ENVISIONING THE FUTURE ROLES AND FUNCTIONS OF PENNSYLVANIA'S INTERMEDIATE UNITS

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Of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units

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ABSTRACT

This doctoral study investigated [Stephens and Turner's (1991)] anticipated dimensions for education service agencies across the United States in view of their advisability for Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units (IUs), as recommended by the three survey groups: IU executive directors, local school district superintendents, and Pennsylvania's state policymakers.

The principal instrument used, the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey, was a 50-item, five-point questionnaire. Data analysis included correlations and ANOVAs.

Based on the results of this study, all respondent groups concurred that IUs should expand and extend services related to cost-effective delivery of education to local school districts, coalition building between/among human service agencies, and provision of state-level information to local school districts. Also, direct instructional support should continue to be provided to low-incidence disabled students. Furthermore, efforts should be made to gain state level support for including urban IUs and instructional support centers in interdistrict IUs.

While increased state funding for programs and services directly related to new state priorities is indicated, no consideration should be given to granting categorical regional taxing power to IUs. Optional district services should be contracted, if adequate local superintendent support can be obtained.

Clearly, strong support for IU programs and services exists within the three respondent groups. Better communications would enhance regional decision making.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLES Page

FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

The Problem

Introduction

Thirty-six states in the United States report having some type of education service agencies (ESA) positioned between the state department of education and the local school districts, resulting in a three-echelon educational system. Those that do not, tend to have county school districts or a state-wide school district. Twenty-one states have ESAs similar in governance structure to Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units [American Association of Education Service Agencies (AAESA), 1996; Firestone & Wilson, 1982a & 1982b; Jacobsen, 1991; Stephens, 1979a; Stephens & Christiansen, 1995; Yin & Gwaltney, 1981]. Called "special districts" by Stephens, these ESAs are: highly structured by legislation and regulation; governed by local boards; advised by local school districts; and, finally, financed by a mix of local, regional, state and state/federal funds (Stephens, 1979a).

Stephens and Turner (1991) developed seven anticipated future dimensions for these special district ESAs. These dimensions are new governance features, new structural features, extended mission, expanded programming profile, finite funding, rigorous accountability, and organizational development. The dimensions delineated by Stephens and Turner are displayed on Table 1 on page 2. The likelihood that these dimensions will occur in Pennsylvania's special district ESAs is the focus of the study.

The current study focuses on special district ESAs in Pennsylvania, where they are referred to as Intermediate Units, or IUs. These IUs are the middle level between

Table 1

Stephens and Turner's Anticipated Future Dimensions

Dimension	Characteristic	Specific Feature
Governance Features	Networks	Reduction in number of IUs
		Inclusion of urban districts
		Inclusion of all state service centers
Structural Features	Advisory Groups	Program advisory groups
		Superintendents' advisory groups
Mission	Dimensions	Equalization of educational opportunities
		Enhancement of quality of education
		Provision of technical assistance
		Cost-effective delivery of education
		Stewardship of state information
		Coalition building with human service agencies
		Program initiation in districts
		Program evaluation in districts
Programming Profile	Direct Instructional Support	High-incidence disabled
		Low-incidence disabled
		At-risk students
		Vocational-technical students
		Gifted students
		Adult learners
		Pre-school students
		Geographically isolated students
	District Support Services	Computer skills
		Distance learning technology
		Instructional leadership
		Media and library services
		Parental involvement
		Academic competitions
		Graduation rates

(continued)

Table 1

Stephens and Turner's Anticipated Future Dimensions (continued)

Dimension	Characteristic	Specific Feature
	National Goals Support	Curriculum development
		Information-age requirements
		Staff development
	Other Services	Nonpublic student instruction
		Student-performance accountability
		Data processing services
Funding	State Support	Direct instructional support
		State regulations
		Student performance accountability system
	Categorical Taxation	Full service provision
		Regional schools for disabled students
		Regional vocational-technical schools
		Early childhood administration
		Math and science administration
	Service Contracts	Optional district services
		Nonpublic school services
Accountability	Performance Indicators	Organizational effectiveness
		Organizational processes
Organizational Development	System Renewal	Professional development of operational core
		Full status in state school system

the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the local school districts in a three-echelon organizational system. Pennsylvania's IUs were created in 1970 by the Pennsylvania Legislature. This legislation empowered IUs to provide educational support services, including curriculum development and instructional improvement, research and planning, instructional materials, continuing professional education, pupil personnel services, and management services to the Commonwealth's 501 school

districts and their communities. It also gave IUs responsibility for special education and permission to provide any services requested by their local school districts (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a).

Current IUs provide support services to the local school districts, ensure equal opportunity for quality education, expand and extend educational opportunities to all students, and make services available on a cost-effective basis (PAIU, 1992). While the exact mix of programs and services offered through various units differs, the common mission of Pennsylvania's IUs is to provide innovative, responsive, and cost-effective services for Pennsylvania's local school districts (Edwards, 1990a).

The "equal partnership concept" for all echelons is advocated, and ESAs function best when local districts are strong. Also, effective ESAs should strengthen local school districts (Lagana, 1995). As a special district, IUs assist in communicating knowledge related to new-state priorities. Also, as organizations IUs must participate in systemic renewal to prevent organization atrophy.

IUs are agencies in transition in a profession that is undergoing awesome pressure to change (Lagana, 1995). The current study increases the knowledge base of state policymakers, IU executive directors, and district superintendents regarding the future roles and functions of IUs in Pennsylvania. Since these leadership groups exercise referent power over IUs, it is critical that adequate research and information is available thus enabling informed decision making, particularly with regard to promoting educational reform.

Statement of the Problem

In a time of national and state educational reform, financial crisis, and increasing public demand for accountability, a study of the future roles and functions of IUs is extremely important if these units are to accomplish their mission, thus enhancing equity and quality of education in Pennsylvania. According to Stephens and Christiansen (1995), regional activities should result in an improvement in local education agency (LEA) activities in efficiency, quality, and effectiveness, the most frequently cited benefits of ESAs. These three criteria are critical to the success of ESA activities; however, their combined impact significantly improves educational opportunities within the region. As entities renowned for saving money and reducing duplication of efforts, ESAs may be one of the few educational entities to emerge from these tough times in a larger and stronger posture. No current research on Pennsylvania's IUs existed; therefore, the current study addresses the future roles and functions necessary to enable them to enhance this posture.

National Educational Reform

Some of the major impetus for the educational excellence and equality grows out of social issues. The first reform, the common school reform of the mid-1800s, expanded and improved public schools to serve middle-class and upper-class students. The Progressive Era of the early 1900s led to child labor laws and compulsory school attendance, which changed local schools significantly and led to the practice of tracking children of varying abilities. In the late 1950s, the scientific challenge represented by Sputnik, when Russia beat the United States to space, led to reforms in

mathematics and science education, as well as a new focus on educating gifted students. The Civil Rights Movement of the mid-1960s created a growing concern for disadvantaged, disabled, and minority children as well as for equality of opportunity for them. In the mid-1980s, the authors of the Nation at Risk Report labeled American schools as "mediocre," placing business and industry at jeopardy in a global economy and launched the current education reform efforts. Today, international competition and a global economy have prompted business and industrial leaders to demand national educational reform that guarantees high standards for student achievement. This reform movement encourages our elementary and secondary schools to provide both excellence in education and equality of educational opportunity for all students, combining components of previous reforms (Baldridge & Deal, 1983; Ballantine, 1989). Intermediate units by virtue of their mission are key players in the implementation of this reform.

National Goals of Education

In 1990, for the third time in U.S. history, a president (President Reagan) called the state Governors together to address a national crisis, education. On February 25, 1990, the National Governors' Association adopted the National Goals of Education, commonly referred to as Goals 2000. Goals 2000 stipulates that, first, all children in America will start school ready to learn. Second, the high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent. Third, all American students will leave grades 4, 8, and 12 having demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every

school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be better prepared for responsible citizenship, lifelong learning, and productive employment in a modern economy. Fourth, U.S. students will be first in the world in mathematics and science achievement. Fifth, every adult American will be literate, will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy, and will be able to exercise the rights and responsibilities of effective citizenship. Finally, educators will ensure drug-free and violence-free schools. These six goals will be achieved by the year 2000 (National Education Goals Panel, 1991), thus enabling U.S. students to become successful adults and citizens.

The federal government supported Goals 2000 through state grants totaling $742,900,000 in 1994-95 and $403,400,000 in 1995-96. Pennsylvania's grants totaled $92,228,591 in 1994-95 and $15,900,000 in 1995-96. The National Education Goals Panel reports progress toward these goals (National Education Goals Panel, 1994, National Education Goals Panel, 1995). In addition, to accomplish this national vision, all levels of education are encouraged to work efficiently, effectively, and collaboratively (Wilson & Firestone, 1983). The current study recommends future roles and functions of IUs in assisting Pennsylvania's 501 school districts to meet these educational challenges.

Pennsylvania's Educational Reform

On April 14, 1993, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education adopted revised Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations that define expectations for public schools to provide students with learning experiences that will prepare them to face the

challenges of adult life in the twenty-first century. Specifically, the State Board intends that schools will prepare students, through a rigorous academic program, to assume responsible adult roles as citizens, family members, workers, and lifelong learners. These new regulations, rooted in the indisputable truth that ALL children can achieve at high levels, give schools and local communities the authority and flexibility needed to decide how best to meet the educational needs of their diverse learners. On May 2, 1992, the Pennsylvania Legislature enacted these Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations as law (Pennsylvania State Board of Education, 1992).

Intermediate Unit Dilemma

Although, Intermediate Units must operate at the forefront of the education profession to assist school districts, a number of uncertainties plague IUs themselves, uncertainties that could affect their ability to support local school districts in meeting tomorrow's challenges. While IUs have realized significant growth and recognition, many units previously concentrated on direct services to special needs students, services that inflated the size of IUs and guaranteed funding (Edwards, 1990a). In 1991, Act 25 of the Pennsylvania Legislature changed special education funding by allocating funds directly to school districts, instead of funneling special education funds through IUs (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1991). This funding change led IUs to streamline special education services by providing only those that operated cost-effectively through cooperative programs. This change resulted in massive reductions in the operation of many IU special education departments. Since special education services were never the IUs' intended role, this change in funding re-directed these

agencies toward programs, services, and technical assistance more consistent with legislation that created them (Edwards, 1990a). Consequently, IUs were forced to restructure to provide programs and services consistent with their historic mission.

In addition, IU funding has become a critical issue. With no taxing power, IU funding comes from federal, state, and district sources (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). When Pennsylvania cut IU funding for four consecutive years starting in 1991-92, budgeting the units required adroit management. The Commonwealth's subsidy to IUs had steadily increased until 1988-89, when it declined by almost 15%; however, it increased 11.08% each of the next two years, only to decrease by .01%, 3.54%, 4.60%, and 10.62% for the next four years from 1991 to 1995 (PDE, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994). In the 1995-96 fiscal year, IU funding remained flat line with less than a 1% increase (PDE, 1995a). However, in 1996-97, IU funding was decreased by a drastic 50% (PDE, 1996). Table 2 contains the percentage change for recent fiscal years. Figure 1 shows graphic representation of current Midwestern Intermediate Univ IV fiscal information; other IU budgets are similar.

It is difficult for local districts to increase their respective IU contributions, a process that requires local school board approval, when they are also experiencing financial problems (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). Therefore, IUs must operate cost-effectively to maintain a budget with very little growth, despite having to refocus to assist local districts in meeting challenging and complex reforms.

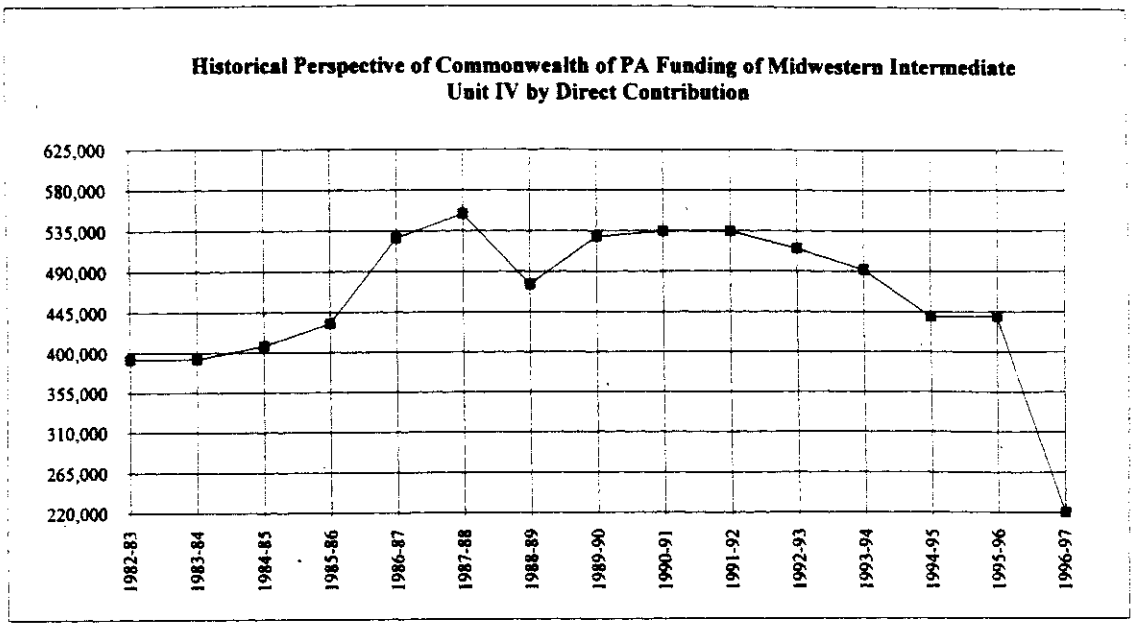
Table 2

Intermediate Unit State Subsidy Variations, 1982-1996

Year	Percentage Change
1982-83	+0.065
1983-84	+0.060
1984-85	+3.680
1985-86	+6.130
1986-87	+21.950
1987-88	+5.080
1988-89	-14.070
1989-90	+11.080
1990-91	+11.080
1991-92	-0.010
1992-93	-3.540
1993-94	-4.600
1994-95	10.629
1995-96	+0.070
1996-97	-50.000

Source: Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. (1996). Operating budget 1996-97.

