



New York State Archives

**New York State Education Department Bureau of School
District Organization Boards of Cooperative Educational
Services Correspondence and Administrative Files B0473**

New York State Archives
222 Madison Avenue
Albany, NY 12230
archref@nysed.gov
URL: <http://www.archives.nysed.gov/>

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	Included are requests for approval or alteration of shared educational programs and transmittals of applications for shared services and contracts. Requests by district superintendents of schools for establishment of BOCES contain the following information about each school district in the superintendency: town; county; district type; enrollments in grades K-6 and 7-12; number of teachers and assessed and true valuation. Occasional copies of BOCES budgets, memoranda concerning department visits to BOCES, and contracts are also included.
Creator:	New York (State). Education Department. Bureau of School District Organization
Title:	Boards of Cooperative Educational Services correspondence and administrative files
Quantity:	15 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1948-1982
Series:	B0473
Sponsor:	This series' description was enhanced as part of the States' Impact on Federal Education Policy Project (SIFEPP), in June 2010. The New York Community Trust - Wallace Special Projects Fund provided funding for this project.

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Arrangement

Chronological by approximate date of last correspondence, thereunder alphabetical by county, thereunder numerical by supervisory district, and then in reverse chronological order.

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Administrative History

During the 1930's, educators envisioned a comprehensive high school that would educate all children for work and life in a democracy. However, most central schools were not big

enough to offer a full array of academic and vocational courses. In 1944, a Council on Rural Education, funded by farm organizations, recommended a "new type of rural supervisory district," responsible to school districts and responsive to needs of rural people. The result was the intermediate district law of 1948. While the intermediate districts were to be formed, the act provided for temporary boards of cooperative educational services (now called BOCES), which the New York State Education Department (NYSED) hoped would "get people working together across district lines" and provide shared educational services in rural areas. The intermediate districts never came into existence, but the BOCES proved to be popular with rural school districts and the general public, since they provided a wide range of educational services at reasonable cost, while maintaining a significant degree of local control over the programs offered by the BOCES.

Today there are 37 BOCES, incorporating all school districts except for those in the "Big 5" cities (New York, Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse and Yonkers). A BOCES is formed by the Commissioner at the request of the school boards in one or more supervisory districts. The BOCES is headed by the district superintendent; school board representatives collectively elect BOCES members and approve the BOCES budget; and NYSED approves BOCES service contracts. Concern that this structure insulates a BOCES from public scrutiny prompted legislation requiring the Commissioner, starting in 1996, to submit an annual report to the Governor and the Legislature on BOCES finances and pupil performance. In the early years the typical BOCES service consisted of traveling teachers for specialized subjects. After 1967, BOCES were authorized to own and operate their own facilities, and BOCES now offer vocational and special education programs as well as many administrative services for member districts.

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Scope and Content Note

This series consists primarily of correspondence with boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES). Most of the correspondence is routine letters of transmittal accompanying applications for shared service and contracts, but some also relates to the establishment of the BOCES and requests by the BOCES for approval or alteration of specific shared programs. The files also contain requests by district superintendents of schools for establishment of BOCES, a standard form giving the following information about school districts in the superintendency: town and county; school district type; enrollments K-6 and 7-12; number of teachers; and assessed and true valuation, and tax rate on each.

Occasionally the files contain other items, such as memoranda and reports from Department visits to BOCES and approval of programs, contracts for cooperative educational services, copies of BOCES budgets, and visitation forms completed by Department staff after visiting a BOCES. Also included in the series are administrative records relating to reports by the Bureau on individual BOCES, the development of procedures for establishing BOCES, legislation, administration staffing of BOCES, and compilation of directories. Some of the files focus on the

comparative costs and benefits between BOCES and other alternatives, such as vocational education extension boards, as well as the Department's belief that the provision of shared services among small school districts should not be seen as an alternative to school district centralization.

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Related Information

Related Material

B0474Series B0474, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services applications for shared services, contains applications from 1948 to 1968

11000Series 11000, BOCES annual financial and statistical reports, contains annual reports from each BOCES

14209Series 14209, BOCES new service proposals, contains proposals for new services from 1975 to 1978

B0477Series B0477, Bureau of School District Organization subject and administrative files

B0482Series B0482, Assistant Commissioner for District Organization and District Superintendents county district administration and supervision files

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Access Terms

- Supervising
- Education
- New York (State)
- Education

- **University of the State of New York**
- **New York (State). Education Department**