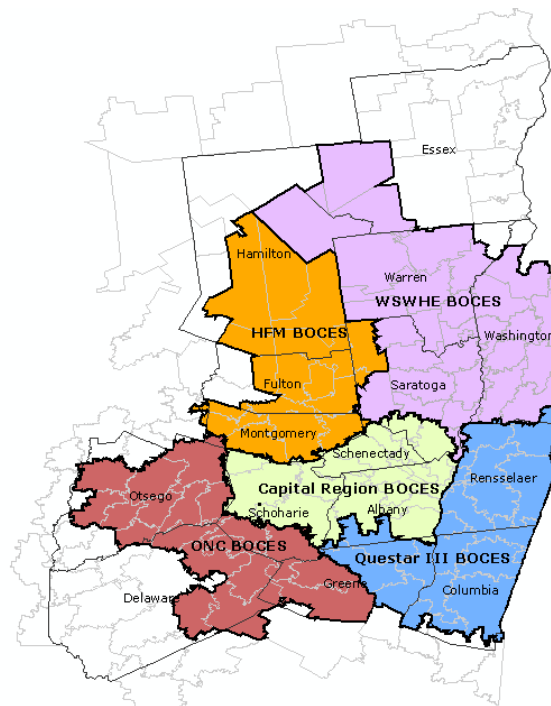


# The Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Saratoga Counties

## A Study of Potential Educational Reorganization in the Capital Region



Prepared for the Commissioner of Education  
New York State Education Department

*July 2007*



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## **I. Executive Summary**

The New York State Education Department charged the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government with analyzing potential options for the reorganization of the Sole Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady and Saratoga Counties (Capital Region). When a district superintendent leaves office, state Education Law requires the Education Department to conduct a survey of the supervisory district and those contiguous to it, to determine if reorganization of the districts will better serve the educational interests of the region. Should the survey indicate that reorganization might be beneficial, the Commissioner of Education may require a more in-depth study to examine possible reorganization options. The Commissioner requested this study in conjunction with the retirement of the Capital Region district superintendent in April 2007.

Under State Education Law, district superintendents are assigned two broad, overlapping functions that carry important implications for the quality and cost of education. Each of the 37 district superintendents is the chief executive officer of a regional Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES), a corporate entity created to provide cooperative educational programs for two or more school districts — services such as education of students with disabilities, career and technical education, and computer and telecommunications services. In addition, the district superintendent is the regional representative of the State Education Commissioner. In that role, the district superintendent is responsible for improving student achievement — a function that includes implementing state standards, helping to select school-district superintendents, promoting staff development, and other tasks. As the Board of Regents has raised educational standards over the past decade, the district superintendents' role in providing leadership through work with individual school districts has become increasingly important.

The Capital Region supervisory district includes most of Albany and Schenectady counties; most of Schoharie County; and two school districts based in Saratoga County. Small sections of several component school districts within the Capital Region Supervisory District extend into Montgomery County.

The four BOCES districts that are contiguous to Capital Region BOCES, and thus are also included in this study, are:

- Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM), to the north and west of Capital Region.
- Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE), to the north and northeast of Capital Region.
- Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III), to the east and south of Capital Region.
- Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (Otsego-Northern Catskills), to the south and west of Capital Region.

As directed by the Commissioner of Education, this study examines potential educational benefits and cost savings from reorganization, including potential implications for workforce development, students' ability to meet higher academic standards, and the capacity of the district superintendent to carry out his or her responsibilities effectively.

Based on research and analysis regarding the options explained below, the Rockefeller Institute study team recommends that the Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga Sole Supervisory District be retained as currently constituted.

The study team conducted intensive analysis of two reorganization options:

- Merger of Capital Region and Questar III BOCES supervisory districts. Such combination would more closely reflect the economic, social and political nature of the area. Recognizing common ground, the two BOCES organizations are already acting to create some region-wide services. A merger, however, would create a supervisory district so large as to hamper the ability of the district superintendent to work effectively with component school districts to improve student achievement. Given higher costs in Capital Region BOCES relative to Questar III, such a merger could diminish the cost-effectiveness of educational services in the Questar III region. It would also create substantial problems of joining organizations with differing institutional cultures and operational practices, which would likely take years to resolve. **The study team recommends continuation of the existing relationship between the Capital Region and Questar III districts.**
- Transfer of four school districts in Schoharie County from Capital Region to Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES. The Otsego-Northern Catskills (ONC) district superintendent proposed that the ONC BOCES absorb the Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie, and Sharon Springs component districts. Such a step would strengthen the Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES' ability to provide needed services at affordable cost. There is extensive evidence that low and declining enrollments, lack of robust economic growth, and other factors limit educational opportunities for students in the region. However, the proposal would likely raise costs, and could harm services, for the four Schoharie County districts. It would also diminish the ability of those school districts to pursue strong, and growing, economic ties with the broader Capital Region. **The study team recommends that the four component districts remain in the Capital Region BOCES Supervisory District, and that no change be made in the relationship between Capital Region and Otsego-Northern Catskills at this time.**

The study team also examined these reorganization options for the Capital Region BOCES Supervisory District:

- Merger of Capital Region and the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES supervisory districts. The Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM) BOCES

Supervisory District has a relatively low total enrollment and could play a role in reorganization of BOCES districts to the west of the Capital Region. Neither the Education Department survey nor this study produced significant evidence to support any reorganization involving the Capital Region and HFM districts. **The study team recommends no change relative to the HFM district at this time.**

- Merger of Capital Region and the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES supervisory districts. The Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE) BOCES Supervisory District was created in 1993 as a result of a merger of two predecessor districts. As part of that reorganization, the Shenendehowa school district was transferred to Capital Region. Neither a preliminary Education Department survey of the Capital Region nor this study produced significant evidence to support any new reorganization involving the Capital Region and WSWHE districts. **The study team recommends no change relative to the WSWHE district.**

During discussions with educational leaders in the region, the study team found widespread concern about the future of K-12 education generally, and BOCES in particular, in the rural regions to the southwest and west of Capital Region. Most component school districts and BOCES regions have seen declining enrollment and serve areas where economic growth has been slow.

**Recognizing the educational and fiscal challenges facing school districts in the Otsego-Northern Catskills region and beyond, the study team recommends that the Commissioner consider a study of the BOCES supervisory districts in the region from Sullivan and Ulster counties in the south to Hamilton, Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida counties in the north, including the area covered by Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES.** Such a study would examine potential reorganization that could be accomplished under more comprehensive, longer-term planning than reorganization initiatives that arise when an individual district superintendent leaves office.

In addition to these issues, the study team examined the relationship of the City School District of Albany to Capital Region BOCES. Albany is not a component district in Capital Region BOCES, although it is the largest in the Capital Region Supervisory District and is among the largest purchasers of services from BOCES. Both Capital Region BOCES and the Albany city schools are contemplating significant new investment in facilities and equipment for career and technical education (CTE) programs. Component status for the Albany schools could allow such investment to be achieved cooperatively and thus more cost-effectively. In addition, there is evidence that the Albany City School District becoming a component district and integrating its CTE programs with those of Capital Region BOCES could improve educational opportunities for students in the Albany school district. **The study team recommends that the Education Department consider working with leaders in Capital Region BOCES and the City School District of Albany to facilitate component status for the district.**

## II. Introduction

Public awareness of New York State’s boards of cooperative educational services historically focused on elements such as vocational programs for students who would enter the workforce directly after high school, and special education for students with disabilities. Such services continue to play key roles in BOCES operations. However, the role of BOCES organizations and their district superintendents has undergone evolutionary — in some ways dramatic — changes in recent years.

Each district superintendent serves both as chief executive of a BOCES, and as regional representative of the State Education Commissioner; the local BOCES and the state each pay part of the district superintendent’s salary. For more than a decade, educational policy as established by the Board of Regents has emphasized improved student learning and greater accountability for school districts. During the same period, staffing at the State Education Department has fallen due to reductions in state appropriations.<sup>1</sup> For those and other reasons, the district superintendent’s role as regional representative of the Education Commissioner — charged with leading successful implementation of higher educational standards — has taken on an increasingly important role.

In a letter that Education Commissioner Richard P. Mills sends to all new district superintendents, the Commissioner outlines key responsibilities for such officials. The letter gives primary emphasis to providing “forceful leadership” as the regional representative of the Commissioner. A detailed and demanding list of tasks followed: “Implement state standards....Lead local school improvement by closing performance gaps....Create new capacity to recruit and prepare school leaders....Engage the community to support a system that yields the best-educated people in the world....Detect, report, and resolve problems.”

As district superintendents face increased accountability for educational improvement, the nature of their second major function — overseeing BOCES operations — continues to evolve as well. With rising costs, new accountability mandates, and increasing taxpayer concern over school budgets, component school districts look to BOCES for additional ways to promote cost efficiency through new or expanded shared services in areas such as internal audits and provision of employee health insurance. Career and technical education, a mainstay of BOCES services for decades, increasingly offers choices in cutting-edge technology and more employer-based courses. A Regents policy adopted in 2001, creating a state-level approval process for CTE course offerings, has raised the quality and attractiveness of such programs — which in turn has stimulated significant increases in enrollment in most districts.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In 1993-94, the Education Department employed more than 3,800. Staffing was cut by roughly one-quarter, to fewer than 3,000, over the next few years. The state Budget Division estimated department employment during the 2006-07 fiscal year at 3,077.

<sup>2</sup> Additional history on the development of BOCES and the role of the district superintendent can be found in Appendix D of this report.

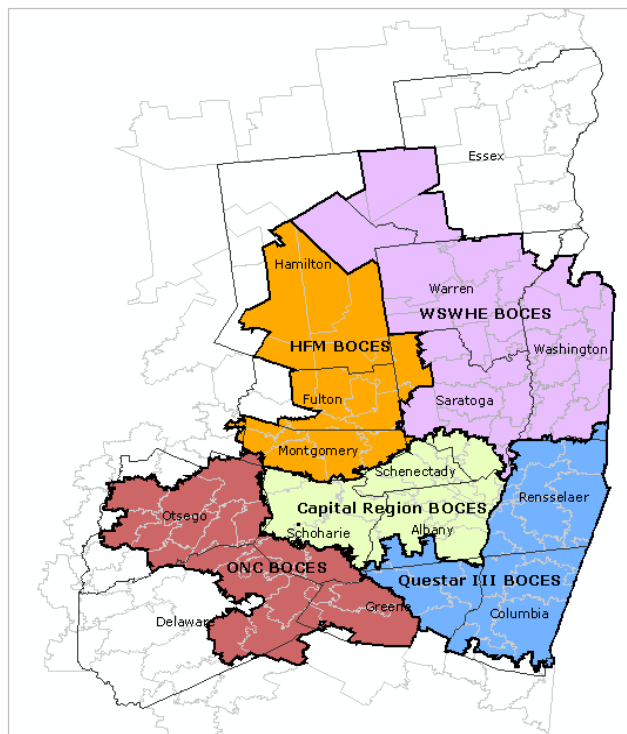
All in all, the multiple roles of the district superintendent — and the staff who work with the district superintendent in the regional BOCES organization — are increasingly central to the goal of providing every student a high-quality education at a cost taxpayers can afford.

### Background on This Study

When a vacancy occurs in the office of district superintendent in any supervisory district, New York State Education Law requires the State Education Department to conduct a survey of the district and those contiguous to it to determine if reorganizing the districts will better serve the educational interests of the region.<sup>3</sup> If the survey results indicate that additional analysis is needed, the Commissioner of Education may order a more in-depth study to examine possible reorganization options. The Commissioner authorized this study pursuant to the April 2007 retirement of the district superintendent of the Sole Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Saratoga counties (“Capital Region”).

The Commissioner retained the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, the public policy research arm of the State University of New York, to research and analyze a possible reorganization of the Capital Region BOCES Sole Supervisory District in relation to four contiguous districts. The contiguous districts are those covering all or parts of Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene Counties (Questar III); Hamilton, Fulton, and Montgomery counties (HFM); Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Greene counties (ONC); and Washington, Saratoga, Warren, Hamilton, and Essex counties (WSWHE). The study area includes all or parts of 15 counties.

Figure 1: Capital Region BOCES and Contiguous Districts: Status Quo



<sup>3</sup> New York State Consolidated Laws, Article 45, Section 2201.

In keeping with previous studies of potential supervisory district reorganization, the Commissioner identified the following reconfiguration options for consideration:

1. Retain the Capital Region Supervisory District as currently constituted;
2. Combine the Capital Region Supervisory District with a contiguous district;
3. Transfer one or more school districts from the Capital Region Supervisory District to a contiguous district; or
4. Transfer one or more school districts from a contiguous district(s) to the Capital Region Supervisory District.

In response to the Commissioner's survey, the Otsego-Northern Catskills district superintendent suggested that a transfer of four Schoharie County districts (Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie, and Sharon Springs) from the Capital Region BOCES to the Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES warranted further examination.

Although not a component district, the City School District of Albany is the largest district (by enrollment) in the Capital Region Supervisory District, and among the largest purchasers of BOCES services. This study also examines the relationship between the Albany school system and Capital Region BOCES.

