



# Building **Bright** Futures

Annual Report  
for school year  
2023-2024



## CAPITAL REGION BOCES BOARD OF EDUCATION

Members of the board are volunteers elected to serve three-year terms by our component school districts' Boards of Education.



**Naomi Hoffman**  
Shenendehowa  
Central School District



**Matthew Tedeschi**  
Berne-Knox-Westerlo  
Central School District



**Nancy delPrado**  
Mohonasen  
Central School District



**Kevin Kutzscher**  
Sharon Springs  
Central School District



**Lynne Lenhardt**  
Bethlehem Central  
School District



**Catherine Lewis**  
Schenectady  
City School District



**John Phelan**  
Guilderland  
Central School District



**Heather Soroka**  
Watervliet  
City School District



**Bruce Tryon**  
Cobleskill-Richmondville  
Central School District



**Kimberly Tully**  
Niskayuna Central  
School District

# Message

## FROM THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND DEPUTY DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT & CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

Capital Region BOCES is continually building.

We're building innovative learning options. The needs of our students and partners in education are continually growing and evolving and so are we. To meet these needs, we're expanding the programs we offer

and the spaces in which we offer them. Building renovations are underway to our Career & Technical Education Centers in Schoharie and Albany, allowing us to manage growing enrollment and meet an ever-increasing demand with new programs such as Emerging Technologies and Plumbing Technology. Beyond CTE, students have access to opportunities that empower them to elevate their voices and to learn in the ways that best suit them.

We're building partnerships. The collaboration between our dedicated staff, partners in education and community is really the educational foundation for our learners. The pages that follow highlight the many ways this collaboration fulfills our commitment to supporting and enhancing education — in big ways and in small. It's an impressive compilation that demonstrates that the work of all our divisions is truly student-centered and purpose driven.

We're building promise. We find it uplifting when we walk the halls of Maywood or Airline academies and see the inspirational interactions between students and teachers. Or when we hear from our adult learners how our programs — and staff — are changing the very direction of their lives.

What happens in our learning spaces and the work we do is meaningful, it's important and it has an impact. We couldn't be prouder, because we know, together, we're building bright futures.



**Lauren J. Gemmill**  
District Superintendent



**Elizabeth Wood**  
Deputy District  
Superintendent & Chief  
Operating Officer

# Board of Cooperative Educational Services

## AT-A-GLANCE

For more than 70 years, it has been our mission to provide quality services to each of our component school districts, clients and stakeholders, establishing ourselves as a trusted partner in public education and workforce development.

We continuously strive to strengthen our regional community and economy by supporting learners through non-traditional programs and offering innovative, real-world educational opportunities through regional partnerships.

Our supplementary services and programs ensure safety, efficiency and effective communication for schools and their various departments.

## Our Commitments

Our five guiding commitments support our mission and purpose, leading us in our work and embodying who we are.



### SERVICE

We provide quality service to each of our component districts and stakeholders, establishing us as a trusted partner in public education and workforce development.



### VALUE

We create value as program and service partners, throughout all of our interactions and relationships.



### EXCELLENCE

We strive for excellence in every aspect of our work.



### IMPROVEMENT

We are the best at getting better. We anticipate and respond to stakeholder needs.



### LEADERSHIP

We are viewed as leaders in our work, applying thoughtfulness and innovation to new program and service development.

## 2023-24 Fast Facts

### 550+

high school seniors from 29 school districts graduated from the Capital Region BOCES Career and Technical Education Center in June.

### \$19M

in grant funding secured for clients by our grant writers in the school year – and more than \$164M since the division’s inception in 2010.

### 80,000+

students, region-wide, learn in-person and virtually, full- and part-time.

### 1,400+

area students learn on-site in our Career & Technical Education Centers, Adult Education and Special Education programs.

