



Texas Association of School Boards
P.O. Box 400 • Austin, Texas 78767-0400 • 512.467.0222

Serving Texas Schools Since 1949

July 17, 2012

Dear Members of the Committee:

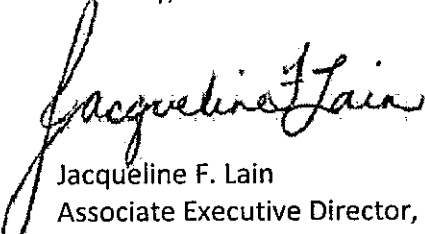
School board members across the state value and strongly support their regional Education Service Centers (ESCs). In light of the charge for this hearing, TASB presented school board members across the state with the following questions:

- (1) Does your district save money and/or time by using services provided by your Education Service Center?
- (2) If so, *which* are some of the ESC services that your district finds most valuable and why?
- (3) How has the ESC helped school boards in your region (i.e., what type of ESC services do school board members find valuable)?

Following are responses from board members in almost every region of the state. In some cases, the board member's entire response is included in this document. In some cases, the response included is an excerpt from a (much) longer letter. We have attached the actual letters we received, as well.

We hope this testimony explains why school board members think that their ESCs contribute to the efficient operation are critical to the success of their school districts.

Sincerely,



Jacqueline F. Lain
Associate Executive Director,
Texas Association of School Boards

As a district of 3,200 students, our participation in Region 1 ESC's cooperatives in child nutrition, library services, the purchasing and electricity cooperatives, school improvement, PEIMS and many others, has allowed us to efficiently use our funds to positively impact student achievement. Additionally, Region 1 ESC has provided needed support to board members in the region by hosting regional and local district workshops, training and networking opportunities. Without this help and support, we would have to look to outside providers and that would be very costly not only in dollars and cents but in the time it would take for us to seek providers and services.

Homero Garcia, President of the Board – South Texas I. S. D.

Corpus Christi ISD's (CISD) instructional program is complemented by the various educational services and programs provided by the Region 2 Education Service Center (ESC), including Distance Learning, Early Childhood, Educational Media, and Regional School Improvement. Additionally, Discovery Education Streaming Plus engages our students by providing a comprehensive video library that features exclusive programs from the *Discovery Channel*, such as *Life*, *Planet Earth*, *Mythbusters*, and *Frozen Planet*. Through the Leadership Services Cooperative, the Region 2 ESC provides orientation sessions for new board members, teambuilding workshops for board members and the superintendent, and numerous training opportunities throughout the year. The Region 2 ESC staff is knowledgeable and helpful in all areas of service, willing to go above and beyond to assist our staff and students achieve success and CCISD strongly supports the work that they do and the services that they provide.

Bill Clark, President, Board of Trustees – Corpus Christi ISD

Hallettsville ISD finds the services of Region 3 extremely valuable. They provide us specialized training in cutting edge workshops that are much closer and more affordable for a small district. Cluster sessions are also provided for departments including food service and transportation; again, at a much more desirable cost and distance to our personnel. The financial services provided to our district are outstanding! This is provided at a minimum shared service fee. Finally, Dr. Julius Cano has helped our District redesign evaluation forms, set goals and priorities and stay focused as a Board. Region 3 ESC has proven to be a vital tool for our District.

Cindy Caraway, board member – Hallettsville ISD

Also see attached letter from Pamela Remmers, Board Member – Nordheim ISD

Although many believe that Education Service Centers (ESCs) mostly serve smaller districts, Region 4 ESC has provided many critical services for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (CFISD) focusing on increasing student performance; shared services that provide efficiencies and cost-savings for the district; and training for teachers, administrators, support staff and Board members. Specifically, in the 2010-2011 school year, Region 4 ESC provided professional development to 2,474 CFISD participants and technical assistance to 566. This training and assistance focused on a variety of topics including the new STAAR and End-of Course assessments, content area instruction, curriculum, accountability, special education, technology, nutrition, finance, etc. More than 53 staff members served on specific advisory committees, which allowed them access to current information from TEA and networking opportunities with job-alike colleagues in other districts. These shared services and training were cost effective for CFISD. In the five school years from 2006-2007 combined, CFISD has employed 541 teachers through Region 4 ESC's Alternative Certification Program. Additionally, in 2010-2011 Region 4 ESC certified 148 bus drivers and recertified 357 bus drivers for CFISD. The

CFISD Board members also benefitted from training and meeting spaces provided at Region 4 ESC. In a time of increased state standards, new assessments, reduced funding for public education and reduced staffing at the Texas Education Agency, Region 4 ESC has filled the gap in many ways.
Bob Covey, Board President – Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (CFISD)

The Region 5 ESC works with our district in many ways. Having a wife that is an educator, I know they deliver professional development to our faculty and staff. But as a board member, I'm aware that Region 5 ESC saves our district money in several other ways also. We use them to help with computer maintenance, bus driver training, Distance Learning, internet and email service, job postings, and student services such as curriculum tools and test data disaggregation. They also help us manage and report all of our PEIMS data, as well as aiding us with required audits such as our cafeteria audit. One of the greatest areas they help us save money is through their Food Service and Purchasing Coops. They are a good place for acquiring information pertinent to our local area, and understand the specific needs of our district and the many others in their region. Region 5 also serves our Board directly by delivering School Board Training. We use them for our annual Team of 8 training requirement, but also for new Board Member Orientation, goal setting, superintendent evaluation, and other trainings at our request. They have also served us by helping us conduct our most recent superintendent search.

