

OCTOBER 1, 2016

HB2940

REGIONAL MEETINGS ON SHARED COUNTY LEVEL SERVICES AND FUNCTIONS

*Summary of Findings
and Recommendations*



West Virginia
School Board Association



West Virginia School Board Association

WVSBA

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October 1, 2016

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On behalf of the West Virginia School Board Association, I am forwarding the completed report relative to House Bill 2940 (§18-2-26a) which was adopted during the West Virginia Legislature's 2013 Regular Session.

That legislation, of course, relates to county boards and county superintendents meetings within the respective eight Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) regions, to "...identify administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards, especially when resignations, retirements, staffing realignments or similar events may occur..."

The report is derived from the participants' work products at the various regional meetings held in July and August. Additionally, the report includes data secured from a post-meetings survey of all county boards of education members, county superintendents and Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) Executive Directors.

That survey garnered a 57 percent response rate. (A total 338 persons were surveyed.)

It should be noted, these particular report segments were prepared independently of the School Board Association.

The report is arrayed as follows:

- Section 1 – Prefatory considerations. This report section establishes the context in which the entirety of the document may be considered, including a series of "observations."
- Section 2 – Recommendations. The report section details a series of four specific recommendations. Many of the recommendations include various subparts. This Section also

includes five “observations.” The “observations” both inform and elaborate upon the recommendations made in the report.

Accordingly, the report entails the following:

1. A recommendation the statute requiring the regional meetings and report be superseded by a process whereby RESA Regional Councils would be responsible and accountable for continually seeking to secure shared services for county school districts. That recommendation has several components many of which focus on accountability for the process the report envisions.
2. A recommendation regarding configuring RESA services, particularly enhanced or new services. The several recommendations in this section relate to programmatic effectiveness, “return on investment,” securing services, etc.
3. A recommendation regarding county-secured services. This recommendation is predicated on provisions of §18-4-8d, a 1989 statute, that addresses sharing of central office personnel between and among school districts. Various components of this recommendation detail questions regarding process, proposed revisions to the Code to make it more operable, and greater consideration of county boards working out service sharing arrangements sans RESAs.
4. A report recommendation concerning innovations which, we propose, should be considered in terms of shared services. This is a significant report segment.

On behalf of the West Virginia School Board Association we are proud of the work product contained in this report as well as previous reports.

As with any report, including previous House Bill 2940 reports, various public education and other interests may disagree with conclusions and the rationale used to arrive at those conclusions. In this context, we heartily encourage those reading this report to concentrate on the four recommendations cited above. These recommendations anchor the report, in fact.

Accordingly, we thank the West Virginia Legislature for providing WVSBA this opportunity. We have shown leadership, if not courage, in terms of many of the report recommendations. Indeed, the association has secured what we believe is not only valued information but also a valued approach in regard to the study of the matter of shared services.

It is our hope the report will be taken within that context and that it engenders the true discussions necessary to move West Virginia’s public education system to the forefront of the nation, building on the initiatives which the Legislature, state Board of Education and Governor have undertaken.

We look forward to discussing our report during the December 2016 legislative interim meetings and the subsequent meeting of the state Board of Education.

Finally, we must note that our Executive Director, Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., drafted this document.

If you have questions or comments, please contact Dr. O’Cull – hocull@wvsba.org or 304-346-0571.

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Section 1: Preface

“McDonald’s doesn’t close because Burger King is across the street.” - Eric B. Schnurer, president Public Works LLC, in remarks to the state Legislature’s Joint Committee on Education (October 2015). ¹ Public Works LLC conducted The Education Efficiency Audit of West Virginia’s Primary and Secondary Education System (2012).²

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Context & Studies

The Strayer Report

As a preface to this report, we quote George D. Strayer (1876–1962), a Pennsylvania-born professor of education, who developed the basic standards for educational administration in use today. Following the Second World War, the West Virginia Legislature appointed an interim committee to address the needs of public education. In turn, the committee contracted with Strayer, a retired Columbia University professor, to prepare an “expert report.” The serious student of West Virginia public education respects both the historical and prospective import of Strayer’s Report. Indeed, one soon realizes Strayer’s recommendations are relevant – if not more relevant – than they were when presented to the West Virginia Legislature some 70 years ago.

Within context of this report, Strayer stated:

The county unit system is not a panacea for all the ills which have beset the schools of West Virginia, and still beset them. It is a convenient and economical way of equalizing opportunities for education within a fairly large area. The county unit does not in and of itself improve schools. It simply removes some of the difficulties in the way of conducting school...

It still remains for the people of each county, through their elected officials and school employees, to work out plans for a better program of education for the children and youth of the county.³

Indeed, Professor Strayer, we heed your counsel - that of working out “plans for a better program of education for the children and youth of the county.”

The Legislature has provided the West Virginia School Board Association (hereafter association is used in as the predominant report reference) a unique leadership opportunity to study how to best sustain county educational governance – governance undergirded through securing sound, effective educational services, including the identification of “... administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards, especially when resignations, retirements, staffing realignments or similar events may occur...”⁴

As delineated in §18-2-26a, the association has met the statutory directive regarding identification of certain county level administrative services and functions which could be shared between and among county boards. Accordingly, the association has provided the proper reportage for the series of meetings conducted in 2013, 2014, and 2016.⁵

The recommendations included in the report – as with recommendations included in previous association reports relative to this legislation – are designed to enhance the effectiveness of county boards. Based on these reports the association calls upon the legislature and state Board of Education to provide a more expansive path for county educational governance leeway and discretion, particularly in regard to efficiencies.

We are not alone. Strayer, while embracing strong state guidance for public education, including the institution of the state Board of Education as we know it today, hardly abandoned the powerful role, charge and responsibilities local public education officials have to ensure educational success. Strayer saw the need for exemplary local educational governance as provided by elected county boards whose agendas focus on students; county boards who free themselves from the fetters of provincialism; county boards who focus on vision rather than the flimsy pursuits of small-minded ideals.

Stayer states:

In West Virginia, as elsewhere, the people have provided through the statutes enacted by the Legislature, for a large degree of local responsibility for administration of schools. But even with this delegation of responsibility to county boards of education, there is a clear recognition in the Constitution and in law that education is a state function.⁶

Moreover, Strayer greatly respected the role of the county superintendent as the chief executive officer of the county board, noting “the first duty of the county board of education is to choose a professionally competent superintendent of schools.” Additionally, he stated, “the quality of education in any county depends largely upon the freedom of the board of education from political pressures.”⁷ (West Virginia Code, in fact, includes the chief executive officer terminology.)⁸

The Education Efficiency Audit

Some 65 years later, we realize the Audit,⁹ without deference to Strayer, “re- discovered” the legislature’s and state Board of Education’s historic tendencies to regulate through a strong emphasis on compliance, concluding a myriad of cumbersome laws, policies, and procedures would or will result in educational innovation.

In fact, we turn to page 1 of the Audit:

West Virginia’s education system, like most in our country, has developed into a structure that satisfies the needs and desires of a wide swath of constituencies and consumers that depend on the outputs of primary and secondary education: businesses that hope to employ West Virginia’s graduates; school professionals – teachers, administrators, support personnel, transportation providers, and many others – who devote their time and energy to education; educational policymakers, both elected and appointed, with ideas and aspirations for our schools; the parents who entrust their children – and their hopes for their children’s futures – to all school professionals every day; and, of course, the taxpayers who fund this educational system and thus ultimately expect a say in its cost and structure.¹⁰

A few pages later, the Audit states:

...Is West Virginia’s education system too centralized, or too decentralized? The answer is “both” – in some areas, greater decentralization would improve educational delivery, and while in others greater centralization would improve efficiency. There is no cookie-cutter answer.

West Virginia’s education system is unique in the country in one major factor – the Department of Education, governed by a State Board, is constitutionally separate from the Executive or Legislative Branch. The system is detailed to the extreme in statutory language that results in an education system that has little flexibility to modify policy and operations without changes to Code. We have encountered no other state that insulates its education system so much from gubernatorial – or voter – control; restricts local initiative so much on the part of districts, building principals, and teachers; and vests so much authority for education at the state level. This is, of course, the citizens’ choice. But it runs counter to most of the concern and thinking in educational reform today that individual initiative and accountability should be encouraged, while responsibility for education must ultimately come to a single point at the top of the pyramid and that the individual ultimately responsible must him- or herself be accountable to the voters.¹¹

While acknowledging efforts are being taken by the legislature and State Board to provide county boards greater governance and policy flexibility, including passage of Senate Bill 359¹² (2013), much more can and must be done in order to tap into innovation at the local level.

House Bill 2940 (§18-2-26a)

Report Note: As proposed and supported by the West Virginia School Board Association, passage of House Bill 2940¹³ (§18-2-26a) in the West Virginia Legislature’s 2013 regular session, requires local educational officials to meet to “...identify administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards, especially when resignations, retirements, staffing realignments or similar events may occur.”

Two prior meetings have been held – one in 2013 and one in 2014. As specified in the statute, beginning in 2016, the meetings are to be held on a biennial basis following the Primary Election at which county board members are elected. These meetings are special meetings of the county boards. Moreover, the statute states, “...all county superintendents of schools and members of county boards belonging to the same regional educational service agency shall meet together...”

The statute has various other provisions, including a report the association itself is to provide to the state Board of Education and the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability (LOCEA).

The report is to include, but is not limited to, the following items:


- (1) Identification of the administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards;
- (2) An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of sharing services in each instance; and
- (3) A process for implementing recommended changes.

The statutory language concludes with this emphatic statement: “Nothing in this section requires the elimination or consolidation of county school districts.”

Prefatory Comments

In providing this report, prefatory comments are grounded within the context of public education institutional or structural reforms – reforms often ushered by external or environmental factors.

In the case of West Virginia, a trio of factors converge, forcing state-level policymakers to move from politically safe, secure incremental policymaking – happy talk, sunny day politics – to confront a state whose economy seems to have lost bearings, in part, given West Virginia’s historic reliance on the coal extraction industry which, rightly or wrongly, is blamed for state policymakers’ lack of efforts to secure economic diversification – a situation confounded by the Mountain



State's geography (absence of flat or land), infrastructure, workforce educational skills and the state's Opioid dependency crisis; a state whose student population base is declining in all but a handful of counties,¹⁴ meaning not only less revenue for county boards but also school board revenue/budgetary strains; a state with an aging population; and, a state where the relevance of well-weathered institutions, including county boards of education, are scrutinized.

Within this milieu and flux of the myriad issues facing West Virginia, many of which are cited above, newspaper pundits, not a few politicians and a number of the ceremonially robed in academia, criticize county boards (often justifiably) for lack of leadership, fiscal frivolity, provincialism, and a penchant for clinging to the politically expedient rather than the collective decisional leadership that proves best for advancing student achievement in their school districts. The upshot? Often the *titled* in West Virginia – as throughout the nation – conclude boards of education are obsolete or unnecessary, given the public education charge for school districts to achieve heightening academic standards all the while securing efficiencies, operating safe schools, providing a myriad of services for students, and securing staff commitment to excellence in teaching or service delivery. Obviously, many of the interests affected by these sets of circumstances have varying degrees of satisfaction with how county boards navigate these tasks – tasks often prescribed by law or State Board policy, rule or regulation. One easily sees how a cant develops: County board decision-making is so embedded “in the weeds” - a buses, beans, and buildings mentality – only the state can provide true educational focus and direction. In fact, many educational interests will seek some type of state level “sorting” to determine local county board decisional priorities. (More on that later.)

The above operational considerations are best noted within another context, namely the conjoined notion that, given West Virginia's economy, there are too many county boards and that the number of county boards could or should be consolidated. The notion is that consolidated school districts might be positioned or arrayed around West Virginia's larger municipal areas or even centralized into geographically regional boards of education.

Far from vexing the association finds this dialogue healthy, robust. In fact, the “debate,” if you will, about school governance can be a prompt for change, equipping county boards for a role, within the context of state woes described above, for more accountable governance.


This scrutiny is not new: Part and parcel of a national debate birthed from the post 1983 Reagan Administration “A Nation at Risk Report: The Imperative for Educational Reform. An Open Letter to the American People. A Report to the Nation and the Secretary of Education,”¹⁵ boards of education as an institution have come under scrutiny for at least two generations.

‘Dark Islands of American Governance’

Indeed, in the mid-1980s, school boards were referenced by one national newspaper columnist as the “...that Dark Island of American governance, the institution that everyone knows of but few understand” (1986).¹⁶ An excellent summary article (1988) is entitled, Reformers Turning Attention to School Boards.¹⁷

In part because of this national sentiment, county boards in West Virginia faced considerable legislative scrutiny during the 1980s-1990s.

As a result, county board members' terms were reduced from six years to four years; county board members were required to possess at least formal schooling;¹⁸ county board members were required to receive training and development, including a requirement to participate in a program of orientation prior to assuming office;¹⁹ and county boards were required to assess their performance.²⁰ During this same time, however, the legislature provided county boards latitude to develop policies to promote their effectiveness²¹ and, most importantly, county boards are given the ability to establish District Innovation Zones²² encompassing an entire school district – school district being the term embedded in the state Constitution.²³



It is safe to say county board scrutiny arose for various reasons, including efforts to systematize county boards of education's structural function, roles and purposes – a move that affected county boards in an institutional sense and county board members specifically. Perhaps, the greatest areas for systematizing county board duties relates to Chapter 18A of the Code,²⁴ the chapter of law relating to school personnel. Over the years, county boards began to see a diminished role in school employee matters so much so that a provision of the Senate Bill 359 legislation can be construed as actually “bypassing” county boards in certain aspects of the school employee hiring process.²⁵ Moreover, county boards no longer hear school employee grievances. In a historical sense once school personnel duties were “removed” legislative attention turned to county board accountability – but with little greater leeway for policymaking.

Given the above considerations, the question one may be prompted to pose is whether these actions *in toto* – including a swath of laws, greater state regulatory decrees and judicial decisions – result in county boards being held to an increasing series of corporate board functional accountability standards (training and development, required analysis of corporate effectiveness, standards for office) all the while county boards are provided insufficient latitude, discretion or authority to advance local governance initiatives except as specified within the bounds of statutes or State Board policy.

No matter one's response, few would disagree with the contention the county board role has been assuaged over the years due to legislative decree and concomitant state Board of Education regulation as enunciated by administrative rule.

Systematism also affected school employees

West Virginia school employees, through state laws, Public Employee Grievance Board decisions, court rulings, and various other legal or administrative rules, have seen systematization in terms of employment, including laws which constitute uniformity in terms of all school districts in West Virginia, particularly school employee seniority which mostly ensures a teacher core comprised of veteran teachers who had served and would continue to serve their school systems. Thus, professional expertise would be comprised system-wide (throughout the state) if county boards did not respect the concept.

That seniority in particular emanated as a state legislative doctrine, included in Code, can be read or interpreted in numerous ways.

One interpretation, perhaps unique to this author, is the school personnel laws were adopted, beginning in the mid-1970s not only for consistency of practice, i.e., school personnel job classifications and pay grades, but also in terms of humaneness and to address abusive political practices.


However, the context cannot be forgotten: Legislators' nascent acknowledgment public school system enrollments were beginning to decline.

In terms of school funding, the Legislature devoted considerable time and energy to ensure the state school aid formula was “adapted” to meet or correspond to these declines which legislators concluded occurred in great part due to weighting for special needs students.

Thus, we have the late 1970s-early 1980s law regarding school employee seniority.

These observations are made to illustrate this approach to systematization obviously ensures uniformity in terms of these employment practices.

Over the next decade-and-a-half or until the mid-1990s, the legislature adopted laws regarding planning periods, lunch periods, school lunch and breakfast program staffing, etc.



For our purposes, the point is that a county unit system literally tilts the public education system – state and local – toward aims in regard to consistency. That concept, largely accomplished by law, is then coupled with the concept with a uniform system of state funding.

Does this uniformity become an obstacle for achieving efficiencies?

The answer has to be provided in regard to a significant number of qualifying factors.

Indeed, we must be fair and respectful in terms of the existing conditions in which this question is posed. The better consideration, however, is one relating to whether we are posing the right question or questions.

Conditions of RESAs

The above comments are provided in part to contrast the state and condition of county boards with that of Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). Both will be viewed in terms of a “settled science” construction.²⁶

To initiate this discussion, we will see the initial RESA legislation simply authorized the State Board to establish the agencies.

Over the years, however, the legislature has taken a greater stance in regard to providing statutory direction for the agencies.


The current enacting legislation states, “...The intent of the Legislature in providing for establishment of regional education service agencies, hereinafter referred to in this section as agency or agencies, is to provide for high quality, cost effective education programs and services to students, schools and school systems.”²⁷

Of course, that same statute includes provisions directing the state Board of Education to “...reexamine the powers and duties of the agencies in light of the changes in state level education policy that have occurred and shall establish multicounty regional education service agencies by rule...”²⁸

One can make the point that the county boards, at least as envisioned by lawmakers or state policy-makers, operate in terms of more “settled science” or, to use a better term, probability standard in terms of state-level policy-making. To contrast, the role of RESAs seems in greater flux because the role of these agencies is not as greatly determined – a point the Audit cites as well.

For our purposes, the question of what RESAs “do” is subject to considerable speculation. The question persists despite legislators’ and the state Board of Education’s efforts to determine, define, or refine these agencies’ purposes. Moreover, state-level policymakers’ often frame RESA missional endeavors around environmental influencers such as West Virginia’s federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) implementation or the Audit or the state’s heightened emphasis on academic standing.

Because there does not seem to be a “settled science” concerning what the agencies’ “true” mission is RESAs appear to have many masters to please, although operating in terms of considerable autonomy.²⁹



As we will see the contrast with county boards, of course, is not totally parallel. County boards often face these questions as well, but the county board role has been “settled” through laws, rules, regulations, and judicial decrees more so than that of RESAs.

RESAs’ “Settled Science” Quotation

While the following suppositions regarding RESAs may prove equivalent to jagged or untidy reasoning this report poses several questions concerning the “settled science” proposition as relating to RESAs.

Based on the preceding “settled science” supposition regarding county boards, one could ask whether the 2002 RESA reforms provided a more “settled science” in regard to RESA mission, role and function. Despite this move on behalf of the legislature questions linger, namely what do RESAs “do?” To whom are RESAs accountable? What would happen if they were eliminated?

In terms of perception, the State Board seems to have the edge in terms of RESAs’ *patron*.

Such standing may not bode well for entities. RESAs, like county boards, face considerable scrutiny by just “being” or “showing up” as a structured public educational entities. Like county boards RESAs are seen as administrative or managerial organizations in a legislative setup which has been largely dominated by powerful school employee interests. Moreover, given what may be perceived by some agency observers as RESAs having unsettled roles, the State Board, by decree or default, is seen as more fully enunciating RESAs’ validity and utility. In terms of these efforts, RESA critics often see the state Board of Education serving as an “apologist” for RESAs.

In terms of the agencies the West Virginia Association of School Administrators often tags along in the wake of State Board support for the agencies. This association may join the group as well, depending on the issues.

There, however, are few other visible champions for RESAs – despite the array of constituent groups they are considered to serve, including diverse groups such as Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs) to whom some RESAs provide training. This is important because political validation or legitimacy largely depends on a relationship with patrons, including political parties or interest groups – often the broader the number of allies the better. Again, the ostensive RESA patron appears to the State Board.

(Of course the agencies cannot directly lobby the legislature. That point is acknowledged.)

The corollary differs for county boards. County boards can be said to enjoy support of various collectives of individuals or groups – shifting coalitions – in terms of matters such as promotion of greater local decision-making.

Even these “groupings,” however, may see county boards as a means to achieve an end, especially in terms of computer-assisted instruction, districtwide energy policies or endeavors relating to facilities.

