

# *Shared Services in School Districts*

## **Catalogue of Best Practices**



New Jersey School Boards  
Association

**RUTGERS**  
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# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **Shared Services Arrangements – New Jersey**

### **New Jersey**

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>School Supplies</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Approximately 214 New Jersey School Districts (complete list at <a href="http://www.ed-data.com">www.ed-data.com</a> )
<i>Contact</i>	Educational Data Services, Inc. Alan Wohl, President 236 Midland Avenue, Saddle Brook, NJ 07663 (973) 340-8800 x18 <a href="http://www.ed-data.com">www.ed-data.com</a> <a href="mailto:alanw@ed-data.com">alanw@ed-data.com</a>

Educational Data Services, Inc. (EDS) is the administrative agent, and the Glen Rock Board of Education the lead educational agency, for a purchasing cooperative consisting of (at last count) 214 members, all New Jersey boards of education. For a fee, EDS handles compliance with public contracting requirements for the purchase of school supplies and other materials. The fee charged to each member district varies, based on district size and purchasing quantity. EDS purchases supplies in 14 categories, including 1200 commonly-purchased items, school and office equipment in six categories, and maintenance contracts in over 40 categories. It also purchases used textbooks (but not new, because publishers generally are not willing to engage in competitive bidding for new textbooks). And it negotiates leases and lease-back arrangements for a variety of materials and equipment.

The EDS cooperative offers its members the significant financial and other benefits associated with bulk purchasing. Prices generally run 20% lower than those in the state contract and 50% lower than retail. They generally remain in effect for 12 months at a time, allowing districts to purchase small quantities throughout the school year as needed at the initial bulk purchase price. Also, EDS uses an interactive web-based order system that allows any and all authorized district personnel (including principals and teachers) to place orders directly. To facilitate orders and record-keeping, EDS software is aligned to school district purchase orders and other procedures.

The EDS purchasing cooperative operates pursuant to an interlocal services agreement that includes every member school district as a party. Every board of education adopts a resolution authorizing its district's membership and agreement to the terms of the cooperative agreement. Most boards authorize participation for periods of five years.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>Pupil Transportation</b>
<i>Districts</i>	More than 70 New Jersey school districts
<i>Contact</i>	Dr. Wayne L. Threlkeld Superintendent, Hopatcong Borough Board of Education Box 1029 Windsor Avenue, Hopatcong, NJ 07843 (973) 398-8801  Amanda Ferrington, Director Sussex County Regional Cooperative PO Box 1029, Hopatcong, NJ 07843 <a href="http://www.sussexcoop.org">www.sussexcoop.org</a>

For 12 years the Sussex County Regional Cooperative has provided transportation services for students who attend school outside their home districts. Established by 14 Sussex County districts at a time when the county educational services commission was having difficulty providing coordinated transportation for students with disabilities, the cooperative now serves over 70 districts in Sussex, Morris, Essex, Hunterdon and Warren counties, and provides transportation for not only students with disabilities but those attending vocational schools, nonpublic schools and other programs. Its billings have increased from \$300,000-\$400,000 in its first year of operation to \$15 million in 2007.

Member boards decrease their transportation costs by at least 50 percent by sharing cooperative routes with other districts. They pay the actual cost of transportation plus a 4% administrative fee, which covers the costs of office staff, supplies, insurance and legal fees. The cooperative has its own board of directors, and employs three office staff members, five drivers and a mechanic. It leases eight handicapped-accessible vans.

The Cooperative strives to minimize the length of the routes so that children spend as little time on buses as possible. It has received the highest transportation efficiency rating of all transportation providers – including local districts -- in New Jersey.

In addition to the transportation itself, the Cooperative holds regional meetings twice a year for its members. State Department of Education representatives speak on emerging issues, and meetings address topics such as contracting, student safety, bus inspections, and CPR training.

Although the cooperative is designed to be self-sufficient and nonprofit, for the last two years it has generated a profit, which it is considering using to purchase a 24-passenger bus that could be reconfigured to accommodate up to seven wheelchairs.

Boards that wish to use a route provided by the cooperative must adopt a resolution to participate in the cooperative's joint transportation agreement. The resolution serves as an agreement between the board and the cooperative for the provision and coordination of transportation. A copy of the required resolution is available on the cooperative's website, [www.sussexcoop.org](http://www.sussexcoop.org).

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Banking Services</b>
<i>Districts</i>	41 Bergen County school districts
<i>Contact</i>	Dr. Philip H. Nisonoff Assistant Superintendent / School Business Administrator Emerson Board of Education 131 Main Street, Emerson NJ 07603 201-599-4178 <a href="mailto:phnisonoff@emerson.k12.nj.us">phnisonoff@emerson.k12.nj.us</a>

In summer 2006, 23 loosely affiliated Bergen County boards of education issued a joint request for proposals for commercial banking services. They sent the RFP to every bank doing business in the area and everyone doing business with banks. Five banks submitted bids, and a committee of school business administrators reviewed the proposals, evaluated them based on a rubric emphasizing financial benefit and customer service, and decided unanimously to award the contract to Commerce Bank.

This was good news for Commerce, and even better news for the member districts. Overnight, they went from being small fry to big investors. Among other things, the interest rate on their deposits increased substantially. By one estimate, the increase has resulted in combined additional revenues of about \$1 million in one year for the 23 districts.

By summer 2007, the Bergen County School District Banking Consortium – New Jersey's only government banking consortium – included 41 member districts, and it had formalized its organizational structure. Its executive director, Dr. Philip Nisonoff (who also serves as the Emerson school district's assistant superintendent/school business administrator and was the consortium's driving force) was projecting a significant further increase in membership in coming months. Other types of entities, municipalities and public colleges, also have requested information, looking to the consortium as a model for their own joint banking activity.

The consortium is not a pooled investment. District funds are not commingled. Each member board of education adopts a resolution authorizing its membership in the consortium and establishment of the several required school district accounts with Commerce Bank, and each board maintains its own separate accounts and banking agreements. Any New Jersey board of education may join, though an application process is required. There are no membership fees. Each member may withdraw at any time, with no liability or penalty imposed by the consortium.

The consortium's goals, and the benefits to its members, are two-fold: maximizing interest earnings and increasing districts' business office efficiency. The negotiated interest rate on all accounts is based on the collective balances of all the member districts, even though the accounts are maintained separately, thus achieving the first goal. And because the rate is consistently high, business administrators need not spend time monitoring rates and transferring funds among accounts in order to achieve the highest available rate, thus achieving the second goal. Efficiency also results from the improved customer service that comes with being a large investor. Even for districts with no local Commerce Bank branch, banking has been made easy: the consortium's RFP required the bank to agree to provide courier services every two days to any member district where there was no branch within three miles.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Electronic Library Services</b>
<i>Districts</i>	26 Bergen County school districts
<i>Contact</i>	Bergen County Technical High School 200 Hackensack Avenue · Hackensack, NJ 07601 201-343-6000

The Bergen Electronic Library for Schools (BELS) is a consortium of 48 school libraries in 26 school districts, coordinated through Bergen County Technical Schools and operated in partnership with the Bergen County Cooperative Library System (BCCLS). The BELS computer-based catalog enables students and faculty in member schools access to the resources of a shared, common catalog. Features include a gateway to the BCCLS catalog, gateway to other databases and remote maintenance of the common catalog for schools. By providing access to material at any participating school or any participating public library via a BCCLS library card, students and staff are able to request information and/or material from a school library or public library, or from their own desktop, using the automated request system.

BELS also serves as a professional resource and network for school librarians. Members of the BELS consortium are invited to attend regular meetings and to take advantage of training opportunities. BELS media specialists meet with fellow library media specialists to work cooperatively with each other, share materials, exchange program ideas, and develop collegial networks. BELS professional networking allows participating librarians to contribute ideas, materials, and suggestions that continue to enhance system wide library service.

BELS also provides schools with the opportunity to move from a stand alone environment to an integrated, networked environment for shared resources. Schools can use the BELS system to manage their collections through reports such as weekly overdue notices, delinquent and fine reports, outstanding materials, unused material reports, daily and monthly circulations reports and inventory reports among others.

Consortium membership requires a one-time access fee and annual fees, which vary depending on the member school's grade level and number of schools participating in each member district.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Laurel Springs / Stratford (Camden County)  Laurel Springs, K-6, 200 students, 1 building Stratford, PK-8, 900 students, 2 buildings
<i>Contact</i>	Dr. Albert Brown, Superintendent (856) 783-2555, Stratford (856) 783-1086, Laurel Springs <a href="mailto:browna@stratford.k12.nj.us">browna@stratford.k12.nj.us</a>

Albert Brown had been the superintendent of the Stratford school district for four years when the position of superintendent in Laurel Springs became vacant. In April 2005 the boards began sharing Dr. Brown's services based on the size of enrollments in each district: His time and compensation are devoted 28% to Laurel Springs, and 72% to Stratford. He has a schedule of three half days in Laurel Springs, and 3 ½ days in Stratford, but is available in either district as needed. It was challenging to develop a formula that would make sense, but by "dumb luck" the boards arrived at one that works. Dr. Brown believes that flexibility is essential to successful sharing, and that the boards must trust him to "get the jobs done." (He resisted keeping a time log, as one board member requested, viewing that as arduous and unnecessary.)