Cody Williford, Board Member – Kountze ISD

The Madisonville CISD has benefited greatly from the services being provided by Region 6 ESC. The services provided are definitely assisting our district in achieving increased efficiency in our operations. Among the services that we use from the Region 6 ESC that are helping us improve efficiency are cooperative purchasing, internet access & connectivity, distance learning, and CSCOPE to mention just a few. We are able to receive significant cost savings through the cooperative purchasing service. And in our size district to have access to an aligned curriculum such as CSCOPE with the training and support provided by Region 6 ESC enables us to use funds that would have to go into the curriculum development in other areas. We have always found the Region 6 ESC staff to be knowledgeable and helpful in all areas of service. They are willing to "go the extra mile" to help our staff and students be successful. We are always confident that any service provided by Region 6 ESC will be affordably priced and of the highest quality.

Dennis McWhorter, Board President – Madisonville CISD

The Region 9 Educational Service Center (ESC9) saves Seymour ISD and all rural districts in its service area both time and money. To begin, the support provided to the English as a Second Language as well as Migrant programs allows the District to provide essential services without the total cost of a full time staff member. Cooperative arrangements facilitated by ESC9 for Asbestos Management and Integrated Pest Management are a couple of maintenance/facilities areas that also save time and money. Furthermore, support provided by ESC9 for internet and software allow the district the free up operating money and put more funds directly in the classroom. Specifically for board members, ESC 9 provides state mandated Tier I and Tier II training mandates via distance education. One of the greatest values from a Board member's perspective is the ESC9 Personnel Services Cooperative arrangement and the on-line AppliTrak System. The District is able to advertise open positions to a greater application market with minimal cost. In closing, the rural districts in the ESC9 service area are financially dependent on all the services that ESC9 provides.

Dustin Walker, Board President – Seymour ISD

Mineral Wells Independent School District makes extensive use of the Education Service Center, Region XI for two reasons: level of up-to-date educational expertise and cost benefits. We have many contracts with our ESC XI varying from technology support, principal training, student data support (PEIMS), and also Board training. Not only does contracting with ESC XI save money for purchased services, but they are always at our "beck and call." They truly mean service when they call themselves the "Education Service Center." Our board has taken advantage of specific Board training on an as needed basis varying from the required Team of Eight training to Legislative Updates and Open Records Trainings. We, as a Board, value the training and support that the service center provides for our district. We look forward to a continual working relationship with Education Service Center, Region XI.

Joe Ruelas, Board President – Mineral Wells ISD

The Hamilton School District is able to save taxpayers money because Education Service Centers (ESCs) operate on a cost-recovery basis and offer cost-sharing pools that help schools leverage and share resources, directing more money to the classroom. Student achievement is improved when our school district personnel receive required and relevant professional development and ongoing support that would be inaccessible to us if not provided by ESCs. ESCs provide teachers with additional training and support to assist economically disadvantaged children break the cycle of poverty through academic achievement. Our school district saves money on programs and services as a result of fee reductions negotiated by the ESC. ESCs help schools operate more effectively and efficiently in a safe and orderly environment. ESCs bridge financial gaps, preserving and generating more money for additional resources through grants, collaboration and strategic alliances. The Hamilton School District Board of Trustees calls on the Texas Legislature to continue the funding of ESCs, which deliver critical programs and services to Texas public schools. Funding for the 20 Education Service Centers should be maintained and/or increased in order to support schools and districts as they work to comply with additional mandates. ESCs are a vital part of the Texas public school system and offer numerous cost-saving services that benefit Texas public school children and save taxpayer dollars. Adequate funding is critically important to prevent students from being denied educational opportunities as they prepare to compete on a global scale in higher education and in future careers.

Hamilton ISD Board of Trustees

During these unprecedented times of financial challenges for public schools, we have looked to the service centers to fill the void where staff positions have been eliminated at the campus and district levels. Region XIII, our service center, is exceptional at keeping superintendents in touch with new issues before they arise and they provide an opportunity for district leadership to gain insights into new directives as it relates to curriculum, federal programs, special education, career and technical education, and many other key initiatives. We also utilize our service center for school board training and legislative updates. One of the most valuable assets provided by Region XIII is the shared service arrangements. The annual contracts that we share with our service center save Georgetown ISD tens of thousands of dollars. As technology dollars have dwindled across the state, we are able to use shared service arrangements through our service centers to assist us with internet access, professional development, and critical training/updates as it relates to district compliance with state and federal programs. Additionally, distance learning and student access to learning using technology are key areas where districts use the service centers. Reductions at service centers directly impact the districts they serve. In essence, reducing services at the educational service center level is an additional reduction to Texas public schools.

Scott Alarcorn, Board President – Georgetown ISD

Region 14's Education Service Center plays a vital role in providing our district with services that are very beneficial to us. The ESC assists our district with staff development, Title I, and technology support just to name a few. We could not begin to meet the district needs at a comparable cost without having shared service agreements with Region 14's ESC. The ESC provides valuable training for our school board and our district staff, which provides us with opportunities to collaborate and network with other school district personnel in the region. We strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to consider the needs of local school districts that receive valuable services through ESCs.