Laying these illustrations aside, this segment of our discussion revolves around the notion that various interests – public education interests in this regard – seek a homeostasis (equilibrium) in order to maintain political checks and balances. These very checks and balances constrain county boards from stepping outside accepted norms and roles – that is, if the legislature itself accepts the norms and roles “ascribed” to county boards.

For example, during the 2016 regular session the association sought to amend this very law to retain the regional meetings but divert the focus from shared county level administrative services and functions to county boards and county superintendents discerning constraints, including statutory decrees or State Board rules and regulations that affect local educational governance effectiveness.³⁰

In order to reign this concept, various school employee groups opposed this move, saying county boards would use that time and the meetings as a means to chip at laws constructive for personnel benefits, rights or duties.

Client Nature of RESAs

The last question relates to the “client” aspect of RESAs. In that RESAs appear to abide with feet in both streams – that of the Legislature’s will and that of the State Board.

The inaugural 97-word RESA statute, enacted through passage of Senate Bill 183 in 1972, reads:

In order to consolidate and more effectively administer existing regional education programs and in order to equalize and extend educational opportunities, the state board of education is authorized and empowered to establish multi-county regional educational service agencies for the purpose of providing educational services to the county school systems, and to make such rules and regulations as may be necessary for the effective administration and operation of such agencies.”³¹

A regional board shall be empowered to receive and disperse funds from the federal government, member counties, gifts and grants. Contrast this with the statute as amended in 2015.³² There are 1,826 words. Most importantly, contrast the language. The 1972 statute essentially authorizes the State Board to establish RESAs with a mention of rule-making.

By contrast the amended §18-2-26 reads, in part:

...The intent of the Legislature in providing for establishment of regional education service agencies, hereinafter referred to in this section as agency or agencies, is to provide for high quality, cost effective education programs and services to students, schools and school systems.

Since the first enactment of this section in 1972, the focus of public education has shifted from a reliance on input models to determine if education programs and services are providing to students a thorough and efficient education to a performance based accountability model...

In establishing the agencies the Legislature envisions certain areas of service in which the agencies can best assist the state board in implementing the standards based accountability model...thereby, in providing high quality education programs...

The state board shall reexamine the powers and duties of the agencies in light of the changes in state level education policy that have occurred and shall establish multicounty regional education service agencies by rule...”³³

In terms of county boards, Code states:

Each county school district shall be under the supervision and control of a county board of education, which shall be composed of five members, nominated and elected by the voters of the respective county without reference to political party affiliation. No more than two members shall be elected from the same magisterial district.”³⁴

Accordingly, the state Constitution declares:

The school districts into which the state is divided shall continue until changed pursuant to act of the Legislature: Provided, that the school board of any district shall be elected by the voters of the respective district without reference to political party affiliation. No more than two of the members of such board may be residents of the same magisterial district within any school district.”³⁵

Note this additional provision of §18-2-26:

Referencing a section of the statute cited earlier, namely regarding certain areas of service the Legislative envisions the agencies can “...best assist the state board in implementing the standards based accountability model...,” RESAs are responsible for “...Developing and/or implementing any other programs or services as directed by law, the state board or the regional council.”

Before moving forward, it is wise to heed these words from the RESA 5 website:³⁶

RESA’s accomplishments have surpassed all expectations as evidenced by ongoing cooperation and positive responses from county school systems and continual support by the West Virginia Legislature. The Statute has been amended nine times since the agencies’ inception in 1972. Each time the RESAs truly have risen to the challenges.


It would be our contention that RESAs have accomplished such without support from few external “partners.”

It is the contention of this report RESAs’ fate has been determined amid a seeming duet between the Legislature and State Board. If one couples this set of circumstances with Audit statements mentioned later in this report one sees the agencies are subject to constant flux in terms of legislative and State Board directedness regarding missional purpose.

Two most important RESA responsibilities

As previously stated, RESAs important responsibilities include providing technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems and providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of West Virginia public education students.

The picture becomes increasingly focused: RESAs serve at least two masters – the Legislature and the state Board of Education. The State Board, within bounds of legislation, is responsible for developing a rule regarding RESAs’ functioning. Finally, regional councils, within the framework of this statute, also assume a role – that is, implementing other programs and services as directed by law, the State Board or the regional council.



If one couples the directedness of statute and the accompanying state Board of Education rule-making directive and the stipulation regarding the “most important responsibilities for the agencies” with the nature of little support from external patrons, the RESA missional role is decidedly and “unsettled science,” meaning the agencies are “utilized” by the Legislature and State Board to serve purposes largely of a state-focused nature, although RESA councils can have some sway in terms of provision of RESA services to school districts.

Thus RESAs reside in a sand-laden expanse encircled by the firmly anchored domiciles of the State Board and legislature who ensure the agencies largely accomplish state-level missions and aims.

For those reasons the agencies are often seen as “divisions” of the State Board, arousing suspicion by county boards and various other educational entities as to intent – partly because of communications. (The report examines the communication issues later.)

What of possible RESA expansionism?

Tilting this discussion in a different direction: What would happen if RESA legislation having significant impact on county school employees, namely to broaden the number of school professionals who provided services to struggling students, were considered by the Legislature?

We have an answer: Just such a bill was proposed last session, passing the House of Delegates but dying in the state Senate.³⁷

In simple terms bill supporters or at least bill sympathizers, largely comprised of school administrators and county boards, could not muster support to move the measure in the Senate, although the state Board and state Department of Education both support RESAs having the ability to provide enhanced services to county boards (not necessarily this particular legislation per se). Moreover, no other entities, particularly business or other economic interests, entered the arena – the very entities whom one would suspect to support public education efficiencies, especially those aimed at advancing academic programs, namely business groups in particular.

To be fair, the bill dealt with issues regarding a controversial circuit court case in Monongalia County whereby RESA employees were dispatched to county schools. The question then arose are these individuals – retired educators – to be employed under the same statutory directive as classroom teachers (Chapter §18-A.)³⁸ Some legislators argued it was not the role of the Legislature to draft legislation hedged to overcome what the state Supreme Court of Appeals *might* rule. Fair enough, perhaps, until one realizes most of the school employee legislation in West Virginia was enacted to address court cases or judicial/adjudicatory decisions school employee groups found distasteful. This is especially true of school service personnel legislation.

Again, most of the above cited instances of law truly were after the fact not before the issue was addressed by the state Supreme Court of Appeals. (The Supreme Court heard arguments in the case in late September.)

Institutional Change

Thus, at this juncture the report notes change – institutional, structural change – can provide rechristening for public organizations, positioning those organizations to face emergent environmental considerations, although these changes, at least in West Virginia, are greatly colored by state directives and decrees – legislation, state Board of Education policies, rules and regulations – meaning the approaches are tempered and even stilted. The question becomes one of

whether the above changes in both county board and RESAs function, operations, and duties, as well as changes regarding school funding and curricula and instructional issues, actually result in moving the needle in terms of the state’s academic showing vis-a-vis other states in the nation.

We have at least one “answer” to that question, namely the state’s much-heralded public education Audit.³⁹

Reports such as the Audit often become all things to all people, including the state Board of Education, which provided its own response to the Audit.⁴⁰ That “response” became the progenitor of the much-heralded Senate Bill 359. Not surprisingly, that legislation does not arrest state Board policy or regulatory largess.

If one views local governance from varying historical policy latitudes, some observers quickly conclude the state is revisiting the direness of the early 1930s – the very era which ushered momentous changes in public schooling structure, namely creating the county unit system of local board governance – a setup much heralded by the Strayer Report. (Four states operate under a county unit education system whereas eight states have a mixed system of county units and independent school districts.)⁴¹ However, is it wise, except for political gain, to link today’s economic conditions in West Virginia to that of the Great Depression? Economists tell us our economy can and will grow largely because the capacity for economic growth is far stronger than the West Virginia of the 1930s – a state barely seven decades from its establishment in midst of the Civil War.

Irrespective of the changes to county board structure in terms of local governance, no other educational entity has received more scrutiny than that of the state’s RESAs.

Why do RESAs come under scrutiny?

Why have RESAs come under such scrutiny? Perhaps the Audit⁴² proves most instructive:

The lack of a statewide, coordinated planning process for the RESAs creates a system that fosters independence but also allows the RESAs to work in isolation, sometimes to the detriment of the entire system. There are opportunities to reduce duplication of effort and increase efficiencies if WVDE establishes a comprehensive planning process, helps RESAs identify core services to be provided by all RESAs and works to establish shared services across RESAs. For example, some RESAs have developed expertise in cooperative purchasing, others excel at technology, still others provide superior services to districts for students with special needs, and some provide specialized services such as audiology screening. In all of these examples, and more, resource sharing among RESAs should be more fully explored.

Moreover, the provision of services such as training for emergency medical technicians (EMTs) provided by some RESAs should be reviewed. While there are historical and practical reasons for why these services are provided through the RESAs, they are not part of the core mission of the Department of Education or school districts. They should, therefore, be carefully reconsidered. Anything that may cause a distraction from the core mission should be eliminated. At the very least, as discussed in RESA Funding section below, the reporting and tracking of funds should be separated so that there is an accurate picture of spending on services for the K-12 system.

Finally, the Audit states,

Opinions about the role, authority and actual services provided by RESAs vary widely... (T)here is considerable variance in the staffing and services provided by RESAs. This variance seems to be based more on the grants a particular RESA has successfully obtained than on any comprehensive needs assessment or strategic planning process. In fact, one universal comment concerning RESAs is that they must work to “follow the money” to pursue grants for their survival rather than base services on an assessment of the most critical needs of districts in the region...”⁴³

Just as with the RESA services questions, there is considerable discussion surrounding the change in RESA Council governance that occurred in 2002. It may be odd but a quote attributed to the Nixon Administration can apply here, namely that history is “rewritten.” While Nixon is sometimes quoted as saying liberals write or rewrite history that may be a misnomer, although his partisans would concur with that sentiment. ⁴⁴ Indeed, considerable time, efforts and energies are spent by RESA partisans and RESA skeptics debating why regional council governance of the entities was changed in 2002 from local officials to the state Board of Education.

Again, as with county boards, environmental pressure and changing times provide the greatest contextual framework by which to examine the conditions of county boards and certainly RESAs. By carefully noting the times, the state was in the midst of considerable wrangling about how to “handle” the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) implementation. RESAs became the entities which could bolster local efforts, including efficiencies. Later, as the state’s long-running Pauley v. Bailey⁴⁵ school finance case was “settled,” largely through creation of the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA), and a standards-based accountability model, RESAs became the means by which these structures were implemented.

This implementation responsibility, however, occurred within the realm of other factors, namely the oft-cited explanation that the necessary legislative funds to accomplish the efficiency goal were not appropriated, meaning that since 2002 the agencies have turned to entrepreneurial means to secure organizational fiscal stability. Thus, the question becomes: Is securing inter-district efficiencies a “top” RESA priority? To answer this question, one must realize concentration of the “efficiencies” side of the equation may be difficult for RESAs given staffing expertise and capacity as well as factors such as salary and benefits since RESA employees are not provided the statutory benefits of §18A. The other issue relates to what appear to be the agencies concentration on entrepreneurial endeavors.

There are, of course, the statutory directives regarding primacy of RESA endeavors, although the agencies are to strive to secure such services for county boards both in terms of statutory language and the corresponding State Board Rule⁴⁶.

Accordingly, §18-2-26, the RESA enacting statute states,

...The intent of the Legislature in providing for establishment of regional education service agencies, hereinafter referred to in this section as agency or agencies, is to provide for high quality, cost effective education programs and services to students, schools and school systems.

Since the first enactment of this section in 1972, the focus of public education has shifted from a reliance on input models to determine if education programs and services are providing to students a thorough and efficient education, to a performance based accountability model which relies on the following:

- (1) Development and implementation of standards which set forth the things that students should know and be able to do as the result of a thorough and efficient education including measurable criteria to evaluate student performance and progress;
- (2) Development and implementation of assessments to measure student performance and progress toward meeting the standards;

(3) Development and implementation of a system for holding schools and school systems accountable for student performance and progress toward obtaining a high quality education which is delivered in an efficient manner; and

(4) Development and implementation of a method for building the capacity and improving the efficiency of schools and school systems to improve student performance and progress⁴⁷.


Although the Audit quite explicitly questions county board involvement in RESA governance, stating, in part:

... There are active Superintendents' meetings in each region that provide an opportunity for district leaders to have a forum for discussion, planning and development of cooperative programs. This group also attends Regional Council meetings. More meaningful and productive oversight of the RESAs can be achieved by tapping into these Superintendents' groups and appointing them as the advisory council to the RESAs.⁴⁸

Other provisions of RESA enacting statute

In order to move forward but in a way that clearly illustrates RESA's role and purpose, we must note other provisions of the RESA enacting statute, namely:

1. The State Board is responsible for "the general supervision of the RESAs and effectuates this responsibility through its staff and through delegation to the (West Virginia Department of Education.)"
2. A major section of the Rule relates to selection of the RESA Executive Director. It reads in part, "The WVBE shall employ on behalf of each RESA an executive director who will act as the day to day administrator. It reads in part, "RESA executive directors serve at the will and pleasure of the WVBE."
3. The procedure used for such includes: "When a vacancy occurs in the position of executive director, the President of the WVBE shall notify the chairperson of the respective regional council who is charged with appointing a selection committee to make recommendations to the WVBE for the employment of an executive director. The selection committee shall be comprised of the following individuals: one member of the WVBE appointed by the WVBE President; WVBE staff at the discretion of the WVBE President; up to two WVDE staff members designated by the State Superintendent; at least one superintendent of the regional council; at least one regional council member who sits on a county board of education other than of the superintendent; and at least three other regional council members as appointed by the regional council. The selection committee is charged with drafting a job description to be approved by the WVBE. The selection committee shall forward its nominee to the WVBE for final consideration and approval.
4. Based on this segment of the WVBE Rule, the State Board determines the salaries for the eight RESA executive directors.
5. Additionally, the WVBE evaluates the RESA executive directors, basing both the employment of the executive directors and their evaluations on statute.
6. On or before December 1 of each year, each RESA shall submit an annual report to the State Superintendent who will promptly forward such report to the WVBE. The report shall include a summary of all the programs/services provided by the RESA, results of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, and results of the evaluation described in section 6.3 of this rule. Such report should also give adequate consideration to any non-quantifiable benefits



derived from RESA services which the RESA executive director and regional council deem appropriate. The report submitted by the executive director shall be reviewed by the members of the regional council who shall verify by a majority vote that the contents of the report accurately represent the performance of the RESA. The annual report for all RESAs shall be in a consistent and standardized format.

7. The (State Board) rule shall contain all information necessary for the effective administration and operation of the agencies. In developing the rule, the state board may not delegate its Constitutional authority for the general supervision of schools to the agencies, however, it may allow the agencies greater latitude in the development and implementation of programs in the service areas outlined in subsection (b) of this section with the exceptions of providing technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems and providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students in state public education.

Note: Also refer to the corresponding state Board of Education Policy §3233 - Establishment and Operation of Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs).⁴⁹

Value of RESAs

Moving apace, this report notes the aforementioned 2012 Audit pointed to the value of the state's Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). This is not surprising: 45 states have similar set-ups to RESAs or regionally configured agencies serving a number of school districts, bringing, in most instances, enhanced, enriched services individual school districts could not accomplish on their own.⁵⁰

The purpose of this report, as prescribed by a state law adopted in 2013 at the request of the state School Board Association,⁵¹ is for county superintendents and county board members, meeting within their respective RESA regions, to "...identify administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county board..."

Obviously, RESAs became part and parcel of these discussions, particularly in 2014, namely because these entities may be seen as established and perhaps best-situated to provide regional services, including county level services and functions that are administrative or coordinating in nature.

The RESA aspects of the discussion greatly expanded in the 2016 meetings, primarily because of recommendations of the County Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC). We commend the TSRC and its chairman, State Board of Education Secretary Beverly Kingery, for her leadership in providing what were productive meetings in terms of discussions regarding shared services and the roles RESAs may have with such – discussions that were healthy, productive and, most of all, sorely lacking over the years.

Association Role

NOTE: The statute states “The [West Virginia School Board Association] shall conduct the meetings and for that purpose may consult with the regional educational service agencies. The format of the meetings shall be approved by the state board in advance.”⁵²

Moreover, the statute says the report to LOCEA and the State Board “...is not limited to” identifying only matters related to sharing of county level administrative services.

The association and those who participated in House Bill 2940 regional meetings this summer realized such, working to attain greater understanding of the issues regarding shared services, especially in regard to the role of RESAs.

Based on these meetings, we submit four specific recommendations, as augmented by a careful review of meeting data – data from 52 table work groups, comprised of county board members and county superintendents, who freely discussed a number of questions relative to the issue of shared services, including those outside the confines of the actual law itself – and a post-meeting survey of county boards of education, county schools superintendents and RESA Executive Directors.

A total 193 persons responded to the survey – a 57 percent response rate.

Prefatory Prompts

Using this backdrop, this report notes prefatory prompts in terms of the report recommendations that follow:

Prompt #1

RESAs are valued entities – entities that can and will provide the efficiencies that ensure county boards receive an array of services boards otherwise may not be able to access. RESAs can be utilized to lessen duplication of services between and among county boards; and, most of all, RESAs can provide county boards stability as school districts continue to lose student enrollments. Thus, RESAs, as shored through greater, heightened accountability as we emphasize in the recommendations section of this report, will continue to meet the needs of various constituencies.

Consider these remarks by Schnurer:

If you really want to find real money, so to speak, that would also go to improving education performance and the efficiency and effectiveness of your state's education system, the place to look is at the district and regional level. So that if you looked at total expenses of about \$70 million (by focusing on efficiencies at the school district and RESA levels). That's \$70 million from cutting programs, not from taking a whack at your schools and what they're providing students, but from actually improving how they function and helping them deliver better education to your students and their families. So I think this is a fruitful area where you can look for additional savings that would be well rewarded in the quality of education that you would be providing in the schools.⁵³

Prompt #2

In terms of the post-meeting survey, respondents were provided an opportunity to determine or *prioritize* the six services RESAs provide by statutory directive. These include:

(b) *Purpose.* -- In establishing the agencies the Legislature envisions certain areas of service in which the agencies can best assist the state board in implementing the standards based accountability model pursuant to subsection (a) of this section and, thereby, in providing high quality education programs. These areas of service include the following:

- (1) Providing technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems;
- (2) Providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students in state public education;
- (3) Facilitating coordination and cooperation among the county boards within their respective regions in such areas as cooperative purchasing; sharing of specialized personnel, communications and technology; curriculum development; and operation of specialized programs for exceptional children;
- (4) Installing, maintaining and/or repairing education related technology equipment and software with special attention to the state level technology learning tools for public schools program;
- (5) Receiving and administering grants under the provisions of federal and/or state law; and
- (6) Developing and/or implementing any other programs or services as directed by law, the state board or the regional council.⁵⁴

This report notes survey respondents chose to select, at least using this instrument, no variance in terms of *prioritizing* this listing of RESA services. It is not the association's role, in drafting this report, to interpret this finding. In the listing of report recommendations, one will note that while the listing was not disturbed in terms of prioritization, the report includes a series of report recommendations regarding how to effectuate services within the statutory framework, namely through concentration of accountability, greater Regional Council directional latitude in terms of services provided or to be provided and a means to determine, both at the Regional Council level and county level, the efficacy of services – all within the context of a more market-driven setting for RESAs. One will note the Audit citation as well.

Prompt #3

While those who responded to the post-meetings surveys strongly supported county boards and county superintendents directing or leading the RESA Councils rather than the state Board of Education, this is not a direct report recommendation. Admittedly, the omission of this recommendation will not be viewed favorably by many county board members who are less reticent to broach the issue than county superintendents, who also may support this concept. (Refer to “Post-Meeting Surveys” segment of Section 3 relating to the survey under ‘Methods for Sharing Services’ titled ‘RESA Regional Councils should be governed solely by county boards’ on page 51.) Moreover, this report remains a report. In publishing this report, we acknowledge state legislators can make this change as was attempted last session.⁵⁵

More importantly, however, we note other parties, working with state lawmakers can propose changes in RESA governance. And, finally, within the spirit of this report, we note this issue should be subject to continuous review, given newly placed emphases on RESA services and accountability.

