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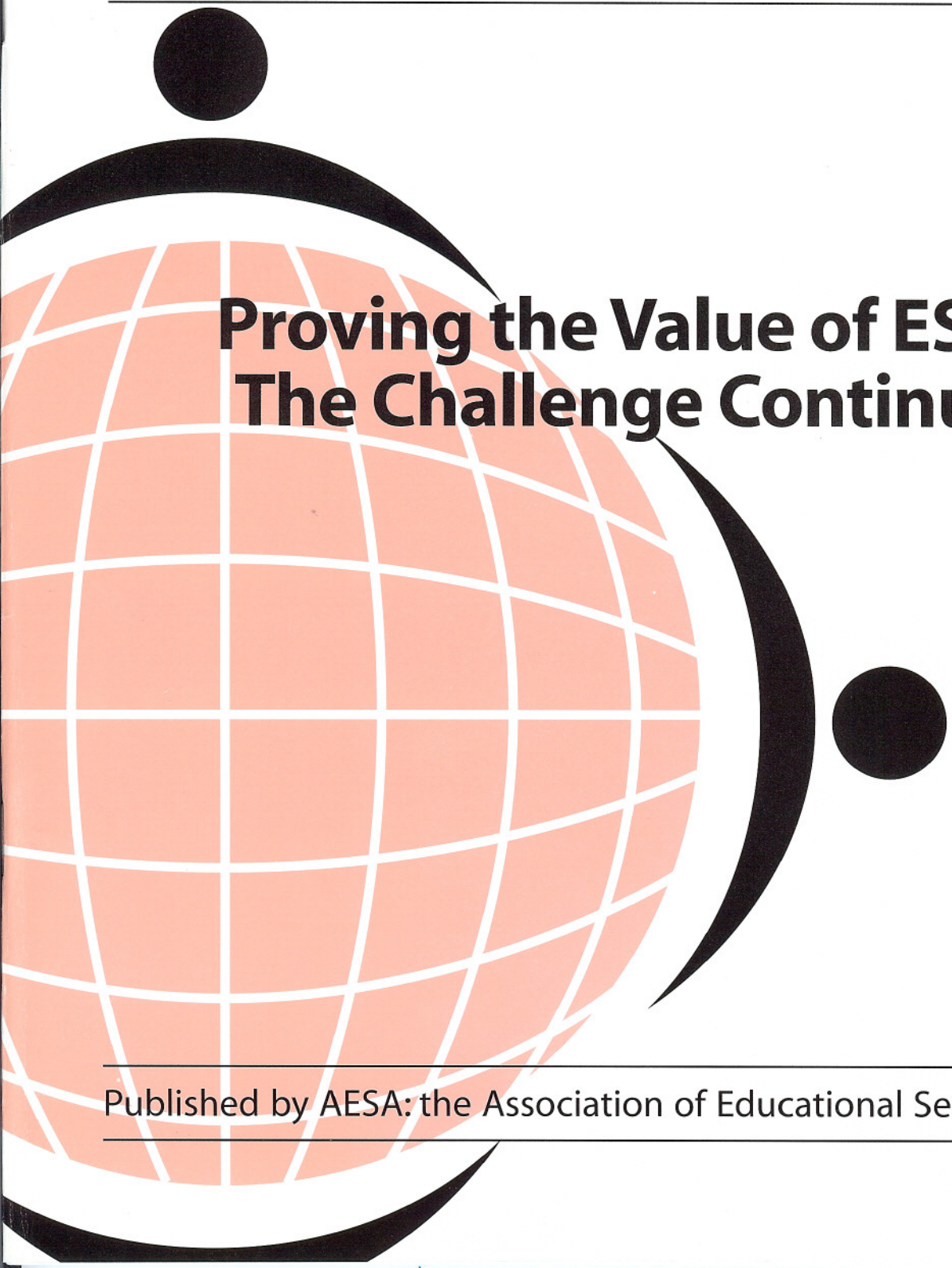
Perspectives

A Journal of Research and Opinion About Educational Service Agencies



Proving the Value of ESAs: The Challenge Continues

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Preface: *25 Years of Educational Leadership*

by
Brian L. Talbott

The year 2001 marks the 25th Anniversary of AESA. The history of AESA is in the process of being documented by past AESA Executive Director Lee Christiansen. In this historical summary, which will be shared with all attendees at our 2001 AESA Annual National Conference in Atlanta, Dr. Christiansen traces our history from the early 1967 discussions to our actual formation in 1976-77.

Early correspondence shows that AESA pioneers like Dr. E. Robert Stephens, then a professor at the University of Iowa, and Robert Isenberg, Director of the National Education Association (NEA) Rural Education Service Division (later the National Rural Education Association), and William J. Ellena, Associative Secretary of AASA, discussed the need for ESAs. In fact, a statement in a letter from Ellena and Isenberg to Bob Stephens sums up what these ESA leaders were thinking: "As you know, the effective and economical provision of a comprehensive program of services for children is beyond the capability of many local school districts." This same correspondence goes on to designate AASA and NEA/REA "as the entities which would cooperatively undertake ways in which local school districts might be strengthened and enhanced through the appropriate establishment and utilization of regional service agencies." During the late 60s and early 70s the need to expand regional service agencies became a major educational priority.

In 1976 the National Committee on Regional Educational Service Agencies received a grant from the National Institute of Education (NIE) to conduct regional conferences for educational service agencies. Dr. Walt Turner of AASA coordinated four national meetings, which led to the formation of the National Association for Educational Service Agencies. Dr. Walt Turner was named the first executive director of what was then called the National Organization of County, Intermediate and Educational Service Agencies (NOCIESA). The natural connection between the national superintendents association, AASA, and the leaders of this new association, some actually called superintendents, led to a subsequent name change, to the American Association of Educational Service Agencies (AAESA). Recent developments, including increased involvement with service agencies from other countries like Canada and The Netherlands, led to another name change, this time to the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA).

As we reflect on this 25th anniversary year we recognize that out of these voluntary meetings and through several name changes a powerful volunteer organization was formed which today is the Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA). From 1976 to 2001 our organization grew from 81 members to over 530 and is recognized today as the fastest growing professional education association in the United States.

With this growth have come new challenges and new opportunities. Educational Service Agencies have transitioned from providing specific programs to becoming recognized leaders for connecting, assessing, guiding, mentoring, cooperating, distributing, integrating, fixing, training, collaborating and building capacity at the regional level. Along with this shift in responsibility has come increased recognition, expanded responsibilities and increased accountability.

In this 25th anniversary year, Bill Keane, our *Perspectives* editor, has captured the essence of this transition. He and the editorial staff have incorporated into this journal specific articles on professional training, accountability, after-school programs, programs to equalize educational opportunities, technology support and methods to satisfy our customers by providing, and proving, that services are not only high quality but cost-effective as well.

Truly, ESAs today are on the forefront of educational leadership. AESA thanks each and every agency for contributing to this success. As your executive director, I want to thank those of you who contributed to this and past issues of *Perspectives.* For those of you who have not contributed, please take the time to help AESA show why ESAs are the educational leaders of today and tomorrow. We have a strong history built through the knowledge and foresight of our past leadership. It is up to us to carry this tradition forward and accept the leadership for the future success of ESAs.

Introduction

Once upon a time there was a service agency superintendent in Michigan - me - who thought that some of the contradictory pressures on service agencies sometimes seemed intractable. It was always a challenge to serve large and small, rich and poor, urban and rural school districts. It was uncomfortable to speak constantly of our focus on service to our districts and then be obligated to report one or more of them as non-compliant in our role as monitors of several programs and services on behalf of the state. However, the challenge of dealing with such pressures was, more often than not, invigorating.

The fun stopped the year (1994) Michigan changed its funding formula for public education. By the middle of the year local districts knew what their financial future would be under the new system. Service agencies (mostly known in Michigan as intermediate school districts, or IDSs) hovered in a special hell before finding out what, if any, funding we were going to get under the new system. Though the process seemed excruciatingly protracted when living through it, and the first piece of legislation left our agency a few million dollars short of need, the end result was positive.

The more I became active with AESA and therefore was exposed to the common condition of service agencies around the United States, the more I began to see that the Michigan trauma was relatively typical of those faced by ESAs around the country. I began to analogize the role of service agency superintendents to the job of airline pilots. Service agency leaders, whether called superintendents, executive directors or administrators, have a number of aspects of their positions that are common to aircraft captains:

- Their positions have tremendous responsibility, which goes largely unnoticed when the weather is calm and life is largely uneventful.
- They make a complex job look easy. Careful planning and skilled execution make it look as though the operation runs itself.
- A lot of people with a lot of different needs depend on them to get them to their destination efficiently and trouble-free.
- No matter how blue and cloudless the skies today, it won't be long before it will be necessary to deal with bolt-shaking storms that put everyone's future at peril.

Certainly the bolts were shaking in 1994 as we lobbied Michigan legislators to put the air (money) back under our wings. A review of this edition of *Perspectives*, as well as previous editions, demonstrates that, sooner or later, service agencies in most states fly into one kind of storm or another.

In Oregon (David Campbell) the Clackamas Educational Service District took the initiative to collect financial data to demonstrate that the service agency was the most effective option for local districts to acquire quality programs and services. In Ohio (Craig Burford) service agency leaders are moving proactively to prepare themselves for the emerging "storm" of accountability for ESAs, a challenge which can be seen clearly on the horizon. In Nebraska, (D. Gil Kettlehut) a storm was fomented by legislative changes which, though well intentioned, resulted in pitting small and large districts in competition for services from the ESA. In Texas (Bill McKinney and Ken Gauntt) Education Service Center IV has created software to demonstrate that their agency (and any other agency which chooses to acquire their software) is leading educational change and doing so in a manner more cost-effective than any potential competitor.

More encouraging than the ability of ESAs to navigate the many financial, legislative, and political storms that beset them is the growing recognition among policy makers of the incredible resource that service agencies can be in achieving state goals. In Connecticut (Cheryl S. Saloom) the state's six ESAs were the agency of choice to lead statewide discussions about how to respond to a court finding that the state's

school funding formula was unconstitutional. Through a magnet school program operated by Cheryl's agency, the ESA is becoming a vital part of the solution. (Parenthetically it might be noted that legislation has been introduced in Michigan that would assign to ISDs the responsibility of taking over and operating any local school district found to be hopelessly incapable of helping itself. This latter responsibility would only exacerbate the continuing conflict faced by ESAs in some states that wish to be the partner of the local district in school improvement yet are required to carry out monitoring and compliance functions on behalf of the state.)

University/ESA partnerships are also continuing to grow. The widely reported shortage of candidates for the superintendency is being creatively addressed by a new partnership (Kyle Wargo, Fred Hartmeister, and David Baldner) between the College of Education at Texas Tech and Education Service Center XVII. The program makes everyone a winner: the university gains a far more effective and relevant program, the ESA begins to build partnerships with students who will soon be leading constituent districts and participants in the program end up with an education that gives them the ideal blend of theory and practice.

Shannon Smith describes still another innovative ESA solution to educational problems, this one fashioned by a California county school district. Here the district designed and delivers after-school programming for students in a largely rural area where families have modest means.

Finally, Jack Harmon describes the gradual transition of Arizona's county school superintendent offices, headed by elected officials, into true service agencies.

Our thanks to this year's volunteer authors for helping us tell the ESA story to each other and to America. Copies of this journal will be sent to the chief state school officer in each state.

As we conclude preparation of this year's edition we offer our thanks to the diligent editorial board members for *Perspectives* for their prompt review of manuscripts, their reasoned editorial judgments, and their suggestions for improving particular articles and the journal in general.

Bill Keane, Editor
Oakland University
Rochester, Michigan

Reducing the Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation in Connecticut:
An Essential Role for Service Agencies

by
Cheryl S. Saloom

Connecticut is viewed as a state of plenty by those who assess its economic and business successes. We are a small state with a wealthy corridor along the shore and many other wealthy communities interspersed throughout the state. But the citizens of Connecticut know that this is too simple a picture of the state's reality. Though the state has definitely experienced significant economic success and many people have become significantly wealthier as a result, the full picture of the state's economic condition must include Hartford, Bridgeport, and New Haven, the state's three major cities. They are among the poorest in the nation. Poverty is only one indicator of the hardship our urban citizens are facing. Segregation, on the basis of race or ethnic group, in the communities and in the schools has far-reaching implications and must be aggressively addressed.

In 1992, a suit was brought against the state of Connecticut by plaintiffs charging that it was a violation of the Connecticut Constitution for the Hartford schools to be segregated, even if the segregation was not intentional. The case, referred to as *Sheff v. O'Neill*, charged that the children of Hartford were being denied equal educational opportunity and provided with a minimally adequate education due to the inequities caused by the maintenance of isolated urban school districts. Connecticut's challenge: was to reduce the racial, ethnic, and economic isolation as defined by the lawsuit.

Connecticut has 166 public school districts, each of which operates under Connecticut's history of local autonomy. Typically, students are educated in their own school districts through high school. Since the 1950s some high school students have attended a regional vocational-technical school or regional vocational agriculture center and for a 20-year period starting in 1966 a number of urban students have attended suburban schools under a program called Project Concern. Prior to 1989, this was the extent of the outreach to urban districts by suburban districts. There was also no greater expectation of further interaction between cities and suburbs.