Dr. Brown noted that a shared position is not twice as much work, because there is duplication. Efficiencies have resulted from the shared superintendency. For example, he reads Department of Education bulletins and notices once, although he may have to prepare two reports. Stratford recently audited its board policies; when Laurel Springs did the same afterward, they were able to use Stratford's work as a basis for their own.

The shared arrangement was approved by the county superintendent under the procedure in Title 18A. The original agreement was for two years, and was extended. In July 2007, both boards approved a five-year agreement.

Dr. Brown observed that the administrative spending cap made it harder to administer the shared superintendency. To reduce its administrative costs, Stratford could not continue paying him his full salary with Laurel Springs contributing. Instead, he is paid separately by each school district.

In July 2007 the two districts also began a shared custodial arrangement under an interlocal services agreement. Stratford employs the custodial staff for both districts, and custodians and maintenance workers will provide services part-time in Laurel Springs. Stratford provides the supervision. The two boards will jointly purchase cleaning supplies, equipment and materials. Anticipated savings to each board from the shared custodian are estimated at \$10,000 per year.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Avalon / Stone Harbor (Cape May County)  Stone Harbor, K-8, 91 students, 1 building Avalon, 1-8, 86 students, 1 building
<i>Contact</i>	Mr. David Rauenzahn, Superintendent (609) 368-4413, Stone Harbor (609) 967-7544, Avalon <a href="mailto:rauenzahn@sh.capemayschools.com">rauenzahn@sh.capemayschools.com</a>

David Rauenzahn is in the third year of a shared superintendency between Avalon and Stone Harbor. The districts have one school building each, and they have a combined kindergarten.

The districts' shared superintendent arrangement came about after the legislature passed S1701, the school budget cap law. Avalon and Stone Harbor have an interlocal services agreement under which Avalon purchases superintendent services from Stone Harbor; under the agreement, Mr. Rauenzahn splits his time 50% between the two districts. All parties have a 90-day "escape clause" in their contracts. There is an annual renewal provision for Avalon to notify Stone Harbor by December 31 whether or not it intends to continue the arrangement. The districts chose to do an interlocal services agreement rather than a shared superintendent agreement under Title 18A because an interlocal services agreement was "better suited" to the districts' circumstances, since it provided them "more latitude" to contract and to end the arrangement. Mr. Rauenzahn had a one-year contract with Stone Harbor in the first two years of the arrangement, and now is in the first year of a three-year contract.

Avalon and Stone Harbor also share other personnel. Their business administrator is Henry Bermann, who is based in Pittsgrove (Salem County). Each district has a part-time clerk who reports to Mr. Bermann. The Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction is also shared; that person is an Avalon employee, and Stone Harbor purchases the services from Avalon. Interlocal services agreements govern the shared business administrator services and shared curriculum and instruction services. The two districts also informally provide custodial coverage for each other during summer vacations and at other times, and share materials, tools, ladders, etc. as needed.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools Child Study Team Services School Business Services Substitute Services</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Wharton / Mine Hill (Morris County)  Wharton, PK-8, 750 students, 2 buildings Mine Hill, PK-6, 350 students, 1 building
<i>Contact</i>	Mr. Richard Bitondo, Superintendent (973) 361-2592, Wharton (973) 366-0590, Mine Hill Twp.

A history of sharing services between the municipalities of Wharton and Mine Hill Township forms the backdrop for the shared superintendency, as well as for other shared services in the two school districts. For many years, the towns have jointly offered youth athletics such as football, baseball and basketball programs. The Wharton Police Department has taken over police services for Mine Hill Township, and the towns have a shared municipal court system.

In summer 2006, the boards of education arranged to share child study team services. Mine Hill contracted with Wharton, through an interlocal services agreement, for use of its child study team. (Until then, Mine Hill had obtained child study team services from the Morris County Educational Services Commission). As part of the arrangement, the Wharton Board of Education hired a supervisor of child study. Mine Hill was involved in the interview process, and boards approved the appointment. In addition, the Wharton child study team was expanded by one member as part of the arrangement.

The agreement also includes substitute services. Wharton provides a staff person to manage substitutes; Mine Hill shares in that person's compensation. Most substitutes are approved by both boards, and the substitute pool has expanded using this approach. This interlocal agreement has a one-year term.

Wharton and Mine Hill Township began discussing sharing a superintendent while negotiating the shared child study team arrangement. The discussions were propelled forward when the Mine Hill Township superintendent resigned to accept a position in another district. In October 2006 the two boards began sharing Mr. Bitondo's services on a 60/40 split, pursuant to an interlocal service agreement. Mr. Bitondo had been the superintendent of schools in Wharton since 2002-03, and had served as school business administrator in Wharton for three years prior to that. The shared superintendent arrangement agreement is for two years, with an option for renewal.

Mr. Bitondo spends two days per week in Mine Hill and three days per week in Wharton, but he is available in either district as needed. The district administrative offices are a five-minute ride from each other.

The two boards also began sharing business services as of July 1, 2007, under another interlocal services agreement. Wharton is the lead educational agency under that agreement, which provides for a business administrator and an educational facilities manager (buildings and grounds supervisor), which is a newly created position. Mine Hill pays 50% of the costs of both positions. The even split was arrived at even though Mine Hill has one school and Wharton has two, because Mine Hill has more immediate capital projects and more sending-receiving relationships than Wharton (both middle school and high school) that require attention. The term of this agreement is for one year.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools Transportation</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Point Pleasant Beach / Bay Head (Ocean County)  Point Pleasant Beach, K-12, 870 students, 2 buildings Bay Head, K-8, 93 students, 1 building
<i>Contact</i>	Dr. John Ravally, Superintendent (732) 899-8840 <a href="mailto:ravally@bayheadschoool.org">ravally@bayheadschoool.org</a>

The Ocean County communities and school districts of Point Pleasant Beach and Bay Head are contiguous to each other. Pursuant to a sending-receiving agreement, students from Bay Head, the smaller of the two communities, attend high school in Point Pleasant Beach. And since 2006 the districts have shared one chief school administrator pursuant to an interlocal services agreement.

Bay Head's superintendent/principal left the district in 2006, creating a vacancy. Rather than appointing a replacement, the Bay Head Board of Education decided to contract with the Point Pleasant Beach board to share the services of its superintendent, Dr. John Ravally. Dr. Ravally remains employed solely by the Point Pleasant Beach board, which is responsible for evaluating his performance and paying 100% of his salary. Point Pleasant Beach receives payment from Bay Head for Dr. Ravally's services.

The districts' shared-services agreement also provides that they will share pupil transportation services, *i.e.*, that the Point Pleasant Beach board will provide transportation for eligible Bay Head students. Because the boards wanted to include both transportation and shared-superintendent services in one agreement, they executed an interlocal services agreement rather than an agreement under Title 18A, which would have been limited to the superintendent position. The primary advantage of the agreement is that Bay Head benefits from the economies of scale that come from the combined services. And Point Pleasant Beach has a source of revenue that it otherwise would not have.

The Point Pleasant Beach school district also shares services with other Ocean County districts. Through separate subcontracting agreements, it provides child study team and case management services to Island Heights, a K-6 district, and to Lavalette, a K-8 district.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools School Business Administrator</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Toms River Regional / Seaside Heights (Ocean County)  Toms River Regional, K-12, 18,000 students, 18 buildings Seaside Heights, PK-6, 300 students, 1 building
<i>Contact</i>	Mr. Michael Ritacco, Superintendent (732) 505-5604 or 5515 <a href="mailto:mritacco@trschoools.com">mritacco@trschoools.com</a>

In 2003, at the request of the Ocean County Superintendent, the Toms River Regional school district took on administrative oversight of the single school in the Seaside Heights school district. The Seaside Heights district was experiencing academic and financial difficulty at the time. It also was top-heavy with administrators, including a superintendent, business administrator, assistant business administrator, and elementary school principal. When its administration was taken over by Toms River Regional, the superintendent retired and the two business administrators left.

The Toms River Regional superintendent and business administrator now serve in those positions in both Toms River Seaside Heights, under an interlocal services agreement on a year-to-year basis. They maintain their offices in Toms River, and have incorporated administration of the Seaside Heights district into their duties. They receive no additional compensation, but Toms River Regional receives revenue, amounting to about 15% of its annual operating budget, from Seaside Heights. The superintendent, Mr. Michael Ritacco, describes the arrangement as akin to folding in one more elementary school into the already large regional district (which has three high schools, three intermediate schools and 12 elementary schools).