Prompt #4

Lastly, we note the value of a matrix organizational approach to ensure greater RESA capacity. Matrix structures, while having advantages and disadvantages, especially in terms of employee loyalty (a symptom of perhaps competing division loyalties within the company or organization), work best when focused on collaboration – in this sense, cross-county, cross-regional, or even for specified counties having certain student enrollments.

First, we examine of collaboration:

A key area of strength for matrixed organizations lies in collaboration—a heartening discovery, since cross-company teamwork is one of the chief aims of many matrices. We asked employees of slightly matrixed, matrixed, and supermatrixed organizations about the benefits of being on different teams. Supermatrixed employees were generally about twice as likely as slightly matrixed ones to say that their organizations not only helped them collaborate more effectively with coworkers, do their best work, and serve customers well but also stimulated bottom-up innovation. Supermatrixed employees were also somewhat more likely than those in the other categories to say they had received recognition or praise during the past seven days, that their opinions counted, and that their fellow employees were committed to doing quality work. These are key elements in the overall engagement of employees and suggest that relationships and collaboration among employees in matrixed organizations and their peers and superiors really are better.⁵⁶

Consider staffing coordination and deployment through state Department of Education

Before reviewing other aspects of this question, two other considerations are in order:

West Virginia law permits job-sharing, although not in terms of the RESA enacting statute. State law describes “job-sharing” as “...a formal, written agreement voluntarily entered into by a county board with two or more of its employees who wish to divide between them the duties and responsibilities of one authorized full-time position.”⁵⁷

Accordingly, refer to these Audit comments:

Consider expanding WVDE's working with the RESAs as a vehicle for improved assistance to school districts. As discussed in more detail in Section 1.6, the department should use RESA services more strategically and ensure they have the authority to work with low-performing counties on behalf of the department as needed.⁵⁸

In reviewing this prefatory recommendation, the report commends the State Board for employing very competent staff who can and do work with RESAs. It is the contention of this report, however, that matrix staffing, which means, for purposes of this report, that the State Board would have the ability to procure services of state Department of Educational personnel to ensure capacity for RESA services, has the advantage of ensuing expertise, support, and guidance and, most of all, a more seamless approach to county board service provision.

Of course, ins-and-outs would need to be determined – and there are many, including differing pay scales, differing job or employment orientation, constraints regarding travel, and sheer availability of persons who would provide what must be well-delineated services.

It is noted the previous State Superintendent provided such an approach but on a limited, less specific basis. The former State Superintendent, largely at the direction of a former Legislature, “re-purposed” a few State Department of Education staff, dispatching these persons to the various RESAs. And, it should be noted, the State Superintendent directed these persons to “roll out” initial segments of the Next Generation Content Standards & Objectives – forerunner of the State Board’s current Career and Readiness Standards. If one carefully reads the State Board Rule, nothing would prohibit such. In fact, the Rule does not prohibit State Department/Board staff from assisting RESAs. In fact, in terms of grants derived from the WVDE, this is required as stated in §126-3.5 which reads in part, “...When a program is funded by grants administered by the WVDE, a member of the associated WVDE staff shall assist in determining qualifications and leadership characteristics, and may be consulted during the evaluation process.” It should be noted this Rule provision relates to evaluation of staff. We do not envision the State Board Rule being amended to remove this provision, although the Board could make this decision.

With these thoughts in mind, the report includes four specific recommendations included in Section 2.

Presented to the respective chairs of the Senate and House Education Committee and state Board of Education President Michael I. Green October 1, 2016 by Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., West Virginia School Board Association Executive Director.

Section 2: Recommendations

“The county superintendent of schools and the county boards of two or more adjoining counties shall communicate with one another for the purpose of scheduling one or more joint meetings to discuss the potential advantages of consolidation of their school systems. As soon as the joint meeting is set, each county board or county superintendent shall notify the state superintendent of schools in writing of the time, place and date of the meeting...(Reports from the meetings shall) contain a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of the joint establishment of county systems, together with recommendations for the implementation of joint establishment of county school systems...” – Statutory provision of Senate Bill 14 (1988) which is considered as the first of West Virginia’s public education reform legislation (excluding early- mid-1980s legislation to revise the state’s Public School Support Plan – school aid formula.)⁵⁹

“I think the report’s recommendations section is pretty good...The main point that needs delivered in that there is a need of constant interactions between Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) and county boards and that policy and moneys from the State can be provided to both RESAs and county boards who can work to achieve the policy goals without crippling state oversight.” – West Virginia County Board of Education Member.

“.... I just want to emphasize that we need to put more energy into sharing services and blurring county lines if we are to survive as state supervised educational agency. With the impending economic losses that will continue to occur over the next several years, we need to develop a vehicle that will continue to provide students with a quality education and at the same time not deplete county budgets in our effort to do so. If we are to continue to meet regarding this purpose, we need to urge the legislature to develop an acceptable plan to move forward.” – West Virginia county superintendent.

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The report includes four recommendations, the overarching recommendation being to revise §18-2-26a.

Recommendation #1 – Revise Existing Statute Requiring Shared Services Meetings

In terms of this revision, the required biennial meetings would be superseded by a process where RESA Regional Councils would be responsible and accountable for continually seeking to secure shared county services, including county level administrative services.

In terms of the statute, this approach is a fitting and explicit RESA Council responsibility.

Accordingly, the Code states:

In furtherance of the purposes provided for in this section, the state board and the regional council of each agency shall continually explore possibilities for the delivery of services on a regional basis which will facilitate equality in the education offerings among counties in its service area, permit the delivery of high quality education programs at a lower per student cost, strengthen the cost effectiveness of education funding resources, reduce administrative and/or operational costs, including the consolidation of administrative, coordinating and other county level functions into region level functions, and promote the efficient administration and operation of the public school systems generally.

Additionally, any school may submit an evaluation of the services provided by the agency to the state superintendent at any time. This report shall include an evaluation of the agency program, suggestions on methods to improve utilization and suggestions on the development of new programs and the enhancement of existing programs. The reports and evaluations submitted pursuant to this subsection shall be submitted to the state board and shall be made available upon request to the standing committees on education of the West Virginia Senate and House of Delegates and to the secretary of education and the arts.⁶⁰

RESAs' most important responsibilities

As stated in the statute, the two areas of providing technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems and providing high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students in state public education, constitute the most important responsibilities for the agencies.

Finally, the statute is clear that State Board rules implementing the legislation "...shall contain all information necessary for the effective administration and operation of the agencies. In developing the rule, the state board may not delegate its Constitutional authority for the general supervision of schools to the agencies, however, it may allow the agencies greater latitude in the development and implementation of programs in the service areas outlined (above)..."⁶¹

Thus, this preface applies to each of our recommendations, including that relative to RESA Regional Council's continuous review of regional services and functions.

Our first report recommendation encompasses several considerations:

1. Although these meetings, comprised of all county board members and county superintendents within a particular region, prove particularly meaningful in terms of provision of information concerning services the RESA provides for county boards within its service district, only Regional Councils can secure, perfect or provide new services that must, of course, be accessed in accordance with statute or as amplified by State Board policy.
2. Seemingly, the information regarding potential services to share, as determined in these meetings, apparently has not been conveyed broadly to RESA Regional Councils and their member boards of education. While conveying such information is not a statutory directive of §18-2-26a,⁶² the statute requires the West Virginia School Board Association to provide reports of the meetings to the State Board and the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability.
3. The statute is explicit in terms of report requirements, namely:
 - Identification of the administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards;
 - An analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of sharing services in each instance; and
 - A process for implementing recommended changes.


While the association's reportage to the state Board of Education and LOCEA has occurred and while reports from the meetings have been available, this association has no leverage to secure RESA implementation of report findings. Although county boards, county board members and superintendents would have greater leverage in this respect, the anecdotal evidence does not support activity in this regard. Thus, follow-through has proven to be a deficient, namely ownership of the resulting report recommendations.

Report ownership

The ownership question is coupled with additional considerations. By participating in the regional meetings, one soon discovers communication about what RESAs "do" does not seem to be readily disseminated between and among county boards in the region – much less what RESAs *could* do. In reviewing this matter – communications being an issue raised by most members convened as a loosely-assembled report writing team – various solutions were proposed. Most of the communications-related issues will not be included in this report, such as that of sharing RESA agendas at county board meetings and receipt of reports from Council members.

However, if meetings were superseded by continuous RESA Council review of potential areas for sharing services, this association becomes a more significant conduit by which all county board members and county superintendents can learn about efforts to secure services in various regions, including the benefits and disadvantages of each. The association's two bi-annual statewide meetings, in fact, provide to be fitting venues for such. Moreover, the association, in conjunction with RESA Councils and the State Board, could provide biennial sessions, particularly for newly-elected members, in terms of RESA roles and responsibilities. In this regard, an Orientation for newly-elected county boards of education members proves of equal promise.⁶³

In terms of the Regional Council, which must operate within bounds of statutory directives as listed above, counties could be polled as to potential shared service needs; the shared services items would be included on each Regional Council agenda; RESA Executive Directors would be responsible for reporting progress



toward meeting these aims – that is, aims as endorsed by the Regional Councils. The state Board of Education and Legislature would receive semi-annual reports regarding the shared services considerations.

Additionally, at least once annually, all RESA Regional Councils could convene as a body to discuss shared services, opportunities, and lessons learned.

While the regional meetings are appreciated and three such meetings have been held, there is little to show in terms of implementing the various report recommendations. Thus, veteran county board members conclude the meetings are redundant, although expressing the desire for county board member training to be delivered at the local level, focusing on other subject or topics.

Moreover, the meetings are costly in that the statute declares the sessions “special boards of education meetings,” meaning county board members receive compensation, reimbursement for mileage and allowable expenses. Attendant costs include facilities, meals, meeting coordination, registrations, etc.

And, as is reiterated in other parts of this report, greater provision of the above information and use of the RESA Regional Councils to continuously discuss shared services, within the context of existing statute and a likely attendant state Board of Education Rule, will ensure accountability for this process and that the shared services discussion is taken seriously.

Lastly, the association made an attempt to amend this statute during the 2016 regular session. While that legislation was not adopted, namely for county boards and county superintendents to meet regionally, to discuss possible constraints that affect their abilities to operate efficiently and effectively, the association does not plan to introduce this particular legislation in the 2017 session. Rather the recommendations in this report serve as a locus from which to discuss several public education issues from the vantage of involving a greater number of interests within the public education community.⁶⁴

Recommendation #2 – Configuring RESA Services

Simply stated, this report recommendation focuses on the capacity of RESAs to examine or reconfigure existing services or, just as importantly, to provide new services to county boards. Again, these questions must be examined within the context of the RESA enacting legislation.

Given that consideration, the issue of RESA “capacity” is examined, namely for new services. In exploring this question, the report concludes RESAs have the capability to develop such capacity – again within statutory and policy frameworks as well as other incumbent factors, namely moneys (new moneys), the types of services that might be requested from a RESA Regional Council, and the Council’s consideration regarding “return on investment” if the program were implemented as weighed in terms of potential benefits for a particular county and/or RESA.

While these become process issues, other questions relate to how these services – reconfigured or new – would be arranged. This is not a simple proposition. However, this question cannot be avoided if, indeed, we wish to emphasize effective shared services.

Several approaches are possible, including:

1. Prorating services based on use and number of students affected;
2. Securing consistency in terms of how RESA services are delivered;
3. Provision of services which can be measured in terms of effectiveness, including independent review;
4. Consideration of securing services from other RESAs – an existing practice; and
5. Examining procurement of services through development of state-level service providers.

In terms of awareness of RESA opportunities and their effectiveness, this report recommends an approach whereby the RESA Councils, individually and as a whole, deliberate and determine these standards, noting the statutory provisions cited above.

We also recommend establishment of a *Best of Class* model whereby effective programs – programs with proven results – are made known to all county boards and superintendents. It is suggested the association website and that of the various RESAs be used for this purpose.

Additionally, RESA Regional Councils would be consulted along with county board members within the RESA, and perhaps independent sources, to study and determine cost/benefit analyses.

In conformity with the RESA enacting statute, programs and services could be evaluated in relation to return on investment, including direct involvement of county superintendents and, as fitting, county boards.


In terms of existing services, this report acknowledges RESA Regional Councils may need to displace or discontinue some services, including some grant-driven services or non-public education services, realizing the statutory injunction concerning services as outlined above (technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems and provision of high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students in the state). Of course, this notion is dependent upon RESA and county capacities. Accordingly, it is acknowledged there must be a correlation between expressed county service needs and costs assessed the counties for such services and whether such prove cost effective, or if services may be procured in another manner.

Recommendation #3 – County-Secured Shared Services

In terms of the existing statute, §18A-4-8d, which was first adopted in 1989, this report suggests the statute be revisited in terms of its intent and revised accordingly.

The statutory provisions themselves are narrow and the language seems questionable in terms of application, given various personnel legislative and regulatory rulings over the years.

While there seems to be no repository relating to the degree to which county boards are sharing services, a few examples have been proffered during regional meetings, especially that involving county food service specialists.



Based on our review, the county-secured services approach may have considerable merit above and beyond central office positions – the salient of the recommendations of the state Board of Education’s Commission on School District Governance and Administration.⁶⁵ The Commission discovered, over a 15-month period, these type services would not only prove economical but also “free” county administrators in particular to concentrate more fully on the student achievement aspect of the equation. Perhaps “ahead of its time,” the House Bill 2940 meetings demonstrate county boards and superintendents are discovering in at least consider the Commission’s thrust in terms of services. (The State Board did not approve the Commission Report per se, but adopted a motion whereby the Report is to be considered a “working document.” The motion also included a provision whereby a “... (State) Board committee will be established to take up the report with commission members invited to participate in meetings at the discretion of the committee chair.”)⁶⁶

Thus, careful review of the statute, existing practices, related personnel statutes, and lessons learned is imperative.

Moreover, county-secured shared services may prove of greater value to clusters of county boards who face considerable declines in student population and who share geographic proximity.

One also should consider that use of this approach does not mean county boards would forego RESA services. In fact, RESA services may augment or RESAs may coordinate the arrangements between and among county boards.

Lastly, the report uses this juncture to comment on a reference made by Gov. Earl Ray Tomblin in his 2013 State of the State Address, namely,

The Education Audit found no other State has so many laws that limit local initiatives including districts, principals, and teachers... Over the past 30 years we have seen a 26 percent decrease in student population. I believe the community, especially parents, should always have access to locally elected officials who oversee their schools. But that does not mean we can and should provide all the current administrative overhead to each of our 55 county school boards. We must become more efficient...⁶⁷

In the 2013, 2014 and 2016 regional meetings, county board members and county superintendent’s note there may be no correlation between declining a county’s decline in student population and services students need or require – services which may be secured through arrangements with a neighboring county or through the RESA. In fact, many counties experience an increased demand in student services as populations decline. (Based on this information, there may be need for heightened services for special needs students in particular.)

In other words, efficiencies between and among county boards must be examined in a multi-dimensional sense, especially RESA Council determination of programmatic services.

Recommendation #4 – Innovation

Lastly, this report recommends policymakers, public education interests, the business communities and others concentrate on educational innovation in terms of provision of educational services.

This facet of the shared services discussion seems absent.

As mentioned earlier, the State Board’s Commission on School District Governance and Administration Report may serve as a locus from which policymakers can readily review innovations for provision of public education services.⁶⁸

In terms of innovation, this report recommends an emphasis on the following:

1. Pilot projects – projects where county boards have considerable leeway to try new or innovative approaches to education programs and services. The approach can be region-wide or in terms of clusters of counties having various student enrollments or similar characteristics, including county enrollments, geography, or needs. Legislation adopted in 2014, in fact, encourages such – The Innovation School District Act.⁶⁹ Based on at least one county board’s attempt to secure the establishment of a “School District Innovation Zone,” the procedure is cumbersome and fraught with easy paths for veto by school employee interests in particular who may not support county board innovation attempts. Again, this information may be subject to greater review. It is not necessarily a conclusion accepted by the association.
2. Use of a data-driven approaches to policymaking, educational programming and determination of programmatic or service effectiveness. This is a strongly held report conclusion. Simply stated, county boards of education often do not rely upon data-based decision-making prompts. The result may be immediate or hastily made decisions rather decision-making as seen in a continuum and in regard to addressing a number of variables than can and do influence decision-making.
3. Independent analysis of the effectiveness of programmatic offerings provided by various public education entities, including RESAs.
4. Determination of the “core services” county boards should provide as well as services which could be secured from various sources, including RESAs, or through cooperatives of counties, contracting or other means. In the aforementioned 2015 presentation to the Joint Committee on Education (Section 1), Eric N. Schnurer whose firm, Public Works LLC, conducted the state audit of public schools, discussed this concept stating, “We would go in the opposite direction (elimination of RESAs) on that. If you want to push services down from the state level...rather than pushing everything down to the local district level, there are efficiencies to be achieved in a number of areas by considering regional purchasing and a variety of other functions...”⁷⁰
5. Examination of constraints that affect innovation, including various laws, especially school personnel laws, as well as State Board rules and regulations and the state’s Public School Support Program (PSSP) or school aid formula within the context of public schools having large responsibility to provide an educated citizenry.

6. Utilization of technology to enhance educational innovation. The focus here is not only that relating to programs and services, but also to use of Learning Management Systems⁷¹ to highlight best practices and for an array of other uses, including county and regional climate surveys designed to determine emergent trends or societal issues facing school districts, RESAs or the state.
7. Statutory and/or gubernatorial establishment of a state-level committee of businesspersons and those of an entrepreneurial bent, appointed by the governor, to continually assess matters regarding provision of public education services, including, but not limited to, county level administrative services.

In order to accomplish this task, the committee would review matters regarding service delivery, how services can best be delivered, provided or shared, including cooperatives and collectives (comprised of various counties), or state-level provisions for service delivery, including those of so-called back office positions. In order not to disturb the constitutional authority of the State Board – an explicit facet of the RESA enacting law – the committee would report their recommendations directly to the State Board via the WVBE Finance Committee (or a similar structure).

Moreover, the committee itself would have no statutory authority to compel acceptance of its recommendations. The committee would be “staffed” by the State Board and/or other state agencies for which it could or desires to procure staffing or expertise, including the Office of the Secretary of Education and the Arts.

As with the County Board Member Training Standards Review Committee (TSRC),⁷² members could serve without compensation. In terms of accountability, the committee’s work product would be subject to review by the governor’s office and reported to the legislature. Moreover, the Commission must be populated with representatives of school employee groups so as not to operate in a vacuum in terms of how recommendations will affect school employees and students.

The Audit also provides an additional point for consideration relative to appointment of such a committee, namely one of cross-agency accountability. In this case, involving the Secretary of Education and the Arts.

The Audit states:

In considering the specific recommendation that responsibility for professional development be taken from the Secretary of Education and the Arts and consolidated in WVDE, we necessarily considered the history and institutional arrangements behind the unique role that the Secretary has played in West Virginia.

The incumbent Secretary, Kay Goodwin, is a forceful and talented exponent of that role, particularly for the function of maintaining a gubernatorial presence (if, indeed, a small one) in the formulation of education policy and the oversight of system-wide spending that accounts for roughly half of all state funds in West Virginia. But this raises the questions, Why professional development? And why not everything else? The answers are historically and politically, not education and efficiency, based.⁷³

This should not, however, preclude the Department and State Board from working with the Governor to improve the system and to ensure better outcomes for students. This review is a significant step in bringing about this type of cooperative approach to identifying ways the education system in West Virginia can be re-focused on students.

