

OHM BOCES Chinese Language and Culture Program

Two students met in the hallway outside their language class. They were talking of their recent trip where they met students from their partner school and toured the capitol city. After exchanging some stories, they entered the class to greet the teacher and other students. This scenario may be replicated thousands of times across the state each year. However, in this case there are a few differences to be considered. First, the class is Mandarin Chinese and the student trip was to Beijing and Chongqing, China. Second, the teacher and other classmates were not in the classroom but in two other locations. This class and other classes in Mandarin Chinese are offered via interactive videoconference by Oneida-Herkimer-Madison BOCES to schools in the Mohawk Valley and across New York State. Teachers and students may be in different locations but are able to communicate in real-time for classes.

The Chinese Language and Culture Initiative at OHM BOCES started with a grant from the US Department of Education, Foreign Language Assistance Program in 2006. The first year of instruction was offered in 2007 to 60 grade 6 students in six districts in the Mohawk Valley. The program now serves over 450 students in 17 districts across New York State, offering 38 daily classes with seven full-time teachers. The program offers two tracks: a sequential program for those students fulfilling the Languages Other Than English requirements, and an elective program for those students wishing to study a Mandarin Chinese after completing an initial sequence in another language. All classes meet New York State and the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages standards.

The program has been recognized as a model and included in the Hanban/Asia Society Confucius Classroom Network. Support from this network includes teacher and administrative professional development, resources, and has led to establishment of collaboration with partner school Bashu Secondary School in Chongqing China. Following teacher and administrator exchange visits, our first group of students traveled to China in 2014 to tour Beijing and meet with our partner school students. Just recently one of our AP students as been accepted as one of only 100 nationwide student ambassadors to China through the 100K Strong Organization.



For more information on the Chinese Language and Culture Initiative at OHM BOCES, please contact Kevin Healy, khealy@oneida-boces.org or 315-223-4793, or visit our website at <http://www.oneida-boces.org/Page/45>.