Connecticut, most recently, and albeit reluctantly, acknowledged the disconcerting fact that its cities were becoming increasingly racially segregated. In 1993-94 the Connecticut legislature mandated the creation of regional forums coordinated and facilitated by the Regional Education Service Centers (Connecticut's ESAs) to begin to address the issues of racial isolation and inequity. Eleven regions were created with the task of voluntarily presenting a desegregation plan. The law did not require concrete proposals nor was there a penalty imposed on any region that did not fully comply with the intent. Each regional group included educators, politicians, business people, parents, and other community members; the groups were facilitated by RESC staff. At the end of several months, and due to Connecticut's history of local control and its strong sense of autonomy, the majority of the groups reached little consensus, and it became evident that voluntary desegregation would not be realized.

The aftermath of these regional forums was frustration among educators, with continuing debate on the merits of suburban and urban collaborations. Amid this atmosphere of continuing rhetoric, the long-awaited *Sheff v. O'Neill* decision was reached. It found that racial and ethnic segregation deprives urban children of

their fundamental rights to an equal educational opportunity under the state constitution. It stated clearly that Connecticut must remedy school segregation by enacting legislation to ensure equal educational opportunities. The news was celebrated by the Hartford community, and other Connecticut cities, hopeful of the far-reaching impact this decision would inevitably have on their school systems. The year was 1996.

Though the economy was rebounding in Connecticut (albeit not as quickly as in the rest of the country) the economic indicators evidenced once again that Connecticut's prosperity had not reached all families. Poor children were not faring well, and since 1989, there has been a 127% increase in the number of poor working families. This disproportion was found to be the greatest in the United States. Based on eligibility for the Free and Reduced Price Meal Program, 25% of Connecticut's children were poor. Connecticut earned the distinction of being referred to as "the two Connecticuts: Separate and Unequal"; the recent data reinforced what educators, politicians and the parents of the urban poor always knew.

The State Department of Education's plan for voluntary desegregation, driven by the *Sheff v. O'Neill* decision, was celebrated by those not interested in a legislative remedy. Many theorized that greater collaboration between and among the suburbs and the urban areas was critical to any resolution, but the regional forums had already proved that a voluntary plan was not viable. The department's remedies included the partial funding of interdistrict magnet schools; funding for Interdistrict Grant programs (actually begun in 1989 but greatly enhanced financially after the decision); the creation and funding of Open Choice, wherein urban children can attend school in suburban districts and vice versa; and funding for Minority Teacher Recruitment. The State Department challenged the school systems and the communities to begin to aggressively engage in exchanges between and among suburban and urban school systems. And in a major demonstration of support of the work the RESCs had already been engaged in, the Regional Education Service Centers were asked to coordinate many of the newly defined and developed efforts. Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES for the remainder of the article), continuing in its leadership role, heeded the call, along with its five other RESC counterparts.

ACES has 26 member school districts in south central Connecticut and has worked successfully and effectively with those districts and others to collaborate in all manner of program development and implementation. New Haven and Waterbury, as two major urban areas within our cachement area, and smaller cities such as Meriden, Middletown, and West Haven have benefited from ACES commitment to regional education and diversity. The suburbs reacted favorably and demonstrated their commitment by actively engaging in all types of collaborative efforts. One of ACES major goals is a diversity initiative the theme of which states: "ACES is an organization which values and celebrates diversity and fosters a pluralistic perspective in all strategies, activities and programs." This philosophy ensures that we help to create educational programs that will meet the diverse needs and career aspirations of our students in a variety of settings. ACES is geared to meet the challenge.

To address the state's and our initiatives, ACES is coordinating magnet schools and will, by the time of the printing of this article, be operating four. Each of our magnet schools has participation by and the commitment of an urban school district and each strives to address the two central goals of Connecticut's vision: to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation and to improve student achievement. Students are selected by a lottery coordinated by their home district.

The Educational Center of the Arts is an arts magnet opened in 1972 with primary participation by New Haven, a number of smaller cities and suburban school districts. Approximately 212 students attend this yearly program and a lottery system ensures that students of many ability levels will be considered and admitted.

Wintergreen Interdistrict Magnet School, in partnership with Edison Schools, Inc., is a K-8 school, again including participation by New Haven, a smaller city and several other districts. This school features a longer

school year, longer day and an emphasis on technology, reading and math and serves 590 students, 25% identified as minority. There is always a very lengthy waiting list, which does not satisfy the eager parents wishing to enroll in this magnet.

An alternative high school and a newly created alternative middle school were awarded magnet status and have five school districts participating, including a smaller city adding to the diversity of the student population. 100 students attend this program. A technology, math and science middle school magnet, grades 6-8, serving 800 students, will open August 2001 with two smaller cities and two suburban school districts partnering in this endeavor.

The State Department of Education has been closely monitoring the effectiveness of the magnet schools statewide, as has ACES for the magnet schools it operates. The factors we use to judge effectiveness revolve around three major components, including parent satisfaction, which runs very high; limited student turnover; and extensive waiting lists for magnet enrollment. There is also greater diversity in the magnets based on participation by participating school districts. We are reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation as a result of the magnet schools.

The state of Connecticut now pays 100% of the cost to renovate existing buildings or to construct and equip new facilities that house magnet schools – a commitment since 1997 of hundreds of millions of dollars. The state also pays magnet schools an operating program subsidy of up to $5,300.00 per student and up to $1,200.00 per student for transportation. The sending district gets to keep state formula aid attributable to each student sent to a magnet school under the $1.3 billion Education Cost Sharing (ECS) formula. The state's annual commitment of operating subsidies for magnet schools has grown from $6.2 million in 1995-96 to over $30 million in 2000-01.

The Open Choice initiative provides for two-way movement of urban and suburban students who participate in a lottery for selection to schools with identified vacancies in specific grades. Districts must report openings, but may choose to defer participation. Students who opt to participate may elect to stay in the new school district through high school graduation. This element of the program contributes to the reluctance of school districts to commit due to the uncertainties of space; long-term commitment poses potential financial implications for the district. Open Choice has proven to be successful for the hundreds of students involved in this experience, but regularly monitoring the myriad issues from transportation to student support is critical to the program's success. ACES runs parent meetings and professional development sessions for staff and commits its agency resources in an effort to ensure a safe and favorable outcome for the student participants.

The Magnet Schools and Open Choice have become a major focus of our effort to reduce racial, ethnic, and economic isolation and the number of towns included have made the student experiences richer both racially and ethnically.

Interdistrict cooperative school programs have been in existence in Connecticut for over a decade but since *Sheff v. O'Neill*, the resources have been significantly increased. These programs run as less than full time, some for one week during vacation, or as short-term after-school programs designed to integrate urban and suburban students for the sole purpose of creating opportunities for diversity and academic improvement. Programs run during and after school, and during spring, winter and summer breaks.

ACES has learned how to effectively manage all of these types of regional programs. Clear guidelines and professional development for participating staff are essential elements. The state department of education, and the state legislature, must adequately fund these programs to ensure transportation and support to the students who may have gaps in learning. Administration and staff from both the sending and the receiving schools must participate in discussions across school systems to increase awareness and greater

appreciation of the needs of the students participating. They and their parents are risk takers and are dependent on the educators to provide the level of support required to achieve success. Parents are hopeful that their child's move to a new district and school, which typically includes lengthy bus trips and many occasions for meeting new students and staff, will result in greater academic and social rewards for their children. And by our experience, it has become evident that a diversity component must be taught and not assumed, and an integrated staff is critical.

ACES and the State Department of Education have aggressively been involved in efforts to recruit teachers of color into Connecticut schools. By state statute local boards of education are required to develop and implement a written plan for minority staff recruitment as one of the ways to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation. Recognizing that there must be both long-term and short-term solutions, regional and state efforts are multileveled. They include recruitment from colleges, universities, and other professions; establishing support networks to help retain qualified teachers once they are hired; and inspiring students in middle and high schools to consider a career in education.

No one strategy can resolve all of the problems identified in the *Sheff v. O'Neill* case. Connecticut's response is to provide families and school districts with a continuum of choices. Magnet schools, charter schools, open choice, interdistrict cooperative grants, and minority recruitment are all a part of the total solution, along with major school improvement efforts in urban districts to raise levels of teaching and learning.

There is no more compelling reason for ACES to participate in the state-wide initiatives and to lead on many levels than to affect a systemic change in the way our state views its obligation and responsibility to all our citizens. All of Connecticut's students must share in the rich tradition and benefit from the success that many of our school systems achieve. Our goal has not been realized but our resolve is unrelenting and our vision of equity will drive us to reach this goal.

Cheryl S. Saloom, Ed.D., is Deputy Executive Director at Area Cooperative Educational Services (ACES) in North Haven, Connecticut. She may be reached by phone at 203-498-6810, by fax at 203-498-6894 and by email at csaloom@aces.k12.ct.us.

Marilyn Carrafiello, Patricia Krukowski, and Joseph Sullivan, Directors at ACES, and Thomas Murphy, Public Information Director, Connecticut State Department of Education, contributed to this article.

escWorks

by
Bill McKinney and Ken Gauntt

Creative people working to provide quality products and services that lead to successful schools and successful students—that's what service agencies are all about. And for all service agencies pursuing this goal, there is a need for solid data which can be used to tailor its products for its customer districts and to illustrate the value of the center to its constituents, to state agencies, and to state legislators. This desire to provide quality products and services as well as accountability provided impetus to establish an information management system to track services and products provided by service agencies to customer school districts within their service area. This information management system is called escWORKS.

escWORKS: The Design

escWORKS is a multi-layered, relational database that provides a service agency with the ability to manage a wide range of information resources. It includes contact information, registration information, information distribution, resource allocation, and customer support information. All activities conducted by a service agency can be managed by escWORKS. Service agencies use a wide range of tools to identify customer needs, but one of the most powerful tools available is escWORKS.

By utilizing escWORKS, service agencies can take advantage of the following capabilities:

- Accountability (service agency to both district and individual school campus)
- Resource Manager (better utilization and efficiency of resources)
- Planning Tool (service agency/district/campus)
- Reporting (flexible to superintendents, central office/campus administrators, board members)
- Growth management

Using escWORKS provides up-to-date information via the World Wide Web so that customers and staff can access the information needed for decision-making in a timely manner. This information may include scheduled events, personnel data, and resource utilization. A common database facilitates viewing, updating, implementing, and monitoring daily events center-wide.

Resources are used efficiently with escWORKS. Individual events can be managed in an "enter once – use many," approach. Budgets, facilities' use, registration, and presenters can be tracked, reported, and analyzed to ensure maximum efficiency and productivity. By allowing divisional and departmental review of data, escWORKS enables each division and department to plan effectively in assisting the regional service center, individual districts, or individual campuses. Automated, step-by-step procedures (wizards) and user-friendly pull-down menus that allow the user to select from a menu of predetermined options ensure proper data entry. These procedures reduce errors in data entry and allow for more accurate reporting and sorting of data. Password protection and access lists provide security and data integrity.

Customer Communications

Service agencies can re-purpose data quickly and efficiently into a variety of products by using an integrated data collection and management product such as escWORKS. Products such as a professional development catalog can take six to eight weeks of data entry and proofreading to produce a quarterly

catalog. This process now takes only days using an “enter once - use many” approach to information management.

The data warehouse features of escWORKS have the ability to create customized district service reports focusing on how the service agency supported each customer’s needs. These reports can contain individualized summaries, narratives, tables, and graphs. In these district service reports, the superintendent can see exactly which staff development programs were attended by the staff of each campus. The campus report permits the principal to view a summary of staff development offerings attended by school staff, showing the type of training and the number of trainings attended by each staff member. District service reports allow the superintendent and central office staff members to identify those campuses that are focused on attending staff development aligned with district and campus goals. Thus, the district service reports become a good communication tool for the superintendent, central office staff members, and principals (Appendix D gives a sample of this report).

The data warehouse capabilities of escWORKS also ensure that up-to-date information is available on the web, including contact information, professional development offerings, on-line registration for certain events, and tracking of individuals’ professional development attendance at service agencies.

Utilization of escWORKS

The many facets of escWORKS are well-suited to the many school districts that can utilize information from escWORKS for accountability purposes, for improving student achievement, and as a communication tool. Participation of faculty in staff development programs can be tracked through escWORKS (see Appendix D), thus holding campus and central office administrators accountable for the utilization of resources for specific purposes aligned with the goals of the district and campuses. By tracking professional development targeted specifically toward improving student achievement, administrators can analyze dollar amount, time expenditure, and personnel allocation dedicated to improving student achievement. The superintendent can employ this tool to show the board of trustees economies and efficiencies associated with utilization of products and services of service agencies. Administrators at all levels in school districts can take advantage of the information gained from escWORKS to more effectively communicate successes, strengths, and weaknesses of internal programs and processes.

However, escWORKS serves as a valuable tool for many entities. Anyone accountable to his/her customers can utilize escWORKS. Service agencies can use it to provide a variety of information to customers, including services provided at the region, district, and campus level. Government agencies can enhance services to constituents by making available information that is pertinent to their concerns and needs, such as current agency personnel contact information, scheduled events, and registration information.

District Service Report

Region IV Education Service Center (ESC) developed and utilizes the escWORKS information management system to create a comprehensive report entitled District Service Report for each of the 54 school districts within the Region IV area (see Appendix A for background information on Region IV ESC). At the end of the school year, Region IV ESC compiles this service report for each district, and the Region IV ESC Executive Director reviews the report with each district superintendent on a one-to-one basis. This in-depth report offers the district superintendent the opportunity to view all services and products that Region IV ESC has provided to the district and to each campus of the district for the preceding year. The report can provide in-district accountability for resources provided by the service center as well as campus accountability since the superintendent can view activities such as staff development sessions or meetings attended by personnel from each campus (see Appendix D). The District Service Report also shows trends in staff development and trends in requested services associated with Region IV ESC. By enabling dialogue

about the products and services provided by the center in relation to the needs of the district, the report helps to build understanding between the service center and the district and enhances the function of both.

