

QUEST R III

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST



Commitment to Excellence / Commitment to Leadership & Service / Commitment to Innovation

TENTATIVE 2023 2024 BUDGET

Dear Colleagues:

On behalf of the Questar III BOCES Board of Education, it is our pleasure to invite school board members and superintendents from Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties to our Annual Meeting on April 5 at our conference center in Castleton.

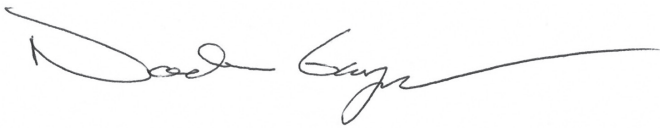
Questar III holds an Annual Meeting every April to review its tentative budget, in accordance with state law. This will be our first in-person meeting since 2019 due to the pandemic.

This booklet details the estimated operating budget for next school year. Our proposed administrative budget is subject to the approval of component school boards on April 25. Final program and service budgets will depend upon final service requests from component school districts on May 1.

As you prepare your budget for the 2023-2024 school year, Questar III BOCES stands ready to provide exceptional value, leadership and service through shared services and collaboration. We continue to be driven by a mission to “change lives, realize dreams and do together what cannot be done alone.”

For the past 65 years, local districts have worked with us to meet the varied and ever-changing needs of their students and communities. We thank you for your partnership.

Please contact us at Nadine.Gazzola@questar.org or gcruz@questar.org with any questions.



Nadine Gazzola, *Board President*



Dr. Gladys I. Cruz, *District Superintendent*

Questar III BOCES Board of Education

Questar III BOCES board members are volunteers elected to three-year terms by our component school districts' boards of education. Questar III BOCES board members have more than 270 years of school board experience in our region.



Nadine Gazzola
Board President



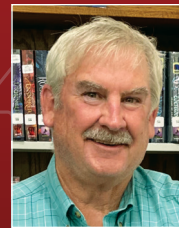
Joseph Garland
Board Vice President



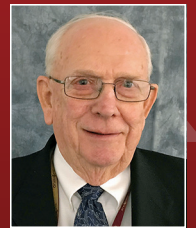
Edmund Brooks



Mary Daly



David Finch



John C. Hill



Mark Mann



Mary Marro-Giroux



Melony Spock



Mary Yurista



Frank Zwack, Jr.

Table of Contents

The Leading Edge	2
Executive Summary	3
Total Tentative Budget	4-5
BOCES Overview	6-7
Tentative Administrative Budget	8-10
Rent & Capital Budget	11
Administrative, Rent & Capital Budgets	12
Celebrated Success & Highlights	13
Program Budgets & Highlights	14
Career & Technical Education	15-16
Special Education	17-19
Itinerant Services	20
General Education	21-23
Instructional Support	24-25
District Support	26-27
Special Aid	28-29
Our Service Area & Locations	30
Boards of Education	31-32

The Leading Edge

ABOUT

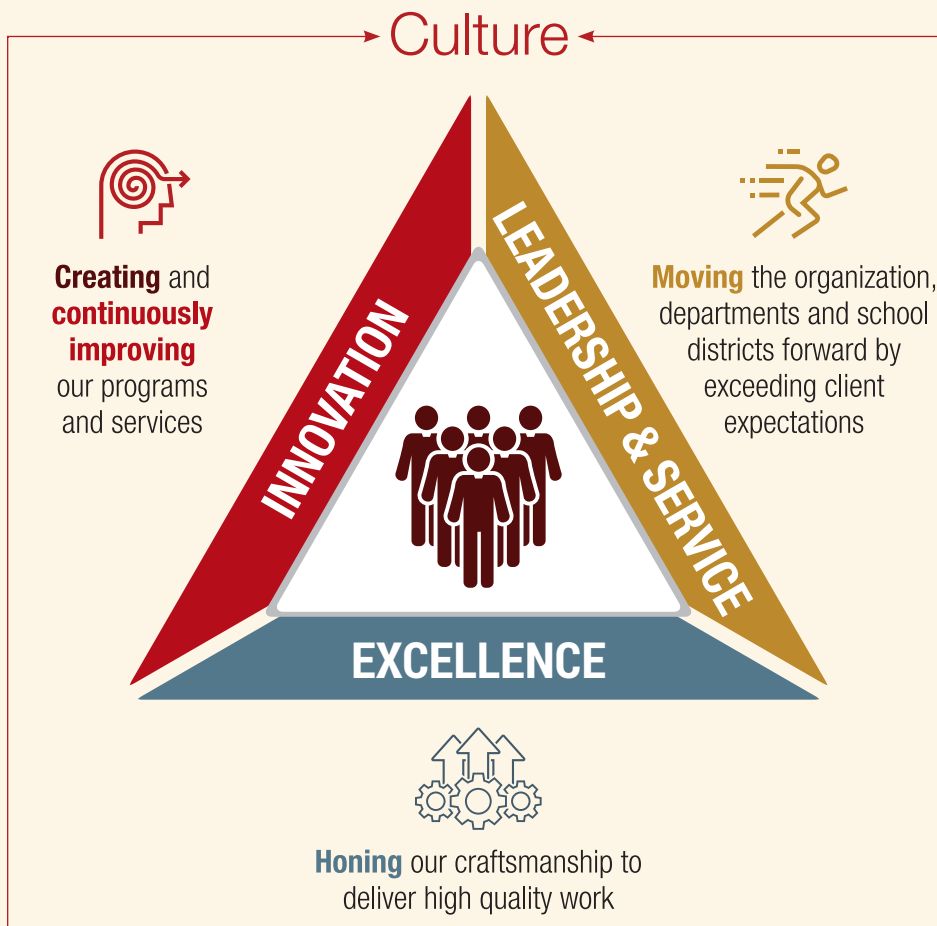
Questar III BOCES serves 22 districts in Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties. Our region includes rural, suburban and urban school districts. Our districts range in size from North Greenbush with 20 students to East Greenbush and Troy with more than 4,000 students.

VISION

Creating a student-centered culture (putting students first) of excellence, leadership and service, and innovation.

MISSION

Changing lives, realizing dreams and doing together what can't be done alone.



Core Values

Questar III BOCES is driven by three core values:

**COMMITMENT TO
EXCELLENCE**

**COMMITMENT TO
LEADERSHIP
& SERVICE**

**COMMITMENT TO
INNOVATION**

Executive Summary

Questar III BOCES continues to manage its costs diligently.
We want to ensure that we provide valuable services to all participating school districts.

Questar III BOCES' philosophy in developing its annual budget centers on cost effective services that deliver value. Questar III BOCES continues to mitigate rate increases for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. More than 70 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2022-2023, while nearly 83 percent are below a two percent rate increase.

Subject to the approval of component school boards, the administrative budget provides for a variety of operational and support activities of the BOCES, as well as services to school districts. Details of the tentative administrative budget can be found on pages 8-10 of this document.

The combined 2023-2024 tentative administrative, rent and capital budget will be increasing by 1.92 percent. However, there was an increase in the other revenues that support this combined budget, resulting in the charge to component districts increasing by 1.42 percent. The 2023-2024 tentative administrative budget will be \$7,152,804 and the rent and capital budget will remain unchanged at \$2,205,217.

The budget for a BOCES differs in significant ways from that of a school district. The most noticeable difference is that its total budget is a collection of several independent budgets. Another difference is that BOCES budgets are strictly revenue-based. That is, they are determined by the revenue generated rather than by predetermined expenditures, as with school districts. Unlike school districts, BOCES does not have any taxing authority.

As a result, final program budgets for the 2023-2024 fiscal year will depend upon service requests from districts. Each tentative program budget is adjusted when there are fluctuations in program enrollments or district participation.

Budgets for services, programs and grants make up 90 percent of Questar III BOCES' total budget. The three largest program areas include special education, district support services and career & technical education.

The total tentative budget charts, on pages 4-5, provide a summary of expenditures by program/service and by object of expenditure categories and includes the following financial data:

- The 2021-2022 final actual expenditures.
- The 2022-2023 budget adopted by the Questar III BOCES Board of Education is based on initial service requests.

- The 2022-2023 adjusted budget illustrates the adopted budget increased by additional requests for services that have occurred to date. Unlike a school district, over the course of the year, Questar III BOCES increases its budget to account for requests of additional purchased services from component and non-component school districts and other BOCES.
- The 2023-2024 tentative budget represents an estimate of purchased services based on historical trends and projected service requests.

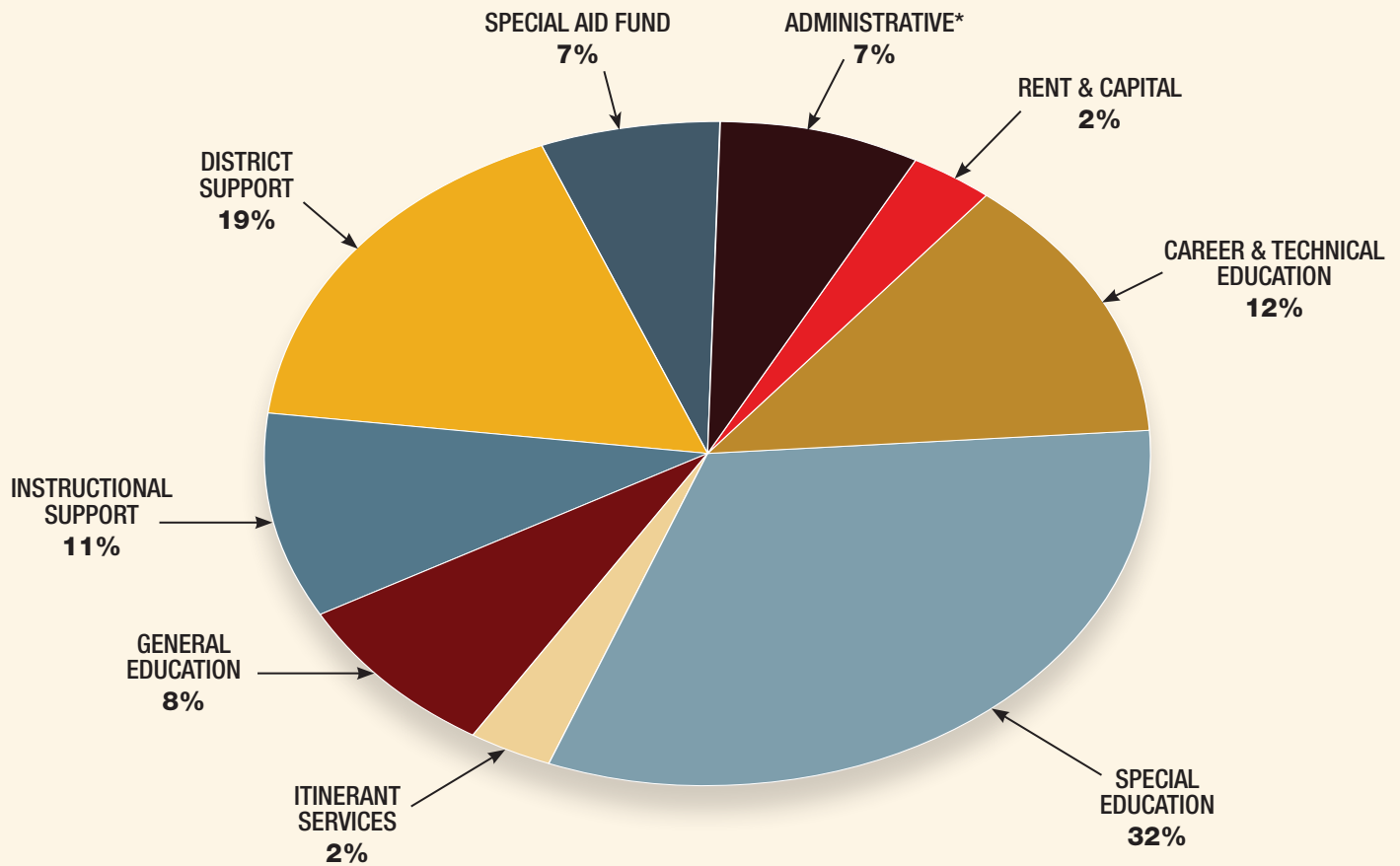
After districts complete and approve the Final Service Requests (FSR), due by May 1st, the 2023-2024 tentative budget, excluding the administrative, and rent and capital budgets, will be adjusted to the actual program and service requests approved.



