

What is BOCES?

Source: Madison-Oneida BOCES
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BOCES stands for Board of Cooperative Educational Services. BOCES is a public organization that was created by the New York State Legislature in 1948 to provide shared educational programs and services to school districts.

The History of BOCES

BOCES owes its origin to a state legislative enactment authorizing the formation of intermediate school districts. Passed in 1948, the act was aimed at enabling small rural school districts to combine their resources to provide services that otherwise would have been uneconomical, inefficient, or unavailable. Actually, BOCES was to be the temporary means by which careful transition could be made to an intermediate district framework. Though its purposes were similar to those of the proposed intermediate districts, BOCES was conceived and written into the Education Law in its own separate sections (1950 and 1951). Simpler in structure and less autonomous than projected intermediate districts, the BOCES proved itself worthy of being both means and end. Not one intermediate district was ever formed, and cooperative boards proliferated rapidly, especially during the mid-1950s, reaching 82 by 1958.

In 1972 the Intermediate School District Act was repealed. Laws pertaining to BOCES, however, have remained on the books. Thus BOCES has developed from a special-purpose, interim agency into a formally recognized middle or intermediate unit in New York State's public education system. There are currently 38 BOCES incorporating all but 9 of the 721 school districts in New York State. Moreover, other states have moved toward regional educational configurations like BOCES. At least 30 state legislatures have mandated or passed legislations, as educational service agencies study the idea.

BOCES Membership

The total area under supervision of a district superintendent is called a supervisory district. BOCES membership is not available to the so-called "Big Five" city school districts: New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Yonkers, and Syracuse. Once a district has joined a BOCES, it cannot withdraw and is obligated to pay its annual share of administrative, rental, or facilities expenses. BOCES services are, however, optional. They may be purchased or not purchased as the district's board of education sees fit. The decision to

purchase or not purchase BOCES services is made each year.

How Does BOCES Work?

BOCES services are created when two or more school districts decide they have similar needs that can be met by a shared program. BOCES helps school districts save money by providing opportunities to pool resources and share costs. Sharing is an economical way for districts to provide programs and services that they might not be able to afford otherwise. It is often more efficient and less costly to operate one central service than it is to have separate programs in each school district. BOCES services are often customized offering districts the flexibility to meet their individual needs.

Why do school districts participate in BOCES services?

Because BOCES services are shared by two or more school districts, they often cost much less than if districts provided the services on their own. Districts pool their resources, and share the savings. In addition, New York State gives a financial incentive to participate in shared services by offering school districts state aid for BOCES services. Here is how BOCES state aid works:

- Each district's Board of Education selects BOCES services for the current year.
- The following school year, a portion of the cost of BOCES services is returned to the district by the State of New York as BOCES aid.
- The amount returned to the district is based on a formula that takes into account the districts' financial resources.
- Money not spent in a CoSer service is returned to the district at the end of each fiscal year by the BOCES.

How are BOCES services paid for?

A BOCES has no taxing authority. Instead, the sources of BOCES funds are primarily taxes levied by its component districts, state aid, and a relatively small amount of federal aid. These funds support an administrative budget (covering administrative salaries, equipment, and services) and a program budget (covering other BOCES programs and services which districts select from the Service Directory, an annual listing of available services). In addition, BOCES may receive and manage funding from outside sources (e.g., state and federal) to cover special projects. The component district's share of BOCES

administrative, lease and capital costs is based either on the Resident Weighted Average Daily Allowance (RWADA) or on real property valuation.

Program costs are proportional to the amount of use each component district requires. Through BOCES state aid, component districts receive financial support for their participation in BOCES. The cost charged to a component district for its BOCES participation serves as the basis for the district's BOCES state aid.

How is BOCES governed?

BOCES is governed just as local districts are governed — by a Board of Education, which is made up of one representative from component districts. Board members are responsible for curricular, financial, and other policy decisions, just as they are at the local level. Members are elected by component school board members. BOCES board members do not need to be local school board members, but they must be eligible voters in component school districts of that BOCES.

Election to BOCES boards occurs at an annual BOCES meeting, which by law is held in April.

The duties and powers of BOCES boards, as specified in 1950 of the Education Law of the State of New York, include the following:

- Appointment of a district superintendent, subject to approval of the Commissioner of Education;
- Provision of cooperative educational services—with the commissioner's approval and on a contract basis—to component school districts;
- Needs assessment and long-range planning for cooperative educational services in the supervisory district;
- Employment of teachers and other support personnel to carry out BOCES programs;
- Preparation of an adjustable budget for the supervisory district program and its administration;
- Administration of payments for and costs of provided educational services;
- Borrowing of money in anticipation of revenue due;
- Entering into contracts with a variety of public agencies as well as non-public schools in order to arrange or provide services under specified conditions;
- Renting, purchasing, or selling of property or facilities under specified conditions;
- Making reports to the commissioner of education as required.