Seaside Heights has benefited from the shared relationship both academically and financially. According to Mr. Ritacco, improving academics was “easy” compared to improving the district’s financial operations. Seaside Heights has met all academic standards for the past two years, which it had never done before. (Its student population is 60% transient, with a high motel residency rate.) There is a school band which didn’t exist before. There is a new addition to its school building. Grievances by the teachers’ union are reduced to zero from ten to 15 per month.

On the financial side, Seaside Heights’ property taxes have gone down for two years in a row. Examples of savings include health insurance premiums, on which the district has saved about \$250,000 per year, and supply purchasing, which has changed from its own drop-ship system to Toms River’s more efficient bulk purchasing.

Mr. Ritacco observed that the shared arrangement is successful largely because of the very capable principal in Seaside Heights, and because he has woven his duties for Seaside Heights into the rest of his duties. For example, when he visits elementary schools, he includes Seaside Heights’ school in his schedule. He attends board meetings in both districts. He also observed that it’s “easy” to succeed “if everybody cooperates,” and Seaside Heights and Toms River Regional have been cooperating.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Superintendent of Schools School Business Administrator</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Upper Pittsgrove / Alloway (Salem County)  Upper Pittsgrove, PK-8, 440 students, 1 building Alloway, PK-8, 500 students, 1 building
<i>Contact:</i>	Robert Bazzel, Superintendent (856) 935-1622, Alloway (856) 358-8163 x 105, Upper Pittsgrove <a href="mailto:bazzelsup@hotmail.com">bazzelsup@hotmail.com</a>

Dr. Robert Bazzel is the superintendent in both the Upper Pittsgrove and Alloway school districts. He divides his time equally between the two districts – Mondays, Wednesdays and Friday mornings in Upper Pittsgrove; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Friday afternoons in Alloway. He believes it's good for the public and his staff to know his schedule. With cooperation and coordination between the two districts, this shared-superintendent arrangement has been a success. 2007-08 is the fourth year of the arrangement, which came about after S1701, the budget cap law, was enacted, in an effort by both boards to reduce spending.

Dr. Bazzel's employment contract is with both boards of education. The boards also have an agreement between themselves, approved by the Commissioner of Education, to share Dr. Bazzel's services. Each board votes each year to continue the contract. Each has a school superintendent committee and evaluates Dr. Bazzel's performance each year. The original contract had a four-year term, but after two years the boards voided the original contract and agreed to enter into a five-year arrangement.

Upper Pittsgrove has other shared positions. It shares a business administrator and child study team with Lawrence Township (Cumberland County). Alloway shares other services as well. It provides the services of its school business administrator and staff, for a fee, to other small districts in Salem County (Elsinboro, Mannington, and Lower Alloways Creek). Alloway also provides child study team services to other districts for a fee.

Dr. Bazzel identified two keys to his successful shared superintendency: two highly cooperative boards of education who understand that a part-time superintendent cannot attend every event in each district, and excellent principals in each of the two buildings. He also identified one possible disadvantage: serving in two districts at once with minimal administrative staff and no curriculum coordinator in either district, he tends to devote his time to short-term issues rather than curriculum development and long-range planning. Efficiency has led to savings in the two districts, but balancing efficiency with leadership on educational issues is sometimes a challenge.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

*Service / Product*

**Superintendent of Schools  
School Business Administrator  
Director of Special Services  
Director of Technology  
Computer Technicians  
Computer Services**

*Districts*

Haledon /  
Passaic County Manchester Regional High School District  
(Passaic County)

Haledon, PK-8, 1000 students, 1 building  
P.C. Manchester Regional , 9-12, 800 students, 1 building

*Contact*

Dr. Ray Kwak, Superintendent  
(973) 389-2841

Haledon is one of the five constituent districts that sends students to Manchester Regional High School, and Manchester Regional High School is located in Haledon. Considering these close ties, collaboration would seem logical, and in fact it has happened, to the benefit of both districts. Since June 2003 the two districts have shared a superintendent. Manchester Regional pays his salary, in part with payment it receives from the Haledon Board of Education. The districts also share the services of Manchester Regional's business administrator, director of technology, and director of special services, and two computer technicians. The only full-time administrators in Haledon are the principal and vice- principal of Haledon School.

Each of the shared-services arrangements is based on an interlocal services agreement that runs on a year-to-year basis, with one year of notice required for nonrenewal.

The savings achieved by Haledon as a result of these shared-personnel arrangements is approximately \$213,000 per year, based on the amount of salary and benefits the district would otherwise be required to pay for its own administrators. The district's budget has not been reduced; instead, the amount saved on administrative costs has been reallocated to student services. Thus, spending has not been reduced, but the educational program offered to Haledon's students has been improved.

Manchester Regional also provides computer services to eleven other school districts and municipalities, pursuant to interlocal services agreements. It purchases and sells computer hardware and software, and provides internet services and computer support. Billings for these services have totaled \$500,000 per year. The enterprise is managed through an enterprise account.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Administrative, Instructional and Support Staff</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Bergen County Special Services School District / Bergen County Technical Schools  Bergen County Special Services, K-12, 1025 students Bergen County Technical Schools, 9-12, 2089 students
<i>Contact</i>	Robert J. Aloia, Superintendent Bergen County Technical Schools 327 E. Ridgewood Avenue, Paramus NJ 07652 201-343-6000 <a href="http://bcts.bergen.org">http://bcts.bergen.org</a>

The Bergen County Vocational School District and the Bergen County Special Services School District are two separate entities, governed by two separate boards of education with two separate budgets and funding streams. But their administrative, instructional and support staff operate as one district. "Anybody goes anywhere" is their operative phrase. By all accounts, the shared-personnel arrangements has been a rousing success.

Superintendent Robert Aloia credits former Bergen County Executive Pat Shuber and the county Board of Chosen Freeholders with initiating the plan to share personnel approximately 13 years ago. In an effort to increase efficiency and save money, the county executive and freeholders asked Dr. John Greico, then superintendent of the Bergen County Technical Schools (operated by the vocational school district), to serve additionally as superintendent of the Bergen County Special Services School District. He agreed to do so, and gradually increased the degree of collaboration between the districts. Upon Dr. Greico's death in 2004, the two boards of education decided to continue the sharing arrangement.

Each year, each district adopts a resolution authorizing the shared-personnel arrangement and an operating budget reflecting anticipated staffing needs, and each year funds are transferred from one district to the other to reflect previously unanticipated transfers and reassignments. Staff members maintain their employment, and applicable tenure and seniority rights, with one board or the other, but all are subject to transfer or reassignment within either district. Dr Aloia estimates that the extensive collaboration between the districts, and resulting efficiency, has provided savings of approximately one million dollars per year.

As a reflection of the extent of sharing and overlap in district administration, the two districts have one joint website, <http://bcts.bergen.org>.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

### *Service /Product*

### **School Business Administrator**

### *Districts*

Pittsgrove / Elmer / Elsinboro / Salem County Special Services (Salem County)  
Washington Township (Burlington County)  
Magnolia / Merchantville (Camden County)  
Avalon / Stone Harbor (Cape May County)  
Deerfield (Cumberland County)  
Newfield (Gloucester County)

Avalon – K-8, 76 students, 1 building  
Stone Harbor –K-8, 83 students, 1 building  
Deerfield – PK-8, 395 students, 1 building  
Magnolia – PK-8, 446 students, 1 building  
Elsinboro – K-8, 126 students, 1 building  
Elmer – K-6, 131 students, 1 building  
Merchantville – PK-8, 351 students, 1 building  
Newfield – nonoperating  
Pittsgrove – K-12, 2000 students, 4 buildings  
Salem County Special Services – 9-12, 82 students, 1 building  
Washington Township – K-8, 60 students, 1building

### *Contact*

Henry Bermann  
Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance  
Pittsgrove Township Board of Education  
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[hbermann@yahoo.com](mailto:hbermann@yahoo.com)  
(856) 358-7091 X 4018 or (856) 358-3094

Henry Bermann is South Jersey's guru of shared business services. He has spent 40 years in the Pittsgrove Township school district, 25 as board secretary/school business administrator. He also serves as board secretary/school business administrator for the Salem County Special Services School District, and provides business services for nine other districts in six counties. Over the years, he has served up to 14 districts at a time, and for about nine years he also acted as business administrator for two Camden charter schools (he still consults for those schools). He says that with telephone, fax, email and Internet, it's more feasible than ever to provide business services remotely.

Each of the districts that Mr. Bermann serves has an interlocal agreement with his employer, the Pittsgrove Township Board of Education. Each agreement provides for services to be performed by the school business administrator "or his or her designee." In most cases, the contracted services include all those required of a school business administrator under Title 18A, and sometimes also include services as board secretary. Mr. Bermann and his staff have provided more limited "clerk of the works" services for specific projects, which has been "a very successful shared service." Each agreement also provides that the county superintendent will resolve any disputes between the parties.

