

# Boards of Cooperative Education Services - BOCES

Presented by

James A, Kadamus, National Education Consultant

Maine Blue Ribbon Commission

October 31, 2016

# Outline of Presentation

- Creation of BOCES in New York State
- History of Services Provided
- Funding and BOCES State Aid
- Role of the District Superintendent
- Governance of BOCES
- Issues with BOCES

# James Kadamus

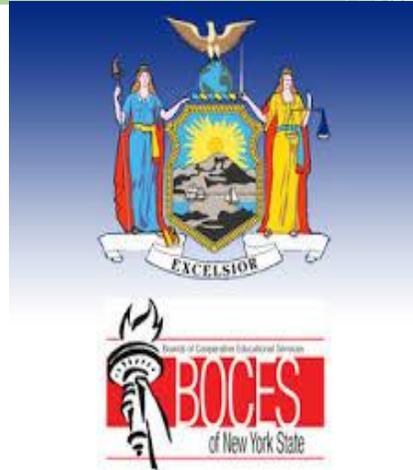
## National Education Consultant

- Former Deputy Commissioner of K-12 Education in NYS
  - Supervised BOCES District Superintendents
- Former Associate Commissioner of School Finance in NYS
  - Managed distribution of State Aid in NYS; created school aid proposals for State budget
- Co-owner of National Higher Education Consulting Firm (Sightlines) for 10 years
  - Provided analysis and advice to University of Maine System



# Creation of BOCES in New York State

- Established by Education Law in 1948
  - Purpose: to provide shared services when two or more school districts have similar needs; initial focus on rural and growing suburban areas to help them have services commonly provided in cities
- Began operating in 1950
  - 77 geographic based entities were originally established; consolidated to 37 currently
  - Only 9 districts out of 700 are **not** members of BOCES (includes Big 5 cities)
- Governed by a Board; District Superintendents serve as chief operating officers
- 43 States have some type of Education Service Agency, many based on NY model



# History of BOCES Services

Early Years: 1950s to 1970s

- **Vocational Education**

- Trades, Automotive, Cosmetology; evolved over time into many other career tech (CTE) areas and includes Adult Retraining

- **Special Education**

- All levels of SWD in beginning; evolved to administering inclusion programs that are now almost all component district/school based
- Direct Special Ed services funded through Excess Cost Aid



# History of BOCES Services

## Technology Era 1980s to 1990s

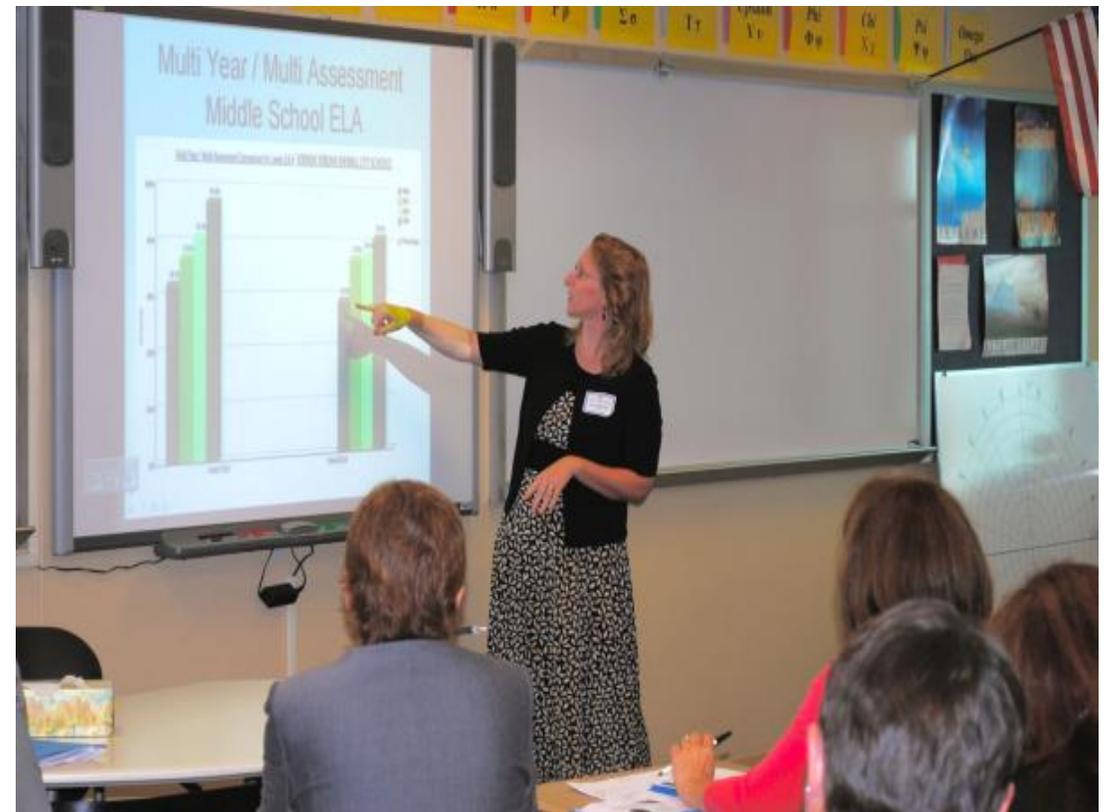
- **Regional Information Centers –RICs (12)**
  - Regional Computer and Data Centers; Student Information Systems; School Library Systems; Tech Support to School Districts
- **Administrative and Back Office Services**
  - Business services; Payroll; Substitute/itinerant teachers
- **Advanced Career Tech Programs**
  - Computer science; Medical and dental assistants; LPN; Food sciences
- **Remote Learning/TV Instruction**
  - Evolved to on line classes, especially in specialized subjects – e.g. physics, foreign languages