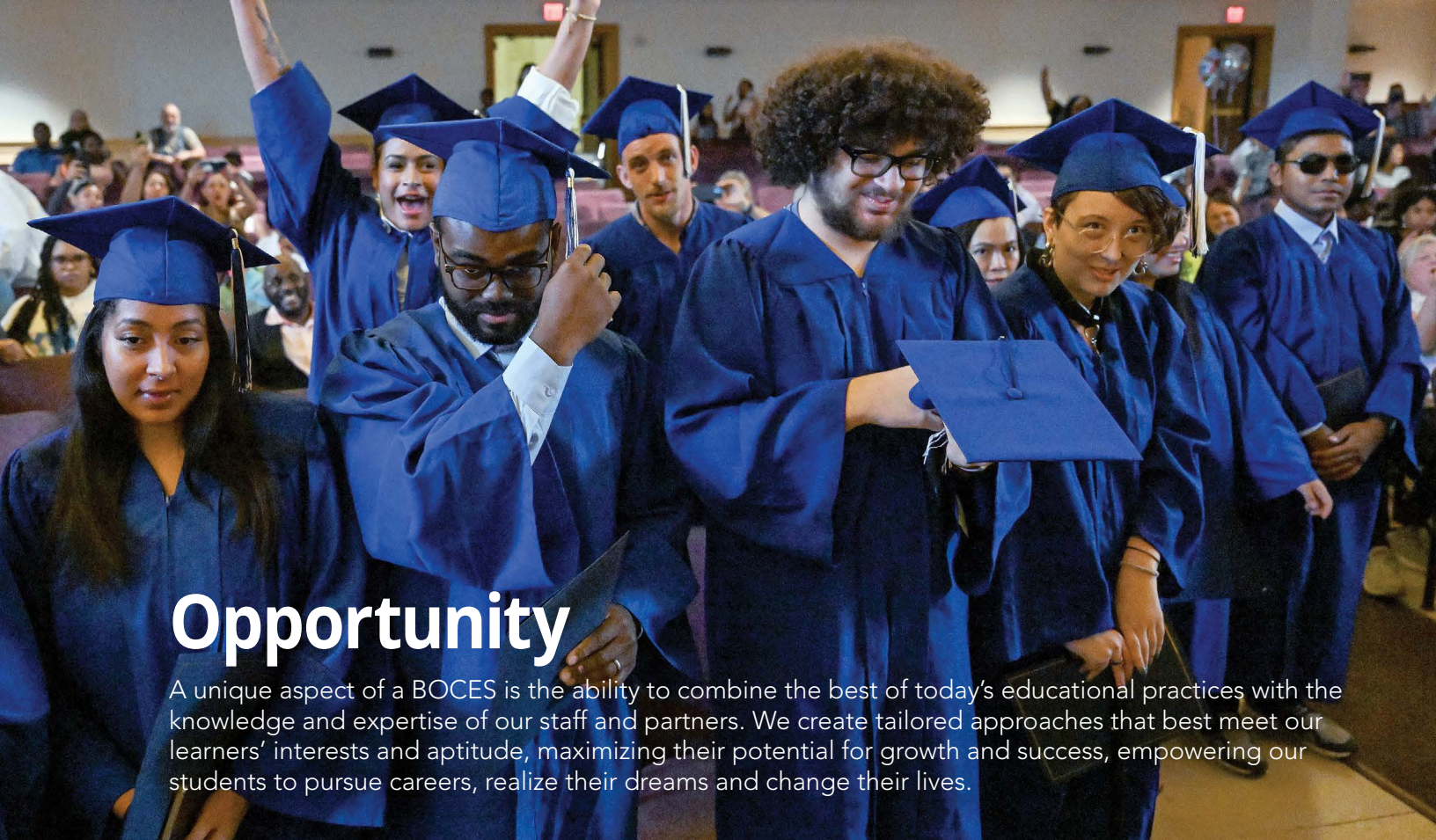
### 300+

business partnerships fuel educational opportunities—preparing students for the workforce of today and tomorrow.