Under Mr. Bermann's direction, the staff of the Pittsgrove Township school district business office has included up to three assistant school business administrators; at the time of this writing there was one assistant who is a CPA and former business administrator in another district. The staff also includes four clerks (three full-time, one part-time), and three "business officials" who are working toward their certification. Pittsgrove Township has become "a training ground for BAs," according to Mr. Bermann: Four of his former employees now serve as school business administrators in other South Jersey districts.

## ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

### ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Paper</b>
<i>Districts</i>	80-90 New Jersey school districts
<i>Contact</i>	Henry Bermann Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Pittsgrove Township Board of Education 1076 Almond Rd. Pittsgrove, NJ 08318 <a href="mailto:bermannh@pittsgrove.k12.nj.us">bermannh@pittsgrove.k12.nj.us</a> <a href="mailto:hbermann@yahoo.com">hbermann@yahoo.com</a> (856) 358-7091 x 4018 or (856) 358-3094 x 4018

For some 15 years, Pittsgrove Township has been the lead educational agency for a joint purchasing arrangement involving the purchase of photocopy paper, materials and school supplies. Between 80 and 90 school districts, mostly in southern New Jersey, currently participate in the cooperative arrangement, which was established under the joint purchasing provision of the Public School Contracts Law, N.J.S.A. 18A:18A-11. The Pittsgrove Township Board of Education contracts individually with each participating board of education.

Pittsgrove Township purchases paper and materials; prepares quotes, specifications and bid documents, and supervises the reception of bids and quotes, which are in the name of Pittsgrove Township. Pittsgrove Township has the right to accept or reject bids and quotes as to items where it is the sole purchaser or the joint purchaser with other school districts, and other joint purchasers have the right to accept or reject any item where they are the sole purchaser of the item. The members of the joint purchasing group pay Pittsgrove Township directly for the items that they purchase, and Pittsgrove Township pays the vendor.

Vendors in this joint purchasing arrangement must guarantee prices at least 10% less than the "state contract" price. Under this arrangement, the vendor ships direct to the joint purchasers. Warehousing is available through Gray's; the cost is passed along to those districts, usually smaller districts, who use it. Most orders are concentrated from April through September. Mr. Bermann's office has a clerk who handles the day-to-day transactions for the joint purchasing arrangement.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## ***New Jersey***

*Service /Product*

**Custodial Services**

*Districts*

Pittsgrove Twp. / Elmer / Elsinboro (Salem County)  
Deerfield (Cumberland County)  
South Harrison (Gloucester County)  
Merchantville / Camden Academy CS / Camden's Promise CS (Camden County)

Pittsgrove – K-12, 2000 students, 4 buildings  
Deerfield – PK-8, 395 students, 1 building  
Elmer – K-6, 131 students, 1 building  
Elsinboro – K-8, 126 students, 1 building  
South Harrison – K-6, 312 students, 1 building  
Merchantville – PK-8, 351 students, 1 building  
Camden Academy Charter High School – 9-12, 406 students, 1 building  
Camden's Promise Charter School – 5-8, 391students, 1building

*Contact*

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(856) 358-7091 X 4018 or (856) 358-3094

Henry Bermann, School Business Administrator for Pittsgrove Township as well as ten other districts, has spearheaded the formation of this custodial consortium for six school districts and two charter schools. The consortium was formed in order for the participating boards and schools to have enough combined square footage to be able to attract a reputable private custodial contractor. It is now in the third year of a four-year contract with GCA, a private custodial services company. The contract was bid jointly by all the participating boards and charter schools.

The consortium has reduced personnel costs for all the participating districts and schools, since custodians employed by the private vendor generally receive lower compensation than those employed directly by boards of education (they also receive none of the other benefits typically provided under districts' collective bargaining agreements, or tenure). The consortium has not completely replaced all custodians in the participating districts and schools, however: Pittsgrove Township, for example, employs two of its 14 custodians through the GCA contract. The district is devoting the amount saved through the custodial services consortium to finance a freshman athletics program.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **New Jersey**

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>Technology, Custodial and Business Services</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Sterling Regional High School District (Camden County)
<i>Contact</i>	Joseph Giambri Shared Services Business Administrator Sterling Regional High School District 501 S. Warwick Road, Somerdale, NJ 08083 (856) 784-3545 <a href="mailto:igjambri@sterling.k12.nj.us">igjambri@sterling.k12.nj.us</a>  South Jersey Technology Partnership at Sterling High School (856) 566-4183 <a href="http://www.sjtp.net">www.sjtp.net</a>

Sterling Regional High School District has found many ways to save through shared services:

- *Technology* -- The South Jersey Technology Partnership is an informal arrangement formed in 2005, an outgrowth of Sterling Regional High School's technology center. Staffed by approximately 12 full-time and 14 part-time district employees, the Partnership provides a variety of computer technology services to 60 to 70 smaller districts and charter schools, seven municipalities, a housing authority and several nonprofit organizations (it is actively seeking additional clients). The Partnership charges 20 to 50 percent less than the market rate for labor and 20 to 60 percent less than the market rate for materials. All of its costs are paid from program fees rather than district funds. The partnership's administrator, Joseph Giambri, estimates that it has saved its clients approximately \$800,000 on billings totaling \$6 million in the short time since its inception. The district is using program fees to underwrite the costs of a new expanded technology center.
- *Custodial and Maintenance Services* -- The district provides a variety of auxiliary custodial and maintenance services for other entities on an as-needed basis. It has an ongoing relationship to provide electrical and HVAC services for Salem County Vocational School; it has provided electricians for the Somerdale, Magnolia Borough, and Laurel Spring districts; and it has provided roofing services for North Plainfield in Union County.
- *Business Services* -- Sterling also has partnered with the Hi-Nella Board of Education, a non-operating district, to provide business services, resulting in substantial savings and improved services for Hi-Nella. Previously, Hi-Nella rented space for \$500 per month and its part-time business staff was available only for limited hours each week. Now, a Sterling assistant business administrator acts as a part-time business administrator for Hi-Nella, including attending all board meetings. Hi-Nella pays the business administrator's salary and Sterling Regional pays the benefit costs. Hi-Nella pays no rent, and the Sterling Regional business office staff is available five days a week.
- *Gas Purchasing* -- Sterling shares natural gas purchasing with the Stratford Board of Education.
- *Motor Vehicle Fuel Purchasing* -- It coordinates joint purchasing of motor vehicle fuel with the Somerdale and Stratford police departments.
- *Substance Abuse Coordinator* -- Sterling's substance abuse coordinator provides services to five elementary districts.
- *Athletic Facilities* -- Middle school students from other districts use Sterling's athletic facilities.
- *Child study team* -- The district shares child study team services with other districts.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Food Services Director</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Caldwell-West Caldwell / Verona (Essex County)  Caldwell West Caldwell, K-12, 2638 students, 7 buildings Verona, K-12, 2047 students, 6 buildings
<i>Contact</i>	Ronald Skopak, School Business Administrator Harrison Building 104 Grey St., Caldwell, NJ 07006 (973) 228-3360 <a href="mailto:rskopak@cwcboc.org">rskopak@cwcboc.org</a>  Cheryl Nardino, School Business Administrator Verona Board of Education 788 Bloomfield Avenue, Verona, NJ 07044 (973) 239-3968

For over ten years, the Caldwell-West Caldwell and Verona school districts have been sharing the position of Food Services Director. Every five years the two districts issue jointly a request for proposals for the position. The RFP states that the boards will pass a joint resolution authorizing the Food Services position, and that they will split the costs of the director. The contract has been awarded to a private vendor, Aramark, whose employee serves as the districts' food services director. Each of the two districts contracts with Aramark for one year at a time, with four possible annual renewals. The contract covers all administrative costs for food services, including the director's compensation.

Sharing the Food Services Director position has reduced personnel costs in each district. According to Ronald Skopak, School Business Administrator in the Caldwell-West Caldwell school district, food services are a significant budget item, and the cost of the director is a substantial portion of the food services budget. The shared-services arrangement has allowed each of them to cut this expense about in half (the Caldwell-West Caldwell Board of Education pays 60% of the cost, Verona 40%).

Mr. Skopak also observes that the districts' proximity to each other has contributed to the arrangement's success. The districts are "right down Bloomfield Avenue" from each other. The director has an office in both districts, and when necessary can be at the other district within ten minutes.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **New Jersey**

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>Telecommunications Computer Network</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Montclair Board of Education / Montclair Township / Montclair Public Library
<i>Contact</i>	James Patterson Personnel Administrator Montclair Board of Education 22 Valley Road, Montclair NJ 07042 973-509-4000 <a href="mailto:jpatterson@montclair.k12.nj.us">jpatterson@montclair.k12.nj.us</a>

In 2004, the Montclair Board of Education, Montclair Township government, and Montclair Public Library all made major upgrades in their telecommunications and computer systems, and they did it all together. The three entities, which generally operate independently of each other, simultaneously replaced their telecommunications and computer systems with a new fiber optic network serving them all. A committee consisting of representatives of each entity decided on a system design that would work best for all three, and the three entities shared the costs of construction and installation. The result was state-of-the-art technology for Montclair's municipal government offices, police and fire departments, public library and public schools, and substantial savings for all of them.

