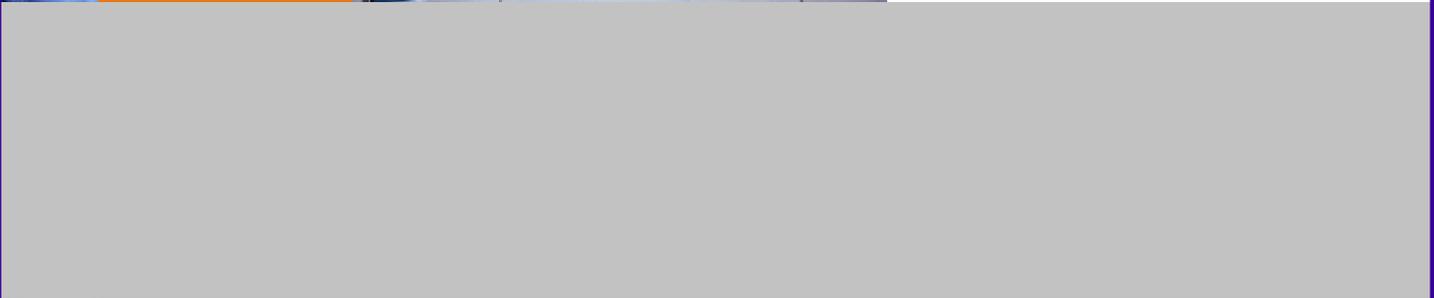




A Comprehensive
Study of the
Programs,
Governance and
Administration of
Regional Education
Service Agencies
(RESAs)



RESA TASK FORCE REPORT

November 2006



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State Superintendent of Schools



A Comprehensive Study of the Programs, Governance, and Administration of Regional Education Services Agencies (RESAs)

The Report of the RESA Task Force in Response to West Virginia Senate Bill 127

Executive Summary

In June 2006, the State Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Steven Paine, convened the Task Force comprised of county superintendents, RESA executive directors, county school boards, county and RESA specialists in staff development, finance, and technology, staff from West Virginia Senate and House Education Committees, the State Auditor's Office, and West Virginia Department of Education staff who served as facilitators for each subcommittee.

The report presents findings, recommendations and impact on code and/or policy for :

- Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight
- School Improvement and Staff Development
- Education Technology
- Other Programs and Services
- Financial Integrity, Oversight, and Accountability

Twenty-seven recommendations have been made; seven suggest changes to State Board Policy 3233 (especially in the areas of governance and finance), one to State Board Policy 5500, and another to State Board Policy 2320. One recommendation proposes changing the name of RESAs to Regional Education and Community Service Agencies (RECSAs) and would require a change in State Code. Several recommendations address the need to increase funding to support RESAs in the delivery of technical assistance to low performing schools, targeted technical assistance, and technology services.

Overview

Defined in federal legislation (No Child Left Behind Act of 2001), Education Service Agencies (ESAs) are legally constituted units of school government intended to serve the needs of both local districts and the state education agency. Most ESAs are governed by state offices of education, local boards and advisory committees, West Virginia ESAs, hereinafter referred to as Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) are the only agencies governed by a State Board of Education¹.

Recent research² on ESAs highlights the need for them to play an important role in turning around failing schools; improving student achievement; and becoming centers of excellence and quality. In 2003 the U.S. Secretary of Education encouraged each state to use their ESAs in implementing No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and tasked ESAs with:

- Teacher Training;
- Paraprofessional Training;
- Alternative Certifications;
- Supplemental Services;
- Expert Teams for School Improvement;
- Integration of Technology;
- Feedback on Proposals and Regulations; and,
- Communication and Dissemination.

In 1972 the West Virginia Legislature enacted legislation that caused the West Virginia Board of Education (WVBE) to establish multi-county Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) “to provide for high quality, cost effective education programs and services to students, schools, and school systems” (WV Code §18-2-26). RESAs are charged by WV Code and WVBE State Policy to:

- provide technical assistance to low performing schools and school systems; provide high quality, targeted staff development designed to enhance the performance and progress of students in state public education;
- facilitate 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;
- install, maintain and/or repair education related technology equipment and software with special attention to the state level basic skills and

¹ Association of Educational Service Agencies, Washington, D.C.

² The Educational Service Agency, America’s Invisible Partner, E. Robert Stephens and William G. Keane, 2005.

SUCCESS programs; education related technology equipment and software;

- receive and administer grants under the provisions of federal and/or state law; and,
- develop and/or implement any other programs or services as directed by law or by the state board.

How well are RESAs accomplishing their legislative mandate? During the 2006 West Virginia Legislative Session, Senate Bill 127 (SB 127) was enacted charging the State Superintendent to conduct a comprehensive study of the programs, governance, and administration of the Regional Education Services Agencies, to include the general structure and specific processes for governance and oversight of the RESAs to ensure efficiency of operations and accountability in the areas of:

- Financial integrity, oversight and accountability;
- Fiscal oversight of budgeting, salaries, benefits, and employment; and,
- Service delivery in priority areas, including, but not limited to:
 - The types, cost, convenience and results of in-service training programs and other efforts to assist low performing schools and school systems,
 - The costs and turnaround time of computer repair services, and
 - The costs and benefits of other services provided to the respective members' counties.

Further, the State Superintendent was charged to report findings generated by the study, together with recommendations and any legislation necessary to effectuate the recommendations, to the Legislative Oversight Commission on Education Accountability (LOCEA) by December 1, 2006.