STATE LAW REQUIREMENT: New York State Law requires the Boards of Education of each of our 21 component school districts to convene on Tuesday, April 25, 2023 to vote on the tentative administrative budget. **The administrative budget is the only portion of the BOCES budget voted on.**

Total Tentative Budget

The Total Tentative Budget charts provide a summary by program/service and by object of expenditure.



2023-2024 Tentative Budget by Program/Service Category

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 Actual Expenditures	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2022-23 Adjusted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$6,175,324	\$6,976,593	\$7,180,829	\$7,152,804
RENT & CAPITAL	5,421,590	2,205,217	2,205,217	2,205,217
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	9,834,168	10,617,399	11,736,410	11,491,911
SPECIAL EDUCATION	25,831,942	28,087,962	32,890,322	30,836,920
ITINERANT SERVICES	1,564,809	1,664,291	1,795,398	1,804,666
GENERAL EDUCATION	6,655,033	7,828,834	8,002,667	7,569,364
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	11,758,229	10,367,376	12,115,733	10,831,750
DISTRICT SUPPORT	16,530,079	17,126,380	18,928,533	18,006,224
SPECIAL AID FUND	5,181,063	5,972,841	6,461,163	6,270,206
TOTAL	\$88,952,237	\$90,846,893	\$101,316,272	\$96,169,062

* The Administrative Budget is the only portion of the budget that component boards vote upon on April 25, 2023.

Total Tentative Budget



2023-2024 Total Tentative Budget by Object of Expenditure Category

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	2021-22 Actual Expenditures	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2022-23 Adjusted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget
INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	\$20,282,266	\$22,230,025	\$23,150,754	\$22,639,075
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	8,070,554	8,325,290	8,682,912	8,671,693
EQUIPMENT (inclusive of lease principal & interest)	6,045,975	4,294,884	6,134,402	4,316,905
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	3,304,025	3,265,353	4,308,662	3,845,039
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	3,698,938	4,591,275	6,028,806	5,404,607
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS	2,582,171	2,358,070	3,063,328	2,594,439
RENTAL OF FACILITIES	1,167,764	1,211,067	1,211,067	1,211,067
PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS & OTHER BOCES	17,775,380	18,408,166	19,481,149	19,844,660
INTEREST ON REVENUE ANTICIPATION NOTES	22,083	42,000	96,667	125,000
EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS	10,864,881	15,499,666	15,075,036	16,503,366
OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	3,627,537	3,832,733	3,832,733	3,662,187
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OPERATIONS & MAINT.	3,739,720	3,357,529	4,905,412	3,703,228
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM CENTRAL SERVICES	2,157,618	2,430,835	4,345,344	2,647,796
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OTHER SERVICES	1,398,366	1,550,574	1,396,847	1,459,732
TRANSFER CREDITS TO OTHER SERVICES	(1,398,366)	(1,550,574)	(1,396,847)	(1,459,732)
SUBTOTAL	\$84,338,912	\$90,846,893	\$101,316,272	\$96,169,062
LEASE ACQUISITION*	4,613,325	—	—	—
TOTAL	\$88,952,237	\$90,846,893	\$101,316,272	\$96,169,062

*Year-end accounting adjustments not budgeted.

BOCES Overview

General Facts

65 YEARS OF SERVICE TO
LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

300 \approx PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES

400+ BUSINESS, EDUCATION
& COMMUNITY PARTNERS

690 \approx SCHOOL DISTRICTS
AND BOCES SERVED

1,652 SQUARE MILES IN THE
SUPERVISORY REGION

28,865 PUBLIC STUDENTS
SERVED LOCALLY

Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) are public education cooperatives that serve as extensions of local school districts. A BOCES provides programs and services that districts are unable to offer on their own or that are more economical to share with other districts.

Questar III BOCES serves 21 component districts (and one non-component) in Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene counties and provides approximately 300 shared services to approximately 690 school districts and BOCES statewide.

The New York State Board of Regents and the Commissioner of Education charge the state's 37 District Superintendents and BOCES with providing leadership and support to local school districts. Questar III BOCES focuses on developing the capacity of local schools to enable students to meet the state learning standards and graduation requirements.

New York State Law requires the Boards of Education of each of our 21 component school districts to convene on **Tuesday, April 25, 2023** to vote on the tentative administrative budget. The administrative budget is the only portion of the BOCES budget that boards vote on each year.

How Questar III BOCES Operates

Questar III BOCES provides shared educational programs to the school districts served. Partnerships with districts allow for the delivery of a broad range of programs and services that help meet the evolving educational needs of students. BOCES programs prepare diverse student populations for their future in the local, regional, state, national and global environment. Questar III BOCES also provides cost-effective shared services to districts that ignite collaboration across the region.

Like public school districts, Questar III BOCES is governed by a policy-making board of education. The 11 members of the Questar III BOCES Board serve three-year terms and are elected by component boards through a special vote held each April. Questar III BOCES Board Members either serve or have served on local school boards. Most of them also have experience as board presidents in their districts of residence.

BOCES has been – and continues to be – an agent of change and a vehicle for family and student choice in our public education system. Through BOCES, school districts can expand educational opportunities and provide a rich variety of learning experiences for students of all interests, ages and abilities. Also, Questar III BOCES strives to be the program of choice through its commitment to excellence, commitment to leadership and service, and commitment to innovation.

How Districts Purchase Services

All services and programs (except for administrative, rent and capital) must be requested, in writing, each year through a final service request (FSR) process approved by local superintendents. Therefore, districts only pay for their share of requested programs and services. All services offered by the BOCES have gone through the approval process of the Commissioner of Education through the submission of a proposed programmatic and financial operating plan for each service, known formally as a Cooperative Service Request, or "Co-Ser."

BOCES Overview

Every year, districts have the option to renew or not renew, increase or decrease any service. Questar III BOCES and the component districts enter into formal contracts through final service requests. Specified in each contract are the number and types of services to be furnished by the BOCES, the number of students to be served and the amount to be paid to the BOCES.

Paying for BOCES Services

Questar III BOCES has no taxing authority. It is funded by the member school districts forming the cooperative. As an incentive to cooperate and share resources, New York State provides aid to partially reimburse districts for participating in BOCES programs and services. Commonly known as “BOCES Aid,” these funds are distributed to districts based on a state-approved formula. BOCES Aid for Questar III BOCES’ component districts ranges from 36 to 79 percent, depending on each school district’s wealth ratio. Each district’s BOCES aid rate is calculated by the State Education Department (SED), annually.

Budget History and Philosophy

Questar III BOCES controlled costs diligently despite facing the same fiscal challenges as our region’s schools. We continue to be fiscally responsible, accountable and transparent in our program and budget development.

Through our shared decision-making process, we have achieved greater participation by our component school superintendents. Superintendent subcommittees continue to be involved in program development and rate setting. Through this collaborative process, new services are developed, or existing services are eliminated and/or refined to better meet district, school and student needs. This process has allowed Questar III BOCES to gain a better understanding of the shared services districts need and value.

Questar III BOCES’ core values – commitment to excellence, leadership and service, and innovation – drive how we develop, refine and evaluate our programs and services as part of our budget development process.

Through its budget development process, Questar III BOCES seeks to:

- Develop programs and services to meet the needs of our component districts and students in an efficient and cost-effective manner.
- Improve its capacity to deliver educational programs that support student achievement and high academic standards.
- Be responsible stewards of the financial resources entrusted to us by our component school districts.
- Move resources, both human and financial, closer to our students and points of service.
- Provide the best possible service to our customers as quickly as possible.
- Increase productivity and provide districts with value for their money.

Our Changing Landscape

In the past five years, we have welcomed a number of new leaders to our region, including:

14 NEW BUSINESS OFFICIALS

15 NEW SUPERINTENDENTS

17 NEW CHAIRS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

53 NEW SCHOOL COUNSELORS & LIBRARIANS

76 NEW PRINCIPALS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS & DEANS OF STUDENTS

112 NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Tentative Administrative Budget

The tentative administrative budget chart provides a summary of expenditures by object category.

The Questar III BOCES administrative budget contains two components: (1) other post-employment benefits (OPEB) for retiree health insurance, and (2) the general administrative operations. The general administrative operations support the management, coordination and leadership provided by the BOCES. It includes the Office of the District Superintendent, central administrative expenses, Board of Education expenses and a portion of the supervisors' and administrative personnel salaries and benefits necessary to carry out the administrative duties of the BOCES.