Figure 1.



Source: Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. (1996). Operating budget 1996-97.

To compound IU difficulties, school districts are currently experiencing financial problems because of changes in state funding, referred to as Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education, and local concern for taxes (Edwards, 1990a). These funding changes translate to school districts' receiving a basic subsidy for each disabled student regardless of the expenses incurred in delivering the individualized educational programs developed for students. Current court decisions, e.g., the 1993 Cordero Case, require Pennsylvania districts to spend additional monies on disabled students in order to provide education in the "least restrictive environment," another financial expense that burdens school districts (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1993).

Despite these issues, IUs are presently viewed in a positive light (PAIU, 1992). Deming (1986) asserts that organizations that are doing well are in an excellent position to improve the quality of their services and have the greatest obligation to improve. In his studies of ESAs nationally, Stephens (1992) emphasizes the importance of ESAs' reforming themselves especially at this time of educational reform and financial crises. Furthermore, as Barker notes, customers are becoming increasingly more discerning and demanding (1990), and districts that receive IU services and states that provide funding to IUs are no exceptions to Barker's statement. Therefore, forward-looking, strategic IU planning is necessary and timely.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to use mail questionnaire methodology to increase the knowledge base that state, local, and regional officials need to determine future directions for IUs during a period of intense educational reform. As already stated, IUs work within a framework established by Pennsylvania state law, school board regulations, court decisions, and local advisement (Carroll, 1981). This study provides information to enhance the dialogue between and among IUs, local school districts, and state policymakers regarding potential roles for IUs in the pursuit of "equalence," or equal access to excellence in education. Decisions are frequently made without a full sense of overall purpose of IUs, and do not always reflect the opinions of all three groups. The information gained about Pennsylvania IUs and their future from this study provides leaders with the knowledge necessary for sound strategic decision making.

In order to increase the research base, the study identifies future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs from the vantage point of state policymakers, IU executive directors, and local school officials. The potential roles and functions to be explored are the universe of possibilities delineated by Stephens and Turner in a 1991 study. The dimensions delineated by Stephens and Turner are displayed on Table 1 on page 2.

A comparison of the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania IUs recommended by the groups charged with providing vision to the IUs; the current executive directors, who are charged with providing leadership for IUs by their leadership position; school district superintendents, who serve as IU advisors; and state policymakers, the agencies' regulatory power is made by the study.

Research Questions

The study explores the perceptions of various state, regional, and local officials regarding the following general issues:

1. Should Pennsylvania's IUs change in governance features?
2. Should Pennsylvania's IUs change in structural features?
3. Should Pennsylvania's IUs' primary mission be expanded?
4. Should Pennsylvania's IUs have a more focused, expanded programming profile?
5. Should Pennsylvania's IUs have new and more finite funding?
6. Should Pennsylvania's IUs be subjected to more rigorous accountability?

7. Should Pennsylvania's IUs develop new commitment to organizational development?

Methods

Answers to the above research questions were gleaned from responses to a survey administered to the population of current IU executive directors, as well as a scientifically selected sample of local school district superintendents and state policymakers.

The preliminary questionnaire for the study, the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey, was reviewed and critiqued by the chair of the dissertation committee and committee members, assistant executive directors, assistant superintendents, and county commissioners. Efforts were made to determine the clarity and relevancy of each questionnaire item to the study.

Each respondent group was asked to complete a Lickert scale questionnaire inquiring about governance features, structural features, primary mission, programming profile, finite funding, rigorous accountability, and organizational development from their unique role perspective. The survey instrument was reviewed by a jury-of-experts. Responses were analyzed within and across groups to identify areas of agreement and disagreement at statistically significant levels, using the F tests and ANOVAs. Scheffé post hoc procedures were also conducted. Statistical significance was set at the p .05 level.

Results are reported in tables, graphics, and narrative formats.

Significance of the Study

The proposed study addresses the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania IUs, in an era of massive educational change. These agencies, which are important actors in the movement for equal and quality education, have a critical role in current educational reform (Stephens & Turner, 1991). Act 25 of 1991 amended the Public School Code of 1949 to enact provisions of the 1991-92 state budget for public schools. Included were changes to the Equalized Subsidy for Basic Education and Small District Assistance. In addition, various subsidy supplements that provide for two new supplemental plans for poorer districts were added to the code. Furthermore, the law made substantive changes in special education funding by eliminating the excess cost system in favor of a reimbursement formula (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1991).

Current Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations hold schools accountable for succeeding at educationally high levels with all students. Local professionals need both legal and program knowledge to successfully operate programs consistent with the spirit of this reform. IUs are strategically placed to assist local school district personnel in the acquisition of this knowledge (Firestone & Wilson, 1982a).

At this time of declining educational revenues, a cost-effective system for delivering assistance and services to local school systems is vital. With the recent passage of legislation for quality schools and significant budget reductions, ESAs are becoming an even more critical link between local districts and the state. In many states, task forces have been initiated to study the services of ESAs (Stephens, 1992),

especially since interest in accountability and restructuring of education is at an all-time high (Firestone & Wilson, 1982b; Stephens, 1989; Stephens, 1992; Pennsylvania State Board of Education, 1992). Because of improvements in technology and communication, state education agencies must analyze the future role of ESAs in public schools (Stephens, 1989; Jacobsen, 1991).

This study differs in a number of respects from prior national and state-wide examinations of ESAs. Relatively few researchers have studied ESAs, although Stephens and various associates have authored longitudinal studies over the past 25 years. Stephens and Turner (1991) have predicted seven new dimensions for ESAs nationally using two basic forecasting approaches: trend extrapolation and subjective judgment. These researchers stress the major changes in ESA operations in each of the seven themes highlighted by Stephens Associates in a comprehensive series of descriptive studies of ESAs (1979a, 1979b, 1979c, 1979d). Stephens and Turners' anticipated dimensions are delineated in Table 1 on page 2. The current research builds on Stephens' work, but also enhances our understanding of future roles and services of ESAs by examining the perceptions of IU executives, local school officers who are IU consumers, and state policymakers who shape the mission of IUs and fund their activities. Also, in an attempt to make recommendations on the state level, it reflects the economic, political, and educational traditions of Pennsylvania.

Throughout the early 1980s, Firestone, Rossman, and Wilson completed most of the studies on Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units. These researchers addressed IUs as change agents that communicate new knowledge for educational improvement and

promote knowledge sharing (Firestone, 1981; Firestone, 1983; Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1982; Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983; Firestone & Wilson, 1981; Firestone & Wilson, 1982a; Firestone, Wilson, & Rossman, 1982a; Firestone, Wilson, & Rossman, 1982b; Wilson & Firestone, 1983). Since then, only three comprehensive documents have been published by the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Executive Directors' Association (PAIU), and none of these addresses the IUs' governing features, structural features, programming profile, definite funding, rigorous accountability, or organizational development, except as they relate to knowledge dissemination (Edwards, 1990a; PAIU, 1992; PAIU, 1993). Few dissertations have studied IUs and most addressed special education departments or other specific departments or types of IU service. Therefore, the current study contributes significantly to knowledge about Pennsylvania IUs and their future directions.

As stated earlier, this study examines IU roles and functions in delivering equal opportunity to excellence in education to the Commonwealth's students. Like other elements important to the equity and quality of education in the schools (Stephens & Turner, 1991), IUs must have a "value-added" quality; that is, they must contribute to quality education in Pennsylvania in a measurable way because this is their primary mission (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a; Edwards, 1990a). To remain viable, IUs must develop systems that meet new priorities and foster innovations, responsively and cost-efficiently (Stephens & Turner, 1991; PAIU, 1992). To return to the Stephens and Turner predictions, new, unfolding educational priorities of the state school systems fall within seven categories: providing effective schools, meeting

national goals of education, improving student performance, maintaining accountability, preparing students to live in an information-age society, serving the needs of special student populations, employing distance learning technologies, and maintaining healthy school-interorganizational relations. ESAs across the United States will carry the primary responsibility of enhancing all of these priorities (Stephens & Turner, 1991). IUs have been around for 25 years, providing service programs to meet the needs of local schools and school districts and assist the state level agency. Currently, however more people are asking about these public entities that are playing an ever-increasing role in Pennsylvania's state education system (AAESA, 1996). Therefore, envisioning the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania IUs in achieving these priorities is critical at this time.

State policymakers decide upon the funding, functions, and format of Pennsylvania's ESAs, or IUs. Superintendent councils determine programs and services, make critical personnel decisions, and carry out additional roles in their respective IUs (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). By virtue of their authority, executive directors are obligated to make changes to improve the system (Deming, 1986). The current study provides local and state decision makers with information needed to stimulate discussion about the future of Pennsylvania's ESAs.

Limitations of the Study

While this research is intended to increase our understanding of the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs, it does so on the basis of perceptions of various key actors. Because of the dynamics and political nature of educational reform, it is

of course impossible to predict actual changes in the formal mission or responsibilities of IUs. A variety of developments at both national and state levels will inevitably influence the actual course of IUs in the years ahead. Congruence or lack of congruence in the perceptions of those surveyed as part of the study, however, helps us understand the likelihood of certain trends and developments related to IUs and their role in the Pennsylvania School System.

In addition, no attempt is made to predict any changes in the legal requirements or the mission of IUs based on the ramifications of state or federal politics. Similarly, the study makes no attempt to delineate the political impact of Pennsylvania's IUs on state or federal politics.

Delimitations of the Study

Sample selection is restricted to IUs in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, not including Philadelphia and Pittsburgh IUs. According to the study's operational definition, an ESA is an interdistrict collaborative known as an IU in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia and Pittsburgh IUs are single district educational agencies.

Definition of Terms

Capacity building: enabling educational entities through training and technical assistance to be independent not dependent upon outside resources for skills and services, to be self-contained.

Education service agency (ESA): general term for an interdistrict cooperative organization—known as an Intermediate Unit (IU) in Pennsylvania (Stephens, 1979a).

Equity in education: fairness between distinguishable groups in terms of access to, participation in, or achievements of the educational system (Adams, 1993).

Excellence in education: high-quality achievement of students in all subjects (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1993).

Instructional Support Centers (ISC): information service centers. In Pennsylvania, the information service centers are the Eastern Instructional Support Center, the Middle Instructional Support Center, and the Western Instructional Support Center.

Intermediate units (IUs): education service agencies (ESAs) that provide educational services to participating school districts as part of the public school system of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1993).

Local education agency (LEA): local elementary-secondary school district (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1993).

Organizational development: building into the organizational system the conditions, the skills, the processes, and the culture that foster continued development of the organization over a sustained period of time (Owens, 1987).

State education agency (SEA): the state department of education, under the administration of a chief state officer of education, a state board of education, the general policy making body for the state within the limits set by the constitution and the statutes (Stephens, 1975). In Pennsylvania, the SEA is the Department of Education.

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into 5 chapters. The first chapter, the introduction, describes the purpose, methods, and significance of the study, as well as its limitations, delimitations, and definition of terms. Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature related to the research problem and includes the following sections: introduction, historical background of ESAs, types of ESAs, changing roles of ESAs, current research on ESAs, historical background of IUs, county offices become IUs, statutory and regulatory framework of IUs, current research on IUs, anticipated future dimensions of ESAs, and summary.

Chapter 3 describes the methodology employed for the study. It includes a description of the study design, instrumentation, data collection procedures, and the statistical analysis applied in arriving at the findings. Chapter 4 presents the results of the data collection and the data analysis. Finally, chapter 5 summarizes the study, presents conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further study. Following chapter 5 are the Reference List and the Appendixes containing support materials for the study.