Prior to SB 127, the Office of the Legislative Auditor had presented the WVBE with a special report on the "Internal Control Structure for Regional Education Service Agencies – July 1, 1998-June 30, 2001." The report's summary of findings and recommendations to improve the operation of RESAs (especially in the area of fiscal management) were:

- Establish an effective system of internal controls to ensure compliance with applicable State laws (Chapter 5A, Article 8, Section 9 of WV Code).
- Strengthen internal controls over grants to RESAs.
- On-site accreditation process targeted to administrative and financial policies, procedures, and activities of RESAs.
- Responsibility for program monitoring should be rotated among the different program offices.
- Strengthen internal controls over RESAs, establish goals and objectives and monitor RESA performance.
- Maintain official minutes of meetings with RESA representatives (Chapter 6, Article 9A, Section 5 of WV Code).

- Require RESAs to submit reports and evaluation of services provided (Chapter 18, Article 2, Section 26(f) of WV Code).
- Promulgate rules for county boards that decline to participate in RESA programs or services (Chapter 18, Article 2, Section 26 [c] of WV Code).

West Virginia State Board Policy 3233, “Establishment and Operation of Regional Education Service Agencies,” was amended in 2004 to address those findings and provides rules for the establishment; governance and administration; finances, plan of services; and, standards for service delivery, accountability and report for West Virginia’s eight RESAs.

In April of 2006, the State Superintendent met with West Virginia Department of Education (WVDE) staff to determine the process to be used to conduct the study. The study was to include:

- A review of literature on the structures of ESAs across the country;
- Discussion with the Executive Director, Association of Educational Service Agencies, to determine status of comparable studies of educational service agencies
- Collection and review of data and documents from each WV RESA, including:
 - Plans of Service
 - Annual reports
 - Financial reports
 - Organizational charts, job titles, descriptions and responsibilities
 - Menus of services
 - Procedures for the evaluation of services and personnel
 - Unique services provided by individual RESAs
- An online survey³ of WV County Superintendents to respond to five questions:
 - What is the most beneficial service provided to your county by the RESA and why?
 - What is the least beneficial service provided to your county by the RESA and why?
 - What service could/should the RESA provide and why?
 - What service does RESA provide that is not needed and why?
 - How does RESA positively impact purchasing power in your county?
- The formation of a task force to examine RESAs and determine what is working, what needs improvement, specific recommendations to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of RESAs, and necessary changes to State Code and/or WVBE policy to implement the recommendations. The task force was to be organized into five subcommittees to closely review the responsibilities and organization of RESAs related to:
 - Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight

³ See Attachment A for summary of online survey responses

- School Improvement and Staff Development
- Education Technology
- Other Programs and Services
- Financial Integrity, Oversight and Accountability
- Publication of a report on findings and recommendations

Task force members⁴ were identified and invited to serve in May 2006. Data and documents were also collected in May and provided important information to the various task force committees. Task force members represented county superintendents, RESA executive directors, county school boards, county and RESA specialists in staff development, finance, and technology, staff from WV Senate and House Education Committees, the State Auditor’s Office, and WVDE staff who served as facilitators for each subcommittee.

The West Virginia Task Force for WV Senate Bill 127 – Comprehensive Study of Regional Education Service Agencies was convened on June 14, 2006, and presented with their charge and timeline by the State Superintendent. Following the initial meeting of the entire task force, the subcommittees met throughout June, July, and August to review data, documents, policy, and code and to formulate their findings and recommendations. The task force reconvened on September 7 to discuss subcommittee recommendations that would be considered for the report to LOCEA and WVBE. During September and October the report was written with the goal of presentation to LOCEA and WVBE in November 2006.

This report serves as the State Superintendent’s official response to SB 127 and provides a vision for West Virginia RESAs in becoming centers of excellence for teaching and learning; having a value added impact on student achievement; and being accountable to measures for efficiency, quality and effectiveness.

The report is organized by the five subcommittees represented on the task force and presents findings, recommendations, and impact on code and/or policy for each:

- Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight
- School Improvement and Staff Development
- Education Technology
- Other Programs and Services
- Financial Integrity, Oversight, and Accountability

Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight

The subcommittee examined the mission and goals for RESAs; the power and duties of the State Superintendent and State Board; qualifications and selection

⁴ See Attachment B for roster of task force members

of RESA Executive Directors; the selection and supervision of RESA staff, including staff evaluations; and the overall organization of RESAs.

Organizational charts, policy and procedures manuals, and plans of services were among the documents the subcommittee reviewed. A survey conducted by RESA directors in 2005 was also provided to the subcommittee.⁵ Particular issues the subcommittee addressed included: the number of RESAs; procedure for employment of Executive Directors; employment of RESA staff; roles and responsibilities of the Regional Councils; personnel and operating procedures and policies; development and submission of annual reports; accountability for delivery of services and results; and the funding formula for RESAs.

The following recommendations are made regarding Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight.

Recommendation 1: Revise State Board Policy 3233 to (1) clarify the role of the State Superintendent for the day-to-day oversight of RESAs; (2) strengthen personnel hiring and evaluation practices, including the employment of Executive Directors (and the role of the regional council); (3) change the Plan of Services to a Strategic Plan; (4) define accountability standards for RESAs; and (5) address recommendations from other subcommittees.

