AESD ASSOCIATION OF
EDUCATIONAL
SERVICE DISTRICTS

Nine ESDs, One Network

NEW BOARD MEMBER ORIENTATION

Congratulations on your election and welcome to the Board of Directors of the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) or your ESD. Yours is an important role and one we hope you will find enjoyable and rewarding. We trust the following information and material will speed your transition into a leadership position that is very important to the success of the network of ESDs in the State of Washington.

History of ESDs

Education Service Districts as they currently exist are the result of evolution for a period of over 85 years from 39 county educational agencies to the current nine ESDs (See Appendix A). The following chronology includes most of the major changes that have occurred:

1890— Office of the County Superintendent was created by statute.

1909— County Boards of Education were created with duties created in statute.

1955— County board membership changed to elected lay membership.

1960— A legislatively mandated study recommended creation of 13 regional service agencies.

1966— Fifteen service areas were created by State Board of Education (Chapter 139, Laws of 1965).

1969— Under Chapter 176, the Laws of 1969, the State Board of Education created 14 Intermediate School Districts.

1971— Legislation rescinded ISDs' regulatory powers emphasizing service functions.

1972— ISD 102 and 103, ISD 106 and 107 were consolidated to create ISD 123 and 167 resulting in 12 Intermediate Districts.

1975— Intermediate School Districts were changed to Educational Service Districts and their purposes were re-defined.

1976— The State Board approved consolidation of ESD 110 and 111, as well as 108 and 109, creating ESD 121 (Puget Sound) and 189 (Northwest). This change resulted in the present nine ESDs.

1977— The legislature defined core services, directed ESDs to assist OSPI and State Board and provide equal educational opportunities. This session also provided for the election of ESD board members by board members of local districts.

1981— Legislation was passed to allow ESDs to provide direct services.
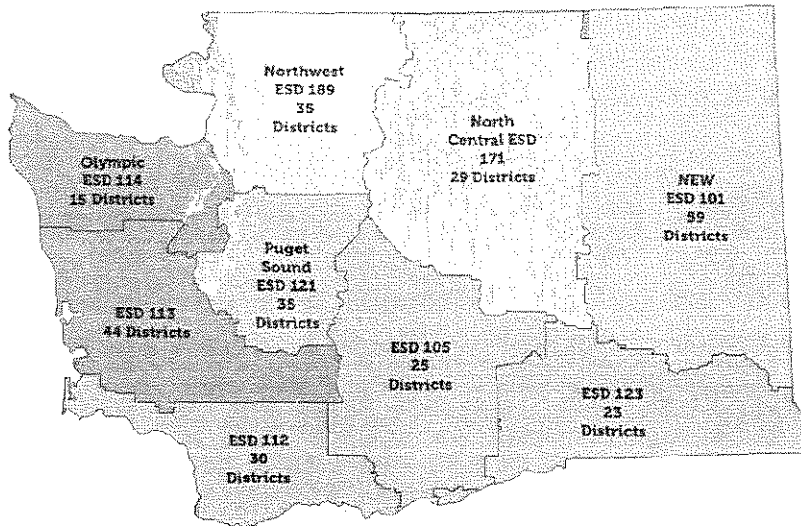
Each of the nine ESDs is governed by a board of directors elected to four year staggered terms by the board members from the local school districts they serve. The ESDs' statutory authority is provided in RCW 28A.310. Under that authority each board independently employs a superintendent and staff who work with the school districts in their region to provide requested services. Less than 5% of funding for each ESD is provided by State appropriation. The remaining revenue comes from grants, fees for service, cooperatives, and entrepreneurial activities. In addition to providing common core and network services to all students in the state, each ESD has developed programs based on the unique needs of its region.

ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRTICTS (AESD)

The statue that created Education Districts also authorized the establishment of the Association of Educational Service Districts, a support organization for elected ESD board members and their staff. The AESD operates with a constitution and bylaws and is governed by an Executive Board comprised of one board member from each ESD. ESD superintendents serve as non-voting and advisory members of the Board. The AESD Executive Board currently schedules five meetings each year, including an annual conference in April.

The AESD Conference is also when the Association's annual meeting is held. The approval of the budget and other business, including the election of association officers, is conducted at this meeting. Each ESD contributes, based on an approved formula, to the expenses of operating the AESD. The Annual Conference generates additional revenue. Occasionally, AESD special projects are funded by special assessments from each ESD. An example is the hiring of a consultant to assist in the development of an ESD Network that guarantees defined services available to all ESDs and their local districts. Current initiatives of AESD include:

1) Research regarding the state funded Math and Science Coordinators
2) AESD Accreditation offered to Washington schools
3) The creation of AESD Operating Principles (See Appendix B)

The purpose of the Association of Educational Service Districts shall be to provide communication and coordination among ESD Boards for educational advocacy; for fostering leadership and partnerships; and for collaboration within the educational community. (AESD Constitution, 2006)

ROLE OF SUPERINTENDENTS IN AESD

The only voting members of AESD are the 69 elected board directors of the nine ESDs. However the nine superintendents play an essential role in all AESD activities. They attend all AESD Board meetings, serve as advisors on all issues, and play a key role in developing the association budget. Also the superintendents were responsible for creating an ESD Network that was the top priority of the AESD. That network, now in place, ensures that essential services that may be available in an individual ESD are available to all students in the state. The AESD Network has strengthened the role of ESDs in the State's framework of pre-K-12 education.

ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES (AESA)

Service agencies from across the nation have banded together to form a national association (AESA). There are currently 553 service agencies in the US with over 100,000 employees operating in 45 states and reaching over 80% of public school districts. AESA holds an annual conference during early December at various locations in the country. These meetings have been very well attended and proven to be an important source of new information and ideas for providing better services.