A value analysis is included in the report comparing the products and services of Region IV ESC with those of other entities. For example, in the Education Services section of the report, "Instructional Leadership Development" is a five-day training program offered at Region IV ESC for a total price of $250.00, or $50.00 per day. The American Management Association provides "Developing Executive Leadership" training in a three-day format for $1,575.00, or a daily rate of $525.00. Thus a daily rate savings of $475.00 is realized when Region IV ESC services are utilized for this particular program offering.

District Service Report Format
Executive Summary

The Executive Summary provides an overview of each part of the report as well as an overview of services provided by each service center division to the district for each of the last five years (see Appendix B). Items included for the divisions are as follows:

- Total value of resources distributed
- Total site visits both in-district and to the ESC
- Technical assistance via phone calls, mail, email, and fax
- Number of consultants that provided service
- Number of job fair participants
- Number of teacher permits issued
- Number of Alternative Certification Interns
- Number of school board member training participants
- Number of student driver education participants
- Number of bus driver certification participants
- Number of bus driver re-certification participants
- Professional development enrollment count

A total count for professional development enrollment across all five of the divisions which make up Region IV ESC is included in this section as well as the value added for each year and the total value added for the five-year period (see Appendix B). Additionally, the Executive Summary provides information about Region IV ESC in chart format on board-authorized revenue and budget appropriations for the current year.

Education Services

Region IV ESC is composed of five divisions, each of which has a detailed section in the report describing the services it has provided to customer districts. The second section of the District Service Report, Education Services, provides detailed information on the following departments of the Education Services Division:

- Reading/Language Arts Services
- Math/Science/Social Studies Services
- Special Education Services
- Leadership Development Services
- Instructional Support Services
- Program Support Services
- Accountability and Compliance Support Services
- Instructional Media Services

Each department's section of the report begins with a bar graph that depicts Technical Assistance by Campus Level. The graph shows the number of times technical assistance was given, resources were distributed, and site visits were made for four levels: elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and administration/district offices. A table summarizes the data utilized to construct the bar graphs. The table presentation allows the reviewer to note the number of times technical assistance, resources, and site visits were provided for each of the elementary, middle, and high schools. The next table delineates the same data for each department in the Education Services Division. The number of consultants providing assistance by the department is also provided.

Following these initial graphs and tables is a very detailed section which is extremely useful according to feedback from districts. This section of the report shows details of technical assistance, resources, and site visits provided by each department of Education Services for each campus or entity in the district. (See Appendix C for an excerpt which shows the detail of the report.)

The next component of the Education Services section provides information on "Professional Development Provided by Education Services." First is a graph depicting the Number Attending Professional Development by Campus Level in Education Services. The bar graph shows the total unduplicated number of participants attending professional development from the four entities: elementary school staff, middle/ intermediate school staff, high school staff, and administration/district office staff. A table following the graph shows the number of participants attending professional development by campus or by entity. For example, of the 879 elementary school staff attending professional development, 50 were from O.V. Calvert Elementary. This is followed by a bar graph that shows frequency of attendance by month and a table that provides a listing of types of position and total attendance from that position. For example, assistant principals from this district attended professional development for a total of 126 times. Teachers attended professional development for a total of 993 times.

The report continues by giving a listing of "Professional Development Provided by Education Services." This section of the report lists the information grouped by campus or entity of the date, name of person attending, position held by person attending, the event title, and the location of the event. Thus, for some of the larger districts in Region IV, hundreds of entries appear in this section of the report.

The listing of "Professional Development Provided by Education Services" is followed by Special Projects in which Education Services participated with the district. This listing shows the campus and the name of the project. A sample of the projects would include the following:

- Texas Reading Initiative
- Title I
- Regional Plan for Visual Impairment
- Deaf Education Advisory Committee
- Assistive Technology Advisory Committee
- Texas Woman's University Masters Program
- Intervention Assistance Team
- Appraisal Advisory Committee
- Non-educational Community Based
- Speech Language Pathology Advisory Committee
- Occupational/Physical Therapy Advisory Committee
- Transition Advisory Committee
- Building Inclusive Schools Initiative

The Education Services portion of the District Service Report concludes with the 1999-2000 Media District Utilization Report. This part of the report lists the district, the county-district-campus number, the

campus, and the number of media items (including CD-ROMs, laser disks, and video cassettes) booked from Region IV ESC's instructional media library.

Using a format similar to Education Services, services and products for the divisions of Technology Services, Human Resources Services, Customer Support Services, and Business Services are delineated in the report.

Professional Development Summary

Following the divisions' sections, the report presents a "Professional Development Summary." This section begins with a list of Positions Attending Professional Development by the district. Any person from the district attending professional development presented by Region IV ESC will be listed by title, and a total number of attendees for each position is given.

This section continues with a "Participation Summary" that presents the number of people from the district attending professional development training for the fall, spring, and summer, as well as a total for the year. It further provides information about the cost for training and shows the value added to the district resulting from services provided by Region IV ESC.

The Professional Development Summary concludes by recording the date, name, position, and event for all staff of the district that attended professional development training provided by Region IV ESC. (See Appendix D for an excerpt.) This part of the report not only shows professional development training attendance by campus for each campus in the district, but also lists attendance of employees from the administrative office/district. This summary report gives the district an extensive listing of professional development provided by all divisions at Region IV ESC that was attended by campus/district staff members.

Supplemental Materials

The Supplemental Materials section of the report is a compilation of information meant to enhance the meaning and value of the report. A Summary Matrix for each of the last four years provides not only a summary of each district's utilization of Region IV ESC professional development and technical assistance but also of site visits for each district. The districts listed in the matrix are sorted into four groups according to the size of the district's student population. The matrix allows for district comparisons and highlights how schools with different student enrollments utilize Region IV ESC. While all districts within Region IV utilize the products and services of Region IV ESC, the summary matrix points out that the districts utilize Region IV ESC in their own unique way. (See Appendix E for a sample summary matrix.)

Statewide Regional Service Center Information is also included in the Supplemental Materials section. This section pertains to service center student data, state ESC funding, campus-funding allocation, and funding formulas. Information provided in this section enables district leaders to understand ESC funding; thus, they can appreciate the efficiency and economy of the service center operation and the value provided to the district by Region IV ESC.

As part of providing for district efficiency and economy, Region IV ESC has a purchasing cooperative that serves districts within Region IV as well as districts and governmental entities across the state. The Supplemental Materials section includes a listing of all entities that participate in the purchasing cooperative and information about the cost savings for the district or organization.

The last part of the Supplemental Materials section is a price comparison chart. The chart provides a price comparison between Region IV ESC products and services and those of public vendors that provide

comparable products and services. The district can view the cost savings afforded by utilizing Region IV ESC products and services. One example is the "Ready to Read" program offered in Education Services for three days at a total cost of $100.00, or $33.00 per day. The Society for Developmental Education Services offers a similar program, "Ready, Set, Read," for one day at a cost of $129.00. Thus, the savings for utilizing this Region IV ESC program is $96. Another example is found in Technology Services. Technology Services presents "Creating Student Multimedia Projects with Hyperstudio" for one day at a cost of $50.00. CompUSA offers "Presentations Introduction" for one day at a cost of $175. The savings realized by utilizing this Region IV ESC is $125.00.

Acronyms

The last section of the District Service Report is an alphabetical listing of acronyms used in the report and by Region IV ESC staff. The list provides the acronym (TEA, for example), a description of the acronym (Texas Education Agency), and the division associated with the acronym (all departments). These acronyms allow the descriptions in the report to be abbreviated while the acronym index allows easy comprehension for the reader.

Requirements for escWORKS and Availability

Computer system requirements for running escWORKS are:

- Windows 98 or Windows 2000 (by Microsoft)
- Internet Explorer 5.50 or greater
- Seagate Crystal Reports Software

Once all three of these systems are in place, escWORKS can be installed. These three basic systems are necessary since escWORKS is written in Microsoft Visual Basic and XML programming languages and uses a Microsoft SQL relational database and Seagate Crystal Reports software for creating reports.

escWORKS will be available for service agencies beginning in the summer of 2001. For more information, contact Bill R. Gossett at (713) 744-6882 or at bgossett@esc4.net.

Bill McKinney, Ph.D., is executive director and CEO of Region IV Education Service Center in Houston, Texas. Ken Gauntt is Director of Field Services at Region IV Education Service Center and can be reached by phone at 713-744-6348 or by email at kwg@esc4.net.

Appendix A

Region IV Education Service Center Background Information

Region IV Education Service Center (ESC), located in Houston, Texas, is one of 20 service centers established by the Texas Legislature in 1967. The purposes of the service centers as presented in legislation are to assist school districts in improving student performance, to enable school districts to operate more efficiently and economically, and to implement initiatives assigned by the Legislature or Commissioner of Education. The mission of Region IV ESC is to "serve education with vision and resources that impact learning communities."

A seven-member Board of Directors (each member representing a different geographical area in the region) is elected by the school boards of trustees in Region IV and governs the service center. In addition to the Board of Directors, a Regional Advisory Committee composed of the superintendent of each Region IV school district provides advice and approves products and services of the service center. The Executive Director, by statute, is the Chief Executive Officer for the service center and is selected by the Board of Directors with the approval of the Texas Commissioner of Education.

Encompassing seven counties in the upper Texas Gulf Coast area, Region IV ESC serves 54 independent school districts and 52 state approved open-enrollment charter schools. As the largest service center in Texas, Region IV ESC serves an educational community of approximately 862,000 students and over 65,000 professional educators on 1,163 campuses.

Appendix B

REGION IV ESC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT TO SUPERINTENDENT
M. B. Donaldson, Superintendent
Aldine ISD
October 2000

EDUCATION SERVICES	**1995-96**	**1996-97**	**1997-98**	**1998-99**	**1999-00**
Total value of resources distributed					$80,332
Total site visits (in district and to ESC)	102	112	96	60	61
Tech. assistance (phone calls/mail/fax/e-mail)	214	214	346	466	165
Number of consultants that provided service	41	46	48	56	48
Special Projects (# of campuses participating)	3	8	39	51	85
Instr. media usage (total # of items booked)	1,075	3,792	2,973	2,351	1,996
Professional Development Enrollment Count			979	1,235	1,531
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES					
Total site visits (in district and to ESC)	n/a	5	n/a	2	180
Tech. assistance (phone calls/mail/fax/e-mail)	48	137	142	97	97
Number of consultants that provided service	13	16	17	15	18
Total value of equipment loaned			$81,478	$145,555	$103,461
Professional Development Enrollment Count			56	62	254
HUMAN RESOURCES SERVICES					
Total site visits (in district and to ESC)					323
Tech. assistance (phone calls/mail/fax/e-mail)	20	61	26	24	57
Number of consultants that provided service					9
Number of job fair participants	22	n/a	58	40	80
Number of teacher permits issued	183	196	274	272	310
Number of ACP Interns	57	51	43	52	68
Professional Development Enrollment Count			152	144	112
CUSTOMER SUPPORT SERVICES					
Total site visits (in district and to ESC)	13	13	14	6	17
Superintendent site visits to ESC	10	19	20	20	16
Tech. assistance (phone calls/mail/fax/e-mail)	7	9	4	4	12
Number of consultants that provided service	2	4	6	2	5
Number of school board training participants	15	4	n/a	8	n/a*
Number of student driver ed. participants	542	482	671	663	688
Number of bus driver certification participants			94	100	226
Number of bus driver recertification participants			78	160	246
Professional Development Enrollment Count			14	36	18
BUSINESS SERVICES					
Tech. assistance (phone calls/mail/fax/e-mail)					1
Number of consultants that provided service					1
Professional Development Enrollment Count			13	8	8
Total Professional Development Enrollment Count	567	949	1,245	1.521	1923
Value Added:	$499,527	$836,069	$1,078,344	$1,340,001	$1,780,698
Five Year Total:					$5,534,639

* No school board training requested

Appendix C

Instructional Support Services

Date	Assistance Provided
Assistance	
Administration Office/District	
07/25/2000	Discussed procedures for submitting paraprofessional paperwork
O.V. Calvert Elementary	
02/28/2000	Discussed training request
06/12/2000	Discussed July reading training for grades 3-5
Dwight D. Eisenhower High School	
08/10/1999	Discussed placement of VAC students
Hidden Valley Elementary	
07/10/2000	Provided information on Project RIDE
07/17/2000	Provided information on Project RIDE
Weaver A. Odom Elementary	
02/23/2000	Provided information related to the two-day training on Reaching the Hard to Teach
Assistance Total: 7	

Date	Assistance Provided
Resources Distributed	
Jesse Hinojosa EC/Pre-K Center	
10/30/1999	Mailed journal article about preschoolers with disabilities
10/31/1999	Mailed journal article about preschoolers with disabilities
Ray L. Shotwell Middle School	
01/07/2000	Provided information regarding Higher Education Coordinating Board Tuition Waiver Program for paraprofessionals
J. Ruth Smith Academy (Elem, EC/PK-2)	
10/28/1999	Mailed Least Restrictive Environment manual
Evelyn S. Thompson Elementary	
10/28/1999	Mailed journal article requested on content mastery
Resources Distributed Total: 5	

