A PROPOSED MODEL FOR A COUNTY FEDERATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Report of the

MONROE COUNTY EDUCATIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE

AUGUST 1971

Sponsored by the Monroe County
School Boards Association

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Staff Assistance From:

Rochester Center for Governmental
and Community Research

Genesee Valley School Development Association

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LIST OF COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Rev. Daniel Brent, Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Rochester. Chairman, Task Force on Regional Demonstration School.

Victor DiStefano, Ph.D., Former member of the Board of Education, Wheatland-Chili Central School District. Associate Professor of Pharmacology and Toxicology, and Radiation Biology and Biophysics, University of Rochester Medical School.

William A. Fullagar, Committee Chairman. President of the Board, Rochester School for the Deaf. Former member of the Board of Education, Honeoye Falls Central School District. Professor of Education, College of Education, University of Rochester. Formerly Dean of the College of Education.

James Green, President, Monroe County School Boards Association. Member, Board of Education, Spencerport Central School District. Employed by the General Electric Corporation.

William Harper, Former President of the Board of Education of the Brighton Central School District. Presently chairman of the Citizens Advisory Council to the Brighton Planning Committee. Employed by Eastman Kodak Company.

Arthur Holtzman, Jr., Member of the Board of Education, Pittsford Central School District. Insurance agent.

Charles W. Kinyon, District Principal, Wheatland-Chili Central School District. Applicant for the ESEA, Title V funds.

James Moser, Former President of the Board of Education, Penfield Central School District. Member, Board of Cooperative Educational Services #1, Monroe County. Employed by Eastman Kodak Company.

Lewis Obourn, Executive Secretary, Monroe County School Boards Association. Formerly Superintendent of Schools, East Rochester.

Glenn Wiltsey, Formerly member and President of the Board of Education, Rochester City School District. Professor Emeritus, University of Rochester.

Executive Secretary: Hugh Fraser, Associate Director, Genesee Valley Regional Education Center

TASK FORCE CHAIRMEN

Educational Planning Model Task Force - Craig M. Smith, Director, Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research

Transportation Task Force - Robert Greis, District Supervisor, New York State Office of General Services

Finance Task Force - Friedrich Grasberger, Associate Director, Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research

Task Force on Reducing Racial Isolation - Dr. John W. Bennion, Superintendent of Schools, Brighton Central Schools

Task Force on Regional Demonstration School - Rev. Daniel Brent, Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Rochester

RESEARCH STAFF

Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research
Craig M. Smith, Director
Friedrich Grasberger, Associate Director
Donald E. Pryor, Sr. Research Analyst
Nancy H. Orr, Research Analyst

CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Genesee Valley School Development Association and Genesee Valley Regional Education Center
John Wood, Director
Dr. N. Sidney Archer, Consultant
James E. Toole, Resource Coordinator

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on the Regional Demonstration School Task Force. Mr. Harry Thompson, Urban Education Planning Office, Genesee Valley Regional Education Center, Mr. Norman Gross, Administrator, ESEA, Title I and Urban Suburban Transfer Program, Rochester City School District, served on the Task Force on Reducing Racial Isolation.

A special debt is owed to the chairmen of the task forces: Robert Greis, New York State Office of General Services, Chairman of the Transportation Task Force; Dr. John W. Bennion, Superintendent, Brighton School District, Chairman of Task Force on Reducing Racial Isolation; Reverend Daniel Brent, Superintendent of Schools, Diocese of Rochester, Chairman of Task Force on Regional Demonstration School; and Craig M. Smith, Chairman of the Model Task Force and Friedrich J. Grasberger, Chairman of the Finance Task Force, both of the Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
CHAPTER I	BACKGROUND	1
	Perspective	1
	Applicable New York State Legislation	5
	Emphasis on the Metropolitan County	8
	Role of the Regional Centers	10
	Areawide Limitations of Present System	11
	Structural Limitations	11
	Financial Limitations	17
CHAPTER II	PROPOSED MODEL	25
	Principles Underlying the Model	25
	Local Control	25
	Representation	25
	Inclusion of City	26
	Countywide Financing	26
	Planning and Decision-Making	26
	Comprehensive Education	27
	Major Elements of the Proposed Model	27
	Organization	30
	Federation	32
	Representation	34
	Governance and Structure	43
	Fiscal Functions	44
	Operation of the Proposed Model	49
	Future Role of BOCES	51
	Countywide Concerns of FIED	54
	Proposed Legislative Revisions	60
CHAPTER III	SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	63
	APPENDIX	

TABLE OF EXHIBITS

		Page
Table	Per Pupil Comparison of Budgets and Revenues Monroe County School Districts	19
Chart	Federated Intermediate Educational District	29
Map	Representation Districts for Federated Intermediate Educational Districts	38

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

PERSPECTIVE

A 1969 report, Target: The Three E's, on the organizational and financial structure of public education in Monroe County stated that the educational system failed to provide fiscal equity across school districts, failed to provide equal educational opportunity for all children in the county, and failed to provide an efficient organizational structure. To quote the report:

> "There is an almost complete absence of overall planning, research and evaluation with reference to areawide needs and services. There are serious gaps in services available and obstacles to full enjoyment of areawide services by all school districts within the county. Perhaps most serious of all is the lack of an effective communication mechanism and the lack of any institutionalized concern, either on the state or local level, for the objectives of metropolitan cooperation in education."[1]

The potential for interaction and action on common problems by the 18 autonomous school districts of the county and the Catholic Diocese existed. Many of the school districts recognized both the importance of local initiative and effort and of voluntary cooperative action. The school board presidents and chief school officers of the City of Rochester and of the 17 other Monroe County school districts and the Catholic Diocese of Rochester have met monthly for more than four years. A number of common educational problems and issues have been identified and discussed in this forum. The dialogue between these representatives generated ideas and plans

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[1]The Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research (formerly Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research), Target: The Three E's, 1969, p. 5.

for cooperative action toward solving the complex interrelated problems of the area. But effective planning and implementation of such cooperation depends upon the development of a legal mechanism which can analyze information, utilize joint resources, utilize state and areawide funds, and implement agreed-upon programs.

Concurrent with the deliberations of the Monroe County group of educators, the New York State Education Department was also considering metropolitan and regional planning, and in the Spring of 1970, placed a high priority on supporting local efforts directed toward this end. On May 1, Associate Commissioner Stanley L. Raub approved an application submitted by the Wheatland-Chili Central School District to support a comprehensive metropolitan educational planning project for Rochester-Monroe County Schools. The Genesee Valley School Development Association had the responsibility of facilitating all operational components of the project.

It is against such a background that in 1970, as part of the project, the Monroe County Educational Planning Committee was formed and task forces created under it. The Planning Committee consisted of private and public school administrators. This voluntary group has met regularly bi-monthly and on numerous special occasions to plan and discuss the planning efforts of other agencies, design and review the process of its task forces, and consider alternative planning models and processes.

The Committee recognized the need for a far more representative and formal structure and consequently engaged in joint task force effort with the Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research, Inc.,

for the design and development of a tentative educational planning and organizational model for Monroe County. This Model Task Force was charged with the responsibility to evaluate various areawide approaches to educational planning and to recommend the approach which would be the most effective, practical, and appropriate to the particular needs, problems and unique concerns of the Monroe County metropolitan area.

The task force studied areawide approaches in other cities, counties, and metropolitan areas, including an in-depth review of studies previously conducted in this field by task force member W. T. Lowe.[1] Particular attention was given to the experiences of Nashville-Davidson County, Tennessee; Hartford, Connecticut; Nassau County BOCES; and Metropolitan Toronto. Of these, special emphasis was placed on Toronto due to similarities between problems of Monroe County and pre-Metro Toronto. Accordingly, members of the task force and Research Center staff spent two days on location investigating the Metro Toronto approach to educational planning and financing. Closer to home, BOCES-type services in Monroe County were reviewed, and the potential of BOCES as a base around which to build an educational planning model was evaluated. Additional areawide approaches were discussed with New York State legislative committees and members of their research staffs, officials of the New York State Department of Education, and local education leaders.

The task force adopted as its basic objective the design of an area-

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[1]William T. Lowe, Joan Roos Egner and Frederick H. Stutz, Strategies for Metropolitan Cooperation in Education, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Project No. 9B129, Grant No. OEG-2-700010 (508), January, 1971; and J. R. Egner, W. T. Lowe and F. H. Stutz, Regional Educational Development in New York State, a Project Report submitted to the New York State Education Department, May, 1970.

wide body, responsive and responsible to local school districts, which would be able to provide leadership, direction, and a means to achieve effective areawide educational planning, financing, decision-making, program provision, and utilization of educational resources. *The continuing autonomy of local school boards and their control over basic educational functions was emphasized as the context within which planning and financing of areawide educational functions should exist.*

To supplement the work of the Model Task Force, the Educational Planning Committee also established a Finance Task Force. The task force--made up of all members of the Planning Committee, with the research also performed by the Center for Governmental and Community Research--recognized that any model for effective areawide educational planning required a new fiscal approach which would provide an areawide source of educational financing for areawide services and also help to reduce or eliminate diseconomies of scale and inequitable financial burdens. Emphasis was placed on the need to reduce reliance on the property tax for educational financing. It was recognized that these fiscal problems must be approached on an areawide basis if a viable solution is to be reached for all school districts.

The importance of a review of educational financing was underlined by the results of a survey of local school board members conducted by the Planning Committee. The survey indicated that the board members gave school finance the highest priority for countywide planning efforts.

Three other task forces were created to study approaches to other

problems thought to be important by the Planning Committee. The Transportation Task Force was charged with the responsibility of conducting a feasibility study on the effect of metropolitan approaches to school transportation problems. The major objective of the task force was to evaluate present interdistrict school busing techniques and identify potential means of improving service and reducing costs.

A Demonstration School Task Force was created to examine the possible establishment of a cooperative effort in developing and disseminating innovative teaching approaches. The remaining task force created by the Planning Committee was the Task Force on Reducing Racial Isolation, which was primarily concerned with increasing support for the continuation and possible expansion of the urban-suburban pupil busing program as a model for helping to reduce racial isolation between the city and surrounding suburban communities.

APPLICABLE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATION

Pertinent state legislation was reviewed in order to determine legal bases and restrictions, and to determine where revisions would be necessary to implement the proposals of the task forces.

Any discussion of state legislation affecting areawide educational planning in metropolitan areas must immediately recognize that metropolitan planning is severely weakened by the exclusion of large cities from the intent of Article 40 of the Education Law. This reflects a historical emphasis on the need to centralize and strengthen the rural school district system -- a very justifiable but somewhat limited goal which has failed to adjust to

increasing urban-suburban disparities and problems in the metropolitan areas. The 1948 legislation, which authorizes creation of Intermediate School Districts and Boards of Cooperative Educational Services as an interim measure, has been implemented in a manner which restricts the law to "non-city" school districts. The declaration of policy of the legislation, as amended in 1953, states:

> "In order to improve educational opportunities in rural areas by overcoming the handicaps in rural education that arise from sparsity of population and from other causes and to provide an organization that will enable local school districts to combine their resources for the effective and economic provision of educational services, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the state that present school districts, *except city school districts*, cooperate in order that additional services not now feasible or available may be provided for the children of the community."[1]

The BOCES section of the law has since been amended several times so that it includes all city school districts, except those having a population of 125,000 or more. The sections of the law authorizing the Intermediate Districts do not exclude cities, but have never been implemented.

The exclusion of the cities over 125,000 population prevents them from becoming members of BOCES districts and leads to financial inequities inherent in this exclusion. Although these city school districts are large enough to achieve economies of scale without joining with other districts, their socio-economic character creates a proportionately greater demand for special educational services, and no financial incentive is offered the districts by the state to provide these services. In fact, the effect of the property tax limit on these same cities creates a disincentive

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[1] Laws of New York, 1948, Chapter 861, as amended 1953, Chapter 747. Italics added.

to expand the school program in these high cost service areas. Furthermore, the exclusion may also be damaging to some suburban districts which might otherwise cooperate with the city in that these districts, even grouped together, may not be able to adequately provide some services at an economical level.

On a more positive note, the Intermediate School District Law does provide a legal base upon which a metropolitan educational planning model could be built, assuming removal of the city school district restriction. The legislation spells out the necessary steps involved in creation of such an Intermediate District, describes the composition of an Intermediate Council and an Intermediate Board of Education, specifies services which may be provided by such a District, and provides for the levy and collection of taxes to cover Intermediate District expenses, with each constituent school district's share based on its proportionate share of the Intermediate District's total full or true valuation. The law also provides for state aid for the Intermediate Districts and authorizes the "establishment of Boards of Cooperative Educational Services pending the creation of intermediate districts." In fact, the successful and widespread development of the BOCES in New York State and the precedents for interdistrict cooperation in this legislation make this a desirable legal base on which to build a metropolitan educational model.