In his charge to the Rockefeller Institute, the Commissioner requested that the study address the following questions with regard to potential reorganization options:

- Educational Benefits: Are there educational benefits for students and school districts from reorganizing the Capital Region Supervisory District with another supervisory district or districts? Or would it be more beneficial for the educational interests of the region to retain the Capital Region Supervisory District as currently organized?
- Cost-Savings Benefits: Would cost savings result from reorganizing the Capital Region Supervisory District with another supervisory district or districts? Or would it be more cost effective to retain the Capital Region Supervisory District as currently organized?
- Workforce Development Implications: What are the workforce development implications for reorganizing the Capital Region Supervisory District with another supervisory district or districts? Will such a reorganization better serve the economic development needs of the region? Or would it be more beneficial for the workforce/economic development interests of the region to retain the Capital Region Supervisory District as currently organized?
- Academic Standards: Will a reorganized district(s) enhance BOCES' ability to provide improved services to school districts by helping them to raise academic standards and close gaps in student achievement?

- District Superintendent: Will the district superintendent(s) of the reorganized district(s) be able to address the needs of all the component school districts?
- Other Factors: Are there other factors that support or argue against reorganizing the Capital Region Supervisory District with another supervisory district or districts?

The Commissioner also requested consideration of the following criteria for an effective supervisory district:

- The number of component districts and geographic size are such that the district superintendent can execute his/her statutory and administrative responsibilities as a state officer, in accordance with Section 2215 of New York State Education Law, in a competent and cost-effective manner.
- The district superintendent should be able to carry out effectively his/her responsibilities as the chief executive officer of the BOCES, in accordance with Section 1950 of New York State Education Law.
- The reorganization should not infringe upon the BOCES' ability to provide shared services to component school districts and respond effectively and efficiently to educational needs.
- The pupil enrollment base must be sufficient to support a variety of quality instructional and support services at appropriately located educational centers to extend and enhance the programs of component school districts.
- The financial base is sufficient to support BOCES administrative, instructional, and related support services costs at affordable levels for component school districts.

## **Methodology**

The Rockefeller Institute of Government collected input on the potential reorganization of the Capital Region Supervisory District and its contiguous districts from stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner. Institute staff collected feedback through the following efforts:

- Interviews, focus group sessions, and extensive follow-up with administrators and staff of the Capital Region, Questar III, and Otsego-Northern Catskills supervisory districts including the BOCES boards, district superintendents (past and current), assistant district superintendents, business officers, and program staff.
- Telephone interviews with the district superintendents of both Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery and Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex supervisory districts; and electronic mail messages to component school-district superintendents in those regions, inviting their input.

- Interviews and focus group sessions with component school superintendents of Capital Region, Questar III, and Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES.
- Interviews and focus group sessions with the superintendents, business officers, program staff, workforce development representatives, and board members of the four Schoharie County component school districts (Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie, and Sharon Springs) of the Capital Region BOCES.
- Interview with the superintendent and senior staff of Albany city schools.
- Telephone interviews with community leaders from business and workforce development organizations.
- Letters and electronic mail describing the study and its purpose, and inviting feedback from federal, state, and local elected officials; area government agency officials; presidents of higher education institutions; cultural organizations; leaders and representatives of area workforce development boards; and leaders of parents' organizations of Capital Region and contiguous districts.
- Promotion of a website developed by Institute staff that included a description of the study and its purpose, and invited comments.

Interviews and focus group sessions produced direct comments from more than 150 leaders, staff, and other individuals in the Capital Region and contiguous supervisory districts. Several emails and letters, with comments from interested individuals in the study area, were also received.

Rockefeller Institute staff collected information from the websites and publications of the Capital Region BOCES and its contiguous districts, governmental reports on the economic condition of the Capital Region and surrounding counties, and BOCES administrative manuals of the New York State Education Department.

Finally, Institute staff analyzed fiscal and demographic data provided by BOCES officials and the New York State Education Department. Such sources included BOCES annual budgets; CO-SERS (cooperative service applications); audit reports; the Education Department's *Preliminary Survey of Alternatives for the Sole Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Saratoga Counties*; *Public School Enrollment and Staff Data, New York State*; Annual 602 reports; Annual 655 reports to the Governor and Legislature; and BOCES program and administrative/capital budget summary data.

### III. Profile of Capital Region BOCES and Contiguous Districts

Total enrollment among school districts in the Capital Region BOCES Supervisory District is by far the largest among the five regions studied. Total enrollment in the Capital Region increased 2.1 percent from 1999 to 2006, while all four neighboring supervisory districts saw declines in pupil enrollment over the period. The Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES saw the largest decline in enrollment, at 8.5 percent.

The four Schoharie County school districts in the Capital Region BOCES — Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie and Sharon Springs — had combined enrollment of 4,712 pupils in 2005-06, making up 6.6 percent of Capital Region’s total enrollment. Total enrollment in those districts declined 6.3 percent from 1999 to 2006. (See Table 1.)

Table 1: Total Enrollment, SY 1999-2006

BOCES	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% change, 1999-06
Capital Region	70,141	70,525	70,726	70,524	70,578	70,825	71,499	71,581	2.1%
HFM	18,283	18,076	17,997	17,735	17,722	17,563	17,537	17,409	-4.8%
ONC	11,741	11,667	11,495	11,366	11,023	10,925	10,742	10,747	-8.5%
Questar III	39,071	39,692	38,562	38,431	38,157	38,310	37,898	37,160	-4.9%
WSWHE	44,560	44,733	44,795	44,970	44,730	44,594	44,373	44,193	-0.8%

BOCES	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% change, 1999-06
Cobleskill-Richmondville	2,231	2,299	2,264	2,212	2,157	2,177	2,194	2,208	-1.0%
Middleburgh	1,078	1,063	1,089	1,062	1,073	1,054	1,037	1,010	-6.3%
Schoharie	1,265	1,261	1,236	1,216	1,188	1,176	1,148	1,102	-12.9%
Sharon Springs	455	436	437	394	371	373	388	392	-13.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,029</b>	<b>5,059</b>	<b>5,026</b>	<b>4,884</b>	<b>4,789</b>	<b>4,780</b>	<b>4,767</b>	<b>4,712</b>	<b>-6.3%</b>

With two medium-sized cities and several large suburban towns, the Capital Region BOCES has the highest number of pupils per square mile (59) in the overall study area, as shown in Table 2. The Otsego-Northern Catskills (ONC) BOCES has the lowest enrollment density in the study area at 6 pupils per square mile, barely more than one-sixth the state average.<sup>4</sup>

Table 2: Pupil Enrollment and Density, Fall 2005

BOCES	Number of Component School Districts	Enrollment, Fall 2005	Land area (square miles)	Density (pupils/sq mile)
Capital Region	24	71,443	1,213	59
HFM	15	16,892	1,640	10
ONC	19	10,445	1,661	6
Questar III	22	36,449	1,602	23
WSWHE	31	43,742	2,686	16
<b>NYS Average</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>42,990</b>	<b>1,227</b>	<b>35</b>

<sup>4</sup> Table 2 data are from *Chapter 655 Report: The Educational Status of New York State Schools*; enrollment data for 2005 from that report differ slightly from data reported on New York State Education Department website used in Table 1.

All the supervisory districts in the study area have relatively low minority enrollment, compared to the statewide average, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Enrollment by Race, SY 2004-05

BOCES	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other
Capital Region	85.7	6.9	3.2	4.2
HFM	90.1	2.1	7.0	0.9
ONC	94.4	2.0	2.3	1.2
Questar III	86.5	8.9	3.2	1.5
WSWHE	96.3	1.8	1.1	0.8

BOCES	% White	% Black	% Hispanic	% Other
Cobleskill-Richmondville	95.6	1.2	2.3	0.9
Middleburgh	98.1	0.3	0.8	0.8
Schoharie	98.5	0.5	1.0	0.0
Sharon Springs	99.5	0.5	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.1%</b>	<b>0.8%</b>	<b>1.5%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>

As shown in Table 4, statewide enrollment in BOCES' career and technical education (CTE) programs has risen steadily in recent years, up by 9.0 percent during the eight years ending in 2005-06. Capital Region BOCES saw a particularly large increase in CTE enrollment, at 47.3 percent. As a proportion of 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-grade enrollment, CTE participation was highest at ONC BOCES, at 24.9 percent, and lowest at Capital Region BOCES, at 11 percent (see Table 5).

Table 4: CTE Enrollment, 1999-06

BOCES	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	% change, 1999-06
Capital Region	814	1,028	1,029	1,047	1,075	1,085	1,160	1,199	47.3%
HFM	375	301	277	284	420	416	461	448	19.5%
ONC	349	379	406	392	391	371	369	401	14.9%
Questar III	634	588	577	669	677	669	715	755	19.1%
WSWHE	1,240	1,270	1,267	1,281	1,307	1,285	1,262	1,289	4.0%
<b>NYS total</b>	<b>32,930</b>	<b>32,615</b>	<b>32,999</b>	<b>33,651</b>	<b>34,236</b>	<b>34,074</b>	<b>35,233</b>	<b>35,903</b>	<b>9.0%</b>

Table 5: CTE Enrollment as Percent of Grades 11-12 Enrollment, 2005-06

BOCES	Total CTE Enrollment	Grades 11-12 Enrollment	CTE Enrollment as % of Grades 11-12
Capital Region	1,199	10,875	11.0%
HFM	448	2,461	18.2%
ONC	401	1,609	24.9%
Questar III	755	5,361	14.1%
WSWHE	1,289	6,523	19.8%

Table 6 illustrates one measure of income disparities among districts — the proportion of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. Higher rates of poverty generally are associated with more significant educational challenges. In the ONC and Herkimer-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM) supervisory districts, more than one in three students is eligible, while Capital Region eligibility is approximately one in five. Poverty indicators

for the four Schoharie County school districts in Capital Region BOCES are more closely aligned with those of ONC.

Table 6: Pupils Eligible for Free Lunch and Reduced-Price Lunch, 2005-06

BOCES	% Eligible for Free Lunch	% Reduced-Price Lunch	% Eligible for Free & Reduced Lunch
Capital Region	14.5%	5.2%	19.8%
HFM	25.7%	9.8%	35.5%
ONC	23.9%	11.9%	35.8%
Questar III	21.6%	8.1%	29.7%
WSWHE	16.1%	7.2%	23.3%

BOCES	% Eligible for Free Lunch	% Reduced-Price Lunch	% Eligible for Free & Reduced Lunch
Cobleskill-Richmondville	19.8%	9.9%	29.7%
Middleburgh	17.9%	17.3%	35.2%
Schoharie	17.5%	9.0%	26.4%
Sharon Springs	21.2%	15.1%	36.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.0%</b>	<b>11.7%</b>	<b>30.6%</b>

School districts in the Capital Region have slightly higher pupil/teacher ratios, on average, than those in the other supervisory districts studied, while those in the ONC region are relatively lower (see Table 7).

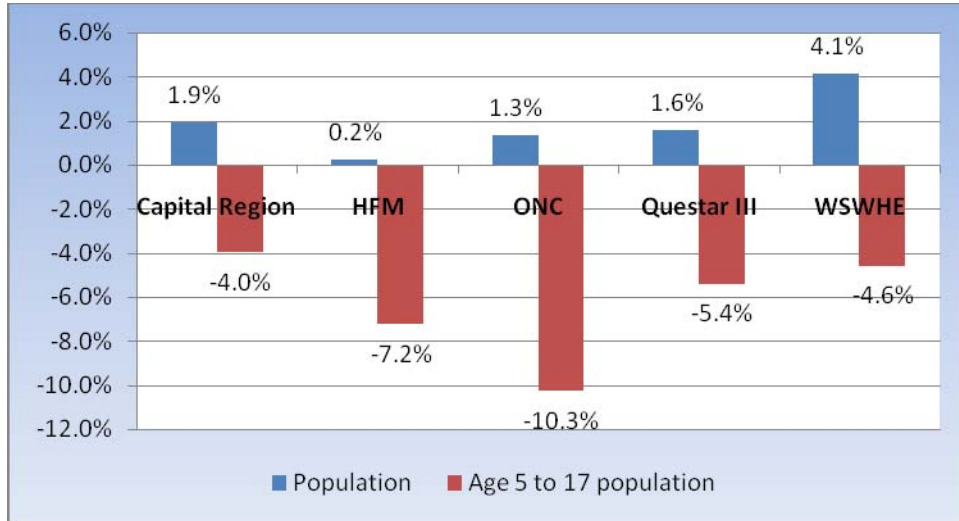
Table 7: Pupil-Teacher Ratio, 2005-06

BOCES	Total K-12 Enrollment	Total Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Capital Region	71,443	5,582	12.8
HFM	16,892	1,440	11.7
ONC	10,444	1,022	10.2
Questar III	36,511	3,089	11.8
WSWHE	43,742	3,654	12.0

BOCES	Total K-12 Enrollment	Total Teachers	Pupil-Teacher Ratio
Cobleskill-Richmondville	2,164	187	11.6
Middleburgh	959	94	10.2
Schoharie	1,083	94	11.5
Sharon Springs	392	42	9.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,598</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>11.0</b>

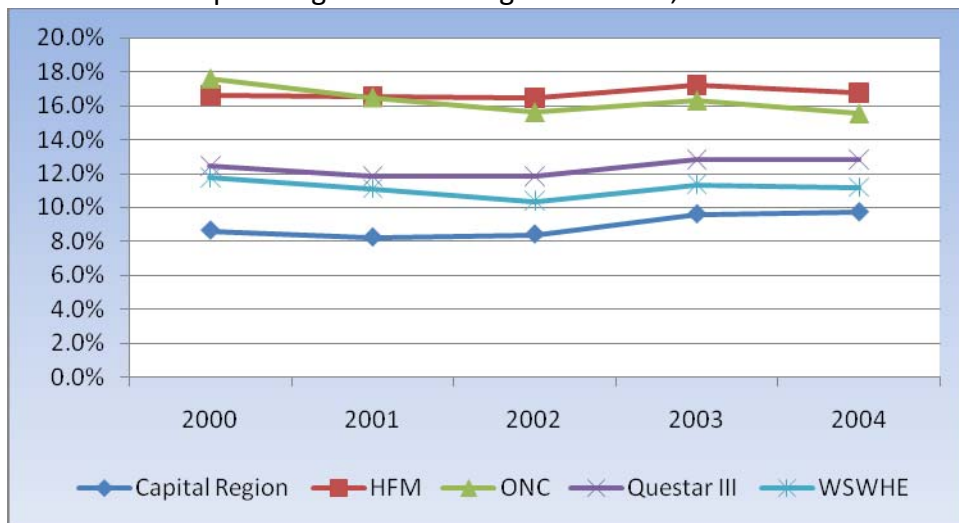
As Figure 2 shows, Capital Region and its four contiguous BOCES saw an increase in total population from 2000 to 2004, while the number of children aged 5 to 17 declined in all five regions.

