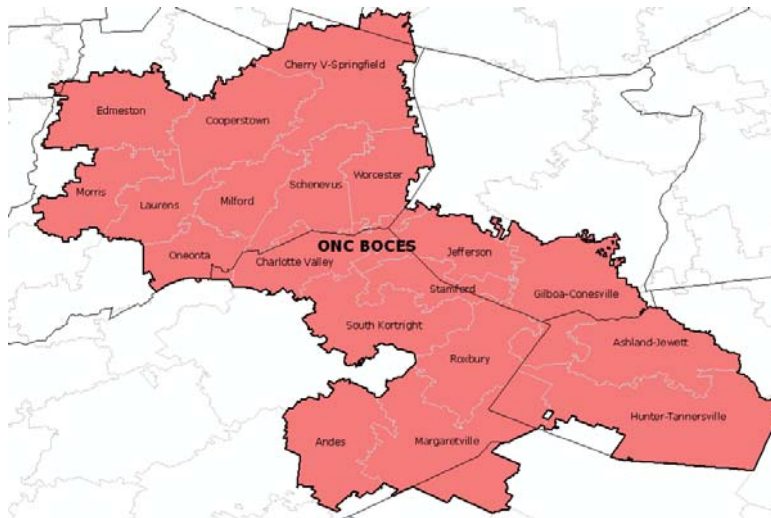


The Sole Supervisory District of Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Greene Counties

A Study of Potential Educational Reorganization of the Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES



**Prepared for the Commissioner of Education
New York State Education Department**

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**THE NELSON A.
ROCKEFELLER
INSTITUTE
OF GOVERNMENT**

Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary	3
II.	Introduction.....	6
	A. Study Background.....	6
	B. Methodology	8
III.	Profile of Otsego Northern Catskills and Contiguous BOCES	11
IV.	Assessment of Potential Reorganization Options	18
	A. Educational Considerations	20
	B. Financial Considerations.....	25
	C. Management Considerations.....	30
V.	Input from Community Interests.....	37
VI.	Conclusions / Recommendations	39
	Appendices A-E.....	A
	Appendix A: About the Rockefeller Institute	A
	Appendix B: NYS BOCES Rankings	B
	Appendix C: BOCES Component School District Enrollment Data.....	C
	Appendix D: State Approved Career and Technical Education Programs ONC, DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES	D
	Appendix E: Evolution of Supervisory Districts and BOCES.....	E

List of Tables

Table 1: Enrollment by Race, ONC School Districts, 2006-07.....	14
Table 2: Number of Component Districts, Enrollment, Area, Density, 2006-07.....	15
Table 3: Number of Component Districts and Enrollment in ONC and Contiguous BOCES, 2006-07.....	16
Table 4: Total Enrollment, 2001-2006	19
Table 5: Program, Administrative and Total Budget, 2007-08	20
Table 6: Special Education Enrollment and Tuition per Pupil, 2006-07.....	21
Table 7: Special Education Budget, 2007-08	22
Table 8: Number of State Approved CTE Programs Offered, 2008-09	22
Table 9: CTE Enrollment, 2002-07	23
Table 10: CTE Enrollment as Percent of Grades 11-12 Enrollment, 2006-07	23
Table 11: CTE Tuition per Student, 2002-07	23
Table 12: CTE Budget, 2007-08	24
Table 13: Itinerant Services Budget, 2007-08.....	24
Table 14: Itinerant Services Costs per FTE by Personnel Type, 2006-07.....	25
Table 15: Program and Administrative Budget, 2007-08.....	26
Table 16: General Administrative Budget, 2007-08	27
Table 17: Capital Budget, 2007-08	28
Table 18: Travel to ONC CTE Centers from DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES Offices...	33
Table 19: Travel from DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES to Outlying ONC Component School Districts	34
Table 20: Comparative Demographic Data, ONC and DCMO.....	35
Table 21: Comparative Demographic Data, ONC, Herkimer and Sullivan BOCES	35

List of Figures

Figure 1: ONC BOCES and Contiguous Districts – Status Quo.....	7
Figure 2: Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES – Status Quo	13
Figure 3: ONC BOCES and Regional Cohort – Status Quo	19
Figure 4: Distribution of Program Budget, 2007-08	21
Figure 5: ONC and DCMO Merger.....	35
Figure 6: ONC Component School Districts Reassigned to Herkimer and Sullivan	36

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 Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Greene counties (hereinafter referred to as “Otsego Northern Catskills” or “ONC”). 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 following the resignation of the Otsego Northern Catskills district superintendent.

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. These services include education of students with disabilities, career and technical education (CTE), 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, assisting school district boards in selecting new 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 Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district includes nine school districts in Otsego County, six in Delaware County, two in Schoharie County; and two in Greene County. It is located in the central part of New York State and is surrounded by *eight* other BOCES districts (a distinction shared only with the Genesee BOCES). BOCES districts that are contiguous to Otsego Northern Catskills and thus also included in this study, are:

- Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region), to the east.
- Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO), to the west.
- Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM), to the north and east.
- Herkimer-Fulton-Madison-Otsego (Herkimer), to the north.
- Oneida-Herkimer-Madison (OHM), to the west and north.
- Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III), to the east.
- Sullivan, to the south.
- Ulster, to the east.

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

The study team recommends that five of the eight contiguous districts be eliminated from serious consideration as part of this potential restructuring with ONC. These supervisory districts, Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga (Capital Region), Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery (HFM), Oneida-Herkimer-Madison (OHM), Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene (Questar III), and Ulster are either too geographically remote from ONC and/or do not share enough common areas of interest (either educational or demographic) to facilitate an effective restructuring.

Three BOCES districts — Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO), Herkimer-Fulton-Madison-Otsego (Herkimer), and Sullivan — were identified as more suitable candidates for a potential restructuring. The study team analyzed three organizational options:

- Merger of Otsego Northern Catskills with Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO) supervisory district. Such a merger would combine two districts with relatively similar economic, social, and political characteristics. A merger would eliminate two of the smallest of New York's 37 BOCES in terms of student enrollment, DCMO (ranked 31st) and ONC (36th), and replace it with one combined district of more than 26,000 students. The new combined BOCES would rank 21st in total enrollment in the state (still well below the suggested threshold of 40,000 established by the State Education Department). Through consolidation, several positions — the district superintendent, assistant superintendents, and certain other senior and support staff — would presumably be eliminated. However, it would create the largest supervisory district in the state in terms of geographic size (3,486 square miles), and the third largest in terms of the number of component school districts (35). The study team believes this factor would hamper the ability of the district superintendent to work effectively with component school districts to improve student achievement and manage administrative responsibilities. In addition, a recent capital expansion at DCMO would result in the allocation of capital costs to districts formerly in ONC. Because these costs were incurred to finance construction of educational centers in the DCMO region that are remote from ONC school districts, the ONC districts would be highly unlikely to utilize these new facilities. The study team believes that at least through the medium term (10-20 years), this cost imbalance poses an insurmountable obstacle to effective consolidation of the two BOCES districts and does not recommend such a merger.
- Restructure ONC BOCES by merging ONC's northern school districts into Herkimer-Fulton-Madison-Otsego BOCES and merging the southern ONC districts into Sullivan BOCES. As with a potential merger between the ONC and DCMO supervisory districts, such a step would reduce certain administrative cost

drivers, particularly for central office salaries and fringe benefits. However, this reorganization would appear to have little positive impact on the educational opportunities provided by the area's BOCES because given the considerable travel distances involved, the study team expects that the two existing career and technical education centers now operated by ONC would need to remain open. For the same reason, the team would not expect any significant reduction in the tuition costs required to finance these centers. The issue of travel time and the preponderance of low enrollment districts in the ONC service area mean that the restructured BOCES would face impediments to effective managerial oversight of their operations. Accordingly, the study team cannot recommend a realignment of the 19 ONC component school districts along these lines.

- Maintain the status quo, leaving the ONC BOCES intact. The study team agrees with the Education Department's preliminary survey findings indicating that the ONC BOCES exhibits abnormally high costs in several areas, such as administration and program tuition, when these costs are expressed on a per pupil basis. A review indicates that these very high costs are primarily a function of two factors:
 - *The very low enrollment of the supervisory district's component school districts.* The low total enrollment of ONC means that fixed costs, even though modest in the aggregate, translate to nominally high costs when divided by a low enrollment total. The study team has found that ONC BOCES is diligent about finding creative ways to reduce costs for itself and its districts, including a consortium for health insurance, a labor relations service, and a shared business office. In some areas, such as in itinerant teacher services, an apparently high level of spending is actually evidence that ONC BOCES is providing needed services to small school districts, thereby helping those districts either reduce costs or deliver services they would not otherwise be able to afford.
 - *The need to operate two relatively small centers for career and technical education.* Challenging geography and limited transportation options mandate that two centers be operated so as to reduce student times to a manageable level.

Based on research and analysis regarding these options, the Rockefeller Institute study team recommends that the Otsego Northern Catskills Supervisory District be maintained as currently structured. The team also shares the Education Department's concern about the relatively high fixed costs of operating this BOCES. To address this concern, we recommend that the Education Department lead a special effort to organize the smaller, rural BOCES in the region to identify ways to increase collaboration. The goal of this effort would be to share more administrative and management services, to lower administrative costs, and thereby enhance resources available for educating the students in the region.

II. Introduction

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. These services include educating students with disabilities, career and technical education (CTE), 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.

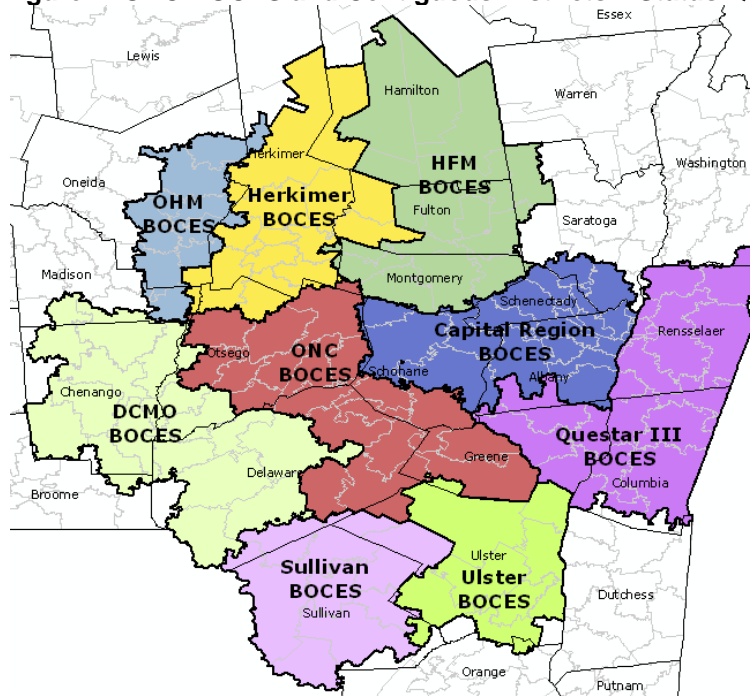
A. Study Background

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.¹ 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 following the resignation of the district superintendent of the Sole Supervisory District of Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Greene counties (hereinafter “Otsego Northern Catskills” or “ONC”).

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 Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES Sole Supervisory District in relation to eight contiguous districts. The contiguous districts are those covering all or parts of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady, and Saratoga counties (Capital Region); Delaware, Chenango, Madison, and Otsego counties (DCMO); Hamilton, Fulton, and Montgomery counties (HFM); Herkimer, Fulton, Madison, and Otsego counties (Herkimer); Oneida, Herkimer, and Madison counties (OHM); Rensselaer, Columbia, and Greene counties (Questar III); Sullivan County; and Ulster County. The study area includes all or parts of 18 counties.