*   Serving as a national voice for education service agencies,
*   Providing professional growth opportunities, technical assistance, advocacy and research,
*   Helping member agencies promote, distribute, leverage their
*   Knowledge, products, and services, and assisting in the establishment of educational service agencies.

AESA is governed by a board of directors chosen from four geographic regions in the country, with headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

RELATIONSHIP TO SPI, WSSDA, AND WASA

State law requires ESDs to provide support for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Currently those services include processing school district budgets and providing fiscal oversight for districts in financial distress, processing teacher certification applications, offering fingerprinting services for school personnel, processing citizen complaints related to the professional code of conduct, resolving school district boundary disputes and assisting with communications to school districts.

The statute that created the AESD required that any staff support for the Association be obtained from either SPI or WSSDA. At present clerical and budget support is provided by WSSDA for an annual fee provided by each ESD.

In addition, AESD engages in extensive lobbying activity provided through a contract with the Washington Association of School Administrators. The contract currently provides the services of two part time lobbyists. These AESD Legislative Liaisons maintain strong contacts with the legislature, the Governor's Office, and with the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The contract for these services is paid for by contributions from each ESD that are based on an agreed upon formula.

WASHINGTON SCHOOL INFORMATION PROCESSING COOPERATIVE—WSIPC

The nine ESDs own and operate one of the most comprehensive data and information service systems in the nation. WSIPC manages payroll, student records and budget information for a majority of school districts and all ESDs in the state. WSIPC operates as a cooperative with users paying for services rendered. The service is cost competitive when compared with private vendors and is managed by a board of directors comprised of a representative from each ESD.

THE RESPONSIBILITY AND COMMITMENT

A person seeking election to an ESD Board of Directors or the AESD Board should recognize the responsibility of the position and commitment of time. ESD board members can expect monthly board meetings and other periodic regional meetings and activities as well as the AESD Annual Conference. They also are responsible for their agency's annual budget that totals several million dollars and the policies that govern the organization. This duty requires time for study in order to make informed decisions as a board member.

Service on the AESD Board entails additional time commitment and responsibility. The AESD Board meets at least five times per year, including a retreat and the Annual Conference. This board sets the goals of the association, approves the budget and is responsible for the annual meeting of the membership.

For additional information contact your local ESD Superintendent and/or access the following websites:
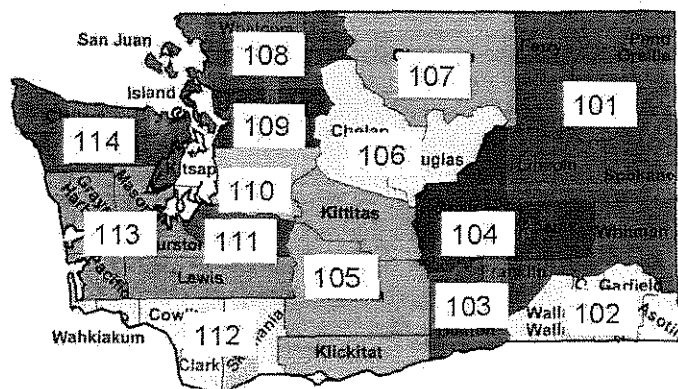AESD at www.aesd-wa.org
AESA at www.aesa.us

APPENDICES

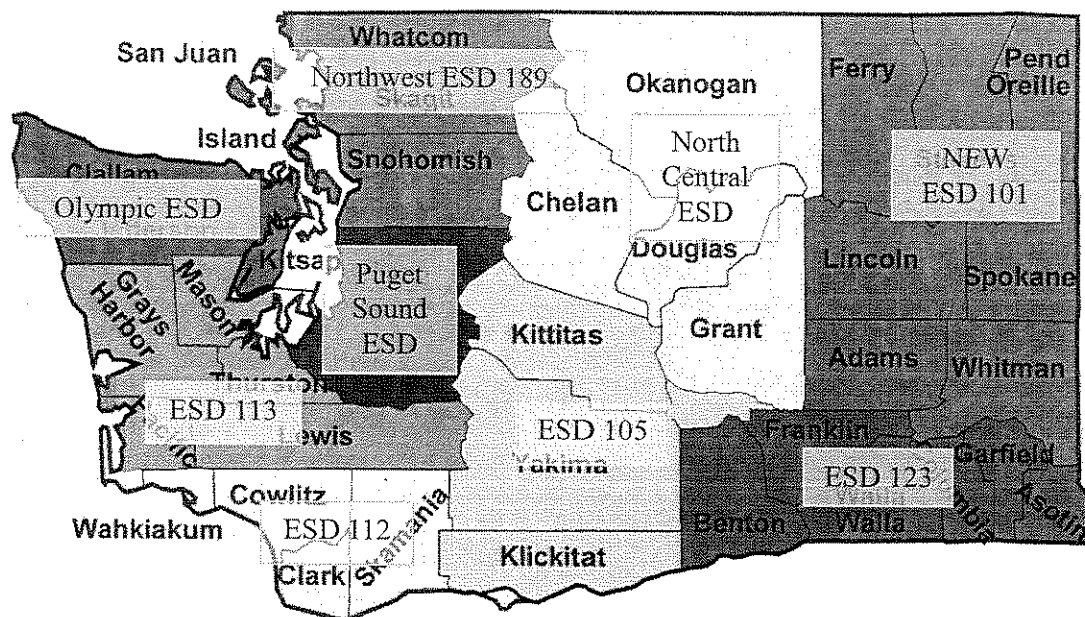## Appendix A—Historical Boundaries

Washington Counties 1889

Label	
Becomes: Okanogan & Chelan	
Becomes: Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille	
Becomes: Grays Harbor	