Date	Assistance Provided
Site Visits	
O.V. Calvert Elementary	
08/17/1999	Developed inclusion plan for fall
12/01/1999	Developed spring inclusion plan, discussed Intervention Assistance Team training options
R.C. Conley Elementary	
06/05/2000	Met with Building Inclusive School Initiative campus principal
Hidden Valley Elementary	
05/05/2000	Provided information regarding Project RIDE
Ernest F. Mendel Elementary	
08/13/1999	Provided information related to integrating social skills
Chester W. Nimitz High School	
06/13/2000	Provided information regarding implementation of co-teaching at secondary level
Site Visits Total: 6	

Instructional Support Services Total: 18

Provided to Aldine ISD by Region IV ESC

Appendix D

Summary of Professional Development Services Provided by Region IV ESC

Date	Name	Position	Event
Elementary School Staff			
A.B. Anderson Academy			
06/26/2000	Julie	Assistant Principal	Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) Training
06/12/2000	Wilbert	Assistant Principal	Instructional Leadership Development (ILD)
03/01/2000	Ben	Principal	Title I School-wide Forum
01/20/2000	Candee	Principal	Title I School Support Team Leader Meeting
09/29/1999	Carol	Teacher	Primary Writing Training
06/19/2000	Diana	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Edward	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
06/19/2000	Grace	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Janice	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/24/2000	Janie	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Katrina	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Kay	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Monica	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
06/19/2000	Robin	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/24/2000	Sharon	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Shirley	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/10/2000	Vernon	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
06/05/2000	Yolanda	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
Mary M. Bethune Academy			
09/14/1999	Sherrie	Assistant Principal	Instructional Leadership Training (ILT)
10/05/1999	Sherrie	Assistant Principal	Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) Training
09/08/1999	Gloria	Director	Mentor/Administrator Training
09/08/1999	Yvonne	Not Identified	Mentor/Administrator Training
06/06/2000	Isabel	Principal	Developmental Assessment Center (DAC)
01/18/2000	Barbara	Teacher	Differentiate Instruction to Meet Diverse Academic Needs in the Heterogeneous Classroom
04/01/2000	Gib	Teacher	ExCET – Elementary Comprehensive
09/08/1999	Helen	Teacher	Mentor/Administrator Training
11/18/1999	Hermima	Teacher	ESL Literacy Process, 3-5
04/01/2000	Keith	Teacher	ExCET – Elementary Comprehensive
06/14/2000	Raymond	Teacher	Troubleshooting Your Classroom Windows 95/98 Computer
01/18/2000	Reba	Teacher	Differentiate Instruction to Meet Diverse Academic Needs in the Heterogeneous Classroom
11/18/1999	Tangela	Teacher	ESL Literacy Process, 3-5
Kenneth D. Black Elementary			
02/17/2000	Bhooma	Assistant Principal	Building Inclusive Schools Initiative
10/05/1999	Claudine	Assistant Principal	Professional Development and Appraisal System (PDAS) Training
09/14/1999	Laura	Assistant Principal	Instructional Leadership Training (ILT)
02/17/2000	Arthur	Diagnostician	Building Inclusive Schools Initiative
07/13/2000	Linda	SLP	Picture Exchange Communications System (PECS)
04/28/2000	Lynda	SLP	Language Therapy in the Classroom: The Missing LINC
06/21/2000	Michael	SLP	Augmentative Communication Vocabulary Institute
07/17/2000	Faith	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
06/05/2000	Jocelyn	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy
07/17/2000	Juanita	Teacher	First Grade Teacher Reading Academy

Appendix E

Region IV Education Service Center
99-00 Summary Matrix

District	Students #	Students %	Teachers #	Teachers %	Technical Assistance	Site Visits Region	Site Visits Admin	Site Visits H.S.	Site Visits Middle	Site Visits Elem	Professional Development Participants	District % of Prof. Dev. Participants
(District<3000 ADA)												
Anahuac ISD	1,411	0.17%	116	0.22%	146	26	9	0	0	2	253	0.65%
Barbers Hill ISD	2,569	0.30%	188	0.35%	165	17	20	1	1	2	306	0.78%
Cleveland ISD	2,987	0.35%	189	0.35%	259	38	44	6	3	8	628	1.61%
Damon ISD	141	0.02%	13	0.02%	83	16	19	0	0	1	96	0.25%
Danbury ISD	729	0.09%	77	0.14%	140	9	20	0	0	0	136	0.35%
Devers ISD	169	0.02%	15	0.03%	56	1	9	0	0	2	91	0.23%
East Chambers ISD	1,122	0.13%	86	0.16%	74	4	11	1	1	2	130	0.33%
Hardin ISD	1,193	0.14%	97	0.18%	103	21	8	3	2	2	173	0.44%
Hempstead ISD	1,410	0.17%	122	0.23%	167	20	14	4	4	7	482	1.23%
Hitchcock ISD	1,237	0.15%	104	0.19%	242	33	32	1	1	5	194	0.50%
Huffman ISD	2,443	0.29%	165	0.31%	233	22	20	2	2	4	310	0.79%
Hull-Daisetta ISD	746	0.09%	68	0.13%	87	4	21	3	2	2	92	0.24%
Kendleton ISD	111	0.01%	4	0.01%	123	17	24	0	0	4	57	0.15%
Liberty ISD	2,459	0.29%	192	0.36%	137	21	42	1	1	2	196	0.50%
Needville ISD	2,433	0.29%	169	0.31%	126	7	22	1	2	1	214	0.55%
Royal ISD	1,450	0.17%	110	0.20%	177	24	26	1	2	3	206	0.53%
Stafford ISD	2,870	0.34%	203	0.38%	164	13	15	1	2	1	271	0.69%
Sweeny ISD	2,210	0.26%	153	0.28%	166	13	32	1	1	1	155	0.40%
Tarkington ISD	1,752	0.21%	124	0.23%	175	33	10	2	2	1	256	0.66%
Total: 19 Districts	29,442	3.45%	2,195	4.08%	2,823	339	398	28	26	50	4,246	10.88%
(District 3,001-9,000 ADA)												
Angleton ISD	6,481	0.76%	444	0.82%	224	23	28	1	2	4	451	1.16%
Channelview ISD	6,474	0.76%	381	0.71%	255	24	54	1	0	0	490	1.26%
Columbia-Brazoria ISD	3,314	0.39%	221	0.41%	347	32	43	1	3	7	386	0.99%
Crosby ISD	3,952	0.46%	249	0.46%	166	25	26	1	1	4	351	0.90%
Dayton ISD	4,808	0.56%	305	0.57%	411	18	28	3	3	8	422	1.08%
Dickinson ISD	6,007	0.70%	405	0.75%	379	19	21	1	1	7	505	1.29%
Friendswood ISD	4,992	0.59%	323	0.60%	333	7	24	3	1	1	452	1.16%
La Marque ISD	4,146	0.49%	276	0.51%	484	30	34	0	0	1	519	1.33%
La Porte ISD	7,502	0.88%	470	0.87%	217	35	18	1	1	1	593	1.52%
Santa Fe ISD	4,369	0.51%	268	0.50%	174	17	18	2	1	2	323	0.83%
Sheldon ISD	4,195	0.49%	285	0.53%	372	43	28	1	3	5	532	1.36%
Texas City ISD	5,951	0.70%	422	0.78%	177	18	9	1	7	5	376	0.96%
Tomball ISD	7,023	0.82%	476	0.88%	191	30	15	1	0	3	412	1.06%
Waller ISD	4,074	0.48%	293	0.54%	206	36	29	1	3	2	460	1.18%
Total: 14 Districts	73,288	8.60%	4,818	8.95%	3,936	357	375	18	26	50	6,272	16.07%

(Districts 9,001-20,000 ADA)												
Alvin ISD	11,404	1.34%	746	1.39%	531	63	43	1	3	20	971	2.49%
Brazosport ISD	13,224	1.55%	873	1.62%	334	55	44	4	10	26	691	1.77%
Deer Park ISD	11,506	1.35%	877	1.63%	273	37	16	4	4	8	562	1.44%
Galena Park ISD	18,523	2.17%	1,219	2.26%	405	91	21	2	0	0	1,346	3.45%
Galveston ISD	9,487	1.11%	714	1.33%	238	33	26	4	3	4	485	1.24%
Goose Creek ISD	18,146	2.13%	1,157	2.15%	344	71	20	0	4	9	795	2.04%
Lamar CISD	14,896	1.75%	1,004	1.86%	347	38	32	1	4	7	603	1.54%
North Forest ISD	12,614	1.48%	728	1.35%	552	37	23	2	3	6	785	2.01%
Pearland ISD	10,202	1.20%	632	1.17%	244	33	27	4	4	6	469	1.20%
Total: 9 Districts	120,002	14.08%	7,950	14.76%	3,268	458	252	22	35	86	6,707	17.18%
(Districts > 20,000 ADA)												
Aldine ISD	50,950	5.98%	3,551	6.59%	641	216	31	0	4	16	1,923	4.93%
Alief ISD	41,839	4.91%	2,701	5.02%	489	76	21	6	18	45	1,309	3.35%
Clear Creek ISD	28,871	3.39%	1,839	3.41%	439	26	22	0	2	1	977	2.50%
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD	60,491	7.10%	3,918	7.28%	613	125	17	13	6	35	1,853	4.75%
Fort Bend ISD	52,904	6.21%	3,330	6.18%	555	103	22	2	5	12	1,208	3.09%
Houston ISD	209,916	24.63%	11,373	21.12%	2,207	408	431	33	47	112	8,168	20.93%
Humble ISD	24,221	2.84%	1,670	3.10%	377	72	28	6	6	19	993	2.54%
Katy ISD	32,338	3.79%	2,184	4.06%	432	81	19	4	2	8	1,063	2.72%
Klein ISD	32,331	3.79%	2,118	3.93%	949	74	18	4	0	11	988	2.53%
Pasadena ISD	41,953	4.92%	2,542	4.72%	377	38	16	7	6	35	1,281	3.28%
Spring Branch ISD	31,628	3.71%	2,206	4.10%	469	86	23	4	6	7	1,165	2.98%
Spring ISD	22,134	2.60%	1,458	2.71%	285	37	27	0	0	8	881	2.26%
Total: 12 Districts	629,576	73.87%	38,890	72.22%	7,833	1,342	675	79	102	309	21,809	55.87%
Grand Totals:												
54 Districts	**852,308**	**100%**	**53,853**	**100%**	**17,860**	**2,496**	**1,700**	**147**	**189**	**495**	**39,034**	**100%**

Ohio's ESC Network:
Best Practice Expectations

by
Craig E. Burford

For over a century Educational Service Centers (ESCs) in Ohio have existed in one form or another, ensuring that a standard level of quality services exists in all schools throughout the state. Over the years, the county offices of education have transformed their operation from one of regulatory functions to one of a service provider, and today they concentrate on providing large-scale support and special programs to local, city and exempted village school districts.

ESCs have been able to effectively change with the times and the demands placed upon them by state policy makers and by their client school districts. As these entities look to the future, the ability to recognize emerging themes and to meet new challenges and demands will be equally important.

A close examination of recent studies of education, state board actions, and legislative proposals reveals several themes that start to emerge. The foci that have emerged at the state, and to some extent the national, level that will impact Ohio's ESCs are *student performance and intervention, alignment, and accountability.* The issue of accountability is perhaps the most immediate concern in Ohio.

Webster's New World Dictionary defines "accountability" thusly: *"**ac·counta|ble adj**. **1)** obliged to account for one's acts; responsible **2)** capable of being accounted for; explainable – ac/counta/bil/i/ty **n."*** But how does this concept translate to the field of education and what impact does it have on students, teachers and school administrators? For Educational Service Centers in Ohio, it means continuously changing their perspective and continuing to improve the way they do business.

Despite their important role in educational service delivery in Ohio, ESCs are an often-overlooked resource in state-level deliberations about school improvement. This lack of recognition underscores the need for ESC accountability in Ohio. Other prominent driving forces have also led to the call for increased accountability for ESCs. These forces include national education trends, the Ohio Supreme Court *DeRolph v. State of Ohio* decision, a 1999 report on the consolidation of ESCs, and the recommendations of the Governor's Commission for Student Success.

National Education Trends

Nationally, accountability for results has taken the forefront in education reform initiatives. Parents, community leaders, and state and national policy makers are all demanding better schools and increased results from their educational leaders. Jeane Allen of the Center for Education Reform attributes this push for greater accountability to two factors: "the dumbing down of the nation's schools, and the political response by Governors and CEOs who attended the 1996 education summit" (Allen, 1999). Whatever the cause, the national call for better results from public education has become an omnipresent phenomenon across the country.

Ohio Trends

In Ohio, the accountability movement began with a lawsuit that found Ohio's school funding system to be unconstitutional. In December 1991, Southern Local and Northern Local school districts filed a lawsuit

against the state alleging that Ohio's public school funding system was unconstitutional. The case made its way to the Ohio Supreme Court and has shaped education reform efforts and state budget deliberations for the past decade.

The first decision by the Ohio Supreme Court in *DeRolph v. State*, delivered in March 1997, found that Ohio's public school financing system violated Section 2, Article VI of the Ohio Constitution, which mandates a thorough and efficient system of common schools throughout the state. After the initial *DeRolph* ruling, the Ohio General Assembly introduced and passed many different types of legislation to create a new educational funding system. Among those legislative enactments were two important accountability measures. *Senate Bill 55* raised academic standards and expectations for students and mandated the issuance of annual "report cards" to the public for each district so parents and taxpayers would know how well the students in their schools are doing in meeting basic standards. *House Bill 412* addressed school operations and fiscal accountability and required that all school districts operate with balanced budgets and five-year budget plans, including set-asides for building maintenance, textbooks and instructional materials.