¹ New York State Consolidated Laws, Article 45, Section 2201.

Figure 1: ONC BOCES and Contiguous Districts – Status Quo



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

1. Retain the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district as currently constituted;
2. Combine the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district with a contiguous district;
3. Transfer one or more school districts from the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district to a contiguous district; or
4. Transfer one or more school districts from a contiguous district(s) to the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district.

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: Would educational benefits result from reorganization or would it be more beneficial to retain the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district, as currently organized?
- District Superintendent: Would the district superintendent(s) affected by reorganization be able to fulfill the dual roles of representative of the commissioner of education and chief executive of the BOCES district? Would the district superintendent(s) be able to address the needs of all

component school districts? Would the district superintendent(s) have the support and capacity needed to implement a reorganization properly?

- Cost-Saving Benefits: Would there be cost savings from reorganization or would it be more cost effective and beneficial to the educational interest of the region to retain the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district, as currently organized?
- Workforce Development Implications: Would the reorganized supervisory district(s) better serve the workforce/economic development needs of the region or would these needs be best served by retaining the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district, as currently organized?
- Academic Standards: Would reorganization result in improved services to help raise academic standards and close achievement gaps or would this be best achieved by retaining the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district, as currently organized?
- Other Factors: Are there other factors that support or mitigate against a reorganized Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district?

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.

B. Methodology

The Rockefeller Institute of Government collected input on the potential reorganization of the Otsego Northern Catskills supervisory district and its contiguous districts from stakeholders in an open and inclusive manner. Institute staff obtained feedback through the following efforts:

- Interviews, focus group sessions, and follow-up with administrators and staff of the Otsego Northern Catskills (including the ONC Board), DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan supervisory districts, including district superintendents (past, current, and interim), assistant district superintendents, business officers, and program staff.
- Letters to district superintendents of Capital Region, OHM, Questar III and Ulster BOCES, as well as electronic mail and letters to component school district superintendents and board presidents in all eight contiguous regions, inviting their input.
- Interviews and focus group sessions with component school superintendents of Otsego Northern Catskills and Herkimer BOCES.
- Telephone interviews with district superintendents and senior staff from contiguous supervisory districts, elected officials, and business and community leaders.
- 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; educational and cultural organization representatives; leaders and representatives of area workforce development boards; and leaders of parents' organizations of Otsego Northern Catskills and contiguous districts.
- A brief project description and a website developed by the study team that included a description of the study and its purpose, and invited comments.

Field interviews, phone calls, and focus group sessions produced direct comments from more than 75 leaders, staff, and other individuals in the Otsego Northern Catskills and contiguous supervisory district areas. Several emails and letters with comments from individuals interested in the study also were received.

The Rockefeller Institute study team collected information from the websites and publications of the Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES and its contiguous districts, governmental reports on the economic condition of the Otsego Northern Catskills 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; CoSers (cooperative service agreements); audit reports; the Education Department's *Preliminary Survey of Alternatives for the Sole Supervisory District of Otsego, Delaware, Schoharie, and Greene Counties; Public School Enrollment and Staff Data, New York State*; annual 602 reports; annual 655 reports to the Governor and Legislature; financial statements; and BOCES program and administrative/capital budget summary data.

NOTE: Most of the enrollment-related data available on the New York State Education Department website use enrollment for the fall 2006 period (2006-07). For that year, there were 37 BOCES in New York. The supervisory districts of Schuyler, Chemung, and Tioga counties, and Steuben and Allegany counties were consolidated into the Greater Southern Tier BOCES effective July 1, 2006, thereby reducing the total number of BOCES from 38 to 37. Unless noted otherwise, this report uses 2006-07 data, which include 37 BOCES.

III. Profile of Otsego Northern Catskills and Contiguous BOCES

The Commissioner of Education directed the Rockefeller Institute to examine potential reorganization options involving the Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES and contiguous supervisory districts. Surrounded as it is by eight contiguous BOCES regions, ONC presents, at least on paper, numerous optional reorganization scenarios.

As might be expected for such a large area, ONC and its eight contiguous BOCES regions exhibit enormous diversity in terms of enrollment, area covered and other important factors. Of the nine supervisory districts in the region, only one, Capital Region BOCES, meets the Education Department's suggested enrollment threshold of 40,000 students. Otsego Northern Catskills and two other supervisory districts are among the four smallest in the state in terms of enrollment. The nine BOCES also span a wide range of geographic areas, although most are above average in size. DCMO BOCES is three times the size of the two smallest, OHM BOCES and Sullivan BOCES.

Following is a short profile of each contiguous BOCES, and a more detailed profile of ONC:

Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga: The Capital Region BOCES has 71,000 students, making it the sixth largest in the state in terms of enrollment. Its pupil density (pupils per square mile) ranks it 11th highest in New York and is almost ten times greater than that of ONC. Its 24 component school districts have an average of 2,958 students each, nearly six times larger than the typical ONC district. Primarily because of the prevalence of large, suburban school districts in the Capital Region, this BOCES plays a more limited role in providing direct education to the students in its community than does ONC. About 10.4 percent of the 11th and 12th year students in the BOCES area participate in career and technical education at Capital Region's CTE centers.

Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego: With 1,825 square miles, DCMO is the largest of the region's nine BOCES and the eighth largest in the state in terms of area. Its enrollment of 15,026 is about 50 percent larger than that of ONC. DCMO contains 16 school districts and the average enrollment of each is about 939, one of the lowest average enrollments among all the state's BOCES, but still considerably greater than ONC's 537 students per component district. In terms of enrollment density per square mile, DCMO is roughly equivalent to ONC: 8.2 versus 6.1, respectively. About 38.4 percent of the overall district 11th and 12th year students participate in career and technical education programs.

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery: HFM is almost exactly the same size as ONC, with 1,640 square miles, yet, with Amsterdam and Gloversville as component districts, HFM has 16,825 students, almost 65 percent more than ONC. The resulting enrollment density of 10.3 per square miles is considerably greater than ONC's 6.1. HFM has 15 component school districts with an average enrollment of 1,122. Of HFM's overall 11th and 12th year student enrollment, 21.2 percent participate in career and technical education programs.

Herkimer-Fulton-Madison-Otsego: The Herkimer BOCES is about mid-range in terms of geographic size, at 1,250 square miles. With 11,293 students, its enrollment density is only 9.0 students per square mile. This density ranks 31st in the state, but is about 50 percent greater than that of ONC. The Herkimer BOCES has 12 component school districts, each with an average enrollment of 941; this is the third lowest average school district enrollment among the nine BOCES, but is more than 75 percent larger than the ONC BOCES' average enrollment. Although Herkimer's total enrollment is only slightly greater than ONC's, it offers more courses. Approximately 34.7 percent of its juniors and seniors participate in career and technical programs.

Oneida-Herkimer-Madison OHM has 23,701 students in its region, which covers 549 square miles. With more than twice as many students and one-third the land area, OHM is considerably more suburban and urban than ONC — its enrollment density is 43.1 students per square mile, second highest in this region, and seven times the density of Otsego Northern Catskills. With several large components, such as Utica, among its 12 school districts, OHM BOCES has an average district enrollment of 1,975. About 24.1 percent of the district's 11th and 12th year students participate in career and technical education.

Rensselaer-Columbia-Greene: The Questar III BOCES has the second highest enrollment in the nine-BOCES region, with 36,294 students. Questar III covers 1,602 square miles with an enrollment density of 22.6 students per square mile, which is nearly four times the density of ONC BOCES. Career and technical programs served 8.4 percent of the district's juniors and seniors, the lowest participation rate of the nine BOCES included in this review. The 22 component school districts have an average student enrollment of 1,650, three times that of ONC.

Sullivan: This BOCES is another of the very low-enrollment supervisory districts in the region, with only 10,641 students. Unlike ONC, Sullivan covers a relatively small area, 1,073 square miles. The enrollment density of 9.9 students per square mile is considerably higher than ONC's 6.1. Sullivan BOCES has only eight component school districts, with an average enrollment of 1,330, more than double ONC's component district average enrollment. Sullivan has one of the higher rates of student participation in career and technical programs in the region — 26.1 percent of all 11th and 12th year students.

Ulster: This BOCES has an enrollment of 24,875, the third-highest in the region. With one of the smallest land areas of the nine BOCES, it has also one of the highest enrollment densities, with 27.9 students per square mile. Ulster serves one of the smallest number of component school districts, nine in total, in the state; the districts have an average enrollment of 2,764 students. Career and technical programs enrolled 24.8 percent of the district's juniors and seniors.

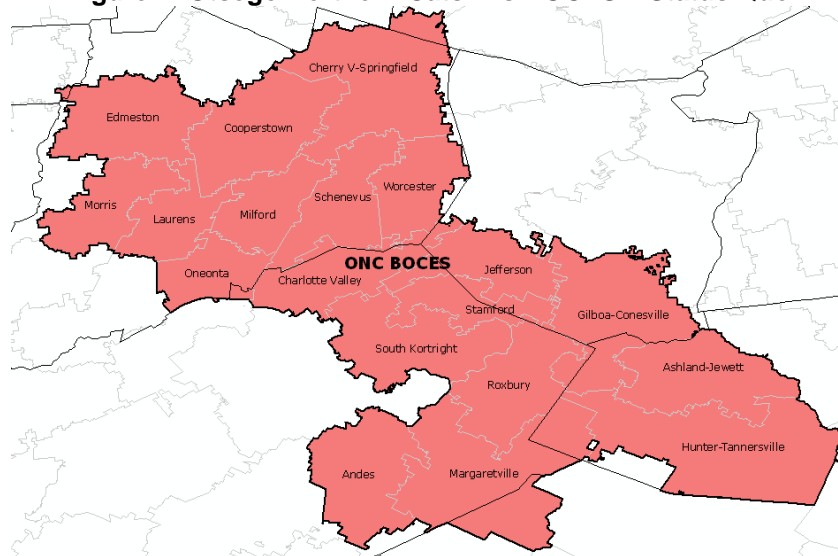
Otsego Northern Catskills: ONC is in many ways a classic example of the BOCES paradigm, as these entities were envisioned when New York State provided for this structure almost exactly 100 years ago. Cooperative services is the hallmark of the

BOCES structure under which multiple school districts join together to provide educational and management services and associated facilities that can be provided more effectively and efficiently on a regional basis.

Following is a brief profile of the ONC BOCES supervisory district, from the standpoint of its size, enrollment base, and other structural characteristics.

Location: ONC is in one of the more rural areas of New York State, and is located between the Capital Region and Binghamton, bounded on the south by Rte. 17 (I-86) and Sullivan County, on the north by Rte. 20 and the NYS Thruway, on the east by the Catskills, and on the west by Chenango County.

Figure 2: Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES – Status Quo



The ONC BOCES covers parts of five counties, four of which are some of the least populous in New York State:

- Otsego County (9 districts)
- Delaware County (6 districts, one of which straddles the Delaware and Ulster County borders)
- Schoharie County (2 districts)
- Greene County (2 districts)

During the course of several interviews with ONC BOCES personnel and component school district officers, the study team was struck by the focus on geography as a key factor in the day-to-day management of the BOCES. A review of transportation resources and patterns in this region indicates that the ONC BOCES is served by only one high-speed interstate highway, I-88. Unfortunately for ease of travel around the region, I-88 which connects Albany/Schenectady and Binghamton transects the BOCES on a diagonal, affording little ease of travel for most districts, either north-south or east-west.

Size: The geographic size of the region served by ONC is impressive, although not nearly as large as certain other BOCES regions. Covering some 1,661 square miles, ONC is the 12th largest BOCES in terms of square miles served. ONC is approximately one-half the geographic size of the largest BOCES, Jefferson-Lewis-Herkimer-Oneida.