More will be said about each of these items in other sections of this report. What is important to note at this point is that although the law needs some modification and modernization, as will be spelled out later,

a mechanism does exist which has an important advantage of providing a legal precedent for the proposed model.

EMPHASIS ON THE METROPOLITAN COUNTY

The Model Task Force shares the State Education Department's faith in the benefits regionalism will bring to the planning and provision of educational services throughout the state. The group gave serious consideration to what limitations should be placed on "areawide" or "region" in order to maximize these benefits and to assure practical feasibility at the implementation stage. Specifically, the question was whether the proposed areawide planning model should have as its focus Monroe County exclusively, or whether it should be broadened to cover surrounding areas as well. The task force ultimately agreed that *a large metropolitan area such as Monroe County, with its unique problems, should in fact be designated as the primary planning area.*

The decision was, to a significant degree, based on the substantial role already being played by the county in financing and providing educational and education-related services. The county, while having little formal responsibility for education in the public school sense, does distribute approximately 12 million dollars in sales tax revenues to the 18 school districts, provides a variety of health services to the districts, partially subsidizes mental health centers which aid emotionally disturbed and mentally handicapped students, and is responsible for the creation and substantial fiscal support of the Monroe Community College. The county also has a considerable financial impact on several county education-related

institutions, such as the Museum and Science Center, Memorial Art Gallery, County Library System, Rochester Area Educational Television Association, and the Monroe County Extension Service.

Furthermore, the county is the only general governmental unit legally available at the areawide level which can provide official coordination and fiscal support to the proposed model. The consensus was that, at a multi-county level, the proposals embodied in the model would not be feasible without significant government reorganization. On the other hand, little restructuring would be needed within the single-county framework. It was agreed that the door is open for subsequent inclusion of other areas if warranted, but that the basic urban county must be organized and operating effectively before a broader attack on multi-county regional problems should be undertaken. Support for this view comes even from an advocate of the multi-county approach to metropolitan planning, who realistically stated:

> "There is no single model or approach which fits all or most of our expanding metropolises. ...Those metropolitan areas which are completely or largely encompassed within a single county ...should probably look to the urban-county approach..."[1]

The intent, then, was to develop a model based on the specific realities of the county's structure and needs. The Planning Committee feels strongly that any state actions toward regionalism in education should recognize the present responsibilities and potential of county government in the design of an overall approach to metropolitan education problems. The Committee believes that an approach which is exclusively multi-county

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[1]Stanley Baldinger, Planning and Governing the Metropolis, New York, 1971, p. 228.

in scope, which allows for relatively little flexibility or emphasis on local-oriented solutions, and which ignores the important role of county or general government in human and cultural needs, while perhaps more politically feasible and more easily implemented, can be detrimental to both short and long-range educational interests.

It is felt that the urban-centered problems within Monroe County demand far different solutions and different initiatives than do the problems of more rural areas of the Rochester region. Thus the Committee will be asking for local option or permissive legislation to allow Monroe County, and other urban areas with specific plans and solutions, to effect the most realistic and progressive areawide and regional approach possible within the general goals of the State Education Department. It is felt that not only is the proposed model compatible with the Department's goals of regionalism, but in fact strengthens these goals and improves the chances of attaining them.

Role of the Regional Centers

Perhaps there is need for emphasizing here that the urban-county model--which would be assigned countywide educational responsibilities--should not be regarded as a replacement for the functioning of a Regional Center, but rather as a necessary complement to the natural and effective operation of a multi-county regional division of the State Education Department along the lines of the Regional Center. In effect, the urban-county model would serve metropolitan county needs while BOCES would continue to serve the more rural county needs. Together they would provide the necessary two-tiered operational system within the State's designated

regional organization.

At the regional level the concerns of the state and local districts should be integrated into the statewide system with the emphasis on communication, curriculum development, educational technology, innovation and demonstration programs, evaluation, guidance and review of student development and placement, certification and training of educational staff, etc. These are functions in which the state and federal government have a responsibility, but one which must be conducted in the field and which can typically best be performed at a multi-county level. Because such regional districts would represent broad state-oriented interests and goals, they should be funded largely by state (and federal) funds and should also be utilized as a convenient method for communicating state goals and concerns, rendering technical assistance to the districts, and providing supervisory relationships of many types with the local districts, including those with intermediate districts established along the lines of the proposed model.

AREAWIDE LIMITATIONS OF PRESENT SYSTEM

Given the present focus on Monroe County, several limitations need to be noted by way of emphasizing the inadequacy of the existing system for dealing with countywide educational problems. Some of the weaknesses in the system are essentially structural or organizational in nature; others are basically financial.

Structural Limitations

As stated previously, the legal exclusion of the City of Rochester from the present benefits of the Intermediate School District Law has a

negative effect on the development of any meaningful participation in any form of areawide services and planning. As emphasized in a State Education Department paper, the exclusion of the city

> ". . . reinforces and is part of the threatening separation of city and suburban citizens and city and suburban governments that prevents joint action on problems that do not respect local government boundaries. This exclusion is yet another illustration of State policy that treats cities as distinct and separate entities and their suburbs as other distinct and separate ones. Even if each is treated 'equally' in dollars, formulas, and programs, it is a separate but equal policy that is as damaging to the development of the capacity of local officials to discern their common destiny and take steps to meet it as it is to individuals segregated by race or economic status."[1]

But the legal exclusion of the city school district is only one aspect of a much broader problem as it pertains to educational planning in Monroe County. That problem is the lack of any legal mechanism which possesses the ability to plan, finance, or make the implement decisions on countywide concerns. Including the city of Rochester, there are 18 distinct public school districts within Monroe County, and the educational leadership in the county tends to be fregmented and oriented toward those local districts. Nor is the fragmentation and inward orientation limited to the school districts. Even BOCES, the best example of a cooperative approach to some areawide services, is fragmented, with two separate boards in Monroe County--one on each side of the Genesee River (excluding the city area)--administering a variety of special and centralized educational services. The structure fosters duplication of services in an inefficient and costly manner (in terms of both money and human costs), and results in the absence of other essential services such as countywide planning and evaluation of countywide educational needs.

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[1]New York State Education Department, "Constructing a State Policy to Promote Regionalism in School Government," July, 1970, pp. 9-10.

In fairness to the two local BOCES, it should be said that many of the problems related to BOCES are not of local making but are built into the legislation. Perhaps its most telling weakness in terms of its relative lack of "clout" is the absence of any significant independent powers such as taxation or financing (see section on financial limitations which follows). BOCES is essentially limited by law to being ". . . a fairly primitive extension of an individual district, a cooperative service enterprise selling services to members who wish them on a charge-back basis with sharing of administrative costs."[1] Inasmuch as a BOCES is only selling service in a cooperative fashion, it is impossible to determine accurately what services and facilities will be needed in the future since they are subject to decisions by local boards. This makes long-range planning nearly impossible.

In addition, BOCES boards are not truly representative of local school districts--election occurring by a majority of members of all component school boards--with no attempt made by the legislation to make district representation proportional to the size of the individual district. Furthermore, there is no direct tie-in between BOCES board members and local boards, and because of their method of election and their five-year terms of office, there is little need for a member to attempt to determine or respond to the needs of the individual district, to the wishes of the voters, or even to the local educators, for that matter.

Lacking a countywide body with the power or legal authority to plan or provide educational services, there is, not surprisingly, inadequate

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[1] Ibid., p. 19

utilization and coordination of countywide or regional educational resources such as arts and cultural institutions, educational TV, colleges and universities, adult education programs, libraries, and manpower programs. Better coordination is also needed with such human and cultural resources as health and mental health services and social welfare services. The Rochester area is fortunate in having a strong base of educational and education-related facilities and programs upon which to build, but the present structure does not encourage optimum utilization of these services. Duplication of efforts results in some cases; coordinated approaches to area-wide educational problems are rare.

Illustrative of the lack of coordination is the duplication present in the interdistrict transportation system. School districts independently plan and implement transportation schedules, with no central fleet of buses or cooperative busing of interdistrict pupils. Buses from one district frequently pass through or near another district independently sending students to the same out-of-district school. These buses occasionally have sufficient additional capacity to accommodate the students from the second district; in other cases the present bus is too small to accomodate the additional load or the departure time does not allow enough slack to make an additional stop. Minor coordinated rescheduling could overcome such situations. Furthermore, the absence of a uniform school calendar across all school districts often results in a shortened school year for those students attending BOCES classes: because of the transportation system, if either the BOCES school or the student's local school is closed, the student does not go to either school that day.

Inefficiency is also quite evident in duplication of some BOCES services by most of the participating districts. All but three of the county's 17 districts eligible for BOCES aid duplicate some of the BOCES services with locally-funded programs. The major areas of duplication are in programs concerned with improving speech and reading, special education programs (typically the locally-run programs are for pupils whose disabilities are less severe than in BOCES programs), and the provision of psychologists and social workers. In some cases the duplication may be justifiable on the basis of greater need within certain districts for particular services, but in other cases it seems difficult to justify the costs of additional staff and equipment for the relatively limited use of a single school district.

Other examples can be given of inadequate coordination of educational resources within Monroe County. The Urban-Suburban Transfer Program is a cooperative endeavor between some suburban school districts and the City of Rochester in which inner city students are educated in cooperating school districts. This program has had only moderate success in mixing students of the city with those of the suburbs. Some schools have not participated at all, and others' participation has been minimal, with little overall coordination existing. The vast potential of educational TV has been largely untapped, with some local districts utilizing it, but with no effective long-range coordinated planning of how best to maximize its potential educational value on an areawide basis or even to share in the necessary planning and programming of educational TV. Only recently have efforts been initiated through the Arts Council to effect coordination and integration of cultural programs with educational programming. This

promising start needs expansion. Manpower training programs, adult education programs, and classes at colleges and universities are offered independently, with coordination and unified planning and scheduling virtually nonexistent. Unfortunately, these represent only a few of many examples of duplication and inefficiency in the provision of educational opportunities with Monroe County.

To be fair, some embryonic educational planning activities have begun to make progress in dealing with areawide problems--e.g., the Monroe County School Boards Association, Catholic Schools Planning Committee, an association of area colleges and universities, and the formation of a consortium of BOCES superintendents. But even these efforts, laudable as they are, have relatively narrow emphases and little power. There has been no central initiating force to bring existing services together to effect evaluation or planning around areawide educational problems on an ongoing basis. Local districts, area colleges and universities, the Catholic and private schools, and the variety of education-related organizations in the area have typically continued to orient their emphases and activities to legitimate, but nonetheless individual concerns.

Certainly the importance of these concerns should not be minimized; solution of individual problems is obviously critical to the ultimate whole of countywide educational well-being. Nonetheless, problems transcending the jurisdiction of a single group or institution cannot even be fully determined, much less solved, by the sum of even the most significant individual efforts. *Countywide needs must be identified and priorities developed on a countywide basis, and policies and programs designed and*

implemented to deal with them. Solutions to countywide problems and the implementation of effective countywide programs must not only draw upon the available resources in a coordinated manner, but must also heavily involve the participation of these resources in the process of establishing the priorities and policies. That is, these resources must not only be the actors--those who carry out the plans after they are developed--but they must also participate in the development of the plot if the most effective solutions to countywide educational problems are to be approached.

In short, the stage is now set. Communications have been established, an expressed state of willingness and concern exists on the part of most local educators, we have a great variety of educational and community resources, and there is an increasingly interested audience (the taxpaying public). It is obviously the structural limitations--the lack of a legal mechanism endowed with proper authority and responsibility--which represent the main deterrent to an areawide approach to educational problems and needs.

Financial Limitations

The structural limitations of 18 school districts of varying sizes, with varying resources and varying needs, are compounded by the inherent limitations of the present system of financing public education. These limitations are characterized by fiscal inequity and unequal educational opportunity.

A study of the public school system in Monroe County in 1969[1] showed that the system did not meet the goals of fiscal equity and equal

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[1]The Rochester Center for Governmental and Community Research (formerly Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research), Target: The Three E's, 1969.

educational opportunity (as well as efficiency). A comparison of current data with the 1967/68 statistics cited in that study reveals that the disparities between the various districts have widened.

Specifically, over the time period from 1967/68 to 1970/71, not only has the median per pupil expenditure increased from $1,148.03 to $1,448.88 (an increase of 26.2%), but the range of the lowest to the highest per pupil expenditures among the 18 county districts has also increased: whereas in 1967/68 the highest expenditure was 27.9% above the lowest, in 1970/71 it was 34.6% higher. The disparity of expenditures is even greater if only regular instruction costs are compared--with a difference of 40.3% between the lowest and highest district in this category existing in 1970/71.

