

Regional education cooperatives**22-2B-3. Regional education cooperatives authorized.**

A. The department may authorize the existence and operation of "**regional education cooperatives**". Upon authorization by the department, local school boards may join with other local school boards or other state-supported educational institutions to form **cooperatives** to provide **education** -related services. **Cooperatives** shall be deemed individual state agencies administratively attached to the department; provided that:

(1) pursuant to the rules of the department, **cooperatives** may own, and have control and management over, buildings and land independent of the director of the property control division of the general services department;

(2) **cooperatives** shall not submit budgets to the department of finance and administration but shall submit them to the department. The department shall, by rule, determine the provisions of the Public School Finance Act [Chapter 22, Article 8 NMSA 1978] relating to budgets and expenditures that are applicable to **cooperatives** ; and

(3) pursuant to the rules of the department, the secretary may, after considering the factors specified in Section 22-8-38 NMSA 1978, designate a cooperative council as a board of finance with which all funds appropriated or distributed to it shall be deposited. If such a designation is not made or if such a designation is suspended by the secretary, the money appropriated or to be distributed to a cooperative shall be deposited with the state treasurer. Unexpended or unencumbered balances in the account of a cooperative shall not revert.

B. The department shall, by rule, establish minimum criteria for the establishment and operation of **cooperatives** . The department shall also establish procedures for oversight of **cooperatives** to ensure compliance with department rule. **Cooperatives** shall be exempt from the provisions of the Personnel Act [Chapter 10, Article 9 NMSA 1978].

C. With council approval, a cooperative may provide revenue-generating **education** -related services to nonmembers, so long as those services do not detract from the cooperative's ability to fulfill its responsibilities to its members.

D. With council approval, a cooperative may apply for and receive public and private grants as well as gifts, donations, bequests and devises and use them to further the purposes and goals of the cooperative.

E. Each cooperative shall cooperate with the department as required by federal-state plans or department rules in the effectuation and administration of its educational programs. Each cooperative shall submit reports to the department at such times and in such form as required by department rule. Reports shall include an evaluation of the effectiveness of the technical assistance and other services provided to members of the cooperative and any nonmember public and private entities to which the cooperative provided educational services. The reports and evaluations submitted pursuant to this subsection shall be made available upon request to the legislative **education** study committee and the legislative finance committee.

History: Laws 1993, ch. 232, § 3; 2001, ch. 293, § 5; 2009, ch. 64, § 1.