San Juan, Whatco, Okanogan, Stevens, Skagit, Island, Snohomish, Clallam, Jefferson, Kitsap, King, Douglas, Lincoln, Spokane, Chehalis, Mason, Kittitas, Grant, Adams, Whitman, Pierce, Thurston, Franklin, Garfield, Lewis, Yakima, Walla Walla, Asotin, Cowlitz, Columbia, Wahkiakum, Skamania, Klickitat, Clark, Pacific

Intermediate School Districts 1969-1973

San Juan, Island, 108, 107, 101, 109, Chelan, 106, uglas, 114, Kitsap, 110, Kittitas, 104, 113, urston, 111, 105, Lewis, Garfield, 103, Walla 102, Asotin, Cow, 112, Wahkiakum, Klickitat, Clark

Appendix A—Historical Boundaries

ISD 1973-1975/ESD 1975-1977

$$107 + 106 = 167 \quad \text{and} \quad 103 + 102 = 123$$

ESDs - 1977

$$167 + 104 = 171 \quad \text{and} \quad 110 + 111 = 121 \quad \text{and} \quad 108 + 109 = 189$$

Appendix A—Historical Boundaries

San Juan

Whatcom

Northwest ESD 189

Skagit

Island

Snohomish

Okanogan

Ferry

Pend
Orelle

North
Central
ESD

NEW
ESD 101

Clallam

Olympic ESD

Chelan

Douglas

Lincoln

Spokane

Kitsap

Mason

Puget
Sound
ESD

Grays
Harbor

Kittitas

Grant

Adams

Whitman

Thurston

ESD 113

Lewis

ESD 105

Yakima

Franklin

Garfield

Pacific

Cowlitz

Columbia

Asotin

Wahkiakum

ESD 112

Skamania

Klickitat

ESD 123

Benton

Walla

Clark

Appendix B—Operating Principles

AESD Board Members
Gary Coe, ESD 101
Bill Gant, ESD 105
Dr. Richard Graham, ESD 112
Howard Coble, ESD 113
Karen Soger, ESD 114
Charlie Staadecker, Past President, ESD 121
Brad Gingerich, ESD 123
Larry MacGuffie, President, ESD 171
Merle Kirkley, President Elect, ESD 189

AESD ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICTS

AESD Network Operating Principles

Background

In 2007, at the direction of the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) Executive Board and with the support of each Educational Service District (ESD) Board of Directors, the superintendents of the nine Washington State ESDs initiated a planning process to become a more effective statewide system, consisting of nine ESDs. The resulting design was the first step to becoming a more unified delivery system for Washington's students and schools. On October 20, 2008 the AESD Executive Board adopted the design as set forth in a document titled *Design of the Washington ESD Network: Creating a Statewide Education Service Delivery System*, which noted:

> "The AESD Network is a voluntary affiliation of the nine ESDs with the purpose of creating a more effective statewide system within specified areas of service" (p. 19).

Additional clarity regarding the intent of the Network and what each ESD can hope to achieve through greater collaboration was provided:

> "The ESD Network will:
> 1. Develop strength and autonomy at the local service level while creating a consistent delivery system at the state level.
> 2. Be the statewide system of choice for development and delivery of state, federal and private education initiatives.
> 3. Positively influence state education policy. Work toward mutual benefit with policymakers on policy development and initiative deployment.
> 4. Develop and stabilize well-defined processes and structures to support the Network and statewide service delivery system" (p. 5).

And finally, the intent was further clarified by the statement:

> "The ESD Network will be strengthened by its relationships with key influence groups: LEAs, both public and private, the State Legislature, the Office of the Governor, and OSPI, to name a few. The effectiveness with which the nine ESDs are able to establish a unified and coherent presence in these relationships is critical to the recognition of the Network as a legitimate and valid member of the State's education system" (p. 15).

Purpose

In the years since the adoption of the Network Design, the nine ESDs have achieved considerable success toward realization of the articulated vision. It is the belief of current representatives that clearer specificity of the ESDs' shared commitment to the AESD Network will strengthen coordination and promote even greater achievement. To that end the nine ESDs agree to the following *Operating Principles* as a shared understanding of the cooperation, communication, and commitment that is prerequisite to a healthy and thriving Network. Given the voluntary nature of each ESD's participation in the AESD Network, these commitments will be assumed until, and unless, notice is subsequently provided that the commitments are no longer held to be appropriate for any ESD.

Appendix B—Operating Principles (Cont.)

AESD Network Operating Principles
Page 2 of 3

Commitments

To achieve a realization of the articulated AESD Network vision, each ESD superintendent, each ESD board collectively, ESD board members individually, and each AESD executive board member commit ourselves and, within limitations of resources, our staff, to the following:

1) Honesty and Integrity
   Fulfill AESD Network responsibilities with honest and integrity.
   * Act with integrity and in a spirit of understanding and goodwill in our collaborative work around the initiatives, programs and services we pursue and provide.
   * Respect and maintain the confidentiality of any private information that is shared in AESD or Network meetings.