Figure 2: Percent Change in the Number of Total Residents and Children Aged 5 to 17  
Capital Region and Contiguous BOCES, 2000-04



As Figure 3 shows, ONC had a significantly higher poverty index compared to Capital Region BOCES. Both HFM and ONC, the two BOCES with the highest poverty indices, saw declines in poverty from 2000 to 2004, while Capital Region BOCES had the lowest poverty index, but highest increase, among the five regions studied.

Figure 3: Poverty Index for Children Aged 5 to 17  
Capital Region and Contiguous BOCES, 2000-04



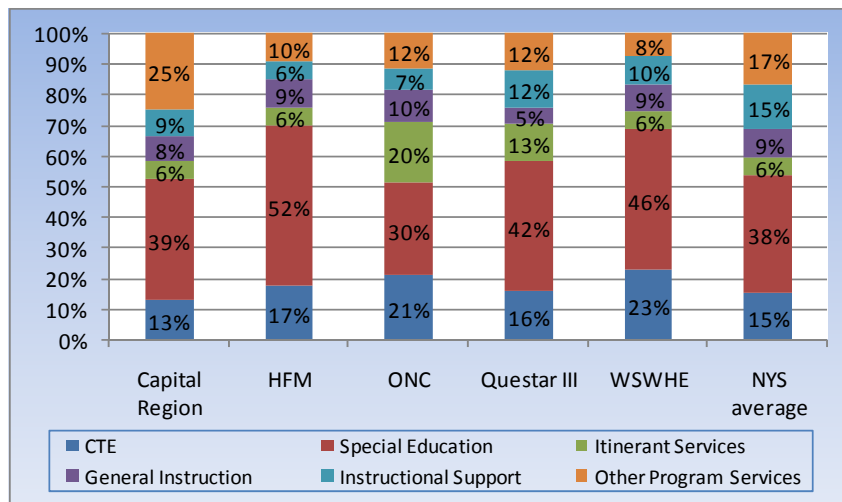
Per-pupil spending varies from region to region, in both programmatic and administrative/capital areas. In general, per-student expenditures (measured by Resident-Weighted Average Daily Attendance, or RWADA) are expected to be relatively high in low-population areas and lower in more densely populated areas due to fixed costs for many programs and administration. Table 8 shows that the HFM and ONC BOCES — smaller supervisory districts with low population and low student enrollment compared to their neighboring regions — had higher per-pupil expenditures for administration and capital budget.

Table 8: Budgets, SY 2005-06

BOCES	Total Program Budget	Admin & Capital Budget	Total Budget	Admin & Capital Per RWADA
Capital Region	75,093,092	7,655,302	82,748,394	101
HFM	18,892,964	2,388,337	21,281,301	134
ONC	18,186,934	2,176,786	20,363,720	192
Questar III	34,298,233	4,715,867	39,014,100	121
WSWHE	48,555,546	5,261,493	53,817,039	112

There are some differences in the distribution of program expenditures by sub-category across the five BOCES, as shown in Figure 4. Special education makes up the most substantial portion of the program budget in all BOCES. ONC devotes a relatively larger amount of its budget to CTE programs and itinerant services, and proportionally less to instructional support than do its regional counterparts.

Figure 4: Distribution of Program Budget  
Capital Region and Contiguous BOCES, 2005-06



## IV. Potential Reorganization: Combining Capital Region BOCES with Contiguous Districts

### A. Merging Capital Region and Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery

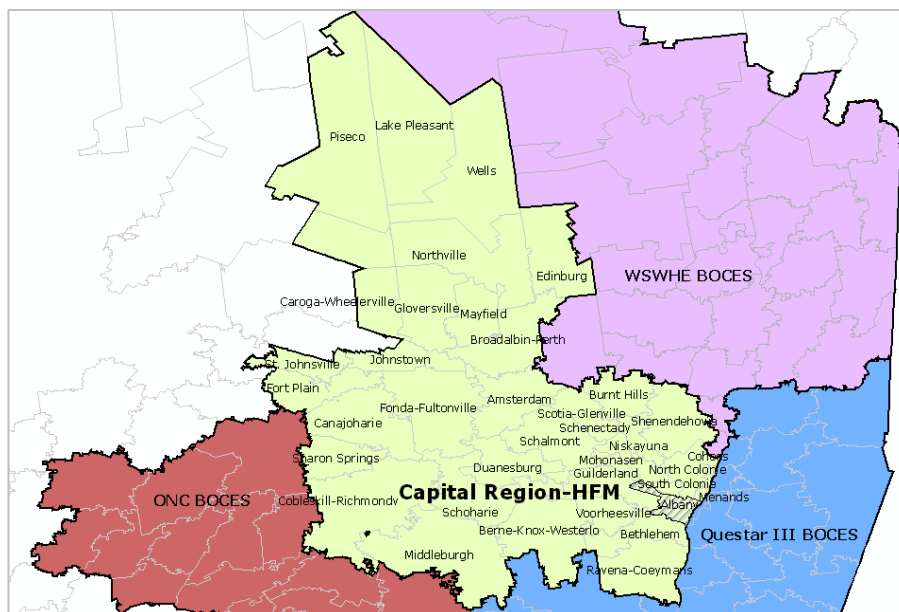
#### Overview and Analysis

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM) BOCES adjoins the Capital Region BOCES on the western half of the Capital Region's northern border. The HFM region is a mix of large, sparsely populated rural areas and small cities that have seen significant population declines in recent decades. It includes much of the southwestern Adirondack Park, which is characterized by mountainous terrain and unpredictable winter weather.

The HFM BOCES provides over \$22 million in shared educational services, career and technical training for more than 425 high school students, alternative high-school placement for 180 students, and literacy and GED instruction for 400 adult learners. The region has a notable proportion of special-education students in integrated settings — more than 99 percent of disabled students in the region are educated alongside their non-disabled peers.<sup>5</sup>

The 15 component districts in the region include total enrollment of 17,409, far below the level the Education Department considers adequate for a BOCES to provide quality educational services at an affordable cost. Enrollment has declined by 4.8 percent over the past seven years. The HFM region has relatively high rates of poverty and of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches.

Figure 5: Capital Region and HFM Merger



<sup>5</sup> For information on the student body of HFM see [www.hrmboces.org/HFMinformation/about.htm](http://www.hrmboces.org/HFMinformation/about.htm).

Merging the Capital Region and HFM supervisory districts would result in a combined region covering 39 school districts and more than 2,800 square miles. Travel time from a district headquarters to many component districts would be well over an hour, especially given the lack of major roadways in much of the region. Administering such a large number of component districts and geographic area would likely reduce the effectiveness of the district superintendent.

### **Recommendation**

In no instance did the study team's field interviews indicate that a merger of Capital Region and HFM was a viable option. (The two regions are part of the same Joint Management Team; one interviewee suggested that even such a relationship may be a mismatch for geographic and other reasons.) The study team recommends that the existing relationship between Capital Region and HFM BOCES supervisory districts remain in place.

In 1995, upon the retirement of the then-district superintendent, a study prepared for the Commissioner of Education suggested a possible merger of HFM with the Herkimer-Hamilton-Fulton-Otsego Supervisory District. Such a reorganization was not implemented. In fieldwork for this study, a number of interviewees suggested that HFM could be included in a broader study of potential reorganization among BOCES supervisory districts west of the Capital Region. The study team concludes that such a broader study may be worth consideration by the Commissioner. Further discussion of this recommendation appears in Section VI.

## **B. Merging Capital Region and Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex**

### **Overview and Analysis**

The Supervisory District of Washington, Saratoga, Warren, Hamilton, and Essex Counties (WSWHE) is located north of the Capital Region BOCES. The district covers 2,686 square miles, making it the second-largest BOCES in the state. It is also one of the most rural BOCES — it has 16 pupils per square mile, less than half the state average of 35.

WSWHE was formed by a merger of two smaller BOCES on July 1, 1993. The following year, the Shenendehowa Central School District was transferred to the Capital Region BOCES. The merger was made to increase the district's enrollment base and provide opportunities to expand services while achieving administrative savings for all districts.<sup>6</sup> Moving Shenendehowa was considered a second, but essential, step in the merger of the WSWHE BOCES. The district was moved to make the newly merged WSWHE district a more manageable size and because Shenendehowa's population, commuting patterns, and economy are more closely tied with the Capital Region.

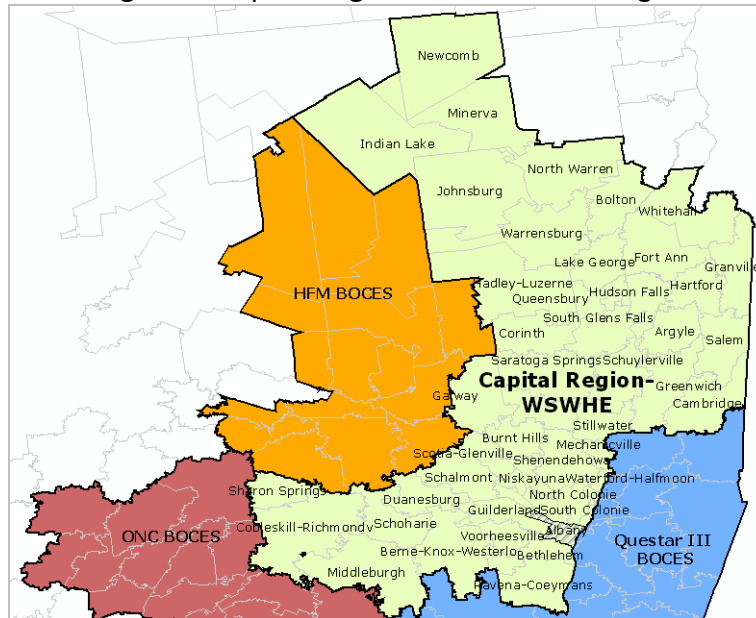
The supervisory district has remained unchanged since 1994, with 31 component districts. Total enrollment in 2006 was 44,193, slightly above the recommended minimum enrollment that is considered important for ensuring effective operation of a BOCES. Total enrollment has declined slightly over the past seven years. Poverty within WSWHE (poverty index of 11.2 percent) is higher than the Capital Region (9.8 percent).

A merger of the Capital Region and WSWHE supervisory districts would create the largest supervisory district in the state, at nearly 3,900 square miles. The resulting region would include more than three times as many component districts as the state average — 55 compared to 18. It would also include parts of nine counties, the most of any BOCES in the state.

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<sup>6</sup> From the *Ten Year Report of the BOCES Merger: Washington-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES and Saratoga-Warren BOCES*. Gerald Carozza, Terrence Blanchfield and Terry Schwartz; February 2003.

Figure 6: Capital Region and WSWHE Merger



Administering such a large district would reduce the effectiveness of the district superintendent because of long travel times and reduced opportunities to work individually with component districts.

In no instance did field interviews indicate that a merger of Capital Region BOCES and WSWHE was a viable option. There is some evidence that the already large geographic area of the WSWHE region creates managerial and administrative challenges. A 2002 study of possible reorganization for WSWHE and neighboring supervisory districts concluded that the WSWHE BOCES appeared “to be organized in a satisfactory manner as currently structured.”<sup>7</sup>

### Recommendation

Given the large geographic area, the consequent challenges for management, commuting times for students, and economic differences in the two regions, the study team recommends no change in the structural relationship between the Capital Region and WSWHE supervisory districts.

<sup>7</sup> From page 27 of the report to the Commissioner of Education, *The Sole Supervisory District of Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Counties*, September 2002.

## C. Merging Capital Region and Questar III

### Introduction

In economic, social and political terms, New York State's Capital Region is commonly understood as a single unit. The area centers on four counties that are primarily urban and suburban in character — Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady — and more broadly is sometimes considered to include exurban counties such as Columbia, Greene, and Schoharie. The U.S. Census Bureau designates the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area as the region including Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties. Of particular importance to BOCES' role in developing the future workforce, the state Labor Department designates those counties (with the exception of Schoharie), along with Columbia, Greene, Warren, and Washington, as the Capital District Labor Market. Employers in each county of the Capital Region draw workers from neighboring counties.