Recommendation 2: The number of RESAs should not be changed at this time. Due to the rural nature of the state, the structure and number of RESAs should follow the pattern established for regional agencies by state government. When state government recommends a change in the regions of the state a study should be conducted on the number of necessary RESAs. At such time, criteria should be established to determine if a RESA should continue to exist or to become part of another RESA. There are currently no minimum criteria that determine when a RESA does not have sufficient student enrollment⁶ to justify existence as a stand-alone center. Additionally, there are no criteria to decide whether a RESA with declining student enrollment should be dissolved or combined with another RESA.

Recommendation 3: Incorporate specific personnel policy requirements into Policy 3233, by adding an additional appendix⁷ to the policy that identifies the required components. A matrix review of all RESA policy manuals showed inconsistent requirements regarding personnel matters. A committee of WVDE and RESA staff should develop consistent and standardized personnel policy manuals in all RESAs and identify policy development software for use in all RESAs.

⁵ See Attachment C for RESA Survey Executive Summary

⁶ See Attachment D for current student enrollment by RESA

⁷ See Attachment E for proposed Personnel Policy Manual components for RESAs

Recommendation 4: Revise Policy 3233 to change the RESA Plan of Services to a Strategic Plan, move the date for submission from September 1 to October 1 and clearly define “core and other services” that must be addressed in the strategic plan by all RESAs.

A review of RESA plans of services revealed inconsistent formats and content and lack of evidence of data analysis in some instances. The current timeline for submission does not allow RESA to adequately utilize county strategic plans to develop the RESA plan; therefore, the current RESA plans of services do not always reflect consideration of counties’ strategic plans and needs. RESAs need access to data from the spring statewide testing to incorporate appropriate data and actions steps from county strategic plans in the planning process and to have time for a review by the WVDE to determine alignment with prioritized professional development needs. Additionally, a standardized RESA Strategic Plan template should be developed and located on the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) and RESAs need the ability to view county plans as they are submitted to WVDE via WVEIS.

Recommendation 5: Develop a state performance accreditation system for RESAs, to include onsite audits of all RESAs. The WVBE should direct the Office of Education Performance Audits (OEPA), in cooperation with the WVDE, to revise Policy 2320 to incorporate a RESA accountability section and define the process that would be followed with a RESA audit. Such an accountability system would provide ongoing monitoring of RESA services, progress in implementing strategic plans, and the resulting impact on teaching and learning.

Recommendation 6: RESA funding should remain within the State School Aid Funding Formula and the current cap on RESA funding should be removed. A study should be conducted to determine necessary changes, if any, in the 60%/40% distribution process. RESAs represent a critical mass of knowledge, expertise and experience that would be difficult to replace. However, the current funding formula places RESAs in a vulnerable position and the distribution process does not allow adjustments for RESAs experiencing growth.

School Improvement and Staff Development

The subcommittee analyzed plans and standards of service, delivery and accountability for technical assistance to low performing schools and targeted professional development that enhances students’ achievement and progress. In both state code and policy, the areas of technical assistance and targeted professional development are identified as the two most important functions for RESAs. It should be noted that state budget funding accounts for only 11% of RESAs’ budgets, however, RESAs leverage funds from other grant and funding sources to support their efforts in providing technical assistance to low-performing schools and targeted technical assistance.

As part of the background work of the subcommittee, RESAS were asked to submit information outlining the number and type of low-performing schools for which technical assistance had been provided and the types and number of sessions of professional development provided across the RESA. During the 2004-2005 school year RESAs conducted over 650 regional staff development sessions for over 17,500 participants.

The majority of staff development sessions were initiated by counties or connected to required activities within restricted state and federal grants. A review of the sessions would indicate that many of the staff development sessions were not targeted to low performing schools. However, this may be attributed to at least three factors. First, the majority of RESA funding is directly tied to specific required activities of grants and special programs and while personnel from low performing schools may participate in some of those sessions, they are not directly targeted to low performing schools. Second, there is limited state-level funding for RESAs to provide the amount and type of targeted professional development and assistance needed for low performing schools. Third, the reported professional development sessions also include sessions for adult education instructors and public service training such as EMTs, firefighters and police.

Additionally there are currently few data collected to indicate the impact of the technical assistance or professional development on educators' content knowledge, classroom practices, and/or pedagogical skills or changes in student achievement that could be associated with educators' involvement with the technical assistance and professional development.

The issues identified with RESA professional development cannot be addressed in isolation because there are many professional development providers in WV (WVDE, RESAs, West Virginia Center for Professional Development [WVCPD], Institutions of Higher Education [IHEs], and Local Education Agencies [LEAs]). The RESA Task Force recommendations for professional development and school improvement should be implemented in conjunction with the recommendations of the Professional Development Stakeholders Group. All professional development providers need to acknowledge the priority professional development needs for which public education is held responsible, and recognize each provider's appropriate role in delivery of professional development. *"The governance structure of the West Virginia professional development system is too diffuse to assure that the entities responsible for professional development are working in a synchronized way to meet state goals for professional development. The professional development system needs to be driven by an agreed upon professional development definition, vision, and standards..." (National Staff Development Council, 2005)*

The following recommendations are made regarding School Improvement and Staff Development.

Recommendation 7: There should be a comprehensive statewide plan for professional development that reflects appropriate roles and governance structure for all professional development providers, including RESAs, as well as adequate standards for, and evaluations of, all professional development. State-approved professional development standards and a uniform system of professional development evaluation should be implemented. The professional development standards should reflect the National Staff Development Council (NSDC) professional development standards, and the professional development evaluation should include tools such as those described in the WV Legislative Study of Professional Development that was conducted by the NSDC.