8. Exploration of RESA- or state-level pooling endeavors such as an insurance pool, a pool for Workers Compensation, or even a pooling set-up for *general* legal services – a frequently-cited service county board members and county superintendents’ mention for potential regional offerings. Under these plans, boards would pool resources to receive economies of scale.
9. Determining whether RESA regional configuration is relevant, given the fact the regions may have been based on patterns for development of health care services in wake of the Great Society programs of the mid-1960s. Other questions abound: Given its capacity, does Kanawha County “need” a RESA or could Kanawha County provide services to other counties in its or another RESA region? (According to information received in terms of preparation of this report, Kanawha County provides a lion’s sharing of funding for at least one major RESA position.) Or, as one may consider the greater aspects of this question, if county boards within this RESA were to work with the Kanawha County Board for certain service deliveries, could the RESA – with smaller staff and focus – serve more of a facilitative role? This report does not attempt to answer that question. Obviously, those are the type questions which should be posed in regard to RESA configuration.
10. Just as importantly, as the regional meetings have progressed, the intent has focused from “county-level administrative services” to the kinds of “back office” services RESAs could provide. This development is not unexpected. Just consider the entire thrust of the State Board’s Commission report cited previously.⁷⁴ Moving in this direction – the essential thrust of the Commission Report – would entail myriad changes in state laws regarding school employee deployment. That is, to say the least. Again, if the intent of public education is to provide the best possible schooling, should not this question be posed within this context rather than existing or current personnel arrangements?
11. What about a state-level approach to some services? Both the Audit cites such and the Commission report cite this approach. Again, considerable details would need to be addressed. In certain instances, this approach may be best. In fact, RESAs are involved in cooperate purchasing.

Innovation is critical

Innovation is critical because it recognizes the geographical challenges the state faces. Innovation, however, is constrained due to politics (county, regional, statewide), turf battles, resistance to change along with various notions West Virginians readily accept – that demographics will assuredly predict student educational standing and progress.

More than ever, West Virginia must educate our students at a time when we are also seeking economic security. The state’s aforementioned economic condition can only be addressed with an educated workforce. The question we face is whether our existing education system is equipped to provide that workforce.

Certainly, the shared services question is one of relevance. Of greater relevance, however, is the question of “who” will provide the policy leadership to secure that workforce. Of course, most report readers will say the state Legislature in tandem with the state Board of Education. Typical responses, of course, prove ill-fitting for atypical times.

Indeed, by working together – embracing the common vision that every student can, should and will succeed – requires a commitment of the entire educational system. County boards, school employees, teachers, students, citizens, the business community and various interests must invest in this vision. For such to

occur, as noted by the Audit, constituent groups (school districts were cited) “must be educated on the role of RESAs and correct the perception that districts must invite RESAs into the county.”⁷⁵

This informational process will allow other informed entities play a valuable role, including RESAs.

Final Observations

This report concludes with five observations:

Observation #1

While this report recommends RESA governance remains as specified in statute, legislation must be crafted so the State Board role, to the degree possible, becomes that of facilitative leadership, allowing RESAs to regroup, restructure and operate to best serve county boards. The greatest role the State Board can embrace is to encourage innovation and creativity from the classroom to the RESA regions.

This does not mean the State Board relinquishes power and authority. In fact the State Board cannot do this nor does this report support this proposition. Rather, this report sees a state Board of Education, having enunciated a vision for public education, working to provide the technical assistance, through matrix staffing with the state Department of Education as discussed in this report, to ensure that students learn and that educational progress becomes the exemplar for which the entire educational system seeks to achieve.

Bluntly put: If counties do not embrace needed change to ensure system progress, the State Board has the ability to secure this critical programmatic objective. The State Board, from a greater, more independent point of vantage, must be willing to embrace innovation. For instance the matrix staffing system as proffered in this report will ensure the right technical personnel are deployed to county boards.

This approach also will serve to amplify the significance, importance and role of the state Department of Education as an engaged player in education reform, coupled with clustered RESA endeavors and county boards’ involvement – fostering niches for development of local talent and purveyors of innovation and creativity.

RESA success revolves around standardization of best practices coupled with examination of agency capabilities, resources, and administration.

Observation #2

Communication seems the underlying issue facing RESAs. Bettered communications will provide greater understanding of RESAs and must be multi-dimensional. Effective communication strategies will include not only awareness of RESA offerings but will address access, effectiveness and the need for innovation – all issues covered in this report.

Observation #3

The power of the State Board in terms of RESAs, particularly as relating to governance, derives from the Board’s rule-making ability. If the existing legislative methodology is used, changes proposed in the report – many of which would require changes in legislation – will require further enunciation through a State Board rule. This is fitting given various court decrees. In terms of revised rule-making we urge the State Board to involve a broad array of individuals in order for the board to secure an enriched policy.

Observation #4

In the previously-mentioned 2015 meeting of the Joint Committee on Education Schnurer cited the need for further review of both the state Board of Education and state Department of Education to ascertain focus on efficiencies. To a great degree this report explores that notion within a context of matrix staffing. And while this report merit may have merit, another of Schnurer’s concepts may prove more apt, namely use of on-going efficiency audits of county boards in terms of efficiency equations.⁷⁶ This report addressees that idea in regard to establishing a state-level committee of businesspersons and others to continually assess matters regarding provision of public education services, including, but not limited to, county level administrative services. Perhaps this group could develop such an evaluative framework. (See Recommendation #4, item 7 on page 28).

Observation #5

These words from §18-2-26a may prove instructive as these discussions continue, especially when resignations, retirements, staffing realignments or similar events may occur.⁷⁷

This very statutory language is of critical significance given the fact nine bills regarding sharing of administrative services were introduced prior to the passage of House Bill 2940, including Senate Bill 620 (2006) which was adopted by the state Senate by unanimous vote but died on the House of Delegates “Inactive Calendar.”

A provision of that bill stated:

Before posting notice of an opening in any regular full-time or regular part-time central office administrative position of employment other than the county superintendent, the county board shall determine the feasibility of obtaining the needed administrative services from the county board's regional education service agency and of sharing the services of administrators with the county boards of contiguous counties. The determination shall be in writing and contain the supporting reasons⁷⁸.

Finally, a subsequent bill included the above provisions of statute as well as a process of notification (state superintendent) in regard to the effectiveness of such positions.⁷⁹

While not endorsed by this report per se in terms of a specific recommendation, there are both statutory antecedents in Code wherein sharing of at least administrative services were contemplated by the Legislature and which provide an incremental means to formalize a process whereby county boards would be encouraged before filling at least administrative positions – perhaps county level administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions (as stated in House Bill 2940) – to seek the feasibility of procuring these services from county boards in contiguous counties or their RESA (or RESAs).⁸⁰

Fiscal Matters

These last report observations are provided without neither an observation nor a recommendation.

Accordingly, in various settings over the last several months, including State Board meetings, comments have been made regarding the fiscal health of county boards. Based on this information, 13 county boards have been placed on what is known as a State Board fiscal “watch list.”

The purpose of the watch list is for the state Department of Education to provide regular financial updates regarding county boards having been placed on the “watch list.” This information, in fact, is forwarded to the State Board's Finance Committee. Those county boards having been placed on the “watch list” are in intervention/takeover status, in a deficit, or trending toward deficit. Once selected for the watch list, the WVDE Office of School Finance performs monthly budget versus actual monitoring and follows up with the county board treasurer regarding various budget variances.

As enunciated in various reports to the State Board, the monthly monitoring is intended to help the county boards of education in question regularly assess their financial situations. The “watch list” will “change” if or when the WVDE Office of School Finance receives updated financial reports or other financial information from the counties involved. Additionally, the current “watch list” will be reviewed once the FY16 unaudited financial statements are received for all county boards. (As an aside, the State Board Commission envisioned a greater role for the Board's Finance committee.)

The State Board recently announced 16 county boards ended the year with less than \$1 million in unrestricted fund balance.

(Refer to Appendix 1)

The report, while not dwelling greatly, on these matters notes the following in regard to RESAs' revenues and unrestricted fund balances:

- Total Revenue All RESAs (FY15) - \$53,596,449
- Total Revenues All RESAs (FY13) - \$48,842,527
- RESAs Unrestricted Fund Balances with OPEB Liability Excluded (FY15) - \$10,844,783
- RESAs Unrestricted Fund Balances with OPEB Liability Excluded (FY13) - \$5,128,870

(Refer to Appendix 2)

We note the following in terms of the number of county administrative positions:

- Number of County Administrative Personnel (FY14) – 609.44
- Number of County Administrative Personnel (FY16) – 620.56

(Refer to Appendix 3)

Note: The earlier fiscal year figures are included in the Commission Report and are used here for comparative purposes.

If one makes a cursory review of this data, he or she may discover the number of “Directors/Managers (Instruction)” may have declined from 198.01 positions in FY14 to 185.18. One, however, must take several factors into consideration before interpreting the import or significance of this statistic. As stated, it is not within the scope of this report to make such an interpretation or recommendation.

Note: in terms of preparing this report, the association received dozens of pages of information, data, statistics and reports regarding services provided by the state's eight RESAs as well as copies of reports having been prepared for the state Legislature and State Board in regard to RESA service provisions, institutional effectiveness and other operational considerations.

That information is not included within this report. A series of Power Point slides provided to the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Education Tuesday, September 9, 2014,⁸¹ appear to greatly inform the other information cited.

That interim study was conducted in terms of the passage of House Concurrent Resolution 134 during the West Virginia Legislature's 2014 Regular Session.⁸²

For more information regarding this array of information, the reader may wish to contact RESA 6.⁸³

Presented to the respective chairs of the Senate and House Education Committee and state Board of Education President Michael I. Green October 1, 2016 by Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., West Virginia School Board Association Executive Director.

Section 3: Data & Results

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Regional Meetings - Background

H.B. 2940 was passed during the 2013 Regular Session of the West Virginia Legislature. Among the provisions contained in the bill was a requirement that

“...all county superintendents of schools and members of county boards belonging to the same regional educational service agency shall meet together to identify administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions that may be shared between or among the county boards, especially when resignations, retirements, staffing realignments or similar events may occur.” **§18-2-26A**

Regional meetings were held in 2013 and 2014. Participants included RESA staff, county superintendents, county boards of education members, a few county board central office administrators, West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) staff members, four State Board of Education members, and two legislative staff members. Meetings were conducted generally in line with the RESA districts. Because the W.Va. Code only requires a biennial review, meetings were not conducted in 2015. Moving forward, meetings will be conducted every two (2) years in accordance with W.Va. Code. Meetings will coincide with biennial Primary Elections at which county boards of education members are elected.

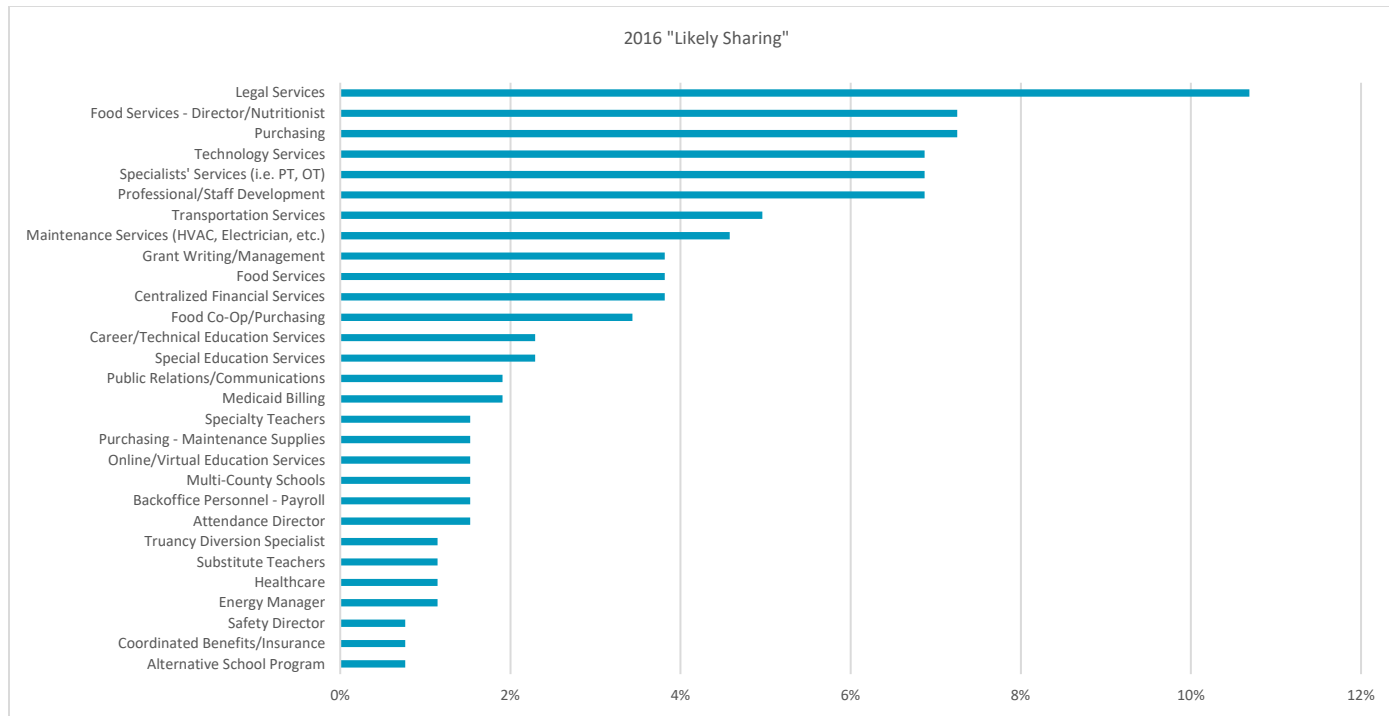
YEAR	PARTICIPANTS
2013	308
2014	322
2016	302

Each year (2013 and 2014) the West Virginia School Board Association produced a report containing the results of the discussions from the regional meetings. The reports provided a synopsis of “ideas for shared services” in addition to other perceived barriers or benefits to such shared services.

Results

2016 Results

The following series of findings were determined by the 52 work groups (county boards of education members and county superintendents) who participated in the eight regional meetings. Groups were comprised of participants from various counties in the Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) area. County superintendents were discussion leaders with persons recording recommendations selected from among county board members at each table grouping.



The chart above depicts the results of the regional meetings held in 2016. The likely ideas for shared services are ranked in order of most frequently mentioned during the group discussions. Other ideas that only elicited one response each include: adult education, audit assistance, curriculum for special classes, engineer for construction projects, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) specialists, innovation sharing, levy sharing, uniform purchasing, reporting/paperwork coordination, school improvement director, use of security companies, superintendents, testing coordinators, and textbook/licensing.

Definitions (in order of ranking):

Legal Services: Shared attorney or shared legal services for multiple counties.

Food Services – Director/Nutritionist: Position of “Food Services Director” or “Child Nutritionist” for food services to be shared by multiple counties. (Also, refer to “Food Co-Op/Purchasing: below.)

Purchasing: Reflects results of purchasing materials/supplies generally. Also includes responses for shared position “Purchasing Director.”

Technology Services: Responses included: Tech centers, technology repair, Information Technology (IT) specialist, webmaster, and other general technology services.

Specialists’ Services: Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Audiologists, Drug Treatment Experts – and related services.

Professional/Staff Development: Continuing Education, professional and staff development generally.

Transportation Services: Shared bus drivers and training, transportation parts purchasing, shared bus garages, fuel purchasing and maintenance.

Maintenance Services: Services related to Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) personnel, electrical, general maintenance, grounds keeping, and plumbing personnel, etc.

Grant Writing/Management: Responses generally described the need for a central grant writer and/or system/personnel to help manage grants for various projects.

Food Services: Function and execution of food services at the school level.

Centralized Financial Services: Accounting services and treasurer positions. Some responses included ideas to share A/R functions.

Food Co-Op/Purchasing: Shared or expanded food co-op and purchasing. (Also, refer to “Food Services – Director/Nutritionist”: above.)

Career/Technical Education Services: Responses concentrated on sharing programmatic aspects of Career/Technical Education programs more so than concentrating on existing Career/Technical Education facilities.

Special Education Services: Responses did not expand beyond “Special Education Services.”

Public Relations/Communications: Shared position for a “public relations officer” or “communications director” to help with media responses and messaging for school initiatives.

Medicaid Billing: Shared position to handle Medicaid billing needs.

Specialty Teachers: Responses included needs for math/science teacher shortages, foreign language instructors, homebound instructors, etc.

Purchasing – Maintenance Supplies: Combining or sharing purchasing powers specifically related to maintenance supplies and equipment.

Online/Virtual Education Services: Resources to help with online and virtual education.

Multi-County Schools: Schools that serve a multi-county area.

Back Office Personnel – Payroll: Shared payroll services.

Attendance Director: Shared position to facilitate attendance or address student issues.

Truancy Diversion Specialist: Shared position to prevent and intervene in truancy issues.

Substitute Teachers: Move away from county-specific substitute teacher lists, utilize multi-county list.

Healthcare: Responses were not descriptive of which healthcare services could be shared.

Energy Manager: Shared position “energy manager.”

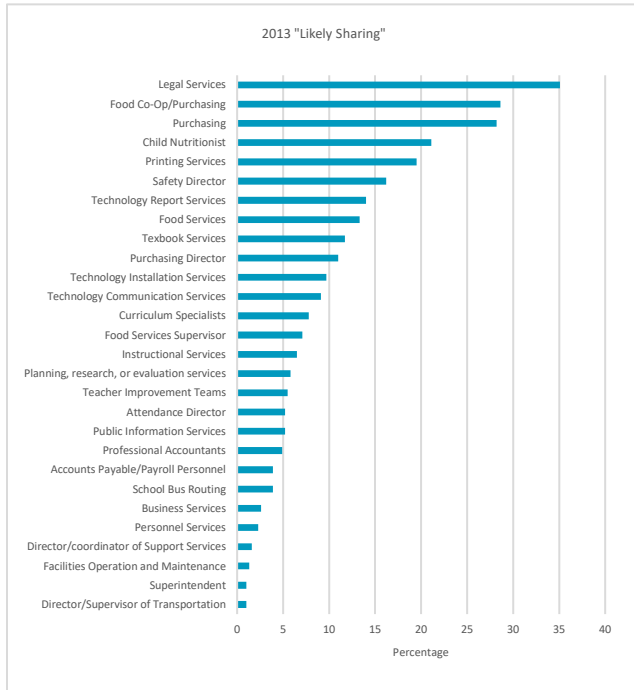
Safety Director: Shared position “safety director.”

Coordinated Benefits/Insurance: Responses indicated need for shared services relating to the management and delivery of employee benefits.

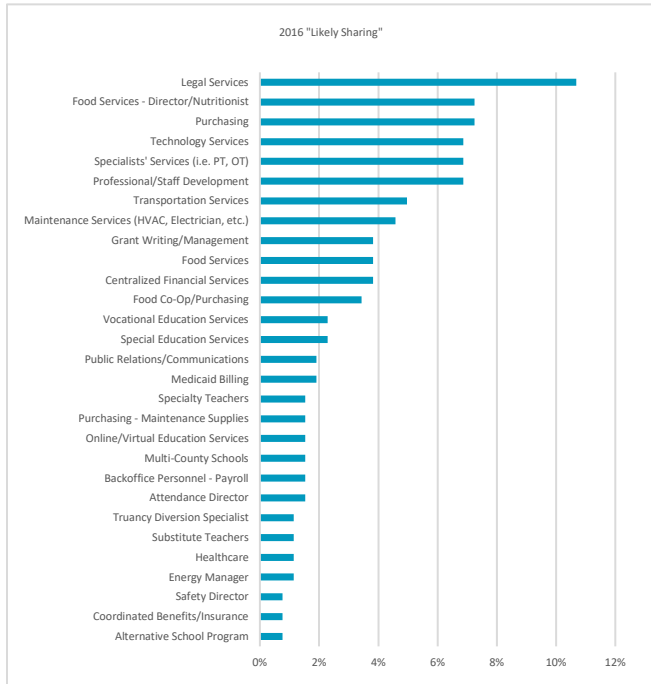
Alternative School Program: Multi-county alternative school.