Demographics: The population served by the ONC BOCES is largely homogeneous (see Table 1). Only two component districts, Margaretville and Oneonta, have non-white enrollment greater than eight percent. There are few large employers, with small businesses, educational institutions, and agriculture predominant. Labor and economic data indicate that there is little commutation out of or into this region for employment purposes.

Table 1: Enrollment by Race, ONC School Districts, 2006-07

School District Name	Fall 2006 Enrollment	Enrollment Distribution By Race				
		White	Black	Hispanic	Asian	Other
Andes CSD	131	93.1	5.3	0.0	0.8	0.8
Charlotte Valley CSD	422	98.3	0.9	0.7	0.0	0.0
Margaretville CSD	495	79.6	1.8	15.6	2.8	0.0
Roxbury CSD	334	95.8	1.2	1.5	1.2	0.0
Stamford CSD	445	95.7	0.9	2.2	1.1	0.0
South Kortright CSD	338	95.0	0.0	2.4	2.4	0.3
Hunter-Tannersville CSD	517	95.6	2.1	1.9	0.0	0.4
Windham-Ashland-Jewett CSD	453	96.0	0.0	2.9	1.1	0.0
Edmeston CSD	533	97.7	0.9	0.2	0.9	0.0
Laurens CSD	410	94.6	2.0	2.2	0.7	0.0
Schenevus CSD	390	94.4	2.1	2.6	1.0	0.0
Milford CSD	460	92.0	3.0	2.4	1.7	0.0
Morris CSD	452	96.7	0.7	2.7	0.0	0.0
Oneonta City SD	2,069	86.7	6.1	4.1	2.7	0.0
Cooperstown CSD	1,048	94.7	0.9	2.5	2.0	0.0
Cherry Valley-Springfield CSD	596	99.0	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.0
Worcester CSD	440	95.5	0.7	2.5	1.4	0.0
Gilboa-Conesville CSD	393	97.5	1.8	0.5	0.3	0.0
Jefferson CSD	286	97.9	1.0	0.0	0.7	0.0
Total ONC BOCES	10,212	93.2	2.2	2.9	1.4	0.0

Source: NYS Education Department, School Report Cards for the 2006-07 School Year.
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/2007/home.shtml.

Enrollment: Total enrollment for the ONC BOCES in fall 2006 was 10,212. This enrollment places ONC near the bottom of the enrollment range for all BOCES, with only the Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES recording a lower enrollment (9,086).

The State Education Department has determined that an enrollment base of some 40,000 students is the minimum desirable enrollment for a BOCES. State education policy makers consider enrollment below this level insufficient to enable the BOCES to provide the broad range of services to meet student characteristics, needs and interests. For fall 2006, only 15 BOCES in the state met this suggested enrollment threshold and four

exceeded the threshold by less than 5,000 students. Four other BOCES fell between 35,000 and 40,000 enrollment. Twenty-two out of 37 BOCES have less than the recommended 40,000 student base, and of these, 12 have fewer than 20,000 students.

Of perhaps even greater concern than ONC’s low enrollment is the fact that enrollment has eroded steadily in recent years. From a fall 2001 enrollment of 10,971, the pupil count has declined by just under 7 percent. This enrollment decline mirrors the steady erosion seen by a number of other BOCES in the upstate region, including some of those most proximate to ONC. Local leaders do not expect any significant turnaround in this trend to occur in the foreseeable future.

The combination of a relatively large land area (1,661 square miles) and a small enrollment (10,212) means a very low enrollment density per square mile — 6.15 for fall 2006. On this measure, only Franklin-Essex-Hamilton BOCES, at 3.64 students per square mile, has a lower enrollment density than ONC.

Appendix B lists all 37 BOCES with their 2006-07 enrollments, the land area in square miles for each, and the enrollment density per square mile. Data for the nine supervisory districts included in this review are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Number of Component Districts, Enrollment, Area, Density, 2006-07

BOCES	Number of Component Districts	Enrollment (Fall 2006)	Area (Sq. Miles)	Density (Student per Sq. Mile)	Rank (Based on Regional Density)
Capital Region	24	71,000	1,213	58.5	1
DCMO	16	15,026	1,825	8.2	8
HFM	15	16,825	1,640	10.3	5
Herkimer	12	11,293	1,250	9.0	7
OHM	12	23,701	549	43.1	2
ONC	19	10,212	1,661	6.1	9
Questar III	22	36,294	1,602	22.6	4
Sullivan	8	10,641	1,073	9.9	6
Ulster	9	24,875	893	27.9	3

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, Fall 2006
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml.

Component Districts: Several features of the underlying school district configuration of ONC are notable.

First, the supervisory district includes 19 component school districts. This is about average for the state’s BOCES, although this average is skewed by two very large and complex BOCES, Nassau and Suffolk 1. Excluding these two BOCES, each of which contains more than 50 component school districts, the average number of component school districts in the state’s BOCES is nearly 17.

More noteworthy is the fact that these 19 component districts all have relatively low student enrollments. Fall 2006 district enrollments range from a low of 131 at the Andes Central School District to a high of 2,069 at the Oneonta City School District. That this range of district enrollments places ONC BOCES at the smaller end of the enrollment spectrum is illustrated by the fact that the average school district enrollment in New York State, excluding the six largest city school districts, is approximately 2,350 students. In other words, the average district enrollment in New York is nearly 14 percent greater than the enrollment of the largest component district in ONC BOCES. The average enrollment of the ONC districts is 537, or less than one-quarter of the average enrollment of all the districts in the state, outside the largest cities.

ONC BOCES has a greater predominance of low enrollment districts than its contiguous districts. As shown in Table 3, the ONC BOCES region has only two districts with enrollments exceeding 1,000 students, well below the number in neighboring BOCES:

Table 3: Number of Component Districts and Enrollment in ONC and Contiguous BOCES, 2006-07

BOCES	# Component School Districts	# of Districts with Enrollments <1000	Average Enrollment Per District (Fall 2006)
Capital Region	24	6	2,958
DCMO	16	9	939
HFM	15	8	1,122
Herkimer	12	7	941
OHM	12	6	1,975
ONC	19	17	537
Questar III	22	6	1,650
Sullivan	8	3	1,330
Ulster	9	1	2,764

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, Fall 2006
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml.

Finally, the component school districts of ONC are also larger than average in terms of geographic size. The 19 districts total 1,661 square miles, for an average of 87 square miles each. In contrast, again excluding New York City and the five largest upstate city school districts (by enrollment), the average district in New York covers some 68 square miles, approximately three-quarters of the average service area covered by the average ONC school district.

In sum, the component school districts of the ONC BOCES are predominantly rural, cover a large geographic area, and have low enrollments. Even the largest district is materially smaller in terms of enrollment than the average district in the state.

ONC BOCES Service Infrastructure: ONC operates two centers where career and technical education, innovative programs (special education), and alternative education services are offered. The centers are located at Grand Gorge in Delaware County, and Milford in Otsego County. These locations were chosen to provide relatively central locations and thereby minimize the associated travel times for students who are bused

from their home districts to the centers. In general, the location of these centers has allowed the component school districts to take advantage of BOCES services, while limiting bus travel times to no more than approximately 40 to 45 minutes each way.

IV. Assessment of Potential Reorganization Options

The brief comparative profile presented in Section III illustrates the considerable diversity that characterizes the nine supervisory districts in this region.

The study team believes that few of these BOCES are compelling candidates for wholesale organizational restructuring with the Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES. Several, such as Capital Region and OHM, are much more urban and suburban in nature and have few common interests with ONC. Others, including Questar III and HFM, are distant from the districts of ONC, posing serious obstacles to effective management and oversight of the BOCES programs. Still others, such as Ulster, pose travel impediments (the highest points of the Catskill Mountains lie between the Ulster BOCES and most of the ONC districts). Most of these supervisory districts also differ sharply from ONC in terms of total enrollment size, student enrollment density, size of component school districts, and economic and demographic features.

In lieu of a relatively simple restructuring involving a merger with a contiguous BOCES, it would be theoretically possible to effectively eliminate the ONC BOCES by merging it into one neighboring BOCES, but reassigning most component school districts to various other supervisory districts. Under this scenario, ONC's two existing centers for career and technical education would either be closed or would need to be absorbed by the appropriate BOCES. Some component districts such as Roxbury, Schenevus, Stamford, and South Kortright defy easy realignment; however, because of their geographic location and distance from other supervisory districts, and a primary obstacle to such reorganization would be the additional travel time required for many students participating in career and technical education and special education programs.

Accordingly, the team recommends that Capital Region, HFM, OHM, Questar III, and Ulster not be considered for any sweeping reorganization involving ONC, and that ONC BOCES not be eliminated through reassignment of its component school districts to several other supervisory districts.

The four remaining supervisory districts, Otsego Northern Catskills and three contiguous BOCES — DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan — are relatively similar and share several key factors that suggest reorganization would be feasible, and perhaps desirable. These contiguous BOCES all have fall 2006 enrollments of less than half the level of students (40,000) considered by the Education Department as being adequate to allow cost efficient operation and acceptable program diversity in a BOCES:

- Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene (ONC), with a total enrollment of 10,212 students
- Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO), with 15,026 students
- Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego (Herkimer), with 11,293 students
- Sullivan, with 10,641 students

Each supervisory district has been plagued by steady enrollment declines (see Table 4). All four regions are sparsely populated, with fewer than 10 students per square mile — far lower than the statewide BOCES average of 37 students per square mile. Largely

because of such low enrollments, most have relatively high administrative costs when measured on a per pupil basis.

Table 4: Total Enrollment, 2001-2006

BOCES	Fall 2001	Fall 2002	Fall 2003	Fall 2004	Fall 2005	Fall 2006	% Change, 2001-06
DCMO	16,470	16,185	15,974	15,671	15,435	15,026	-8.8%
Herkimer	12,018	11,773	11,718	11,549	11,394	11,293	-6.0%
ONC	10,971	10,830	10,649	10,629	10,444	10,212	-6.9%
Sullivan	11,286	11,353	11,255	11,102	10,781	10,641	-5.7%

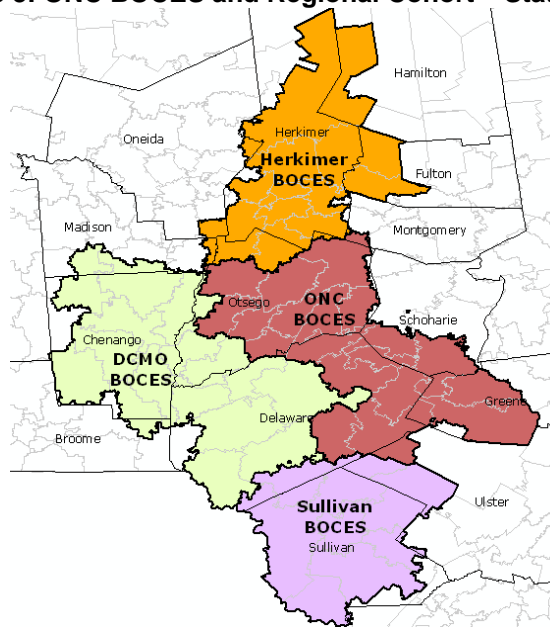
Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml.

The balance of this study focuses on potential reorganization opportunities and challenges presented by the four remaining BOCES: Otsego Northern Catskills (ONC), Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego (DCMO), Herkimer-Fulton-Hamilton-Otsego (Herkimer), and Sullivan supervisory districts. For purposes of this report, these three contiguous supervisory districts (DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan) are termed the “regional cohort.”

