



# TENTATIVE 2024 BUDGET 2025 BUDGET





Commitment to Excellence | Commitment to Leadership & Service | Commitment to Innovation

#### 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 10 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 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 23. 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 2024-2025 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 66 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 <u>Nadine.Gazzola@questar.org</u> or <u>gcruz@questar.org</u> with any questions.

Nadine Gazzola, Board President

Dr. Gladys I. Cruz, District Superintendent

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### 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 nearly 300 years of school board experience in our region.



Nadine Gazzola Board President



Joseph Garland
Board Vice President



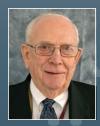
**Edmund Brooks** 



Mary Daly



David Finch



John C. Hill



Mark Mann



Mary Marro-Giroux



Melony Spock



Mary Yurista



Frank Zwack, Jr.

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### The Leading Edge

Change is inevitable and it requires educational service agencies like Questar III to be on the cutting edge of innovation. As public education evolves, so is our organization. For many years, Questar III developed strategic plans to focus our work. Questar III continues its quest for excellence, leadership, service, and innovation through The Leading Edge, our framework for success which defines our vision, mission and core values.

#### **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 approximately 35 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 2024-2025 fiscal year. More than 66 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2024-2025, while nearly 79 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 7-9 of this document.

The combined 2024-2025 tentative administrative, rent and capital budget will increase by 1.12 percent. While there is a small increase in the other revenues that support this combined budget, the net effect results in a 1.2 percent increase to component districts. The 2024-2025 tentative administrative budget is \$7,257,451, which is at contingent level. This means the budget increase equals the other post employment benefits (OPEB) increase. 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 2024-2025 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 nearly 91 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 3-4, provide a summary of expenditures by program/service and by object of expenditure categories and includes the following financial data:

- The 2022-2023 final actual expenditures.
- The 2023-2024 budget adopted by the Questar III BOCES Board of Education based on initial service requests.

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 23, 2024 to vote on the tentative administrative budget and elect BOCES board members. The administrative budget is the only portion of the BOCES budget voted on.

- The 2023-2024 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 Ill BOCES increases its budget to account for requests of additional purchased services from component and non-component school districts and other BOCES.
- The 2024-2025 tentative budget represents an estimate of purchased services based on historical trends and projected service requests.

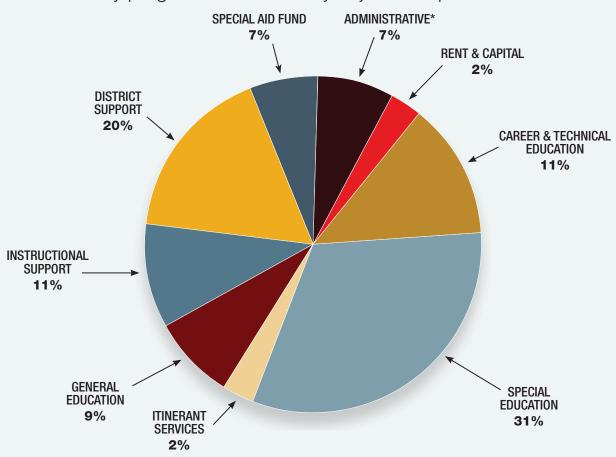
The 2024-2025 tentative budget, excluding the administrative, and rent and capital budgets, will be adjusted to the actual program and services requested by school districts by May 1st.



Jared Reed, a 2010 graduate of Averill Park CSD, credits Questar Ill's New Visions with preparing him for a college-level workload and putting him nearly a year ahead in school.

# Total Tentative Budget

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



2024-2025 Tentative Budget by Program/Service Category

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PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2022-23 Actual Expenditures	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Adjusted Budget	2024-25 Tentative Budget		
ADMINISTRATIVE	\$6,618,098	\$7,152,804	\$7,799,404	\$7,257,451		
RENT & CAPITAL	2,126,539	2,205,217	2,205,217	2,205,217		
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	10,027,264	11,519,088	13,322,019	11,954,507		
SPECIAL EDUCATION	29,854,475	31,546,979	36,123,960	32,708,009		
ITINERANT SERVICES	1,439,915	1,862,468	2,092,869	1,960,193		
GENERAL EDUCATION	7,093,592	8,100,888	7,569,691	8,977,754		
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	12,282,406	11,161,474	12,840,634	11,971,949		
DISTRICT SUPPORT	16,969,305	18,681,662	22,045,772	20,391,211		
SPECIAL AID FUND	5,958,105	7,928,585	8,486,676	6,843,027		
TOTAL	\$92,369,699	\$100,159,165	\$112,486,242	\$104,269,318		

<sup>\*</sup> The Administrative Budget is the only portion of the budget that component boards vote upon on April 23, 2024.