A comprehensive statewide professional development plan would prevent professional development and delivery that is fragmented and lacks focus. Both state code and policy should reflect appropriate roles, governance structure, standards, and evaluation for professional development to ensure that professional development first addresses federal requirements of (1) improving student achievement and (2) ensuring that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers. A comprehensive statewide professional development plan must reflect input from and collaboration among all professional development providers, including RESAs, in the design and delivery of WVBE-approved professional development. However, the State Superintendent and designees must have oversight for the development and delivery of all professional development that addresses the two priority areas.

Recommendation 8: Revise WVBE Policy 3233 to assure that strategic plans reflect State Superintendent leadership in directing the prioritizing of professional development to address student achievement and highly qualified teacher issues. State-level leadership (i.e., under the direction of the State Superintendent) is needed in order to provide oversight for RESAs to assure that professional development reflects the state priorities (e.g., those issues for which the WVBE/WVDE is held responsible by the U.S. Department of Education: (1) improving student achievement and (2) ensuring that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers) in terms of delivery of professional development to schools/school systems.

Recommendation 9: Revise WVBE Policy 5500 (County Professional Staff Development Councils), to identify as a local professional development priority those issues for which the WVBE/WVDE is held responsible by the U.S. Department of Education: (1) improving student achievement and (2) ensuring that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers.

WVBE Policy 5500 (County Professional Staff Development Councils) establishes the general implementation process for staff development activities in the 55 county school systems. There is a need to resolve the conflict between Code-mandated local Professional Development Councils and the master state professional development plan; RESA plans; county strategic plans; NCLB

requirements; U.S. Department of Education requirements; NSDC Study of WV Professional Development recommendations, etc. State-level leadership should result in clearly defined minimum expectations for the delivery of standards-based professional development services to schools/school systems by RESAs (and other professional development providers) in order to provide consistency of services, as well as to provide for the unique needs of schools/school systems.

Recommendation 10: Allocate adequate resources to RESAs for professional development to assure that RESA-provided professional development addresses the federal priorities of (1) improving student achievement and (2) ensuring that all students are taught by highly qualified teachers.

It appears RESAs have been able to respond to Code and/or Policy priorities to provide professional development in terms of technical assistance and professional development to low-performing schools only to the extent that legislative funding is provided. It also appears that because public service types of professional development are self-sustaining in terms of revenue generated, more public service professional development is provided in some cases than technical assistance to low-performing schools professional development.

Recommendation 11: Due to their ability to respond quickly to county needs in low-incidence or high need areas and deliver specialized training programs, RESAs must be provided adequate funding to allow them to become centers of excellence for teacher quality and professional development, especially related to high need areas such as science, mathematics, and technology.

Education Technology

The subcommittee considered RESAs' responsibility for education related technology equipment and software, including cost and turnaround time as well as the impact of new technologies on RESA functions.

RESA staff responded to over 40,000 document service calls for software and/or hardware repair and support and provided training and support for over 10,000 West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) users statewide during the 2004-2005 school year; however, their responsibilities for education technology are much broader and far reaching. RESAs offer a number of additional technology services that benefit member counties:

- Support for non-standard software
- Substitute call systems
- Payroll production and financial assistance to counties
- Support for GradeQuick implementation
- Hiring of technicians and technology support personnel on behalf of the county school systems

The West Virginia Board of Education Educational Technology for 21st Century Learners Comprehensive Report of Findings and Recommendations found that “Technical support for computer and peripheral use is essential to the successful implementation of these devices in a school/classroom setting.”

The WV Legislature appropriated \$1 million in FY07 (and for several previous years) for “Technology Repair and Modernization.” The WVDE allocates these monies to RESAs based on student net enrollment of member counties. The 2006 Digital Divide reports over 87,000 total student workstations installed in WV schools, with almost 50,000 of these being Windows XP and higher. Additional administrative machines are installed in schools and county board offices, making the total workstation count in schools 100,000+. The \$1 million appropriation appears insufficient to cover the salaries of all RESA computer technicians, let alone provide funds for parts, staff development, etc.

Although most RESAs have a computer lab and/or some computers available for training purposes, RESAs vary in their capacity to provide schools with access to a sufficient number of computers and/or space suitable for professional development purposes. RESAs also vary in their capacity to provide access to videoconferencing equipment and other technologies. County school systems, individual schools, and the WVDE would benefit from cost-effective access to video conferencing equipment, computer labs, and other technologies to facilitate informational statewide meetings, professional development sessions, and distance learning opportunities.

As school systems employ technology integration specialists to work in schools, there is a need for extensive professional development for these specialists; yet very few counties have the capacity to provide such professional development. RESAs could assist the WVDE in the design and implementation of professional development programs for technology integration specialists.

In a 2006 survey of county superintendents, 50% of responses identified technology support (WVEIS, computer repair, etc.) as the most beneficial service provided by RESAs. Only 10% saw computer repair as the least beneficial, generally because the larger counties may have internal support for computer repair and may not use this RESA service. However, no uniform system exists among the RESAs for billing counties for technology maintenance and repair activities. §18-2-26 identifies as a primary RESA service: “installing, maintaining, and/or repairing education related technology equipment and software with special attention to the state level basic skills and SUCCESS programs.” §18-2-26 also identifies specific turnaround time requirements for repairs to technology components (e.g., WVEIS, file servers, networks, workstations, printers). Additionally, §18-2-26 requires RESAs to submit quarterly status reports on turn around time for computer installation, maintenance and repair to the state superintendent of schools. RESAs are also required to submit an annual audit report to the Legislative Oversight

Commission on Education Accountability. Although all RESAs report these data and attempt to report as accurately as possible, reports are not uniform across RESAs.

