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A Descriptive Study of
Regional Special Education
Programs in Virginia

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The delivery of special education and related services to identified handicapped learners is often a complex and expensive task. Local education agencies (LEAs) are responsible for providing a free appropriate public education to those learners, but have available to them varied options for service delivery. When there are few handicapped learners of a particular category, such as with the low-incidence handicapped, or when there are limited resources, the LEA may decide to deliver services through a regional special education program (RSEP).

The Virginia Department of Education (SEA) has encouraged LEAs to become involved in RSEPs because of their potential for providing quality programs at reduced costs to the low-incidence handicapped. By 1985-86, there were nine RSEPs formally recognized by the SEA involving 51 LEAs in the state. To date, no comprehensive study has been conducted regarding the status of RSEPs in Virginia. Such studies had been used in other states to guide policy formation and program planning. The lack of available descriptive data about RSEPs has made planning increasingly difficult for participants of RSEPs and for SEA officers.

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The author collected data along the dimensions of the four central characteristics of RSEP programs i.e., legal framework, organization, services, and financial factors, as were identified by Stephens (1979a). The data collection methods were also based on Stephens' RSEP studies in other states. The present author's methods included on-site visitations, investigations of SEA and RSEP files, RSEP surveys sent by mail to 168 RSEP participants and SEA officials, and interviews with about one-third of the participants.

Results indicated that Virginia's RSEPs were cooperative education associations of voluntarily participating LEAs. Most participants agreed that there was a need for additional clarification of SEA Regulations regarding RSEPs. Organizational structures were very similar among the regional programs; services, staffing patterns, and service delivery systems were varied. Participants were satisfied with the quality of services offered but desired regional programs to offer additional services for certain handicapped groups which were not being served in RSEPs. Factors which participants noted that could be inhibiting RSEP growth in Virginia included: SEA regulations prohibiting RSEP building construction and insufficient finances from the SEA for RSEPs. Funding was mainly provided by state and local sources, but there was disagreement among RSEP participants and SEA officials regarding the adequacy of state funding, and state funding mechanisms for RSEPs. The author recommended that communications be increased between SEA officials and RSEP personnel for greater accountability and better planning capabilities.

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INTRODUCTION

The delivery of special education and related services to identified handicapped learners is often a complex and expensive task. Local education agencies (LEAs) are responsible for providing for a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to these learners but have available to them varied options for service delivery. When there are few handicapped learners of a particular category, such as with the low-incidence handicapped, or when there are limited resources, the LEA may decide to deliver services through regional special education programs (RSEPs). Various authors have suggested that development of the RSEP movement was given impetus by the passage of Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142) - the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act of 1975 (Stephens 1979a; Martinson, 1982; Olson, 1983; Helge, 1984b; Skirtic, Guba and Knowlton, 1985). In fact, PL 94-142 encouraged local school districts with insufficient enrollment to qualify for at least \$7,500 in federal flow-through funds to join regional special education programs to insure that a continuum of services could exist, and that low incidence handicapped students could receive appropriate services (Helge, 1984b).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The Virginia State Department of Education (SEA) has recognized the viability of the RSEP as one means through which local school systems may provide services to identified low-incidence handicapped learners (Virginia Department of Education Guidelines, 1982). By the end of the 1985-86 school year, nine formal RSEPs in Virginia had been established

for this purpose. In Virginia, RSEPs may become formally recognized by the State Board of Education and the SEA if they establish a lay joint board and follow the Regulations for Jointly Owned and Jointly Operated Schools - JOAJOS (Virginia Board of Education, 1981). Though the first formal RSEPs in the state were established in 1978, until this study no comprehensive research had been conducted describing the existing formal RSEPs, which would enable current or prospective participants to understand how they function, how they are perceived by RSEP participants, or what are their commonalities and differences. Without such data, planning for future RSEP development becomes difficult. Therefore the problem to be addressed in this study is the lack of descriptive and evaluative data regarding the functioning of the nine RSEPs in Virginia.

Regional Education Programs

In the past two decades many LEAs have turned to regional education programs, sometimes called Education Service Agencies (ESAs) to help solve some of their mutual education and other programming needs. The ESA movement in America actually dates back to the mid-nineteenth century in Delaware and Oregon (Levis, 1983); however, most of the states which became involved in ESAs did so by the early 1960's (Stephens, 1979a). Special education programs are often part of comprehensive ESAs, which often also offer a variety of other services, such as research and evaluation, pupil testing, vocational and gifted education, consulting, central purchasing, in-service training and media services. Turner (1980) reported that over 86% of the ESAs in the

United States provided at least some type of special education services. Stephens (1979a) reported that special education was one of the services most offered in regional education programs in the thirty-one states he studied.

ESAs are called by various names, and have various forms throughout the United States. In Wisconsin and Georgia they are called CESAs (Cooperative Education Service Agencies); in Colorado and New York State they are BOCES (Boards of Cooperative Education); in Connecticut, Maryland, Ohio, Texas, and West Virginia they are RESAs (Regional Education Service Agencies); and in Michigan and Pennsylvania they are IEUs (Intermediate Education Units). In some states ESAs are statewide and systematically organized, whereas in other states the programs are only in certain parts of the state as determined by the need of the LEAs. Various states encourage and permit multiple models of ESA development (Stephens, 1979a; Levis, 1983).

Types of Regional Education Organizations

According to Stephens (1979a) there are three basic types of ESAs found nationwide:

- (1) Special districts: Special district education services are largely districts which had reorganized or merged for various reasons. These emerged in the 1950's and 1960's, but were on the decline by the 1970's.
- (2) Regionalized Services Agencies: Some states had organized regionalized services agencies (RSAs) through their SEA for regulatory and administrative purposes. These RSAs were usually attempts to increase SEA jurisdiction in the few states where they were organized. They were primarily organized in the 1960's and early 1970's.
- (3) Cooperative education programs: The formation of cooperative education programs by LEAs participating voluntarily is the

regional education movement which has most often been organized in the 1960's and 1970's (pp. 1-2).

To avoid confusion between the acronyms RSEP and REP (regional education programs), the author of the present study shall refer to any of the above types of general interdistrict program as an ESA, or a regional education program. A cooperative principally designed to deliver special education services will be referred to as a regional special education program (RSEP).

Four Central Characteristics of ESAs

According to Stephens (1979a) the following four central characteristics have been noted by researchers studying ESAs:

1. Legal Structure refers to the purposes for establishing regional organizations and to the regulations governing those programs at the state level. Many states have a dual structure which allows for formal regional organizations that must follow state regulations, and informal organizations which may operate autonomously or follow guidelines (The Education Collaborative of Boston - ECOB, 1979). Legal structure has been an important characteristic to study because it often dictates the types of external requirements and restraints imposed on the ESAs by the SEA.
2. Governance and Organization pertains to the policies and organizational procedures of boards, and to the administrative structure of the ESAs. Information related to regional boards would include agreements for formation, by-laws, policy manuals, composition and methods of operation. Studies related to ESA governance and organization would include administrative-supervisory structure, decision-making and management practices, employment procedures, salary schedules, interagency strategies, and geographic, demographic and sociocultural factors which effect ESAs. Governance and organizational structures have been examined by researchers because these determine the internal operations procedures of the ESAs.
3. Programs and Services refers to the services delivered, service delivery models, the types and numbers of students served and the employment practices used to deliver the services, e.g., teacher-pupil ratio, or number of aides per

class. The services provided can be categorized into three types: pupil, personnel, and administrative. Pupil services are direct educational and related services to students. Personnel services may be in training, media, consultation, and curriculum development. Administrative services provided may be in planning, program development, research, and evaluation. Programs and services are the products of REPs and thus have usually been described in studies of such programs.

4. Financial Factors refers to the methods used to finance regional education programs. Combinations of local, state and federal funding sources have been used to operate different types of service systems. The methods that LEA designated fiscal agents use in regional programs to derive tuition from participating LEAs, e.g., by levy, per-pupil, and participation fee have been investigated. Another topic studied is how the fiscal agent receives, budgets and disburses funds to operate the programs. The costs of various services in regional programs such as transportation, personnel, administration and specialized equipment are also sometimes analyzed. The fact that ESAs could not function without finances has undoubtedly led researchers to investigate this topic.

Perceptions of Participants

Researchers (Snell, 1972; Squires, 1974; Stephens, 1979b and g; Crohn and Nelson, 1986) also have examined the perceptions of participants regarding one or more of the four central characteristics of ESAs as outlined above: In their studies, perceptions have been expressed through a number of means, e.g., advantages and disadvantages, impact of belonging, issues and future directions of regional programs. According to Squires (1974), and Stephens (1979a), an investigation of both the perceptions of participants, and of the descriptive data on the parameters of the four central characteristics of ESAs would be a valuable reference source for decision-makers at the local, regional and statewide levels.

Participants of ESAs serving the handicapped have perceived that there are numerous benefits derived from establishing cooperative special education programs. A discussion of the significant reasons for establishing those programs follows in the next section.

Reasons for Establishing ESAs

School districts may achieve both financial savings and high quality programming by providing regional special education programming (Stefonek, 1973; NSBA, 1979; Spellman, et al., 1980; Connors, 1980; Helge, 1984b; Crohn and Nelson, 1986). Uxer (1974) noted that RSEPs can be structured to compensate for deficits in local education programs. Helge (1981a) reported that through regional programs, LEAs can share in specialized resources, personnel, materials and technical expertise without the risks associated with consolidation. According to Stephens (1979a), Turner (1980), and Helge (1981a), regional programs are often able to offer services that LEAs cannot afford to provide. LEAs in Kentucky (Rosati, 1983), Minnesota (Weatherman, 1983) and various other states (Levis, 1983) have turned to some form of regional special education program due to a combination of factors including the perception of shrinking fiscal resources and the need to increase cost effectiveness.

Federal and state laws requiring mandatory special education have facilitated the need for many LEAs to consider participating in RSEPs (National School Public Relations Association, 1971; Blake and Essigs, 1973; Heller, 1975; Helge, 1984b; Skirtic, et al., 1985). Helge (1981b) has suggested that laws, plus need, plus scarcity of resources equals

need for RSEPs. The Education Collaborative of Greater Boston - ECOB (1975), citing the need for services for the severely handicapped, recommended regional programming as the most feasible way for Massachusetts to provide for those students. Helge (1984b) observed that small rural LEAs have more handicapped students proportionately than larger LEAs and thus need regional services involving schools and community agencies. The smaller LEAs often cannot generate enough funds to start programs and face barriers in geography, low population, low-tax base, higher per-pupil special education expenses, difficulties in attracting and retaining skilled personnel, and cultural prejudices against providing services to handicapped students, however LEAs have been successful in solving both program and financial problems through the establishment of regional special education services (Squires, 1974; Lindstrom, 1978; Stephens, 1979a; Helge, 1984b; Skirtic, et al., 1985; Crohn and Nelson, 1986).

In the following section, the need for and historical background of the development of RSEPs in Virginia, the present topic, will be discussed.

RSEPs in Virginia

A Status Study (Virginia Department of Education, 1980) of Virginia's special education services from 1970-1979 cited a need for educational programming for the low-incidence handicapped, and shortages of trained personnel to teach students with those handicapping conditions. In 1982, the Virginia Board of Education indicated that the establishment of regional special education programs was one of its

major objectives in meeting the needs of low-incidence handicapped students (Virginia Department of Education, Superintendent of Public Instruction--Annual Report-1982). In the same year it published the following memorandum:

The Board of Education recognizes that the concept of educational cooperatives holds forth much promise for school divisions as they confront the complexity of the delivery of high cost programs to low-incidence populations. Accordingly, the Board of Education encourages school boards to develop regional programs to meet mutual needs (Virginia Department of Education Guidelines, 1982, Preface).

Even prior to 1982, the Governor's Committee on the Education of the Handicapped (1977) recognized "... the necessity for interdistrict cooperation for the economic and efficient delivery of some services to a portion of the handicapped populations." In 1981 (Virginia Department of Education, Superintendents' Memo #101) the Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction authorized the reimbursement of 60% of the total operational costs, as approved by the State Board of Education, when regional programs follow the Board's Regulations for Jointly Owned Programs and Jointly Operated Schools (JOPAJOS). Services were to be offered to the following types of low-incidence handicapped pupils as defined in the Regulations Governing Special Education Programs for Handicapped Children in Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 1984):

A. "Seriously emotionally disturbed" is defined as follows:

(1) The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree which adversely affects educational performance:

(a) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors;

(b) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers;

(c) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;

(d) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or

(e) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (p. 10).

(2) The term includes children who are schizophrenic. The term does not include children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they are seriously emotionally disturbed (p. 11). (Effective 1/18/85)."

B. "Multihandicapped means concomitant impairments (such as mentally retarded-blind, mentally retarded-orthopedically impaired, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. The term does not include deaf-blind children (p. 10)."

C. "Severely and Profoundly Handicapped is defined as follows:

(1) The term includes individuals who:

(a) Have primary disabilities that severely impair cognitive and/or adaptive skills and life functioning; and

(b) May have associated severe behavior problems;
and

(c) May have the high probability of additional physical and/or sensory handicaps; and

(d) Do require significantly more educational resources than are provided for the mildly and moderately handicapped in special education programs.

(2) Specifically included are:

(a) Individuals diagnosed as severely and profoundly mentally retarded; and/or

(b) Individuals who exhibit two or more severe handicaps, i.e., physical, sensory, behavioral.

NOTE: The term does not, however, include individuals of normal intelligence who are orthopedically and other health

impaired regardless of the number of related support services they require (p. 12). (Effective 1/1/85)."

Virginia's RSEPs were entirely voluntary and local autonomy was observed. Although the authority to operate the regional special education programs in Virginia was derived from the 1981 JOAJOS Regulations of the State Board of Education, the regional programs were created by the participating LEAs. The LEAs determined how the programs were organized and operated. However, the JOAJOS Regulations required that certain conditions be met before regional programs were eligible for certain state and federal incentive funding (discussed in Chapter IV of present study).

The Virginia Department of Education also published a detailed set of Guidelines for Operating Education Cooperatives (1982). These guidelines suggested various governance (policy) and administrative procedures, services delivery systems and financial arrangements for RSEPs. In addition, the report contained information on advantages, disadvantages, issues and problems found in other ESAs and RSEPs nationwide.

The Virginia Department of Education (1984) revised its Special Education Regulations in September 1984. Changes were to be effective by January 1, 1985. The new regulations referred back to the JOAJOS (1981) Regulations but also made revisions regarding LRE, the joint board, the regional director and the service categories of RSEPs (discussed in Chapter IV).

NEED FOR PRESENT STUDY

The author designed and administered a survey in order to determine the perceived need among regional participants for a statewide study of RSEPs and to determine the areas of primary interest. The survey (Appendix A) was subsequently given to twelve regional directors of five formal and seven informal RSEPs, and to eight SEA officials at a conference on regional special education, sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education at Wintergreen, Virginia in November, 1983.

The needs survey was divided into two parts. The first part contained a list of twenty-five sub-topics which were cited in other studies on ESAs. Sub-topics included contents of agreements, programs to pupils, financial arrangements, administrative structure and role of the SEA in working with regional programs. The respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they would be able to use such information if a statewide descriptive study of regional programs should be conducted and published. The rating scale ranged from 1 (very useful) to 4 (not useful). The respondents were asked to list the main issues and problems of their regional programs in the second part of the survey instrument.

The rank order of the 11 items which each group thought would be most useful to them if a study of Virginia RSEPs were to be conducted is shown in Table 1. As can be seen in this table, the rankings of both the SEA officials and the regional directors are very similar, as both generally selected the same 11 items from the 25 possible choices.

Table 1

Rank Order of Needs - Survey by Regional Directors (N=12) and

SEA Officials (N=8)

Combined Score (Top 11/25 Choices)

<u>Item Name</u>	<u>Regional Directors Ranking</u>	<u>SEA Officials Ranking</u>
Methods of Financing Services	1	1
Budgeting Arrangements and Procedures	3	2
Programs and Services to Pupils	2	3
Programs and Services to Personnel & LEAs	2	3
Perceived Advantages and Disadvantages	5	4
Perceived Problems of Belonging	5	4
Perceived Impact on LEAs	6	5
Perceived Future Direction	4	5
Contents and Agreements	4	5
Administrative/Organizational Structure	6	5

The results of the needs study indicated that Regional Directors and SEA personnel associated with RSEPs in Virginia perceived value in generating information concerning such programs. The areas of interest cited by the participants in the survey, corresponded to those emphasized in the review of the literature i.e., the four central characteristics of RSEPs and the perceptions of participants regarding those characteristics.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to provide descriptive and evaluative data regarding the functioning of the nine RSEPs which were active in Virginia at the end of the 1985-86 school year. The author has collected data regarding the functioning of the nine formal RSEPs and on the perceptions of RSEP participants along the dimensions of the four

central characteristics (Stephens, 1979a) of those programs i.e., legal framework, governance and organization, programs and services, and financial arrangements.

Participants shall be defined as administrators, supervisors, and board members at the LEA and SEA levels who make policy, program, administrative, and financial decisions regarding the RSEPs. The author shall also report on commonalities and differences across the nine RSEPs pertaining to the characteristics, and on the perceptions of the participants regarding the central characteristics.

The following research questions guided the design and implementation of the study:

1. a. How can the existing Regional Special Education Programs (RSEPs) in Virginia be described according to Stephens' (1979a) four central characteristics?
- b. What are the commonalities and differences among the RSEPs according to their four central characteristics?
2. a. What are the perceptions of the regional participants regarding factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs as they presently operate in Virginia?
- b. What are the commonalities and differences among the participant decision-makers regarding their perceptions of factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia?

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The Virginia Board of Education (1982) has stated that RSEPs hold much promise towards assisting in the complex task of delivering high cost programs to low-incidence handicapped students. At present, it has not been determined how the RSEPs function in Virginia or how they are perceived by the current participant decision-makers. Besides being endorsed by the State Board, RSEPs are funded by the Virginia Department of Education and are cited in the Virginia Special Education Regulations (1984). As such, they are an important part of Virginia's plan to meet the mandates of federal and state law regarding the low-incidence handicapped.

The present study provides descriptive information for participants at the LEA, and SEA levels regarding the operational details of the RSEPs, along with the perceptions of key participants regarding the perceived adequacy of services being provided, the advantages and disadvantages for participation, and the desired level of involvement by participants at the various RSEPs. An important objective of the study is to help participants understand how the RSEPs are perceived by various levels of decision-makers, and to compare perceptions among different groups. Such comparisons, hopefully, will help to determine the extent of agreement which exists among groups of decision-makers, and provide an opportunity to compare descriptive characteristics and perceptions of participants with those reported in the current literature on ESAs and RSEPs nationally. It is expected that the present study will also provide a reference tool to the participants at each level in planning and decision-making activities related to RSEPs.

At the State Board and SEA level, it could help generate future policy, program planning and funding alternatives regarding the RSEPs. Participants in LEAs contemplating forming, joining or remaining involved in a RSEP could also use the information obtained in the study to better understand the issues and the possible alternatives involved in developing such an effort.

RSEPs are one major strategy the Virginia SEA has advanced for meeting state and federal special education mandates. If they are being perceived by participants currently active in those organizations as successfully providing services to the low-incidence handicapped at reduced costs, then involvement by more LEAs should be encouraged by SEA officials. If there are perceived major problems or shortcomings associated with the RSEPs in Virginia, then these should be either addressed by the participants or other alternatives should be planned. It is hoped that the present study will also produce a forum for the discussion of possible issues and alternatives among participants.

The significance for this study is tied to the statements made by both the Virginia Department and Board of Education regarding the promise that RSEPs hold in meeting the needs of special populations of low-incidence handicapped students. Without the data on the existing programs, the present and prospective future participants at the LEA and SEA levels will find it increasingly difficult to make sound decisions regarding the RSEPs, thus undermining their potential.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study will examine the formal regional special education programs in Virginia (those following the JOAJOS Regulations). According to Dr. Austin Tuning, Director of Special Education Administration and Finance, at the Virginia Department of Education, "It would be almost impossible to count the number of informal special education arrangements which exist in the state at the present time" (Interview, July, 1984). The existing formal regional special education programs are preferable for a study in comparison to informal cooperative efforts, because they are more stable and have clear-cut financial, policy and administrative arrangements.

The study will not examine other regional non-special education efforts being offered among LEAs, and an in-depth historical analysis description of each RSEP will not be included, since that task would require a lengthy, separate study. An analysis of the quality of educational services (except for participants' perceptions of quality) is beyond the scope of this study, since quality is a subjective matter and would require extensive site visitations and other quantitative and qualitative measures irrelevant to the present research questions.

A study of the comparative costs of regional programs with those of other alternatives also will not be attempted, since the differences in funding arrangements, stated objectives, and staffing patterns among those programs would make such comparisons invalid (Rossmiller, R.A., Hale, J.A. and Frohreich, L.G., 1970).

Finally, neither the findings, conclusions, nor recommendations of the present study would necessarily apply to RSEPs in other states,

since legal structure, governance patterns, organizational structure, programs, financial factors, and general characteristics of regional programs vary considerably among the states (Stephens, 1979a).

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The main areas to be explored in this Chapter correspond to those identified by Stephens (1979a) as being the four central characteristics of ESAs, i.e. legal framework, governance and organization, programs and services and financial arrangements. Perceptions of participants shall also be included as a sub-topic of each of the above four areas since they are interwoven within each area, rather than being a distinct topic.

Squires (1974) performed the earliest (and one of the few) descriptive studies specifically concentrating on regional special education programs (and ESAs offering special education). His data were derived from surveying state directors of special education, and a national sample of ninety-four directors of regional special education programs. His purposes were to: (1) determine the extent to which they existed in the United States, (2) describe features of effective practices, (3) identify the strengths and major problems, and (4) make recommendations for their improvement. Even though the study was conducted prior to PL 94-142, he found the RSEPs had been steadily increasing in the United States, and that they existed in some form in at least thirty-nine states. Squires concluded that there were considerable similarities in governance, organization, personnel and delivery of services, while there was considerable diversity in program administration, instruction, support services, number of pupils served and geography among programs. The major strengths of the programs were their ability to provide services to students with unique handicaps, and

the economic advantages of shared services. The major problems reported were the absence of administrative authority, the lack of state funding support, the size of regional programs, and SEA legislative clarifying authorities.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The need to create ESAs can be perceived by state legislators, SEA officials or local officials. Lindstrom (1978) has described ESAs as being quasi-legal organizations which are usually partly controlled by ESAs and partly controlled by LEAs. States can recognize and establish ESAs that are mandatory or permissive. Under mandatory legislation, LEAs are usually required, by varying degrees, to participate in established programs. According to a status study of 31 states, by Stephens (1979a), four states had permissive legislation. Hughes and Achilles (1971) asserted that some states had ESAs despite the fact that no legislation had been established, and that some states had legislation establishing ESAs, but no programs. The National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA) (1971) has distinguished between ESAs that are: subordinate to SEAs and those that are subordinate to LEAs. The latter are usually regarded as voluntary organizations since the need to create these was established internally rather than externally.

In many cases, where ESAs are created by state legislation or by the SEA, the state will have line association with those programs and expect them to carry out certain regulatory functions to the LEAs on behalf of the SEAs. Uxer (1974) has stated that whether ESAs are

regulatory or permissive will often effect their structure and the types of services offered. Identifying the locus of control of ESAs is important because it will usually determine who makes the policy and actually governs the programs. According to Connors (1980) when ESAs are organized externally (by the state), control is removed from the participants. Loss of control also affects the quality of the program. He stated that it is essential for the board to be able to make policy and for administrators to make management decisions. Stephens (1979g) noted that RSEP participants generally believed that RSEPs can best function without fear of legal and bureaucratic constraints, and without outside intervention. Instead of added mandates, Stephens asserted that most participants desired the state to provide added clarification of RSEP regulations - which he noted was often greatly lacking.

The review of the literature shows that there are at least three types of ESAs:

Types of ESAs

Stephens (1979a) has determined that three major types of ESAs have been established in the United States during the past fifty years. In review, the three categories of ESAs are Special District ESAs, Regionalized SEA/ESAs, and Cooperative ESAs.

According to Stephens, since the 1960's, the most popular type of ESA has been organized at sub-state levels. The National Education Association, in 1963, defined this type of ESA as an agency operating regionally which coordinates and supports local services and serves as a link between the local and state units (Levis 1983). Stephens (1979a)

noted that although few pure examples existed of any type, Special District ESAs were most extensively used in eleven states (California, Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin). Five states had examples of regionalized branches of their SEAs. (Massachusetts, New Jersey, Ohio, North Carolina, and Oklahoma). Many of the other states had cooperative ESAs established voluntarily.

The three types of ESAs differed regarding the central characteristics of regional education programs, i.e., legal framework, governance, and organization, programs and services, and financial arrangements (see Table 2).

The states varied considerably in their types of ESA administrative associations with LEAs. In some states, there was direct line association, in other there was little association, or merely a monitoring function assigned to the SEA. Helge (1984b) noted that there were often conflicting monitoring and regulatory roles assumed by the SEA regarding RSEPs. However in many states administrative functions were shared by varying degrees between LEAs, regional boards and SEAs. Squires (1974) noted that nineteen states had regional programs controlled by LEAs; four by Intermediate Units controlled by the state; and seven by combination local and state education agencies. Stephens (1979a) reported that 14 of the 31 states he studied had line associations with their ESAs. In those programs, a state official responsible for ESAs often had regular meetings with each regional director. Many of the above states also assigned personnel to the ESAs

Table 2

DOMINANT PATTERNS OF TYPES OF ESAS WITH
REGARD TO FOUR CENTRAL CHARACTERISTICS*

Four Central Characteristics				
Type of ESA	Legal Framework	Governance	Programs and Services	Fiscal Support**
Special District ESA	Tends to be structured in legislation and/or SEA regulations	Tends to be lay control	Tends to be determined by member LEAs and the SEA	Tends to be a mix of local, regional, state and state/federal
Regionalized SEA/ESA	Tends to be structured in SEA regulations only	Tends to be professional advisory only	Tends to be almost exclusively determined by SEA	Tends to be almost exclusively state and state/federal
Cooperative ESA	Tends to be general (i.e., intergovernmental regulations, statutes and/or permissive legislation)	Tends to be composed of representatives of member LEAs	Tends to be almost exclusively determined by member LEAs	Tends to be almost exclusively local and state/federal

* Stephens (1979g)

** The present author broadened this characteristic to financial arrangements

such as the director, the assistant director, curriculum specialists and the secretary.

There were limited descriptions found of the various statewide systems of ESAs which described the overall legal structures of regional education organizations existing within specific states. However several references were found which described ESA efforts by individual states or groups of cooperating LEAs within a state.

The legal framework of specific ESA and RSEP efforts within several states will be discussed in the following section.

BOCES of New York

In 1971, the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA, 1971) described how New York's Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) were established. In those organizations, personnel were employed and responsible to both the SEA and to the cooperating LEAs. The SEA paid half the salary of BOCES employees, while the other half was paid proportionately by each participating LEA. The LEAs submitted program and budget plans which needed approval from the SEA. In relation to the dominant patterns of ESAs, as described by Stephens (1979a), BOCES appeared to be a mix of a Special District ESA and a Cooperative ESA.

Special Education Cooperatives in Kansas

According to Kirmer, Lockwood, Mickler and Sweeney (1984), enabling legislation for educational cooperatives in Kansas was enacted in 1949, but the first programs were not formed until 1967. Under the legal

structure, each participating district was allocated one board member and one vote on a governing board. Personnel were employed by the board and common operating procedures were established throughout the cooperatives, however, evaluation was conducted primarily by the building administrator where the program was housed, with input from the regional administration. The first educational cooperative in Kansas was established to provide special education pupil and support services and training to LEA personnel in 12 school districts within a 4 county area of central Kansas.

Kentucky's ESAs

Stephens (1979c) described how Kentucky's cooperative ESAs were established through \$1,500,000 in incentive grants from the SEA, but were mostly dissolved in less than two years (by 1975) because of rescission in state funding. Some programs in that state, however, were later reorganized. After 1975, regional programs concentrating on handicapped students began to increase due to mandatory service requirements.

Rosati (1983) added that the Kentucky SEA was encouraging LEAs to participate in cooperative ESAs by 1980, by utilizing funds provided from PL 94-142 to help implement technical assistance projects to all ESAs working with handicapped children.

ESAs in Texas

Stephens (1979f) found that the SEA helped establish funding and support services for cooperative RSEPs in Texas. The SEA also

established guidelines, goals, consultation and evaluation assistance, but allowed administrative matters to be handled internally by each program. This type of structure, Stephens asserted, helped RSEPs in Texas to become a national model in effective regional organization.

IEUs in Pennsylvania

Firestone (1981) reported that Intermediate Educational Units (IEUs) began operating in Pennsylvania in 1971 to provide specialized services because certain LEAs could not efficiently provide those services independently. Participation in IEUs was voluntary, yet IEUs became the principal provider of special education and vocational education services in the state. After 1975, due to the perceived acceptability of the IEUs, various mandates were issued by the state legislature which specified that IEUs should offer auxiliary and related services such as guidance, testing and counseling, curriculum development, instructional materials, pupil-personnel services, technical assistance, and in-service training. However most IEUs continued to offer instructional rather than support services, since the SEA could not mandate specific IEU activity because each had its own board and independent governance patterns.

IEUs became an accepted part of the Pennsylvania education system by the mid 1970's, according to Firestone. This was supported by the fact that a state funded study supported by the Pennsylvania legislature in 1975, found that about 80% of the participants perceived that the programs were very effective and were very supportive of their efforts and objectives. The study found that participants were most encouraged

that IEUs provided services to school districts without attempting to monitor or enforce state mandates. However some state officials were concerned about the lack of line authority between SEA and IEU officials. Firestone concluded that diverse interests between SEA and regional officials could create a tension, however he asserted that the IEU could not serve the state without meeting the local needs for which they were directly responsible.

CESAs in Wisconsin

Stefonek (1973) described how Wisconsin's legislature created Cooperative Educational Service Agencies (CESAs) in 1964 and established the membership, enrollment, geographic and funding requirements for each program, but allowed LEAs to determine the services they needed, and the organizational structures. This approach increased local control, but also created some instability in Wisconsin's regional programs, due to the lack of direct continuous funding.

Harmon and Bowles (1984) noted that the 19 CESAs originally created were established to provide services to low-incidence handicapped children for districts needing assistance with such specialized programming. However, in 1981, the state de-funded the CESAs because of questions about their value and accountability. After LEA participants protested, the state restored \$25,000 for each CESA (about 1/2 of the pre-1981 level), but reduced the number of organizations from 19 to 12. Other recommendations made by the state included that CESAs should not have taxing authority, that a self-evaluation (approved by the SEA)

should occur every three years and that the state should encourage a mixed model of regional education development including the:

1. CESA
2. Regional ESA
3. Special District ESA (Harmon, p 6.)

Cooperative ESAs in South Dakota

Lindstrom (1978), in writing guidelines for ESAs in South Dakota, suggested that the best organizational model is for the SEA to develop a statewide plan, funding and technical support for regional programs, but allow each program to organize internally to meet its own unique needs. Widvey (1985) expanded the reported research on South Dakota's cooperative ESAs by stating that the voluntary development of educational cooperatives in South Dakota began in the early 1970's, however in 1985, the state legislature passed an education reform bill which officially established voluntary educational cooperatives. The legislation was undertaken because legislators and educators agreed that cooperative educational development was becoming crucial for LEAs in a state that had 77,047 square miles with 70% of the schools districts having an enrollment of less than 500 students. Widvey reported that special education was the primary service offered in South Dakota's ESAs.

Policy Issues of ESAs

Stephens (1979g) has listed several central policy issues and questions which would need to be addressed in each state to help fully understand the roles and nature of the legal framework of ESAs:

1. Should ESAs primarily be established to meet LEA or SEA needs?
2. How should the SEA be involved in ESAs?
3. Who should control ESAs?
4. Should ESAs perform regulatory functions?
5. Should governance of ESAs be flexible or formal?
6. How specific should enabling legislation pertaining to ESAs be?
7. Should LEAs be required to hold ESA membership?
8. What should the membership requirements in ESAs be?
9. Should ESAs serve non-public agencies?
10. Should more than one type of ESA be permitted in a state?
(pps. 12-16)

Stephens concluded that many of the above issues still need to be discussed by ESA and SEA participants. In some states many of these questions have been resolved and policy choices made. However, other states abound with controversy regarding their efforts to implement ESAs. Uxer (1974) contended that there has been a struggle in many states to determine whether ESAs should be for service only or for service and regulatory functions, in some states ESAs are expected to perform both. This often creates ambiguities in their roles as perceived by SEA and LEA participants, because the legal framework of ESAs often effects their governance and organizational patterns, which are discussed in the following section.

ORGANIZATION

A significant distinction in ESA organizational patterns is whether services are formal or informal (The Education Collaborative for Greater

Boston-ECOB, 1975). In informal organizations, services are usually organized by a single LEA, which allows other LEAs to participate in their programs. Usually informally organized services are administered by the host LEA; while purchasing LEAs send students or personnel to those services. The informal system is very flexible, may be cost-efficient and program effective, but does not usually allow purchasing LEAs to participate in decision making, curriculum formation or personnel decisions. The formal program is principally characterized by the existence of a joint board, the establishment of Agreements and By-Laws, and (in most cases) some formal recognition from an SEA. The NSPRA (1971) has contended that when LEAs decide to set up voluntary regional programs, then most of the organizational decisions are made by the local participants. When the level of services are low, then decisions are usually minimal. However when services are increased then external input in policy and program matters usually increases. Prior to moving from internal to formal operations, many ESAs commission a feasibility study.

The Feasibility Study

Increasing the level and complexity of services often necessitates increased formalization of ESAs. However, prior to formalization, a feasibility study, needs-survey or needs-assessment is often conducted by other participating LEA personnel, SEA officials, or outside consultants.

Lawrence (1978) conducted the earliest known needs-study to determine if formal RSEPs were feasible in Virginia. As a result of his

study, he recommended that 7 Southeastern Virginia LEAs form an RSEP to offer services to low-incidence handicapped students and in-service training to personnel in the local school divisions. Recommendations were also included which outlined possible local, state and federal funding sources for the RSEP, which eventually came to be called the Southeastern Educational Cooperative Program - SECEP.

In an effort to determine whether further regional cooperation was feasible for 6 school districts in the Roanoke, Virginia area, which already served certain low-incidence handicapped children, Roanoke County Schools commissioned Dr. Philip R. Jones and Peter J. Malmurg (1983) to conduct a needs-survey. Jones and Malmurg studied the programmatic and fiscal needs of the LEAs, and conducted site-visits and interviews of the possible participants before writing a final report consisting of findings and recommendations, which supported the need for establishment of regional programs. Recommendations included that:

1. Each cooperating school district make a formal contractual commitment of at least three years.
2. A cooperative board should establish procedures to serve the needs of exceptional children, and provide a stable basis to assist local divisions in planning.
3. The board should hire a director.
4. The board should appoint a fiscal agent LEA.
5. The board should assess a membership fee based on per-pupil enrollment to cover operational costs.
6. The Cooperative should seek start-up costs from the Virginia Department of Education.

7. That each LEA should assume responsibility for transporting students to cooperative services (pp. 17-19).

Although Jones's study was received by Roanoke County Schools, formal services under the Roanoke Cooperative were not established until the 1986-87 school year (Interview with Mr. Anthony Faina, official with the Virginia Department of Education, October, 1986).

Young (1985) conducted and published the results of a study he conducted in 1985 to determine the possible collaborative options of nine small rural school districts in Washington State. His study was aided by technical advisory committees including the nine superintendents, consultants from Washington State University, and a citizens advisory group. The study identified advantages and disadvantages of 14 alternative options for multi-district cooperatives including shared: staff, students, faculties, and busing. Widvey (1985) also designed, conducted and published a needs-assessment model to determine the existing status and requirements of both general education and special education in 8 small rural school districts of South Dakota. She concluded that the development of educational cooperatives was a must if small rural school districts were to provide the services needed for quality education.

Organizational Patterns

Squires (1974) emphasized that there were many similarities in administration, organization and personnel patterns in regional programs he studied, but there was also much diversity. Connors (1980) contended that because of the variations in types, purposes, and legal structures

of regional programs, they have adopted a variety of administrative structures. He described two principal models that public regional education programs may either utilize the single system or multi-system model.

In the single-system model, regional programs offer a single service such as a school, a diagnostic clinic, or training program. The advantage of the single-system is that it is usually easy to administer, employs few personnel, and is flexible in decision making and program changes. The disadvantages are that it is not as stable (because enrollment or participation in key LEAs may vary) and it frequently costs a great deal (if enrollment is not optimum) more than multi-system organizations. A multi-system regional program offers more than a single service. The advantages of the multi-system model are that since a greater diversity of services is offered, more specified resources and personnel are available, more needs of participating districts are met, and (in many cases) the per-capita costs are lowered because of maximum utilization of services. The disadvantages are decisions become more complex, transportation to services is more difficult, and change is difficult because of the existence of various layers of decision makers. Connors concluded, however, that despite certain disadvantages, the multi-system model of operating regional programs is more cost-efficient and program effective than the single-system model.

There are a variety of governance and organizational structures possible in regional programs. The model most commonly used is illustrated in Connors (1980), as shown in Figure 1.

ESA Organizational Structure

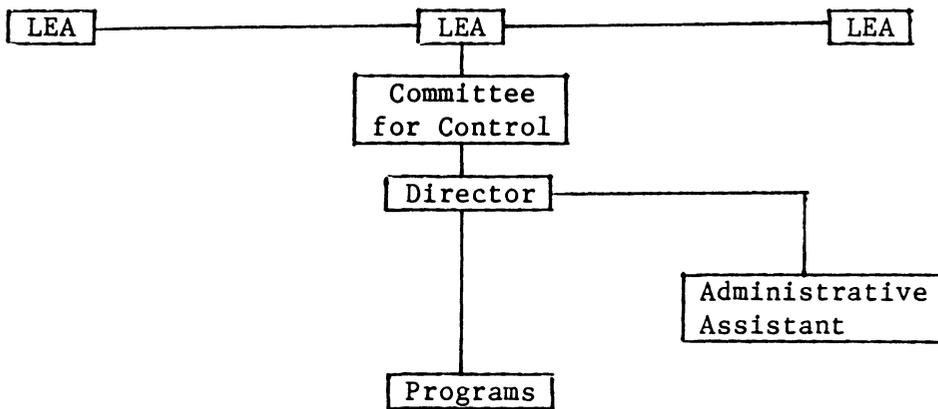


Figure 1

In the above model, the LEAs elect or appoint a joint board for control which makes the policy and oversees the director and other administrative staff. The administrative staff implements the board's policy and other directives and supervises the programs and services of the regional program.

Another variation is shown in the ECOB (1975) study, and displayed below in Figure 2.

ESA Organizational Structure (Variation)

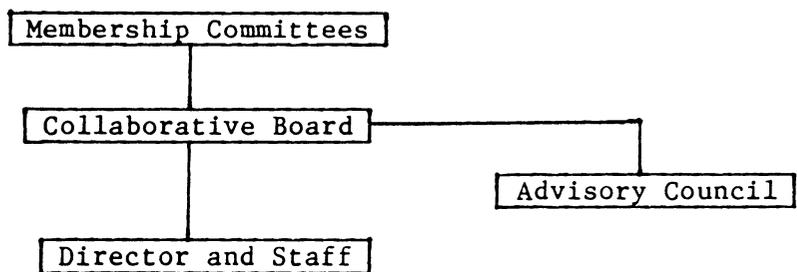


Figure 2

Under the above variation model, the Membership Committee (participating LEAs) also appoints or elects a board. The board makes policy decisions, based on recommendations to the administrative staff.

Stefonek (1973) has added that in regional programs in Wisconsin, the same type of role is played by the advisory committee, as reported by the ECOB.

Joint Board - According to Hughes and Achilles (1971), Squires (1974), Lindstrom (1978) and Stephens (1979a), most formal regional education programs have established joint boards or committees for control. Stefonek (1973) and Connors (1980) have suggested that formal regional programs managed by a joint board often result in more efficient and effective educational organizations than do informal cooperative programs needing approval from each separate LEA. Connors (1980) and the ECOB (1975) have asserted that the regional board functions much like a regular school board, in that it can adopt budgets, make policy, employ personnel, and disburse funds for the regional organization. Connors also noted that the board allows program decisions and changes to come through a coordinated entity rather than through each participating agency; thus no single LEA can totally control a board.

Various authors have shown that the membership requirements and selection procedures of board members varied significantly across the states (Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Squires, 1974; Stutz, 1975; and Stephens, 1979a). The ECOB (1975) suggested that identifying the member agencies or districts of the cooperative is often one of the first steps in forming a board. The considerations for membership may be by geography, by planning districts, or by common need or attitude. Some boards may even provide services to LEA or community agencies outside their membership. Hughes and Achilles found that most voluntary

cooperatives have boards with representative participants of the LEAs. Participants may be local board members, superintendents, community or business officials (Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Uxer, 1974; The Education Collaborative of Greater Boston, 1975). Squires (1974) reported that 48 of 92 responding regional special education directors stated that their programs were controlled by boards from member districts; twelve by county boards; two by state boards; two by joint city-county boards; and five by special education boards. Stutz (1975) found that there are four ways that regional boards are often chosen:

1. The board members could be appointed by local boards or superintendents.
2. The board members could be elected by local boards
3. The board could be elected by voters
4. The board may be elected by user groups of students in the programs (p. 4)

Connors (1980) suggested that one board member per district is the simplest way to establish a regional board, but not always the most equitable, since student enrollment and commitment of resources to programs is often unevenly distributed. Stephens (1979a) in the 31 states he studied, found that there was an average of between 7 to 11 members on most regional boards. The size and composition varied significantly depending on the type of representation i.e., all local board members, superintendents, community members, etc.