# Total Tentative Budget



In January 2024, George Washington School students participated in an anti-bullying program led by Tay Fisher, formerly of the Harlem Globetrotters.

### 2024-2025 Total Tentative Budget by Object of Expenditure Category

OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE CATEGORY	2022-23 Actual Expenditures	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Adjusted Budget	2024-25 Tentative Budget
INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	\$22,274,333	\$23,363,013	\$25,248,692	\$25,941,692
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	8,253,346	8,888,165	8,670,691	8,803,839
EQUIPMENT	1,818,809	1,954,351	2,826,895	441,909
LEASE ACQUISTION	2,824,681	2,500,000	2,729,676	2,500,000
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	4,131,521	3,923,609	4,932,885	4,671,379
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	4,358,138	5,362,183	6,858,143	5,573,021
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS	2,639,298	3,072,216	4,683,897	3,273,470
RENTAL OF FACILITIES	1,126,539	1,205,217	1,205,217	1,205,217
PAYMENTS TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS & OTHER BOO	CES 19,948,731	20,412,093	20,971,318	22,000,511
DISTRICT LEASES (PRINCIPAL & INTEREST)	2,154,685	1,390,000	1,583,000	1,800,000
DEBT SERVICE - INTEREST ON REVENUE ANTICIPATION NOTES	96,667	125,000	175,000	125,000
EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS	13,067,413	16,950,106	15,795,367	17,626,232
OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	3,832,733	3,662,187	3,662,187	3,766,834
TRANSFER TO CAPITAL	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OPERATIONS & MAIN	IT. 3,007,983	3,703,228	8,179,851	2,917,855
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OTHER SERVICES	3,193,411	3,967,731	5,180,117	3,771,195
TRANSFER CREDITS TO OTHER SERVICES	(1,358,588)	(1,319,935)	(1,216,695)	(1,148,837)
TOTAL	\$92,369,699	\$100,159,165	\$112,486,242	\$104,269,318

### **BOCES Overview**

#### **General Facts**

66

YEARS OF SERVICE TO LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

300≈ PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

400+ BUSINESS, EDUCATION & COMMUNITY PARTNERS

690 

SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND BOCES SERVED

1,652 SQUARE MILES IN THE SUPERVISORY REGION

28,824 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 23, 2024** 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 79.7 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 programs and services are developed, or existing programs and 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 SUPERINTENDENTS** 

15

**NEW BUSINESS OFFICIALS** 

17

NEW CHAIRS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

5,9

NEW PRINCIPALS, ASSISTANT
PRINCIPALS & DEANS OF STUDENTS

63

NEW SCHOOL COUNSELORS & LIBRARIANS

10,7

**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 superintendent leadership and development opportunities 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	2022-23 Actual Expenditures	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2023-24 Adjusted Budget	2024-25 Tentative Budget
INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	\$196,398	\$225,730	\$335,230	\$381,658
NON-INSTRUCTIONAL SALARIES	929,108	1,133,492	941,492	987,579
EQUIPMENT	1,503	12,000	131,088	20,000
SUPPLIES & MATERIALS	91,289	106,698	126,008	112,844
CONTRACTUAL SERVICES	168,433	281,865	305,836	294,676
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE CONTRACTS	293,689	382,025	462,626	369,754
INTEREST ON REVENUE ANTICIPATION NOTES	96,667	125,000	175,000	125,000
EMPLOYEE FRINGE BENEFITS	405,635	609,961	601,789	638,287
OTHER POST EMPLOYMENT BENEFITS	3,832,733	3,662,187	3,662,187	3,766,834
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OPERATIONS & MAIN	T. 93,322	119,013	233,096	64,428
TRANSFER CHARGES FROM OTHER SERVICES	509,321	494,833	825,052	496,391
TOTAL	\$6,618,098	\$7,152,804	\$7,799,404	\$7,257,451



Patrick Stark, a 2023 Taconic Hills CSD graduate of our Heavy Equipment Repair and Operations program, represented Questar III at the SkillsUSA National Championship.

