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April 25, 2019

Ms. Elizabeth R. Berlin  
Executive Deputy Commissioner  
New York State Education Department  
89 Washington Avenue, Room 2 M West  
Albany, NY, 12234

Dear Ms. Berlin,

This letter is in response to your FEH BOCES survey letter regarding the announced retirement of FEH BOCES District Superintendent Stephen Shafer and NYSED’s requested comments and opinions on serving the educational needs of the FEH BOCES Supervisory District.

Below, I have summarized my response indicating “**Option 1**” as my preference. I have included pertinent details to support my recommendation and have shared additional recommendations for consideration, as well. Please find the additional information included below.

**Table 1:** *BOCES Name, Number of Component Districts, Enrollment and Square Miles*

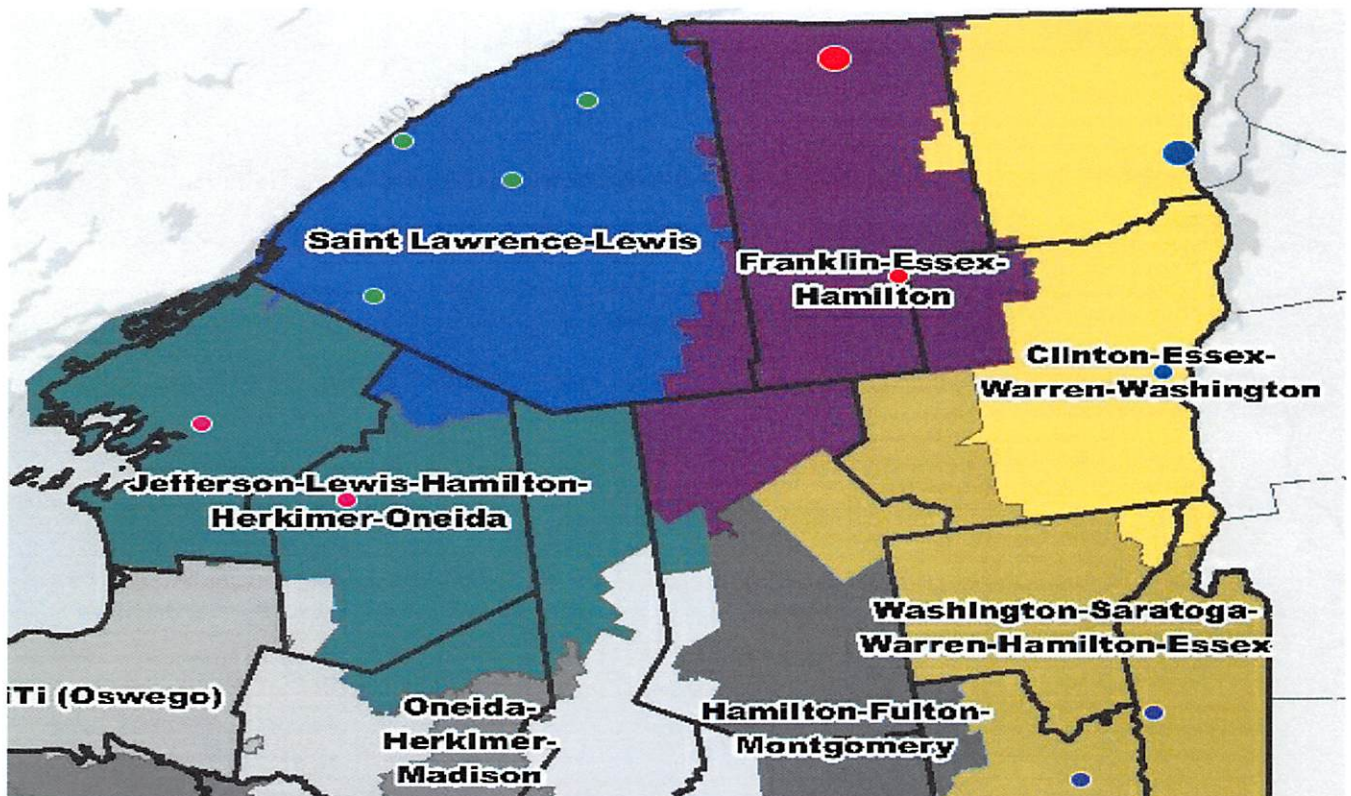
<b>BOCES</b>	<b>Number of Components</b>	<b>2017-18 Enrollment</b>	<b>Area (Sq. Mileage)</b>
Clinton-Essex-Warren-Washington (CEWW) BOCES	17 / 16 as of 7/1/2019 due to a merger	13,862	2,344
Franklin-Essex-Hamilton (FEH BOCES) BOCES	9 districts	7,957	2,499
Jefferson-Lewis-Hamilton-Herkimer-Oneida BOCES	18 districts	23,335	3,339
St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES	18 districts	15,408	2,643
Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex (WSWHE) BOCES	31 districts	38,258	2,686
<b>Total</b>	<b>92 (7/1/19)</b>	<b>98,820</b>	<b>13,511</b>

Source: <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/boces/enrollment/>

- The five BOCES listed above represent the five largest geographic BOCES footprints in the state. Combined, they represent over 13,500 square miles. FYI, bigger than nine states including Maryland (12,407 square miles) or Massachusetts (10,555 square miles).

