Center for Sustainable Living.

In addition to the organizational partners, there are two individual partners helping to guide the launch of the new center. Joseph Phelan, retired superintendent of Rhinebeck Central Schools and a senior fellow with Sustainable Hudson Valley, and Dorna Schroeter, retired coordinator of PNW BOCES Center for Environmental Education, and a sustainability educator/author are serving as individual partners.

During the summer, the partners focused on curriculum development. A variety of programming will be available for district staff and students. There will be opportunities for educators to learn with and from each other about curriculum, instruction and assessment practices, facilitation of strategic planning at the district and school level, and creating a district-based sustainability and climate education program. Students will participate in both awareness and leadership activities.

“We have worked with school districts to determine what areas they want to learn about for possible activities this school year,” Ms. Stempel said. BOCES Director of Educational Resources Jenny Schinella and Staff Specialist Terrence McKiernan are also actively leading the work of the Center and will be in direct contact with districts that join this service.

Letters have been sent to educators throughout the region to introduce the new opportunities available through the Center. A regional conference is being planned for spring.

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For Immediate Release