# Tentative Administrative Budget

Questar III BOCES' tentative administrative budget for 2024-2025 is \$7,257,451 which equals a contingent level budget. The other post employment benefits (OPEB) costs account for 51.9 percent of the budget, while the general operations costs account for 48.1 percent of the budget. The total increase for the tentative administrative budget is \$104,647 or 1.46 percent from the previous year's budget.

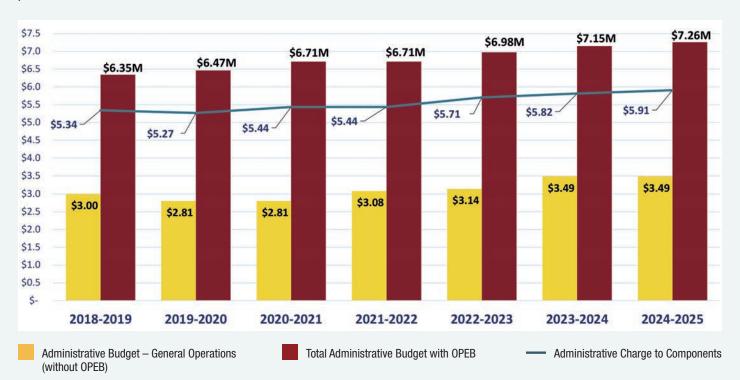
However, the actual administrative charge to districts is \$5,914,348,

representing an increase of \$96,327 or 1.66 percent from the previous year. The administrative charge for individual component districts is derived from the administrative budget of \$7,257,451 and is reduced by \$1,343,103 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	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2024-25 Tentative Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Total Administrative Budget	\$7,152,804	\$7,257,451	\$104,647	1.46%
Less: Other Revenues	1,334,783	1,343,103	8,320	0.62
Administrative Charge to Components	\$5,818,021	\$5,914,348	\$96,327	1.66%

#### 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. The administrative charge to districts has increased on average \$95,000 per year or 1.73 percent.



<sup>\*</sup>In millions.

### Tentative Administrative Budget

#### **Administrative Revenues**

(excluding interest income)

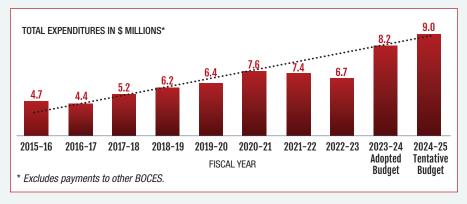
The revenues from administrative fees charged to non-components for statewide services, indirect costs and other miscellaneous revenues help Questar III BOCES contain administrative costs for its 21 component districts. As our statewide district support services grow, so does our administrative revenue (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
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%
2024-25	\$1,283,103*	0.62%

<sup>\*</sup> Excludes interest income of \$60,000. Total Administrative Revenues, including interest income, is \$1,343,103.

#### **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

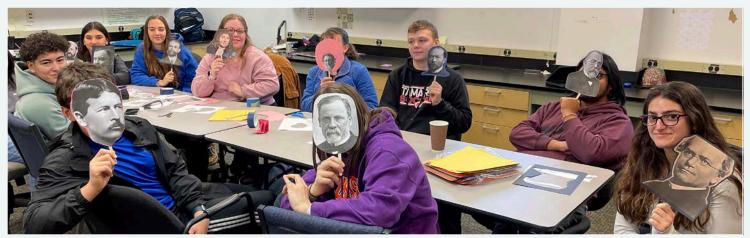
The District Superintendent serves as the Chief Executive Officer of Questar III BOCES and is the representative of the New York State Commissioner of Education in the Questar III BOCES Supervisory District. The District Superintendent's salary is paid by New York State and Questar III BOCES. The BOCES 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	\$ 16,887
Health, Dental & Disability Insurance	\$ 30,665
Workers' Compensation Insurance	\$ 2,472
Unemployment Insurance	\$ 495



Last fall, Scientific Research & World Health students read the classic "Enemy of the People", an 1882 play by Henrik Ibsen about the contamination of a public water supply. They learned how the Love Canal environmental disaster lead to many of our current regulations.

# 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 2024-2025 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 support 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.



Last summer, the Questar III & HVCC STEM High School hosted a summer camp for middle school students in partnership with Regeneron and Hudson Valley Community College.