The new network includes fiber optic lines extending throughout the township and to every school and municipal facility within its borders, as well as associated servers, hubs and switches, and telephone and computer equipment and software. The combined system has one "backbone," the fiber optic line, but is designed to allow the school district, municipality and library to operate their systems independently of each other, so that outside callers and users are unaware that the systems are combined.

For the board of education, the new system meant replacing its former T1 telephone lines with the fiber optic line and replacing its former 400 individual phone units with a digitized internet protocol communications system, "call manager," a new voice mail system and internet access for all users. The district administration estimates that the telecommunications upgrade has resulted in savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars per year.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>Professional Development (Reading Recovery Training)</b>
<i>Districts</i>	Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District (Somerset County) / Centers in nine other districts
<i>Contact</i>	Susan Fleisher - Teacher Leader  Bridgewater-Raritan Regional School District Wade Administration Building 836 Newmans Lane P.O. Box 6030 Bridgewater, NJ 08807 (908) 685-2777, x 267 <a href="mailto:sfleisher@brrsd.k12.nj.us">sfleisher@brrsd.k12.nj.us</a>

The Reading Recovery program is a short-term early literacy intervention program for low-achieving first graders. Students receive one-on-one tutoring in reading and writing for 12 to 20 weeks, and as a result usually are brought from low-achieving to average reading performance. There are ten Reading Recovery training sites in New Jersey, each based in a school district that provides the program for its students: Atlantic City, Bridgeton, Bridgewater-Raritan, Elizabeth, Evesham Township, Haddonfield, Jersey City, Lawrence Township, and Newark. Each of the sites provides initial and ongoing professional development and training for Reading Recovery teachers in its own and other districts.

Teachers in the Bridgewater-Raritan school district tutor four students, 40 minutes each day, with Reading Recovery. The district also provides Reading Recovery training for 24 other districts in eight counties. Providing the training jointly not only cuts costs substantially for all involved, but provides more effective interaction among all participants.

Additional information is available from the New Jersey Reading Recovery Network, [www.njreadingrecovery.org](http://www.njreadingrecovery.org), and the Reading Recovery Council of North America, [www.readingrecovery.org](http://www.readingrecovery.org).

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***New Jersey***

<i>Service /Product</i>	<b>Distance Learning</b>
<i>District</i>	Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission
<i>Contact</i>	Tim Nogueira, Superintendent Monmouth-Ocean Educational Services Commission 100 Tornillo Way, Tinton Falls, NJ 07712 (732) 389-5555 x1000 <a href="http://www.njvs.org">www.njvs.org</a>

The New Jersey Virtual School is a statewide program of online coursework for middle and high school students. The program is designed for students who want to earn additional credit from their school, need to repeat a failed course, need home instruction, want more scheduling flexibility, want courses not offered in their school district, need to make up coursework due to illness or absence, or want to attend online summer school. Credit for each course offered by the Virtual School is awarded by the participating student's local school.

The Virtual School advertises that its courses "can be taken anytime, anyplace" with access to an appropriately configured computer and to the Internet. Approval to take a course for credit must be obtained from a student's principal or guidance counselor. Available courses include English (English I, II, III and IV); Social Studies (World History, U.S. History I and II), Mathematics (Algebra I and II, Geometry, Integrated Math, Mathematics 3); Science (Biology, Chemistry, Marine Science, Physics); and Foreign Languages (Spanish and Latin). Courses are also offered in Advanced Placement (AP Macroeconomics and Microeconomics, AP Biology, AP Computer Science); Study Skills (SAT prep); G.E.D.; and Life Management Skills.

The summer school program is offered during July and August. The program provides one-on-one instruction, and allows independent study with a NJ-certified teacher. The same array of curriculum outlined above is available. Tuition and fees for remediation courses are \$350; for comprehensive courses, \$750, and for AP courses, \$800.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **Shared-Services Arrangements – Other States**

### **Massachusetts**

*Service / Product:*

**Special Educational Programs  
Cooperative Purchasing  
Professional Development  
Transportation  
Alternative school**

*District*

10 Massachusetts School Districts:  
Andover, Boxford, Haverhill, Lawrence  
Lowell, Methuen, Middleton, North Andover, Topsfield  
Greater Lawrence Technical School

*Contact:*

Robert J. McArdle, Executive Director  
**Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative**  
978-685-3000 X120  
[rmcardle@glec.org](mailto:rmcardle@glec.org)  
[www.glec.org](http://www.glec.org)

Ten school districts near Lawrence, Massachusetts joined together in 1974 to form the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative (GLEC) to provide educational services to member districts and throughout northeastern Massachusetts. GLEC is a public entity under the jurisdiction of its ten member school committees, whose superintendents of schools comprise its governing board. It offers the following programs:

- Special Education – Educational, vocational and therapeutic programs for mentally, emotionally and physically challenged children in the least restrictive environment, and provides special needs transportation services to students of member districts.
- Professional Development -- In-service training and other professional development activities to teachers and administrators of member districts
- Cooperative Purchasing -- Cooperative purchasing of natural gas, fuel oil, paper, pest control, electricity, and insurance
- Enrichment Programs – GLEC coordinates intercommunity enrichment programs in the arts, recreation and other areas of education which address the social objective of bringing together children from diverse communities
- Alternative School – GLEC operates the Collaborative Alternative School for special needs middle and high school students that delivers academic and therapeutic resources, such as counseling, career exploration and a culinary arts program to at-risk students.
- Special Needs Camp – Camp Steppingstone, a six-week educational day program for students between the ages of 3 and 22 who have moderate to intensive developmental delays. Staffing includes certified special education teachers, counselors, counselors in training (CIT), water safety instructors, three full-time registered nurses, a full-time camp director and full-time specialists. These specialists include occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy and vision therapy.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***Texas***

### *Service / Product*

**Business Services  
Employee Benefits  
Supplies  
Teacher Placement Service  
Legal Services  
Teacher Productivity Center  
Textbook Adoption Support**

### *School District*

59 Texas School Districts

### *Contact*

Kyle Wargo, Executive Director  
Region 17 Education Service Center  
1111 West Loop 289, Lubbock, Texas 79416  
806-281-5852  
<http://www.esc17.net>

Region 17 Education Service Center is one of 20 regional service organizations created by the Texas Legislature and State Board of Education to provide services to support school administration and instruction. District participation is voluntary. Region 17 serves 59 West Texas school districts, encompassing about 19,000 square miles, in three areas: increasing student performance, implementing state education initiatives, and operating more efficiently and economically. In the third area, it offers the following services:

- Business Services (Budget, Accounting, Payroll) – With RSCCC software enabling secure access to district financial data, Region 17 performs services such as preparing and monitoring budgets, maintaining journals and ledgers, processing payroll, and preparing reconciliations and other reports.
- West Texas Public Schools Employee Benefits Cooperative – Twenty-seven member districts participate in this insurance pool, which provides employee benefit plans for life, dental, vision and disability insurance, cancer/accident insurance, and flexible spending accounts.
- Lone Star Purchasing Cooperative – Region 17's purchasing cooperative obtains substantial savings on paper products, office products, teaching supplies and computer supplies through volume purchasing. Region 17 provides the organizational structure and staff time for the program and implements activities related to the bidding and vendor selection process.
- Educator Placement Service – This service assists member districts in staffing teaching and professional service positions by providing a pool of qualified applicants. Applicants complete an on-line application form, and information provided on the form is provided to participating school districts and remains in an active file through August of each year.
- Legal Services -- Region 17 Administrative Technology Contract participants may obtain telephone advice on school law matters by calling a toll-free number to a Lubbock law firm contracted by the Education Service Center. They also may participate in legal training seminars.
- Teacher Productivity Center (Creative Corner) – Region 17's production center provides resources, supplies, and equipment for creating instructional materials for the classroom. The center's equipment includes laminating machines, computer workstations and printers, color scanner, poster maker, and die cut lettering and shape systems. There is a moderate cost for materials used.
- Textbook Adoption Support – Region 17 maintains a library of instructional materials and textbooks currently under consideration for adoption by the Texas State Board of Education.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***11 Midwestern States***