School technology infrastructures (e.g., network operating systems, desktop operating systems, hardware, network topologies and devices, WAN connections) have and will continue to become increasingly complex. The quantity, variety, and complexity of technology in schools are expected to increase as the WVDE implements its 21st century program. The demand for highly qualified technicians and systems engineers to support this technology is also anticipated to increase. The classifications and compensation schedules for RESA personnel involved in technology maintenance duties varies widely across RESAs. The days of the simple 'computer repair' (e.g., installing hard drives, installing CD drives) are over. While hardware components have increased in number and complexity, many components previously requiring maintenance are now considered consumables. Desktop systems have complex operating system requirements. Served-based local area networks may include multiple servers with complex configuration 'rules'. Wide area networks (WANs) add another layer of complexity. To ensure that technology systems function effectively for instructional use, schools need high-level technical assistance. Only a handful of schools can provide the necessary level of technical expertise within the school. While some larger counties hire technical support staff, many counties rely on RESA to provide these services.

The following recommendations are made regarding Education Technology.

Recommendation 12: *The WV Legislature should increase line-item funding to support technology infrastructures (local and wide area networks, server/network operating systems) and maintenance activities consistent with the WVDE technology plan budget recommendations found in the [West Virginia Board of Education Educational Technology for 21st Century Learners Comprehensive Report of Findings and Recommendations](#).*

In addition, RESAs not already doing so should implement software that permits remote diagnostic and maintenance capabilities for school networks and appropriate technology systems.

Recommendation 13: *Equip and maintain up-to-date computer labs and videoconferencing equipment at each RESA to enhance the delivery of professional development and targeted technical assistance to low performing school systems via technology.*

Some types of professional development and technical assistance could be provided more cost-effectively via videoconferencing. Use of RESA training labs makes training of multiple schools and/or counties at the same time/location

possible, without making a school computer lab inaccessible for instruction during the training time.

Recommendation 14: The WV State Board of Education should appoint a committee to (1) design a clear, accurate, and uniform reporting structure/work order protocol for RESA repair services; (2) develop an equitable and uniform system to be used by all RESAs for billing counties for technology maintenance activities associated with statewide projects; and (3) to study issues related to job classification and compensation schedules for RESA positions related to technology. The study should consider minimum compensation schedules and issues related to RESA budgets, state appropriations to RESAs, and personnel policies.

Accurate communication of data should support requests for additional funding. The committee should include representation from RESA directors, RESA financial personnel, RESA technicians, WVDE Office of Technology staff, county technology directors, and/or other appropriate personnel.

Recommendation 15: The WVDE Office of Technology should conduct an annual update meeting/staff development session with RESA technicians covering topics such as statewide contract changes, software on statewide contracts being installed in schools, server-based software, network topologies and devices.

This action would ensure that all RESA technicians are familiar with technologies being implemented via statewide initiatives.

Recommendation 16: All RESAs should become approved self-maintainers for IBM, HP, and Dell manufacturers. This would provide schools with an alternative for warranty service at times when RESA technicians must also be in schools to provide non-warranty service or at times when provision of warranty service does not negatively impact RESAs' ability to provide non-warranty repairs.

The training required for the self-maintainer programs would provide RESA technicians with expertise on systems in the schools and RESAs would have an easier avenue for the procurement of parts for computer repair. While the reimbursements for warranty service via these programs are not generally large, participation in the program could potentially provide an additional source of revenue for RESAs. However, since participation in the program could impact the number of technicians required, RESAs should ensure that non-warranty work remains a priority and should defer warranty work to another warranty provider, as appropriate, to maintain integrity of repair services.

Other Programs and Services

The subcommittee examined how RESAs facilitate the coordination and cooperation among the county boards in areas such as

- Sharing of specialized personnel, communications, and technology;
- Curriculum development;
- Operation of specialized programs for exceptional children;
- Developing and/or implementing any other programs or services as directed by law or State Board;
- Adult education; and
- Public service.

Some RESAs facilitate the purchase of classroom materials, custodial supplies and other goods and services used by school systems to obtain the maximum lowest prices. Other RESAs broker the purchase of utilities and fuel for school buses, again leveraging the buying power of multiple counties as opposed to single county purchases.

RESAs function in various capacities related to the federal E-rate program. RESA 3 is the “billed entity” for the state’s DS3 telecommunications lines (providing access from the state’s two points-of-presence out to the Internet). A few RESAs provide network maintenance services network/telecommunications devices approved as eligible by the Schools and Libraries Division (SLD).

Some counties have a limited number of students to serve in a particular special education category and RESAs are able to employ regional special education teachers who serve students in multiple counties. RESAs provide other specialized services for special populations including management of Medicaid reimbursements, speech therapy, nursing, psychological services, physical therapy, occupational therapy, audiology services, IEP activities, personal care, transportation, and care coordination.

In coordination with WVDE, RESAs provided services to nearly 75,000 adults in 2004-2005, including:

- 2,500 Adult Basic Education (ABE) in-service and pre-service instructors trained;
- 3,900 students successfully passed the Graduate Equivalent Degree (GED) Exam;
- 30,000 adults served through assessment, employment skills, literacy skills, job preparation, and GED preparation; and
- 38,000 adults trained via courses for firefighters, EMTs, miners, Boards of Education employees, and industry employees.