Summary

In summary, this study addresses the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs. At this time of educational reforms, financial crises, and increasing public accountability, IUs are in a key position to affect education positively in the Commonwealth. Since no current research existed for these IUs, using Stephens and Turner's 1991 predictions for ESAs on a national level as the universe of

possibilities, survey methodology gathers recommendations of executive directors, district superintendents, and state policymakers on the governance, structural features, mission, programming profile, funding, accountability, and organizational development for Pennsylvania's IUs.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Related Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a review of literature and previous research related to the current study. The chapter contains five sections. The first section provides a historical overview of ESAs in the United States. The second section reviews current research on these ESAs. The third section provides a review of the historical development of the IU system in Pennsylvania, including a review of the statutory and regulatory frameworks that serve as parameters for the duties and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs. These studies provide a backdrop for current research on the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's intermediate units. Section four examines existing research on IUs across the Commonwealth, studies that are particularly relevant to the focus of the research. They also provide important insights into and a framework for the results of this study. The final section reviews the anticipated dimensions of ESAs in the United States. These dimensions provide the research criteria for the recommended roles and functions of IUs, in Pennsylvania.

ESAs: Past and Present

Historical Background of ESAs

The Constitution of the United States mentions neither public education nor public schools. The Tenth Amendment states merely that "any powers not specifically delegated to the federal government, nor prohibited by it to the state governments, are reserved for the states." Therefore, public education in the United States was delegated to the states (Campbell, Cunningham, & McPhee, 1965).

Permissive in nature, early statutes allowed groups of people to form local school districts with the states' responsibility usually limited to "the encouragement of schools." This permissive attitude and a desire for local control of education resulted in thousands of small school districts in each state. In time, states established the position of the state superintendent or chief state school officer, whose responsibility was to guide, supervise, and regulate local districts (Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, 1962). However, inadequate transportation and poor communication with the numerous school districts made the state school officer's task extremely difficult. While state authority over education was difficult to exercise, the states often empowered local districts or delegated educational responsibility to them. Since state officers needed reliable information from the local districts for apportioned support funds, the need for a professional school officer familiar with local conditions became apparent. Particularly acute was the need for a regional educational official to oversee these small districts and to enforce state regulations.

As a result, the county was considered the most suitable geographic and legal territory for the general administration of public office. It was logical that the existing county lines be followed in structuring the county agencies (Morphet, Johns, & Reller, 1967; Department of Rural Education, 1967). Thus, middle-echelon state education liaisons supervised, regulated, and served local school districts. Their role was also to communicate effectively between the state and the local school districts (Cubberly, 1919). County school officers assisted the state education office by communicating their priorities and reporting information. Thus, county superintendents became an

intermediary functioning between the state department of education and the local school district (McLure, 1956).

As a result, many states established county offices, the early form of ESAs, to assist state education officials in overseeing a system of small school districts primarily concerned with elementary education (McLure, 1956). By 1795, New York, an early state to develop such an agency (Department of Rural Education, 1967), established a body of government known as the "town commission." This commission apportioned state monies among the school districts, conferred with district trustees about teacher qualifications, and exercised some supervision over the total school system. By 1814, the commission became a policy board employing town inspectors to carry out its assigned duties (Hoyt, 1963). Delaware created the first county office in 1829 (Duffenbaugh & Covert, 1933). By 1860, 34 of the existing 38 states followed suit, creating county offices (Stoops & Rafferty, 1961) whose major duties were to guide, supervise, and regulate local districts (McLure, 1956). By the late 1940s, all states except Delaware, Nevada, and the 12 states with predominantly county-wide local school districts had a county office of education (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

In some instances, the county education office was seen as a protector of local control against the centralization of authority. In other instances, the office was viewed as the unwanted intrusion of the state. Despite these diverse reactions, a county office was established in many states to carry out the state's educational function (Cooper & Fitzwater, 1954).

Over time, county offices changed from supervision of local districts to a more service-oriented role, assisting local districts in broadening student programs and services (Jacobsen, 1991). By the early 1960s, almost half the states had made significant changes in their county offices (Isenberg, 1971). Beginning in the 1960s and extending into the 1970s, the mission of these offices shifted to the dual role of promoting collaboration among local school districts and serving as major delivery systems for state initiatives. Other states without a middle-echelon school government created a system of ESAs to foster collaboration, promote state priorities, or both (Stephens & Turner, 1991). These decades are now referred to as the "golden age" of the movement (Stephens, 1977). By 1988, thirty-six states utilized some type of ESA (Jacobsen, 1991; Stephens, 1989).

Three Types of ESAs

Over a 25-year period, Stephens and Associates conducted significant research on ESAs. Using a taxonomy of over 100 characteristics of all the existing ESAs in the United States, Stephens (1977) identified three different kinds of agencies, based on external environment, mode of operation, and products. The first type is a cooperative organized and supported by school districts. A second type, the regionalized state education agency, is a branch office of the state government. Third is a special district, which has its own board of directors and twin functions, to assist both local education agencies and the state education system (Stephens, 1979a).

These three basic patterns of ESAs identified by Stephens developed in a large number of states into cooperative, regionalized, and special district ESAs. The

cooperative ESA, a loose consortium of local schools, is supported by the view that ESAs are established by two or more LEAs to provide services exclusively to members of the cooperative. There are three different types of cooperatives: multi-purpose (five or more services), limited-purpose (four or fewer services), and single-purpose. The **regionalized** branch-of-state education agency, frequently referred to as a county office, is supported by the view that ESAs are established as arms of the state to deliver services for the state education agency (SEA). There are three different types of regionalized ESAs: those providing administrative services only, those providing general services only, and those providing both administrative and general services. A legally constituted unit of school government, the **special district** ESA is positioned between the state education agency and a collection of LEAs and supported by the view that ESAs are established by the state, or the state and LEAs in concert, to provide services to both the SEA and constituent LEAs (Stephens, 1979a).

Although all three basic patterns of ESAs serve as a middle echelon, they differ in legal framework, governance arrangement, programs and services, and fiscal support (Jacobsen, 1991; McLure, 1956; Stephens, 1977). In most cases concerning procedures, enabling legislation was the primary vehicle used to establish state ESAs. Permissive legislation established the cooperative ESA networks, while mandatory legislation was predominant in establishing regionalized and special district SEA/ESA networks (Stephens, 1979a). Since they are created on an ad-hoc basis, cooperative ESAs have appointed boards rather than elected boards. Regionalized ESAs are branch offices of the state department of education and therefore have no local board.

Usually, an elected board of directors governs the special district ESAs. Many special district ESA and cooperative ESA networks replaced county office systems in their respective states (Stephens, 1979a).

In all three emerging types of ESAs, there are at least seven major program and service areas: comprehensive programs and services for exceptional children, e.g., mentally retarded, gifted, or physically handicapped students; media and library services, e.g., film library, professional library, software library, closed-circuit television; curriculum development and consultation services; vocational-technical programs; comprehensive data processing and information services; as well as administrative and planning services for the SEA (Stephens, 1977).

Historically, ESAs have classified the activities within these seven major areas of programs and services into five categories. Three of these categories address services to LEAs and LEA staffs and direct instructional support services. The remaining two categories constitute services for SEAs and nonpublic schools (Stephens, 1979a). In order to fund ESAs, five basic means of financing emerged in education service units, including direct taxing authority, direct appropriation, legal service contracts, direct federal funding, and prorated payments. Budget review by constituent districts is required (Stephens, 1975). Thus, while these three emerging ESAs hold similar positions in the educational system, they exhibit varying characteristics among the types and across the various state systems.

Changing Roles of ESAs

The roles of ESAs in the U.S. public school system changed as our nation changed. The effects of a shift from a rural, agrarian society to an urban, high-technology society and the improvement of transportation and communication systems resulted in a reduced need for administrative supervision. Technological advances have allowed for immediate, cost-effective transmission of data. Consequently, SEAs are considering reallocating financial resources and redesigning organizational structures to meet current educational needs. To do this, SEAs must analyze the future roles and functions of ESAs in the U.S. public education system (Jacobsen, 1991). Historically, many states created ESAs to provide specialized programs and services to a consortium of local school districts. Since ESAs provide a way to share resources over a broad base, the widespread use of these service units between local and state education agencies grew in the 1960s and continues to be popular today (Stephens, 1991).

This movement toward an education service unit, unlike school consolidations, allows local districts to retain their identity while giving only limited responsibility and authority to ESAs (Nyquist, 1973). Local control, which resulted from conditions during the formative years of education and political theory (Stephens, 1975), may currently be the primary source of support for all quarters (Jacobsen, 1991). Advocates contend that the nation's decentralized administration of education is the "finest flower of democracy" while critics call it the greatest obstacle to the

achievement of "universal quality in education," depending on whether the perspective is state or national (Stephens, 1975).

The dominant questions regarding the development of ESAs throughout the nation are purpose and organization. There is potential conflict between the service and the enforcement orientations. The dichotomy between these two roles can create conflict in providing programs and services as well as in developing relationships with the member LEAs (Stephens, 1975), especially since enforcement may require LEAs to relinquish local control. In other words, the assignment of any regulatory function to a regional service-oriented ESA can compromise the effectiveness of the services rendered (Chambers, 1971; Firestone & Wilson, 1983b), which is another factor affecting the future of ESAs.

Current Research on ESAs

Many states are searching for a public education system that reflects the needs of both LEAs and SEAs. Such a system would permit local autonomy in shaping local response to state priorities while enabling the state to further its priorities. In order for this to happen, an entire state school system, with all of its component parts, must be aligned (Stephens, 1992).

Consensus in the literature purports that support for ESAs, the middle echelon of state education systems, is strong and will remain so well into the future (Stephens, 1974; Stephens, 1975; Stephens, 1977; Stephens, 1979a; Stephens, 1979b; Stephens, 1979c; Stephens, 1979d; Stephens, 1979e; Stephens, 1988; Stephens, 1992; Stephens & Turner, 1991). Clearly, states will increasingly recognize ESAs as important resources

for helping local educators realize their policy goals and helping them cope with a variety of pressures from an increasingly complex educational environment (Stephen, 1979; Stephens & Turner, 1991).

In 1990, Stephens outlined a conflux of economic, social, political, and educational trends that span into the twenty-first century. These trends, which will add to the difficulties of state education systems, forecast seven broad patterns for ESAs: more statewide ESA networks, inclusion of all districts in service areas, expansion of the primary mission of ESAs, more programs and services to meet new educational priorities, increased state funding, greater accountability, and more commitment to organizational development.

Stephens and Turner's research (1991) shows that 23 state school systems currently have statewide ESAs of the special district type, an indication that it is the preferred type. This research supports the view that special districts will continue to be the dominant ESA in the United States. These organizations have twin functions: to assist local educational agencies and to provide certain functions for the SEA. Both functions require adept management.

Dominant organizational characteristics of special district ESAs are as follows: no statutorily specified minimum enrollment; a clear line association with the state education agency; legally required membership, but no required participation; full or partial representation of constituent school districts on the governing board; and appointment of chief administrative officials by the governing board (Stephens & Turner, 1991). Combined, these constitute the paradigm of special districts.

If ESAs are to maintain equal—credibility with the other two educational tiers—the state department of education and local school districts—current research predicts changes in their primary mission. These changes include assisting with the delivery of new state priorities to local school districts, serving as stewards of information, and assisting in coalition building. The new priorities include comprehensive assessment programs, comprehensive accreditation standards, and official sanction of poorly performing schools. As stewards of information, ESAs will provide cost-effective, direct instructional services to special populations and new populations, e.g., gifted, pre-kindergarten, or adult; expansion of instructional support services to public and nonpublic schools; and new emphasis on national education goals, management services to LEA, and staff development. Other programming will include providing technical assistance and capacity building in local schools, administering many programs, and serving as administration for small schools. As coalition builders, ESAs will assist in forming closer working relations between and among education and human service agencies (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

These ESAs provide new technical knowledge and knowledge about political legislation and regulation, two kinds of linkages to meet new educational priorities. The linkage functions are both technical and political (Firestone & Wilson, 1981). These linkages relate to promoting educational change, and both kinds are mind-stretching activities (Havelock, 1969). Technical linkages refer to knowledge and research (Weiss & Bucuvaleas, 1980) and deal primarily with curriculum knowledge and instructional practice (Firestone & Wilson, 1981). Political linkages,

which refer to the content transmitted between educational agencies, deal with knowledge of regulations and legislation.

Three activities delivering these linkages are expert/training work, monitoring work, and liaison work. Expert/training work provides technical information, usually through workshops and intensive consultations. Monitoring entails the collection of information needed for enforcement of state rules and regulations and district compliance assessment. Liaison work keeps local educators abreast of both technical matters and new regulations (Firestone & Wilson, 1981). In essence, then, these activities facilitate the implementation of new educational priorities.

Yin and Gwaltney (1981) point out five advantages of ESAs' providing these technical and political linkages. First, since they serve several school districts, they can operate cost-effectively. Second, they can effectively collaborate with districts to make changes since they are service-oriented. Third, they have broader access and impact if every school district has an ESA. Fourth, they have political and bureaucratic legitimacy since they are part of the state education system. Finally, state and local funds support them since they receive little federal support (Yin & Gwaltney, 1981).