The study team focused on three potential options involving Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES:

- Merging Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES with the Delaware-Chenango-Madison-Otsego BOCES
- Merging Otsego Northern Catskills with Herkimer-Fulton-Madison-Otsego BOCES, but transferring 10 of the more southern component districts into Sullivan BOCES
- Maintaining Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES as currently structured

Figure 3: ONC BOCES and Regional Cohort – Status Quo



The report evaluates these options with regard to their impact on educational opportunities and programming, financial considerations, and management considerations.

A. Educational Considerations

The role of the BOCES within the educational community can vary significantly in different regions of the state, where demographics and the nature and size of the component school districts can be quite dissimilar. In more rural, sparsely populated regions, the BOCES often plays a much more extensive role in providing services to the component districts. This is borne out by Table 5, which shows the 2007-08 budgeted amount of spending for these programs per pupil for ONC, the regional cohort and the statewide average.

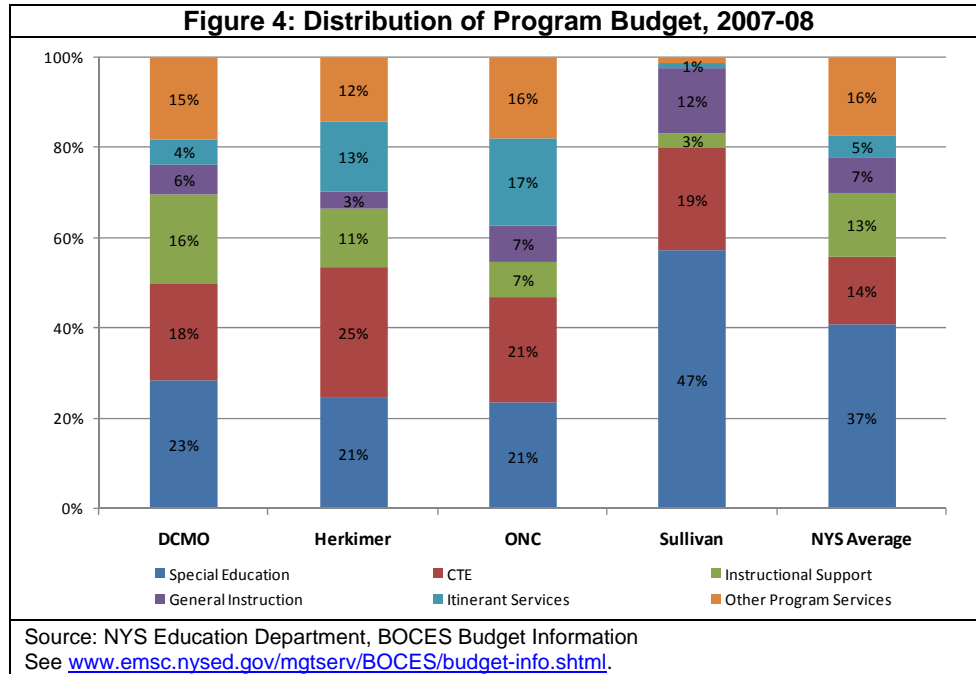
Table 5: Program, Administrative and Total Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	Program Budget (\$)	Administrative Budget (\$)	Total Budget (\$)	Program Budget Per Pupil (\$)	Admin. Budget Per Pupil (\$)	Total Budget Per Pupil (\$)
DCMO	30,748,760	6,642,777	37,391,537	2,046	442	2,488
Herkimer	15,805,824	2,719,447	18,525,271	1,400	241	1,640
ONC	19,494,502	2,650,484	22,144,986	1,909	260	2,169
Sullivan	20,258,244	4,133,428	24,391,672	1,904	388	2,292
All 4 BOCES	86,307,331	16,146,136	102,453,467	1,830	342	2,172
Total NYS	2,227,512,223	236,068,059	2,463,580,282	1,393	148	1,541

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml.

Whereas the statewide average BOCES planned to spend approximately \$1,393 per pupil for these educational programs, the ONC BOCES and the regional cohort exceeded that amount — ONC, DCMO and Sullivan by significant amounts.

There are some differences in the distribution of program expenditures by sub-category across the four 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 compared to the state average, DCMO and Sullivan BOCES, and proportionally less to instructional support than DCMO and Herkimer BOCES, and the state, on average.



ONC BOCES offers the typical range of educational programming to serve the students of its 19 component school districts, although certain areas are modest in scope. Three of the most extensive programs are as follows:

Special education programs: Special education services and programs are offered in four traditional settings: special class professional staff to pupil to paraprofessional staff ratios of 1:12:1, 1:6:1, 1:8:1 and 1:12:3.

Enrollment numbers for 2006-07 show that ONC had the highest enrollment for 1:8:1 programs, which is comparable to the statewide average of pupil enrollment distribution. While ONC does not have a 1:12:1 program, the regional cohort BOCES provide such programs. In terms of tuition per pupil, ONC has a relatively higher tuition per pupil for its 1:6:1 and 1:8:1 programs compared to the state averages, and somewhat lower tuition for the 1:12:3 program (see Table 6).

Table 6: Special Education Enrollment and Tuition per Pupil, 2006-07

BOCES	Pupils (Based on Staff-Pupil Ratio)				Tuition Per Pupil (Based on Staff-Pupil Ratio)			
	1:12:1	1:6:1	1:8:1	1:12:3	1:12:1	1:6:1	1:8:1	1:12:3
DCMO	82	125	0	0	19,765	24,918	0	0
Herkimer	55	11	38	15	24,599	28,700	33,093	26,983
ONC	0	7	76	30	0	43,680	31,180	30,104
Sullivan	79	0	182	21	24,969	0	37,035	29,984
NYS Total	5,371	5,600	5,531	1,741	--			
NYS Average	153	187	198	62	22,907	32,621	30,071	31,743

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Financial and Statistical Outcomes, Annual 602 Report
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/financial-statistical.shtml.

In terms of spending, ONC BOCES adopted a budget for special education totaling \$4.6 million for fiscal year 2007-08. ONC's special education budget as a share of the total program budget and as a share of the total budget is lower compared to the statewide average and the three cohort BOCES (see Table 7).

Table 7: Special Education Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	Special Education Budget (\$)	Special Ed. Budget Per Pupil (\$)	Special Ed. Budget as % of Program Budget	Special Ed. Budget as % of Total Budget
DCMO	8,739,468	582	28.4%	23.4%
Herkimer	3,878,803	343	24.5%	20.9%
ONC	4,550,804	446	23.3%	20.6%
Sullivan	11,565,794	1,087	57.1%	47.4%
All 4 BOCES	28,734,870	609	33.3%	28.0%
NYS Total	905,377,540	566	40.6%	36.8%

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mqtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml.

Career and technical education (CTE) programs: ONC offers these programs at its two CTE centers located in Milford and Grand Gorge. For 2008-09, 12 programs are offered, including those in building trades, cosmetology, health occupations, information technology, culinary arts, and New Visions/medical technology. Typically, the career and technical courses are half-day programs, open to high school juniors and seniors. Total fall 2008 enrollment is estimated at 433. This enrollment level represents a 10 percent increase over the enrollment of 392 students in the 2001-02 year; during the same period, total component district enrollment declined 14 percent.

Table 8 illustrates the number of state approved CTE programs offered by ONC and the regional cohort BOCES for fall 2008. See Appendix D for a detailed listing of CTE programs for each of the four BOCES.

Table 8: Number of State Approved CTE Programs Offered, 2008-09

BOCES	# of State Approved CTE Programs	# of CTE Centers
DCMO	17	2
Herkimer	15	1
ONC	12	2
Sullivan	16*	1

Source: Program officers from each of the four BOCES.
Note: One program is in currently process for state approval.

As shown in Table 9, statewide enrollment in BOCES' career and technical education (CTE) programs has risen steadily in recent years, up by 9.0 percent statewide from 2002 to 2007. ONC BOCES saw a particularly small increase in CTE enrollment, at 2 percent only for the last six years, while the cohort BOCES had much larger increases in terms of CTE enrollment. As a proportion of 11th-

and 12th-grade enrollment, CTE participation was lowest at ONC BOCES, at 23.7 percent, and highest at DCMO BOCES at 38.4 percent (see Table 10).

Table 9: CTE Enrollment, 2002-07

BOCES	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	% Change, 2002-07
DCMO	758	708	712	794	914	974	28%
Herkimer	549	582	618	621	634	608	11%
ONC	392	391	371	396	401	398	2%
Sullivan	295	358	384	427	472	411	39%
NYS Total	33,651	34,236	34,074	35,233	35,903	36,710	9%
NYS Average	886	901	897	927	944	992	12%

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Financial and Statistical Outcomes, Annual 602 Report
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/financial-statistical.shtml.

Table 10: CTE Enrollment as Percent of Grades 11-12 Enrollment, 2006-07

BOCES	Total CTE Enrollment	Grades 11-12 Enrollment	CTE Enrollment as % of Grades 11-12
DCMO	974	2,535	38.4%
Herkimer	608	1,750	34.7%
ONC	398	1,682	23.7%
Sullivan	411	1,575	26.1%

Sources: BOCES Financial and Statistical Outcomes, Annual 602 Report for CTE Enrollment
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/financial-statistical.shtml, and
School Report Cards for the 2006-07 School Year for Grades 11 and 12 Enrollment
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/irts/reportcard/2007/home.shtml.

As Table 11 indicates, ONC BOCES historically has had significantly higher per student CTE tuition rates compared to the statewide average, DCMO, and Herkimer. Compared to Sullivan, ONC has somewhat comparable rates for CTE tuition per student. In terms of the nominal percent change for the last six years, ONC's CTE tuition rates per student increased nearly as much as the state average, and less than both Herkimer and Sullivan.

Table 11: CTE Tuition per Student, 2002-07

BOCES	2001-02 (\$)	2002-03 (\$)	2003-04 (\$)	2004-05 (\$)	2005-06 (\$)	2006-07 (\$)	Nominal % Change, 2002-07
DCMO	6,421	6,779	6,842	6,408	6,394	6,960	8.4%
Herkimer	5,289	5,376	5,497	6,383	5,955	6,952	31.4%
ONC	7,999	7,789	8,380	8,706	9,230	9,725	21.6%
Sullivan	7,843	8,025	8,025	8,575	8,191	9,763	24.5%
NYS Average	6,279	6,412	6,723	6,853	7,095	7,544	20.1%

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Financial and Statistical Outcomes, Annual 602 Report
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/financial-statistical.shtml.

ONC BOCES adopted a CTE budget totaling \$4.6 million for fiscal year 2007-08. ONC's CTE budget as a share of its program budget and as a share of its total

budget is significantly higher compared to the statewide average. It also is higher than DCMO and Sullivan, but lower than Herkimer (see Table 12).

Table 12: CTE Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	CTE Budget (\$)	CTE Budget Per Pupil (\$)	CTE Budget as % of Program Budget	CTE Budget as % of Total Budget
DCMO	6,586,606	438	21.4%	17.6%
Herkimer	4,579,045	405	29.0%	24.7%
ONC	4,594,886	450	23.6%	20.7%
Sullivan	4,658,711	438	23.0%	19.1%
All 4 BOCES	20,419,249	433	23.7%	19.9%
NYS Total	340,168,713	213	15.3%	13.8%

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml.

Itinerant services: BOCES offer a range of itinerant services, where BOCES teachers are assigned to schools with insufficient enrollment to justify or support the direct employment of these instructional staff by districts. In addition to serving students with special needs, ONC’s itinerant services program offers counseling and academic instruction such as art and English as a second language (ESL). The prevalence of many low enrollment school districts in ONC BOCES would suggest that ONC has a relatively extensive itinerant program, and the data appear to bear this out. As shown in Table 13, ONC ranks highest among the regional cohort in the extent of itinerant services, as measured by the percent of the total BOCES budget devoted to such services, and the amount of budgeted spending per pupil.