2) Positive Communication and Cooperative Approach
   Demonstrate, in word, action and deed, a positive and cooperative approach to the AESD Network priorities in service to Washington State's public schools/districts. Regularly share information that may be useful to colleagues in other ESDs, always assuring professional communication.
   * Problem-solve in an open and positive atmosphere toward designing, implementing, and assessing plans to achieve the Network goals.
   * Collectively and individually support new, and continuing, team members.
   * Where appropriate, seek first a collaborative rather than competitive response to new service and or funding opportunities.
   * Proactively engage team members, sharing perspective and information that may be of interest/benefit.
   * Active engagement in vigorous discussion leading up to Network decisions is followed by support for resultant decisions, publicly and privately.
   * Seek positive and respectful resolution of any differences or disagreements with a commitment to defining common ground that all can support.

3) Participation
   Provide engaged participation in Network activities, supporting the interests of the Network in individual activities.
   * Within time and budget limitations, share assignments and workload necessary to support the priorities and operation of the Network.
   * Present a business plan, including a budget with anticipated gain or loss, for any activity undertaken on behalf of the Network by an individual ESD or group of ESDs.
   * Within the resource limitations of each ESD, the staff of each ESD is committed to adhere to these principles.
   * Provide support and necessary information and input toward the evaluation of Network services and programs as agreed upon by the ESD Superintendents.
   * Provide appropriate assistance requested by any ESD undertaking an ESD superintendent search.
   * Contribute fiscal support for the Network based upon an assessment model that is approved and regularly reviewed by the ESD Superintendents and AESD Executive Board, and with the approval of each ESD Board.

4) Meeting School and District Needs
   Assure member school district needs are addressed - whether through the local ESD individually, in partnership with another ESD as appropriate, or the AESD Network.
   * Work together to provide services to school districts located within one another's regions.

Appendix B—Operating Principles (Cont.)
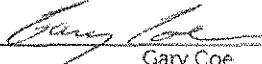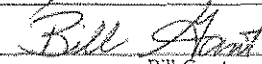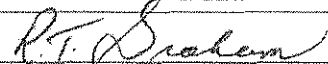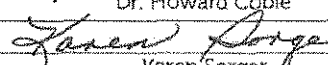
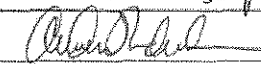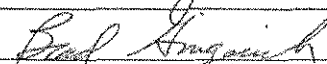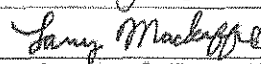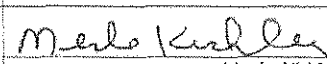**AESD Network Operating Principles**
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- When receiving requests for services from school districts in another region, the Superintendent of the initiating ESD or the initiating district will consult with the Superintendent of the resident ESD to determine how best to deliver services to the school district that is requesting them. Such ESD to ESD partnerships should be consistent with the 2004 Interlocal Agreement between the ESDs, or any subsequent agreements which replace or modify that ILA.

5) **ESD Autonomy**

The autonomy and authority of each ESD Board to act in the best interests of its region is respected and valued. Given the voluntary nature of AESD Network participation, it is important for each ESD Board to support continued participation in the programs and initiatives previously implemented so the Network can maintain credibility as a reliable delivery system for statewide initiatives.

Approved in Second Reading by the AESD Executive Board on January 30, 2012 and forwarded to the nine ESD Boards with a recommendation for their approval.

ESD	AESD Representative
NEWESD 101	Gary Coe
ESD 105	Bill Gant
ESD 112	Dr. Richard Graham
ESD 113	Dr. Howard Coble
OESD 114	Karen Sorger
PSESD 121	Charles Staadecker
ESD 123	Brad Gingerich
NCESD 171	Larry MacGuffie, President
NWESD 189	Merle Kirkley

Appendix C—State of Washington ESDs Historical Studies Resource Guide

Table of Contents (A copy of the Guide was provided to each ESD)
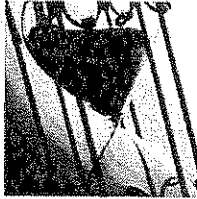
State of Washington Educational Service Districts
HISTORICAL STUDIES RESOURCE GUIDE

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Appendix C—Self Study ESDs, Section III 2006 Review of ESDs

This section of the self-study provides a good overview of statutory duties and other services offered by Washington ESDs.

Self Study

Washington State Educational Service Districts
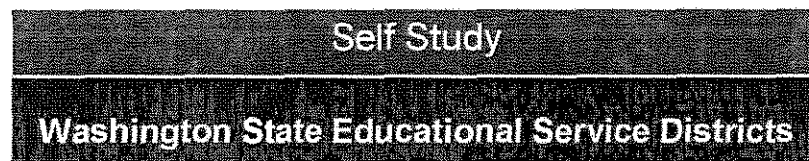
October 1, 2006

Marcia L. Fromhold
MLF Solutions
Vancouver, Washington

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III. 2006 Review of ESDs

As a part of this Self Study, in 2006 a general review was completed of each of the state's nine Educational Service Districts. The review included the collection of geographic and demographic information about each ESD, its policies, procedures and programs.

Some of the information collected is displayed on the accompanying chart. The chart clearly shows the diversity among ESDs. That diversity is not only about size and geography, but also about each ESD having its own unique blend of students, staff, poverty, ethnicity and languages served. In addition, there are substantial differences in the relative wealth, number and size of school districts and population density, as well as the square miles to be served.

While there is clearly an unequal distribution in the number of large and small school districts among the ESDs, none of the studies previously referenced has shown that reducing or changing the ESD boundaries would substantially decrease costs or improve services. Currently, the ESDs are configured geographically to insure relative proximity and access to services for local districts. Even under the current configuration some districts are a great distance from their ESD which hampers the timely and cost-effective delivery of services. The cost of travel increases the cost of services to districts which effectively prices some distant school districts out of the market. They simply do without services that would allow them to serve their students more effectively. And, those factors make it difficult to meet one of the ESDs' most pressing obligations -- providing for educational equity.

