

The ESC of Morris County

Evolution of the ESC
 "Providing Models of Shared Services since 1970"

October 2019

The Shared Services Initiative

- Over the years, NJSBA has supported the idea of shared services as well as consolidation, noting that voters in local communities should have the final say, not the State.
- In 1995 New Jersey School Board Association published its Shared Services Report (Pat Rist, President)
- The report developed a definition of shared services in education as "Any voluntary formal or informal agreement between two or more entities that enhances educational opportunities for students and/or demonstrates cost effectiveness and accountability"

The Shared Services Initiative

- In its 2005 study, The Promise of Shared Services, Deloitte noted that the process of sharing services addresses the political emphasis of consolidation as a cost effective measure:
- "Consolidation can have some serious downsides, it is politically unpopular, reduces local control, can negatively impact educational outcomes, and can lead to higher costs to support the new bureaucracy"
- "In short, shared services may be the most effective strategy to help districts direct more money into the classroom.

The Shared Services Initiative

Deloitte provides a model to decide on what functions to share.

Figure 10. Shared Services Opportunities Decision Tree

The Shared Services Initiative

- ❖ A variety of models for shared services, as an alternative to consolidation have emerged in the United State and through out the world.
- ❖ Local districts through statutory provision in NJSA 18A and NJSA 40, have authority to enter into local agreements to provide shared services through contractual agreements.
- ❖ Another model, mentioned in the report is an educational services agency.

Educational Services Agencies

- The term Educational Service Agencies has been used for many years in federal education laws and by the national association representing these entities.
- ESAs perform a variety of services for their clients, which consist of staff and students of local school districts and private schools, incarcerated youth, home schooled children, and some ESAs operate their own schools.
- The services that ESAs most commonly provide for their clients include professional development, special education, technology, cooperative purchasing, financial and reporting assistance, diagnostic testing and assessments, insurance pools, grant applications and oversight, printing and media supplies, and other tasks requested by the client.

Educational Services Agencies

- ESAs, or educational service agencies, currently exist in approximately 40 states with some 600 agencies. These educational entities reside between local educational agencies (LEAs) and the state educational agency (SEAs).
- ESAs are known by various names at the state level, such as BOCES (boards of cooperative education services in New York and Colorado), I.U.s (intermediate units in Pennsylvania), ISDs (intermediate school districts in Michigan), ESDs or ESCs (educational service districts or centers in Washington and Texas, respectively), county offices of education (in Arizona, California and Illinois).
- In New Jersey, this type of agency is called Educational Services Commission.

Establishment of the ESC in New Jersey

In 1968 NJSA 18A:6-51, et seq. was adopted.
The law defined the organization as follows:

“ESC means an agency established or to be established in one or more counties for the purpose of carrying on program of educational research and development and providing to public school districts such educational and administrative services as may be authorized pursuant to the rules of the State Board of Education.”

Governance of the ESC

- The ESC in each county is governed by the local Boards of Education through their designed representatives.
- Annually each member district elects/appoints the Representative from their district to the ESC Representative Assembly.
- The Representative Assembly meets twice each year. In January to adopt the budget and in June to elect the Board of Directors.
- The Board of Directors meets each month to conduct the business of the ESC, and establish annual goals
- ESC Board meetings are conducted in a manner similar to local Boards of Education as prescribed by the law.

Governance of the ESC

- According to NJSA each ESC board can be composed of a Board member or a Superintendent.
- The ESC in New Jersey have a variety of Board member compositions.
- Passaic (Northern Regional) ESC
- Sussex
- Essex
- Middlesex (ESC of NJ)
- Hunterdon
- Monmouth/Ocean
- Camden
- Union

Governance of the ESCs

- Morris ESC has chosen the model of all elected local Board members
- While there is value in the other models of governance, the Morris ESC Board of Directors believes governance by elected Board members offers a different opportunity to examine shared services.
- Board members face the same challenges in their districts, whether large or small, that involve fiscal accountability for public funds.
- Board members represent their communities and have
- Board members perspective
- Board members have an opportunity to articulate common shared services concerns.

Board Member Guided ESC

- Recently School Leader talked to our Superintendent about trends in special education, and ideas for districts looking to improve both the education program delivered to special needs students, while containing costs.
- One of the perennial concerns of school districts is the cost of special education. What kinds of things can local school districts do to contain the rising cost of special education?
- Board members can ask for decision making processes that include outsourcing components that regularly occur.

Board Member Guided ESC

- A model promoted by the ESC is outsourcing CST evaluation.
- The model enables district CST to manage the program component of each special education student with care, while outsourcing the time consuming mandated evaluations
- The result is that district personnel are freed up to engage parents and educators in the best care for each child.

Board Member Guided ESC

- Our ESC offers part-time staff on a contract basis for districts, which may not need a full-time specialist in a field. How does that work?
- Request for services for special education students are an ongoing process due to the nature and needs of the students
- District staff are often pressed due to timeline constraints.
- ESC staff can fill in the process on an interim or short term basis to assure quality and compliance for each student.
- The economy of scale works when multiple districts use this service.

