SCHOOL DISTRICT SHARING AND EFFICIENCIES STUDY
Senate File 447

Findings and Recommendations

Background: Senate File 447, passed in 2007 by the Iowa General Assembly and signed by Governor Chester Culver, required the Iowa Department of Education to provide findings and recommendations about potential sharing and efficiency efforts among school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, other post secondary institutions, and governmental subdivisions. A series of regional discussions facilitated through the Area Education Agencies invited participation by various educational personnel and governmental officials (county and municipal). Attendees examined various efficiency proposals in the following areas:

- Operational efficiencies
- Shared programming
- Transportation sharing
- Expansion of area education agency cooperatives
- Common schedules for school districts and community colleges
- Energy and insurance efficiencies
- Effective structure and delivery models that promote optimum student achievement
- Graduation requirements
- A rigorous, relevant curriculum

(A more detailed description of the uniform process used to gather input in each region may be found in Appendix 1.)

Findings: The findings cited below were consistent in reports from at least eight of the ten Area Education Agency regions:

- **Finding 1:** Educational and local/county governmental officials appreciated the opportunity to have structured regional conversations about what they are already doing to share services and to examine how they might do more sharing in the future. Participants noted that the "easy to share" services are already working. (See Appendix 2 for a listing of services currently being shared; several of the regional facilitators who are retired school superintendents commented that they were pleasantly surprised at the recent successes in sharing services among and between various local partners). Several regional reports mentioned that the regional meetings were "a good beginning, but more of them need to be held."
- **Finding 2:** Tight budgets and a shortage of qualified staff for specific jobs has motivated most of the sharing among school districts, AEAs, community colleges, as well as city and county government. (It was noted in a few regions that while districts have contracted for services with their

city, county, hospital, etc., they have not generally considered the operations to be "sharing" agreements). The sharing of services was often driven by the inability of the school district to find individuals who were qualified and were willing to work for the salaries that the district could pay. For example, several regions also noted that there is a need to rethink the way mental health services are provided to students as well as adults. Common needs, like this example, will drive most of future sharing/contractual agreements.

- **Finding 3:** While striving for efficiency is important, educators stressed that they are responsible for educational efforts being effective. "What is efficient may not be effective" was a common sentiment. One region noted that "becoming 'efficient' does not always equate to a savings of money." Another regional report stated, "Doing the right thing for the students is not about saving money; it is about saving the kids." And another region mentioned, "If programs are anticipated to be more effective in terms of results, but not necessarily more efficient in terms of costs, then there needs to be a method to measure those effective results…" Further it was stated, "Not all benefits can be measured in dollars and cents. Quality of life and the future of this state must be an important part of any discussion that takes place regarding sharing or efficiency of operation."
- **Finding 4:** Additional efficiencies and sharing could be undertaken with few barriers in areas such as shared payroll, fuel depots, architects, recycling, snow removal, asbestos and fire safety, immunization with public health, shared space and facilities (e.g. rec centers), preschool, public and student transportation, grant writers, skilled workers such as electricians and bus mechanics, and insurance services (especially workers' compensation, risk insurance, vehicle insurance). Every region commented that one of the biggest potential efficiencies would be health insurance. One region noted that every educational and governmental entity that employs IPERS-eligible staff should be able to work together for more efficient health insurance options. Another noted, "Health insurance was high on the list of problems that need solving-and there is serious money at stake." (See Appendix 3 for a listing of services that have potential for being shared).
- **Finding 5:** The AEA cooperative, the Iowa Educators Consortium (IEC; http://www.iec-ia.org/) which was formed by all the AEAs as a tax-exempt independent entity, negotiates prices on a variety of supplies. IEC works with the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) to make state-negotiated contract goods and services available to districts and other public and not-for-profit entities. School district participants noted that many of the city and county officials in attendance at the regional meetings were unaware that the IEC contracts generally permitted purchasing by city and county government as well as not-for-profit organizations like Boy Scouts, science centers, etc. It was suggested by all that many of the potential savings could occur if the IEC or some other statewide purchasing agencies expanded into negotiating prices on buses,

repair parts, tires and fuel as well as services such as human resources and payroll.