Key state agencies, such as those that maintain highways and care for the mentally disabled, make similar regional designations for purposes of arranging service structures and promoting locally based decision-making. The Capital District Regional Planning Commission, the comprehensive planning agency for the region, covers all four core counties — Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady. So, too, do the Capital District Transportation Committee, the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for transportation; and the Capital District Transportation Authority, which provides mass transit service in the area.

In the public education system, the regional structure is similar in some important ways, while differing in others. Planning and professional-development organizations such as the Capital Area School Development Association, incorporated by the state Education Department, and the Greater Capital Region Teacher Center, a program run by teachers, serve areas that are centered on the four core counties mentioned above. High-school athletes compete in the New York Public High School Athletic Association's (NYSPHSAA) Section II, an area that stretches from Columbia and Greene counties to the southern Adirondacks.

A decade ago, business and other community leaders in the Capital Region sparked a comprehensive study aimed at consolidating governmental units and/or public services throughout the region. The Commission on the Capital Region recommended a series of proposals to reduce artificial boundaries among local governments, improve efficiency, and restrain growth in taxpayer costs.<sup>8</sup> Business and civic leaders continue to urge consolidation of local government entities and services. At the state level, Governor Spitzer has created the Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness and charged it with finding ways to encourage consolidation of local units as one major step toward more cost-effective government. The trend is also seen in the private nonprofit sector, where the United Way of Northeastern New York (Albany,

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<sup>8</sup> Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, *Growing Together Within The Capital Region: The Report of the State Commission on the Capital Region*, June 1996.

Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schoharie counties) recently merged with the United Way of Schenectady County.

The broader Capital Region is bisected into two BOCES supervisory districts. As noted earlier in this report, Capital Region BOCES covers most of Albany, Schenectady, and Schoharie counties, and part of Saratoga County. It includes two of the three larger cities in the region, Albany and Schenectady. Questar III, to the east and south of Capital Region, includes most of Rensselaer (with the third-largest city in the region, Troy), Columbia, and Greene counties.

Retention of two BOCES regions in the Capital Region creates some barriers to cooperative efforts among school districts — precisely the kinds of barriers that BOCES are intended to eliminate. For example, efforts by leaders in two regions were required to obtain special state legislation to create an important new educational initiative, Tech Valley High School. The geographic relationship of the two regions creates some operational inefficiency, as well. For example, students in some Capital Region component schools would have shorter bus rides if attending Questar III’s Rensselaer Educational Center in Troy rather than the Capital Region BOCES center in Albany.

Given such obstacles to inter-district cooperation, and rising interest in government consolidation across the state, the study team examined possible reorganization of the two BOCES supervisory districts into a single Capital Region-wide district.

### **Structural and Demographic Background**

The present Capital Region and Questar III BOCES are themselves, like most of their sister organizations throughout the state, products of consolidation over the last several decades. The Shenendehowa district joined Capital Region BOCES as a result of a neighboring consolidation that created the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex Supervisory District in the early 1990s. Component districts in Schoharie and Schenectady previously had joined with what originally was the Albany BOCES region. The organization now known as Questar III resulted from a merger of Rensselaer and Columbia BOCES in 1972, and the addition of the Greene County #1 Supervisory District in 1977.

Questar III<sup>9</sup> falls among the middle ranks in the 37 BOCES regions across the state — 18<sup>th</sup> in student enrollment and 14<sup>th</sup> in square miles. Its 23 districts (including one non-component, Hoosick Falls) place the region 11<sup>th</sup> highest on an important measure of workload for the district superintendent. The region ranks 21<sup>st</sup> in enrollment density.

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<sup>9</sup> The Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene Board of Cooperative Educational Services adopted the name Questar III for popular usage in 1994. The name “reflects an evolution in the organization’s role and mission that has taken place over the last decade,” according to the Questar III website. It adds: “‘Quest’ stands for the educational journey and our search for excellence; ‘Star’ for the brilliance of our programs, staff and students; and ‘III’ for the three counties we serve.”

Table 9: Comparative Demographic Data, Capital Region and Questar III

	Status Quo		Capital Region & Questar III Merger
	Capital Region	Questar III	
Number of Component School Districts	24	22	<b>46</b>
Enrollment, Fall 2005 (components only)	71,443	36,449	<b>107,892</b>
Land Area square miles (components only)	1,213	1,602	<b>2,815</b>
Density of Supervisory District (pupils/square mile)	59	23	<b>38</b>
Poverty Index (2004)	9.8%	12.8%	<b>10.8%</b>

Questar III is made up of one medium-sized and three smaller urban districts, two larger suburban districts, and a variety of rural and rural/suburban districts. In addition to providing special education, career and technical education, and other traditional BOCES services to local school districts, Questar III provides state-aid planning services to more than three-quarters of the districts statewide. It is home to the Career and Technical Education Resource Center, a statewide program that coordinates initiatives aimed at improving student achievement in career and technical education. Other special services include technical assistance in bilingual education for 16 districts from the Questar III region to the Canadian border.

As mentioned above, Questar III and Capital Region BOCES collaborate in a variety of areas. One significant initiative is Tech Valley High School, the fruit of special state legislation enacted in 2005, which will open for 40 ninth-grade students in September 2007. The school will focus on math, science, and emerging technologies in project-based learning set in a business environment. Total enrollment is projected at 400 by 2011.

### Finances and Costs

As enrollment in career and technical education has risen in recent years, and the need to modernize current CTE facilities increases, both Capital Region and Questar III are considering new investments in buildings and equipment. A merger might enhance opportunities for cost-effective development of such facilities.

While such a merger might have some positive effects, however, field interviews produced no support among local educational leaders for such a move. Rather, leaders in BOCES organizations and component school districts believe such a move would raise significant educational challenges and would likely increase costs for Questar III component districts.

Over the past four decades, mergers of BOCES districts have been driven by expectations of reduced costs — particularly administrative expenses — and increased opportunities for educational programming. A merger of Capital Region and Questar III BOCES might allow some small reduction in administrative personnel. Other costs would increase, however. Such increases could be well beyond any savings from new efficiencies in administrative staffing.

Questar III staff estimate average salaries for teachers at \$57,520 in Capital Region BOCES, and \$52,199 in Questar III. Top-level administrators are paid an average of \$116,025 in Capital Region, and \$103,126 in Questar III, according to estimates. Average salaries for mid-level administrators and subject supervisors, teacher assistants, and support staff are also substantially higher in Capital Region BOCES. During field interviews for this study, BOCES and school-district leaders were virtually unanimous in observing that past BOCES mergers have led to “leveling-up” of salaries — with employees in a lower-paid organization enjoying pay raises to the level of their new colleagues after mergers. If Questar III employees’ salaries were brought up to the level of Capital Region’s, the costs to taxpayers would rise by \$1.4 million a year, according to Questar III staff estimates.

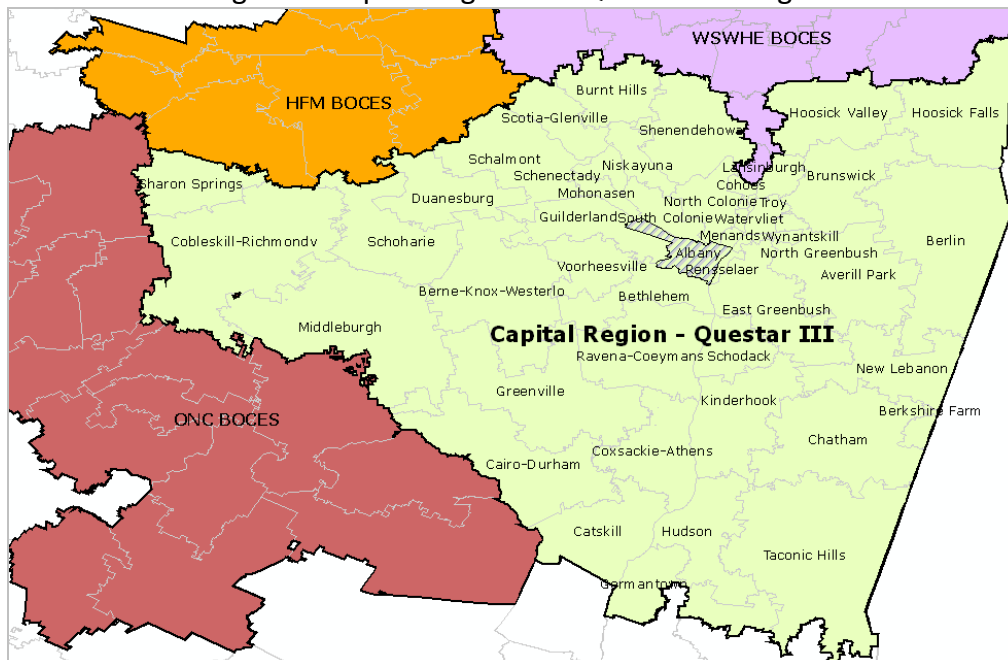
Employee-benefit costs, such as those for health coverage, are also higher at Capital Region BOCES. Questar III reimburses retirees for the first \$240 of annual Medicare Part B premiums, while Capital Region BOCES reimburses retirees for the full amount — currently \$1,090 annually. Extending such practice to current Questar III retirees would raise administrative costs by \$210,000 annually, while changes in coverage for current employees could add another \$240,000, Questar III staff estimate.

### **Administration and Management**

Whether in the public or private sector, combining large enterprises inevitably creates complications related to operational approaches, financial practices, and organizational culture. Such considerations also support retention of two BOCES supervisory districts for the greater Capital Region.

If merged, Capital Region and Questar III would create a BOCES supervisory district with total enrollment in the range of 118,000 students (including those at non-component districts, Albany and Hoosick Falls). The statewide average for enrollment in a BOCES supervisory district is approximately 43,000. A combined district would cover 2,906 square miles, more than twice the statewide average.

Figure 7: Capital Region and Questar III Merger



A combined supervisory region would task the district superintendent with assisting and supervising 48 individual school districts. Among existing BOCES regions, only Nassau and Suffolk One have more component districts. Suffolk One covers 933 square miles, roughly one-third the size of a combined Capital Region-Questar III district; the Nassau region is below 300 square miles. Such a merger could make it difficult for a district superintendent to provide personal leadership in collaboration with local school boards and superintendents.

A number of other factors involving operational practices and organizational culture discourage consideration of a Capital Region-Questar III merger. For example, administrators and supervisors are unionized in Capital Region, but not in Questar III.

**Related Issues**

Leaders in the two neighboring regions have established cooperative efforts that could be important examples for colleagues elsewhere in the state — the new Tech Valley High School being one notable example. During field interviews, educators suggested that a new relationship between local districts and the State Education Department could speed development of future collaborative work to improve student achievement.

School districts and BOCES across the state are increasingly challenged by families, employers, and other constituencies to provide students with more educational choices. BOCES have responded to such demands with a variety of innovations — New Visions courses that emphasize career exploration and increasing availability of college credit, for example. At the same time, school districts continue to look to BOCES for new,

noneducational services such as assistance in conforming to new requirements for internal audits and disclosure of long-term retiree health costs.

BOCES and school-district leaders believe their responses to such demands for innovation are sometimes hampered by nonessential review requirements at the state level. In a draft planning document for “a New York State Continuum of School Support,” district superintendents wrote:

Historically, New York State has a strong “home rule” tradition and local policy making and administration have proven to be generally effective means of oversight for the educational and financial operations of a district. Nevertheless, New York State has maintained a relatively assertive regulatory posture with respect to its school districts — establishing standards in numerous areas and often mandating specific means for meeting those standards.<sup>10</sup>

While such concerns have statewide application, they may be particularly relevant to areas such as the broader Capital Region where local leaders have demonstrated the willingness and ability to work across institutional boundaries to develop new educational initiatives. As the Regents and the Commissioner challenge school districts and BOCES to respond ambitiously and innovatively to higher educational standards, the State Education Department may wish to consider changes in administrative practices to encourage more collaboration among component districts and BOCES organizations.

### **Recommendation**

Given the increased costs and managerial challenges likely to result from any merger of the Capital Region and Questar III supervisory districts, the study team recommends that the relative structure of the two regions remain in place.

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<sup>10</sup> District Superintendents School Improvement and Accountability Committee, *Learning Our Way to Universal Proficiency: Creating a New York State Continuum of School Support*, draft dated Dec. 6, 2006.

## D. Merging Capital Region and Otsego-Northern Catskills

### Overview and Analysis

The Otsego-Northern Catskills (ONC) BOCES is south and west of the Capital Region BOCES. The district is 1,661 square miles, which makes it one of the larger BOCES in the state. It is also one of the most rural. With only six pupils per square mile, it is well below the state average of 25 students per square mile. Many of the school districts are located in the Northern Catskills, where more rural roadways and inclement winter weather make transportation difficult.

The Supervisory District has 19 component school districts. Total enrollment in 2005 was 10,445, far below the state average for BOCES, and approximately one-quarter of the recommended minimum enrollment of 40,000 considered important for ensuring effective operation of a BOCES. The largest school district in ONC is Oneonta, with 2,112 students; the smallest is Andes, with 149 students. Enrollment has declined significantly in the ONC BOCES region compared to its neighboring BOCES regions over the past nine years—from 11,741 in 1997-98 to 10,445 in 2005-06 — an 11 percent decrease. Poverty within ONC is higher than the Capital Region BOCES and the state average.

