



REGIONALIZATION FAQs

<https://www.nysed.gov/regionalization/frequently-asked-questions>

What is my school district required to do under this initiative?

Component districts of a Sole Supervisory District are required to:

- a. Complete the Strengths & Needs Tool to summarize and reflect on their local strengths, needs, and vision in the Fall of 2024;
- b. Participate in regional convenings, facilitated by the District Superintendent of your Sole Supervisory District / CEO of BOCES, to discuss aggregate needs of the region with other component districts;
- c. Continuously engage and collaborate with other component districts to develop a regional plan and set of recommendations for creating and enhancing access to opportunities for all students in your region.
 1. **Note that each school district is not required to have an activity for their school(s) listed in the plan; only to contribute to the conversations. The District Superintendent will record the plan and recommendations in a template provided by NYSED.**
- d. Collaborate to implement and amend, as appropriate, regional plans beginning in school year 2026-2027, if their district has an activity listed in the plan for their school(s); and
- e. Engage in the planning process to reflect on progress and update their plans and recommendations on a 10-year cycle.

Is there any incentive for districts to participate in the regionalization planning process? Are there any grant funding opportunities available?

It is our hope that the students in each participating district will benefit with additional educational opportunities and that districts could potentially benefit through operational efficiencies.

Additionally, it is our hope that the suggestions made in the Regionalization Plans will lead to advocacy for resources to accomplish the goals of the planned activities. Part 2 of the Regionalization Plans is intended to include items school districts would consider in their region if they had additional resources. Should your region make suggestions requiring additional resources, NYSED will consider using those ideas to advocate for resources, including grant funding, to make these opportunities a reality. (See FAQ on “What will be in the final plan and recommendations?” below.)

Does my school district have to participate?

All component districts of a Sole Supervisory District are required to participate in the regional conversations and planning process, including completion of their local reflections in the Strengths & Needs Tool. Non-BOCES component school districts, such as the Big Five school districts, are invited to participate in the conversations occurring in their neighboring region(s).

Upon completion of the regional plan, school districts need only pursue implementation of activities they have agreed or consented to for their local context in the final plan.

A school district may elect not to participate in the development of a regionalization plan. If it so elects, the superintendent of a school district, after consultation with their board, must communicate the district's election, in writing, to the Department's Office of Education Policy, 89 Washington Avenue, Education Building Room 2M, Albany, NY 12234. The deadline for submission of such letters is January 15, 2025, and every ten years thereafter.

What will be the outcome of this initiative?

The output of this initiative, the regional plans and recommendations, seek to highlight the work local school districts are already doing, uplift the work they are planning to do, and identify the resources and supports they need to carry out their plans—especially those resources and support they wish to recommend NYSED consider in shaping budget and legislative priorities and/or policy or regulation changes.

NYSED and the Board of Regents are committed to strengthening the Department's role as a service agency that supports and facilitates field-informed and field-driven approaches to real change and reform across our state's educational landscape. This process will produce the data and innovative thinking to inspire real change for our schools and students.

Will this initiative eliminate or consolidate local school districts? Will regional districts run by the BOCES be created?

The intention of this initiative is to charge local stakeholders with identifying support needs for creating and enhancing equitable student opportunity as well as solutions to persistent challenges, as well as make recommendations for how NYSED may shape budget and legislative priorities and/or policy or regulation changes. Regionalization in New York State is **not** reorganization, consolidation, mergers, annexation, or the creation of regional high schools.

NYSED has no intention of forcing local school district reorganization or creating regional districts operated by BOCES. Merger or consolidation of local school districts may only occur following several proscriptive statutory requirements. If a local school district is considering a voluntary merger or consolidation, they may contact NYSED's Office of Educational Management Services for information and resources.

Why are the District Superintendents / CEO of BOCES leading this work? Is this a BOCES plan?

The final regional plans and recommendations will be developed by local school districts, not BOCES. This initiative leverages the capacity of the District Superintendents / BOCES CEOs to support the facilitation of regional conversations and recording of regional activity plans and recommendations. District Superintendents are the Commissioner's representatives in the field, by statute. They also serve as the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) for each Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES).

The role of the District Superintendent in this initiative is to serve as a convener to compile the plan and recommendations based on input from component school districts, to serve as a thought partner, and to foster ideas and collaboration among convening participants.

What are Sole Supervisory Districts?

New York State has 37 Sole Supervisory Districts. They are commonly referred to as the Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) regions as each Sole Supervisory District houses a regional BOCES that provides cooperative educational programs for two or more school districts.

Most public school districts in New York State are component districts of a BOCES, or Sole Supervisory District, though several small city school districts across the state are not members of a BOCES ("non-component districts"). Although BOCES component districts do not include the "Big Five" city school districts of Buffalo, New York City, Rochester, Syracuse, and Yonkers, these districts will be invited to voluntarily participate in regional conversations. Each Sole Supervisory District is overseen by a District Superintendent who serves as the chief executive officer of the regional BOCES as well as the regional representative of the Commissioner of Education.

