

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE BOARDS
OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
(BOCES) IN THE STATE OF NEW YORK

A THESIS

PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE

by

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE

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Aug. 15, 1975.

Date

INTRODUCTION

The development of the shared services concept of education in New York State, indeed in the country, has made a tremendous impact on public education. By having available a multitude of services and programs that otherwise could not be provided by most independent school districts, public education in this state has been profoundly enriched and forever changed by the utilization of cooperative educational services.

From the narrow concept of the three "R's" for "normal" children of earlier years, there has developed a multi-faceted, comprehensive educational philosophy of education for all--the mentally and physically handicapped, the emotionally disturbed, the blind and deaf, the school dropout, the disadvantaged, the educationally deprived adult--who have been provided with a workable and successful solution to the problem of total education in New York.

In this study, two contrasting Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) districts are examined in detail; the first is suburban Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES, the other, rural Herkimer County BOCES. Despite a considerable difference in school population, many of the same courses

and programs are offered in both districts, although it can be noted that Herkimer's vocational courses have more agricultural content. However, the Putnam/Northern Westchester BOCES is vastly more sophisticated due to its much larger enrollment and the educational demands of an essentially suburban area.

From among the proliferating programs offered around the state, educational media service is highlighted as an example of a popular BOCES cooperative service in almost all areas of the state.

Future directions for BOCES are also discussed in Chapter IX, specifically through a proposal for the introduction of BOCES organizations in the state's metropolitan areas.

The writer's interest in the development of shared services in New York led to a second level of inquiry, that of shared services programs in other states. Two were examined in detail, those of the States of Colorado and Pennsylvania. The information gathered on their respective programs illuminated the flexibility and diversity of cooperative educational organizations around the country.

It is the intention of the writer to present a clear and up-to-date view of the activities of the New York State Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, as well as a sampling of the many creative approaches, based on local needs, which are being used under a shared-services concept in the nation.