- **Finding 6:** There is a widespread perception among school district superintendents that existing Iowa Code and/or federal regulation prohibits districts from engaging in various activities that might be more efficient. See Barrier 6 below.
- **Finding 7:** Providing high school students with expanded educational opportunities (Advanced Placement courses; college credit courses) was considered a primary reason to expand sharing agreements. Efforts such as career academies (career and technical focus) in partnership with Iowa's Community Colleges have been especially successful and need to be expanded. School districts noted that investing in expensive technical equipment, specialized facilities, and qualified teachers through cooperative ventures with the community college in the region is both efficient and effective. Interest was expressed in using distance learning technologies to provide additional courses for high school students (e.g. Mandarin Chinese).
- **Finding 8:** While the existing sharing incentives (e.g. supplementary weightings) for school districts are stimulating sharing agreements, it was the unanimous opinion that further financial incentives are needed for other potential opportunities. One region noted, "Supplemental weighting money does get people talking and serves as a very good reason to start sharing discussions." A further note added: "[Supplementary weighting] gives the administration and the board a legitimate reason to go to their constituents and recommend a particular sharing arrangement. Many of the older constituents do not understand why students need more courses or more opportunities when today's students have more courses and opportunities than the older constituents ever did. But the older constituents [do] understand the need for more money."
- **Finding 9:** The regional reports recommended that the Iowa Department of Education consider limiting the number of student information systems that districts may use. Some regions even recommended that the Department select one system for statewide use. Superintendents noted that training costs would be reduced and support for district personnel utilizing the system would be enhanced if the number of systems was limited.
- **Finding 10:** Every region noted that participants were skeptical of the motivations behind Senate File 447. Participants voiced concerns that the reason for the legislation was to create a backdoor tactic for school consolidation. One region noted that if the state continues to have the same county and school district structure, then no one should expect "order-of-magnitude" changes in efficiencies. A common sentiment across regional reports was exemplified by one region's statement, "There was some apprehension expressed that gathering this information [about existing efficiencies] would only be used by the state as a covert way to force districts to reorganize."

Barriers: The barriers cited below were consistent in reports from at least eight of the ten Area Education Agency regions:

- **Barrier 1:** It was pointed out by participants in each regional meeting that giving up "turf" is difficult for elected officials such as school board members, county supervisors, and mayors. Sharing arrangements and efficiencies must be viewed as a "win-win" for all parties involved if they are to be successful. "Like legislators, local boards are elected…" was the sentiment of one region. "Our board believes that as long as we play football on Friday night, everything is OK," was cited in another regional report.
- **Barrier 2:** Creating common schedules and calendars among school districts remains a challenge for local school districts. Participants noted there needs to be a reason for districts to change their calendars and bell schedules. When there is an incentive to have common calendars and/or schedules, such as in the creation of regional academies that serve several districts, common calendars have been created. One region found the best solution was to create "coordinated schedules" among districts. This allowed coordination of busing, teacher assignments and shared classes. While the districts didn't have identical calendars and schedules, they did coordinate with each other to facilitate sharing.
- **Barrier 3:** Purchasing services through cooperative agreements may save districts money in the short term but may have long-term negative implications at the local level. One region noted that while a district might be able to save 10% by purchasing goods from a large distributor (rather than buying locally), the local business that supports the school suffers from lost income. In the long run, having vital local businesses is in the best interest of the school district.
- **Barrier 4:** While school districts are eligible for supplementary weighting for specific sharing arrangements between and among districts and between districts and community colleges, there is no financial incentive for districts sharing with municipalities and counties. (Nor is there any specific sharing incentive for the municipality and county). As noted in one regional report, "If the legislature is serious about schools sharing more with governmental subdivisions, they are going to have to deal with [legal and regulatory] issues."
- **Barrier 5:** Every report emphasized that while it is appealing to have staff, especially teachers, travel from one district to another for sharing purposes, "a barrier will always be the willingness of staff to travel-the position is not attractive to many teachers/staff/etc." This sentiment was especially noted in those shortage areas where qualified staff in most demand will look for positions where travel is minimized. Most reports emphasized that additional incentives or pay would be required to attract staff who incurred travel in their work.
- **Barrier 6:** Several of the regional participants mentioned interest in energy conservation and other "green" efforts. However, they mentioned

that they are not very knowledgeable about the energy saving possibilities and how they might benefit districts (and local governmental partners).