Despite the efforts of state lawmakers to make the state's school funding system more equitable, the Ohio Supreme Court ruled again in May 2000 that the state's new funding formula had not met the "thorough and efficient" standard set in the Ohio Constitution. The Court cited specific areas to be addressed by the state including the need for strict, statewide academic guidelines that must be developed and rigorously followed throughout all of Ohio's public school districts.

Accountability for Ohio's ESCs

While state policy makers have worked feverishly to develop strict, statewide academic guidelines and standards for local, city, and exempted village school districts, there has been no companion action or policy as it relates to educational service centers. Under current law, there is no requirement upon ESCs to report their progress toward meeting their own standards or to demonstrate the various ways in which they are assisting client districts in meeting theirs.

Some accountability measures for ESCs were already in place for several years. Unfortunately, the State Department of Education has not fulfilled its obligation of gathering and evaluating this information. In a 1999 study of ESCs, the Legislative Office of Education Oversight found that there is little oversight of ESC operations by the Ohio Department of Education (LOEO Report, 1999).

Ohio law currently requires educational service centers to submit "plans of service" which detail the services that client districts will receive. ESCs must also submit annual budgets to the State Board of Education, and be regularly evaluated by the Ohio Department of Education. Implementation of these reporting and evaluation requirements, however, has greatly diminished in recent years.

While much of this declining state oversight reflects the national trend of state departments of education changing from regulatory organizations to service agencies, and Ohio's traditional focus on local control, Ohio ESCs have been left in a precarious position; these organizations are seen as unaccountable. In its report, LOEO recommended, "If the General Assembly wishes to strengthen the role of ESCs and improve their effectiveness, performance standards or other accountability measures that focus on the quality of services may need to be considered" (LOEO Report, 1999).

Another push for accountability of regional service providers in Ohio came with the recommendations of the Governor's Commission for Student Success. The commission recommended that the Ohio Department of Education take the lead in realigning and strengthening Ohio's regional service delivery system to provide assistance in specialized areas such as professional development, technological services and curriculum development. The commission stated that alignment is needed to guarantee that all regional providers are

effectively providing services aimed at improving student performance to meet state adopted standards. The commission also emphasized the need for extending the use of report cards or other reporting instruments to these providers, including ESCs, to fully inform parents and community leaders about their contributions to the academic success of Ohio's students (GCSS Report, 2001).

The Ohio Educational Service Center Association (OESCA) embraced the recommendations by LOEO and completed its initial work even before the recommendations of the Governor's Commission were announced. To accomplish the task of implementing a performance accountability system, OESCA and its member ESCs formed an accountability committee and have strategically planned and developed an accountability mechanism to address these emerging realities and to position ESCs as the premiere educational service provider in the state. In these planning efforts, considerable attention was paid to the need for quality financial and performance data from all ESCs and the retention of the customer-focused philosophy that has made ESCs so successful. The result is an accountability system based on Best Practice Expectations.

Accountability Through "Best Practice Expectations"

The Ohio ESC accountability system, known as the "Ohio ESC Network: Best Practice Expectations," is the result of the work of OESCA's Accountability Committee and seeks to represent the expectations of each ESC in Ohio. These expectations are aligned with the Ohio Department of Education's vision and mission statements, the state of Ohio's education goals, the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993, the rules for county school districts in Ohio administrative code, and with the new Ohio school standards currently under development.

The true purpose of the Ohio ESC Network is to work in partnership with schools, communities, the Ohio Department of Education, the Ohio General Assembly and other state policy makers to support cost-effective, innovative educational efforts to raise expectations, build capacities, and improve results.

This Baldridge-based network focuses on seven key areas or Best Practice Expectations: leadership, performance results, customer and student focus, improvement planning, information and analysis, staff focus, and process management. The system's seven Best Practice Expectations are evaluated on indicators and measures of success and are aligned to administrative rules for county school districts.

Leadership

The first, and perhaps most important, expectation addresses ESC leadership. Under Ohio Administrative Code rules for County School Districts, ESCs are required to develop a mission statement promulgated through the county school district plan. The mission statement must be based on the principles of providing leadership and service to meet the individual and collective needs of the districts served. The Ohio ESC network's Best Practice Expectations in the area of leadership are tightly aligned to this rule, mandating that ESCs demonstrate innovate, future-oriented leadership to facilitate collaboration among customer districts and provide cost-effective, customer-driven services. Ohio's ESCs are also expected to demonstrate future-oriented leadership to advance state initiatives. In playing this leadership role, ESCs will develop and maintain processes through which public concerns are proactively addressed and communities are supported.

Performance Results

To achieve specific performance results, Ohio's ESCs are committed to demonstrate appropriate service support to customer districts' continuous improvement initiatives. Indicators of success in this area include the appropriate support of student improvement efforts of customer districts, alignment of services to customer districts' improvement priorities and, ultimately, improvement on the customer school districts' report cards. Additionally, Ohio's ESCs are pledged to demonstrate continuous improvement in staff work system performance, development and satisfaction. Success of this goal will be measured by evidence of a

work system design aligned with key operational requirements and on-the-job performance improvements. Ohio's ESCs will also demonstrate continuous improvement in financial performance measured by appropriate levels of revenue and expenditures and operational efficiency and effectiveness.

Customer and Student Focus

ESCs have always been customer-focused and market driven entities. The customer and student focus of the Best Practice Expectations reinforces and continues this trademark practice. Ohio's ESCs will enhance customer relationships by ensuring the relevance of current services and by developing new service opportunities that support student performance. To accomplish this expectation, it is vital that processes be developed and implemented to listen to and learn from current or potential customers and key stakeholders. Other defined measures include processes to determine services and their relative value to customer districts, as well as to determine customer satisfaction levels.

Ohio's ESCs are also currently required to provide assistance to local school districts in the development of comprehensive programs of school and community relations and to support the facilitation and interaction with persons, programs, and agencies affecting the county and local school districts in the state. These requirements initiated the need for communication of best practices that require ESCs to facilitate partnerships with federal, state and community organizations to enhance customer satisfaction and relationships. The success of this expectation or goal is determined by whether or not the selection and development of federal, state, and community partnerships align with the key customer satisfaction requirements identified.

Improvement Planning

Ohio's reform efforts have centered on the idea of continuous improvement planning. Under the proposed accountability system, Ohio's ESCs will develop and deploy customer-focused improvement plans that address performance improvement in terms of quality of service, operational effectiveness, unique capacities, and efficiency. Measurements include a clearly defined vision of the future, a customer-oriented mission, assurance that customer needs and expectations are addressed, staff and operational capacity, supplier and partner capabilities, measurable short and longer-term action plans, and performance projections for key measures and benchmarks.

Information and Analysis

The proposed accountability system also highlights the data-gathering abilities of Ohio's ESCs. Under the Ohio ESC Network, ESCs will develop and maintain effective performance measurement systems to analyze, align and improve overall performance. Indicators of success will include appropriate measures or indicators of effectiveness in daily operations and selection of measures that permit tracking of overall organizational performance. Key comparative data will be identified and effectively used. Cost/benefit analysis of improvement options, processes to support organizational performance reviews and planning, and processes to support daily operations aligned with action plans will be part of the tools used to assist districts.

Staff Focus

Concerned with employing highly skilled, motivated and satisfied employees, Ohio's ESCs will implement and maintain agile staffing work systems designed to achieve high performance aligned with customer needs. To evaluate the success of these systems, processes will be implemented to ensure effective communications, cooperation, and knowledge/skill sharing among staff, as well as processes to identify characteristics and skills needed by staff. Ohio's ESCs must also provide appropriate development and support to build staff knowledge, skills and capabilities to achieve a high performance work system. Indicators or measures in this area include staff development and support programs that balance short and longer-term organizational and employee needs. Also, the development and support processes are required to reflect staff input in design and delivery. To attract the highest skilled employees, ESCs will maintain a work environment that contributes to the well-being, satisfaction, and motivation of employees. This level of staff

satisfaction and motivation will be assessed by processes to ensure identification of key factors affecting employee well-being, satisfaction, and motivation. Success in this area will be determined by assurance that assessment methods to measure employee satisfaction are used.

Process Management

In the area of process management, ESCs will continue to design and deliver cost-effective, customer-driven services that support student performance. Ohio's ESCs must also maintain key support processes aligned with organizational priorities and direction. The design of key support processes showing incorporation of internal and external customer requirements will be an indicator of successful implementation of this Best Practice Expectation.

Building the Accountability System

OESCA, in conjunction with Hamilton County ESC and the Ohio Department of Education, will pilot the Ohio ESC accountability network beginning in the summer of 2001 with two pilot districts. This number will be expanded in the fall 2001 to achieve our annual objective to design, develop and pilot an accountability system for a minimum of five pilot ESCs. In conjunction with the OESCA strategic plan, the three-year target is to have 40 ESCs effectively using the accountability system for the purposes of continuous improvement. Once all 60 ESCs in the state are participating in the accountability system, a three-year rotational assessment cycle for the accountability system may be implemented to ensure that 20 ESCs are in each annual cycle and all ESCs are assessed every three years.

For public school districts in Ohio, the reporting of mere process and content has been replaced by an emphasis on substantive performance standards, alignment, and accountability. Unfortunately, this has not yet happened at the state level for educational service centers – until now. OESCA and its member organizations have developed their own standards and accountability system and have proactively sought legislative and departmental support of the initiative.

The Ohio ESC Network: Best Practice Expectations will ensure accountability of results for Ohio's ESCs and will guarantee continued delivery of customer driven resources and services that support student performance standards today and into the future.

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Proving the Worth of ESAs:
A Cost Efficiency Study for an ESD in Oregon

by
David Campbell

Can your service agency provide clients and others with hard data that really demonstrate that the ESA offers to school districts the most cost-efficient methods to acquire products and services? Would you be able to justify your agency's continuation as an ESA if legislators and others seriously questioned its value? Oregon has had a changing landscape regarding public education, and positive answers to the questions above have become vital to the continuation of our regional service agencies as this article will attempt to demonstrate.

Why are ESAs being Challenged?

Public education in Oregon has undergone dramatic changes in the last decade. A property tax limitation, Measure 5, passed in 1990 with implementation beginning in the 1991-92 fiscal year. This measure limited property tax rates for educational operations to $15 per thousand in 1991-92, $12.50 per thousand in 1992-93, $10 per thousand in 1993-94, $7.50 per thousand in 1994-95, and $5 per thousand in 1995-96. Measure 5 provided for community colleges, school districts and education service districts to share the tax rate in the same ratio as had existed prior to the passage of Measure 5. The measure further required that the revenues lost by school districts and education service districts be replaced by funds from the state's General Fund. The legislature interpreted this obligation to mean that the total loss incurred by school districts and education service districts together had to be replaced. However, since there was no requirement to continue the support to school districts with what had been known as State Basic Funds, the net effect was that less money was available to school districts and education service districts. The Oregon Legislature also passed the School Improvement Act for the 21st Century in 1991, an act that added a significant number of obligations to the schools and, in 1993, passed legislation that required reorganization of education service districts. The outcome of these actions was that schools and education service districts were being asked to do more with fewer resources and, further, school districts and education service districts had, in some ways, become competitors for scarce state resources.

It was not long before questions were being raised as to whether education service districts really did represent a more cost-efficient means for school districts to acquire certain products and services. In an effort to answer the question of education service district efficiency, the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts commissioned a cost-efficiency study (Chastain, 1994), which addressed five service areas in five education service districts. The results were very positive for education service districts; i.e., only one service in one education service district did not demonstrate significant savings for the school districts as a result of the work of the ESD.

The Clackamus ESD Study

Though the Chastain study proved to be beneficial, it was limited to only a few service areas. Therefore, for the 1996-97 fiscal year, the superintendent and staff at Clackamas Education Service District adopted an objective to subject all programs and services provided by the District to the rigor of a cost-efficiency study. The basic plan was to determine how Clackamas ESD costs compared with other providers in order to present a rationale for the continuation of ESDs based on actual data and to determine whether we needed to operate more efficiently in any program areas. Further, we were committed to including all costs so that the

process and outcomes of the system would be able to withstand whatever scrutiny to which they might be subjected. Much had been learned from the techniques used in doing the Chastain study, and many of the Chastain strategies were utilized by the staff at Clackamas. We did find the task to be more complex and difficult than had been projected, and the effort was carried forward into the 1997-98 year.

Our approach was to determine the unit cost for each program so as to decide what kinds of measurements might be applicable. For example, in the Evaluation Center, time studies were conducted to determine how much time staff members were spending conducting different types of evaluations. In analyzing staff development activities, the number of participants, length of the activity and total hours of ESD staff involvement were all determined to be critical to the cost analysis. In several programs, the analysis was done according to the charging schemes used by private providers; e.g., the technical repair program was interested in determining the time required to conduct the diagnostics, repair the different equipment and identify the price of the parts and any surcharge on those parts. Production Services, too, followed the examples of the private providers in that specific costs for each job, including labor, printing materials and equipment, had to be determined. These kinds of analyses were completed for each program under the direction of the department director.