Table 10: Comparative Demographic Data, Capital Region and ONC

	Status Quo		Capital Region & ONC Merger
	Capital Region	ONC	
Number of Component School Districts	24	19	<b>43</b>
Enrollment, Fall 2005 (components only)	71,443	10,445	<b>81,888</b>
Land Area square miles (components only)	1,213	1,661	<b>2,874</b>
Density of Supervisory District (pupils/square mile)	59	6	<b>28</b>
Poverty Index (2004)	9.8%	15.6%	<b>10.5%</b>

As shown in Table 10, a merger of the Capital Region and ONC BOCES would create one of the largest BOCES in the state, geographically. With 43 component districts, it would have more than twice as many districts as the state average.

Administering a supervisory district over such a large geographic area (close to 3,000 square miles) would be challenging for the district superintendent. Not only would the number of districts be more than twice the state average, but the travel time between districts would result in less effective managerial oversight and diminished administrative quality. The average travel time from ONC districts to the Capital Region BOCES headquarters is well over an hour. The farthest ONC component district, Edmeston, is 105 miles away, and travel time one way is almost two hours.

Other administrative challenges would include a major change in information technology for BOCES offices and component districts in one of the two regions, given that Capital Region operates the Northeast Regional Information Center and ONC is part of the South Central (Broome County) Regional Information Center. Such a move raises concerns regarding systems and software compatibility, as well as the overall time and costs associated with a transition.



## **V. Consideration of Individual School Districts**

### **A. Transfer of four Schoharie County school districts from Capital Region to Otsego-Northern Catskills**

#### **Structural and Demographic Background**

The Capital Region BOCES has existed in its current form since 1994. Twelve component districts are in Albany County, six in Schenectady County, four in Schoharie County, and two in Saratoga County. The Albany County districts (not including the city of Albany) comprise 43.6 percent of the total enrollment, Saratoga County – 17.9 percent, Schenectady County – 31.8 percent, and Schoharie County – 6.7 percent.

In response to the Education Commissioner’s survey, the Otsego-Northern Catskills (ONC) district superintendent recommended consideration of moving the four districts within Schoharie County from the Capital Region to ONC. That proposal was an important factor in the Commissioner requesting a study to examine possible reorganization of the Capital Region.

ONC’s arguments for the recommendation included these:

- Numbers of students in supervisory districts: The Capital Region BOCES district serves approximately 70,000 students; ONC serves 10,500. Transferring 4,600 students to the ONC BOCES region would have a significantly positive overall impact on ONC.
- Geography: The four Schoharie County districts would be closer to ONC’s administrative offices in Stamford than to the Capital Region’s administrative offices.
- Costs: Transferring the four Schoharie districts to ONC would decrease administrative and capital costs for ONC component districts.
- Facilities/Economies of scale: In a transfer, the Schoharie County districts would be reassigned to ONC’s CTE centers, making productive use of facilities that operate below capacity.
- Student programs: Programs available to the students at the Schoharie Campus would continue to be available and increased enrollment in the ONC facilities would result in expanded program opportunities.
- Community of interest: Schoharie County schools have more in common with ONC’s component districts than with those in the Capital Region. They face similar challenges — district size, rural poverty, an eroding tax base, and a heavy dependence on state aid.

Table 11 shows how the Capital Region and ONC BOCES currently compare on a number of demographic and geographic factors and how these factors would change if the four Schoharie County districts were transferred.

Table 11: Key Demographic and Geographic Indicators  
Capital Region, ONC, and Schoharie Districts

	Status Quo			Schoharie Districts Joining ONC	
	Capital Region	ONC	Schoharie 4 SDs Total	Capital Region – 4 SD	ONC + 4 SD
Number of Component School Districts	24	19	<b>4</b>	20	23
Enrollment, Fall 2005 (components only)	71,443	10,445	<b>4,598</b>	66,845	15,043
Land Area square miles (components only)	1,213	1,661	<b>487</b>	726	2,148
Density of Supervisory District (pupils/square mile)	59	6	<b>9</b>	92	7
Poverty Index (2004)	9.8%	15.6%	<b>14.2%</b>	9.5%	15.1%

The Capital Region has more component districts and a significantly larger student enrollment, has a lower poverty rate, and is more urban than ONC. Although removing four districts from the Capital Region BOCES would change all the aforementioned data by making the two districts in question somewhat more similar to each other, in no instance would the move dramatically improve indicators for ONC.

The most notable change that would benefit the ONC BOCES is an increase in enrollment. Currently, ONC ranks second to last among the state’s 37 BOCES regions in total enrollment. ONC’s acquisition of the four Schoharie districts would increase its enrollment by 44 percent, which would help it financially. However, the region’s total enrollment would still be far below the 40,000 level that SED estimates is required in a BOCES to allow the desired level of cost efficiency and breadth of programming.



illustrates how administrative and capital costs would change in both the ONC and Capital Region BOCES if the four Schoharie districts were to move.

The four Schoharie districts would have an increase of 78.6 percent in their assessment for administrative and capital costs while the 20 remaining districts in the Capital Region BOCES would pay 6.8 percent more for administrative and capital costs. At the same time the ONC school districts would have a decrease of 29.8 percent in their assessment for administrative and capital costs.<sup>11</sup>

Table 12: Administrative and Capital Costs Per Student, SY 2006-07

Enrollment and Cost Data	Status Quo Capital Region	Status Quo ONC	Capital Region - 4 SD	ONC + 4 SD
Enrollment	75,730	11,326	70,925	16,131
Administrative cost per student	\$52.8	\$140.5	\$56.4	\$98.7
Capital cost per student	\$23.8	\$54.3	\$25.4	\$38.1
Total administrative & capital cost per student	\$76.6	\$194.8	\$81.8	\$136.8

ONC acknowledges that the four Schoharie districts would have higher costs. However, transferring these districts would greatly reduce ONC’s overall administrative and capital costs, as well as the costs of the current ONC component districts. Proponents of the transfer believe the long-term benefits outweigh the initial financial implications, as a larger pupil base would allow ONC to offer more and richer programs and services for all students, including those from the Schoharie districts.

Estimates of costs reductions and increases for ONC and Capital Region, respectively, assume no change in administrative staffing in either BOCES organization. In field interviews, Capital Region BOCES and school-district leaders generally agreed that the loss of four component districts and 4,500 or so students would not result in administrative staff reductions. It is difficult to predict whether a relatively large addition of students to the ONC region could be accomplished, and appropriate levels of service provided, with no increase in administrative costs.

Although discussions of BOCES mergers often focus on shifts in administrative costs, such expenses are a relatively small part of overall BOCES expenditures. Most costs relate, instead, to student programs. Such costs are reflected in tuition rates.

Based on data from ONC, a move of the Schoharie County districts would reduce tuition costs for ONC special education by \$9,505 per pupil for students in a 12:1:1 setting, and \$3,829 for students in a 6:1:1 setting.<sup>12</sup> Because of differences in special-education classifications in ONC and Capital Region, the study team was unable to estimate potential total changes in special-education costs.

CTE tuition costs for the four Schoharie County school districts totaled an estimated \$1.35 million in 2007-08. If the districts were transferred from Capital Region BOCES to

<sup>11</sup> Costs per student, based on Resident-Weighted Average Daily Attendance, were calculated based on the estimates provided by Capital Region and ONC BOCES.

<sup>12</sup> Estimated tuition costs based on data received from ONC and Capital Region BOCES, June 2007.

ONC BOCES, the districts would face an estimated increase of 4.6 percent in CTE tuition costs. Total cost increases would range from \$7,218 in Sharon Springs to \$32,481 in Cobleskill.<sup>13</sup>

Estimated administrative and capital costs for the four districts were \$368,072 in 2006-07. A move from Capital Region to ONC would increase such costs by 78.6 percent, with increases ranging from \$25,276 in Sharon Springs to \$134,144 in Cobleskill.

Table 13: Potential Changes in Administrative, Capital, and CTE Costs

School District	School Tax Levy, 2007-08	Status Quo			Schoharie County 4 SDs & ONC Merger				
		CTE Tuition, 2007-08	Admin. & Capital Budget, 2006-07	Total CTE, Admin. & Capital Budget	CTE Tuition, 2007-08	Admin. & Capital Budget, 2006-07	Total CTE, Admin. & Capital Budget	\$ Change in Total CTE, Admin. & Capital Budget	Added Costs As % of School Tax Levy
Cobleskill	12,999,089	705,672	170,746	876,418	738,153	304,889	1,043,042	166,625	1.3%
Middleburgh	7,897,000	191,664	77,061	268,725	200,486	137,604	338,090	69,364	0.9%
Schoharie	8,144,334	296,208	88,092	384,300	309,842	157,300	467,142	82,842	1.0%
Sharon Springs	2,243,731	156,816	32,173	188,989	164,034	57,449	221,483	32,494	1.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,284,154</b>	<b>1,350,360</b>	<b>368,072</b>	<b>1,718,432</b>	<b>1,412,515</b>	<b>657,242</b>	<b>2,069,757</b>	<b>351,325</b>	<b>1.1%</b>

The combined estimated increase in CTE tuition and administrative and capital budget costs will represent an average 1.1 percent increase of total school tax levy for all four Schoharie County school districts combined. This increase will range from 0.9 percent in Middleburgh to 1.4 percent in Sharon Springs.

Transportation costs would also increase in most cases, given the proposed closure of the Capital Region’s Schoharie campus. The study team asked component districts for data on current transportation costs and potential changes under the proposed move to ONC. One district, Cobleskill-Richmondville, provided such data. According to the district’s estimates, its total transportation costs would rise by roughly \$150,000 — reflecting purchase of an additional bus, hiring an additional driver, and using more fuel. The direct additional cost to local property taxpayers would represent 10 percent of that cost, while the remainder would be billed to taxpayers at the state level, due to BOCES aid for transportation costs.

Facilities costs may increase in the coming years for Capital Region BOCES, while those in ONC are more likely to remain stable. The Capital Region BOCES currently serves about 70,000 students, and its population continues to increase. Capital Region BOCES’ representatives have said that facilities are near or at capacity, which suggests that the district will have insufficient space to continue to serve students without expanding or building new facilities in the relatively near future. This, in turn, will affect costs. The ONC BOCES has space available to accommodate the students from the four Schoharie districts, and has recently upgraded both of its CTE facilities.

The cost of closing the Schoharie facility would be a significant consideration related to the transfer of the four Schoharie districts. State Education Department staff indicate that

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

current state law is unclear as to the process for selling such an asset and distributing proceeds to component school districts. Such a sale would require voter approval, which — given strong sentiment in Schoharie County for retaining the center — could be difficult to achieve.

## **Programs and Services**

Like all BOCES, Capital Region and ONC provide their component school districts with a variety of shared services, including career and technical education (CTE), special education, itinerant personnel, general education, instructional support, and non-instructional support services. Of these service categories, CTE is particularly relevant when considering the potential transfer of four Schoharie County school districts from Capital Region to ONC. The two BOCES districts have a number of similar course offerings. However, opponents of a transfer argue that the breadth and quality of Capital Region's programs provide a stronger educational experience for students:

- The Capital Region BOCES has 24 state approved CTE courses in its two sites. Eight programs are nationally accredited. Several programs also carry national skills certifications that do not require a formal accreditation process; however, students may receive additional certifications that provide advanced standing when they enter the workplace.
- ONC BOCES has 17 state-approved programs at its two sites. Two programs — culinary arts and information technology — carry national skills certification.
- Capital Region's CTE schools are accredited by the Middle States Consortium on Secondary Education; ONC's are not. Accreditation indicates that a program has undergone intensive internal and external review, generally associated with program improvement.

Students in the Schoharie County districts would lose access to some education programs as a result of a move to ONC. Absent change to the state law creating Tech Valley High School, students in ONC are not eligible for the new school, scheduled to open in fall 2007. Schoharie districts have made start-up investments in several Capital Region initiatives that could be lost. For example, a 2006 report by Capital Region BOCES leaders<sup>14</sup> notes that it is developing satellite programs in an effort to keep students closer to home. The report states that the initiative involves “a partially decentralized Career & Tech program with some classes offered in component schools. One such satellite program — a full-day career academy focusing on early childhood education — is currently being piloted at Cobleskill-Richmondville High School.”

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<sup>14</sup> See “Charting the Future of Career & Technical Education in the Capital Region” at <http://www.bocescaareertech.org/Strategicplanning/chartingthefuture.htm>, Capital Region BOCES, March 2006.

Opponents also note that changing library automation services and moving from one regional information center to another would be expensive and disruptive.

Proponents of the transfer assert that having the newer ONC facilities at or near capacity is more cost effective than the Capital Region maintaining its Schoharie Campus, where declining program and service offerings have led to some unhappiness in the four Schoharie districts. During field interviews, the study team heard Schoharie County educational leaders express some frustration regarding the quality of services and overall responsiveness in Capital Region BOCES. The 2006 Capital Region report mentioned above summarized such concerns, which BOCES board members encountered in the context of planning for future CTE programming. The report noted that “under the heading of unmet needs, 63 percent of Schoharie County respondents said it is ‘very important’ for Career & Tech to find ways to better serve students who are looking for more career options, compared to 41 percent overall. This is a strong indication that the Schoharie respondents are much less satisfied than those from other counties with the variety of choices available to students.”