RENT AND CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2024-25 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

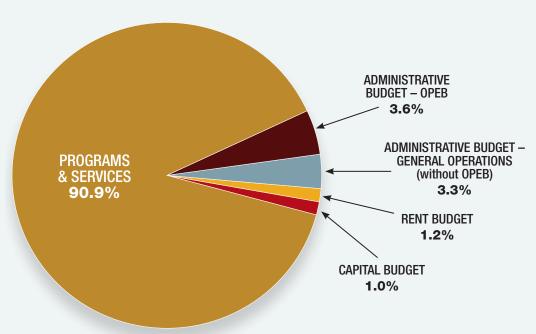
Sections 1950 and 1951 of the NYS Education Law established BOCES and the requirement of member or component districts to pay a proportionate share of the administrative, rent and capital costs.

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 1.12 percent for a total combined budget of \$9,462,668. The net administrative rent and capital charge to components, after other revenues are applied, will increase by 1.2 percent for a total combined charge of \$8,113,715 for 2024-2025.

ADMINISTRATIVE, RENT & CAPITAL BUDGETS & CHARGES TO COMPONENTS	2023-24 Adopted Budget	2024-25 Tentative Budget	Dollar Change	Percent Change
Total Administrative Budget	7,152,804	7,257,451	\$104,647	1.46%
Total Rent & Capital Budget	2,205,217	2,205,217	_	0.00%
Total Administrative, Rent and Capital Budgets	\$9,358,021	\$9,462,668	\$104,647	1.12%
Total Administrative Charge	5,818,021	5,914,348	\$96,327	1.66%
Total Rent & Capital Charge	2,199,367	2,199,367	_	0.00%
Total Administrative, Rent & Capital Charge to Components	\$8,017,388	\$8,113,715	\$96,327	1.20%

Together the administrative, rent and capital budgets equate to 9.1 percent of the total Questar III BOCES Tentative Budget. The remaining 90.9 percent represents the programs and services purchased by districts and other BOCES.



# 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 66 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2023-2024. Overall, nearly 79 percent of services are below a two percent rate increase. This chart demonstrates how the 2024-2025 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
2020-21	57.02%	77.53%
2021-22	88.62%	94.83%
2022-23	68.64%	79.79%
2023-24	70.44%	82.85%
2024-25	66.36%	78.50%



Hannah Schermerhorn, a 2023 graduate of Ichabod Crane CSD, earned her FAA Private Pilot Certificate through Questar III's Aviation Program. She aspires to be a military pilot.

# 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 2.0 percent to 5.46 percent for 2024-2025.

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 2024-2025 budget contains new and expanded CTE program offerings based on interest such as: the launch of a new two-year Education Careers program; an Electrical Trades program; expansion of Welding, Culinary, Criminal Justice; and an additional firefighting curriculum as part of a two-year Fire & EMS program.

# Programs recognized by the CTE TAC of NY as model programs

# **8–15** College credits available to New Visions Program students

Students inducted into the National
Technical Honor Society last year,
an increase of 52 percent from the
previous year

98.9% 
Graduation rate

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

10,000+ based learning, job shadowing or apprenticeships last year

#### **Program Offerings**

#### CTE

- Agriculture Science
- Automotive Technologies\*
- Aviation
- Construction Technologies\*
- Cosmetology
- Criminal Justice
- Culinary Arts
- Education Careers
- Electrical Trades
- Fire & EMS
- Gaming & Multimedia
- Heavy Equipment Operation & Maintenance\*
- HVAC & Renewable Energies\*
- Nursing Assistant
- Welding/Metal Fabrication/Machine Tool\*
- \* Part of the Youth Apprenticeship Program

#### **New Visions**

- Business, Finance & Marketing (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
- Career Exploration
- Introduction to Food Services

#### **Budget for Career & Technical Education Programs**

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION	\$10,027,264	\$11,519,088	\$13,322,019	\$11,954,507

# 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 three schools, the Robert H. Gibson Technical School in Troy, generally serving students in Rensselaer County, the Donald R. Kline Technical School in Hudson, generally serving students in Columbia and Greene Counties and the Marilyn A. Noonan School at Durham serving students in our Agriculture Science and Heavy Equipment programs.

