



QUEST  R III  
PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

TENTATIVE  
2022  
2023 BUDGET

Dear Colleagues:

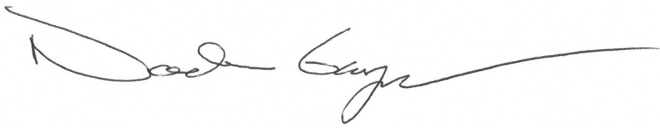
On behalf of the Questar III BOCES Board of Education, it is our pleasure to provide our local school board members and superintendents with our annual tentative budget document. As you prepare a budget for the 2022-2023 school year, Questar III BOCES is prepared and ready to serve your needs, and to provide exceptional value, leadership and service through shared services and collaboration.

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic has continued to create new challenges for our local districts. Please know that the work and operations of Questar III BOCES have continued uninterrupted since March 2020. The structure and mission of the BOCES continues to demonstrate the power of intermunicipal cooperation to achieve economies, efficiencies, expand educational opportunities, close gaps in student achievement and engagement, improve educational equity, and serve diverse learners of all ages, abilities, backgrounds, and interests.

Looking ahead, we are focused on preserving, strengthening, and expanding opportunities and programs for our students and school districts. It is our pleasure to invite component district school board members to our Annual Meeting on April 13 virtually through Zoom starting at 6 p.m. Every April we hold this meeting to review our tentative budget, in accordance with state law. We also invite you to learn more about next year's tentative program and service budgets by reading our publication.

We continue to be driven by a mission to "change lives, realize dreams and do together what cannot be done alone." For more than six decades, our tri-county region has partnered with BOCES to put students first. Looking ahead, we will continue to work together to meet the varied and ever-changing needs of our students and communities.

Thank you for your ongoing interest and support of our efforts to serve your school districts, students, and communities. Please contact us at [Nadine.Gazzola@questar.org](mailto:Nadine.Gazzola@questar.org) or [gcruz@questar.org](mailto: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 280 years of school board experience in our region.



Nadine Gazzola  
*Board President*



Joseph Garland  
*Board Vice President*



Edmund Brooks



Lynn Clum



Mary Daly



Jennifer Haggerty



John C. Hill



Mark Mann



Mary Marro-Giroux



Frank Zwack, Jr.



Mary Yurista





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# 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.

## MISSION

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

## VISION

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



## 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 aggressively. We want to ensure that we provide valuable services to all participating school districts.

The COVID-19<sup>1</sup> pandemic has continued to create new challenges for Questar III BOCES and our local districts. At this time last year, the pandemic had created a difficult and uncertain financial situation. Given the uncertainties, the 2021-2022 rate increases were kept low with more than 88 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services rates at a zero percent increase. The financial situation has dynamically changed this past year, this has solved some problems but created new challenges. Over the course of this past year, additional federal funding was granted to our component school districts, which was unknown last February. Conversely, the labor market crisis has created staff shortages and retention issues creating the need to be more competitive with compensation plans and collective bargaining agreements. Another factor is the significant inflationary pressure on the costs of supplies and materials. Despite these dynamic challenges, Questar III BOCES' budget philosophy remains consistent to provide cost effective services that deliver value to all participating school districts. Questar III BOCES continues to be aggressive in developing its budget to mitigate rate increases for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. More than 68 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2021-2022. Overall, nearly 80 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 2022-2023 tentative administrative, rent and capital budget will be increasing by 2.98 percent. The 2022-2023 tentative administrative budget will be \$6,976,593 and the rent and capital budget will remain unchanged at \$2,205,217.

The budget for a BOCES differs in several 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.

**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 26, 2022 to vote on the tentative administrative budget. **The administrative budget is the only portion of the BOCES budget voted on.**

As a result, final program budgets for the 2022-2023 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 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 category and by object of expenditure category and includes the following financial data:

- The 2020-2021 actual expenditures represents the final actual costs for that year.
- The 2021-2022 adopted budget represents the budget adopted by the Questar III BOCES Board of Education based on initial service requests.
- The 2021-2022 adjusted budget represents the adopted budget increased by any 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 2022-2023 tentative budget represents Questar III BOCES' estimate of purchased services based on historical trends and projected service requests.

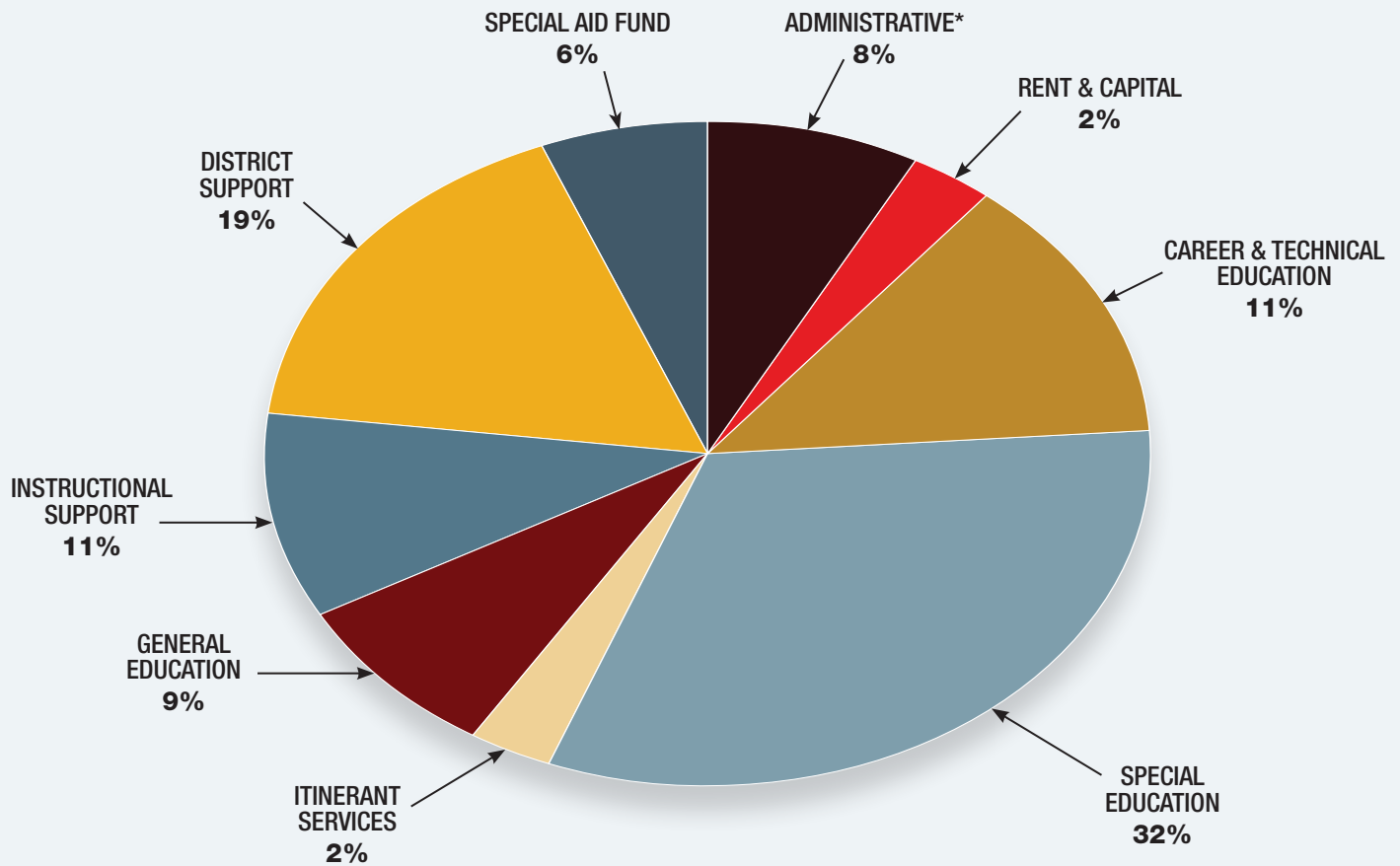
After districts complete and approve the Final Service Requests (FSR), due by May 1st, the 2022-2023 tentative budget, excluding the administrative, and rent and capital budgets, will be adjusted to the actual program and service requests approved.