According to the report, “Schoharie County interviewees acknowledge that as funding gets tight in their school districts; they cut back on their participation in Career & Tech. And as they cut back, Career & Tech is forced to reduce its offerings. This only makes Career & Tech less attractive to Schoharie students and contributes to even lower enrollments. Everyone agreed that the challenge is to find a way to break this downward spiral and to come up with more innovative approaches for serving rural students.”

Leaders of ONC BOCES have stated that the Schoharie districts would play a large role in curriculum and program development in that region. With one-third or more of total enrollment in ONC, the Schoharie districts could expect a stronger voice than they have in Capital Region BOCES.

The superintendent and school-board members in one Schoharie County component district, Middleburgh, expressed openness to a move from Capital Region to ONC. The district is the closest of the four to ONC educational centers. However, the superintendent expressed serious concern over what might happen to the Schoharie campus if not all of the four Schoharie districts transferred to ONC.

There also has been strong concern expressed that even with an increased base of 15,000 students, ONC is still vulnerable to further restructuring within the next decade. Schoharie representatives are concerned that if their districts are transferred, and then ONC is merged with another BOCES, operational disruption could go on for many years.

### **Workforce Development**

Schoharie County is located in the western portion of the Capital Region BOCES, just north and east of ONC BOCES, and south of the Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES district. Because of its location, the county has overlapping affiliations with different metropolitan, labor market, and workforce development regions.

Career and technical education plays a central role in K-12 education generally in Schoharie County, and in the districts' relationship with BOCES specifically. Some 18 percent of 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders in the four districts that are part of Capital Region BOCES take advantage of career and technical education courses. The significant role of CTE suggests the need for a detailed look at workforce and labor-market considerations.

The county is classified by the U.S. Census Bureau and New York State as a part of the greater Capital Region, and community leaders strongly identify it as such. Workforce and commuting patterns are predominantly eastward, toward Schenectady and Albany counties, as are the community's economic, geographic, and cultural development initiatives.

The New York State Department of Labor combines New York's 62 counties into larger geographic areas for labor market reporting purposes. These larger areas are defined as Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs) and are divided into Metropolitan (having at least one urban area of 50,000 inhabitants) and Micropolitan (with at least one urban area having between 10,000 and 50,000 inhabitants) statistical areas. There are 11 Metropolitan and 15 Micropolitan statistical areas in New York.<sup>15</sup> Schoharie County is one of five counties in the Albany-Schenectady-Troy Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), along with Albany, Rensselaer, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties. Otsego County, a part of the ONC BOCES region, is in the Oneonta Micropolitan Statistical Area. The Department of Labor defines its CBSAs as being "made up of a county or counties with at least one urban area, plus adjacent, outlying counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the core. An outlying county is included in the CBSA if at least 25 percent of its employed residents work in the central county (or counties)."

The Department of Labor also divides the state into 10 Labor Market Regions. The Capital District Labor Market Region (LMR) includes Albany, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties, which comprise, along with Schoharie, the counties in the Capital Region BOCES.<sup>16</sup> Schoharie County's LMR affiliation, however, is not with the Capital Region. Instead, it is part of the Mohawk Valley Region, along with Fulton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, and Oneida counties. Otsego and Delaware counties, which make up a large portion of the ONC BOCES region, are within the Southern Tier Labor Market Region.<sup>17</sup>

New York State Department of Labor workforce and industry data for these regions show that recent private sector job growth patterns in the Capital District and Mohawk Valley LMRs are closely aligned, with education and health services, and the leisure and hospitality sectors accounting for the most growth in both of these areas.

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<sup>15</sup> See <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceindustrydata/apps.asp?reg=nys&app=regions>.

<sup>16</sup> Other counties in the Capital District LMR include Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Warren, and Washington: <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceindustrydata/apps.asp?reg=cap&app=geog>.

<sup>17</sup> Other counties in the Southern Tier LMR include: Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins. See <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceindustrydata/index.asp?reg=sou>.

Employment gains in the Southern Tier Region were largest in educational and health services, as well. However, this region also had gains in the trade, transportation, and utilities; and natural resources, mining and construction sectors. The Capital Region and Mohawk Valley region had minimal gains, or even losses, in these sectors.

There are 33 workforce investment areas in New York State.<sup>18</sup> Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), with approximately 50 percent of their membership from the business community, are responsible for setting workforce development policy for and overseeing the workforce development efforts in their area under the federal Workforce Investment Act. WIBs oversee the operations of One-Stop Career Centers, which provide job placement, training, and other services to job seekers, and employee placement, workforce training, and other services to employers.

The Capital Region Workforce Investment Board (WIB) serves Albany, Rensselaer, and Schenectady counties. Schoharie County is part of the Fulton-Montgomery-Schoharie (FMS) Board. However, the Capital Region and Fulton-Montgomery-Schoharie, together with the Columbia-Greene and the Saratoga-Warren-Washington boards, form what the Department of Labor defines as “The Four Greater Capital Region Workforce Investment Areas.”<sup>19</sup> The workforce community in the Otsego-Northern Catskills BOCES Supervisory District is served by the Chenango-Delaware-Otsego (CDO) Workforce Investment Board.

The study team solicited comments from leaders of the business community, and from members of the workforce development communities in and around Schoharie County. Respondents generally opposed a transfer of the four school districts, citing the following:

- Commuting patterns: According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics,<sup>20</sup> 41 percent of Schoharie’s resident workers commute out. Of these commuters, 69 percent travel to the Capital Region Labor Market Region, which includes Albany, Saratoga, and Schenectady counties.<sup>21</sup> In contrast, as shown in Table 14, just 16 percent travel to Otsego and Delaware counties for work. Some 5 percent of Schoharie’s working residents commute to Fulton and Montgomery counties.

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<sup>18</sup> See <http://www.workforcenewyork.org/wibtemplate/>.

<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.thejoblink.org/documents/VolumeI.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Rockefeller Institute analysis of the U.S. Census Bureau’s *County-To-County Worker Flow Files*: <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/commuting.html>.

<sup>21</sup> Other counties in the Capital District LMR include Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Warren, and Washington: <http://www.labor.state.ny.us/workforceindustrydata/apps.asp?reg=cap&app=geog>.

Table 14: Schoharie County Workforce Commuting Patterns

Commuting Patterns, 2000	Total Commuters	% of Total Commuters
<b>Total Schoharie Commuters to Area Labor Market Regions (LMR)</b>	<b>5,577</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Commuters to Capital Region /1	3,842	68.9%
Commuters to Southern Tier (Delaware and Otsego counties) /2	900	16.1%
Commuters to Mohawk Valley (Fulton and Montgomery counties) /3	278	5.0%
All other commuters	557	10.0%

**Source:** U.S. Census Bureau, County-To-County Worker Flow Files

**Notes:**

/1 Capital Region LMR includes Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Schenectady, Warren, and Washington counties.

/2 Other counties in the Southern Tier Region include Broome, Chemung, Chenango, Schuyler, Steuben, Tioga, and Tompkins.

/3 Other counties in the Mohawk Valley Region include Herkimer, Madison, Oneida, and Schoharie.

- **Economic and Geographic Affiliation with the Capital Region:** Schoharie County has developed several long-range economic development initiatives based on its relationship with the Capital Region. An October 2004 economic development strategy prepared for the Schoharie County Planning and Development Agency<sup>22</sup> outlines the economic interface between the county and the Capital Region, citing collaborative opportunities for land use, facilities space, advanced health care services, technology, and tourism. These initiatives are in many cases directly related to Schoharie County’s position along the I-88 corridor. The Schoharie County Chamber of Commerce, which supports retaining the four school districts within Capital Region BOCES, markets the county as part of the “Tech Valley” region to the east.

While its primary economic orientation is toward the east, Schoharie County also has economic relationships with the Otsego-Northern Catskills region. ONC BOCES offers workforce programs through Bassett Healthcare,<sup>23</sup> which has 24 health centers and four hospitals, including Cobleskill Regional Hospital.

The four Schoharie County districts have been a part of the Capital Region BOCES since 1962, and BOCES district lines separated these districts from the other Schoharie schools (Jefferson and Gilboa-Conesville), even before I-88 was built. Employment-based and other economic ties to the Capital Region are likely to grow further.

Schoharie County also provides regularly scheduled public transportation to Albany, Schenectady, and other areas of the Capital Region, but not to Otsego or Delaware counties.

**Geographic Considerations**

Opponents generally cited geographic and transportation issues as strong deterrents to a transfer. Many Schoharie County residents work in the Capital Region, and for after-school programs, conferences, open houses, etc., many parents would have to travel a much greater distance. And although the Capital Region and the Otsego-Northern

<sup>22</sup> *Schoharie County Long Range Economic Development Strategy:* <http://www.schohariebiz.com/longrangedoc.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> See <http://www.bassett.org/>.

Catskills are neighboring regions, weather patterns are quite different. Traveling in the ONC area becomes far more difficult in the winter, and there are no major transportation routes comparable to those in the Capital Region (i.e., I-90, I-88, NY Route 20), which could lead to an increase in lost instruction time due to inclement weather.

ONC BOCES has suggested that in the event of the four districts being transferred, the Schoharie Center would close and the students sent to ONC occupational centers. Based on distance and travel time, Cobleskill, Schoharie, and Middleburgh students would attend the Northern Catskills Occupational Center (NCOC) in Grand Gorge; Sharon Springs' students would go to the Otsego Area Occupational Center (OAOC) in Milford.

Of the 149 students from the four Schoharie County districts currently enrolled in CTE, 121 attend classes at the Capital Region BOCES' Schoharie Campus. Transferring these students from the Schoharie Campus to the closest ONC occupational center would result in an increase in both travel time and mileage. Most affected would be students from the Schoharie Central School District. Traveling to ONC's Northern Catskills Occupation Center (NCOC) instead of the Capital Region's Schoharie campus would result in an increase of almost 54 miles round trip, and would require students to be on a bus for more than an hour. With the exception of Middleburgh, travel time to the ONC occupational centers is comparable to the Capital Region campus in Albany. Table 15 shows mileage and travel times for the Schoharie districts to the Capital Region and Otsego-Northern Catskills Occupational Centers.

Table 15: Schoharie County School Districts Travel Distance and Time (One Way)

<b>Albany Campus</b>					
<b>To</b>	1031 Watervliet-Shaker Rd. Albany, NY 12205	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Time</b>		
<b>From</b>	Cobleskill-Richmondville	43	49		
	Middleburgh	47	52		
	Schoharie	36	41		
	Sharon Springs	43	57		
<b>Schoharie Campus</b>					
<b>To</b>	174 State Route 30A, Schoharie, NY 12157	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Time</b>		
<b>From</b>	Cobleskill-Richmondville	10	15		
	Middleburgh	9	16		
	Schoharie	3	5		
	Sharon Springs	20	24		
<b>Otsego Area Occupational Center (OAOC)</b>				<b>Increased distance</b>	<b>Increased time</b>
<b>To</b>	1914 County Highway 35, Milford NY 13807	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>(miles)</b>	<b>(mins)</b>
<b>From</b>	Sharon Springs	28	43	8.6	19
<b>Northern Catskills Occupational Center (NCOC)</b>				<b>Increased distance</b>	<b>Increased time</b>
<b>To</b>	2020 Jump Brook Rd, Grand Gorge, NY 12434	<b>Distance</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>(miles)</b>	<b>(mins)</b>
<b>From</b>	Cobleskill-Richmondville	33.6	44	23.12	29
	Middleburgh	26.1	34	17.33	18
	Schoharie	29.9	40	26.88	35

Source: [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com)

## **Cultural Considerations**

In many ways, the four Schoharie districts have more in common with the ONC component districts than with the Capital Region component schools. Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie, and Sharon Springs are all rural districts that face the same challenges as most ONC component schools: declining enrollments, rural poverty, stagnant or eroding tax bases, and heavy dependence on state aid. Proponents of the transfer also cite the cultural similarities of rural districts and argue that ONC BOCES has a better understanding of the cultural needs of the Schoharie schools. This like-mindedness leads to more programs designed to suit the needs of rural students, which differ from those in suburban or urban settings — for example, a CTE program in heavy-equipment operation and repair.

The six rural districts in the western part of the Capital Region BOCES (Cobleskill-Richmondville, Middleburgh, Schoharie, Sharon Springs, Berne-Knox Westerlo, and Duanesburg), in an effort to reduce costs, have informal collaborative transportation agreements in place. This consortium or “mini-BOCES,” as some call it, also shares program offerings and services (such as special education classes held within their districts), and cooperative purchasing and bidding agreements. Transferring the Schoharie County districts could result in higher costs and/or reduced services in Duanesburg and Berne-Knox Westerlo.

Additionally, respondents noted that media and advertising in Schoharie County — television, radio, and newspapers — are all primarily from the Capital Region. Student athletes from the four Schoharie districts compete in Section II of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (NYSPHSAA), along with other Capital Region schools.

## **Recommendation**

Based on an examination of cost considerations, educational programming opportunities, and Schoharie’s strong and growing economic ties to the Capital Region, the study team recommends that the four Schoharie districts remain component districts of the Capital Region BOCES, as currently organized.

At the same time, the study team concludes that additional review is needed regarding the difficulty that ONC BOCES and component-district leaders face in working to provide services for a region that struggles to maintain a stable population and economic growth. Further discussion of such issues and a recommendation for further study follow in Section VI.