- **Barrier 7:** There is a perception that school districts are not currently permitted to engage in certain types of sharing arrangements. For example, most regions mentioned an interest in working with their communities to construct a wind generator that was shared by other governmental entities on school property. But there was uncertainty whether Iowa Code permitted such a shared endeavor.

Recommendations: The following are recommendations from the Iowa Department of Education to address the findings and barriers noted above.

- **Recommendation 1:** Expand the high school course offerings provided through uses of technology and telecommunications. These would include courses offered through the Iowa Online AP Academy and Iowa Learning Online.
- **Recommendation 2:** The Iowa General Assembly should modify the existing Market Factor Pay allocations and distribute to districts based upon needs identified by the Department. One such need is the shortage of teachers in fields such as high school physics and industrial technology. Market Factor Pay funds could then be focused and used for creative solutions to teacher shortages that are common to several districts. For example, one region proposed having three or four districts in close proximity share a physics teacher. A combination of course delivery through technology and telecommunications along with regular visits by the physics teacher to each school for labs could be solution for quality education while minimizing staff travel time.
- **Recommendation 3:** The Department should actively encourage the AEAs and districts to utilize existing allowed supplementary weighting to provide shared services such as payroll. (See Appendix 3, "Summary of Potential/Future School District Sharing or Efficiency of Operations.")
- **Recommendation 4:** Provide additional supplementary weighting to school districts for concurrent high school/community college courses in career and technical fields (change weighting to .78 for career and technical courses and to .46 for liberal arts and sciences courses). Due to the expense of the specialized equipment and facilities, career and technical courses are more costly to deliver than courses in the arts and sciences.
- **Recommendation 5:** Allow equity of access for qualified Iowa high school students to earn advanced high school and college credit courses. See the Governor's proposed Senior Year Plus program for specific recommendations. Expansion of career academies and regional academies through Iowa's Community Colleges and regional academies between districts will help address this need.
- **Recommendation 6:** The Department, in partnership with other knowledgeable agencies, should provide information about allowable sharing arrangements between school districts and other governmental

bodies (due to perception noted in Barrier 6 and 7 above). In addition, information needs to be distributed about how districts and their communities may benefit from energy efficiencies. Creating a “green school” at the Price Lab School, University of Northern Iowa, could be a model for districts that are building new facilities and/or renovating existing structures.

- **Recommendation 7:** The Department recommends a request for proposal (RFP) process that would lead to a limited number of student information systems in Iowa. Limiting the number of systems would address the need for standardization for the sake of efficiency and the needs of the districts to have options because of their unique circumstances. Districts should be required to have an automated capacity to share information using a standard format. A new student information system infrastructure would be phased in over five years.

Appendix 1:

Process for Regional Discussions and Regional Reports

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Format for Regional Plan

Due January 15, 2008

Section 1: Regional Plan

Instructions: Use the information gathered in Section 2 (below) to summarize the results of the study across areas one through nine. Format the narrative according to the areas below.

I. Process used to gather information
   a. What was the process used in your region to gather information from various stakeholders (e.g. online/written survey, meetings by county/"zones," etc).
   b. Who were the participants in your information sessions? (e.g. county supervisors, mayors, etc.)
   c. What was the level of participation regionally(e.g. equal representation regionally from school personnel and other stakeholders).

II. Existing opportunities for school district sharing or efficiency of operations
   a. What **existing operational efficiencies efforts** currently <u>are shared</u>?
   b. What **existing operation efficiencies efforts** <u>could be shared</u> between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state)?
   c. Who are the cooperative partners?

III. New or expanded opportunities for school district sharing or efficiency of operations
   a. What **new or expanded operational efficiencies efforts** <u>could potentially be shared</u> (even if plans are not yet underway to share)?
   b. What **new or expanded operational efficiencies efforts** <u>are currently in the planning process</u>?
   c. Who are the cooperative partners?

IV. Barriers to implementation
   a. What are the barriers for implementing **new or expanded operational efficiencies efforts**?
   b. What ideas were generated in your region that might overcome these barriers?

V. Long-term measures that identify money or time saved
   a. How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of new or expanded efficiency of operations?
   b. Are there other measures that your region identified that would be benefits as a result of new or expanded efficiency of operations?