The administrative budget also contains funding to support activities associated with implementation of regional initiatives in advocacy, certification, communications support, district strategic planning, emergency management, grant research, superintendent searches, annual leadership institute for superintendents, business and operational support, and professional development for boards of education, superintendents and staff.

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	2021-22 Actual Expenditures	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2022-23 Adjusted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget
INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	\$183,850	\$202,601	\$202,742	\$209,730
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	857,910	975,161	984,059	1,003,492
EQUIPMENT	21,720	21,000	91,860	12,000
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	58,500	100,300	121,457	106,845
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	127,735	300,070	236,006	342,587
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS	241,740	325,165	380,440	389,025
INTEREST ON REVENUE ANTICIPATION NOTES	22,083	42,000	96,667	125,000
EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS	413,732	560,540	549,507	590,012
OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	3,627,537	3,832,733	3,832,733	3,662,187
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OPERATIONS & MAINT.	153,882	105,729	142,638	119,013
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OTHER SERVICES	466,635	511,294	542,720	592,913
TOTAL	\$6,175,324	\$6,976,593	\$7,180,829	\$7,152,804



Tentative Administrative Budget

Questar III BOCES' tentative administrative budget for 2023-2024 is \$7,152,804. The other post employment benefits (OPEB) costs account for 51 percent of the budget, while the general operations costs account for 49 percent of the budget. The total increase for the tentative administrative budget is \$176,211 or 2.53 percent from the previous year's budget.

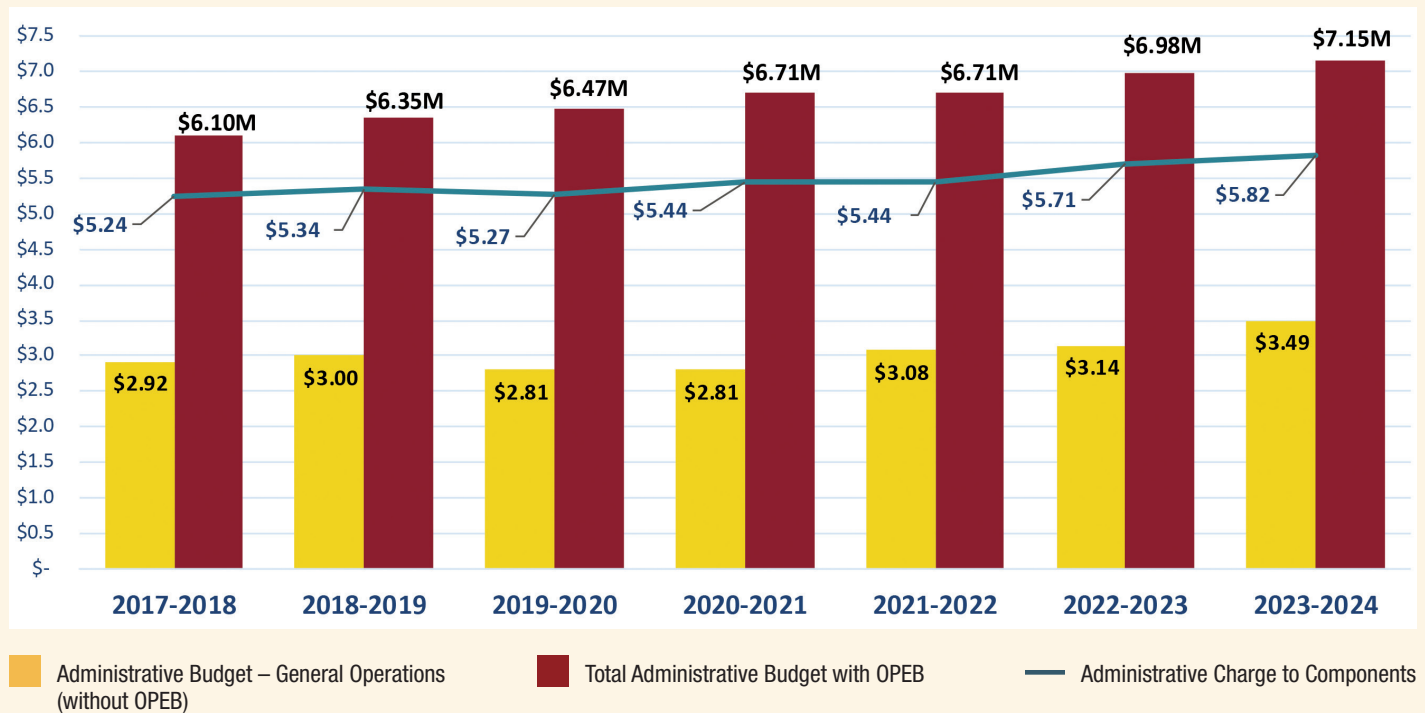
However, the actual administrative charge to districts is \$5,818,021, representing an increase of \$112,610 or 1.97 percent from the previ-

ous year. The administrative charge for individual component districts is derived from the administrative budget of \$7,152,804 and is reduced by \$1,334,783 in revenues earned from administrative fees for statewide services, indirect costs from grants and contracts, interest income and other miscellaneous revenues. These revenues support nearly 19 percent of the total administrative budget.

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Total Administrative Budget	\$6,976,593	\$7,152,804	\$176,211	2.53%
Less: Other Revenues	1,271,182	1,334,783	63,601	5.00%
Administrative Charge to Components	\$5,705,411	\$5,818,021	\$112,610	1.97%

History of the Administrative Budget

The administrative budget has been diligently managed in an effort to minimize the effect of the cost of OPEB. This chart reflects the history of the administrative budget both with and without OPEB. On average, the overall administrative budget has increased by \$150 thousand per year. The administrative charge to Districts has increased on average \$82 thousand per year or approximately 1.6 percent.



*In millions.

Tentative Administrative Budget

Administrative Revenues

(excluding interest income)

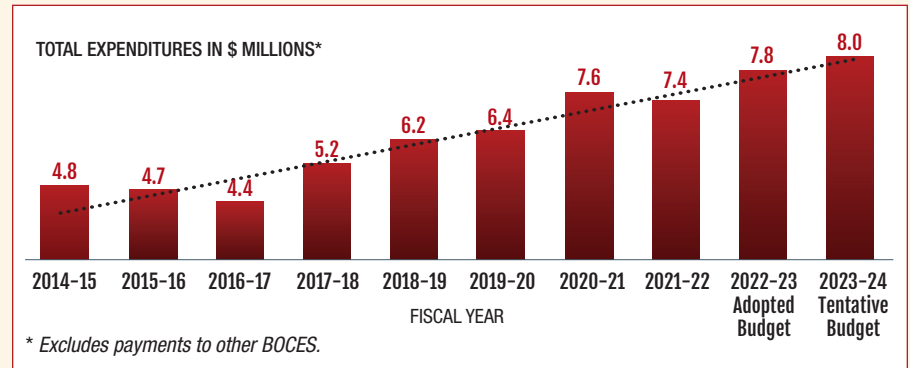
The revenues from administrative fees charged to non-components for statewide services, indirect costs and other miscellaneous revenues help Questar III BOCES contain administrative costs for its 21 component districts. As our statewide district support services grow, so does our administrative revenue (net of interest income), which in turn reduces administrative charges to our components. The chart below demonstrates the growth in administrative revenues over the last decade.

Year	Revenue	Year-to-Year % Change
2014-15	\$ 778,147	1.10%
2015-16	\$ 813,252	4.51%
2016-17	\$ 828,731	1.90%
2017-18	\$ 844,199	1.87%
2018-19	\$ 987,866	17.02%
2019-20	\$ 1,138,851	15.28%
2020-21	\$ 1,246,182	9.42%
2021-22	\$ 1,261,182	1.20%
2022-23	\$ 1,261,182	0.00%
2023-24	\$ 1,304,783*	3.46%

* Excludes interest income of \$30,000. Total Administrative Revenues, including interest income, is \$1,334,783.

District Support Services Revenue Growth

The generation of administrative revenues are directly attributed to Questar III BOCES' drive to be the program of choice and to continue to develop new services to meet the needs of districts. This is demonstrated by the growth in Questar III BOCES' district support services provided to districts.



Office of the Superintendent

The District Superintendent serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Questar III BOCES and is the representative of the New York State Commissioner of Education in the Questar III BOCES Supervisory District. The District Superintendent's salary is paid by New York State and Questar III BOCES. The BOCES Reform Legislation of 1993 limits the salary and mandates the separate reporting of the District Superintendent salary and benefits as follows:

State of New York portion of salary and fringe:

District Superintendent Salary \$ 43,499
Plus all Medicare and Social Security taxes

BOCES portion of salary and fringe:

District Superintendent Salary \$ 164,751
New York State Teacher Retirement \$ 16,475
Health, Dental & Disability Insurance \$ 29,665
Workers' Compensation Insurance \$ 2,471
Unemployment Insurance \$ 494



Rent & Capital Budget

Questar III BOCES occupies a number of instructional and office spaces in the tri-county region, including space owned and leased by the BOCES. Owned spaces include the two technical schools in Hudson and Troy, the Sackett Center in Schodack, the Marilyn A. Noonan School in Durham and the office/warehouse facility at 1070 Route 9 in Castleton. All other spaces are leased.

The tentative 2023-2024 rent and capital budget includes two components: (1) rent for leased spaces at schools and other entities and (2) transfers to capital. Rent to other entities includes the central office building located in Schodack, Tech Valley High School® and classrooms at colleges

and other private entities for New Visions and special education programs. Transfers to capital supports capital improvement needs at spaces owned by the BOCES.

Questar III BOCES also continues to lease instructional space with school districts for special education programs (Averill Park, East Greenbush, Rensselaer, Schodack). The classroom rental rate of \$7,000 per classroom (except new construction) is established by Questar III BOCES' superintendents.

Over the past decade, Questar III BOCES has worked with districts to better locate and cluster appropriate space for special education students. This work has resulted in better quality instructional space.