# History of BOCES Services

Standards and Assessment Era: 2000s to present

- **Standards and Curriculum Support**
  - State Department of Education uses BOCES as way to deliver training
- **Assessment Support and Information Security**
  - Test Scoring and Student Information; cyber security of student information
- **Professional Development**
  - Regional training to implement complex State initiatives that require changes in teaching and teacher evaluation
- **Online Instructional Support**
  - Banks of lessons, instructional modules



# Funding of BOCES and BOCES Aid in New York State



- CoSer Process (Cooperative Service Agreement)
  - State must approve CoSer for service to receive BOCES Aid; Criteria based on need for service, cost-effectiveness; eligibility under Education Law
  - School districts pay for BOCES services in year service is provided
  - School districts file claim for BOCES aid and if approved, aid is paid in following fiscal year
- BOCES Aid is paid on expenses incurred so it is an “expense-based aid”
- BOCES aid (like foundation aid) is based on factors like district property wealth; but there is an incentive to use services because BOCES aid is more favorable than base aid for districts.
  - Minimum BOCES aid ratio is 36%; minimum foundation aid is \$500/student
  - Aid formula keeps wealthier districts buying services and encourages cooperative sharing by districts

# Role of the District Superintendent (DS)



- Established by Education Law in 1910
  - Purpose: to enable State Board of Regents and Commissioner of Education to supervise the 10,000 small school districts in NYS; essentially DS was the Commissioner's field rep
- DS given chief administrative officer of BOCES role in 1950s, but still retain Commissioner field rep responsibilities
- DS oversee BOCES operations; assist districts with problems; often conduct searches for local superintendents
- BOCES Board hires DS subject to approval of Commissioner
- Part of DS salary paid by State of NY; DS carry out State initiatives
- State required by law to do a study of a BOCES when DS leaves/retires; studies have led to consolidation of BOCES units over time

# BOCES Governance

- BOCES governed by a board elected by component districts
  - Boards usually 7-15 members; individuals serving do not need to be on component district boards
- Main responsibilities of BOCES Board
  - Hire DS and oversee administration of BOCES programs
  - Create and balance annual budget; BOCES restricted on having a year-end surplus
  - Set administrative rates for component districts
  - Make capital improvements; these require vote by component districts
- Component districts join BOCES for “life”
  - Districts can choose how many services they want, but once they join BOCES, they are required to pay their share of administrative costs



# What can Maine Learn for NYS BOCES Experience?

- Regional shared services evolve over time to respond to school district needs and state education initiatives
  - For example, growth of support for teaching and instruction with State standards; evolution of Career Tech and Special Ed programs; expansion of role of Regional Information Centers
  - Therefore, a Maine system would need to build in similar flexibility
- Regional shared services must meet the test of cost-effectiveness
  - Shared services need to be less costly than districts doing it themselves

# What can Maine Learn for NYS BOCES Experience?

- Regional shared services need a governance system that is accountable for providing quality services at a lower cost
  - In NYS, the BOCES are governed by the school districts they serve
  - The dual role of the District Superintendent ensures accountability to local districts and the State
  - Because districts are BOCES members for life, they have a long-term stake in the quality and cost of services
- There is a “sweet spot” for funding regional shared services
  - Some level of incentive aid is needed to encourage participation of districts
  - But incentives cannot be set at a level where they encourage premium levels of services where higher costs are offset by aid