Comparing 2013, 2014 and 2016

In 2014 the group discussions continued focusing on the benefits and challenges of sharing services. In addition to sharing the top six ideas for shared services from 2013 (legal services, food co-op/purchasing, purchasing, child nutritionist, printing services, and safety director) nine other ideas surfaced.



- 2014 ADDITIONS**
1. Specialists' Services
 2. Professional/Staff Development
 3. Technology Support Services
 4. Transportation Services
 5. Regional Grant-writing Services
 6. Sharing of Professional/Service Personnel Substitutes
 7. Maintenance Services (HVAC, energy, etc.)
 8. Centralized Fiscal Services
 9. Various Specialized Services (i.e. communications director)



Trends

The availability of data from three different years (2013, 2014, and 2016) assists in the extrapolation of services that are perceived to be more important and those that are no longer perceived as a possibility. Certain trends are demonstrating using the rank of shared service ideas from 2013 compared to 2016. Additionally, the 2014 “additional services” list provides insight as to changing attitudes toward certain services in between the 2013 and 2016 rankings.

Top Downward Trends

TRENDING DOWN

Printing Services

Textbook Services

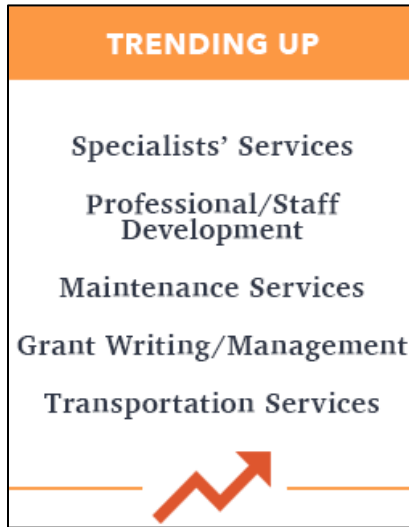
Safety Director

Food Co-Op/Purchasing



1. **Printing Services.** Printing Services was identified as the 5th highest ranking shared service idea from the 2013 regional meetings. However, during the 2016 discussions there were zero (0) references to “printing services” or related ideas.
2. **Textbook Services.** Although it did not achieve a top ranking for shared service ideas in 2013 it still was the 9th highest out of 28. In 2016, however, textbook services received zero (0) mentions.
3. **Safety Director.** The 6th highest ranking in 2013, “safety director” fell near the bottom of the rankings (21st) during the 2016 discussions.
4. **Food Co-Op/Purchasing.** Food co-op and purchasing services was the 2nd most frequent response in 2013. Although food services continues to receive several mentions during regional discussions, the “food co-op/purchasing” category fell to the 12th most frequent response in 2016. **However**, the reason for this drop may be explained by the services that are actually being shared as indicated in the 2016 discussions (see “2016 – What Services are Actually Shared?” below). If schools/districts are in fact implementing food co-ops its ranking as an “idea” may indeed drop.

Top Upward Trends



1. **Specialists' Services.** Physical Therapy, Occupations Therapy, Speech, Audiology and related services was added as an idea for shared services in 2014. During the 2016 discussions it received the 5th highest ranking after not making the chart in 2013.
2. **Professional/Staff Development.** There were hints of ideas relating to professional and staff development in 2013, but mostly directed toward specific support roles. This was clearly a bigger idea during the 2014 refresher discussions and it received the 6th highest ranking of ideas for shared services from the 2016 regional meetings.
3. **Maintenance Services.** In 2013 ideas surrounding maintenance of schools and grounds keeping filtered toward the bottom of the rankings. In 2014, however, it was added as an idea with increasing importance. The 2016 discussions corroborated the 2014 trend as HVAC, electrician, and general maintenance services and positions achieved the 8th highest ranking of ideas.
4. **Grant Writing/Management.** Sharing grant writers/managers with multiple counties was the 9th highest ranking of ideas from the 2016 discussions. In 2013 there were no mentions of the shared services, but it was included in the additional ideas during the 2014 regional meetings.
5. **Transportation Services.** Transportation services was the last ranking of ideas from the 2013 discussions – it was specifically geared toward the director/supervisor position. However, several ideas relating to transportation services were shared in 2014 and it received the 7th highest ranking in 2016.

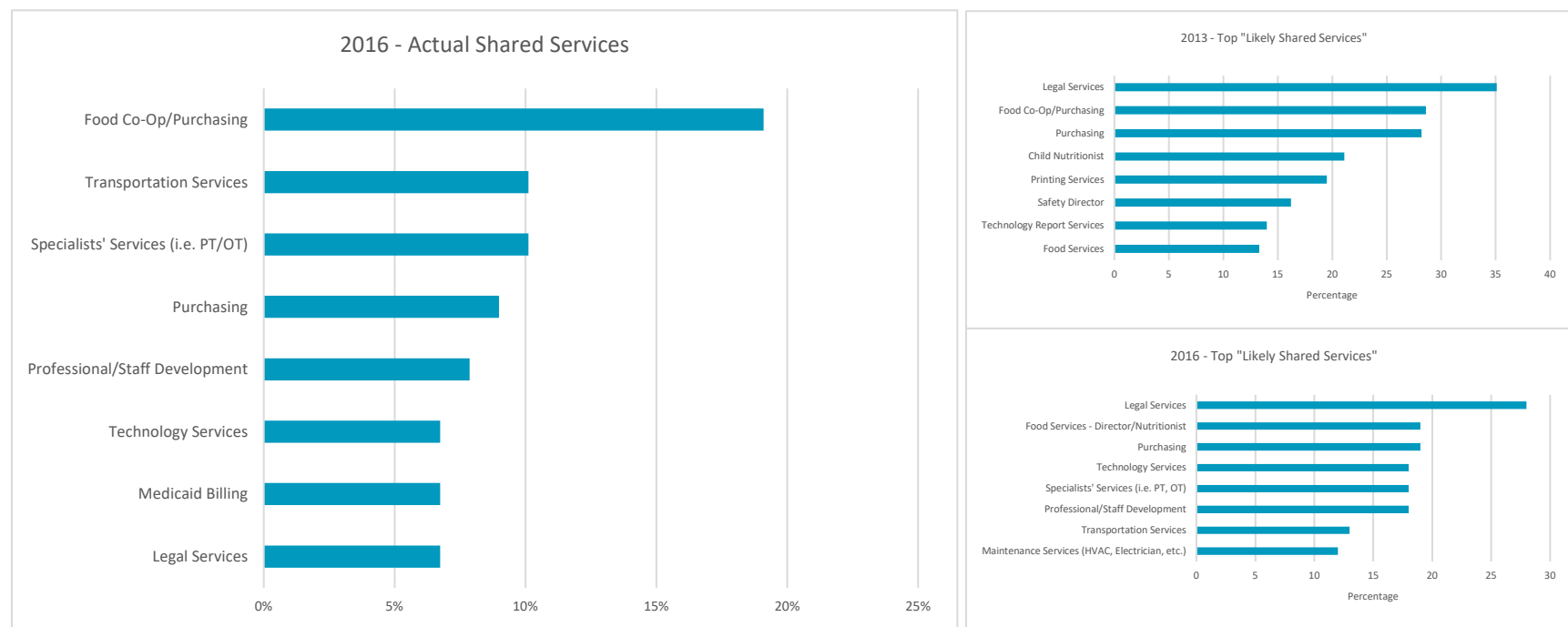
Consistently High-Ranking Shared Service Ideas

1. **Legal Services.** Consistent throughout discussions from all years is the idea that legal services could be shared in several different arrangements – either via RESA administered or informal multi-county arrangements. Legal services remains the top-ranked shared-service idea from 2013 through 2016. *NOTE: RESA 2 (Cabell, Lincoln, Logan, Mason, Mingo, Wayne County Boards of Education) has employed a RESA attorney.*
2. **Food Services – Director/Nutritionist.** The Child Nutritionist shared position was ranked 4th in the 2013 regional discussions. In 2016 the focus on “food service director” and/or “child nutritionist” continued to receive several mentions – achieving the 2nd highest ranking.
3. **Technology Services.** Specific technology needs were scattered throughout the 2013 report. If those responses were grouped together it would have achieved a higher ranking. In 2014 technology services was again recommended. The 2016 discussions corroborated those sentiments as technology services achieved the 4th highest ranking among 29 ideas.
4. **Purchasing.** General purchasing services retained its 3rd highest ranking from 2013 to 2016.



2016 – What Services are Actually Shared?

The 2016 regional meetings revealed services that are now being shared among counties. The below charts depict the top shared services (as percentage of responses during regional meetings) compared to the top ideas for shared services in 2013 and 2016.



As referenced earlier in the “Top Downward Trending” sharing ideas, “Food Co-Op/Purchasing” is the top service actually shared by counties. One can infer from this that the reason food co-ops are not no longer a top sharing idea is because counties are actually deploying this strategy. All other services being shared are, by-and-large, in line with the responses from the 2013, 2014, and 2016 discussions with the exception of “Medicaid Billing.” “Legal Services,” although consistently achieving the top ranked shared-service idea, has not been widely executed by counties to this point.

There were two comments of interest during the discussions relating to services actually being shared.

Relating to sharing “**Special Education Services**” one participant stated: “*Medicaid problems complicate special education issues.*”

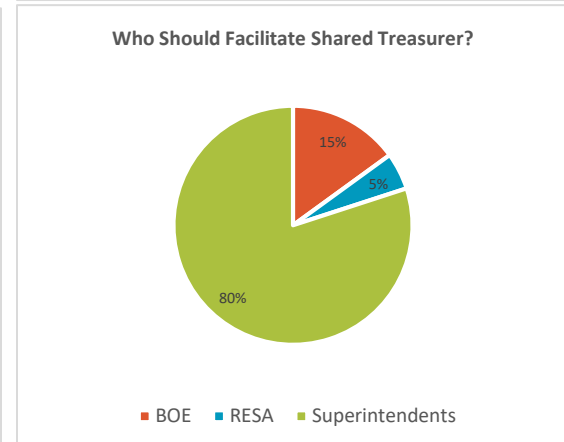
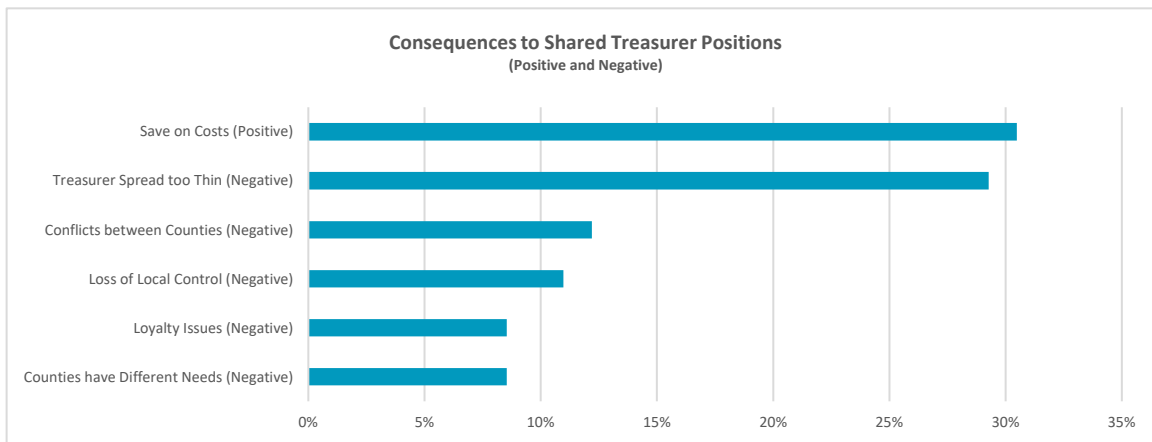
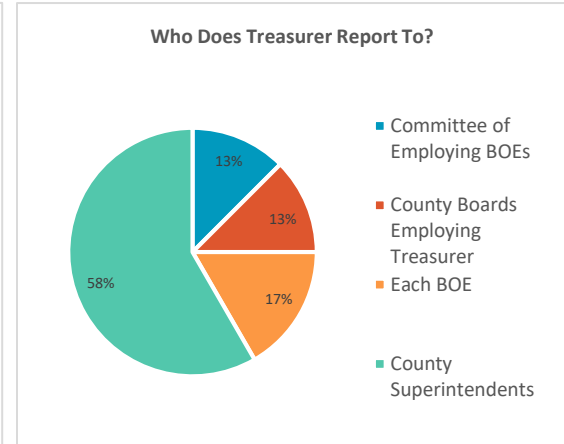
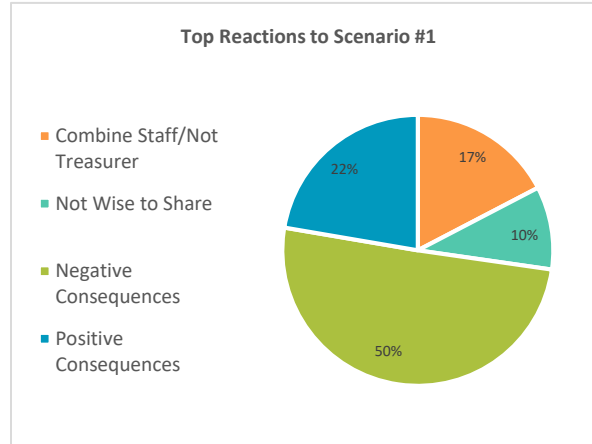
Relating to sharing “**Transportation Services**” one participant stated: “*We are doing regional bus-driver training, however it is not cost-effective due to travel time.*”

Shared Service Hypotheticals – Reactions

During the 2016 regional meetings groups were posed three hypothetical scenarios relating to shared services between counties. Participants were encouraged to register their reactions to the scenarios relating to logistics; potential positive and negative consequences; and roles for RESAs, county boards of education and county superintendents.

Scenario #1 – Shared Treasurer

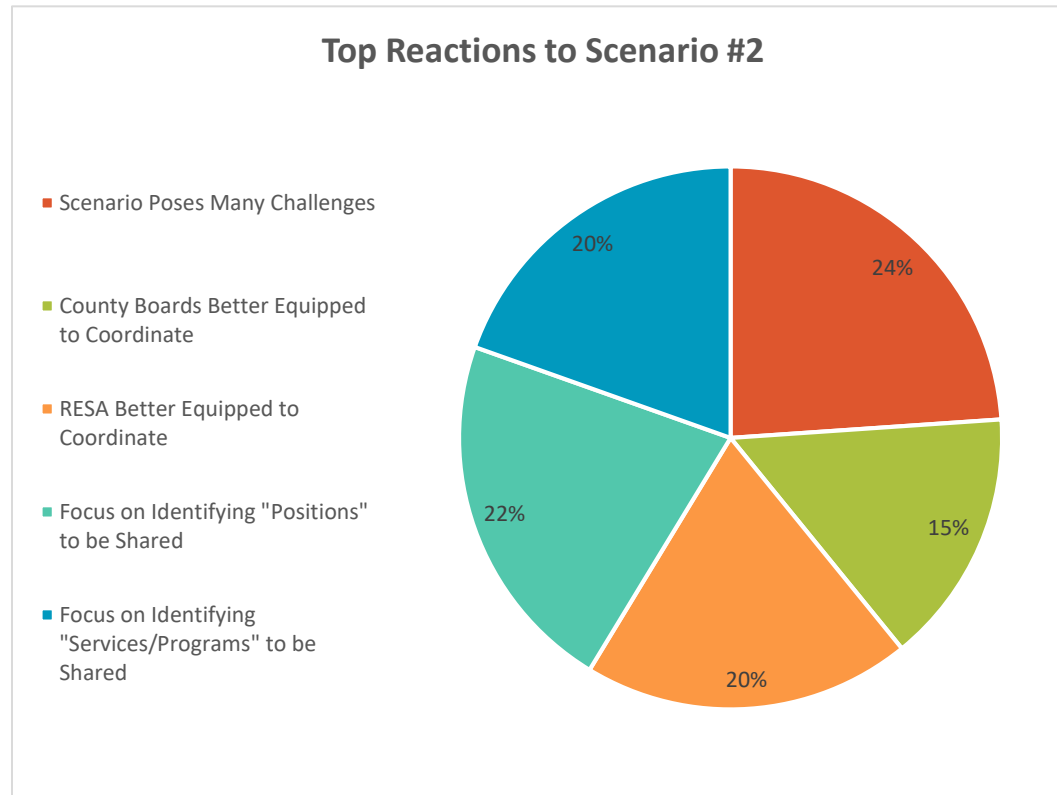
This scenario dealt with the sharing of a treasurer between two county boards of education. That position was selected because it is one county-level position “not covered” by the Public School Support Plan (PSSP) or state school aid formula. In essence, the scenario involved a county board whose long-time treasurer was retiring. That retirement coincided with the pending retirement of a treasurer in an adjoining county. Participants were encouraged to consider the logistics; potential positive and negative consequences; and interactions between and roles of stakeholders.



Scenario #2 – Shared School: RESA or County?

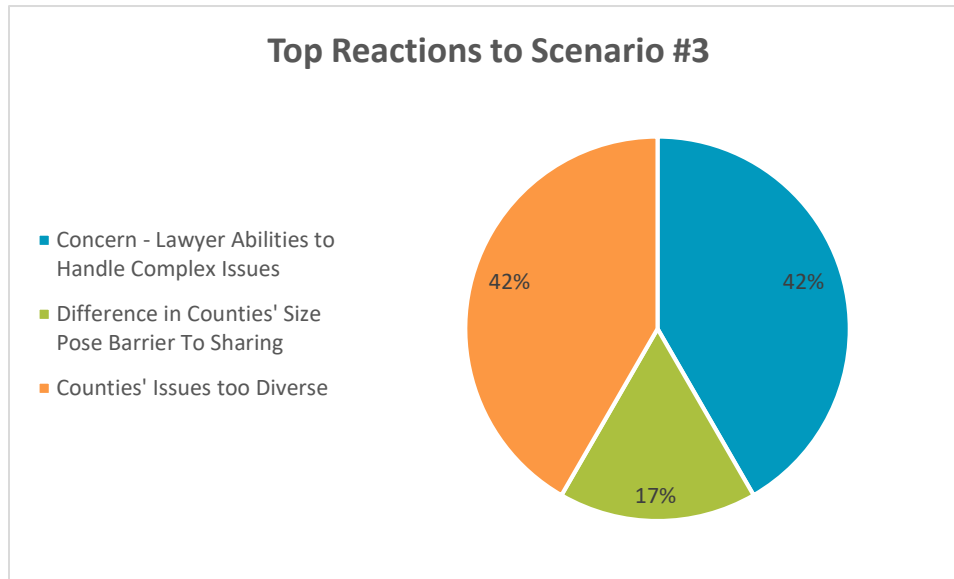
The second scenario is constructed around §18A-4-8d of the West Virginia Code. That section of law, enacted in 1989, allows county boards to “...join together to share the services of central office administrative personnel, any employee whose services are no longer needed by virtue of such sharing may have his or her contract terminated for lack of need...”

In terms of this scenario, two county boards, both having newly-appointed county superintendents, hold a joint meeting for the purpose of discussing the building of a regional school. As this matter is discussed, members of both boards request their respective superintendents pursue “...which services might be shared between and among county boards.” As the matter is being explored, a discussion ensues amid members of one county board and the county superintendent as to whether “...RESAs are best equipped for this initiative because the RESAs can provide ‘scale,’ greater ‘expertise,’ greater specialization and ‘capacity.’ One member, however, says RESAs are too involved with state Board and statutory directives to assume this role and, besides, the counties are members of differing RESAs regions.”