The median of all types of state aid has increased 23.9% in this same period from $531.87 to $658.64 per pupil. However, the median per pupil property tax levy increased 34.6% from $470.43 to $633.26. Increases in full value property tax rates ranged between 10.9% in Honeoye Falls and 41.3% in the Rochester City School District. The median increase was 23.4%. (Despite the increase in the City School District tax rate, its place in the ranking of all districts increased only from 18th to 17th.)

The variation in expenditures and revenues is summarized in the Table. With the variation in expenditures, it is unlikely that there is equal educational opportunity. With the variation in revenues, it is unlikely that there is fiscal equity.

The differentiation in revenue sources--whereby one district

PER PUPIL COMPARISON OF BUDGETS AND REVENUES
MONROE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Expenses	Rochester	Range of Districts in BOCES #1 (East) Low	Range of Districts in BOCES #1 (East) High	Range of Districts in BOCES #2 (West) Low	Range of Districts in BOCES #2 (West) High	Overall Median
Admin. & Bd. of Ed.	$ 34.81	$ 30.16	$ 71.15	$ 37.33	$ 53.72	$ 43.68
Inst. Reg. Day School	798.27	763.73	1,071.76	770.43	857.97	800.85
Transportation	53.65	15.43	78.01	47.60	101.28	62.48
Oper. & Maintenance	144.44	94.16	151.56	111.47	133.26	117.90
Debt	117.54	62.25	229.86	144.23	265.10	172.77
Benefits	208.32	162.48	256.38	163.48	207.24	187.53
Other	57.22	16.71	59.68	11.23	45.92	31.32
Revenues						
Property Tax	$ 678.63	$ 331.06	$ 1,097.71	$ 397.79	$ 636.21	$ 633.26
Sales Tax	119.51	61.73	76.64	63.40	73.17	69.56
State Aid	457.60	452.76	839.05	613.48	942.10	658.64
Other	158.51	32.73	112.09	63.20	103.10	69.91
Total*	$ 1,414.25	$ 1,294.64	$ 1,737.17	$ 1,384.48	$ 1,506.13	$ 1,448.88
Valuation						
Valuation Per Pupil	$40,927.90	$22,036.13	$48,239.27	$17,925.67	$32,613.54	$31,103.78
Full Value Tax Rate	17.07	14.07	23.65	19.74	23.35	20.49

Sources: Monroe County School Districts' Budgets - 1970-71.
County of Monroe, Department of Assessment and Taxation - 1970-71.

*Except for Rochester, these total represent the ranges and median for the total expenditures and revenues, and therefore are not the sum of the parts shown above.

receives 64.0% of its revenue from state aid and another receives only 25.1% and whereby one district raises 63.2% of its budget from property taxes and another 25.3%--is due to the bases for the allocation of state aid. Neither the regular state aid formula nor the BOCES state operating aid formula is based directly on the educational needs of the pupils.[1]

The regular state aid formula is based on the average full property valuation per pupil compared to the average throughout the state. If valuation per pupil is intended to measure educational needs by assuming that districts with low valuation per pupil will have more students needing special education services, then the inclusion of all taxable valuation distorts the measure. As an example, in 1970/71, the Rochester City School District had $40,198 full valuation per pupil for state aid, the Brighton School District had $43,034 and the Pittsford School District had $35,832,[2] but according to 1970 census data, the median value of owner occupied houses was $15,174 in the city and $30,689 in the town of Brighton and $36,424 in Pittsford, with residential properties constituting most of the valuation in these two town districts.

In addition, valuation per pupil may be rejected as being unrelated to the ability to pay just as the real property tax is not a measure of the the ability to pay. The inequities of the property tax will be discussed shortly.

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[1] Only one type of state aid is based on any attempt to measure needs -- temporary, categorical urban education aid. Urban education aid is distributed to districts with more than 4,500 pupils with a "heavy concentration of pupils having special educational needs associated with poverty" as measured by scores on the state reading test, provided at least five per cent of the pupils in weighted average daily attendance are from families receiving grants under aid for dependent children programs.

[2] For 1970/71 aid purposes, the valuation per pupil is based on the 1968 full value and the 1968/69 resident weighted average daily attendance.

The BOCES state aid for operating expenses is based on the total tax effort for education. However, the tax effort may bear no relation to the pupil's need for special educational services. A district which transports large numbers of its pupils to school--particularly those who live too close to qualify for state aid[1]--will have a high tax effort. A district which is growing rapidly will have a high tax effort for debt service. On the other hand, a district may have a relatively low tax effort, not because its needs are low, but because either the taxpayers will defeat a budget which attempts to meet these needs or the district is prohibited by the State Constitution from taxing above a certain level--such as in cities with populations over 125,000. Furthermore, the actual use of BOCES services is subject to the vicissitudes of the local budget processes. In times of financial crisis, these services tend to be among the first to be cut. An additional difficulty is presented by the fact that state aid for these services is extended on the basis of actual expenditures--and not paid until a year after the expense is incurred. Therefore, the local districts must assume a larger portion of the costs.

Thus, the formulas for regular state aid and BOCES aid for operating expenses do not lead to fiscal equity or equal educational opportunity. Even with a more adequate formula, BOCES aid will not fulfill these criteria until such times as the Rochester City School District becomes eligible for such aid.

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[1]Under the state aid formula for transportation aid, pupils must live at least 1-1/2 miles from school, or more than 1 mile from the main route if a feeder route is established.

The shortcomings of the real property tax--the major local source of educational support--contribute both to the fiscal inequities and to the taxpayer revolt which, in turn, contributes to unequal educational opportunity. Basic principles of taxation are that taxes should be raised from those who benefit from a service or should be based on the ability to pay. Where the benefits of a service are diffused, and the direct beneficiaries are unable to pay, as in the case of public education, the ability-to-pay principle finds its most logical application. Yet, the property tax is a regressive tax on one form of wealth. The value of real property owned by an individual may or may not bear any relation to that person's ability to pay. Though the property tax is a tax on wealth, it must be paid out of income.

The shortcomings of the property tax are compounded by the inability of receipts to respond to economic growth. This inability may be partially due to poor administration. As a result, substantial increases in the tax rates are necessary to meet needs. In the Monroe County school districts, the median rate increase was 23.4% over a three-year period. Because of these limitations, the property tax should not be relied upon as the general tax base--particularly for education and other social responsibilities.

Joseph Pechman provides an explanation of why local governments utilize the property tax:

> "Dependence on this tax reflects the reluctance of many state governments to give localities authority to levy other taxes. It also reflects local fears of inducing migration or purchases in neighboring communities. Taxation of real property may have significant effects on the price and use of land, but

not on its location."[1]

The sales tax, also a regressive tax, is presently set at a rate of 7% in Monroe County for state and county purposes. To increase this rate to provide additional funds for education would be difficult. In addition, any increase, to be of significant assistance to education, would have to be substantial, as the present 3% county levy raised $48 million in 1970--of which 25%, or $12 million, was distributed for educational purposes to the school districts--compared to the total real property tax for education of $94 million.

Because of the weaknesses of the property and sales taxes, the possibility of an income tax for educational purposes must be explored.

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[1] Joseph A. Pechman, Federal Tax Policy, the Brookings Institute, 1971.

CHAPTER II - PROPOSED MODEL

PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING THE MODEL

After a careful review of the structural and financial limitations, the Model Task Force developed a number of basic principles which served as guideposts for the development of the model. The principles reflect a combination of educational philosophy, political and practical reality, and a readiness for change.

Local Control

Perhaps the most important reality underlying the development of the model was the necessity for retaining local control. The high level of ingrained support for local educational control and a reluctance to surrender any significant amount of that control were considered basic realities which proponents of any model would have to seriously consider. It became quite apparent from the earliest discussions that a model which did not allow local districts to retain a substantial degree of their autonomy would have no chance of being approved by the Model Task Force or Educational Planning Committee, let alone by local administrators, school board members, or the public at large. Aside from these realities, arguments in favor of local control of basic educational services are overwhelmingly persuasive. Retention of local control and participation appears to be a vital element in the creation and operation of a flexible, innovative, and responsive educational system.

Representation

Related to the local control issue was the principle that a body with countywide educational responsibilities should be made up of representatives

elected from and responsible to the local districts. Thus even at the metropolitan county level, the intent was to reflect the wishes of the localities.

Inclusion of City

Of central importance to the concept of countywide metropolitan educational planning is the assumption that the city school district will be included. This has been emphasized elsewhere in this report, but cannot be overemphasized. No model for areawide planning, coordination, and financing can be a viable one if, in effect, the area jurisdiction is in the shape of a doughnut with the hole being the important urban core of the metropolitan area. The Task Force felt strongly that any model must provide for full participation of any affected school district.

Countywide Financing

It was felt by both the Model and the Finance Task Forces that any model should provide for countywide financing of the activities of the educational planning body and the local share of services provided by it. This, of course, assumes that state aid for special educational and vocational services would also be made available on a countywide basis.

Planning and Decision-Making

It is important to link the planning process with decision-making to assure implementation and follow-through of the plans. It is not unusual to find planning bodies which are essentially advisory in nature, with little or no power to do more than recommend. However, it was felt that if true planning, decision-making, and coordination were to be effected, it would be necessary to link the planning and implementation functions within one body with overall responsibility, and to provide the aforementioned fiscal authority to provide the means of implementation.

Comprehensive Education

Although problems of public elementary and secondary education provided the major impetus for the formation of the Educational Planning Committee, the need for a broader and more comprehensive approach toward educational planning was recognized. Comprehensive educational planning must, in addition to public elementary and secondary education, include higher education, private education, adult education, and educationally-related activities such as museums, art galleries, educational television, etc. A model must provide for representation and participation of all of these components to be successful.

MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

To achieve the stated goals and in conformance with the principles discussed above, a model based on a federation of all 18 local school districts within Monroe County has been designed. This proposed federation would emphasize, preserve, and strengthen the autonomy of local districts in providing basic education, while simultaneously permitting a countywide approach to planning, financing, and providing selected countywide educational services and programs as well as encouraging coordinated solutions to countywide educational problems. The model would provide for comprehensive educational planning including the involvement of a wide variety of educational resources outside the public school systems (e.g., colleges and universities, public libraries, manpower programs, cultural activities, parochial schools, educational television, etc.).

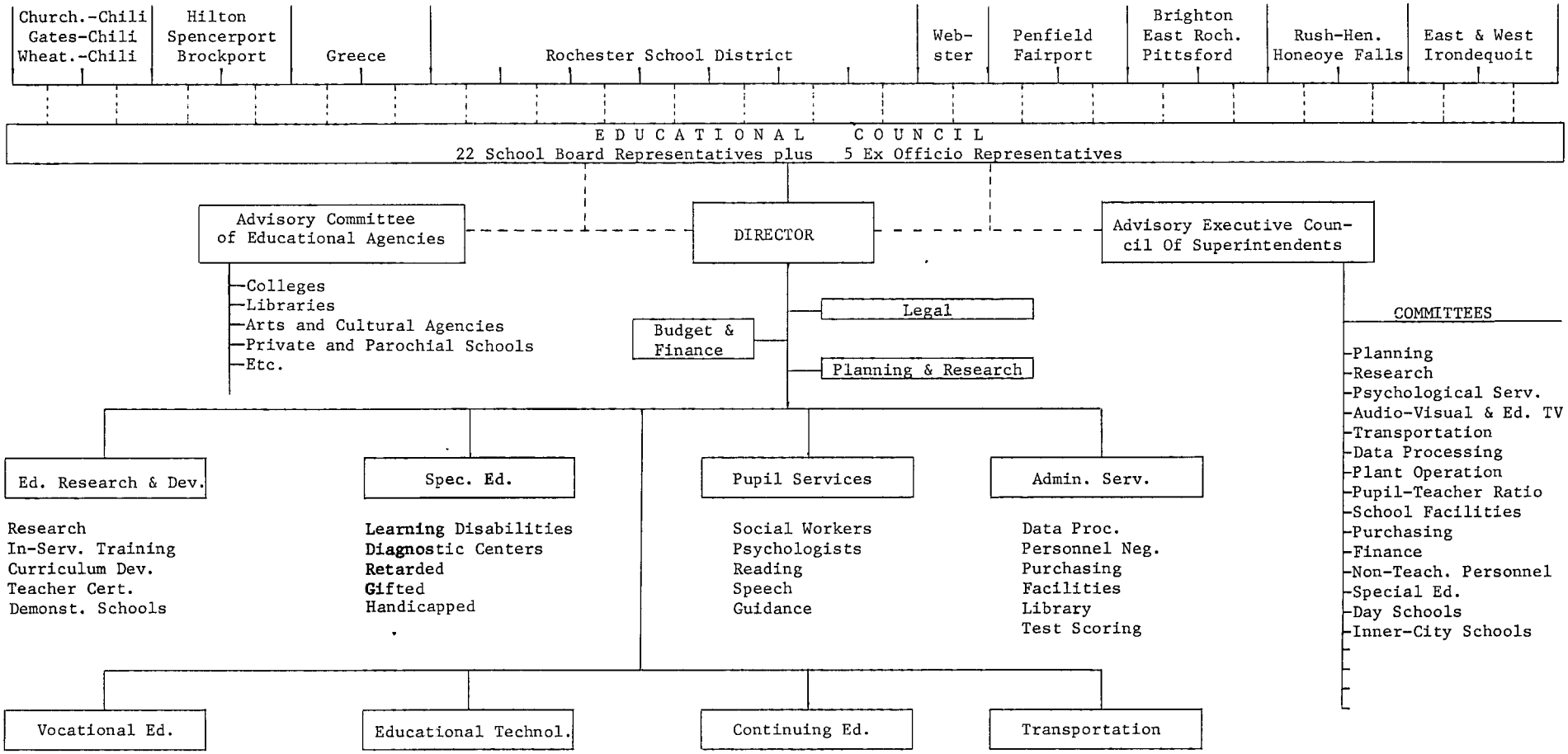
A more detailed discussion of the proposed model and its implications will follow in the subsequent sections of this report, but a brief description will be outlined at this point to give the reader a general overall familiarity with the model.