VI. Effective structure and delivery models that promote optimum student achievement
   a. (Summarize the results obtained in area 8; See Section 2 below)

VII. Making educational stakeholders aware of the sharing and efficiency in operations opportunities available in each area
   a. (Summarize the results obtained in area 10, second question; See Section 2 below)

VIII. Overall recommendations
   a. (Summarize the results obtained in area 10, first question; See Section 2 below)

Section 2: SCHOOL DISTRICT SHARING AND EFFICIENCIES STUDY

Senate File 447

AEA _____ **Date** _____

Educational or governmental entity _____

AREA ONE: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

1) Identify and describe **existing operational efficiencies efforts** that could be shared between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **new, or expanded operational efficiencies** that could be shared between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for implementing the identified new or expanded operational efficiencies.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of new or expanded efficiency of operations?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded efficiency of operations.

AREA TWO: SHARED PROGRAMMING

1) Identify and describe **existing shared programming efforts** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **new, or expanded types of shared programming** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for implementing the identified new or expanded shared programs.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of new or expanded shared programming?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded shared programming.

AREA THREE: TRANSPORTATION SHARING

1) Identify and describe **existing transportation sharing efforts** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **new, or expanded forms of transportation sharing** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for developing a new or expanded shared transportation system.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of new or expanded efforts of shared transportation?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded efforts of shared transportation.

AREA FOUR: EXPANSION OF AEA COOPERATIVES

1) Identify and describe **existing area education agency cooperatives** for school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **opportunities for expanding area education agency cooperatives** for school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for the expansion of new or expanded area education cooperatives.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of expanding area education cooperatives?

List the **cooperative partner(s)** for new or expanded area education cooperatives.

AREA FIVE: COMMON SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

1) Identify and describe **existing efforts of common scheduling** between school districts and community colleges.
2) Identify and describe **new or expanded common scheduling techniques** that would benefit school districts and community colleges.

Describe the **potential barriers** that would impact new or expanded common scheduling between school districts and community colleges.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** as a result of common scheduling for school districts and community colleges?

List the **cooperative partner(s)** for new or expanded common scheduling between school districts and community colleges.

AREA SIX: ENERGY EFFICIENCIES

1) Identify and describe **existing energy efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **new, or expanded opportunities for saving energy** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for the identified new or expanded energy efficiencies.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** through new or expanded energy efficiencies?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded energy efficiencies.

AREA SEVEN: INSURANCE EFFICIENCIES

1) Identify and describe **existing methods of insurance efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).
2) Identify and describe **new, or expanded methods for providing insurance efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Describe the **potential barriers** for the identified new or expanded insurance efficiencies.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** through new or expanded insurance efficiencies?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded insurance efficiencies.

AREA EIGHT: EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY MODELS

1) Identify and describe **existing structure and delivery models** for student achievement, graduation requirements, and curriculum for school districts.
2) Identify and describe **new or expanded structure and delivery models** that promote optimum student achievement, graduation requirements, and a rigorous, relevant curriculum for school districts.

Describe the **potential barriers** for implementing the identified new or expanded educational delivery models for school improvement.

How will districts determine the amount of **money or time saved** through the identified new or expanded educational structure and delivery models?

List the **cooperative partners** for new or expanded educational structure and delivery models.

AREA NINE: OTHER IDEAS FOR EFFICIENCY AND SHARING

1) Existing
2) New or expanded
3) Barriers
4) Potential $ or time saved
5) Cooperative partners

AREA TEN: OVERALL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING SHARING AND EFFICIENCY FOR IOWA PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS

WHAT PROVISIONS WILL BE MADE FOR MAKING EDUCATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AWARE OF THE SHARING AND EFFICIENCY IN OPERATIONS OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE IN EACH AREA?

Appendix 2:

Summary of
Existing School District Sharing or Efficiency of Operations
(Mentioned in at least 8 of 10 regional reports)

AREA ONE: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **existing operational efficiencies efforts** that could be and/or are shared between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- daycare facilities
- preschools
- wellness programs (e.g. city, county, school district, hospital)
- landfill/recycling
- paper purchasing and printing
- technology and telecommunications expertise and services; tech service agreements
- shared/contracted services for custodial, grounds upkeep
- shared recreation/fitness and athletic facilities/fields, auditoriums and theaters, libraries
- summer recreation programs for children and youth
- shared transportation/buses (e.g. city buses to cover school bus routes)
- hot lunch/meals for other entities (e.g. day cares, preschools)
- shared snow removal and road/parking lot upkeep (e.g. city plows school roads as a priority, hauls rock to athletic fields and bus turnarounds)
- shared large equipment (e.g. snow removal)
- security systems
- telecommunications uplinks shared with local police
- emergency situations – staff; frequencies
- sharing equipment/tables/chairs
- physicals/flu shots
- GIS systems
- shared professional staff such as grant writer, nurses
- human resource procedures including payroll processing
- fuel and food purchases and storage
- training in OSHA and other safety areas