### 5.5M+

meals Shared Food Services helped districts serve.





# Opportunity

A unique aspect of a BOCES is the ability to combine the best of today's educational practices with the knowledge and expertise of our staff and partners. We create tailored approaches that best meet our learners' interests and aptitude, maximizing their potential for growth and success, empowering our students to pursue careers, realize their dreams and change their lives.

## Opening Doors for Adult Learners ▲

At the start of the 2023-24 year, we opened the doors for learning at a new adult education center in Albany's South End. In partnership with the Community Loan Fund of the Capital Region, our newest center expands the availability of skills-based training and career opportunities for learners. The new center delivers an array of adult education and community programs, including High School Equivalency and English as a Second Language, as well as collaborative programs with partners such as Albany Can Code, Northeast New York Coalition for Occupational Safety & Health (NENYCOSH) and Ready, Set, Work.

## Greening the State's Yellow Buses ▶

We were proud to convene a gathering of area school business officials for learning and strategic planning around the state's Electric Bus Mandate. Staff from our Management Services' Shared Transportation team and experts from NYSERDA, National Grid, SED and NYAPT were available with resources and support of the challenges they are facing as they move toward having more eco-friendly bus fleets by 2035.



## Educational Support

By helping new teachers in the Schenectady City School District navigate their roles, instructional coaches serve as thought partners, adding a layer of support. Whether it's providing pertinent professional development, collaborating when reviewing data or brainstorming instructional strategies that are most impactful, instructional coaches are available to navigate the challenges Special Education teachers and paraprofessionals meet.

## STEM Learning

With the rollout of new science investigation kits, BOCES Education Support Services designed a two-year plan for developing and delivering professional development on each of the investigations. We partnered with Smithsonian to align our newly created units with the science kits, online curriculum and other resources and now have a three year curriculum scope and sequence for our K-2, 3-5 and 6-8 science teachers. ▼

## Funding the Future

Since 2010 our team of grant writers have been working to secure the financing districts and consortiums need to make their good ideas a reality for students and school communities. This year was no exception. From the youngest children to adults, grant funding for our partners will provide a more secure educational start as well as brighter futures:

- **800+ area four-year-olds** in six districts will benefit from a **\$3 million grant win** to fund Universal Pre-K expansion.
- **Grant funding secured** from BOCES partner Regeneron helped make **summer STEM learning** a reality for dozens of area middle schoolers.
- This past September, a **\$150,000 grant** was secured to help **fund teacher residency programs** in support of K-12 English language learners and refugee students.

## 2023-24 Fast Facts

# Nearly 200

special education students learned in-person with 150 faculty/staff in our summer extended school year program.

# 900+

middle and high school students earn essential course credits at our two summer school sites.

# 1,300+

area students prepared for in-demand careers in the skilled trades in our Career & Technical Education programs; this June we celebrated the successful completion of our program with more than 500 of these learners.

# Nearly 130

area adults, from career changers to recent high school graduates, are now nurses and healthcare workers after completing our Adult Practical Nursing program.



# Partnership

At Capital Region BOCES, we emphasize collaborative education. Partnering with local districts, businesses and organizations, we craft tailored learning experiences that prepare students for the workplace of today and tomorrow. Through these partnerships, hands-on and practical learning becomes our curriculum, benefiting learners and enriching the local workforce and community. True to our cooperative roots, we know that the educational experience and support we can offer is better together.

## Greening the Workforce

Groundbreaking with area businesses on Albany's first solar array, located adjacent to our Career & Technical Education Center Albany campus, has offered new "green" learning for our CTE students. Albany County officials and representatives from Calibrant Energy and Sunrise Power Solutions led students from BOCES on a tour of the new 2.1-megawatt solar array. This project provides students with hands-on learning in solar energy and highlights growing career opportunities in the renewable energy sector. In addition to this program, and in response to workforce needs, we added three new green industry offerings for adults during the 2023-24 year. Fueled by a \$1.25M New York state grant, this has allowed nearly 100 adult learners to train for "green" careers in the offshore wind industry. ▼

## Sign of the Times

Students in our Building Trades program worked together this spring to craft wooden signs that will hang in nature preserves around Albany County and at the Indian Kill Nature Preserve in East Glenville.