<sup>1</sup> Additional information on Questar III BOCES' COVID-19 response can be found on page 13 of this document.

# Total Tentative Budget

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



2022-2023 Tentative Budget by Program/Service Category

| PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY     | 2020-21<br>Actual Expenditures | 2021-22<br>Adopted Budget | 2021-22<br>Adjusted Budget | 2022-23<br>Tentative Budget |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Administrative*              | \$6,323,000                    | \$6,710,997               | \$6,931,143                | \$6,976,593                 |
| Rent & Capital               | 2,205,217                      | 2,205,217                 | 2,205,217                  | 2,205,217                   |
| Career & Technical Education | 9,795,846                      | 10,120,484                | 11,570,761                 | 10,356,574                  |
| Special Education            | 26,052,970                     | 26,079,665                | 27,929,483                 | 28,425,445                  |
| Itinerant Services           | 1,468,002                      | 1,781,884                 | 1,757,699                  | 1,769,606                   |
| General Education            | 5,703,065                      | 6,370,654                 | 7,358,846                  | 8,042,355                   |
| Instructional Support        | 8,223,682                      | 8,732,226                 | 10,590,873                 | 9,592,379                   |
| District Support             | 13,894,830                     | 14,510,218                | 18,227,142                 | 16,709,877                  |
| Special Aid Fund             | 3,940,841                      | 5,142,614                 | 7,708,901                  | 5,698,989                   |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                 | <b>\$77,607,453</b>            | <b>\$81,653,959</b>       | <b>\$94,280,065</b>        | <b>\$89,777,035</b>         |

\* The Administrative Budget is the only portion of the budget that component boards vote upon on April 26, 2022.



# Total Tentative Budget



## 2022-2023 Total Tentative Budget by Expenditure Category

| OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE CATEGORY             | 2020-21<br>Actual Expenditures | 2021-22<br>Adopted Budget | 2021-22<br>Adjusted Budget | 2022-23<br>Tentative Budget |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Instructional Salaries                     | \$19,219,156                   | \$20,240,303              | \$20,537,383               | \$22,213,307                |
| Non-Instructional Salaries                 | 7,527,222                      | 7,755,302                 | 8,539,969                  | 8,363,893                   |
| Equipment                                  | 4,199,579                      | 3,882,878                 | 5,829,435                  | 4,314,950                   |
| Supplies & Materials                       | 2,840,691                      | 2,911,488                 | 4,289,127                  | 3,006,436                   |
| Contractual Services                       | 3,010,260                      | 3,959,602                 | 5,222,482                  | 4,168,505                   |
| Professional Service Contracts             | 2,043,827                      | 1,910,382                 | 3,268,751                  | 2,582,953                   |
| Rental Of Facilities                       | 1,151,482                      | 1,211,067                 | 1,211,067                  | 1,211,067                   |
| Payments To School Districts & Other BOCES | 14,850,652                     | 14,638,293                | 17,205,984                 | 17,556,442                  |
| Interest On Revenue Anticipation Notes     | 8,050                          | 42,000                    | 42,000                     | 42,000                      |
| Employee Fringe Benefits                   | 11,696,335                     | 14,658,134                | 15,419,719                 | 15,696,385                  |
| Other Post Employment Benefits             | 3,905,552                      | 3,627,537                 | 3,627,537                  | 3,832,733                   |
| Transfer To Capital                        | 1,059,585                      | 1,000,000                 | 1,000,000                  | 1,000,000                   |
| Transfer Charges From Operations & Maint.  | 4,015,662                      | 3,478,804                 | 5,377,402                  | 3,361,615                   |
| Transfer Charges From Central Services     | 2,079,400                      | 2,338,169                 | 2,709,209                  | 2,426,749                   |
| Transfer Charges From Other Services       | 1,542,971                      | 1,311,257                 | 1,415,235                  | 1,640,635                   |
| Transfer Charges To Other Services         | (1,542,971)                    | (1,311,257)               | (1,415,235)                | (1,640,635)                 |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                               | <b>\$77,607,453</b>            | <b>\$81,653,959</b>       | <b>\$94,280,065</b>        | <b>\$89,777,035</b>         |

# BOCES Overview

## General Facts

**64** 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

**29,753** 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 26, 2022** 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 education opportunities for their students 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 has been aggressive in controlling and containing costs for component districts despite being faced with the same economic challenges as our region’s schools. We continue to strive for fiscal responsibility, accountability and transparency in our program and budget development efforts.

