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ECASB

Erie County Association of School Boards

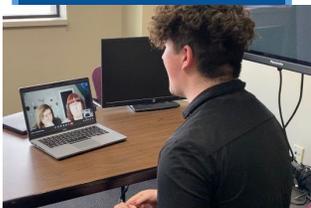
Where professional development,
leadership & advocacy meet.

erie boces



"The staff is great and highly responsive to us and our parents. They've managed to turn a virtual environment into an Inclusive community"

- Kimberly Moritz,
Springville-Griffith
Institute CSD



ECASB Asks the Experts...

ECASB "Ask the Experts" is a monthly paper that brings ECASB and an expert in the field of education together to provide ECASB Board Members information about a variety of topics of interest to Board Members. If you have suggestions for future topics you would like to see featured, please let us know at ECASB

Experts in Virtual Learning: eAcademy- Erie 1 BOCES

The pandemic caused a great deal of disruption in education. It also provided the opportunity to move the use of educational technology forward at an unprecedented pace. To that end, eAcademy at Erie 1 BOCES provides high quality academic and social emotional support to students who thrive in the virtual environment.

eAcademy is a 100% virtual learning option for general education students, in grades K - 12. Providing a traditional school schedule in a non-traditional setting, students attend synchronous classes with NYS certified teachers, including special area teachers. Such special areas include music, art and physical education. In addition, eAcademy offers Indirect Consultant Special Education teaching services, guidance counselor support and dedicated social workers available to support social-emotional learning initiatives to the students that are enrolled in the program.

As we all know, the pandemic forced teachers to change their teaching methods and make content more accessible in a short period of time. There was virtually little or no warning on pivoting to this type of learning. Teachers across the state were thrust into a new normal of teaching and found themselves working with virtual platforms where there had been little training, or they were forced to produce stacks of paper packets that were either mailed home or sent home via courier services.

Just about every teacher was asked to teach in a hybrid setting at

some point during the pandemic. Many teachers found that they could not devote their full attention either to students who were in-person, or involved in online learning.

Given a choice, many students would rather attend and prefer to attend in person classes in a school building where they are also able to socialize with their friends.

However, for the niche of students that require a different approach and environment, such as students that require Home/hospital care, long term suspension instruction, experience chronic absenteeism, and that are emotionally vulnerable, the virtual classroom affords several benefits. eAcademy provides more flexibility to meet students “where they are” and provide a higher level of differentiation. In addition, this method of online teaching allows students to interact in a positive way with other students and teachers involved in the program.

***“This is so much better than having a tutor come to my house. I get to be in class with other kids”
- 9th grade student***

***“This is the first time I’ve enjoyed being in school”
- 12th grade student***

Providing these students with an excellent public education, while they can’t be in school, is challenging, and expensive for individual districts. Staffing, scheduling and managing qualified home/hospital instructors is becoming more and more difficult. Having dedicated staff to provide either a virtual environment or an alternate instructional model is cost prohibitive for many districts. eAcademy is an aidable BOCES coser service that provides districts with the opportunity to provide their students with a highly engaging virtual environment.

For more information regarding eAcademy please visit the E1B website. You can also click on the link below for more information on the program.

<https://www.e1b.org/en/k-12-education-programs/eacademy> or scan the QR code below.