The District Superintendent

A BOCES board appoints its own chief executive officer, contingent upon approval of the commissioner of education. As a BOCES executive, the district superintendent serves local districts and is responsible to the board of education representing the component districts of the BOCES. The district superintendent also serves as a

representative of the commissioner of education, providing educational leadership to local school districts in matter of law, policy, and practice.

Based on these responsibilities, the district superintendent has at least three important roles:

- Educational change agent
- Regional planner and coordinator
- Field representative for the State Education Department, a consultative capacity designed to improve two-way communication between state and local levels

Structure and Procedures for Providing Services

The facilities, professional personnel, and services of a BOCES are available to every local school district within the district superintendent's supervisory district. Because the BOCES board must develop its offerings to fulfill local demands and needs, levels of accountability and flexibility are maintained. Under Education Law, a BOCES must furnish any educational service that is requested by two or more component districts and approved by the commissioner of education according to need and practicality in a regional context. By January of each year, component districts specify their potential service needs for the following school year. These needs, developed by the BOCES into annual operating plans, are submitted to the State Education Department and the commissioner of education for approval. BOCES boards then notify component districts of the approved services, asking for a firm commitment to participate by May 1 of each year.

The BOCES and the component districts then enter into formal contracts. Specified in each contract are the number and types of services to be furnished by the BOCES, the number of people to be served, and the amount to be paid to the BOCES. Signed by the BOCES and component board presidents, and then approved by the commissioner, these contracts are effective for one year, after which they may be renewed, changed, or cancelled at the component districts' option. Districts may also authorize multi-year service requests from BOCES.

What kinds of Programs does BOCES offer?

Every BOCES is a little different, depending on the needs of the local school districts. A large percentage of BOCES programs are instructional; that is to say, they serve students with classroom programs and services. Examples of instructional programs are vocational-technical programs for high school students, physical and occupational therapy for students with disabilities, and literacy programs for adults.

The remaining programs are called support services. Although they are not classroom programs, support services are still very important because they relate to the education of students, and because they help school

RCLS Technology Plan 2001-2004

Source: RCLS

RCLS TECHNOLOGY MISSION:

RCLS identifies new technologies that can enhance library service. RCLS works with member libraries to plan, implement, and train in the use of appropriate technologies to enhance library services.

PLAN CONTENTS:

The RCLS Technology plan contains the following elements:

1. Goals and strategies for using telecommunications and information technology to improve library services delivered by our member libraries
2. A professional development strategy to ensure that staff know how to use these new technologies to improve library services
3. An assessment of the telecommunications services, hardware, software, and other services that will be needed to improve library services
4. A sufficient budget to acquire and support the non-discounted elements of the plan; the hardware, software, professional development, and other services that will be needed to implement the strategy
5. An evaluation process that enables the library to monitor progress toward the specified goals and make mid-course corrections in response to new developments and opportunities as they arise

1. GOALS AND STRATEGIES

GOAL: OFFER ACCESS TO A CURRENT, STATE OF THE ART INTEGRATED ONLINE LIBRARY SYSTEM TO ALL MEMBER LIBRARIES

Services: Allows system-wide resource sharing (in-person ILL and remote ILL by library patrons among member libraries); shared cataloging; system-wide training

Strategies:

- Load and maintain most current release of Dynix software
- Investigate new generation integrated systems to replace the Dynix software (with epixtech's Horizon/Sunrise system offering the advantages of functionality based on Dynix software)
- Replace remaining few dumb terminals with PCs; upgrade older PCs on a planned cycle of every 3-4 years.

GOAL: CONNECT MEMBER LIBRARIES TO THE INTEGRATED ONLINE LIBRARY SYSTEM THROUGH A PRIVATE TELECOMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

Services: A private network offers security, reliability, lower costs, and a basis for establishing an equity of costs among member libraries. Using public networks to connect to the central servers of the integrated online library system offers less security, less reliability, and would create telecomm cost inequities.

Strategies:

- Insure that frame relay connections offer each member library adequate bandwidth for their electronic, networked services by reviewing data loads and response times. Upgrade connections where needed. Our minimum standard is 56K connections [this includes data compression]. We now want to use 384K as the minimum standard for an increasing number of libraries, and upgrade large sites to full T1 capacity.
- Investigate ATM, fiber optic and wireless technologies.