It is proposed that the federated model be built upon the legal base of Article 40 of the State Education Law--the Intermediate School District Law--with appropriate modifications. The district thereby created would be called the Monroe County Federated Intermediate Educational District (FIED), which in effect would become a countywide BOCES organization with improved representation and greatly strengthened planning and fiscal powers. The following chart outlines the organizational framework and responsibilities of the district.

As indicated, a 27-member Educational Council would be created. Twenty-two of the members would be directly responsible to, and selected from the membership of, the 18 local school boards. School districts would have either individual or shared elective representation on the Intermediate District Educational Council, depending on the size of their respective public school enrollments. The Council would also include five ex-officio members with voting power, representing such interests as the Catholic Diocese, area colleges and universities, arts and cultural organizations, etc.

Control of countywide educational activities would reside with the Educational Council, which would have the responsibility for hiring a County Director who would become the chief administrator of the District. The Director would head an Advisory Executive Council of School District Superintendents, which would advise and work closely with the Educational Council. The Advisory Executive Council would have several professional standing committees which would have important roles to play in such areas as transportation, research, facilities, special education, etc. An Advisory Committee of Educational Agencies would also be established to represent non-public education concerns. In addition to having an advisory role, this Committee would have direct voice and voting power on the Council through ex-officio Council seats.

FEDERATED INTERMEDIATE EDUCATIONAL DISTRICT



Finally, the proposed model would provide the authority for the levy and utilization of a countywide educational tax and for utilization on a countywide basis of BOCES and Intermediate District state aids for all countywide educational services and facilities.

Organization

The concern for developing a strong countywide educational planning model with power to make and implement educational decisions appears initially to conflict with the emphasis on retention of local control, mentioned earlier as one of the principles underlying the model. In reality the conflict seems more apparent than real; the two concerns did, however, quickly rule out possible alternative approaches to the model ultimately being proposed.

As an alternative, for example, some consideration was given to a consolidation of school districts into one countywide district. This approach has been successfully adopted in some sections of the country (as in Nashville-Davidson County) but such examples of merger were presented with the problem of consolidating only two school districts (city and surrounding county), and not 18, as in Monroe County! Such a merger in Monroe County would clearly weaken the operation of local control which has been fostered in our suburban and rural districts and which is also appearing in neighborhood form within the city district. As the mayor of Minneapolis said in discussing metropolitanization in his area, "One of the basic essentials of metro government is that it be genuinely local in character--the object is to strengthen, not to weaken, local government".[1] After reviewing single-district approaches to education in large

[1] Arthur Naftalin, former Mayor of Minneapolis, quoted by Peter Vanderpoel, "Metro Unit Compromise Seen", St. Paul Pioneer Press, March 24, 1967.

metropolitan areas, the staff of the Buffalo area's Project 1990 forcefully stated that ". . . the experience of huge school organizations under a single board of education and administrative staff has been one of rigidity and bureaucracy, not of flexibility, adaptability, or citizen influence and control".[1] The practical headaches of administratively effecting such a merger in Monroe County, when added to the vehement arguments against the loss of local control which would result, ruled merger or consolidation out as a viable alternative.

On the other hand, moving in the direction of reliance on an essentially cooperative model, with little real authority, or retaining a contractual service-oriented model along the lines of BOCES seemed to make equally little sense. The task force realized that if areawide planning were to have any significant impact, and were to open up more educational opportunities to the community as a whole, some degree of central authority and fiscal independence was necessary. Communication and cooperation among educators in Monroe County has increased considerably recently, but those doing the cooperating have recognized the inadequacy of voluntary approaches. Similarly, there was agreement that BOCES programs are essentially voluntary in nature and are subject to too many administrative, fiscal, and legislative drawbacks to be anything else. Something more in the way of centrally-located decision-making about countywide problems and of authority to implement and finance programs is necessary to have an effective educational planning unit.

A compromise solution was needed which would combine the best features of local autonomy and countywide authority to deal with areawide problems. As

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[1] Western New York School Development Council, Project 1990: The Future of Education on the Niagara Frontier, Report No. 2, Alternatives for Planning, p. 8.

Jerome Zukosky has ably stated, "Powerful forces are at work binding metropolitan populations together; just as powerful ones operate to segregate them and differentiate out resistance to complete unity, and the institutions of metropolitan life must accomodate to them both".[1] The accomodation proposed is a federated approach.

Federation

The federation approach is not viewed as a compromise or accomodation in which either position is weakened. The proposed countywide federation of all 18 school districts is seen as preserving and strengthening the role and capability of local districts in providing basic education while simultaneously providing for a mechanism for identifying countywide problems and coordinating, implementing, and funding countywide programs. The strength of the proposed federation approach is corroborated by the success of the Metro Toronto approach to municipal government and education and by the introduction of a federated metropolitan approach in the Twin Cities area of Minnesota. "Citizen groups, newspapers, and other concerned interests advocated metropolitan reorganization--federation--because it seemed the only logical solution to recognized area problems while safeguarding local values."[2]

A recent study of the metropolitan reorganization in Minnesota has stated, "Past attempts at reorganization have emphasized economy of scale and efficiency of function to the exclusion of the desires of the people for small, human scale, and more responsive government. Many proponents of reform have failed to realize that people living under our politically fractionalized system

[1] Jerome Zukosky, "Politics, Planning, and Regionalism", p. 7.

[2] Baldinger, Planning and Governing the Metropolis, p. 221.

may be willing to pay the added costs of less efficient government in order to preserve these long sought and worked for values".[1] The approach embodied in this model should go far toward preserving those values and allowing them to flourish while at the same time strengthening the ability to equalize educational opportunity and to do so on a more equitable, efficient basis countywide.

A final quote from the just-published Twin Cities study summarizes the values of the federation. Those values are just as applicable to Monroe County as to the Minneapolis - St. Paul area.

"Three major virtues of federation are these:

(1) the assignment of functions to the appropriate level or extension of government to facilitate their optimum handling with respect to 'planning, decisions, and scale of operation',[2]

(2) retention of local government with its greater immediacy and opportunity for individual participation, and

(3) effective areawide planning and coordination of approaches to common problems".[3]

More details on how the federation would work operationally will be spelled out in subsequent sections of this report.

As noted earlier, the proposed model is viewed in the context of building upon the present legal base of Article 40 of the Education Law--the Intermediate School District Law. Although this law, with the exception of that portion pertaining to the "interim" Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, has essentially not been utilized, "the intermediate educational unit or region

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[1] Ibid., p. 20.

[2] Alternative Approaches to Governmental Reorganization in Metropolitan Areas, Washington, D.C.: Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, June, 1962, p. 79.

[3] Baldinger, op. cit., p. 15.

is a viable organization, every bit as feasible as its proponents claimed 25 years ago when they sought legislation to create such units in New York State".[1] For a discussion of the development, strengths and weaknesses of intermediate educational districts, see Appendix. A quote from that discussion summarizes the potential values of such intermediate districts:

> "Intermediate school districts have the potential for equalization of educational opportunities, protection of local control, development of a change-agent role, promotion of economy and efficiency, coordination and improvement of educational planning, and reduction of contact points for liaison responsibilities of the state education agency."[2]

All of this is of course not to say that changes--some of a significant nature--are not necessary if the Intermediate School District Law is to be made consonant with the model being proposed. These changes will be noted in the subsequent discussion. But the Intermediate Districts authorized by this law do adhere to the concept of federation proposed in this model, and as such the existing legislation can serve as a viable and appropriate foundation upon which to base the model's development.

Representation

With 18 school districts to be represented in the Monroe County Federated Intermediate Educational District (FIED), the manner of representation becomes of prime importance. Each district should be represented in a manner which reflects the relative school population of that district within the county. With 18 districts, ranging in size from approximately 1,600 to 46,000

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[1] Egner, Lowe, and Stutz, "Regional Educational Development in New York State", p. 475.

[2] Wallace E. Blore, "A Proposed Position Paper on Intermediate School Districts for presentation to the Washington State Board of Education", Jan., 1970. Referred to in Interpretive Study of Research and Development Relative to Educational Cooperatives, U.S. Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare--Office of Education, Grant No. OEG-0-70-2487 (508), January, 1971, p. 41.

pupils, this could become unwieldy in terms of number of votes or council members if a method of direct proportional representation were to be set up. How to assure adequate and fair local representation without sacrificing ultimate administrative and decision-making efficiency became one of the major concerns of the task force in developing the model.

Some thought was given to electing members to a countywide council by a method similar to that presently used in electing BOCES board members, but as indicated previously, this procedure is not optimally designed to ensure responsiveness to an electorate. In fact, the non-representativeness of BOCES board members has been a major complaint of several local districts. There is no pretense of proportional representation built into the system, nor is it necessary for a BOCES board member to have any direct relationship, past or present, with a local school board. Members are elected for five year-terms by a majority of the voting members of all component district school boards. There appears to be nothing in this method of selection to assure, or even to promote, an attitude of awareness and responsiveness on the part of BOCES board members. This is certainly not to say that such attitudes are not present in many of these board members, but it is felt that responsibility and responsiveness should not be a matter of chance but should in fact be built into the model, insofar as possible.

Representation as provided under Sections 1951 and 1952 of the Intermediate School District Law would be similarly inappropriate. Under these, an intermediate council would be formed, composed primarily of up to five members from each component school board regardless of size of district. This council would in turn elect a five-member intermediate board of education, with the

only qualification being that each of the five be a qualified voter in his respective school district. These members, as on the BOCES boards, would be elected for five-year terms. Furthermore, five members would hardly allow adequate representation of 18 school districts. This legislative alternative was quickly rejected.

The method of selection of members to a central board of a federated system which was thought to come closest to meeting the local needs was that in existence in the Metro Toronto system. There, the Metro School Board is composed of trustees who are also members of, and who are selected by, the local school boards, with one or more Metro representatives, depending on district size, from each of the six districts--making a total of 15 public school representatives. In other words, officials elected to sit on local boards directly represent those boards at the Metro level, thus reducing the threat of a centralized body going against the will of the local districts and assuring representative awareness of ongoing basic educational programs and current needs in each district.