One of the most important and earliest functions of the regional board is to establish Agreements and By-Laws (operating procedures). Adamson (1968) said that regional programs need written Agreements to promote a shared understanding of common objectives. The ECOB (1975) contended that Agreements should be formulated from documented needs and

recommendations for action arising from a comprehensive needs study. The Agreements should be realistic in stating what they expect the regions to accomplish, but should not be so narrowly stated to limit the scope of programming possibilities. The advantages of having formalized written Agreements are that they help to avoid disputes, and they tend to stabilize regional programs. According to the NSPRA (1971), West Virginia had a law requiring that regional programs have Agreements which followed a specific format, and were approved by the SEA. They were required to specify how the members are chosen and their roles and responsibilities. The By-Laws are usually established after the Agreements have been approved by the participating regional member districts or agencies. They often contain some information which is also found in the Agreements, but also usually have operational details relating to the regional boards, the encumbering of funds, the specific roles of personnel, the service delivery alternatives, the decision-making and resolution of conflict procedures, the meeting procedures, and the procedures for adopting and changing policies (NSPRA, 1971; The ECOB, 1975).

The NSPRA (1971), Connors (1980) and Helge (1981) suggested that one of the biggest tasks of ESAs was to encourage LEAs to relinquish a certain degree of control of their own territory through the formation of a joint board. Often personnel are used to working competitively against each other. Regional operations require a shift to collaborative working relations. Thus many of the reported problems of regional programs are more political than program related. Besides the

joint board, a superintendents' committee is often used to help administer regional programs.

The Superintendents' Committee

The superintendents in LEAs involved in regional programs, although not employed by a regional board, will most often play a key role with the board and with the REPs. The NSPRA (1971) has determined that the role of the superintendents is crucial in providing leadership, direction and support to regional programs. They may provide input individually or collectively throughout a Superintendents' Committee. In some cases the superintendents are advisory to the board and to the administrative staff, while in other cases the superintendents are members of, or solely constitute the board. They often oversee the programs and help to establish the regional policies. In order for them to be most effective, they too must give up the idea of managing mainly from a local perspective, in deference to regional management.

The advantages and disadvantages found in the organization of ESAs are discussed in the following section.

Advantages and Disadvantages of ESA Organization

Stefonek (1973) and Helge (1981) reported that administrative detail and decision making processes are frequently overly complex in regional organizations, sometimes making them inefficient. The ECOB (1975) stated that developing an effective organizational structure in regional programs is often a problem because of the complex nature of personnel roles and responsibilities. However, Stephens (1979a) has

noted that counteracting strengths of cooperative ESAs are that LEAs can keep their own autonomy and can renew (or not renew) participation annually. In addition, he found that ESAs were often highly sensitive to, and accountable to LEA needs, which created an atmosphere for long-term planning partnerships. However, Stephens, in the same study, also noted that ESAs are often short-term, subject to major changes in governance, organization, personnel and programs. Many participants also perceive that cooperatives are "temporary in nature." (p. 18)

McLaughlin (1982) surveyed RSEP participants of the Cooperative Centers for Exceptional Children (CCEC) in Southwest Virginia to determine their perceptions towards organizational advantages and disadvantages of regional programming. His results indicated that most superintendents in that RSEP perceived that the RSEP had provided adequate services to meet the needs of multiple handicapped students at reduced costs, providing appropriate inservice training, offered a wide range of services, enhanced planning levels, and increased LEA flexibility. However, LEA School Board members disagreed with the superintendents on all of the above reported advantages of CCEC. All seven superintendents reported in interviews that their LEA was having very few or no problems as a result of participation in CCEC. LEA School Board members were not interviewed.

The potential loss of administrative control of ESAs by LEA participants has also been reported. Helge (1981) noted that LEA participants often express a loss of local pride through regional participation. Connors (1980) stated that consensus of participants is difficult to obtain in regional programming and unresolved issues often

result in on-going conflicts. Skirtic, et al. (1985) noted that forced participation in regional programs often results in perceived loss of control by regional participants. Helge (1984a) suggested that overlapping organizational layers, i.e., different boards in the same region, made control issues very complicated. The NSPRA (1971) reported that some ESAs have been seriously weakened, or disbanded due to rivalries for control among LEAs. The ECOB (1975) noted that in singular purpose ESAs, the withdrawal of one LEA from a cooperative may mean the end of a particular organization. However, Helge (1984a) suggested that "true change" is difficult without competing local rivalries. Stefonek (1973), Stephens (1979a), and Helge (1984b) concluded that despite the inherent problems of regional education programs, the advantages far outweigh the disadvantages.

Stefonek (1974) reported that regional education programs offer school districts greater flexibility in meeting local needs. Stephens (1979a) and Helge (1984b) noted that regional education programs provide participants with the best possible use of, often, limited resources. The perception that regional education programs offer participants increased problem solving abilities has also been reported by various participants (NSPRA, 1971; Stephens, 1979; Helge, 1984a). Stefonek suggested that regional education organizations often result in increased efficiency in the organization and management of services.

The issues concerning personnel management in ESAs will be discussed in the following section.

Personnel Management in ESAs

The ECOB (1975) stated that developing an effective organizational structure in regional programs is often a problem because of the complex nature of personnel roles and responsibilities. Stefonek (1973) found that there are often communication problems among personnel in large regional organizations. The NSPRA (1971) and Helge (1984b) noted that recruitment and retention is difficult in many regional programs due to perceived instability by employees. In many regional programs, tenure for regional employees is unavailable or meaningless (if the organization ceases to exist). Consequently, lack of job security and high employee turnover are very big problems in regional programs (NSPRSA, 1971). In order to combat these obstacles, some regional programs are forced to pay employees higher than those employed in LEAs. Naturally this can produce jealousies, and morale problems in LEA employees. Employees of regional programs working in host schools in LEAs are often confused over who is their supervisor: the principal, the regional director, or the host LEA program supervisor? Lack of LEA acceptance of regional personnel employed at local sites has also been noted as a big problem in certain ESAs (Helge 1984a). In regional programs that owned or managed their own facilities, this problem was not noted. However, many states do not allow regional programs to construct or own facilities. Helge (1984b) also reported that teachers and other direct services personnel working in ESAs had other problems which frequently resulted in attrition, including little input in decisions, job insecurity, extensive travel, complex scheduling

problems, and confusion about roles of other personnel working in the ESAs.

Duncan's (1979) study showed how the role of the regional director was perceived entirely differently by superintendents, teachers, special education supervisors and regional directors themselves. In a survey of regional directors, superintendents and teachers involved in regional programs, in North Dakota, he noted that there were significant differences in each of the above participants' expectations and their perceptions regarding the role of the regional director. Teachers thought that curriculum development was the most important role for directors; regional directors thought that knowledge of finances, and effective working relationship with superintendents were their most important functions; and superintendents ranked legislative responsibility as being the highest task function. Duncan concluded that regional directors need highly specialized skills, which are different from LEA special education supervisors.

Most studies of ESAs have reported the existence of a regional director (NSPRA, 1971; Stefonek, 1973; Lindstrom, 1978; Duncan, 1979). Connors (1980) has compared the role of regional director to that of a superintendent in an LEA, who is responsible for the overall administration and operation of the programs including the curriculum, finances, facilities and implementation of board policies. Stefonek (1973) noted that the director usually:

- * Employs personnel
- * Develops proposals and plans
- * Evaluates programs and services
- * Locates and allocates resources
- * Negotiates with the state
- * Supervises, recruits and evaluates personnel

- * Develops salary schedules of personnel
- * Communicates with parents and community
- * Reports and keeps records about the programs (pp. 76-79)

The ECOB (1975) asserted that the director needs knowledge and experience in administration, law, fiscal management, supervision, program development, communications and fund raising skills.

The NSPRA (1971) has shown that personnel patterns varied considerably among regional programs. Besides the director, other staff positions included in regional programs were the assistant director, subject matter specialists, teachers, evaluators, psychologists, medical personnel, media specialists, para-professionals (aides) and maintenance personnel.

The ECOB (1975) described ways regional programs may utilize a variety of personnel-employment options:

- * They may employ existing personnel from participating LEAs.
- * The host LEA may employ the staff and bill other LEAs.
- * Positions may be rotated among different LEAs.
- * Personnel may be employed with grant monies through an LEA.
- * A regional board may employ the personnel (p. 24)

Geographic and demographic considerations of ESAs will be considered in the following section.

Geography and Demography

There are considerable variations in the size, geography, and boundaries of regional programs. The NSPRA (1971), Uxer (1974) and Stephens (1979a) have determined that total student enrollment in participating districts varied from ten-thousand to over one million. There appears to be no optimum number for enrollment in regional

programs because the enrollment needs relate to the types of services and programs that are offered.

Hughes and Achilles (1971) and Stephens (1979a) have found that most participating LEAs were no more than an hour's drive from the center of the region. The LEAs in regional programs are usually contiguous but some are not; cooperation in those cases is based on shared socio-economic needs. Stephens (1979a) has noted that the geographic boundaries of regional programs in several states also coincide with other service delivery systems e.g., mental health, health, planning district. Examples of those states are Georgia, Texas, and Minnesota.

The NSPRA (1971) has reported that LEA membership in regional programs has been found to vary from two to as many as fifty. The number of participating LEAs doesn't appear to influence the effectiveness of regional programs as much as the extent of commitment by each LEA.

Other important factors about ESAs cited in the literature pertained to transportation, facilities and interagency collaboration.

Transportation and Facilities

Stefonek (1973), Helge (1981), and (Skirtic, et al., 1985) reported that transportation is often costly and a major problem in implementing regional programs. Some regions are several thousand square miles in area. Roads may be indirect, and terrain rough. The farthest points between LEAs participating in regional programs may be upwards of one hundred miles. Can students, particularly those with severe

handicapping conditions, be receiving appropriate education when they must travel one or more hours to school each way? The answer is uncertain, because many LEAs do not have other alternatives except to participate in regional programs for certain handicapped students.

The NSPRA (1971) and Stephens (1979a) found that regional programs do not usually own their own facilities; instead they must often lease or utilize donated public or private facilities. Many states do not allow regional organizations to own or borrow money for facilities. In some programs, facilities are assigned or chosen by LEAs while in others the SEA makes facility decisions. Facilities which are not specifically designed for handicapped students will often be inappropriate unless extensive alterations are made.

Interagency Collaboration

Regional education programs, particularly RSEPs, often have considerable interaction with other community and state associated agencies. As noted by the ECOB (1975), many agencies may have some overlapping goals with LEAs and regional programs. According to Martinson (1985), no one agency can provide for all the needs of handicapped individuals, thus facilitating the need for interagency collaboration. McLaughlin and Elder (1983) stated that interagency collaboration "... is a process through which professional services providers join forces to enhance the service delivery system..." for persons with handicaps (p. 29). Hord (1985) has defined collaboration as the action taken when groups work together to solve common problems, when individual actions are less than possible (p. 1).

La Cour (1982) argued that educational, social service, health, and other community agencies share common mandates and clients, a broad range of services are duplicated, and a lack of coordination of efforts often occurs. Various agencies even compete for clients. Thus, he concluded that it would be reasonable to develop organizations along collaborative lines.

Woodward (1985) noted that the advantages of interagency collaboration are that it promotes new and improved services, improves communications among agencies, heightens accountability, avoids fragmented services, allows agencies to cover large geographic areas and helps develop a broad advocacy base. Among the disadvantages of interagency collaboration reported by Woodward, are that developing collaboration is time-consuming, can be frustrating, creates bureaucratic hassles, makes agency problems visible to the community, and opportunities for mis-communication become more likely (p. 9). However, McLaughlin and Johnson (1982) concluded that the most important factor associated with the success of inter-agency efforts is the degree to which people can work together. They stated that PL 94-142 has forced states and LEAs to identify alternative service delivery patterns. This need has caused LEAs to seek linkages with other public and private facilities. Olson (1983) reported on how inter-agency collaboration increased the quality of educational and related services for handicapped children in Maryland. Uxer (1974) and the ECOB (1975) have claimed that regional programs provide various internal and external linkages which bolster mutual problem solving and program formation efforts. Clarifications on which agencies need to provide

related services to handicapped children are still needed in each state and locality. However it is certain that many agencies can offer supportive services to RSEPs e.g., mental health, health, welfare, rehabilitation, and vocational organizations.

Stephens (1979a) contended that interagency planning is more feasible in rural areas where communications are easier and district lines are often the same as regional program lines. Members of community or state associated agencies are often members or advisors on RSEP boards. Helge (1981) described how inter-agency collaborative efforts helped to explain the rise in the identification of handicapped children from 1975-80. The greatest assistance, from these agencies, came through their support of LEAs in child-find activities - which were required in PL 94-142. The finding of more handicapped children often forced LEAs to expand services via regional cooperative programming, and to cooperate with community agencies to seek support services for those children.

The ECOB (1975) has shown how regional administrative staff from different RSEPs and non-education community agencies in Massachusetts met regularly to solve common problems related to educating severely handicapped children. Such meetings have also resulted in inter-regional programs, shared planning and information, increased ability to impact legal processes at the state level, and in improved programs and services to severely handicapped children.

Programs and services offered by RSEPs and ESAs will be discussed in the following section.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

Advantages & Disadvantages of ESAs

Several authors have concluded that regional programs often provide higher quality educational and support services than would be ordinarily offered in LEAs (Snell, 1973; Waller, 1975). Uxer (1974) and Helge (1981) stated that regional programs are often successful in attracting highly skilled personnel to provide specialized services for handicapped children, which are not ordinarily available. Stefonek (1973) suggested that regional programs often result in more appropriate services to handicapped children due to better grouping capabilities. They also allow for greater flexibility in meeting various other local education needs. Regional programs provide teachers with the opportunity to meet, exchange ideas and grow professionally; thus further improving the quality of services. The NSPRA (1971) reported that regional programs helped develop demonstration and model programs, increased opportunities for innovation and exposed teachers to new ideas. Weatherman (1983) claimed that in-service education is often provided more successfully on a regional basis than locally, and that increased technological advancements in tele-communications, interactive T.V., and microcomputers are also made more possible regionally.

Skirtic, et al. (1985) noted that regional education programs often overcome distance and sparcity problems, provide relief to LEAs trying to serve low-incidence handicapped children, and offer increased support for their teachers. Helge (1984a) suggested that regional programs increase accountability to handicapped students and their families.

Skirtic, et al. (1985) stated that transportation arrangements are often overly complex and very costly in regional education programs. Helge (1981) also suggested that there may be conflicts on the location of classes and scheduling problems in regional programs. Helge was concerned that some LEAs tended to over-rely on regional programs to provide LEA mandated programs. Squires (1974) noted that size is a factor which often restrains the growth of regional programs. There reaches a point when regional services can no longer be added due to excessive travel times and distances. Skirtic, et al. reported that regional programs often have difficulty in arranging coordinated school schedules and in-service training, due to the fact that cooperating districts have different school calendars. Helge (1984b) stated that services in RSEPs sometimes become diluted because students of various ages, abilities, and handicapping conditions are placed in the same classes for lack of sufficient numbers to justify further specialization of services.

Types of Services in ESAs

Tamblyn (1971) has identified four main categories of services provided through regional education programs, as children's, personnel, administrative, and community services. Tamblyn, ECOB (1975), and Stephens (1979a) have provided detailed lists and descriptions of services offered by regional programs, which fit into the above four categories. The following is a summary of the services mentioned in those studies:

1. Children's Services - General education, special education, gifted education, vocational education, psychological guidance, recreation, alternative education, pre-school, physical and occupational therapy
2. Personnel Services - Recruitment, assignment, supervision, curriculum development, training, media and library and information exchange
3. Administrative Services - Planning, research, evaluation of programs, central purchasing, grant writing, legislative studies and financial planning and management
4. Community Services - Social services to families, parent education, adult continuing education, interagency collaboration, services to non-public schools

Stephens (1979a) recorded the number of instances where services were offered in regional programs, in the 31 states he surveyed, and produced frequency rankings. The top 10 services offered by all ESAs he examined are shown in Table 3. In Table 3, it can be observed that both special education and general administrative services were among the most widely offered services in regional programs studied by Stephens. The claim that special education is among the most widely offered services in regional programs also has been supported by numerous other authors (Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Squires, 1974; Lindstrom, 1978; Turner, 1980). General administration was ranked equally high because it is essential for the successful operation of regional programs. Many of the other top ranked services listed in Table 3 related to administrative functions, such as planning, evaluation services,

Table 3

Rankings of Services Most Offered in ESAs*

<u>Services</u>	<u>Rankings</u>
Education of pupils with handicapping conditions	1
General administration	1
Media and library services	3
Staff development	4
Curriculum services	5
Information exchange	6
Planning services	7
Evaluation services	8
Gifted/talented education	9
Vocational/occupational education	10

*Stephens (1979h, p. 11)

Table 4

Rankings of Services Least Offered in ESAs*

<u>Services</u>	<u>Ranking</u>
Research and development	17
Transportation	18
General academic instruction	19
Personnel services	20
Adult Education	21
Legislative Services	22
Outdoor/environmental education	23
Migrant education	24
Bilingual education	25
Alternative education	26

*Stephens (1979h, p. 11)

information exchange and curriculum development. Personnel services, such as staff development and media and library were also ranked high, because regional programs usually require a high degree of specialization in personnel and educational materials. Specialized personnel usually require on-going staff development activities and access to specialized media and materials. Besides special education, vocational and gifted education were the only other pupil services ranked by Stephens as being in the top 10 for regional programs.

As indicated in Table 4, fewer regional programs studied were involved with research and development, transportation, general academic instruction, personnel services and adult education because these have been traditionally, and still appear to be, delivered by LEAs. Legislative services, outdoor/environmental education, migrant education, bilingual and alternative education are generally offered less frequently in public schools than many other basic services, and thus would not usually be considered as offerings in regional education programs.

Uxer (1974) contended that regional education programs are usually more effective at meeting the service needs of small and rural school districts, than they are in large metropolitan areas. However, some large metropolitan areas find that successful collaboration is only possible in highly specialized program areas such as special education. Uxer concluded that there does not appear to be any limitation on the types of services which can be started. The ECOB (1975) found that to organize or become involved in a regional service, LEAs must conclude that:

1. They lack a specific program(s)
2. They recognize a common problem with other LEAs
3. Finances in present alternative(s) are too costly
4. Enrollment in present program is too low
5. A funding source is available (p. 21)

Achilles and Hughes (1971) have noted that to start a regional program there must be a demand for services, a cooperative climate and a stable financial base.

A description of some of the types of services which have been successfully offered through RSEPs, ESAs, and informal cooperative arrangements between LEAs, and interagency collaborative efforts is provided in the following sections.

Non-Special Education Services

Jones, O'Malley, and Kirchoff (1983) described an on-going cooperative approach to in-service training involving 3 districts and 3,000 students in an intermediate unit in Illinois. Planners were employed full-time to develop the training. The authors said that the success of the program was in the participatory decision-making model employed. The planning process was described as participatory and not controlled by a single LEA or individual. The result was said to be better in-service programming for teachers in St. Clair County, Illinois.

Gryzymkowski and Kelley (1984) described how 4 small school systems in Connecticut minimized the effects of declining enrollments by sharing teachers, students, and resources. The collaborative effort encouraged long range planning and enabled the system "to expand and diversify the curriculum without incurring proportional increases in costs" (p. 221).

The main collaborative services included vocational education, guidance, and shared planning and decision making. The authors noted that scheduling and transportation were the major problems in implementing the collaborative efforts, but those problems were not considered "insurmountable" (p. 721). Allsop, Baker, and Briere (1985) reported on how an Indiana Collaborative helped foreign language teachers in a wide area surrounding Indianapolis to keep up-to-date in their fields, have low-cost opportunities for professional development, and increased professional contact with colleagues.

Special Education Services

Collella and Foster (1973) wrote about forty-seven BOCES units which served over 30,000 handicapped children in New York in 1972-73. Virtually all categories of special education students were served. The above authors contended that BOCES, at that time, were among the best examples of districts pooling their resources to provide services to handicapped children in the nation. These programs successfully met the special education needs of rural and suburban LEAs throughout the state. Only large urban areas were excluded from participation in BOCES programs. The BOCES were regarded as an extension of LEA services. They could either offer those services solely or purchase them from their BOCES. BOCES provided the services when two or more districts initiated a request stating that they could not offer the services effectively. Thus it appeared that it was the BOCES ability to respond speedily to LEA needs and requests, that made their service delivery model most effective. Sarachon-Deily, Medved, Ognibene, Lyon, and

Grippen (1984) reported that besides special education services to handicapped children, BOCES were mandated to provide in-service training to special education and general education staff who worked with handicapped children. Their study described how a special BOCES grant helped 15 rural school districts in New York improve their in-service training programs.

Pre-School Services - Nelkin (1983) described collaborative efforts in several states which provided health and education programs to preschool handicapped (PSH) students. One state developed a comprehensive resource file of state services to PSH students. Several states reported the development of inter-agency agreements for the identification, evaluation, and provision of appropriate services to high-risk infants. In one state, physical therapy services were contracted between a crippled children's agency and cooperating area LEAs. Overall, Nelkin noted that she found many collaborative activities in various states among health, social service, and education agencies which often resulted in improved services to PSH students and their families.

Vocational Services - Gill (1985) reported that twelve school districts in Washington state cooperated to combine secondary special education and vocational education to improve services to the handicapped. The collaborative effort involved developing cooperative agreements between LEAs and community agencies, organizing parent input groups, and providing on-site consultative services by program managers. Once service delivery systems were developed, a major activity of the effort was the development of IEPs by cooperative teams with

professionals from different departments and agencies. The cooperative programming was implemented because studies in 1984 showed that unemployment of former special education students was about 40%, and that 70% of those employed earned less than \$10,000 per year. Gill concluded that the data indicated that cooperative efforts between special education and vocational education had quantitatively improved services, provided more options to LEAs and increased enrollment after only 1 year of collaboration.

A study by Hyppolitus and Bregman (1983), which examined the impact of cooperative state vocational education agreements in 17 states, indicated that those agreements did have a positive influence on the delivery of vocational services to handicapped youth. Areas most effected included teacher training, improved curriculum and increased sharing of resources.

A feasibility study by Peace and Lovelace (1983) concluded that cooperative vocational education among small school districts in Texas was needed to provide comprehensive services. Although Texas Education Regulations permitted cooperative vocational education programs, the state lacked standards which allowed for the implementation, maintenance, monitoring, and evaluation of programs. Among the recommendations of the study were that the Texas SEA develop program and certification standards, assign SEA personnel to oversee cooperative vocational function; to field test a cooperative model; and to establish minimal requirements for financial assistance.

The financial arrangements of ESAs will be discussed in the following section.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Funding Procedures

Researchers have consistently reported that regional education programs utilize a diversity of funding sources to operate their various programs (NSPRA, 1971; Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Squires, 1974; The ECOB, 1975; Stephens, 1979a; Levis, 1983). These studies have reported that regional programs often utilize a combination of local, state and federal funds. Some regional programs also receive private funds to support their activities. Squires (1974) reported that forty-four regional directors in his national survey responded that their major source of funding was local taxes; twenty-one indicated state funds; ten, federal funds; and three directors reported taxes raised through the regional program. Hughes and Achilles (1971) reported that regional programs most commonly raise funds by charging tuition for pupils served. The NSPRA (1971) has contended that regional programs have a competitive advantage in accessing public and private funds, since they are more visible, and often have specialists concentrating on securing financial resources. Regional programs are often regarded as desirable funnels of public and private grants by agency officials because they are perceived as a more efficient utilization of these funds than single agencies.

In 1977-78, Stephens (1979a) found regional educational networks had taxing authority in only five of 31 states he studied. All revenues raised in those 31 states were from property taxes. However, it varied in each of the states how those funds could be used. Eighteen regional networks received state funding to operate their programs. A formula

based on need and the cost of operations was used most often in the states reporting. Twenty-four of the regional networks received federal funds, which most often flowed through the state. There were 18 federal funding sources reported in those regional programs. Special district ESAs reported 38% of their revenues came from within the ESA; 41% from the state; 18% from federal sources; and 3% from other sources. Cooperative networks reported 36% of their revenue came from within the ESAs; 28% from state sources; 28% from federal sources; and 8% from other sources.

Levis (1983) reported that most Regionalized ESAs had stable budgetary sources which were contained within SEA budgets. Stephens (1979a) and Helge (1984b) noted that Cooperative ESAs often had unstable funding sources and some constantly face the threat of dissolution.

Economy of Scale Factor

Connors (1980) suggested that funding patterns must relate to the objectives of the regional programs. He asserted that the justification for providing regional programming lies in economy of scale factors, first described in educational terms by Dr. Roe L. Johns. In Connors' discussion of Johns' theory, he explained that larger school districts could produce superior levels of educational programs due to higher enrollments. In these systems, pupils would fill services to their maximum levels, thus promoting cost efficiency. Conversely, small and rural divisions have fewer students, thus fewer services. The economy of scale factor is relevant to the present study because special education would often be considered a programmatic and financial burden

in small and rural school districts unless regional services are provided. Connors further demonstrated in his study how TREES, a regional residential program for the emotionally disturbed, in Virginia, operated at maximum financial efficiency with exactly 25 students. At a lower, or even a higher number of students, the program would lose money, because budgets and operating costs were fixed.

Helge (1981) reported that small school districts had higher expenses for special education costs than urban or suburban districts. She concluded that rural RSEPs generally offer more services at reduced costs than LEA-only alternatives. However, transportation in these programs often costs more than in LEAs.

Several sources have concluded that regional education programs offer high quality programs at reduced costs (Rossmiller, 1970; NSPRA, 1971; NSBA, 1979; LeBrasseur, 1979; Spellman, et al., 1980; Helge, 1984b; Skirtic, et al., 1985).

Assessment of Costs

Lindstrom (1978) has listed five ways that LEAs share the costs of regional programs. The alternatives are that each LEA:

1. Is assessed a portion of each program or employee
2. Is assessed according to their pupil population
3. Is assessed according to the pupil enrollment only in the regional programs
4. Pays a flat fee for regional services
5. Sets aside a percentage of their annual budget for funding regional programs (p.32)

Connors (1980) has described three methods for sharing costs among LEAs. Percentage sharing is when each LEA pays a percentage of the charges to the ESA based on overall district enrollment or previously

established pupil enrollment in the ESA. Connors stated that this system is the easiest to administer, but the most inequitable, since enrollment varies considerably among LEAs. Per-pupil funding is when each LEA pays the ESA only according to actual pupil enrollment. The author states that per-pupil funding is more equitable, more difficult to administer, and frequently causes budget deficits and surpluses. Most districts, he reported, use Combination funding, whereby districts are assessed a per-pupil fee to cover variable expenditures, and a percentage fee for fixed costs (administration, fixed charges). He concluded that it is best for a regional program to utilize a flexible billing procedure.

Stephens (1979a) demonstrated that in most regional programs, the local costs were most often allocated on a per-pupil basis. General administration services were most often provided on a no-charge basis, since these were usually funded by other sources (state, federal). Vuillemot, 1967; Adamson, 1968; Hughes and Achilles, 1971; and the NSPRA, 1971, have found that LEAs frequently paid administrative fees for regional programs. Stefonek (1973) described how Wisconsin's CESAs (in 1973) designated between 7-10% of their budgets for administrative costs, such as for the director and secretary. Harmon (1984) reported that CESA's administrative costs were lowered from an average of \$50,000 each to \$25,000 each, by the state legislature, due to perceived accountability problems.

Fiscal Management

Squires (1974) found that a fiscal agent is present in most regional programs. Connors (1980) stated that formal regional programs need a fiscal agent to exercise cooperative budget planning, billing, and management procedures. However, in informal organizations, where a single LEA offers and bills for the services, a fiscal agent representative is not necessary.

The ECOB (1975) asserted that financial management skills are needed to operate organizations such as regional education programs. Financial management systems must be developed to help translate funds to services. There is also a need for sound decision-making procedures. The regional board must oversee all financial operations of the programs. Fiscal agent LEAs are either appointed on a permanent or rotating term basis to handle routing functions e.g., payroll, disbursements. Often a treasurer of a county, city or town is appointed to be the recipient of funds. Lindstrom (1978) stated that the budget for regional programs is often first developed by the regional director and subject to approval by the board, and most regional programs are subject to an annual audit of their finances.

Financial Arrangements in Selected States

Collella and Foster (1973) and Sarachan-Deily, et al. (1984) showed that BOCES funding in New York was primarily generated from state reimbursements to local school districts according to their participation level in regional programs. State money is also allocated to LEAs to help pay the administrative costs of regional programs.

Lindstrom (1978) outlined the ways that funds for South Dakota's regional programs came from a combination of local, state, and federal funds. Local funds for RSEPs were collected through property taxes. State funds were collected and paid directly to regional programs for special education, pupil-personnel services and vocational services, and federal funds were paid to regional programs for federally funded services.

Stephens (1979a) described expenditure and fiscal management procedures in regional programs in the 31 states he studied in 1974-75 and 1977-78. Over half the directors reported expenditures for special education, administration and media and library services. The four biggest expenditure categories (in order of spending) were special education, vocational education, federal programs and general administration. Together these four accounted for 66% of the expenditures in twenty-six categories reported. Most regional programs had borrowing authority, and 63% of them borrowed some money in 1974-75 for operating expenses or capital outlay. The SEA was involved in developing the ESA budget in seven states and approving the budget in 15 states. However, regional directors provided input to regional budgets in most states. Twenty-four states required regional programs to follow uniform accounting procedures similar to those followed in LEAs. Fourteen states required SEA audits in regional programs. In 17 states, the ESA was the direct recipient of state funds, which meant that state funds flowed directly to the ESA, rather than first flowing through the LEAs. No states had regional programs as the direct recipients of federal funds, as those funds initially flowed to the SEAs. The total

expenditures in 1977-78 for special district ESAs (n=181), ranged from a low of \$470,000 in Illinois to a high of \$8,905,000 in Pennsylvania. In cooperative ESAs (n=57) the range was from \$190,000 (Ohio) to \$4,741,000 (Connecticut). In regionalized ESAs operated by the SEA (n=6), the expenditure range was \$131,000 to \$1,061,000.

Financial Advantages and Disadvantages

Financial problems and issues were frequently cited as one of the major concerns of personnel in regional programs. The NSPRA (1971) Squires (1974), Lindstrom (1978) and Stephens (1979a) reported that regional directors thought that insufficient state and local funds were among the biggest problems facing regional programs. The NSPRA has emphasized that regional programs must have a financial base to operate their services. Skirtic, et al. (1985) noted that although LEAs usually save money, in comparison to other alternatives by participating in regional programs, the costs of those programs are still perceived as being very high. Jealousies by LEA personnel have been known to occur. Some LEA participants perceive that ESAs "get all the money". Due to this perception, there is a need for regional programs to demonstrate cost effectiveness.

Hughes and Achilles (1971) have suggested that regional programs should have the power to levy taxes, be fiscally independent, yet still receive state aid. Although this situation may approach the ideal, it is practiced in few, if any, states. Stephens (1971g) believes that an overriding question to ask regarding ESAs is: How should regional programs be financed? A state system should not be implemented until

adequate planning has occurred regarding this detail. Another important question is: Who should be accountable for regional finances? Decisions about whether the main funding sources are state or local will usually influence that determination.

Squires (1974), in a study conducted prior to PL 94-142, surveyed education directors and regional directors in 35 states, and identified perceived criteria by those respondents for effective financial management of regional special education programs. Among those criteria were the following:

1. Guaranteed financial foundation
2. Program-oriented expenditure plan
3. Sufficient financial base to operate comprehensive educational and related services
4. Financial commitment by the state
5. Regional program controls the funds it has been allocated (pp. 59, 66-68)

However, in the same study he also identified the major problems of regional programming as reported by the above administrators. The major problems were:

1. Insufficient funds to operate services
2. Lack of state support
3. Overdependence on federal funds
4. Lack of taxing authority
5. Inadequate local funds (p. 99)

Other researchers have also commented on unstable and insufficient funding as a major problem of regional programs. The NSPRA (1971) noted that many regional programs fail when original funding sources are withdrawn. That association recommended that regional programs depend largely on local funds for long-range stability. However, local funds for regional programs are often difficult to obtain. The NSPRA (1971) and Stephens (1979c) have noted that costs of regional programs are

often regarded as excessively high in comparison to the number of students served. Many LEAs are resentful of paying high costs for services to students they seldom or never see.

SUMMARY

The ECOB (1975) and Helge (1984) have emphasized that regional programs are not a panacea for all school districts. LEAs must weigh the advantages with the disadvantages before joining. However, Stefonek (1973) has concluded that despite the disadvantages, there are usually more advantages in participating in regional education programs.

Stephens (1979h) discussed some of the financial advantages and disadvantages of cooperative educational programs reported by the participants in his study. In voluntary cooperatives, each LEA can keep its own autonomy, can purchase only the services it needs, and can renew/or not renew participation annually. Most cooperative programs are highly accountable to LEAs, thus highly sensitive to their needs. They can often function without outside intervention. There also is the perception that cooperatives help to improve partnerships and long range planning capabilities with SEAs. Some participants perceived them as being capable of helping to remove certain inequities of school funding formulas. Others felt that they can promote statewide research, evaluation and dissemination of services and ideas.

The reported weaknesses of voluntary cooperatives, however, are also considerable. Most are not statewide in scope, contributing to their inability to meet the needs of most LEAs in the state. Many organizations were isolated from others in the state. State provisions

regarding membership requirements, and operating procedures are often absent, resulting in haphazard development of these systems. The role and function of the executive officer is not defined in legislation or SEA regulation, thus creating added ambiguity in that position. In some ESAs, the executive is the regional director, in others it is a head superintendent.

Funding in most cooperative ESAs is from local, state, and federal sources, making organizational survival indefinite from year to year. Skirtic, et al. (1985) noted that concerns about funding often become over-emphasized in ESAs, since the primary benefits of cooperative programs are improved services and improved quality, not reduced costs.

Most regionalized ESAs offer few direct pupil services to LEAs, reducing their ability to improve either state or local needs. A majority of those ESAs have limited staffs, reducing their ability to efficiently utilize such personnel. Most devote a relatively small portion of their budget to staff development. Some regionalized ESAs may create an added layer of bureaucracy for LEAs or between LEAs and SEAs. A regional program could also become a competitor for scarce local resources if it receives funds previously sent to LEAs for other educational purposes.

When LEA or SEA organizational components and communications capabilities are weak, then regional organization problems are more likely. The operation of regional services may detract from and clash with the SEAs role in providing educational leadership.

Since Cooperative ESA agreements are often short-term, they are highly susceptible to changes in personnel and boards. Frequent

personnel and governance changes threatens continuity and long-term planning capabilities. There may be a lack of interest by personnel in cooperative regional programs due to the lack of permanent governance and organizational structure. The recruitment and retention of personnel capabilities tends to be reduced because of the short-term nature of cooperatives. In some situations, the legal constraints on regional programs can seriously limit their effectiveness.

Squires (1974) concluded that new ways must be found to allow for more pupil access to regional programs. Transportation problems must be overcome. He suggested that there should be increased emphasis on mobility of services (itinerant staff) rather than transporting students to services. Recruitment and staff development capabilities for highly specialized staff must also be significantly enhanced. For effective programming, regional programs need good leadership, guaranteed funding, highly specialized staff and a keen ability to plan for and meet local needs. States need clarifying legislation and guidelines regarding regional roles, powers, and boundaries.

Despite the problems and unresolved issues, Squires also perceived the advantages of regional programs as far outweighing the disadvantages. Squires noted in 1974 that regional programs were well established and rapidly growing throughout the United States due to their viability. He suggested that the range of services they can offer is virtually unlimited. In some cases regional programs, of the future, he predicted, will be virtually mandated in some states due to continued financial burdens and legal requirements. He also envisioned the role of special education programs as continuing to have an increased

significance in regional programs. He speculated that many states will eventually clarify legal and control issues currently confronting many regional programs. The loss of LEA power, and other disadvantages, he contended, will be more than justified in considering the long-range benefits of regional education programs.

The research methods, data gathering techniques, and the procedures used to analyze the data and reach the findings of the present study, of RSEPs in Virginia, are discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Rationale

The purpose of this study is to provide descriptive data regarding the functioning of the nine formal RSEPs in Virginia. Stephens' (1979a) four central characteristics i.e., legal structure, organization, services, and financial arrangements were deemed important for guiding the structure of the research methodology because:

- (1) They have been most frequently cited by previous ESA and RSEP researchers, particularly by Stephens (1979a), whose work the present study is based upon.
- (2) They were cited in the Ellison (1983) Needs-Survey of Regional Directors and SEA personnel as areas which were important to participants in the field.
- (3) They allowed the researcher to gather data in an organized and consistent manner.
- (4) They provided a logical and organized format for present and future participants to use in decision-making activities.

The following research questions guided the design and implementation of the study:

1. a. How can the existing Regional Special Education Programs (RSEPs) in Virginia be described according to Stephens' (1979a) four central characteristics?

- b. What are the commonalities and differences among the RSEPs in Virginia according to their four central characteristics?
2.
 - a. What are the perceptions of the regional participants regarding factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs as they presently operate in Virginia?
 - b. What are the commonalities and differences among the participant decision-makers regarding their perceptions of factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia?

Approach - The approach for studying the RSEPs in Virginia is based on the framework and methodology developed by E. Thomas Stephens in nine published studies of the American Association of School Administrators (AASA), for the United States Office of Education, and for the State Departments of Education of Kentucky and Texas. In 1979 the studies were republished by his own company - Stephens Associates. Four reports in this series were considered to be highly useful in formulating the framework for the present study:

Report I (Stephens, 1979a) - Education Service Agencies; Status and Trends - In this study, Stephens compares policy, programmatic, financial and demographic information of regional organizations in 36 states.

Report VII (Stephens, 1979g) - Major Policy Issues Surrounding the Education Service Agency Movement and a Proposed Research and Development Agenda - This study summarizes the previous literature

pertaining to the development of the regional education movement in the United States and uses the literature base as a source for the derivation of significant policy questions pertaining to legal framework, governance, programs and services, and financial factors.

Report III (Stephens, 1979c) - The Establishment and Abolishment of a Statewide Network of Education Service Agencies; The Kentucky Experience - This is a case study of state officials and superintendents who were involved in a state supported regional education effort which had become defunct prior to the investigation.

Report VI (Stephens, 1979f) - Factors Influencing Local Education Participation in the Programs and Services of Education Service Agencies in the State of Texas - This study is an analysis of the factors influencing local participation in regional programs in Texas, which utilizes the research framework established through Stephens' previous studies. It is also a comparative study of the perceptions of decision-makers at various levels of regional programming in Texas.

Appropriateness - The approach utilized by the present author is thought to be most appropriate for addressing the problem of the lack of descriptive information about Virginia's RSEPs because:

1. It provided data about the four central characteristics of each of the nine RSEPs which were in operation at the end of the 1985-86 school year.

2. It described the commonalities and differences of the four central characteristics of Virginia's RSEPs.
3. It provided data about the perceptions of RSEP participants in Virginia.
4. It described the commonalities and differences of the perceptions of RSEP participants in Virginia.
5. It will provide a reference tool for RSEP participants to utilize in making future policy, program and financial decisions regarding regional programming in Virginia.

The study was conducted in 11 phases as listed below:

1. Research methodology designed.
2. Documents collected and interviews held with SEA officials.
3. Demographic and geographic data collected.
4. RSEP Surveys designed.
5. RSEP Surveys sent, collected and analyzed.
6. Reliability study conducted.
7. RSEP site visitations and interviews conducted.
8. Follow-up telephone interviews conducted.
9. Case studies written.
10. Analysis performed.
11. Findings, conclusions, and recommendations written.

A description of the research methodology and rationale for the procedures used by the present author is provided in the following sections.

1. Study Plan - The research methodology was designed with an emphasis on building a constructive replication, appropriate for

Virginia's RSEPs, of the framework and methodology used in four of Stephens' (1979a, c, f and g) previous studies on regional programming in various states. Stephens identified the four central characteristics of regional education programs (ESAs) and provided a usable framework for describing the regional status within a given state based on those characteristics. Two of his studies particularly described RSEP programs and issues within two states i.e., Kentucky (Stephens, 1979c) and Texas (Stephens, 1979f).

Other sources were also included in the design of the interview, data collection and survey design. A description of the work plan written in 1984, and approved by the present author's dissertation committee in December 1985, is provided in Table 5.