Terry Merck, Board President – Wylie I.S.D

The ESC is very important to all districts and small districts, especially. The ESC and TASB are partners in providing schools with high quality services and leadership to ensure the best education for students. The ESC provides professional development training for board members, administration, faculty, and district staff, as well as other numerous other services are a must for boards' and districts' success.

Bret Begert, Board Secretary – Ft. Elliott ISD

Also see attached letter from Anette Carlisle, Board President – Amarillo ISD

The Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC) provides invaluable and irreplaceable services for the districts of Region 17. Smaller districts, especially, depend on the ESC for everything from staff development and curricular support to technology and financial accounting support. Region 17 has 57 school districts spread over a wide geographical area. It would be financially and logistically impossible for each district to find acceptable services covering such a wide range of needs at an affordable price. For example, my district purchases software programs that are essential to the district's operations through ESC 17's purchasing coop. We depend heavily on ESC 17 for professional development, not only in instructional delivery but also in required documentation, since both curricular demands and testing standards have been increased tremendously. The need for technology in school districts will continue to increase exponentially. Districts in Region 17 access low-cost internet service through a wireless Wide Area Network that was organized, designed and supported by ESC 17. And, ESC 17's staff is an excellent resource, always ready to assist trustees in any way possible to enable our board service to be enriching and productive. ESC 17 plays a huge role in the ability of school districts in our region to serve our students in a productive and successful manner. I strongly encourage legislators to recognize the value of and continue state support for ESCs.

Melanie Morris

Board Secretary – Petersburg ISD; President – South Plains Association of School Boards

Unlike large districts, districts our size (835 students) are unable to employ the multitude of professional personnel to cover all the various operational program aspects required of school districts. As such, we rely extensively on our Regional Service Center to provide us with ever increasing services related to the operation of the school district, legislative and TEA mandates, and federal program requirements. The following is a *partial* listing of services currently being provided by our Regional Service Center that we believe are cost saving services for our district: Cooperative Purchasing; CSCOPE Curriculum Implementation and Training for Teachers in all content areas; Academic Accountability Monitoring/Updates/Training; Board Training (required and informational update sessions); Special Programs Guidance and Training; PEIMS Coordination and Guidance;

Federal Programs Regulations Training and Guidance; Student Nutrition Program Monitoring/Training/Updates; Parent Involvement Program Training; Computer Network Services and Technology Support Services; Student Data Management Support for Instruction; and, Instructional Media Services. The services provided by the Regional Service Center allows our district to spend more of our resources on direct instruction rather than additional administrative personnel, travel expenses for information gathering and training, and contracted services to provide training and support for direct instruction activities. We respectfully request that you support the continued operation of the Regional Service Centers in order to provide districts with the necessary support resources we need to meet the ever changing demands of our educational endeavors for children.

Guadalupe Montanez-Perez, Board President – Anthony ISD

Region 20 has provided multiple services and support for the Bexar County School Boards Coalition that could not be provided by any other organization. The Bexar County School Board Coalition is a collaborative group formed of the Board of Trustees in Bexar County. Region 20 has provided the capability for the group to communicate and to inform the public of its activities by hosting and updating the Coalition web site. In addition, when the Coalition took on the challenging task of writing a book about Public Education in Bexar County, Region 20 provided the data and suggested formats for the educational statistics about each of the 20 Independent School Districts and helped to compile it as County Data. Region 20 was known as an unbiased and accurate source to support the gathering and publication of the data. The final example we can provide showing the benefit the Coalition has achieved from our partnership with the Region 20 is the use of its facilities for meetings and other events. Region 20 is viewed as a neutral site for ISDs of all demographics, enrollment, etc.

Bobby Blount, Board Member – Northside ISD-Bexar County; President – Bexar County Coalition



Board of Trustees

CORPUS CHRISTI INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
P.O. Box 110 • 801 Leopard Street • Corpus Christi, Texas 78403-0110
Office: 361/695-7403 Fax: 361/886-9109
Website: www.ccisd.us

July 13, 2012

Ms. Jackie Lain
TASB Governmental Relations
1101 Trinity Street
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Ms. Lain:

The Corpus Christi Independent School District (CCISD) strongly supports the Region 2 Education Service Center and the affordable and high quality services that they provide. The Region 2 provides services that include relevant professional development for teachers, administrators, and school board members, which assist in enhancing the quality of instruction and efficiency of operations.

CCISD's instructional program is complemented by the various Region 2 ESC educational services and programs, including Distance Learning, Early Childhood, Educational Media, and Regional School Improvement. Additionally, Discovery Education Streaming Plus engages our students by providing a comprehensive video library that features exclusive programs from the *Discovery Channel*, such as *Life*, *Planet Earth*, *Mythbusters*, and *Frozen Planet*.

Through the Leadership Services Cooperative, the Region 2 ESC provides orientation sessions for new board members, teambuilding workshops for board members and the superintendent, and numerous training opportunities throughout the year.

The Region 2 ESC staff is knowledgeable and helpful in all areas of service, willing to go above and beyond to assist our staff and students achieve success and CCISD strongly supports the work that they do and the services that they provide.

Sincerely,

Bill Clark, President
Board of Trustees

Every student a learner...every learner a graduate...every graduate a success!

