



Regional Education Service Centers- Summary

Texas created regional education service centers (ESCs) through statute in 1967. Chapter 8 of the Texas Education Code (TEC) requires that ESCs be located throughout the state, so each school district has the opportunity to be served by and to participate with an ESC on a voluntary basis. ESCs are established by the legislature for the purpose of: 1. Assisting schools in improving student performance; 2. Enabling schools to operate more efficiently and economically; and, 3. Implementing initiatives assigned by the legislature or the commissioner.

In accordance with statute, ESCs have actively delivered training and consulting assistance to school districts/charter schools to a wide-array of educators and other individuals involved in the education process. During the 2010 – 2011 school year, ESCs trained approximately 1.1 million people (duplicate count) and provided over 6.2 million training contact hours to individuals in school districts across the state. ESCs provide professional development in all areas of the education spectrum, secure products and services at reduced prices for districts/charter schools, provide technical assistance in all facets of the education process, and perform other activities that meet the needs of school districts/charter schools.

ESCs also partner with private entities to assist school districts/charter schools in purchasing items and services. Combined, the twenty ESCs partner with over 10,000 vendors for a total of over \$900 million worth of goods and services. The ESCs utilize economies of scale to help districts acquire educational tools that districts would not otherwise be able to purchase, saving money and improving efficiencies.

To ensure that training and consulting assistance is customized to individual district/charter school needs, ESCs continuously examine district/charter school data. ESCs do an exceptional job of utilizing customer feedback in order that services meet the needs of their districts/charter schools. This feedback includes annual evaluation instruments, evaluations of every workshop conducted, and feedback from advisory groups. The results of these instruments can easily be provided for review.

ESCs use general revenue distributed under Chapter 8 for core services or for necessary operational expenses related to those services. While these funds are critical to the delivery of core services, it is important to note that school districts/charter schools provide local funds to supplement the cost of services. The blending of state and local funds maximizes and enhances core services. ESCs do much to enable school districts/charter schools to operate more effectively, efficiently, and economically. ESCs have generated data that indicates cost savings to districts. This data can be provided upon request.

ESCs are non-regulatory agencies and have no taxing authority. Any fund balances that are obtained by an ESC are accrued from local dollars only. Because ESCs do not have the ability to tax and create bond debt, they must purchase significant capital outlay expenditures and maintain/renovate facilities on a pay-as-you-go basis. ESCs designate all fund in accordance with the Financial Accountability System Resource Guide.

ESCs play a critical role in carrying out Texas' educational priorities as established by the governor, the legislature, and the commissioner. Without ESC involvement, such initiatives could not be successfully accomplished. ESCs have also been an integral part of the statewide emergency response system. ESCs serve as decentralized agencies responsible for communicating on behalf of the state in statewide or regional emergencies by coordinating transportation or other types of relief within the state or to the affected region.

In closing, ESCs, the non-regulatory entities created in statute through Chapter 8 of the TEC in 1967, have developed and matured into an essential partner for school districts/charter schools in the state of Texas. As vital partners, ESCs provide timely training and much needed technical assistance that impacts student success and other educational and operational issues. ESCs are able to maximize state funding to provide optimal services to school districts/charter schools.

Should there be further questions about this information regarding ESCs, please contact Philip Cochran at the Texas Education Agency who will coordinate with ESCs to provide a response to the request.