

**Regional Consortium Service Organizations
F.S. 1001.451**

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INTRODUCTION

The Florida Legislature recognizes the impact that being small and rural has on the delivery of quality education programs for its citizens. Transportation costs are increased because students are dispersed throughout sparsely populated districts. Grants are harder to obtain because funding agencies want to sponsor programs that impact the greatest number of students and small districts are always able to employ writers. The low tax base of small and rural districts negatively impacts the funds available for competitive teacher and principal salaries, or state of the art facilities. Access to technology and other educational resources is limited due to multiple demands being placed on limited funds. Teacher training in specific subject areas is especially challenging because there may be only one or two educators teaching in the district in a specific curriculum subject. Implementation of state and federal initiatives is extremely challenging because of the few district-level staff available to manage the tasks required.

AUTHORIZED IN STATUTES IN 1993

The Regional Consortium Service Organizations (RCSO) were an outcome of the early recognition that regional programming was a way for small and rural school districts and school boards to make advances in school improvement and provide a broader range of service through cooperative efforts. In 1993, the Florida Legislature passed HB 1545 establishing F.S. 228.0857.

Clearly, it was the intent of the Legislature that the delivery of educational programs and services in the state be improved through the creation of regional consortium service organizations. The program was designed to stimulate cooperation between school districts in order that resources of one school district may be available to other school districts. In addition, it was further the intention of the Legislature that such organizations provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the development of new programs and services.

In 2002, F.S. 228.0857 became F.S. 1001.451 in School Code Rewrite.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

F.S. 1001.451 includes specific standards and criteria for program delivery. Each of the regional consortium service organization that receive funding provide a full range of services to a larger number of students, minimizing duplication of services, and encouraging development of new programs and services. Each regional consortium service organization is required to provide, at a minimum, three of the following services: exceptional student education, teacher education centers, environmental education, federal grant procurement and coordination, data processing, health insurance, risk management insurance, staff development, purchasing, and planning and accountability.

THREE PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS

There are three established Regional Consortium Service Organizations that meet the statutory parameters of F.S. 1001.451.

The three Regional Consortium Service Organizations provide support to School Districts with 20,000 or fewer UWFTE through a regional delivery of service to improve student achievement through technical assistance and school improvement strategies.

The Panhandle Area Education Consortium (PAEC) representing 14 members operating since 1967 -- <http://www.paec.org/>. (PAEC members include: Calhoun, FSU lab school, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Liberty, Madison, Taylor, Wakulla Walton, and Washington.)

The North East Area Education Consortium (NEFEC) representing 15 members operating since 1976 -- <http://www.nefec.org/about/> (NEFEC members include Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Flagler, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Levy, Nassau, Putnam, Suwannee, Union, P.K. Yonge lab school, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind.)

The Heartland Education Consortium (HEC) representing 6 members operating since 1998 -- <http://www.heartlanded.org/> (HEC members include DeSoto, Hendry, Glades, Highlands, Hardee, and Okeechobee.)

FUNDING HISTORY

Funding for the Regional Consortium Service Program is a priority for small school districts and the three existing consortia have enjoyed support from the Florida Legislature and all previous Governors

At the request of the Florida Department of Education and with the support of the Florida Legislature funding for the Regional Education Consortium Services program has been included in the base budget of the Department of Education for this program. \$1,445,390 was included in the 2012-13 Appropriations Bill and for the first time in the history of the program the funding was vetoed by the Governor.

Funding Levels Back To FY 95-96

2012-13 Funding - \$1,445,390 - Vetoed
2011-12 Funding - \$1,445,390
2010-11 Funding - \$1,611,465
2009-10 Funding - \$1,611,465
2008-09 Funding - \$1,660,750
2007-08 Funding - \$1,750,000
2006-07 Funding - \$1,750,000
2005-06 Funding - \$1,700,000
2004-05 Funding - \$825,000
2003-04 Funding - \$775,000
2002-03 Funding - \$775,000
2001-02 Funding - \$750,000
2000-01 Funding - \$750,000
1999-00 Funding - \$750,000
1998-99 Funding - \$750,000
1997-98 Funding - \$750,000
1996-97 Funding - \$750,000
1995-96 Funding - \$550,000
1994-95 Funding - \$750,000

Attached –

- Statutes Governing Regional Consortium Service Organizations - F.S. 1001.451
- Budget Request for 2012-13 of the Florida Department of Education document support for the program.