An example of the access issue is demonstrated by the time it takes in each ESD to reach the farthest outlying district.

Distance Chart

ESD	HOURS TO FARTHEST S.D.
101	3.5 hours
105	1.5 hours
112	2.5 hours
113	2.5 hours
114	4 hours
121	2 hours
123	2.75 hours
171	3 hours
189	2 hours+1.5 to Pt. Roberts (plus wait time for ferry)

It is important to note that each of the regions also appears to have a unique culture as it relates to the relationship between school districts and the serving ESD. The different "cultures" seem to reflect differences in formality, trust in government services and regulation, the types of services needed or desired and the form service delivery takes. As one superintendent said, "We are all doing the right things; we just do them differently to suit our region." Another said, "Beyond core services, we are driven by our market." Sometimes the issues are common to all of the ESDs and sometimes they are unique to just one. For example, in ESD 105, the goal is to be "narrow but deep" and focus on capacity-building for local school districts because that is what they need and want. The key to "customer satisfaction" appears to be the ability to meet both the common and unique needs of a particular ESD region in a competent, cost-effective, and timely fashion.

The importance of regional delivery to local school districts is clear. ESDs are near enough to their "customers" to have trust, proximity and an understanding of common problems unique to a region, while offering the economies of scale, expertise and affordability needed by school districts.

General Information Chart I

(2012-13)	ESD 101	ESD 105	ESD 112	Capital Region ESD	Olympic ESD
School Districts by Student FTE					
0-200 FTE	27	4	9	9	2
201-500 FTE	10	-	3	10	2
501-1,000 FTE	9	6	5	12	1
1,001-2,000 FTE	5	5	4	4	2
2,001-5,000 FTE	5	8	4	5	5
5,001-10,000 FTE	1	1	2	3	2
10,001-20,000 FTE	1	1	1	1	1
20,001-30,000 FTE	1	-	2	-	-
Greater Than 30,000 FTE	-	-	-	-	-
Total Number of Districts	59	25	30	44	15
Total Student FTE	85,625	59,890	95,507	66,595	45,841
FTE Staff in ESD Districts					
Certificated FTE	5,507	3,581	5,692	4,125	2,786
Classified FTE	3,425	2,295	3,178	2,762	1,817
ESD Staff FTE					
Certificated FTE	17	6	109	20	20
Classified FTE	110	84	309	262	115
ESD Core Staff FTE					
Core Staff Allocated by GFS Budget	8.81	6.71	6.71	7.97	6.71
Actual Core Staff Reported	13.76	15.16	24.46	19.95	11.67
Difference: Actual Vs. Allocated	4.95	8.45	17.75	11.98	4.96
CORE					
GFS Allocation	$ 629,907	$ 490,053	$ 490,053	$ 582,570	$ 490,053
Actual Expenditures	$ 1,868,761	$ 1,928,032	$ 3,023,516	$ 2,663,272	$ 1,532,599
Difference: Actual Vs. Allocation	$ 1,238,854	$ 1,437,979	$ 2,533,462	$ 2,080,702	$ 1,042,546
ESD Square Miles	14,239	8,308	4,835	6,526	4,050

General Information Chart I (continued)

(2012-13)	Puget Sound ESD	ESD 123	North Central ESD	Northwest ESD	System Total 2012-13
School Districts by Student FTE					
0-200 FTE	2	5	7	2	67
201-500 FTE	-	5	4	3	37
501-1,000 FTE	-	4	7	5	49
1,001-2,000 FTE	3	1	5	5	34
2,001-5,000 FTE	9	4	3	9	52
5,001-10,000 FTE	7	1	3	6	26
10,001-20,000 FTE	8	3	-	5	21
20,001-30,000 FTE	5	-	-	-	8
Greater Than 30,000 FTE	1	-	-	-	1
Total Number of Districts	35	23	29	35	295
Total Student FTE	382,044	66,107	43,173	155,740	1,000,522
FTE Staff in ESD Districts					
Certificated FTE	23,688	3,926	2,585	8,975	60,865
Classified FTE	13,481	2,513	1,671	5,308	36,450
ESD Staff FTE					
Certificated FTE	10	10	16	31	68
Classified FTE	311	45	70	114	540
ESD Core Staff FTE					
Core Staff Allocated by GFS Budget	6.71	6.71	6.71	6.71	26.84
Actual Core Staff Reported	30.43	8.88	9.84	13.65	62.80
Difference: Actual Vs. Allocated	23.72	2.17	3.13	6.94	35.96
CORE					
GFS Allocation	$ 492,436	$ 492,436	$ 490,053	$ 492,436	$ 1,967,363
Actual Expenditures	$ 4,228,546	$ 1,111,211	$ 1,463,741	$ 1,473,822	$ 8,277,320
Difference: Actual Vs. Allocation	$ 3,736,109	$ 618,775	$ 973,688	$ 981,386	$ 6,309,957
ESD Square Miles	4,051	6,764	12,030	6,329	29,174

Legal Authority

In statute, school district boards of directors are granted broad discretionary powers to adopt policies not in conflict with other law. ESD powers are currently more limited.

ESDs are considered to be political subdivisions of the State according to the State Attorney General in AGLO 1977 No. 39.[35] Each ESD is statutorily obligated to provide services as outlined in Chapter 28A.310 RCW.[36] The relevant authorizing statutes state that:

RCW 28A.310.0 - Purpose

It shall be the intent and purpose of this chapter to establish educational service districts as regional agencies which are intended to:

(1)   Provide cooperative and informational services to local school districts;

(2)   Assist the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education in the performance of their respective statutory or constitutional duties; and

(3)   Provide services to school districts and to the school for the deaf and the school for the blind to assure equal educational opportunities.