2. SEA Data Collection and Interviews - Data collection and interviews with State Department of Education officials have been a part of the research methodology regarding regional programs in various studies. SEA offices often contain information about the historical documents which led to the enabling legislation, historical background and recent information about regional education governance, organization, programs and finances. SEA officials, who were involved in regional programs since the planning stages, as well as those who have been involved in the development and recent operation of those programs often have valuable insights and perceptions, and thus have frequently been interviewed as part of regional education studies.

Stephens (1979 a, c and f) collected data and interviewed officials from SEAs in his national and statewide studies of Kentucky and Texas. He collected and compared the SEA documents about the four

Table 5
RSEP Central Characteristics Survey Design

Type of Information Needed	Information Source	Citation	Survey Format
<u>General Characteristics:</u>			
0.1 Current names of RSEPs and participating LEAs	All information can be obtained from the Virginia Department of Education official documents and reports.	Information on the general characteristics of ESAs has been included in the following studies: Squires, 1973; Stefonek, 1973; Uxer, 1974; Educ. Collaborative of Boston, 1975; and Stephens, 1979 a, c, f.	Items on this section will appear in narrative descriptions tables, figures and maps.
0.2 Names, titles of current personnel in LEAs with responsibilities for RSEPs (Supervisors, Supt., Board Members)			
0.3 Names of current Regional Directors			
0.4 Names, titles and responsibilities of SEA personnel assigned RSEP responsibilities			
0.5 ADM of each participating LEA			
0.6 Demographic information on each RSEP			
0.7 Geographic information on each RSEP			

Table 5 (Continued)

Type of Information Needed	Information Source	Citation	Survey Format
<u>Legal Characteristics of RSEPs</u>			
1.1 Code of Virginia	Items 2.1 through 2.5 can be obtained from reviewing official documents and reports.	Stephens (1979a) reported on the legal characteristics of REPs in 31 states.	All items in this section will be phrased in open-ended questions. The answers, then, will be recorded narratively by either quoting or paraphrasing from the sources used.
1.2 Enabling legislation	Information on the function of the SEA in governing the RSEPs can be obtained by reviewing the job responsibilities of officials at the SEA	In Stephens (1979g), he described important issues relating to legal characteristics. In his studies on Kentucky and Texas (1979c,f) he described the legal code, historical development regulations and functions of the State Board and SEA in the respective states.	
1.3 Planning and historical documents related to development of REPs in Virginia.	and by reviewing the state special education regulations.	Other studies on legal characteristics are found in the following: NSPRA, 1971; Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Rosati, 1983; Squires, 1974; Uxer, 1974; Stutz, 1974; and The Education Collaborative of Greater Boston, 1975.	
1.4 State Regulations			
1.5 Functions of State Board			
1.6 Functions of SEA in governing			

Table 5 (Continued)

Type of Information Needed	Information Source	Citation	Survey Format
<u>Governance and Organization of RSEPs :</u>			
2.1 Purposes and objectives of each RSEP	Item 2.1 can be obtained by reviewing the needs studies and agreements for forming each RSEP. Items 2.2-2.4 can be obtained by reviewing the By-Laws and policy manuals of each program. Items 2.5-2.7 can be obtained by reviewing administrative documents related to each program and by interviewing administrative personnel at the LEA and Regional levels. Information on Annual Plan (2.8) will be reviewed for its contents.	The role and function of the Joint Board and the Operational procedures of the REPs were analyzed in the following studies: Educational Collaborative of Greater Boston, 1975; Connors, 1980; Adamson, 1968; NSPRA, 1971; Squires, 1974; Stefonek, 1973; Duncan, 1979; Stephens, 1979 a, c, f; Virginia Dept. of Education-JOPAJOS Regulations, 1981; and Virginia Dept. of Education-Guidelines, 1982.	All items in this section will be phrased in open-questions. The answers will be recorded narratively, or in diagrammatic form e.g., organizational or other flow charts.
2.2 Function of Joint Board			
2.3 Membership requirements and composition of each Joint Board			
2.4 Operational procedures of each Joint Board			
2.5 Organizational Chart (relationship between Joint Board, LEA Boards, LEA and Regional Personnel)			
2.6 Roles and responsibilities of administrators associated with RSEPs at the LEA and regional level			
2.7 Responsibilities of regional director			
2.8 Presence of annual plan			

Table 5 (Continued)

Type of Information Needed	Information Source	Citation	Survey Format
<u>Programs and Services:</u>			
3.1 Names and description of Pupil Services	Most information could be obtained by reviewing reports submitted by the RSEP to the SEA such as: --proposals for funding --program and financial reports --annual 6 year plan and update Other information will be obtained by reviewing documents and interviewing personnel in each RSEP.	Information on programs and services of RSEPs have been contained in studies by: Education Collaborative of Greater Boston, 1975; Uxer, 1974; Tamblyn, 1971; Stefonek, 1973; NSPRA, 1971; Stephens, 1979a; and Virginia Dept. of Education Guidelines, 1982	Questions about programs and services will be phrased in both open-ended questions and short-answer questions
3.2 Pupil enrollment			
3.3 Names and descriptions of administrative services			
3.4 Names and description of personnel services			
3.5 Names and descriptions of community services			
3.6 Other services			
<u>Financial Arrangements:</u>			
4.1 Sources of funds to operate RSEPs (LEA, SEA, Federal, Private)	Items 4.1-4.10 can be obtained by reviewing financial reports submitted by the RSEPs to the SEA. Items 4.1-4.10 can also be obtained by reviewing financial documents and minutes of joint board meetings and by interviewing personnel from each	The following authors reviewed financial arrangements in studies of RSEPs: Squires, 1974; Connors, 1980; NSPRA, 1971; Stephens, 1979 a,c,f and g; Hughes and Achilles, 1971; Lindstrom, 1978; Vuillemot, 1967; Adamson, 1968; and The Education Collaborative	Information pertaining to financial arrangements shall be gathered through open-ended interview, as well as budget forms which will both be developed by the author
4.2 Amounts allocated to each RSEP by each funding source.			
4.3 Budget categories and amounts for each RSEP			
4.4 Costs for pupil services			

Table 5 (Continued)

Type of Information Needed	Information Source	Citation	Survey Format
4.5 Costs for administrative services	RSEP. The annual plan submitted by each RSEP to the Virginia SEA is expected to contain information on financial arrangements.	of Greater Boston, 1975	
4.6 Costs for personnel services			
4.7 Costs for other services			
4.8 Reimbursement procedures by LEAs			
4.9 Audit procedures			
4.10 Joint Board procedures for approving expenditures.			

characteristics of ESAs and was able to write about certain commonalities and differences of regional programs in various states in his 1979a study. In his studies of Kentucky (Stephens, 1979c) and Texas (1979f), he interviewed SEA participants as well as obtaining survey data from them in order to compare perceptions of different participant groups (including RSEP participants).

Various other researchers have collected documents from state departments of education and interviewed SEA officials as part of state studies of regional education programs (Snell, 1973; Stefonek, 1973; Squires, 1974; Lindstrom, 1979; Firestone, 1981; Rosati, 1983; Harmon and Bowles, 1984; Kirmer, et al., 1984).

For the present study interviews were conducted in January and in March, 1986, regarding the enabling legislation and historical development of RSEPs in Virginia with Mr. James T. Micklen, former Virginia Director of Special Education Programs. Of particular assistance were reports he provided about the plan to establish RSEPs in Virginia (Commonwealth of Virginia, 1977); the regulations for operating regional programs (Virginia Department of Education, 1981); the guidelines for establishing RSEPs in Virginia (Virginia Department of Education, 1982a) and the SEA memorandum authorizing RSEP funding from Dr. S. John Davis, Virginia Superintendent for Public Instruction (Virginia Department of Education, 1981).

Documents related to the funding patterns of the SEA regarding the RSEPs from 1979 through 1985-86 were provided by Mr. Gerald H. Mathews, Virginia Supervisor of Special Projects and Mr. Anthony Faina, Virginia Supervisor for Private School Assistance. Mr. Faina also provided

copies of the rate applications of each regional program in Virginia active in 1985-86. This information was cleared through a letter sent by Dr. Austin Tuning, Virginia Director of Administration and Finance for Special Education Programs (see Appendix B).

The Virginia special education regulations (Virginia Department of Education, 1984) were provided by Dr. Les Jones, Acting Virginia Director of Special Education Programs. Dr. Jones also provided a letter (see Appendix C) for the author to send to RSEP participants endorsing, and encouraging them to provide information and cooperate with the study.

Documents and interviews regarding the programmatic aspects of Virginia's RSEPs were provided by Dr. Pat Poplin, Virginia Supervisor of Programs for the Mentally Retarded and Mr. David Aldrich, Virginia Supervisor of Programs for the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped.

Data about the characteristics of LEAs participating in RSEPs in Virginia were provided by clerical personnel in the Division of Management Information Services of the Virginia Department of Education (1986 a, b and c). Information collected from this office included enrollment of LEAs special education enrollment, LEA expenditure and composite indices, and annual per-pupil expenditures.

3. Demography and Geography - Information about the demographic and geographic characteristics of regional education programs has been described by various authors (Uxer, 1974; ECOB; 1975; Helge, 1981 and 1984b; and Skirtic et al., 1985). These authors have reported that demographic and geographic factors significantly influence LEA participants' perceptions of the need to participate in RSEPs,

particularly where low-incidence handicapped children are involved and program costs, or potential program costs are high. Several regional education studies have included data about the demographic and geographic factors of ESAs and RSEPs including those by Stefonek, 1973; Snell, 1973; Lindstrom, 1978; Stephens, 1979a, c and f; Firestone, 1981; and Kirmer, et al., 1984).

Demographic and geographic data for the present study were collected from the United States Department of Commerce - Bureau of the Census (1984) and the Virginia Department of Highways and Transportation (1986). The data included 1980 and 1984 population figures and trends, land area and population density, and maps of the localities of the RSEPs.

4. RSEP Surveys Designed - Some items on the Virginia RSEP Surveys were obtained from Stephens' (1979f) study of ESAs in Texas. Stephens sent surveys to participants in 20 regional programs throughout Texas regarding incentives and deterrents to regional participation (Appendix D), actual and desired services (Appendix E) and factors influencing LEA participation in ESAs (Appendix F). His findings showed the means (\bar{x}) of each item of his survey by region and compared regional means with statewide means. Combined with the state documents Stephens collected, and the numerous interviews with SEA officials, he used the survey data to produce recommendations for ESA programming in Texas, along the lines of their four central characteristics of ESAs.

The author of the present study in Virginia also designed a survey (Appendix G) and administered it to participants of nine RSEPs in Virginia and selected SEA officials. The Virginia RSEP Survey was

designed along the dimensions of the four central characteristics of RSEPs as outlined by Stephens (1979a). In the present survey, the terms incentives and deterrents were renamed advantages and disadvantages of RSEP participation. Several of the items on Stephens' survey of incentives and deterrents e.g., all costs paid by SEA/federal sources, and adequacy of minority persons on regional staff and boards, were not considered pertinent to Virginia's RSEPs.

Several of the items on incentives and deterrent sections were included on the present author's advantages and disadvantages section but reworded for appropriateness in the Virginia context. Other items, pertaining to advantages relevant to Virginia's RSEPs, were added to the present study. For example, survey item (h), on cooperation, has been added to the present study due to the importance that interagency researchers such as Johnson, McLaughlin and Christiansen (1982) have placed on good working relations in any inter-organizational effort.

Stefonek (1973), Weatherman (1983) and Skirtic, et al. (1985) have noted that improved in-service was a major advantage in RSEPs. Survey statement (i) has been added to determine the extent to which participants perceived in-service training as an advantage in Virginia's RSEP programs.

Stefonek (1973); Stephens (1979a) and Helge (1984b) have all concluded that the advantages of operating regional programs far outweighed the disadvantages. Survey question (j) has been added to determine the extent to which Virginia's RSEP participants agreed with the above three authors' conclusions.

A format difference is also found between Stephens' "incentives and deterrents" and the present study's "advantages and disadvantages." Stephens listed all factors on his survey as neutral; participants decided whether they were incentives or deterrents. On the present study, the author used conclusions drawn from the literature to group regional factors as either advantages or disadvantages, and asked participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements.

Disadvantages added to the present study included (a) loss of LEA autonomy occurred, which was described in the literature by Uxer (1974) and Skirtic, et al. (1985); (b) increased competition between LEAs occurs, which was described by Connors (1980) and Helge (1981); (f) personnel arrangements were complicated, which was described by (Stefonek (1973) and the ECOB (1975); (g) personnel had less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs, which was described by Helge (1984b); and (h) RSEPs were perceived as unstable from year to year, which was described by the NSPRA (1971) and Helge (1984b).

Despite the fact that Stephens (1979f) described factors relating all four characteristics of ESAs in Texas in his study, he did not include separate sections in his survey regarding Governance, Organization, or Financial Arrangements. However, Stephens did include items concerning each of the four characteristics dispersed throughout other survey questions.

However in the present RSEP Survey, the author has included a separate section on Governance, Organization, and Financial Factors to ascertain Virginia's RSEP participants' perceptions on various topics

and issues discussed in the literature and/or emphasized by participants in the author's Needs Survey (Ellison, 1983).

In Governance statements a-d, the author attempted to determine whether participants perceived that RSEP regulations are sufficiently clarified, and whether they perceived that SEA officials should involve RSEP personnel more in planning and development of regional programs. Uxer (1973), Connors (1980) and Stephens (1979a and g) have noted that ESAs operated best when regulations were clarified and participants involved in regional planning. Governance statements e-g deal with participants' perceptions of control issues among SEA and LEA personnel involving RSEPs, the importance of which have been emphasized by Uxer (1974) and Connors (1980). Statement (h) was added by the author to determine if RSEP participants perceived that an SEA Administrator of RSEPs might assist in clarifying regulatory and control issues.

Squires (1974) and Stephens (1979a) have determined that there are many models of operating ESAs. Governance statements (i) and (j) have been included to determine whether participants perceived a need by the Virginia State Board of Education to include recognition of informal RSEPs along with formal RSEPs. The importance of this distinction has been described by the ECOB (1975).

Organizational statements a-f have been included to determine participants' perceptions of the activities and effectiveness of the joint board. Stefonek (1973) and Connors (1980) have suggested that regional programs managed by joint boards often result in effective management.

Several studies have noted the importance of the regional director and the need to clarify his/her role (ECOB, 1975; Duncan, 1979; Connors, 1980). Survey statements a-j have been included to determine Virginia participants' perceptions of the clarity of the regional director's role in RSEP programs.

All statements on the Financial Factors section of the RSEP Survey relate to the perceived adequacy of SEA funds, and SEA administration of RSEPs in Virginia. These areas have been cited by the NSPRA (1971), Squires (1974), Lindstrom (1978) and Stephens (1979a), and participants of Virginia's RSEP programs (Ellison, 1983) as among the most important aspects of regional education programs.

Stephens (1979f) included a survey in his Texas study on participants' "actual use" and "desired use" for specific services. He then, computed the region by region, and statewide means (\bar{x}) to determine where discrepancies existed between "actual use" and "desired use." Stephens needed to distinguish between actual and desired use because he did not specifically study the services offered in each region. The present author did not need to ask participants to indicate "actual use" of services, since he knew what services were offered through site-visitations and document collection. In the present study, the author has asked participants to determine whether they thought specific special education and non-special education services should be offered in their RSEPs. Non-special education services were listed because Virginia RSEPs have mainly been established to serve special education students (Virginia Department of Education, 1981). The author wanted to determine the extent to which participants thought that non-

special education services should be included in Virginia's regional education programs, as occurs in other states (Stefonek, 1973; Stephens, 1979a; Turner, 1980).

In designing the survey questions for the study, the author used Stephens' (1979f) RSEP survey questions, others found in the literature, and suggestions offered by RSEP officials and SEA officials during the Needs Study conducted by the author (Ellison, 1983), and in interviews with those participants throughout 1984 (the planning year for the study).

Once a draft RSEP survey was designed, it was sent to the author's research committee members at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (all of them had had previous experience with ESAs). After the committee had reviewed the questions, the author revised and printed enough copies of the Survey for distribution to RSEP participants and SEA Officials.

5. RSEP Surveys Administered - The author identified the executive superintendent and regional director of each RSEP in Virginia (Appendix H) through documents available from the Virginia Department of Education and sent him/her a copy of the endorsement letter from Acting Special Education Program Director Dr. Les Jones explaining the purposes of the study, the survey, the data collection procedures and the upcoming site-visitations.

Once clearance was received from the superintendents to proceed on the study, the regional directors also received a copy of the Jones endorsement letter, and another letter requesting the names, addresses and phone numbers of the joint board members, superintendents and

special education supervisors of each region. All lists were received by mid-April 1986. The printing of the Virginia RSEP Surveys was also completed by April, subsequently the author addressed an envelope to each RSEP participant and included the RSEP Survey, a letter introducing and explaining the study (Appendix I), the endorsement letter from Dr. Les Jones, a stamped self-addressed envelope, and a complimentary teabag.

Survey packages were sent by May 1 to 168 RSEP participants (see Table 6) including 45 joint board members, 51 superintendents, 51 special education administrators, 9 regional directors, and 12 selected officials from the Virginia Department of Education. State Department officials were chosen upon the recommendation of Acting Program Director, Dr. Les Jones, after the author asked him to supply a list of special education and regular education officials at the SEA who were involved and knowledgeable about RSEPs. In order to insure that all SEA members returned their surveys, they were contacted individually by telephone, or given surveys during personal contacts at the Virginia Department of Education.

All surveys were mailed on May 1, 1986, and May 14, 1986 was the requested return date. By May 14, sixty-two surveys had been received, more than 1/3 of all surveys sent. An initial follow-up post card was sent by May 14 reminding participants to return their survey by May 28. Another 40 surveys were returned by that date, whereupon the author sent a final mail request to return all surveys by June 10. By the "final" mail request date, the author attempted to call as many of the non-respondents as possible to collect additional surveys. By June 20, ten

Table 6

Virginia's RSEP Surveys Sent/Returned

<u>Participant Group</u>	<u># Sent</u>	<u># Returned</u>	<u>Return % (Rounded to nearest 10th)</u>
Joint Board Members	45	23	51.0%
Superintendents Committee*	51	31	60.7
Special Education Administrators	51	43	84.3
Regional Directors	9	9	100
SEA Officials	12	12	100
TOTALS	168	118	70.2%

* CCEC Superintendents were included in this category, even though they served on the joint board.

additional surveys were collected bringing the total to 112. Eight subsequent surveys were collected during the author's visits to the 9 RSEP sites in late-June and throughout July 1986.

After all the follow-ups and site visitations, 118/168 surveys had been collected, or 70.2% of all respondents. The responses on each survey statement by region were tabulated, means (\bar{x}) calculated and narrative statements recorded for each region after they had all been received.

6. Reliability Study - To determine if participants' responses were reliable on two administrations of the RSEP Survey, the author randomly selected one participant from each of the nine RSEPs and one from the SEA who had returned their surveys by May 28, sent them another survey with a handwritten note stating that the author would follow-up with a telephone call to readminister the survey, to determine if their opinions remained the same or had changed. The follow-up calls were administered during the first week of June, and the results (Table 7) indicated that there was very little change in perceptions/opinions from the first to the second administration.

With 76 survey statements and 10 respondents, there were a total of 760 possible responses which needed to be checked for reliability between the first administration and the second administration. Of the 760 possible responses, 8 had been changed completely on the second administration from agree to disagree, disagree to agree, or no-response to any response, or 1.1% of all responses. There were 31 responses which either changed on the second administration from agree to tend to agree, or from disagree to tend to disagree. These changes were

Table 7

Reliability Study- Summary of Responses between 1st and
2nd Administration of RSEP Survey (% rounded off)

<u>Respondent #</u>	<u>(#) Major Shifts</u>	<u>(%) Major Shifts</u>	<u>(#) Minor Shifts</u>	<u>(%) Minor Shifts</u>	<u>(#) Consistent Responses</u>	<u>(%) Consistent Responses</u>
1	0	0	7	9.2	69	90.8
2	2	2.6	3	4.0	71	93.4
3	1	1.3	4	5.3	71	93.4
4	1	1.3	5	6.6	70	92.1
5	0	0	0	0	76	100
6	0	0	0	0	76	100
7	1	1.3	0	0	75	98.7
8	2	2.6	4	5.3	70	92.1
9	1	1.3	3	4.0	72	94.7
10	0	0	5	6.6	71	93.4
TOTALS	8	1.1	31	4.1	721	94.8

considered minor shifts of opinion and accounted for 4.1% of all responses. There were no changes on 721 responses. Consequently, 94.8% of the responses remained consistent from the first administration of the Virginia RSEP Study to the second administration (see Table 7).

Prior to the administration of the reliability study, on May 15, 1986, the author contacted Dr. E. Robert Stephens by telephone at his office to determine what reliability studies had been conducted on any of his RSEP studies. He answered that no reliability studies had been conducted, however validity studies were conducted by panels of experts including RSEP participants, SEA officials and researchers. In his opinion, no reliability studies on the RSEP survey questions were necessary. The author proceeded to conduct the studies anyway to help provide a reasonable degree of confidence in the reliability of the Virginia RSEP survey.

7. RSEP Site Visitations - After summaries concerning each of the RSEP Surveys were written, the author sent a letter to each executive superintendent and regional director to arrange a suitable date for a site visitation and interview. The author followed up the letters with telephone calls to those officials until a visitation date could be arranged for each program (see Site Visitation Schedule, Table 8). Correspondence from the executive superintendent of the PACES program (see letter, Appendix K) requested that no site visitation or interviews with personnel be conducted, since PACES had recently undergone external evaluation.

The present author sent a letter to each superintendent and regional director confirming the visit and interviews and attempted to

Table 8

RSEP Site Visitation Schedule (1986)

<u>Site</u>	<u>Date</u>
Southside Special Education Consortium.	June 17 (Tuesday)
Shenandoah Valley Regional Program.	June 23 (Monday)
Southeastern Cooperative Education Program (SECEP).	July 1 (Tuesday)
Northwestern Regional Education Program (NREP). . .	July 2 (Wednesday)
Gloucester-Mathews-Middlesex Regional Education Program	July 3 (Thursday)
Piedmont Regional Education Program (PREP).	July 9 (Wednesday)
Lynchburg Regional Education Program (LAUREL) . . .	July 10 (Thursday)
Cooperative Centers for Exceptional Children (CCEC)	July 16 (Wednesday)
State Department of Education (SEA)	July 22 (Tuesday)

contact other RSEP participants to arrange personal or telephone interviews on the arranged site visitation day. The meetings were arranged by a secretary, administrative director, or regional director. Meetings were held in offices of RSEP participants, in RSEP headquarters, or by telephone interview (only when personal meetings could not be arranged).

Prior to the meeting with each regional director, a set of organizational interview questions (Appendix L), a list of documents needed from RSEPs to prepare the case study, and a list of questions about the regional directors' responses on the RSEP survey were prepared. If specific information about characteristics of the RSEP was needed before (or after) the site visit, the author sent a request for data form (Appendix M) to the appropriate individual. Prior to the meeting with each executive superintendent, the author prepared a written summary about the results of the RSEP survey in the superintendent's region, and a list of specific interview questions about organizational details, issues and reactions to the RSEP results. Other participants, including SEA officials, were interviewed only in regard to their responses on the RSEP Surveys, except where those officials had information about specific needed details of RSEP programming.

8. Follow-Up Interviews - Prior to writing each case study, the author reviewed the collected RSEP documents, surveys and interview notes to determine whether there were still important unanswered questions. After the author reviewed and analyzed the surveys, about 20 participants (2-4 from each RSEP) were called from late July 1986

through October 1986 for follow-up questioning related to their discrepant answers, to represent trend areas, to represent a group not interviewed during the site visitation, or to answer specific questions about RSEP programming. Questioning by the author attempted to clarify their responses and/or to probe their answers in greater detail than was provided through the RSEP mail survey. Follow-up interviews also were conducted in early August, 1986 with selected Virginia State Department of Education officials including Dr. N. Grant Tubbs, Administrative Director of Compensatory and Special Education; Mr. Gerald H. Mathews, Supervisor of Special Projects; Mr. David Aldrich, Supervisor of Programs for the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped; Mr. James Micklen, former Director of Special Education Programs, and Mrs. Kathy Kitchen, Director of the Budget. At the SEA site interviews, officials were also asked to provide documents which had not yet been obtained by the present author.

9. Case Studies Written - The author collected and filed data about the four central characteristics of each RSEP, the RSEP Survey data, the interview responses compiled by participant groups i.e., joint board members, superintendents, etc., the demographic and LEA data, and proceeded to write a case study about each. There were several case study formats designed and sent to the author's dissertation chairman and committee for feedback. After committee input, the final format included demographic data, LEA characteristics, descriptions of each RSEP by its central characteristics, the mean (\bar{x}) responses for each survey question, discussion of salient points and a summary section.

As each RSEP case study was written, a copy was sent to each executive superintendent and regional director along with a letter (Appendix N) requesting feedback regarding the accuracy of information. All RSEP studies only required slight revisions (Appendix O). At least one participant of each RSEP (usually the regional director) responded to the accuracy revision request.

After all accuracy revisions were made, the corrected case studies were sent back to each regional director and executive superintendent requesting that a letter be sent to the author stating that the study was accurate and if it had been used, or would be used in any way in the RSEP. Several participants responded. The correspondence from respondents (Appendix P) and the 9 RSEP case studies are discussed in Chapter IV of the present study. The nine case studies were bound in a separate document and may be obtained from the author.

10. Analysis Written - The analysis included a description of SEA functioning regarding RSEPs, commonalities and differences reported about the four central characteristics of RSEPs, and discussions of the perceptions of the various participant groups regarding the RSEP survey questions.

The analyses of SEA functioning included a review and discussion of historical documents related to Virginia RSEP development, legal framework, regulations and guidelines, organization of RSEPs at the SEA level, and issues, considerations and apparent emerging future directions.

The analyses of the commonalities and differences included graphic, tabular and narrative descriptions regarding the four central

characteristics and of the perceptions of the various participant groups.

For example, tables were prepared for demographic, geographic and LEA characteristics showing the mean (\bar{x}) results by region and statewide. Further analyses were conducted showing the differences between participant groups i.e., joint board members, superintendents, special education supervisors, regional directors and SEA officials.

Analyses of the four central characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia were presented in narrative and tabular formats to display commonalities and differences among programs. Comparisons of the perceptions of participants were also presented in narrative and tabular (referring to the RSEP Survey) formats to highlight similarities and differences of perceptions among various participant groups.

11. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations - The final phase of the study addressed the conclusions reached about each of the research questions regarding the four central characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia, and about the perceptions of RSEP participants in Virginia. The conclusions and recommendations were tied to the review of the literature, the data collected in the study, and the surveys and interviews conducted with RSEP and SEA officials.

Chapter IV

RESULTS

Overview

In Chapter 4 the data collected from the Virginia RSEP study between January and October of 1986 was analyzed. The major problem addressed in the study was the lack of descriptive information about the nine RSEPs which existed in Virginia at the end of the 1985-86 school year. This lack of data has made policy, program and financial planning increasingly difficult at the state level, and also has made it difficult for participants of RSEPs to comprehend what is occurring in other organizations. The purpose of RSEPs in Virginia was to provide services to low-incidence handicapped children in 51 LEAs.

A review of the literature conducted by the author revealed that there were many studies performed which involved regional programs in education, special education, and vocational education. However, one researcher, Stephens (1979a) apparently had conducted the most exhaustive studies of ESAs (Education Service Agencies) on the statewide and nationwide levels. Stephens (1979a) identified four central characteristics of regional programs, which were used as the basis for the investigation of the present study: legal structure, governance and organization, services, and financial arrangements.

The central questions involved in the present author's study are:

1. a. How can the existing Regional Special Education Programs (RSEPs) be described according to Stephens' (1979a) four central characteristics?

- b. What are the commonalities and differences among the RSEPs in Virginia according to their four central characteristics?
 2.
 - a. What are the perceptions of the regional participants regarding factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs as they presently operate in Virginia?
 - b. What are the commonalities and differences among the participant decision-makers regarding their perceptions of factors associated with the four central characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia?

The author collected data from the Virginia Department of Education and from participants of the RSEPs between January and March of 1986. An RSEP survey was also sent to 168 RSEP participants in 51 school divisions, in May, 1986. Participants included joint board members, superintendents, special education administrators, regional directors and selected SEA officials involved in RSEPs in Virginia.

Site visitations and interviews were conducted by the author in June and July of 1986. By late July, 118/168 surveys had either been returned by mail or collected by the author on the site visitations. Follow-up interviews were also conducted with selected RSEP participants to probe discrepant and trend answers. Case studies were then written and sent to each of the executive superintendents and to the regional directors between September 1986 and March 1987 with a written request for them to correct any inaccuracies of data.

After the suggested revisions were made, a case study on each of the nine RSEPs in Virginia, based on the four central characteristics of RSEPs, as identified by Stephens (1979a), was written and bound in a separate document.

The purpose of the present chapter is to analyze and discuss the commonalities and differences among the RSEPs, and of the perceptions of participants of those programs. Demographics are discussed in the first section.

The demographics of the nine RSEPs in Virginia are discussed in the following section.

Demographics

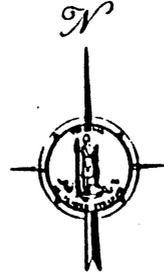
RSEPs served school divisions in virtually every geographic segment of Virginia: from east to west, north to south and in much of the center of the state (Figure #3). Combined, more than one-third of the school districts in Virginia were served by RSEPs. As can be seen in Table 9, the 1984 population in localities served by RSEPs totalled over 2.1 million people, or somewhat less than half of the total population of Virginia.

There were considerable differences in population in 1984 among the localities served by RSEPs. The two RSEPs which had the lowest local population were the Gloucester-Mathews-Middlesex Regional Program - GMMRP (41,380) and the Northwestern Regional Education Program - NREP (66,005). The two RSEPs which had the highest local populations were Southeastern Educational Cooperative - SECEP (950,164) and Peninsula Area Cooperative Educational Services - PACES (365,349). There was an

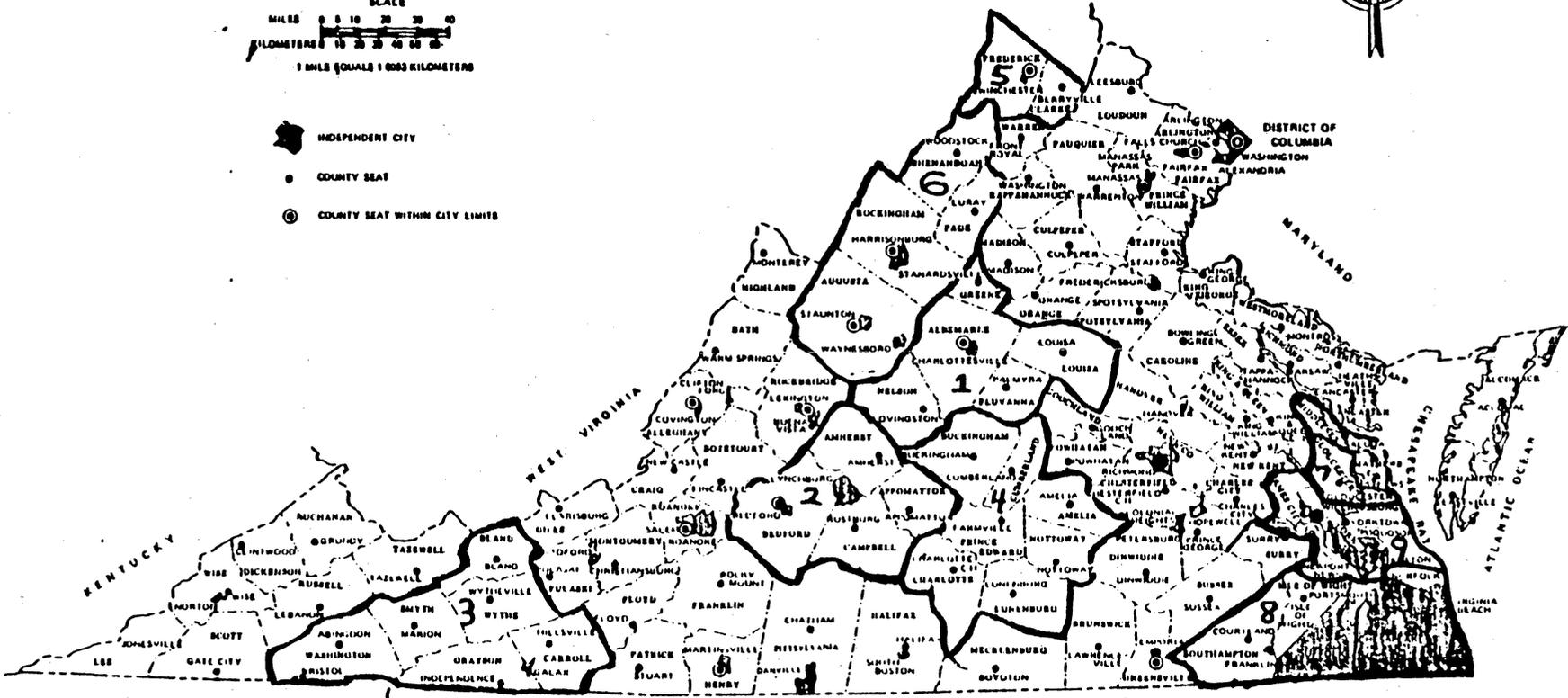
COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION INFORMATION SERVICES DIVISION COUNTY SEATS AND INDEPENDENT CITIES

Map of Localities Served by RSEPs



- INDEPENDENT CITY
- COUNTY SEAT
- COUNTY SEAT WITHIN CITY LIMITS



TENNESSEE

NORTH CAROLINA

- 1 - PREP
- 2 - LAUREL
- 3 - CCEC

- 4 - SSEC
- 5 - NREP
- 6 - SVRP

- 7 - GMRP (Gloucester is in GMRP & PACES)
- 8 - SECEP
- 9 - PACES

Figure 3

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Table 9

Population Trends of Virginia's RSEPs (1985-86)

RSEP	1980 Population (Census)	1984 Population (Bureau Estimate)	Change	
			Number	Percent
PREP	143,579	149,201	5,687	3.8%
LAUREL	188,187	191,764	3,577	1.9%
CCEC	181,118	183,123	2,005	1.1%
SSEC	83,549	83,305	-244	-0.3%
NREP	64,332	66,005	1,673	2.5%
SVRP	199,258	203,483	4,225	2.1%
GMMRP	35,821	41,380	5,559	13.4%
SECEP	871,936	950,164	78,228	8.9%
PACES	344,372*	365,349*	20,977	5.8%
Totals	2,112,152	2,233,774	121,687	5.6%
Virginia	5,346,797	5,635,544	288,747	5.4%

Source:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Current Population Reports - Local Population Estimates. Bureau of Census Series P.26, No. 84-S-SC (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 109-113.

* Gloucester's population was not included in PACES figures but was included in GMMRP's population figures.

overall population gain of 5.6% from 1980-84 in all the localities served by the RSEPs, which was slightly more than the 5.4% growth rate experienced in the state during that same period. One locality, Southside Special Education Consortium - SSEC, had an overall population decline of 0.3% in the four years, whereas other localities had between small and substantial population gains. The localities with the highest gains were SECEP (8.9%) and GMMRP (13.4%), and those with the lowest gains were Lynchburg Area Unit for Exceptional Learners - LAUREL (1.9%), and Cooperative Centers for Exceptional Children - CCEC (1.1%).

The counties and cities which were served in 1985-86 by Virginia's RSEPs are shown in Table 10.

Area and Population Density

The total land area of all localities served by the RSEPs was 16,708 square miles, which was somewhat less than one-half the total land area of Virginia (Table 11). The smallest localities were GMMRP (446 square miles - SM) and PACES (404 SM). The largest areas served by RSEPs were SSEC (2,819 SM) and CCEC (2,782 SM).

The average population density of the nine regions was 133.4 persons per square mile (PSM), which was very similar to the statewide average. However the only two regions which had population densities greater than the state average were SECEP (352.8 PSM) and PACES (620.1 PSM). Both were predominantly urban regions in the southeastern part of Virginia.

Other regions which were served by RSEPs had considerably lower population densities - from SSEC's (29.55 PSM) to NREP's (109.6 PSM).

Table 10

Counties and Cities* Served by Virginia's RSEPs (1985)

PREP

Charlottesville*
Albemarle
Fluvanna
Greene
Louisa
Nelson

LAUREL

Lynchburg*
Amherst
Appomatox
Bedford
Campbell

CCEC

Bland
Bristol*
Carroll
Galax*
Grayson
Smythe
Washington
Wythe

SSEC

Amelia
Buckingham
Charlotte
Cumberland
Lunenburg
Prince Edward

NREP

Clark
Frederick
Winchester*

SVRP

Augusta
Page
Rockingham
Shenandoah
Harrisonburg*
Staunton*

GMMRP

Gloucester
Mathews
Middlesex

PACES

Gloucester
Williamsburg*
York
Newport News*
Hampton*
Poquoson*

SECEP

Chesapeake*
Franklin
Isle of Wight
Southampton
Norfolk*
Portsmouth*
Suffolk*
Virginia Beach*

* Names with asterisks (*) are cities; those without are counties.

Table 11

Area and Population Density (per square mile) of
Virginia's RSEPs (1985-86)

RSEP	Land Area (in square miles)	Population Density (avg. per square mile)
PREP	2,154	69.3
LAUREL	2,115	90.7
CCEC	2,782	65.8
SSEC	2,819	29.55
NREP	602	109.6
SVRP	2,693	75.56
GMRP	446	92.8
SECEP	2,693	352.8
PACES*	404	620.1
Totals	16,708	133.4
Virginia	39,703	134.7

Source:

U.S. Department of Commerce, Current Population Reports - Local Population Estimates. Bureau of Census Series p.26, no. 84S-SC (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1984), pp. 48.8-48.9.

* Land area for Gloucester was not included in PACES figures, but was included in GMRP's.

Both SSEC and NREP were predominantly rural. SSEC, with 2,819 square miles in central Virginia, had relatively flat terrain, yet considerable driving time between localities. NREP, which was located in the northwestern part of the state had one medium sized city - Winchester, and was a considerably smaller region than SSEC, since it had only three localities.

Geographically the smallest region was GMMRP, which also had only three localities. This region was a mix of suburban (to southeastern Virginia) and rural areas. CCEC and Shenandoah Valley Regional Education Program - SVRP were both regions with very large land areas, predominantly rural and small town characteristics, and significant geographic barriers - mountains, large distances and inaccessible or indirect roads among localities. CCEC was located in the southwestern part of the state and SVRP in the Northwestern section.

Piedmont Regional Education Program - PREP and LAUREL were contiguous regions in the north-central part of Virginia. Each region had one large city, Charlottesville - PREP and Lynchburg - LAUREL, with the remainder a mix of suburban and rural areas. Both regions had terrains consisting of rolling hills and mountains, and both had similar transportation obstacles of considerable distances between localities, indirect and inaccessible roads.

ADM and Special Education Enrollment

The LEAs served by RSEPs had a total average daily membership (ADM) of 377,178 in 1985-86, which was more than one-third of Virginia's pupil enrollment for that year (Table 12). The LEAs served by PACES, with an

Table 12

Enrollment (ADM), Special Education Enrollment
and Percentage in Virginia's RSEPs (1985-86)

RSEP	A. General Enrollment (ADM)	B. Special Education Enrollment	C. Special Education Percentage (of ADM) (average)
PREP	22,853	3,039	13.30
LAUREL	33,204	3,637	10.95
CCEC	31,381	3,348	10.67
SSEC	14,652	1,538	10.50
NREP	11,750	1,423	12.11
SVRP	32,860	3,680	11.20
GMRP	7,112	731	10.28
SECEP	161,318	15,873	9.84
PACES*	62,048	6,028	9.72
Totals	377,178	39,297	10.42
Virginia	968,104	103,477	10.69%

Source:

Column A: Virginia Department of Education, Fall Membership in Virginia Public Schools, (Richmond, Division of Management Information Sources, 1985). Referred to pages throughout the Publication.

Column B: Virginia Department of Education, latest computer enrollment printout available, as of Sept. 26, 1986.

Column C: Calculated by author by using Column (A) and (B) above.

* Gloucester's enrollment figures were not included in PACES, but were included in GMRP's.

ADM of 62,048, and SECEP, with an ADM of 161,318 had the highest pupil enrollment. LEAs with the lowest ADM were associated with NREP (11,750) and GMMRP (7,112).

The total special education enrollment of all divisions served by RSEPs was 39,297, or about one-third of the state special education population. Regions with the two lowest special education enrollments were those served by GMMRP (731) and NREP (1,423), and those with the highest enrollments were PACES (6,028) and SECEP (15,873). However the PACES and SECEP LEAs also had the lowest special education percentages, with 9.72% and 9.84%, respectively. The LEAs served by NREP (12.11%) and PREP (13.30%) had the highest overall special education percentages.

However, the average special education enrollment for all LEAs served by RSEPs in Virginia was 10.42%, which was only slightly lower than the state average of 10.69% in 1985-86.