The principle of the direct relationship between local districts and countywide body--in this model called the Educational Council--is considered an important one. It is felt that if Council members were separately elected, they might not have as adequate and in-depth a feel for the needs and problems of the local areas as would a school board member who is constantly confronted with those problems. This could conceivably lead to contradictory votes and to countywide decisions being made which would not be reflective of the collective desires of the local school boards. Thus the desire to retain the principle of representation on the Council from currently active local school board membership

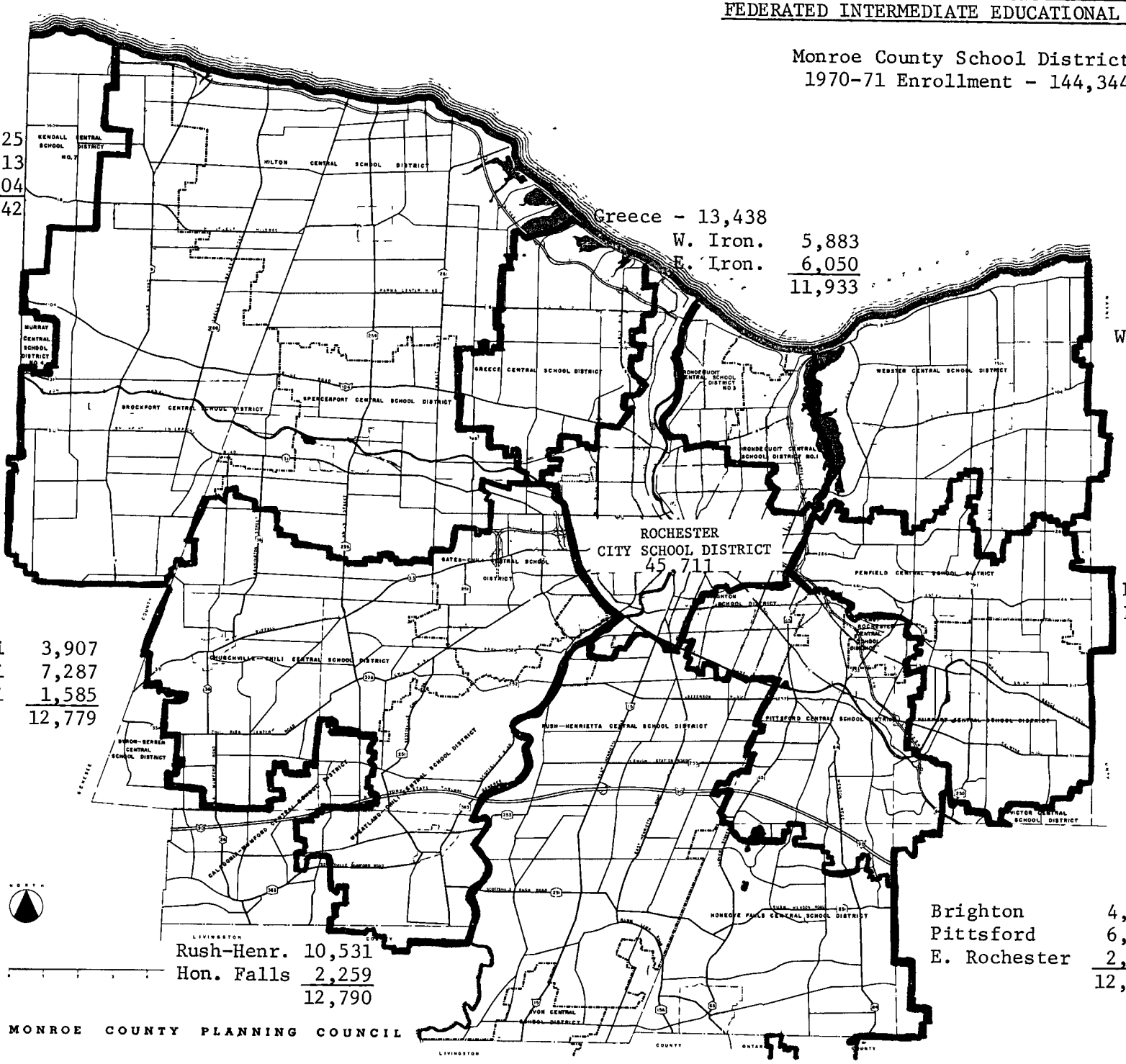
was firmly established. The practical question remained of how to implement such a system on a proportional representation basis with 18 separate local districts of vastly different sizes.

The proposal arrived at is that some districts would share representatives to the Educational Council. Otherwise, if each of the smallest districts were to have at least one school board member sit on the Educational Council, and the other districts were to have representation roughly proportional (based on enrollment), an unwieldy Council of approximately 90 members would result. The proposed model has been developed as an illustrative solution but is only one of many combinations possible. It envisions that one Council member would be elected to represent approximately 6,500 public school enrollees and, further, that no more than three districts would be grouped together to share two representatives. Accordingly, the suggested approach would stipulate that two Council members be selected to represent any single district or combination of two or three districts having an enrollment of approximately 13,000.

In the suggested alignment shown on the accompanying map, Greece would be the only single district, aside from the city, with as many as 13,000 students enrolled and thus would be the only non-city single district having two representatives. Webster, as a single district with significantly fewer than 13,000 enrollees, would elect one representative. The other town districts, in combinations of no more than three, would be grouped as shown on the map into approximately equal-sized combined districts, geographically contiguous, with two Council members from each such combination of districts who would be charged with the responsibility of speaking for and fairly representing the wishes of the respective component districts who elected them. Thus, for example, a

REPRESENTATION DISTRICTS FOR FEDERATED INTERMEDIATE EDUCATIONAL DISTRICTS

Monroe County School Districts
1970-71 Enrollment - 144,344



Hilton 4,625
Spencpt. 4,613
Bkpt. 3,704
12,942

Greece - 13,438
W. Iron. 5,883
E. Iron. 6,050
11,933

Webster
8,917

ROCHESTER
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
45,711

Penfield 5,913
Fairport 6,962
12,875

Church.-Chili 3,907
Gates - Chili 7,287
Wheat.- Chili 1,585
12,779

Brighton 4,457
Pittsford 6,349
E. Rochester 2,153
12,959

Rush-Henr. 10,531
Hon. Falls 2,259
12,790

MONROE COUNTY PLANNING COUNCIL

member of the Brockport School Board and one from the Spencerport Board might be elected to represent on the Intermediate Educational Council the three school districts of Brockport, Spencerport, and Hilton. Not only would each member be responsible for representing his own respective district, but the Hilton Board would also make known its wishes through these two representatives and expect them to represent Hilton just as they would their own boards. To complete the roster of district-oriented representatives on the Council, the City of Rochester would be represented by seven members, reflecting approximately the same proportionate number of Council members as it has of the county public school enrollment.

It should be noted here that the proportionality of representation should be reviewed each two years before the formation of new Council membership to ascertain whether any of the single or combined districts are overrepresented or underrepresented by more than one half of one representative. If so, adjustments in the assignment of the 22 elected members should be made at that time to reflect the current proportional school enrollments. It would be the responsibility of the Educational Council, subject to approval by the State Commissioner of Education, to revise the allotted number of representatives at such time, and if necessary, to revise district boundaries and groupings in line with pertinent sociological and economic developments (e.g., the formation of a planned new community covering two separate school districts).

When school boards come together to elect shared representatives, it will be necessary to assure that one board does not have more power simply by virtue of the fact that it has more board members. Thus, for example, if one district of a combination has seven board members and another only five, the one with seven should have only five votes in the selection process. This procedure

is similar to that presently used in the selection of BOCES board members. Combinations of districts would have to work out among themselves how to assure the most effective representation of each from year to year. A reasonable system of rotation would assure direct representation from each district over a period of time. The mechanics of selection such as minimum rotation requirements should be spelled out in enabling legislation. The fact that each district would have an equal number of votes in the selection process helps to ensure that no district, no matter how small, can be ignored. In fact, smaller districts are assured of a greater impact in this kind of a countywide Council, due to their built-in equality of voting power at the combined district level, than would be the case if they were assured of a seat on a proportionally-representative council (which, as previously noted, would have some 90 members).

The city school district presents a situation quite different from all other county districts due to the fact that its representation of seven on the Educational Council is as large as its total board membership (effective January, 1972). It is unlikely and unrealistic to assume that all seven members would be willing or able to sit on both the Board and the Intermediate Educational Council. As previously indicated, it is considered extremely desirable that all Council members be currently active members of local boards, and indeed it is felt that this stipulation should be part of any enabling legislation. However, it seems clear that an exception should be made in the case of the city. It is recommended that at least a majority--four--of the seven Council seats be occupied by current board members, with the other three to be appointed by majority vote of the seven board members. This method at least assures that the majority of the Council seats from the city will come directly from the school

board, and because those appointed will be responsible to a majority of the popularly-elected board, the wishes of the city district should be adequately reflected at the Council level.

The question of term of office of Council members is a perplexing one. Ideally, all local districts should hold school board elections at the same time and have equivalent terms of office. This would enable selection of delegates to the Educational Council to be made by the newly-elected boards, with the delegates to serve on the Council for their full elected term of office. This is done in Toronto, apparently effectively, but to conduct six local elections simultaneously is obviously far different from changing local patterns to effect the simultaneous occurrence of 18 local district elections. Therefore, other possibilities were considered toward the end of ensuring the dual goals of Council efficiency and adequate reflection of local board composition and wishes. Unfortunately, these two goals are not necessarily compatible. Council efficiency is presumably promoted by little turnover among representatives, but continuity arrived at through long terms of office could lead to a Council member's continuing to hold office even when he no longer reflects the will of a changing local board. There is the additional potential problem of a school board member being elected to the Council but being defeated for reelection in his own district during his term of office on the Council. Should he be allowed to complete his Council term even though he would no longer directly represent a local board?

In grappling with these questions, the task force quickly ruled out long terms of office, such as the five-year terms of BOCES board members, as being incompatible with effective local representation. It also determined that

in no case should a defeated or retired local board member be allowed to continue to sit on the Educational Council. It was decided that, although a one-year term of office would probably best assure the ability to reflect changes in local boards, it might be counterproductive in the potential turnover and resulting inefficiency represented by the process of a newcomer becoming acclimated to the processes at the countywide level. *Thus staggered two-year terms are recommended as the best blend of continuity and up-to-date reflection of the will of local boards.*

Although the Educational Council should be dominated by those ultimately responsible to the public for their membership on the Council, there is also strong support for the idea that the Council must reflect much broader concerns if it is to lead to truly comprehensive educational planning in the county. A report submitted to the State Education Department on regional education says, "Each educational region will need to become a single, articulated system of regional education (pre-school through community college) governed by a Regional Education Council and coordinating resources to provide all those educational services that can best be offered on a regional basis".[1] For such concerns to be adequately handled by the Council, its membership must include representatives from non-public education concerns. The task force proposes that five ex-officio representatives with voting rights be included on the Council. These members would represent such important education-related concerns as the Catholic Diocese, area colleges, and universities, arts and cultural organizations, and the County Legislature. It is proposed that these four hold regular permanent membership on the Council. The task force also

[1] Egner, et al., "Regional Educational Development in New York State", p. 480.

recommends that an Advisory Committee of Educational Agencies be established which would include arts and cultural agency representation, private and parochial schools, colleges and universities, libraries, manpower training, representation, etc. In addition to the permanent ex-officio membership on the Council, it is recommended that this Advisory Committee also elect one of its members each year to sit as an additional ex-officio Council member. This would provide a direct linkage of the Advisory Committee to the Council and thereby assign a greater importance to its existence, and by electing its representative each year would allow for wider exposure of educational agencies to the deliberative processes and decision-making of the Council.

In summary, the model calls for an Educational Council of 27 members, 22 of whom are directly responsible to, and selected by, the 18 local school districts. Inasmuch as this Council will have significant fiscal control on a countywide level, the task force believes the responsibility to the electorate to be an important strength of its proposed model. The five voting ex-officio members of the Council, backed by the Advisory Committee of Educational Agencies, are considered to be extremely important to the Council's ability to be comprehensive in its planning and coordinating of countywide educational programs and educational and fiscal resources.

Governance and Structure

Operationally, countywide educational control would be vested in the Educational Council, which would have the responsibility for hiring a County Director. As chief administrator, he would also head an Advisory Executive Council of Superintendents, which would be composed of the County Director and the 18 Superintendents of the local school districts. This body would meet

regularly and would work closely with the Educational Council, advising them and keeping them informed of professional and administrative concerns. The Advisory Executive Council would be assisted by standing committees dealing with such areas as research, planning, transportation, facilities, purchasing, finance, special education, etc. These committees, through the Advisory Council, would provide important input into the Educational Council's deliberative and decision-making processes. A more detailed look at the proposed administrative structure is provided in the chart on page 29.

The powers of the Educational Council, with its appropriate staff and advisory inputs, would be wide-ranging. Although, as previously emphasized, control of basic education would continue to reside with the local school boards, on a countywide level the Council would have significant planning, operational, and fiscal powers. It should be able to determine educational priorities of a countywide nature and to establish the programs to deal with those priorities. A discussion of the Council's proposed fiscal powers follows, and the potential role of the Council in comprehensive countywide educational planning is discussed in more detail in the subsequent section "Operation of the Proposed Model".

Fiscal Functions

The Educational Council would assume fiscal control over the countywide special education services now provided partially through the BOCES framework. State aid for these services should be granted based on a countywide formula. The local share of the special services budget--previously funded from the individual district budgets--would be financed through a countywide tax levy. It is anticipated that once these services are completely removed from the local districts' budgets, and controlled by an agency responsive to the

districts, the duplication of services by the individual districts will cease. It is very likely that demand for special services would increase as they would be of no direct cost to the district. Or conversely, the Council could decide that even though the concern and financing of a particular service should be countywide, it should be administered by the local districts.

In giving the Educational Council the authority to levy taxes to support countywide services, consideration must be given to the yield required and the equity of the various taxes.