RCW 28A.310.200 – ESD board – Powers and duties - Rules

In addition to other powers and duties as provided by law, every educational service district board shall:

(1)   Approve the budgets of the educational service district in accordance with the procedures provided for in this chapter;

(2)   Meet regularly according to the schedule adopted at the organization meeting and in special session upon the call of the chair or a majority of the board;

(3)   Approve the selection of educational service district personnel and clerical staff as provided in RCW 28A.310.230;

(4)   Fix the amount of and approve the bonds for those educational service district employees designated by the board as being in need of bonding;

(5)   Keep in the educational service district office a full and correct transcript of the boundaries of each school district within the educational service district;

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[35]   State Attorney General, AGLO 1977 No. 39, 1-3.
[36]   Revised Code of Washington, http://www.apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/ (10 Sept. 2006).

(6)   Acquire by borrowing funds or by purchase, lease, devise, bequest, and gift and otherwise contract for real and personal property necessary for the operation of the educational service district and to the execution of the duties of the board and superintendent thereof and sell, lease, or otherwise dispose of that property not necessary for district purposes. No real property shall be acquired or alienated without the prior approval of the superintendent of public instruction and the acquisition or alienation of all such property shall be subject to such provisions as the superintendent may establish. When borrowing funds for the purpose of acquiring property, the educational service district board shall pledge as collateral the property to be acquired. Borrowing shall be evidenced by a note or other instrument between the district and the lender;

(7)   Under RCW 28A.310.010, upon the written request of the board of directors of a local school district or districts served by the educational service district, the educational service district board of directors may provide cooperative and informational services not in conflict with other law that provide for the development and implementation of programs, activities, services, or practices that support the education of preschool through twelfth grade students in the public schools or that support the effective, efficient, or safe management and operation of the school district or districts served by the educational service district;

(8)   Adopt such bylaws and rules for its own operation as it deems necessary or appropriate; and

(9)   Enter into contracts, including contracts with common and educational service districts and the school for the deaf and the school for the blind for the joint financing of cooperative service programs conducted pursuant to RCW 28A.310.180(3), and employ consultants and legal counsel relating to any of the duties, functions, and powers of the educational service districts.

RCW 28A.310.340 - Identification of core services for budget purposes – Generally.

It is the intent of the legislature that a basic core of uniform services be provided by educational service districts and be identified in statute so that biennial budget requests for educational service districts may be based upon measurable goals and needs. Educational service districts as noted in RCW 28A.310.010, are intended primarily to:

(1)   Provide cooperative and informational services to local districts and to perform functions for those districts when such functions are more effectively or economically administered from the regional level;

(2)   Assist the state educational agencies, office of superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education in the legal performance of their duties; and

(3) Assist in providing pupils with equal educational opportunities.

The purpose of RCW 28A.310.350 and 28A.310.360 is to further identify those core services in order to prepare educational service district budgets for the 1979-81 biennium, and those bienniums beyond.

RCW 28A.310.350
Identification of core services for budget purposes – Specifically Listed Services.

The basic core services and cost upon which educational service districts are budgeted shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

(1)   Educational service district administration and facilities such as office space, maintenance and utilities;

(2)   Cooperative administrative services such as assistance in carrying out procedures to abolish sex and race bias in school programs, fiscal services, grants management services, special education services and transportation services;

(3)   Personnel services such as certification/registration services;

(4)   Learning resource services such as audio visual aids;

(5)   Cooperative curriculum services such as health promotion and health education services, in-service training, workshops and assessment; and

(6)   Special needs of local education agencies.

In addition:

RCW 28A.300.030
Assistance of educational service district boards and superintendents — Scope.

The superintendent of public instruction, by rule or regulation, may require the assistance of educational service district boards and/or superintendents in the performance of any duty, authority, or power imposed upon or granted to the superintendent of public instruction by law or by the Constitution of the state of Washington, upon such terms and conditions as the superintendent of public instruction shall establish. Such authority to assist the superintendent of public instruction shall be limited to the service function of information collection and dissemination and the attestment to the accuracy and completeness of submitted information.

The Educational Service District superintendent is statutorily obligated as follows:

RCW 28A.310.280
ESD superintendent's powers and duties — Records and reports.

In addition to other powers and duties as provided by law, each educational service district superintendent shall:

(1)   Perform such record keeping, including such annual reports as may be required, and liaison and informational services to local school districts and the superintendent of public instruction as required by rule or regulation of the superintendent of public instruction or state board of education: PROVIDED, That the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education may require some or all of the school districts to report information directly when such reporting procedures are deemed desirable or feasible.

RCW 28A.310.270
ESD superintendent's powers and duties — Chief executive officer.

In addition to other powers and duties as provided by law, each educational service district superintendent shall:

(1)   Serve as chief executive officer of the educational service district and secretary of the educational service district board.

(2)   Visit the schools in the educational service district, counsel with directors and staff, and assist in every possible way to advance the educational interest in the educational service district.

RCW 28A.310.280
ESD superintendent's powers and duties — Records and reports.

In addition to other powers and duties as provided by law, each educational service district superintendent shall:

(1)   Perform such record keeping, including such annual reports as may be required, and liaison and informational services to local school districts and the superintendent of public instruction as required by rule or regulation of the superintendent of public instruction or state board of education: PROVIDED, That the superintendent of public instruction and the state board of education may require some or all of the school districts to report information directly when such reporting procedures are deemed desirable or feasible.

