
What Is a “Statewide System” of ESAs?



Research

There is a “growing awareness...state network of education service agencies should be viewed as a systemic state network, not a collection of unorganized, separate entities.”

(Stephens and Keane, 2005)



Definition for:
***Systemic State Network
of Education Service Agencies***

“A collection of separate, nonhierarchical organizational entities established and supported by the state to serve as a statewide system for the development, production, and/or delivery of programs and services deemed essential for promoting a common set of needs for school districts/schools and those of the state, as well as to promote cooperation and coordination among and between school districts/schools and others; as such they constitute a systemic statewide support network within the state system of elementary-secondary education.”

(Stephens and Keane, 2005)



Characteristics and Indicators of a Viable Statewide ESA System



Planning and Development

- Regular, statewide meetings of ESA CEOs
- ESAs share statewide strategic planning cycles
- Joint meetings with key partners
 - State Department of Education
 - Associations
- Monthly meetings of ESA program managers
 - Design, develop, and assess statewide programs and services
- ESAs share data collection, analysis and reporting



Governance

- Statewide Constitution and Bylaws for the “systemic statewide system”
- Elected statewide ESA Board leaders to oversee state system
- A working committee structure is in place



Staffing

- The “system” employs staff or outsources work to oversee and carry out aspects of the statewide system.
- For example:
 - Executive Director
 - Group Purchasing Manager
 - ESA Lobbyist



Communications

- A statewide group develops system wide communications
- Image products are used statewide
 - Web site, logo, literature and video
- Joint communication projects are evident and growing
- The state ESA system intentionally creates visibility through conference and convention presence, video, etc.



Advocacy

- Expertise is secured to oversee advocacy positions and strategy
- A legislative platform is developed for the system and informs advocacy efforts at the state and federal level



Funding and Foundations

- ESAs stem from authorizing legislation
- An equitable funding mechanism exists to cover some operating costs – partial or full statewide subsidy
- A unified budget exists for joint projects and joint staff
- A “consensus” formula exists for the unified budget



Programs and Services

- ESAs share joint projects, initiatives, programs among all or some ESAs
- ESAs offer statewide conferences and initiatives for teachers, administrators, parents, and LEA leaders



Programs and Services

- The system endorses or creates “*Centers of Excellence*” to efficiently meet client needs
- The ESA system jointly develops and delivers programs/services in collaboration with the Department of Education and education associations



Programs and Services

- Group purchasing programs emerge
- Shared programming and resources naturally expand



Accountability

- A statewide accreditation system/process includes comprehensive plan, annual progress report, core services, etc.
- Joint commission studies of state system
- Voluntarily downsizing or reorganization in response to efficiency or effectiveness studies
- Statewide customer surveys are used routinely



Relationships Are Critical to ESA Success



Relationships

- ESAs initiate numerous efforts to build and strengthen relationships
 - Related associations/organizations
 - Teacher unions
 - State Department of Education
 - Legislators
 - Administrator association