- The combination of two of any of these BOCES, listed in the Figure 1 chart, would make the implementation of Option II or Option III very challenging or unmanageable. For example, merging any of the two BOCES together, would create a BOCES of between 4,800 square miles to 5,800 square miles. Please see Table 2 below for the geographic depiction of the Upstate NY BOCES identified in Table I. We have also added the representative locations of the BOCES Centers/program campuses.

**Table 2:** *Upstate NY BOCES Geographic depiction adapted from the Rockefeller Report, page 10, Table showing the “BOCES of New York State” and adapted by CVES’ communications service to depict various BOCES’ campuses/centers.*



- Geographically, FEH BOCES (shown in purple), has two educational centers serving their districts. The distance between those CTE/BOCES Centers is significant. The FEH BOCES student enrollment is aligned to support their two campus sites.

- The economic efficiencies of merging FEH BOCES or transferring districts to neighboring BOCES due to the distance between the neighboring BOCES center may provide significant challenges for coordination of their services for students and staff, billing, rate setting, etc.
- There has been strong community and component district support for their respective BOCES throughout the region and there are varied approaches among the BOCES for financing their projects between the Dormitory Authority, a Joint Financing Agreement or Inter-municipal Financing Agreement or paying fully out of their reserves. For example, in March 2017, Jefferson-Lewis BOCES' voters overwhelmingly passed a \$20 million project. In December 2017, FEH BOCES successfully passed their \$18.5 million Capital Project referendum by an 80% margin with voting in their 9 component districts. In October 2018, St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES' voters also overwhelmingly approved their \$43.5 million dollar project for upgrades at three Tech Centers. Lastly, in December 2018, CEWW BOCES voters went to the polls in their 17 districts and strongly passed their \$29.85 million capital project by a 72% margin.
- FEH BOCES has a very successful Health Insurance and Workers' Compensation Consortium totaling approximately \$44 million who's Board of Directors / Joint Governing Board includes 9 districts and includes 9 employee representative. Their consortium has been very successful in managing their health care costs, keeping their health care increases reasonable, while providing high-quality care for all participants.

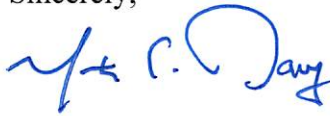
#### **Other Regional BOCES Collaboration Considerations or Potential Future Opportunities:**

- In addition to the overall recommendation of support for Option 1, there may be potential advantages of expanding the existing collaborative opportunities between the Upstate NY BOCES shown. The various BOCES offer varying services which their counterparts may not – i.e. expanded instructional services, data analysis services, labor relations, communications services, special education programs, instructional technology, etc.
  - FEH BOCES has a Shared Business Office which provide full business office support or module services for 4 districts in CEWW BOCES, 3 districts in FEH BOCES and in 2019-20, will include a WSWHE component district for 9 total districts.
  - CEWW BOCES enrolls special education students from several FEH BOCES districts including Saranac Lake CSD, Lake Placid CSD, Malone CSD and Chateaugay CSD for specialized programs such as Autism, ITSP (Intensive Therapeutic Support Program), Life Skills, etc.
  - St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES supports multiple school districts outside of their BOCES for various shared services including Labor Relations, Communications, McKinney-Vento, Model Schools and Shared Food Services. They also provide Cooperative Purchasing Services to FEH BOCES, CEWW BOCES, and Jefferson-Lewis BOCES and numerous component districts within those BOCES.

- In early July, there is an annual 4-BOCES summer “Administrators’ Leadership Conference”, in 2019 it will be its 32<sup>nd</sup> conference held in Lake Placid for administrators from the BOCES and our component districts for Jefferson-Lewis BOCES, St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES, FEH BOCES and CEWW BOCES.
- In August each year, CEWW BOCES hosts a “Gearing Up” administrative conference, held for the past 7 years, with strong FEH BOCES district participation and annually in December, CEWW BOCES and FEH BOCES hold a joint “Northeastern Council of School Superintendents Conference” held for the past 48 years in Lake Placid.

In closing, I want to thank my regional District Superintendent colleagues from our Upstate NY region for their willingness to discuss these considerations, options and future collaboration opportunities for moving forward. If there are additional questions or I can provide additional information regarding my response, please let me know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mark C. Davey". The signature is stylized and cursive.

Mark C. Davey, Ed.D.  
District Superintendent / CEO  
Sole Supervisory District of Clinton-Essex-Warren Washington Counties

MCD:lj