<i>Service / Product:</i>	<b>Computer Software Computer Hardware Telecommunications Risk Management</b>
<i>School District</i>	School districts and other institutions in 11 midwestern states
<i>Contact:</i>	Midwestern Higher Education Commission 1300 South Second St., Suite 130 Minneapolis, MN 55454-1079 612-626-8288 <a href="http://www.mhec.org">http://www.mhec.org</a> <a href="mailto:mhecnews@tc.umn.edu">mhecnews@tc.umn.edu</a>

The Midwestern Higher Education Commission (MHEC) is an interstate compact agency charged with promoting interstate cooperation and resource sharing in higher education. Its member states are Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio and Wisconsin. MHEC has four cost-sharing initiatives: computing software, computing hardware, telecommunications and risk management. Public K-12 school districts and private schools are eligible to participate in joint purchasing under three of these programs:

- Computing software – The MHEC computing Software Purchasing Program provides discounts on a broad range of computer software. MHEC has entered into agreements with Novell, Oracle and Trend Micro to provide special pricing and terms to all colleges and universities, as well as other entities including K-12 school districts, in its member states. The agreements provide for special pricing and expedited contracting
- Computing hardware – The MHEC computing Hardware Purchasing Program provides discounts on a broad range of computing products tailored to the needs of college and university faculty, staff and students. The program provides discount prices to all colleges and universities served by MHEC, as well as discounts on desktop and laptop computers preconfigured for college and university use, and discounts to faculty, staff and students purchasing computers for personal use and on user training. Through an agreement with Xerox, it offers significant discounts on the purchase price of Xerox printers and supplies (excluding paper).
- Telecommunications – In partnership with the American TelEdCommunications Alliance, known as the ATAlliance, provides leadership and low-cost access to technology products and services, including internet network services and products, video services and products, e-learning course management systems, and additional programs (cable and fiber, power conditioning, etc.), through agreements that are especially suited to the needs of education, government and nonprofits. Participants gain access to top-end technologies at considerable savings, and can avoid their own RFP processes.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **Connecticut**

*Service / Product*

### **Special Education**

*School Districts*

Northwestern Regional School District No 7, Winsted CT  
(1164 students)  
Barkhamstead District, Barkhamsted CT (361 students)  
Colebrook Consolidated School, Colebrook CT (121 students)  
Hartland Elementary School, East Hartland CT (225 students)  
Botelle Elementary School, Norfolk CT (176 students)  
Winchester Public Schools, Winsted CT (1064 students)

*Contact:*

*Paula Gladu-Morabito, Director  
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94 Battistoni Drive, Winsted, CT 06098  
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<http://sharedservices.webexone.com/login.asp?loc=&link=>*

Shared Services is a nonprofit organization that provides special education programs, related services and special education administration to six small school districts in northwestern Connecticut. The organization provides academic support services as well as a language, speech and hearing clinician, occupational therapist, school psychologist and social worker. It also coordinates special education personnel shared by the participating districts, and provides transportation for students to and from special education programs.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***Minnesota***

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Academic Pairing</b>
<i>School District[s]</i>	24 Minnesota School Districts
<i>Contact</i>	John Bulger Minnesota Department of Education (651)582-8781

As a result of several state statutes adopted since 1978, school districts in Minnesota are permitted to maintain as few as three grades within their district boundaries and continue to be considered independent school districts. (Prior to 1978, school districts had to maintain elementary and secondary schools in grades kindergarten through 12 within their boundaries in order to be independent districts.)

Academic pairing agreements are now the primary means by which Minnesota school districts operate fewer grades but retain their status as independent districts. Academic pairing agreements are formal, written agreements between two or more school districts through which entire grade levels of students and staff are shared. A school district may enter into one or more academic pairing agreements with one or more school districts. There are two academic pairing agreements permitted under statute, agreements for secondary education and agreements for interdistrict cooperation. The former may be made between two or more school districts to share secondary students, and the latter between two or more districts to share elementary and secondary students. Districts proposing to enter into interdistrict cooperation agreements must consult with the Division of Program Finance and submit a copy of their final agreement to state Department of Education.

Academic pairing agreements of both types are usually made for at least two years, subject to renewal or cancellation with due notice. Under the terms of the authorizing statutes, each district participating in an academic pairing agreement must continue to meet the reporting and accounting requirements applicable to independent school districts. A district that sends students to another pursuant to an agreement for secondary education must have less than 375 students enrolled in grades 7-12; a school district that sends elementary students to another in accordance with an agreement for interdistrict cooperation, or that receives students under either type of agreement, may have any size enrollment. Per-pupil formula aid goes to the school district of a student's residence, and tuition at a rate agreed upon by the participating districts is paid to the receiving district by the resident district.

No public vote on a proposed academic pairing agreement is required or authorized, but a public informational meeting must be held in each district, and a review and comment from the commissioner of education must be procured and published prior to the school board voting to formally enter into the agreement.

The number of academic pairing agreements in Minnesota peaked in 1991-92, with 56 agreements involving 138 school districts. The number declined dramatically thereafter, due to an increase in district consolidations and combinations involving paired school districts, which resulted from legislation providing financial incentives for such arrangements. In 2003-04 there were ten academic pairing agreements in the state, involving 24 school districts.

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **California**

<i>Service / Product</i>	<b>Joint Public / High School Library</b>
<i>School District</i>	Sweetwater Union High School District / City of Chula Vista
<i>Contact</i>	Jesus Gandara, Superintendent of Schools 619-691-5555 <a href="http://www.suhsd.k12.ca.us">www.suhsd.k12.ca.us</a>

To provide better library services with limited resources, the municipality of Chula Vista, California partnered with the Sweetwater Union High School District to open a “joint use library,” the Eastlake Branch of the Chula Vista Public Library, in 1993. Located within Eastlake High School, which was built in 1992, the joint use library combines municipal and school district resources provide high school students and Chula Vista residents access to a more extensive collection than any that could be provided without this shared-service arrangement. The City of Chula Vista and the Sweetwater Union High School District have a joint-use agreement to share facility, staffing and inventory costs. Students gain by having immediate access to a more comprehensive collection of books, software and media materials than school libraries can typically provide; the city gains by expanding library services and literacy activities for residents in a high-growth area of Chula Vista without having to undertake facility construction; and Eastlake High School benefits from greater community involvement and support.

The Eastlake Branch of the Chula Vista Public Library is open to students from 6:45 a.m. 3:30 p.m. on school days, and to the public from 3:30 to 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and on Saturday. Students using the library are subject to all Chula Vista Public Library policies, including those pertaining to loans, fines and fees, as well as to all policies of Eastlake High School and its school library.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***California***

*Service / Product*

**Library Services**

*District*

University of California campuses

*Contact*

[www.slp.ucop.edu](http://www.slp.ucop.edu)

Beginning in 1974, the development of systemwide library strategic plans with a goal of "One University, One Library" has led to collaborative efforts to further the sharing of services by campus libraries in the University of California system, and those efforts continue to this day. University-wide library shared services now include:

- The California Digital Library -- Since 1997, the state of California has provided funding to support a shared digital library, the California Digital Library, serving all campuses of the state university system. In addition, each university campus contributes to support and maintenance of the shared collection. A university-wide advisory committee is composed of faculty, administrators and librarians from all university campuses. The university estimates that if individual campus libraries were to obtain licenses and collect user statistics for the 8,000 titles and 250 databases in the system-wide digital library, the university library system would spend an additional \$34 million per year.
- Melvyl Catalog – The California Digital Library supports and maintains the Melvyl Catalog, including data processing, the user interface, and backup and recovery, while the campuses create and supply bibliographic records. Requests for items are available through Melvyl Catalog software, supported by extensive interlibrary loan processes within UC.
- UC-eLinks – This service allows users to move seamlessly from a citation (discovered in an online reference database or online journal) to the underlying full content of the article, or make a request for the print version of the item. The CDL maintains the software while the campus libraries configure the service for local implementation by including locally held online materials.
- SearchLight – SearchLight allows simultaneous searches across multiple journal databases, book catalogs, and other information sources available through the CDL and the UC campuses. It assists newcomers to a disciplinary field with locating and using the richest databases and information resources. SearchLight also provides views of the data that are based on the materials available to a particular campus.
- Acquiring shared content – The CDL helps the UC libraries select, negotiate, and license shared content. Drawing on their shared expertise and negotiating strength, the libraries actively work to improve or tailor user interfaces and services. Campuses work individually and in small groups to purchase electronic resources that are not acquired as part of the shared collection.
- Counting California – Counting California is an initiative committed to enhancing California citizens' access to the growing range of social science and economic data produced by government agencies. Counting California's single interface enables public access to data compiled by federal, state, and local agencies. It also allows users to interactively collate and integrate data by topic, geography, title, and provider.
- Online Archive of California (OAC) – UC campuses and California-based museums and libraries have created online inventories of cultural heritage materials and selective digital versions of them for inclusion in the OAC. The CDL supports and maintains the data processing, user interface, and backup and recovery of the publicly accessible OAC server

# **SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES**

## **Michigan**

*Service / Product:*

**Recreation**

*School District*

Northville Public Schools  
Northville Township  
City of Northville

*Contact*

Traci Sincock  
Director, Northville Parks and Recreation  
700 W. Baseline Rd.  
Northville, MI 48167  
248-449-9941  
[tsincock@ci.northville.mi.us](mailto:tsincock@ci.northville.mi.us)  
[www.northvilleparksandrec.org](http://www.northvilleparksandrec.org)

Northville Public Schools, the Charter Township of Northville and the City of Northville, Michigan – a school district and two municipalities – have a long history of coordinated efforts in recreation. The Northville Parks and Recreation Department was established in 1980, with the signing of a joint services contract between the municipalities, creating a joint recreation authority. Today, Northville Parks & Recreation is a shared service of the City of Northville and the Charter Township of Northville, overseen by an advisory commission made up of residents of the city and township with a representative of the Northville Board of Education.