This was a great way for the students to apply their skills and "give back" in betterment of the community.

Students in our Work-Based Learning/SELFI program also regularly partner with local charities, such as the Regional Food Bank, to provide adult learners with real-world work experience and the opportunity to give back.

*"It's great to know that people will see the work we did and put up for years to come."*

— Jacob Valverde  
rising Scotia-Glenville CSD senior  
and Building Trades student

## Team BOCES/NERIC

In less than a year, 2023 Mohonasen CSD and Special Education program graduate Antonio Di Santo has distinguished himself in a career with our tech partner, the Northeastern Regional Information Center (NERIC), rising from a student worker to achieving a full-time position as Information Technology Generalist Trainee. In this role, Antonio provides valued tech support for our organization, which has included our April Signing Day event. We are very proud of you, Antonio — so glad to have you on the team! ▼





## 2023-24 Fast Facts

### Dozens

of business, education, state and community partners celebrate CTE Month and the many benefits of career and technical education for students.

### 300+

area businesses and organizations support our learners' skill development through work-based learning tailored to their interests and aspirations.

Center for Economic Growth partners with Capital Region BOCES to host a workforce development and apprenticeship forum for the manufacturing industry.

### 60+

school facility directors expand their knowledge at the bi-annual School Facilities Management Institute, hosted by our Management Services.

# Innovation

Capital Region BOCES is future-forward and future-focused. Not only are we preparing students for their tomorrow but we're planning for ours. We're expanding our Career & Technical Education Centers in Schoharie and Albany to offer more of the programs that are in demand. These enhanced offerings put BOCES at the forefront of filling student needs.

But not every innovation is groundbreaking, sometimes it can come out of something small, such as partnering students to create new learning experiences. By prioritizing creativity, critical thinking and adaptability, Capital Region BOCES is not only making learning more engaging but we're also equipping students with the skills necessary for success in the future — and that's innovative.

## Paving the Way at Schoharie CTE

A renovated Career and Technical Education Center – Schoharie Campus greeted students at the start of the 2024-25 school year, with technology and safety upgrades and expanded programming that will enhance the learning experience for the more than 200 students.

Schoharie-based students can now take part in our popular Welding and Metal Fabrication program, which was previously available only to students on the Career & Technical Education Center – Albany Campus.

Also included in this project were renovations and upgrades to the classrooms for other in-demand offerings, including Automotive Trades Technology, Cosmetology and Culinary Arts and Hospitality Technology. ▼



*“At BOCES, I learned a lot and developed skills that I might not have had going into a workplace, such as how to apply for and get jobs, budgeting, talking effectively with others and all stuff that you need for life.”*

— Grad Darren Bouck  
2024 CTE, Heavy Equipment Operation, Maintenance & Repair program

## Education Takes Flight

Beginning this school year, students in our Schoharie-based CTE Building Trades, Heavy Equipment Operator and Criminal Justice programs added drone operation to their “toolkit” of practical and marketable skills. Drone operation is a growing and profitable area of specialization. Students learned how to use these tools for site surveying, capturing high-resolution aerial imagery, conducting structural inspections and more.



## Model of Innovation ▲

Last fall, Gov. Kathy Hochul signed two significant educational bills expanding access to Advanced Placement coursework and student government into law at Tech Valley High School. The governor touted Tech Valley High, a high-tech regional high school which is a partnership of Capital Region BOCES and Questar II, as an innovative model in education and illustration of the benefits of Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

“Education is the great equalizer for young New Yorkers. This legislation proves that we’re not just changing policy — we are creating environments where every family has the knowledge to best support their kids on their educational journey, and students have the opportunity to practice civic engagement through opportunities in their own classroom.”