Other specialized services and programs delivered through RESAs include distance learning; energy management; food cooperatives and warehousing of commodities; substitute employee management and training; tobacco prevention;

professional development depositories/libraries; grant development and management; leadership training; principals' regional institutes; parent resource centers; GEAR UP; legal services, research, and seminars; and transportation services for Pre-K Supplemental Services (NCLB).

RESAs have the structure in place to deliver some of the same services to the community for a fee that they deliver to the K-12 system, e.g. professional development, technology support for business, non-profits and local government. They have the flexibility to offer a diversity of services based on the regional needs that other local or state entities do not provide, e.g. public service training and RESAs have the experience to administer and manage categorical state and federal grants that do not fit into the K-12 system. However, there must be a common accountability reporting system for RESAs to document other/specialized services provided.

The following recommendations are made regarding Other Programs and Services.

Recommendation 17: RESAs should continue to provide coordination and delivery of programs among county boards of education to provide efficiency of professional services and cost savings.

While many of the larger counties may be able to provide these services themselves, we must remember West Virginia is a rural state with many small LEA's where county staff are already wearing too many "hats". Incentives may be one option to consider to encourage all LEA's to utilize cost savings, professional development, and technical assistance services available through RESA's

Recommendation 18: Establish a set of "other" core services that each RESA should provide to develop collaborative community relationships, and work toward a shared vision while allowing flexibility and diversity of additional services based on regional needs.

Planning for these "other core services" must be a required component in each RESA's strategic plan. "Other" core services may include community services such as:

- Technology repair for adult education, and non-profits and other organizations
- Grant development and management
- Professional Development in areas such as leadership training in economic development
- Brokering of educational services with colleges (e.g., teacher training and 2+2 programs.) and continuing education credit for other professionals (e.g., DHHR workers certificate renewal)
- Sharing of specialized personnel, i.e. speech pathologists and special education staff

- Adult services, such as Adult Basic Education, regionalized GED testing, English as Second Language (ESL), workplace education, volunteer literacy services, public service, etc.

Recommendation 19: Explore the concept of “super” regional services as an avenue to allow one or two RESAs to specialize in purchasing and/or providing specific goods or services.

Services not available in all RESAs could then be made available across the state where appropriate and cost-effective. An example of a “super regional service” is the West Virginia Education Information System (WVEIS) currently managed at RESA III.

Recommendation 20: Amend State Code and State Board Policy to change the name RESA to Regional Education and Community Service Agency (RECSA) to align the mission of the service agencies with 21st Century Learning and economic development to provide the vital link between educational opportunities and the workforce needs of employers.

RESAs have the flexibility to offer diverse services based on the regional needs that other local or state entities do not provide, e.g., public service training.

Recommendation 21: Amend State Board Policy to expand the representation of the RESA regional council to include community business leaders, non-profit representatives and economic development professionals.

RESAs need to play a vital role in linking the educational system’s 21st century skills with economic development and workforce needs. This can be accomplished through collaborative partnerships within the RESA regional council.

Financial Integrity, Oversight, and Accountability

The subcommittee examined the development of RESA budgets; fiscal oversight of budgeting, salaries, benefits and employment, including audits; purchasing power and cooperative purchasing; and procedures for receiving and administering grants.

The combined RESAs revenues and expenditures for the 2005-06 year were approximately \$42 million. These revenues provided funding for school system programs, adult education programs and other projects. Revenues were comprised of the following sources:

Local	\$15.7 million	37.4%
State aid to schools	4.2 million	10.0%
Other state grants	8.4 million	20.0%
Federal grants	13.7 million	32.6%
Total	\$42.0 million	100.0%

Due to the sizeable revenues and expenditures there must be standardized operating procedures in place to ensure fiscal integrity and accountability, while allowing RESA to remain flexible to meet their unique regional and program needs. RESAs must also provide relevant fiscal information in a timely manner to all interested stakeholders. It is critical that RESAs develop and maintain appropriate internal control procedures including the segregation of essential accounting duties by utilizing RESA resources and the resources of the fiscal agents. Finally, RESAs must be effectively audited to the satisfaction of all interested parties.

The following recommendations are made regarding Financial Integrity, Oversight, and Accountability.

Recommendation 22: The WVBE should create and maintain a standing finance committee comprised of representatives from the WVDE, the RESAs and the RESA fiscal agents to develop standardized statewide financial policies, practices, and procedures for the RESAs.

Currently RESAs adhere to their own financial practices and procedures as well as those of their fiscal agent county boards; but, these practices and procedures vary among the eight RESAs. The WVBE should appoint committee members, establish a schedule for periodic meetings, review existing RESA financial policies, practices, and procedures to ascertain best practices, and develop an accounting procedures manual for RESAs.

Recommendation 23: Each RESA should create and maintain standing committees comprised of the chief financial officer of each RESA and the Chief School Business Official (CSBO) of each county board served by the RESA to review and discuss financial practices and procedures for activities that are unique to each RESA.

The standing committees would meet periodically to improve the communication of the financial staffs within each RESA and ensure that established practices and procedures are followed.

Recommendation 24: Establish a standardized financial report format and accompanying guidelines for RESAs to report financial information on a monthly and annual basis to:

- RESA directors and program directors/coordinators
- RESA Regional Councils

- State Department of Education
- State Board of Education

Standardized financial reporting formats will ensure financial information will be presented in a clear and concise manner and all stakeholders will have access to the same information on a periodic basis. The standardized financial report format and accompanying guidelines should be included on the Department of Education's website and workshops conducted to ensure all users are familiar with the requirements.