Hallettsville Independent School District

P.O. Drawer 368

361-798-2242 x400

Hallettsville, Texas 77964

Dr. Jo Ann Bludau
Superintendent

Sheryl Mikeška
Superintendent's
Secretary

Dr. Mandy Bucek
Curriculum Director

Russell Kowalik
High School Principal

Susan Dolezal
High School Counselor

Tommy Psencik
Athletic Director

Sophie Teltschik
Junior High Principal

Aaron Etzler
Junior High Counselor

Trina Patek
Elementary Principal

Stephen Hunter
Elementary Counselor

Denise Henk
Technology Operations

Carla Jones
Instructional Technology

Paul Cook
Board President

Todd Schindler
Board Vice-President

Dean Madden
Board Secretary

David Ehler
Board Member

Mark Schneider
Board Member

Mike DeLaRosa
Board Member

Cindy Caraway
Board Member

To: Jackie Lain
From: Cindy Caraway, Board Member
Date: July 12, 2012
Subject: Testimonial Regarding ESC 3 Services

The Hallettsville Independent School District located in south central Texas is served well by the Region III Educational Service Center under the direction of Dr. Julius Cano and his team of dedicated staff members.

HISD saves money and time by contracting with the service center for a variety of services and professional development opportunities. As a small rural district, HISD cannot afford content specific curriculum support personnel. Therefore, on a weekly basis, teachers and HISD staff members travel a short distance to Victoria, Texas where they are able to get specialized training in cutting edge workshops focused on preparing students for the new STAAR and EOC assessments as well as for higher education and a 21st Century workforce.

The ESC 3 also offers a number of cluster sessions in our area for support staff and departments including food service and transportation. Therefore, bus drivers and food service personnel do not have to travel long distances to larger cities for continuing education opportunities and updates regarding developments at the state level.

Teachers, staff, and board members have also participated in NET3 distance learning opportunities where Region 3 staff members have shared valuable information and resources to improve our district services to students, parents, and the community.

The superintendent and business manager have found the school financial services provided by Laura Ratliff to be some of the most valuable services provided to our school district. Again with the lack of personnel resources, many districts like ours rely upon Laura's expertise as she travels from district to district in Region 3 to assist with utilizing state finance templates and developing annual budgets. In the event that we have questions, she has a number of contacts at the state level that can assist our district with getting answers to our school finance questions. All of this is provided to our district at a minimal shared service fee.

Most recently our Board has found the years of experience, knowledge, and insight that Dr. Julius Cano possesses to be most helpful in improving our board and superintendent team relations. He has also helped us to redesign our superintendent evaluation system and focus on district needs and priorities. Although our district participates in the Region 3 leadership contracted service, Dr. Cano has provided much of this support and assistance at no extra charge. Without Dr. Cano's valuable service and the dedicated service of the Region 3 staff, our district would have a difficult time providing a high quality educational program for the children of the Hallettsville community.

Nordheim Independent School District

500 North Broadway

Nordheim, Texas 78141

361.938.5211 (Fax) 361.938.5266

361.938.5212

July 11, 2012

Region III provides services to help the district/charter schools in our region operate more efficiently and economically through shared services, cooperatives, curriculum support, business services, teacher recruitment, etc. My district participates in many services including Regional Purchasing Services, School Finance Services, Business and Student Accounting Software support, Technology Support, NCLB and Title I Part C, Carl Perkins, Child Nutrition Services, Assessment Assistance, E Rate Application Services, and training for Language Arts, Gifted and Talented, Math, Science, Special Education, and Leadership as well as many others. Without the support of our regional service center my district would struggle to provide training to our teachers, to have technology support and be unable to benefit E Rate and other grants because we do not have the expertise on our staff to apply.

Region III covers a geographic area of over 10,000 square miles serving 40 school districts with a combined student population of just over 53,000 students. Twenty-six of the districts in Region III serve less than 1,000 students, 16 of which serve less than 500 students. Ten districts serve less than 2,000 students. The largest district is Victoria, which serves over 14,000 students. Last year they provided 102,000 training contact hours to approximately 18,250 participants along with 46,000 hours of consultative assistance in 34,239 contacts. Even though they are busy helping so many, we feel like they are an extension to our staff, a part of our district. They are there to help when we need training for our teachers because we could not afford to bring in someone for just one teacher (like we have in many areas) or when we need a service that we only use once a month or even only once a year. Region 3 is where we turned for training to administer the STAAR exam or to ensure we met the requirements of NCLB and Title I. The Regional Purchasing Cooperative enables us to have competitive pricing when we need to make purchases, otherwise we would have no bargaining power. When we were without a Superintendent recently they called immediately to offer their support if we needed them and provided us a list of people in our area to help out as an Interim.

Our Service Center provides services on a cooperative basis to schools that may not otherwise be available or affordable to rural school districts, just like mine. I do not know what my district would do if the Service Center was not there to support us. Ninety percent of the districts in my region are small rural districts, we cannot afford to have multiple levels of administration and the bottom line is that the Service Center allows us to take care of business, comply with requirements, obtain training, and apply for grants keeping the costs down staying within in our budgets.

Pamela Remmers

Trustee
Nordheim ISD
Nordheim, TX

July 11, 2012

Jackie Lain
Texas Association of School Boards
12007 Research Blvd.
Austin, TX 78759

Dear Ms. Lain,

As Board President of the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD (CFISD), I have first-hand knowledge of the critically important role that Education Service Centers play in the work of school districts. Although many believe that Education Service Centers mostly serve smaller districts, Region 4 has provided many critical services for CFISD focusing on increasing student performance; shared services that provide efficiencies and cost-savings for the district; and training for teachers, administrators, support staff and Board members. CFISD has saved both time and money by receiving valuable information, training, and services either at the Region 4 Center or with Region 4 providing services within the school district. Additionally, by sharing the cost of services with other districts, CFISD has been able to receive these services for less money than if the district provided them or paid for staff and Board members to travel to receive the services. CFISD has also benefitted from participation in the Texas Cooperative Purchasing Network.