## 2023-24 Fast Facts

Electrical Trades and Building Trades program students joined the tiny home movement by building and wiring 24'x12' homes at the BOCES CTE – Schoharie Campus.

The SELFI program provides up to twelve 18-22 year old adult students per year with practical, relevant skills for employment, life, and independence. Students work with staff at CRB and in several worksites in the community.

Students in Career & Technical Education Center – Schoharie Campus are learning how to operate drones and use infrared, geo-locating and thermal sensors to assist in mapping construction sites and modeling construction projects.

Students in the BOCES Two-Year Sequence of Health Careers program are learning the skills necessary to earn Home Health Aide, Personal Care Aide and Nurse Assistant certifications, answering the need for healthcare workers.

### Buddying Up ▲

The buddy program at Airline Drive Academy partners middle school and elementary students for friendship, mentorship and learning. The Big Buddies and Little Buddies get together at specific times of the week for activities, which can vary from playing games, arts and crafts, cooking to science experiments. Students are experiencing many positive outcomes including improved relationships, greater confidence and taking on increased responsibilities.

### Libraries Get an AI Assist ►

Nearly 800 educators, librarians and support professionals gathered in-person and virtually this spring with our School Library Services team to learn about the topic of the moment: assistive technology, or AI, and how it can enhance and expand library services and supports.



# Leadership

Leading the way. It's easy for an organization to say, much harder to do. At Capital Region BOCES leadership is part of our very mission. We're setting the standard with an array of programs and services that meet the ever-changing needs of students, school districts, business partners and municipalities. When organizations have workforce needs, municipalities face grant writing challenges or school administrators need innovative instructional solutions, they all turn to Capital Region BOCES.

## Supporting Safe Schools

Quiet, calm and behind the scenes is how our health, safety and risk managers like things, as this is a sign of preparedness and a job well-done. From technical assistance to consultation services, the work of this team ensures that staff are up-to-date with essential training, schools are healthy and secure places for learning and employees are ready to respond well should a situation or crisis occur. To say that schools wouldn't run without their support and attention to detail is an understatement. Here's an example: Health and Safety Coordinator Tim Murphy guided the Guilderland Central School District through new state water testing requirements, ensuring

the district met timelines and reporting specifications. The result — safe drinking and cooking water for more than 5,000 students and 1,000 staff members.