Regional Education Consortium Services Matrix
PROGRAMS SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN STATUTE

Program or Service listed specifically in 1001.451(1) – each consortium must provide a minimum of three of the following programs:	HEC	NEFEC	PAEC
Exceptional Student Education			
• Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource Services	X	X	X
• Institute for Small And Rural Districts	X	X	X
Professional Development (formerly Teacher Education Centers)	X		X
Environmental Education *****			
Grant Procurement and Coordination			
• Federal	X	X	X
• State	X	X	X
Data Processing Design and/or Support		X	X
Health Insurance (Employee Health Benefit Programs)		X	X
Risk Management Programs		X	X
Staff Development Training	X	X	X
Purchasing Programs	X	X	X
Planning and Accountability	X	X	X

PROGRAMS IMPLEMENTED IN ADDITION TO STATUTORY PROGRAMS

Regional Education Consortia Services In addition to those specifically listed in 1001.451(1)	HEC	NEFEC	PAEC
State Grant Procurement and Coordination	X	X	X
STEM Programs	X	X	X
Information Technology Assistance	X	X	X
Electronic Professional Development	X	X	X
Policy Development Assistance	X	X	X
Building Code Inspections		X	
Common Core Support	X	X	X
Early Learning Professional Development	X	X	X
Educational Leadership Training	X	X	X
Reading Intervention and Remediation	X	X	X
Mentoring Programs	X	X	X
Virtual Education Program Support	X	X	X
Alcohol Abuse Initiative	X	X	X
Math and Science Resources	X	X	X
Rural Broadband Education	X	X	X
Regional Economic Development Partnership	X	X	X
College and Career Readiness	X	X	X
RTTT Initiatives	X	X	X
Teacher / Principal Evaluation	X	X	X
Evaluation Performance Pay		X	X
Employee Recruitment and Selection Support	X		
Instructional Material Review	X		

Text of Original Legislation

Chapter 93-145 - House Bill No. 1483

Section 1. (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that the delivery of educational programs and services in the state be improved through the creation of regional consortium service organizations designed to stimulate cooperation between school districts in order that resources of one school district may be available to other school districts. It is further the legislative intent that such organizations provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the development of new programs and services.

(2) School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-time equivalent students may enter into cooperative agreements to form a regional consortium service organization. Each regional consortium service organizational service organization shall provide, at a minimum, three of the following services: exceptional student education; teacher education centers; environmental education; federal grant procurement and coordination; data processing; health insurance; staff development; purchasing; and planning and accountability.

(3)(a) Each regional consortium service organization which consists of four or more school districts is eligible to received, through the Department of Education, an incentive grant of \$25,000 per school district to be used for the delivery of services per school district to be used for the delivery of services within the participating school districts.

(b) Application for incentive grants shall be made to the Commissioner of Education by July 30 of each year for distribution to qualifying regional consortium service organizations by January 1 of the fiscal year.

Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 1993.

**CURRENT STATUTE GOVERNING
Regional Consortium Service Organizations
F.S. 1001.451**

Ch. 1001 » Sec. 1001.451

1001.451 Regional consortium service organizations.— In order to provide a full range of programs to larger numbers of students, minimize duplication of services, and encourage the development of new programs and services:

(1) School districts with 20,000 or fewer unweighted full-time equivalent students, developmental research (laboratory) schools established pursuant to s. 1002.32, and the Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind may enter into cooperative agreements to form a regional consortium service organization. Each regional consortium service organization shall provide, at a minimum, three of the following services: exceptional student education; teacher education centers; environmental education; federal grant procurement and coordination; data processing; health insurance; risk management insurance; staff development; purchasing; or planning and accountability.

(2)(a) Each regional consortium service organization that consists of four or more school districts is eligible to receive, through the Department of Education, subject to the funds provided in the General Appropriations Act, an incentive grant of \$50,000 per school district and eligible member to be used for the delivery of services within the participating school districts. The determination of services and use of such funds shall be established by the board of directors of the regional consortium service organization. The funds shall be distributed to each regional consortium service organization no later than 30 days following the release of the funds to the department.

(b) Application for incentive grants shall be made to the Commissioner of Education by July 30 of each year for distribution to qualifying regional consortium service organizations by January 1 of the fiscal year.

(3) In order to economically provide programs and services to participating school districts and members, a regional consortium service organization may establish purchasing and bidding programs, including construction and construction management arrangements, in lieu of individual school district bid arrangements pursuant to policies exercised by its member districts. Participation in regional consortium service organization bids shall be accomplished by action of an individual district school board through a letter of intent to participate and shall be reflected in official district school board minutes.

(4) A regional consortium service organization board of directors may elect to establish a direct-support organization pursuant to s. 1001.453 which is independent of its fiscal agent district.

(5) The board of directors of a regional consortium service organization may use various means to generate revenue in support of its activities. The board of directors may acquire, enjoy, use, and dispose of patents, copyrights, and trademarks and any licenses and other rights or interests thereunder or therein. Ownership of all such patents, copyrights, trademarks, licenses, and rights or interests thereunder or therein shall vest in the state, with the board of directors having full right of use and full right to retain the revenues derived therefrom. Any funds realized from patents, copyrights, trademarks, or licenses shall be considered internal funds as provided in s. 1011.07. Such funds shall be used to support the organization's marketing and research and development activities in order to improve and increase services to its member districts.