With eight full-time employees, Northville Parks and Recreation oversees and coordinates a substantial recreation program, including after-school and summer programs, a youth services organization and a senior citizens program. It operates a community recreation center with a swimming pool, two full-size gymnasiums, fitness center and multi-purpose meeting rooms and classrooms. It also operates a senior community center, and five community park facilities. Some of its programs are run in school facilities. Many schools in the district house facilities used by community youth sports organizations and residents as well as school athletic teams.

Northville Township and the City of Northville have a formula for their respective contributions to fund the recreation activities. The school district provides facility assistance. The school facilities are incorporated into the park and recreation master plan. And the recreation department is currently located in an office in the district's middle school.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***Pennsylvania***

*Service / Product:*

**Food Service Director**

*District:*

Cornwall-Lebanon / Northern Lebanon, Pennsylvania

*Contact:*

Jack Shirk, Supervisor of Food and Nutrition Services  
Cornwall-Lebanon Educational Center  
717-272-2033

After the first year of operation with one Supervisor of Food and Nutrition Services for both their districts, the Cornwall-Lebanon and Northern Lebanon School Districts in Pennsylvania had a combined profit of \$100,000 in their food services operations, compared with a combined loss of \$20,000 the previous year. Their combined volume increased their purchasing power, cutting their costs approximately in half.

But that was only part of the story. The districts' collaborative efforts also have resulted in improved service for their customers, district students. Daily menus can be planned based on the purchases for both districts. Collaboration on both Type A menus and a la carte items has helped to increase sales and improve quality of food items that are offered to students in both districts.

Additionally, by combining the two districts, a common day or days can be scheduled for training both districts, which allows for discussion and sharing of information between the two districts. Because school cafeterias and kitchens are subject to many safety and health issues, the districts benefit from each other's ideas and experience, allowing the supervisor to initiate common safety and health practices in all of the districts' kitchens.

The districts' collaborative success also has created a more stable working environment for all the food service employees, resulting in a lower employee turnover rate. At the same time, the districts have been able to enlarge their substitute food service employee pool. Because the supervisor is performing the interview process for both districts, individuals may apply and be considered for employment at both districts simultaneously.

The districts attribute their success to the hiring an individual with in-depth knowledge of nutrition, food preparation, marketing, fiscal management and interpersonal skills. Their Supervisor of Food and Nutrition Services has been able not only to run both districts' food services operations efficiently but to do so in a manner that maximizes collaboration, joint purchasing and efficiency.

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***State Government Resources for Shared Services***

### **New Jersey Department of Community Affairs**

Division of Local Government Services

<http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs>

### **SHARE/COUNT/REAP programs**

[www.state.nj.us/redi/index.html](http://www.state.nj.us/redi/index.html)

SHARE—offers grants to help districts study, develop, and implement new shared services

[www.state.nj.us/share](http://www.state.nj.us/share)

COUNT—a regional coordination grant that targets county government and nonprofits to assist local units in exploring new shared services (part of SHARE)

REAP—aid awarded to a school district is applied as a property tax credit against each parcel of residential property in the school district

Contacts: Susan Jacobicci, Director  
(609) 292-7842

Mark Pfeiffer, Deputy Director  
(609) 292-6113 or 6110  
[mark.pfeiffer@dca.state.nj.us](mailto:mark.pfeiffer@dca.state.nj.us)

John Rasimowicz, Manager of Shared Services  
(609) 984-7764  
[john.rasimowicz@dca.state.nj.us](mailto:john.rasimowicz@dca.state.nj.us)

### **New Jersey Department of Education**

<http://www.state.nj.us/education/>

Used textbook sharing

<http://www.education.state.nj.us/textbook>

Contact: Pam Castellanos, Executive Assistant, Division of Field Services  
(609) 984-5717

[pam.castellanos@doe.state.nj.us](mailto:pam.castellanos@doe.state.nj.us)

### **New Jersey Department of State**

Division of Archives and Records Management

PARIS (Public Archives and Records Infrastructure Support) grants available to fund strategic advancements to build and improve the infrastructure of public records administration for county and municipal government. Grants available to school districts partnered with eligible entities.

[www.njarchives.org/links/paris](http://www.njarchives.org/links/paris)

Contacts: Jennifer Petrino, PARIS program administrator  
(609) 530-5467

[paris.grants@sos.state.nj.us](mailto:paris.grants@sos.state.nj.us)

Karen Perry, Education Records Analyst  
(609) 530-7490

[karen.perry@sos.state.nj.us](mailto:karen.perry@sos.state.nj.us)

***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS:  
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**New Jersey Commission on Government Efficiency & Reform (GEAR Commission)**  
[https://wwwnet1.state.nj.us/GOV/APPT/GOV\\_APPT\\_WEB/Default.aspx](https://wwwnet1.state.nj.us/GOV/APPT/GOV_APPT_WEB/Default.aspx)

**Local Unit Reorganization & Consolidation Commission**  
[https://wwwnet1.state.nj.us/GOV/APPT/GOV\\_APPT\\_WEB/Default.aspx](https://wwwnet1.state.nj.us/GOV/APPT/GOV_APPT_WEB/Default.aspx)

***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS:  
CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

***County Coordinators of Shared Services***

**Atlantic County**

James McGreary  
Thomas Foley  
Atlantic County Shared Service Coordinators  
"D" Building, Dolphin Avenue, Northfield, NJ 08225  
(McGreary) 609-965-1722  
(Foley) 609-645-5851  
[Foley\\_tom@aclink.org](mailto:Foley_tom@aclink.org)

**Bergen County**

John Dean DeRienzo  
Mayor, Borough of Haworth  
Acting Shared Services Coordinator  
201-384-4785  
[derienzo@haworthnj.org](mailto:derienzo@haworthnj.org)

**Burlington County**

Gary LaVenía  
Director of Improvement Authority Operations  
1300 Route 73 North, PO Box 6, Palmyra, NJ 08065  
856-829-1900  
[glavenia@bcbridges.org](mailto:glavenia@bcbridges.org)

**Camden County**

Louis DiAngelo  
Director, Office of Shared Services  
2311 Egg Harbor Road, Lindenwold, NJ 08021  
856-566-3100  
[ldiangelo@camdencounty.com](mailto:ldiangelo@camdencounty.com)

**Cape May County**

Bradley Rosenthal  
Cape May County Shared Services Coordinator  
4 Moore Road, DN 132, Cape May Court House NJ 08210  
609-463-5199  
[rosenthalb@co.cape-may.nj.us](mailto:rosenthalb@co.cape-may.nj.us)

**Gloucester County**

Michele Pandolfo  
Special Projects Manager, Human Resources Department  
County of Gloucester  
PO Box 337, Woodbury NJ 08096  
856-853-3261  
[mpandolfo@co.gloucester.nj.us](mailto:mpandolfo@co.gloucester.nj.us)

**Hudson County**

Laurie Cotter  
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Hudson County Administration Building Annex  
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[lcotter@hudsoncountynj.org](mailto:lcotter@hudsoncountynj.org)

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## **Hunterdon County**

Michael Capabianco  
Shared Services Coordinator, Hudson County Chamber of Commerce  
[mcappbianco@hunterdonsharedservices.org](mailto:mcappbianco@hunterdonsharedservices.org)

## **Mercer County**

Nancy Coffee  
Mercer County Administration Building  
640 South Broad Street, Trenton NJ 08650  
609-278-8067  
[ncoffee@mercercounty.org](mailto:ncoffee@mercercounty.org)

## **Middlesex County**

Maria M. Sirimis  
Middlesex County Shared Services Coordinator  
711 Jersey Avenue, New Brunswick NJ 08901  
732-745-4175  
[maria.sirimis@co.middlesex.nj.us](mailto:maria.sirimis@co.middlesex.nj.us)

## **Monmouth County**

William Wood  
Administrative Dept. Dir., Public Svcs. & Reg.  
Monmouth County Hall of Records  
1 East Main Street, Freehold NJ 07728  
732-683-8911  
[wwood@co.monmouth.nj.us](mailto:wwood@co.monmouth.nj.us)