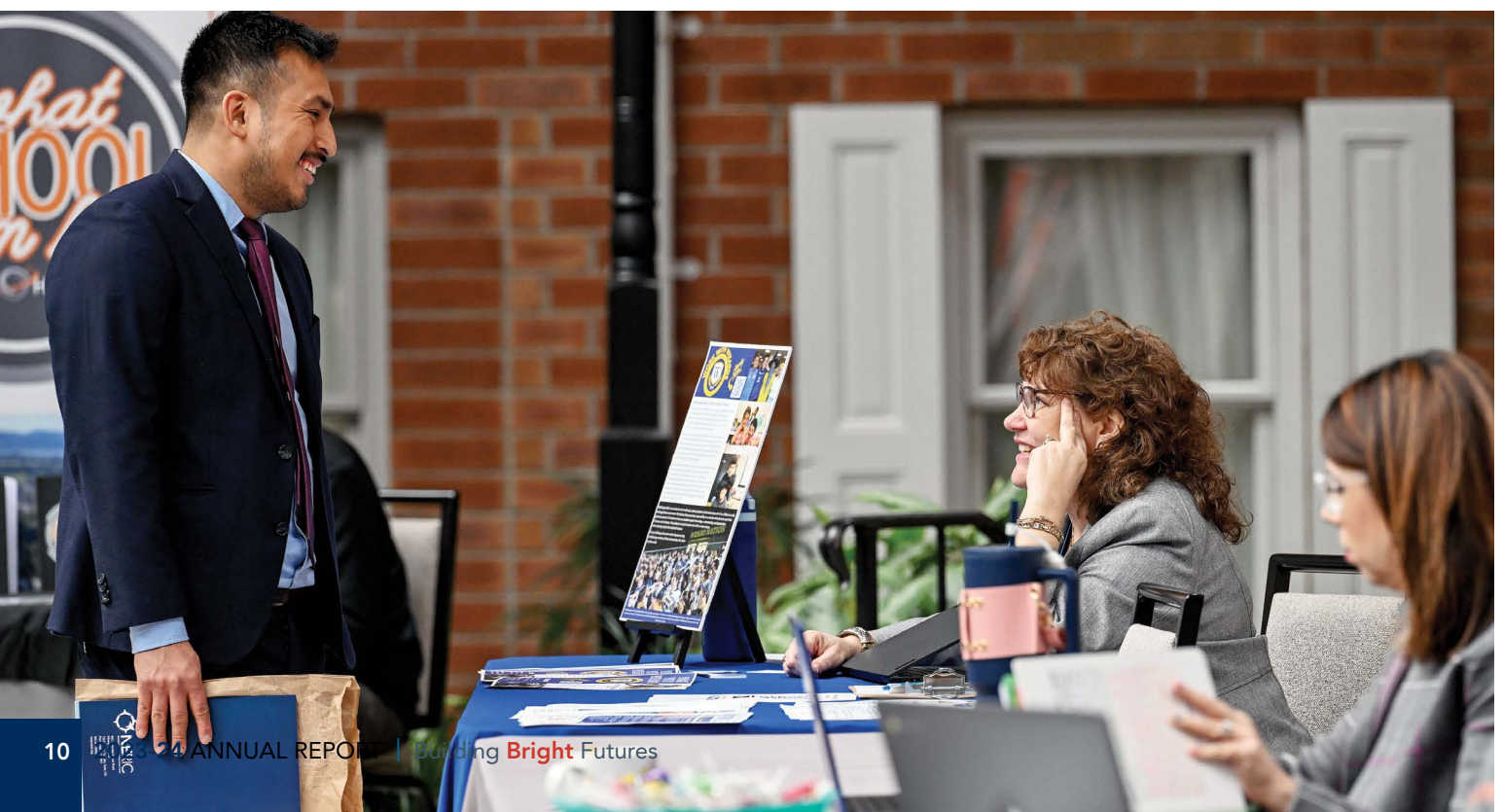
## Communications Professionals Set the Standard

Supporting 105 school districts and 37 BOCES statewide, the Communications team provides an array of services and resources that effectively communicate with and engage a school community. This year, the team worked with nearly 100 districts on the passage of budgets, with a success rate of over 95%. In addition, the team is guiding school leaders in the reimaging of school mascots,

redesigning of websites to meet the demands of today's users and building consent for capital improvement projects. The Capital Region BOCES Communications team are trusted leaders who are relied upon for advice and support.

## Educators Career Fair

The BOCES-led career fair for educators held in March offered job seekers the chance to network with educators and leaders from nearly 50 school districts from around the state. In some cases, applicants were interviewed and offered positions on the spot. We were proud to play a part in helping foster these connections and create a pipeline to meaningful work in schools. ▼



## 2023-24 Fast Facts

School-based mental health clinic—supported by BOCES and its partner Northern Rivers is lauded as a model of innovation by NYS Gov. Kathy Hochul.

20 area superintendents learn at NERIC summer retreat on such timely topics as cybersecurity, AI and virtual learning. Meanwhile, BOCES and NERIC staff gained new skills in AI as a teaching tool, cybersecurity, all things Google and more during NERIC's PD days, held throughout the year.



### ◀ Tech A-Day

Hundreds of area educators joined us at NERIC's annual Tech A-Day for learning on today's educational technology innovations and applications. For 34 years, this popular event has offered educators, students and tech professionals from around the state a chance to showcase innovative practices and learn about cutting edge applications for educational technology.