Scenario #3 – Shared Legal Services

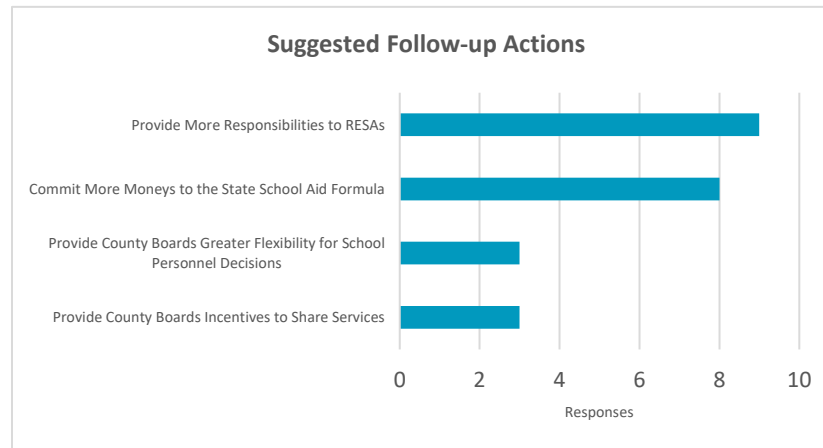
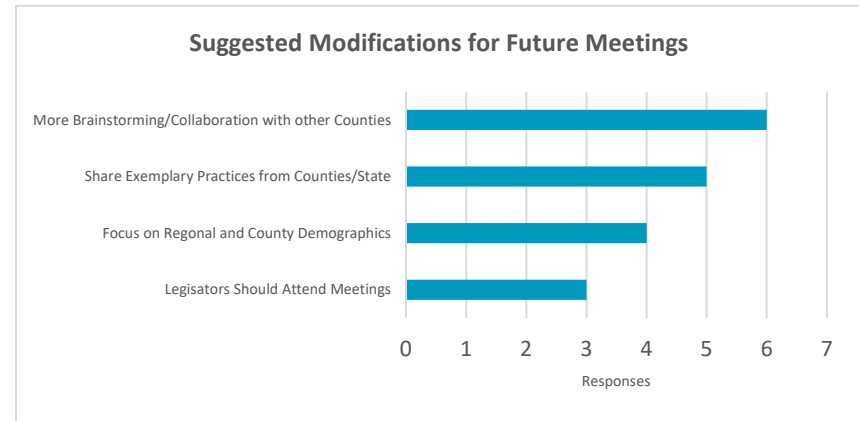
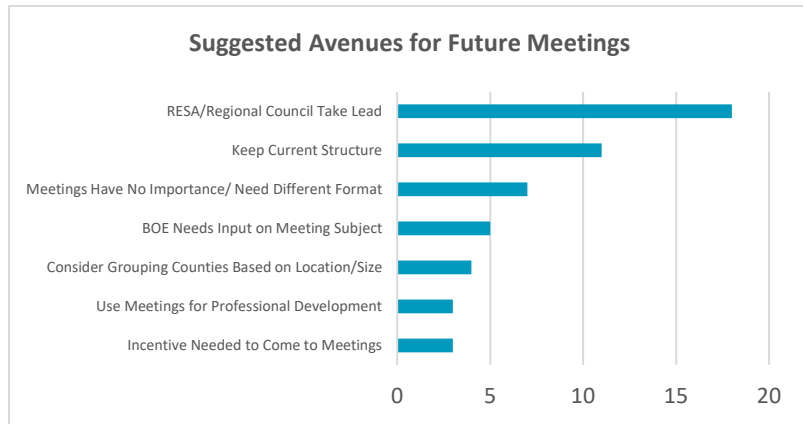
The question posed: “(Your) board has been toying with ways in which to ‘economize.’ One suggestion members recall from previous House Bill 2940 meetings is the sharing of legal services, especially RESA-wide. A member of your board wants to pursue this notion, which also is discussed at the above planning meeting. The majority of the county board, however, questions how effective the approach would be especially in terms of matters unique to a county such as litigation involving only your county board, like grievances and complicated personnel issues.



NOTE: RESA 2 participants were not consulted concerning perceptions regarding effectiveness of this approach.

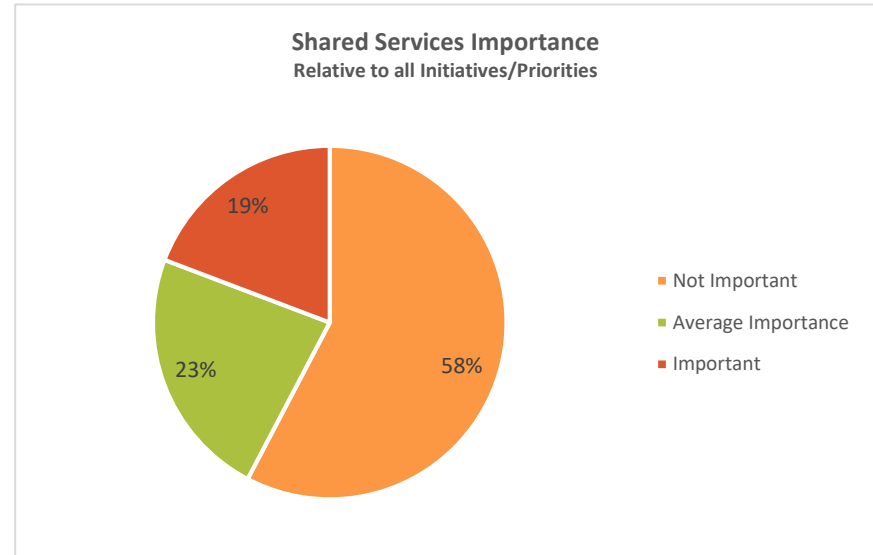
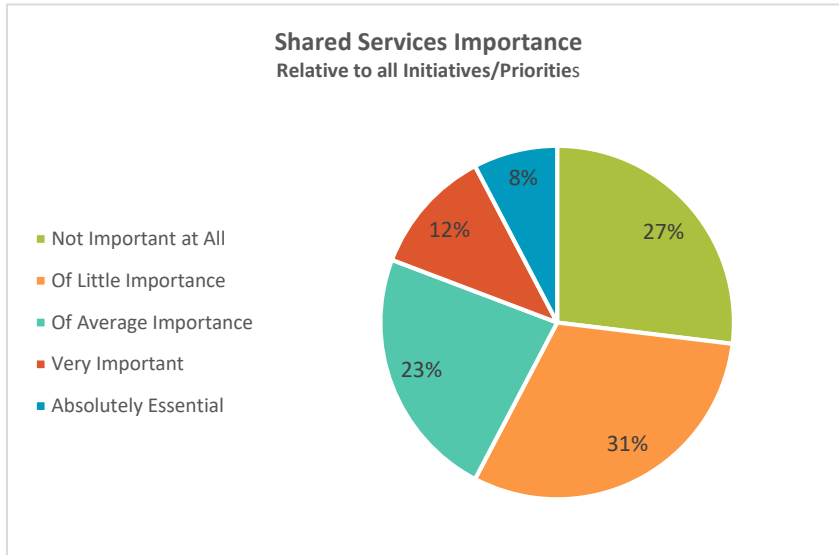
Regional Meeting Feedback

Participants were asked to provide feedback on the structure of the required regional meetings, suggested modifications, and recommended follow-up actions. This exercise produced a wide-range of responses. It is important to note that not all regional meetings answered the feedback questions. Regardless, the top suggestions and reactions from each category are depicted.



Opinions – Importance of Shared Services

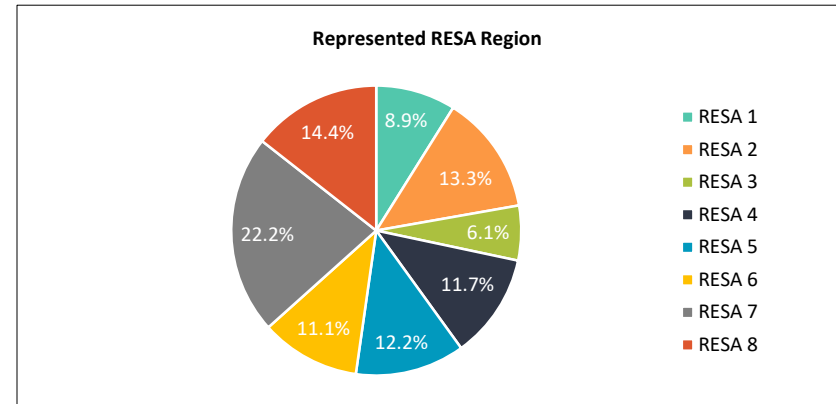
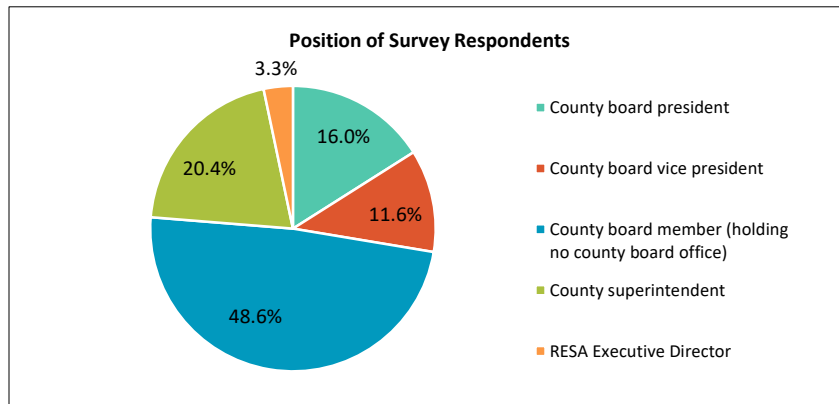
Three of the regional meetings rated the importance of shared services relative to all other initiatives and priorities of the county. Participants were asked to rate the importance of shared services on a scale of 0-4: 0 = not important at all; 1 = of little importance; 2 = of average importance; 3 = very important; 4 = absolutely essential. The charts depict the full breakdown of results and general importance or lack thereof of shared services relative to all other priorities.



Post-Meeting Surveys

In order to receive more enriched data regarding the House Bill 2940 regional meetings held this summer, the West Virginia School Board Association developed a survey which was forwarded to each of the state’s county boards of education members, county superintendents and the eight Regional Education Service Agency (RESA) Executive Directors. The survey was forwarded September 15 with the deadline for completion set for September 25. The association contracted with Omni Strategic Technologies for the purpose of formatting the survey, with questions prepared by Howard M. O’Cull, Ed.D., West Virginia School Board Association Executive Director.

From an n = 338, there were 193 responses – a 57 percent response rate with responses from each of the three category of survey recipients.



The association then contracted with Three Point Strategies, LLC for the purpose of arraying the survey data. Three Point Strategies also arrayed the responses received for table group work during the regional meetings. Three Point Strategies, however, provided no interpretation relative to the survey or the table work findings. Rather this data is meant to provide quantitative enrichment to qualitative aspects of the report, namely the prefatory comments and the recommendations.

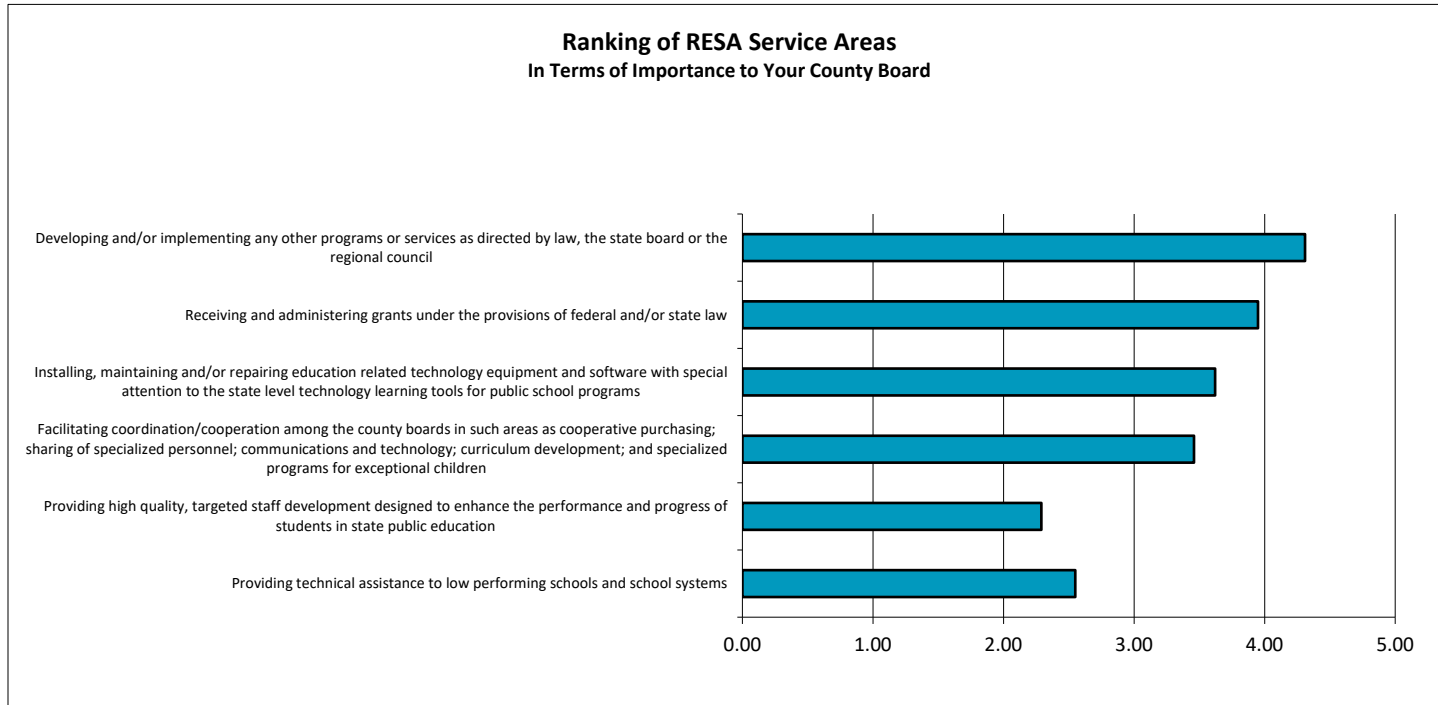
In terms of the survey, recipients received this written communication:

The survey, while not extensive, does require some deliberation as to the various questions posed. Results from the survey will help form the report relative to House Bill 2940 – along with evaluations of the meetings received this summer as well as the work of a report writing team which is meeting September 26 in Charleston. These meetings are important – and so is your survey participation as we work to prepare a report that is thorough and which provides policymakers, including county board members and county superintendents, with sound information for decision-making.

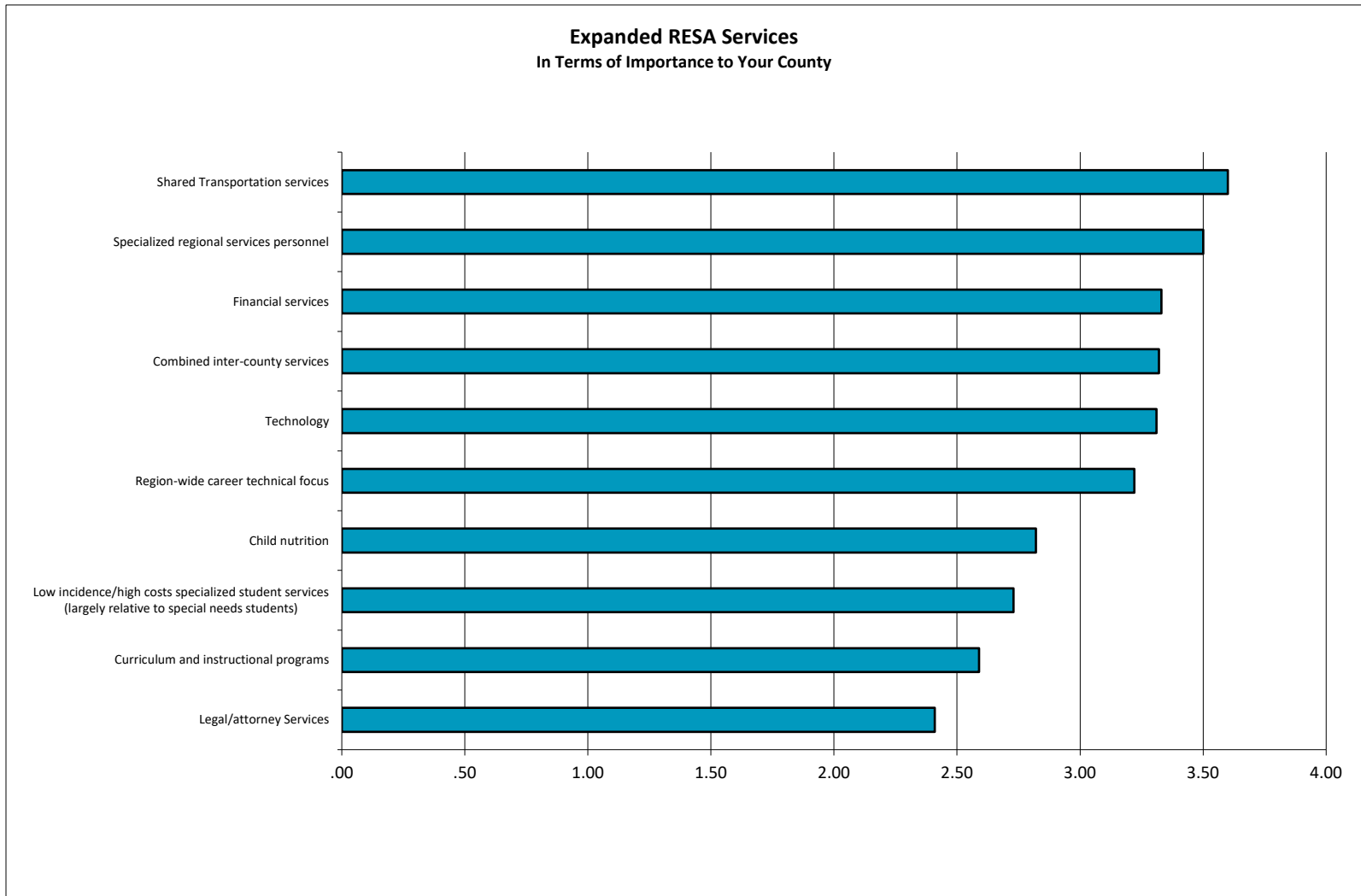
RESA Functions/Priorities & Services

The law establishing Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) specifies six areas of service in which RESAs “can best assist the state board in implementing the (state’s) standards based accountability model...thereby, providing high quality education programs.” Although the listing of areas of service is not interpreted as being prioritized in terms of RESAS’ work or outputs, how would you prioritize the listing of areas of service in terms of importance to your county board?