(2)   Keep records of official acts of the educational service district board and superintendents in accordance with *RCW 28A.21.120, as now or hereafter amended.

(3)   Preserve carefully all reports of school officers and teachers and deliver to the successor of the office all records, books, documents, and papers belonging to the office either personally or through a personal representative, taking a receipt for the same, which shall be filed in the office of the county auditor in the county where the office is located.

RCW 28A.310.300
ESD superintendent's powers and duties — Generally.

In addition to other powers and duties as provided by law, each educational service district superintendent shall:

(1) Assist the school districts in preparation of their budgets as provided in chapter 28A.505 RCW.

(2) Enforce the provisions of the compulsory attendance law as provided in RCW 28A.225.010 through 28A.225.140, 28A.200.010, and 28A.200.020.

(3) Perform duties relating to capital fund aid by non-high districts as provided in chapter 28A.540 RCW.

(4) Carry out the duties and issue orders creating new school districts and transfers of territory as provided in chapter 28A.315 RCW.

(5) Perform the limited duties as provided in chapter 28A.193 RCW. (education programs for juvenile inmates)

(6) Perform all other duties prescribed by law and the educational service district board.

In addition to the core services outlined in statute, the ESDs currently have a consolidated services agreement (CSA) with OSPI for OSPI-directed state and federal services delivered beyond the core services outlined in law. Moreover, all of the ESDs are party to a master interlocal cooperation agreement which permits them to deliver services across ESD boundary lines. Appendix A includes more detailed information about the Revised Code of Washington (RCWs), Washington Administrative Code (WACs) and Attorney General Opinions (AGOs) that govern the activities of ESDs.

It is important to point out that there are numerous examples where the ESDs have sought and received legislative authority to provide services that were not previously authorized. The result today is the cost-effective provision of services such as childcare, self-insurance of worker's compensation, unemployment and property casualty risks and direct and support services in special education.

Operations

Educational Service Districts are audited annually by the State Auditor's Office (SAO). In addition to reviewing finances of the ESD, the SAO annually reviews contracts, board minutes, compliance with open public meetings/closed executive session requirements as well as an ESD's compliance with its own policies and procedures. The 2006 review looked at these additional items as well. While there is not uniformity in the manner in which ESDs execute these tasks, each of the ESDs demonstrated its compliance with the requirements. This variety is present in local school districts as well.

Although the format differed substantially, all of the ESDs provided their mission and goals or some variation thereof, an organizational chart and evidence of a strategic planning process. Whether they were titled Action Plans, Strategic Objectives or Operational Plans, there was great variability in the processes and formats for strategic planning with more or less board, employee or school district input. This appeared to be unique to the "culture" in each ESD. For example, Puget Sound ESD uses a prescribed policy/governance process for strategic planning, goal setting and evaluation of success. Some ESDs choose not to do extensive surveying of their member districts and staff because their view is that the school districts share their opinion every year when they choose which ESD services to use. Most of those ESDs serve fewer districts and have close personal contact with smaller district decision-makers on a frequent basis, thus the more informal approach to strategic planning.

Seven of the ESDs have seven-member boards while two ESDs have nine-member boards. ESD board members are not compensated in any of the ESDs. Ongoing training for the boards generally occurs through attendance at the state Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD) conference, the Washington State School Directors (WSSDA) annual conference and regional meetings and/or the national Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) annual conference. The boards generally have some sort of periodic meeting/training with local school boards as well. Several of the ESDs provide periodic publications for their local school district boards. Orientation of new board members varies among the ESDs.

All of the ESDs showed evidence of appropriate personnel practices. Each had recruitment practices, periodically reviewed job descriptions, evaluation processes,

induction/orientation procedures and ongoing staff training. Again, personnel practices vary based on the size and needs of the individual ESD.

Regional Services

ESDs offer a wide array of services to local school districts. In 2006, the Educational Service Districts prepared a master database of regional services. This document is included in Appendix B. Additionally, each ESD prepared a matrix that shows which districts take advantage of specified services. Those matrices are included in Appendix C. The purpose here is not to reiterate those reports but rather to draw some conclusions from them.

Among the services provided are all of the core services currently required by law: fiscal, grants management, special education, transportation, personnel, learning resources, curriculum, in-service training, workshops, assessment and special needs of local agencies. The need for these services is variable. The availability of these programs provides stability and equity in the educational system.

Further, there is a set of services that are not statutorily defined as core services but are available in every ESD to meet school district needs. Those services include:

Student Assistance	Teacher Training and Coaching
Pupil Transportation	Leadership Coaching
School Mapping	Technology – District Technical Support
Safe and Drug-free Schools	K-20 Support
Focused Assistance	Professional Development Support
School Improvement Plans	Educational Technology Centers
District Improvement Plans	Regional Committees
State Reporting Assistance	

Beyond providing core services, it is the responsibility of ESDs to provide such services as meet the needs of the districts in their respective regions. A review of ESD contracted services, discussed in the next chapter, indicates that ESDs often contract with private- sector businesses. However, private vendors for the types of services needed by small, rural school districts are often unavailable or exorbitant in their cost

because of travel distances. In ESD programs, districts benefit from having a direct hand in program governance and fee setting. Services may be cooperatives, fee-for-service or grant programs. District needs, district ability to pay for services and private sector availability of similar services vary from one ESD to another so there is an inherent lack of absolute consistency among the regions.