AREA TWO: SHARED PROGRAMMING

Identify and describe **existing shared programming efforts** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

Shared staff and partners in sharing:

- secondary teachers in a variety of subject areas between districts
- K-12 librarians between districts
- high school guidance counselors between districts
- coaches/extra-curricular staff between districts
- police officers/truancy officers between community and district
- nurses between public health/other districts
- special education teachers between districts and/or AEA
- Title I teachers between districts
- administrators (e.g. superintendents, curriculum directors)
- physicians on sidelines/EMT/police at events
- translators between districts and/or community

Shared courses and activities and partners in sharing:

- whole-grade sharing between districts
- professional development between districts with AEA support
- before/after school programs with community
- preschool with private preschool providers and/or Head Start
- wellness staff with community and/or hospital
- counseling services with private or ISU Extension services
- DARE/ALERT with community
- at-risk programs with other districts
- alternative high schools and programs with other districts
- career and technical programs between local schools and/or community colleges
- special education with AEA and other districts
- school to work with other districts
- high school students attending a neighboring high school during the instructional day, including regional academies
- high school students receiving post-secondary classes (concurrent credit)
- extra curricular programs (e.g. athletics) between districts as well as agreements with non-public high schools
- shared high school courses and shared teachers using the ICN video and Web-based courses (e.g. AP Online Academy; Iowa Learning Online; community college classes)
- Perkins consortium (districts and community colleges working together)
- equipment used sparingly between districts

AREA THREE: TRANSPORTATION SHARING

Identify and describe **existing transportation sharing efforts** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- fuel depot with county
- transporting HEAD START and/or preschool children
- public transportation for school routes (city provides free or reduced rate bus rides for students going to and from school)
- community summer rec programs (district transports in partnership with community)
- transporting non-public school students
- special education students (AEA provides busing for local district students attending school in a different district)

AREA FOUR: EXPANSION OF AEA COOPERATIVES

Identify and describe **existing area education agency cooperatives** for school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- Iowa Educators Consortium* and other AEA consortium contracted/negotiated prices for purchases such as
    - educational software (e.g. Cognitive Tutor, ALEX Math)
    - computers and related equipment, including repair and maintenance
    - HVAC repair and maintenance
    - paper
    - cleaning supplies

    - food for school lunch
    - AEAs pay the subscription for various online resources for all school districts (teachers, administrators, students); see Iowa AEA Online
- professional development for teachers and administrators (e.g. Balanced Leadership for superintendents); professional development for teachers may be used for teacher licensure renewal credits
- monthly meetings of superintendents (with some regions also have regular meetings of other administrators such as curriculum directors)
- driver's education instruction
- special education classes and teachers
- home schooling services
- legal services
- preschool collaboratives
- Medicaid reimbursement services
- tech prep in partnership with districts and the community colleges
- early childhood services in partnership with Empowerment

*Several regions noted that the IEC negotiated prices and purchasing is available to community colleges, other governmental agencies as well as not-for-profits such as YMCA and Boy Scouts.

AREA FIVE: COMMON SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Identify and describe **existing efforts of common scheduling** between school districts and community colleges.

The following were cited as motivators for school districts and community colleges to work together in creating school calendars and schedules which at least complement each other (not necessarily identical schedules):

- dual/concurrent credit courses (student receives both high school and college credit)
- at-risk credit recovery courses
- coordination of area-wide alternative high school
- ICN courses
- career academies in technical content areas
- tech prep programs
- articulation workshops for high school and college faculty
- Project Lead the Way®

Other motivators for common schedules and calendars among and between school districts:

- districts that share classes, contract for whole-grade sharing and/or share teachers
- staff development shared between and among districts
- athletic conferences
- ICN courses
- shared regional academies
- public district sharing transportation, courses and programs with non-public schools