RENT AND CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Rent Budget	\$1,205,217	\$1,205,217	—	0.00%
Capital Budget	1,000,000	1,000,000	—	0.00%
Total Rent and Capital Budget	2,205,217	2,205,217	—	0.00%
Less: Grant Revenue	5,850	5,850	—	0.00%
Total Rent and Capital Charge to Components	\$2,199,367	\$2,199,367	—	0.00%

Administrative, Rent & Capital Budgets

Impact of the Administrative, Rent and Capital Budgets

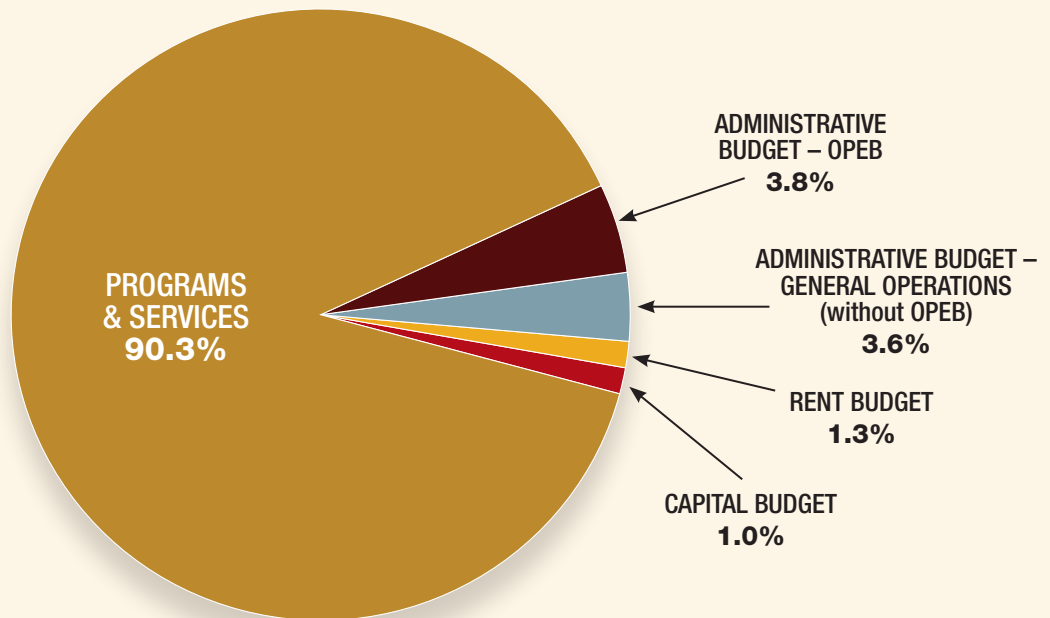
Sections 1950 and 1951 of the NYS Education Law established BOCES and the requirement of member or component districts to pay a proportionate share of the administrative, rent and capital costs.

School districts pay an annual assessment toward the support of the administrative budget based upon their Resident Weighted Average Daily Attendance (RWADA). District charges vary based upon increases or decreases in RWADA.

In summary, the total administrative rent and capital budget will be increasing by 1.92 percent for a total combined budget of \$9,358,021. The net administrative rent and capital charge to components, after other revenues are applied, will be increasing by 1.42 percent for a total combined charge of \$8,017,388 for 2023-2024.

ADMINISTRATIVE, RENT & CAPITAL BUDGETS & CHARGES TO COMPONENTS	2022-23 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Tentative Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Total Administrative Budget	6,976,593	7,152,804	\$176,211	2.53%
Total Rent & Capital Budget	2,205,217	2,205,217	—	0.00%
Total Administrative, Rent and Capital Budgets	\$9,181,810	\$9,358,021	\$176,211	1.92%
Total Administrative Charge	5,705,411	5,818,021	\$112,610	1.97%
Total Rent & Capital Charge	2,199,367	2,199,367	—	0.00%
Total Administrative, Rent & Capital Charge to Components	\$7,904,778	\$8,017,388	\$112,610	1.42%

Together the administrative, rent and capital budgets equate to 9.7 percent of the total Questar III BOCES Tentative Budget. The remaining 90.3 percent represents the programs and services purchased by districts and other BOCES.



Celebrated Success & Highlights

1. District Superintendent Dr. Gladys I. Cruz is president-elect of the national School Superintendents Association (AASA). She will serve as president starting in July 2023.
2. Dr. Cruz is also a member of the State Education Department's Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures.
3. The Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (PR/HYLI) was named a national "Program to Watch" by Excelencia in Education.
4. Our Communications Department earned 16 awards from the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) in July 2022, including the organization's highest honor in eight categories.
5. Our Heavy Equipment programs in Durham and Troy received grant funding from the state and National Grid to purchase training simulators to expand hands-on training for students.
6. Our Special Education Department received grant funding from the Berkshire Taconic Foundation to expand work-based learning for students.
7. Tech Valley High School hosted a meeting of the Board of Regents in November 2022 – the first time in the history of the Regents that it held a full meeting outside of the State Education Building in Albany.
8. Questar III has named four buildings in honor of deceased board leaders – the Robert H. Gibson Technical School in Troy (formerly Rensselaer Educational Center), the Donald R. Kline Technical School in Hudson (formerly Columbia-Greene Educational Center), the Marilyn A. Noonan School at Durham (formerly the Durham School) and the Paul Puccio School at Maple Hill.
9. Assistant Superintendent Shauna Maynard was named the 2022 Outstanding Career Educator by the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE).
10. Our Youth Apprenticeship Program was featured on Fox News and theblaze.com in September 2022.
11. AASA's Transformational Leadership Consortium visited the Robert H. Gibson Technical School and Tech Valley High School in October 2022.
12. The New York State Office of Strategic Workforce Development awarded Questar III BOCES \$1.6 million to transform our Warehouse located behind the Robert H. Gibson Technical School in Troy into a state-of-the-art training center that will house two high-demand CTE programs starting in the 2024-25 school year. This includes a new welding and metal fabrication program (replicating our program in Hudson) and our existing heavy equipment maintenance and operation program.
13. Questar III was selected to coordinate superintendent searches for three local school boards (Catskill, Ichabod Crane and Taconic Hills). The organization has coordinated nine searches since the start of the pandemic.
14. Questar III has held more than 100 virtual town hall meetings for staff since the start of the pandemic.
15. Questar III partnered with Foretell Reality to provide special education students with virtual reality learning opportunities.



16. Our Special Education Department is now using NASA's Globe program in its curriculum, which connects students, teachers and scientists around the world to better understand, sustain and improve the Earth's environment.
17. Questar III partnered with Curtis Lumber Company on a Workforce Development Coalition that highlights the value of our programs and careers in the trades. The mission is to encourage young people and adults to consider careers in the construction industry, which started out with a focus on Saratoga County and has now grown into a multi-county effort comprised of 40 professionals from a wide range of businesses and organizations with a passion for raising awareness about the trades.
18. The Robert H. Gibson Technical School in Troy held its first in-person Veterans Day luncheon since 2019. The annual event, which began in 2003 at our technical schools in Troy and Hudson, honors local Veterans for their service to our country with a free lunch prepared and served by our Culinary Arts and Intro to Food students.
19. Our State Aid & Financial Planning Service celebrated its 50th anniversary this school year. This was the first service the organization offered outside its region. It is now the largest BOCES service in the state.
20. This year marks the 75th anniversary of the 1948 law that made BOCES possible.

Program Budgets & Highlights

The budget for a BOCES differs significantly from that of a school district. The most noticeable difference is that a BOCES has no taxing authority. Also, the budget is a collection of several independent budgets. Another difference is that most BOCES budgets are strictly revenue-based. That is, they are determined by the revenue generated by purchases of programs and services annually, rather than predetermined expenditures. As a result, final program budgets depend upon district requests in May of each year.

Whereas school district budgets are fixed, the demand for BOCES services leads to staff (and thus budget) increases or decreases. Services may fluctuate based on district needs and demand.

Questar III continues to work hard to contain costs and to minimize rate increases for school districts. Striving to be the program of choice, Questar III's program participation remains strong despite pressures from regional student enrollment declines. This chart demonstrates how cost containment and strong participation results in the majority of program rate increases within the districts' tax cap limitations. More than 70 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2022-2023. Overall, nearly 83 percent of services are below a two percent rate increase. This chart demonstrates how the 2023-2024 rate increases are similar to pre-pandemic levels.

Year	% of Programs with No Rate Increase	% of Programs with a Rate Increase of 2% or Less
2019-20	66.48%	75.64%
2020-21	57.02%	77.53%
2021-22	88.62%	94.83%
2022-23	68.64%	79.79%
2023-24	70.44%	82.85%



Career & Technical Education (CTE)

The Career & Technical Education budget is comprised of three areas of programming including CTE, New Visions and Career Studies. The increase in rates for Career & Technical Education range from 1.5 percent to 8.69 percent for 2023-2024.

Participation in CTE remains strong. There are many high-skilled, high-demand, high-salary career paths in various industries where employers

are eager for a trained workforce. As a result the 2023-2024 budget contains new and expanded CTE program offerings based on interest such as: expansion of Gaming & Multimedia in our southern region; expansion of the Welding program in our northern region; and a new offering for New Visions in Business, Finance & Accounting at Columbia-Greene Community College.

Program Offerings

CTE

- Agriculture Science
- Automotive Technologies*
- Aviation
- Nursing Assistant
- Construction Technologies*
- Cosmetology
- Criminal Justice
- Culinary Arts
- Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) & Health Careers
- Gaming & Multimedia
- Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance*
- HVAC & Renewable Energies*
- Welding/Metal Fabrication/Machine Tool*

* Part of the Youth Apprenticeship Program

New Visions

- Business, Finance & Accounting (Columbia-Greene Community College)
- Emergency Preparedness, Informatics, Cybersecurity & Homeland Security (University at Albany's College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security & Cybersecurity)
- Medical (Samaritan Hospital)
- Pathways in Education (University at Albany's Main Campus)
- STEM (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute)
- Scientific Research & World Health (University at Albany's Health Sciences Campus)
- Visual & Performing Arts (The Arts Center of the Capital Region)

Career Studies

- Automotive Services
- Building Trades
- Introduction to Food Services

4 ▶ Programs recognized by the CTE TAC of NY as model programs

8-15 ▶ College credits available to New Visions Program students

85% ▶ Technical endorsement pass rate

85 ▶ Students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society last year

98.2% ▶ Graduation rate

327 ▶ Consultant committee partners help us to align curriculum and equipment to industry standards

2,190 ▶ Hours of student internships last year

Budget for Career & Technical Education Programs

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	\$9,834,168	\$10,617,399	\$11,736,410	\$11,491,911

Career & Technical Education (CTE)

CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The Questar III BOCES CTE programs provide students in 11th and 12th grades with the academic and technical skills necessary to succeed in future careers and to become lifelong learners. Our CTE programs are primarily located at two schools, the Robert H. Gibson Technical School in Troy, generally serving students in Rensselaer County, and the Donald R. Kline Technical School in Hudson, generally serving students in Columbia and Greene Counties.

