



Collaboration and Creation of Efficiencies Advisory Committee Final Report October, 2011

Historically, the twelve local districts and Ingham ISD have worked closely together to benefit the students and the community we all serve. We have a long list of instructional programs and administrative services that are ISD-wide or shared between two or more districts. However, there is more urgency today than ever before to collaborate among districts.

“The issue of consolidation is paramount for Michigan’s school districts. Reductions in the state School Aid Fund, shrinking enrollments, and spending pressures (such as increasing retirement costs) have converged to dramatically reduce revenue for most districts. These factors have already caused service consolidation efforts to accelerate at the local and ISD levels around the state, but statewide calls from action groups, legislators, and the governor suggest that a state mandate requiring consolidation of services is far more imminent than at any time in the past.” *(Public Sector Consultant’s Report, March 22, 2010)*

In light of this new reality, the boards of education and superintendents in our intermediate region agreed to work together to accelerate the rate of collaboration and creation of efficiencies between and among our districts. The local boards of education together with the ISD Board, area superintendents and frontline administrators met on the evening of March 24, 2010 to hear a presentation by Public Sector Consultants (PSC). PSC met previously with each superintendent and also independently researched the issue of public sector collaboration in Michigan. PSC enumerated three key concepts that they garnered from their conversation with the superintendents. For future collaboration to be successful, the superintendents believe, the following needs to be in place:

- **Maintain quality of the service:** Will the quality of the service provided be equal to that of the current in-house service? Are there opportunities, through consolidation, to have services enhanced even beyond what local districts can currently offer?
- **Strong collaboration, including regular communication, between the district and the service provider:** Can local control be maintained at some level? How much input does the local district have on the design and delivery of the service?
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Does consolidation of services allow local districts to redirect money to the classroom?”

The boards of education in Ingham decided, after the PSC presentation, to jointly create an Advisory Committee on Collaboration comprised of one board member from each district, the chair of the Superintendents’ Round Table, and the ISD superintendent.

The newly created advisory committee had its first meeting on June 15, 2010 and agreed the three key concepts identified by the superintendents should be strongly considered before any collaboration moves forward. The committee, at their initial meeting, developed a process to work together and determined the anticipated outcomes of their work. The committee narrowed the scope of their focus into four distinct areas. These were:

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- Alternative Education
- Cooperative Purchasing
- Instruction/Online Learning
- Technology Services

The advisory committee formed workgroups for each of the four enumerated areas. The workgroups were comprised of local and ISD staff and one or two advisory committee members. The workgroups each met a number of times during the year and reported out to the whole committee at their monthly meetings. During the process, additional collaboration projects concerning general education transportation and custodial services were explored.

The committee met for one last time on September 20, 2011. At that meeting, the committee reviewed the accomplishments of the workgroups. The Advisory Committee decided the work begun at the behest of the committee would continue to be carried on by appropriate workgroups and be overseen by the Superintendent's Round Table. The committee directed that a final report be created and shared by committee members with their respective Boards. The full report from each workgroup is attached as Exhibit A-D.

While the work of the advisory committee is complete, the direction and momentum created by the committee continues to gather steam. The concept of whether to collaborate with a neighbor or across the county is no longer an afterthought in the Ingham ISD service area, but instead has become an integral part of all conversations, at all levels of discussion, in all of our districts.

Cooperative Purchasing

Purpose: To expand collaborative purchasing opportunities by full utilization of existing purchasing options and coordination of regional bids for items not covered by existing cooperatives.