Expenditures, Composite Indices, and Per-Pupil Expenditures

As can be seen in Table 13, the total expenditures of all LEAs served by RSEPs was more than one-third of the almost three billion dollars spent on all pupils in Virginia in 1985-86. LEAs with the lowest total expenditures were those served by GMMRP (about \$17 million) and NREP (about \$34 million). Those with the highest total expenditures were those served by PACES (about \$191 million) and SECEP (about \$438 million).

The composite index is a state formula which attempted to calculate the local ability to pay. It was based on the state average of .5000. Localities with indices considerably higher than .5000 were considered

Table 13

Expenditures, Composite Indices, and Per-Pupil Expenditures
in Virginia's RSEPs (1985-86)

RSEP	Total LEA Expenditures (rounded to nearest million \$)	Composite Indices (average)	Annual Per-Pupil Expenditures (average)
PREP	\$ 74	.5994	\$3,092
LAUREL	\$ 72	.3983	\$2,608
CCEC	\$ 78	.3643	\$2,503
SSEC	\$ 37	.3802	\$2,545
NREP	\$ 34	.5324	\$3,015
SVRP	\$ 90	.4883	\$2,770
GMMRP	\$ 17	.5950	\$2,682
SECEP	\$438	.4113	\$2,782
PACES*	\$191	.5960	\$3,428
Totals	\$1,031	.4850	\$2,825
Virginia	\$2,989	.5000	\$3,110

Source:

Virginia Department of Education. Facing up 20 - Statistical Data on Virginia Public Schools, (Richmond, Division of Management Information Sources, 1986). Referred to pages throughout the document.

* Expenditures for Gloucester were not included in PACES totals, but were included in GMMRP's.

by the state to have a higher ability to pay than those with indices lower than the state average. Each LEA had a composite index calculated annually by the SEA, based on its local ability to pay. Calculating the average composite index of each RSEP was considered by the author to be the most expedient method of determining if RSEP composite indices were representative of the state average (Table 13). According to Table 13, five regions had average composite indices below the state average, and four were above the state average, for an overall average of .4850, which was considerably close to the state average.

In calculating the average annual pupil expenditures the author has obtained the average of each LEA served by an RSEP and calculated the average regional per-pupil expenditures. These figures are provided to illustrate LEA expenditure trends in each RSEP for general comparative purposes. Taking these averages into account, the LEAs served by CCEC (\$2,503) and SSEC (\$2,545) had the lowest average annual per-pupil expenditures, and those served by PREP (\$3,092) and PACES (\$3,428) had the highest annual per-pupil expenditures. The average annual per-pupil expenditures of all LEAs served by RSEPs in Virginia in 1985-86 was \$2,825, which was almost an average of \$300 per-pupil lower than the state average of \$3,110 per-pupil. Generally, LEAs which had higher composite indices also provided higher annual per-pupil expenditures.

LEGAL CHARACTERISTICS

As was described in Chapter I of the present study, Stephens (1979a) noted that there are three basic types of ESAs found nationwide: Special Districts, Regionalized Service Agencies and Cooperative

education programs. RSEPs in Virginia, as found at the time of the present study, were Cooperative Educational Programs; these were primarily designed to meet the needs of special education populations, which the state board and SEA perceived as unserved or underserved. A 1980 Status study by the Virginia Department of Education pointed to the need for additional programming for the low-incidence handicapped. In 1982, the Virginia Board of Education indicated that the establishment of RSEPs was one of its major objectives in meeting the needs of low-incidence handicapped students. Even prior to that (in 1981), the state board authorized the Virginia Department of Education to reimburse 60% of total operational costs to LEAs in RSEPs following the Board's 1981 Regulations for Jointly Owned and Jointly Operated Schools - JOAJOS. The regulations specified that RSEPs must serve either SED, MH, or SPH students to receive state funding; however they did not mandate such services, or exclude other offered services. Virginia's RSEP movement was established because the Virginia Board of Education, realizing its legal obligations under Federal PL 94-142, decided to provide financial incentives for LEAs to establish RSEPs to provide legally mandated services for previously unserved and underserved students. Although there had been informal regional special education programs prior to the incentives from the state board and the SEA, the 1981 regulations provided the first specific legal structure governing the recognition and funding parameters of RSEPs in Virginia.

Virginia's RSEPs were entirely voluntary and local autonomy was observed. Although the authority to operate the regional special education programs in Virginia was derived from the 1981 JOAJOS

Regulations of the State Board of Education, the regional programs were established by the participating LEAs. The LEAs determined how the programs were organized and operated. However, the JOAJOS Regulations required the following conditions to be met before regional programs were recognized and eligible for certain state and federal incentive funding (with present RSEP compliance in parenthesis):

1. Bi-annual audit prepared by a Certified Public Accountant. (This practice was observed in all RSEPs.)
2. Establishment of lay Joint Board for Control. (This was established in all RSEPs except CCEC.)
3. Selection of a finance officer and clerk. (They were selected in all RSEPs.)
4. Joint Board has authority to hire staff, purchase materials and equipment, determine policies of instruction, manage and operate the joint programs. (This occurred in all RSEPs.)
5. Joint Board has no authority to own or construct buildings. (They did not in any RSEP.)
6. Selection of a superintendents' committee. (Established in eight RSEPs, but met regularly in seven RSEPs.)
7. Preparation of annual program, budget and financing plan. (This was prepared in all RSEPs.)
8. Each LEA required to appropriate funds to cover expenditures for regional programs. (Funds were appropriated in each RSEP.)

In 1982, the Virginia Department of Education published Guidelines for Operating Education Cooperatives. These guidelines suggested various governance (policy) and administrative procedures, services delivery systems and financial arrangements for RSEPs. In addition, the report contained information on advantages, disadvantages, issues and problems found in other ESAs and RSEPs nationwide.

The Virginia Department of Education (1984) revised its Special Education Regulations in September 1984. Changes were to be effective by January 1, 1985. The new regulations referred back to the JOAJOS (1981) Regulations but also made the following revisions regarding Virginia's RSEPs:

1. Regional programs must be provided in the Least Restrictive Environment. (This was not defined for RSEPs.)
2. Each Joint Board is required to submit a regional six year plan an annual update. (This was observed in each RSEP.)
3. Each Joint Board shall appoint a qualified director. (Seven RSEPs had full-time directors, two had part-time.)
4. Autistic students may be served. (They were served in four RSEPs.)

The 1981 JOAJOS Regulations and other additions to the revised 1984 Virginia Special Education Regulations provided the major legal structure for RSEPs in Virginia.

SEA Officials Responsible for RSEPs

According to information obtained by the author through interviews with officials from the Virginia Department of Education in June and July of 1986, there was no single administrator appointed to direct, supervise or coordinate the various aspects of RSEPs in Virginia. Instead various responsibilities had been delegated to several officials (see Table 14).

As can be seen in this Table, twelve individuals were identified by the author and an SEA official who had influence, coordination responsibilities, or control over the various aspects of RSEPs in Virginia at the time of the Virginia RSEP study. In analyzing the

Table 14

SEA Officials Responsible for Virginia's RSEPs (1985-86)

<u>Official</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>RSEP Responsibilities</u>
Dr. S. John Davis	State Superintendent of Public Instruction	Control over RSEP Regulations and finances
Mr. Myron E. Cale	Associate Superintendent for Financial and Support Services	Coordinates disbursement of RSEP funds, and responsible for collecting RSEP annual report
Dr. N. Grant Tubbs	Administrative Director, Special and Compensatory Education	Influences RSEP policies and financial decisions
Mr. Les B. Goode	Associate Director, Special and Compensatory Education	Coordinates administrative and financial aspects of RSEPs
Mr. James T. Micklem	Former Director of Special Education Programs	Helped develop RSEP policies and structure. Presently serving as SEA consultant
Dr. Austin T. Tuning	Director Special Education Administration and Finance	Coordinates RSEP funding activities and responsible for releasing data for RSEP study
Mr. Leslie W. Jones	Acting Director of Special Education Programs	Coordinates RSEP programs - service categories
Mr. Gerald H. Mathews	Supervisor of Special Projects	Coordinates federal special project funding to RSEPs
Mr. Anthony G. Faina	Supervisor of Private School Tuition	Coordinates rate applications of RSEPs and private schools
Dr. Patricia D. Poplin	Supervisor, Programs for the Mentally Retarded	Coordinates RSEP programs for mentally retarded
Mr. Dave Aldrich	Supervisor, Programs for the SPH	Coordinates RSEP programs for the SPH
Mrs. Irene Bolton	Supervisor, Programs for the SED	Coordinates RSEP programs for the SED

responsibilities of the different SEA officials it appears that there were many overlapping responsibilities and ambiguous assignments regarding the RSEPs. It could not be determined through the author's interviews if any official had direct control for policy, regulations, programs or funding of RSEPs. However several officials shared part of the responsibility for controlling each of those areas: Dr. Davis, Mr. Cale, Dr. Tubbs, Mr. Goode, Mr. Micklem, Dr. Tuning and Dr. Jones apparently shared policy, regulatory and financial control aspects of RSEPs. Dr. Jones, Dr. Poplin, Mr. Aldrich and Mrs. Bolton coordinated the various programmatic (service categories) aspects of RSEPs.

In the following section, responses of RSEP participants and SEA officials on the governance (SEA legal structure) questions of the Virginia RSEP Survey are analyzed.

Participants' Perceptions - Legal Structure

On the following analysis of the responses of RSEP participants and SEA officials, Governance shall refer to participants' perceptions of how RSEPs were governed under the Legal Structure of the Virginia Board of Education, through the 1981 JOAJOS Regulations, and by the Virginia Department of Education through the 1984 state special education regulations. The ways that RSEPs were governed internally i.e., joint board and management procedures will be discussed in the succeeding Organization section. Each respondent will be referred to in the masculine pronoun "he," since identification of a feminine pronoun, in some cases, could identify the person.

As can be seen in Table 15, the response of participants from each Virginia RSEP, and the state totals are included. The number of respondents (included in parentheses) and mean (\bar{x}) totals, based on a scale of 1 (disagree) to 4 (agree) are shown for each region. On this scale, a response of 2.5 would indicate that participants were about evenly divided on agree and disagree issues. A \bar{x} response of 2.6 would indicate a "tend to agree" response, and a 2.4 would indicate a "tend to disagree." Table 16 is structured similarly to Table 15, except it offers an analysis of the results by participant group i.e., joint board members, superintendents, special education administrators, regional directors and SEA officials.

Roles of Personnel - On questions a-d, relating to the Roles and Responsibilities of SEA/RSEP Personnel, participants in most regions were nearly evenly divided regarding the need for further clarification of SEA regulations involving the roles of RSEP and SEA personnel. However the majority of RSEP participants ($\bar{x}=2.97$) agreed that SEA officials should involve RSEP personnel more in the planning and development of RSEPs (Table 15).

As can be seen in Table 16, there were some differences in the ways that participant groups responded to Governance questions a-d. On question a, joint board members, superintendents and special education supervisors were almost evenly divided, however regional directors ($\bar{x}=1.75$) and SEA officials ($\bar{x}=1.58$) disagreed that roles of SEA officials and RSEP personnel were sufficiently clarified. SEA officials (question c) were the strongest proponents of the need to further clarify SEA regulations on the roles of personnel. Regional directors ($\bar{x}=3.56$) and

Table 15
RSEP Survey - Governance (x̄ Response by Region)

	RSEPs										
	PREP (#) ^a x̄ ^b	LAUREL (#) x̄	OCEC (#) x̄	SSEC (#) x̄	NREP (#) x̄	SVRP (#) x̄	GMRP (#) x̄	SECEP (#) x̄	PACES (#) x̄	TOTALS (#) x̄	
<u>Roles and Responsibilities of SEA/RSEP Personnel</u>											
a. The roles and responsibilities of SEA officials in RSEPs are clarified in State Regulations	(10) 2.20	(11) 2.92	(10) 2.60	(13) 2.38	(10) 2.50	(12) 2.50	(8) 2.40	(12) 2.75	(10) 2.20	(96) 2.49	
b. The roles and responsibilities of RSEP personnel are clarified in State Regulations	(10) 2.40	(13) 3.00	(10) 2.80	(13) 2.38	(10) 2.20	(11) 2.25	(8) 2.63	(12) 2.67	(11) 2.36	(98) 2.52	
c. The roles and responsibilities of SEA and RSEP officials need further clarification in State Regulations	(9) 2.70	(13) 2.38	(10) 2.50	(15) 2.67	(10) 2.40	(11) 2.36	(8) 3.13	(13) 2.69	(12) 2.73	(101) 2.61	
d. SEA officials should involve RSEP personnel more in the planning and development of RSEPs	(10) 2.90	(11) 2.91	(10) 2.70	(15) 2.73	(10) 3.10	(12) 3.30	(8) 3.13	(12) 3.17	(9) 3.11	(97) 2.97	
<u>Control</u>											
e. The RSEPs are mainly controlled by the SEA	(10) 1.60	(13) 1.84	(11) 1.82	(15) 2.07	(10) 2.00	(12) 2.17	(8) 1.88	(13) 1.92	(13) 1.79	(105) 1.95	
f. The RSEPs are mainly controlled by the participating LEAs	(10) 3.30	(13) 3.15	(11) 3.27	(15) 3.00	(10) 2.80	(12) 2.67	(8) 3.38	(13) 3.00	(12) 3.15	(104) 3.05	
g. There is a proper balance of control between the SEA and the LEAs regarding the RSEPs	(10) 2.90	(13) 2.92	(11) 3.36	(14) 2.93	(10) 2.90	(12) 3.25	(7) 4.00	(12) 2.75	(10) 2.90	(99) 3.09	
h. A state supervisor of RSEPs should be appointed to manage the varied aspects of the programs	(10) 1.90	(13) 2.08	(11) 2.27	(15) 2.40	(10) 2.40	(11) 1.73	(8) 3.00	(13) 1.92	(13) 2.23	(104) 2.19	
<u>Joint Board Recognition</u>											
i. The SEA should only recognize RSEPs with a duly appointed Lay-Joint Board for Control	(10) 2.60	(13) 2.85	(10) 1.60	(14) 3.14	(9) 2.77	(12) 3.08	(8) 2.75	(13) 3.08	(12) 2.85	(101) 2.74	
j. The SEA should allow a dual recognition system of Informal (no joint board) and formal (with board) RSEPs	(10) 2.70	(13) 2.00	(11) 3.18	(14) 1.86	(10) 2.00	(12) 1.25	(8) 1.38	(12) 1.92	(13) 2.00	(103) 2.13	
a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree											

Table 16
RSEP Survey - Governance (\bar{x} Response by Groups)

	Participant Groups									
	Joint Board Members		Superintendents		Special Education Administrators		Regional Directors		SEA Officials	
	(#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}
<u>Roles and Responsibilities of SEA/RSEP Personnel</u>										
a. The roles and responsibilities of SEA officials in RSEPs are clarified in State Regulations	(18)	2.78	(31)	2.55	(41)	2.44	(8)	1.75	(12)	1.58
b. The roles and responsibilities of RSEP personnel are clarified in State Regulations	(18)	2.72	(31)	2.48	(41)	2.51	(8)	2.25	(12)	1.50
c. The roles and responsibilities of SEA and RSEP officials need further clarification in State Regulations	(18)	2.61	(31)	2.55	(43)	2.65	(9)	2.77	(12)	3.33
d. SEA officials should involve RSEP personnel more in the planning and development of RSEPs	(19)	2.95	(31)	2.84	(38)	3.03	(9)	3.56	(12)	3.16
<u>Control</u>										
e. The RSEPs are mainly controlled by the SEA	(22)	2.09	(31)	1.81	(43)	1.91	(9)	1.44	(11)	1.45
f. The RSEPs are mainly controlled by the participating LEAs	(22)	2.77	(31)	3.32	(42)	3.05	(9)	3.22	(11)	3.36
g. There is a proper balance of control between the SEA and the LEAs regarding the RSEPs	(21)	2.62	(31)	3.00	(39)	3.00	(8)	3.75	(12)	2.50
h. A state supervisor of RSEPs should be appointed to manage the varied aspects of the programs	(22)	2.32	(30)	2.27	(43)	2.14	(9)	2.11	(12)	2.42
<u>Joint Board Recognition</u>										
i. The SEA should only recognize RSEPs with a duly appointed Lay-Joint Board for Control	(20)	2.80	(31)	2.87	(41)	2.71	(9)	3.44	(12)	3.00
j. The SEA should allow a dual recognition system of informal (no joint board) and formal (with board) RSEPs	(22)	1.95	(31)	2.03	(41)	2.39	(9)	1.88	(12)	2.33
a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree										

SEA officials ($\bar{x}=3.16$) were also the strongest advocates for the need to involve RSEP personnel more in the planning and development of RSEPs (question d). One director stated that SEA regulations were not clear on personnel issues or any other issues regarding RSEPs. He suggested that if RSEPs carry out the programs advanced by the state, then RSEP personnel should be more involved in the planning. One director stated that SEA information was not available to RSEP participants regarding state regulations, and there was a need for the SEA to clarify regulations and procedures for informing RSEP personnel. Another director pointed out that at one time there had been SEA sponsored workshops and planning sessions with RSEP personnel, however "... these have apparently been discontinued." He thought that the SEA should encourage RSEP personnel to meet more often with state officials, and with other RSEP personnel to share ideas, clarify issues and plan together.

Several regional directors and superintendents noted on their RSEP surveys, and through interviews, that the SEA treated RSEPs in the same manner as private and residential schools regarding the state's required operational procedures and regulations. Those participants thought SEA requirements and procedures were inappropriate, since RSEPs were public facilities and, therefore, should have separate status and separate operational and financial procedures provided by the SEA.

Three regional directors noted a concern that there was lack of accountability by SEA officials for RSEPs. One director explained that RSEP personnel submitted program plans and budgets each year for SEA officials to approve and fund "... and yet there has never been any

follow-up or review to determine if plans were being carried out as stated in RSEP proposals and budgets." Several SEA officials agreed with the regional directors on the "need to clarify SEA regulations" questions. One SEA official stated that "... there was no system of matching reimbursement requests with goals and objectives on RSEP proposals." Another official suggested that SEA officials do not want to get too involved with RSEP concerns, but he thought that SEA officials should be able to answer certain questions relating to how RSEP officials should fill out SEA reports, how the RSEPs should be accountable to the SEA, and what records RSEP personnel should keep. He suggested that RSEPs "... operated in a vacuum." He asked, "Is an RSEP a program, a school district, or a school?" He stated that the RSEP entity was confusing, but the state could not answer the above question because the SEA, and the State Board of Education, were concerned that the RSEP joint board had the potential of undermining LEA authority, consequently the SEA was reluctant to get too involved in clarifying RSEP status issues. Another SEA official perceived the RSEPs as a "fad," which would probably "not last long."

Control - The majority of RSEP participants ($\bar{x}=1.95$) disagreed that RSEPs were controlled by the SEA (Table 15 - question e), and agreed that there they are controlled by the LEAs ($\bar{x}=3.05$) (question f), yet there was also agreement ($\bar{x}=3.09$) that there was a proper balance of control regarding LEAs and RSEPs (question g). On question h, except for GMMRP, all other RSEPs disagreed that a state supervisor of RSEPs needed to be appointed.

There was essential agreement among all groups (Table 15) on most control questions. Joint board participants agreed least that RSEPs were locally controlled ($\bar{x}=2.77$), and superintendents ($\bar{x}=3.22$) and SEA officials ($\bar{x}=3.36$) agreed most that RSEPs were controlled by LEAs. Regional directors agreed most ($\bar{x}=3.75$) that there was a proper balance of control involving the SEA and the LEAs involving RSEPs.

No participant groups perceived that there was a need to appoint a state supervisor of RSEPs. One superintendent cautioned that "... this would just add one more unnecessary layer of bureaucracy between the SEA and the LEAs. One regional director suggested that RSEP programs needed to blend more with other LEA and SEA programs, and did not need separate status or a separate SEA supervisor. However, several joint board members and superintendents disagreed, stating that there was a need for a state supervisor "... since different answers had been coming from different SEA officials regarding RSEP questions." However several superintendents were concerned that an RSEP supervisor might mean more RSEP regulations. One superintendent stated that "we need more guidance from the SEA and less regulation."

Only one SEA official suggested a need for the SEA to appoint an RSEP supervisor because "... we were unable to obtain information about what they [RSEPs] were doing."

Joint Board - As was seen in Table 15, except for the responses of CCEC (which functioned without a lay joint board), the remaining RSEP participants agreed ($\bar{x}=2.74$) that the SEA should only recognize RSEPs with a duly appointed lay joint board (question i). The majority of participants ($\bar{x}=2.13$) also disagreed that the SEA should allow a dual

recognition system of informal (no joint board) and formal (with joint board) RSEPs (question j).

As was seen in Table 16, the strongest support for the lay-joint board came from SEA officials ($\bar{x}=3.00$) and regional directors ($\bar{x}=3.44$). Regional directors ($\bar{x}=1.88$) and joint board members ($\bar{x}=1.95$) disagreed most that the SEA should allow a dual recognition system. One joint board member stated that the lay-joint board was very important in RSEP decision-making. He said that "I don't know how such a cooperative program could exist without a joint board." Another board member disagreed, stating that the lay-board was not terribly important - since superintendents, special education supervisors and program personnel were most knowledgeable about RSEP programs. However, several special education supervisors noted that there was a need for the SEA to allow LEAs to develop cooperative informal regional programs before moving into formal associations. As was discovered by the present researcher, most RSEPs operated certain informal, cooperative programs among LEAs under purchase of service agreements. For example, services for V.I. or H.I. students, or OT/PT and speech services were often offered by LEAs within an RSEP, but did not come under the jurisdiction of the joint board due to different funding arrangements. According to one special education supervisor "... if LEAs had to start off with formal programs every time there was a need to cooperate, then many would get discouraged from ever starting or joining an RSEP." Another superintendent, also who disagreed with the majority, stated that there were many models for operating RSEPs, and he did not think the SEA should only mandate the lay-joint board model without allowing LEAs to

try other models "... which may even be more effective for accomplishing cooperative LEA objectives." An SEA official who also favored informal agreements for RSEPs thought that formal boards "stifled flexibility needed to serve low-incidence handicapped children." However, many special education supervisors, who had worked with informal programs, said that formal programs allowed more equitable LEA control over RSEPs than informal programs.

ORGANIZATION

In the following section, the organization of the joint board (the central governing body of RSEPs in Virginia) and the organizational systems of RSEPs will be analyzed. Comparisons of significant aspects of the joint boards, and of the organization of the nine RSEPs in Virginia will also be provided along with an analysis of the perceptions of RSEP participants regarding those aspects.

The Joint Board

Establishment - As can be seen in Table 17, all joint boards were established within a six year time span (from 1978-1984), indicating that the state's incentives for establishing RSEPs may have significantly influenced the development of the nine regional programs operating by the year of the present study (1985-86). The first RSEP established in Virginia, SECEP, as was discussed in Chapter II of the present study, greatly influenced the organizational patterns of at least four of the remaining RSEPs. The last two RSEPs to establish joint boards (in 1984-85), GMMRP and CCEC, both actually had functioning

Table 17
RSEP Organization - Joint Board (1985-86)

Characteristics	RSEPs			
	PREP	LAUREL	CCEC	SSEC
Established	1984-85	1979-80	1984-85	1979-80
Appointment	One member from each LEA	One member from each LEA	One superintendent from each LEA	One member from each LEA
# of Members	6	5	8	7
Chairman	Elected annually	Rotated annually	Elected annually	Elected annually
Reappoint	As long as appointed	As long as appointed	Elected annually	As long as reappointed
Meetings	Monthly	4 per year and special meetings	7 times per year	11 times per year
Annual Plan and Budget	Approved each Spring	Varied according to SEA timelines	Varied according to SEA timelines	Approved each spring
Expenditures	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent
Fiscal Agent	Charlottesville Schools (not rotated)	Lynchburg Schools (not rotated)	Carroll County Schools (not rotated)	Charlotte County Schools (rotated every 2 years)
Clerk	Secretary of PREP	Secretary of LAUREL	Administrative Assistant	Regional Director
Adminis- trative Building	Multi-use Educational Office Bldg.	In LAUREL Center	Galax High School	Eureka Elementary School (Charlotte)
Audit	Separate PREP Audit	Separate LAUREL Audit	Separate CCEC Audit	Separate SSEC Audit

(Continued on Next Page)

Table 17 (Continued)
RSEP Organization, Joint Board (1985-86)

RSEPS

Characteristics	NREP	SVRP	GMMRP	SECEP	PACES
Established	1982-83	1979-80	1984-85	1978-79	1979-80
Appointment	Two members from each LEA	One member from each LEA	One member from each LEA	One member from each LEA	One member from each LEA
# of Members	6	6	3	8	6
Chairman	Two year term	Elected annually	Elected annually	Elected annually (can succeed self)	Elected annually
Reappoint	As long as re-appointed	As long as re-appointed	As long as re-appointed	As long as re-appointed	As long as re-appointed
Meetings	Monthly	Monthly	6 times per year	3-5 times per year	Monthly
Annual Plan and Budget	Approved in June	Approved each Fall as part of SEA plan	Approved each Spring	Varied according to SEA timelines	Varied according to SEA timelines
Expenditures	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent	Signed by Fiscal Agent
Fiscal Agent	Dowell J. Howard Vocational Center Winchester (not rotated)	Shenandoah County Schools (not rotated)	Middlesex County Schools (rotated every 3 years)	Norfolk Schools (not rotated)	Newport News Schools (not rotated)
Clerk	Regional Director	Secretary of SVRP	Regional Director	Secretary to SECEP	Secretary to PACES
Administrative Building	In NREP Center	New Market (Shenandoah Schools)	Same as Regional Dir.'s Off. (rotated every 3 years)	Consolvo Center (Norfolk)	Hampton
Audit	Separate part of Fiscal Agent's Audit	Separate SVRP Audit	Separate GMMRP Audit	Separate SECEP Audit	Separate PACES Audit

regional programs more than ten years prior to establishing their boards, but formed their boards to qualify for state 60% incentive funding. Actually, CCEC did not establish a lay-joint board, but received an SEA waiver to form a proxy joint board, with superintendents representing LEA board members.

Membership - Except for NREP, which had two members appointed from each LEA, the remaining RSEPs had one member appointed. According to the 1982 Virginia guidelines for operating RSEPs, regional programs with three LEA members were advised to appoint two members from each LEA - as NREP had done. However GMMRP, with three LEA members chose to appoint one representative member from each LEA. Consequently, membership on RSEP joint boards (except for NREP) corresponded to LEA membership in the various RSEPs. The board with the fewest members was GMMRP (3 members), and the board with the most members was CCEC (8). All members could serve as long as they were re-appointed to their own local boards, and consequently were re-appointed to serve on the RSEP board. No RSEPs had a maximum term that a joint board member could serve. Except for NREP, joint board chairmen were elected annually. In NREP, the chairman was elected for a two year term.

Meetings - Although most RSEPs had a set number of meetings per year, most reported that special meetings were also added to that number, as needed. LAUREL and SECEP were scheduled to meet between 3-5 times per year, but both reported that there were often more special meetings. CCEC met 7 or more times per year, and other RSEPs met every month or took off one month (usually July) during the summer.

Administration - All joint boards approved an annual program and budget plan. Usually these plans were also required as part of SEA reports or funding proposals, consequently several RSEPs timed their plans with SEA requirements, which according to participants, "consistently varied". In general, however, most RSEPs submitted their annual plans in the spring, with SVRP reporting that they usually submitted theirs in the fall. In each RSEP, the board prepared the budget and program plans, but actual checks were written and signed through the fiscal agent. This procedure was one of the Virginia's 1981 JOAJOS regulations. The fiscal agent of each RSEP is shown in Table 17, and was an LEA, except for the case of NREP, which had a regional vocational center as a fiscal agent. SSEC and GMMRP rotated their fiscal agent every two years and three years respectively. Other RSEPs did not have a regular rotation system for their fiscal agent.

The clerk of the joint board was either the regional director, the RSEP secretary or an administrative assistant. The clerk was required by SEA regulations, however he/she had few listed responsibilities. Most importantly the clerk kept minutes of meetings and other records of the RSEPs.

The administrative offices for RSEPs were located in LEA schools, in annexes, in rented office buildings, in local school board offices, or in centers housing RSEP services. The administrative offices were where RSEP records were kept, and where the regional director and staff were housed.

Also, as was required by the 1981 JOAJOS regulations, each RSEP had either a separate bi-annual audit performed, or had a separate audit, as part of the fiscal agent's audit.

Organizational Structure

Several RSEPs, (PREP, LAUREL, GMMRP, and SECEP) used the organizational structure provided in the 1982 guidelines for operating Virginia's RSEPs - which is shown below in Figure 4.

Basic Virginia RSEP Organizational Structure

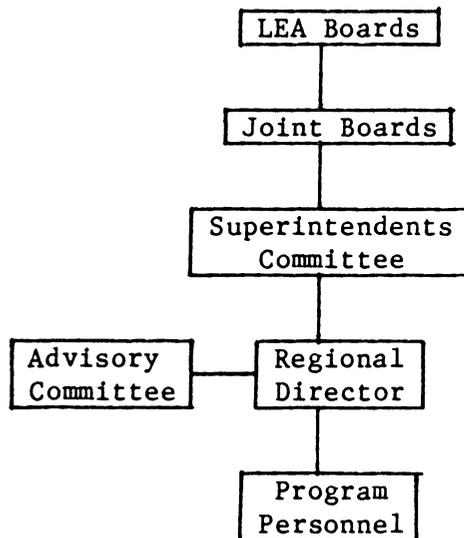


Figure 4

Under the Basic Organizational Structure (BOS), LEA boards appointed representatives to serve on regional joint boards, which governed and made policy, program and financial decisions about RSEPs. The Superintendents' Committee advised joint boards and acted as a liaison with LEA personnel regarding the regional programs (Table 18). Some RSEPs had superintendents' committee meetings with the joint

Table 18
RSEP Organization - Committees and Personnel (1985-86)

Characteristics	RSEPs			
	PREP	LAUREL	CCEC	SSEC
Superintendents Comm.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supts. Comm Mtgs.	None	4 times a year	Yes	Yes 11 times per year
Purpose of Supts. Comm.	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Was Joint Board for CCEC	Make recommendations to Joint Board
Superintendents attend Board Meetings	Yes	No	Was Joint Board for CCEC	No-only Executive Superintendent
Executive Superintendent	Dr. Vincent Cibbarelli-Charlottesville	Dr. Joseph Spagnolo-Lynchburg Schools	Mr. Milton Maxton-Bland	Mr. Robert Wood-Charlotte
Advisory Committee	LEA Special Education Supervisors	LEA Special Education Supervisors	LEA Special Education Super.	LEA Special Education Supervisors
Role of Advisory Comm.	Planning, Needs-Assessment and Input	Conveyed recommendations to Regional Director	Did not meet as part of CCEC	Advise Regional Director and Supts. Comm
Personnel Employment	All by Joint Board	All by Joint Board	Most by LEAs. Regional Staff by CCEC.	Most by Joint Boards. Some by LEAs.
Regional Director	Dr. Gregory Shasby	Ms. JoAnne Shearer	None. Had Administrative Asst. and Program Coor.	Ms. Kathleen Rapazzo
Role of Regional Director	Planning, budget and personnel supervision	Planning, budget and personnel supervision	Shared by Exec. Superintendent, Administrative Asst., Program Coordinator, and LEA-site Coords.	Planning, budget and personnel supervision

Table 18 (Continued)
RSEP Organization - Committees and Personnel (1985-86)

	<u>RSEPs</u>				
	NREP	SVRP	GMRP	SECEP	PACES
Superintendents Comm.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Supts. Comm Mtgs.	2-3 per year	monthly	None	2-3 times per year	Yes
Purpose of Supts. Comm.	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Make recommendations to Joint Board	Make recommendations to Joint Bd.
Superintendents attend Board Meetings	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Executive Superintendent	Dr. Kenneth Walker-Frederick	Dr. Robert Danley-Shenandoah	Mr. James Goforth-Middlesex	Dr. Vito Morlino-Isle of Wight	Dr. Judith Whittemore York
Advisory Committee	Was Superintendents' Committee	LEA Special Education Supervisors	LEA Special Educ. Administrators	LEA Special Educ. Administrators	LEA Special Educ. Super.
Role of Advisory Comm.	Advise Joint Board	Planning and program Evaluation	Meets with and advises Joint Board	Planning and program input	Planning and program input
Personnel Employment	All by Joint Board	Most by LEAs. Regional staff by Joint Board.	All by Joint Board	All by Joint Board	All by Joint Board
Regional Director	Dr. Nancy Cook	Ms. Judy Sorrell	None fulltime. Rotated every 3 years among Special Educ. Super. Was Ms. Fran V. Haynes	Dr. Judith Nussen	Ms. MaryAnne Bruno
Role of Regional Director	Planning, budget and personnel supervision	Planning, budgeting, communications and coordination of personnel	Planning, budgeting, and program coordination	Planning, budgeting, program coordination and personnel super.	Planning, budgeting and personnel supervision

boards, some met separately, and some didn't meet at all; instead they chose a superintendent to represent them to the joint board. The Advisory Committee was most often the LEA special education administrators, who usually advised the regional director, and sometimes advised the superintendents' committee. In NREP, the Advisory Committee was the superintendents' committee. This committee was usually responsible for planning, providing needs assessment data to the regional director, and program evaluation. The regional director was responsible for providing all input regarding RSEP needs to the superintendents and joint boards, and for administering the program, once decisions had been made by the joint board. Although, the director was employed by the joint board, he/she was also accountable to the superintendents in the LEAs. Under the BOS, the regional director supervised the program personnel solely. However, two RSEPs (SSEC, and SVRP) had slight variations of the BOS, where supervision of program personnel was shared by both the advisory committee and the regional director. SECEP's variation was that the regional director supervised site supervisors, who supervised program personnel.

Organizational Variation - One RSEP, which had a significantly different organizational system, was CCEC. As was discussed previously, in CCEC, LEA boards appointed superintendents to serve on a joint board. Superintendents appointed a superintendent as Program Coordinator, who shared administrative functions with the Administrative Assistant. The Superintendents supervised the LEA special education administrators, who were the site supervisors of the regional program personnel, as shown below in Figure 5.

RSEP Organizational Variation (CCEC)

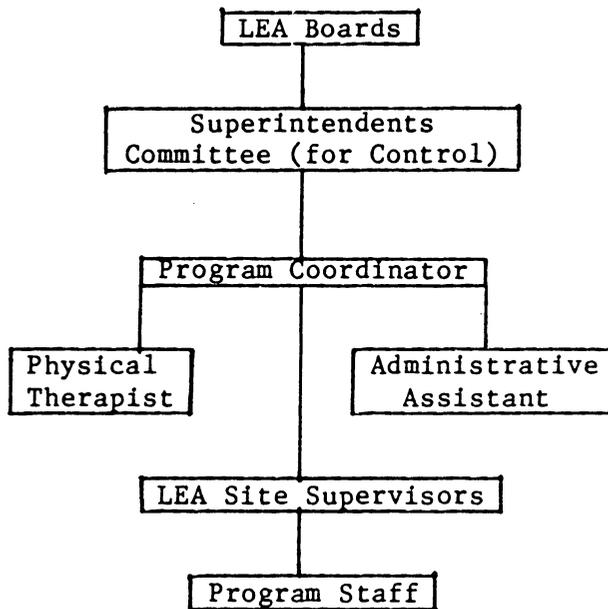


Figure 5

Participants' Perceptions - Organization

RSEP Participants - As can be seen in Table 19, the majority of RSEP participants ($\bar{x}=3.04$) except for CCEC's agreed that: the establishment of a lay board resulted in more effective management than informal management; one vote was the most equitable decision-making method ($\bar{x}=3.36$); superintendents were the most important decision-makers ($\bar{x}=3.13$); and the regional director had the most responsibility in carrying out RSEP objectives ($\bar{x}=3.49$).

RSEP participants disagreed that the establishment of a joint board resulted in loss of LEA control ($\bar{x}=1.93$); the joint board was not aware of organizational details ($\bar{x}=2.24$); the various roles of responsibilities were confusing to personnel in the RSEP ($\bar{x}=1.99$), and

Table 19
RSEP Survey - Organization (\bar{x} Responses by Region)

	RSEPs									
	PREP (#) ^a \bar{x} ^b	LAUREL (#) \bar{x}	OCEC (#) \bar{x}	SSEC (#) \bar{x}	NREP (#) \bar{x}	SVRP (#) \bar{x}	GMRP (#) \bar{x}	SECEP (#) \bar{x}	PACES (#) \bar{x}	TOTALS (#) \bar{x}
<u>The Joint Board</u>										
a. The establishment of a lay-joint board results in more effective management of an RSEP than if special education services were operated by informal agreements between LEA's	(10) 3.1	(12) 3.50	(11) 2.18	(15) 3.30	(10) 3.10	(12) 3.00	(8) 3.38	(13) 2.92	(14) 2.93	(105) 3.04
b. Superintendents should be allowed to serve as voting members of an RSEP joint board	(10) 3.0	(13) 2.23	(11) 3.64	(15) 1.80	(10) 1.80	(11) 2.09	(8) 2.25	(14) 2.50	(14) 2.29	(106) 2.38
c. One vote per participating district is the most equitable method of decision-making on a joint board	(10) 3.4	(13) 3.46	(10) 3.40	(15) 3.67	(10) 3.10	(12) 3.50	(8) 3.13	(12) 3.00	(14) 3.36	(104) 3.36
d. Although the joint board takes the official actions, the superintendents are the most important decision-makers in the RSEP	(10) 3.3	(12) 2.33	(11) 3.64	(15) 3.27	(9) 3.00	(12) 3.38	(8) 2.75	(14) 3.21	(14) 3.14	(105) 3.13
e. The establishment of a joint board results in significant loss of LEA control over RSEP programs	(10) 2.2	(12) 1.67	(11) 1.91	(15) 2.07	(10) 1.80	(12) 1.75	(7) 1.86	(13) 1.92	(13) 2.15	(103) 1.93
f. Since the Joint Board meets so infrequently it is really not fully aware of the actual organizational details of the RSEP	(10) 2.8	(12) 1.75	(11) 2.27	(15) 2.07	(10) 2.10	(12) 2.58	(7) 1.86	(13) 2.31	(11) 2.45	(101) 2.24
<u>The Regional Director</u>										
g. The regional director has the most responsibility in carrying out the objectives of the RSEP	(10) 3.8	(13) 3.54	(11) 2.64	(12) 3.29	(10) 3.50	(12) 4.00	(8) 3.25	(13) 3.46	(14) 3.79	(103) 3.49
h. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in the RSEP	(10) 1.7	(13) 1.85	(11) 2.55	(14) 2.70	(10) 1.90	(12) 1.42	(8) 2.13	(14) 1.62	(14) 2.00	(106) 1.99
i. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in LEA's	(10) 2.5	(13) 1.85	(11) 2.64	(13) 2.00	(10) 1.90	(12) 1.50	(8) 2.00	(13) 1.54	(14) 2.43	(104) 2.03
j. The regional director should be given the same authority in an RSEP as a superintendent in an LEA	(10) 1.8	(13) 1.92	(11) 2.27	(14) 1.86	(10) 1.80	(11) 1.75	(8) 1.75	(12) 2.08	(12) 1.92	(101) 1.91

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

the LEAs ($\bar{x}=2.03$); and that the regional director should be given the same authority in an RSEP as a superintendent in an LEA ($\bar{x}=1.91$).

As can be seen in Table 20, the majority of RSEP participants agreed that the following organizational characteristics were advantages: planning capabilities were enhanced ($\bar{x}=3.42$), staff recruitment capabilities were enhanced ($\bar{x}=2.96$); cooperation increases ($\bar{x}=3.41$) and the advantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the disadvantages ($\bar{x}=3.55$).

The majority of RSEP participants disagreed that the following organizational characteristics were disadvantages: a loss of LEA autonomy occurred ($\bar{x}=2.10$); personnel arrangements became complicated ($\bar{x}=2.01$); there was increased competition between LEAs for control ($\bar{x}=1.72$); regulatory procedure were burdensome ($\bar{x}=1.99$); personnel had less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs ($\bar{x}=2.07$); RSEPs were perceived as unstable ($\bar{x}=2.04$); and the disadvantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the advantages ($\bar{x}=1.44$).

An analysis of the perceptions of the participants, by group, on the organizational questions of the RSEP survey, is presented in the following section.