# Empower

## Providing Students

### ◀ Women in the Skilled Trades

Increasingly, young women are seeing the personal and career potential of learning in our Career & Technical Education programs — such as auto trades, construction and welding — where women have traditionally been underrepresented. Throughout the year, and specifically each March for Women in the Trades month, we uplift the stories of the young women carving a career pathway for themselves in the skilled trades. As a kickoff to this month-long celebration, we annually host a forum where graduates of our programs and local industry come together with current and aspiring CTE students to share their stories of perseverance and success with non-traditional career paths.

*“There’s not a lot of us women in welding, but that just makes me want to do it more. I want to be an ironworker. I want to be up high in the air welding. I like heights and I like welding. I like the adrenaline of it.”*

— Lajay York, Watervliet CSD and Welding program student

### National Signing Day ▶

This May, we recognized 32 high school and adult education students who have committed themselves to careers with area manufacturers and businesses by signing letters of intent of employment. The ceremony was attended by family, representatives of area businesses and dignitaries and celebrated the students as well as the role BOCES plays in preparing students to become contributing members of society and the workforce.

“The work done here at BOCES and CTE is amazing. It ... puts students on the road to great success,” New York State Labor Commissioner Roberta Reardon said. She went on to say that Signing Day highlighted the “indisputable proof of the success of partnership in fueling the essential workforce pipeline.”

The Capital Region BOCES event was affiliated with the SkillsUSA National Signing Day, which

mirrors the NCAA’s National Signing Day for athletes who commit to play sports in college. It is designed to honor students who are entering a technical field and to celebrate the dignity of work.

Rich Crumlish of Kenworth Northeast, commented on his firm’s partnership with BOCES. “We have worked with BOCES for some time, and through this partnership, we are creating the next generation for the workforce,” he said.

Class of 2012 Cosmetology program graduate Jackie (Paratore) Fish returned to BOCES to celebrate the signing of senior Aniella Kennedy to her place of employment, Chrispy Cuts Barber Shop & Hair Salon. “BOCES was life-changing for me, and it’s very important in terms of introducing students to, and preparing them for, the workforce,” she said.



# Elevating Futures:

*With Opportunities That Are Meaningful to Them*



## Supporting Student Leaders

For the second year, our Elevating Student Voices program offered youth from around the Capital Region the opportunity to engage with peers on topics that matter most to them, their schools and communities. One hundred forty students from 23 school districts came together to discuss critical issues in a constructive and open dialogue. Student facilitators lead group roundtables among their peers during three forums held throughout the year; the program culminated in the youth summit held in April.



*“I think it’s really powerful for a high school student to walk into a legislative meeting and rival legislators in their knowledge of the policy issues, the constitutional scholarship, the laws that are already on the books and the laws that we’re really pushing to change. We’re not being performative about it, and I think that really says something about the experience young folks go through.”*

— Conor Webb, Guilderland Central School District student

# Honoring our talented team

We would not be where we are today without the dedication, skill, compassion and resilience of the employees of our Capital Region BOCES. We are 1,000+ strong, united in purpose and focused on the success of everyone and every entity we serve.

## INTERNAL RECOGNITION

We are proud to recognize our employees and how the work they do exemplifies our guiding commitments of Service, Value, Excellence, Improvement and Leadership through our Employee Recognition Program.



### Extra Mile Award Recipient

Transportation Assistant **Alisha Williams** was recognized at our Opening Day celebration for having a positive impact on those she interacts with by exemplifying each of our commitments and going the “Extra Mile.”

### Commitment Award Recipients

These awards are given throughout the school year, September through June.



