

# Instruction & Technology Weekly Bulletin

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“Errors using inadequate data are much less than those using no data at all.”  
- Charles Babbage

## Upcoming Events

- Thurs., Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving (Recess-Nov. 23, 24, 25, 2011)
- Thurs., Dec. 15 – Holiday Party – Shadow Lake Restaurant – Five Mile Line Road, 4:00 PM
- Tues., Dec. 20 – Hanukkah begins at sundown
- Wed., Dec. 21 – First day of Hanukkah and first day of winter
- Sat., Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve
- Sun., Dec. 25 – Christmas Day (Recess-Dec. 26-27, 2011)
- Mon., Dec. 26 – First day of Kwanzaa
- Sat., Dec. 31 – New Year’s Eve
- Mon., Jan. 1 – New Year’s Day (Recess-Jan. 2, 2011)

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## A Message from Mike

Listening to a song recently, I heard an interesting lyric: “I knew her voice before she spake.” The songwriter clearly used this version of the past tense for “speak” in order to rhyme with the word “make” two lines later. So a couple of days later, I was writing an email, and I could not decide which irregular past participle of the verb “speak” to use: spoke or spake. Oh the great dilemmas of life. The answer to this conundrum is that it depends on **when** I’m writing. The folks at Google have digitized over five million books and have created a searchable database of books and other written material



based on the date of publication. With a quick search you can find the relative frequency of a word’s appearance and have it displayed on a graph. Enter two words and you can compare their usage over time. Here is a graph showing the data for spoke and spake. It is no secret that I am a fan of data, and based on this data, and the fact that I was not composing my email in 1810, I decided to go with “spoke.” Check out this great TED Talk about [Google’s ngram](#). Here is the [link to the actual database](#).

• **Staff News**

- ❖ **All 12 Month Staff** – An official notice from Dan White was sent to all 12 month staff notifying that we will be closed on Tuesday, December 27, 2011. The holiday recess will include December 26-27, 2011 and January 2, 2012. If you have submitted paperwork to take vacation on this day, it will be changed and you will not be charged a vacation day.
- ❖ **Celebrate the Holiday Season Party** – Thursday, December 15, 2011 at 4:00 PM, we will gather to enjoy hors d'oeuvres (cash bar) at Shadow Lake Restaurant, 1850 Five Mile Line Road, Penfield, NY. As part of the celebration, please plan on bringing a wrapped ornament. Not a typical beautiful holiday ornament, but one that is tacky or ugly...something special that will make everyone want to fight for it! It can be homemade or purchased, but please do not spend more than \$3.00. This is optional, but should be a memorable time for those that participate. Based on participation, the cost will be \$10.00-15.00 per person. **Please send an email of interest to Carolyn no later than Monday, November 28, 2011.**

• **Staff Reminders**

- ❖ Time and Attendance:
  - ✓ Emails must be submitted to your supervisor, Brenda Simonson and me. I will approve all requests, your supervisor will review the request and approval and Brenda will record as necessary. This includes shifting your hours for one day, additional time and flex time, and 2 hour absences. Please remember these requests may or may not be approved. Here is a helpful tip. Upon approval of 2 hour absences, enter your absence into SEMS and copy the job number into your calendar. When the day comes, you will be reminded that it is entered into SEMS. This can be used for any absence that you are responsible to record.
  - ✓ While we continue to move forward with our new time and attendance system, when in doubt, contact Carolyn Byam for clarification.
- ❖ If you have any HR or O&M questions, please contact me. I am the contact for HR as well as O&M.

- Carolyn

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## Technology Tip of the Week

Thanks to Diane Smith for sharing this Tip of the Week:

Need a quick average, sum or count of a group of cells in a worksheet, and you don't want to enter a formula in the worksheet? It's as easy as **selecting** the cells you are interested in obtaining a count. In the example below, you will see the average, count and sum appear in the summary area below the worksheet names:



Justin Thyme	95	93	94	67	95
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Printing Tips | Data Tables | Dates | Functions | Protect |

Average: 88.8 | Count: 5 | Sum: 444

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## Up to the TASC

For a number of years, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) has funded a large, state-wide network of professionals who help local districts address issues related to special education. This network, with each office formerly known as the Special Education Training and Resource Center (SETRC), has provided long-term, job-embedded support since the 2001-02 school year. This type of technical assistance and professional development greatly increases the chance that a district will make real change for its students.

A few years ago, the SETRC network was renamed the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance and Support Center (RSE-TASC). Each region now includes training specialists on various topics, along with the type of professionals mentioned above who deliver the long-term, embedded assistance to districts. These individuals are now called Special Education School Improvement Specialists (SEIS). Gina Carrano and Anna Frank are the two SEIS assigned to provide service to the Monroe 1 area.

In the past, schools and districts designated for SEIS support were determined using accountability criteria linked solely to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This year, for the first time, designations were made using a combination of criteria based on both IDEA and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) measures. Improving the academic performance (graduation rate, core subject achievement) of students with disabilities is now the bottom line for the work of a SEIS.

SEIS work with schools and districts who have been identified by NYSED due to the performance of their students with disabilities on one or more NCLB measures. Gina and Anna are currently involved with six schools in the Monroe 1 area. They serve as disabilities specialists as these schools complete mandatory school quality reviews (SQR). They will also facilitate the creation of plans specific to this population for the purpose of improving outcomes for students with disabilities.

-The TASC Team

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## Steve's Space

So far this year, we have scheduled 192 video conference classes. This number will increase throughout the year. Andy, Peter, and sometimes Shaun Dulen, will have reached approximately 3,750 students through distance learning. Sometimes they conference from the bottom of a swimming pool (that's when we call Shaun in ☺) Other times it is from one of our three labs down at the Rochester Museum and Science Center. These conferences often require a science kit for the classroom which means the BoSAT team builds the kits, the courier team delivers them, and of course the distance learning team provides technical support. It really is a team effort. You should all be very proud. 3,750 students, now that's impressive. Also, the Green Machine will be down at the Rochester Convention Center next week for the NYSCATE Conference. This will offer an opportunity for NYSCATE visitors to see how it enhances student education.

-Steve

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## Connecting with a Colleague

Each week, a staff member will be randomly selected to complete a brief questionnaire to help us get to know him or her.

This week we are connecting with **Kelly Endres!**

- **Primary Responsibilities:** *"Coordinator of the Mid West RSE-TASC -Regional Special Education Technical Assistance and Support Center. RSE TASC is a state-funded network designed to provide support and technical assistance to 71 districts and Rochester City. This support is aimed at improving outcomes for students with disabilities."*
- **How long have you worked at BOCES?** *"I have been with Monroe 1 BOCES for four years."*
- **What is your favorite part of your job?** *"I love working with all of the different districts across the region. You get to meet a variety of people and make connections across a wide area."*
- **What do you enjoy doing in your free time?** *"I love to read, shop, travel to warm, sunny places, and play games."*
- **Is there anything else you would like to share?** *"I am looking at planning a trip to Europe next summer!"*



Look for a different colleague to be profiled each week. If you are interested in participating before your name is "randomly" selected, please see Carolyn or Mike.

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