AREA SIX: ENERGY EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **existing energy efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- I JUMP program (through IASB; allows purchase of natural gas through a cooperative buy)
- interruptible status on electrical power (through agreement with utility company)
- state-wide cooperative purchasing
- energy audits
- districts replacing ballasts and bulbs with new high efficiency products
- retrofitting older buildings with computerized controls, automatic set-backs on thermostats
- new school facilities installing geothermal heat
- limited number of districts installed wind turbines
- new hybrid fuel school buses

AREA SEVEN: INSURANCE EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **existing methods of insurance efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- city/counties cooperate to obtain workers compensation and liability insurance property through ICAP and IMUA
- school districts have formed coalitions like ISEBA, Mercer, S.E. Iowa and Iowa Star to purchase health insurance
- IASB negotiated property, casualty, liability and workers' comp insurance (Employer's Mutual Company); Hawkeye Security also provider of property and casualty insurance for districts (prices negotiated)
- IASB negotiated Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance
- several districts work collaboratively to share in self-funded health insurance trust; in some regions, districts work with community college and AEA as well

AREA EIGHT: EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY MODELS

Identify and describe **existing structure and delivery models** for student achievement, graduation requirements, and curriculum for school districts.

Several regional reports referenced back to AREA TWO above (many responses were included in that section):

- high school students taking college credit classes (PSEO; 28e agreements with community colleges)
- career and technical programs for high school students with cooperation of local business (e.g. manufacturing, health care); coordinated by community college
- advanced placement classes including those offered via telecommunications (Iowa AP Online Academy)
- whole-grade sharing between school districts
- regional academies (shared high school programs among districts, often with community college leadership/support)
- courses offered from Iowa Learning Online (science and math high school courses)
- shared in-services (staff development) among two or more school districts focused on improving student achievement in reading or math (often led by AEA)
- Model Core Curriculum
- Perkins grant opportunities
- Project Lead the Way®

- annual High School Summits along with regional facilitated discussions about improving high schools (coordinated by the DE and AEAs)
- 28e agreements with Juvenile Court Services
- quality preschool programs
- shared district and AEA staff
- technology planning between districts with AEA support
- regional alternative high school programs and schools
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AREA NINE: OTHER IDEAS FOR EFFICIENCY AND SHARING

- model school board policy program through IASB
- IREAP (advertises educational vacancies)

Appendix 3:

Summary of
Potential/Future School District Sharing
or Efficiency of Operations
(Mentioned in at least 8 of 10 regional reports)

AREA ONE: OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **new, or expanded operational efficiencies** that could be shared between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- adoption of a single student management system
    - one system statewide would be efficient with uniformity
    - training of staff using the system would be efficient
    - student moving from one district to another would enable ease of transfer of data
- continuation of the facilitated conversations among and between various governmental entities to identify future and expanded operational efficiencies
- increased sharing of facilities such as recreation centers
- shared staff and services with city and county (or entities such as hospitals)
    - food service directors
    - transportation directors
    - skilled workers such as electricians, plumbers, bus mechanics
    - payroll
    - snow removal services and grounds upkeep
    - wellness
    - before and after school programs including daycare
    - webmaster
    - training that is consistent across entities (e.g. CPR)
- regional coordination of some of the functions done in every district that are not full-time positions (e.g. equity coordinators)
- regional coordination of services such as mental health for youth and adults
- more online reporting functionality for reports due to the Iowa Department of Education

AREA TWO: SHARED PROGRAMMING

Identify and describe **new, or expanded types of shared programming** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- expansion of regional and career academies
    - provide career and technical courses that individual school districts are incapable of providing and/or offer advanced courses that have low enrollment for each district
- equity of opportunities for all high school students, regardless of location or school size, to benefit from post-secondary and AP courses
- additional sharing of teachers and administrators between districts
    - could help address teacher shortage in critical areas (e.g. industrial technology, specific science courses)
    - substitute teacher pool among districts
- expansion of online course offerings for high school students especially to include subjects that are currently not available (e.g. Mandarin Chinese)
- expansion of the work of the Model Core Curriculum to include more content areas and classroom assessments of student learning
- extension of the whole-grade sharing incentive funding to at least five years (current limit is three years)
- expansion of supplementary weighting to include
    - alternative high schools

- regional academy host sites
- ICN and online courses (web-based courses)
- whole-grade sharing beyond three years of funding (to at least five years)
- shared curriculum director