The programs combine classroom learning with hands-on training in a wide range of in-demand career fields. These programs are equipped with industry-recommended tools and equipment, have articulation agreements for students to earn college credit and provide opportunities for students to obtain industry certifications or credentials.

All CTE programs integrate academic learning into the CTE instruction, giving students a deeper understanding of applied math, science and/or English Language Arts (ELA) concepts and skills needed in that career area, while affording students the opportunity to earn academic credits towards Regents graduation requirements.

The Youth Apprenticeship Program partners with Capital Region businesses to offer high school students paid internships that could lead to immediate employment after graduation. Entering its fourth year in 2023-2024, our Youth Apprenticeship Program continues to grow, with more than 30 students placed in paid internships last year. During the 2022-2023 school year, we added Automotive Technology to our already participating programs of Heavy Equipment, Construction Technology, HVAC and Welding. With CTE Program enrollments continuing to rise, we want to ensure that students are not turned away or wait-listed due to a lack of space in our programs. For this reason, we are working to expand several programs for 2023-2024. Based upon interest, these may include Welding, Culinary, Cosmetology and Criminal Justice. Last year, CTE also transitioned the former Academy for Information Technology into a Gaming and Multimedia program, based on student interest and industry demand. For 2023-2024, we plan to expand this program to the Donald R. Kline Technical School.

NEW VISIONS

The New Visions programs allow students to gain valuable insights into career options from a real-world perspective. A one-year, honors-level program, New Visions turns area businesses, health care facilities and college campuses into classrooms for highly motivated and academically successful high school seniors. The main goal of all New Visions programs is to act as the bridge between high school and college level work and careers. By participating in a New Visions program, students are better equipped to make the right decision for their future. New Visions programs are highly reputable with three programs receiving the “Model Program” award from the CTE Technical Assistance Center of NY for their innovation and academic rigor.

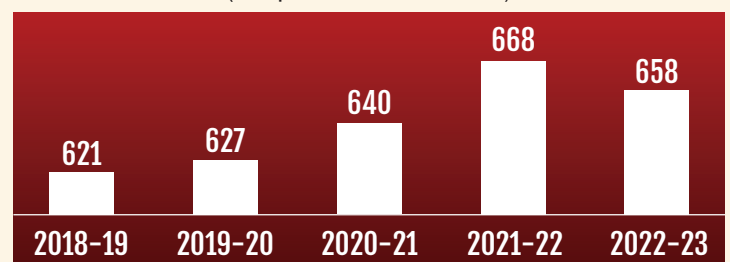
New Visions students learn and explore career options through mentoring, internships, interactions with professionals, group discussions and creative project-based learning, as well as more traditional methods.

Students in each of our six programs will earn four academic credits toward their high school graduation; one in English, one in Social Studies and two elective credits. All students also earn college credits from top universities in the area, including Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Russell Sage College, The University of Albany, Hudson Valley Community College and Columbia-Greene Community College. Graduates of these programs have gone on to attend very competitive institutions of higher learning. Our New Visions Programs are expanding for 2023-2024 with the addition of the Business, Finance and Accounting Program. This program is designed to help meet a growing need within the region for qualified individuals to enter in-demand business fields. All New Visions programs are committed to innovation and industry alignment, allowing students to use cutting edge technology and develop critical thinking skills.

CAREER STUDIES

Career Studies programs provide high school students (ages 16-21) with entry-level training in a technical area or trade at an alternative learning pace. These programs are designed to provide more customized career instruction and experience in a supportive learning environment. Career Studies programs have a small student-teacher ratio and are taught by certified teachers with substantial real-world experience in their given trade. The smaller class size provides an individualized course of instruction that helps students to become successful in the world of work.

CTE & New Visions Enrollment
(Component School Districts)



Special Education

A longtime leader in special education, Questar III BOCES provides an array of services for students with disabilities, based on their individual academic capabilities and social/behavioral needs in response to each student's individualized educational plan (IEP). School districts, including those outside the BOCES, refer students to Questar III BOCES programs through their Committee on Special Education (CSE) process.

Budget for Special Education Programs

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$25,831,942	\$28,087,962	\$32,890,322	\$30,836,920

The Special Education Department provides individualized instruction to students ages 5 through 21 in different academic settings, including academies, technical schools, districts and a community college.

In recent years, Questar III BOCES has sought to find ways to explore more effective and cost-efficient ways to meet the ever-changing needs of our students. This includes addressing greater mental health needs and moving students to a less restrictive environment in accordance with state regulations.

In July 2022, the special education programs at Catskill Academy were relocated to the Marilyn A. Noonan School at Durham, where a center-based special education continuum of services are offered. The school also houses the Heavy Equipment and Agriculture Science CTE programs. This new

space provides the opportunity for program expansion and unique course offerings, including a Practical Assessment Exploration System (PAES) lab and a maker space.

Tuition rates are differentiated based on the level of service and class size ratio. The special education program rate increases range from approximately 2.1 percent to 6.6 percent. In addition to the rising costs of supplies and materials, salaries and employee benefits also drive the rate increases.

Intake for the Special Education Program is very high. As a result, physical space capacity is being evaluated along with ensuring that students are placed in the right programs and in the right locations. Classroom expansion at various locations is also occurring.

Questar III BOCES offers the following Special Education programs:

Instruction of Students with Disabilities Regents Programs

The Regents programs are designed for students with emotional and behavioral disabilities where these behaviors interfere with their learning process. These are students who require multiple levels of support for extended periods of time. Academically, students are instructed using the State Learning Standards as they work toward achieving a Regents Diploma. These 4:1:2 and 6:1:2 programs are located in academy settings where Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), the school-wide behavior management system, is in place, as well as behavioral Response to Intervention (RTI). A focus of these Regents programs is on developing social skills, conflict resolution and problem solving. Students in 11th and 12th grades have the opportunity to participate in Career & Technical Education (CTE) classes or Career Studies (CS) classes as appropriate. Also at the high school level, students may participate in Career Development Occupational Studies (CDOS) classes in order to work towards achieving a CDOS credential. Program supports include access to social worker, psychologist, psychiatric consultation, crisis intervention and the support of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. Assistance in connecting families with mental health resources in the community is also provided.

Therapeutic Youth Program

The Therapeutic Youth Program (TYP) 6:1:1 classrooms are designed for students with a mental health diagnosis that interferes with success in school, which may include school phobia and anxiety. This Regents-based program is for middle and high school students with a focus on academics and coping strategies. The 11th and 12th grade students have the opportunity to participate in CTE classes or CS classes as appropriate. Also at the high school level, students may participate in CDOS classes in order to work toward achieving a CDOS credential. Program supports include access to social worker, psychologist, psychiatric consultation, crisis intervention and the support of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. Assistance in connecting families with mental health resources in the community is also provided.

Robin Sobol Transition Program

The Robin Sobol Transition program is an 8:1:2 class currently located at the Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC). Students ages 18-21 who have completed their New York State Assessments have the opportunity to participate in a life skills curriculum and work-based learning experiences.

Special Education

Reading and math levels of students in this program are approximately third grade, and students must be able to participate in work-based learning in the community with adult supervision. They have access to multiple opportunities both on the HVCC campus and in the community. Assistance in connecting families with mental health resources in the community is also available.

New York State Alternate Assessment Programs (NYSAA)

Students in 4:1:2 and 6:1:2 NYSAA classes have significant cognitive difficulties as well as social and behavioral disabilities. These classes are in academy settings, which in addition to providing social work and psychologist support, also have crisis support. Students work on functional academics in all areas, including activities of daily living and life skills. These students also participate in PBIS, a school-wide behavior management system, as well as behavioral Response to Intervention (RTI). At the high school level, students have the opportunity to participate in work-based learning experiences. Program supports include access to social worker, psychologist, psychiatric consultation and the support of a Board-Certified Behavior Analyst. Assistance in connecting families with mental health resources in the community is also available.

The 8:1:1 NYSAA students exhibit multiple disabilities, including significant cognitive and academic delays, and potentially physical disabilities. The programs are housed in district-based classrooms. Focus in these classrooms is on activities of daily living and life skills along with academics. At the high school level, students have the opportunity to participate in work-based learning experiences.

Pre-Academic Support Program at Paul Puccio School

The 6:1:3 Pre-Academic Support Program is designed for K-2 students on the Autism Spectrum. The focus of the program is to develop and work on pre-academic school skills such as sitting, attending and being a part of a group. This program is designed for students who are new to the school environment or for students who benefit from an additional year or two to develop and prepare for an academic setting. Students learn and develop pre-academic skills through repetition and immersion of these skills into a variety of activities throughout the school day. Students are supported with a variety of sensory tools and gross motor movements. Visual aids and supports are used to enhance learning and understanding with most activities being delivered in a small group or individualized instruction format. Students who attend this program receive support of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst.

Integrated Regents Program

The Integrated 8:1:1 Regents Program is a high-school level, district-based program designed to support students with social, emotional and/or learning disabilities. Students participate in general education instruction and are provided additional supports tailored to individual needs and goals. The additional supports include a “home base” for academics, a school psychologist and social worker, and teaching assistants that attend classes to support students integration and life skills transition. Students who attend this program are on track for a Regents diploma with an opportunity for CDOS (Career Development Occupational Studies) credential or CTE Endorsement.

52 ► Classrooms in three counties

96% ► Of the Class of 2022 completed their graduation requirements (Regents, local diploma, CDOS or Skills and Achievement Commencement credential)

103 ► Physical therapy sessions per week

232 ► Social work and individual counseling sessions per week

253 ► Occupational therapy sessions per week

401 ► Speech therapy sessions per week

2,659 ► Years of service and experience by Questar III BOCES staff

3,162 ► Average hours per year, over the last 3 years, of work-based learning, internships, service learning and school-to-work paid employment

Career Academy

The 6:1:2 Career Academy Program is for 11th and 12th grade students working toward a Regents Diploma, with an opportunity to obtain a CDOS credential, by spending half of their day taking academic classes and the other half of the day attending a CTE or CS program at the Donald R. Kline Technical School. Generally, students have learning needs that are not being met in a district-based program and require the support of this smaller learning setting.

Special Education

WORKFORCE READINESS

Questar III BOCES offers an array of opportunities for students to become better prepared for their future after they graduate high school. While enrolled at Questar III BOCES, students can participate in work-based learning, service learning and CDOS (Career Development Occupational Studies) classes. These opportunities provide on the job training while cementing the soft skills they will need to become successful when they transition into the workforce.