Specifically, in the 2010-2011 school year, Region 4 provided professional development to 2,474 CFISD participants and technical assistance to 566. This training and assistance focused on a variety of topics including the new STAAR and End-of Course assessments, content area instruction, curriculum, accountability, special education, technology, nutrition, finance, etc. More than 53 staff members served on specific advisory committees, which allowed them access to current information from TEA and networking opportunities with job-alike colleagues in other districts. These shared services and training were cost effective for CFISD.

Another critical Region 4 service that benefitted CFISD was the Alternative Certification Program. Even in a year of significant budget cuts when CFISD did not hire as many teachers as in previous years, for the 2010-2011 school year CFISD employed 61 Alternative Certification Program teachers trained and certified through Region 4. In the five school years from 2006-2007 combined, CFISD has employed 541 teachers through Region 4's Alternative Certification Program. Additionally, in 2010-2011 Region 4 certified 148 bus drivers and recertified 357 bus drivers for CFISD. The CFISD Board members also benefitted from training and meeting spaces provided at Region 4.

These are just a few examples of many Region 4 services that CFISD teachers, administrators, support staff, and Board members have benefitted from. In a time of increased state standards, new assessments, reduced funding for public education and reduced staffing at the Texas Education Agency, Region 4 has filled the gap in many ways.

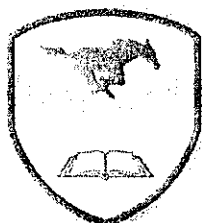
I am pleased to have been asked by the Texas Association of School Boards to share my perspective on the critical role that Region 4 Education Service Center has provided for the Cypress-Fairbanks ISD. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Bob R. Covey
Board President
Cypress-Fairbanks ISD Board of Trustees

coveybob@yahoo.com

MCISD



MUSTANGS

Keith Smith
Superintendent

Dr. Robert Cope
Assistant Superintendent

James Sanders
Assistant Superintendent

July 9, 2012

Jacqueline Lain
Associate Executive Director
TASB Governmental Relations

Dear Ms. Lain:

The Madisonville CISD has benefited greatly from the services being provided by Region 6 ESC. The services provided are definitely assisting our district in achieving increased efficiency in our operations. Among the services that we use from the Region 6 ESC that are helping us improve efficiency are cooperative purchasing, internet access & connectivity, distance learning, and CSCOPE to mention just a few. We are able to receive significant cost savings through the cooperative purchasing service. And in our size district to have access to an aligned curriculum such as CSCOPE with the training and support provided by Region 6 ESC enables us to use funds that would have to go into the curriculum development in other areas.

We have always found the Region 6 ESC staff to be knowledgeable and helpful in all areas of service. They are willing to "go the extra mile" to help our staff and students be successful. We are always confident that any service provided by Region 6 ESC will be affordably priced and of the highest quality.

Please share this information with anyone you deem appropriate to show the importance of the Education Service Centers to the success of local school districts.

Sincerely,

Kevin M. White
Board President





SEYMOUR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

409 W. Idaho Street, Seymour, Texas 76380
ph: (940) 889-3525 fax: (940) 889-5340
Dr. John Baker, Superintendent
on the web: <http://www.seymour-isd.net>

July 10, 2012

Mr. Jackie Lain
TASB Associate Executive Director
12007 Research Blvd.
Austin, Texas 78759

The Region 9 Educational Service Center (ESC9) saves Seymour ISD and all rural districts in its service area both time and money.

To begin, the support provided to the English as a Second Language as well as Migrant programs allow the District to provide essential services without the total cost of a full time staff member. Cooperative arrangements facilitated by ESC9 for Asbestos Management and Integrated Pest Management are a couple of maintenance/facilities areas that also save time and money. Furthermore, support provided by ESC9 for internet and software allow the district the free up operating money and put more funds directly in the classroom.

Specifically for board members, ESC 9 provides state mandated Tier I and Tier II training mandates via distance education. One of the greatest values from a Board member's perspective is the ESC9 Personnel Services Cooperative arrangement and the on-line AppliTrak System. The District is able to advertise open positions to a greater application market with minimal cost.

In closing, the rural districts in the ESC9 service area are financially dependant on all the services that ESC9 provides.

Sincerely,

Dustin Walker
School Board President
Seymour ISD

Greg Roach
High School Principal
(940) 889-2947

Morris Davis
Middle School Principal
(940) 889-4548

Kristi Exum
Elem School Principal
(940) 889-2533

Keith Ivy
Athletic Director
(940) 889-3181

Tim Orsak
Finance/Inst.Coordinator
(940) 889-3525

Phil Holub
Transportation Dir.
(940) 889-3525

MINERAL WELLS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

906 S.W. 5TH AVENUE
MINERAL WELLS, TEXAS 76067
TELEPHONE No. (940) 325-6404
FAX No. (940) 328-6088



JOE RUELAS
BOARD PRESIDENT

July 10, 2012

Ms. Jackie Lain
TASB Associate Executive Director of Governmental Relations
P.O. Box 400
Austin, Texas 78767-0400

Dear Ms. Lain:

I am writing to you in order to let you know that Mineral Wells Independent School District makes extensive use of the Education Service Center, Region XI for two reasons: level of up-to-date educational expertise and cost benefits.