Please rank the listed areas of from 1-6 with “1” being the highest priority for your county board and “6” being of least priority:

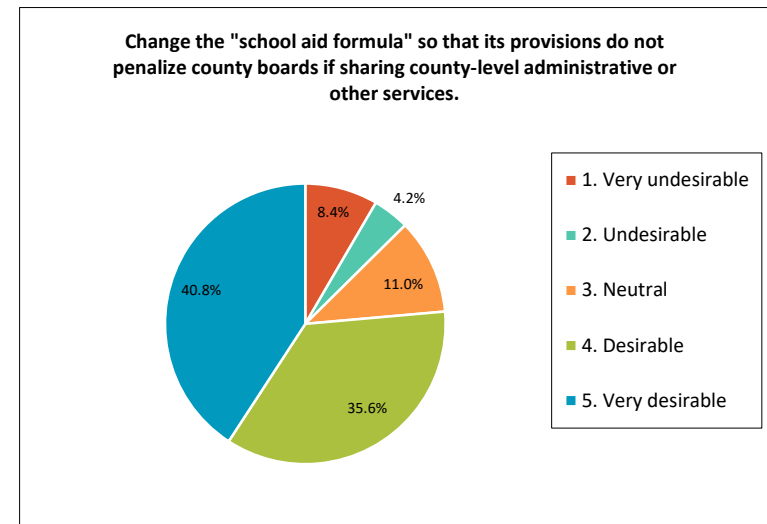
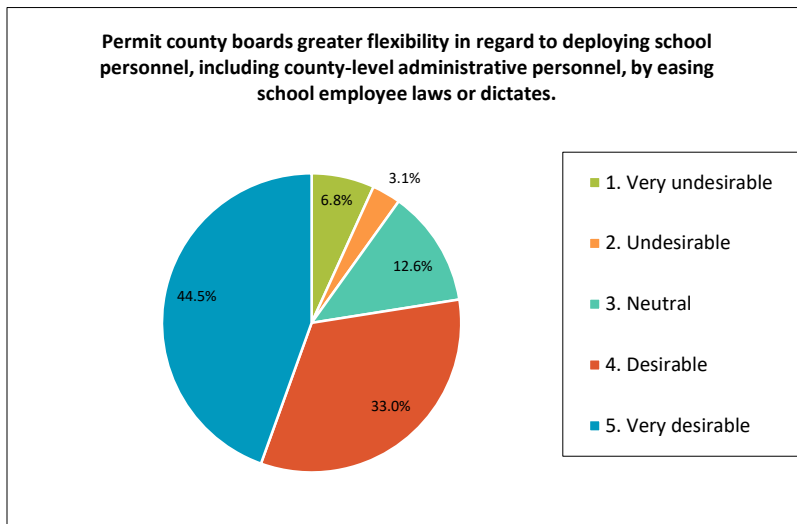
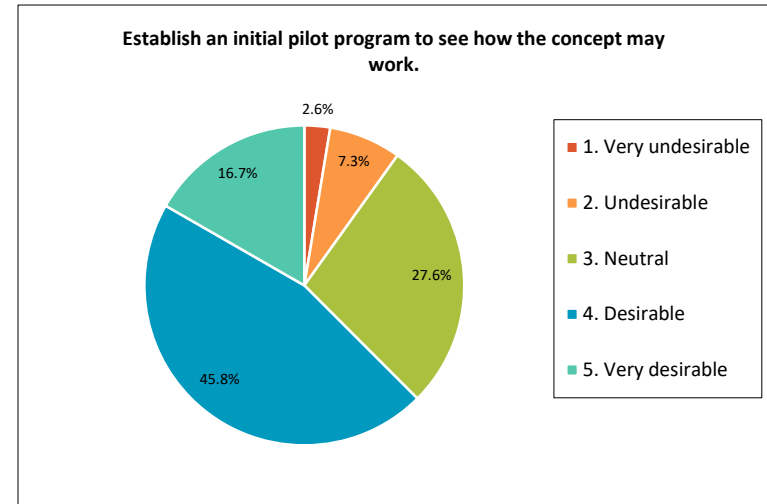
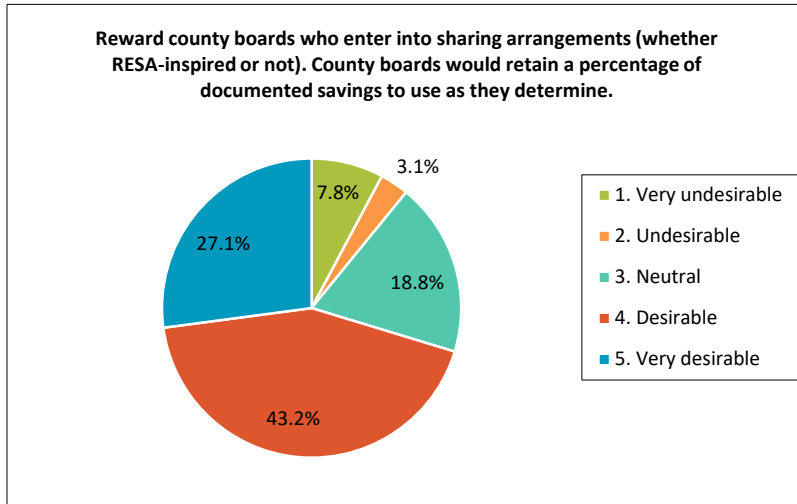


Participants in this summer’s regional county board meetings also thought RESAs might emphasize new or expanded services. In terms of this listing please select the 5 services areas which would be of greatest importance to your county board, ranking the selected service areas from 1-5, with ‘1’ being the most important and ‘5’ being of lesser importance:



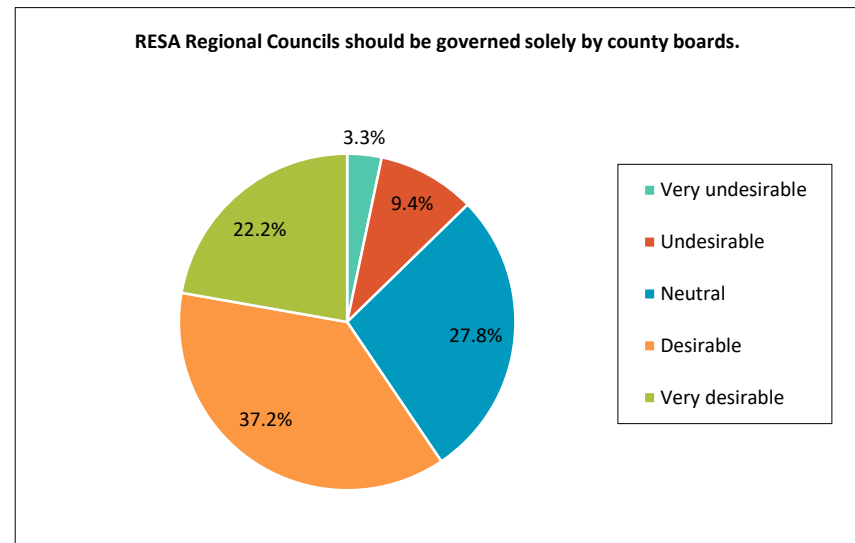
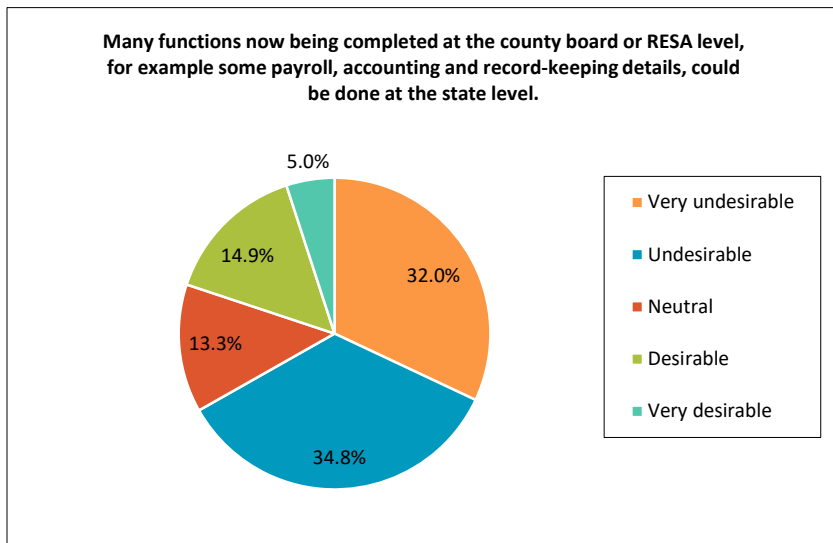
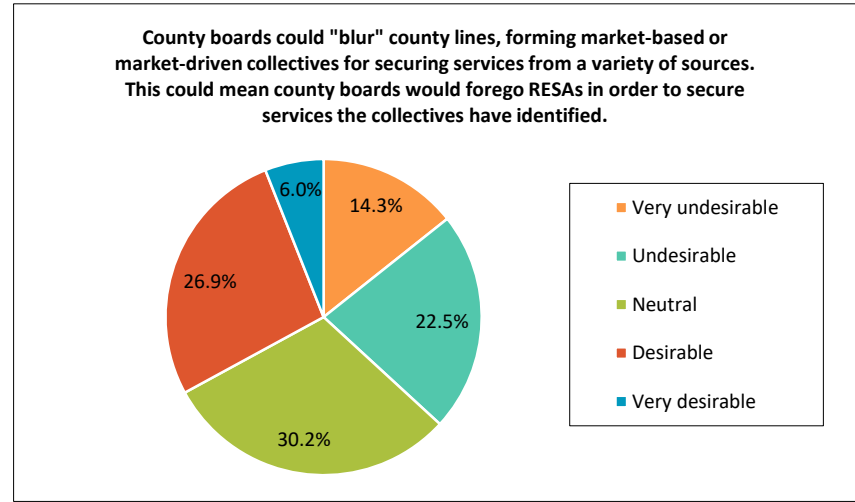
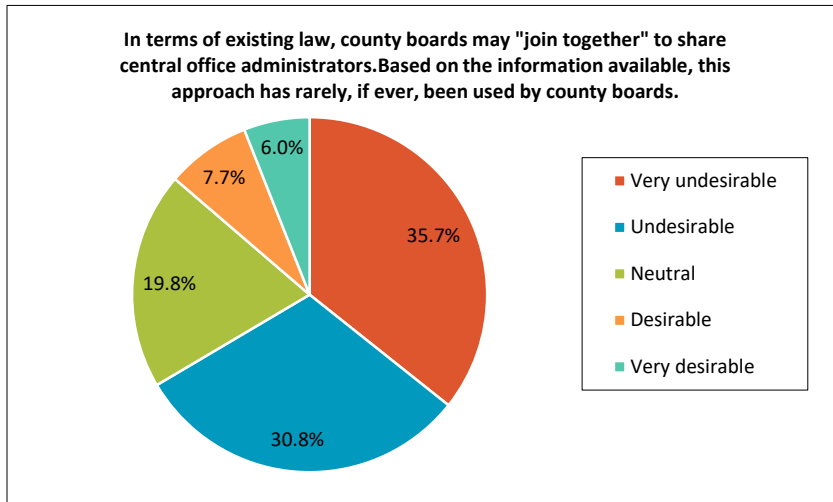
Incentives for Sharing Services

In this summer’s regional meetings of county boards regarding sharing of administrative services county board members and county superintendents say the Legislature should provide certain “incentives” for the sharing of administrative personnel. The following is a listing of the most-frequently cited incentives. Please review the listing and rate which of the options you find most desirable:



Methods for Sharing Services

At a few of the regional meetings of county boards of education certain ideas related to sharing of services were suggested. What is your thinking in regard to the desirability of these approaches?



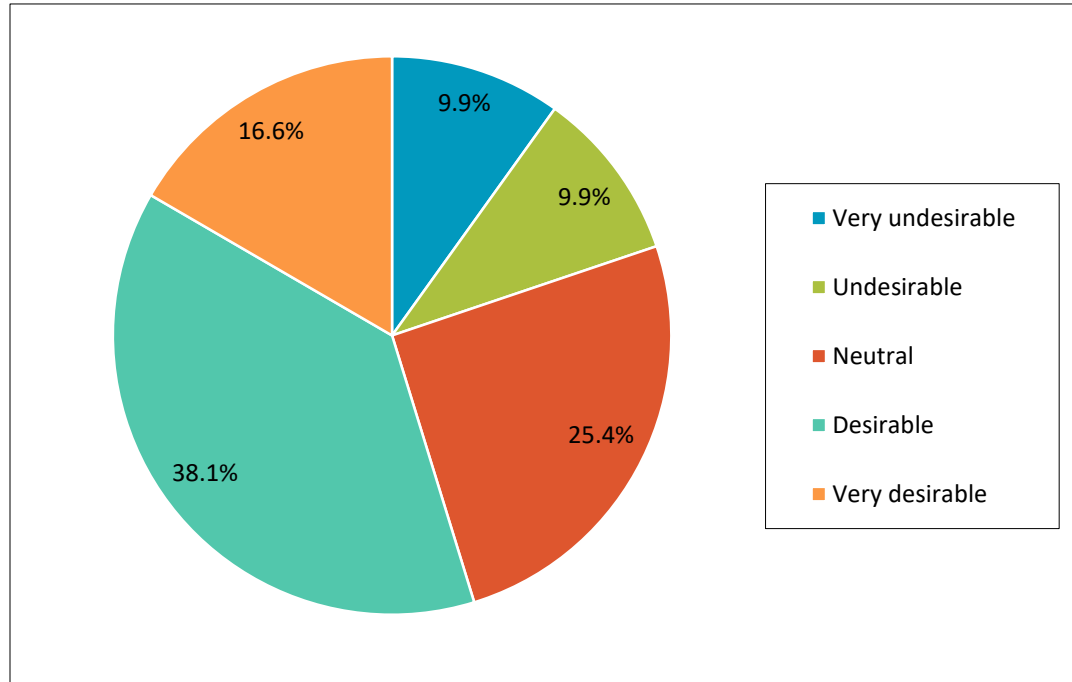
Future Regional Meetings Structure

A strong suggestion from this summer’s regional school board meetings was that the summer regional meetings should be discontinued. In lieu of this approach, it was suggested the eight RESA Regional Councils would be responsible for identifying administrative, coordinating and other county level services and functions county boards might share.

In summarizing these suggestions and comments regarding this recommendation, in lieu of the required summer meetings, RESA Regional Councils would work with county boards in their respective RESA regions. Accordingly, each county board would be responsible for identifying areas for shared services. The Regional Councils would prioritize the listing, studying the various services which might be provided, based on this listing.

The Regional Councils then would report to each county board the results of their studies and any resulting recommendations. These reports could be presented to the state Board of Education and Legislature. County boards and county superintendents, meeting at the West Virginia School Board Association “fall” conference (or other statewide meeting), would meet to discuss the entire list of services, making recommendations and suggestions. The approach envisioned is continuous.

What is your level of support/opposition for suggestion?





Section 4: Appendix & Citations

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Appendix 1

County Boards of Education (BOE) Fund Balance

**COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION
UNRESTRICTED FUND BALANCES WITH ADJUSTMENTS - AUDITED
GENERAL CURRENT EXPENSE FUND
AS OF JUNE 30, 2015**

County	Approved Levy Estimate	Unrestricted Fund Balance	OPEB Accumulated Annual Required Contribution (Added)	Unrestricted Encumbrances (Subtracted)	Net Unrestricted Fund Balances Adjusted for OPEB Liability & Encumbrances	Pct. Net Unrestricted Fund Balance to Approved Levy Estimate
Barbour	20,376,377	920,133	703,614	8,937	1,614,810	7.9%
Berkeley	158,139,734	1,052,020	7,497,746	391,695	8,158,071	5.2%
Boone	49,614,101	(1,221,072)	3,264,740	412,156	1,631,512	3.3%
Braxton	17,877,426	332,833	1,360,460	-	1,693,293	9.5%
Brooke	34,254,131	3,991,230	1,625,623	595,817	5,021,036	14.7%
Cabell	128,255,103	29,438,097	3,837,420	2,344,009	30,931,508	24.1%
Calhoun	7,874,708	(2,249,706)	414,479	2,293	(1,837,520) *	-23.3%
Clay	15,060,960	(946,648)	958,947	2,166	10,133	0.1%
Doddridge	15,208,613	2,154,720	1,124,133	31,293	3,247,560	21.4%
Fayette	67,743,978	3,969,912	3,659,364	69,067	7,560,209	11.2%
Gilmer	8,543,386	713,460	425,380	47,025	1,091,815	12.8%
Grant	13,291,332	(419,259)	431,322	-	12,063	0.1%
Greenbrier	38,756,413	(3,887,602)	3,888,469	-	867	0.0%
Hampshire	28,991,277	(170,573)	1,142,314	19,893	951,848	3.3%
Hancock	36,466,457	(1,255,974)	1,478,398	8,825	213,599	0.6%
Hardy	17,084,801	278,849	416,477	-	695,326	4.1%
Harrison	89,811,766	7,062,899	2,633,806	-	9,696,705	10.8%
Jackson	48,008,717	3,791,682	1,775,765	1,283,293	4,284,154	8.9%
Jefferson	81,633,274	(1,827,869)	4,291,751	75,783	2,388,099	2.9%
Kanawha	244,671,301	14,984,547	9,991,235	6,188,307	18,787,475	7.7%
Lewis	21,785,375	(748,028)	1,609,430	53,865	807,537	3.7%
Lincoln	35,648,586	(803,684)	2,190,218	139,033	1,247,501	3.5%
Logan	56,361,770	21,337,716	2,545,260	464,918	23,418,058	41.6%
Marion	74,897,385	2,910,492	3,897,601	339,612	6,468,481	8.6%
Marshall	56,348,889	5,660,983	2,593,502	390,040	7,864,445	14.0%
Mason	42,378,876	4,813	2,064,591	72,941	1,996,463	4.7%
McDowell	33,912,939	5,325,001	2,230,715	2,737,418	4,818,298	14.2%
Mercer	78,167,615	10,301,354	3,198,362	2,512,247	10,987,469	14.1%
Mineral	41,470,795	1,324,524	2,020,274	59,398	3,285,400	7.9%
Mingo	44,834,319	(1,410,504)	3,150,434	105,000	1,634,930	3.7%
Monongalia	109,852,217	7,476,003	4,349,070	579,480	11,245,593	10.2%
Monroe	15,763,202	1,615,911	1,457,274	57,472	3,015,713	19.1%
Morgan	24,452,011	(98,229)	1,312,763	138,527	1,076,007	4.4%
Nicholas	36,862,319	8,679,549	2,086,263	31,414	10,734,398	29.1%
Ohio	52,028,322	1,832,172	1,556,428	339,580	3,049,020	5.9%
Pendleton	11,874,348	(380,612)	519,849	16,222	123,015	1.0%
Pleasants	14,657,605	2,987,736	823,207	1,776	3,809,167	26.0%
Pocahontas	11,096,595	(4,878)	606,976	-	602,098	5.4%
Preston	32,565,343	302,595	1,706,625	29,648	1,979,572	6.1%
Putnam	99,758,536	12,796,870	2,498,803	934,149	14,361,524	14.4%
Raleigh	115,046,884	21,466,640	3,050,346	1,875,576	22,641,410	19.7%
Randolph	35,344,950	(1,269,093)	1,561,177	95,117	196,967	0.6%
Ritchie	14,396,414	433,430	933,185	13,407	1,353,208	9.4%
Roane	16,756,131	261,808	1,095,340	-	1,357,148	8.1%
Summers	12,088,016	(358,252)	753,904	139,031	256,621	2.1%
Taylor	20,111,456	3,969,182	810,079	7,170	4,772,091	23.7%
Tucker	10,908,207	308,972	408,708	-	717,680	6.6%
Tyler	13,086,454	1,201,484	917,385	127,068	1,991,801	15.2%
Upshur	36,081,529	(733,370)	1,458,117	179,207	545,540	1.5%
Wayne	68,514,191	1,963,234	3,377,213	470,903	4,869,544	7.1%
Webster	11,302,457	(690,260)	917,263	26,799	200,204	1.8%
Weitzel	31,939,440	5,988,695	1,461,989	1,385,237	6,065,447	19.0%
Wirt	9,535,057	495,349	405,383	13,824	886,908	9.3%
Wood	110,958,312	(1,303,311)	3,796,105	386,296	2,106,498	1.9%
Wyoming	45,341,939	2,559,987	1,846,652	299,868	4,106,771	9.1%
State	2,567,792,339	170,115,958	116,131,935	25,502,802	260,745,091	10.2%

(1) The amounts presented above are from audited financial statements except for Gilmer and Mason, which are from unaudited financial statements and are therefore subject to change. (2) Fund balances presented in red are deficit balances; those presented in bold and with an asterisk are deficit balances that exceed the definition of a casual deficit, per WVC §11-8-26 and §18-1-1, which define a casual deficit as a deficit of not more than 3% of the approved levy estimate or that is nonrecurring. (3) The General Accounting Standards Board (GASB) changed the fund balance classifications, beginning with FYE 6-30-11, to the following: nonspendable, restricted, committed, assigned and unassigned; the amounts presented as unrestricted include committed, assigned and unassigned balances. (4) The amounts presented above are unrestricted fund balances, with the following adjustments: the accumulated annual required contribution (ARC), as defined in WVC §5-16D-1, for Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) is added back, since according to the Public Employee Insurance Agency (PEIA) the county boards are not required to remit the amount, and encumbrances associated with the unrestricted fund balance are subtracted, since these amounts were obligated as of year-end.