Joint Board - can be seen in Table 21, all participant groups agreed that: the establishment of a lay board resulted in more effective management of RSEPs than informal management ($\bar{x}=3.00$); and one vote per participating district was the most equitable method of decision-making ($\bar{x}=3.00$). All groups disagreed that the establishment of a joint board resulted in significant loss of LEA control ($\bar{x}=2.00$). Most groups (except for SEA participants - who tended slightly to agree)

Table 20
RSEP Survey - Organization, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Responses by Region)

	RSEPs																			
	PREP (#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	LAUREL (#)	\bar{x}	CCEC (#)	\bar{x}	SSEC (#)	\bar{x}	NREP (#)	\bar{x}	SVRP (#)	\bar{x}	GMRP (#)	\bar{x}	SECEP (#)	\bar{x}	PACES (#)	\bar{x}	TOTALS (#)	\bar{x}
<u>Reported Advantages of RSEPs</u>																				
a. Planning capabilities of comprehensive services by cooperating LEAs are enhanced	(10)	3.30	(13)	3.38	(11)	3.82	16	3.20	(10)	3.50	(12)	3.83	(7)	3.43	(13)	3.07	(14)	3.43	(106)	3.42
b. Staff recruitment capabilities are enhanced	(10)	2.90	(13)	3.07	(11)	3.09	(15)	2.33	(10)	3.00	(12)	3.75	(6)	2.17	(14)	2.71	(13)	2.75	(104)	2.96
c. Cooperation among RSEP personnel increases	(10)	3.40	(12)	3.25	(10)	3.27	(13)	3.69	(10)	3.40	(12)	3.83	(8)	3.38	(14)	3.29	(13)	3.23	(103)	3.41
d. Overall, the advantages of operating RSEPs far outweigh the possible disadvantages	(10)	3.50	(13)	3.54	(11)	3.82	(14)	3.27	(10)	3.90	(12)	4.00	(7)	3.50	(14)	3.28	(14)	3.36	(106)	3.55
<u>Reported Disadvantages of RSEPs</u>																				
e. A loss of LEA (local school district) autonomy occurs	(10)	1.80	(13)	2.83	(11)	1.82	(14)	2.14	(10)	2.40	(12)	1.67	(8)	2.25	(14)	2.00	(14)	2.00	(106)	2.10
f. Administrative personnel arrangements become overly complicated	(10)	1.80	(13)	1.92	(11)	2.36	(15)	2.47	(10)	2.10	(11)	1.27	(8)	2.50	(14)	1.93	(14)	1.79	(106)	2.01
g. There is increased competition between LEAs for control	(10)	1.60	(13)	1.69	(11)	1.63	(15)	2.00	(10)	2.30	(12)	1.33	(8)	1.75	(14)	1.71	(14)	1.50	(107)	1.72
h. Regulatory procedures of RSEPs are burdensome	(10)	1.80	(13)	2.00	(11)	2.36	(15)	1.87	(9)	2.11	(12)	1.75	(8)	2.50	(14)	2.00	(14)	1.78	(106)	1.99
i. Personnel have less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs	(10)	2.40	(13)	1.77	(10)	2.27	(15)	2.33	(10)	1.90	(11)	1.50	(8)	3.00	(12)	2.00	(14)	1.79	(103)	2.07
j. RSEPs are perceived as unstable from year to year	(10)	2.80	(13)	1.46	(11)	2.00	(15)	2.87	(10)	1.80	(12)	1.42	(8)	2.25	(14)	1.93	(14)	1.85	(107)	2.04
k. Overall the disadvantages of operating RSEPs far outweigh the possible disadvantages	(10)	1.50	(13)	1.31	(11)	1.18	(14)	1.57	(10)	1.60	(12)	1.08	(8)	1.40	(13)	1.54	1.71	(105)	1.44	

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

Table 21
RSEP Survey - Organization (\bar{x} Responses by Participant Groups)

	Board Members		Superintendents		Special Education Admin.		Regional Directors		SEA Officials	
	(#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}
<u>The Joint Board</u>										
a. The establishment of a lay-joint board results in more effective management of an RSEP than if special education services were operated by informal agreements between LEAs	(22)	3.14	(32)	3.03	(42)	2.90	(9)	3.22	(9)	3.00
b. Superintendents should be allowed to serve as voting members of an RSEP joint board	(23)	1.86	(32)	2.13	(40)	2.73	(9)	2.50	(9)	2.33
c. One vote per participating district is the most equitable method of decision-making on a joint board	(22)	3.38	(32)	3.30	(41)	3.37	(9)	3.67	(9)	3.00
d. Although the joint board takes the official actions, the superintendents are the most important decision-makers in the RSEP	(23)	3.04	(32)	3.19	(41)	3.15	(9)	3.44	(9)	2.55
e. The establishment of a joint board results in significant loss of LEA control over RSEP programs	(22)	2.32	(31)	1.80	(41)	2.28	(9)	1.33	(9)	2.00
f. Since the Joint Board meets so infrequently it is really not fully aware of the actual organizational details of the RSEP	(29)	2.05	(31)	2.06	(40)	2.43	(9)	1.89	(8)	2.88
<u>The Regional Director</u>										
g. The regional director has the most responsibility in carrying out the objectives of the RSEP	(23)	3.22	(30)	3.40	(42)	3.50	(9)	4.00	(9)	3.67
h. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in the RSEP	(23)	2.17	(31)	1.70	(42)	2.00	(9)	2.00	(8)	2.00
i. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in LEAs	(23)	2.32	(30)	1.73	(42)	2.16	(9)	2.44	(9)	2.56
j. The regional director should be given the same authority in an RSEP as a superintendent in an LEA	(22)	2.35	(30)	1.50	(41)	1.86	(8)	2.25	(9)	1.56

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

disagreed that the joint board was not fully aware of the organizational details of the RSEPs.

Comments on the joint board made by superintendents included that the joint board worked very well and helped manage services in their regions. An executive superintendent stated that the board represented the LEAs very equitably and "... was fully aware of the details...." Another executive superintendent stated that "formalizing the board gave it more importance and credence in the LEAs - and in the SEA."

One former executive superintendent stated that there was some loss of control in establishing the joint board "... but there was more control than there would have been through informal agreements." Another superintendent concluded that those "... participants who weren't getting their way always felt a loss of LEA autonomy." An executive superintendent emphasized that "... cooperation was inherent in an RSEP. It wouldn't work without cooperation."

Most board members interviewed agreed that the board fostered good cooperation among LEAs participants. One member stated that local control was expressed through the board and therefore it was only fair "... that each board member should only have one vote." Another member theorized that their board worked so well because all problems had been "ironed out" by superintendents and other regional personnel before they reached the board. One board chairman asserted that the board insured "... that services were developed more cooperatively than competitively." He said if there was no board, then there would be more competition through purchase of service agreements. Another board member advocated that the board helped to keep LEA boards and the public

informed about the needs of handicapped children, and of RSEP goals in helping special groups. CCEC participants had the same favorable reactions about their boards except that they were responding in relation to their superintendents' board.

Although the state board required the establishment of the joint board, and the SEA mandated its existence for formal recognition and receipt of state RSEP funding, several SEA officials were less than enthusiastic about the joint board. One stated that "Yes, it is required, but I'm not sure it is needed." Another official said that the board was needed even if it was only a rubber stamp body. One supervisor asked, "Do we really need a board in each RSEP?" He suggested that we do away with the joint board concept for RSEPs and restore local control over special education programs. Most special education administrators disagreed that elimination of the joint board would restore more LEA control over programs. Some concluded that there were more unserved children before RSEPs. Others noted that services improved through the RSEP. One supervisor concluded that local control was not achieved through competitive purchase of service agreements "... this only promoted rivalry and looseness of organizational details."

Superintendents - Joint board members (\bar{x} =1.86), superintendents (\bar{x} =2.13), and SEA officials (\bar{x} =2.33) disagreed (Table 21) that superintendents should serve as voting members of the joint board. All groups agreed that superintendents are the most important decision-makers in an RSEP; however SEA officials were the group least in agreement with that statement (\bar{x} =2.55).

From the joint boards perspective, several participants spoke of the importance of the superintendent in ironing out problems, and bringing forth recommendations. One board member stated that it is important for the board to have the final vote and not the superintendents - to restore lay control. Another member concluded that "... the superintendents have enough power in the RSEP. They don't need a vote."

Superintendents of CCEC, the one program without a lay-out board disagreed with the need for establishing such a body. One superintendent from CCEC said the superintendents' board eliminates the need for an additional decision-making step and an additional meeting. He said he used to be involved in another regional program, where the lay board was "... really a puppet board." All superintendents in CCEC were enthusiastic about how well the board ran without lay control.

Most other superintendents did not think that superintendents should serve as voting members on a joint board. Said one, "It is incumbent on superintendents to make the board aware of important details of the RSEP." However, decision-making should be shared between the boards and the superintendents."

Regional Directors - All participant groups (Table 21) perceived that the regional director had the most responsibility in carrying out the objectives of the RSEP. Also, all groups disagreed that the role of the regional director was confusing to RSEP and LEA personnel (although regional directors only tended to slightly disagree that their role was confusing to LEA personnel - $\bar{x}=2.44$). All groups also disagreed that

the regional director should be given the same responsibility as a superintendent in an LEA.

Two regional directors commented that there was a need to clarify their roles and responsibilities. One said, "We are not supervisors, principals or superintendents." The question of supervisory roles of regional directors was the biggest personnel problem that several directors noted. One stated, "When I go to a regional program in an LEA, no one knows who is in charge." Most directors thought that the regional director should be allowed to administer and supervise the RSEP. This was occurring in some RSEPs, while in others role ambiguities were still being discussed.

SEA regulations did not help to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the regional director. In fact nothing was stated in the regulations regarding the director's responsibilities in an RSEP. The only state regulation which pertained noted that an RSEP must have a regional director. Consequently there were various types of regional director arrangements existing in the RSEPs. Some supervised all regional personnel, some supervised some personnel, and others coordinated personnel.

Advantages and Disadvantages - All participant groups agreed that: planning capabilities were enhanced; staff recruitment was enhanced (special education administrators only tended to agree - $\bar{x}=2.68$); cooperation among RSEP personnel increased; and overall the advantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the disadvantages (Table 22).

All groups disagreed that: a loss of local autonomy occurred in RSEPs, though SEA participants disagreed only slightly ($\bar{x}=2.44$);

Table 22
RSEP Survey - Organization, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Responses by Participant Groups)

	Participant Groups									
	Total Board Members		Superintendents		Special Education Admin.		Regional Directors		SEA Officials	
	(#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}
<u>Reported Advantages of RSEPs</u>										
a. Planning capabilities of comprehensive services by cooperating LEAs are enhanced	(22)	3.32	(32)	3.45	(43)	3.33	(9)	3.89	(9)	3.00
b. Staff recruitment capabilities are enhanced	(22)	3.23	(31)	3.03	(42)	2.68	(9)	2.77	(9)	3.00
c. Cooperation among RSEP personnel increases	(22)	3.32	(31)	3.41	(41)	3.46	(9)	3.67	(9)	2.89
d. Overall, the advantages of operating RSEPs far outweigh the possible disadvantages	(23)	3.59	(31)	3.71	(43)	3.42	(9)	3.77	(9)	3.00
<u>Reported Disadvantages of RSEPs</u>										
e. A loss of LEA (local school district) autonomy occurs	(23)	1.68	(32)	2.13	(42)	2.09	(9)	2.11	(9)	2.44
f. Administrative personnel arrangements become overly complicated	(23)	1.90	(32)	2.03	(42)	2.07	(9)	3.77	(9)	2.33
g. There is increased competition between LEAs for control	(23)	1.86	(32)	1.97	(43)	1.69	(9)	1.44	(9)	2.22
h. Regulatory procedures of RSEPs are burdensome	(22)	2.18	(32)	2.00	(43)	1.95	(9)	2.33	(9)	1.56
i. Personnel have less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs	(22)	2.00	(31)	1.97	(41)	2.20	(9)	1.44	(9)	2.11
j. RSEPs are perceived as unstable from year to year	(23)	1.90	(32)	2.19	(43)	2.07	(9)	1.89	(9)	2.44
k. Overall the disadvantages of operating RSEPs far outweigh the possible disadvantages	(23)	1.43	(31)	1.32	(42)	1.51	(9)	1.22	(9)	1.56

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

regulatory procedures were burdensome; there was increased competition between LEAs for control; personnel had less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs; RSEPs were perceived as unstable from year to year (though SEA officials disagreed only slightly - $\bar{x}=2.44$); and overall, the disadvantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the advantages. Most groups disagreed that personnel arrangements became overly complicated in RSEPs. However, regional directors strongly agreed ($\bar{x}=3.77$) that personnel arrangements were overly complicated (see previous section on regional director, for discussion of regional director's responsibilities).

Two board members said it would be burdensome for LEAs to provide services without the RSEP, since services had already been established. One chairman of the board said that the RSEP had brought services and personnel which would have otherwise been unavailable to LEAs. One board member said that we received tremendous support [as a small LEA] from the larger LEAs - more than if we weren't participating in the RSEP.

One board member stated that personnel administration was confusing because regional personnel were evaluating staff working in LEAs. He thought that much clarification was needed in "straightening out" problems concerned with RSEP personnel. Transportation problems were also a concern to many board members. Several spoke of students riding buses for one or more hours each way to receive services; most concluded that transportation was a burdensome problem, but there was no way to get around it.

Superintendents mostly agreed that the biggest advantages of RSEPs were that they provided quality services at reduced costs. One superintendent stated that a certain amount of autonomy was inevitably given up in an RSEP, but this was necessary to achieve the service goals. Another superintendent said that there was a need to compromise different opinions in an RSEP. "It is a lot harder to reach a consensus in an RSEP than in a LEA. But the ends are worth the extra effort." Another superintendent said that it was difficult to attend so many planning meetings. "Currently I am on regional planning committees for special education, vocational education, gifted programs, and athletics." He suggested that it might be more efficient to coordinate or consolidate all regional planning under a single committee and/or a single board.

One special education administrator agreed that it would be useful to regionalize much of Virginia's smaller LEAs. However he thought, "This would never occur because of the potential political issues of jurisdictions trying to fight for local control." Another administrator stated that RSEPs were potentially very valuable to LEAs, if capable leadership was provided. One supervisor stated that a weakness of the RSEPs was that LEA personnel didn't have much of an awareness of RSEP goals and programs. However, he thought that a strength of the program was that all RSEP programs were run under local control.

One supervisor stated that his LEA [a larger division] reluctantly participated in the regional program "... because if we didn't it would fall apart." Several participants agreed that their larger divisions could provide programs for children currently served under the RSEP but

perhaps "... not with the same quality of services." Concluded one administrator, "The regional program offers new programs and opportunities. I get new ideas from participating in our RSEP, which also helps to upgrade programs implemented in my LEA - even those not associated with the RSEP."

The programs and services of RSEPs, and the perceptions of regional participants towards those RSEP characteristics are presented and analyzed in the following section.

RSEP SERVICES

The following section on services will present and analyze:

- 1) RSEP services offered in the 9 Virginia RSEPs in 1985-86.
- 2) perceptions of RSEP participants and SEA officials towards RSEP services
- 3) services desired in RSEPs by participants

RSEP Services Offered - As can be seen in Table 23, various services were offered by the 9 Virginia RSEPs. No services were offered by all RSEPs, and some services i.e., gifted workshops (PACES); pregnant teen classes (LAUREL) were only offered by a single RSEP. Most services were offered for school-aged handicapped populations. Three RSEPs (PREP, NREP and SECEP) offered preschool handicapped services. Some RSEPs offered services for non-handicapped students i.e., classes for pregnant teens, vocational assessment (for handicapped and disadvantaged), regional in-services (for special education and non-special education personnel), and gifted workshops for high school students.

Table 23
RSEP Services

Programs & Services	RSEP								
	PREP	LAUREL	CCEC	SSEC	NREP	SVRP	GMRP	SECEP	PACES
Severely & Profoundly Handicapped (S.P.H.)	Yes CBIP Model	Yes In LAARC School	Yes In 2 Centers	Yes In 2 Centers	Yes In Regional Center	Yes At 7 Centers	Yes In 2 Centers		
Occupational & Physical Therapy (O.T./P.T.)	Yes For SPH Class	Yes For SPH Classes	Yes (P.T.) For SPH Classes	Yes (P.T.) For SPH Classes	Yes For SPH Classes	Yes	Yes For SPH Classes		
Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (S.E.D)	Yes Ragged Mountain Day School			Yes In 2 Centers	Yes Level Sys. at Regional Center	Yes At 4 Centers		Yes In 4 Sites Used Re-Ed Model	Yes Used Modified Re-Ed Model
Counseling	Yes For SED Students			Yes Individual Counseling For SED	Yes Student & Parent Counseling	Yes Varied In Each LEA		Yes Individual & Parent Counseling	Yes Ind. & Parent Counsel.
Hearing Impaired (H.I.)	Yes Uses ENFI Model	Yes Itinerant, Consulting & Teaching							
Vision Impaired (V.I.)	Yes Consulting, Teaching, & Testing	Yes Itinerant, Consulting & Teaching		Yes Itinerant, Consulting & Teaching		Yes One Itinerant Specialist			
Pre-School Handicapped (P.S.H.)	Yes Home-Based & Consult.				Yes Home-Based Services		Yes Pre-School Autistic		
Autistic		Yes In LAARC School				Yes At 1 LEA Site	Yes In 3 sites, used TEACCH Model	Yes At 1 Site	

(Continued on next page)

Table 23 (Continued)
RSEP Programs & Service

Programs & Services	RSEP								
	PREP	LAUREL	CCEC	SSEC	NREP	SVRP	GMPR	SECEP	PACES
Pregnant Teen Classes		Yes In LAARC School							
Vocational Assessment				Yes, In 1 Center For Dis- advantaged & Handicapped					Yes To Handi- capped & Disad- vantaged Students
Regional In-Service				Yes for Special Education En- dorsement		Yes PREP offered 8-14 work- shops per year			Yes For Sele- cted LEA Personnel
Gifted Programs									Yes Workshop to Selec- ted High School Students

Most RSEPs offered services for SPH and SED students, also most offered student and/or parent counseling services for SED students, and OT and/or PT for SPH students. Several RSEPs offered services for H.I., V.I. and Autistic students.

The following is a description of the ways in which the above mentioned services were delivered in the nine RSEPs.

SPH/MH Services were offered by seven RSEPs. There was consistency among most services except in those RSEPs where they were operated by each LEA, instead of the RSEP (CCEC and SVRP). Most classes were offered at LEA sites. However, LAUREL, NREP, and GMMRP offered SPH/MH services at their respective regional centers. The philosophy of most services was to teach students to interact appropriately with non-handicapped and handicapped peers and adults. Two services (NREP and GMMRP) taught home routines at school, which were also explained to parents for future home-transference of skills. NREP offered infant stimulation to the youngest SPH/MH students.

All services emphasized the use of PT and/or OT personnel to achieve SPH/MH program goals. All programs also taught communications skills through various systems. SSEC emphasized teaching communications through sign language, pointing sticks and communications boards. PREP and SSEC used computers to teach communication skills. Visually impaired SPH students in PREP, LAUREL, SSEC and SVRP received either direct teaching or consulting services from vision specialists. Hearing impaired students in LAUREL, PREP and SVRP received either direct teaching or consulting services from hearing specialists and/or speech therapists. Elementary students in all RSEPs (serving SPH students)

were taught functional academic skills geared toward daily survival. Most were taught leisure and daily living skills, such as playing games, turning on/off radios and TVs, and use of other adaptive and electronic environmental management aides e.g., turning on/off lights, cooking, opening doors.

Older students were typically taught pre-vocational and vocational skills such as sorting, stacking and envelope stuffing. Vocational training was usually aimed at placing students in community sheltered workshops (where available). In one RSEP (CCEC), such workshops were unavailable to students in some localities, either due to transportation problems or overcrowding of local workshops. One RSEP, (PREP) reported that it was a goal to train older SPH/MH students to utilize the supportive work model (where clients were partially followed up by itinerant specialists). Some students were also prepared for competitive employment.

S.E.D. Services were offered in six RSEPs. There were many similarities among the programs, yet a few of them offered more unique and comprehensive services than did others. One RSEP (SVRP) did not have a regional service delivery model which was used in all LEAs. Consequently classes were organized and run according to each LEA's model. However it was noted that all programs emphasized the teaching of academic, behavioral and social skills. SVRP and SSEC were the only two RSEPs which offered the major SED services for the region. Other RSEPs offered SED services, which were part of the LEA's continuum of LRE. In most cases, LEAs offered SED classes, and students who couldn't be handled in local services, but were not hostile or psychotic enough

to be placed in more restrictive settings, could be placed in RSEP programs. All services had personnel working with parents, LEAs and community agencies to facilitate service transitions to and from the home-school setting.

All services offered academic remediation, social skills training and various forms of behavioral management, and all worked toward sending students back to less restrictive environments, whether that was a less restrictive SED class, or a regular education class. Services were offered in most RSEPs to elementary, middle school and secondary students. Many of the classes encouraged pupils to earn their way through a level-system where the lowest level involved many controls and few privileges, and the highest levels involved fewer controls and responsibilities - approximating the home-school setting.

All services offered individual and group counseling to students to help facilitate adjustment, and as part of the social skills training. All offered parent consultation services, and at times parent counseling to facilitate communications and transference of skills learned in school to the home.

Unique SED services included those offered by PREP and SECEP. PREP offered a day school at a camping facility, known as Ragged Mountain. It was managed by a team under the PREP board consisting of the PREP psychologist, 2 LEA supervisors, the head teacher and the regional director. Ragged Mountain was similar to a private day school for SED students, except that it was offered by PREP, the public schools' regional program. Ragged Mountain was based on a total environmental

approach, where attention was given to behavior management, interpersonal skills, social skills, and family involvement.

The SECEP service was philosophically closely aligned with the basic principles of the RE-Education (RE-ED) model system started at Peabody College. This model focused on working intensely with significant elements of a child's ecology, such as his family, neighborhood, and school where he would return. It used a teacher, counselor and assistant teacher counselor for each class of 8-12 students. A master teacher supervised each two classes. Students moved through a level system, the goal of which was also to return students to a less restrictive environment. Another important component of the SECEP service was camping, which allowed students to transfer social skills learned in the class to a controlled real life setting.

H.I. Services were offered to LEAs and to regional students in both the LAUREL and PREP regional programs. In LAUREL, services were provided by H.I. specialists on an itinerant basis to students and teaching personnel. Specialists provided resources, in-service and consultation to personnel who worked with H.I. students. H.I. specialists emphasized the teaching of signing and working with augmentative devices such as hearing aides and "talk back", which increased the sound of the child's voice to his/her own ears. The H.I. program at PREP, which was established by mid-year, was modeled after a project pioneered at Galludet College in Washington, DC, called English Natural Form Instruction (ENFI). The computer was used in this service to aid in the development of proper language form and structure for the hearing impaired. Speech therapists and computer specialists in the

region helped design the educational and computer programs. The goal of the program was to facilitate the successful adjustment of the hearing impaired students to the language world by teaching them the communications skills needed for personal, social and vocational success.

V.I. Services to LEA students and personnel were offered in four RSEPs: PREP, LAUREL, SSEC and SVRP. Services in all regions were most often organized with one LEA, not usually the fiscal agent of the RSEP, serving as the lead agency. Most often, V.I. services were coordinated in various degrees by the lead LEA, the regional board and the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped - the agency which ultimately controlled the curriculum, guidelines and funding of the services. All four programs provided direct and consultative services to pupils and staff.

The PREP-V.I. service also offered vision testing to LEAs. It also demonstrated the use of new computer and specialized software developed for V.I. students, which taught them to become independent computer users in keyboarding and word processing skills.

The LAUREL, SSEC, and SVRP services provided resources, in-service and consultation to personnel working with V.I. students. The goal of the services was to assist handicapped students to function in regular classes. V.I. specialists also ordered the adaptive materials, such as Braille writers, large print and talking books.

Pre-School Handicapped services were offered by three RSEPs: NREP, PREP, and SECEP. NREP offered home and center based infant stimulation, home routines instruction, and self-care skills to preschool SPH

students. Students also received supportive services from vision, speech and physical therapists. Teachers stressed pre-academic training, dressing and self-help skills, and other skills necessary for transitions to school programs.

In PREP, center based P.S.H. services had formerly been offered by the regional program. Those services had been taken back by the LEAs, and then PREP was charged with providing home-based diagnostic consultative and child-find activities as a service to the LEAs. Two "home visitors" were also responsible for meeting all time-lines in bringing pre-school handicapped children to eligibility, and coordinating all home-school communications.

SECEP's pre-school services for autistic students are described in the following section.

Services for Autistic Students were offered at four RSEPs: LAUREL, SVRP, SECEP, and PACES. The LAUREL service emphasized teaching functional academic curriculum at age appropriate levels, and increasing social skills and self-help skills. Students received extra emphasis in developing speech and language strategies through computer systems such as EPSON Speech-Pak - which reproduced human-like sounds called synthesized speech.

In the SECEP and PACES school-aged autistic service, classes were provided to children who had moderate to severe symptoms of autism. Established in 1981, the SECEP Autistic service was patterned after North Carolina's TEACCH model. Of central importance in this approach was an emphasis on the need for parents to be active collaborators or "co-therapists" in all aspects of their child's educational processes.

A child entering the service received an initial evaluation, which included medical, developmental, educational and psychological testing. Following this evaluation, parents were invited to attend an interpretive conference in which they were informed of the results of the evaluation, and recommendations offered. The purpose of these sessions was to help parents develop home programs which focused on behavior management and self-help skills, as well as to extend and re-enforce classroom goals and objectives.

SECEP also offered pre-school autistic services. The classroom was operated in a regular day school, with the individual child's needs determining the length of his/her day. Younger students were usually most effectively served with a four hour day, paired with parents providing additional training in the home. An individual educational program was developed for each student based on the diagnostic team's assessment of present level of functioning, the TEACCH communication curriculum, and needs reported by parents within the home setting. Objectives of the classroom included an emphasis on developing an organized classroom environment, detailed communications, self-help and social skills, and academic readiness skills.

Vocational Assessment - Comprehensive vocational assessment services were offered by SSEC and PACES. Both PACES and SSEC offered those services to handicapped and disadvantaged students.

SSEC encouraged LEAs to conduct an initial Phase I vocational screening before requesting that the region conduct the comprehensive vocational assessment at their center in Charlotte County. As part of the initial screening, some LEAs assessed students aptitudes, interests,

and skills in order to help them design appropriate vocational programs as part of their I.E.P.s.

Two evaluators conducted the more in-depth Phase II vocational evaluation to further assess students vocational interests, aptitudes, work habits and general educational development. Those traits were then compared to predictors of success in specific vocational training programs and area jobs. Evaluators also assisted local special and vocational personnel to implement recommendations from the vocational assessment evaluation report by participating in planning meetings with teachers and inter-disciplinary teams.

In-Service was provided by SSEC, NREP, and PACES. NREP had offered a Regional Approach to In-Service Education (R.I.S.E.) since 1979. Each year from 8 to 14 workshops had been presented which centered on special needs both in the mainstream and within special education classes. Workshops were provided by professors from various universities, private consultants, and teachers and administrators in LEAs. Through the R.I.S.E. training, participants were provided with the opportunity to earn college credits or non-college credit (NCC) units.

SSEC offered endorsement-level special education courses for non-endorsed teachers in the seven participants' LEAs. The need for the regional approach became apparent because the southside localities lacked a graduate training facility which offered special education classes and endorsement opportunities. The classes had been offered to as many as one hundred teachers in a given year, since it was first organized (in 1979-80). Several special education teachers had become endorsed in their primary teaching area, and others gained additional

endorsements. Many regular education teachers also received training in areas such as behavioral management, educational diagnosis, and remedial math and reading methods.

Pregnant Teen Classes - Pregnant teen classes were offered by LAUREL. Girls were taught regular school subjects by instructors certified in the various academic areas; thus they could receive full-credit for taking courses away from their regular school during their pregnancies. Besides academic offerings, they received home-economics and La-Maze childbirth preparation classes. Under this program, students didn't lose any time or credit from school, and didn't have to repeat a year.

Gifted Workshops - PACES offered Technical Opportunities workshops for selected gifted high-school students. A lack of information was available about those services, since the author was denied access to information and on-site visitations.

Participants' Perceptions - Services

PREP Participants - As can be seen in Table 24, participants of all RSEPs agreed that: a wide range of services was provided in RSEPs (\bar{x} = 3.21); quality of services to low incidence populations was increased (\bar{x} = 3.61); access to specialists was facilitated (\bar{x} = 3.61); and access to specialists is facilitated (\bar{x} = 3.39). Participants in SECEP (\bar{x} = 2.64), PACES (\bar{x} = 2.93), and PREP (\bar{x} = 2.90) only tended to agree that a wide range of services was provided in their RSEPs. However after interviewing several participants, who disagreed that a wide range of services was offered, it became apparent that although participants in those RSEPs

Table 24
RSEP Survey - Services, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Response by Region)

Reported Advantages of RSEPs	RSEPs									Totals (#) \bar{x}
	PREP (#) \bar{x}	LAUREL (#) \bar{x}	CCEC (#) \bar{x}	SSEC (#) \bar{x}	NREP (#) \bar{x}	SVRP (#) \bar{x}	GMRP (#) \bar{x}	SECEP (#) \bar{x}	PACES (#) \bar{x}	
a. A wide range of services is provided	(10) 2,90	(13) 3,46	(11) 3,55	(15) 3,13	(10) 3,60	(12) 3,75	(8) 3,00	(14) 2,64	(14) 2,93	(107) 3,21
b. The quality of services to low incidence popu- lations is increased	(10) 3,50	(13) 3,77	(11) 3,82	(15) 3,26	(10) 3,50	(12) 4,00	(8) 3,50	(14) 3,57	(14) 3,57	(107) 3,61
c. Access to spec- ialists is facilitated	(10) 3,40	(11) 3,38	(11) 3,64	(15) 3,13	(10) 3,60	(12) 3,75	(8) 3,25	(14) 3,29	(13) 3,15	(106) 3,39
d. Staff develop- ment and in- service training capabilities for LEA personnel are increased	(10) 2,50	(13) 3,38	(11) 3,09	(15) 2,33	(10) 3,10	(12) 3,83	(8) 2,50	(13) 2,62	(14) 3,21	(106) 2,96
Reported Disadvantages of RSEPs	X X	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
e. Transportation arrangements are burdensome and time consuming	(9) 1,90	(13) 2,69	(10) 2,45	(15) 2,87	(10) 2,80	(12) 2,00	(8) 3,63	(14) 2,86	(14) 2,43	(105) 2,63

a. (#) = Number of Respondents

b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

were satisfied with the quality of services offered, they didn't think that their RSEPs offered enough services. Consequently, question A was probably interpreted differently among some of the participants.

The majority of participants tended to agree that staff development and in-service training capabilities for LEA personnel were increased (\bar{x} =2.96). However participants of SSEC (\bar{x} =2.33) and GMMRP (\bar{x} =2.50) were neutral; and participants of SECEP (\bar{x} =2.62) only tended to agree that in-service training capabilities are increased. Participants who disagreed generally felt like LEA in-service opportunities were insufficient to meet local needs, or that RSEP in-service opportunities were principally geared toward RSEP, and not LEA participants.

The majority of RSEP participants tended to agree that transportation arrangements were burdensome and time-consuming (\bar{x} =2.63). However, participants of PREP (\bar{x} =1.90), CCEC (\bar{x} =2.45), SVRP (\bar{x} =2.00), and PACES (\bar{x} =2.43) disagreed that transportation arrangements were burdensome. Only participants of GMMRP (\bar{x} =3.63) strongly agreed that transportation arrangements were burdensome.

The perceptions of the various participant groups towards RSEP services are discussed and analyzed in the following section.

Participant Groups - As can be seen in Table 25, all participant groups agreed that a wide range of services was provided in RSEPs; quality of services to low-incidence populations was increased; access to specialists was facilitated; and staff development capabilities for LEA personnel were increased. Regional directors (\bar{x} =3.89) and joint board members (\bar{x} =3.09) most strongly agreed that a wide range of

Table 25

RSEP Survey - Programs, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Responses by Participant Groups)

Reported Advantages of RSEPs	Participant Groups				
	Joint Board Members	Superintendents	Special Ed. Administrators	Regional Directors	SEA Officials
	(#) ^a \bar{x} ^b	(#) \bar{x}	(#) \bar{x}	(#) \bar{x}	(#) \bar{x}
a. A wide range of services is provided	(22) 3.09	(31) 2.94	(43) 3.00	(9) 3.89	(9) 2.78
b. The quality of services to low- incidence pop- ulations is increased	(21) 3.48	(31) 3.74	(43) 3.58	(9) 3.89	(9) 2.89
c. Access to spec- ialists is fac- ilitated	(22) 3.32	(31) 3.55	(43) 3.16	(9) 3.34	(9) 3.44
d. Staff deve- lopment and in- service training capabilities for LEA personnel are increased	(21) 3.10	(31) 3.35	(42) 2.93	(9) 2.78	(9) 2.89
e. Transportation arrangements are burden- some and time consuming	(22) 2.18	(31) 2.81	(42) 2.59	(9) 3.11	(9) 2.67

services was provided, and SEA officials ($\bar{x}=2.78$) agreed least that a wide range of services was provided.

One regional director stated that "we are providing good services to all groups served." Another added, however, that more groups should be served. One regional director concluded that he did not know of any students who needed regional services who weren't receiving them. Another director said that more services were needed, but there was no place in the region to start new services, since all existing facilities were overcrowded, and the SEA won't allow construction of buildings. Most regional directors noted that more severe handicapped students were being served in RSEPs, and consequently services are both highly specialized and of higher quality than would be possible through LEAs. One board member stated that RSEPs were able to offer better services working cooperatively than LEAs could offer separately.

SEA personnel noted that the need for RSEP services often varied among localities from year to year due to low-incidence conditions, and frequent moving of some families of those children. One SEA official did not think that RSEPs had even begun to tap the potentialities for providing educational and related services to low-incidence handicapped children, and recommended that localities take more of an initiative in starting more special and non-special education services on a regional basis. Another SEA official said that the whole regional program had not been thought through carefully enough by the SEA. He said that special education services were too fragmented in the state. There were LEA, RSEP, and programs by the Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped offered for special education students. For non-special

education students, there were separate regional efforts for vocational education, sports, the gifted and talented, summer school, adult education and in-service. "Somewhere", he said, "there should be some regional coordination of many of those efforts."

Services desired by RSEP participants, and participant groups are presented and analyzed in the following section.

Services Desired, Special Education

Special education services which could be offered in RSEPs were listed on the author's RSEP Survey. As can be seen in Table 26, services for severely profoundly handicapped students were most desired in RSEPs by regional participants (n=91) on the RSEP surveys. Services for hearing impaired students (n=88) were desired second, even though such services were not offered by most RSEPs. Services for seriously emotionally disturbed students (n=87), which were offered by most RSEPs, were requested third. Recruitment services, (n=71), which were not formally offered by any RSEPs, were desired fourth; and training for special education personnel (n=69), which was offered by several RSEPs, was requested fifth. Other services desired by RSEP participants, not listed on the author's RSEP survey, included services for dually-diagnosed MR/SED students and residential services for SED students. Special education services least desired by RSEP participants included: research programs (n=38); services for retarded students (n=37); and services for learning disabled students (\bar{x} =21). Most regional participants did not desire RSEPs to offer services for retarded and learning disabled students.

Table 26
RSEP Survey - Special Education Services Desired (# Responses by Region)

	RSEPs									Totals (#)	Rank
	PREP (#)	LAUREL (#)	CCEC (#)	SSEC (#)	NREP (#)	SVRP (#)	GMMRP (#)	SECEP (#)	PACES (#)		
<u>Special Education Services Desired in RSEPs:</u>											
a. Services for severely & profoundly handi- capped students	9	11	11	15	10	12	8	8	7	91	1
b. Services for hearing impaired students	9	13	11	13	9	12	7	8	6	88	2
c. Services for emotionally disturbed students	8	12	3	13	10	12	5	12	12	87	3
d. Recruitment services for special ed. personnel	2	5	8	13	9	8	6	12	8	71	4
e. Training for special ed. personnel	6	12	5	11	7	5	6	8	9	69	5
f. Services for visually im- paired students	9	3	5	13	6	12	6	7	5	66	6
g. Supervision & evaluation of special ed. personnel	1	5	5	12	9	10	6	8	4	60	7
h. Vocational ed. services for handicapped students	8	8	4	7	5	2	6	7	7	54	8

(Continued on next page)

Table 26 (Continued)
RSEP Survey - Special Education Services Desired (# Responses by Region)

	RSEPs									Totals (#)	Rank
	PREP (#)	LAUREL (#)	CCEC (#)	SSEC (#)	NREP (#)	SVRP (#)	GMMRP (#)	SECEP (#)	PACES (#)		
i. Occupational & physical therapy srvs.	9	11	7	5	5	6	2	5	2	52	9
j. Transportation services for handicapped students	4	7	5	5	5	8	2	7	5	48	10
k. Services for retarded students	3	5	3	6	3	4	6	5	3	38	11
l. Research programs to develop model special ed. services	6	4	2	8	5	3	3	5	1	37	12
m. Services for learning disabled students	2	2	2	6	3	1	1	4		21	13

As can be seen in Table 27, all participant groups chose classes for seriously emotionally disturbed students as the most desired special education service, except for special education supervisors who chose it second. Special education supervisors chose occupational and physical therapy services as those most desired in RSEPs. O.T. and P.T. services were chosen second by SEA officials, third by regional directors, and fifth and sixth by joint board members and superintendents respectively. Services for SPH students were selected first by SEA officials and regional directors; second by joint board members; and third by superintendents and special education administrators. Training for special education personnel was selected first (tied) by joint board members; second by superintendents; third by SEA officials; and fourth by special education administrators. Vocational services were selected second (tie) by joint board members; second by SEA officials; third by superintendents; fifth by regional directors; and sixth by special education administrators. Services for the retarded and learning disabled were consistently the least desired by participant groups.

Services Desired, Non-Special Education

RSEP Participants - As can be seen in Table 28, remedial education services for slow learners (n=40) were most desired among regional participants. Services for the gifted were desired second (n=35); vocational services for regular education students third (n=30); region-wide educational planning fourth (n=29); and cooperative purchasing fifth (n=25). Services requested by RSEP participants, not included on the author's survey, included foreign language instruction, closed

RSEP Survey - Special Education Services Desired (# Responses by Participant Groups)

	Participant Groups										
	Joint Board		Superin-		Special Ed.		Regional		SEA		
	Members	rank	tendents	rank	Administors	rank	Directors	rank	Officials	rank	
	(#)		(#)		(#)		(#)		(#)		
<u>Special Education</u>											
<u>Services Desired</u>											
<u>In RSEPs:</u>											
a.	Services for emotionally disturbed students	21	1	26	1	36	2	9	1	7	1
b.	Services for severely & profoundly handi- capped students	19	2	19	3	33	3	9	1	7	1
c.	Services for learning disabled students	12	7	12	8	4	10	1	8	1	6
d.	Services for retarded students	16	5	16	6	9	10	3	6	1	6
e.	Services for visually impaired students	18	3	18	6	31	5	6	3	4	4
f.	Services for hearing impaired students	17	4	17	5	33	3	6	3	3	5
g.	Occupational & physical therapy services	16	5	16	6	37	1	6	3	6	2
h.	Recruitment services for special education personnel	11	8	11	9	14		4	5	4	4
i.	Training for special education personnel	21	1	21	2	32	4	8	2	5	3
j.	Vocational education services for handi- capped students	19	2	19	3	25	6	4	5	6	2
k.	Transportation services for handicapped students	19	2	19	3	14	8	2	7	4	4
l.	Research programs to develop model special ed. services	14	6	14	7	19	7	4	5	5	3
m.	Supervision & evaluation of special ed. personnel	12	7	12	8	11	9	5	4	3	5

Table 20
RSEP Survey - Non-Special Education Services Desired (# Responses by Region)

RSEPs

	PREP (#)	LAUREL (#)	CCEC (#)	SSEC (#)	NREP (#)	SVRP (#)	GMMRP (#)	SECEP (#)	PACES (#)	TOTALS (#)	Rank
<u>Special Education Services Desired</u>											
<u>In RSEPs:</u>											
Remedial education services for slow learners	4	5	4	3	6	1	3	5	6	40	1
Services for gifted and talented students	2	4	4	3	5	5	3	3	6	35	2
Vocational educational services for regular education students	3	3	1	2	7	2	3	4	5	30	3
Region-wide educational planning	5	2	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	29	4
Training for regular education personnel	1	2	5	4	5		4	4	3	28	5
Adult education services	4	4	1	2	3	2	2	4	2	24	6
Research programs to develop model regular educ. services	3	2	4	2	2	4	2	3	1	23	7
Audio-visual services for regular education personnel		1	2		4	1	2	3	2	15	8
Transportation services		2	1		2	2	2	4	1	14	9
Maintenance & custodial services			2	1	1		1	3	3	11	10
Supervision & evaluation of regular education personnel		1	1	2	3		1	3		11	11
Printing & duplicating services	1		1		1		2	3	2	10	12

circuit TV in-service instruction, computer software cooperatives, and more regional vocational services for non-handicapped students.

Participant Groups - As can be seen in Table 29, remedial services were chosen first (most desired) by joint board members and special education administrators. Regional directors chose training for regular personnel first. Training was chosen 2nd, 3rd, and 4th by superintendents, administrators, and SEA officials (respectively).

SEA officials and superintendents chose services for gifted students first. Gifted services were chosen second by joint board members, and (tied) second by regional directors. Vocational services were chosen second by SEA officials, and (tied) second by superintendents and regional directors.

Region-wide educational planning was desired second by special education administrators, third by SEA officials (tied), and regional directors (tied); and fifth by joint board members. Cooperative purchasing was requested second (tie) by regional directors; fourth by joint board members and special education administrators, and tied fifth by SEA officials. Among the non-special education services which were consistently least desired by participant groups were: supervision and evaluation of regular education personnel; regular education research programs; and printing and duplicating services.

