



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Commissioner of Education
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Dear Members of the Cooperative Boards of New York State:

In every corner of our state, students, families, and educators look to our public education system as a source of opportunity, stability, and promise. At a time when education is at the center of national and state conversations, one thing remains clear—our collective responsibility to provide every student with a high-quality education that prepares them for future success.

As we navigate the opportunities and challenges ahead, the New York State Education Department (NYSED) remains steadfast in its commitment to upholding the principles of equity, opportunity, and access for all students. This commitment is not just an aspiration—it is a responsibility enshrined in state law, ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has the support and resources necessary to achieve their full potential.

New York's Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) stand at the forefront of this mission. They are not only critical partners in implementing the State's education priorities, including transforming education in our state by implementing the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission on Graduation Measures, what we call "New York Inspires,"¹ but are also as essential drivers of workforce development, ensuring that students are prepared to meet the demands of an evolving economy. As I travel the state visiting many BOCES, I see firsthand how you are accomplishing this critical work through pioneering regional collaborations that expand access to advanced coursework, integrating K-12 education with higher learning through early college opportunities, and preparing students for meaningful careers through career and technical education (CTE).

In recognition of this, NYSED's legislative and budget priorities include \$53.8 million to increase the salary limit for BOCES aid, enabling more students to access CTE programs that lead to high-demand careers. Additionally, expanding dual enrollment remains a priority as we work with our partners in state government to propose a College in High School Opportunity Fund supporting Smart Scholars, P-TECH, and locally designed programs that will allow more students to earn college credit with academic and counseling support. NYSED also recently published a first of its kind BOCES Early College Access Cooperative Service Agreement (CO-SER) to partner with higher education to increase early college opportunities, especially for students who would otherwise not be able to afford it.

The success of New York's students depends on the continued partnership between NYSED, the Board of Regents, BOCES, school districts, and community stakeholders. In the words of author Ryunosuke Satoro, "individually, we are one drop. Together, we are an ocean."

Best wishes for a continued successful and transformative year ahead.

Sincerely,



Betty A. Rosa
Commissioner

¹ <https://www.nysed.gov/news/2024/state-education-department-announces-ny-inspires-plan-transform-education-new-york-state>