GOAL: OFFER INTERNET ACCESS FROM OUR PRIVATE NETWORK

Services: Offers cost-effective access to Internet resources to library staff on staff workstations and to patrons on public access workstations

Strategies:

- Insure that the Internet connections offered from our private network are adequate to meet the demand at our member libraries without jeopardizing the performance of the integrated online library system. Upgrade the connection to our ISP as needed.
- Where individual libraries see other ISPs offering more cost-effective solutions, insure that traffic back to RCLS servers from other ISPs do not cause bottlenecks on the Internet access offered through the private network
- Investigate cost-effective networked printer management software, workstation booking/timing software for public Internet workstations
- Add security measures to public workstations to minimize network security concerns and individual workstation security concerns

GOAL: OFFER ENHANCED INTERNET-BASED RESOURCES

Services: Offer cost-effective access to libraries and patrons from remote locations (homes, businesses) to fee-based resources. Use library websites to enhance communication with patrons. Offer reference services through the Internet.

Strategies:

- Encourage system-wide web-based commercial database licensing for aggregate discounts and equity of access
- Add enhanced features to the web-based library catalog
- Develop more online reference services
- Develop other interactive, personalized web-based services
- Facilitate system-wide and individual member library digitization projects; develop a system digitization policy in conjunction with regional and State efforts

GOAL: EMPLOY EXTENSIVE USE OF INTERNET FOR INTERNAL SYSTEM COMMUNICATIONS

Services: The Internet offers the quickest, most reliable method of delivering information and documents from System HQ to member libraries and among member libraries. Extensive use of Internet for communications allows more collaboration without the logistical problems of meetings and conference calls.

Strategies:

- Offer ubiquitous, full-featured web-based mail and discussion group software that can be accessed from any Internet connection
- Investigate Internet-based conferencing for meetings and training sessions that would alleviate travel logistics
- Publish documents on System web site

GOAL: IMPLEMENT ENHANCED OUT-OF-SYSTEM RESOURCE SHARING

Services: Offer quicker and more reliable access to resources held by non-member libraries.

Strategies:

- Implement ISO-compatible out-of-system ILL product in conjunction with regional system and neighboring library systems
- Encourage other library systems to adopt and implement the ISO ILL standard and Z39.50 library catalogs.
- Investigate and implement member library-based electronic document delivery system.

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

RCLS provides its members libraries with training on the integrated online library system software and workstation/telecommunications equipment. The RCLS Electronic Resources Consultant coordinates the library software system training. The RCLS ANSER Project Manager coordinates the workstation and telecommunication equipment training. The strategy is for RCLS to offer this training onsite at the time equipment is installed for the first time and prior to a library going on-line with circulation. Training is required before a library goes online with circulation. Thereafter, group refresher training sessions will be offered either as separate workshops or as elements of user group meetings.

In addition the RCLS Electronic Resources Consultant coordinates the training on the enhanced library Internet services: database interfaces, web-based catalog, email system, and annual report software. These are offered through group workshops offered at multiple locations.

Outside sources of continuing education are encouraged for: basic Internet skills; basic office software packages; web page design and programming; and specific, topical Internet research. RCLS provides pointers to sources of this outside training including: local educational institutions (BOCES, SUNY Community Colleges); regional Library Research Council (SENYLRC); and recommended private training consultants and firms.

RCLS itself has a Continuing Education policy and budget which is used for training and certification studies for our technical staff. That budget is included in the "Professional Fees" and "Travel" sections of the overall RCLS budget. In 2001, these budget lines included \$7000 and \$18000, respectively.

The RCLS Staff Development Plan is included as Appendix I.

3. ASSESSMENT

[The current building level hardware and telecommunications network is diagrammed in Appendix II.] Prior to selecting the next integrated online library system software package, RCLS will conduct an assessment process that will identify mission-critical functionality, desired features, and impact on current hardware and telecommunications costs.

The integrity of this network is maintained through the following measures:

- All servers (HP N series for Dynix system, HP LH series

for Internet services, Dell system for WebPAC) are backed up at least once a week, and one copy of those backups is kept off site.

- All servers are protected from power surges and fluctuations by a Liebert Series 100 10kVA Single Phase Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) unit. This unit can provide all the servers with about 25 minutes of battery power in which they would be able to be shut down gradually without harm to components.
- Our Internet connection comes from 2 separate sources. Although they are not yet configured to back up one another if one goes down, that capability is being worked on.
- The HP N series server running the Dynix system, as well as the LH series Internet server, both use RAID disk drive technology that allows drives to be "hot swappable" in the event that one fails.
- All software being used by member libraries, and the hardware of the servers themselves are covered by maintenance contracts with the appropriate vendors.

4. BUDGET

[The current ANSER Project budget is included in Appendix III.] The technology budget has been designed so that e-rate discounts are factored into the annual, per workstation maintenance fee charged to member libraries. If e-rate discounts were lost, the annual maintenance costs would rise; however, no specific service in the technology plan would be threatened.

