

BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

1. What is B.O.C.E.S.?

The acronym B.O.C.E.S. is short for BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.

2. What is a Board of Cooperative Educational Services?

A Board of Cooperative Educational Services is an intermediate school unit, which functions between the New York State Education Department and the local school district.

3. What is the main purpose of a BOCES?

The main purpose of a BOCES is to provide educational opportunities and support services to children and to component school districts on a regional basis. The shared services are more economical, efficient and equitable than if sponsored by an individual school district or on a statewide scale.

4. What legal statute authorizes the formation of a BOCES?

Sections 1950 and 1951 of the New York State Education Law, first enacted in 1948, authorizes the Commissioner of Education to form Boards of Cooperative Educational Services.

5. How are members of a BOCES Board selected?

Each year between April 16 and 30, on a day set by the President of the BOCES, component boards meet in their local districts to vote on nominees for seats on the BOCES.

6. How many members are on the BOCES Board?

By statute, the Board may have 15 members. The majority of the BOCES have 9 members. BOCES members are now elected for a term of three years.

7. Must a BOCES member be a member of a local board of education?

No. The only legal requirements are that they be an eligible voter in one of the component school districts and not be an employee of a component district or BOCES. Only one resident from a component district may serve at a time on the BOCES.

8. Which districts belong to BOCES?

Across New York State there are only 14 non-component school districts. Once a district joins a BOCES it may not withdraw.

9. Who is the chief executive officer of BOCES?

The District Superintendent of Schools serving the particular supervisory district serves as the Executive Officer.

The BOCES is directed by the Commissioner of Education to meet for the purpose of appointing a District Superintendent whenever a vacancy shall occur. The BOCES appoints the District Superintendent with the approval of the Commissioner of Education.

The District Superintendent occupies a unique position. As District Superintendent he/she is a state employee, but as executive officer of BOCES, he/she is also employed by the BOCES.

10. Does a school district get to choose what services it buys from BOCES?

Yes. A component district notifies BOCES by February 1 of the preliminary requests for services for the succeeding year.

By March 10th BOCES receives approval of these services from the Bureau of School District Organization of the State Education Department.

Between April 1st and 15th of each year the BOCES holds its Annual meeting to present the projected budget for services for the next school year.

By May 1st each district notifies BOCES of the services it will buy in the next year. However, each district is obligated annually to pay its share of administrative, rental and facilities expenses.

11. Does BOCES serve only school districts?

No. BOCES serves the whole community. BOCES serves the continuing educational needs of local business, labor and industries by making its facilities available to them. Collaboration with other government agencies and colleges is encouraged.

BOCES also services the adult community by offering continuing educational courses for everyone. Some courses are tailored to meet the needs of the unemployed or under-employed adult seeking either upgrading or retraining in technical occupations. Other courses are offered for the individual seeking a general education diploma.

12. Why a BOCES – can't separate school districts provided all the educational needs of our young people?

BOCES provides the services because local districts either cannot economically offer the service due to high costs or insufficient numbers of students. In many instances a better program results from a pooling of talent and resources.

13. How does the BOCES charge for services?

The costs of services are allocated according to a plan mutually agreed upon by the BOCES and its component districts. Charges can be based on number of students (tuition), a flat fee, and size of district or special formula. Except for the administrative and rental charges, districts pay only for services that are requested.

14. How does BOCES aid work?

A general example: two districts request BOCES to provide an itinerant art teacher on an equal time basis for 2.5 days in each district. The total service costs are approximately \$40,000 salary, retirement costs and instructional materials. Each district pays to BOCES a sum of \$20,000. The aid received will vary with the aid ratio of the individual school district. For example, District "A" might receive 82% state aid on the expenditure and District "B" 70% state aid on the expenditure for art. Portions of staff salaries above a certain level are not aidable. Some support services may be offered by BOCES but approved without aid.