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 local businesses to offer high school students paid internships that could lead to immediate employment after graduation. Entering its fifth year in 2024-2025, our Youth Apprenticeship Program continues to grow, with 26 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 2024-2025. Based upon interest, these may include a new two-year Education Careers program at the Donald R. Kline Technical School and a new Electrical Trades program at the Robert H. Gibson Technical School. Questar III also plans to add a Welding progam at its former warehouse located behind Gibson.

#### **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 futures. 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 seven programs 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, 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 expanded this year with the addition of the Business, Finance and Marketing 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	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
SPECIAL EDUCATION	\$29,854,475	\$31,546,979	\$36,123,960	\$32,708,009

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

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. Salaries and employee benefits drive the rate increases along with the rising costs of supplies and materials.

Intake for the Special Education Program is very high. As a result, physical space capacity is being evaluated to ensure 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 with Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and 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 work-based learning opportunities both on the HVCC campus and in the community. Assistance in work-based learning 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 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 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 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.

School districts served including 19 components

**52** Classrooms in three counties

Of the Class of 2023 completed their graduation requirements

(Regents, local diploma, CDOS or Skills and Achievement Commencement credential)

Physical therapy sessions per week

Social work and individual counseling sessions per week

256 ► Occupational therapy sessions per week

Speech therapy sessions per week

Hours of work-based or service learning, internships, and school-to-work paid employment completed by students last year

#### **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 are school-coordinated activities which provide opportunities for students with disabilities to achieve employment related competencies in a workplace environment. WBL builds 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 its inception.

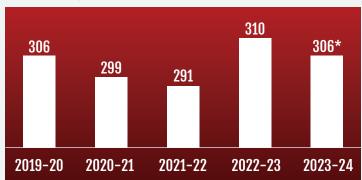
#### **Service Learning**

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 students who were unable to go out into the community. Our students have directly supported local nursing homes, hospitals, first responders, churches and food pantries through their service learning experiences.

#### **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 knowledge needed for the workplace. WBL hours count toward the requirement for the CDOS credential competencies. WBL also introduces students to different careers, reinforcing students' essential skills such as problem-solving, critical thinking, teamwork and collaboration and real-life work experience at job sites with scaffolded supports. We also work with our WBL partners to support post-secondary work-based opportunities for 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 February 2024.



Questar III offers Special Education programming at 10 different sites regionally.

#### **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	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
ITINERANT SERVICES	\$1,439,915	\$1,862,468	\$2,092,869	\$1,960,193

Instructional itinerant services include consultant teaching, music therapy, 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, independent APPR evaluator and business and education partnerships are also provided as itinerant services.



Our Business & Education Partnership Service teamed up with the Northeast Construction Trade Workforce Coalition to raise student awareness about careers in the building trades.

### General Education

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

#### **Budget for General Education Programs**

PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
GENERAL EDUCATION	\$7,093,592	\$8,100,888	\$7,569,691	\$8,977,754

- 13 > STEM High School students named to HVCC's president's and dean's list
- **230** Pre-Kindergarten students
- 100% STEM High students take college classes in their freshmen year at no cost to families
- 100% > 100 percent of Tech Valley High School students have graduated since the school opened in 2007
- 350+ ► College credits earned by STEM High School students during fall semester



STEM High School students have access to robotics at the Hudson Valley Community College's Gene F. Haas Center for Advanced Manufacturing Skills (CAMS).

### 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 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 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, teamwork and collaboration that our business partners are seeking.



Every student at STEM High School has access to credits at no cost to their 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



Students learn hands-on skills in our pre-K programs.

#### **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 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 eight Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs. Our TPK programs provide developmentally appropriate instruction to four-year-old students from families that are considered economically disadvantaged. Our programs 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, or outside speakers. Staff development related to a specific art activity is also available. Questar III is pleased to host the 35th 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 teachers, teaching assistants, 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 2024-2025 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	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT	\$12,282,406	\$11,161,474	\$12,840,634	\$11,971,949

- **6** PLC Sessions on Chronic Absenteeism delivered to districts
- 19 Teams advanced to the Odyssey of the Mind world finals in the past decade
- 100+ Districts served by Capital District RBERN representing 8 BOCES
- **100+** Programs coordinated through Questar III Arts in Education and Exploratory Enrichment services
- 300+ Data analysis reports provided to districts
- **630+** ► Students supported in Home Instruction service
- Students in the Capital Region earned the Seal of Biliteracy in 2022-23 representing 26 different languages
- **3,000+** ► Educators participated in Regional PD Day
- 10,032 