Table 13: Itinerant Services Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	Itinerant Services Budget (\$)	Itinerant Budget Per Pupil (\$)	Itinerant Budget as % of Program Budget	Itinerant Budget as % of Total Budget
DCMO	1,655,981	110	5.4%	4.4%
Herkimer	2,479,395	220	15.7%	13.4%
ONC	3,779,271	370	19.4%	17.1%
Sullivan	274,699	26	1.4%	1.1%
All 4 BOCES	8,189,346	174	9.5%	8.0%
NYS Total	113,442,766	71	5.1%	4.6%

Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml.

Table 14 shows full time equivalent (FTE) costs for different itinerant services personnel. These costs are in addition to salary and fringe benefits. The costs per FTE also include expenditures for supplies and equipment, staff development, and travel. Compared to statewide averages, ONC BOCES has lower costs per FTE for all personnel types, with the exception of physical therapy, which greatly exceeds the statewide average and that of the three cohort BOCES.

Table 14: Itinerant Services Costs per FTE by Personnel Type, 2006-07

BOCES	School Psychologist Per FTE	Speech Impaired Teacher Per FTE	Visually Impaired Teacher Per FTE	Occupational Therapist Per FTE	Physical Therapist Per FTE
DCMO	69,845	77,501	0	70,782	0
Herkimer	0	102,053	0	75,461	97,276
ONC	79,048	63,477	85,220	66,763	115,402
Sullivan	80,081	0	90,722	0	0
NYS average	\$85,350	\$83,545	\$94,832	\$79,779	\$89,052
Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Financial and Statistical Outcomes, Annual 602 Report See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mqtserv/BOCES/financial-statistical.shtml .					

Summary

From the several benchmarks illustrated above, there is little to distinguish among the ONC BOCES and the three other BOCES in the regional cohort. On the basis of this brief survey of educational considerations, it appears that the ONC BOCES is meeting the educational needs of the students in its region. However, the tuition rates charged to districts for these services are high compared to those imposed by the regional cohort BOCES. This appears to be a function of the use of two separate CTE centers, which ONC officials and component district leaders indicate is necessary to limit travel times for students (because of the size of the supervisory district), and the number of small, rural school districts. There is little or no evidence to suggest that a restructuring involving the BOCES in the regional cohort would materially enhance the educational offerings of Otsego Northern Catskills or materially reduce the tuition rates, thereby encouraging greater student utilization.

B. Financial Considerations

This section presents an analysis of key financial metrics for ONC BOCES and the three regional cohort BOCES on which this review focuses.

For the 2007-08 fiscal year, ONC BOCES adopted a budget totaling \$22,144,986. BOCES activities are categorized into the following elements:

Program expenses: This category includes all direct programs and services including career and technical education, special education, adult education, and alternative education activities. These services are financed through tuition rates charged to districts choosing to purchase the particular service from the BOCES. ONC’s budget for this category was \$19,494,502.

General administrative expenses: Central and certain fixed costs, including salaries and fringe benefits of central office staff, are included here. These costs are allocated to all member school districts on the basis of pupil enrollment. ONC’s budget for this category was \$2,093,097.

Capital expenses: This category includes the cost of central headquarters facilities and centers where educational and career training services are provided. The costs are allocated to districts based on enrollment, similar to administrative expenses. ONC’s budget for this category was \$557,447.

As this review began, the study team was mindful of a general concern about the level of spending at ONC BOCES for administrative cost items. This concern was expressed by staff of the State Education Department and certain members of the BOCES community. Accordingly, particular attention was paid to this factor.

Table 15 illustrates the total budget and the three sub-categories for ONC as compared to the budgets for the regional cohort and for the statewide average for all BOCES. In general, per-student expenditures (measured by Resident-Weighted Average Daily Attendance, or RWADA) are expected to be relatively higher in low-population areas and lower in more densely populated areas due to fixed costs for many programs and administration. ONC BOCES, which has school districts with low population and low student enrollment compared to neighboring regions, actually had lower combined per-pupil expenditures for administrative and capital budget items than DCMO and Sullivan BOCES.

Table 15: Program and Administrative Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	Program Budget (\$)	General Administrative Budget (\$)	Capital Budget (\$)	Total Budget (\$)	RWADA 2006-07	Admin & Capital Per RWADA (\$)
DCMO	30,748,760	2,115,519	4,527,258	37,391,537	15,963	416
Herkimer	15,805,824	2,275,013	444,434	18,525,271	12,035	226
ONC	19,494,502	2,093,037	557,447	22,144,986	11,056	240
Sullivan	20,258,244	1,707,825	2,425,603	24,391,672	11,191	369
All 4 BOCES	86,307,331	8,191,394	7,954,742	102,453,467	50,245	321
NYS Average	60,203,033	4,305,127	2,075,091	66,583,251	N/A	N/A

Sources: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information for budget data
 See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtser/BOCES/budget-info.shtml; and
 NYS Education Department, BOCES Aid for RWADA numbers
 See <http://stateaid.nysed.gov/boces.htm>.

Table 16 illustrates administrative spending, in per pupil terms (based on fall 2006 enrollment numbers) and as a percent of the budget, for ONC, the regional cohort, and the statewide average.

Table 16: General Administrative Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	General Administrative Budget (\$)	General Administrative Budget Per Pupil (\$)	General Administrative Budget as % of Total Budget
DCMO	2,115,519	140.8	5.7%
Herkimer	2,275,013	201.5	12.3%
ONC	2,093,037	205.0	9.5%
Sullivan	1,707,825	160.5	7.0%
All 4 BOCES	8,191,394	173.6	8.0%
NYS Average	4,305,127	99.6	6.5%

Sources: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information for budget data
 See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml; and
 NYS Education Department, BOCES Enrollment for pupil counts
 See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml.
 Note: Pupil counts are based on enrollments numbers for Fall 2006.

As illustrated above, ONC spends considerably more on general administrative items per student and also allocates a greater portion of its total budget to administrative costs than the statewide average. The same relationship holds true for ONC *vis a vis* DCMO and Sullivan; Herkimer spends virtually the same amount per pupil and also devotes a considerably greater portion of its budget to administrative items than does ONC.

The amount spent on general administration by the state’s BOCES ranges from a low of \$1,261,856 in the Cayuga BOCES to a high of \$23,007,587 in Suffolk 1. The nearly \$2.1 million spent by ONC BOCES on administrative cost items ranks seventh lowest in the state in aggregate terms, less than one-half the statewide average, and approximately 60 percent of the statewide average when the two highest spending BOCES (Nassau and Suffolk 1) are excluded from the average.

Our analysis did not indicate that ONC BOCES is spending at an abnormally high level in absolute terms. Moreover, the study team found evidence that some number of BOCES incorrectly include in their program expense category some spending on retiree health insurance — an item that should be included in the administrative category. Finally, the administrative budget is subject to approval by the superintendents of component school districts and in the case of ONC BOCES, this budget element has been strongly endorsed over the years, according to the school district superintendents.

The study team believes that ONC’s relatively high per pupil general administrative spending is instead largely a function of its very small enrollment base, across which BOCES costs are spread either pro rata or through tuition rates. The vastly different sizes (as measured by enrollment) of the state’s BOCES means quite dissimilar levels of budget allocations to central or fixed costs, as opposed to categories of service that are more directly dependent on enrollment. In this way, smaller BOCES, such as ONC and each member of the regional cohort, will almost inevitably incur greater administrative costs on a proportional or per student basis than a larger BOCES. For example, the salary of the district superintendent is a far larger budget item on a proportional basis for a BOCES

with 10,000 students and a budget of \$20 million, than for a BOCES with 70,000 students and a budget of \$200 million. The necessary minimum level of central office staff and costs typically follows the same pattern.

It should be noted that although there is an appropriately heightened level of scrutiny on administrative spending, this category amounts to a very small portion of total BOCES expenses. Statewide, the average share of the BOCES budget devoted to administration is 6.5 percent (5.7 percent is the median level).

This study also examined capital spending by ONC. This BOCES incurs capital costs for three facilities: the central office in Stamford (leased space), and career and technical education centers in Milford and Grand Gorge. ONC devotes \$557,447 of its \$22.1 million budget to capital expenses. Table 17 illustrates capital spending, in per pupil terms and as a percent of the budget, for ONC, the regional cohort and the statewide average.

Table 17: Capital Budget, 2007-08

BOCES	Capital Budget (\$)	Capital Budget Per Pupil (\$)	Capital Budget as % of Total Budget
DCMO	4,527,258	301	12.1%
Herkimer	444,434	39	2.4%
ONC	557,447	55	2.5%
Sullivan	2,425,603	228	9.9%
All 4 BOCES	7,954,742	169	7.8%
NYS Average	2,075,091	48	3.1%
Source: NYS Education Department, BOCES Budget Information for budget data See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/budget-info.shtml ; and NYS Education Department, BOCES Enrollment for pupil counts See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml . Note: Pupil counts are based on Fall 2006 enrollment numbers.			

Capital spending per pupil at ONC is slightly higher than the statewide average, but at the lower end of per pupil spending among all BOCES, which range from a low of \$9 in Jefferson BOCES to a high of \$301 in DCMO. Even more than administrative spending, BOCES capital spending is a minimal portion of overall costs. At 2.5 percent of its budget, ONC devotes less to capital costs than the statewide average of 3.1 percent.

There are two noteworthy issues regarding capital spending by the ONC BOCES and the regional cohort. First, ONC has completed a feasibility study regarding the closing of its central offices in leased space in Stamford, and relocating administrative offices to its two career and technical centers. These centers were expanded in 2001, but because of declining utilization in certain programs, now have underutilized space. Under the proposed plan, administrative offices would be distributed between the two centers, and the current lease costs would be avoided. This action would save some \$265,000 annually that is now incurred for rental, operations, and maintenance expenses for the leased headquarters in Stamford. However, the preliminary estimate for the costs of relocation to the two

CTE sites is approximately \$2 million, including reconstruction work and expansion of parking facilities.

Second, the DCMO BOCES is completing construction of new and renovated career and technical education facilities at its Norwich and Masonville sites, funded by a bond issue totaling approximately \$47.5 million. Under state law, capital costs are allocated among all the component districts on the basis of RWADA. If the ONC and DCMO supervisory districts were merged, ONC component districts would account for approximately 41 percent of the combined total RWADA and DCMO components would account for the remaining 59 percent. DCMO's total capital budget for the 2008-09 year is just under \$4.5 million, which according to DCMO officials, reflects the full impact of debt service on the recent bond issue, as well as other rental and capital items. In ONC, capital costs total approximately \$560,000, of which \$135,000 represents the lease costs for its existing headquarters (which presumably would be eliminated under a merger scenario). If a merger of ONC and DCMO had been effective in the current year, total combined capital costs would have been just under \$4.9 million, excluding the ONC central office lease. DCMO component districts would have been allocated nearly \$2.9 million of these capital costs, and ONC districts would have been allocated the remaining \$2.0 million.

A merger between ONC and DCMO would significantly increase the amount of capital spending funded by ONC districts, but these allocations would primarily be to support facilities located in, and used almost exclusively by, DCMO component districts. The financial impact on all component districts would be significant, with large increases in ONC components and decreases for DCMO components. For example, in the ONC BOCES, the Oneonta district would see its BOCES capital budget allocation rise from \$109,000 to \$392,000, while the far smaller Andes district would see its share rise from \$7,400 to \$26,600. In DCMO, the impact would be positive from a budgetary perspective: for example, the largest DCMO component, Norwich, would see its capital cost allocation decline from almost \$644,000 to approximately \$416,000. School superintendents in the ONC BOCES expressed concern that under a scenario whereby ONC and DCMO merged, the ONC school districts would be responsible for their pro rata share of the new debt service costs even though very few of their students would be able to partake in the offerings available at this new center.