In 1979, Stephens predicted a major shift in governance features to a more extensive role for general advisory bodies. These groups, composed of local district personnel, will plan, implement, and evaluate programs and services. The superintendents' advisory groups will be granted extensive decision making authority over programming and budgetary actions. An emerging structural pattern is a

mandatory advisory body, composed of representatives of local district administrators, with review authority over the budget and, subsequently, the programs and services (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

However, since ESAs are experiencing financial problems, additional funding sources need to considered, such as increased state support and use of categorical regional taxes designed to equalize educational opportunities. Stephens and Turner (1991) also hold that the courts will continue to be assertive in broadening the definition of equality of opportunity. In 1992, Stephens reported that the role of ESAs to provide "equalence"—to ensure equal access to excellence in education—appears more vital than ever. There is greater acceptance for the notion of granting categorical regional taxing authority to ESAs to promote equity (Stephens & Turner, 1991), another move to equalize educational opportunities.

To ensure adequate funding, a number of critical financial models need to be considered. The predominant sources of revenue include service contracts with constituent districts, a major source of revenues; direct state appropriations, a small percentage of income; and federal program participation, a major source of revenue. Although only one state system has the authority to levy taxes, many have the authority to hold title to real property (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Stephens and Turner predicted greater accountability, including a movement toward more sophisticated accreditation and performance indicators related to organizational effectiveness and organizational process. Organizational, structural, and procedural features require efficient and effective operation. Accreditation systems

have two levels for authorization, review, and/or approval: the local school districts and the SEA (Stephens & Turner, 1991), a feature that provides a checks-and-balances system.

According to Stephens and Turner, ESAs will commit resources for organizational development. First, ESAs will expend resources for systemic induction and long-term training of the professional core—the key coordinating mechanism of ESA activities (Stephens, 1979b). Due to decentralization, the professional core will make planning and operational decisions, but concentrated authority over accomplishment of the mission will remain with the chief executive officer, the executive director (Peters & Waterman, 1986). Next, ESAs will allocate resources to combine marketing considerations with the traditional approach, grouping programs and services by function. In summary, a solid foundation for meaningful organizational renewal and perpetuation will develop (Stephens, 1979b).

An analysis of ESA functions shows both strengths and weaknesses of the ESA organizational system. The advantages of ESAs include local representation for SEAs, responsiveness to LEAs, and state representation in the form of a local negotiator, interpreter, conflict resolver, ombudsman, and liaison. Disadvantages include variations in intermediary organizational structure between the SEA and LEAs; inequitable, insufficient, or variable funding year to year; variations in services attributed to funding, personnel resources, and individual resourcefulness; and lack of attractiveness to potential leaders (Jacobsen, 1991). In restructuring, ESAs should build upon these advantages and strategize to overcome the disadvantages.

As a network, ESAs have a viable delivery system for implementing state requirements because they have a proven history of providing assistance in meeting new priorities. These ESAs offer significant opportunities to improve the coordination of educational services in this country. Prototypes of future functions in restructured ESAs include achievement of equity within state systems, achievement of cost-effectiveness, and positive effects on the quality of education in school districts (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Summary of ESA Research.

In summary, the role and structure of ESAs have slowly evolved. Cooper and Fitzwater (1954), who examined the evolution of ESAs, observed that during early development, ESAs were seen primarily as extensions of the state. Over time, power and authority were gradually transferred to a lay board and to a chief administrative officer. Progress has been slow in expanding the role of ESAs, because people naturally resist an encroachment upon local control of education. However, ESAs have gradually been viewed as resources for providing local school districts with programs and services that these districts cannot ordinarily provide for themselves. Therefore, ESAs have gradually evolved from regulatory and supervisory agencies to providers of programs and services.

At the present time of significant budget reduction, greater accountability, regulatory legislation, court decisions supporting equality and quality in schools, and educational reform, ESAs—including Pennsylvania's IUs—remain a critical link between LEAs and SEAs (Stephens, 1992). These agencies provide necessary

educational support programs, thus enabling local schools and districts to focus on their basic mission—the education of children. Individual school districts simply cannot fund the level of services necessary for the operation of the educational system without taking resources, time, and money away from the teaching and learning processes in the classroom (AAESA, 1996).

Pennsylvania's IU's: Past and Present

Historical Development of Pennsylvania's IUs

Just as the history of education followed a path of disagreement the legal development and final implementation of laws dealing with the IUs in Pennsylvania has been a "rocky" road.

Impetus for public education in Pennsylvania came from the Free School Act of 1834. Although controversial, the act had enough legislative support to withstand an attempt to repeal it in 1835 (Kirk, 1980; Pennsylvania State Board of Education, 1967). This venture into education reform resulted in a total of 531 local school districts by 1854; in time the original number was to explode into thousands in Pennsylvania (McCrury, 1967b). In 1854, the Pennsylvania Legislature created county superintendents' offices to coordinate and lead these local school districts. Thus, the line of administration followed the typical three-echelon state-county-local pattern (Stephens, 1979c), a pattern that initiated the ESA movement.

Although the potential for county superintendents to accomplish their purposes was great, local people bitterly opposed the existence of the office, believing it was a threat to local autonomy. They petitioned their legislators to disband the county

offices and eventually prevailed. As a result, many states established a county school office, then abolished it, only to reestablish it (Good, 1973).

Pennsylvania's pattern was similar. Open and violent opposition greeted the Act of 1854. Local opponents to state interference attempted to repeal the County Superintendent Act, but all attempts failed. Since representatives of local school boards elected the administrators of county offices in Pennsylvania, one way they could express their disapproval was to establish an incredibly low salary for these county superintendents (Christman, 1965). Eventually, the General Assembly, in an attempt to appease constituents, permitted some school districts to work directly with the Department of Public Instruction, the forerunner of the PDE. Therefore, both three-tiered and two-tiered systems developed concurrently, an organizational scheme that prevailed with minor alterations for the next 120 years in Pennsylvania (Colwell, 1976).

County Offices Become IUs

As indicated previously, in many states the county office was the usual predecessor of the ESA, and Pennsylvania was no exception. With increases in qualified personnel at the local level, increases in district size, and advances in communication technology, the office of the county superintendent in the Commonwealth became obsolete prior to 1937 (Carroll, 1981; Pennsylvania State Board of Education, 1967). Following the trend of other states, Pennsylvania began to study the IU concept at conferences held during 1937 (Christman, 1965). In addition, Pennsylvania began to study the proliferation of local schools, the fragmentation of

administrative authority, and the needs of contemporary society. The result was the School District Merger Act of 1937 and its 1947, 1953, 1961, and 1963 successors, which directed the county superintendents in conjunction with the county board of school directors to prepare a county-wide plan for the organization of ESAs (Colwell, 1976).

Francis and Musmano (1975) reported on preliminary activities, the IU movement in the 1950s. A joint committee of the House and Senate was formed to study the Commonwealth's educational administrative structure. However, no positive results were reported by this committee, and the committee remained dormant for three years after its formation. In 1953, the committee reorganized and introduced House Bill 1002, which carried provisions for the establishment of IU service areas to replace the existing county superintendent offices. The bill, which went to the Education Committee on April 8, 1953, died as a result of effective opposition by local school administrators (Francis & Musmano, 1975).

With funds provided by the Kellogg Foundation, further study of the IU concept was initiated later in 1953 (Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations, 1971). As a result of this study, modified versions of House Bill 1002 and Senate Bill 769 were prepared and introduced to the Senate in 1955. Senate Bill 769 was introduced under the assumption that it had the support of local school administrators (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1955). The bill carried provisions for the establishment of IUs to replace the county superintendents' offices. However, again, local opposition was strong enough to defeat the bill.

The next two legislative years saw renewed attempts at enactment. In 1956, the General Assembly passed Act 650. The provisions of this Act required the State Council of Education to prepare a statewide plan for intermediary units of school administration. The Act, which also called for an appropriation of $50,000 to be set aside to carry out the plan, carried provisions for the eventual establishment of IUs (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1956). Although the plan was completed, it did not result in any formal changes. Introduced in 1957, Senate Bill 525 became the Intermediate Service Area Bill. Like its predecessors, it encountered strong opposition at the local level and went down to defeat. As a result, the IU concept remained dormant.

Reassessment of the function of the county office was an essential activity of school district reorganizations during the 1960s. McCrury (1967a) reports that in the 1963-64 school year, 2,056 school districts were consolidated into 956 school systems. Of these, 192 districts with superintendents reported directly to the Department of Public Education. The remaining 764 systems were under the jurisdiction of the county superintendents. In the 1966-67 school year, there were 466 school districts, of which all but 29 were eligible to elect a district superintendent under Act 299 (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1967). Thirteen counties became single school districts; and 39 counties contained six or fewer school districts. Statistics supported replacing the office of county superintendent due to school consolidation (McCrury, 1967a).

There was no longer a need to continue the county office in its administrative and supervisory capacities. However, although they represented larger administrative units, many reorganized districts still could not economically provide many of the essential services of public education such as special education and vocational education. Because of this program deficiency, the IU concept filled vital gaps in instructional and ancillary services. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the IU concept, an expansion of the old county superintendent's office concept, developed according to the needs of school districts the IUs served (McCrury, 1967a).

Armed with the need to expand the old county superintendent's office, the Commonwealth's next step was more successful. In 1963, Act 299, known as the Reorganization Act, called for reorganization of public schools under the plans previously prepared. It passed with a stern note attached by the General Assembly to the public: "Article X, Section 1 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania . . . requires that the General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public schools." The Reorganization Act renewed the General Assembly's dedication to group the 2,000 schools into approximately 500 school districts (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1963).

The next reorganization attempt to include the county superintendent was Act 152, which passed in 1965 (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1965). This Reorganization Act phased out county superintendents' offices and transferred these service functions to IUs. In order to expedite the reorganization, county

superintendents' terms were limited to two years or until an IU plan became effective (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1965).

In the absence of specific legal mandates, National Defense Education Act funds provided for 18 instructional support centers. These centers, located at state colleges, housed state and county employees. In essence, then, Pennsylvania had two sets of intermediate-type agencies (PAIU, 1993): the county offices and the instructional support centers.

In 1967, the General Assembly directed the State Board of Education to plan an IU network, with no administrative authority over school boards, to provide services economically and efficiently on the regional level. The plan contained the following priorities for IUs: to preserve local control and strengthen good school districts, to expand educational opportunities and program offerings, and to encourage economic efficiency through consortium services (PAIU, 1992). From this report prepared by the State Board, legislation creating IUs for Pennsylvania developed (Carroll, 1981). The newer concept of intermediate units called for more leadership functions, while many administrative functions of the county superintendent were transferred to local school administrators. Instead of administrative functions, many supplementary teaching and supervisory services were provided by these intermediate agencies (Edwards, 1990a).

Statutory and Regulatory Framework of IUs

As special district ESAs, Pennsylvania IUs were created by mandatory legislation. Act 109 signed by Governor Raymond Shafer on January 14, 1970, dissolved the office of county superintendent of schools and the county board of school directors, transferring their powers and duties to the IUs (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1970). Furthermore, Act 109 removed all references to county superintendents and county school boards and replaced them with executive directors and IU boards of directors (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970b). At last, total school district reorganization had been completed, but with one minor problem. In effect, the General Assembly had changed the school laws to read "executive directors" and "intermediate units," but had failed to pass enabling legislation to create IUs (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1970). As a result, another act to create IUs was necessary.

A companion act, Act 102, signed by Governor Shafer on May 4, 1970, established a system of 29 IUs, created IU boards of directors and spelled out their duties, and provided a system for financing their functions (Pennsylvania Department of Education, 1970). While this Act fully defined the powers and duties of the new organization, it was not exempt from political problems. On the same date, May 4, 1970, Act 103 was passed. It postponed the implementation of the entire legislative package concerning IUs until July 1, 1971 (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970b). Despite the delay, now that the legal structure was intact, the plan would move ahead.

This sweeping, comprehensive legislation assigned each school district in the Commonwealth to an IU and stated that each school district "shall be entitled to the services of an intermediate unit in accordance with a program of services adopted by the intermediate unit board of directors" (Pennsylvania Basic Education, 1978). Although this statewide network of 29 IUs included all local school districts and mandated membership, participation was voluntary (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). In 1960, Pennsylvania's three-tiered education system consisted of the State Department of Education, 67 County Offices of Education, and 2,000 local school districts. Since 1970, the Department of Education and 29 IUs have served 501 local school districts (Edwards, 1990a; PAIU, 1992). The geographic boundaries of the IUs are shown in Figure 2. Statistics on these IUs are shown in Table 2.

In addition, Act 102 gave general guidelines for services to be provided by IU boards of directors. According to Section 914-A,

> An intermediate unit board of directors shall have the power and its duty shall be to adopt a program of services. Each intermediate unit may provide the following programs of services: curriculum development and instructional services; educational planning services; instructional materials services; continuing professional education services; pupil personnel services; and State and Federal agency liaison services; and management services. Each additional service must be provided to local boards of school directors, which comprises the intermediate unit board of directors, for the express purpose of approving or

> disapproving; any such additional service. (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a).

