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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cyber to Sky: Freshmen Begin Career Journey at PTECH Summer Bridge Programs

Rome, NY - August 5, 2025 – As part of the annual week-long PTECH Summer Bridge program, staff from the Oneida-Herkimer-Madison (OHM) and Madison-Oneida (MO) BOCES PTECH programs partnered with Griffiss Institute, Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC), and SUNY Polytechnic Institute (SUNY Poly) to deliver immersive, high-tech learning experiences for rising high school freshmen. The July 29–30 portion of the week featured hands-on activities hosted at MVCC and SUNY Poly, providing students with early exposure to college-level environments and in-demand career fields.

The full-week PTECH Summer Bridge program was designed and led by OHM and MO BOCES educators to help students strengthen foundational technical skills, build confidence, collaborate in teams, and begin exploring future career pathways while being introduced to the PTECH program. The college immersion component was collaboratively executed; BOCES staff and higher education staff co-delivered the experience, blending K-12 instructional insight with collegiate content and environments.

At MVCC, students participated in team-based challenges and rotated through a series of engaging technical stations. Highlights included a live Capture the Flag (CTF) cybersecurity competition, which fostered digital literacy and real-time problem-solving in a dynamic, gamified setting. Throughout, OHM and MO BOCES staff collaborated with MVCC facilitators, providing context, reinforcing learning, and helping students translate challenges into actionable understanding.

The following day at SUNY Poly, students explored emerging technologies through college-facilitated workshops that introduced them to advanced tools and academic resources. BOCES educators again partnered directly with SUNY Poly staff to support facilitation, troubleshoot in-the-moment learning needs, and help students connect the content to potential academic and career pathways.

“Our goal is to make the transition into high school and the PTECH program both exciting and purposeful,” said Sarah Gomez, P-TECH Coordinator, Madison-Oneida BOCES. “By partnering with local colleges and industry leaders, we’re helping students see a clear path from classroom learning to real-world opportunity.”

“Partnering with the PTECH programs from OHM and MO BOCES, Griffiss Institute and MVCC for this Summer Bridge Program exemplifies the kind of regional collaboration that helps students see what’s possible,” said John Reade, SUNY Poly Director of Pre-Collegiate Outreach. “This immersive experience gives PTECH students not only early exposure to college-level learning environments and emerging technologies, but also the confidence to begin envisioning their place in these exciting and growing fields.”

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“This event provides students with a meaningful, hands-on introduction to the fields they’ll explore throughout their academic and professional journeys,” said Erica Schoff, Senior Director of Academic Programs and Workforce Pipelines at Griffiss Institute. “It also exemplifies the strength of the Mohawk Valley’s collaborative ecosystem where education, industry, and research partners come together intentionally to inspire and cultivate the next generation of technical leaders.”

As the Mohawk Valley’s workforce development catalyst, Griffiss Institute supports programs like PTECH Summer Bridge to connect education and industry, promote early exposure to STEM careers, and build a regional talent pipeline equipped for the future. Its partnership with BOCES, SUNY Poly, and MVCC reflects a broader commitment to aligning hands-on student experiences with real-world workforce needs.

The PTECH Summer Bridge program supports a broader regional strategy to expand access to high-demand career pathways and dual-enrollment opportunities for PTECH students. Through articulated programs in areas such as Cybersecurity and Remotely Piloted Aircraft Systems (RPAS), MVCC and SUNY Poly offer students the chance to earn college credit while building skills and confidence for future success.

By integrating technical challenges, college exposure, and strong educator leadership, the week-long PTECH Summer Bridge program reflects the Mohawk Valley’s deep commitment to preparing students for meaningful futures in advanced technology fields.

About Griffiss Institute

Griffiss Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Rome, NY, accelerating national security innovation through its three-pillar mission of Talent, Technology, and Venture Development. As the steward of the Innovare Advancement Center, an open, unclassified research and collaboration campus, Griffiss Institute fosters and drives partnerships across government, industry, and academia to advance dual-use technologies. Griffiss Institute is committed to strengthening national security through nontraditional STEM education, accelerated innovation, and the commercialization of emerging technologies, with a deep belief in American-made solutions by a resilient U.S. science and engineering workforce.

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