## **B. The City School District of Albany**

### **Structural and Demographic Background**

Albany is the largest district in the Sole Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Saratoga counties, with total enrollment of 10,240 in 2006-07. It is among the largest purchasers of services from Capital Region BOCES. Alone among school districts in the supervisory region, however, Albany remains a non-component district in Capital Region BOCES. At various times over the past two decades, the school district has considered joining BOCES; during some of those times, the state Education Department encouraged such discussion. As part of its examination of the Capital Region BOCES Supervisory District, the study team analyzed whether the state Education Department should consider renewing its efforts to encourage component status for the City School District of Albany.

The City School District of Albany serves a student population characterized by high levels of poverty; some 61 percent of students are eligible for free lunch and another 11 percent for reduced-price lunch. Two-thirds of students enrolled in 2004-05 were black, while 21 percent were white and 10 percent were Hispanic. More than 20 percent of students were classified as having disabilities in 2004-05, compared to an average of 13.2 percent for all districts in Capital Region BOCES. Spending on disabled students was the equivalent of 41 percent of spending on general education students, compared to an average of 33 percent throughout the Capital Region Supervisory District.

In 1989, a task force appointed by the Albany school board reported that entering into component status could save the district \$1.1 million to \$1.5 million annually, with significant savings in career and technical education, alternative education, and other services.<sup>24</sup> District leaders studied the issue again in 1991, taking no action. In the mid-1990s, senior Education Department staff worked with leaders in the Albany district and Capital Region BOCES to fashion a proposed arrangement under which the city schools would become a component district. The Albany school board rejected that proposal, 4-3, in October 1995.<sup>25</sup> BOCES and district leaders have had informal discussions on component status in more recent years, but such efforts have not advanced to official consideration by the school board.

Of nearly 700 school districts statewide, the Five Large City School Districts are not part of BOCES. Among remaining districts, only four — Albany, Hoosick Falls, Mamaroneck, and Newburgh — are not component districts within a regional BOCES. Albany's status as a non-component district is partly a reflection of BOCES' historical development. Most BOCES were created in the 1950s as vehicles for smaller rural and suburban districts to promote efficiency by sharing services. School districts in cities such as Albany were relatively large educational enterprises in compact geographical areas, and thus were not considered in need of BOCES services. (In Albany and some

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<sup>24</sup> *BOCES Component Membership Report*, November 1989.

<sup>25</sup> "No BOCES Membership for Albany Schools," *Times Union*, Albany, N.Y., Oct. 11, 1995.

other cities, local political organizations also relied on public school systems for patronage jobs, and tended to resist changes that would remove control over hiring.)

Federal and state mandates for new services, arising during the 1960s and thereafter, increased the demand for sharing of expertise and services through BOCES. At the same time, most cities in upstate New York were losing population, and experiencing stagnant or shrinking property-tax bases; their educational leaders began to see more value in joining BOCES. In the Capital Region, the Schenectady school district joined BOCES as a component district in 1968. Across the Hudson River, the Troy district joined the Questar III BOCES in 2002.

The decision to become a component school district is entirely up to individual school districts. Non-component districts such as Albany can contract for BOCES services in the same way that component districts do, but they may have less involvement in decisions by BOCES administrators and boards as to which courses are offered, or to how programs are structured. Non-component districts also have a lesser role, if any, in longer-term BOCES planning with regard to issues such as facilities construction or leasing.

### **Finances and Costs**

The Albany City School District's consideration of component status over the last two decades was based largely on the expectation of significant new state aid. Legislation enacted in 2002 provides aid for some programs similar to the level that would be received if CTE services, for example, were purchased through BOCES. (Some uncertainty remains about the long-term status of such aid, if Albany were to join BOCES; further discussion appears below.)

Estimates by Capital Region BOCES indicate that becoming a component district would cost Albany some \$350,000 in new administrative charges, while producing roughly the same amount in additional state aid for which the district is not currently eligible.

Despite that rough balance, issues of cost are relevant to consideration of Albany's relationship with Capital Region BOCES.

Individual school districts often rely on BOCES for services that require specialized equipment, facilities or staff. CTE programs increasingly demand specialized, costly technology; spreading the cost across as many users as possible can allow a given level of resources to purchase the maximum variety and quality of learning opportunities for students. Leaders in both the Albany City School District and Capital Region BOCES expect significant new expenditures to modernize CTE facilities and equipment in coming years. Given the relatively large size of the Albany district and its geographic location within the Capital Region, BOCES and the city school district both might realize cost efficiencies by working together to develop plans for such investment. For example, if Albany were to become a component district, Capital Region BOCES might wish to consider siting a new CTE facility in the city. Such a facility could serve both Albany

students and those from districts (such as Bethlehem and Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk) for which an Albany location would be closer than the Capital Region BOCES site in Colonie.

The Albany school district could choose to purchase CTE services from Capital Region BOCES while retaining its non-component status. As a practical matter, such a choice appears highly unlikely; city school officials and students' families strongly support retention of a CTE center within the city. (The location of the current Abrookin Center in Albany is particularly convenient, two blocks from Albany High School.) Suburban and rural BOCES member districts, for their part, are unlikely to support an Albany location if the city schools do not choose component status. In other words, more cost-effective, joint development of new facilities would be unlikely to occur if Albany were to remain a non-component district.

### **Programs and Services**

Factors beyond financial considerations may argue for Albany's becoming a component district. There is evidence that Albany students could benefit educationally if the city school district were to integrate its career and technical education program with that of Capital Region BOCES.

Achievement indicators for students in Albany's Career and Technical Education program are lower than the statewide average. For example, 66 percent of the district's CTE students completed and passed Regents exams in June 2005, compared to a statewide average of 79 percent. Such disparities may, however, be related to challenges outside the school system; students who live in Albany are more likely than those elsewhere in the region to live in poverty.

Component districts that purchase CTE programming from BOCES have greater flexibility than a district that provides all such courses on its own. Program offerings may be influenced by availability of staff with specific expertise. If a district that does not purchase services from BOCES cannot replace an experienced teacher in a given field, it may be forced to forgo such program offerings or provide them with less-qualified instructors.

Finally, there is evidence that Capital Region BOCES' CTE programs are of superior educational quality, compared to Albany's.

Seeking to raise the academic and technical rigor of career and technical education, the Regents created a voluntary program approval process for CTE in 2001. The State Education Department has approved 24 programs offered by Capital Region BOCES, compared to only three programs offered by the City School District of Albany.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> *New York State Career-Technical Education Approved Programs*, New York State Education Department website at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/cte/ctepolicy/Approved.htm>.

Program approval by the State Education Department indicates that CTE administrators and teachers have subjected their programs to internal analysis and outside review to assess program quality, and to assure adherence to state learning standards. Criteria for program approval include quality of curriculum, teachers with state certification in appropriate academic and/or technical fields, alignment with current industry standards, articulation agreements with postsecondary institutions, work-based learning experiences for students, and data on student performance.

An independent evaluation conducted in 2005 concluded that approved CTE programs are “distinguished by value-added features,” compared to those programs that are not department-approved.<sup>27</sup>

The Capital Region’s CTE program is accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, while the Albany schools’ program is not.

State program approval and Middle States accreditation, or lack thereof, are not necessarily indications of superior or inferior program quality. At a minimum, however, they indicate that CTE instructors and administrators have examined their programs critically, sought expert outside appraisal, and considered potential improvements. Research indicates that such certification is associated with improved student learning; in one study of New York State’s CTE approval process, 89 percent of teachers surveyed said the application process improved educational quality.<sup>28</sup>

During interviews with the study team, Albany city schools’ administrators expressed concerns with the responsiveness and quality of services offered by Capital Region BOCES. Leaders in the school district also see significant benefit in managing their own CTE and other programs without the need for shaping programs in ways that would attract other districts. Alleviating such concerns could be an essential step toward consideration of component status for the city school district.

## **Recommendation**

The study team recommends that, for reasons of cost-efficiency and educational quality, the Commissioner consider renewing the Education Department’s encouragement of component status for the Albany school district, including integration of the district’s CTE program with that of Capital Region BOCES. The Department could, for instance, resolve apparent uncertainty over special services aid in the aftermath of 2002 legislation that provided such aid for Albany and certain other city school districts. Attorneys for the city school district and Capital Region BOCES expressed uncertainty over the long-term status of such aid when asked for legal analysis in 2002.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned previously, the

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<sup>27</sup> MAGI Educational Service, *The Face of Career and Technical Education in New York State, Year 2 Evaluation Report*, September 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from Jeffrey D. Honeywell to Albany Superintendent Lonnie L. Palmer, August 29, 2002; and letter from Michael F. Bergan to District Superintendent Barbara Nagler, August 30, 2002; letters in possession of Capital Region BOCES.

Department has worked in the past to fashion financial arrangements that would support component status for the Albany city schools. The Commissioner may wish to consider whether renewal of those efforts could enhance educational services and cost-effectiveness in the Capital Region.

## **VI. Consideration of Further Study**

An important factor leading to the State Education Commissioner's request for this study was the recommendation from the Otsego-Northern Catskills district superintendent that the Commissioner consider moving four school districts from the Capital Region supervisory district to the ONC region. As detailed in Section V of this report, the study team does not recommend such a step.

However, field interviews and research indicate that the concerns leading to the ONC district superintendent's recommendation are well founded. Such concerns, according to the district superintendent, include "an eroding tax base, declining enrollments, rural poverty, and a strong dependence on state aid." Similar issues can be found, to greater or lesser degrees, in other rural BOCES surrounding ONC from the Catskills region, through the Mohawk Valley and into Central New York.

The Education Department considers student enrollment of 40,000 adequate to allow cost-efficient operation and acceptable program diversity in a BOCES. Like ONC, four contiguous BOCES regions had enrollments of less than half that figure in 2006:

- Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego, with total enrollment of 15,846.
- Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery, with 17,409 students.
- Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego, 10,384.
- Sullivan, 11,239.

In each of those supervisory districts, total enrollment has been declining in recent years. Enrollment decreases from 2001-2006 range from a low of 0.8 percent in Sullivan BOCES to a high of 8.1 percent in Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego. All four regions are characterized by high levels of poverty, with more than one in three students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and more than 15 percent of school-age children living in poverty. All four regions are sparsely populated, with 10 or fewer students per square mile — less than one-third the statewide BOCES average. In part because of such enrollment characteristics, all have relatively high administrative and capital costs.

Three other supervisory districts that are adjacent to, or not far from, ONC BOCES also have relatively low enrollments, although they are more densely populated than the four regions mentioned above:

- Madison-Oneida, with total enrollment of 17,126, or 21 students per square mile.
- Oneida-Herkimer-Madison, with 24,075 students, 44 per square mile.
- Ulster, with 25,530 students, 29 per square mile.

BOCES services remain critically important to these regions. For example, in Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego, Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego, and Sullivan BOCES, more than 30 percent of 11<sup>th</sup>- and 12<sup>th</sup>-graders are enrolled in BOCES' career and

technical education programs. All three regions have seen such enrollment increase by more than 25 percent in recent years.

Numerous educational leaders interviewed for this report expressed concern over the future of K-12 education generally, and BOCES specifically, in the largely rural areas that make up ONC and surrounding supervisory districts. As this report's discussion of four Schoharie County school districts illustrates, clear and easy answers to questions of educational structure in these areas are elusive. Most or all of the BOCES mentioned above are products of reorganizations in recent decades. Any further reorganization would raise issues of geographic size, organizational culture, and variations in employee compensation, among others.

Recognizing such issues as well as those described above in this section, the study team concludes that the concerns raised by the ONC district superintendent and other educational leaders merit further attention. The study team recommends that the State Education Commissioner consider a broader study of BOCES reorganization in the region, including the area from Sullivan and Ulster counties in the south to Hamilton, Herkimer, Madison, and Oneida counties in the west and north. Such a study would examine potential reorganization (including ONC) that could be accomplished under more comprehensive, longer-term planning than reorganization initiatives arising from changes in district superintendents. The goal of such a study would be to identify a potential new supervisory district structure that would maximize cost efficiencies and opportunities for improved student achievement. The four Schoharie County districts analyzed earlier in this study are located between Montgomery and Delaware counties, and might naturally be included in such a study. However, any further analysis of those districts should take into consideration their economic ties to the Capital Region.

## **Appendices A-D**

### **Appendix A: About the Rockefeller Institute**

The Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government is the public-policy research arm of the State University of New York. It conducts studies on the role of state and local governments in American federalism, and on the management and finances of states and localities. Researchers at the Institute work closely with state and local governments nationally, and especially in New York State, and draw on the State University's rich intellectual resources and on networks of public policy academic experts throughout the country.

The Institute's recent work includes an examination of recent trends in federal, state, and local government spending on K-12 education. In 2005, Institute staff conducted a study for the New York State Education Department on potential reorganization of the First Supervisory District of Monroe County. That study and other Institute reports are available online at [www.rockinst.org](http://www.rockinst.org).

The study team for this report included Courtney Burke, senior policy analyst in the Institute's Federalism group; Lucy Dadayan, policy analyst in the State and Local Government Finance group; Alison Grinnell, research analyst in State and Local Government Finance; and Barbara Stubblebine, project administrative officer in State and Local Government Finance. The principal investigator was Robert B. Ward, the Institute's deputy director. The co-directors of the Institute are Richard P. Nathan and Thomas Gais.