There is wide variance in the availability of planning and evaluation documents for each program offered in an ESD. Oftentimes, the specific measurements or evaluation for programs are dictated by law, grant or other funding source which makes it difficult to have consistent planning and evaluation even within one ESD. Conversations with ESD superintendents reveal two areas of current effort to improve ESD program offerings. One area is using periodic cost/benefit analyses to ensure that programs are both cost-effective and truly beneficial in improving student learning or administrative efficiency. A second area is the difficulty of measuring improvements in student learning as a direct result of district participation in ESD programs. Numerous variables affect student performance and specific ESD programs control just a few of those variables. Nonetheless, ESDs are seeking mechanisms that measure more directly, and ultimately improve, their benefit to students.

ESD superintendents are easily able to self-identify "best practices" in their own and other ESDs. Whether it is the Personnel Cooperative in ESD 113 or the regional board training model in ESD 171, they are proud of their unique accomplishments. There is not currently a system-wide process for the identification, evaluation and expanded use of identified "best practices". It is important to note that what is a "best practice" in one ESD may not be either scalable or a good match for other ESDs.

In addition to the other services described, ESDs have demonstrated their ability to be entrepreneurial in meeting the needs of local districts:

- ESD 101 has built upon its STAR Schools Telecommunications ability and leveraged existing infrastructure and its unique capabilities to extend educational opportunities and value-added services. The U.S. Department of Education grant for the Correction Learning Network serves incarcerated youth and adults as well as corrections personnel. Grant dollars are leveraged to extend educational opportunities that serve students here in Washington and to students across the nation without expending additional public dollars.

- Another example of ESD entrepreneurial leadership is the selection of Puget Sound ESD's early learning program by the privately funded Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the White Center, Washington community to serve as community intermediary/lead in a large scale demonstration initiative to provide comprehensive early learning services to all children ages 0-5. ESD 105 has also been selected to coordinate the Gates "Thrive by Five" Program.

There are many other examples ranging from construction management to technology. In fact, in several of the ESDs the services are so needed and of such quality and cost-effectiveness that other public entities, such as cities, have requested ESD assistance. This would appear to be a reasonable extension of ESD authority that would serve taxpayers' best interests.

A common misconception is that larger school districts do not need or use ESD services. While larger districts may have the infrastructure to provide services in-house they often choose to use the ESD for cost-effectiveness and to preserve their focus internally. An examination of the program matrices provided in Appendix C shows that large districts are active users of ESD services. Cross-district transportation of homeless students and interpreter training are among the types of services needed by large districts that can benefit from ESD economies of scale. Even for large districts the ESD offers expertise, cost-effectiveness and neutrality.

Washington School Information Processing Cooperative (WSIPC)

WSIPC is the cooperative data system used by the majority of the state's school districts for required state reporting. The fiscal system is used by 279 of the state's school districts representing almost 700,000 FTE students and 150,000 employees. The student system is used by 214 districts representing 605,118 FTE students and includes three private schools. There are seven regional data centers located in ESDs around the state as well as nine district data centers located in larger school districts. ESDs have played integral roles in WSIPC's history and its operations.[37]

As noted in the 1975 Miller and Associates Common School Financing and Reform report to the legislature, "There is a need for a common local district information system

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[37] WSIPC staff, interview by author, Olympia, Washington, August 2006.

(LDIS) and that regional data centers would be the most effective way to ensure computing capability for all districts."[38] Miller further discussed the logic of the ESDs' role because of the financial management services they provide to many districts. Subsequent to that report, with ESD leadership, the WSIPC system was created in order to provide consistent and cost-effective student and fiscal system data collection and reporting to the state.

WSIPC is one of the largest public data systems in the state. Other than a minimal initial state investment, the ESDs and member districts have fully funded and governed the WSIPC system since the late 1970s. Implementation of major updates has occurred periodically. As local school districts, the federal government and the state legislature desire additional information, particularly as it relates to student performance, WSIPC and data center staffs are able to provide those services. ESDs and local school districts have struggled at times as more data and reports are demanded (e.g. Core Student Records System) without an accompanying appropriation of funds.

Based on a 15-year analysis, done in 2003, of the OSPI F196 report, which indicates the district-reported costs of Activity 72 (data processing), the cost for data collection in WSIPC districts is on average about one-half of that in non-WSIPC districts. The fact that after thirty years so many districts continue using WSIPC services is testimony to its responsiveness, value and cost-effectiveness.[39]

Educational Service Districts as a System

All nine of the ESD superintendents meet periodically during the year. Their purpose is to plan, organize and make more efficient the entire ESD "system". The group has an elected leader who provides coordination. In terms of statutory recognition there is not a "system" of ESDs. However, the superintendents realize that greater efficiency for all can be gained by working together. Current projects include development of a "Solutions Center" for the review and purchase of educational software. Another topic of recent discussions is the development of multi-region cooperatives. Although the concept is not entirely fleshed out, its purpose is to develop a program in one ESD than

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[38] Miller and Associates, "Common School Financing and Reform" (Olympia, A Report to the Select Educational Study Coordinating Committee of the Washington State Legislature, 13 Sept. 1975), 252.
[39] WSIPC staff, interview by author (Olympia, August 2006).

can provide services for other ESDs. Examples might be the special education program in ESD 112 or "Just Five Clicks" in ESD 114. The superintendents and boards are attempting to take selected programs to a larger, more efficient scale without diminishing the quality of service. In other cases, each ESD may operate a "storefront" while the development and administration of a program resides with one ESD. This ensures a variety of services is available throughout all ESDs without costly duplication of program costs. These efforts appear to be effective for some programs while others, including core services, require the personal touch of the home ESD.