Work Based Learning (WBL)

WBL experiences for students with disabilities are supervised, school-coordinated activities which provide opportunities for students to achieve employment related competencies in a workplace environment. WBL can build career and college readiness through experiences designed to foster improved educational and work readiness outcomes. Questar III BOCES' WBL program has shown tremendous growth since it began. In the last four years, our students have accumulated over 11,000 hours of work-based learning, paid employment, service learning and volunteer opportunities.

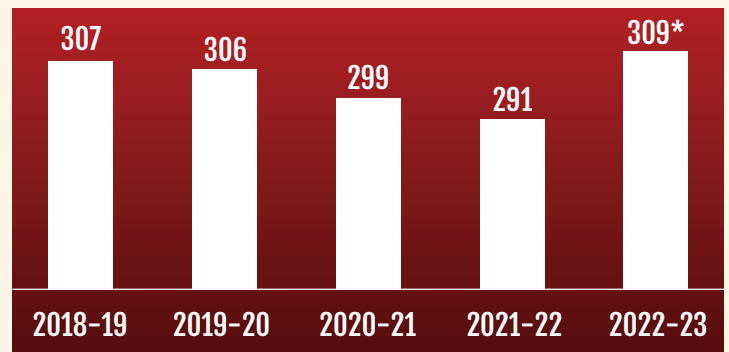
Service Learning

Service Learning is a teaching/learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth and civic responsibility. Over the past two years, our service learning opportunities were expanded to supplement our students that have not been able to go out into the community. Service learning projects have benefited our local nursing homes, hospitals, first responders, churches and food pantries.

Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS)

The CDOS credential classes provide reinforcement of the student's knowledge of the workforce by bringing in speakers to explain the skills and education needed for jobs. WBL hours count toward the requirement for the CDOS credential. WBL also introduces students to different jobs/careers, reinforcing their ideas with soft skills and then giving them real-life work experience at job sites with scaffolded supports. We also work with our WBL partners on creating hiring opportunities for our post-secondary students. Over the past five years, our programs have awarded nearly 100 students the CDOS credential as a graduation pathway.

Special Education Enrollment



* Enrollment as of March 2023.



Questar III BOCES Facilities

- Donald R. Kline Technical School
- George Washington School
- Marilyn A. Noonan School at Durham
- Paul Puccio School at Maple Hill
- Rensselaer Academy
- Robert H. Gibson Technical School
- Sackett Educational Center

District/College-Based Classrooms

- Columbia High School
- Rensselaer Jr.-Sr. High School
- Robin Sobol Transition Academy at Hudson Valley Community College

Itinerant Services

Questar III BOCES staff members are shared between school districts through itinerant services. Specific schedules or student assignments are determined by school district needs. The cost of individual itinerant service is impacted by the salaries and benefits of the individuals providing the service. Furthermore, due to district purchases and changes in staff, the costs of these services may have significant year-to-year fluctuations.

Budget for Itinerant Services

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
ITINERANT SERVICES	\$1,564,809	\$1,664,291	\$1,795,398	\$1,804,666

Instructional itinerant services include consultant teaching, librarian, music therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, adaptive physical education, school psychologist, psychological counseling, speech and language therapy, speech improvement, teacher of the blind/visually impaired and English as a new language (ENL). District services such as claims auditing, communications/public information coordinator, and business and education partnerships are also provided as itinerant services.



General Education

Questar III BOCES offers a wide array of general educational offerings such as Questar III and HVCC STEM High School, Tech Valley High School,[®] distance learning, virtual learning, arts in education, and pre-kindergarten.

Budget for General Education Programs

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
GENERAL EDUCATION	\$6,655,033	\$7,828,834	\$8,002,667	\$7,569,364

181 ► Pre-Kindergarten students

100% ► STEM High students take college classes in their freshmen year at no cost to families

207 ► STEM High students' college credits earned to date by the sophomore class

370 ► Anticipated credits earned by 9th and 10th grade STEM High School students by the end of the 2022-2023 school year



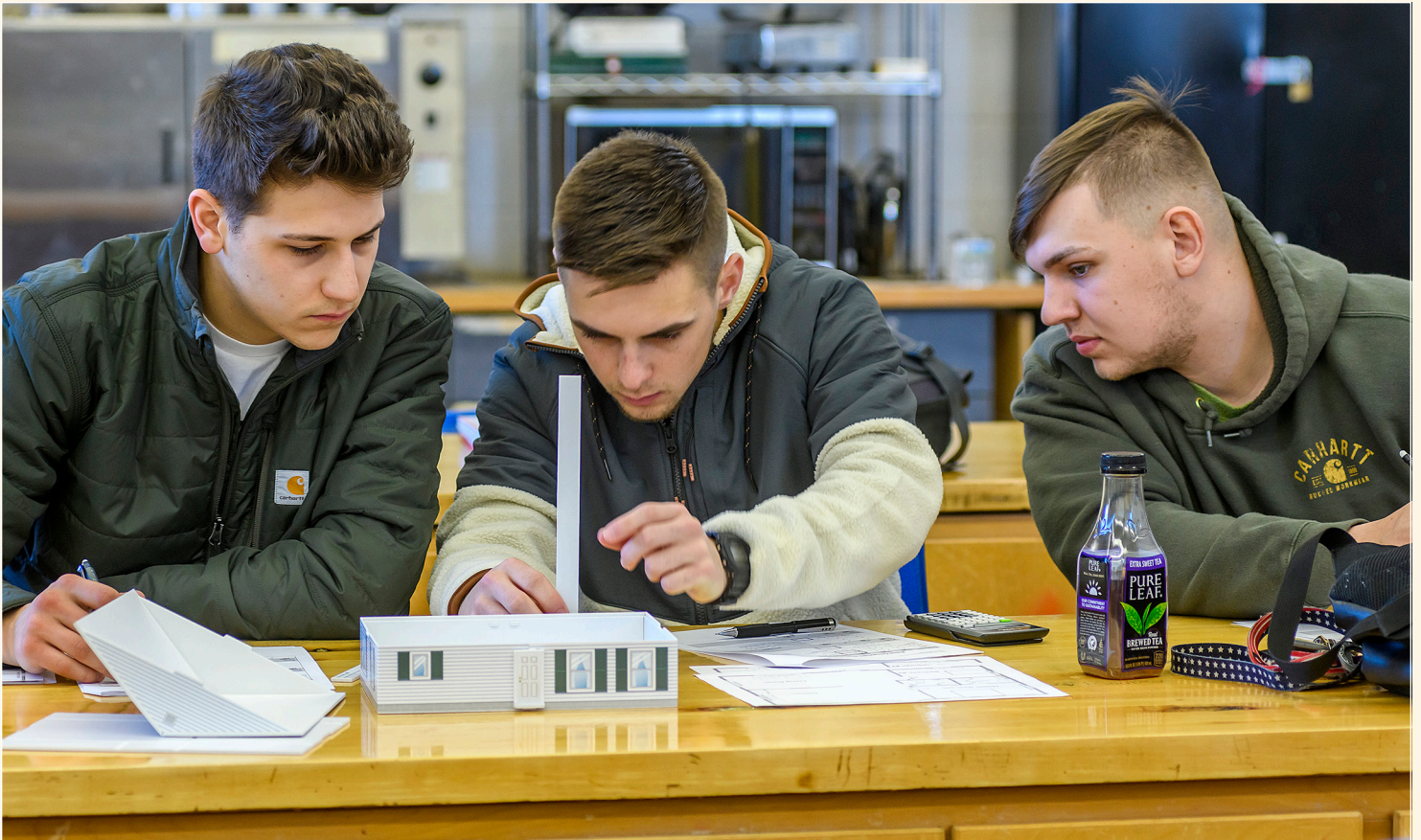
General Education

The Questar III and HVCC STEM High School opened its doors in September 2021 on the campus of Hudson Valley Community College (HVCC) in Troy. Since its opening this comprehensive regional high school has continued to welcome in cohorts of students who are eagerly working on both their high school diploma and college degree in STEM specific pathways. Students who attend this high school begin their college course work in 9th grade and many will earn their full Associate of Applied Science degree during their four years in high school, all at no cost to families. The school's funding is supplemented by two grants: Pathways in Technology (P-TECH) and Smart Scholars Early College High School (ECHS). Both grants directly address both education and workforce development skills gaps by providing innovative approaches to high school and college education while engaging corporate partners and local communities for student success. The school occupies its own building right on the HVCC campus and all students participate in and benefit from the many opportunities the larger campus has to offer. This includes access



to lab experiences in state-of-the-art science labs, cultural events housed at the college campus and an array of student support services available to all HVCC students. Within the STEM High School, students receive a fully aligned high school education from certified teachers who instruct students via interdisciplinary STEM-based learning

experiences. This school also has a vast network of industry partners that provide mentorship and internship experiences for students, along with field trips and job shadowing. The STEM specific degree pathways available to all students include: Computer Information Systems, Clean Energy Management, Civil Engineering and Medical Science; all of which have a strong favorable job growth projection in the coming years. Students will graduate this program with 24 to 64 college credits, with connections to local industry and proficiency in essential skills, such as: problem solving, critical thinking, team work and collaboration that our business partner employers need. With the support of our component districts and our two NYSED grants, every student has access to these opportunities at no cost to families.