Membership: Fred Ford, Holt Board member; Kim Cosgrove, Holt; Chris Petrimoulx, Mason; Celestine Hart, Lansing; Jamie Rutter-Danley, Ingham ISD; Helen McNamara, Ingham ISD

Process:

- A process and structure was developed to assist districts in maximizing purchasing leverage
- The process involves two components: full utilization of existing purchasing options by sharing of information and resources, and coordination of regional bids for items not covered by existing cooperatives
- Ingham ISD will coordinate the process by periodically communicating with existing stakeholder groups to identify potential collaborative purchases (Business Officials, Technology Directors, Curriculum Directors, etc.)
- Bid teams will be formed with local district representation to provide input on bid specifications, determine bid evaluation criteria, make vendor recommendations, and provide input on vendor contract terms
- Periodic reporting will be made to Superintendents' Round Table with a summary matrix of cooperative purchases, by district

Outcomes:

- The intended outcomes for cooperative purchasing are to:
 - Save districts money on purchases, and
 - Save districts time in procurement activities

Future Expectations

- Stakeholder groups will periodically review collaborative purchasing needs and opportunities, coordinated by Ingham ISD
- Periodic reporting will be made to Superintendents' Round Table which reflects detail regarding cooperative purchases and participation by district

Technology Services Advisory Workgroup

Progress Report 11/28/2011

Purpose

As an ad hoc workgroup our purpose is to collect and analyze data and report back on services considered for consolidation and/or collaboration. Our goal will be to identify both short and long term collaborations which:

- Are cost savings and/or containment opportunities
- Improve quality and/or services
- Increase efficiencies
- Are sustainable

Membership

Bruce Barbour (Mason), Jerome Brzenski (Mason), Jeff Cassin (Haslett), Mark Chaplow (Williamston), Erin Chapman (Okemos), Lisa Cyrus (Stockbridge), Tamara Dodge (Leslie), Cindy Lance (Stockbridge), Al Momrick (Waverly), Rich Pugh (East Lansing), Daryl Tilley (Ingham ISD), Bob Vonliten (Holt)

Process

The Technology Services workgroup met periodically to gather and analyze data on collaboration in areas of need. The general process was to:

- Examine existing technology collaborations.
- Identify potential areas of future technology collaborations
- Assess the need, impact, and effort of potential future collaborations
- Create recommendations for areas of focus
- Present recommendations to the Consolidation Advisory Committee
- Create subgroups to work on specific collaborations as approved by the Consolidation Advisory Committee

Outcomes

The Technology Services workgroup determined the following areas of collaboration to focus on:

1. Shared Technology Support Services
Explore options for technology staffing including contractual support, shared staffing, and ad hoc support, and sharing expertise between districts.
2. RtI/IEP/Assessment Software
Support the work being done to identify a software suite for Response to Intervention, Special Education, and student assessment and analysis.
3. Backups and Disaster Recovery
Evaluate options to implement shared storage for the purpose of off-site data backups and disaster recovery.
4. Electronic Content Management
Assess Electronic Content Management (ECM) solutions for districts looking to streamline the processes, procedures and technologies for lifecycle document management.
5. Phone Systems and Services
Investigate the possibility for sharing phone systems and/or phone services across multiple districts.

Future Expectations

1. Shared Technology Support Services

Shared technology support services will be an ongoing process which should lead to increased services by leveraging cross-district expertise and cost reductions by reducing the cost and amount of vendor/consultant supplied services.

2. Rti/IEP/Assessment software

The software selection committee hopes to have a final selection made and begin implementing in the spring of 2012. Having a common, shared application suite should reduce costs associated with manual processes, as well as increase efficiencies in the sharing and flow of data.

3. Backups and Disaster Recovery

A pilot of backup storage hardware is underway at Ingham ISD. Once the solution has been tested and vetted, a shared system should save cost on storage, create efficiencies in the time needed to administer and manage a backup system, and create an service to be used for disaster recovery purposes.

4. Electronic Content Management (long term)

Holt and Ingham ISD currently have ECM systems in place. During the summer/fall of 2012 the workgroup will reconvene to determine interest from other districts in examining the existing systems in the service area, and/or to further explore other options.

5. Phone Systems (long term)

Webberville and Ingham ISD currently share a physical phone system. During the summer of 2012 the workgroup will reconvene to determine interest in exploring further sharing of phone systems and services.