This section mandates IU board of director approval of new programs and services. Act 102 stated:

> From July 1, 1971 to June 30, 1972, intermediate units shall provide essential services formerly provided by county boards of school directors, collect and analyze informational data, and adopt a program of services. On or before May 1, 1971 and annually thereafter, the code stipulates that each intermediate unit shall submit a program of services for the next school year to the Superintendent of Public Instruction for budgetary approval. This program of services shall be developed and submitted in accordance with the law. (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a).

Thus, Act 102 permits IUs to update their programs and services on an annual basis, when approved by the IU board, to meet current district needs.

Chapter 17 of the Regulations of the State Board of Education of Pennsylvania mandated that every IU submit an annual report to the Secretary of Education on or before October 1 which describes the services offered to the school districts comprising the unit. The descriptions in the annual report shall include: a brief narrative comparing intended accomplishments with outcomes achieved; personnel employed—both full-time and part-time; total, per-pupil cost and the salaries for each service; and source of revenue supporting each service. (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a).

These regulations mandate that a description of the programs and services accompany the IU budget for approval.

Furthermore, Section 908 of Act 102 stated that "All powers and duties of county boards of school directors with respect to special pupil services are hereby transferred to intermediate unit boards of directors, effective July 1, 1971." Section 909-A stated that "All powers and duties of county boards of school directors with respect to vocational-technical education are hereby transferred to intermediate unit boards of directors, effective July 1, 1971" (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). These sections gave IUs administrative power over special education and vocational-technical education.

Finally, Section 914-A gave IUs authority to contract for specialized services. For example, IUs were authorized to "consolidate and let combined bids for bulk purchases." IUs could also "receive federal, state, school district and other monies and expend the same to conduct programs of services." In addition, this section of the Code allowed IUs to "lease land, buildings and equipment" to house these programs and services (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). This section enables IUs to assist school districts to operate cost effectively.

By passing Act 102 in 1970, the Pennsylvania General Assembly mandated a regional, intermediate unit system to provide service, not supervision and administration, to local school districts. However, increasing demands on the state education system forced IUs to provide specialized services ordinarily not provided at the state level. These services were now available to students more effectively and

efficiently on a regional basis than at the local districts (Benson & Barber, 1994). Consequently, these services were assigned to the IUs.

A closer look at the following definition of IUs will assist in understanding the IU's roles and functions. The State Board of Education defined IUs as follows:

> an IU provides consultive, advisory, or education programs and services to school districts; the school district is responsible for administration, supervision, and program operation; and the IU provides ancillary services necessary to improve the state system of education.

This definition clearly states that an IU is essentially an agent of school districts with some responsibility for improving the state system of education. This is consistent with the legal requirements for the State Board of Education and the Pennsylvania Legislature to operate the state education system (Carroll, 1981).

The key to the definition is that school districts should determine the programs and services needed on a regional level. The dominant programming services include vocational-technical education, data processing services, educational media services, comprehensive programs and services for special-needs students, curriculum development, and research and evaluation services (Edwards, 1990a). IUs were additionally mandated to provide direct instructional services to nonpublic schools and administrative services to the PDE.

IU boards are comprised of 13 members, although later legislation permits nine members, whose term of office is three years. The directors are current members of constituent school boards. These Board members are elected at an annual convention

of local school directors, using a weighted voting system based on the district's student population. The "weighted vote" concept also carries over into the budget approval process, where district contributions are based on both wealth and size (Carroll, 1981). The IU board appoints the chief administrative officer of the unit, the executive director (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). A superintendents' advisory council, composed of all local school districts' chief administrative officers, is also mandated by Act 102. As the name suggests, this council serves in an advisory capacity to the executive director (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a).

IUs receive state appropriations based on a weighted formula that includes enrollment and a real-value factor of property or district wealth. Table II gives 1975 information, while Table III gives current information used in these calculations. Constituent school districts can be assessed a general fee for the IU's operating budget; however, this budget must be approved by the local school boards (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a), thus empowering them to control the general fee. IUs receive a substantial amount of federal monies and use service contracts extensively. However, IUs have no taxing authority, but may purchase and hold real property in order to have adequate, appropriate office space (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1987).

Certain staff are also mandated via the IU development guidelines. The staff must include an executive director and as many assistant directors, program specialists, teachers, and support staff as necessary to deliver the program and services needed by their member districts (Carroll, 1981).

In 1970, IUs were permitted to form special education consortiums of sufficient size to operate effective, efficient programs and to allocate special education funds on a regional basis. The goal was to provide regional planning for a continuum of services, including district programs, inter district programs, and IU programs. In addition, IUs could provide technical assistance and supervision to make the best use of specialists in educating exceptional children. State and local funds are required to follow the child, regardless of which echelon operates the program. Later, the State Board of Education stated that vocational education and special education should be phased out of IUs and assumed by local school districts or district consortiums (Carroll, 1991).

Since 1971, school districts have acquired a working knowledge of the basic procedures that guarantee the rights of students to a free appropriate public education. By the early 1990s, many schools had developed the skills necessary to educate a larger number of Pennsylvania's students with disabilities. Children enrolled in special education programs received a continuum of resource services: a regular classroom, an inclusive classroom, a resource classroom, a special facilities classroom, and a clinical or a residential program. Since IUs are able to offer greater expertise, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness on a regional basis for students with unique needs that require very specialized services, they continue to provide cost-effective special education leadership and services where requested (PAIU, 1993; PAIU, 1992).

The map in Figure 2 map shows these 27 units as established by Act 102 of 1970. Growth and comparisons of the IUs and 499 constituent school districts

spanning 20 years can be determined using Table 2 (1973-1974 statistics) and Table 3 (1993-94 statistics).

In an attempt to maintain local control, Act 102's legal framework placed parameters on the operation of Pennsylvania's IUs. While conception to implementation took over 25 years, Pennsylvania's IUs, created under the dictates of Act 102, continue to operate today (PAIU, 1993).

Current Research on Pennsylvania's IUs

IU leaders, constituent school superintendents, state legislators, and SEAs must understand the roles and functions of IUs preferred by the Pennsylvania educational community. Especially difficult, without information, seems to be a full interpretation of the IU's mission, so LEAs can have input on the programming profile. Without access to the whole picture, there is a temptation for all three groups, with referent power, to deviate to personal agendas in decision making. Information on how to deliver these services successfully is also important. The following research addresses these issues.

Research suggests that compliance with the spirit of current reform legislation can be facilitated by increasing the access of local professionals to both the legal and

Figure 2.

Intermediate Units, Department of Education, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

1. Intermediate Unit 1
2. Pittsburgh-Mount Oliver
3. Allegheny
4. Midwestern
5. Northwest Tri-County
6. Clarion Manor
7. Westmoreland
8. Appalachia
9. Seneca Highlands
10. Central
11. Tuscarora
12. Lincoln
13. Lancaster-Lebanon
14. Berks County
15. Capital Area
16. Central Susquehanna
17. Blast
18. Luzerne
19. Northeastern Educational
20. Colonial Northampton
21. Carbon-Lehigh
22. Bucks County
23. Montgomery County
24. Chester County
25. Delaware County
26. Philadelphia
27. Beaver Valley
28. Arin
29. Schuylkill

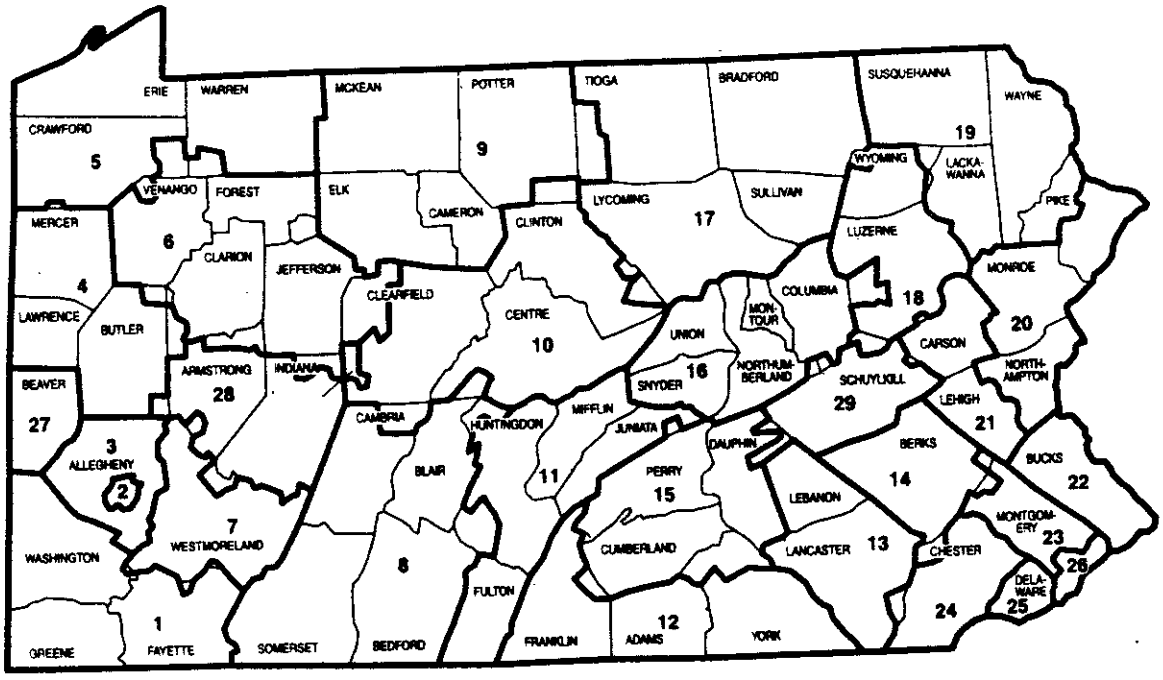


Table 2

General Information: Pennsylvania IUs (1975)

Unit Number	Number of Districts	Square Miles	Number of Counties	1973-74 WADM	1973-74 Market Value	1973-74 Assessed Value
1	25	2234	3	101,504	1,451,786,900	451,676,165
2	1	----	-	----	------	------
3	46	675	1	259,664	5,951,964,400	3,261,367,663
4	27	1826	3	97,384	1,599,416,600	519,892,840
5	17	2774	3	95,039	1,857,765,000	722,052,383
6	17	3097	4+	50,094	647,556,400	185,297,734
7	17	1006	1	98,874	1,614,055,900	402,496,085
8	35	3480	4	107,989	1,492,037,700	553,390,494
9	14	3300	4	29,379	420,774,700	103,142,178
10	12	3300	3	43,000	813,848,900	246,775,717
11	9	2150	4	28,920	364,823,000	105,583,815
12	25	2150	3	104,742	2,126,324,800	581,590,057
13	22	1337	2	102,074	2,208,814,400	650,926,660
14	18	864	1	72,357	1,613,580,900	476,128,858
15	24	1716	3+	111,239	2,282,272,600	639,449,047
16	17	1712	5	49,712	709,446,300	211,741,925
17	19	3950	4	19,014	206,494,700	55,000,340
18	12	1298	1	72,566	1,178,912,000	412,661,850
19	20	2470	4	66,335	1,267,871,400	487,839,123
20	13	950	3	68,628	1,877,585,400	999,197,012
21	14	749	2	65,390	1,443,557,600	894,716,491
22	13	620	1	114,772	2,595,514,000	810,074,730
23	22	492	1	147,565	4,679,204,400	1,416,523,851
24	12	752	1	72,118	1,732,498,200	590,825,471

+Parts of other counties included.