The financial arrangements of RSEPs, and the perceptions of RSEP and SEA participants towards those characteristic are discussed in the following section.

Table 29

RSEP Survey - Non-Special Education Services Desired (# Responses by Participant Groups)

	Participant Groups									
	Joint Board		Superin-		Special Ed.		Regional		SEA	
	Members	rank	tendents	rank	Administors	rank	Directors	rank	Officials	rank
	(#)		(#)		(#)		(#)		(#)	
<u>Special Education</u>										
<u>Services Desired In RSEPs:</u>										
Vocational educational services										
for regular educ. students	11	3	4	2	14	3	2	3	6	2
Services for gifted & talented students	12	2	8	1	11	6	3	2	7	1
Training for regular education personnel	7	6	4	2	14	3	4	1	4	4
Transportation services	6	7	3	3	2		1		1	7
Audio-visual services for regular education personnel	8	5			5	8	1	4	4	4
Adult education services	8	5	3	3	9	7	3	2	6	2
Cooperative purchasing for participating divisions	9	4	2		13	4	3	2	3	5
Remedial education services for slow learners	13	1	4	2	19	1	2	3	5	3
Printing and duplicating services	2	10	2	2	2	10	2	3	4	4
Maintenance & custodial services	3	9			2	10	2	3	3	5
Region-wide educational planning	8	5	3	3	16	2	2	3	5	3
Research programs to develop model regular educ. services	6	7	3	3	12	5	1	4	5	3
Supervision & evaluation of regular educ. personnel	4	8			4	9	1	4	2	6

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The financial arrangements of RSEPs in Virginia will be presented in the following section. The first subsection will describe the ways in which the SEA funded RSEPs, and show SEA funding patterns from 1980 to 1986-87. The second subsection will compare SEA charges for services among RSEPs, 1985-86 expenditures, funding sources and categories in the various RSEPs. The final subsection will highlight the commonalities and differences in the perceptions of RSEP participants and SEA officials on financial issues concerning regional special education programs.

RSEP Funding

Generally, the SEA funded LEA special education programs by providing categorical funding per-pupil, based on an annually preset formula. Students having more severe handicaps, in more restrictive placements, had higher established funding allotments (which the state would send to the LEAs) than students with less severe handicaps, in less restrictive placements. However, once LEAs elected to enroll students in RSEPs, they were disqualified from claiming reimbursement under the state categorical special education formula, and instead needed to fund those students through reimbursements received from the state's (60%) tuition reimbursement program. The remaining 40% was paid through funds from state and local sources.

SEA tuition program - Each RSEP filled out an SEA tuition application each year to establish a rate for each service it provided, which was included under state regulations. Services which were

eligible included special education for SED students and related services i.e., counseling; and special education for SPH/MH and Autistic students and related services i.e., physical, occupational, and speech therapy, and vocational education. The tuition package was submitted to the Virginia Department of Education, Supervisor for Private Schools Tuition programs (who had been Mr. Anthony G. Faina since the inception of RSEPs in Virginia). The application was reviewed by the supervisor, business personnel within his department, and an inter-departmental rate setting panel, consisting of representatives from the departments of education, social services, health and corrections.

After the application was reviewed, it was either recommended for state board of education approval, or sent back to the RSEPs for revision. If the SEA had not approved the rate the RSEPs were expecting, then RSEP personnel could either appeal or ask for a "budget exception" from the SEA. RSEPs were expected to request not more than the annual pre-determined maximum rate increases (generally between 6-7%). However in 1985-86 the SEA allowed, what Mr. Faina termed, "a one time exception" for rates to increase in proportion to salary increments. In that year, the state board of education encouraged LEAs to raise teacher salaries at least 10%. Once the rate was accepted by the SEA, and approved by the state board of education, it became the established rate the RSEPs could charge for LEA students until the next rate package was submitted. The entire process, from developing the package, until rate acceptance, generally took about two to four months (depending on the extent of revision needed.) The rate setting procedure was practically the same for RSEPs as for private day schools

and private residential facilities, except that RSEPs could charge LEAs an additional fee above the established rate if the LEAs agreed to pay for it, whereas private schools could not assess the extra fee.

Once the rate was established, RSEPs billed LEAs for each service (on a per-pupil basis). Billing could either be monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually. One RSEP even billed LEAs one year in advance to insure that all services would be paid for. Once LEAs paid RSEPs, they were eligible to apply to the SEA for 60% reimbursement for all allowable expenses. The remaining 40% would be paid by the participating LEAs.

Reimbursement checks from the SEA were sent to LEAs twice a year. The RSEP was consequently operated as if it were a private business. Unlike the LEAs, it could carry a positive cash flow-balance through different fiscal years, and either re-invest that balance to start new services, absorb future losses, or redistribute the money to LEAs. The funds, however, could not be spent without the authorization of the joint board, and checks had to be signed by the designated official from the RSEP's fiscal agent.

The number of students served, under the state tuition program, the funds expended by the SEA and LEAs under the state tuition program from 1980 to 1985-86, and projected for 1986-87 are shown in Table 30. As can be seen by this table, students served under RSEP programs, and eligible for state tuition funds rose from 207 in 1980-81, to 715 in 1985-86. Accordingly, state funds available for tuition programs rose from \$667,438 in 1980-81 to \$3,250,594 in 1985-86, and were expected by SEA officials to rise to about \$3,600,000 in 1986-87. The local

Table 30

Funding to RSEPs in Virginia from 1980-86 (by Source)

School Year	No. Students Served (SED, SPH & Autistic Students)	State (60%) Tuition Funds	Local (40%) Share of Tuition Funds	Total Expenditures (State, Local Sources) Under State Tuition Pgm.
1980-81	207	\$667,438	\$444,666	\$1,112,104
1981-82	359	1,264,345	842,896	2,107,241
1982-83	504	1,792,005	1,194,670	2,986,675
1983-84	533	2,029,648	1,353,098	3,382,746
1984-85	603	2,324,256	1,549,504	3,873,760
1985-86 ^a	715	3,250,594	2,157,062	5,407,656
1986-87 ^b	800	\$3,600,000	\$2,400,000	\$6,000,000

a. Estimated by Virginia Department of Education (6/18/87). 1980-81 Files Inactive.

b. Projections by Virginia Department of Education (11/18/86).

expenditures were always 40% of the share paid by the state, and rose from over \$400,000 in 1980-81 to over 2 million dollars in 1985-86, and were expected (by SEA officials) to total about \$2,400,000 in 1986-87. Total expenditures on RSEPs, under the state tuition program, rose from over 1 million dollars in 1980-81 to over 5 million dollars in 1985-86, and were expected (by SEA officials) to reach about \$6,000,000 in 1986-87.

Federal Special Projects - Under Title VI-B of PL 94-142, the federal government flowed discretionary money to each state to use for new and supplemental special education services. The Virginia Department of Education had "flowed" money to regional programs since their inception to start new and demonstration services for severely handicapped students, and for the demonstration of new technology in the special education field. Special Project funds also were available to LEAs who responded to requests for proposals (RFPs) for demonstration projects. According to Mr. Gerald Mathews, records for Special Projects prior to 1980-81 had been placed in inactive vaults and are not accessible. He estimated that Special Project funds to RSEPs were at or above \$1,200,000 in 1980-81.

From 1981 to 1987, Special Project funds to RSEPs declined from \$1,068,777 to \$77,381 (see Table 31). According to another official from the SEA, there were no new Special Projects funds expected to be allocated to RSEPs in 1987-88.

Table 31

Federal Special Project Funds to RSEPs from 1980-88^a

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount Funded</u>
1980-81 ^b	\$1,200,000 ^b
1981-82	1,068,777
1982-83	691,832
1983-84	449,651
1984-85	434,000
1985-86	424,621 ^c
1986-87	77,381
1987-88 ^b	0

- a. Source - Virginia Department of Education Files, Summer, 1986.
- b. Estimates from Virginia Department of Education Officials (6/18/87).
- c. Regular and Supplemental Grants.

Other Funding - RSEPs were eligible to apply for and use any other public or private sources to fund their programs, however the state tuition program, LEA tuition, and Federal Special Project funds were the major funding sources of regional programs.

SSEC and PACES used state funds for regional in-service training. The Virginia Department for the Visually Handicapped funded 50% of staff salaries for itinerant Vision Specialists in four RSEPs, however those services were ineligible for state tuition funds. As was discussed previously, LEAs paid 40% toward the state tuition program and occasionally paid RSEPs above the determined rate for special expenditures.

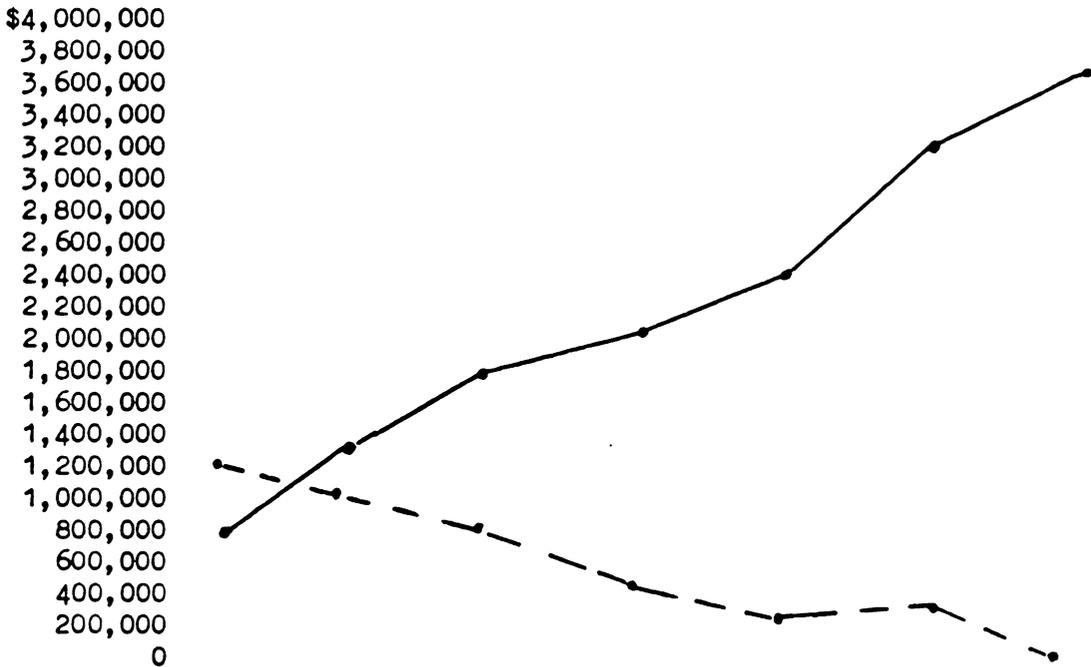
SEA Funding Trends - As can be seen in Figure 6, state tuition rose from over \$600,000 in 1980-81, to over \$3,200,000 in 1985-86, and was expected (by SEA officials) to rise to \$3,600,000 in 1986-87. However, Federal Special Project funding for RSEPs dropped from an estimated

State Funding to RSEP's, 1980-87 (State and Federal Special Project Funds)

Dollars
(Rounded to nearest
hundred thousand)

Year

1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986 *
-81	-82	-83	-84	-85	-86	-87



Code:

State Tuition (60%) Funds = ——— Straight Line

Federal Special Project Funds = - - - - Broken Line

Source: Virginia Department of Education Files (11/18/86 & 6/18/87)

*Estimated by Virginia Department of Education (6/18/87)

Figure 6

\$1,200,000 in 1980-81, to under \$78,000 in 1985-86, and was expected (by SEA officials) to be almost phased out in 1986-87.

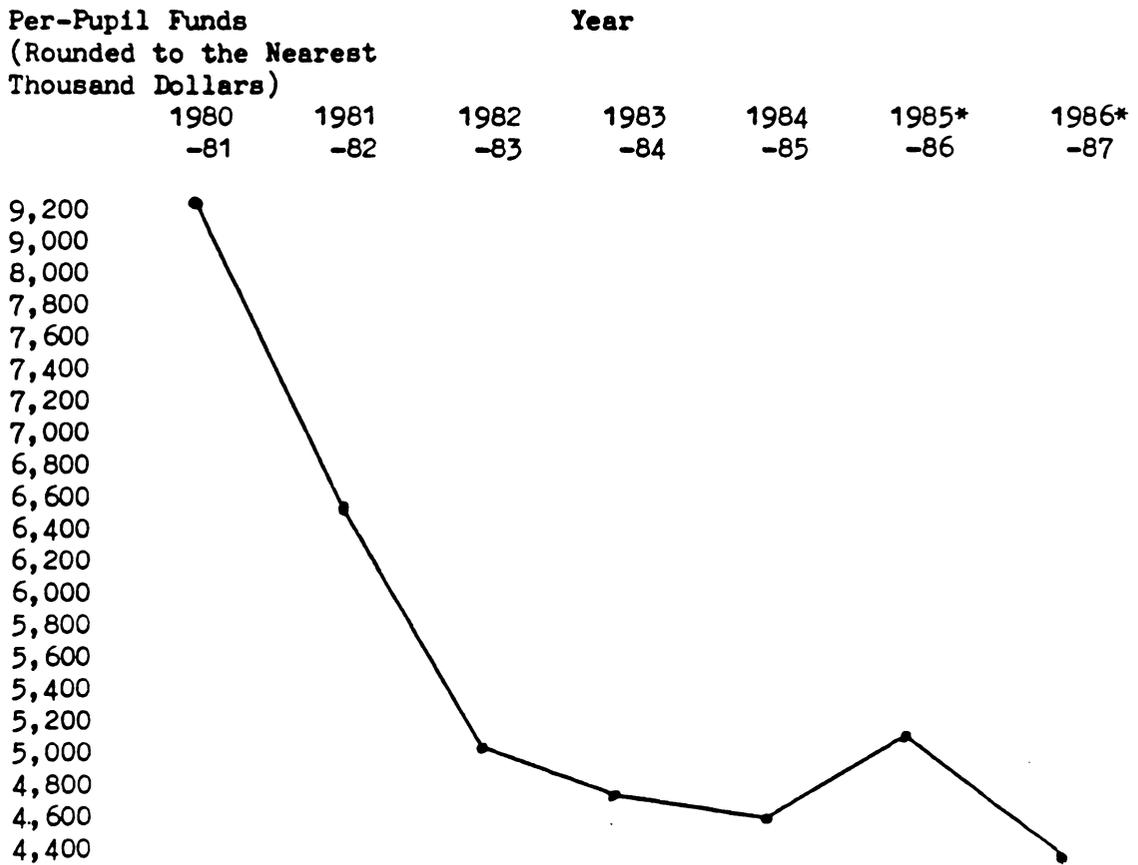
Using the combined information available in Tables 30 and 31 and Figure 6, the author was able to calculate the amount the state has funded (per pupil) for students in RSEPs from 1980-81 to 1985-86, with a projection for 1986-87 (based on SEA estimates).

Figure 7 shows the total funds received by RSEPs from state tuition funds, and federal Special Project funds to derive per-pupil funding levels. As can be seen in that figure, state per-pupil funding in RSEPs had declined from an almost \$9,200 per-pupil average, to over \$5,000 in 1985-86, and was expected (by SEA officials) to drop to under \$4,600 (about half of the 1980-81 average) in 1986-87. The one year that per-pupil funds rose (1985-86) was an exception to the trend, because the SEA allowed RSEPs to increase rates more than usual to provide at least the minimum recommended (by the state board of education) 10% pay increases for teachers. In addition, in the same year the SEA allowed the RSEPs an additional supplemental Special Project grant for new regional projects (Some RSEPs had two Special Project grants in 1985-86).

The financial arrangements of RSEPs ie., funding sources, rates to LEAs for services, and overall expenditures are presented in the next section.

Funding Sources - As was described in the previous section, funding for RSEPs was principally derived from the SEA tuition (60% reimbursement) program and from Federal (VI-B) Special Projects funds. Other sources were local and other state funds.

State Average Per-Pupil Funding to RSEP's, 1980-87
(State Tuition, (60%), and Federal Special Project Funds)



*Source: Virginia Department of Education Files, 11/18/86 & 6/18/87

*Estimated by officials of the Virginia Department of Education (6/18/87)

Figure 7

State Funding - by RSEP

State Tuition Programs - All nine of Virginia's RSEPs established tuition rates in 1985-86 for services. As can be seen in Table 32, seven RSEPs had set rates for SPH services, six for SED services, and four for Autistic services (two RSEPs had the same rates for SPH and Autistic services). The rates for SPH special education services ranged from GMMRP's \$4,477 per year to PREP's \$10,003 per year. Occupational therapy was provided at no extra charge (NEC) by LAUREL and SVRP i.e., it was built into the rate. GMMRP and NREP charged \$37.21 and \$43.00 per hour, respectively, and PREP simply charged \$740 a year for O.T. services. Other RSEPs didn't offer O.T. services for SPH students.

Physical therapy (P.T.) services were offered by all seven RSEPs which served SPH/MH students. SVRP, SSEC, and LAUREL offered P.T. services for N.E.C. and other RSEPs had fees about \$40 per hour, except for PREP, which charged \$1,570 annually. PREP was also the only RSEP which had a specific charge for vocational training (\$3,377 annually), although all RSEPs had some vocational training for SPH/MH students.

Tuition rates for special education services for SED students ranged from SSEC's \$3,320 per year to PACES' \$11,450 per year. Counseling was offered to all SED students in RSEPs, however PREP was the only regional program to establish a separate rate (\$2,792 per year) for that service. Autistic services were offered by GMMRP for \$6,079 annually; by LAUREL at \$9,155; by SECEP for \$9,651; and by PACES for \$14,065.

Table 32
Rates for Services Established by RSEPs (1985-86)

RSEPs	SPH Services					SED Services		Autistic Services
	Special Ed. (annual)	Occupational Therapy (per-hour)	Physical Therapy	Vocational Training	Speech Therapy (per-hour)	Special Ed. (annual)	Counseling	Special Ed. (annual)
LAUREL	\$9155	No Extra Charges (NEC)	NEC	NEC	NEC	N/A	N/A	\$9155
CCEC	6214	N/A	\$39.67 (per- hour)	NEC	\$14.97 (per-hour)	N/A	N/A	N/A
SSEC	4873	N/A	NEC	NEC	11.73 (per 1/2 hour)	\$3220	NEC	N/A
NREP	9758	\$43	43 (per- hour)	NEC	NEC	10,238	NEC	N/A
SVRP	6079	NEC	NEC	NEC	NEC	6,079	NEC	6,079
GMMRP	4477	37.21	46.77	NEC	9.21 (per- hour)	N/A	N/A	N/A
PREP	10,003	740 (annual)	1570 (annual)	3377 (annual)	1688 (annual)	9038	\$2792	N/A
SECEP	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	10,886	NEC	9,651
PACES	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	11,450	NEC	14,065

The number of students projected to be served by each RSEP under the state tuition program is shown in Table 33.

As can be seen in Table 33, the number of SED students projected to be served under the state tuition program ranged from 15 in SSEC to 97 in SECEP, for a total of 255 for the entire state. SPH students ranged from a projected 14 in GMMRP to 59 in NREP, with 297 projected for the state. There were 12 Autistic students projected for PACES and 50 for SECEP. In all RSEP state tuition programs, there were 614 students projected in 1985-86 by regional personnel.

Students receiving other services, such as V.I. and H.I. services, could not be accurately counted because many of them were already counted in the SPH and SED programs. In addition, since these services were itinerant, many of the students received consultation services from RSEP staff, or they were just seen on a temporary basis.

The following is an overview of the total expenditures, staffing patterns and expenditure categories of each RSEP.

LAUREL had total expenditures of \$451,201 to provide services to 54 SPH/MH and Autistic students. The rate for services was \$9,155 per year, which included speech and physical therapy. The budget included employee compensation, staff development, building expenses, rent and fixed charges. Employee compensation totalled \$396,000 or 87.9% of the total budget. Employees' salaries were budgeted for the regional director, a secretary, seven teachers, 10.5 aides, a speech therapist, nurse, physical therapist, and a part-time occupational therapist and vision specialist. Operating expenses totalled \$55,200 and included

Table 33

Average Number of Students Projected to be Served in RSEPs by ServiceCategory, (1985-86)

RSEP	# SED students	# SPH/MH students	# Autistic students	Totals
PREP	24	45	N/A	69
LAUREL	N/A	54	a	54
CCEC	N/A	54	N/A	54
SSEC	15	16	N/A	31
NREP	33	59	N/A	92
SVRP	50	55	b	105
GMMRP	N/A	14	N/A	14
SECEP	97	N/A	50	147
PACES	36	N/A	12	48
Totals	255	297	62	614

a. Some of the SPH were Autistic.

b. Some SED students were Autistic.

rent, equipment communications, staff development and travel, educational supplies, adaptive P.E. and fixed charges.

CCEC had a total budget of \$406,752 and provided SPH services to 54 SPH/MH students. The total administrative budget of \$51,501 included a stipend for the Program Coordinator, for four special education administrators (who were site supervisors), a fiscal agent's service charge, travel, office expenses, an audit, education materials, maintenance of facilities, and fixed charges.

Salaries totalled \$131,314 for eight SPH teachers and \$71,355 for the salaries of eight SPH aides. The P.T. budget was \$29,300 and the speech budget was \$18,659 for part time services of six speech therapists serving the sites. Operating expenses for the services totalled \$104,243, including rent, travel, educational materials, operation and maintenance of the building, equipment, food services and fixed charges.

SSEC provided services to 15 SED students and 16 SPH/MH students, with a total budget of \$196,858. Total employee compensation was \$164,571, or 83.5% of the total budget, for two SPH teachers and three aides, two SED teachers and two aides, and part of the regional director's salary. Contractual fees for the physical and speech therapists totalled \$15,716. Operating expenses totalled \$16,571, and included insurance, audit fees, staff development, travel and fixed charges.

NREP provided services to 33 SED students and 59 SPH/MH students with a total budget of \$692,280. Employee compensation was \$448,057 or 64.7% of the budget, including the salaries of five SED teachers, three

SPH teachers, three center-based early childhood education teachers, twelve aides, a home school-liaison, counselor, psychologist, speech therapist, physical therapist and custodian.

A total of \$60,000 was budgeted for the salary of the regional director, secretary, office expenditures and insurance, and \$18,000 was budgeted for a part time Occupational Therapist. Operating expenses totalled \$166,223 and included rent, fixed charges, educational materials and equipment.

SVRP served 50 SED and 55 SPH/MH students with a total budget of \$577,481. Total employee compensation was \$509,581 or 88.2% of the total budget. It included the salary of the regional director, secretary, four SED teachers, one teacher specializing in autism, five SED aides, seven SPH/MH teachers, and nine SPH aides.

Contractual fees totalled \$29,000 and included the salaries of a part-time physical therapist and 12 part-time occupational therapists. Operating expenses totalled \$38,900, and included rent, insurance, staff development, travel, educational supplies, office expenditures and communications.

GMMRP provided services to 14 SPH students with a total budget of \$91,859. The salaries of two teachers and three aides totalled \$55,904 or 60.8% of the budget. Contractual fees, which included the salaries of a part-time physical and speech therapist, totalled \$12,300. Operating expenses totalled \$23,655 and included rent, educational materials and fixed charges.

SECEP served 97 SED students and 50 Autistic students with a total budget of \$1,430,223. The total SED (RE-ED) budget was \$1,136,223.

Employee compensation was \$950,817 or 83.7% of the overall budget. It included the salaries of the RE-ED Director, three coordinators, five liaison-teacher-counselors, ten teacher-counselors, eight associate teacher-counselors, two clerk-stenos, three center secretaries, two custodians, and 80% of the regional directors salary.

Contractual fees were budgeted for \$26,000, and included training, and staff development expenses. Operating expenses totalled \$159,406, which included educational supplies, telephone, and utilities, rent, maintenance and indirect charges to the fiscal agent.

SECEP localities also paid an extra \$6.89 a day per pupil for supplemental charges, which were not allowable under the state tuition program.

SECEP Autistic Program - The total budget for the regular school autistic program was \$384,649. Employee compensation was \$327,108 or about 85% of the total budget. It included the salaries of two clerk stenos, two supervisors, eight teachers, seven aides, and 20% of the regional director's salary.

Other budgeted items included contractual fees of \$9,000 for staff development and travel expenses.

Operating expenses were budgeted for \$48,546 and included rent, insurance, equipment, educational supplies and indirect charges to the fiscal agent.

PACES served 36 SED students and 12 Autistic students with a budget of \$594,160. The PACES program for SED students was budgeted at \$412,164 to fund the services of five teachers, 28% of the regional director's salary, 1.5 program coordinators, five teacher aides, 1.45

secretaries, one part-time speech, one part-time recreation therapist (shared with the autistic program), and one school psychologist. PACES had \$181,996 budgeted for the autistic program to fund the salaries of three teachers, three aides, a speech therapist, recreation therapist, partial secretary and partial psychologist.

Total employee compensation budgeted for the SED and Autistic Programs was \$524,079 or 88.2% of all budgeted expenses.

Other budgeted expenses included \$3,000 for contractual fees, and \$67,081 for operating expenses including rent, utilities, maintenance, staff development, educational supplies, and communications.

PREP served 24 SED and 45 SPH/MH students with a total budget of \$739,863, including the salaries of three teachers, two aides, one social worker and one psychologist.

For the SED program, total employee compensation was \$186,182 out of \$231,648, or 80.4% of the budget.

Operating expenses totalled \$45,466 and included indirect service charges to the fiscal agent, rental fees, staff development, building maintenance, travel and communications costs.

The total budget for the SPH/MH program was \$508,215 including the salaries of nine teachers, one vocational teacher, 13 aides, one occupational therapist and .50 speech therapists. Total employee compensation was \$299,903 or 59% of the total budget.

Operating expenses totalled \$102,905 and included educational supplies on equipment, indirect charges to the fiscal agent, rental fees, building maintenance, staff development and communications expenses.

Analysis of RSEP State Tuition Budgets

Employee Compensation - As can be seen in Table 34, over four million dollars was budgeted for employee compensation in 1985-86 among the nine regional programs. Most RSEPs only included instructional salaries in this category, but some also included salaries of therapists, which other RSEPs listed under contractual fees. Compensation ranged from \$164,571 (SSEC) to \$950,817 (SECEP, RE-ED). CCEC had the lowest budgeted percentage (49.9%) under employee compensation, and SVRP (88.2%) had the highest. The average budgeted percentage of employee compensation for the nine RSEPs was 77.1%.

Contractual fees - which usually included partial salaries of physical, occupational and speech therapists and other consultants, totalled \$222,768 for all RSEPs, and averaged 4.2% of the total budget. The lowest budgeted percentage (which had contractual fees) was PACES (0.5%), which paid contractual fees in employee compensation. The highest was GMRP (13.4%).

Operating Expenses - All RSEPs had numerous smaller budgeted line items, which the author grouped together, into a single operating expenses category. Those items included educational supplies, equipment, rental fees, food services, travel, in-service, staff development, office expenditures, utilities, communications, fixed charges, and indirect charges to the fiscal agent.

Statewide, \$828,196 was budgeted for all operating expenses, for an average of 15.7% of the total of all RSEP budgets. The lowest budgeted amounts were by SSEC (\$16,571) and the highest by SECEP's RE-ED Program

Table 34
RSEPs State Tuition Budget Analysis - 1985-86
Expenditures

RSEP	Employee Compensation		Contractual Fees		Operating Expenses		Administration		Total Budget
	Total	% of Budget	Total	% of Budget	Total	% of Budget	Total	% of Budget	
LAUREL	\$396,000	87.8%			\$55,220	12.2%			\$451,200
CCEC	203,049	49.9	\$47,959	11.8%	104,243	25.6	\$51,501	12.7	406,752
SSEC	164,571	83.5	15,716	8.0	16,571	8.5			196,858
NREP	448,057	64.7	18,000	2.6	166,223	24.0	60,000	8.7	692,280
SVRP	509,581	88.2	29,000	5.0	38,900	6.8			577,481
GMMRP	55,904	60.8	12,300	13.4	23,655	25.8			91,859
SECEP:									
Re-Ed	950,817	83.9	26,000	2.3	159,406	14.0			1,136,223
Autistic	327,103	85.0	9,000	2.4	48,546	12.6			384,649
PACES	524,079	88.2	3,000	0.5	67,081	11.3			594,160
PREP:									
SED	186,182	80.4			45,466	19.6			231,648
SPH/MH	299,903	59.9	59,793	11.8	102,905	20.2	45,614	9.0	508,215
Totals	\$4,065,246	77.1%	\$220,768	4.2%	\$828,196	15.7%	\$157,115	3.0%	\$5,271,325

(\$159,406). The lowest percentage of all operating expense budgets was by SVRP (6.89%), and the highest by GMMRP (25.8%).

Administration - Three RSEPs had administration categories, which usually were budgeted for the salaries of regional staff, indirect charges, and administrative overhead expenses. Other RSEPs usually listed administrative salaries in employee compensation, or had salaries covered in federal Special Project budgets.

Three RSEPs had \$157,115 budgeted for administrative budgets, for a total of 3% of the state RSEP tuition budget. The overall budgets of the nine RSEPs ranged from GMMRP's (\$91,859), to a high of SECEP's, RE-ED Programs (\$1,136,223). The total amount budgeted by the RSEPs under the state tuition program was \$5,271,325.

The federal Special Project funds and activities of the RSEPs are presented in the following section.

Federal Special Project and other Funds (by RSEP) LAUREL, CCEC, and GMMRP did not receive any federal Special Project funds from the state in 1985-86. (See Table 35) GMMRP and LAUREL never received any, and CCEC previously received the funds but was not receiving any during the year of the study. The SEA had informed RSEPs that they were implementing a three year "phase out" of Special Project funds. The phase-out provided a 100% funding level the first year; 80% the second year; 60% the third year; and no funding thereafter. RSEPs which were supposed to be "phased out" of the 3 year cycle by the end of 1985-86 included PACES, SVRP, NREP, and SECEP. However PACES was offered a supplemental Special Project grant by the SEA in 1986-87, which they eventually did not spend. SECEP and SSEC were also offered additional

Table 35
Virginia's Federal Special Project Awards to RSEPs from 1981-1986*

RSEP	Year							
	1981-82	1982-83	1983-84	1984-85	1985-86	1985-86 (Supplemental)	1986-87	1987-88 (None projected)
PREP	\$205,132	\$150,000	\$84,651	\$67,720	\$50,790	\$20,000	\$16,000	0
SECEP	304,930	183,186	75,000	60,000	45,000	45,476	36,381	0
NREP	0	0	60,000	48,000	36,000	24,372	0	0
SSEC	30,000	51,466	80,000	63,680	47,831	0	25,000	0
CCEC	178,500	100,000	0	75,000	0	0	0	0
SVRP	150,000	80,000	75,000	60,000	45,000	0	0	0
PACES	200,215	127,180	75,000	60,000	45,000	65,152	0	0
LAUREL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
GMMRP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
State Totals	\$1,068,777	\$691,832	\$449,651	\$434,400	\$269,621	\$155,000	\$77,381	\$0

*Projections by Virginia Department of Education Official (6/18/87)

Special Project funding in 1986-87, which they did spend. PACES, SVRP, and NREP were the only regional programs which were actually phased out in 1985-86 under the state Special Projects formula. No official at the Virginia Department of Education was able to explain, when questioned by the author, why certain RSEPs received extra funding in 1986-87 when they were scheduled to be "phased out", while others actually were phased out from Special Projects funding.

Goals of the 1985-86 Virginia Special Project awards are discussed by RSEP in the following section.

PREP received a basic Special Project grant of \$50,790 and a supplemental grant of \$20,000. The initial grant was for personnel and equipment to establish a regional diagnostic team for severely handicapped students and a parent trainer for families of that student population. It included \$2,100 for specialized equipment related to those services, and \$4,000 for travel, parent training, expenses and in-service.

The supplemental grant was sufficient to operate the itinerant hearing impaired specialist program for the second half of the year. The grant also included travel expenses of \$1,400 and equipment expenditures of \$5,368.

SECEP received two special project grants in 1985-86 totalling \$90,649, which went toward paying the expenses of the autistic program, and the newly created autistic preschool program.

NREP received \$36,000 in Special Project funds to continue services for SED and SPH students, training expenses for staff, and to fund part of the fees for an occupational therapist. Other budgeted categories

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The perceptions of RSEP participants and SEA officials toward the financial arrangements of RSEP programs are presented in the following section.

Participants' Perceptions - Financial Arrangements

RSEP Participants. As can be seen in Table 36, the majority of participants in all RSEPs disagreed ($\bar{x}=1.92$) that current state funding for RSEPs was adequate, and that the discontinuation of State Special Project funds would have little or no effect on the service delivery capability of RSEPs ($\bar{x}=1.54$). RSEP were fairly consistent on all other finance questions on the RSEP survey, agreeing that: the SEA should support start-up costs of new RSEPs ($\bar{x}=3.43$) and overhead costs ($\bar{x}=3.43$) of existing RSEPs; the SEA had not funded RSEPs to the extent previously promised ($\bar{x}=2.94$); sporadic timelines for SEA proposals had made RSEP planning increasingly difficult ($\bar{x}=3.18$); the varied number of sources needed to fund an RSEP made the financial operation of one increasingly difficult ($\bar{x}=2.79$); and the RSEPs could not afford to operate services under the low predetermined maximum rate increases ($\bar{x}=2.93$). The majority of participants also tended to disagree that the RSEP model would be cost effective for non-special education programs ($\bar{x}=2.38$).

Participant Groups - As can be seen in Table 37, there was consistent agreement on finance questions a-d for all participant groups, along the same lines as in the previous table (36). On question e, all RSEP participants agreed that the SEA should support overhead costs of RSEPs, but SEA officials tended to disagree ($\bar{x}=2.45$). SEA officials also tended to disagree ($\bar{x}=2.30$) with RSEP participants that

Table 36
RSEP Survey - Finances (x Responses by Region)

Reported Advantages of RSEPs	RSEPs										TOTALS (#) \bar{x}
	PRGP (#) ^a \bar{x} ^b	LAUREL (#) \bar{x}	OCEC (#) \bar{x}	SSEC (#) \bar{x}	NREP (#) \bar{x}	SVRP (#) \bar{x}	GMRP (#) \bar{x}	SECEP (#) \bar{x}	PACES (#) \bar{x}		
a. Current state funding for RSEPs is adequate	(9) 2.33	(12) 2.41	(9) 2.11	(14) 1.50	(10) 1.80	(11) 2.45	(7) 1.43	(12) 1.33	(13) 1.62	(97) 1.92	
b. The discontinuation of State Special Project Funding (VI-B Funding) would have little or no effect on the service delivery capabilities of the RSEPs	(9) 2.22	(12) 2.00	(11) 1.36	(14) 1.14	(8) 1.40	(12) 1.75	(8) 1.13	(14) 1.57	(14) 1.36	(102) 1.54	
c. Funding uncertainties at the SEA level greatly contribute to a sense of instability among RSEP Personnel	(10) 3.20	(12) 2.77	(11) 2.91	(14) 3.35	(10) 3.40	(12) 2.67	(8) 3.13	(14) 3.14	(13) 3.15	(104) 3.07	
d. The SEA should support continued start-up costs for new RSEP programs	(10) 3.50	(12) 3.50	(11) 3.73	(14) 3.43	(10) 3.40	(12) 3.00	(8) 3.50	(13) 3.38	(14) 3.50	(104) 3.43	
e. The SEA should support on-going overhead costs of existing RSEP programs for increased stability	(10) 3.50	(11) 3.45	(11) 3.64	(14) 3.71	(10) 3.80	(12) 3.08	(8) 3.75	(14) 3.14	(12) 3.33	(102) 3.47	
f. The SEA has not funded RSEPs to the extent that had previously been promised	(9) 2.77	(10) 2.60	(8) 3.00	(14) 2.78	(6) 3.16	(12) 2.83	(6) 3.50	(10) 3.00	(8) 3.25	(83) 2.94	
<u>Organization of Finances</u>											
g. Sporadic timelines by SEA proposals for funding have made planning in RSEPs increasingly more difficult	(10) 3.20	(10) 3.10	(9) 2.67	(14) 3.43	(10) 3.00	(12) 3.00	(6) 3.33	(12) 3.30	(11) 3.45	(94) 3.18	
h. The varied number of sources needed to fund an RSEP makes the financial operation of one exceedingly difficult	(10) 3.40	(11) 2.18	(11) 2.18	(14) 3.14	(10) 3.10	(12) 1.92	(6) 3.17	(13) 3.00	(14) 3.14	(101) 2.79	
i. The RSEPs cannot afford to operate services under the low predetermined maximum rate increases allowed in the SEA Tuition Rate Program	(9) 2.77	(11) 3.18	(8) 2.63	(13) 3.31	(8) 3.25	(12) 2.17	(7) 3.14	(13) 3.15	(12) 2.83	(93) 2.93	
j. The RSEP model would probably be cost effective for non special-education programs	(10) 2.70	(11) 2.27	(10) 2.50	(12) 2.25	(7) 2.86	(12) 2.33	(6) 2.83	(11) 1.73	(12) 2.42	(91) 2.38	

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

Table 37
RSEP Survey - Finances (\bar{x} Responses by Participant Groups)

	Participant Groups									
	Joint Board Members		Superintendents		Special Education Admin.		Regional Directors		SEA Officials	
	(#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}
<u>State Support</u>										
a. Current state funding for RSEPs is adequate	(19)	1.68	(30)	1.67	(40)	2.10	(9)	2.22	(11)	2.09
b. The discontinuation of State Special Project Funding (VI-B Funding) would have little or no effect on the service delivery capabilities of the RSEPs	(21)	1.48	(31)	1.29	(43)	1.79	(9)	2.11	(11)	1.81
c. Funding uncertainties at the SEA level greatly contribute to a sense of instability among RSEP personnel	(23)	3.26	(31)	3.00	(42)	3.19	(9)	2.66	(11)	3.18
d. The SEA should support continued start-up costs for new RSEP programs	(22)	3.36	(31)	3.42	(41)	3.55	(9)	3.33	(11)	2.82
e. The SEA should support on-going overhead costs of existing RSEP programs for increased stability	(21)	3.52	(31)	3.55	(40)	3.45	(9)	3.22	(11)	2.45
f. The SEA has not funded RSEPs to the extent that had previously been promised	(21)	2.95	(24)	2.70	(29)	3.10	(7)	2.71	(10)	2.30
<u>Organization of Finances</u>										
g. Sporadic timelines by SEA proposals for funding have made planning in RSEPs increasingly more difficult	(22)	3.23	(28)	3.14	(33)	3.21	(8)	3.88	(10)	3.40
h. The varied number of sources needed to fund an RSEP makes the financial operation of one exceedingly difficult	(21)	2.90	(30)	2.63	(38)	2.89	(9)	2.22	(11)	3.27
i. The RSEPs cannot afford to operate services under the low predetermined maximum rate increases allowed in the SEA Tuition Rate Program	(20)	2.90	(28)	2.82	(35)	2.89	(9)	3.00	(10)	2.70
j. The RSEP model would probably be cost effective for non special-education programs	(21)	2.19	(27)	2.22	(35)	2.57	(7)	3.00	(9)	2.67

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

the SEA had not funded RSEPs to the extent previously promised. SEA officials did agree with RSEP participants that sporadic timelines by SEA proposals for funding had made planning in RSEPs difficult. All groups tended to agree that the RSEPs could not afford to operate services under the low predetermined maximum rate increases of the state tuition program. There was some disagreement regarding question j, which pertained to the cost effectiveness of non-special education services. Joint board members and superintendents tended to disagree that the RSEP model would be cost effective for non-special education services; and special education administrators, regional directors (\bar{x} =3.00), and SEA officials tended to agree with the concept.

As can be seen in Table 38, all RSEP participants agreed that cost effectiveness of specialized services was increased (\bar{x} =3.43); disagreed that the ability to attract state and federal funds through RSEPs was increased (\bar{x} =2.03); and also disagreed that there were increased costs for the delivery of services (\bar{x} =1.89).

As can be seen in Table 39, there was agreement among all participant groups that cost effectiveness of services, and the ability to attract funds was increased by RSEP participation. All groups disagreed that there were increased costs for the delivery of services; SEA officials were the only group who tended to agree (\bar{x} =2.89) that added start-up costs were likely to offset potential RSEP savings in the first year.

A summary of the finance comments by RSEP participants and SEA officials, taken from the RSEP Surveys and interviews are presented in the following section.