Total expenditures in Monroe County for BOCES type special education services in 1970-71 were over $17 million. Had aid been received under a countywide aid ratio, the state aid portion would have amounted to almost $10 million. If the state aid continues to be received based on actual expenditures, and the expenditures increase 10% per year, the local share in 1971-72 would be almost $9 million. (Should the aid formula be revised to extend aid on a budget-year basis, the need for local funding would be almost $2 million less.)

The form of taxation used to finance the local share of the costs of special education services should be that which most nearly satisfies the two most basic requirements for the source of financing: (1) that the tax be equitable, and (2) that the yield of the tax be responsive to increasing costs and growth in the economy. Three forms of taxation are possible alternatives: the property tax, sales tax, and a tax on income. The following discussion of these three taxes and their respective tax rates is based on the projected 1971-72 local share of expenditures.

If a property tax were used to finance these services, the full value levy would be $1.82 per thousand. The assessed rate would vary from $2.60 per

thousand to $8.27. Although the property tax imposed on a countywide basis would be more equitable than individual district taxes, it still remains a regressive tax imposed on one specific form of wealth, with little relation to benefits received, ability to pay, or growth in the economy.

The sales tax rates in Monroe County total 7% with a 3% rate for the county and 4% for the state. The county levy in 1970-71 yielded $48 million, of which 25% is distributed to the school districts. If the local share of the special education services were to be financed from the sales tax, either the educational share would have to be increased from 25% to 43.5% or an additional levy of 3/5ths of 1% would have to be imposed, or the present allocation to the districts reduced. None of these alternatives appears particularly attractive or politically feasible. Further, since the sales tax revenues currently received by the districts are treated as general revenues, it would be difficult to determine an equitable method of reducing these allocations in order to finance the special education services.

The remaining option would be to adopt an income tax or a surcharge on the New York State income tax. A proportionate or progressive income tax with adequate exemptions and deductions is generally recognized as the most equitable tax in terms of ability to pay. Used to finance education, a case can be made for the benefit principle as it can be argued that over the long term a person's income reflects his education. A surcharge of 9% on the New York State tax, or a proportionate county tax of 3/10ths of 1% on net taxable income would be sufficient to finance the special education costs.

Based on the above considerations, it is recommended that the special education services be financed through a surcharge on the state income tax. If

that option is not available, a countywide property tax would be preferable to an increase in the sales tax rate. The tax rate to finance the special education services should be set to reflect the additional demand that is to be expected.

In addition to financing the special education services, the Education Council could raise revenues to provide general aid to the local districts. The logical method for redistributing the funds would be to remedy on a countywide basis some of the more serious faults of the state aid formula. Logical areas for improvement are the establishment of a realistic expenditure ceiling, the use of a current aid ratio based on current full valuation and not that of two years previous, and the use of a more accurate weighting system than the present weighting of 1.0 for elementary students and 1.25 for secondary. Consideration should be given to basing aid on enrollment rather than on attendance. Detailed calculation of the cost of these proposals has not been made as the basic state aid formula may be sharply revised by the Fleischmann Commission.[1] However, an improvement of the state aid formula would be the preferable method of distributing funds, compared to the possibility of per pupil grants or grants based strictly on valuation per pupil.

A difficulty which must be resolved is the fact that school district boundaries do not conform to county lines: several districts headquartered in Monroe County extend into surrounding counties; many pupils in Monroe County are in districts which are headquartered in other counties. If there is to be a countywide tax levy to aid education, a standard method must be devised for dealing with pupils in these categories. The following arrangement is proposed:

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[1] New York State Commission on the Quality, Cost, and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. a. All children who are Monroe County residents and those attending schools in Monroe County regardless of residence would be eligible for Monroe County central services, but the central services costs allocable to children living outside of Monroe County would be financed via a BOCES-type chargeback to the local district, and

   b. The countywide tax proceeds may be used for property tax reductions only within the Monroe County portion of the overlapping school district; or

2. As an option for districts headquartered outside of Monroe County,

   a. None of the districts' children, regardless of residence, would be eligible for central services financed by the Monroe County levy, but

   b. Monroe County taxpayers in these districts would receive property tax reductions determined on the basis of their fair share of the total countywide tax yield before allocation is made between costs of central services and amounts to be set aside for tax rate reductions and equalization.

Under the present proposal, it is not anticipated that the Educational Council would have the authority to review and approve the local school budgets--this would remain a function of the local school board. If the state aid formula were to be supplemented by the Educational Council, the local districts would have to provide information similar to that provided to the State Education Department to justify aid claims. The local districts could also propose programs to be performed and financed on a countywide basis, but the Educational Council would have the authority to determine which programs would be carried out on a countywide basis.

Authority to raise countywide taxes to support a share of the Educational Council budget would rest with the County Legislature in a similar manner as sales tax funds are now raised by the county for school purposes. Although it is proposed that the legislature have the power to raise county taxes in

support of Council programs, it would have no direct authority over the items in the Council budget. It is also proposed that the FIED have a fiscal year from July to June in order that the budget and tax schedule conform to that of the local districts and be separate from that of the county.

Approval by the County Legislature of any countywide tax levies would be necessary because the members of the Educational Council are not directly elected. Under the Intermediate School District Law (Section 1956) however, a procedure is available for raising funds through a district-wide property tax collected by the local school districts. This charge would be levied as part of the school district tax, with each local district share based on relative full valuation. In effect, this makes possible a countywide property tax for school purposes without total reliance on the County Legislature for the local share of Intermediate District funds.

OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED MODEL

The purpose of this report is to propose a model, and not to outline the actual development or specific operational responsibilities and functions associated with that model. Nevertheless, there are certain general assumptions to which it is hoped that the model will adhere in its development. The authors of a major educational planning study in the Niagara Frontier area suggested four such general guidelines:

(1) "There should be no loss of service to any local school district due to centralization of a school function.

(2) All services should be continued to at least the same extent as they were previously for local school districts, with the accent on improving services.

(3) Duplication of functions should be eliminated enabling economies of scale to be established.

(4) Basic regional functions should include regional comprehensive educational planning, evaluation and research and development."[1]

The issue ultimately becomes one of which functions and services are to be performed, and by whom. The Project 1990 study concluded that:

> "...centralization of some school functions and decentralization of others could improve both efficiency and participatory decision-making. The problem is ... which functions should be carried out on which levels. The ruling principle, we believe, is that the decision unit should be as small as possible but as large as necessary to efficiently perform the function at hand."[2]

However, it must be strongly emphasized at this point that what "we" believe and what the Educational Council will believe will not always coincide, and the model emphasizes the role of the Council--no one else--as the locus of countywide educational decision-making. Many questions must be answered concerning such issues as what responsibilities and programs should be undertaken, how and by whom they should be carried out, and what should be the approach to financing their execution. Answers to these and many related questions can not, and should not, be determined in advance by this Educational Planning Committee. If, as has been emphasized throughout this report, the concern is for countywide educational planning which reflects local views and the views of all important educational institutions in the county, then all these viewpoints must be represented in determining priorities, directions, and programs, rather than having them imposed a priori. It is well to suggest general guidelines such as those introducing this section, and various suggestions

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[1] Western New York School Development Council, Project 1990: The Future of Education on the Niagara Frontier, Report No. 2, Alternatives for Planning, p. 21.

[2] Ibid., p. 6.

should be advanced, but ultimately the representative Educational Council must make the decisions. Only "mutually agreed upon functions"[1]--which reflect the wishes of the majority of the representatives of the broad-based Council--should be assumed on a countywide basis. And even then, some of these assumed countywide responsibilities, as in Metropolitan Toronto, may still be administered at the local district level with only the expense and general responsibility for service assumed by the Council.

Because the specific responsibilities and functions of the proposed Educational Council would not be mandated, the countywide planning process can be expected to be a gradually evolving one. Rapid agreement can be expected on some issues, with consensus on other questions developing gradually as Council members and the public become more acquainted with the advantages of particular approaches possible under the proposed federated model.

The discussion which follows focuses on some of the issues with which the Council will at some point have to deal. The discussion is by no means intended to be an exhaustive treatment of the important issues. Rather, it is intended to illustrate some of the potential for effective educational planning and programming possible under the model. Where appropriate, specific recommendations are offered for the consideration of the Council.

Future Role of BOCES

One of the earliest questions to which the Council will have to address itself concerns the future role of the present BOCES operations in the county. As emphasized earlier, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services were

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[1] Baldinger, Planning and Governing the Metropolis, p. 241.

originally intended to be nothing more than interim organizations, to exist only until such time as intermediate districts were created. Thus, with the formation of a Federated Intermediate Educational District (FIED) as proposed in this report, the vacuum which the BOCES were created to fill no longer exists, and their continuation is technically no longer warranted according to the authorizing legislation. Moreover, even if BOCES had been accorded permanent status in the legislation, weaknesses in that legislation, discussed earlier in this report, would have necessitated significant changes in BOCES policies and structure if effective countywide educational planning were to result.

Nonetheless, it should be recognized that the existing BOCES operations can play an important role in the establishment of an effective network of countywide educational services and administration. The existence of facilities and equipment, staff, and teaching and administrative experience present within the two BOCES structures in Monroe County should provide a strong foundation upon which the proposed countywide intermediate district and the Educational Council can effectively build and grow. It would seem logical that many of the present BOCES staff would provide a solid nucleus and much of the experience and leadership needed in FIED's development and evolution. Similarly, many of the administrative and educational services being provided by one or both of the BOCES operations could logically be expected to provide the core of a potentially-expanded base of services and functions extended throughout the county. BOCES facilities and equipment would presumably be available for utilization under the new model where appropriate.

The degree to which BOCES staff, facilities, and services would become merged into one centralized countywide resource, or alternatively, become

decentralized, in a manner similar to their present structures, would have to be determined by the Educational Council. It is possible that many of the operations presently carried out within geographical areas by BOCES 1 and 2 respectively should continue to be performed in such relatively localized areas, rather than countywide. The city would of course have to be made a part of such a decentralized system, and each of the components (old BOCES 1 and 2 areas and the city, or, alternatively, any restructured component areas), instead of being self-contained administrative entities, would be ultimately responsible to the countywide Council. The Council may well decide that certain administrative and educational functions might most effectively and efficiently be carried out on such a decentralized basis, whereas others might better be totally centralized. The Council should not be reluctant to retain decentralized approaches modeled along present BOCES lines where that appears most advantageous, but neither should it feel bound by such precedents or hesitate to centralize those functions where decentralized duplication would be wasteful.

Earlier reference was made to the relationship between the proposed federated intermediate district and the multi-county regional center of the State Education Department. It is hoped that a strong ongoing communication channel would be established such that the intermediate district and the separate school districts would be able to readily benefit from state and regional programs and to be constantly informed about the thinking and concerns at the state level. Perhaps equally important, this kind of relationship would offer a greater opportunity for the state to be informed of problems and to gain insights and suggestions from the localities than is presently the case.

Countywide Concerns of FIED

One of the most critical functions to be performed by FIED would seem to be that of research and evaluation. Determination of countywide educational needs, problems, and solutions must be predicated upon an effective evaluation component. In the survey of school board members (previously referred to) conducted by the Educational Planning Committee, except for the overwhelming concern expressed for educational planning to concern itself with school financing, the major emphasis was placed on the need for evaluation of educational programs. The need is for comprehensive, relevant, and interpretable data as input into the planning and decision-making process. Where appropriate, the research and evaluation should be carried out by FIED staff at the county level; the local district would be the most appropriate level of responsibility in other instances. In either case, research, data collection, and evaluation should be conducted under standards and guidelines established at the county level in order to assure comparability and validity of the information. This concern for effective data collection and evaluation of educational needs and programs must be ongoing and must pervade the entire model. In fact, successful educational planning and decision-making can only occur when this kind of effective evaluation is present.

It is hoped that the Educational Council will approve the assumption by FIED of responsibility for adequate provision of vocational and special education services for all eligible and interested children within the county. This could include special programs for disadvantaged and for mentally, physically, and emotionally retarded students, as well as for specially gifted pupils. Many students already benefit from such programs under BOCES, but because of quotas and the varying degree of voluntary school district participation, not all students who could potentially benefit from such programs actually

do. Intermediate district assumption of these programs would, of course, require a uniform standard of eligibility and a method of screening potential participants. Within FIED a program might either be offered under countywide administration, be administered under a decentralized system, or be administered under the auspices and guidance of an individual school district (but with enrollment open to all pupils from any district, with countywide funding). The actual means of offering the programs should be determined by the Council in a way which ensures that there is no wasteful duplication but that the programs are sufficient to meet the needs.

Not only must the Council resolve the problem of vocational and special education for regularly-enrolled pupils, but in any comprehensive plan for providing adequate countywide educational opportunities, adequate adult education and manpower training opportunities must be provided. Many programs are currently available under many different auspices and many different funding sources. However, little effective coordination of these programs is in evidence, and needs often go unmet. Obviously, as is the case with the aforementioned vocational and special education needs, an adequate information base is needed to verify the extent to which needs are not being met before changes should be effected in the present system. But through a federated educational system which includes representation and input from colleges and universities, from comprehensive planning bodies, and from manpower development programs, a more unified, efficient, and effective approach to adult education and training should be possible. Coordination of the use of supplemental funds available for such programs is also a natural responsibility of the Educational Council.