  Hours of embedded professional development provided in our region
- 220,000+ eTitles borrowed in Sora, an online ebook, audiobook, and magazine service provided by the School Library System to all Questar III districts
- **450,000+** Titles in Follett library catalogs supported by the School Library System
- \$2 million ► Educational technology software purchases

### 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 following areas:

- Data Coordination and Analysis
- Embedded Professional Development
- Grant Writing
- Home Instruction Review
- · Leadership Coaching
- · Odyssey of the Mind

#### **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.

- Program Evaluation
- Regionally Developed Assessments
- Regional Scoring Coordination
- Regional Professional Development Day
- School Library System
- STEM Research Institute

#### **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. Last March we were 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 2024-2025, 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	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
DISTRICT SUPPORT	\$16,969,305	\$18,681,662	\$22,045,772	\$20,391,211

90% Of all school districts (and 34 BOCES) served by the State Aid & Financial Planning Service

**150** Backflow devices inspected

28,436 Fire alarm devices inspected by Fire System Maintenance Service

88,000 > Students' safety impacted by our Health and Safety Service

**7.4** Million square feet of fire inspections in 191 buildings

\$168 Million in excess cost aid, including Extended School Year and Homeless Youth, 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

\$14.3 Billion in assets inventoried and managed by our Asset Management & Valuation Service in 2,356 buildings, totaling 65 million square feet

\$18.8 Billion in OPEB liability valuation for 196 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. 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.



The Technology Services Department team is comprised of more than 20 dedicated computing professionals with decades of combined experience.

#### **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 podcasts and video production.

#### **Technology Services**

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 Fund

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	2022-23	2023-24	2023-24	2024-25
	Actual	Adopted	Adjusted	Tentative
	Expenditures	Budget	Budget	Budget
SPECIAL AID FUND	\$5,958,105	\$7,928,585	\$8,486,676	\$6,843,027



PR/HYLI students assume different legislative roles in debating and voting on bills under consideration by the State Legislature

### Special Aid Fund

These are detailed descriptions of some of the grants and programs accounted in the Special Aid Fund.

### 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, RBERNs, and other agencies as appropriate. This exciting program offers 275 high school juniors and seniors the unique opportunity to achieve civic readiness and grow as leaders in their community and beyond. PR/HYLI was recognized as a program to watch by *Excelenia in Education*, an organization that helps to accelerate Latino success in higher education.

### 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 149 school districts, educators and parents with English Language Learners (ELLs) across eight BOCES regions. 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 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 school districts whose budgets total more than \$3.8 billion.

#### 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



Dr. José Medina has facilitated a four-part workshop series using the C6 Biliteracy Framework as part of the RBERN.