Appendix 2

RESA Revenues and Expenditures (FY2015)

**REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES
SUMMARY OF TOTAL REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES (UNAUDITED)
FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2015**

	RESA 1 Raleigh Co.	RESA 2 Cabell Co.	RESA 3 Kanawha Co.	RESA 4 Nicholas Co.	RESA 5 Wood Co.	RESA 6 Ohio Co.	RESA 7 Harrison Co.	RESA 8 Berkeley Co.	Total
Revenues:									
Local and Intermediate Sources:									
Tuition	238,309	-	220,980	17,140	65,617	152,165	182,878	27,475	904,564
Investment earnings	9,376	-	8,878	-	-	-	-	12,222	30,476
Service to other LEAs	1,647,787	1,495,991	874,694	237,781	2,804,043	3,095,398	2,889,093	3,350,087	16,394,874
Service to other Govt. Units	-	20,272	96,422	-	-	-	-	-	116,694
For/on behalf	-	-	105,000	-	-	-	-	-	105,000
Miscellaneous	281,457	-	339,209	107,889	21,314	136,260	262,929	345,277	1,494,334
State Sources:									
State support (2)	451,650	482,692	511,366	385,476	417,914	383,433	558,083	500,136	3,690,750
State restricted (2)	1,458,160	607,351	3,088,133	440,790	1,029,273	815,518	1,858,159	1,039,948	10,337,331
State unrestricted (2)	-	472	-	-	-	-	-	-	472
For/On Behalf (3)	467,629	153,472	491,078	194,349	420,345	507,240	686,494	930,174	3,850,782
Federal Sources:									
Medicaid	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Direct federal grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	57,922	4,785,525	4,843,447
Federal thru state restricted (2)	2,082,383	547,392	1,680,219	1,465,043	1,196,367	796,195	1,946,926	1,471,818	11,186,343
Accrued revenue	219,150	(15,578)	53,111	300,931	82,238	(247,564)	178,730	70,364	641,381
Total Revenues	6,855,902	3,292,064	7,469,090	3,149,399	6,037,110	5,638,645	8,621,213	12,533,025	53,596,449
Expenditures:									
Professional salaries	1,666,962	638,416	1,940,413	696,242	1,663,475	1,377,741	2,844,845	2,984,637	13,812,729
Service salaries	1,238,456	259,060	910,831	389,886	682,329	1,233,347	984,805	2,506,136	8,204,850
Board members salaries	5,300	4,100	3,500	3,300	8,100	4,700	6,524	5,200	40,724
Other salaries	435,434	229,725	515,716	-	333,400	408,984	1,200,818	1,673,273	4,797,349
Employee benefits	974,264	328,709	1,052,917	374,649	815,857	1,043,382	1,330,388	2,312,047	8,232,212
Unfunded Retirement (3)	467,629	153,472	491,078	194,349	420,345	507,240	686,494	930,174	3,850,782
Purchased prof and tech services	529,625	590,010	2,689,278	577,526	238,230	506,650	539,472	343,574	6,014,365
Insurance	27,184	9,704	26,684	-	24,484	19,220	40,000	71,501	218,777
Communications	72,138	16,108	220,122	9,928	36,348	39,492	95,451	39,790	529,377
Advertising	4,754	1,591	-	-	-	4,417	3,323	5,401	19,488
Printing/binding	22,081	-	2,220	-	-	-	8,677	11,143	44,121
Tuition	149,729	-	-	-	-	9,199	1,260	-	160,188
Travel	199,034	55,459	161,627	104,978	125,765	143,348	229,879	212,764	1,232,853
Utilities and energy	50,439	23,354	59,581	11,979	1,417,506	4,388	32,809	52,355	1,652,410
Disposal / cleaning	3,287	2,538	9,250	1,429	2,947	33,517	2,713	82,819	138,499
Repair and maintenance	53,181	26,490	4,899	17,779	9,273	3,502	22,124	162,639	299,887
Rentals	136,502	4,469	84,364	2,778	89,109	54,566	63,265	315,949	751,002
Supplies	633,726	770,447	572,451	813,034	317,021	199,872	457,675	706,629	4,470,855
Land / Buildings / Paid to Contractors	16,313	-	45,046	-	-	-	-	-	61,359
Equipment	24,083	-	165,685	-	-	-	-	408,939	598,707
Debt related payments	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	81,092	81,092
Other	8,187	8,916	11,040	450	2,115	16,000	20,202	7,699	74,610
Total Expenditures	6,718,307	3,122,567	8,966,701	3,198,307	6,186,304	5,609,566	8,570,724	12,913,760	55,286,236
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenditures	137,595	169,497	(1,497,611)	(48,908)	(149,194)	29,080	50,490	(380,734)	(1,689,787)
Beginning fund balance	316,716	1,386,771	88,701	974,800 (4)	(480,700)	(449,253)	(1,815,117)	(1,505,062)	(1,483,148)
Transfers In	184,587	65,774	102,636	56,687	89,440	35,104	132,113	72,191	738,532
Transfers (Out)	(184,587)	(65,774)	(102,636)	(56,687)	(89,440)	(35,104)	(132,113)	(72,191)	(738,532)
Audit Adjustment	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11,326	11,326
Unrestricted fund balance at 6-30-15 (With OPEB liability included)	454,311	1,556,268	(1,408,910)	925,892	(629,894)	(420,173)	(1,764,627)	(1,874,470)	(3,161,605)
Liability for OPEB	1,217,894	511,369	2,670,124	450,488	1,153,520	1,684,828	2,855,191	3,462,974	14,006,388
Unrestricted fund balance at end of year with OPEB liability excluded	1,672,205	2,067,637	1,261,214	1,376,380	523,626	1,264,655	1,090,564	1,588,504	10,844,783

Notes: (1) The amounts shown above were compiled from unaudited financial statements and are subject to change. (2) The revenues denoted by footnote (2) in the description column indicate funds that were distributed by the WVDE to the RESAs; such funds totaled \$25,214,897 during FY15. (3) Due to an accounting change related to GASB Statement 24 implemented during FY15, these are payments made directly by the WVDE to CPRB for the unfunded liability of the Teachers' Retirement System. (4) RESA 4's beginning fund balance was restated from \$813,521 to \$925,892 due to an error discovered in the prior year.



Appendix 3

County Boards of Education (BOE) Central Office FTEs (2015-2016)

**COUNTY BOARDS OF EDUCATION
NUMBER OF CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATORS BY POSITION - (FTE)
EXCLUDES RESA PERSONNEL
2015-16 YEAR**

County	Super-intendent	Deputy/Asso. or Asst Supt.	Admin. Assistant	Director/ Manager Instructional	Director/ Coordinator Support Serv.	Chief School Business Official	Child Nutrition Director	Total Central Off. Administrators
Barbour	1.00	0.60	-	3.10	-	1.00	0.50	6.20
Berkeley	1.00	3.00	-	5.00	19.00	1.00	1.00	30.00
Boone	1.00	2.00	-	4.00	6.00	1.00	1.00	15.00
Braxton	1.00	-	-	2.63	1.00	1.00	0.33	5.96
Brooke	1.00	1.00	-	4.50	3.00	1.00	-	10.50
Cabell	1.00	3.00	-	6.00	14.00	1.00	-	25.00
Calhoun	1.00	0.50	-	1.50	0.50	1.00	-	4.50
Clay	1.00	0.90	-	3.30	1.00	1.00	0.30	7.50
Doddridge	1.00	-	1.00	2.00	0.75	1.00	-	5.75
Fayette	1.00	1.00	-	5.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	12.00
Gilmer	1.00	-	1.00	2.00	0.50	1.00	-	5.50
Grant	1.00	1.00	-	2.50	3.00	1.00	-	8.50
Greenbrier	1.00	2.00	-	6.50	4.00	1.00	1.00	15.50
Hampshire	1.00	-	-	2.70	3.80	1.00	-	8.50
Hancock	1.00	1.00	-	3.00	4.00	1.00	-	10.00
Hardy	1.00	1.00	-	1.65	1.35	1.00	-	6.00
Harrison	1.00	3.00	-	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	12.00
Jackson	1.00	2.00	-	4.00	0.25	1.00	1.00	9.25
Jefferson	1.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	7.00	1.00	1.00	16.00
Kanawha	1.00	6.00	10.00	4.00	18.00	1.00	-	40.00
Lewis	1.00	-	-	3.95	1.00	1.00	0.70	7.65
Lincoln	1.00	1.00	-	4.00	2.00	1.00	-	9.00
Logan	1.00	1.00	-	6.00	7.00	1.00	-	16.00
Marion	1.00	-	3.00	3.00	-	1.00	-	8.00
Marshall	1.00	1.00	-	4.00	4.00	1.00	1.00	12.00
Mason	1.00	-	1.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	-	13.00
McDowell	1.00	2.00	-	4.00	5.00	1.00	0.50	13.50
Mercer	1.00	2.00	-	3.00	5.00	1.00	-	12.00
Mineral	1.00	1.50	-	4.00	5.00	0.50	1.00	13.00
Mingo	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	13.00
Monongalia	1.00	1.00	3.00	4.50	12.00	1.00	1.00	23.50
Monroe	1.00	1.00	-	2.00	2.00	1.00	0.50	7.50
Morgan	1.00	1.00	-	2.50	2.25	1.00	0.75	8.50
Nicholas	1.00	-	-	2.50	3.00	1.00	0.50	8.00
Ohio	1.00	-	-	5.00	-	1.00	1.00	8.00
Pendleton	1.00	0.50	-	2.00	-	1.00	0.50	5.00
Pleasants	1.00	-	-	2.00	1.00	1.00	0.50	5.50
Pocahontas	1.00	-	-	1.00	0.50	1.00	0.50	4.00
Preston	1.00	1.00	-	4.00	2.80	1.00	1.00	10.80
Putnam	1.00	3.00	-	5.50	11.00	1.00	1.00	22.50
Raleigh	1.00	2.00	-	5.50	11.00	1.00	1.00	21.50
Randolph	1.00	1.00	-	3.00	1.20	1.00	0.80	8.00
Ritchie	1.00	-	-	2.00	0.50	1.00	-	4.50
Roane	1.00	-	-	2.40	1.60	1.00	-	6.00
Summers	1.00	-	-	1.50	0.58	1.00	0.42	4.50
Taylor	1.00	1.00	-	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	8.00
Tucker	1.00	-	-	1.50	1.00	1.00	-	4.50
Tyler	1.00	-	-	2.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	6.75
Upshur	1.00	1.00	-	2.00	2.00	1.00	-	7.00
Wayne	1.00	-	1.00	6.00	11.50	1.00	1.00	21.50
Webster	1.00	-	-	1.20	1.00	1.00	0.50	4.70
Wetzel	1.00	1.00	-	3.00	2.00	1.00	-	8.00
Wirt	1.00	-	-	1.00	0.50	1.00	-	3.50
Wood	1.00	2.00	1.00	9.00	10.00	1.00	1.00	25.00
Wyoming	1.00	2.00	-	3.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	13.00
Total	55.00	57.00	24.00	185.18	217.58	54.50	27.30	620.56

OSF

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Citations

- ¹ Refer to the November 24, 2015, issue of the West Virginia School Board Association *The Legislature* for a full report of this meeting. This document will additional references to the November 2015 meeting. Visit www.wvsba.org
- ² <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf>
- ³ From <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015076568396;view=1up;seq=35>. (The actual quote is found on p. 21 of this document.)
- ⁴ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>
- ⁵ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>
- ⁶ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015076568396;view=1up;seq=35>. (The actual quote is found on p. 2 of this document.)
- ⁷ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015076568396;view=1up;seq=35>. (The actual quotes are found on pp. 21-22 of this document.)
- ⁸ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=4§ion=10#04> This section of Code states, in part, “The county superintendent shall: (1) Act as the chief executive officer of the county board as may be delineated in his or her contract or other written agreement with the county board, and, under the direction of the state board, execute all its education policies...”
- ⁹ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf>
- ¹⁰ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p.2
- ¹¹ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 15
- ¹² http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB359 SUB1 ENR.htm&yr=2013&sesstype=RS&i=359
- ¹³ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>
- ¹⁴ <http://www.wvsba.org/resources/west-virginia-school-age-population-patterns-and-trends-2014>
- ¹⁵ <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED226006>
- ¹⁶ <https://mrangel22.files.wordpress.com/2011/05/48453220.pdf> - The full article is entitled, “School Boards A Neglected Institution in an Era of School Reform.” It is penned by Michael Usdan of the Institute for Educational Leadership, a Washington DC think tank largely responsible for efforts to improve the leadership capacity of school boards.
- ¹⁷ <http://www.nytimes.com/1988/11/02/us/reformers-turning-attention-to-school-boards.html>
- ¹⁸ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=1A#05>
- ¹⁹ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=1A#05>
- ²⁰ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=1C#05>
- ²¹ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=14#05>
- ²² <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5B§ion=12#05B>
- ²³ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/WV_CON.cfm#articleXII (6)
- ²⁴ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/Code.cfm?chap=18a&art=1>
- ²⁵ §18A-4-7a. Employment, promotion and transfer of professional personnel; seniority.
- ²⁶ <https://thelogicofscience.com/2015/08/16/settled-science-part-1-is-science-ever-actually-settled/> - an excellent article exploring the actual construct of the notion of “settled science.”
- ²⁷ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ²⁸ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ²⁹ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – pp. 75 and 76

- ³⁰ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4706%20org.htm&yr=2016&sesstype=RS&i=4706
- ³¹ Acts of the Legislature 1972 - Chapter 105 pp. 601-602. (This information is not available in an electronic format.)
- ³² <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ³³ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ³⁴ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/Code.cfm?chap=18&art=5#05>
- ³⁵ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/WV_CON.cfm#articleXII
- ³⁶ <http://resa5.k12.wv.us/?PN=AboutUs>
- ³⁷ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4572%20ENG.htm&yr=2016&sesstype=RS&i=4572 the purpose of this bill was to except “specialized contract instructors” from the statutory definition of teacher – an issue in terms of the litigation cited. The proposed legislation also defined the term “specialized contract instructors.”
- ³⁸ Monongalia County Bd. of Educ. and Frank Devono vs. AFT, et al.
- ³⁹ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf>
- ⁴⁰ <http://wvde.state.wv.us/audit-response/>
- ⁴¹ Does Centralization of Non-instructional Services Influence Instructional Spending? Evidence from (National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Common Core Data. The report is available from the National School Boards Association (NSBA). <http://www.nsba.org/>
- ⁴² <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – pp. 75 and 76
- ⁴³ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 72
- ⁴⁴ <http://buchanan.org/blog/pjb-the-neocons-and-nixons-southern-strategy-512>
- ⁴⁵ Pauley v. Bailey, 324 S.E.2d 128 (1984)
- ⁴⁶ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ⁴⁷ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ⁴⁸ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 76
- ⁴⁹ TITLE 126 LEGISLATIVE RULE BOARD OF EDUCATION SERIES 72 ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION OF REGIONAL EDUCATION SERVICE AGENCIES (3233) - <http://apps.sos.wv.gov/adlaw/csr/readfile.aspx?DocId=27176&Format=PDF>
- ⁵⁰ The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) is a professional organization serving educational service agencies (ESAs) in 45 states; there are 553 agencies nationwide with hundreds of thousands of staff members. AESA is in the position to reach well over 80% of the public school districts, over 83% of the private schools, over 80% certified teachers, and more than 80% non-certified school employees, and well over 80% public and private school students. Annual budgets for ESAs come to \$14.7 billion. AESA’s membership is agency wide and includes all ESA employees and board members. <http://www.aesa.us/about/index.cfm>
- ⁵¹ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>
- ⁵² <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ⁵³ Refer to the November 24, 2015, issue of the West Virginia School Board Association *The Legislature*, p. 9. This document references the aforementioned 2015 Joint Education meeting. Visit www.wvsba.org
- ⁵⁴ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>
- ⁵⁵ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_history.cfm?INPUT=327&year=2016&sessiontype=RS
- ⁵⁶ <http://mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/revisiting-the-matrix-organization>
- ⁵⁷ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/Code.cfm?chap=18a&art=1>
- ⁵⁸ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 30

⁵⁹ Quotation cited in “HB 2940 Regional Discussions: Summary of Findings & Recommendations / West Virginia School Board Association.” p. 30. This is first of three reports prepared by the School Board Association in regard to House Bill 2940 regional meetings.

⁶⁰ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>

⁶¹ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26#02>

⁶² <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>

⁶³ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=1A#05>

⁶⁴ http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=hb4706%20org.htm&yr=2016&sesstype=RS&i=4706

⁶⁵ http://static.k12.wv.us/tt/2014/commisononschoolgovernance_report.pdf

⁶⁶ January 14, 2015, Minutes – West Virginia Board of Education – XIV - WVBE Response to Governor's Education Agenda

⁶⁷ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/media/pressreleases/2013/Pages/GovernorTomblinDelivers2013StateoftheStateAddress.aspx>

⁶⁸ http://static.k12.wv.us/tt/2014/commisononschoolgovernance_report.pdf

⁶⁹ . <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/wvcode/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5B§ion=13#05B>

⁷⁰ Refer to the November 24, 2015, issue of the West Virginia School Board Association publication, The Legislature, p. 9. Access the publication by visiting www.wvsba.org

⁷¹ A learning management system (LMS) is a software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting and delivery of electronic educational technology (also called e-learning) courses or training programs.¹

⁷² <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=5§ion=1A#05>

⁷³ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 15.

⁷⁴ http://static.k12.wv.us/tt/2014/commisononschoolgovernance_report.pdf

⁷⁵ <http://www.governor.wv.gov/initiatives/satf/documents/wvde%20report%20final.pdf> – p. 81.

⁷⁶ Refer to the November 24, 2015, issue of the West Virginia School Board Association publication, The Legislature, p. 9.

⁷⁷ <http://www.legis.state.wv.us/WVCODE/ChapterEntire.cfm?chap=18&art=2§ion=26A#02>

⁷⁸ Quotation cited in “HB 2940 Regional Discussions: Summary of Findings & Recommendations / West Virginia School Board Association.” p. 32.

http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=sb620%20eng.htm&yr=2006&sesstype=RS&i=620

⁷⁹ This measure, Senate Bill 608, was considered by the Senate Education Committee in the 2010 regular session, but failed to be approved by the committee.

http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB608%20intr.htm&yr=2010&sesstype=RS&i=608

⁸⁰ This measure, Senate Bill 608, was considered by the Senate Education Committee in the 2010 regular session, but failed to be approved by the committee.

http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/bills_text.cfm?billdoc=SB608%20intr.htm&yr=2010&sesstype=RS&i=608

⁸¹ The agenda item is entitled, “RESAs - Sharing Services and Creating Efficiencies.” It was presented by Wade Linger, a former president and then member of the State Board. The Power Point slides are available as well from Regional Education Service Agency 6 and from the state Board’s staff. The electronic link to the meeting is

<http://www.legis.state.wv.us/committees/interims/agenda.cfm?recordid=2815&abb=ED>

⁸² http://www.legis.state.wv.us/Bill_Status/Resolution_History.cfm?year=2014&sessiontype=RS&input4=134&billtype=cr&houseorig=h&btype=res

⁸³ <http://resa6.k12.wv.us/>