One of the objectives of the study was to determine a unit of measurement for identifying and describing the cost of a particular program or service. For classroom-based programs, the unit was quite easy to identify; i.e., the student. In other areas it was more complex and a specific unit of measure was determined based on the nature of the program functions. Following are the other types of units identified:

Production Services - the specific printing job
Technical Repair - the specific piece of equipment to be repaired
Staff Development - participant hour and participant day
Media Center - the specific film video tape or instructional item
Evaluation Center - time per specific type of evaluation
Transportation - miles traveled and students transported
Delivery Services - mileage
Network and Information Services - CPU seconds used, disk space used for storage in megabytes and pages printed
Attendance Services - referrals and consultations
Test Scoring and Reporting - tests scored and specific reports prepared

Once the units of measurement were identified, the next step in the process was to determine the direct program expenditures for each function and then to compute the indirect costs that needed to be allocated across all the functions. The Fiscal Services Department director provided a summary of all expenditures for General Fund programs, Special Revenue Funds, and Internal Service Funds. Indirect costs, i.e., all expenditures not assigned to a specific program, were then allocated across all programs on a pro rata basis using the ratio of a program expenditure to total ESD expenditure times the total administrative or indirect costs. Special Revenue Fund programs are often charged an indirect fee to cover ESD administration costs. In those cases, the indirect fees were subtracted out of the cost allocation to those programs so that they did not get a double charge for administration.

Total costs for each function were then computed as the total of direct program costs and the share of administrative costs. Unit costs were then calculated for each function. Other providers were identified where possible and cost data were collected from them in order to compare Clackamas ESD costs with other potential providers.

It is important to note that audited expenditures, not budgeted numbers, were used for the analysis. Also, all expended funds are accounted for within the cost analysis process. Examples provided below to illustrate

the findings include the Media Center Program, School Improvement - Staff Development/Consultation / Support Services, the Evaluation Center, and the Production Services Program.

Cost Analysis - Expenditure Allocation

Admin. Cost	=	All Expenditures Not Directly Assigned to a Program
Admin. Allocation	=	Program Expenditures X Admin. Expenditures from total ESD Expenditures
Total Program Cost	=	Program Expenditure + Admin. Allocation

Examples*

Media Center

Clackamas ESD cost per item booked	= $9.13
Comparisons: University of California (Rental)	= $50 - $70 per title plus shipping
BFA Educational Media (rental)	= $20 - $112 per title
AltschulGroup Corp. (rental)	= $50 per title for three days

Production Services

Example 1:	
200 copies - 10 page parent athletic handbook	= $ 45.54
Quoted price from local printer	= $104.35
Example 2:	
30 copies - 38 page ABC book	= $ 33.05
Quoted price from local printer	= $ 59.60
Example 3:	
1800 copies - 39 page student handbook	= $2420.43
Quoted price from local printer after $450 discount	= $3011.00

School Improvement /Staff Development/Consultation

Clackamas ESD Staff Development	= $78.18/ day for six hours
The Literacy Partnership	= $95/day
University of Oregon	= $105/day early reg. = $115/day late reg.
Ed. 2000 Workshops, COSA Leadership Inst.	= $305 for 3 days (includes meals)

Evaluation Center

Clackamas ESD full evaluation @ 30.75 hours	= $1804.41
CDRC for a comparable evaluation	= $2380.00

*None of the calculations are included here, but they are available. Anyone who would like either the actual calculations or other information about this analysis is encouraged to contact David Campbell at Clackamas ESD in Oregon.

It proved to be fortuitous that this study was completed when it was. The 1999 Oregon Legislature enacted a requirement that a task force be appointed to conduct a study to determine whether education

service districts should be continued in Oregon. Examples of the results of the Clackamas cost-efficiency study were presented to the task force and were very influential in causing the final conclusion to be strong support for the continuation of the system of education service districts in Oregon.

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Radical Changes in Decision Making:
The Nebraska Story

by
D. Gil Kettelhut

Similar to most educational service agencies, Educational Service Unit (ESU) #3 in metropolitan Omaha, Nebraska serves numerous school districts with various needs and requirements. The range in school district size alone, from 19,000 students to 200 students, provides leadership challenges to the most skillful of service agency administrators. This article summarizes the attempts to restructure the largest service agency in Nebraska from a traditional service model offering a "buffet line" approach to programs and services to one with an "a la carte" menu selection. This change is largely driven by new legislation that attempts to balance the needs of large and small districts.

In 1997 the Nebraska legislature completely altered the legal requirements by which educational service units determined the services and programs to be offered to their school districts. Nebraska is one of the last few states in which state funds (core service funds) and local property taxes comprise the major portion of a service unit's budget. Prior to 1997 the publicly elected boards of education, based upon administrative recommendations, made final program and budget decisions, a process similar to the ones used by virtually all school boards across the United States. The 1997 Nebraska statute changed all this with the following wording: *Funds appropriated for Core Services/Property Tax Levy shall be used for purposes approved by representatives of two-thirds of the member school districts in an educational service unit, representing a majority of the students in the member school districts.*

The concept of providing services based upon the approval of two-thirds of the member school districts in an educational service unit, representing a majority of the students in the member school districts, was initially proposed by E. Robert Stephens in his work with the Nebraska legislature as a consultant regarding the future role and mission of educational service units in Nebraska. However, Dr. Stephens had proposed this concept as a discretionary approach for the elected board of education to determine the selection of services and programs to be offered by the service unit. What occurred in the final passage of the legislation was the removal of this language as advisory, instead giving full power to the representatives of the school districts. In the state legislature the rationales put forth for the new piece of legislation were based upon the premises that each school district best understands its educational needs and that ESU boards of education may not always have been responsive to school district requests.

Therefore, what had once been the authority of elected boards of the service agencies in constructing programs and budgets was now legislatively turned over to the local school districts for the expenditures of funds, yet the publicly elected board stayed in place for the collection of all receipts and taxes. E. Robert Stephens called this dual governance model "a recipe for disaster"; nevertheless, the chief administrator of each Nebraska educational service unit had to find a way to make this new system work.

While it is true that many of Nebraska's educational service units had little direct conflict between the new law and the elected board, this was not true for all. For ESU #3 the 19 local superintendents were identified as the voting representatives of the school districts. Three of the 19 school districts in ESU #3 comprised over 50% of the students, leaving the other 16 school districts with a minority number of students, but controlling the 2/3 member school requirements of the new statute. The seemingly divergent needs and interests of large and small school districts is the crux of this story.

As explained earlier, ESU #3 had a 35-year history of providing services and programs to the K-12 school districts based upon final ESU #3 school board approval. Recommendations for ESU #3 offerings almost always originated from department advisory committees comprised of school administrators from the districts. For example, the school district representatives to the ESU's staff development department would help frame the programs for the next year and the elected board would typically approve the recommendations. The method used for these staff development program selections could most likely be compared to the United States Senate, where each state, large and small, gets two votes; in our case needs were determined by majority vote that did not consider the size of the school district. The smallest school district of just over 200 students would theoretically have the same voting "weight" as a school district of over 18,000 students. While this might be an oversimplification of the process, the basic tenet of one-district one- 'vote' in the department advisory council seemed to be a preference even for some of the larger school districts. The new legislation changed all this as it factored into the approval process the size of school districts, based upon their number of students, similar to the make-up of United States House of Representatives. Now both sides were equally represented in the law concerning the governance of the ESU.

After the passage of the new legislation, three of the larger school districts, with over 50% of the students in the ESU, started to meet separately to discuss their common needs as suburban school districts. What came from these discussions was the premise that services from the ESU should be more closely aligned to the source of the revenues. In other words, if a school district theoretically "sent" $500,000 to the ESU through property tax and state Core Service funds, then that school district should receive $500,000 worth of direct services that are specifically requested by that school district as opposed to paying for the "buffet line" of services that other districts may have requested, but are not needed in this particular district. The larger districts believed this method caused them to subsidize smaller districts and in some cases keep the smaller districts open at the expense of the larger districts.

The new approach proposed by the larger school districts suggested that the Unit move to an "a la carte" process whereby the district selected specific services and only paid for those requested services. The majority of the school districts saw this new approach as enabling the larger districts to avoid sharing services in a cooperative manner, a goal which had been the original purpose of establishing Nebraska's educational service units. Of course, there was legitimacy to the arguments put forward by each side of the discussion.

As the ESU understood the rationale of both sides of the discussion, such as one would comprehend the reasons for the differences between proposals put forward on the same subject by the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives, the dilemma was one of finding "middle" ground that would support both the common and unique needs of the districts. This would prove to be easier said than done.

The advisory council meetings of the 19 superintendents, the voting representatives of their school districts, discussed what was common for all and what was unique to each district. As one would imagine, 19 CEOs of school districts can easily bring about 19 different views on how a service unit should be governed.

At first the superintendents' discussions were exploratory in nature in order to comprehend what each other wanted. It quickly became apparent that two points of view had developed. However, neither side had the power or authority to implement change or even to keep matters the way they were. Either side could 'block' the other, but neither could move forward without agreement from districts representing a different point of view. Since the three larger school districts (representing over 50% of the students in the service unit) were demanding changes, the first step in the process was to determine just exactly what they wanted.

They clearly stated that they were interested only in services applicable to their particular school district, and they wanted to pay only for these services. As a result the services needed and requested by members of the group of 16 smaller school districts would require increased costs for basic services they had received for years. Some of the programs that the larger districts did not wish to participate in or fund included the live

animal services, media services, science materials, and staff development programs that did not relate directly to the school district's specific standards and assessment program. Without the larger school districts helping to finance some of these services, costs would have to rise if the level and quality of service was to continue. The larger school districts, on the other hand, wished to have access to dollars to which they had not had before for unique programs, such as a student information system, that no other district used.

At this stage of the dialogue, one side of the equation could only be satisfied at the expense of the other. The larger districts contended that the smaller districts had "lived" off them for years. The smaller districts insisted that the larger districts were being selfish. How then was the conflict to be resolved?

In order to make this a workable solution for all of the schools, ESU #3 devised a set of operating principles that all the districts were asked to support. These included paying for the upkeep of the facility and the overhead in all the departments, even if a school district did not select any services from a particular department. In addition, none of the current full-time ESU #3 staff members would be dismissed even if a school district wished to use funds previously allocated to the service unit so as to hire its own staff person for the same function. It was agreed, though, that as attrition occurred inside the ESU #3 staff, the ESU would work with the larger districts to hire staff with a specific match for the needs of that school district.

The next step in the determination of services was that of requiring all the districts to pay for what are known as Core Services. The state of Nebraska allocates dollars on a per-student head count to each ESU for the delivery of basic, or "core," services. Three core services are staff development, instructional technology, and instructional materials, all of which are to be directly related to the new state initiatives of standards, assessments, and accountability. A fourth area in which a different set of state core services dollars became available was that of technology infrastructure/internet support. These services had become the backbone of the unit and while not all districts had to participate, they all had to share in the costs of these programs.

All other programs not included in the core services became elective services. Examples of such services include the financial (payroll and accounting) software system, the student information system, the live animal program, and all other staff development not directly related to the state's initiatives on standards and assessments. Now school districts could select and pay for any or all of the elective services. The services and programs of the ESU were, in a sense, "customized" for their clients. Dollars not used by a school district for direct ESU #3 services could be used by the local school district, in conjunction with the ESU, under the statutory authority of "interlocal governmental cooperatives." These Nebraska interlocal agreements allow various governmental agencies to share services and programs without penalties to the state aid formula. In this manner both the school district and the ESU became winners in the complex state aid and spending lid limits as mandated by the state.

Specifically, the state of Nebraska allows a school district or service unit to spend only a specified dollar amount each fiscal year no matter how many dollars a school district or service unit may have in its account. This is referred to as the Nebraska "spending lid" on budget authority. What the interlocal agreements provide is a method for school districts and service units to spend the funds available to them beyond what the spending lid allows. Any spending of funds through an interlocal agreement is outside the spending lid. A recent example of this procedure is the interlocal agreement the service unit has with a school district for adding staff in the data processing department in order to implement a new accounting/personnel software program. The new staff members were hired as employees of the ESU, but were paid for and assigned to the school district. Without the interlocal agreement it would not have been possible to hire the staff because the school district had no spending authority left, even though the school district has significant dollars available.

A new delivery process for the use of core services is also being discussed. In the past most staff development programs were delivered on site at the ESU and during the typical school day. In the future service units will be delivering direct services at the school site or regional sites, and before or after the traditional school day. School districts need immediate assistance in their local buildings and that is where

service unit staff members need to be present to provide direct help.

As of the time of this article, the 19 school districts are in the process of working out details as to what elective services they may or may not wish to have in the next year. The schools are very close to reaching a final consensus. Once this process is finished, the ESU #3 Board of Education will review the requests of the schools and take appropriate board action. The elected Board of Education continues to provide a vital role in this process. Even though the school districts have outlined their requested services and programs, this is just one part of the overall process of developing a budget. Negotiations, personnel issues, policies, finances and facilities are just a few of the important factors that need to be considered by the Board of Education in order to successfully run a complex organization.

Now that all the disputes have been resolved, it seems clear that the process of having the school superintendents specifically identify services and programs for the Board of Education makes the overall budget development process work more effectively to meet the needs of school districts and the employees of the service agency.

While this process is still in its infancy, numerous lessons have been learned and reinforced. First, one size of program does not fit all school districts, but some programs can be utilized by all districts. While the internet infrastructure is an example of a service all school districts should be a part of, most discretionary services need to be assessed in relationship to the special needs of each school district. Service agencies must deliver in this manner; if we don't, school districts will look for other service providers to meet their needs.