ESC Budget and Finances

- The driving force behind the structure of the ESC is that there are savings that come from efficiencies and economies of scale when districts join together through a central agencies to provide services to meet their educational responsibilities.
- The ESC revenue source comes from the savings that result in the delivery of shared services on a larger scale.
- The ESC receives no state aid nor local property taxes.
- Tuition rates and fees for services are developed by the Representative Assembly.
- The ESC annually develops a budget based on proposed services. The ESC develops an annual CAFR and evaluates the financial viability of programs and services.

Regional Transportation Services

Coordinated transportation services involves the bidding, award and management of transportation contracts on behalf of over resident school districts in:

- Public School Routes
- Special Education Routes
- Nonpublic School Routes
- B6T Bidding and Processing
- Academy Routing
- Mapping and Consulting

CST Evaluations and Support Services

- Child Study Team Services
- Speech & Language
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Home Instruction
- On Line Instructional Services

Transition Support Services

- Transition Services prepares students (14-21 years old) with disabilities for post-secondary activities – post secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, adult services, independent living, and community participation
- Assists students in determining post - secondary preferences through informal and formal assessments and college/career exploration
- Develop work readiness skills through structured learning experiences at school and in the community
- Develop repeated and sustained opportunities for students to participate in Community Based Instruction
- Act as a liaison with adult agencies and service providers – DDD ,DVRS, CBVI

Alternative School Services

- ♦ Alternative School Options
 - ESC Commission Schools
 - Commission Schools operated in LEA
 - LEA Operated Schools with ERESC Staff
 - LEA Schools operated with LEA staff & Commission Consultation.
- ♦ Instructional Strategies
 - Project based activities
 - Directed learning projects
 - Team teaching
 - Authentic learning
 - Peer tutoring
 - Cooperative Education
 - Mastery Tests

Paraprofessional Services

- ♦ Teacher assistants are support personnel who deliver an array of instructional services to students. They are also known as para-educator assistants, para-professional educational assistants, aides, and instructional assistants.
- ♦ Teacher assistants currently constitute the most rapidly growing portion of the special education workforce.
- ♦ Shared service agreements with districts have been implemented through attrition replacement and whole school /district placement.
- ♦ A collaborative relationship with district in all areas including: hiring; placement; evaluation; professional development; and remediation.
- ♦ Districts have realized significant budgetary savings through shared services agreements for paraprofessional services.

Services to Nonpublic School

Chapter 192 and 193
Compensatory Education, Supplemental Instruction, Speech Therapy, Child Study Team services

Nursing Services
ESC employed nurses who provide mandated screenings

Textbook Acquisition Services
Coordinate acquisition of textbooks for nonpublic schools

Technology Acquisition Services
Coordinate acquisition of technology equipment and supplies for nonpublic schools

(Nonpublic Services are provided with funds for the DOE for private schools located within public school district.)

Business Support Services

The Commissions provides a full range of services to support the business office function:

- Payroll services.
- Cooperative purchasing for general, art and maintenance supplies, which include thousands of items.
- Computer technical support in the maintenance of computer hardware and software as well as network administration.
- Health, safety and environmental services which include Right-To-Know, Blood Borne Pathogen training, survey and consultation services.

Educational Support Services

- ♦ Supplementary Educational Services
 - Credit Recovery Program
 - Home Instruction
- ♦ Summer Schools
 - Extended School Year Special Education Program
- ♦ Before and After Care Programs
- ♦ Substitute Teacher Registry
- ♦ Professional Development Programs

School Administrative Services

- Supervisor Services
 - The ESC provides supervisory services in a number of areas to assist districts on a temporary or long term basis. These included mentoring, director of transportation, director of special services, to name a few. Other areas are based on district request for such services.
- Teacher Evaluation Services
 - The ESC provides certified evaluators to assist districts in meeting the teacher evaluation mandates of TEACH4NJ.
 - Evaluators are trained in the district approved methodology, ie: Danielson, etc, and complete district and state requirements for the evaluation of individual teachers.

General Board Discussion

- ◆ Local Board members appointed to serve on ESC board are **KEY COMMUNICATORS**
- ◆ Opportunities ESC Board meeting end with General Board Discussion. Local Boards provide opportunity for their ESC appointees to report about the ESC offerings/actions.
- ◆ Two way communication = success !

General Board Discussion

- ◆ Asking Questions:
- ◆ *What other areas can/should the ESC be developing to serve districts.*
- ◆ *What emerging issues are going to challenge districts. How can the ESC help?*
- ◆ Exploring options:

General Board Discussion

- ◆ **It' s Your Turn....**
- ◆ *Questions ?*
- ◆ *Challenges?*
- ◆ *Recommendations?*