Summary

Administrative spending at the ONC BOCES is very high when measured as a percent of the overall operating budget and on a per pupil basis. The study team believes that this variance is due not to unnecessary or excessive expenditures but rather to its small enrollment base. With only slightly over 10,000 students, ONC incurs a substantial level of spending to support fixed or core activities and spreads these costs over a small enrollment base. This factor accounts for extremely high nominal spending using the two measures noted above. However, the study team found no evidence that spending is uncontrolled; in fact, there

appear to be adequate reviews and checks in place to ensure a transparent and accountable administration, from a financial standpoint. And the ONC BOCES appears to be aggressive about identifying mechanisms to achieve lower costs for its own operations and those of component districts.

Capital spending is relatively low and if ONC implements plans to relocate the administrative headquarters from a separate facility to shared space in two existing career and technical centers, then capital costs can perhaps be driven even lower.

In short, although it is reasonable to expect a merger would realize a certain level of savings in administrative costs, the study team believes that there would be a material amount of offsets to such savings. These costs would include the probable need to enhance management levels to ensure effective supervision of BOCES operations, and to deal with small, outlying component districts that rely heavily on BOCES. In the final analysis, the study team believes any net savings would be *de minimis* in the context of the overall BOCES budget.

C. Management Considerations

The study team recognizes that any potential reorganization of a BOCES involves more than evaluating the educational implications and financial impact. Other factors must be considered as well, because of the significant operational and managerial aspects of a modern cooperative educational enterprise. This section discusses several of these management considerations.

From the brief profile provided earlier, it is evident that the ONC BOCES serves a largely rural, widely dispersed, and homogeneous population. There is little major industry and instead, small businesses, agriculture, and educational institutions are the predominant employers. The component school districts are themselves rural and serve small, often declining enrollments. Throughout the interview phase of this survey, the study team heard repeatedly about the special challenges faced in providing high quality, educational and management services to small, rural districts.

BOCES Services to Small School Districts

As noted previously, most of the component school districts in the ONC BOCES region have very low student enrollments. This reality greatly affects school district management structures and capabilities, which in turn help shape a large part of the profile of services provided by the ONC BOCES.

Seventeen of ONC's 19 component districts have enrollments of less than 1,000, compared to nine of 16 in DCMO, seven of 12 in Herkimer, and three of 8 in Sullivan. Another revealing measure of the size and characteristics of the ONC component districts is the fact that 15 of the 19 districts have all of their classrooms located in one central building in their respective districts — all K-12 students attend classes in one structure. There are approximately 76 such school

districts in New York State², and 20 percent of these are in the ONC BOCES region. Herkimer and DCMO BOCES have two such districts and Sullivan has one.

ONC BOCES has a far greater predominance of component districts with low enrollments and the unique and challenging feature of using one building to house all K-12 classrooms.

This carries several implications for educational management at both the district and BOCES levels. Small, rural school districts, such as those that dominate the ONC BOCES and the regional cohort, generally have very flat and lean management structures, where the district office occupies space in the school building, which often is managed by one principal. There generally is no separate principal for elementary grades, middle school, or high school, or other middle management level between the principal and the individual teachers. The lean nature of the organizational structure is illustrated by the fact that some component school districts of ONC do not have a principal for the one school building — the superintendent doubles as principal. In addition, more than one ONC area school superintendent serves as a team coach, or teaches a class, or even acts as a substitute bus driver. As a consequence, the component district superintendents indicate they are forced to rely on ONC BOCES to a significant degree for management assistance and services.

A considerable portion of the time of a district superintendent and senior staff is devoted to providing support to component school districts. Services provided by the BOCES may include:

- Assistance with searches for new school superintendents (which typically occur more frequently in smaller school districts);
- Mentoring and advice to new school superintendents;
- Consultation and support for boards of education;
- Liaison between the school districts and the State Department of Education;
- Support to the school district superintendent on curriculum and instruction issues, and
- Staff development support to component districts.

The extent of such management responsibilities can vary widely depending on many factors, including the number, size and wealth of component districts, the geographic spread of the area served by the BOCES, and the range of services needed by the school districts. But in general, the study team has found that management demands on BOCES staff are often considerably greater in regions with many low-enrollment school districts compared to areas with fewer, high-enrollment districts.

² www.nystart.gov/publicweb/SimilarSchool.do?year=2007&ssGroupNumber=64.

For instance, the BOCES district superintendent is likely to be very heavily involved when a school district searches for a new superintendent if the district is small, with limited staff and financial resources. The former district superintendent at ONC BOCES managed 14 such searches from 2002-2008. In contrast, the BOCES district superintendent may not be involved at all in the search process for a large district with considerable staff resources and the financial resources to hire an executive search firm.

Another area involves the continuing support provided by BOCES staff to local districts as they grapple with the management demands of running complex enterprises. For example, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction at the ONC BOCES is called on to work closely with the school districts on instructional issues including awarding of high school credits, scheduling issues, transfer students, acceleration, and testing accommodations. Because only one of the 19 districts in the BOCES has an assistant superintendent for instruction and curriculum, this activity can impose a considerable burden on the BOCES.

This more extensive interaction between the BOCES and small, rural districts occurs on non-instructional issues, as well. The ONC BOCES appears to have been aggressive in launching new initiatives aimed at helping its districts manage fixed costs and thereby free up local budgets to improve educational opportunities or offer services that would otherwise be unavailable. For example, in an effort to control costs, the ONC BOCES established a self-insurance consortium for health insurance that serves both its own needs and those of component school districts. This allowed ONC to manage claims costs by negotiating directly with local providers for discounts on health care expenses.

The ONC BOCES also offers a “shared business office” service to its component districts. Under this model, ONC provides finance office activities including budgeting, payroll, general ledger accounting, financial reporting, investment, and other related services. Currently, six small school districts purchase this service from ONC. It should be noted that this type of cooperative service for financial “back office” operations is being considered as a model for broader application among New York State’s general purpose local governments, as well.

The ONC BOCES also offers cooperative arrangements for human resources services. Many districts in ONC and other supervisory districts participate in ONC’s labor relations program, through which districts have access to employee relations specialists for assistance in bargaining, grievance work, and contract administration.

Finally, ONC operates CROP (the Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership) and is the designated grant recipient for these federal funds. This needs-based program provides after-school services to K-8 students who may need additional academic

services, who may have disabilities, and who may go home to an empty house after school. CROP provides academic improvement for students, youth development and personal/social enrichment, and literacy and other educational assistance to families.

Under any reorganization plan, these cooperative services would, at a minimum, be threatened. To maintain these services, the new parent supervisory district(s) would need to either continue them with fewer participating component school districts or have other districts join in the service. Failing these actions, such services to the smaller ONC districts could be terminated.

Travel Concerns

ONC BOCES spans a large and rural geographic area. The geographic size of the district appears to dictate that under any potential merger option, the two existing CTE centers at Grand Gorge and Milford would need to be retained; to do otherwise would appear to require inordinate travel times for students to other sites. Virtually every educator interviewed by the study team, in ONC as well as other BOCES, indicated that the maximum recommended travel time for students participating in a BOCES program was effectively 40-45 minutes (the length of a standard class period). Because most BOCES programs are half-day in length, and require bus transportation from the student’s home district to the BOCES center and back, to extend beyond 45 minutes imposes major difficulties in scheduling and threatens student success.

The remaining issue pertains to travel time for administrators and staff. Although not as critical an issue as bus travel time for students, lengthy travel can impair effective monitoring and consultation for central administrators. Table 18 illustrates travel times under potential BOCES reorganization scenarios.

Table 18: Travel to ONC CTE Centers from DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES Offices

ONC CTE Centers (Round trip)	DCMO		Herkimer		Sullivan	
	Distance (miles)	Travel Time	Distance (miles)	Travel Time	Distance (miles)	Travel Time
OAOC – Milford, NY	84.58	1 hr. 56 min.	73.30	1 hr. 52 min.	--	--
NCOC – Grand Gorge, NY	136.86	3 hrs. 4 min.	--	--	140.84	3 hrs.

Source: www.mapquest.com.

In addition, travel under potential reorganization scenarios from the respective BOCES central office to more outlying component schools would present even greater travel and time challenges for various aspects of BOCES operations including professional development, work by the district superintendent on component school searches and oversight of itinerant teachers in the component districts (see Table 19).

Table 19: Travel from DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES to Outlying ONC Component School Districts

ONC Component School District (Round trip)	DCMO		Herkimer		Sullivan	
	Distance (miles)	Travel Time	Distance (miles)	Travel Time	Distance (miles)	Travel Time
Hunter-Tannersville Central School District	186.7	4 hrs. 10 min.	--	--	--	--
Windham-Ashland-Jewett Central School District	167.6	3 hrs. 44 min.	--	--	--	--
Schenevus Central School District	--	--	107.06	2 hrs. 34 min.	--	--
Laurens Central School District	--	--	157.64	3 hrs. 30 min.	--	--
Charlotte Valley Central School District	--	--	--	--	137.36	3 hrs. 4 min.
Jefferson Central School District	--	--	--	--	165.38	3 hrs. 40 min.

Source: www.mapquest.com.

Although the study team recognizes that administrator and staff travel times should be secondary to potential educational improvements associated with alternative structures, we similarly recognize the importance associated with in-person communications and consultations. Long travel times can only weaken management oversight and effective coordination and collaboration among the BOCES central staff and component school districts. Staff travel time is especially important for central office interaction with component districts, supervision of itinerant teachers, staff development, and other similar areas. That most travel in these BOCES districts would of necessity be on secondary or state highways (rather than interstates) and the often-mountainous terrain in the ONC region raises legitimate questions regarding the ability of administrators to operate effectively during many months of the year.

Other District Superintendent Vacancies

This study of potential reorganization options was precipitated by the resignation of the district superintendent of the ONC BOCES. At about the same time, the district superintendents of two contiguous BOCES also resigned. The DS of the Sullivan BOCES has already left that position while the DS of the DCMO BOCES has resigned but has agreed to remain until a successor is named.

The study team is concerned about the short-term challenges that would confront a new superintendent named to head a BOCES that is undergoing a large-scale restructuring. Thus, under either major scenario — a merger of ONC with DCMO or a merger/restructuring involving ONC and Sullivan and Herkimer BOCES, new superintendents would be responsible for assuming the leadership post of a BOCES while completing a major expansion. Many members of the regional BOCES community expressed concern about such a scenario and the management challenges it would pose.

Under the potential merger/restructuring scenarios, the affected BOCES would see an increase in the number of component school districts and the geographic size of the supervisory district. Following a merger with ONC, DCMO would

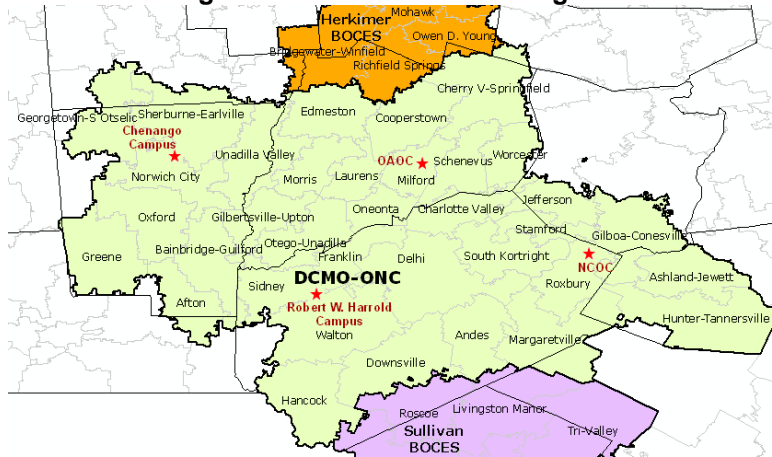
expand from 16 to 35 districts and become the largest BOCES in the state, geographically (see Table 20).