Distance /Online Learning

Purpose: to consolidate courses and instructors throughout Ingham County using distance and/or online learning.

Membership: Stan Kogut, Melissa White, Tamara Dodge, Jack Davis (Lansing School Board)

Process:

- All Ingham county districts have been provided distance learning equipment through STARNET.
- Training has been provided to technology directors and key teachers to use the equipment with students and staff.
- Moodle has been purchased as the Course Management System
- Moodle training has been offered and is currently being offered throughout the 2011-2012 school year.
- Webinar software (Adobe Connect) has been offered at a discounted price to local districts to use in their blended and fully online courses.
- Instructors are being identified this fall to teach a blended or fully online course either 2nd semester or beginning fall of 2012 to interested students in Ingham County. The information is being brought to the Principal's meeting in November. This information will also be shared with district curriculum directors. The districts would be able to use Ingham ISD's seat time waiver.

Outcomes:

- Students in Ingham County will be provided with expanded opportunities
 - Classes not offered in their home district
 - Attend virtual field trips
 - Talk and meet with experts
 - Be exposed to and be proficient using an Online Course Management System
 - Participate in a blended or fully online course
 - Take remediated or accelerated courses

Future Expectations

- Students in Ingham County will have an array of blended or fully online courses to choose from taught by "Highly Qualified" teachers in Ingham County.
- All students will have taken a course in grades 9-12 where the teacher is using Moodle or another Course Management System
- Student engagement will increase as well as achievement scores
- Ingham County Schools will retain their students and increase their graduation rate

Purpose:

Gather data/information and develop recommendations on possible alternative education options for consolidation, sharing and/or consortium efforts.

Membership:

Jack Davis, Lansing, Board member
Venkat Saripalli, Lansing, Business Official
Eric Isham, Leslie, Board member
Dorothy Blackwell/Dennis Farmer, Waverly, Curriculum Director/Special Education Consultant
Cliff Seybert, E. Lansing, Curriculum Director
Mike Freeman, Williamston, HS Building Administrator
Mike Caine, Haslett, Special Education Director
Scott Szpara, Holt, Deputy Superintendent of Human Resources/Legal Services

Summary of Meetings:

At the initial meeting on 10/21/10, the workgroup reviewed the definition of alternative education programs, discussed current programs being implemented, the enrollment/outcome data from those programs, and the research/evidence-based practices available for alternative education program models.

On 12/6/10, the workgroup met again to identify alternative education programming needs/gaps across the districts from the compiled data reviewed in October. At this meeting, the workgroup requested presentations from several vendors currently delivering alternative education programming within our local districts to learn more about their models and services.

On 3/10/11, presentations from three alternative education vendors were provided to the workgroup members to include: 1) Educational Services of America (Ombudsman), 2) The American Academy, and 3) AdvancePath Academies. The workgroup members evaluated each of the program models discussed using a common rubric and made the following recommendations to the Advisory Committee on Consolidation at their May 3, 2011 meeting.

Future Expectations

- Ingham ISD will continue to partner with Educational Services of America and interested local districts to implement Ombudsman Alternative Education Programs. Currently

Ombudsman programs are operating within the Holt and Waverly districts for HS students, with support from Ingham ISD.

- Through the ReImagine online seat time waiver approved for Ingham ISD, local districts can enter into an agreement with The American Academy to provide an online dropout recovery alternative education pathway for HS students identified through the 2012-13 school year.
- Ingham ISD will continue to work with Superintendents, Curriculum Directors and building administrators through existing meeting structures, to identify other possible consolidation or consortium efforts around alternative education programming needs that emerge for students on an ongoing basis.
- On an as need basis, districts can continue to access other HS programming options for students supported in partnerships/waivers through Ingham ISD, e.g. Michigan Virtual University and/or GenNet online courses, dual enrollment options, High School Diploma Completion Initiative through LCC, and TEC@LCC