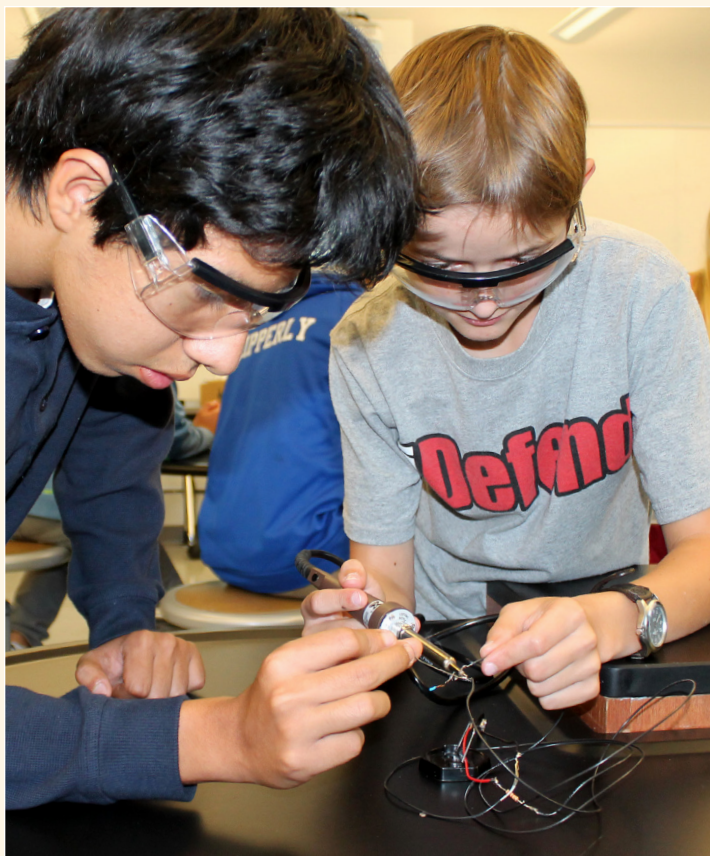


General Education



Tech Valley High School (TVHS) is a four-year comprehensive regional STEM public high school that is built on the principles of project-based learning and collaboration. Students have ample access to technology, participate in Student Learning Teams and earn college credits with College in the High School courses, as well as the College Ready partnership with Excelsior College.

- ▶ **140 students from 30 school districts**
- ▶ **2-week annual career exploration program (called I-Term)**
- ▶ **4 years of math and science (and 2+ years of Mandarin Chinese)**
- ▶ **27 college credits earned, on average, by graduating seniors**
- ▶ **20+ monthly interactions with business, non-profit and higher education leaders**
- ▶ **60-credit associate degree available through Excelsior College**
- ▶ **100 hours of community service in order to graduate**
- ▶ **100+ presentations delivered across four years of school**



Distance Learning

Questar III BOCES works closely with the Northeast Regional Information Center (NERIC) to offer access to a distance learning network that expands the offerings of districts in our cooperative. This allows participating districts to share courses that cannot be offered in most districts and offers students the opportunity for Advanced Placement (AP) and college courses.

Online Learning

The Online Learning Service provides credit recovery and credit accrual options both synchronously and asynchronously, to support on-time graduation as school districts are faced with increased requirements, limited resources, shortage of personnel and scheduling conflicts. Districts have the option to enroll struggling students, while taking a course for first time credit, in credit recovery as an intervention or support to pass critical high school courses. Online Learning utilizes courseware aligned with state standards. It is highly personalized and highly flexible.

Virtual Academy

The Virtual Learning Academy service is an opportunity for school districts to provide instruction to students who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to attend in-person instruction. The Virtual Academy offers Grades 9-12, a full list of grade and subject level courses that can be used to complete a student's full course load for the school year or support students whose schedules cannot accommodate required or elective courses. The Virtual Academy team work directly with districts, students and families to support the student's successful completion of their courses.

Pre-Kindergarten

Questar III BOCES has partnered with districts to create and deliver model programs for pre-kindergarten educational services for nearly three decades. Questar III BOCES supports two types of pre-kindergarten programs: three Targeted Pre-Kindergarten programs (TPK) and six Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs. Our TPK programs provide developmentally appropriate instruction to four-year-old students from families that are considered economically disadvantaged. The six UPK programs are located in three sites in two different counties. They each provide developmentally appropriate instruction to four-year-old students. Our programs employ certified teachers and teaching assistants and incorporate high-quality curricula to prepare students for future school success through strong foundational skills in early literacy and numeracy, social interaction and kindergarten readiness through child-centered activities.

Arts in Education and Exploratory Enrichment

Arts in Education and Exploratory Enrichment are shared services designed to provide students with extraordinary educational opportunities. Activities may include the arts, STEM focused events, or bringing in outside speakers. Staff development related to a specific art activity is also available. Questar III is pleased to host the 34th Annual High School Invitational Art Exhibition, a juried art competition open to high school students in the Questar III region.

Instructional Support

The Questar III BOCES instructional support services provide high-quality professional development, instructional technology services and other instructional support services that benefit students, teachers and administrators across the region. The majority of these services will have rates that remain unchanged or are increasing by two percent or less for the 2023-2024 school year. Increased participation, along with deploying a model of continuous improvement, has mitigated the need for additional rate increases.

Budget for Instructional Support Services

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	\$11,758,229	\$10,367,376	\$12,115,733	\$10,831,750

22 ► Teams advanced to the Odyssey of the Mind world finals in the past decade

25 ► Districts provided embedded professional development

150+ ► Unique workshops and trainings offered over the past year by School Improvement

650+ ► Home instruction students served

8,862 ► Hours of embedded professional development provided by content specialists

180,000+ ► eTitles borrowed in Sora, an ebook and audiobook service provided by the School Library System

200,000+ ► Vetted educational media resources, including streaming video and royalty free music, available through Media Library Service

450,000+ ► Titles in Follett catalogs supported by the School Library System

\$1 million+ ► Educational technology software purchases

\$15 million+ ► In devices and technology assets managed for school districts

Instructional Support

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

The Questar III School Improvement Office offers services and programs to assist all stakeholders in the educational community. Programs and services are tailored to meet the needs of school districts and individual schools. The School Improvement office offers services in the additional following areas:

- Data Coordination and Analysis
- Embedded Professional Development
- Grant Writing
- Home Instruction Review Service
- Leadership Coaching
- Odyssey of the Mind
- Program Evaluation
- Regionally Developed Assessments
- Regional Scoring Coordination
- Regional Professional Development Day
- School Library System
- STEM Research Institute

Data Coordination and Analysis

The Data Coordination and Analysis Service provides on-site expertise in data analysis and reporting. Support and implementation are offered for districts' multiple submissions of data to the State's Student Information Repository System (SIRS). The service provides expertise relating to ESSA Accountability. In-district professional development is offered in the area of data interpretation to inform instructional practice. In addition, Qualtrics is used to develop surveys capturing qualitative and quantitative data in easy-to-understand reports.

Embedded Professional Development

School Improvement specialists provide a variety of services and supports for districts in the Questar III BOCES Region. The work of the specialists support best practices guided by New York State learning standards and current research. Embedded professional development is available in many content areas, including English/Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, Social-Emotional Learning/Behavioral Consulting and Coaching, Mental Health, Restorative Practices and Special Education.

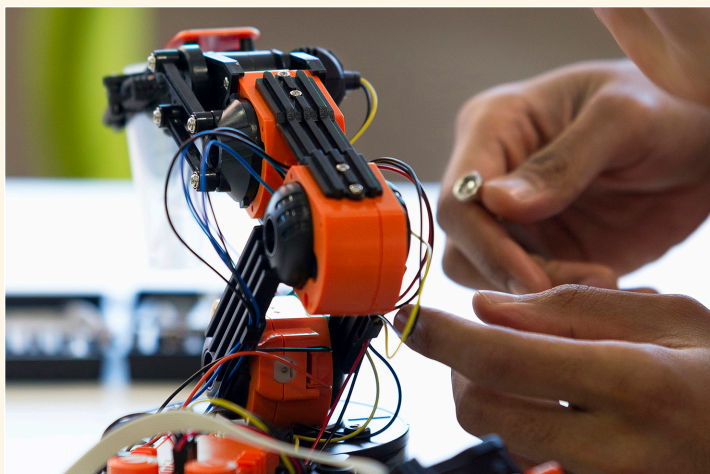
School Library System and Related Services

School districts can purchase shared services that expand access to resources beyond the walls of the library. Services include building enhanced library collections, providing full library automation support and online resources. The Multimedia Service continues to add products and is now offering Clickview, Discovery Education and Swank Movie Streaming and Licensing.

Odyssey of the Mind

Odyssey of the Mind is a worldwide educational program that helps students develop creative problem-solving skills through teamwork. Questar III BOCES is the New York State Region 4 coordinator of this program, the second largest in the state. Questar III BOCES teams advance to state and world final competitions each year. In March 2023, we are pleased to host our first fully in-person tournament since 2019.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY SERVICES



Model Schools

Model Schools assists districts with integrating technology into the curriculum, training faculty and staff on a wide variety of software and presenting on a wide variety of relevant topics. Robotics, virtual reality technology and coding materials can be borrowed, with appropriate embedded professional development, from the service. Virtual reality in the classroom allows all students the opportunity to explore simulated experiences.

Educational Technology Software and Equipment Purchases

Model Schools participating districts are eligible to purchase educational technology equipment and software to support the teaching and learning needs of school districts. Districts are able to leverage their buying power through participation in this program.

District Support

Questar III BOCES' district support services extend and enhance the capacity of participating districts by providing a high level of technical expertise at competitive prices. We ensure that our services are the best value in the marketplace. We continuously benchmark our district support services against our competition and make adjustments when needed. For 2023-2024, the majority of these services will have rates that will remain unchanged or are at increases of two percent or less.

Budget for District Support Services

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
DISTRICT SUPPORT	\$16,530,079	\$17,126,380	\$18,928,533	\$18,006,224

90% ▶ Of all school districts (and 33 BOCES) served by the State Aid & Financial Planning Service

200+ ▶ School district support staff trained in CPR

86,000 ▶ Students' safety impacted by our Health and Safety Service

6.7 ▶ Million square feet of fire inspections in 185 buildings

7.4 ▶ Million square feet of visual building inspections

\$101 ▶ Million in public and private excess cost aid secured by the STAC Service for district clients

\$1+ ▶ Billion in successful school budget and capital project communications provided by Questar III BOCES last year

\$11.2 ▶ Billion in assets inventoried and managed by our Asset Management & Valuation Service in 1,872 buildings, totaling 57 million square feet

\$17.5 ▶ Billion in OPEB liability valuation for 197 school districts served by our GASB 75 Service

District Support

Asset Management & Valuation

The Asset Management & Valuation Service has teamed up with Asset-Works, Inc. to provide school districts and BOCES across the state with a comprehensive solution for managing fixed assets that includes a complete physical inventory with building appraisals, annual re-inventory and a web-based inventory software system.

Absence Management & Substitute Calling

The Absence Management & Substitute Calling Service is an automated system which allows school district staff to report absences by phone or online. The automated system then places calls to substitutes based on employee request and substitute availability.

GASB 75 Valuation

The GASB 75 Valuation Service assists school districts and BOCES across New York State in the valuation and management of their OPEB liability. The Government Accounting Standards Board (GASB) issued Statement No. 75 with the primary objective of improving accounting and financial reporting by state and local governments for post-employment benefits other than pensions (OPEB).