Through our shared decision-making process, we have achieved greater participation by our component school superintendents. Superintendent subcommittees continue their active involvement 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 faithful stewards and make effective use 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:

**13** NEW SUPERINTENDENTS

**14** NEW BUSINESS OFFICIALS

**16** NEW CHAIRS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

**44** NEW SCHOOL COUNSELORS & LIBRARIANS

**51** NEW PRINCIPALS, ASSISTANT PRINCIPALS & DEANS OF STUDENTS

**86** NEW SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

# Tentative Administrative Budget

The tentative administrative budget chart provides a summary of expenditures by object of expenditure 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, professional development for boards of education, superintendents and staff, and COVID-19 regional support.

| OBJECT OF EXPENDITURE CATEGORY            | 2020-21<br>Actual Expenditures | 2021-22<br>Adopted Budget | 2021-22<br>Adjusted Budget | 2022-23<br>Tentative Budget |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Instructional Salaries                    | \$183,625                      | \$189,825                 | \$189,992                  | \$202,601                   |
| Non-Instructional Salaries                | 801,557                        | 866,443                   | 871,511                    | 970,211                     |
| Equipment                                 | 31,667                         | 10,500                    | 23,264                     | 21,000                      |
| Supplies & Materials                      | 41,807                         | 97,200                    | 102,426                    | 100,300                     |
| Contractual Services                      | 89,458                         | 267,392                   | 247,005                    | 274,848                     |
| Professional Service Contracts            | 187,360                        | 326,475                   | 404,250                    | 325,165                     |
| Interest On Revenue Anticipation Notes    | 8,050                          | 42,000                    | 42,000                     | 42,000                      |
| Employee Fringe Benefits                  | 432,342                        | 567,198                   | 568,299                    | 590,712                     |
| Other Post Employment Benefits            | 3,905,552                      | 3,627,537                 | 3,627,537                  | 3,832,733                   |
| Transfer Charges From Operations & Maint. | 145,475                        | 212,179                   | 322,545                    | 105,729                     |
| Transfer Charges From Other Services      | 496,107                        | 504,248                   | 532,314                    | 511,294                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                              | <b>\$6,323,000</b>             | <b>\$6,710,997</b>        | <b>\$6,931,143</b>         | <b>\$6,976,593</b>          |





# Tentative Administrative Budget

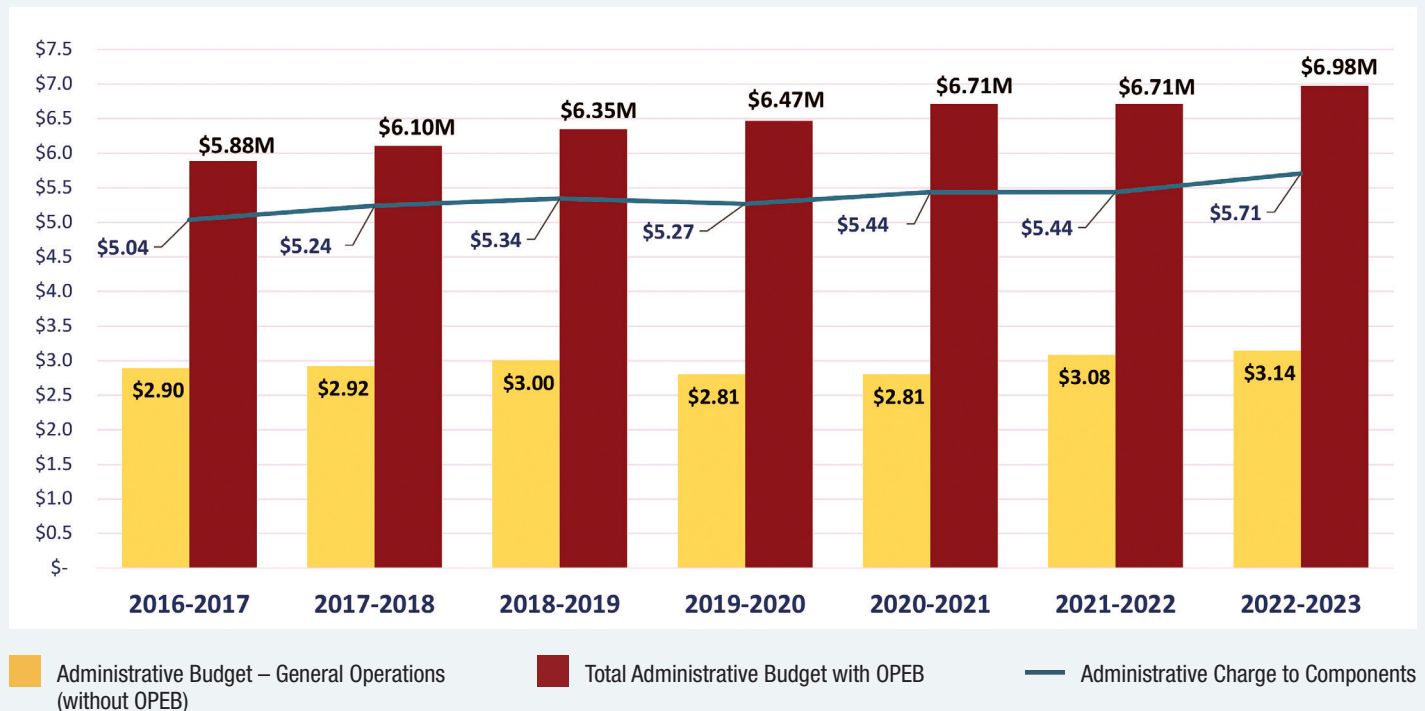
Questar III BOCES' tentative administrative budget for 2022-2023 is \$6,976,593. The other post-employment benefits (OPEB) costs, which account for 55 percent of the total administrative budget, are increasing by 5.66 percent. The general operation costs, which make up the remaining 45 percent of the budget, are increasing by 1.96 percent. The resulting total increase for the tentative administrative budget is \$265,596 or 3.96 percent from the previous year's budget.

However, the actual administrative charge to districts is \$5,705,411, representing an increase of \$265,596 or 4.88 percent from the previous year. The administrative charge for individual component districts is derived from the administrative budget of \$6,976,593 and is reduced by \$1,271,182 in revenues earned from administrative fees for statewide services, indirect costs from grants and contracts, interest income and other miscellaneous revenues. These revenues support 40 percent of the general operations portion of the administrative budget.

| ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY              | 2021-22<br>Adopted Budget | 2022-23<br>Tentative Budget | Dollar<br>Change | Percent<br>Change |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Administrative OPEB Budget                 | \$3,627,537               | \$3,832,733                 | \$205,196        | 5.66%             |
| Administrative Budget without OPEB         | 3,083,460                 | 3,143,860                   | 60,400           | 1.96%             |
| <b>Total Administrative Budget</b>         | <b>\$6,710,997</b>        | <b>\$6,976,593</b>          | <b>\$265,596</b> | <b>3.96%</b>      |
| Less: Other Revenues                       | 1,271,182                 | 1,271,182                   | —                | 0.00%             |
| <b>Administrative Charge to Components</b> | <b>\$5,439,815</b>        | <b>\$5,705,411</b>          | <b>\$265,596</b> | <b>4.88%</b>      |

## History of the Administrative Budget

The administrative budget has been aggressively 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 total increase of the general operations portion of the administrative budget (without OPEB) in the last six years was approximately \$248,000, representing, on average, an annual increase of under \$42,000 per year.