Greater coordination of current efforts is also needed to more effectively utilize and expand present cultural and scientific programs for educational

purposes. Monroe County has many such resources available, but only recently have significant efforts been made to use these as important resources in the educational process. The Educational Council should play a lead role in bringing educators together with planners and administrators from the arts, cultural, and scientific facilities and programs to develop more innovative ways of integrating cultural and educational programming.

One of the very important areas of concern for the Educational Council centers around facilities planning and design. Presently each district develops its own plans and priorities for new buildings, site selection, and renovations independent of the plans of other neighboring districts. The Council must decide whether each district will continue to have completely independent authority to develop such plans, or whether they should be developed within the context of countywide plans, needs, and standards. In Toronto, the Metro School Board has responsibility for the entire capital program, with no renovations, expansions, or new facilities started except by decision of the Board. Priorities are determined on a Metro-wide basis, and funds from the Metro tax revenues are provided for those programs adopted by the Board. The FIED Educational Council may ultimately choose such a centralized approach (but one which is nevertheless responsible to the local district representatives for approval), or it may opt for the retention of local district responsibility, but within countywide guidelines. To continue the present uncoordinated system would be wasteful, inefficient, and potentially environmentally unsound. It is strongly recommended that, at the very least, FIED establish guidelines and standards to which the local districts should attempt to adhere in their capital program planning. It is further recommended that the Council make provisions for all

site selections to be subject to review by the County Planning Council, with provision for study and public hearing and re-submission by local districts in case of initial disapproval by the Planning Council.

It would seem desirable for the Educational Council to give serious consideration to ways of improving the school transportation system within the county, particularly as it pertains to interdistrict transportation. The Transportation Task Force created by the Educational Planning Committee came to a number of conclusions and made several recommendations which the Council will hopefully take under careful advisement as they consider economies and efficiencies possible within the county's educational system. For example, better coordination of existing bus schedules could help reduce duplication and costs. With recent amendments to Article 73A of the New York State Education Law, effective July 1, 1971, the restrictions on joint ownership and operation of interdistrict transportation fleets have been relaxed, making this a viable--and, according to the task force, an economic--alternative. It is also suggested that careful study be given to the effect of a uniform school calendar on the costs of school transportation, not to mention the social cost inherent in the present system which may cost a student attending both BOCES and local district classes up to 30 days of school per year.

Consideration might be given by the Council to the creation of more effective teaching techniques and teacher development. As the Demonstration School Task Force created to study this problem indicated, it is understandable but lamentable that school board interests typically revolve around short-range finances and that improvement of instruction appears to be given a relatively low priority. It is recommended that a countywide arrangement be studied to

provide for the design, testing, and evaluation of innovative programs for the benefit of student and teacher development as well as potential long-range cost reduction. Intrinsic to the plan should be provisions for involving and working with teachers who would then inaugurate the innovations in their local district. Higher education and cultural resources within the community should be utilized in such a program which would build upon, but extend beyond, the purposes of present in-service training programs. Using the Center for Innovative Education at Brockport State University is suggested as a potential starting point for such a demonstration school concept.

A potentially controversial, yet highly important issue which must ultimately be dealt with by the Educational Council concerns salary negotiations. In an age of increasing tensions between school boards and the staffs they employ, the question of countywide negotiations will inevitably arise. Resolution of this issue will be difficult and no easy solutions are suggested here. It is perhaps useful to briefly note, however, the experience with teacher salary negotiations in Toronto, where the federated system most closely resembles the proposed Monroe County model. In Toronto, there was initial resistance to Metro salary negotiations because that seemed to imply an overriding centralized control. Gradually a complex process of negotiations evolved, based on local negotiations but with coordination at the Metro level. This process resulted in many claims of bad faith, and finally the teachers requested Metro negotiations which, after a difficult period, appears to have generally satisfied both teachers and school board members. A closer look at the circumstances surrounding the Toronto experience may prove useful to the proposed Monroe County Educational Council.

Most of the special educational services discussed above--if adopted as countywide concerns by the Council--as well as overall administrative costs of FIED, would be financed by the countywide tax levy, thus eliminating the need for local districts to include funds for such items in their budgets. It should be recognized, however, that the Council might opt for making use of certain of these or other educational or administrative services optional to the local district. In such cases, the local school boards would have to decide whether or not to use FIED's services, and if so would have to allot funds in their respective local budgets to cover the costs of the contracted services, which would presumably be billed on a chargeback basis similar to that now used for BOCES services.

No attempt has been made in the foregoing discussion to do more than highlight some of the important questions which will demand answers--direct or indirect--from the Educational Council. Many other issues could have been mentioned and certainly should be considered carefully by the Council--e.g., development and supervision of pre-school programs, expansion of urban-suburban busing programs, more effective use of educational television, centralized data processing--and many other concerns will be raised which cannot even be foreseen at this point. Which brings us back to perhaps the most basic and critical of the functions of FIED: that of research and evaluation to identify the primary needs, directions, and priorities, and to propose the best means--centralized or decentralized--of responding. The ultimate decisions to approach particular educational questions on a countywide or decentralized basis rest with the Educational Council, and thus with representatives of the local school districts. But in order for these decisions to be made effectively, and in order that the correct questions be raised in the first place, the Council must not hesitate

to set up a strong countywide research and evaluation component. Only with such an effective component can the proposed Federated Intermediate Educational District--and its member local districts--establish a truly coordinated, effective and efficient, and farsighted educational system in Monroe County.

PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE REVISIONS

Permissive legislation should be utilized to authorize implementation of the proposed model. A recent nationwide review of regionalism in education states:

> "Legislation which permits or requires regionalism shows some interesting patterns or trends. . . . Recent legislation is . . . more permissive in allowing various programs and in allowing authority for taxing if there is a local referendum in favor of it."[1]

The New York State Education Department has also indicated its support for the desirability of local option:

> "The state must proceed as experimentally and pragmatically as possible, leaving as much to common sense and local determination and support as possible, and relying as much as possible on permissive legislation and discretionary authority of the Commissioner for each area."[2]

To this end, Education Law Article 40, the Intermediate School District Law, has been recommended as the legal foundation for development and implementation of the model. Creation of an Intermediate District is left to the option of the locality. Simple petition to the Commissioner of Education by 100 or more qualified voters within the proposed area or by a majority of members

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[1] U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Interpretive Study of Research and Development Relative to Educational Cooperatives, January, 1971, p. 173.

[2] State Education Department, "Constructing a State Policy to Promote Regionalism in School Government", July, 1970, p. 12.

of the affected boards of education authorizes the Commissioner to set in motion a short series of events which may culminate, at the request of a majority of all school board members, in a series of local school district meetings to vote on creation of the proposed Intermediate District, with a majority of all votes cast across the District needed for approval. Instead of a series of meetings, it is strongly recommended that the legislation be amended to authorize a county-wide referendum to decide the fate of the plan for creation of the proposed model.

Additional changes in the legislation would be needed:

The legislation should be amended to reflect urban as well as rural applicability, and in particular, the reference to exclusion of cities with populations of 125,000 or more from full participation in the legislation should be removed.

Sections 1951 and 1952, referring to an Intermediate Council and an Intermediate Board of Education, should be amended or deleted to allow election and representation of an Educational Council as proposed in the model. Revised legislation would need to reflect proposed changes in Council representation, method of election, term of office, and more comprehensive authority.

Legislation would be necessary to provide for the proposed financial system. Specifically, the county should be authorized to levy an income tax for use by the FIED. This could be accomplished by adding to the taxing powers of counties for school purposes as now provided for under Article 29 of the Tax Law. The BOCES aid formula should be revised to include that countywide levy as well as the local district levies for basic education in calculating the tax effort for the FIED.

These recommendations assume the use of the present BOCES aid formula. It is hoped that the work of the Fleischmann Commission will result in a more equitable aid formula. If it does not, further study of the aid formula should be made in order that it may be revised to provide equity. Minimally, aid should be provided based on budgets rather than actual expenditures.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report has attempted to identify limitations of the existing educational system in the Rochester-Monroe County metropolitan area and has proposed a model capable of providing leadership, direction, and a means to more effective areawide educational planning, financing, and provision of services and programs.

The focus has been countywide rather than multi-county, because of the unique problems of a large metropolitan county such as Monroe and because the county is the only general governmental unit with areawide scope which could provide official coordination and fiscal support to the proposed model. The proposed urban-county model is seen as effectively complementing the multi-county BOCES approach utilized in providing educational planning and services in the more rural counties. The two-tiered operational system which would thereby result is seen as strengthening the State Department of Education's goals of regional organization.

Although Monroe County is fortunate in having a strong base of educational and education-related resources upon which to draw, the existing educational system within the county is inadequate for dealing with countywide educational problems. No countywide body has the power or legal authority to plan, finance, or provide educational services, and thus there is inadequate utilization and coordination of those resources. There is considerable fragmentation with 18 separate public school districts and two BOCES in the county. BOCES is the best example of a cooperative approach to the provision of some

areawide services, but by state law the City of Rochester is excluded from the benefits of BOCES, although it may contract for services. Neither equal educational opportunity nor fiscal equity for all school districts presently exist within the county.

There are a variety of educational problems which transcend the jurisdiction of a single institution or school district and which seem to require countywide attention. Priorities and needs must be determined on a countywide basis, and policies and solutions designed and implemented to deal with them. In response to such countywide problems and needs, the proposed model was created to provide the legal authority to plan, finance and implement countywide programs.

Critical to the development of the model was the desire for continuing local district control over basic educational functions. Retention of local control is seen as being essential to a flexible, innovative, and responsive educational system. Furthermore, it was considered important that a body with countywide educational responsibilities should be made up of representatives elected from and responsible to the local districts, thus further assuring reflection of the wishes of the localities.

For the model to have significance, full participation of the city school district and provision for countywide financing were considered essential to provide equal opportunity and fiscal equity. The need for comprehensive educational planning to include all major educational resources, and the importance of linking planning and decision-making functions (thus assuring implementation and follow-through of the plans), were the other basic principles upon which the development of the model was based.

The model created and proposed within the report is a federation of all 18 local school districts in the county. This proposal combines the best features of local autonomy and countywide authority to deal with areawide problems. It is recommended that the federated model be built upon the legal base of Article 40 of the State Education Law--the Intermediate School District Law--with appropriate amendments.

The proposed model envisions the creation of a 27-member Educational Council. In effect, 22 of the members would be directly responsible to, and selected from the membership of, the 18 local school boards. School districts would have either individual or shared elective representation on the Council, depending on their respective public school enrollments. The Council members, who must also be current local school board members, would serve for two years. The terms of office would be staggered to assure continuity on the Council from year to year while simultaneously helping assure up-to-date reflection of changing composition and policies of local school boards.

Although the Educational Council should be dominated by those with ultimate accountability to the public, truly comprehensive educational planning requires input and voting representation from non-public education resources. Thus, five ex-officio voting members are included on the proposed Council to represent important education-related concerns.

The proposed model would provide the authority for the levy and utilization of a countywide tax--preferably an income tax--and for use on a countywide basis of BOCES-type state aid for all countywide educational services, programs and facilities.

The control of countywide educational functions would be vested in the Educational Council, which would be responsible for hiring the County Director as chief administrative official. He would head an Advisory Executive Council of Superintendents (made up of all the local district Superintendents), which would work in close collaboration with the Educational Council.

The actual development of specific operational responsibilities and functions must be worked out by the Council. If the concern is for countywide educational planning to truly reflect the views of local districts and educational institutions, the priorities, directions, responsibilities, and programs must be determined through their combined representation on the Council, and not in advance. No priorities should be determined or functions assumed on a countywide basis without support of the majority of the Council membership.

It should be emphasized at this point that the proposed model is indeed only that--a proposed model. School board members, professional educators, and contributors attuned to the politics of educational changes have had significant input into the development of the model. Nonetheless, questions can--and should--still be raised about the model, its advantages and disadvantages, its feasibility, and about possible alternative ways of meeting the objective of a countywide approach to educational planning, financing, and provision of certain countywide functions and programs. Local educators and school board members should give the model intensive discussion and consideration, and ultimately widespread public exposure and debate on the merits of the proposal are necessary. The importance of marshaling public support cannot be overemphasized, and the virtues of local control, increased services, and more equal educational opportunity with greater fiscal equity should enable winning of that support. If necessary, refinements should be made, followed by drafting of appropriate permissive legislation to enable the proposal to be implemented.