Recommendation 25: Conduct a review and evaluation of each RESA's internal control procedures and existing segregation of duties to determine existing practices and establish minimum standards regarding segregation of duties at each RESA.

Conducting this review and evaluation will enable the RESA finance committee to identify best practices among the RESAs and to target areas that have potential weaknesses. Establishing minimum standards will provide guidance on the types of duties, or combination of duties, each RESA employee may be assigned or allowed to perform. This will also establish the minimum financial duties each fiscal agent will be required to perform.

Recommendation 26: The WV Department of Education, in cooperation with the State Auditor's Office and the RESA finance committee, should develop a state compliance supplement for use by auditors in conducting the audits of RESAs.

Establishing minimum audit requirements for the auditors conducting the annual audits of RESAs will establish standardized auditing procedures for accounting firms to follow and provide assurance that all state funds are being audited. The WVDE must work cooperatively with the State Auditor's Office and the RESA finance committee to determine the significant federal and state programs that RESAs receive, develop required audit tests that must be performed in the audit of these programs, and include the requirements in the audit specifications.

Recommendation 27: Revise State Board Policy 3233 to include the requirement that all RESAs must be audited using the requirements specified under the Single Audit Act and that the cost of the audit will be paid from RESA funds.

This requirement in policy will standardize the type of audit the RESAs receive each year and ensure that all material federal and state program grants are included in the scope of the audit work.

Attachment A
2006 Online Survey of County Superintendents

30 superintendents responded to five questions

- What is the most beneficial service provided to your county by RESA?
- What is the least beneficial service provided to your county by RESA?
- What additional service could RESA provide?
- What service provided is not needed?
- How does RESA positively impact purchasing power in your county?

Summary of Responses

What is the most beneficial service provided to your county by RESA

- Technology support – WVEIS, computer repair, etc. – 50% of responses
- Staff development – 30% of responses
- Collective purchasing/collaborative programs – 23% of responses

What is the least beneficial service provided to your county by RESA?

- No services least beneficial/none – 20% of responses
- Coordination and delivery of staff development – 20% of responses
- Services to low performing schools – 10% of responses
- Computer repair – 10% of responses

What additional service could RESA provide?

- No additional services – 17% of responses
- RESA-wide attorney/legal services – 13% of responses
- More in cooperative purchasing – 20% of responses

What service provided is not needed?

- Don't know of any not needed – 40% of responses
- Regional councils – 10% of responses
- Different needs between large and small counties – 13% of responses
- Need to review structure and organization of RESAs – 17% of responses

How does RESA positively impact purchasing power in your county?

- Group purchasing of energy – 23% of responses
- Cooperative purchasing – 20% of responses
- Child nutrition/food services – 20% of responses

Attachment B
WV Senate Bill 127 RESA Study
Task Force Members

Committee	Committee Members
<p>Governance, Administration, Personnel, and Oversight</p> <p>Jack McClanahan, Chair jmcclan@access.k12.wv.us 304-558-3762</p>	<p>Chuck Nichols, RESA III Rick Powell, RESA II Hank Hager, Representative for WV State Senate Dave Mohr, Representative for WV House of Delegates Ron Spencer, WV Board of Education David Perine, WVDE Deborah Akers, Mercer County Howard O’Cull, WV School Board Association Delores Cook, WV Board of Education</p>
<p>School Improvement and Staff Development</p> <p>Karen Huffman, Chair khuffman@access.k12.wv.us 304-558-7826</p>	<p>Cindy Daniel, Kanawha County Diana Vargo, Ohio County Todd Chiccihrizzi, RESA VIII Geraldine Sawrey, Cabell County Judy Bledsoe, Wyoming County Larry Gillespie, Clay County Tom Dadrick, Marion County Ron Nichols, RESA V Elmer Pritt, RESA IV</p>
<p>Education Technology</p> <p>Kathy Boone, Chair kboone@access.k12.wv.us 304-558-3538</p>	<p>Marshall Patton, WVDE – WVEIS Gabe Devano, RESA VII Bill Grizzell, RESA I Jim Miller, RESA III Dave Kenney, Technology Director, Berkeley County Ron Blankenship, Calhoun County R. Harold Boone, Tyler County Board of Education</p>
<p>Financial Integrity, Oversight, and Accountability</p> <p>Joe Panetta, Chair jpanetta@access.k12.wv.us 304-558-6300</p>	<p>Nick Zervos, RESA VI Mike McKown, WVDE Jim Miller, Chief Financial Officer, RESA III Adela Cortez, State Auditor’s Office Kim Wade, Chief School Business Official, Marion County Jim Welton, Consultant</p>
<p>Other Programs and Services</p> <p>Bill Wilcox, Chair bwilcox@access.k12.wv.us 304-558-0280</p>	<p>John Hough, RESA VIII Alan Sturm, Vice Chair of RESA Council/Jefferson County BOE Charles Eversole, Chairperson, WV State Fire Commission John Myers, Retired Superintendent Matt Kittle, Superintendent, Barbour County Carol Cain, President, Randolph County BOE</p>

Attachment C 2005 RESA Survey

- Survey was distributed by Executive Directors of the 8 WV RESAs
- Approximately 550 surveys were distributed
- 144 surveys were completed and returned (26% return rate)
- Survey was analyzed in relation to six areas of service for RESAs as identified in WV Code and State Board Policy

Executive Summary of Responses

- 88% of respondents were familiar with RESAs and programs and services they provide.
- Over 50% of responses identified programs and services considered vital to schools and school systems. Services identified as most vital were technology services, technical assistance to schools and school systems, coordination and operation of regional programs and services.
- Respondents recommended RESAs increase services and programs in areas of technology, assistance to schools and school systems, and the coordination and operation of programs and services region wide.
- Respondents recommended RESAs enhance and improve services and programs by continually training regional personnel, employing additional staff, and seeking additional funds.
- Identified possibilities for the share of personnel on a regional basis were in the areas of curriculum, finance/purchasing, and child nutrition.
- Additional areas of service identified included the development of regional school calendars, early childhood programs, video conferencing and legal services.