# Tentative Administrative Budget

## Administrative Revenues

(excluding interest income)

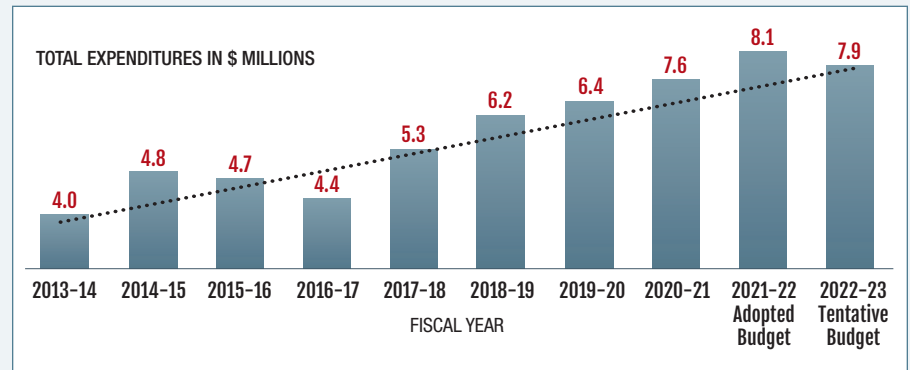
The revenues from administrative fees charged to non-components for statewide services, indirect costs, interest and other miscellaneous revenues help Questar III BOCES contain administrative costs for its 21 component districts. As our statewide district support services grow, so does our administrative 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 |
|---------|---------------|-----------------------|
| 2013-14 | \$ 769,683    | N/A                   |
| 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%                 |

\* Excludes interest income of \$10,000. Total Administrative Revenues, including interest income, is \$1,271,182.

## 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. Both New York State and Questar III BOCES pay the District Superintendent's salary. 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 . . . . . \$ 17,299  
 Health, Dental & Disability Insurance . . . . . \$ 28,389  
 Workers' Compensation Insurance . . . . . \$ 2,801  
 Unemployment Insurance . . . . . \$ 824





# 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 educational centers in Hudson and Troy, the Sackett Center in Schodack, the Durham School in Durham and the office/warehouse facility at 1070 Route 9 in Castleton. All other spaces are leased.

The tentative 2022-2023 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 space 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.



## Rensselaer Educational Center Modernization Project

Over the past several years, Questar III BOCES has explored its options for creating a new state-of-the-art facility to house career and technical education (CTE) and special education programs.

After exploring various options based on the best value/location and much deliberation and discussion, Questar III BOCES moved forward with the renovation of the Rensselaer Educational Center in Troy. Renovations occurred in three phases that began in June 2019 and were completed during 2021-2022. Phase I, completed in August 2019, was comprised of site work that improved drainage, provided new walkways, improved the bus loop and parking and included brick repainting of the building.

The building rehabilitation was segregated into two phases in order to minimize disruption to students during construction. Approximately half of the building was rehabbed under Phase II, completed in September 2020, and the remainder of the building, under Phase III, was substantially completed during the summer 2021.

Questar III BOCES is excited to see this multi-year project come to a close. Renovating the Rensselaer Educational Center was the most cost-effective option that continues to provide our northern region school districts with a centrally located campus benefiting our CTE and Special Education students, staff, school districts and region.

| RENT AND CAPITAL BUDGET SUMMARY                    | 2021-22<br>Adopted Budget | 2022-23<br>Tentative Budget | Dollar<br>Change | Percent<br>Change |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Rent Budget  | \$1,205,217               | \$1,205,217                 | —                | 0.00%             |
| Capital Budget                                     | 1,000,000                 | 1,000,000                   | —                | 0.00%             |
| <b>Total Rent and Capital Budget</b>               | <b>2,205,217</b>          | <b>2,205,217</b>            | <b>—</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>      |
| Less: Grant Revenue                                | 5,850                     | 5,850                       | —                | 0.00%             |
| <b>Total Rent and Capital Charge to Components</b> | <b>\$2,199,367</b>        | <b>\$2,199,367</b>          | <b>—</b>         | <b>0.00%</b>      |

# Administrative, Rent & Capital Budgets

## Impact of the Administrative, Rent and Capital Budgets

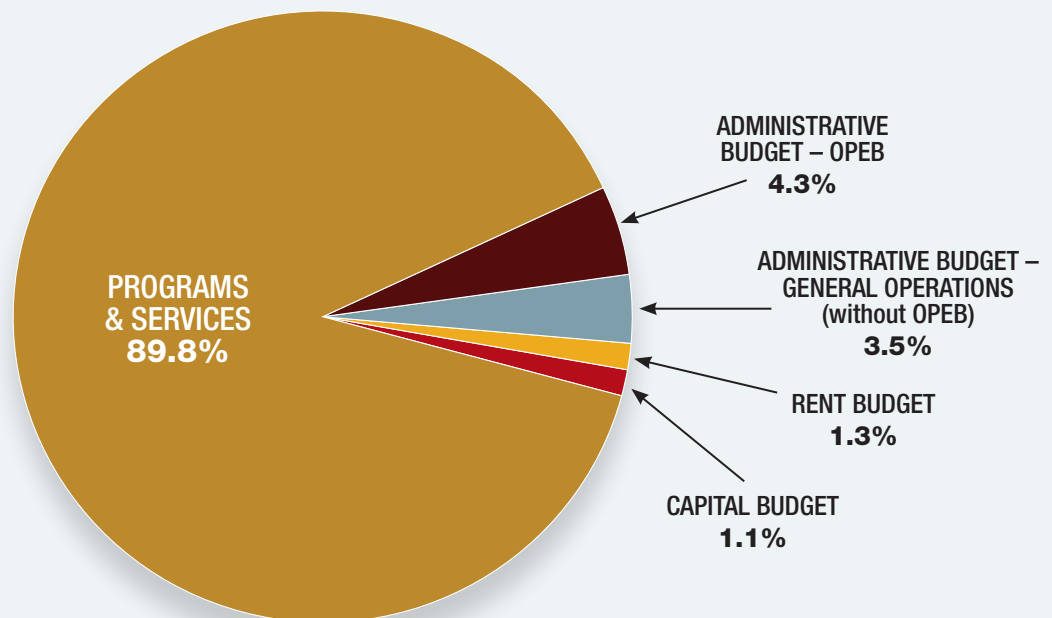
Sections 1950 and 1951 of the NYS Education Law established BOCES and the requirement of member or component districts to pay a proportionate share of the administrative, rent and capital costs.