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

Unit Number	Number of Districts	Square Miles	Number of Counties	1973-74 WADM	1973-74 Market Value	1973-74 Assessed Value
25	12	752	1	72,118	1,732,498,200	590,825,471
25	15	185	1	112,784	3,031,376,500	665,577,769
26	1	129	1	308,338	7,903,132,800	5,387,005,840
27	15	441	1	54,684	1,000,303,500	321,581,745
28	11	1500	2	41,497	560,799,200	218,052,910
29	12	784	1	31,536	440,011,300	150,386,879

Note. From General Information Pennsylvania Intermediate Units. Harrisburg, PA: Office of Assistant Commissioner of Basic Education, 1975.
+Parts of other counties included.

the program knowledge needed to operate successful programs (Wise, 1979; Boyd, 1978; Murphy, 1971; Kirst & Jung, 1980; Filmore, 1980; Berman, 1981). In the last decade, researchers have developed a body of evidence showing that dissemination systems which put "human helpers" in contact with LEAs are effective in putting such knowledge to use (Emrick, Peterson, & Agarwala-Rogers, 1977; Louis, Rosenblum, & Molitor, 1981; Louis & Sieber, 1979; Royster et al., 1981). A review of 20 years of curriculum development indicates that efforts to put curricula into practice require an extensive network of human helpers (Yin & Gwaltney, 1981). In case studies, IU success in curriculum reform points to informal interpersonal networks between ESA staff and LEA educators (Firestone & Wilson, 1982a).

luman helpers can promote the use of knowledge to improve educational practice. Significance of relationships and interactions directly relates to what happens when LEA personnel read a report or a law. However, assistance strategies rely heavily on the voluntary

Table 3

General Information: Pennsylvania IUs (1994)

Unit Number	Number of Districts	Square Miles	Number of Counties	1993-94 WADM	1993-94 Market Value	1993-94 Assessed Value
PA LEAs	501				331,090,381,300	98,004,141,038
1	25	2234	3	68,255	5,765,743,500	1,619,624,418
2	1	----	-	44,725	18,326,575,200	2,072,412,732
3	42	675	1	143,058	4,227,236,746,800	6,739,993,285
4	27	1826	3	68,810	277,236,160,800	1,431,854,052
5	17	2774	3	69,632	177,662,281,800	1,993,488,775
6	33	3097	4+	36,765	332,579,245,900	1,108,074,628
7	17	1006	1	64,111	178,023,060,900	3,070,966,994
8	35	3480	4	75,114	7,293,593,000	1,257,698,469
9	14	3300	4	19,592	169,191,200	426,003,050
10	13	3300	3	34,477	5,344,721,400	974,394,682
11	9	2150	4	21,432	2,207,205,000	525,403,876
12	25	2150	3	90,080	14,703,011,700	10,854,875,719
13	22	1337	2	90,797	216,859,953,900	3,590,511,600
14	18	864	1	62,696	11,440,163,100	13,783,755,426
15	24	1716	3+	92,280	16,188,635,300	7,838,545,337
16	17	1712	5	43,710	4,799,963,100	1,310,118,457
17	19	3950	4	46,074	5,036,143,500	3,273,724,926
18	12	1298	1	50,822	7,099,411,800	779,760,724
19	20	2470	4	51,755	9,043,354,000	2,587,956,475
20	13	950	3	70,324	16,465,655,000	8,169,227,939
21	14	749	2	55,540	11,298,185,000	6,506,688,696
22	13	620	1	92,876	23,135,777,600	1,570,089,581
23	22	492	1	96,213	33,308,704,900	2,510,303,757
24	12	752	1	62,733	19,674,015,900	1,600,753,866

+Parts of other counties included.

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

Unit Number	Number of Districts	Square Miles	Number of Counties	1993-94 WADM	1993-94 Market Value	1993-94 Assessed Value
25	15	185	1	73,369		
26	1	129	1	237,406	30,980,742,000	9,274,495,983
27	15	441	1	32,501	3,480,138,500	1,779,291,820
28	11	1500	2	30,010	2,707,752,100	436,365,268
29	12	784	1	23,494	2,631,934,200	542,357,586

Note. General Information Pennsylvania State Tax Equalization Board 1994 Market Values of Taxable Real Property. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania State Tax Equalization Board.
+Parts of other counties included.

development of relationships between the ESA "assistor" and the LEA recipient, and there are serious limitations to the influence these individuals can exert. Successful outcomes of projects to improve education are more closely related to LEA administrator and teacher perceptions that a significant problem is being addressed than to ESA helpers' behaviors (Corbett, 1981; Firestone & Corbett, 1981). As a result, the persuasive power of the IU professional core is extremely important in the change process. Firestone, Wilson, and Rossman (1983) add that IUs are attuned to the special needs of LEAs and have the time and resources needed to develop the necessary expertise.

A 1982 study by Firestone and Wilson explores some issues related to combining enforcement and assistance to promote program reforms and the use of educational knowledge. Assistance means providing the legal or program knowledge needed to operate successful programs. Enforcement means monitoring programs to make sure regulations or mandates are being carried out. Firestone and Wilson's and other researcher findings suggest that combining enforcement and assistance activities

will change the dynamics of assistance relationships and undermine assistance work (Chambers, 1971; Firestone & Wilson, 1983a), a factor that may limit IU effectiveness. Furthermore, McLaughlin (1981) points out that assistance is provided only upon request from progressive districts, not to traditional districts with weak programs who seldom request IU assistance. Therefore, the IU mission to assist districts in complying with current educational reform can be seriously hampered, especially in districts with weak programs.

Local educators look for training and technical assistance in three broad areas: curriculum and instruction, administration, and current information. Curriculum and instruction assistance provides for new-program implementation, curriculum development and improvement, and staff development. School administration assistance provides a range of activities related to overall organizational functioning and management skills of individual administrators. Knowledge about current information includes regulations, mandates, and improvement of relations with community groups and other school districts. Long-term project assistance, training workshops, brief conversations, and visitations to the resource center are services requested by local educators. In essence, then, research recommends that IUs provide training and technical assistance on current reform issues (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

Two conditions critical for effective service from IUs are trust between LEA and IU staff and the perception, by locals, that the services are useful. Six factors that affect trust levels are advisory committees, annual stable program funding, growth

patterns, IU field agents with effective professional and interpersonal skills, close interpersonal ties with local districts, and leadership that is entrepreneurial and responsive. These six factors also affect perceived usefulness of services. Committee structures foster communication between IU leadership and local educators, thereby promoting services attuned to district needs. Advisory committees enable local administrators to express service needs and provide IU personnel the information necessary for responsive, needs-oriented assistance. In addition, committees with continuous membership promote responsive services. This personal interaction builds trust in ways that filling out forms cannot (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

Funding mechanisms create stability or instability in an IU budget. Heavy reliance on short-term grants and contracts reduces continuity and control of program content. As a result, the services offered are not always the most useful. Insufficient funding detracts from service quality because it inhibits attracting or retaining highly qualified personnel. However, if districts must allocate their own funds to purchase IU services, the services are viewed as investments and are used heavily. Governance structures that foster stable funding build trust. Growth patterns can have contradictory effects on trust and perceived program usefulness. Entrepreneurship expands funds and services, but this growth may create jealousy on the part of the districts, especially if their budgets are shrinking. Consequently, some IUs simultaneously face both appreciation and jealousy (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

Certain IU staff characteristics build trust. First, IU behavior that conforms to expectations enhances service use. These expectations include both professional and interpersonal expertise. Professional expertise consists of training and expert knowledge, as well as "school savvy." Interpersonal expertise is the ability to get along with others, including communication skills and personal attributes. Preferred are personable, open-minded, tactful agents who are responsive to unique, individual district needs and who provide timely, on-target, nondirective assistance. Even personnel charged with monitoring compliance with state law and code conform more closely to the district's expectations when assuming an assistance posture (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

Networking structures facilitating fast and easy communication and developing working intimacy and mutual knowledge promote valued services. These qualities of the relationship promote easy access, on-target services, and trusting relationships (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

In addition to governance, funding structures, and personnel characteristics, the role of IU leadership in shaping service delivery is crucial. Leadership establishes the overall approach to training and assistance, including taking the initiative in offering services, conceiving of local educators as clients, and emerging in enterprising searches for outside resources. This overall attitude is reflected in hiring staff, staff initiation and support, communication mechanisms, and IU service menus. Researchers identified laissez-faire, authoritarian, and marketing approaches to leadership. The **laissez-faire** approach is responsive but not aggressive in "selling" services and is not

entrepreneurial. The **authoritarian** approach is much more restrictive, since IUs are responsive only to requests that conform to services preferred by IUs. The marketing approach is responsive but tempered by taking initiative in seeking funds and "selling" new programs or ideas to local educators. Of the three, **marketing** is much more likely to foster trust and to provide useful services to local districts (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983).

Firestone's study (1983) also points out the potential tensions between local educators and state expectations that could limit IU effectiveness. IUs and PDE working with the state legislature create a low-tension setting that enhances the delivery of IU services to LEAs. Since the quality of the assistance provided is the most important consideration, IUs cannot serve the state without first meeting the needs of the LEAs that provide direct instruction to students. Without strong ties to local educators, IUs lack the trust relationships that enable them to provide assistance to PDE and the PA Legislature (Firestone, Wilson, & Rossman, 1983).

Because of their proximity to local districts and state and local funding, IUs and their staffs are key tools in communicating new knowledge for educational excellence (Wilson & Firestone, 1983), knowledge that can lead to educational improvement and assist in coping with external reform pressures. As a result, IUs have become a major source of knowledge for educators (Stephens, 1979d), especially since IU core professionals are on the cutting edge of educational information (Louis, Rosenblum, & Molitor, 1981).

Knowledge sharing is complex because it serves many purposes (Wilson & Firestone, 1983). First, job characteristics give some people, particularly those in authority, broader access to external knowledge than others (Fullan, 1981). For example, principals are so involved in organizational management that they can devote little time to acquiring knowledge (Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz & Porter-Gehrie, 1983). As a result, principals are unable to bring current research to their staffs. Job characteristics also determine the need for specialized, technical responsibility. Specialists need specific, technical knowledge and must search for it (Fullan, 1981). Therefore, professional development of the IU professional core is both necessary and important.

Second, professional experience (Corwin, 1977) and formal training (Rosenblum & Louis, 1981) are positively associated with innovative changes. Experience and training provide a base for knowing what knowledge is needed and where to search for it. Upwardly mobile, sophisticated individuals committed to their occupational skills and professional growth are more likely to search for knowledge (Merton, 1968) and are a wise choice for the IU professional core.

Other factors affect knowledge sharing. Havelock (1969) points out that networking has become the medium by which knowledge or information is shared. A more open communication pattern, within LEAs and between IUs, is linked to increased adoption of innovations (Baldridge & Burnham, 1975) and improvement of schools (Little, 1982). Also, organizational factors influence knowledge sharing (Baldridge & Burnham, 1975; Rosenblum & Louis, 1981). For example, physical

isolation inhibits change (Rosenblum & Louis, 1981). An organization's attitude toward employees' knowledge attainment also can inhibit or encourage innovative change.

Louis, Rosenblum, and Molitor (1981) point out that when IU field agents' roles match a districts' perceived needs, knowledge sharing is successful. Consequently, a field agent's technical skills and personal integrity are important factors in approaches to knowledge sharing. Mutual knowledge and delivery of on-target services are critical to successful collaboration (Firestone et al. 1983). The quality and stability of the knowledge delivered are key to mutual trust and confidence (Firestone, Wilson, & Rossman, 1983). Also, the quality and quantity of personal relationships between IU professionals and district staff play important roles in determining the breadth of knowledge sharing (Wilson & Firestone, 1983). Firestone and Rossman (1983) propose that a marketing strategy develops a responsive approach that encourages a broader exchange of knowledge.

Three policy implications, identified by Wilson and Firestone's (1983) research, warrant discussion. The most significant finding was that a combination of professional and interpersonal expertise along with a responsive attitude toward the needs of local educators yields a greater payoff (Firestone, Rossman, & Wilson, 1983). Secondly, since schools are loosely coupled (Deal & Celotti, 1981; Weick, 1976), the power and position of the educator receiving the knowledge will affect the potential usefulness of the knowledge (Wilson & Firestone, 1983). Knowledge must flow to the point of most positive impact, that is to classroom teachers in school districts. Finally,

there is an invisible communication network through which knowledge can be shared. This reflects the orientation that knowledge is information rather than skills acquisition or implementation.

In summary, Firestone, Rossman, and Wilson (1983) describe their key observations concerning the local educator's, central office's, and superintendent's perceptions of IU services. Educators appreciate assistance in curriculum and instruction, school management, and coping with the external environment. Assistance is most beneficial when received through long-term projects, workshops, brief telephone and face-to-face interactions, and resource centers. IU assistance is constructively provided in relationships characterized by mutual knowledge and trust, working intimacy, ease of access, and a high degree of assistance. Personal characteristics such as content expertise, school "savvy," strong interpersonal relationships, and a responsive attitude facilitate a constructive relationship. Extensive advisory committees, funding patterns that reduce staff turnover, and a full-service agency also facilitate constructive relationships.

Firestone, in conjunction with various co-authors, clearly identifies IUs as the most comprehensive, effective disseminators of new knowledge in Pennsylvania. Similarly, Stephens, in conjunction with various co-authors, identifies ESAs as the most comprehensive, effective disseminators of new knowledge in the United States.

Beem and Jones describe the IU as the "the office or agency in a position between the State Department of Education and the local school districts" (1956). From even a cursory definition such as this, one can quickly deduce that any unit that

attempts to find a place between the legally fixed responsibility for education at the state level and the jealously guarded operation of schools at the local level will also need to plan and deliver services aligned with both the SEA and the local LEA, because conflict is highly probable.

Anticipated Future Dimensions of ESAs

At this time of declining revenues in education and public demand for accountability and school reform, reconsideration of the public education system is extremely important. Both state and local policymakers are reassessing the capacity of state educational systems to meet the current reform.

As early as 1977, Stephens identified three major factors enabling ESAs to step into the leadership role. First, ESAs are positioned to enhance educational equality, quality, and efficiency. Second, ESAs are positioned to disseminate current and pertinent knowledge based on research, development, and evaluation procedures. Third, ESAs contain the planning, communication, and coordinating mechanisms to inspire educational excellence (Stephens, 1977).