Attachment D
RESA Personnel Policy Procedures Manual for Policy 3233

RESA's shall be required to develop consistent and standardized personnel procedures including, but not limited to:

- Organizational Structure
 - Overview of State Board & RESA
 - Employment Legal Relationship (At-Will)
 - Organizational Description
- Employment
 - Equal Employment Opportunity
 - New Employee Orientation
 - Hiring of Relatives
 - Medical Examinations/Background Checks
 - Conflicts of Interest
 - Outside Employment
 - Non-Disclosure
 - Disability Accommodation
 - Job Postings
 - Employee Acknowledgement of RESA Policy Requirements
- Employment Status & Records
 - Employment Categories
 - Access to Personnel Files
 - Employment Reference Checks
 - Personnel Data Changes
 - Performance Evaluation
 - Job Descriptions
 - Salary Schedule
- Employee Benefit Programs
 - Employee Benefits
 - Vacation/Release Day Benefits
 - Holidays
 - Worker's Compensation
 - Sick Leave
 - Bereavement Leave
 - Jury Duty
 - Benefits Continuation (COBRA)
 - Health Insurance
 - Life Insurance

Attachment D – continued

- Payroll/Timekeeping
 - Timekeeping
 - Paydays
 - Pay Deductions
 - Employment Separations
- Work Conditions & Hours
 - Health & Safety
 - Work Schedules
 - Use of Phone & Mail Systems
 - Smoking
 - Meal/Break Periods
 - Overtime/Adjusted Work Schedule
 - Use of Equipment & Vehicles
 - Business Travel Expenses
 - Computer & Email Usage
 - Internet Usage
 - Cell Phone Usage
- Leaves of Absence
 - Medical Leave
 - Family Leave
 - Personal Leave
 - Military Leave
- Employee Conduct & Disciplinary Actions
 - Employee Conduct & Work Rules
 - Drug & Alcohol Use
 - Sexual & Other Unlawful Harassment
 - Attendance & Punctuality
 - Personal Appearance
 - Resignation
 - Security Inspections
 - Solicitation
 - Drug Testing
 - Grievance Procedure

Attachment E
Student Populations by RESA⁸

RESA I

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles⁹	Number of Students
McDowell	15/2	538	4,112
Mercer	25/2	424	9,335
Monroe	5/0	474	2,068
Raleigh	30/11	610	11,684
Summers	5/1	368	1,616
Wyoming	14/1	507	4,190
RESA I Total	94/17	2,921	33,005

RESA II

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Cabell	31/9	286	12,249
Lincoln	18/0	437	3,764
Logan	18/2	456	6,050
Mason	13/2	446	4,209
Mingo	15/0	424	4,686
Wayne	21/1	518	7,575
RESA II Total	116/14	2567	38,533

RESA III

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Boone	16/1	506	4,572
Clay	7/1	347	2,111
Kanawha	72/20	913	27,979
Putnam	22/4	351	8,930
RESA III Total	117/26	2,117	43,592

⁸ Student numbers based on 2004-2005 WV Report Card and WV Blue Book

⁹ Source: WV Blue Book

Attachment E – continued

RESA IV

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Braxton	8/0	520	2,457
Fayette	24/3	667	6,919
Greenbrier	15/0	1023	5,297
Nicholas	16/0	657	4,225
Pocahontas	5/0	943	1,353
Webster	6/0	559	1,624
RESA IV Total	74/3	4369	21,875

RESA V

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Calhoun	4/0	280	1,187
Jackson	13/1	472	5,022
Pleasants	5/0	135	1,360
Ritchie	6/0	455	1,561
Roane	7/1	486	2,581
Tyler	4/0	260	1,561
Wirt	3/0	234	1,017
Wood	31/6	378	13,746
RESA V Total	73/8	2,700	28,035

RESA VI

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Brooke	12/0	93	3,638
Hancock	10/3	89	4,296
Marshall	16/5	315	5,241
Ohio	13/15	109	5,359
Wetzel	8/1	360	3,240
RESA VI Total	59/24	966	21,774

Attachment E - continued

RESA VII

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Barbour	11/1	345	2,599
Doddridge	3/2	322	1,284
Gilmer	6/0	342	1,009
Harrison	29/11	418	11,356
Lewis	6/3	391	2,789
Marion	22/3	314	8,183
Monongalia	24/7	369	9,960
Preston	12/1	654	4,702
Randolph	16/0	1,043	4,425
Taylor	6/0	177	2,417
Tucker	3/1	422	1,197
Upshur	12/1	355	3,765
RESA VI Total	150/30	5152	53,686

RESA VIII

County	Schools Public/Private	Area in Square Miles	Number of Students
Berkeley	30/6	325	14,983
Grant	6/1	478	1,995
Hampshire	10/3	641	3,618
Hardy	5/0	576	2,330
Jefferson	13/5	212	7,672
Mineral	14/1	330	4,583
Morgan	8/0	231	2,574
Pendleton	4/0	697	1,201
RESA VIII Total	90/16	3490	38,956