Table 38
RSEP Survey - Finances, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Responses by Region)

Reported Advantages of RSEPs	RSEPs											
	PREP (#) ^a \bar{x} ^b	LAUREL (#) \bar{x}	COEC (#) \bar{x}	SSEC (#) \bar{x}	NREP (#) \bar{x}	SVRP (#) \bar{x}	GMRP (#) \bar{x}	SECEP (#) \bar{x}	PACES (#) \bar{x}	TOTALS (#) \bar{x}		
a. Cost effectiveness of Specialized Services Is Increased	(10) 3.70	(13) 3.62	(11) 3.55	(14) 3.40	(10) 3.90	(12) 3.75	(8) 3.13	(14) 3.00	(14) 3.00	(106) 3.43		
b. The ability to attract state and federal grants Is Increased	(10) 3.00	(11) 2.91	(11) 3.82	(15) 3.07	(10) 3.10	(12) 3.75	(8) 2.88	(13) 2.92	(14) 2.71	(104) 3.13		
Reported Disadvantages of RSEPs												
c. There are Increased costs for the delivery of services	(10) 1.80	(13) 1.67	(11) 1.64	(15) 1.87	(10) 2.30	(12) 1.42	(8) 2.25	(14) 2.07	(14) 2.07	(107) 1.89		
d. Added start-up costs are likely to offset any savings gained in the initial year of operation	(10) 1.90	(10) 1.80	(11) 1.64	(14) 1.93	(10) 2.00	(12) 1.50	(8) 2.40	(13) 2.38	(13) 2.67	(101) 2.03		

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

Table 39
RSEP Survey - Finances, Advantages and Disadvantages (\bar{x} Responses by Participant Groups)

Reported Advantages of RSEPs	Participant Groups									
	Joint Board Members		Superintendents		Special Education Admin.		Regional Directors		SEA Officials	
	(#) ^a	\bar{x} ^b	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}	(#)	\bar{x}
a. Cost effectiveness of specialized services is increased	(23)	3.30	(31)	3.61	(42)	3.26	(9)	3.77	(9)	2.78
b. The ability to attract state and federal grants is increased	(22)	3.23	(30)	3.47	(41)	3.07	(9)	3.11	(9)	3.30
Reported Disadvantages of RSEPs										
c. There are increased costs for the delivery of services	(19)	1.74	(31)	1.90	(40)	2.00	(9)	1.44	(9)	2.33
d. Added start-up costs are likely to offset any savings gained in the initial year of operation	(18)	2.22	(31)	1.81	(37)	2.16	(9)	1.77	(9)	2.89

a. (#) = Number of Respondents b. Code = 1-Disagree, 2-Tend to Disagree, 3-Tend to Agree, 4-Agree

Joint Board Members - Many board members commented that the SEA had not been providing sufficient funds to cover the operating expenses in an ample manner, and that the funds had come at unpredictable times. Several noted that the SEA funding arrangements had contributed to the perception of RSEP "instability." One board member thought the instability was felt more by administrative staff than other regional personnel because their funds were more subject to cuts and were based more on "soft [Special Projects] money". Another board member pointed out that state funding was inadequate because the LEAs were increasingly needing to fund costs of RSEPs not covered by the SEA, such as required salaries, and expenses above the maximum allowable rates. Several concluded that this was becoming a "dangerous pattern because lots of programs would go down the drain without continued state support [of RSEPs]". However, other board members pointed out that their RSEPs were not reliant on Special Project funds and wouldn't be affected by the elimination of those funds. Some board members even contended that their RSEPs would continue even if all state funds were discontinued.

Superintendents agreed even more strongly than joint board members about the inadequacy of SEA funds and funding arrangements for RSEPs. One superintendent noted that funding instability had definitely caused "turnover and shortage of staff in our RSEP." An executive superintendent exclaimed "No way is current state funding adequate. There are not enough funds to cover the exorbitant costs of RSEPs, and discontinuation of funds would have a significant negative impact on services." One superintendent said that "RSEPs are a state function, yet they haven't funded them to the extent they are responsible."

Several superintendents mockingly referred to the state board of education's two contradictory mandates: one that RSEP tuition rates could not rise above 6% per year; and another that salaries must increase by at least 10% per year.

Despite the above concerns, several superintendents spoke of the big financial advantages of participating in RSEPs. The advantages were even stronger said one "in comparison to what we would have to pay to offer services alone, or if we had to send students to expensive private schools." Most superintendents concluded that despite the fact that state funding "left a lot to be desired," RSEPs were still a cost-effective way of serving low-incidence handicapped students.

Regional Directors had the same types of financial concerns as superintendents and joint board members, but spoke most strongly against the unpredictability of RSEP funding timelines by the SEA, and the over-complicatedness of the SEA tuition rate application package. Said one director, "The RSEPs should be set up as a separate entity by the SEA instead of being lumped with private and residential schools." Several expressed the same general view, alleging that the RSEP system appeared to be based on mistrust of RSEPs. "After all", stated one director, "... the RSEPs are forced to keep their rates within reason or the LEAs would not pay for services." Most regional directors felt that rates should be assessed for actual service costs, rather than having to conform to SEA specifications and pre-determined maximums. Concluded one regional director, "The SEA dangled funding to RSEPs like a carrot on a stick. Now that the horse has chased after the carrot, the carrot has been withdrawn and the horse left alone."

Several directors were concerned that the SEA had also put some unnecessary burdens on RSEPs, such as expecting them to submit state tuition applications one year in advance, when service levels and student populations were so unpredictable from month to month. Said one regional director, "We may get 30 new students next month. Yet the rates were set last year based on the programs and personnel we needed then." Several directors noted that the state tuition rate lacked flexibility because it often took 2-4 months to negotiate a new rate, once a change needed to be made in an RSEP.

Besides the finance concerns, one of the biggest problems noted by several regional directors, was the lack of communications between SEA and RSEP personnel. One stated that there used to be regular planning and communications meetings between the SEA, RSEP and LEA participants. "Now there are practically none." Several noted that the SEA even used to help arrange for RSEP personnel to meet for mutual planning and problem solving, but even this had now been abandoned. One regional director wondered whether the SEA was really still interested in regional programs, or whether there was the intent to either phase them out, or pretend that they don't exist. What was most curious to several directors was how the SEA had also discontinued monitoring RSEPs to determine whether funds were being spent as intended. "The current disinterest in RSEPs by SEA personnel, considering that they appeared to be a high priority several years ago, is disheartening," said one regional director.

SEA Officials - One official noted that he had been told that he was not to monitor or closely scrutinize SEA spending in RSEPs. He said

"If I went into an RSEP and started asking questions about spending, the LEA superintendent would call a high ranking official at the SEA, and I'd be called to the carpet when I returned to my office." One SEA official stated that since RSEPs are not moving in the direction of Intermediate Education Units, which are found in some other states, that they are not permanent organizations. He termed RSEPs as "... probably a fad." The same administrator was not convinced that RSEPs offered higher quality services than could be provided directly through the LEAs. Two officials noted that RSEP services were often flashy and bigger, but not necessarily better. Said one, "They have nice offices, good organizations, big administrative budgets, yet there is often too much emphasis on the image, and not enough placed on improved services to students." One official thought that the SEA shouldn't be encouraging LEAs to set up separate boards for regional services; instead he thought that informal cooperative arrangements would provide better services and be more flexible.

Two different SEA officials expressed disagreements with RSEP participants regarding Special Project funding. Both thought that the purpose of the funding was to get new programs started. "Once RSEPs have had the initial funding, then they should be fiscally independent." Several SEA officials conceded that timelines had been "... inconsistent and unpredictable." However one noted that the timelines were often out of the state's control, because they were based on federal funding cycles - which were also unpredictable. Several officials also conceded that the SEA has probably not delivered on all it promised to RSEPs. However, three officials noted that some RSEPs had really driven the

rates and costs of regional programs "to excessive levels." The contradiction, noted one official, is that "RSEP participants want increased state funds, and decreased state control over programs." He conceded though, that the State Tuition and Special Project plan for RSEPs "... needed re-clarification and re-thinking." However he cautioned that there was just not enough money available to satisfy all current RSEP desires. "Even funding for non-RSEP special education is much less than desired by LEA officials." He contended that the predetermined maximum rate increases were needed because of the finite amount of resources available, and that the SEA needed some control of the pricing mechanism of RSEPs or they wouldn't be able to budget properly. "Oh, sure we can lift the predetermined maximum increase, but this would then lessen the amount of funds available to LEAs and private schools."

In the following chapter, the results will be discussed, conclusions drawn and recommendations offered for RSEPs in Virginia, based on the data collected in the present study, and on the author's review of literature.

Chapter V

The following chapter is based on the data collected during the Virginia RSEP Study, and on the author's review of the literature. The major research questions concerning the descriptive characteristics of RSEPs and the perceptions of RSEP participants, are discussed according to the four characteristics of regional education programs as identified by Stephens (1979a) i.e., legal structure, governance and organization, services and financial arrangements. Conclusions and recommendations are presented and discussed in the following sections.

Legal Structure

Research Question (paraphrased): What is the Legal Structure of RSEPs in Virginia, and what are RSEP participants' perceptions toward that structure?

For the purposes of this study, Legal Structure was defined as the ways in which the SEA regulates regional programs. The Virginia SEA issued two sets of regulations in the early 1980's which governed certain aspects of the state's RSEPs.

Compliance to those regulations was generally found in the nine RSEPs which existed by 1985-86. However one RSEP did not have a joint board, as was required in the 1981 JOAJOS Regulations. Each joint board had appointed a regional director, although two only served part-time. No RSEPs owned facilities as this was not permitted under state regulations.

Most RSEP participants agreed that RSEPs were mainly controlled by the LEAs, and the majority were in agreement that the roles and

responsibilities of SEA regulations toward RSEPs needed additional clarification. Most participants strongly agreed that the SEA should involve LEA and RSEP personnel more in the planning and policy decisions of RSEPs. However, most tended to disagree that a state supervisor of RSEPs needed to be appointed, because of a widespread concern that such an individual might "... impose additional burdensome regulations on the RSEPs." Apparently the consensus among RSEP participants was that they wished the SEA to provide less regulation, and more clarification, support and technical assistance.

The majority of participants tended to agree that the SEA should only recognize formal RSEPs with a duly appointed lay-joint board. However, a number thought the SEA should permit a dual recognition system whereby LEAs would be able to organize either informal or formal RSEPs as needed.

Discussion - According to Stephens' categorization of regional education programs, Virginia's RSEPs were Cooperative ESAs with voluntary participation from LEAs. Over one-third of the LEAs in the state had voluntarily joined an RSEP, and up until 1985-86, RSEPs had been steadily growing in Virginia, as they had been in Squires' 1974 national study of RSEPs. The state's encouragement, design of regulations, and provision of funding incentives to establish RSEPs had apparently influenced the development of many of those programs, as all nine had been established since the state took the above measures. The formation of RSEPs aided the LEAs in meeting the state and federal mandate to serve low incidence handicapped children, since the number of those students served in RSEPs almost tripled from 1980-86. Although

some may have been previously served in LEAs, many RSEP participants reported that services to the low-incidence handicapped did not exist prior to RSEPs, or were not appropriate to meet their legal needs.

The Virginia SEA's regulations for RSEPs when compared to Lindstrom's (1978) and Stephens' (1979a) concepts, were permissive. According to Stephens, Cooperative ESAs tended to establish a very general framework, utilize inter-governmental regulations, and have permissive legislation. There were few RSEP regulations in Virginia - in comparison to states like Pennsylvania and New York - which had more formal RSEP legal structures. In addition, in Virginia there appeared to be some inconsistency in the SEAs compliance expectations for RSEPs. For example, the SEA permitted one RSEP to operate without a lay-joint board. One RSEP established a superintendents' committee which never met. Two RSEPs appointed a regional director or coordinator who did not have full-time responsibility or written roles and responsibilities.

There were no standardized reporting requirements among RSEPs to the SEA in Virginia. None of the 12 SEA officials with delegated RSEP responsibility appeared to have actual control over the programs, and there was no one official or group at the SEA who had total control of planning, coordination, data collection or evaluation of RSEPs in Virginia. This researcher needed to go to the offices of 10 of the 12 identified officials to obtain about 25% of the data for the present study. The remaining data were obtained from the RSEPs. The effect of this lack of a coordinated RSEP effort may be a weakness in the planning and communications capabilities among SEA, LEA and RSEP personnel.

The apparent lack of single authority at the SEA for regional programs may pose a problem in the monitoring of programs to identified handicapped learners served through the RSEP. According to PL 94-142 (as amended), all programs must be monitored by the SEA. Without clear SEA authority and responsibility, the monitoring of services may not be conducted as intended by PL 94-142. As will be noted in the following sections, the organization, administration and financing of RSEPs is complex, therefore there is a need for structure and a monitoring process.

Like RSEPs in Kansas (Kirmer, et al., 1984); Kentucky (Stephens, 1979c); South Dakota (Lindstrom, 1978); and Texas (Stephens, 1979f); Virginia's RSEPs were primarily encouraged by the SEA to help deliver special education services to low incidence handicapped students. Other states, unlike Virginia, established ESAs to provide a broad range of educational services to handicapped and non-handicapped students, and to regular and special education staff.

Several of the states provided technical assistance, training and support services, which according to many participants were lacking in Virginia's RSEPs. Rosati (1983) noted that Kentucky (in 1980) provided technical assistance to all regional programs working with handicapped children through consultation and provision of special resources. Stephens (1979f) reported that the Texas SEA helped establish funding and support services, developed goals, guidelines, consultations and evaluation assistance for all RSEPs, but allowed each program to organize its own administrative procedures. Stephens called the Texas SEAs effort an exemplary national model for RSEP development.

Participants in RSEPs and SEA officials generally agreed that Virginia's RSEPs were primarily under local (LEA) control. This model of local control over RSEPs was similar to those described in Wisconsin by Harmon and Bowles, (1984), in South Dakota by Lindstrom (1978); and in Texas by Stephens (1979f). However, most participants agreed that there was a balance of control between LEA and SEA personnel regarding RSEPs. There was no apparent interest by either LEA or SEA officials in allowing the SEA to increase control over regional programs, as the legal control structures which were in place in Virginia's RSEPs were considered adequate by most participants. In the opinion of this author, insufficient legal control was provided to the state for ensuring compliance to state regulations, and for monitoring program accountability among RSEPs. Thus, although regulations had been established, the state would not know whether compliance was obtained unless monitoring was increased.

Since most RSEPs had moved from informal to formal regional structures, and many of them had both formal and informal service delivery operations within the same region, it did not seem necessary for the SEA or for the Virginia State Board of Education to require formalization of all RSEPs before state recognition could be granted. The author, who also had been a regional director of an RSEP in Virginia (SSEC) for four years, was able to observe that moving from informal to more formal structures in an RSEP worked well in that situation, and was, according to participants, working well in the RSEPs he visited at the time of the present study.

GOVERNANCE AND ORGANIZATION

Research Question (paraphrased) - What are the Organizational Characteristics of RSEPs in Virginia and what are RSEP participants' perceptions about those organizations?

Governance and organization was defined as the ways in which boards internally govern, and administrators organize regional education programs.

Formal regional special education programs had been organized in Virginia since 1978. Through the 1985-86 school year, nine formal RSEPs had been established, serving 51 LEAs. Two of the nine formal RSEPs (CCEC and GMMRP) had organized informal cooperative arrangements to deliver special education services without lay joint boards since the early 1970's.

Impetus to starting many of the existing RSEPs came from SEA funding incentives from 1980 through the year of the present study (1985-86). Since the SEA, during those years, was promoting the formation of RSEPs and providing funding incentives to start projects (Federal Special Projects funds), and funding to operate existing projects, over one-third of the LEAs in the state formed such projects. As described in the previous section, LEAs pooled their resources, wrote feasibility studies, drew up cooperative plans, formed joint boards and began operating services.

Combined, Virginia's RSEPs served local populations of over one-third of the state, and also served over one-third of the LEAs. There were a number of differences in the population, size, and geography of the nine RSEPs found in Virginia, as there were in other states

(Squires, 1974). Most RSEPs in Virginia used the Basic Organization System (BOS) recommended under the 1982 Virginia RSEP Guidelines. Under the BOS, LEA boards chose members for joint boards, who relied on recommendations from superintendents for final decisions. Joint boards and superintendents made policy and plans, and relied on the regional director to implement their directives. The regional director relied on input from the advisory committee and implemented the regional programs. Some regional directors also supervised regional personnel and some coordinated programs and personnel.

All participant groups agreed that the joint board resulted in more effective management of RSEPs than through other informal management procedures, and that one vote per district was the most equitable voting system. Most groups agreed that the joint board was informed about RSEP programs, and most agreed that the establishment of the joint board fostered cooperation and reduced some of the competitive aspects of the informal purchase of service agreements.

Discussion - According to Virginia's 1981 JOAJOS Regulations, RSEPs were to be managed by joint boards. Participants in Virginia's RSEPs overwhelmingly concluded that the joint board was critical in effecting the success of RSEPs in the state. The joint board helped to ensure equal opportunity for local input in RSEP decision-making. Connors (1980) and the ECOB (1975) have asserted that the regional board functioned much like a local school board in that it could adopt budgets, make policy, employ personnel, and disburse funds for the regional organization. In Virginia, joint boards were carrying out all of the above functions. Connors also added that the joint board allowed

program decisions and changes to come through a single coordinated entity, rather than through each participating agency; thus no single LEA could totally control a board. Most participants in Virginia's RSEPs agreed that their joint board served a coordinating and power balancing role in regional programs. Connors (1980) suggested that one joint board member per-district was the simplest way to establish a joint board, but not always the most equitable, since student enrollment and commitment of resources was often unevenly distributed. However in Virginia, most RSEP participants agreed that one vote per-participating district was the most equitable decision-making method. The re-apportionment of voting power by any other method, e.g., size of LEA, wealth, influence, would allow larger or more powerful LEAs to control many RSEPs, giving smaller LEAs less significant input in RSEPs than under the present system.

Although the NSPRA (1971), Connors (1980) and Helge (1981) suggested that one of the biggest tasks of ESAs was to encourage LEAs to relinquish a certain degree of control over regional programs, loss of local control was not perceived as a problem by most participants of RSEPs in Virginia. Many even stated that the establishment of the joint board resulted in more effective management of RSEPs than if special education services were operated by LEAs through informal agreement. Without the establishment of the joint board, and the cooperative management of services, the LEAs might be competing with each other for students, or sending students to other LEA programs without much control or input. Some RSEP personnel noted that they served on more than one regional board, such as the special education, vocational education,

gifted, or athletics board. One superintendent noted that the creation of multiple boards serving the same LEAs imposed some limitations, including duplication of efforts, lack of coordination, and difficulty in finding personnel to participate on all boards. The creation of multiple education boards in the same region was viewed as an unnecessary and inefficient method of managing regional educational resources.

According to most RSEP participants, joint boards exhibited the most control over RSEPs in Virginia, however superintendents held the most influence, even though they didn't generally vote on the joint board. Their influence came through their power of recommendation and through their position as links between the LEA boards and the joint board. Because of this, most participants did not think that superintendents should vote on the joint board. Giving the superintendents voting privileges on the joint board would probably undermine the state board's intention of providing RSEPs with public lay-control. Their vote could erode joint board control, and put policy and control issues in the hands of employee-administrators rather than lay board members.

Stefonek (1973) and Helge (1981) reported that administrative detail and decision-making processes were frequently overly complex in regional organizations, sometimes making them inefficient. However, most participants did not indicate that decision-making processes were overly complex in Virginia's RSEPs. Virginia's RSEP participants agreed that planning capabilities of LEAs were enhanced; staff recruitment was augmented; cooperation among RSEP personnel increased; and that the

advantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the disadvantages. The majority of RSEP participants did not identify in Virginia many of the disadvantages reported in other RSEPs nationwide. They disagreed that: loss of LEA autonomy occurred; there was increased competition between LEAs for control; regulatory procedures were burdensome; personnel had less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs; and RSEPs were perceived as unstable from year to year.

In Duncan's (1979) study of RSEPs in the United States, many RSEP participants perceived the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the regional director. Most participants in Virginia noted that the regional director had the most responsibility in carrying out the objectives of the RSEP, but most did not think his/her roles needed additional clarification. However several regional directors and board members spoke of the need to clarify the regional directors role, since when he/she visited RSEP services situated in LEAs, then local personnel often did not know whether to perceive the director as a principal, supervisor, or superintendent of the RSEP. The majority of RSEP participants disagreed that directors should function like superintendents in an LEA because this would undermine local authority. Most also disagreed that the director should function as an agent of the state because of the potential of divided loyalties in that role, and because LEA personnel would not be able to develop complete trust in the regional director if he/she were partly or fully employed by the state. Regional directors were usually not employed by either LEAs or the SEA; instead, they were agents of joint boards. The regional director's role in RSEPs was not defined by the SEA, and thus

was perceived to be in need of further clarification by the directors and some joint board members.

The results obtained in McLaughlin's (1982) study of the CCEC regional program in Virginia corresponded in all but one area to those found in the present study. CCEC was atypical of RSEPs in Virginia in that it did not utilize a lay-joint board in 1982 or in 1985-86. As a result, most participants in CCEC did not perceive that there was a need for a lay board, as did most in Virginia's other RSEPs. Results which were consistent for CCEC's Superintendent Board members in 1982, and in the statewide totals of RSEP participants in the author's 1985-1986 study, included that: a wider range of services was provided; planning was enhanced; access to specialists was facilitated; and RSEPs increased LEA programming flexibility. Participants in both studies also disagreed that RSEPs resulted in loss of local autonomy; instability of the cooperative; additional regulatory functions; competition among school districts; and complicated personnel management procedures.

The perceptions of participants of RSEPs in Virginia also were consistent in several ways with those found by Stephens (1979f) regarding the perceptions of participants of RSEPs in Texas. In both states, participants noted that RSEPs provided services LEAs could not provide alone; RSEPs were cost effective; quality of services in RSEPs was increased; and cooperation among LEAs increased. There were no major disagreements noted between participants in the Virginia and Texas studies; however there were several different items on the RSEP surveys of the two states, due to unique features of their organizational structures and goals. For example in Texas, RSEP participants noted

that an advantage of RSEPs was that all costs were paid by state or federal sources - which was not found in Virginia. Participants of RSEPs in Texas noted that cooperation and communications were good among LEA, RSEP and SEA participants. Although this item was not an RSEP survey question in the Virginia study, several Virginia RSEP participants discussed the need for improved communications among LEA, RSEP and SEA officials. Texas participants noted that an advantage of their RSEPs was that there was an adequate number of minority persons in the RSEP staff and board. However, minority issues were not studied in Virginia's RSEPs.

SERVICES

Research Question - What services were offered by RSEPs in Virginia, and what were RSEP participants' perceptions about those services?

The Virginia State Board of Education and the SEA encouraged LEAs to establish services to meet the needs of unserved and underserved low-incidence handicapped children. The Board of Education in 1982 indicated that the establishment of RSEPs was one of its major objectives in meeting the needs of low incidence handicapped children. Even prior to that (in 1981), the Virginia Department of Education authorized the reimbursement of up to 60% of the tuition costs to LEAs participating in RSEPs serving seriously emotionally disturbed, multiple handicapped, and severely and profoundly handicapped students. In 1984, the SEA allowed autistic students to be added to the eligible reimbursement list.

While it was found that the above student populations were being served in the RSEPs by 1985-86, RSEPs were also serving other handicapped student populations not covered by the state's tuition reimbursement program, such as the hearing and visually impaired. Vocational services were also being provided to handicapped students, and in-service training provided to professionals working with the handicapped. Other RSEPs offered services to non-handicapped students such as for pregnant teens and the gifted.

Discussion - Authors have concluded that regional programs provided higher quality educational and support services than would be ordinarily offered in LEAs (Snell, 1973; Waler, 1975). Most Virginia RSEP participants strongly agreed that a wide range of services was provided through RSEPs; that quality of services to low-incidence populations was increased; and that access to specialists and training capabilities were increased through regional participation. Findings from this study supported Stefonek (1973) who found that regional programs often resulted in more appropriate services to handicapped children due to better grouping capabilities and with Weatherman (1983) that in-service education was often provided more successfully on a regional basis than locally. The findings also agreed with Skirtic, et al. (1985) that regional education programs often overcame distance and sparcity problems, and provided relief to LEAs trying to serve low-incidence handicapped children, and with Helge (1984a) that RSEPs increased accountability to handicapped students and their families.

Skirtic, et al. (1985) and Helge (1981) also suggested that transportation was often one of the biggest obstacles that LEAs needed

to overcome to deliver services to handicapped children. Transportation arrangements were burdensome, costly and time-consuming, and often restricted the growth potential of regional programs because of excessive distances between students and services, difficulty in scheduling and locating classes, and to increased difficulties of grouping low-incidence students together in the same classes, despite the presence of dissimilar service needs. Even with the above mentioned obstacles in transporting students to services, or services to students, only a slight majority of Virginia's RSEP participants believed that transportation arrangements were burdensome and time-consuming. Most participants apparently concluded that transportation burdens were a big disadvantage in RSEPs, but one that could be tolerated considering there were no better alternatives for providing services to low-incidence handicapped students. RSEPs often provided LEAs with the only viable option for educating low-incidence handicapped children which would allow children to reside in their localities.

Participants in Virginia's RSEPs overwhelmingly agreed that services provided SPH and SED students were among the most desired special education offerings, but also were interested in having RSEPs provide services for hearing impaired students, recruitment and training for special education personnel, supervision and evaluation of special education personnel and vocational education for handicapped students.

Participants in Virginia's RSEPs wanted to see those organizations adopt an expanded regional service delivery network for special education, as was seen in BOCES programs of New York, or in IEU's of Pennsylvania, since there were a number of special education services

desired by participants in Virginia, but not offered in RSEPs. However, there were no non-special education services which were desired by half or more of the responding participants. The three services which were most desired included remedial education services for slow learners, services for gifted and talented students, and vocational services for regular education students.

The 1981 JOAJOS Regulation, which did not permit joint boards to own or construct facilities, may have prohibited some RSEPs from finding suitable sites for added services. Participants in some RSEPs in Virginia had noted problems in this area. The author was not able to determine justifying reasons for this regulation through the interviews he conducted with SEA officials. However this was probably due to potential problems which could occur related to building ownership if the RSEP disbanded. That is, if RSEPs disbanded, it is uncertain as to which LEA would have ownership of the facilities.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Research Question - What are the financial arrangements of RSEPs in Virginia, and what were the perceptions of RSEP participants about those arrangements?

RSEP Services were principally funded through the state tuition program (which reimbursed LEAs 60% for the RSEP charged services), through LEA contributions, and through Federal Special (Title VI-B) Projects, which flowed from PL 94-142 funds to the state and to the RSEPs. Tuition rates needed to be established each year by each RSEP for eligible services, and were approved by the SEA by an inter-

departmental rate setting panel, and ultimately (in education) by the state board of education. State tuition funds to RSEPs had increased from over \$600,000 to over \$3,000,000 per year from 1980 to 1986, and students had increased from over 200 to over 700 during the same years. The local share of tuition funds was a constant 40%, regardless of the year, except where the LEA elected to support RSEP services above the allowable rate - which was generally limited to a 6-7% increase.

Special Project funds were generally used to start new regional projects, to fund innovative technologies for the low-incidence handicapped, or to fund administrative costs of regional programs. However, those funds peaked in the early 1980's at about \$1,000,000, were down to under \$500,000 by 1985-86, and were projected by SEA officials to be virtually eliminated by 1987-88. Total per-pupil state funding of RSEPs (including state tuition funds and Special Project funds) decreased from an average of over \$9,100 per-pupil in 1980-81 to under \$5,000 per-pupil (almost one-half) in 1985-86.

Seven RSEPs had rates established for SPH services, which ranged from \$4,477 per year to \$10,003 per year. Occupational therapy was offered in three programs and physical therapy services in all programs. Some charged extra for physical therapy services and some provided them at no extra charge. Six RSEPs offered SED services at a range of \$3,220 to \$11,450 per year.

The total state tuition budget for RSEPs ranged from a low of \$91,859-GMMRP, to a high of \$1,430,223-SECEP. The number of students served in RSEPs ranged from a low of 14 in GMMRP, to a high of 105 in

SECEP. Employee compensation ranged from over 49% to over 88% of RSEPs total budgets, with an average of 77.1%.

Contractual fees ranged from 0% in one RSEP (those fees were assigned to employee compensation) to 11.8% of the total budget in two RSEPs. The average for all RSEPs was 4.2%.

Operating expenses included all the line items listed by RSEPs which were not in other categories i.e., employee compensation, administration or contractual fees. The budget range was from 6.8% to 25.8% of the respective RSEP's total budgets, with an average of 15.7% for all RSEPs. Administration, which was budgeted in only three programs, averaged 3% across all RSEPs in the state.

Discussion - As Stephens (1979g) discussed, the fiscal support of Cooperative ESAs tended to be a mix of local, state and federal funds. This was also noted about Virginia's RSEPs. And similarly to ESAs in Texas (Stephens, 1979f), and Cooperative ESAs in Kentucky (Stephens, 1979c), the Virginia Department of Education had once provided state and flow-through federal funding for the start up costs and maintenance of RSEPs. State funding of Virginia's RSEPs started in 1979-80, but unlike Wisconsin's SEA, Virginia had not allocated a pre-established amount which would be assured to RSEPs each year to partially cover administrative expenses. The lack of an annually budgeted allocation for RSEPs made the continuation of RSEPs questionable each year, according to several RSEP participants interviewed by the author. Squires (1974) noted that RSEPs needed a stable financial base from the SEA. Stephens (1979f) reported that participants of RSEPs in Texas had

noted that stable state funding was one of the most favorable aspects of regional programs in the state.

The author concluded that the lack of stable state budgeted funds for RSEPs probably jeopardized both the growth of new regional programs and the continuation of some of the existing RSEPs as formal organizations. Federal Special Project funds, which had previously been used by many RSEPs to fund start-up costs of new services, and overhead costs of existing ones, had been steadily decreasing from about \$1.2 million in 1979-80 to under \$500,000 in 1985-86. Although some RSEPs in Virginia were able to re-allocate all or a portion of administrative fees to the state tuition budget, this was impossible for some because the added costs would have raised tuition rates beyond allowable SEA limits. Some RSEPs had responded by assessing additional local administrative fees to each LEA for RSEP participation. At least one RSEP was planning to operate without a regional director in 1987-88 due to state funding cuts.

Even though researchers (Squires, 1974; ECOB, 1975; and Levis, 1983) had noted that RSEPs usually operated through a diversity of funding sources, Virginia's RSEPs were mostly financed by the state tuition funds, and by local funding support in the 1985-86 school year. When compared to studies conducted by Squires (1974) and the NSPRA (1971), Virginia's RSEPs were not able to use special tax assessments (as was allowed in some RSEPs), nor were they using any private funds to support services.

As was noted by Hughes and Achilles (1971), RSEPs often raised funds through charging fees on a per-pupil basis. This also was the

major fund raising method employed in Virginia. According to Connors (1980), LEAs usually relied on participants' perceptions of cost effectiveness, which were based on an economy of scale factors (related to per-pupil costs), in deciding whether RSEP costs were justified. Several authors concluded that RSEPs were often able to offer high quality services at reduced costs (Rossmiller, 1970; NSBA, 1979; Skirtic, et al., 1985) in comparison to providing the same level of services at the LEA level. But as some Virginia RSEP participants had noted, there were few alternatives for many LEAs (besides RSEPs) to appropriately serve low-incidence handicapped. Nonetheless, the majority of participants perceived that Virginia's RSEPs were effectively serving low-incidence handicapped students in a cost effective manner.

No justification could be found for SEA procedures requiring RSEPs to establish tuition rates according to the same procedure as private or residential facilities, or in requiring RSEPs to establish rates a year in advance. Some SEA officials stated that the rate setting procedure had already been devised for private and vocational schools before RSEPs had been established. Those officials said that the SEA tried to fit RSEPs into the established system. However, many RSEP participants felt that the system was inflexible, over-regulated, financially limited and not responsive to RSEP enrollment, program, or monetary needs.

Costs for services varied among RSEPs in Virginia, as was noted in other studies (Squires, 1974; Lindstrom, 1978; Stephens, 1979a). However, strict comparisons of RSEP costs would be invalid due to different service delivery models, staffing patterns, cost of living

expenses and overhead costs inherent in the different localities. However, as was noted by SEA and RSEP officials, some RSEP costs appeared to be much higher than warranted. Some RSEPs had considerably higher administrative costs, overhead expenses, and staffing patterns than those found for comparable services in LEA settings, private or state schools. Some RSEPs had multiple level full-time administrators, two or more teaching related staff in each class, and comparatively high operating expenses in non-direct instruction areas, such as travel, conference fees, telephone and printing costs. Although it was argued by some personnel that the RSEP should choose the level of services it wished to deliver, when such costs would have the effect of reducing funding to other RSEPs which operated with very basic budgets, then they tend to become unfair. This argument would be particularly valid when SEA funds were limited.

Despite the fact that State tuition funds for Virginia's RSEPs had substantially been increased from over \$600,000 in 1980-81, to over \$3,000,000 in 1985-86, those funds had not nearly kept pace with gains in pupil enrollment, which rose from an average of 207 students in 1980-81 to 715 in 1985-86. In actuality, overall state funding (including tuition and Special Project funding) per-pupil decreased during the same period almost 50% - without taking inflation into account. SEA officials did not give any reasons to justify the SEA decrease of RSEP per-pupil funds. Virginia's decrease of RSEP per-pupil funding may have been unjustified considering the significant increase in pupils served.

Nationally, financial problems and issues were frequently cited as one of the major concerns of personnel in regional programs. Lindstrom

(1978) and Stephens (1979a) reported that regional directors thought that insufficient state and local funds were among the biggest problems facing regional programs. The NSPRA (1971) emphasized that regional programs must have a financial base to operate services. Squires (1974) identified perceived criteria among participants for effective financial management of regional special education programs. Among those criteria were guaranteed financial foundation, sufficient financial base to operate comprehensive services, and financial commitment by the state. However, in the same study, Squires noted that the major problems addressed by administrators of RSEPs he studied were insufficient funds to operate services and lack of state support.

Perceptions of RSEP participants in Virginia did not run contrary to the problems reported by participants in Squires 1974 study. The majority of participants in Virginia's RSEPs and SEA officials agreed that state funding for RSEPs was inadequate. The majority also believed that the discontinuation of state special project funding would negatively affect the service delivery of RSEPs. RSEP and SEA officials were in agreement that funding uncertainties at the SEA level greatly contributed to a sense of instability among RSEP personnel. RSEP participants strongly agreed that the SEA should support continued start-up costs and on-going overhead costs of existing RSEPs for increased stability, however SEA officials were almost evenly divided on those issues. RSEP participants and SEA officials strongly agreed that sporadic timelines for SEA requests for proposals made planning in RSEPs increasingly difficult. In addition, RSEP participants and SEA officials tended to agree that RSEPs could not operate services under

the low predetermined-maximum rate increases allowed in the state tuition program. One substantial difference between the two groups of participants was that RSEP participants strongly agreed that cost effectiveness of specialized services was increased in RSEPs. SEA officials were more divided on that issue, only tending to agree that RSEP services were more cost effective.

In the view of many RSEP participants, costs for services were justified. They also believed that the SEA had imposed many burdensome funding application procedures, had unpredictable and inflexible timelines, and provided insufficient and unstable funding to support RSEPs. On the other hand, many SEA officials thought the state had provided adequate start-up costs to initiate RSEPs, and therefore LEAs should be making efforts to view those programs as being as fiscally autonomous as possible. In addition, several SEA officials perceived the costs of some RSEP programs as excessive, and that the state was not getting its "money's worth" from some of them. Even though most SEA officials conceded that it would be desirable to raise the SEA level of funding for certain "justified direct services" they concluded that there just was not enough money to satisfy even all legitimate funding needs of LEA and RSEP programs "in current times of budget austerities."

There may be a certain degree of validity in the arguments of both RSEP participants and SEA officials over the need to increase SEA funding for RSEPs. However, the arguments of RSEP officials are more supportable because the study's data suggested that the SEA had not maintained the per-pupil level of funding for RSEPs which existed in 1980-81. Instead the per-pupil funding levels were almost half-even

much lower if inflation were taken into account. Thus, the SEA apparently had not provided stable and sufficient funds to cover many of the valid expenses of RSEPs in Virginia. Specifically, the SEA had not allowed for adequate increases in employee compensation, and did not permit all groups of low incidence handicapped children to be served under the state tuition program. Furthermore the SEA had prohibited many (by the predetermined maximum rate caps) RSEPs from including legitimate administrative and overhead costs in their tuition rate structures.

Conclusions

- Although the Virginia Board and Department of Education issued certain RSEP regulations, RSEPs in Virginia were mainly controlled by the participating LEAs. SEA control was mainly exerted through establishing RSEP parameters and through disbursement or withholding of finances.
- Based on interviews held with twelve SEA officials and with numerous RSEP officials, the author concluded that no single individual or office was coordinating the overall planning, policy formation, organization, delivery of services, or financing of RSEPs in Virginia. No one individual or office was collecting data regarding more than one of the above regional characteristics, and there were several individuals who apparently had overlapping responsibilities assigned regarding RSEPs. No individual or office was requiring RSEPs to be accountable to the SEA in compliance with state regulations, or in fulfilling program objectives as submitted by RSEPs to the SEA in funding applications. With such an apparent overall absence of activity coordination, and lack of accountability expected from the SEA, the future development of RSEPs would most likely be haphazard, and the SEA would become increasingly unable to understand, evaluate or plan the future course of the RSEPs.
- There were many more similarities in the organizational patterns of RSEPs in Virginia, than there were differences. Most RSEPs utilized the Basic Organizational System described in the Virginia (1982) RSEP Guidelines. The organizational system utilized in Virginia's RSEPs also was very similar to those described by authors (Squires, 1974; Stephens 1979a; and Connors, 1980) in other states which had Cooperative ESAs.

- The majority of participants in Virginia's RSEPs agreed with many of the nationally reported advantages of RSEPs found by researchers (Squires, 1974; Stephens, 1979a and f; Helge, 1981 and 1984). Among the advantages reported both nationally and in Virginia were that planning and recruitment capabilities were enhanced, and cooperation among personnel increased.
- The majority of participants in Virginia's RSEPs disagreed with many of the nationally reported disadvantages of RSEPs found by researchers (Squires, 1974; Stephens, 1979a and f; Helge, 1981 and 1984). Among the reported RSEP disadvantages that Virginia's RSEP participants disagreed with were that a loss of LEA autonomy occurred; administrative arrangements were burdensome; there was increased LEA competition for control; regulatory procedures were burdensome; personnel had less allegiance to RSEPs than to LEAs; and RSEPs were perceived as unstable. Virginia's RSEP participants agreed with conclusions reached by many RSEP researchers that overall the reported advantages of operating RSEPs far outweighed the possible disadvantages.
- Virginia's RSEPs were serving those low-incidence handicapped students which the State Board of Education had envisioned in its 1982 statement on the potential of regional education cooperatives in Virginia.
- Virginia's RSEP participants were satisfied with the quality of services offered by RSEPs to low incidence handicapped groups served, however many wanted to see services expanded to other special education populations including the hearing and visually impaired. Participants also wanted RSEPs to offer vocational education services for the handicapped, and wanted LEAs to offer recruitment, training and supervision for special education personnel.
- The majority of RSEP participants in Virginia did not perceive the need for RSEPs to provide services to non-handicapped students. Those non-handicapped groups which participants most wanted RSEPs to serve were somewhat related to special education i.e., gifted and remedial education.
- The existing system of financing RSEPs was not appropriate to meet the planning or operational needs of RSEP participants. Major problems reported were unpredictability of funding timelines, lengthy and inappropriate funding procedures, and lack of flexibility in establishing or changing RSEP rates.
- The SEA had not funded RSEPs sufficiently to meet the service needs of the existing programs. State funding for RSEPs was limited to the four low-incidence handicapped groups targeted by the SEA. The state usually would not allow annual rate

increases above 6-7%. In addition, funds channeled through Federal Special Projects, which once supported start-up and overhead expenses of RSEPs, were being phased out.

Recommendations For SEA Officials

- The SEA should consider establishing a clear line of authority and attendant regulations regarding the state's responsibilities regarding the design, operation, and monitoring of RSEPs.
- The Virginia SEA should permit LEAs to form both informal and formal RSEPs. This "dual recognition" model had been successful in other states and was strongly advocated by other authors (Lindstrom, 1978; Stephens, 1979g; Connors, 1980).
- The lay joint board was an efficient and effective body for managing RSEP services in Virginia. The establishment of a lay joint board should be required by the SEA before RSEPs are recognized as a formal legal entity, or are eligible to receive state funding.
- The SEA should clarify and further delineate the legal authority of the joint board in an RSEP, and define the roles and responsibilities of the regional director.
- The SEA should allow each RSEP to establish its own organizational structures, as long as those structures conform to state regulations.
- The SEA should attempt to study all the boards and planning groups existing within each LEA to determine the feasibility of coordinating the management of various educational programs with fewer organizational boards and planning groups.
- The SEA should consider allocating a minimum amount of overhead costs (based on a per-pupil ratio) for RSEPs each year to ensure their continuation.
- The SEA should consider budgeting an established amount of funds each year for LEAs needing to conduct a feasibility study for forming new RSEPs, or for those LEAs needing RSEP start-up costs.
- The SEA should consider establishing a maximum tuition rate each year that RSEPs would be permitted to charge for each service. The rate should allow for adequate delivery of special education and support services based on reasonable charges for those services in other settings. If RSEPs wished to provide services above the maximum rates, then those costs

should be paid locally. The rates should be set by SEA officials with input from LEA and RSEP participants.