We have many contracts with our ESC XI varying from technology support, principal training, student data support (PEIMS), and also Board training. Not only does contracting with ESC XI save money for purchased services, but they are always at our "beck and call." They truly mean service when they call themselves the "Education Service Center."

Our board has taken advantage of specific Board training on an as needed basis varying from the required Team of Eight training to Legislative Updates and Open Records Trainings.

We, as a Board, value the training and support that the service center provides for our district. We look forward to a continual working relationship with Education Service Center, Region XI.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Ruelas", written over a horizontal line.

Joe Ruelas
Board President
jruelas@ffin.com

JR/jb

John Craft, Ed. D., *Superintendent*
Miller Beard, Ed. D., *High School Principal*
Mona Cloff, *Junior High Principal*
Jennifer Zschiesche, *Elementary Principal*
Ken Alexander, *Business Manager*

Hamilton Independent School District

400 South College
Hamilton, Texas 76531

Board of Trustees:
William Lasater, *President*
Dan Chorenziak, *Vice-President*
Kasey Kunkel, *Secretary*
Tracy Wenzel
Keith Rogers
Ken Shaffer
Jon Lengefeld

Building the future, one student at a time.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES
Hamilton INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
RESOLUTION CONCERNING Education Service Centers
OF TEXAS

STATE OF TEXAS §
COUNTY OF HAMILTON §

Whereas, we believe student achievement is improved when our school district personnel receive required and relevant professional development and ongoing support—a must in a time of larger classes and less funding for public education; and

Whereas, The Hamilton School District is able to save taxpayers money because education service centers operate on a cost-recovery basis and offer cost-sharing pools that help schools leverage and share resources, directing more money to the classroom; and

Whereas, The Hamilton School District's employees and staff receive equal access to innovative, affordable educational programs and opportunities that would be inaccessible to us if they were not provided by education service centers; and

Whereas, the state has a legal obligation as mandated through legislation to support Education Service Centers, which help schools operate more effectively and efficiently in a safe and orderly environment; and

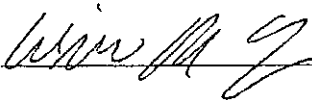
Whereas, The Hamilton School District saves money on programs and services provided by third-parties as a result of fee reductions negotiated by education service centers; and

Whereas, we believe education service centers bridge financial gaps, preserving and generating more money for additional resources through grants, collaboration and strategic alliances; and

Whereas, the work of Education Service Centers provides teachers with additional training and support to assist economically disadvantaged children break the cycle of poverty through academic achievement that will lead to independent, productive lives; therefore be it

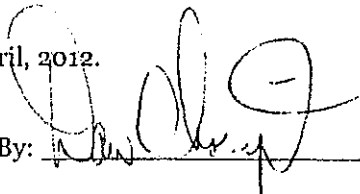
Resolved that The Hamilton School District Board of Trustees calls on the Texas Legislature to continue the funding of regional education service centers, which deliver critical programs and services to Texas public schools. Funding for the 20 Education Service Centers should be maintained and/or increased in order to support schools and districts as they work to comply with additional mandates. Education Service Centers are a vital part of the Texas public school system and offer numerous cost-saving services that benefit Texas public school children and save taxpayer dollars. Adequate funding is critically important to prevent students from being denied educational opportunities as they prepare to compete on a global scale in higher education and in future careers.

PASSED AND APPROVED on this 30th day of April, 2012.

By: 

Name: William Lasater

Title: Board President

By: 

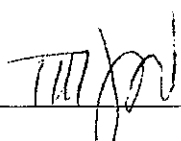
Name: Dan Chorenziak

Title: Board Vice-President

By: 

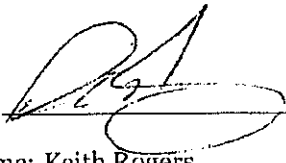
Name: Kasey Kunkel

Title: Board Secretary

By: 

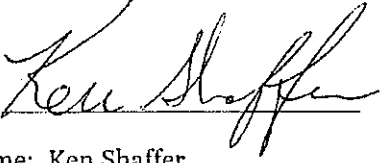
Name: Tracy Wenzel

Title: Board Member

By: 

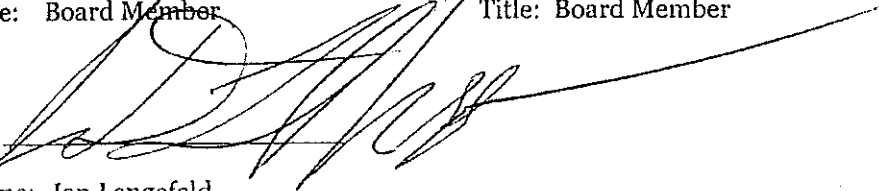
Name: Keith Rogers

Title: Board Member

By: 

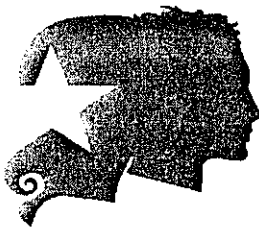
Name: Ken Shaffer

Title: Board Member

By: 