Service agencies are still the best method for schools to receive maximum value for the dollars they spend to achieve educational improvement. Our mission is to make sure that we don't lose sight of the fact that we serve our schools first and that the schools are always our best and most valued customers.

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Superintendent Certification:
A Collaborative Program

by
Kyle Wargo, Fred Hartmeister and David Baldner

Introduction

In recent years, emphasis has been placed on teacher shortages in school districts. While districts have been working on finding solutions for this problem, another shortage has emerged. The availability of effective leaders to fill the role of superintendent is quickly becoming a major dilemma for schools. School boards have reported dwindling pools of candidates to fill superintendent positions. Education service agencies can help by collaborating with colleges and universities in offering programs that will prepare future school superintendents with the leadership skills needed to embrace the role in the 21st century. One such partnership exists with the Region XVII Education Service Center and Texas Tech University in Lubbock, Texas.

University Perspective

Like many institutions in the educator preparation business, the College of Education at Texas Tech University (TTU) has been helping prepare aspiring school administrators for many years. Beginning in the early 1960s, the Educational Leadership program at TTU has provided masters' (M.Ed.) and doctoral-level (Ed.D.) degrees as well as principal and superintendent certification. In hindsight – and in stark contrast to its current rigorous degree and principal certification programs – participants in the TTU superintendent certification program prior to 1994 generally earned certification status without necessarily having "earned their stripes" in a demanding, realistic and highly-applicable program. Consequently, there was little correlation between certification status and actual preparedness for the stressful demands of becoming and succeeding as school district superintendents.

Fortunately, 1994 produced a confluence of circumstances and opportunities, the intersection of which resulted in a major reconfiguration of the Professional Superintendent Certification program at TTU. The early 1990s on the South Plains in primarily rural West Texas witnessed relatively high attrition and an accelerating rate of superintendent vacancies driven largely by a generational turnover. The appointment of several new professors and the supplementation of other resources at TTU provided an exciting mix of incentive and opportunity for program redesign and expansion. Added to the mix was a growing research-based realization that stability in the superintendency is a fundamental component for enhancing the prospects for K-12 student performance and school district success. In recognition of the perceived shortcomings in TTU's existing superintendent certification program and taking advantage of new developments, the program was completely overhauled. However, in order to remain consistent with state-level expectations for superintendent certification to be comprised of at least a 15 semester-hour graduate program, three hours of which consist of a semester-long internship, the basic framework of four classes plus an internship remained unchanged.

Program Reconfiguration

Although it took almost two years to phase in all of the new components in the TTU superintendent certification program, substantive changes began in earnest in 1994. First, two new classes focusing on

governance, politics, legal issues and superintendent/school board relations were conceptualized and submitted for institutional approval. In conjunction with modifications made in two preexisting classes and a more formalized internship experience, the overall combination of course work and experiential learning opportunities embraces virtually all of the Texas State Board of Educator Certification's Learner-Centered Standards for Professional Superintendency (2000) and the American Association of School Administrators' Professional Standards for the Superintendency (1993). Because they parallel the emphasis on developing particularized skills and competencies crucial to superintendent success, a conscious decision was made to incorporate both sets of standards in the newly configured series of courses and activities.

Next, unlike the prior iteration of the program, the new version became cohort and calendar year-based. A closed-cohort group of candidates begin the program each January by taking a single 3-hour class on Wednesday evenings during the spring semester. This first class focuses on the role of the superintendent within the context of school governance. Students are challenged to begin to "think differently" on a host of issues related to the superintendency.

This challenge is set forth in a combination of activities that bring theory and practice together. Most leadership theories stress the importance of operating from the productional or relational realm. A productional leader is an individual who tends to focus on accomplishing tasks and achieving goals, whereas a relational leader places more emphasis on employees. Therefore, during class, students are exposed to a variety of leadership theories that stress the importance for effective leaders to operate in both productional and relational modes. A variety of activities are offered in which the participants are given the opportunity to identify their area of strength. Once their strength has been identified, activities are presented that help them develop the less dominant area that they have weaknesses in. For example, a person who feels as though he or she is productional may be asked to persuade a group of parents, community, and faculty to move from open to closed campus for lunch. While this may seem like a minor decision, the other participants take on their roles as members of that community or faculty and begin talking about safety of children, business generated by students leaving campus, and other issues which are emotional. The discomfort felt by the person taking on the role of superintendent is evident as he/she tries to reassure a community in relational terms while his or her more dominant productional behavior continues to guide actions. In the end, the science of leadership is the focus while the students work on the art of taking the theory and adapting it to their style.

As the mission of the collaboration states: "The Program Faculty in Educational Leadership work collaboratively to continually refine and operationalize the program's central theme: Building Linkages Among Theory, Research, and Practice. The realization of this goal is fostered through building connecting links among university, public schools, and the community in the critical examination of educational leadership theory, research, and practice. This emphasis on building collaborative linkages remains the central focus of program faculty, students, and professional school personnel as we strive to continue working together toward making a positive impact on educational leadership in public schooling in the 21st century."

Throughout the first course students are exposed to a number of activities that are "hands-on" in nature. These activities include role-playing, public speaking, media training, oral and written exercises centered around problem-solving, and a variety of other challenging experiences. During the summer, participants complete three separate 3-hour classes highlighting school finance, instructional leadership, policy formation and multiple aspects of educational governance. Finally, during the fall semester, students complete a semester-long supervised internship placing great emphasis on the value of mentoring relationships and the opportunity to further develop essential skills in an intensive field-based environment. Following completion of all course work and during the internship semester in the fall, participants take – and almost 100% pass on the first try – the state's superintendent ExCET examination.

Role of the Service Center

Without question, the most significant accomplishment during the entire program reconfiguration period was the collaborative team-teaching relationship created between the Educational Leadership program at TTU and selected administrative personnel at the Region XVII Education Service Center (ESC XVII). In a nutshell, because none of the TTU faculty had prior superintendent experience, it was decided that it would be mutually beneficial to invite experienced practitioners now employed in executive roles at the regional service center to team-teach all four superintendent certification courses and co-supervise the culminating internship in collaboration with a university professor. All service center personnel involved in an instructional capacity in the program have terminal degrees and serve as members of the graduate faculty in the TTU College of Education. As evidenced by the participant comments that follow, the "teaming" of academic and practitioner instructors for each class has become the cornerstone upon which the entire program is flourishing.

Service Center Perspective

For its part, the service center has a variety of reasons for being involved in the development of potential superintendents who may be served by the ESC. Maintaining a personal relationship with each district within a service center's region is crucial to the success of the center in its on-going efforts to impact student achievement, implement state-required programs, and assist districts in improving their economy and efficiency of operations. When a vacancy occurs in the leadership of a district, especially the superintendency, the transition process of forming new bonds and creating that partnership in the education process is started again between that district and the service center.

When given the opportunity to be a part of that superintendent's program at the university level, Dr. Wargo, executive director of the Education Service Center XVII, realized the value immediately. The service center would be as much a part of a superintendent's "preservice" work as well as his or her professional development once in the job of the superintendent. In essence, a relationship is already established with the leadership as they become a part of their new district.

Secondly, the credibility of the people within the service center in their respective areas is enhanced. Curriculum, finance, and governance/politics are all team-taught with ESC XVII personnel. These staff members are consistently called upon by district personnel as they develop plans to address issues within their given areas, and the ESC XVII staff are viewed as experts in their given fields by the new leadership as they fill their new roles. This enables ESC XVII staff to address the goals set forth for service centers (student achievement, economy and efficiency, and implementing state-required programs) as well as provide assistance to districts.

The benefits for both the service center and the district are immeasurable. It is crucial that leaders of districts in transition view the service center as a resource. It is also imperative that service centers maintain relationships with districts in order to continuously support decisions, programs, and efforts within the district to improve student achievement. This relationship of mutual support is a strong part of ESC XVII's involvement in the superintendent collaborative at Texas Tech.

Program Validation and Enhancement

Since initiating the newly configured superintendent preparation program beginning in 1994, a total of 75 participants have successfully completed certification. Of this number, at least 25 are currently serving as superintendents in one of the 1,042 public school districts in Texas. A similar number of former participants are presently employed in executive-level central office positions. Although the number of successful

certification candidates does not appear overwhelming, the totals are well-aligned with regional needs and fit nicely within the 12-15 participants per year parameters established for the program seven years ago.

Further validation of the superintendent certification program at TTU is evidenced by the receipt of a $300,000, three-year grant from the Sid W. Richardson Foundation. The grant project, proposed and funded in 1999, is designed to support a project entitled "Establishing a Preparation Model for the 21st Century Texas School Superintendent" (Hartmeister, F., & Wargo, K, 1999). Building on the innovative changes in the superintendent certification program at TTU, the generous external funding furthers advances in both curricular content and course delivery. By addressing all of the recently imposed state-mandated requirements for first-time superintendents in Texas, the goal is to pave the way for a larger number of better-qualified candidates to assume roles and enjoy long-term success as inspiring educational leaders.

One of the aspects of the program that the grant allowed was the development of an advisory panel. This has had a positive impact in the sense that members of the panel provide input to the direction and substance of the collaborative and its content. Panel members consist not only of superintendents but also of executive directors of state or national professional organizations, former state commissioners of education, and members of faculty from other institutions. This range of experience and knowledge has contributed to the depth of the program and added value to the experiences of those participating in it.

Participants' Perspectives

As was stated previously, of the 75 total participants in the program, 50 have been placed in central office or superintendent positions. Of the 25 who have become superintendents, the consistent response is that the program did prepare them for the superintendency.

"The best thing I remember about the program is the experience or the hands-on learning we received, from the role-playing in the class and other applications, as well as the practicality of the information and the networking," was Shane Fields's response when asked about the program. Mr. Fields currently serves as superintendent of Southland ISD in the ESC XVII region.

Jim Waller, a superintendent in his second year in Petersburg ISD, went through the cohort during his first year in the superintendency. His comments certainly highlight the mission of applying theory and making it applicable to daily activities in the job of the superintendent: "When I finished the principalship, the quote was 'what they didn't teach me in school.' This was not true with the superintendency collaboration. I used the finance template, the media training, and the problem-solving activities. Without a doubt, it was the most valuable learning experience I've ever had. Painful at times. By that I mean that the concept of putting you in uncomfortable situations that are real and that you don't want to deal with, but you have to because they are real in the superintendency. The learning helps you in the long run."

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Appendix

Texas Tech University Superintendent Advisory Panel

C. Cryss Brunner, Assistant Professor, University of Wisconsin-Madison

Bernard J. DuBray, Superintendent, Fort Zumwalt School District

Norman Hall, Superintendent, Richard Milburn Academy

Cleveland Hammonds, Jr., Superintendent, St. Louis School District

Fred Hartmeister, Associate Professor and Project Co-director, Texas Tech University

Spike Jorgensen, Advisory Panel Co-coordinator

Joan P. Kowal, Superintendent, Hayward Unified School District

John D. Monahan, Assistant Professor, Educational Leadership Program

Mike Moses, Superintendent, Dallas Independent School District

Monte Moses, Superintendent, Cherry Creek School District

Jim Murphy, Executive Director, New Jersey Association of School Administrators

Harold P. Seamon, Deputy Executive Director, National School Boards Association

Johnny L. Veselka, Executive Director, Texas Association of School Administrators

John Wargo, Advisory Panel Co-coordinator

Kyle Wargo, Executive Director, Region XVII Education Service Center

The Teen Connection After-School Program

by
Shannon D. Smith

The After-School Movement

Over the last ten years, a movement in the support of after-school programs has been building in our country. It began when statistics regarding juvenile crime were released by the FBI, and became commonly available, in the early part of the 1990's. Since that time, studies stating these statistics have been commonly quoted, and it has become general knowledge that youth are more likely to commit crime *and* be victimized in the after-school hours (although specific times vary on the study; somewhere from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m.). In fact, "about 29 percent of all juvenile offenses occur on school days between the hours of 2:00 p.m. – when young people begin to get out of school – and 8:00 p.m." (U.S. Department of Education [USD], 1998). Following this onslaught of youth crime statistics, policy makers and prevention advocates started turning their attention to programs that supervise children and youth during this high-crime period: after-school programs. Government agencies, like California's Department of Social Services – Office of Child Abuse Prevention, began building after-school program components into their prevention program funding, through programs like the Juvenile Crime Prevention Demonstration Project (1995).

Since this time, momentum has been growing rapidly. The juvenile crime data has been compounded with statistics regarding the number of working mothers, number of single-parent homes, number of latchkey children, and a lack of after-school "slots" available. A sampling of statistics on these topics is as follows:

- 64% of mothers work today (Fletcher, n.d.)
- 35% of 12-year-olds are left home regularly while their parents are at work" (USD, 1998)
- There are 5 million latchkey children in the U.S., and
- 70% of all elementary and middle schools in our country are without after-school programs for their students (National Community Education Association [NCEA], n.d.).

In the second half of the decade, education professionals began to see the possibilities for other national improvements through after-school programs, besides just keeping children safe and decreasing juvenile crime. With strong influence from the Community Education community to revive the idea of *community schools*, the U.S. Department of Education, in partnership with the C.S. Mott Foundation, developed the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC) initiative in 1997. The theory of the project was that, "by keeping school doors open during non-traditional school hours, the school provides students, parents and the community with access to valuable educational resources… [and] safe after-school and summer havens for children, where learning takes place in a building removed from violence, drugs and a lack of supervision that permeate some communities in America" (NCEA, n.d.). The 21st CCLC Program proposed to serve our country's low-income rural and inner city communities and won bi-partisan support in Congress. It began in 1998 by funding 99 sites in the United States, but has grown over the last three years and now funds nearly 1,000 communities. Many other federal agencies, state governments, and charitable foundations have followed suit, using prevention and education monies to fund after-school programs all across the country. California has been one of the leaders in this effort, beginning their own multi-million dollar after-school initiative, The After School Learning and Safe Neighborhoods Partnership Program, the emphasis of which is on improvement in student academics and classroom performance.