State Aid & Financial Planning

The State Aid & Financial Planning Service assists school districts and BOCES statewide in navigating their way through the complex world of school finance. The service assists school districts and BOCES in interpreting the impact of any state aid changes resulting from the pandemic. At a time when school business and school district administrators have more requirements than ever before, and with the state providing historic levels of state aid, knowledge and fast, accurate information are essential.

Special Education Aid Assistance

The Special Education Aid Assistance Service works collaboratively with school districts across the state to maximize and secure their excess cost aid. A dedicated team of STAC analysts keep districts abreast of new and changing special education claiming regulations. Additionally, the service provides education and training of best practices, to ensure all reporting requirements and deadlines are met, for maximizing all available excess cost aid.

Health and Safety

Questar III BOCES' Health and Safety Service continues to provide a comprehensive selection of cost effective services to support school safety, facility management and safety compliance needs. Shifting from the pandemic, the Health and Safety service remains to be the point of contact for the districts, counties and BOCES in sharing of related information in best practices for school safety and mental health supports for students and staff. The service continues to lead the region in school safety initiatives by managing its grant from the DOJ's Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act (the STOP School Violence Act) for an anonymous reporting system, allowing districts to comply with Alyssa's Law. Finally, the Health and Service continues to grow its Regional Reunification Team model to support our schools within the region in the event reunification is needed as a result of tragic event.



Communications

The Communications Service supports 22 school districts throughout the year, from one-time requests to ongoing projects. In recent years, Questar III BOCES has added new services in response to district needs, including video production and drone videography/photography.

Technology Services

The Technology Services Department team is comprised of 22+ dedicated computing professionals with decades of combined experience. Questar III BOCES provides information technology resources and services to address district IT needs. From staff augmentation to complete management of technology, the department addresses the most basic to the most complex requirements. With security certifications, years of experience and strategic partnerships, expeditious service is provided to meet any demands. Some of the services the department is able to provide, include:

- Management, engineering and technician consulting time
- Fully redundant and secure data center hosting
- Hosted off-site backup repository
- Security assessments and penetration testing
- EDR (Endpoint Detection Response) & MDR (Managed Detection Response) security solutions
- Vetted solutions for DDOS (Distributed Denial-of-Service) attack remediation
- Helpdesk as a service
- MFA (Multi-Factor-Authentication) solutions
- Project management, strategic planning and budgeting
- Technology evaluations

Questar III BOCES provides coordination for the Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Health Insurance Trust and the Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Workers' Compensation Consortium. These separate entities are governed by representatives of the participating school districts and Questar III BOCES.

Special Aid

The Special Aid Fund accounts for state and federal grants and other contracts that are not accounted for in the General Fund. Changes in new or ending grant awards or other contracts creates budgetary variations from year-to-year. Funded contracts and grants are charged a state-approved indirect cost rate. The revenue generated assists in reducing the administrative budget charge to component school districts. The Special Aid Fund includes anticipated funding for the following programs:

- Internal Audit Service
- Library Programs Aid
- Targeted Pre-Kindergarten Grant
- P-TECH Grant
- Early College High School Grant
- Perkins Career & Technical Education (Perkins V) Grant
- Special Education Extended School Year Program
- PR/HYLI – NYS Contract
- RBERN – NYS Contract
- Title III Limited English Proficiency Consortium Grant
- Employment Preparation Education Aid
- Workforce Investment Opportunity Act Grant
- STOP School Violence – US Department of Justice Grant

Budget for Special Aid Fund Programs

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2021-22 ACTUAL EXPENDITURES	2022-23 ADOPTED BUDGET	2022-23 ADJUSTED BUDGET	2023-24 TENTATIVE BUDGET
SPECIAL AID FUND	\$5,181,063	\$5,972,841	\$6,461,163	\$6,270,206



Special Aid

The Angelo Del Toro Puerto Rican/Hispanic Youth Leadership Institute (PR/HYLI)

PR/HYLI is funded by a contract from the New York State Education Department. The institute is an innovative collaboration with the NYS Assembly & Senate Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force in conjunction with the annual SOMOS Conference, NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, New York City Public Schools and other agencies as appropriate. This exciting program offers 275 high school student participants the unique opportunity to achieve civic readiness and grow as leaders in their community and beyond. PR/HYLI was recently recognized as a program to watch by *Excellencia in Education*, an organization that helps to accelerate Latino success in higher education by promoting student achievement.

Capital District Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network (RBERN)

RBERN is funded by a contract from the New York State Education Department to provide technical assistance and professional development to school districts, all educators and parents with English Language Learners (ELLs) in its service area. Areas of focus include assistance with English as a New Language (ENL) and Bilingual Education programs, instructional strategies, resources, conferences, workshops and embedded work. The Capital District RBERN provides service across eight BOCES and is part of a statewide network.

Internal Audit Service

The Internal Audit Service provides independent, objective assurance and professional consulting services designed to add value and improve operations of school districts and BOCES throughout the state. The Internal Audit Service auditors support \$3.8 billion in annual operational district/BOCES budgets.

Special Education Extended School Year (ESY) Program

The program is a six-week (30 days), full-day special education summer program for students with a wide range of disabilities and needs. The goal of ESY is to help students maintain the skills that they learned during the school year. The program accommodates both Regents and NYSAA students who are recommended for a 4:1:2, 6:1:1, 6:1:2, 8:1:2 or 12:1:1 program ratio. Additionally, the ESY program offers High School Regents students the opportunity to pursue credit recovery. Students enrolled in the program will have access to related services including:

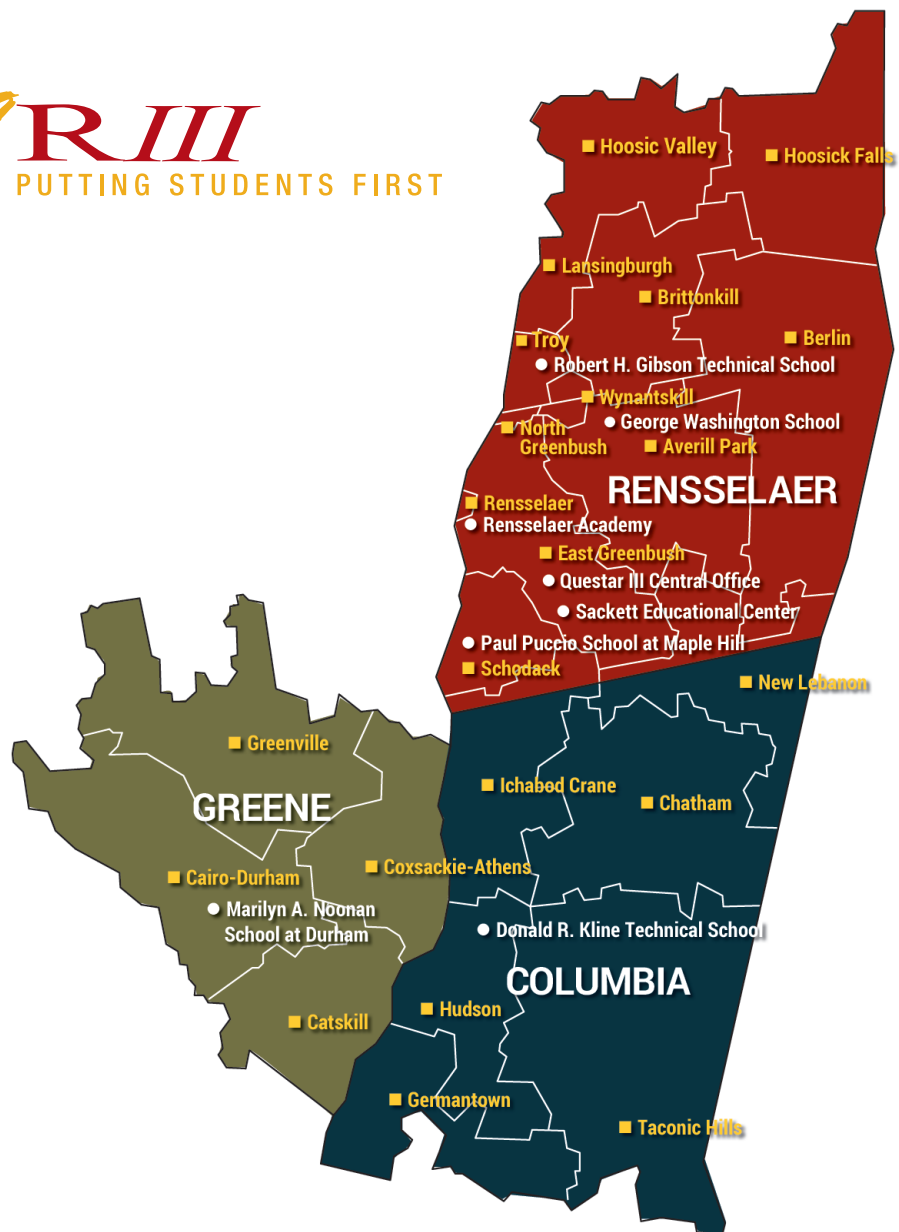
- Counseling
- Occupational Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility
- Physical Therapy
- Speech/Language Therapy
- Vision Services



Our Service Area & Locations



- SCHOOL DISTRICTS WE SERVE
- QUESTAR III BOCES LOCATIONS



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NON-DISCRIMINATION NOTICE: Questar III BOCES does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, weight, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or other characteristic protected by federal or state law in its programs and activities, including but not limited to admission, access to and participation in educational programs, course offerings and student activities.

Questar III BOCES provides equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups. The following positions at Questar III BOCES have been designated to handle inquiries regarding Questar III BOCES' non-discrimination policies and the application of regulations prohibiting discrimination:

- TITLE IX COMPLIANCE OFFICER – QUESTAR III BOCES, 10 Empire State Blvd., Castleton, NY 12033 | 518-477-8771
- 504 COMPLIANCE OFFICER – QUESTAR III BOCES, 10 Empire State Blvd., Castleton, NY 12033 | 518-477-8771
- SCHOOL ATTORNEY – QUESTAR III BOCES, 10 Empire State Blvd., Castleton, NY 12033 | 518-477-8771

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, or to inquire regarding the application of regulations prohibiting discrimination, contact the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights.

Please contact the Questar III BOCES Business Office for additional information on the 2023-2024 Tentative Budget at 518-477-8771.

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QUESTAR III

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

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