AREA THREE: TRANSPORTATION SHARING

Identify and describe **new, or expanded forms of transportation sharing** between school districts, area education agencies, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- statewide negotiated contracts for bus purchasing (possibly through the Iowa Educators' Consortium)
- contracting with private vendors and/or other governmental entities for transporting students (e.g. use city buses more extensively)
- shared transportation directors/managers and mechanics with other districts and/or with the city and county
- shared facilities for bus storage and repair (bus barns) between districts, cities and counties
- coordination of bus routes with other districts (may allow each district to eliminate a bus route or two)
- better coordination of bus routes for pubic districts and non-public schools
- sharing of substitute bus drivers between districts

AREA FOUR: EXPANSION OF AEA COOPERATIVES

Identify and describe **opportunities for expanding area education agency cooperatives** for school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- statewide negotiated contracts for
  - bus purchases
  - bus tires and repair parts
  - LP gas
  - wind generators
  - fuel pool
  - textbooks
- grant writing for districts (as a pay-for-fee service)
- federal report filing for districts (as a pay-for-fee service)
- technology support and maintenance for school districts (pay-for-fee service)
- increased facilitation of providing special education services, especially Level 3 students
- hiring pool for hard-to-staff positions and services such as
  - guidance counselors
  - school nurses
  - teacher librarians
  - plumbers
  - electricians
  - HVAC specialists
  - equity coordinators

- homeless coordinators
- federal program specialists
- asbestos inspection and paperwork
- fire safety
- payroll
- board secretaries
- substitute teachers
- webmaster

AREA FIVE: COMMON SCHEDULES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND COMMUNITY COLLEGES

Identify and describe **new or expanded common scheduling techniques** that would benefit school districts and community colleges.

- expansion in regional and career academies will stimulate more common or coordinated calendars and schedules
- expansion of more shared staff and whole grade sharing will stimulate more common or coordinated calendars and schedules
- offering more ICN courses that districts need will cause more districts to match schedules with the ICN classes offered
- coordination of summer calendars to facilitate special courses not available during the school year
- regional collaboration in professional development opportunities including coordinated calendars/days

AREA SIX: ENERGY EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **new, or expanded opportunities for saving energy** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- collaboration with city for construction and use of wind turbines
- joint fuel purchase by school, city and county
- statewide cooperative to purchase fuel and energy
- one-time incentives for districts doing new construction and/or renovation to use energy efficient technologies (e.g. geothermal)
- more information for districts about energy efficiencies, especially about “green” school buildings
- access to “experts” to assist districts in energy audits
- use of school facilities year-round

AREA SEVEN: INSURANCE EFFICIENCIES

Identify and describe **new, or expanded methods for providing insurance efficiencies** between school districts, community colleges, postsecondary institutions, and governmental entities (local, county, and state).

- statewide health insurance program or pool for all public entities
    - schools and/or governmental bodies could elect to “opt out”
    - several insurance options should be available
    - increasing the number of members in the pool should help decrease costs
- collaboration with regional partners including community colleges, AEAs, city and county government for wellness activities and programs
- state-wide coops for other areas of insurance to include city and county government as well as districts

AREA EIGHT: EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE AND DELIVERY MODELS

Identify and describe **new or expanded structure and delivery models** that promote optimum student achievement, graduation requirements, and a rigorous, relevant curriculum for school districts.

Several ideas were also presented above in AREA TWO.

- year-round schools to better utilize facilities
- expansion of educational opportunities for high school students on Saturdays and evenings
- expansion of ICN and other methods of delivering courses (e.g. web-based); utilization of AP Online Academy and Iowa Learning Online
- better utilization of technology and online classes to support on-going teacher professional development
- regional centers for specialized classes, especially in career and technical fields which require expensive equipment and teachers in shortage areas
- use of other community-based facilities for class delivery (e.g. arts centers, public library facilities, college campuses)
- more project-based learning
- more hands-on partnerships with business and industry to expand student learning opportunities, especially for high school students
- 12th grade more focused on transition to post-secondary including college credit classes
- consideration/piloting of 4-day a week classes for high school students with 5th day spent either at regional/career academy or in hands-on labs
- continued expansion of state-supported preschools

AREA NINE: OTHER IDEAS FOR EFFICIENCY AND SHARING

- incentives for public schools and AEAs to develop more cooperative partnerships