Stephens identified some near absolutes that ESAs must achieve to maintain a leadership role. Governance arrangements must clearly reflect ESAs' primary orientation, which is providing services to both the LEAs and the SEA. Also, local involvement in governance must be a consistent practice (Stephens, 1977), especially since this will enhance the service orientation of ESAs.

Another of Stephens' findings is that a management information system must be developed to provide high quality, baseline data on a system-by-system basis. Also,

planning efforts must emphasize the management team concept. In addition, planning efforts must include a system of checks and balances (Stephens, 1977) that assure quality services.

ESAs are in position to play a key role in intergovernmental relations for several reasons. First, ESAs are regional and thus offer a broad perspective. Second, if adequate allocations of resources are designated, these organizations have a critical mass of expertise, due to excellence in staffing and staff flexibility. Third, ESAs can provide linkages with other human-resource agencies and other government subdivisions. In 1977, Stephens urged ESAs to pursue aggressively their logical role as key education spokespersons and advocates in the areas they serve. The special strengths that they bring to the task are still germane today.

In 1991, Stephens and Turner predicted seven broad trends for ESAs—labeled the "Big Seven." These researchers predict that the seven trends will dominate the future of ESAs into the next millennium.

First, change will occur in the governance features of ESAs. Additional states will adopt the educational service concept. Stephens and Turner researchers anticipate that this widespread growth in ESAs will raise the number of state ESA systems to 35 and increase the number of special district ESAs to 23. In addition, some states will redesign current ESAs to special districts and the state agency, to handle the needs of LEAs. Thus, the special district ESA will remain dominant in the United States. Finally, multiple systems of different forms of ESAs functioning side-by-side within a given state will be eliminated. In addition, the number of units within special district

networks will be reduced. Three important criteria will weigh heavily in the decision. Based on the old planning axiom that "form follows function," the important criteria will include maximum travel time; maximum potential population; and coterminous boundaries with other public service agencies. Another governance change will be inclusion of large urban districts with other school districts in ESAs. Current exclusion of urban districts contributes to the isolation of these districts and weakens the ESAs' capacity to affect quality and equity issues (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Second, changes will occur in the structural features of ESAs. One major structural shift Stephens and Turner predict is that a general advisory group, composed of consumers of the agency, will have increased review authority over budget and program decisions. These functional advisory groups will assist more extensively in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of special programs and services. In addition, the superintendent's advisory groups will be granted decision making power over the IU budgets and programs. (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Third, Stephens and Turner (1991) anticipate an expanded mission for ESAs that includes the growth of traditional roles and addition of new expectancies. Besides equalizing educational opportunity, enhancing the quality of education, and providing technical assistance, three new roles are anticipated. The new roles include cost-effective delivery, information stewardship, and coalition building (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Fourth, new patterns of programming are a natural continuation of the extended mission. ESAs will continue to provide direct and instructional services to the LEAs'

exceptional students and special populations. Instructional support services to public and nonpublic schools will emphasize current and relevant knowledge. ESAs will play an important, although limited, role in management services to LEAs. These management services include data processing and information services. The anticipated major direct services that ESAs will perform for SEAs will be in planning for state initiatives, capacity building for implementation of state and federal initiatives, and providing information on the condition of education in the regional area. Also, ESAs will initiate, organize, and facilitate partnerships with human service agencies (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Fifth, the reassessment of ESAs will result in greater efficiency and accountability. Adopting a set of standards and developing accreditation procedures are important. A sophisticated accreditation system is foreseen for all special district networks. Special features of new systems will include performance indicators that assess the effectiveness of an ESA and that reflect clear differences of ESAs from other types of educational organizations. However, ESAs will not be extensively involved in student performance accountability (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Sixth, Stephens and Turner (1991) predict two models for more definite funding: increased state support for programs and services directly related to state priorities, and more extensive use of categorical regional taxes designed to equalize educational opportunities in the regions. Also, the creation of regional taxing authority will be a model for future funding (Stephens & Turner, 1991).

Seventh, these researchers speculate that there will be a new commitment to professional development since ESAs exhibit many features of a professional bureaucracy (Mintzberg, 1983); ESAs rely almost exclusively on the skills and knowledge of their professionals, the operating core, to function successfully. The induction and training of these professionals are critical to organizational effectiveness (Stephens & Turner, 1991). Owens (1987) contends that system renewal prevents organizational atrophy, a condition that decreases the improvement of the organization's effectiveness. Through self-renewal, the system can initiate and adapt to change, impact the system's environment, and increase the system's capacity to solve problems. The goal is to build an internal system with the conditions, the skills, and the processes for continuous improvement. All of these conditions are compatible with Selznick's model for organizational effectiveness (1957).

These "Big Seven" conjectures highlight the most critical changes that will shape the future of ESAs. The enhancement of public education is ESAs' primary focus. Services for nonpublic schools will continue to be primarily in instructional support. SEAs will increasingly recognize the need to make use of ESAs to realize their policy goals (Stephens, 1992), creating an environment that will enhance IU credibility in the educational community. The role of ESAs is more vital than ever before. Efforts by state policymakers in numerous states to strengthen the state's current delivery systems suggest that these states share Stephens' vision (Stephens, 1992).

Summary

A variety of structural approaches have been used during the twentieth century to improve state and local systems of public education. Since the 1950s, the most popular trend for provision of specialized services, by SEAs to LEAs, by state education agencies to local school districts has been the ESA. The growing trend has been created by the potential of ESAs to equalize and extend educational opportunities for all children within a state education system in a cost-effective manner. Regional units have proven to be economical and efficient in providing equal access to excellence in education (Stephens, 1973).

Despite the issue of whether ESAs should be purely service or both service and regulatory agencies, the primary purpose that is emerging is service to local schools and districts (PAIU, 1996). Pennsylvania IUs were clearly established to provide consultative, advisory education programs and services to school districts (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970a). Through cooperation and collaboration, IUs work to provide innovative, responsive, and cost-effective educational support programs (PAIU, 1996). However, while service continues to be the primary function of Pennsylvania's middle-echelon education unit, IUs may operate special education programs and area vocational-technical schools and be responsible for state regulatory functions. IUs also serve as major delivery systems of state priorities. This trend fits Stephens' definition of special district ESAs (1979) and adheres to the broader service-regulatory function as an effective way to equalize educational opportunity.

Since a study of national ESAs was completed and used as a guideline for the development of Act 102, which created IUs, it seems appropriate to examine current research on national educational agencies in order to help assure the future of IUs. A state task force studied 14 IUs identified as national models. The models were compared by the state task force. The findings of that study played a major role in defining the roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs (Carroll, 1981). Conversations with executive directors of state agencies—i.e., Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania Association of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, American Association of Educational Service Agencies, Pennsylvania American Association of Educational Service Agencies—support this research approach.

The current study surveyed Pennsylvania IU executive directors, school district superintendents, and state policymakers to determine which of the nationally anticipated future dimensions of ESAs identified by Stephens and Turner, as shown in Table 3, are predicted for Pennsylvania's special district IUs.

The following chapter contains a description of the study design. Using survey methodology, three groups will recommend the future roles and functions for Pennsylvania's IUs. This chapter also discusses the population and sample, data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis for the study.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter describes the exact steps taken to address the study's research questions that are in accord with Stephens and Turner's anticipated future dimensions for ESAs on a national level. The study addresses the recommendations of three rater groups for these future dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs.

This chapter describes the study design, the data collection including instrumentation, validity, reliability and procedures, and the data analysis processes.

Design of the Study

The current study of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units is a descriptive study concerned with information obtained by mailed questionnaire (Miller, 1991). The study utilizes survey methodology, a branch of social scientific research (Kerlinger, 1986). A population survey collected Pennsylvania IU executive directors' recommendations, while a sample survey collected constituent superintendents' and policymakers' recommended future roles and functions of IUs. (The state policymakers included leaders of the Senate and the House Education Committees, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education, the Pennsylvania Department of Education, and the Pennsylvania educational organizations.)

The study includes 27 of the 29 IUs in Pennsylvania identified in Act 102 of 1970. This study does not include Philadelphia and Pittsburgh because they function primarily as single school districts. Being single educational service entities removes them from consideration in this study of special district ESAs by definition, since ESA

is defined as an interdistrict cooperative in current literature. Pittsburgh (IU 2) and Philadelphia (IU 17) operate in isolation from the activities of the remaining 27 IUs. These IUs work exclusively for one school district; therefore, their future roles and functions may vary greatly from IUs that work with multiple local school districts.

The 27 independent IUs of the special district ESAs in Pennsylvania serve 499 local school districts. Act 102 of 1970 designated which districts each IU serves. The Map in Figure 2 shows these 27 IUs as established by Act 102 of 1970 (Pennsylvania General Assembly, 1970b).

The executive directors of these 27 IUs and a random sample of local school district superintendents and state policymakers responded to a survey reviewed by a panel of experts. The questionnaire asked for responses to the anticipated future dimensions of ESAs as delineated by Stephens and Turner as part of their national study of trends in ESA organizations and functions (1991). All three audiences responded to an identical survey. A complete copy of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey appears in Appendix E.

Data Collection

This descriptive research used survey methodology. The population survey gathered information about future dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs by eliciting the opinions of 27 IU executive directors. The sample survey collected information about future dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs by gathering opinions of local school district superintendents, who serve on IU advisory boards, and state policymakers, who serve as educational decision makers on the state level. An analysis and interpretation of

survey results determined which of Stephens and Turner's anticipated new dimensions for ESAs are recommended for Pennsylvania's IUs by executive directors, constituent superintendents, and state policymakers.

Instrumentation

A survey instrument was designed by the researcher and contains 50 questions relating to specific characteristics within each of the dimensions addressed by the research questions. This survey instrument was the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. (A copy of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey is contained in Appendix E.)

Any instrument used for appraisal must provide data which meet certain standards of validity and reliability. "A valid measure should yield consistent data about which it is concerned regardless of the time of day, week, or month the measures are taken, and regardless of who takes the measure" (Latham & Wexley, 1981, P. 65).

Content validity.

The degree to which the instrument's subscale items are appropriate measures of the various dimensions determines the content validity (Latham & Wexley, 1981).

The content validity of the survey, containing questions derived by the researcher from Stephens and Turner's work, was guaranteed by the jury-of-experts approach in survey instrument development. First, a content analysis was conducted by a committee consisting of assistant executive directors, assistant superintendents, and county commissioners. The proposed questions were reviewed for appropriateness

and clarity. Second, the suggested revisions, found in Appendix A, were incorporated into the survey.

Reliability.

For a survey to be reliable, all the items should measure the same concept and should correlate positively with one another. The higher the survey items correlate with one another, the more reliable the test. The higher the coefficient alpha—the closer it is to 1.00—the higher the internal-consistency reliability of the survey (Kerlinger, 1973).

Reliability was calculated for each subscale using the SPSSX computer program, which generated an index of internal consistency, Cronbach's alpha. Internal consistency provides a measure of the singularity of a concept: each question adds to understanding of the concept and all questions measure the same concept.

Procedures

Appropriate guidelines were followed for Human Subjects Research Committee review of the survey instrument and overall content of the study. A signed copy of the approval letter was received on April 22, 1996 and is contained in Appendix B.

The cover letter, the vehicle of approach, explained the importance of the study as well as the significance of its results. Letters to IU executive directors were signed by Angelo Pezzuolo, Executive Director of Midwestern Intermediate Unit IV. Letters to the two remaining groups, school district superintendents and state policymakers, were signed by Howard Pullman, Professor of Educational Administration at

Youngstown State University. The respondents were guaranteed anonymity. A copy of the cover letters are contained in Appendix C.

Even though the anticipated return rate of 50% to 60% occurred, a follow-up procedure was initiated. A second mailing was sent to initial nonrespondents. The cover letter contained a polite reminder of failure to respond initially. A copy of the follow-up letter is contained in Appendix D. A second copy of the survey instrument was sent with the follow-up letter.

Data Analysis

Data analysis of survey results addressed the 7 research questions of the study. The first bank of survey questions (1-3) related to the first research issue, on governance. The second bank of survey questions (4-5) related to the structural features research issue. The third bank of survey questions (6-13) related to the third research issue, on primary mission. The next questions (14-36) focused on the programming profile research issue. The fifth section of survey questions (37-46) addressed the fifth research issue, on funding. Survey questions 47 and 48 referred to the accountability research issue. The remaining two questions (49-50) dealt with organization development, as did the last research issue.

Survey data were entered into the SPSSX program via the mainframe at Youngstown State University. The SPSSX program was used to calculate the needed descriptive and inferential statistics.

Analysis of differences between the three groups—IU executive directors, school district superintendents, and state policymakers—was obtained through ANOVAs. The

Scheffé post hoc procedure determined significant contrasts between the mean scores of the three respondent groups. The statistical significance was set at $p = .05$ for Scheffé contrasts.