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 2.98 percent for a total combined budget of \$9,181,810. The net administrative rent and capital charge to components, after other revenues are applied, will be \$7,904,778 for 2022-2023.

| ADMINISTRATIVE, RENT & CAPITAL BUDGETS & CHARGES TO COMPONENTS       | 2021-22 Adopted Budget | 2022-23 Tentative Budget | Dollar Change    | Percent Change |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Total Administrative Budget  | 6,710,997              | 6,976,593                | \$265,596        | 3.96%          |
| Total Rent & Capital Budget  | 2,205,217              | 2,205,217                | —                | 0.00%          |
| <b>Total Administrative, Rent and Capital Budgets</b>                | <b>\$8,916,214</b>     | <b>\$9,181,810</b>       | <b>\$265,596</b> | <b>2.98%</b>   |
|  |                        |                          |                  |                |
| Total Administrative Charge  | 5,439,815              | 5,705,411                | \$265,596        | 4.88%          |
| Total Rent & Capital Charge  | 2,199,367              | 2,199,367                | —                | 0.00%          |
| <b>Total Administrative, Rent &amp; Capital Charge to Components</b> | <b>\$7,639,182</b>     | <b>\$7,904,778</b>       | <b>\$265,596</b> | <b>3.48%</b>   |

Together the administrative, rent and capital budgets equate to 10.2 percent of the total Questar III BOCES Tentative Budget. The remaining 89.8 percent represents the programs and services purchased by districts and other BOCES.



# COVID-19 Response

Questar III BOCES continues to play a pivotal leadership role in the second year of the public education system's response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene counties. This included the coordination of efforts with new or changing state requirements, health and safety needs, professional development, communications, and more.

Our Health and Safety Service continues to lead efforts in assisting our school districts in planning and responding to the pandemic. Questar III BOCES has hosted and facilitated weekly meetings with each local health department since March 14, 2020. As a result, the Health and Safety service has become the point of contact for our school districts, counties and BOCES in sharing of related information, best practices and supplies for the COVID-19 response. The organization's continued work with the local counties provided the opportunity to support the Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity for Infectious Diseases Cooperative (ELC) Agreement School Reopening Funding. This involves the testing of unvaccinated staff in schools as mandated by the New York State Health Department.

Questar III BOCES continued to provide support on the interpretation of state memos and actionable items distributed by the Governor's office and the State Health Commissioner. These included executive orders, interim guidance documents, opening planning, positive case response, contact tracing protocols, testing programs and home test distribution. Questar III BOCES' Communications Service created a variety of regional materials, including videos, letters, sample notifications, templates, and social media posts.

The Health and Safety and Communications Services continued to support our districts in coordinated responses and advocacy for our schools at local and state levels. Looking ahead, we will continue to support the region in returning to a new normalcy locally and across the state.

Here are some of our region's accomplishments over the past year:

- Creating opening plans based on state and federal guidance in a short period of time.
- Engaging families and staff in the refinement and understanding of those plans.

- Meeting additional requirements and responsibilities from the state, including testing of unvaccinated individuals and distribution of at-home test kits.
- Working with 10 county departments of health and school districts to create regional contact tracing protocols and infographics.
- Planning for expanded athletics and extracurricular activities in the region.
- Keeping BOCES programs open for in-person instruction five days/week in coordination with our school districts.
- Responding to a high volume of cases and contact tracing due to new variants.
- Pivoting to a modified form of contact tracing (in January 2022) following the change in state guidance.
- Continuing to communicate with staff and families as guidance and conditions frequently changed.
- Continuing our cleaning and disinfecting protocols to ensure that our schools and offices remain clean, safe, and ready for our students and staff.
- Partnering with the county health departments on school-aged vaccination clinics.
- Staying on top of local, regional, statewide, and national developments, including changes to guidance on isolation/quarantine, sports, masks, and vaccination.
- Being flexible, adaptive, and patient – making decisions based on facts and data, not emotion.

Questar III BOCES is proud of our individual and collective work to sustain and expand the regional public education system over the past year. As a BOCES, we continue to look ahead to the future to develop and evolve programs to align with the needs of our students, districts, and communities. We know that COVID-19 has in many ways disrupted the paradigm and we need to be thoughtful about planning for and getting beyond the pandemic. Together, we will not only get through this public health crisis, but we will seize the opportunity to learn from our experiences to make our BOCES, school districts and public education system stronger.

As a BOCES region, our success depends on collaboration and cooperation. Over the past year, we have expanded our networks, the sharing of best practices and the ability to support each other through unprecedented times.

The following data points illustrate how we sustained and expanded our networks:

- 10** ► Advocacy letters sent to the state officials since the start of the pandemic
- 20+** ► State guidance changes interpreted from August 2021 to March 2022
- 20,000** ► KN95 masks distributed to schools
- 30,000+** ► Surveillance tests performed
- 193,000+** ► Home test kits distributed by the BOCES to school districts



# 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.

Looking back at last year, the COVID-19 pandemic placed uncertain financial stress on school districts. As a result, Questar III BOCES was aggressive in minimizing rate increases for school districts. This resulted in nearly 95 percent of rates at below a two percent increase for the 2021-2022 year. Striving to be the program of choice, Questar III BOCES' program participation remains strong despite pressures from regional student enrollment declines. Although new challenges were created by the pandemic, specifically related to the labor market crisis, we continued to be aggressive in developing budgets to mitigate rate increases for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. More than 68 percent of Questar III BOCES' programs and services will not have a rate increase and will remain at the same level as 2021-2022. Overall, nearly 80 percent of services are below a two percent rate increase. This chart demonstrates how the 2022-2023 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 |
|---------|-------------------------------------|--|
| 2018-19 | 62.23%                              | 86.30%   |
| 2019-20 | 66.48%                              | 75.64%   |
| 2020-21 | 57.02%                              | 77.53%   |
| 2021-22 | 88.62%                              | 94.83%   |
| 2022-23 | 68.64%                              | 79.79%   |



# 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 4.64 percent for 2022-2023.

- 4** ▶ Programs recognized by the CTE TAC of NY as model programs
- 8-15** ▶ College credits available to New Visions Program students
- 94%** ▶ Technical endorsement pass rate
- 97** ▶ Students inducted into the National Technical Honor Society last year
- 98.5%** ▶ Graduation rate
- 200** ▶ Consultant committee partners help us to align curriculum and equipment to industry standards
- 2,233** ▶ Hours of student internships last year

## 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

- 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

## Budget for Career & Technical Education Programs

| PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY     | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| CAREER & TECHNICAL EDUCATION | \$9,795,846                       | \$10,120,484                 | \$11,570,761                  | \$10,356,574                   |

# 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, Rensselaer Educational Center in Troy, generally serving students in Rensselaer County, and Columbia-Greene Educational Center in Hudson, generally serving students in Columbia and Greene Counties.

The programs combine classroom learning with hands-on training in a wide range of high-need 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 certification 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.

In addition to the two CTE Educational Centers, The Durham School continues to expand its programming. The CTE Heavy Equipment program has been located in this building for four years and, for 2022-2023, a Agriculture Science program will be added to the CTE offerings at The Durham School, in addition to various special education classrooms. The new CTE Agriculture Science program will cover both plant and animal sciences and will be completely hands on, making use of the property to cultivate the land and raise small farm animals. CTE has also transitioned the former Academy for Information Technology into a Gaming and Multimedia program, based on student interest and industry demand. The Capital Region is seeing a burgeoning gaming industry develop with the epicenter located in Troy, which is where the Rensselaer Educational Center is located. This lends itself to multiple work-based learning opportunities for the students enrolled as well as strong career prospects post-graduation from the Gaming and Multimedia program.