## Appendix B: BOCES Rankings

### Student Base (K-12) and Number of Component Districts 2005-2006 Enrollment<sup>30</sup>

Rank	BOCES	Enrollment	Rank	BOCES	Number of component districts
1	Nassau	207,868	1	Nassau	56
2	Suffolk One	171,268	2	Suffolk One	51
3	Suffolk Two	90,871	3	Westchester Two	33
4	Westchester Two	77,154	4	Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE)	31
5	Erie One	75,622	5	Erie Two-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus	27
6	<b>Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region)</b>	<b>71,443</b>	6	Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga	25
7	Onondaga-Cortland-Madison	62,815	7	<b>Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region)</b>	<b>24</b>
8	Putnam-Northern Westchester	57,811	8	Onondaga-Cortland-Madison	23
9	Orange-Ulster	55,775	9	Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming	22
10	Dutchess	47,505	10	Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming	22
11	Monroe One	47,202	11	Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III)	22
12	Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE)	43,742	12	Allegany-Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben-Tioga	21
13	Erie Two-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus	42,513	13	Erie One	20
14	Rockland	41,750	14	Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (ONC)	19
15	Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga	41,252	15	Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida	18
16	Monroe Two-Orleans	38,676	16	Orange-Ulster	18
17	Orleans-Niagara	38,277	17	Putnam-Northern Westchester	18
18	Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III)	36,499	18	St. Lawrence-Lewis	18
19	Broome-Tioga	35,743	19	Suffolk Two	17
20	Allegany-Chemung-Schuyler-Steuben-Tioga	34,300	20	Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington	17
21	Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming	25,969	21	Broome-Tioga	16
22	Ulster	25,530	22	Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego	16
23	Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida	24,525	23	Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM)	15
24	Oneida-Herkimer-Madison	24,075	24	Dutchess	13
25	Oswego	23,569	25	Orleans-Niagara	13
26	Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming	19,977	26	Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego	12
27	Madison-Oneida	17,126	27	Oneida-Herkimer-Madison	12
28	Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM)	16,892	28	Franklin-Essex-Hamilton	10
29	St. Lawrence-Lewis	16,614	29	Monroe One	10
30	Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington	16,214	30	Cayuga-Onondaga	9
31	Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego	15,435	31	Madison-Oneida	9
32	Cayuga-Onondaga	14,521	32	Monroe Two-Orleans	9
33	Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga	13,808	33	Oswego	9
34	Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego	11,394	34	Rockland	9
35	Sullivan	10,855	35	Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga	9
36	Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (ONC)	10,445	36	Ulster	9
37	Franklin-Essex-Hamilton	9,198	37	Sullivan	8
	<b>*TOTAL*</b>	<b>1,614,233</b>		<b>*TOTAL*</b>	<b>690</b>

<sup>30</sup> Data from New York State Education Department

**Appendix B (continued)**

**Area (Components Only) and Student Density per Square Mile  
2005-2006 Enrollment<sup>31</sup>**

Rank	BOCES	Area square mile	Rank	BOCES	Pupils per square miles
1	Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida	3,339	1	Nassau	711.88
2	Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE)	2,686	2	Westchester Two	482.21
3	St. Lawrence-Lewis	2,643	3	Suffolk Two	434.79
4	Franklin-Essex-Hamilton	2,499	4	Rockland	198.81
5	Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington	2,344	5	Suffolk One	183.57
6	Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming	2,159	6	Erie One	174.24
7	Allegany-Chemung-Schuylar-Steuben-Tioga	2,144	7	Monroe One	131.55
8	Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego	1,825	8	Monroe 2-Orleans	114.57
9	Erie Two-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus	1,791	9	Putnam-Northern Westchester	110.54
10	Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga	1,750	10	Orange-Ulster	65.23
11	Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming	1,696	11	<b>Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region)</b>	<b>58.90</b>
12	Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (ONC)	1,661	12	Dutchess	56.02
13	Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM)	1,640	13	Orleans-Niagara	49.71
14	Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III)	1,640	14	Oneida-Herkimer-Madison	43.85
15	Onondaga-Cortland-Madison	1,433	15	Onondaga-Cortland-Madison	43.83
16	Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego	1,250	16	Broome-Tioga	32.03
17	<b>Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region)</b>	<b>1,213</b>	17	Ulster	28.59
18	Broome-Tioga	1,116	18	Erie Two-Chautauqua-Cattaraugus	23.74
19	Sullivan	1,073	19	Ontario-Seneca-Yates-Cayuga	23.57
20	Oswego	1,021	20	Oswego	23.08
21	Suffolk One	933	21	Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III)	22.26
22	Ulster	893	22	Madison-Oneida	21.01
23	Orange-Ulster	855	23	Cayuga-Onondaga	19.52
24	Dutchess	848	24	Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga	18.56
25	Madison-Oneida	815	25	Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE)	16.29
26	Orleans-Niagara	770	26	Allegany-Chemung-Schuylar-Steuben-Tioga	16.00
27	Cayuga-Onondaga	744	27	Genesee-Livingston-Steuben-Wyoming	15.31
28	Tompkins-Seneca-Tioga	744	28	Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM)	10.30
29	Oneida-Herkimer-Madison	549	29	Sullivan	10.12
30	Putnam-Northern Westchester	523	30	Cattaraugus-Allegany-Erie-Wyoming	9.25
31	Erie One	434	31	Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego	9.12
32	Monroe 2-Orleans	412	32	Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego	8.46
33	Monroe One	294	33	Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida	7.35
34	Nassau	292	34	Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington	6.92
35	Rockland	210	35	Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (ONC)	6.29
36	Suffolk Two	209	36	St. Lawrence-Lewis	6.29
37	Westchester Two	160	37	Franklin-Essex-Hamilton	3.68
	<b>*TOTAL*</b>	<b>46,608</b>		<b>*AVERAGE*</b>	<b>34.63</b>

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

## Appendix C: BOCES Component School District Enrollment Data

BOCES Supervisory District	K-12 Public School Enrollment 2005-2006 <sup>32</sup>	% of Total Component School District Enrollment
<b>Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region)</b>		
Berne-Knox-Westerlo Central Schools	1,087	1.5%
Bethlehem Central Schools	5,118	7.1%
Burnt Hills-Ballston Lake Central Schools	3,416	4.8%
Cobleskill-Richmondville Central Schools	2,208	3.1%
Cohoes City Schools	2,235	3.1%
Duanesburg Central Schools	930	1.3%
Green Island School	330	0.5%
Guilderland Central Schools	5,645	7.9%
Maplewood School	177	0.2%
Menands School	240	0.3%
Middleburgh Central Schools	1,010	1.4%
Mohonasen Central Schools	4,312	6.0%
Niskayuna Central Schools	5,585	7.8%
North Colonie Central Schools	2,310	3.2%
Ravena-Coeymans-Selkirk Central Schools	3,328	4.6%
Schalmont Central Schools	2,176	3.0%
Schenectady City Schools	9,212	12.9%
Schoharie Central Schools	1,102	1.5%
Scotia-Glenville Central Schools	2,916	4.1%
Sharon Springs Central Schools	392	0.5%
Shenendehowa Central Schools	9,535	13.3%
South Colonie Central Schools	5,688	7.9%
Voorheesville Central Schools	1,272	1.8%
Watervliet City Schools	1,357	1.9%
<b>Total Component School Districts</b>	<b>71,581</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM)</b>		
Greater Amsterdam School District	3,780	21.7%
Broadalbin-Perth Central School District	1,952	11.2%
Canajoharie Central School District	1,130	6.5%
Edinburg Common School District	63	0.4%
Fonda-Fultonville Central School District	1,572	9.0%
Fort Plain Central School District	919	5.3%
Gloversville Enlarged School District	3,302	19.0%
Greater Johnstown School District	2,019	11.6%
Lake Pleasant Central School District	95	0.5%
Mayfield Central School District	1,185	6.8%
Northville Central School District	547	3.1%
Piseco Common School District	16	0.1%
St. Johnsville Central School District	493	2.8%
Wells Central School District	174	1.0%
Wheelerville Union Free School District	162	0.9%
<b>Total Component School Districts</b>	<b>17,409</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>32</sup> New York State Education Department, *Chapter 655 Report* data, Table 1, available at <http://www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/655report/>.

**Appendix C (continued)**

<b>BOCES Supervisory District</b>	<b>K-12 Public School Enrollment 2005-2006</b>	<b>% of Total Component School District Enrollment</b>
<b>Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (Otsego-Northern Catskills)</b>		
Andes Central School District	140	1.3%
Charlotte Valley Central School District	455	4.2%
Cherry Valley-Springfield Central School District	667	6.2%
Cooperstown Central School District	1,125	10.5%
Edmeston Central School District	575	5.4%
Gilboa-Conesville Central School District	379	3.5%
Hunter-Tannersville Central School District	555	5.2%
Jefferson Central School District	269	2.5%
Laurens Central School District	437	4.1%
Margaretville Central School District	544	5.1%
Milford Central School District	500	4.7%
Morris Central School District	476	4.4%
Oneonta City School District	2,159	20.1%
Roxbury Central School District	342	3.2%
Schenevus Central School District	378	3.5%
South Kortright Central School District	367	3.4%
Stamford Central School District	478	4.4%
Windham-Ashland-Jewett Central School District	468	4.4%
Worcester Central School District	433	4.0%
<b>Total Component School Districts</b>	<b>10,747</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III)</b>		
Averill Park Central School District	3,491	9.4%
Berkshire Union Free School District	270	0.7%
Berlin Central School District	1,030	2.8%
Brunswick (Brittonkill) Central School District	1,433	3.9%
Cairo-Durham Central School District	1,767	4.8%
Catskill Central School District	1,758	4.7%
Chatham Central School District	1,422	3.8%
Coxsackie-Athens Central School District	1,593	4.3%
East Greenbush Central School District	4,533	12.2%
Germantown Central School District	692	1.9%
Greenville Central School District	1,380	3.7%
Hoosic Valley Central School District	1,263	3.4%
Hudson City School District	2,209	5.9%
Ichabod Crane Central School District	2,276	6.1%
Lansingburgh Central School District	2,447	6.6%
New Lebanon Central School District	598	1.6%
North Greenbush Common	22	0.1%
Rensselaer City School District	1,083	2.9%
Schodack Central School District	1,199	3.2%
Taconic Hills Central School District	1,833	4.9%
Troy City School District	4,461	12.0%
Wynantskill Union Free School District	400	1.1%
<b>Total Component School Districts</b>	<b>37,160</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## **Appendix D: Evolution of Supervisory Districts and BOCES**

Supervisory districts are subregions of New York State created to improve the overall supervision of local schools. In 1910 the State Legislature authorized the Commissioner of Education to divide the state, with the exception of cities and villages of more than 4,500 people, into supervisory districts. These first districts did not have the authority to provide educational services and were headed by district superintendents, who were state officials with salaries paid by the state.

In the 1930s, groups began to express concern that the range of educational services available in rural school districts was inadequate and sought an intermediate or regional system to provide expanded services. Although there were efforts to consolidate schools, by the early 1940s there were still more than 4,000 small schools. Many of the schools serving rural students continued to lack sufficient enrollment and fiscal resources to provide the variety of programs available to students in city districts and emerging suburban schools.

In 1948, an intermediate school district bill was signed into law that, among other things, authorized the establishment of a Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) to provide shared educational services in a supervisory district. To form a BOCES, the boards of education of a group of school districts could vote to request the Commissioner of Education to approve the establishment of a cooperative board. The district superintendent would also serve as the chief executive officer of the BOCES, and receive a salary for these responsibilities from the participating local school districts. Eleven BOCES were established in the first ten months following enactment of the 1948 legislation. During the first decade, the services offered by BOCES were limited primarily to shared itinerant teachers for rural districts with too few students to employ full-time instructors in areas such as art, music, and driver education.

In the 1950s, BOCES membership was expanded from central and small union-free school districts within a supervisory district to include larger, independent districts. This expansion ensured growth, and by 1960 82 BOCES had been created. School districts in cities, except those over 125,000 in population, were permitted to join BOCES in 1963. With this growth, the nature of services provided began to change from shared itinerant teachers to include services for students with disabilities, and career and technical education services. Growth in programs that brought students together from a variety of schools to one location was limited, however, by the inability of a BOCES to own facilities.

Legislation was passed in 1967 that allowed BOCES to construct and own facilities with voter approval and to use the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York to finance the cost of the facilities. As a result, BOCES services began to expand, as most BOCES constructed buildings with classrooms and shops having state-of-the-art equipment. Subsequent legislation was adopted authorizing BOCES to provide data processing services for schools on a multi-BOCES basis. School districts began requesting other services such as computer-assisted instructional services, planning and staff development services, and programs for adults. BOCES services continued to grow through the 1970s, and by 1980 most school districts in the state were members of a BOCES. BOCES were given the

authority to operate academic programs such as summer school and alternative high school in the early 1980s.

There are currently 37 supervisory districts in New York State with a BOCES located in each. A district superintendent continues to lead each supervisory district and serve as the chief executive officer of the supervisory district's BOCES. A portion of the district superintendent's salary is paid by the state and a portion by the component school districts of the BOCES. All but nine of the operating school districts in the state are members of a BOCES. Of the nine, five (Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers) are not eligible to join BOCES, as they are city districts each with a population over 125,000.