SERVICE

#### Service

**Paul Dolan, Paul Rother, Chris Snye and Erica Weakley**, Career & Technical Education Culinary teachers

**Zach Reibert**, Public Information Specialist



VALUE

#### Value

**Susie Mizerak-Thompson**, Stores Clerk



EXCELLENCE

#### Excellence

**Michael Stratton**, Vocational Case Manager

**Jordyn Kelleher**, Engagement & Development Division, administrative assistant II



LEADERSHIP

#### Leadership

**Hilary Hofstein**, Health, Safety & Risk Management Service program manager

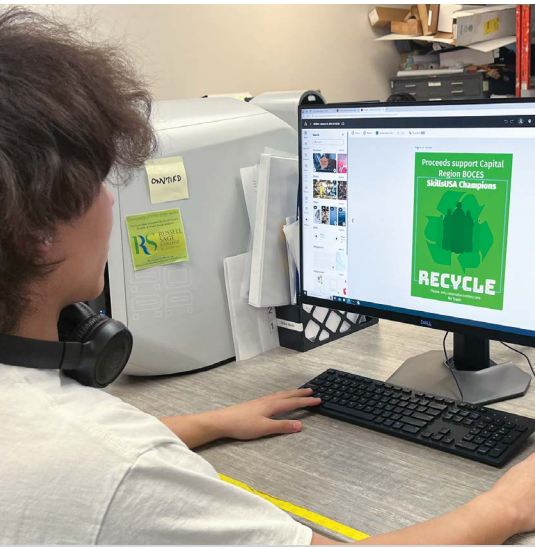
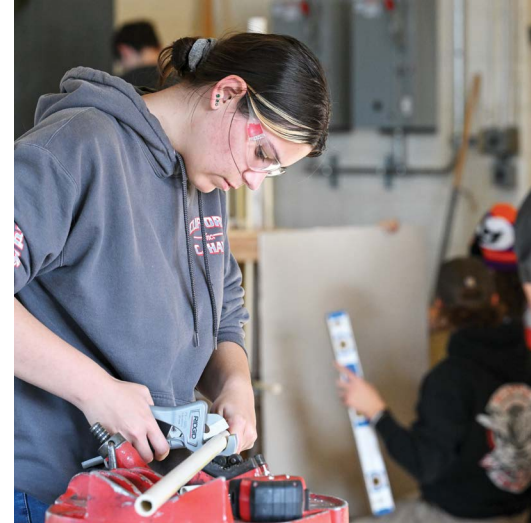
# External recognition

We are humbled and honored to have received recognition regionally and nationally for the work we do on behalf of our students, schools and employees.

Capital Region BOCES named **2023 Nonprofit of the Year** by the Albany Business Review



Career & Technical Education division honored by the New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) as a **CHAMPION OF CHANGE** for Women in the Trades Initiative



Digital Media Design students **Evan Agan, Kaylee Marrano and Lillian Sweeney** honored by the Electric Vehicle Association as **Students of the Year** for electric vehicle social media campaign

Students shined during the annual **SkillsUSA** competition. 2024 cosmetology program grad, **Jacob Alaimo**, and Network Technology grad, **Liam Pierce**, moved on to compete at the national level.

From photography to capital projects, our **Engagement & Development** team was honored with dozens of state and national **public relations association awards** for their creative and strategic communication work.



NERIC teammate **Virginia Bond** honored by NYSCATE for helping transform teaching and learning through technology





# Building **Bright** Futures

Annual Report for school year **2023-2024**

The Capital Region BOCES does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs, activities, employment, and admissions; and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups.

The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policies: Director of Human Resources, at [hrdirector@neric.org](mailto:hrdirector@neric.org), 518-862-4951, or 900 Watervliet Shaker Road, Albany, NY 12205.

Inquiries concerning the application of the Capital Region BOCES non-discrimination policies may also be referred to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), 32 Old Slip, 26th Floor, New York, NY 10005, phone: 646-428-3800, fax: 646-428-3843, TTY: 800-877-8339, or email: [OCR.NewYork@ed.gov](mailto:OCR.NewYork@ed.gov).



Board of Cooperative  
Educational Services  
900 Watervliet-Shaker Rd.  
Albany, NY 12205

518-862-4900