## NEW VISIONS

New Visions students gain valuable insight 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 central goal of all New Visions programs is to act as the bridge between high school and the rigor of college level and career work. By participating in a New Visions program, a student is 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.

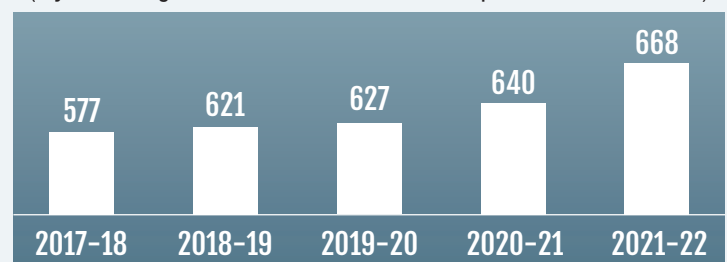
New Visions students learn and explore career options through mentoring, internships, interactions with professionals, group discussions and creative projects, as well as more traditional methods. Students in

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. Because of the heightened interest in infectious diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Scientific Research and World Health program partnered with the Albany School of Pharmacology to offer students a three-credit course entitled Microbes and Me, which looks at infectious diseases in the human body. 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  
(5 year average of student 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 | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| SPECIAL EDUCATION        | \$26,052,970                      | \$26,079,665                 | \$27,929,483                  | \$28,425,445                   |

The Special Education Department provides individualized instruction to students ages 5 through 21 in different academic settings including academy, CTE centers, district-based classrooms and a community arts center.

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 will be relocated to The Durham School, where a center-based special education continuum of services will be offered. The school will also house the Heavy

Equipment, and Agriculture Science CTE programs. This new space will provide the opportunity for program expansion and unique course offerings, including a PAES lab and a maker space.

Tuition rates are differentiated based on the level of service and class size ratio. The majority of the special education programs rate increases range from approximately 2.5 percent to 6.4 percent. In addition to the rising costs of supplies and materials, recently settled collective bargaining agreements are also a driver for the rate increases. The labor market crisis, created by the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated issues of recruitment and retention. The settled agreements are expected to mitigate these challenges.

Questar III BOCES offers the following Special Education programs:

### Instruction of Students with Disabilities Regents Programs

Questar III BOCES' 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 available.

### Therapeutic Youth Program

Questar III BOCES' 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. In these programs, students in grades 11 and 12 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 available.

### Robin Sobol Transition Program

Robin Sobol Transition program is an 8:1:2 class currently located at The Arts Center of the Capital Region in Troy. Students ages 18-21 who have completed their New York State Assessments will have the opportunity to participate in a life skills curriculum and work-based learning. Reading

# Special Education

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. Additionally, students have access to the art studios and the kitchen at The Arts Center. 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 present 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 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.

Questar III BOCES' 8:1:1 NYSAA students attend classes in district-based buildings. These students exhibit multiple disabilities, including significant cognitive and academic delays, and potentially physical disabilities. 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 a new offering for 2022-2023, 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. Classroom supports are individualized to meet the unique skill that each student is developing. The physical environment addresses the needs of early learners, including the use of multi-modal communication, flexible seating options, small group and individualized instructional space, and designated break areas.

## **Spectrum Program**

The Questar III BOCES Spectrum Program is a high-school level, district-based program designed for students with an autism diagnosis and/or a learning need which makes it difficult for them to access instruction without support. As appropriate for each individual student, integration in general education classes for much of the day occurs. Students also have a "home base" where they receive interventions for their academics and where instruction is provided where integration is not appropriate. There is focus on developing social skills, problem solving and conflict resolution. Students who attend this program are on track for a Regents diploma.

**50** ▶ Classes in three counties

**100%** ▶ Of the Class of 2021 completed their graduation requirements (Regents, local diploma, CDOS or Skills and Achievement Commencement credential)

**114** ▶ Physical therapy sessions per week

**219** ▶ Social work and individual counseling sessions per week

**232** ▶ Occupational therapy sessions per week

**395** ▶ Speech therapy sessions per week

**1,142** ▶ Average hours per year, over the last 3 years, of work-based learning, internships, service learning and school-to-work paid employment

**2,620** ▶ Years of service and experience by Questar III BOCES staff

## **Career Academy**

The Questar III BOCES Career Academy is for students in 11th and 12th grades 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 Columbia-Greene Educational Center. Generally, students have learning needs that are not being met in a district-based program and require a 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'll 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.

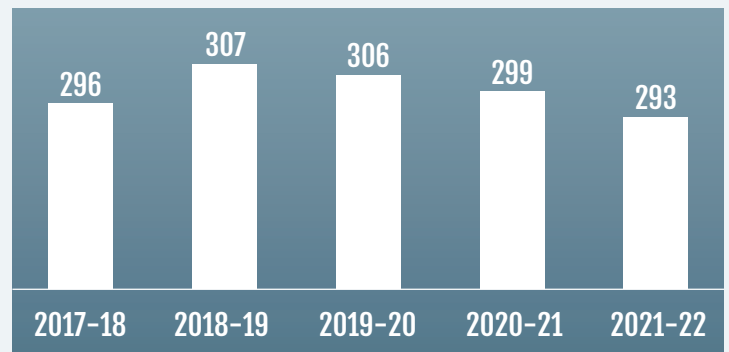
### Service Learning

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 is in eight schools and these 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 with the CDOS credential as a graduation pathway.

Special Education Enrollment



### Questar III BOCES Facilities

- Academy at Rensselaer Educational Center
- Columbia-Greene Educational Center
- The Durham School
- George Washington School
- Paul Puccio School at Maple Hill
- Rensselaer Academy
- Sackett Educational Center

### District-Based Classrooms

- Columbia High School
- Rensselaer Jr.-Sr. High School
- Robin Sobol Transition Academy at the Arts Center of the Capital Region



# 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 services 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 | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ITINERANT SERVICES       | \$1,468,002                       | \$1,781,884                  | \$1,757,699                   | \$1,769,606                    |

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.

**135** ▶ Business engagement opportunities through Business & Education Partnership Service

**50,500** ▶ Likes/follows on social media accounts managed by Questar III BOCES Communications Service



# General Education

Questar III BOCES offers a wide array of general and alternative educational offerings such as STEM High School, Tech Valley High School,<sup>®</sup> distance learning, remote learning, arts in education, and pre-kindergarten. While many rates are not increasing, some will have a two percent increase or greater. The Targeted Pre-kindergarten state grant has remained at the same level for nearly a decade, which continues to increase the local share for participating districts.