Additionally, other sections of the RCLS budget support services mentioned in this Technology Plan. These include: all travel costs associated with the Automation staff to workshops, conferences, and member libraries; a vehicle for exclusive use of the automation staff; the salary of the Electronic Resources Consultant; benefits and payroll tax for all automation staff; and other building expenses. Administrative and account fees are also in the overall RCLS budget. Access to databases is supported in part by the Central Library budget [CBA and Central Reference funds].

5. EVALUATION

The RCLS Technology Plan is developed by System staff using the RCLS Director's Association ANSER Subcommittee for review and revision. The ANSER Subcommittee meets every two months to evaluate system-wide technology services and discuss new services. The Technology Plan is also referenced by the System Plan of Service, and therefore undergoes evaluation as part of the Plan of Service process. The RCLS Board also has an Electronic Resources Committee

that reviews technology planning issues relevant to the services it delivers. It, too will review the RCLS Technology Plan.

RELATION TO NY ELECTRONIC DOORWAY LIBRARY PROGRAM

All RCLS member library main branches currently meet the criteria of the EDL Advanced Level (dedicated 56K lines, Z39.50 level 2 catalog, commercial databases, electronic delivery of documents). Two libraries current meet the criteria for EDL Leader Level. As additional libraries are upgraded to T1 connections and embark on creating their own digital content, they will qualify as EDL Leader Level.

Planning for School Facilities

Source: Valiant, Etc.

CHECKLIST FOR PRE-PLANNING RURAL SCHOOL FACILITIES

Rural school administrators and School Boards face a daunting task when they take on the challenge of planning for facility improvements or replacement. Few, if any, will have done this type of work before, especially on such a large scale. Since this kind of planning is very specialized, the Superintendent and the Board often find themselves at the mercy of the professional planners they hire. It is the intention of the author to provide some help to small-school administrators in educating the district's planning team and in setting the stage before the architect is hired. It is hoped that the reader will find the checklist provided below to be a useful tool in this process.

CHECKLIST

1. Is the needed expertise available within the staff or among the school patrons?

Yes
 No

If no, where can we get it?

What are some of the training needs of the planning team?

2. Does the District have a 'Strategic Plan'?

Yes
 No

If yes, does it speak to facilities either directly or indirectly?

Yes
 No

Describe:

3. Are documents available that describe the District's programs (curriculum, co-curriculum, etc.)?

Yes
 No

If yes, collect them.

4. Does a long-range facility plan exist?

Yes

No

If yes, collect it.

5. Are there any recent studies of building conditions, enrollment trends, technology, etc.?

Yes

No

Collect those that are available.

6. Does the community use the school facilities?

Yes

No

If yes, in what ways and how much?

7. List the age, capacity, and general condition of existing facilities.

8. If all pieces of the data identified above are available, what are the gaps between 'Strategic Plan,' program, and facilities?

9. If pieces are missing, design a plan to acquire them.

10. Are there local, state, or federal resources available to help in the planning effort?

What are the requirements to obtain them?

Planning for Results

Source: RCLS

Facilitator Information

Planning for Results is a tested, results-driven planning process that enables libraries of all sizes to respond quickly to rapidly changing environments. The planning process is dynamic and flexible, adaptable and easy to implement. It helps libraries of all sizes and all budgets to anticipate and prepare for change.

The Upper Hudson Library System working with Carol Clingan, Mohawk Valley Library System, Patricia Stocker, Pioneer Library System, Catherine Way, Chautauqua Cattaraugus Library System, Robert Hubsher, Ramapo Catskill Library System, Mickey Cantwell, Suffolk Library System, and Lisa Areford, Division of Library Development received an LSTA grant to give public library system staff the skills needed to facilitate the New Planning for Results model in public libraries in New York State. Sandra Nelson, the nationally respected consultant and author of *The New Planning for Results*, an ALA publication lead the workshop.

The following is a list of highly skilled consultants who will work with libraries of all sizes to develop a community based library long-range plan at no charge to the public library.

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Kathryn is the director of the Athens Regional Library System in Athens, GA, which serves five rural and suburban counties in Northeast Georgia. She is particularly interested in helping libraries to move away from traditional services and to provide a framework to help them grow and change. Kathryn just completed a Specialist in Library Science degree from the U of SC, with an emphasis on administration and leadership.

Kathryn's training experiences include library planning, planning for new facilities, and providing programs for staff during Staff Day events.

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Mickey is the Statistical Analyst for the Suffolk Coopertive Library System on Long Island. He began his library career 25 years ago surveying library usage at small libraries in Suffolk County. The bulk of his work involves annual report liaison work, mapping patron usage by library district, and tracking "contract" district usage along with helping in the formation of library districts from "unserved" areas.