- The SEA should devise a new formula for funding RSEPs which separates public regional funding procedures from those used by private day and residential schools. The RSEP rate-setting procedure adopted should be less complex and more flexible than the present one and the categories standardized for easier comparisons of costs. The newly adopted rate setting procedure should allow RSEPs the flexibility of establishing or changing rates whenever major RSEP program changes occur. The new procedure should be less "time consuming" than the present one, and budgetary procedures should be timed along with other LEA and SEA funding cycles.
- The SEA should expect RSEPs to be financially accountable to program goals for RSEPs established by regional and state personnel, and should mandate RSEPs to submit reports demonstrating that all state funds have been spent in accordance with stated RSEP program goals and objectives.

Recommendations for Further Study

The following studies are recommended for aiding RSEP planners at the local, regional and state levels:

- A study of the advantages and disadvantages of the various Legal Structure models used in states with Voluntary Educational Cooperatives should be conducted.
- A study of the relationship of LRE policies to program implementation in RSEPs in states with Voluntary Educational Cooperatives should be attempted.
- A study of the methods that states with Voluntary Educational Cooperatives utilize to establish and fund RSEPs should be conducted.

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APPENDIX A

NEED FOR RSEP STUDY SURVEY

Regional Programs Survey

Type of Personnel (Check one)

SEA _____ Regional _____ LFA _____ Other _____

Exact Title: _____

Employing Agency: _____

Please rate the extent to which you believe the following information about the status of present special education programs in Virginia could be used for information, planning or decision-making purposes by your Agency: (Code: 1 very useful 2 useful 3 not very useful 4 not useful)

	<u>Please circle one:</u>			
1. Contents of Agreements	1	2	3	4
2. Stated purposes/objectives	1	2	3	4
3. Membership requirements for LEA's	1	2	3	4
4. Programs and services provided to pupils	1	2	3	4
5. Programs and services provided to personnel and LEA's	1	2	3	4
6. Service delivery models	1	2	3	4
7. Methods of financing services	1	2	3	4
8. Budgetary arrangements and procedures	1	2	3	4
9. Role of Joint Board	1	2	3	4
10. Role of Chief Executive Officer	1	2	3	4
11. Role of Superintendents Committee	1	2	3	4
12. Role of Special Education Supervisor's Committee	1	2	3	4
13. Role of Advisory Committee	1	2	3	4
14. Role of Regional Director	1	2	3	4
15. Administrative/Organizational structure	1	2	3	4
16. Communications-decisions making model	1	2	3	4

(-continued on next page-)

Regional Programs Survey

page two

Please circle one:

- | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 17. Personnel-employment procedures by regional programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. Interagency collaboration activities and strategies used by regional programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Perceived advantages/disadvantages of operating regional programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 20. Role of SEA in working with regional programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. Perceived advantages/disadvantages of belonging to regional programs by participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. Perceived problems of belonging to Regional programs by participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 23. Perceived issues regarding regional programs by participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. Perceived impact of regional programs on LEA's by participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 25. Perceived future direction of regional programs by participants | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

Issues

Please list or describe (in general terms) the issues pertaining to regional special education programs that you think should be discussed in a statewide status study.

Regional Program Survey

Page three

Needs/Problems

Please list or describe the problems or needs (in general terms) relating to regional special education programs that you think should be discussed in a statewide status study.

Suggestions

Please list or describe any suggestions you may have for the present researcher - regarding his effort to conduct a statewide study of regional programming.

Please return completed survey to: Murray S. Ellison - Director
Southside Special Education Consortium
Amelia School Board Office, Amelia, VA 23002
(work), (home)

APPENDIX B

SEA INFORMATION RELEASE LETTER



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
P. O. BOX 60
RICHMOND 23216-2060

January 8, 1986

Mr. Murray S. Ellison
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA. 23235

Dear ~~Mr. Ellison~~:

This letter is in response to your communication in which you requested permission to review information regarding special education regional programs. The information you requested is available and the persons you wish to interview have concurred with your request. Please contact Mr. Micklem, Mr. Faina and Mr. Aldrich individually to arrange for a mutually convenient time to collect the data you need.

I look forward to reading your findings. Best wishes for a successful completion of the dissertation and a happy new year.

Sincerely,

Austin T. Tuning, Director
Division of Special Education
Administration and Finance

ATT/st

cc: Dr. S. John Davis
Dr. N. Grant Tubbs
Mr. Leslie Jones
Dr. John McLaughlin
Dr. Pat Poplin
Mr. James Micklem
Mr. Anthony Faina
Mr. David Aldrich

APPENDIX C

SEA ENDORSEMENT LETTER



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 60
RICHMOND 23216

February 20, 1986

TO: Administrators and Board Members Associated with Regional
Special Education Programs (RSEP's)

FROM: Leslie W. Jones, Acting Director, Division of Special
Education

SUBJECT: RSEP Statewide Study

Mr. Murray S. Ellison, who was a director of an RSEP in Virginia for four years, is currently conducting a descriptive study of RSEPs in Virginia. He has agreed to provide a summary of the findings to Regional and State Department personnel - if requested. All responses given by individuals will be confidential. Information sent to state and regional personnel will highlight similarities and differences among RSEP's rather than region-specific issues.

The study is being conducted in three phases:

I. Data will be collected on characteristics of RSEP's from state department and RSEP officials (January through April 1986)

* II. Perception surveys will be administered to regional participants (April and May)

III. Follow up case study interview will be conducted (May through July)

The Virginia Department of Education supports Mr. Ellison's study because of its potential value for RSEP planning. I am asking that you cooperate with Mr. Ellison by providing him with information.

If there are any questions please contact me at _____, Mr. Aldrich
at _____, or Mr. Ellison at _____.

LWJ/bf

* Virginia RSEP Survey enclosed

APPENDIX D

STEPHENS' - INCENTIVES AND DETERRENTS SURVEY

INCENTIVES FOR AND DETERMENTS TO THIS LEA'S PARTICIPATION IN RESC SERVICES

Directions: Circle the degree of influence of factors as incentives or deterrments to your LEA's participation in RESC services

INCENTIVES

Degree of Influence

1. No incentive
2. Weak incentive
3. Moderate incentive
4. Strong incentive
5. Very strong incentive

Degree of
Influence. (Circle) one
Number for Each Factor).

FACTORS

1. All costs paid by state and/or federal source(s)	1	2	3	4	5
2. This LEA alone cannot provide effective program	1	2	3	4	5
3. This LEA alone cannot provide economical program	1	2	3	4	5
4. Adequacy of LEA financial resources	1	2	3	4	5
5. RESC unit costs	1	2	3	4	5
6. RESC program or service quality	1	2	3	4	5
7. Proximity of RESC facility	1	2	3	4	5
8. RESC services available at this or nearby LEA	1	2	3	4	5
9. Level of TEA RESC-LEA cooperation	1	2	3	4	5
10. Quality of RESC-LEA communications	1	2	3	4	5
11. Advantages of multi-district cooperation	1	2	3	4	5
12. Degree of LEA involvement in RESC planning	1	2	3	4	5
13. Programs meet state and/or federal requirements	1	2	3	4	5
14. RESC sensitivity to our needs	1	2	3	4	5
15. Adequacy of numbers of minority persons on RESC staff and board of directors	1	2	3	4	5

DETERMENTS

Degree of Influence

1. No deterrment
2. Weak deterrment
3. Moderate deterrment
4. Strong deterrment
5. Very strong deterrment

Degree of
Influence. (Circle) one
Number for Each Factor).

FACTORS

1. Travel time	1	2	3	4	5
2. RESC unit costs	1	2	3	4	5
3. No state and/or federal aid	1	2	3	4	5
4. Travel costs to and from programs	1	2	3	4	5
5. Cost of substitutes for teachers in RESC workshops	1	2	3	4	5
6. Level of available LEA resources	1	2	3	4	5
7. Programs not required by state or feds	1	2	3	4	5
8. RESC program quality	1	2	3	4	5
9. Independence of LEAs	1	2	3	4	5
10. Service already provided by this LEA	1	2	3	4	5
11. Level of RESC-LEA cooperation	1	2	3	4	5
12. Too few minority persons on RESC staff and/or board of directors	1	2	3	4	5
13. Degree of RESC insight into this LEA's needs	1	2	3	4	5
14. Degree of LEA involvement in RESC planning	1	2	3	4	5
15. Degree of LEA staff interest in RESC services	1	2	3	4	5

My LEA office is: (1) _____ miles from the RESC central office.

(if applicable) (2) _____ miles from the nearest RESC satellite.

PLEASE MAIL COMPLETED FORM TO:

Stephens Associates
Suite 107
7338 Baltimore Avenue
College Park, Maryland 20742

(This copy is photoreduced 75 per cent from the actual instrument.)

APPENDIX E

STEPHENS' - ACTUAL AND DESIRED USE SURVEY

COMPARISON OF EXTENTS OF ACTUAL AND DESIRED USES
OF RESC SERVICES IN 1977-78 AND REASONS FOR DIFFERENCES, IF ANY

Directions: Special note for listed services not offered by your RESC in 1977-78: Circle (X) for "actual", and circle a number (from 1 to 6) for "desired" according to how much your LEA should have used the service if it had been offered.

For all listed services and programs offered by your RESC in 1977-78: For "actual", complete the following statement: "When this RESC service was available in 1977-78, this LEA _____ used it."

For "desired", complete this statement: "This LEA should _____ have used this service in 1977-78."

- 1 - Never
- 2 - Almost Never
- 3 - Occasionally
- 4 - Frequently
- 5 - Almost Always
- 6 - Always

Check (✓) Services, if any, Not Offered.
Also Check (✓) All Reasons for Differences in Those Services, if any, Where Actual Use Was Less Than Desired Use.

(Circle) the Extent of Actual Use and (Circle) the Extent of Desired Use for Each Service

RESC PROGRAMS AND SERVICES		1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Planning, Evaluation/Accreditation	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2.	Media, Film Library	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
3.	Media, In-service	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4.	Media, Equipment Repair	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
5.	Computers, Student Accounting (test scoring, grade reporting, etc.)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
6.	Computers, Business Services (payroll, checks, accounting, etc.)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
7.	Computers, Student Terminals	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
8.	Special Education, Child Find	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
9.	Special Education, In-service	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
10.	Special Education Materials (SEIMC)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
11.	Pupil Services (guidance, counseling, psychologists, etc.)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
12.	Crime Prevention & Drug Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13.	Bus Driver Training	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
14.	Driver Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
15.	Career Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
16.	Diffusion, Promising Practices, etc.	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
17.	Bilingual Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
18.	Migrant Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
19.	Gifted and Talented	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20.	Cooperative Purchasing	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
21.	Adult Basic Education	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
22.	Right to Read	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
23.	Health Services	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
24.	Management Services (other than above)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
25.	In-service Education (other than above)	actual	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
		desired	1	2	3	4	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(This copy is photoreduced 66 percent from the actual instrument.)

APPENDIX F

STEPHENS' - FACTORS INFLUENCING LEA PARTICIPATION SURVEY

GIVEN THE PRESENT FUNDING & GOVERN-
ANCE of Regional Education Service
Centers (RESCs) in Texas. . . .

Please RANK ORDER the factors below
from strongest (1) to weakest (6)

according to your opinion of their
relative importance in influencing
LEA participation in RESC services.
(Use all 6 numbers in the ranking.)

LEA Code _____

- A. LEA wealth _____
- B. LEA size (enrollment) _____
- C. LEA remoteness (distance
from RESC) _____
- D. RESC program quality _____
- E. RESC leadership _____
- F. LEA leadership _____

Neither your identity nor your
district's will be identified in
the report.

Noble J. Gividen
Stephens Associates

APPENDIX G

ELLISON RSEP SURVEY

PARTICIPANTS SURVEY

Virginia Regional Special Education Program (RSEP) Study*
Murray S. Ellison, Coordinator
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23235

- A. General Instructions - The purpose of this survey is to help determine whether there are similarities or differences among RSEP participants in their perceptions regarding significant Virginia RSEP issues. The survey is part of an independent descriptive study of Virginia RSEP's being conducted by Murray S Ellison, a former RSEP director. The question selected for the current survey have been derived from a recent review of RSEP literature and from interviews conducted by Mr. Ellison with Virginia RSEP directors and State Education Agency (SEA) officials. The present author hopes that the results of the study, once compiled, will be useful to RSEP personnel for planning purposes. He also plans to submit part of the study towards fulfilling his doctoral research requirement at Virginia Tech. The research advisor for this study, is Dr. John McLaughlin.

Please fill out the survey and return it by MAY 14, 1986 in the enclosed envelope to the address listed above.

Although individual responses to surveys will remain confidential (and not reported at anytime) a summary of the statewide results by participant group will be sent to each respondent to the survey who requests a copy. The surveys are coded only to monitor response rates. A copy of the summary of the responses of each region by participant group will be sent to each specific RSEP - if requested by an executive superintendent or regional director. For more information, please call Mr. Ellison at work - (804) 556-4657, or at home - (804) 272-8232.

- B. Instructions for RSEP Participants - Respond to each of the following survey items according to the opinions you have formed through participating in your current RSEP.
- C. Instructions for SEA Officials - Respond to each of the following survey items according to the opinions you have formed through your interaction with RSEP's in Virginia.
- D. Demographic Information - First we need to know something about you:
1. Current Position (check one or more as appropriate)
 - a. SEA official
 - b. Joint Board Member
 - c. Superintendent
 - d. Executive Superintendent
 - e. Special Education Administrator
 - f. Regional Director
 - g. Other _____
Specify

*The present RSEP survey and study have the full support of the Special Education Program and Administrative Divisions of the Virginia Department of Education (see enclosed letter).

D. Demographic Information (con't)

2. Name of RSEP in with you participate (disregard if SEA official) _____

3. Number of years/months you have been an RSEP participant _____

4. Name of Employing Agency or School Division _____

5. Your Name (optional) _____
6. If necessary may I contact you for a follow-up interview regarding this study? a. yes b. no
7. If yes to #6, please indicate telephone numbers/times you may be reached

8. Do you wish to receive a copy of the summary of the VRSEP study once it is completed? a. yes b. no
9. If yes to #8, please provide proper mailing address below:
Your name (if not listed in #5) _____
Mailing Address _____

10. Date completing survey _____

Thank you for completing and returning this survey promptly!

Please turn to the next page to begin survey

Code _____

Section I. Advantages and Disadvantages of RSEP's - There are numerous advantages and disadvantages reported in the literature about RSEP's. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following reported advantages and disadvantages by placing a check mark in the appropriate box next to the statement. Respond to each statement from your perspective either as an RSEP participant or as an SEA official (See B & C, page 1). Use the following scale:

1 = Disagree 2 = Tend to Disagree 3 = Tend to Agree 4 = Agree

<u>Reported Advantages of RSEP's</u>	1 Disagree	2 Tend to Disagree	3 Tend to Agree	4 Agree
a. A wide range of services is provided				
b. The quality of services to low incidence populations is increased				
c. Planning capabilities of comprehensive services by cooperating LEA's are enhanced				
d. Cost effectiveness of specialized services is increased				
e. Access to specialists is facilitated				
f. Staff recruitment capabilities are enhanced				
g. The ability to attract state and federal grants is increased				
h. Cooperation among RSEP personnel increases				
i. Staff development and in-service training capabilities for LEA personnel are increased				
j. Overall, the advantages of operating RSEP's far outweigh the possible disadvantages				

Comments (Add other advantages in space given below - optional)

Reported Disadvantages of Operating RSEP's	1	2	3	4
	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree
a. A loss of LEA (local school district) autonomy occurs				
b. There is increased competition between LEA's for control				
c. Regulatory procedures of RSEP's are burdensome				
d. There are increased costs for the delivery of services				
e. Transportation arrangements are burdensome and time consuming				
f. Administrative personnel arrangements become overly complicated				
g. Personnel have less allegiance to RSEP's than to LEA's				
h. RSEP's are perceived as unstable from year to year				
i. Added start-up costs are likely to offset any savings gained in the initial year of operation				
j. Overall the disadvantages of operating RSEP's far outweigh the possible advantages				

Comments (Add other possible disadvantages in space given below - optional)

Section II Governance - This pertains to the legal structure and external requirements placed upon an RSEP by an SEA, State Board or State Legislative Body.

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the governance of RSEP's using the previous (disagree/agree scale) and checking the appropriate column next to each statement. Respond to each statement from your perspective either as an RSEP participant or as an SEA official (See B & C, page 1). Use the same scale as in Section I.

	1	2	3	4
	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree
Roles and Responsibilities of SEA/RSEP Personnel:				
a. The roles and responsibilities of SEA officials in RSEP's are clarified in State Regulations				
b. The roles and responsibilities of RSEP personnel are clarified in State Regulations				
c. The roles and responsibilities of SEA and RSEP officials need further clarification in State Regulations				
d. SEA officials should involve RSEP personnel more in the planning and development of RSEP's				
Control:	1 D	2 TD	3 TA	4 A
e. The RSEP's are mainly controlled by the SEA				
f. The RSEP's are mainly controlled by the participating LEA's				
g. There is a proper balance of control between the SEA and the LEA's involving the RSEP's				
h. A state supervisor of RSEP's needs to be appointed to help manage the varied aspects of the programs				
Joint Board-Recognition:	1 D	2 TD	3 TA	4 A
i. The SEA Should only recognize RSEP's with a duly appointed Lay-Joint Board for Control				
j. The SEA should allow a dual recognition system of informal (no joint board) and formal (with joint board) RSEP's				

Comments on Governance (optional)

Section III Organization - This pertains to the policies and procedures of the local boards and to the administrative structure of the RSEP's.

Instructions - Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the organization of RSEP's according to the same scale used in the previous sections (check the appropriate column next to each statement). Respond to each statement from your perspective either as an RSEP participant or as an SEA official (See B & C, page 1). Use the same scale as in the previous sections.

	1	2	3	4
	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree
The Joint Board				
a. The establishment of a lay-joint board results in more effective management of an RSEP than if special education services were operated by informal agreements between LEA's				
b. Superintendents should be allowed to serve as voting members of an RSEP joint board				
c. One vote per participating district is the most equitable method of decision-making on a joint board				
d. Although the joint board takes the official actions, the superintendents are the most important decision-makers in the RSEP				
e. The establishment of a joint board results in significant loss of LEA control over RSEP programs				
f. Since the Joint Board meets so infrequently it is really not fully aware of the actual organizational details of the RSEP				
The Regional Director				
	1 D	2 TD	3 TA	4 A
g. The regional director has the most responsibility in carrying out the objectives of the RSEP				
h. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in the RSEP				
i. The various roles and responsibilities of the regional director are confusing to personnel in LEA's				
j. The regional director should be given the same authority in an RSEP as a superintendent in an LEA				

Comments on Organization (optional)

Section IV Financial Factors - refers to the methods used to finance RSEP's. It includes analyses of the funding sources used, the disbursement of funds and the various salary arrangements.

Instructions - Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements about the financial factors of RSEP's. Respond to each statement from your perspective either as an RSEP participant or as an SEA official (See B & C, page 1). Use the same scale as in the previous sections.

	1	2	3	4
	Disagree	Tend to Disagree	Tend to Agree	Agree
State Support				
a. Current state funding for RSEP's is adequate				
b. The discontinuation of State Special Project Funding (VI-B Funding) would have little or no effect on the service delivery capabilities of the RSEP's				
c. Funding uncertainties at the SEA level greatly contribute to a sense of instability among RSEP Personnel				
d. The SEA should support continued start-up costs for new RSEP programs				
e. The SEA should support on-going overhead costs of existing RSEP programs for increased stability				
f. The SEA has not funded RSEP's to the extent that had previously been promised.				
	1 D	2 TD	3 TA	4 A
Organization of Finances				
g. Sporadic timelines by SEA proposals for funding have made planning in RSEP's increasingly more difficult				
h. The varied number of sources needed to fund an RSEP makes the financial operation of one exceedingly difficult				
i. The RSEP's cannot afford to operate services under the low predetermined maximum rate increases allowed in the Sea Tuition Rate Program				
j. The RSEP model would probably be cost effective for non special-education programs				

Comments on Financial Factors (optional)

Section V. Programs and Services- RSEP participants: Place a checkmark next to each of the following special education and non-special education services you would like to have offered (or continued) in your regional program. SEA officials: Place a checkmark (✓) next to each service you think should be offered in Virginia's RSEP's.

<u>Special Education Services</u> <u>In RSEP's:</u>	<u>(✓) Yes,</u> <u>Offer</u>	<u>Non-Special Education Services</u> <u>In RSEP's:</u>	<u>(✓) Yes,</u> <u>Offer</u>
Services for emotionally disturbed students		Vocational educational services for regular education students	
Services for severely & profoundly handicapped students		Services for gifted & talented students	
Services for learning disabled students		Training for regular education personnel	
Services for retarded students		Transportation services	
Services for visually impaired students		Audio-visual services for regular education personnel	
Services for hearing impaired students		Adult education services	
Occupational & physical therapy services		Cooperative purchasing for participating divisions	
Recruitment services for special education personnel		Remedial education services for slow learners	
Training for special education personnel		Printing and duplicating services	
Vocational education services for handicapped students		Maintenance & custodial services	
Transportation services for handicapped students		Region-wide educational planning	
Research programs to develop model special education services		Research programs to develop model regular educ. services	
Supervision & evaluation of special education personnel		Supervision & evaluation of regular education personnel	

Comments(List any other services you think RSEP's should offer in the space below):

APPENDIX H

RSEP DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE SUPERINTENDENTS

Regional Directors and Executive Superintendents of RSEP's(1986-87)

Southside Special Education Consortium

Mrs. Kathleen Rapazzo, Director
Eureka Elementary School
Rt. 1, Box 289
Keysville, VA 23947

Mr. Robert Wood, Superintendent
Charlotte County Schools
P.O. Box 387
Charlotte Courthouse, VA 23923

Northwestern Regional Education Program

Dr. Nancy Cook, Director
1010 Smithfield Ave.
Winchester, VA 22601

Dr. Kenneth E. Walker, Supt.
Frederick County Schools
P.O. Box 3508
Winchester, VA 22601

Shenandoah Valley Regional Program

Mrs. Judy Sorrell, Director
PO Box 277
New Market, VA 22844

Mr. Robert A. Danley, Supt.
Shenandoah County Schools
PO Box 488
Woodstock, VA 22664

LAUREL Regional Education Program

Mrs. Joanne B. Shearer, Director
PO Box 2258
Lynchburg, VA 24504

Dr. Joseph A. Spagnolo, Supt.
Lynchburg City Schools
PO Box 1599
Lynchburg, VA 24505

Piedmont Regional Education Program

Dr. Gregory Shasby, Director
Jefferson Building-201 4th St., NW
Charlottesville, VA 22901

Dr. Vincent Cibbarelli, Supt.
Charlottesville City Schools
1562 Dairy Rd.
Charlottesville, VA 22903

Cooperative Centers for Exceptional Children

Ms. Belinda Howlett, Admin. Asst.
Clark Ave.
Galax, VA 24333

Mr. Milton Maxton, Supt.
Bland County Schools
PO Box 128
Bland, VA 24315

Southeastern Cooperative Educational Program

Dr. Judith L Nussen, Director
P O Box 839
Norfolk, VA 23501

Dr. Vito J. Morlino, Supt.
Isle of Wight County Schools
Isle of Wight, VA 23997

Peninsula Area Cooperative Educational Services

Mrs. MaryAnne Bruno, Director
1306 Thomas St.
Hampton, VA 23669

Dr. Judith Whittemore, Supt.
York County Schools
302 Dare Rd.
Grafton, VA

Gloucester-Mathews-Middlesex Regional Program

Mr George Hellieson, Director
Gloucester County Schools
Gloucester, VA 23061

Dr. James Meyers, Supt.
Gloucester County Schools
Gloucester, VA 23061

APPENDIX I

LETTER ACCOMPANYING RSEP SURVEY

Virginia RSEP Study
Murray Ellison, Coordinator
1519 Knollwood Dr.
Richmond, VA 23235

RSEP MEMO

TO: Planners & Participants of Virginia's Regional Special Education Programs (RSEP's)

FROM: Murray S. Ellison, RSEP Study Coordinator

RE: Request to fill out RSEP Survey

- * Enclosed please find, examine and fill out the official Virginia RSEP Survey by or before MAY 14 , 1986 and return it in the stamped, self addressed envelope for your results to be included in the soon to be published Status Study of Virginia's Regional Special Education Programs by Mr. Ellison, who was a former RSEP Director and is now working on his doctorate in Special Education Administration at Virginia Tech.
- * The study is being funded by Mr. Ellison, but is endorsed by the Division of Special Education Programs at the Virginia Department of Education (See Letter of Support from Mr. Les Jones, Acting State Director of Special Education-Attached).
- * All individual responses to the survey will remain confidential. Region-specific results will only be made available to authorized officials in each RSEP-upon request only.
- * The author realizes that all persons being asked to fill out this survey are very important and also very busy, and is therefore offering a teabag. He is requesting that each participant take a well deserved teabreak, and then fill out the survey. It will not take any longer to fill out the survey, than it would to make and sip a cup of tea. Sorry cream and sugar could not be included in this envelope.
- * RSEP Participants- Respond to each of the items in the enclosed survey according to the opinions you have formed through participating in your current RSEP.
- * SEA Officials- Respond to each of the items in the enclosed survey according to the opinions you have formed through your interactions with RSEP's in Virginia.

APPENDIX J

RSEP RELIABILITY STUDY DATA RECORDING FORM

APPENDIX K

PACES CORRESPONDENCE FROM SUPERINTENDENT



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
302 DARE ROAD, GRAFTON, VIRGINIA 23692

DR. JUDITH D. WHITTEMORE, Superintendent

June 2, 1986

Mr. Murray S. Ellison
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

This letter is in response to your letter of May 19 addressed to Mr. Don Bruno. I am currently serving as Superintendent-in-Charge for PACES, and Mr. Bruno referred your letter to me.

We have recently undergone an extensive outside evaluation of our PACES operation, an evaluation we sought and funded. The recommendations from that study were helpful, and the board's objectives and activities based on that evaluation are underway.

I do not think it would be advantageous for us to seek additional survey information through an interview process at this time. However, we would be pleased to receive a copy of your study.

Thank you for offering your time to us.

Sincerely,

Judith D. Whittemore, Ed.D.
Superintendent-in-Charge
PACES

dk

APPENDIX L

ORGANIZATIONAL SURVEY QUESTIONS

Virginia RSEP Study- Murray Ellison, Coordinator

1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23235

Organizational Survey

Interview Date _____ Program _____

Interviewee _____ Interviewer _____

I- Joint Board

Chairman elected every _____ Members appointed every _____

Number of meetings per year _____ Number last year _____

Date program plan approved _____ Date budget plan approved _____

Personnel employment procedures _____

Billing Procedures _____

Approval of Expenditure Procedures _____

Fiscal Agent _____ Clerk _____

Fiscal Agent rotated every _____ RSEP Office Rotated every _____

Annual audit performed _____ Separate audit? _____

II-Superintendents

Executive Supt. appointed every _____ Executive's Name _____

Type meetings _____ Meetings per year _____

Meet w/ Joint Board? _____ Separate Meetings _____ Meet w/ Spec Ed Sups _____

Purposes _____

III-Other

Regional Directors Name _____ In the position since _____

Program established since _____

Organizational issues _____

APPENDIX M

REQUEST FOR DATA FORM - RSEP SURVEY

Request for Data Pertaining to Regional Special Education
Programs Study in Virginia by Murray S. Ellison:

Name of Program _____

Info. Requested from _____ Position _____

Type of Info. needed:

Date Requested _____ Info. needed by _____

Mail to : Mr. Murray S. Ellison
Coordinator of Regional Special Education Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235
(Phones): Day- _____ ; Other-

C.C.

APPENDIX N

CASE STUDY FEEDBACK REQUEST LETTER

Virginia RSEP Study
Mr. Murray Ellison, Coordinator
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235
Phone: (p.m.)

Dear

I hope you have had a chance to review and make any comments on the Case Study of your Regional Special Education Program that I conducted and wrote during the past year. I hope if you have revisions you would still like me to make, they can be brought to my attention during the early part of April - so the study may be published with accuracy.

The purpose of this letter is to request that you write a letter to me commenting on the study, the way it was conducted, written or any use that was derived, or may be derived in the future from any of the findings. I realize that the letter may take a few moments of your valuable time, but it would be immensely helpful to me in supporting and defending my doctoral dissertation defense - which will be held once the entire RSEP study is completed.

As previously, I sent you a large teabag for your help in filling out the RSEP survey, I am sending another teabag to express my large appreciation, in advance, for taking the time to write your comment letter.

Please use the enclosed, stamped, self-addressed envelope to return your letter.

Sincerely yours,

Murray Ellison

APPENDIX 0

CASE STUDY REVISIONS FROM RSEPs

COOPERATIVE CENTERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
CLARK AVENUE GALAX, VA. 24333

December 4, 1986

Mr. Murray Ellison
Coordinator
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

Mr. Marvin Winters, Chairman of the CCEC Committee for Control, and I have discussed your case study on our regional program and find it to be an over-all objective and accurate report. However, we feel it is important to clarify personnel positions.

Your study refers to Mr. Winters as both Committee Chairman and Program Coordinator; however, he should be referred to only as Committee Chairman. Mr. Robert O. Harrison, Superintendent, Galax City Schools, was appointed Program Coordinator at the July 1986 Committee for Control Meeting. My position with the CCEC should be referred to as Administrative Assistant rather than Administrative Assistant and Regional Coordinator.

Thank you for clarifying these titles. Best wishes on your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Belinda E. Howlett
Administrative Assistant

cc: Mr. Marvin Winters
Chairman, CCEC Committee for Control



Gloucester County Public Schools

P.O. BOX 770, GLOUCESTER, VIRGINIA 23061

TELEPHONE:

JAMES R. MYERS, PH.D., SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

February 20, 1987

Mr. Murray S. Ellison
Coordinator
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison,

Thank you for a copy of your Case Study dealing with the Gloucester-Mathews-Middlesex Regional School. Many interesting facts and comments were noted in your study which the Regional School can use in future programming.

One area of clarification needs to be called to your attention. On page 20 and in the second paragraph, you stated, "According to regional director, Mr. George Helliesen, the two programs were to be moved to Gloucester Schools in 1986-87." Mr. Helliesen was inferring that the Gloucester County School Division would be the administrative agent beginning with the 1986-87 school year and for three consecutive years. The physical location of the classes would not necessarily move to Gloucester County. This is a minor clarification and need not necessarily be changed in your report.

Again, thank you for allowing us to participate in your study and we wish you the best in pursuing your doctoral degree.

Sincerely,

James R. Myers, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

JRM/GGH/jla

CC: George Helliesen

PIEDMONT REGIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM
P R E P

2776 HYDRAULIC ROAD
SUITE #5
CHARLOTTESVILLE, VIRGINIA 22901-8915

March 11, 1987

Mr. Murray S. Ellison
1519 Knollwood Dr.
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Murray,

Sorry to be so long in responding to you. You caught us in the middle of moving our office to a new location.

I read over the document and found only one error that should be corrected. On page 23 you show that the cost of Occupational Therapy per pupil per year is \$4,070. That is a bit much and should be closer to \$740 per year. Other than that it looks fine.

Best wished in your defense.

Sincerely,

Gregory^v B. Shasby
Director-PREP

Frederick County Public Schools

1415 Amherst Street
Post Office Box 3508
Winchester, Virginia 22601-2708
Telephone:

Division Superintendent

March 20, 1987

Mr. Murray Ellison
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

The following is an informal note to call to your attention two or three errors noted in the study. On page three, geography and population, the population of Frederick County is listed as the population of Winchester. Later in the study, the name of the director, Dr. Cook, is misspelled. The "e" should not be included. At one point in the study, you indicated that she was the first full-time director. Perhaps a slight rephrasing would be helpful here and be more accurate. There was a director previously, but the director was accountable to the three school-division directors of special education as a committee with one of the three serving as chairman. The difference is subtle; however, some revision probably will be appropriate.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth E. Walker
Division Superintendent
Executive Officer, NREP

KEW/gc

PAGE 1

The regional director offered to let the researcher come to her office and look at file information regarding the various programs and services PACES sponsors.

PAGE 2

Second line in "Purpose of RSEP" section says five school districts -- there are SIX.

In addition to the day services for seriously emotionally disturbed and autistic students, PACES provides a number of other programs and services for the six school divisions -- regional inservice workshops for selected personnel, family counseling services, Technical Opportunities workshops for selected gifted high school students, and comprehensive vocational evaluation services for handicapped and disadvantaged students. Plans are being made to operate a regional Career Assessment Center for regular students beginning with the 1986-87 school year.

PAGE 8

The first sentence left out York County. According to the chart on page 10, the ADM figure should be 8,680.

PAGE 12

In the "Organization" section, it states that PACES was formed in 1980-81. This is incorrect. PACES was formed in July, 1979.

The joint board (paragraph 2) was also formed in July, 1979, not in 1980-81. In 1979-80 the York County Public Schools served as fiscal agent for PACES. Newport News has served as fiscal agent since July 1980. The Superintendent-in-Charge for 1985-86 was Dr. Judith D. Whittemore, Division Superintendent in York County, and the Chairman of the PACES Board was Mrs. Ella S. Tapscott, also from York County.

In the last line of paragraph 2, the following words should be deleted: "recommendations to the superintendents and to the." The special education administrators provide planning suggestions to the director, and the director makes recommendations to the superintendents.

PAGE 13

First full paragraph -- Ms. Jane Webb should be Dr. Jane Webb. Ms. Elizabeth Zahn should be Mrs. Elizabeth Zahn.

Second full paragraph -- Mr. E. Scott Tapscott should be Mrs. Ella S. Tapscott. Pronoun references should be feminine in the seventh and ninth lines.

PAGE 17

First full paragraph -- change to Mrs. Ella S. Tapscott.

Third full paragraph -- change Mr. to Mrs.

PAGE 18

Again, the researcher was offered the opportunity to come to the PACES Office and obtain any file information necessary. To say that no information was able to be obtained is not accurate. Both vocational evaluation and inservice workshops were being provided prior to 1985-86.

PAGE 19

Emotionally Disturbed Programs -- (Paragraph 1) There is only one site.
(Paragraph 2) We have never had a consulting psychiatrist.

Autistic Program -- The autistic program never has been at Newport Academy. From 1981-1985 the program was housed in an elementary school in York County. Since August of 1985, the program has been housed in an elementary school in Hampton.

PAGE 20

Third full paragraph starting "As described..." -- the last two words in that first sentence should be deleted. It doesn't make sense. Remove "could offer" and end the sentence after the word "division" in the third line.

In the 7th line of the third full paragraph, the word "education" should be "evaluation."

Last line on the page -- correct Mrs. Tapscott's name as previously noted.

PAGE 21

Second line on page 21 -- Mrs. Tapscott

Second line of the first full paragraph -- change "education" to "evaluation".

PAGE 22

Paragraph 2, Line 6 -- The percent of the regional director's salary charged to the Tuition Rate program for SED students is ridiculous. The rate application clearly lists the percent as 28. Where you got 75% is beyond my comprehension. There are several other errors which are clearly recorded on the rate application:

- 1 1/2 Program Coordinators, not 2
- Speech Teacher and Recreation Therapist are two different positions.
(Both are shared with the autistic program.)
- 5 teacher assistants, not 6
- 1.45 secretaries, not 2
- 1.1 school psychologists
- Custodian is part-time, not full-time

Paragraph 3 -- Where did you find any of the director's salary budgeted in the Autistic Rate application? Absolutely NONE was. You wrote that 25% was.

- Only 3 teachers were budgeted, not 4
- Only 3 teacher assistants were budgeted, not 4
- Speech Teacher and Recreation Therapist -- same as above

PAGE 23

Paragraph 2 -- Last line should read... "office supplies, and communications." We have never budgeted any medical expenses. Again, where did you find this?

PACES Survey - Financial Factors -- Fourth line from the bottom of the page should be Dr. Jane Webb, not Mrs. Last line again has Mrs. Tapscott's name wrong.

APPENDIX P

CASE STUDY FEEDBACK LETTERS

COOPERATIVE CENTERS FOR EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN
CLARK AVENUE GALAX, VA. 24333

December 18, 1986

Mr. Murray Ellison
Coordinator, VA RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Sirs:

The CCEC Committee for Control, at its December 17 meeting, reviewed your case study on the Cooperative Centers for Exceptional Children. The Committee found it to be both accurate and helpful.

Best wishes on your dissertation.

Sincerely,

Belinda E. Howlett
Administrative Assistant



LAUREL Regional Program

1721 Monsview Place

Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

February 24, 1987

Mr. Murray S. Ellison
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, Virginia 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

We at LAUREL are most appreciative of the work that you have put into our RSEP Study. We have already benefitted by your review of the LAUREL Regional Program. I have shared the results of the study with the Lay Advisory Board and our regional board.

We look forward to your comparison of the various RSEP's and feel that this will give us a range of services for referral. We continue to feel that the state funding issue is our major stumbling block and believe that your study will help bring this concern to light. I appreciate especially the professional manner in which you have handled this study. If I can be of further assistance to you please let me know.

Sincerely,

Joanne B. Shearer
Director

JBS/lb

SHENANDOAH COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

P. O. Box 488

Woodstock, Virginia 22664

Office of The Division Superintendent

March 2, 1987

Phone

Mr. Murray Ellison, Coordinator
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knowellwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

Your disertation on the Shenandoah Valley Regional Education Program has been reviewed by me and is most accurate and can be used by all involved in the regional program.

I wish you well in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Danley, Jf.
Division Superintendent

RADjr:dr



NORTHWESTERN REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Route 11, Box 236
Stephens City, VA 22656
Phone:

1010 Smithfield Ave., Extended
Winchester, VA 22601
Phone:

March 2, 1987

Virginia RSEP Study
Murray Ellison, Coordinator
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

Your case study was interesting and the content will be shared with LEA's. I trust all is going well and that you are able to have the study published soon.

Sincerely,

Nancy W. Cook, Director
NREP

NWC/ab



SOUTHSIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION CONSORTIUM

Route 1, Box 289
Keysville, Virginia 23947

TELEPHONE

Serving School Divisions:

Amelia
Buckingham
Charlotte

Cumberland
Lunenburg
Nottoway
Prince Edward

March 9, 1987

Mr. Murray Ellison
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

Thank you for sending the revised copy of the Case Study written about the Southside Special Education Consortium. The study seems accurate as well as informative and has been shared with the members of the Joint Board of our program.

Sincerely,

Kathleen C. Rapazzo,
Director

KCR/khc

Frederick County Public Schools

1415 Amherst Street
Post Office Box 3508
Winchester, Virginia 22601-2708
Telephone:

Division Superintendent

March 20, 1987

Mr. Murray Ellison
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

I have reviewed your case study written about the Northwestern Regional Educational Programs and wish to commend you for the thoroughness of your research. The fact that you used followup interviews as well as written questionnaires added depth to the study.

The study contains an adequate amount of background information to give the reader an overview of the regional special-education program's organization and operations. The results of the opinion questionnaire completed by the participating superintendents, joint-committee-for-control members, and director form a composite perspective of the advantages, disadvantages, functions, and needs of a regional special-education program that can be helpful to others considering such an operation.

Thank you for sharing the results of the study with me.

Sincerely yours,

Kenneth E. Walker, Ph.D.
Division Superintendent
Executive Officer, NREP

KEW/gc

CHARLOTTE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS



ROBERT A. WOOD, Superintendent
CHARLOTTE COURT HOUSE, VIRGINIA 23923

Telephone

March 27, 1987

Mr. Murray Ellison
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

I would like to commend you for the recent South-side Educational Consortium study you prepared. I think the facts you gathered exhibit quite clearly the need for the formation of such a Consortium and the excellent results that have been achieved through its continued operation. I am sure you will be pleased to learn that we have organized a new class in Buckingham County and another in Lunenburg County. As the demand increases for additional placements we will continue to make every effort to provide for the educational needs of low incident students in our Consortium area.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Wood
Division Superintendent

RAW/rd

THE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD OF SMYTH COUNTY

MARVIN E. WINTERS, SUPERINTENDENT · JOYCE E. CORNETTE, CLERK

BOX 987

MARION, VIRGINIA 24354

JOHN B. STYRON, CHAIRMAN
MACK S. BLEVINS
WILLIAM G. BRYANT
MRS. LAURA B. HAYS
WILLIAM D. McCLELLAN
L.T. OLINGER
EDWIN B.J. WHITMORE, III

April 14, 1987

Mr. Murray Ellison, Coordinator
Virginia RSEP Study
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235

Dear Mr. Ellison:

I was pleased with the information that was presented in the Virginia RSEP Study. The format was appropriate and the charts and graphs were easy to understand.

I am not aware of any corrections and changes that should be made. I have shared the study with my staff, and they will use the information to study our regional program.

Sincerely yours,

Marvin E. Winters, Superintendent
Smyth County Schools

HWT/MEW:dd

BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

**P. O. BOX 128
BLAND, VIRGINIA 24315**

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

April 16, 1987

*Virginia RSEP Study
Mr. Murray Ellison, Coordinator
1519 Knollwood Drive
Richmond, VA 23235*

Dear Mr. Ellison:

The case study of our regional special education program was well conducted, concise, and clearly written. We found the study to be helpful to our long range programming to better serve our special children.

Thank you for this service.

Sincerely,

*Judy F. Farmer, M.Ed.
Coordinator of Special Services*

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