## Budget for General Education Programs

| PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| GENERAL EDUCATION        | \$5,703,065                       | \$6,370,654                  | \$7,358,846                   | \$8,042,355                    |

**78** ► Virtual Academy Students

**389** ► Virtual Academy course enrollments

**161** ► Virtual Summer School Credit Recovery Enrollments

**1,216** ► Students participating in Online Learning courses





# General Education

The Questar III BOCES and HVCC STEM High School opened its doors, in September 2021, on the campus of Hudson Valley Community College in Troy, as a new comprehensive regional high school welcoming its first freshman year cohort. STEM High School creates opportunities for local high school students to earn college credits and get an early start on innovative careers in the STEM field.

Students attending this high school could earn an Associates of Applied Science degree during their high school career 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 skill gaps by providing innovative approaches to high school and college education while engaging corporate partners and local communities for student success. STEM High School's location on the HVCC campus allows STEM High School staff and students to engage in college level coursework, lab experiences and cultural events housed on the college campus. Guest professors come to the building to teach high school students and students attend classes throughout the campus starting as early as 9th grade. STEM High School implements AVID, a student learning program that addresses any skills gap, so students are successful in the school's rigorous classes. In AVID, students learn foundational skills that are key to prolonged learning far beyond their time in high school. They build confidence and are exposed to additional resources for college level coursework. This school also has a



vast network of industry partners that provide mentorship and internship experiences for all students. This assists students to connect what they learn in the classroom with real world applications.

This high school is designed to give students historically underrepresented at the post-secondary level the opportunity to get a jumpstart on their college education and their future careers. The P-TECH grant targets up to 45 students each year, in a six-year program that culminates in both a high school diploma and an Associate of Applied Science degree. Degree pathways include Computer Information Systems, Civil Engineering, and Environmental Science with an emphasis on clean energy management. The ECHS grant targets up to 25 students each year, in a four-year program that culminates in a high school diploma along with at least 24 college credits. Pathways in ECHS include Computer Information Systems with an emphasis on web development and Health Sciences. Tech Valley High School is a valued partner in this initiative, providing the structure and support for project-based learning and collaboration across disciplines. Additionally, a steering committee composed of several stakeholders including superintendents, business partners and HVCC department chairs advise the operating body of STEM High School to guarantee innovation in education and cooperation for all. STEM High School will assist students on the path to a college degree while saving their families thousands of dollars in tuition costs.

Please visit [www.questar.org/education/ptech-echs](http://www.questar.org/education/ptech-echs) to learn more.





# General Education



Tech Valley High School (TVHS) is a four-year regional 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 credit 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)**
- ▶ **19 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

Our Online Learning Service provides credit recovery and credit accrual options for school districts as they face increased requirements, limited resources, shortage of personnel and scheduling conflicts. Online Learning takes place using the internet and courseware designed with state standards. It is highly personalized and highly flexible. Students who enroll in online courses should be self-motivated and possess good time management and organizational skills. Every student sits in the front row in a virtual classroom.

## Virtual Academy

A new service offered this year is our Virtual Academy. This service was developed to assist school districts with their needs to provide instruction to students who, for medical reasons and others, are unable to attend in-person instruction. The Virtual Academy offers all grade levels, K-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.

## Alternative Learning Program

The Questar III BOCES Alternative Education programs (ALP) offer options for students who are in danger of not completing high school, who have difficulty with attendance, grades or motivation, or need assistance to pass Regents exams required for graduation. ALP is an option for students that are struggling in the traditional educational setting.

## 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 five Universal Pre-Kindergarten (UPK) programs. Our TPK programs provide developmentally appropriate instruction to classes having a minimum of 16 four-year-old students from families that are considered economically disadvantaged. The five UPK programs are located in three sites in two different counties. They each provide developmentally appropriate instruction to classes of 18 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 is a shared service designed to integrate the arts into education. Activities may include music, drama, dance and writing. Staff development related to a specific art activity is also allowed. Questar III BOCES hosts a juried art competition for students in participating schools.

# 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 for the 2022-2023 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 | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT    | \$8,223,682                       | \$8,732,226                  | \$10,590,873                  | \$9,592,379                    |

**21** ▶ Districts provided embedded professional development

**27** ▶ Teams advanced to the Odyssey of the Mind world finals in the past decade

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

**600+** ▶ Home instruction students served

**7,664** ▶ Hours of embedded professional development provided by content specialists

**50,000+** ▶ 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

**\$20 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
- Regional Professional Development Day
- School Library System
- STEM Research Institute

### Data Coordination and Analysis

The Data Coordination and Analysis Service provides onsite 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, with Mystery Science added in the 2021-2022 school year. Mystery Science provides schools with open-and-go lessons that inspire students to love science.

### 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.

## INSTRUCTIONAL 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.

### Instructional Technology Software and Equipment Purchases

Model Schools participating districts are eligible to purchase instructional 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 example, we partnered with Capital Region BOCES and transferred our Textbook Service clients to them in order to benefit from the scale of their operations. We are also ending our Central Business Office Service since there was minimal participation by our component districts. As a result for 2022-2023, 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 | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| DISTRICT SUPPORT         | \$13,894,830                      | \$14,510,218                 | \$18,227,142                  | \$16,709,877                   |

**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

**\$87.9** ▶ Million in public and private excess cost aid secured by the STAC Service for district clients

**\$894.1** ▶ Million in successful school budget and capital project communications provided by Questar III BOCES last year

**\$9.5** ▶ Billion in assets inventoried and managed by our Asset Management & Valuation Service in 1,574 buildings, totaling 52 million square feet

**\$21** ▶ Billion in OPEB liability valuation for 188 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 postemployment 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 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 the 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 offer a wide-array of cost effective services to support school safety, facility management and safety compliance needs. Through the continued pandemic, the Health and Safety service has remained the point of contact for the districts, counties and BOCES in sharing of related information in best practices for managing and adapting to COVID-19 throughout the school year. The service looks to re-focus back to leading the region in school safety initiatives as evidenced by its recent award of a grant for \$541,818 under the DOJ's Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing School Violence Act (the STOP School Violence Act). The grant will provide an anonymous reporting system that will enable students, staff, parents, and community members to report concerning or life-threatening behavior to school administration and local authorities.