Table 20: Comparative Demographic Data, ONC and DCMO

	Status Quo		ONC & DCMO Merger
	ONC	DCMO	
Number of Component School Districts	19	16	35
Enrollment, fall 2006 (components only)	10,212	15,026	25,238
Land Area square miles (components only)	1,661	1,825	3,486
Density (pupils/sq. mile)	6.1	8.2	7.2
Poverty Index (2005)	15.1%	14.5%	14.8%
# K-12 School Buildings	15	2	17

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, Fall 2006
 See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml; and
 U.S. Census Bureau, School District Income and Poverty Estimates
 See www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/district.html.

Figure 5: ONC and DCMO Merger



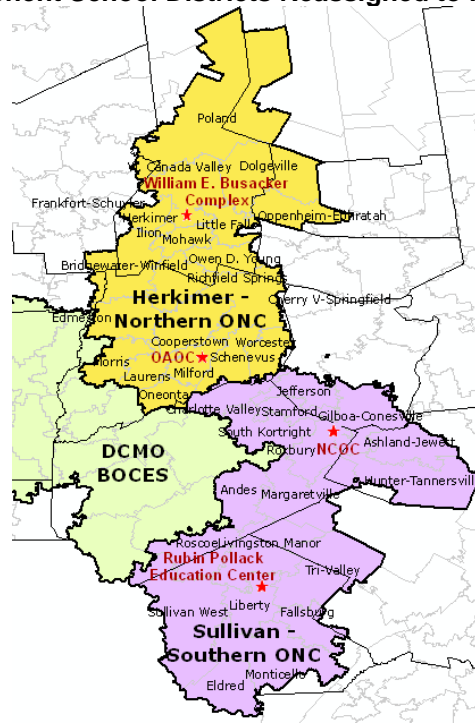
Alternatively, if the 19 component districts currently in ONC were redistributed, Sullivan would expand from eight districts to 18 and Herkimer from 12 to 21 (see Table 21).

Table 21: Comparative Demographic Data, ONC, Herkimer and Sullivan BOCES

	Status Quo			Merging ONC School Districts with Herkimer & Sullivan	
	ONC	Herkimer	Sullivan	Herkimer	Sullivan
Number of Component School Districts	19	12	8	21	18
Enrollment, Fall 2006 (components only)	10,212	11,293	10,641	17,691	14,455
Land Area, sq. miles (components only)	1,661	1,250	1,073	1,873	2,111
Density (pupils/sq. mile)	6.1	9.0	9.9	9.4	6.8
Poverty Index (2005)	15.1%	15.2%	18.0%	14.7%	17.8%
# K-12 School Buildings	15	2	2	11	8

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, Fall 2006
 See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml; and
 U.S. Census Bureau, School District Income and Poverty Estimates
 See www.census.gov/hhes/www/saipe/district.html.

Figure 6: ONC Component School Districts Reassigned to Herkimer and Sullivan



The newly appointed district superintendent under either merger option would face the dual challenges of assuming the new position of district superintendent (almost certainly, this would be the first such DS position for the individual) and at the same time leading an effort to incorporate a significant number of additional school districts into that BOCES. The management challenges of such a merger are only exacerbated by the existence of several joint services (such as the shared business office, the Catskill Area School Employee Benefit Plan, and the Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership or CROP) currently offered by ONC BOCES. Harmonizing disparate collective bargaining agreements, with varying terms and conditions of employment and salary structures, would present another serious management challenge. The immediacy of this challenge could be mitigated by delaying the effective date of any reorganization for a year or more after the appointment of the new district superintendent.

Summary

The study team believes that the management concerns faced by a BOCES with so many small, rural, and widely spaced component school districts are indeed significant. While on the one hand, such services help explain the high level of administrative spending incurred by ONC, they also exemplify the very role of a supervisory district providing cooperative services in sparsely populated areas. We believe that a reorganization of the ONC BOCES is likely to have a material and negative impact on the ability of the BOCES to provide quality services to the component districts, largely because of the size and geographic location of these components.

V. Input from Community Interests

As part of its review, the study team solicited input from a wide variety of community interests, including elected officials, educational leaders, workforce and economic development experts, civic and community organizations, parent organizations, and others. This section summarizes the input received from this outreach effort.

Elected Officials: Input from an elected official who represents the area covered by the ONC BOCES strongly supported retaining the ONC BOCES as currently organized, stressing that it was responsive and accountable to the needs of its component school districts, particularly the small, rural districts. The official noted how important BOCES organizations are in helping small districts provide adequate services while achieving needed economies of scale. The official also urged the ONC BOCES to develop stronger ties to local employers, including small businesses, and thereby play a greater role in developing the economy of the region.

Education Community: There is little or no support for a major restructuring involving ONC among the ONC leadership and component school districts, and several individuals interviewed stressed the following obstacles:

- Traditional support provided by ONC to its small, largely rural component districts is valued highly by the component superintendents. They expressed great concern that under various merger scenarios, the needs of these smaller districts would not receive adequate attention.
- Travel difficulties were cited by most BOCES and district staff as being particularly challenging. Adding more districts and more rural landscape to an expanded BOCES area would only exacerbate this issue.
- Many ONC component superintendents expressed concern about the challenge of appointing a new district superintendent — to both the DCMO and the Sullivan BOCES — and charging that individual with implementing a merger that involved adding additional school districts to the BOCES structure.
- Cost savings are highly uncertain.
- Changing library automation services and moving from one regional information center (RIC) to another would be expensive and disruptive.
- The school district superintendents could not cite educational benefits that would accrue from the restructuring of the ONC BOCES.

Those in the education community who supported reorganization also cited travel difficulties, uncertain cost savings, and the potential loss of certain ONC services such as the shared business program, CROP, and the labor relations CoSer as barriers/concerns to reorganization.

Business and Workforce Development Community: The study team solicited comments from leaders of the business community and members of the workforce development communities in and around the Otsego Northern Catskills region. Some concerns were expressed; however, responses were generally positive regarding the performance of the ONC BOCES:

- Several respondents expressed strong satisfaction with the ONC's employment related programs, noting that ONC worked closely with community business partners and the workforce investment board to develop meaningful programs to address the growing and changing needs of local businesses.
- Some businesses currently have little or no relationship with the ONC BOCES, and believe ONC needs to improve linkages to employers and increase the business community's involvement in determining what classes were offered, so students could more readily meet the employment needs of the area.
- Some workforce development representatives noted that they interact with both ONC and DCMO, and would welcome more collaboration and less bureaucratic overlap between the two BOCES districts.
- The new graduation requirements seem to deter students who are qualified and would excel in the training offered at BOCES from taking advantage of it. As a result, local businesses do not have enough qualified candidates for job openings.

Most business and workforce development community members who provided input to the study expressed support for the ONC BOCES, noting that they would welcome additional and/or continued collaboration. Overall feedback did not support reorganization, unless, as one respondent noted, reconfiguring the BOCES districts would enlarge the local offering of programs.

VI. Conclusions / Recommendations

In his letter to the Board President of Otsego Northern Catskills BOCES announcing this study, the State Education Commissioner noted two factors that are striking: the declining enrollment base in the component school districts, and the high administrative costs of operating the supervisory district.

The study team's field research affirms the Commissioner's concerns and notes that they pertain as well to other rural BOCES surrounding ONC and elsewhere in New York.

Most of the educational leaders interviewed for this report expressed varying degrees of concern over the future of ONC BOCES, primarily with regard to the declining enrollment in its component school districts. However, they expressed nearly unanimous support for the BOCES as an entity that transcends its small size to leverage innovative solutions to the unique problems encountered by small districts. They voice serious concern about the feasibility of implementing a merger of ONC with another BOCES, either in whole or in part.

The study team is persuaded that the challenges posed by smaller, rural school districts in an area with significant travel difficulties are very real and should not be discounted. Sweeping organizational changes would elevate the significance of these issues to the level where they are likely to disrupt the smooth management and oversight of the cooperative enterprise that is the modern BOCES. In short, the team believes that there are real limits to the ability of a consortium of small rural school districts to take full advantage of economies of scale. And although the potential financial benefits of creating a BOCES with more component districts would help spread the costs of administrative infrastructure over a broader base, this is a relatively minor benefit that is likely to be offset by other drawbacks. Because of the need to retain the two existing centers for career and technology education, the team sees little potential improvement in the range of educational programming offered to students or a diminution of the costs of such programs. The combination of an even greater number of small component districts that depend on the administrative and educational leadership of the BOCES, the sprawling geographic area, and the transportation challenges inherent in this part of New York State present still more obstacles to a reorganization.

For these reasons, the study team recommends that the Otsego-Delaware-Schoharie-Greene supervisory district be continued as currently structured.

After decades of consolidations among supervisory districts, the state may have reached the point where, in most regions, further consolidation may not be practical due to constraints imposed by geography and management responsibilities for district superintendents. While the potential for achieving economies of scale and improved services may warrant consideration of further consolidation in selected instances, the Department may wish to increase its overall emphasis on cooperative activities among BOCES districts. We recommend that the Department lead an effort among the smaller contiguous supervisory districts (including, but not limited to those in the I-88 corridor),

to identify ways in which multiple supervisory districts can share more administrative and managerial services. An aggressive effort in this area could help reduce costs while improving services to the students, the school districts, and the employers in the area. Finally, the study team recommends that serious consideration be given to facilitating the use of BOCES as platforms through which administrative and managerial services can be extended to smaller, general purpose units of local government.

Appendices A-E

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.

In 2007, Institute staff conducted a study for the New York State Education Department on potential reorganization of the Sole Supervisory District of Albany, Schoharie, Schenectady and Saratoga Counties (Capital Region); and in 2005, Institute staff conducted a study on potential reorganization of the First Supervisory District of Monroe County. These studies and other Institute reports are available online at www.rockinst.org.

The study team for this report included Rockefeller Institute staff Lucy Dadayan, senior policy analyst, and Barbara Stubblebine, project officer. Shuqin Pan, graduate research assistant, assisted with data collection. The principal investigator was Brian T. Stenson, senior consultant, and former deputy director of the Rockefeller Institute. Robert B. Ward, deputy director, provided guidance on this study. The co-directors of the Rockefeller Institute are Richard P. Nathan and Thomas Gais.