# Celebrated Success & Highlights

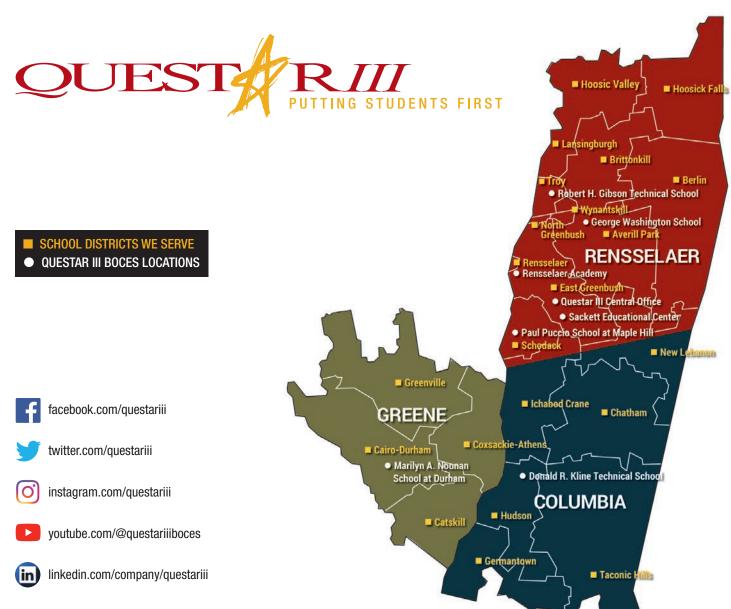
- The Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce presented Questar III with its highest yearly honor, the Van Rensselaer Corporate Award.
- District Superintendent Dr. Gladys Cruz is the president of AASA, the School Superintendents Association. She has a monthly column in School Administrator Magazine and hosts a monthly podcast called the Future Driven Leader.
- 3. Tech Valley High School teacher Michelle Sweeny was named a Top Teacher by WNYT News Channel 13.
- 4. Tech Valley High School hosted a tour, press conference, and bill signing with Governor Kathy Hochul in September 2023.
- Over the past year, the Governor, Commissioner of Education, State Board of Regents, the U.S. Secretary of Education, and a cohort of superintendents from AASA visited Questar III schools to learn about our best practices.
- Questar III honored its late Board Vice President Marilyn Noonan during a dedication ceremony at the Marilyn A. Noonan School at Durham.
- Questar III launched a partnership with the SUNY New Paltz on a Science of Reading microcredential. More than 350 educators signed up for the first cohort.
- 8. Thirteen students from Questar III & HVCC STEM High School were named to the Fall 2023 President's List and Dean's List at Hudson Valley Community College. Students had to be enrolled in 12 or more college credits in a semester to qualify.
- 9. Questar III will launch an education careers and fire & EMT programs at the Donald R. Kline Technical School and an electrical trades and welding programs at Robert H. Gibson Technical School. The New Visions Business, Finance and Accounting program at Columbia-Greene Community College will also add a marketing component to become New Visions: Business, Finance and Marketing.
- 10. Questar III graduated its second cohort of the Foundations of Teaching and Learning (FTL) MicroED cohort with the University at Albany to certify teaching assistants and CTE teachers.
- Five Special Education teachers completed Questar III's Master Teacher program.
- 12. Eleven students from Paul Puccio School at Maple Hill and six students from Rensselaer Academy had their holiday artwork displayed in the Times Union.
- 13. Satya Groff, a senior in our New Visions: Visual & Performing Arts program, was nominated for the 2024 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.
- 14. The Questar III Education Foundation launched its first apparel store for families and staff.
- 15. The Questar III & HVCC STEM High School launched a pilot robotics course co-taught by HVCC and RPI professors. It was featured on the front page of the August 3, 2023 Times Union.



Questar III has experienced a 27 percent increase in its pre-K enrollment over the past year.

- 16. Questar III received an AASA | Sourcewell Helping Kids grant to purchase 3-D printers for our expanded Pre-K program.
- 17. The Board accepted a donation from the town of Stockport for a decommissioned police vehicle for our criminal justice program at Kline.
- 18. The Board also accepted a Chevy Bolt from the DePaula Auto Group for the automotive technologies programs at Kline.
- 19. The Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Health Insurance Trust, which coordinates health insurance and prescription drug benefits for 19 districts and Questar III, convened a meeting for wellness coordinators and school leaders to learn more about best practices and what Highmark can to do assist their individual efforts.
- 20. The Office of School Improvement coordinated a regional professional development day that supported 17 districts and the BOCES. It also hosted the first-ever professional learning community for school district administrative assistants.
- 21. Questar III established a partnership with Purdue University for graduates of our aviation program.
- 22. The aviation program was also recognized for excellence by NYSSBA.
- 23. The organization vacated its warehouse space behind the Robert H. Gibson Technical School in preparation for construction that will house two CTE programs as part of a \$1.654 million grant.
- 24. Our Communications Department earned 11 awards for their work, including the National School Public Relations Association's highest honor in writing, finance publication, magazine, and marketing.
- 25. Our Extended School Year program supported more than 240 students last summer.

### Our Service Area & Locations



#### www.questar.org

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

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 Tentative Budget at 518-477-8771.

### Boards of Education

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Dr. James Franchini, Superintendent

#### **Board of Education**

Jessica DiFiore, Board Member Michelle Garofolo, Board Member Jacqueline Geraci, Board Member Meghan McGarry, Board Member Adam Stewart, Board Member Samantha Hicks, Board President Jessica Zweig, Board Vice President Linda Fitzpatrick, Board Clerk

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Trevor Jewett, Board Member
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Katie Snyder, Board Vice President
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#### **EAST GREENBUSH CSD** (continued)

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Blake Klush, Board Member
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Shelly Palmer, Board President
Kurt Maier, Board Vice President
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### Boards of Education

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