## 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 offsite backup repository
- Security assessments and penetration testing
- EDR & MDR security solutions
- Vetted solutions for distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack remediation
- Helpdesk as a service
- Multi-Factor-Authentication (MFA) 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)
- Special Education Extended School Year Program
- PR/HYLI – NYS Contract
- RBERN – NYS Contract
- Title III Limited English Proficiency Consortium
- Employment Preparation Education Aid
- Workforce Investment Opportunity Act Grant
- Epidemiology & Laboratory Capacity County Agreements
- STOP School Violence – US Department of Justice Grant

## Budget for Special Aid Fund Programs

| PROGRAM/SERVICE CATEGORY | 2020-21<br>ACTUAL<br>EXPENDITURES | 2021-22<br>ADOPTED<br>BUDGET | 2021-22<br>ADJUSTED<br>BUDGET | 2022-23<br>TENTATIVE<br>BUDGET |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| SPECIAL AID FUND         | 3,940,841                         | 5,142,614                    | 7,708,901                     | 5,698,989                      |

**63** ▶ Languages spoken by English language learners (ELLs) in the RBERN region

**149** ▶ School districts with a total of 4,243 ELLs served by RBERN

**250** ▶ Special Education students served in our extended school year program

**250+** ▶ High School students attend PR/HYLI

**11,300+** ▶ Employment Preparation Education and Workforce Investment Opportunity Act hours of instruction serving 171 students for High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation and adult literacy services

**\$2.5+** ▶ Billion in school district and BOCES funds audited by Questar III BOCES

**\$3.1** ▶ Billion in cumulative district/BOCES annual operational budgets where our auditors provide internal audit services





# Special Aid

## 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.

## Epidemiology and Laboratory Capacity (ELC) for Infectious Diseases Cooperative Agreements

During 2021-2022, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) contracted with local health departments (LHDs) to provide ELC Reopening Schools support. Questar III BOCES contracted with Rensselaer, Columbia and Greene Counties to implement the school testing programs. LHDs are responsible for assessing the need for assistance and resources related to designing and implementing COVID-19 screening testing and applicable support services for schools in their service regions. NYSDOH provides guidance and technical assistance to LHDs and BOCES regarding ELC Reopening School plans and services. Due to changing pandemic conditions, continuation of funding into the 2022-2023 is not known at this time.

## 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 El Futuro Conference, NYSED Office of Bilingual Education and World Languages, the New York City Department of Education, and other agencies as appropriate. This exciting program offers student participants the unique opportunity to achieve civic readiness and grow as leaders in their community and beyond.

## 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.

## 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:

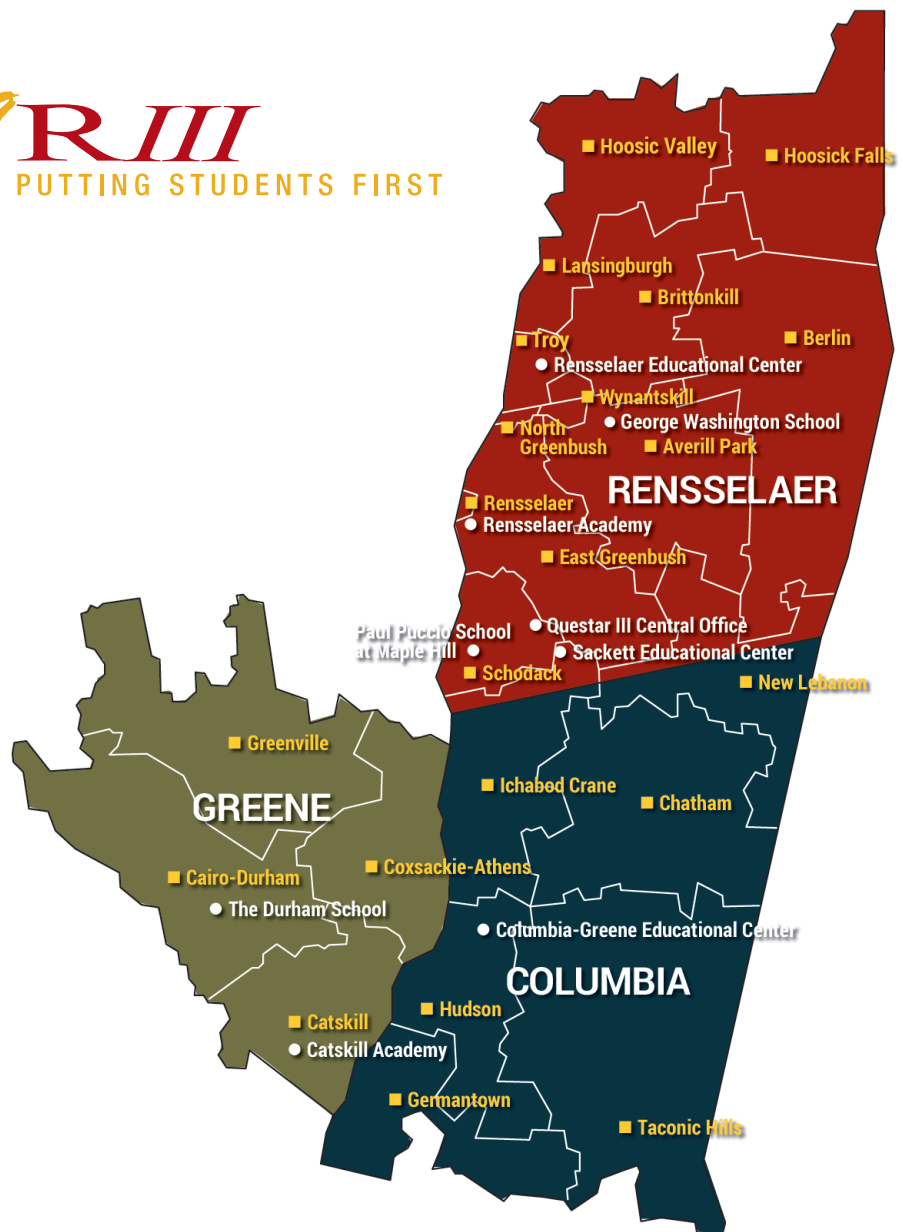
- Counseling
- Occupational Therapy
- Orientation and Mobility
- Physical Therapy
- Speech/Language Therapy
- Vision Services



# 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 2022-2023 Tentative Budget at 518-477-8771.*

# Boards of Education

## RENSSELAER COUNTY

### AVERILL PARK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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#### Board of Education

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Samantha Hicks, Board Member  
Douglas Kelley, Board Member  
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Linda Fitzpatrick, Board Clerk

### BERLIN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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### EAST GREENBUSH CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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### EAST GREENBUSH CSD *(continued)*

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Margaret Rice, Board Member  
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Donald Miller, Board Member  
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# Boards of Education

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Christopher Spencer, Board Member  
Patricia Wilson, Board Member  
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Brittany Williams, Board Member  
Judy Kusminsky, Board Clerk

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Eric Herbstritt, Board Member  
Duncan Macpherson, Board Member  
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Daphane Pearson, Board Clerk



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

# QUESTAR III

PUTTING STUDENTS FIRST

THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR RENSSELAER, COLUMBIA & GREENE COUNTIES

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