

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SUPPORT OF THE QUESTAR *III*  
STEM RESEARCH INSTITUTE PROJECT WITH THE GOAL OF ENHANCED  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FOR THE BURGEONING GAME  
DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER IN THE COUNTY AND REGION**

**WHEREAS**, Rensselaer County and the surrounding region have become nationally known as a center for the development of gaming programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the demand for gaming programs continues to show great growth, with a concomitant growth in the demand for a workforce well trained in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math and the specific skill sets germane to gaming development; and

**WHEREAS**, a recent report by the Center for Economic Growth identified the availability of STEM talent as one of the gaming industry's top needs, if the gaming cluster is to continue to thrive and grow in the region; and

**WHEREAS**, QUESTAR *III*, through its STEM Research Institute, has partnered with Vicarious Visions, the region's largest video game developer, and area secondary school STEM educators, to collaborate in the development of an interdisciplinary gaming course to be offered to secondary school students in Rensselaer County; and

**WHEREAS**, the aforesaid collaboration will require participating teachers to spend seven weeks of the summer working with the STEM professionals at Vicarious Visions to develop secondary school courses which will align with the skill sets needed by the gaming industry; and

**WHEREAS**, participating teachers will be required to attend future professional development conferences to present to other STEM teachers the lesson plans and courses they develop through the STEM Research Institute project, sharing best practices that can be replicated or modified in schools around the region; and

**WHEREAS**, the Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency (the Agency) recognizes video game development as a growing industry in Rensselaer County and is supportive of the efforts of QUESTAR *III* to help meet the workforce needs of that industry; and

**WHEREAS**, the Agency recognizes that the availability of a workforce well-trained in necessary skill sets is a prerequisite to the growth of any industry; and the presence of such a workforce is necessary in order to attract and retain commercial and industrial enterprises; and

**WHEREAS**, the Agency believes that the QUESTAR *III* STEM Research Institute's video gaming curriculum development project will ultimately result in a pool of workers well-trained in the skills needed by the gaming industry; and

**WHEREAS**, the encouragement and support of workforce development efforts is well within the goal and mission of this Agency to attract and retain Rensselaer County employers, now, therefore, be it

**RESOLVED**, that the Agency does agree to financially support the QUESTAR *III* STEM Research Institute's curriculum development effort by contributing the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars toward the stipend for three secondary school teachers participating in the project.

**Resolution ADOPTED by the following vote:**

**Ayes: 6**

**Nays: 0**

**Abstain: 1**

**June 13, 2019**

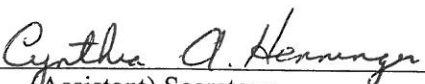
STATE OF NEW YORK                    )  
  ) SS.:  
COUNTY OF RENSSELAER            )

I, the undersigned (Assistant) Secretary of Rensselaer County Industrial Development Agency (the "Agency"), DO HEREBY CERTIFY that I have compared the foregoing annexed extract of the minutes of the meeting of the members of the Agency, including the Resolution contained therein, held on June 13, 2019 with the original thereof on file in my office, and that the same is a true and correct copy of said original and of such Resolution contained therein and of the whole of said original so far as the same relates to the subject matters therein referred to.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that (A) all members of the Agency had due notice of said meeting; (B) said meeting was in all respects duly held; (C) pursuant to Article 7 of the Public Officers Law (the "Open Meetings Law"), said meeting was open to the general public, and due notice of the time and place of said meeting was duly given in accordance with such Open Meetings Law; and (D) there was a quorum of the members of the Agency present throughout said meeting.

I FURTHER CERTIFY that, as of the date hereof, the attached Resolution is in full force and effect and has not been amended, repealed or rescinded.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the Agency this 13th day of June, 2019.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
(Assistant) Secretary

(SEAL)



**To:** Bob Pasinella  
**From:** Jim Church  
**cc:** Peter Kehoe  
**Date:** May 22, 2019  
**Re:** Questar III STEM Research Institute/Vicarious Visions/Rensselaer County IDA Support

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## Overview

Questar III's STEM Research Institute is an intensive, two-summer STEM teacher professional development program, modeled from a successful Columbia University program. It partners secondary school STEM educators with researchers and STEM industry professionals to engage in research and work experiences relevant to the content they teach.

In addition to exposing teachers to the latest STEM research and work practices, teachers are required to spend one day each work week at Questar III developing curriculum based on their work experiences.

The benefits are two-fold:

- teachers' instructional practice improves while developing lesson plans based on the latest STEM research and work practices
- students' STEM-interest and proficiency is significantly enhanced in the classrooms of participating teachers and are more likely to participate in STEM-related activities, competitions and programs (Reference Science Magazine Article: October 2009)

Since the program's inception, we've developed partnerships with recognized research institutions including SUNY Poly, RPI, SUNY Albany RNA Institute and NYS DOH/Wadsworth Laboratories. The program has also partnered with and/or received support from businesses like National Grid, IBM, General Electric, Momentive Performance Materials, CAP COM FCU, Regeneron Pharmaceuticals and Global Foundries as well as organizations such as the Center for Economic Growth and NYS Workforce Development.

## **Video game development partnership**

As the game development industry continues to grow in the Capital Region, this past fall, Questar III initiated conversations with Vicarious Visions (VV) about partnering to host a teacher as part of the STEM Research Institute. These conversations led to VV agreeing to host six teachers, from three Rensselaer County school districts (Averill Park, Schodack and East Greenbush) to collaborate on developing an interdisciplinary gaming course to offer students either during the upcoming school year or in 2020-21. (Averill Park intends on offering it for the upcoming year with close to 50 students expressing serious interest).

Teachers from content areas including Computer Science, English, Math, Coding, Art and Technology will work with VV both this summer and next year to develop courses that align with the skill sets needed by the industry.

This opportunity has much potential, including:

- educating potentially hundreds of Rensselaer County students in the coming years about the industry, introducing and developing the skills required to succeed as well as an understanding of the career opportunities available as the region's game development cluster continues to grow;
- opportunities for continued collaboration with industry professionals beyond this experience that could include enhancing curriculum beyond entertainment applications into other industries, including healthcare/mental health;
- potential student internships and teacher professional development workshops;
- to develop similar courses that could be replicated or modified in school districts throughout the county or create distance-learning opportunities for these districts to offer the course to
- develop relationships with NYS/RPI's Gaming Hub effort to partner teachers and students with their initiatives, strengthening the game development ecosystem

## **Request**

Teachers participating in the STEM Research Institute receive stipends of \$10,000 for their seven weeks/five days-a-week each summer. STEM Research Institute teachers are also required to participate in future education professional development conferences to present their lesson plans and courses that they develop, sharing best practices that can be replicated or modified in schools around the region.

Questar III BOCES, on behalf of the three participating school districts, is requesting that the Rensselaer County IDA fund three of the six teachers' stipends for this upcoming summer, totaling \$30,000.

As this initiative offers the opportunity for three school districts in Rensselaer County (and potentially more in the future) to develop an innovative partnership with the region's largest video game developer, funding support for this collaboration can help support one of the challenges highlighted in the Center of Economic Growth's recent report on the industry's impact - developing a talented workforce pipeline:

*“For the cluster to further grow in the region, studios placed the greatest emphasis on improved access to venture capital, grants or loans and an improved tax environment. **The availability of STEM talent** and quality of life enhancements tied as the cluster’s second greatest need.”*

(Reference-<http://www.ceg.org/articles/video-game-development-cluster-becomes-force-capital-regions-creative-economy/>)

Please let me know if you would like to discuss further-as the program begins in early July, it would be helpful to receive direction re this request in the coming weeks.