## **Salem County**

Robin B. Weinstein, MTS  
Deputy County Administrator  
Salem County Administration Building  
94 Market Street, Salem NJ 08079  
856-935-7510 X 8202  
[robin.weinstein@salemcountynj.gov](mailto:robin.weinstein@salemcountynj.gov)

## **Somerset County**

Peter Wright  
Shared Services Coordinator, Somerset County Business Partnership  
PO Box 833, Somerville NJ 08876  
908-218-4300  
[pwright@somersetbusinesspartnership.com](mailto:pwright@somersetbusinesspartnership.com)

## **Sussex County**

John Eskilson  
County Administrator  
[JEskilson@sussex.nj.us](mailto:JEskilson@sussex.nj.us)

## **Union County**

Ryan Gardner  
Director of Intergovernmental Relations  
Union County Administration Building  
10 Elizabethtown Plaza, Elizabeth, NJ 07207  
(908) 527-4291  
[rgarner@ucnj.org](mailto:rgarner@ucnj.org)

***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS:  
CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

***Educational Services Commissions***

**Camden County ESC**

6 East Clementon Road, Suite 1B  
Gibbsboro, NJ 08026  
(609) 784-2100

**Essex County ESC**

520 Pompton Avenue, CN 2506  
Cedar Grove, NJ 07009  
(973) 239-1511

**Hunterdon County ESC**

Sandhill Center  
215 Route 31  
Flemington, NJ 08822  
(908) 806-8174

**Middlesex County ESC**

Raritan Valley Academy  
1690 Stelton Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854  
(732) 777-9848 x 2

**Monmouth-Ocean ESC**

PO Box 1264  
Freehold, NJ 07728  
(732) 431-7246

**Morris County ESC**

PO Box 1944  
Morristown, NJ 07963  
(973) 540-8844 x6

**Passaic County ESC**

810 Belmont Avenue  
North Haledon, NJ 07508  
(973) 304-6046

**Somerset County ESC**

PO Box 326  
Manville, NJ 08835  
(908) 707-8558

**Sussex County ESC**

105 North Church Rd.  
Sparta, NJ 07871  
(973) 383-6700 x211

**Union County ESC**

728 Westfield Avenue  
Westfield, NJ 07090  
(908) 233-9317 x. 31

***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS:  
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***Jointure Commissions***

**Bayshore Jointure Commission**

Robert Baroska, Principal  
Aberdeen NJ  
732-441-4115  
[www.bayshorejointure.org](http://www.bayshorejointure.org)

**Morris-Union Jointure Commission**

Kim B. Coleman, Superintendent  
340 Central Avenue  
New Providence NJ 07974  
908-464-7625  
[www.muic.org](http://www.muic.org)

**South Bergen Jointure Commission**

Dawn Fidanza, Superintendent  
500 Route 17 South, Suite 307  
Hasbrouck Heights NJ 07604  
201-393-0475  
[www.southbergenjointure.org](http://www.southbergenjointure.org)

# ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

## ***Other Resources***

### **Interlocal Advisory Center, New Jersey State League of Municipalities**

<http://www.njslom.org/interlocaladvisorycenter.html>

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities offers an on-line Interlocal Advisory Center that contains an extensive collection of information about shared services. The site includes a shared services bulletin board, sample shared services agreements, interlocal legislation, information about interlocal resources, interlocal grants and incentives, county resources and a consultation and advisory service. The site also offers New Jersey success stories and links to handbooks from the Department of Community Affairs and other sources with practical tips on how to implement shared services.

### **The Team Consulting Program**

Interfunctional Management MBA Team Consulting Program

Rutgers-Newark School of Business

<http://business.rutgers.edu/tcp>.

Paul Belliveau, Director

973-353-1126 / (732) 247-2356

[belliveau@business.rutgers.edu](mailto:belliveau@business.rutgers.edu)

The Team Consulting Program (TCP) at Rutgers-Newark is a for-credit project in which business students integrate knowledge gained through coursework into assistance provided to governmental entities, for-profit companies and nonprofit organizations. TCP provides strategic business plans, feasibility studies, benchmarking and other consulting services for a fee. Faculty advisors are compensated through program fees.

TCP provides advice about shared services to the "Northern Middlesex Alliance," a consortium of five school districts in Middlesex County: Highland Park, Piscataway, Dunellen, South Plainfield and Middlesex. The Northern Middlesex Alliance has retained TCP to provide a fresh, nonbiased, nonpolitically-charged analysis of how their operations could be more efficient. For a fee of \$7,500 paid to TCP, nine Rutgers students are analyzing district needs, studying the districts, and providing recommendations for services that the districts can consider sharing.

TCP also provided consulting advice on shared services to the Borough of Highland Park, and made 120 recommendations for sharing services in a 100-page report. The borough and the school district implemented many of those ideas.

### **SharedXpertise, LLC**

[www.sharedxpertise.org](http://www.sharedxpertise.org)

Richard Crespin, Chairman & CEO

Tel. (202) 905-0351 X12

Fax (212) 255-4832

Mobile (917) 605-0742

[richard.crespin@sharedxpertise.org](mailto:richard.crespin@sharedxpertise.org)

SharedXpertise (formerly, Shared Service and Business Process Outsourcing Association) is an umbrella organization comprised of membership "forums" which are "designed to provide peer-to-peer exchanges of insights and information on back office transformation." The forums are organized by business process: human resources, finance and accounting, procurement, and information technology. There is

## ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

also a Public Sector Human Relations Forum. SharedXpertise was formed when three organizations combined in 2005 to address current movements in private business operations and in the public sector: outsourcing, off-shoring and shared services.

Members have access to other members, the online portal, association events (such as a shared services conference, HR and finance transformation, webinars, executive briefings), and a database of best practices, research and training. All members receive a free subscription to the monthly SharedXpertise Bulletin, a newsletter on emerging trends and research. Public sector members receive special membership rates. With an associate membership, the bulletin subscription is free. SharedXpertise offers a program with affinity partners that provides members with discounted subscriptions and attendance at partner events. SharedXpertise is holding a public sector forum meeting in Washington, D.C. on September 10, 2007. It is co-hosting a Shared Services conference in Chicago on October 23-24, 2007.

### **Shared Municipal Service Incentive Programs**

The State of New York established a funding mechanism known as the *Shared Municipal Service Incentive Program* (SMSI). The SMSI program is a \$25 million dollar grant program that assists municipalities with their efforts to consolidate local government services, cut spending and save tax dollars. For example, grants of up to \$1 million are available for municipalities seeking to merge into a single government unit, while awards of up to \$300,000 are available for the development of county-wide shared service programs. During the first round of funding the state received 266 applications (NYSAC 2006).

The Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development established the *Shared Municipal Services Program* (SMSP). This program provides grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$25,000 (50 percent match required) for cooperative municipal agreements, which typically include:

- Shared police records administration.
- Shared technology initiatives.
- Municipal insurance pooling.
- Shared public works operations.
- Consolidated recreation activities.
- Shared code enforcement operations.
- Shared motorized equipment (SMSP 2005).

The Wisconsin Incentives for Service Collaboration (WISC) provides an incentive for collaboration by rewarding collaborative efforts that result in cost savings. Municipalities that submit a collaboration agreement demonstrating cost savings are eligible for a payment equal to 50 percent of the expected savings over 5 years, paid in installments over a 5-year period. In 2004, the Wisconsin legislature budgeted \$45 million in incentive payment for local governments that demonstrate cost savings in the first year of a shared services arrangement.

Texas Governor Rick Perry has issued an executive order mandating that school districts limit non-classroom spending to 35 percent of their total budgets. The order is expected to create strong momentum for more service sharing by Texas school districts. Districts that fail to boost classroom spending to 65 percent of total spending would eventually face sanctions according to the Texas Education Agency. Perry's proposal has encountered strong opposition from some local school officials who argue that the order infringes on local control.

## ***SHARED SERVICES IN SCHOOL DISTRICTS: CATALOGUE OF BEST PRACTICES***

Michigan's 83 counties, 533 cities and villages, 1,242 townships, and 609 school districts are expected to do more to share and consolidate resources. The Governor has proposed a significant change to revenue sharing – the money provided by the state for local government services. The Governor has proposed a 2.5 percent increase in revenue sharing funds, but cities, villages, and townships must demonstrate that they are sharing services as a way to save taxpayer money in order to receive the increased funds. Cities, villages, and townships will need to have signed cooperative agreements in place to qualify for the additional funding. In addition, the Governor has called on local school districts to cut costs by sharing and consolidating services at the county and regional level. The upcoming budget proposal will implement the Governor's call by providing financial incentives for shared services. The Governor has promised next year's budget will include penalties for schools who fail to meet this expectation.