

School District Organization, Reorganization and Boundary Determinations/Alterations

Presentation to District Superintendents

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The Structure of New York State School Districts

There are five different types of school districts in our state -

1. Common School Districts

The common school district is the oldest of the existing types, with its legislation enacted in 1812. Common school districts do not have legal authority to operate a high school and must tuition to a neighboring district. There are 9 today, including two non-operating districts: South Mountain Hickory and Piseco. (EL 1602)

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2. Union Free School Districts

In 1853 the legislature provided for union free school districts in which groups of common districts could join together to provide secondary education. Rate bills would be done away with so public education would become truly “free” for the first time. Not all union free districts currently operate K-12. There is a non-operating district: Raquette Lake. Twelve are Special Act or Institutional Districts and one is non-operating. (EL 1702-1703)

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3. Central School Districts

Legislation was enacted in 1925 to establish central districts. For the first time, incentives were provided for school district reorganization: money for transportation, new buildings and operations. (All types of districts receive incentives for reorganization now.) Central districts are the most common today. There are a few central districts which do not operate K-12. (EL 1804)

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4. City School Districts

There are two types of city school districts: one for cities under 125,000 in population and the other “Big 5” for cities over 125,000.

School districts in the 57 cities under 125,000 population are separate governmental units, each with its own board of education and operate like central and union free district in most respects. Many encompass territory that is greater than the city and are referred to as “enlarged city school districts”. A couple are co-terminous. All operate K-12. (EL 2502)

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City School Districts (cont'd.)

In the five cities over 125,000 population, the education function is part of city government and school funding is part of the municipal budget. The Big 5 are Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse, Yonkers and NYC. (EL 2553)

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5. Central High School Districts

Central High School legislation was established in 1917 and withdrawn in 1944. Five districts were formed. They are the most unique of the organizational types. They were seen as a promising way to achieve an adequate enrollment base of secondary students.

There are three central highs in Nassau County. Two of these have four elementary components and one has three. A fourth was established in Westchester County, but became a K-12 district in 1950. A fifth was established in Erie County, but became a K-12 district in 1979. There is current legislation to allow a new central high school district in Suffolk County.

(EL 1901)

Forms of Reorganization

“Reorganization” is a generic term that refers to the joining together of two or more school districts to form one large district. Education Law contains a number of different procedures by which reorganization can take place. Each was developed at a different time to facilitate reorganization of different types of districts – common, union free, central and city.

Forms of Reorganization

- A. Centralization – In a centralization, all districts but city districts can take part; each participating district is dissolved and a new district is created.

- B. Annexation – Again, all districts but city districts can participate. A new district is not created, rather one district is dissolved and joined to another.

Forms of Reorganization

- C. Consolidation of Union Free/Common - A new district is created, as in centralization.

- D. Annexation of Union Free – A district is dissolved and joined to another as in annexation of a central school district.

Forms of Reorganization

- E. Consolidation with a City School District Under 125,000 Inhabitants – A consolidation of one or more districts with a small city school district is similar in impact and in procedures to an annexation.
- F. Central High School – Central high schools were created to operate a common high school to serve students of a number of smaller component districts in 1917. Five were formed; two have become K-12 districts. In 1944 the legislation was rescinded. In 1981, legislation was reinstated for Suffolk County only.

Incentive Aid

- New York State Law provides incentive operating and building aid to assist districts that reorganize in accordance with a plan approved by the Commissioner of Education.
- The additional Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid (RIOA) is 40% of the 2006-07 Formula Operating Aid, up to 95% of AOE, for 5 years, declining by 4% each year thereafter.
- The aid ends after 14 years.

Incentive Aid

- The additional building aid is an additional 30% on approved costs, based on the ratio.
- Ex: $.650 \times .30 = .195$ $.650 + .195 = .845$
- The maximum is 95%. It is for 10 years but has been extended.

Procedures For School District Boundaries

Our Role -

We provide technical assistance to the District Superintendent of Schools, school district personnel and the public in all matters related to boundaries. Determinations and alterations are filed in our office.

Procedures For School District Boundaries

I. Boundary Determination – Education Law 2215

Definition: A formal statement that describes the location of a segment of a boundary line between two districts.

Purpose: A determination is necessary in instances where there is no known available description or where there is a dispute concerning where the boundary is.

Responsibility: Section 2215 assigns the responsibility for a boundary determination within his or her Supervisory District to the District Superintendent. Our staff provides assistance and the determination is filed with our office. The action is subject to Commissioner's appeal.

Procedure: A request may emanate from a district, property owner, or resident with children, usually in writing to assure that the required effort is directed at the proper problem.

Procedures For School District Boundaries

II. Boundary Alteration

Definition: A transfer of property from one school district to another (may be several parcels).

Responsibility: City School Districts – Section 1525 permits a boundary alteration between a small city school district and any other district with the written consent of the districts and an order of the Commissioner of Education. The District Superintendent of Schools assists.

Other Districts – Sections 1506 and 1507 permit a boundary alteration between any other two districts with the written consent of the districts by an order of the District Superintendent of Schools.

Resources

- Office of State Aid –

<http://stateaid.nysed.gov>

Phone: (518)-474-2977

- Office of Educational Management Services (BOCES and School District Organization) –

www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/boces/home.html

www.p12.nysed.gov/mgtserv/sch_dist_org

Phone: (518)-474-6541