Name: Jon Lengefeld

Title: Board Member



JOE DAN LEE, *Superintendent*
SCOTT ALARCON, *President*
MIKE HEWLETT, *Vice President*
SHEILA CARTER, *Secretary*
ARTHUR DELA CRUZ, *Trustee*
GREG EADY, *Trustee*
FRED BARHYDT, *Trustee*
RONNA JOHNSON, *Trustee*

July 9, 2012

Senate Committee on Education

Educational Service Centers are vital to public education. During these unprecedented times of financial challenges for public schools, we have looked to the service centers to fill the void where staff positions have been eliminated at the campus and district levels. The service centers have been the backbone in providing updated information related to STAAR. It is important to remember that the Texas Education Agency has also experienced unprecedented budget reductions, which translates to less staff. New, relevant, and timely information regarding the new state testing program, as well as implementation issues, have caused districts to turn to the educational service centers to provide them with much needed information. As we have moved through the first round of STAAR and EOC testing, it has been the service centers that have provided information to the districts. As we have been waiting with anticipation regarding how to interpret the scores, it is the service centers that are providing timely information. Prior to the testing, as we looked for resources to assist us in interpreting and implementing the new TEKS, it was the service centers that provided timely training. Our reliance on service centers is directly correlated to the reduced staff at the district level and the reductions at the Texas Education Agency.

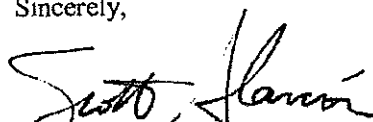
Region XIII, our service center, is exceptional at keeping superintendents in touch with new issues before they arise and they provide an opportunity for district leadership to gain insights into new directives as it relates to curriculum, federal programs, special education, career and technical education, and many other key initiatives. Our staff relies heavily on the service center for information. As school board members, it is imperative to us that our staff have timely information and, at Georgetown ISD, we rely on Region XIII.

We also utilize our service center for school board training and legislative updates. As school board members, we need these updates. Our service center provides this to trustees, just as they provide this critical information to our staff.

One of the most valuable assets provided by Region XIII is the shared service arrangements. The annual contracts that we share with our service center save Georgetown ISD tens of thousands of dollars. These services and shared arrangements with other districts throughout the region, coordinated by the service center, cannot be replicated without the assistance of staff at Region XIII. As technology dollars have dwindled across the state, we are able to use shared service arrangements through our service centers to assist us with internet access, professional development, and critical training/updates as it relates to district compliance with state and federal programs. Additionally, distance learning and student access to learning using technology are key areas where districts use the service centers. With so many districts and organizations facing budget shortfalls, it is critical to keep key players in place to offer the much needed services to school districts and to provide continuity. Reductions at service centers directly impact the districts they serve. In essence, reducing services at the educational service center level is an additional reduction to Texas public schools.

Service centers provide key services, fiscally-responsible training and coordination, and timely resources that cannot be duplicated by other organizations because they are equally compromised due to financial constraints. At a time when we are struggling to move forward in a leaner and efficient manner, it is critical to not eliminate agencies/organizations that are part of the recovery plans for schools. Schools are using service centers more and relying more heavily on their resources because of financial constraints. Reducing services at the service center level strongly impacts public schools.

Sincerely,


Scott Alarcon, President
Board of Trustees

WYLIE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

6249 Buffalo Gap Road
Abilene, Texas 79606
(325) 692-4353

July 9, 2012

Jackie Lain
TASB Associate Executive Director of Governmental Relations

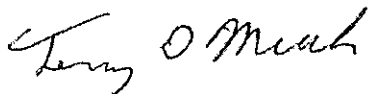
We are writing this letter in support of Region 14 Education Service Center. They play a vital role in providing our district with services that are very beneficial to us.

The Regional Education Service Center assists our district with staff development, Title I, and technology support just to name a few. We could not begin to meet the district needs at a comparable cost without having shared service agreements with Region 14 ESC.

Region 14 ESC provides valuable training for our school board as well as our district staff. They give our staff and school board opportunities to collaborate and network with other school district personnel in the region.

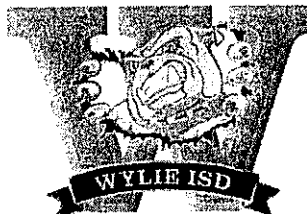
We strongly urge the Senate Education Committee to consider the needs of local school districts that receive valuable services through Regional Education Service Centers.

Sincerely,



Terry Merck
Wylie I.S.D. Board of Trustees President

TM/dkc



As a long-time school board member, and as the Director of an organization that works with school districts across the Panhandle and West Texas, I have seen the benefit and leadership provided by the Regional Education Service Centers throughout our area of Texas. Amarillo ISD is the largest district in the Panhandle, and even though we do some of the services in-house because of our size, we work with Region 16 for a number of services, and receive excellent training as board members from them. Our region benefits by the leadership and coordination of services provide by our ESC. This saves our district time and money.

Our district personally contracts with or benefits from our Regional ESC for the following services (and it would be a much longer list if we were a smaller district):

- Region 16 provides a significant amount of training for our staff across a broad array of programs. (This has increased due to the cut-backs at TEA.) Staff trainings and professional and paraprofessional development used covers management and leadership, legal updates, research-based strategies for TEKS, Federal and state accountability, bilingual/ESL, GT services, teacher & principal quality training, among others.
- Board trainings
- Video-streaming services
- Head Start shared services
- Co-op purchasing
- Technical Assistance
- Overall quality assurance for our district
- Testing coop

Our community benefits from the Head Start programs and the Adult Basic Ed services. Recently, Region 16 has assisted in providing community poverty trainings for our nonprofits who serve low-income families.