APPENDIX

Excerpts from

INTERPRETIVE STUDY OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT RELATIVE TO EDUCATIONAL COOPERATIVES

Chapter II: "INTERMEDIATE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES"

Research Conducted by: Dr. Larry W. Hughes, Co-Director, Dr. C.M. Achilles, Co-Director, Mr. James Leonard, and Mr. Dolphus Spence, College of Education, The University of Tennessee, January 15, 1971

Study funded by: U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Office of Education, Bureau of Research, Grant No. OEG-0-70-2487 (508)

APPENDIX

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Isenberg stated:

> ". . . the multi-district area has unquestionably been utilized as a local educational agency for complex specialized education functions. Its merit seems to be in its adaptability. It furnishes a large enough population base to permit the operation of effective programs. At the same time its cooperative nature does not upset the existing school system structure. With such great advantages, even greater use of the multi-district local education agency can be expected in the future."

The intermediate unit offers a structure through which new approaches may be made to both new and old ideas. Meeting together periodically, local school officials within an agency area are in an excellent position to acquire a broad view of regional matters that can place local accomplishments and local deficiencies in revealing perspective.

The intermediate school district's most important role is as a service agent for local school districts. The services provided should develop out of the needs of children and their teachers in local districts. Secondarily, intermediate units should improve administration and structure of education within its region. Logically, obvious economies can be realized by cooperative action in administration and organization. Only those services should be considered that cannot be efficiently and effectively performed by the local school district.

Blore emphasized that intermediate school districts have the potential for equalization of educational opportunities, protection of local control, development of a change-agent role, promotion of economy and efficiency, coordination and improvement of educational planning, and reduction of contact points for liaison responsibilities of the state education agency.

Regional service agencies based on state-wide planning units desirably associated with a state planning office would have some of the following strengths:

1) There would be the incorporation of educational planning and service delivery systems into the planning and service systems of other state agencies.

2) There would be an attempt to incorporate all the school districts of the state into units based on economic and geographic factors.

3) All units could have a major population trade center.

4) There would be a reduction in the wide range of assessed evaluation per pupil.

Isenberg has disapproved of the tendency to examine one segment or level of education in the state at the exclusion of the total system of education in a state. He said, "What each one does depends on what the others do. And none can be considered in isolation without taking fully into account the structure and the functioning of the other levels."

Various studies in many states have developed criteria for the establishment of regional intermediate educational cooperatives. A synthesis and checklist of these reports can be found in the attachment to this appendix.

The most controversial criterion in the formulation of regional intermediate units is the size of the service area. It is apparent that geographic limitations must be set to meet conditions found within the individual states. In Iowa, it was stated that too large an area "tends to make it more difficult to maintain channels of communication and the sociological community ties tend to be weakened."

One study reported that:

> ". . . apparently, there is growing recognition that conditions vary in different areas of the United States and even in specific areas of a single state. Such differences are compounded by the diverse philosophies upon which the intermediate operation is based in many states. The variations of the way the middle echelon is conceived within the framework of the total three-level state system also add to the overall differences from state to state."

FUNCTIONS

One study classified the specific functions of the intermediate unit services and programs as follows: (1) administrative and staff personnel services and programs; (2) instructional services and programs; (3) student personnel and services; (4) special education services and programs; and (5) research and development services and programs.

Campbell, et al. see the major functions of the intermediate unit as follows:

1) Planning for local district reorganization.

2) Determining the location of school plants.

3) Providing supplemental financing designed to further equalize educational opportunities.

4) Offering specialized educational programs, such as technical and junior college programs.

5) Providing specialized educational services such as psychiatric help to pupils in local districts.

6) Providing educational leadership to local school districts.

Intermediate units have been described as having primary functions of articulation, coordination, and supplementation. In its articulative functions the intermediate unit acts as the housekeeper for state school administrative operation and at the same time lobbies for local educational needs at the state level. In its coordinative functions, the intermediate unit fosters cooperative spirit between local districts to solve common educational problems. In providing supplementary service functions, the intermediate unit provides instructional and other direct services local districts cannot provide completely, effectively, or economically by themselves. This function may be one of the major growth areas for intermediate districts nationally. Some of the more typical supplementary services are supervision of instruction, consultant help for teachers, operation of library and instructional materials centers, provision for psychological and guidance services, health services, special classes for handicapped pupils, speech and hearing therapy, and so on.

Emerson pointed out that regional service agencies must plan to "spin off" functions when they become obsolete or the member districts are able to support them internally.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The formal incorporation of some type of multi-district or multi-county intermediate service agency as an integral part of the state's formal education structure is a movement that has been increasing in strength since 1960. The demise of the old county office of superintendent and the growth of some form of intermediate or middle echelon organization has had tremendous impact on the states where this has occurred. During the past decade, approximately fifteen states have established a new unit of school government based upon a regional approach for the purpose of providing specialized programs and services for elementary and secondary schools or have reorganized existing units, usually the single county office of superintendent, for the improvement of educational delivery systems at the local school system level. Other states are currently examining this alternative through the state education agency, the state legislature, and/or executive branch of the state government.

The increased demand from a more highly technologically oriented society, urbanization and the subsequent suburbanization with the inherent population shifts, and the increased demand for providing equal

educational opportunity for all youngsters have placed greater responsibility upon each state educational system and the subsequent organizational structure. Even though education is constitutionally a state responsibility, in operation most of the responsibility has been placed on the local educational agency. With the increased complexity of education and the specialized services and programs increasing in number and scope, local education agencies have not been able to keep up with the demand effectively and economically. Therefore, regional approaches to delivering services to meet the specialized educational needs of youth are increasingly being required.

Organization

Intermediate educational cooperatives are an integral part of the state system of educational administration. These agencies are legally established or permitted through state legislation and subsequently encouraged through state, federal and local funding. In most cases the intermediate unit is below the local education agency instead of a super-structure designed to overshadow the local school district; the intermediate unit receives direction from the local education agency. The state structure in which these organizations are found is frequently described as a three echelon system consisting of the state education agency, intermediate unit, and local education system. During the formation of the emerging regional intermediate unit, the old county superintendency has either been abolished or absorbed into the new intermediate unit.

Membership

Membership in intermediate units consists of the local school districts which comprise them. In some states it is optional for the county to vote for inclusion, while in others it is mandated. Most states are divided into regional agencies in which all school systems are involved, although in some states certain school systems of large size are not permitted or required to join. In Iowa, the regional boundaries have been designed to include either a community college or area vocational school which would then become an integral part of the educational program, though not necessarily having membership.

Governance

The traditional intermediate unit, the office of county superintendent, was either elected by popular vote or appointed by the state education agency. In some cases a policy board of elected lay citizens did not exist. More recently, the intermediate unit has consisted of a board of control elected by the people with the appointment of the executive officer. The emerging regional intermediate units vary in the manner in which the board of control is determined. In some states they are popularly elected; in other states they are elected by the school board members of the constituent districts from their own ranks; and in one state they are elected by a joint committee of the constituent school districts which is usually made up of the superintendents of the local education agencies.

Situations exist where separate county school boards appoint a common administrator or superintendent who must meet separately with both boards in administering the joint unit.

It is generally recommended that the board of control be popularly-elected lay citizenry with overlapping terms of office from three to four years. However, the election of a board of control by the school board members of constituent districts based upon a weighted ADM vote has much merit. States where the governing board consists of one representative of each of the constituent districts or limit membership to a set number from any constituent district may soon run into the problem of conflict with the "one-man, one-vote" principle.

The authority of the governing boards of the intermediate units is either established in law or through regulations established by the state education agency. Where possible, it is recommended that powers and responsibilities of the boards of control be established through regulations of the state education agency so that changes can be made more easily as needs arise. Literature also indicates that the board of control of an intermediate unit should be empowered to establish its own rules and regulations subject to state education agency and/or statutory and constitutional constraints. The board of control of the intermediate unit should, as it most frequently does, have the authority to appoint its chief administrative officer and to approve staff upon the recommendation of this officer.

Size and Geography

Existing intermediate units have a wide range of student population depending upon the state's organization and natural geography or terrain. It is generally considered that the minimum student enrollment for any multi-county regional intermediate unit should be 10,000 pupils with an optimum range of 50,000 to 60,000 students. It should be pointed out, however, that this optimum is probably not sufficient to offer extensive computer programs and facilities economically and efficiently. One of the chief considerations in determining geographic size is the driving time from any point within the region to the center or centers that house program offerings. A common "rule of thumb" is that driving time to the centers should not exceed one hour for 90 percent of the area to be serviced.

Currently, intermediate units in the United States vary from single counties to multi-county organizations. However, the boundaries of the regional intermediate units may or may not be coterminous with the existing political county boundaries. This is usually determined by the strength of the county political and administrative functions. Where the multi-county intermediate unit is not coterminous with county boundaries, the region seems to have been planned on a socio-economic basis. Other considerations given to the formation of regional agencies are the number and kinds of local school systems involved, the financial

base, trade and service areas, climate, the demand for services that would be placed upon the regional intermediate unit, and sociological community ties.

Function

The primary role of the intermediate unit is to offer programs and services to aid local school systems in providing equal educational opportunity for all students within the service area. The services provided by the intermediate units in the United States vary considerably. They may deal with inservice education, special education, guidance, curriculum development, vocational and adult education, cooperative purchasing, educational television, electronic data processing, media, shared teachers, library, etc. Many regional intermediate units are extensively involved in planning on short- and long-range bases. These planning functions seem to be rapidly emerging and necessitate the regional intermediate unit working cooperatively with other state and federal agencies.

Many of these intermediate units are involved in the developmental programs which are designed to work out the bugs so that the program can be "spun off" as soon as the constituent districts are able to support it internally.

Whatever the types of services provided to local school districts, they are usually determined by the criteria of the inability of the local district to provide the service on an economical, effective, and efficient basis itself.

It should also be pointed out that those intermediate units which do not have a state regulatory function operate most effectively with the local education agency and are seen as providing services to and not for the local education agencies. Naturally, this has implications for state laws, rules and regulations.

Personnel

High staff quality and highly specialized personnel are the most striking characteristics of successful intermediate cooperative education units. The following types of specialties required indicate the variety of personnel needs and opportunities connected with intermediate units: (1) curriculum content, (2) legal problems, (3) team teaching, (4) flexible scheduling, (5) educational planning, (6) educational redesigning, (7) testing, (8) programmed instruction, (9) curriculum research (10) research, (11) educational television, (12) child development, (13) teacher recruitment, (14) communications, (15) general administration, etc. One intermediate unit in Michigan employs a full-time lobbyist to work with state and federal legislators in obtaining or influencing new legislation and possible sources of funding.

Excellent salary schedules and/or various other fringe benefits and privileges are apparent keys to the successful recruitment of quality

staff personnel. The regionalism of many intermediate units provides a "district" size large enough to allow for a high degree of specialization by extremely qualified personnel who are typically given the freedom to perform within their own specialty areas. Current and projected activities of intermediate units will require personnel trained in: (1) planning, (2) communication, (3) media and technology, (4) program development, (5) evaluation, (6) computer applications, etc. Some intermediate units have been forced to develop their own training programs, especially in the rapidly emerging area of educational planning.

Financing

Intermediate units vary in their authority to levy taxes to provide funds for operational programs. Some intermediate units have been deliberately limited in the amount of state funds provided for administration and program operation to force local cooperation and mutually funded programs between constituent members of the intermediate unit. It is recommended that the intermediate unit be empowered to levy taxes and have fiscal independence and fiscal integrity. Intermediate units should be eligible to receive federal aid, other gifts, and grants for the operation of specialized services. Regional intermediate units should also be eligible to bond for the construction of the facilities. Contractual arrangements between the intermediate unit and local school systems to provide services are one of the most common forms of funding and definitely indicates program commitment. Some states provide funds on a matching basis for specific programs. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Act has been used extensively in funding operational programs at the intermediate unit level. The trend toward more planning and evaluation activities through Title III of ESEA encourages continuation of this funding since the intermediate unit is one of the most logical agencies to perform these tasks.

Trends

Some type of intermediate unit between the local school system and the state education agency appears essential since public education is obviously involved in a period of profound change, and modern conditions will continue to dictate further change. Most recent developments have emphasized the regional concept of multi-district cooperation with co-ordinative, planning and supplementary service functions. Since 1965 there has been a considerable movement toward the establishment of intermediate units on a regional basis with many states considering this alternative. The advantage in this type of an agency that is most attractive to local education systems is the ability to maintain local autonomy while obtaining needed specialized services for students. A matter of prime consideration for the establishment of multi-county intermediate units is that this structure provides an opportunity to equalize the tax base at a more local level than has previously existed. While mid-America has been the center of the force for the emergence of the regional intermediate units, the Southeastern United States, which has few of these cooperative programs, has probably