**Appendix B: NYS BOCES Rankings
Student Base (K-12), Number of Component Districts
Area (Components Only), and Density, 2006-07**

Number of Component Districts, Student Base (K-12), Area (Components Only), Density, 2006-07					
BOCES	# Component Districts	Enrollment (Fall 2006)	Area (Square Miles)	Density (Student per sq. mile)	Rank (based on density)
Nassau	56	206,576	292	707.0	1
Suffolk 1	51	168,248	933	180.3	5
Suffolk 2	18	90,596	209	432.7	3
Westchester	33	77,568	160	483.5	2
Erie 1	20	75,423	434	173.6	6
Albany	24	71,000	1,213	58.5	11
Onondaga	23	62,202	1,433	43.4	14
Putnam	18	57,407	523	109.7	8
Orange	17	55,552	855	65.0	10
Dutchess	13	47,156	848	55.6	12
Monroe 1	10	47,151	294	160.4	7
Washington	31	43,338	2,686	16.1	25
Rockland	8	41,770	211	198.2	4
Erie 2	27	41,690	1,791	23.3	18
Ontario	25	40,519	1,750	23.2	19
Monroe 2	9	38,334	412	93.1	9
Orleans	13	37,349	770	48.5	13
Rensselaer	22	36,294	1,602	22.6	21
Broome	16	35,133	1,116	31.5	16
Greater So. Tier	21	33,741	2,143	15.7	26
Genesee	22	25,449	1,696	15.0	27
Ulster	9	24,875	893	27.9	17
Jefferson	18	24,426	3,339	7.3	33
Oneida	12	23,701	549	43.1	15
Oswego	9	23,214	1,021	22.7	20
Cattaraugus	22	19,532	2,159	9.0	30
Hamilton	15	16,825	1,640	10.3	28
Madison	9	16,809	815	20.6	22
St. Lawrence	18	16,542	2,643	6.3	35
Clinton	17	16,001	2,344	6.8	34
Delaware	16	15,026	1,825	8.2	32
Cayuga	9	14,373	744	19.3	23
Tompkins	9	13,769	744	18.5	24
Herkimer	12	11,293	1,250	9.0	31
Sullivan	8	10,641	1,073	9.9	29
Otsego	19	10,212	1,661	6.1	36
Franklin	10	9,086	2,499	3.6	37
Total NYS	689	1,598,821	46,572	34.3	

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, fall 2006
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgt/serv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml

**Appendix C: BOCES Component School District Enrollment Data
Student Base (K-12), Percent of Total Component School District Enrollment,
Area, and Density, 2006-07**

BOCES	Enrollment (Fall 2006)	% of Total Component SD Enrollment	Area (Square Miles)	Density (Pupils/sq. mile)
DCMO				
Afton	672	4%	87	7.7
Bainbridge Guilford	983	7%	101	9.7
Delhi	907	6%	192	4.7
Downsville	335	2%	142	2.4
Franklin	274	2%	63	4.4
Georgetown-So. Otselec	418	3%	118	3.5
Gilbertsville-Mt. Upton	510	3%	62	8.2
Greene	1,283	9%	127	10.1
Hancock	446	3%	119	3.7
Norwich	2,145	14%	105	20.4
Otsego-Unadilla	1,178	8%	83	14.2
Oxford	934	6%	117	8.0
Sherburne-Earlville	1,614	11%	158	10.2
Sidney	1,170	8%	80	14.6
Unadilla Valley	1,015	7%	123	8.3
Walton	1,142	8%	147	7.8
Total Component School Districts	15,026	100%	1,825	8.2
Herkimer				
Bridgewater-West Winfield	1,342	12%	96	13.9
Dolgeville	936	8%	176	5.3
Frankfort	1,142	10%	40	28.9
Herkimer	1,227	11%	22	54.7
Ilion	1,710	15%	11	153.6
Little Falls	1,155	10%	57	20.1
Mohawk	950	8%	44	21.6
Oppenheim-Ephratah	393	3%	84	4.7
Poland	716	6%	459	1.6
Richfield Springs	633	6%	88	7.2
Van Hornesville (ODY)	222	2%	66	3.4
West Canada Valley	867	8%	107	8.1
Total Component School Districts	11,293	100%	1,250	9.0

Source: NYS Education Department, School District Enrollment, fall 2006
See www.emsc.nysed.gov/mgtserv/BOCES/enrollment.shtml

Appendix C (continued)

BOCES	Enrollment (Fall 2006)	% of Total Component SD Enrollment	Area (Square Miles)	Density (Pupils/sq. mile)
Otsego Northern Catskills (ONC)				
Andes	131	1%	99	1.3
Charlotte Valley	422	4%	81	5.2
Cherry Valley-Springfield	596	6%	137	4.3
Cooperstown	1,048	10%	98	10.7
Edmeston	533	5%	85	6.3
Gilboa-Conesville	393	4%	135	2.9
Hunter-Tannersville	517	5%	164	3.2
Jefferson	286	3%	70	4.1
Laurens	410	4%	28	14.6
Margaretville	495	5%	170	2.9
Milford	460	5%	58	7.9
Morris	452	4%	67	6.8
Oneonta	2,069	20%	22	95.0
Roxbury	334	3%	84	4.0
Schenevus	390	4%	66	5.9
South Kortright	338	3%	95	3.6
Stamford	445	4%	46	9.7
Windham Ashland	453	4%	95	4.8
Worcester	440	4%	62	7.2
Total Component School Districts	10,212	100%	1,661	6.1
Sullivan				
Eldred	686	6%	97	7.0
Fallsburg	1,460	14%	37	40.0
Liberty	1,610	15%	82	19.6
Livingston Manor	568	5%	131	4.3
Monticello	3,430	32%	190	18.0
Roscoe	267	3%	109	2.5
Sullivan West	1,413	13%	239	5.9
Tri-Valley	1,207	11%	189	6.4
Total Component School Districts	10,641	100%	1,073	9.9

**Appendix D: State Approved Career and Technical Education Programs
ONC, DCMO, Herkimer, and Sullivan BOCES**

ONC BOCES

Program Title	Integrated Credits	Certification(s)
Agriculture Production and Science	ELA, Math*, Science	National Occupation and Career Testing Institute (NOCTI), (NYS Water operator C, D in process)
Automotive Service Technician	English, Math, Science	NOCTI, (NATEF in process)
Building Trades	Math, Science	NOCTI, (NCCER in process), American Heart Association First Aide/CPR
Cosmetology	English, Math*, Science	NOCTI, NYS licensure in Cosmetology, Esthetics, Nail Technician, Barbering. (Barbering is not offered at NCOC.)
Criminal Justice (OAOC)	English, Math*, Part. in Gov't, Science	NOCTI, NYS Dept of Conservation Search and Rescue, NYS Department of Criminal Justice Services Security Guard pre-assignment course certification, American Heart Association in First Aide/CPR/AED
Culinary Arts	ELA, Math, Science	NOCTI, NYS Restaurant Association Sanitation, American Heart Association First Aide/CPR. (In Culinary Arts at NCOC, students also take the Pro-Management and Serv-Safe tests provided by the National Restaurant Association.)
Early Childhood (NCOC)	English, Math*, Science*	NOCTI, CPR/First Aid, NYS Mandated Reporter Training (Child Abuse and Neglect), and Cornell Cooperative Extension
Equipment Operation and Repair	Math*, Science *	NOCTI, NYS Logging certification, American Heart Association First Aide/CPR. (The certifications earned in OAOC's NRO are identical to NCOC's Equipment Operations and Repair Program.)
Health Occupations – CNA (OAOC – One Year)	Math*, Science	Child Care: NOCTI, American Heart Association First Aid/CPR: Infant, Child and Adult CNA: NYS certification in CNA, American Heart Association First Aid/CPR: I, C, A
Health Occupations (NCOC – Two Years)	Math, Science	In addition to the certifications offered to OAOC students in Health Occupations, NCOC Health Occ. students receive NYS Mandated Reporter Training (Child Abuse and Neglect).
Information Technology	English, Math*	Internet Core Computing (IC3), Microsoft Certified Professional Desktop Administrator 70-270, Comptia A+ PC Tech and Repair, Microsoft Certified Application Specialist, Network Plus (technician). NCOC - With regard to the Comptia A+ certification, at NCOC, all students take the "Essential" test and elect to take "PC Technician and Repair," and/or "Help Desk Support," and/or "Depot Technician." NCOC students have an opportunity to take all of the other tests offered to OAOC students
Natural Resource Occupations	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI, NYS Logging certification, American Heart Association First Aide/CPR
Visual Communications (NCOC)	English, Math*, Science*	Like Visual Arts at OAOC, NOCTI is the certification test given to NCOC's Visual Communications and Graphic Arts students.
Visual Arts Media Tech. (OAOC)	English	NOCTI
Welding	Math, Science	NOCTI, NYS DOT Welding exam
New Visions Health Care	College Credit	OAOC – Anatomy Physiology: 3 Credits, General Physics: 4 credits NCOC – The New Visions Medical Professions certifications are the same at both locations (Fox and Bassett).

Note: * spec – specialized credit offered at district principals' discretion
Source: ONC BOCES

Appendix D (continued)

DCMO BOCES

Program Title	Integrated Credits	Certification(s)
Auto Collision Repair and Refinishing	Math, Science, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Auto Technology	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Carpentry & Building Construction	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Computer Technician/Networking	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Conservation & Equipment Technology	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Cosmetology	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Culinary Arts	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
Early Childhood Education	Math, Science, ELA, Career & Financial Management	NOCTI
New Vision Allied Health	Senior English and Social Studies (via local waiver)	N/A
New Vision Business Management, Banking and Insurance	Senior English and Social Studies (via local waiver)	N/A
New Vision Education Professions	Senior English and Social Studies (via local waiver)	N/A
New Vision Environmental Science/Agriculture	Senior English and Social Studies (via local waiver)	N/A
New Vision Law and Government	Senior English and Social Studies (via local waiver)	N/A
Nurse Assistant	Health, Science, ELA, Career and Financial Management	NYS Certification Exam
Security and Law	Math, Science, ELA, Career and Financial Management	NOCTI
Visual Communications/Graphic Design	Math, Science, ELA, Career and Financial Management	NOCTI
Welding Technology	Math, Science, Career and Financial Management	NOCTI

Source: DCMO BOCES

Herkimer BOCES

Program Title	Integrated Credits	Certification(s)
Automotive Technology	ELA, Math, Science	ASE/NOCTI
Broadcast Occupations	ELA, Math, Science	NOCTI
Building Construction	ELA, Math, Science	NCCER
Business Information Systems	ELA, Math, Science*	Microsoft
Collision Repair	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI
Computer Networking Technology	ELA, Math*, Science*	NOCTI
Cosmetology	ELA, Math*, Science	NYS License/NOCTI
Criminal Justice	ELA, Math*, Science	Security Guard/NOCTI
Culinary and Hospitality	ELA, Math*, Science	ProStart
Early Childhood Education	ELA, Math*, Science*	NOCTI
Health Occupations	ELA, Math*, Science	CNA License/NOCTI
Natural Resource Management	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI
Outdoor Power Equipment	ELA, Math*, Science	EECT
Service Industry Preparation	None	None
Service Industry Readiness	None	None
Trade Industry Exploration	None	None
Trade Industry Readiness	None	None
Visual Communications	ELA, Math, Science*	NOCTI
Vocational Tech Prep	None	None
Welding & Metal Fabrication	ELA, Math*, Science	AWS

Note: *specialized credit offered

Source: Herkimer BOCES

Appendix D (continued)

Sullivan BOCES

Program Title	Integrated Credits	Certification(s)
Animal Science	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Small Animal Science
Auto Body Repair	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Collision Repair/Refinishing Technology
Auto Technology	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Automotive Technician Core
Computer Repair and Networking	ELA, Math*, Science*	NOCTI – Computer Repair Technology
Construction Technology	ELA, Math, Science*	NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research) and Local Core; NCCER core modules 1,3 .4 .5
Cosmetology	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Cosmetology
Criminal Justice	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Law Enforcement
Culinary Arts	ELA, Math*, Science	Prostart
Early Childhood	ELA, Math*, Science	NOCTI – Early Childhood Care
Graphic Design	ELA, Math*, Science*	NOCTI – Advertising and Design
Health Occupations	ELA, Math*, Science	NYS Nursing Home Nurse Aide Certification; NOCTI – Nurse Assistant
Natural Resources	<i>Program Approval in Process</i>	
Practical Nursing	ELA, Math*, Science	NYS Nursing Home Nurse Aide Certification
Precision Machinery	ELA, Math*, Science*	NOCTI – Precision Machinery
Health Academy	N/A	N/A
New Vision	N/A	N/A

Note: *specialized credit offered

Source: Sullivan BOCES

Appendix E: Evolution of Supervisory Districts and BOCES

Supervisory districts are sub regions 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.