Smaller districts would utilize the budgetary and financial services, criminal background checks, PEIMS services, in addition to the above services.

As a long-time board member in Amarillo (16+ years), I have received excellent training from Region 16, improving my effectiveness as a board member.

As you can see, even a large district like Amarillo ISD (33,000 students) benefits greatly by the services of our Regional ESC. Were we to have to provide these services on our own, it would be extremely more costly and less efficient and effective. I very much encourage continued support of our ESCs throughout Texas, but particularly in the more rural areas with such great distances between districts and ESCs.

Sincerely,
Anette Carlisle
Amarillo ISD Board of Trustees

Melanie Morris

P.O. Box 684
Petersburg, Texas 79250

Jackie Lain
TASB Governmental Relations

Dear Jackie,

My name is Melanie Morris. I have served as a member of the Board of Education at Petersburg ISD for the past 12 years and am currently serving as Secretary. I have also been active in TASB at the regional and state level during that time and currently serve as the President for the South Plains Association of School Boards after previously serving that organization as Secretary/Treasurer and Vice President. I am also currently a candidate for the TASB State Director position for Region 17.

The Region 17 Education Service Center provides invaluable and irreplaceable services for the districts of Region 17. It is of particular importance to smaller districts such as Petersburg ISD because it provides support in areas that are very difficult for smaller schools to handle in a stand alone manner. Smaller districts depend of the Service Center for everything from staff development and curricular support to technology and financial accounting support.

It would be impossible for Petersburg ISD to have access to all the services provided by ESC 17 if they had to be contracted on an individual basis. It would not only be financially impossible, it would be logistically impossible as well. Region 17 has 57 school districts spread over a wide geographical area and it would be impossible for each district to find acceptable services covering such a wide range of needs at an affordable price.

Many of the software programs essential to the operation of Petersburg ISD are not only purchased cooperatively through ESC 17, but are supported as well. One of the key roles that ESC 17 plays is in the area of staff development. PISD depends very heavily on the support of ESC 17 in this area, particularly since both curricular demands and testing standards have been increased tremendously. Such support would not be available without the existence of ESC 17.

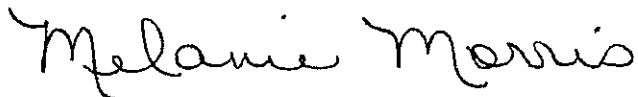
The need for technology in school districts will continue to increase exponentially. ESC 17 has been at the forefront in assisting districts in this area. Petersburg ISD receives low cost internet access through a wireless Wide Area Network that was organized, designed and supported by ESC 17.

Increased accountability standards at both the state and federal level places increasing pressure on all those involved in a smaller district to "cross every T and dot every i", all the while attempting to insure the provision of the best education possible to every child. ESC 17 provides invaluable support at every level in insuring not only the delivery, but the required documentation. That support serves to help preserve funding that is so precious to the schools of Region 17, and particularly the poorer schools like Petersburg ISD.

ESC 17 provides both general and specific board training, as well as legislative updates, that are always timely, informative, and well received. They serve as an excellent resource and are always ready to assist in any way possible to enable our board service to be enriching and productive.

The Region 17 Education Service Center plays a huge role in the ability of Petersburg ISD to serve its students in a productive and successful manner and I would strongly encourage those in power to recognize this valuable service and continue to support it in every way possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Melanie Morris". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Melanie Morris

Board Secretary-Petersburg ISD, President-South Plains Association of School Boards



KILGORE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

301 N. KILGORE STREET ★ KILGORE, TEXAS 75662-5499
(903) 984-2073 ★ (903) 983-3212 (fax)

Date: July 10, 2012

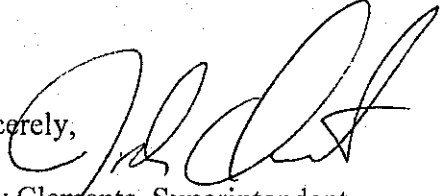
To Whom It May Concern:

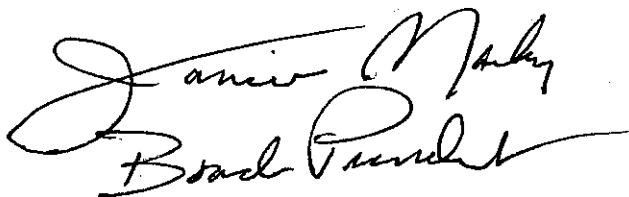
Kilgore ISD would like to express its support for the Region Service Centers. We believe that the service centers are an integral part of what we do as educators. The most valuable services that we feel are provided by their staff is the continued opportunities for staff development, knowledge of how to incorporate and implement new policies, procedures and laws, as well as continued support for all district programs. By having the service center close at hand we are able to save valuable time and money in our travel and staff development budgets as well as eliminating the need to hire expensive speakers and workshop leaders.

As superintendent it is critical to know that we have all of the services we need available at one place. In addition to providing for our staff, the region service center also provides extensive training for our school board. Opportunities for grassroots meetings, individual board training as well as regional group meetings have provided a forum for our board to be a part of what takes place in Austin and have a voice for our community.

Please continue to provide these services and opportunities for our district.

Sincerely,


Jody Clements, Superintendent
Kilgore ISD


Board President