Visit the [BOCES website](#) for more information about the Sole Supervisory Districts, including contact information for the District Superintendents and their staff.

See a map of all 37 BOCES regions at this [link](#).

What will be in the interim progress report?

The interim progress report allows the District Superintendent to share information with NYSED on what has been discussed to date regarding the region's strengths, needs, and preliminary suggestions for action including requests for legislative changes, regulatory changes/relief, and/or additional resources.

See our "[Materials & Guidance](#)" webpage for more information on roles and responsibilities regarding the interim progress report.

What will be in the final plan and recommendations? What information will be necessary to include and what will NYSED do with the information?

The regional plans will have two parts:

Part 1: Regional Activity Plan – Items the districts have agreed to work on together, that are completely identified and generated by the local school districts themselves.

Part 2: Regional Ideas & Recommendations – Items the districts would consider pursuing in their region if they had additional resources, legislative changes, or regulatory changes.

Only information local districts want to share will be included in the final regionalization plan. The basic structure will involve a description of the innovation being considered, who is included in the innovation, and what are the proposed benefits to students.

For Part 1 of the plans, NYSED will stay in communication with the region to observe progress so successes can be promoted widely, and technical support can be provided if the region discovers challenges as they pursue implementation of their agreed upon activities. For Part 2, NYSED will collate suggestions and consider placing the recommended legislative, regulatory, and resource requests on the Board of Regents 2026 legislative agenda.

What if my school district does not have an activity listed in the final plan? Will we be forced to implement other activities in our region and/or educate out-of-district students?

The regional plans will only include activities that individual school districts consent or agree to pursue and implement in their local context. A district cannot be identified against their will as a participant in any particular activities listed in the regional plan. No individual school district is required to commit their local resources without their agreement or consent.

Local public school districts are only required to educate students who have established residency or are homeless under the McKinney-Vento Act. The regional plan may not force a school district to educate out-of-district students without their consent or permission.

If my school district opts out of the regionalization planning process, can it still be required to take action in a regionalization plan?

No. If a school district opts out of the planning process, it will not, and cannot, be required to take any action as part of a regionalization plan.

Can a school district opt out of certain parts of the regionalization planning process but still participate in others? For example, can a school district opt out of submitting the Strengths & Needs Tool, but still participate in the regional convenings?

Yes. However, for local districts, the Strength & Needs Tool is foundational to this discussion, so there would be gaps in the ability to participate fully since their own reflections would not be included in the aggregate regional picture.

If a school district elects not to participate now, would they be out of the regionalization planning process for good? Can they change their mind and participate at a later date? If so, what would that process look like?

This is intended to be an inclusive process, not an exclusive process. Innovative ideas are welcome regardless of who is making the suggestion. (See FAQ on “Can a school district opt out of certain parts of the regionalization planning process but still participate in others?” above.)

As this is a regionally-facilitated process, NYSED is not dictating the number or timing of the various convenings. Please contact the District Superintendent/CEO of the BOCES for dates, times, and agendas for the regional convenings.

Visit the [BOCES website](#) for contact information for the District Superintendents and their staff.

Can BOCES opt out of the regionalization conversations?

The District Superintendent of the Supervisory District, who also serves as Executive Officer of the BOCES, is facilitating this process at the direction of the Commissioner of Education. As such, the District Superintendent cannot opt out of the process. The BOCES are an entity entirely dependent upon Cooperative Service agreements between school districts in their region. Therefore, it is unclear what a BOCES would be opting out of regarding the regionalization initiative, as doing so would appear to undermine their foundational purpose.

Can we make changes to the plan over time, even after the October 2025 deadline?

Yes, the regional plan can be amended at any time and will be required to be updated on a 10-year cycle.

I'm a parent/caregiver or family/community member. How can I engage in and learn more about this initiative?

We would encourage you to reach out to the District Superintendent in your BOCES region, who can best assist you with information on upcoming convenings in your area. Visit the [BOCES website](#) for contact information for the District Superintendents and their staff.

How will the data from the Strengths & Needs Tool be analyzed and shared back with participating districts? Will participating districts get reports or resources?

NYSED is providing the aggregate data back to the region for regionalization convenings. The Regional Information Centers (RICs) are working on developing additional reports and resources to support this effort.

What technical assistance and support will NYSED provide?

NYSED’s goal is to provide a supportive environment and the tools necessary for Sole Supervisory Districts and component districts to engage in the regional conversations and planning. To that end, NYSED will provide templates, data collection and review tools, and guidance for each step of the planning process. (See our “[Materials & Guidance](#)” webpage.) NYSED staff will also be available to answer any questions, provide technical assistance, data, and other supports to schools, districts, and BOCES as they develop their regional plans and recommendations throughout the process.

Contact us with questions at: regionalization@nysed.gov