

## CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

# CiTi BOCES Connects Education, Industry, and Opportunity in Upstate New York using ACT® WorkKeys®



## OUTCOMES

56

% of Seniors Earning  
WorkKeys NCRCs

14

# of Platinum  
NCRCs Earned

19

# of Gold  
NCRCs Earned

37

# of Silver  
NCRCs Earned

41

# of Bronze  
NCRCs Earned

## The Challenge

Oswego County's (Mexico, New York) economic landscape underscores the urgency to help bridge the gap to career readiness for students. With roughly 119,000 residents across nine small districts, the region ranks near the bottom statewide in economic development and health outcomes.

The county's Center for Instruction, Technology and Innovation Board of Cooperative Educational Services (CiTi BOCES) aims to make a real difference in preparing students for these realities. Many CiTi BOCES students face compounded barriers: transportation gaps, poverty, trauma exposure, and limited postsecondary opportunities. Fewer than 60 percent of graduates pursue college, and with many returning home within a year.

**We serve some of the toughest, most resilient kids you'll ever meet. They need to see their skills in a concrete way — something that connects directly to opportunity.**

Julie Landy, Ed.D.

Director of Assessment, Professional Growth, and Community Services  
Initiatives | Center for Instruction, Technology, and Innovation BOCES

## The Solution: WorkKeys Activation

Every CiTi BOCES student who took the ACT® WorkKeys® assessments earned the ACT® WorkKeys® National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC®). — a remarkable outcome for a district serving many alternative and special-education populations.

In New York State, students who earn the WorkKeys NCRC can apply it toward the Career Development Occupational Studies Pathway, replacing one required state exam for graduation. For CiTi BOCES learners, that policy opened doors previously out of reach.

*"The WorkKeys NCRC gives our students a credential that carries weight," Landy says. "It's not just a test — it's proof of employability that the state recognizes." - Julie Landy, Ed.D.*

# Breakthrough Opportunity: A New Pipeline from Classroom to Career

Partnerships with industry have magnified the impact. One of the major Oswego county employers, Huhtamaki, a global packaging manufacturer, now uses WorkKeys as a hiring and screening tool with other industry partners are moving in that direction.

*“We have companies telling us, ‘if a student holds a WorkKeys NCRC, they can skip the initial screening interview,’”* Landy notes. *“That’s huge motivation for our students.”* - Julie Landy, Ed.D.

In 2025, Oswego County Workforce Development adopted WorkKeys countywide, eliminating its previous screening assessments and aligning with the WorkKeys NCRC framework. Every job seeker — high schooler or adult — now speaks the same *“skills language.”*

The results are tangible:

- New York Pathways in Technology Early College High School graduates with Platinum WorkKeys NCRCs were hired at Novelis directly out of high school, earning \$80,000–\$90,000 annually.
- Mentorship programs pair industry professionals with students monthly, helping them connect WorkKeys competencies — like applied math, graphic literacy, and using workplace documents — to real manufacturing environments.
- Employers and educators meet monthly to expand profiling efforts, identify needed skills, and explore horizontal pay increases or promotions tied to higher WorkKeys NCRC levels.



**LEARN MORE ABOUT ACT WORKKEYS**  
[www.act.org/workkeysforeducators](http://www.act.org/workkeysforeducators)