The Teen Connection After-School Program

It is not difficult to recognize the importance of after-school programs for any community. Lake County is a small, rural, isolated community in northern California where the median family income is well below the state average and more than 50% of students qualify for free/reduced lunch in most schools. Several years ago our community had virtually no extended day, enrichment, or recreation activities for middle school youth – a critical age group in terms of the statistics. We were experiencing one of the highest juvenile crime rates in our state (per capita). We joined in the after-school movement and began applying for grants to start up programs at our county's middle schools.

In 1998, the Lake County Office of Education, an educational service agency, was awarded one of the initial 99 21st CCLC grant awards. The 21st CCLC award allowed us to create comprehensive, no-charge after-school programs at every middle school in our county – remarkable for a rural, low socioeconomic community in Northern California. We had very little experience with the type of programming embodied by the 21st CCLC model. However, we have had numerous successes with the creation, implementation, and improvement of our programs. In this, our last, year of 21st CCLC funding, as we look for means of sustaining the program we have made, we hope to further the after-school movement as we refine our model, define our success, and share our story.

Our Program

Our program, called the Teen Connection, serves all five of the middle schools in our county. As a Lake County Office of Education program, we work in partnership with local schools and school districts to provide comprehensive, quality academic, enrichment, and recreation activities to over 300 middle school youth, and we will pilot a new high school program shortly.

Staffing Organization

All staff members of the Teen Connection Program are employees of the Lake County office of Education and are supervised by the program's director. At each of our five, shortly six, sites, paraprofessional staff are responsible for the daily maintenance of the program, program planning, and student supervision. In addition to each site's two core staff, high school volunteers are recruited to tutor students and serve as mentors. These volunteers are rewarded with scholarship awards after meeting a certain number of volunteer hours. We find the low student-to-staff ratio improves the quality of the services we provide. Additionally, our middle school participants enjoy the contact they receive with our high school mentors, and the relationships built between students and staff seems to be the key to students returning day after day. Lastly, school day teachers and community members are recruited to serve as instructors for many of our enrichment activities. Many of these teachers and community members volunteer their time, although we do make small stipends available for their service.

Partnerships

Partnerships are extremely important for the success of after-school programs. Our major partner in this endeavor is, of course, the schools that house the programs. We depend on them to provide adequate facility space, as well as janitorial and other support. These schools collaborate with the program on transportation arrangements and assist us in the collection of key evaluation data. Referrals to the program, systems of integration with the school day, and other resources are also provided by these middle schools.

Partnerships can be formed with any of the many service providers in a community. Our community does not currently have active YMCA or Boys and Girls Club programs, so we had to form alliances with other

providers of youth services. We partner with other Lake County Office of Education Programs like Healthy Start, Family Resource Centers, and the Career Center. We also work with our Health Department's Tobacco Education Program and local non-profit organizations. These groups bring services to the students in our after-school programs and offer interesting curriculum.

Program Design

Our program is operated five days a week, three hours a day at most sites. The Teen Connection offers a comprehensive program design to all its student members. Each day, an academic component, enrichment component, and recreation component are provided, with the majority of students choosing to participate in all three.

The academic component consists of homework help and tutoring, where the focus is on homework completion, a task which we have found is sometimes a challenge for middle schoolers. Academic skill building activities and technology access augment this component. We work to have ongoing communication with our students' school day teachers and have implemented a weekly progress report form with incentives for students. Our enrichment component is skill focused and structured, but is designed to offer students choices. We offer 6-8 week club sessions, instructed by teachers and community members, on topics like cooking, photography, martial arts, mechanics, computers, nutrition, drama, dance, art, and more. One day each week students participate in community service projects or life skills curriculum, both key aspects of our program. Other enrichment activities include guest speakers, teambuilding and challenge games. The recreation component of our program is the draw for this age group – it is free time. Many students choose to listen to music, talk with friends, play boards games, or engage in sports activities outside. Additionally, Fridays are student-planned theme days with activities like movie watching, Hawaiian Luau, or field trips.

These component activities are augmented with an incentives program, where students earn "teen bucks" for participation and are given the opportunity to buy items to their liking from our Teen Store. Snacks are provided for students each day (through the National School Lunch Program's after-school snack program). Transportation home is also provided following the program each day at most sites, due to the rural nature of our community.

Key Elements

There are several key elements to our program, which we believe have made it a success. Staff Development has been critical. The paraprofessional staff that run our programs are our most valuable commodity. To support them, we hold weekly staff meetings that include training sessions, program sharing and planning, partnership development, and more. Although the staff work at school sites spread around a large county, they support each other through teamwork and appreciation.

Another key to our success has been our quality management plan. The superintendents, project director, program coordinator and program staff have developed a vision for the program that serves as a foundation. Internal quality standards have been set, goal development is ongoing, and self-evaluation is key. Vision and goals are discussed regularly at staff meetings and at a yearly staff retreat. Lastly, program quality is managed by ongoing site visits by the program director and coordinator, and by members of the staff.

Our program has garnered community support through diligent public relations efforts. Program staff and participants have made presentations in the community, written articles and letters to the editor, and published pictures of activities. Our local newspapers and radio stations have been key collaborators.

Evaluation and Results

Our program is part of a national evaluation of 21st CCLC sites. In our second year, an independent evaluation firm was contracted to create a database and do program evaluation. Although data collection is the most challenging aspect of our program, we have consistently demonstrated improvement in the GPAs of our student participants. Additionally, anecdotal evidence demonstrates student improvements in classroom behavior, math and science grades, and social skills. This year, we implemented a self-esteem assessment tool, which we expect will document student growth. Results of that measure will be available at the end of the school year.

Sustainability

Our 21st CCLC grant, which constituted 90% of our funding, ended in May of this year. However, we feel secure that our program will continue. We have been able to diversify our funding base with monies from our local juvenile crime prevention program and local grants from United Way and Alcohol and Other Drug Services. We are hopeful that our county will also contribute funds from Department of Social Services and/or Parks Department. Over the last three years, we have built a strong foundation of support, including parents, students, teachers, administrators, law enforcement officers, and other community members. They recognize that the after-school services we provide are crucial to the welfare of our community.

The time is now for educational service agencies across the country to join the after-school movement. The role of educational service agencies can be many: they can establish and manage after-school programs in partnerships with local school districts, they can provide training and technical assistance for staff of after-school programs, they can identify funding sources and help with preparation of grant proposals, and they can advocate for the creation of programs in their communities, just to name a few possible roles that they can play. ESAs should not hesitate to get involved – after-school programs are of utmost importance to our youth's success. There are resources available to assist all those interested in more information about after-school program funding and development. For more information contact the U.S. Department of Education, the After School Alliance, the National Center for Community Education, the C.S. Mott Foundation, or other state and community resources.

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Education Service Agencies in Arizona:
Changing to Meet New Needs

by
Jack W. Harmon

The structure of Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) and the services they provide vary greatly throughout the United States. Nevertheless, there are also many similarities in the services, programs and activities of ESAs. Arizona's ESAs (county school offices) are certainly different from the Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in New York, the Intermediate School Districts (ISDs) in Michigan and the Education Service Centers (ESC) in Texas. In other states such units are called Intermediate Education Units (IEU), Intermediate Service Units (ISU) or Education Service Units (ESU). Dr. E. Robert Stephens writes that there are three types of educational service agencies (special service districts, voluntary cooperatives, and regional offices of the state department of education). Arizona may represent a different and additional type.

In Arizona the County School Superintendents Offices are the state's closest unit comparable to an ESA. In 1991, the Arizona Association of County School Superintendents contracted with a consulting firm (Petersen, 1991) to conduct a survey and develop recommendations to establish Intermediate Service Units (ISUs) in Arizona. Although legislation to provide for service units did not materialize, the report was the beginning of an acute awareness that county school offices, which historically served as an office to provide oversight of local districts, could act instead as educational service agencies to provide support for local school districts.

The office of the County School Superintendent is provided for in the state's constitution. Therefore, voters of each county elect the county superintendent in accordance with constitutional requirements (Arizona Revised Statutes). The counties range in population from nearly three million in the largest county to 15,000 in the smallest. The only requirement for being elected to the office, in addition to residency, is that the candidate must hold a teaching certificate. This minimum requirement has not been changed since it was established in 1912 with the adoption of the state constitution. At that time there was little demand for specially trained administrators. Thus, no administrative certification, training or experience is required. The county school superintendent is directly responsible to the voters of the county. There are 15 counties in Arizona; thus, there are 15 county school superintendents.

In Arizona, there are some unique areas of responsibilities given to the county school superintendents, though they may perform only those duties and powers specified or permitted by statute. Although this restriction appears to be very limiting, in fact, county school offices have some latitude to support school districts in many ways. There are also duties that are mandated by statute (those referenced by "shall" clauses) while those powers that are permitted are distinguished as "may" clauses. The "may" clause provides not only flexibility but also provides for a great diversity of services and activities among county school offices. This discretionary authority also provides the opportunity to customize services to serve the needs of individual school districts within each county.

One unique aspect of the county school superintendent's responsibilities is that he/she is responsible for operating existing county entities called "accommodation schools." An accommodation school in Arizona is one that is located in a geographic area not included within the boundaries of any other school district as per Arizona Revised Statutes Section 15-101. Not all counties have accommodation schools. Examples of accommodation schools are those on military bases and schools that were organized for children of migrant

farm workers in the 1940s. Recently, the state legislature provided that accommodation schools may be established by county school superintendents for the purpose of serving homeless and at-risk students (alternative schools). The uniqueness of the governance of accommodation schools lies in the fact that the county school superintendent is not only the superintendent of the school, but also acts as a one-member school board with the same authority of the normal three- or five- member boards which are common in the state. The county school superintendent is also responsible for all accommodation school policies and procedures, such as adopting a budget, hiring personnel, overseeing the curriculum and administering the daily operations of the school.

The county school superintendent is also responsible for the educational programs in secure-care environments. These include the juvenile detention center, youth remanded to adult jail and incarcerated persons who are special education-eligible to age 22. The juvenile detention centers may be operated under the authority of the accommodation school or independently of the accommodation school, while the jail education programs operate outside of the accommodation school and under specific statutes.

Another unique responsibility of county school superintendents in Arizona is that of appointing school board members to the school districts within the county when a vacancy occurs on the board between elections. The county school superintendent may call for an election or appoint someone to fill the vacancy until the next regular school board election. The county school superintendent oversees all school elections. These elections include regular school board elections, recall elections of school board members, budget overrides, bond elections and other elections specific to school districts.

School districts must utilize the county school office as the fiscal agent for their budgets. The county school office processes payroll and expenditure warrants for all districts except some of those with an enrollment above 4,000 students, which may process their own warrants upon approval of the State Board of Education.

Service programs are allowed by statute if school districts request and pay for them. There are no direct funds provided by the state to county school offices to support service programs for school districts, with the exception of a minimal amount to assist small school districts that have an enrollment of less than 600 students. Service programs operate through intergovernmental agreements and are funded primarily by school district funds and grants or by grants initiated and received by the county school office. Under the auspices of their authority to support small schools, county superintendents may exercise discretion as to the type of support their agencies will provide They may offer itinerant specialists for areas such as special education and fine arts, school nurses, or other personnel. They may also offer technology support, curriculum assistance or any other type of support as they determine appropriate.

AESA Impact on Arizona County Superintendents

The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) has become a strong influence for Arizona County School Superintendents by providing information and services regarding educational service agencies nationally. Since AESA brings ESAs together nationally by a number of means, including a national conference, a summer leadership conference, various publications and occasional research studies, it provides visibility of service agencies nationwide. This exposure has caused Arizona county school superintendents to assess services provided by their respective offices. AESA is having a major influence in redefining the services provided by the county school offices in Arizona.

A recent informal survey of services being offered by Arizona county school superintendents indicated that service programs provided by the county school superintendent offices are becoming more aligned with those of other service agencies throughout the United States. A partial listing of services provided by Arizona county school offices include staff development programs, camps for gifted students, student leadership

camps, help with curriculum and alignment to state standards, county-wide teacher workshops, technology assistance, data processing, grant-writing services, itinerant special education services and fiscal management services. These services and others offered by the county offices are similar to services offered throughout the country by ESAs as summarized in the AESA Data Base Survey of 1999.

Arizona's county school offices will continue to improve the quantity and quality of services to local school districts for the foreseeable future. It is encouraging to note that at each legislative session there appears to be a diminution of the county school offices' responsibilities to oversee the fiscal management of districts while there are new initiatives to strengthen their ability and capacity to provide educational services.

In summary, the county school superintendents of Arizona act in the legal capacity of an education service agency. However, because the county school superintendent is elected rather than appointed, he/she does not operate under the direction or authority of a school board. The county school superintendent is directly responsible to the voting citizens. The office may offer many programs or few, or none. The role of the county school superintendent has changed over time from an inspector of schools to a provider of services. The Association of Educational Service Agencies is providing critical leadership and influence in changing the role of the county school superintendents in Arizona.

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