

### The Issue

New York Schools are faced with unprecedented fiscal challenges: State aid has been cut over \$1 billion, \$600 million of Federal EdJobs funds have expired, districts are subject to a newly enacted tax levy limit. Yet, policymakers agree that increased educational attainment is essential to the future of the US economy, and that by 2020 nearly all jobs in the US will require access to some degree of post-secondary education, underscoring national efforts to raise secondary educational attainment and completion.

Enacting instructional, performance management, curricular, technological and structural reforms at scale during a period of increasing resource scarcity will require efficiency in the deployment of existing resources, and high-leverage institutions consolidating change and capacity-building efforts. In New York State, that umbrella institutional capacity exists with BOCES, but is hampered by a regulatory/financial structure better matched to the education environment that existed 30 years ago.

### The Solution

Comprehensive reforms should be enacted to capitalize on the existing school reform and improvement capacity inherent at BOCES, and align BOCES' regulatory, financial, and leadership environment to the current challenges facing New York's educational system.

### Specific Proposals

The Board of Regents should consider the following in its Legislative/State Aid Proposal:

1. The Role of the District Superintendent – Clarify the DS role in school improvement, with lowest performing schools, in oversight of local districts, with Distinguished Educators, and in implementing the Regents Reform Agenda.
2. BOCES Financial Stability and Sustainability – Resource scarcity will likely lead districts to scale back spending at BOCES in ways that prove counterproductive to regional capacity building. A comprehensive reform must address:
  - a. State Aid/Co-Ser Reform – Create a sustainable path for BOCES aid in order to avoid counterproductive proposals to eliminate aid which undermine long-term planning. BOCES Aid should incentivize the State's policy agenda of supporting functional consolidation by being targeted to reward collaboration. Co-ser approval should only be needed to receive aid.
  - b. Financial Stability/Flexibility – A new regional role will require flexibility in start-up services, short term cross subsidization, multi-year budgets, mechanisms to manage post-employment costs, and flexibility in using consultants during start up phases. Similarly BOCES need more flexible leasing authority to house new services cost-effectively.
  - c. Share costs more broadly –
    - i. Expand contracting authority with Counties, Libraries, other municipalities.
    - ii. Allow BOCES to spread fixed and administrative costs by contracting with out-of-state and other in-state educational entities.
    - iii. Expand range of services permitted to be offered without aid.
3. New Regional Models – Permit regional magnet schools, regional high schools, multi-district consolidations, and expanded back office functional consolidation.