Summary

While this chapter outlined the study's survey methodology, including the population and sample, data collection, instrumentation, and data analysis, the next chapter reviews the results of the correlations and ANOVAs. The results, both by subscale and by survey item, are discussed. Recommendations of the study as a whole and by the three different respondent groups, are delineated. Areas of agreement or disagreement between the three rater groups are identified for each dimension, subscale, and specific characteristic.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The data analysis accords with the procedures set forth in Chapter 3 and is reported in this chapter, which presents the findings of the study. The focus of the research was to assess the perceived desirability of applying Stephens and Turner's anticipated dimensions of ESAs to Pennsylvania IUs; this research examined the perceptions of Pennsylvania IU executive directors, school district superintendents, and state policymakers.

This chapter includes a summary of the demographic information gathered, a description of Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey results for the three categories of respondents, and a statistical analysis relating to the questions posed in the study. (For a copy of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey instrument, see Appendix E.)

Return Rates

The return rates for the survey instrument distributed to the 27 IU executive directors, 27 school district superintendents, and 20 state policymakers are presented in this section. After an initial mailing to all three rater groups, a second mailing containing a follow-up letter and a second copy of the survey were sent to the nonrespondents. Although the expected rate of 55% for IU executive directors and superintendents was achieved with the initial mailing, the follow-up letter was sent to encourage reluctant respondents to return their surveys. Table 5 summarizes the results of the mailings.

Table 5

Return Rates

Return Rates	First Mailing	Second Mailing
Number Sent	74	33
Executive Directors	27	3
Superintendents	27	13
Policymakers	20	17
Number Returned	41	16
Executive Directors	24 (89%)	3 (100%)*
Superintendents	14 (52%)	5 (70%)*
Policymakers	3 (15%)	6 (45%)*
Total	55%	74%*

*Indicates cumulative percent

Survey Respondents

Position

This study of future dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs surveyed the entire population of IU executive directors and a random sample of school district superintendents and state policymakers. Note that questionnaires were sent to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh IUs to obtain results for future studies, even though the results were not pertinent to this study. A total of 27 executive directors, 19 superintendents, and 9 policymakers responded to an identical survey; however, the survey from one policymaker was uncodeable. The 100% return rate for IU executive directors is indicative of their personal knowledge of the researcher as an IU administrator; the 45% return rate for state policymakers may be indicative of perceived political ramifications of survey results. The state policymakers are

members of the State Board of Education, the Department of Education, the House and Senate Education Committees, and Pennsylvania professional organizations. The mean number of years in respondents' current position as executive director, school superintendent, or state policymaker was 7.22; the average number of years in their current organization—IU, school district, or state agency—was 16.44 years.

Educational Level

Due to Pennsylvania certification regulations, all IU executive directors and school superintendents hold both a master's degree and either a superintendent's letter or an executive director's letter of eligibility. However, in addition to the required education, 17 executive directors and 12 district superintendents have completed a doctorate degree. While no minimum level of education is mandated for the state positions, 5 respondents hold a master's degree, and 3 respondents have completed a doctorate.

Reliability

Table 6 presents full scale and subscale reliability coefficients. N represents the number of surveys on which the respective reliability coefficient was calculated. Reliability coefficients calculated from the returned surveys show a full scale value of 0.94. Two subscales, governance features and structural features, had low reliability coefficients. This indicates the fact that respondents tended not to see the questions as relating to the same concept as is often true with scales containing a small number of questions.

Table 6

Reliability of Full Scale Survey

Subscales	N	Alpha
Governance Features (Part A)	49	0.13
Structural Features (Part B)	53	0.29
Mission (Part C)	52	0.80
Programming Profile (Part D)	50	0.93
Direct Instructional Support	52	0.79
Direct Support Services	53	0.90
National Goals Support	53	0.86
Nonrelated Services	52	0.66
Funding (Part E)	51	0.84
State Support	52	0.89
Categorical Regional Taxing	52	0.90
Service Contracts	53	0.74
Accountability (Part F)	52	0.95
Organizational Development (Part G)	53	0.80
Full Scale Survey	44	0.94

Note: Parts A through G refer to sections of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.

Dimensions

Subscale means, standard deviations, and F test results from the ANOVAs for all three groups of respondents—executive directors, superintendents, and policymakers—are presented in Table 7. F test results, one for each subscale, are presented in the column labeled F.

Note that the possible range of mean scores for a given subset is dependent upon the number of questions contained in that subscale. Since there are 3 survey

questions (1-3) in the governance features subscale, the possible range of mean scores on that subscale is 3 to 15. Similarly the possible ranges for the remaining subscales are as follows: structural features, 2 questions (4-5), possible range 2 to 10; mission, 8 survey questions (6-13), possible range 8 to 40; programming profile, 23 survey questions (14-36) in the full subscale, possible range 23 to 115 (direct instructional support, possible range 8 to 40; direct support services, possible range 7 to 35; national goals support, possible range 4 to 20; nonrelated services, possible range 4 to 20); finite funding, 10 questions (37 to 46), possible range 10 to 50 (state support, possible range 3 to 15; categorical regional taxing, possible range 5 to 25; service contract, possible range 2 to 10); accountability, 2 survey questions (47-48), possible range 2 to 10; organizational development, 2 survey questions (49-50), possible range 2 to 10.

F tests for the governance features subscale (Part A) and the structural features subscale (Part B) indicate a statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F ratio is significant at the 0.05 level. The F test for the mission subscale (Part C) indicates no statistically significant difference in responses from the three respondent groups.

The programming profile (Part D) contains 4 subscales. The F test for the programming full scale indicates a statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F ratio is statistically significant at the 0.01 level. F tests for the direct instructional support subscale, the district support subscale, and the nonrelated services subscale indicate a statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F ratio is significant at the 0.01 level. The F test

Table 7

Analysis of Variance of Dimensions

	Group			
Full Subscales	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Governance Features (Part A)				4.28*
Mean	10.70	9.37	9.00	
S.D.	1.94	1.57	1.29	
N	23	19	7	
Structural Features (Part B)				3.38*
Mean	6.00	7.21	7.00	
S.D.	1.72	1.58	1.31	
N	26	19	8	
Mission (Part C)				2.01
Mean	33.59	30.67	31.86	
S.D.	3.43	6.88	2.61	
N	27	18	7	
Programming Profile (Part D)				
Full Subscale				11.04**
Mean	92.85	74.29	79.71	
S.D.	8.97	16.61	15.97	
N	26	17	7	
Direct Instructional Support				5.74**
Mean	29.81	24.72	25.62	
S.D.	4.49	5.55	6.26	
N	26	18	8	

(continued)

Table 7

Analysis of Variance of Dimensions (continued)

	Group			
Full Subscales	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
District Support Services				8.08**
Mean	29.92	23.68	25.00	
S.D.	3.22	6.85	6.84	
N	26	19	8	
National Goals Support				3.34*
Mean	16.85	14.63	14.57	
S.D.	2.88	3.55	2.99	
N	27	19	7	
Nonrelated Services				16.46**
Mean	16.22	12.00	14.86	
S.D.	2.11	2.76	2.61	
N	27	18	7	
Funding (Part E)				
Full Subscale				1.70
Mean	32.16	27.61	28.63	
S.D.	6.46	9.42	10.69	
N	25	18	8	
State Support				2.45
Mean	12.23	10.94	9.88	
S.D.	2.12	3.50	3.40	
N	26	18	8	

(continued)

Table 7

Analysis of Variance of Dimensions (continued)

	Group			
Full Subscales	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Categorical Regional Taxes				0.95
Mean	12.48	9.89	11.38	
S.D.	5.88	6.28	6.80	
N	25	19	8	
Service Contracts				0.83
Mean	7.65	6.79	7.38	
S.D.	1.96	2.78	1.41	
N	26	19	8	
Accountability (Part F)				.078
Mean	7.12	7.39	7.12	
S.D.	2.60	2.12	2.10	
N	26	18	8	
Organizational Development (Part G)				9.11**
Mean	9.26	7.44	8.50	
S.D.	0.94	2.04	0.76	
N	27	18	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Parts A through G refer to sections of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p $\leq$ .05, **p $\leq$ .01

for the national goals support subscale indicates a statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F ratio is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Funding (Part E) contains 3 subscales. The F test for the funding full scale indicates no statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups.

F tests for the state support, categorical regional taxes, and service contracts subscales indicate no statistically significant differences in responses from the three respondent groups.

The F test for the accountability subscale (Part F) indicates no statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F test for the organizational development (Part G) subscale indicates a statistically significant difference in responses from the three rater groups. The F ratio is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Governance Features

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the governance features subscale are presented in Table 8. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F. Scheffé post hoc procedures were used to identify statistically significant contrasts, at the 0.05 level, between means for the three rater groups. The possible range of mean scores for each item is 1 to 5.

The governance research issue (Part A) is addressed by three survey questions (1-3) relating to the reduction in the number of independent IUs and the inclusion of urban districts and instructional support centers (ISCs) in interdistrict IUs. Mean scores in Table 8 indicate negligible support for reducing the number of independent IUs. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate an extensive recommendation for including urban districts in an interdistrict IU. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is significantly higher than both the superintendents' and policymakers'

Table 8

Analysis of Variance of Governance Features

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Reduce Number of IUs (1)				0.21
Mean	1.88	1.68	1.71	
S.D.	1.07	1.20	0.49	
N	26	19	7	
Include Urban Districts (2)				5.43**
Mean	4.50	3.79	3.62	
S.D.	0.78	0.86	0.92	
N	24	19	8	
Include Instructional Support Centers (3)				3.41*
Mean	4.36	3.89	3.25	
S.D.	1.00	1.15	1.17	
N	25	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

mean scores. Mean scores indicate an extensive recommendation for including ISCs in IUs. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is significantly higher than the policymakers' mean scores.

Structural Features

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the structural features subscale are presented in Table 9. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

Table 9

Analysis of Variance of Structural Features

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Advisory Groups (4)				0.37
Mean	3.38	3.63	3.63	
S.D.	0.98	1.12	1.06	
N	26	19	8	
Superintendents' Advisory Council (5)				5.15**
Mean	2.56	3.58	3.38	
S.D.	1.25	1.07	0.52	
N	27	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$

The structural research issue (Part B) is addressed by 2 survey questions (4-5) related to program advisory groups and superintendents' advisory groups. Mean scores in Table 9 indicate a moderate recommendation for program advisory groups. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate negligible support for enhanced superintendent advisory groups' power. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is significantly lower than the superintendents' mean score.

Mission

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the mission subscale are presented in Table 10. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

Table 10

Analysis of Variance of Expanded Mission

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Equalizing Education (6)				0.51
Mean	3.63	3.32	3.63	
S.D.	1.11	1.16	0.74	
N	27	19	8	
Enhancing Quality (7)				3.11*
Mean	4.40	3.74	4.13	
S.D.	0.69	1.15	0.83	
N	27	19	8	
Technical Assistance/Capacity Building (8)				3.44*
Mean	4.67	4.06	4.71	
S.D.	0.55	1.16	0.49	
N	27	18	7	
Cost-effectiveness (9)				0.97
Mean	4.70	4.53	4.29	
S.D.	0.67	0.77	0.95	
N	27	19	7	
Stewardship of Information (10)				0.70
Mean	4.22	4.37	3.88	
S.D.	0.97	1.01	0.99	
N	27	19	8	
Coalition Building (11)				0.96
Mean	4.41	4.00	4.38	
S.D.	0.93	1.20	0.74	
N	27	19	8	

(continued)

Table 10

Analysis of Variance of Expanded Mission (continued)

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Program Initiation (12)				4.48*
Mean	4.04	3.42	3.25	
S.D.	0.65	1.07	0.70	
N	27	19	8	
Program Evaluation (13)				0.30
Mean	3.52	3.26	3.38	
S.D.	0.98	1.24	1.19	
N	27	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p $\leq$ .05, **p $\leq$ .01

The mission research issue (Part C) is addressed by 8 survey questions (6-13) related to equalizing educational opportunities, enhancing quality education, technical assistance and capacity building, cost-effective delivery of state priorities, stewardship of state information, coalition building, program initiation, and program evaluation. Mean scores in Table 10 indicate moderate IU responsibility for equalizing educational opportunities and program evaluation. Scheffé contrasts show no significant differences between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate extensive IU responsibility for enhancing educational quality, for technical assistance and capacity building, for cost-effective delivery of education, for stewardship of state information, for coalition building, and for program initiation. There are no significant contrasts between the mean scores of any two groups.

Programming Profile

The programming profile research issue (Part D) is addressed by 23 survey questions (14-36) consisting of 4 subscales: direct instructional support, district support services, national goals support, and nonrelated services.

Direct instructional support.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the direct instructional support subscale are presented in Table 11. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The first subscale is composed of 8 survey questions (14-21) addressing direct instructional support services to special populations: high-incidence disabled, low-incidence disabled, at-risk students, vocational-technical students, gifted students, adult learners, pre-school students, and geographically isolated students. In the area of special needs students, mean scores in Table 11 indicate moderate support for direct-instruction to high-incidence disabled students and extensive support for low-incidence disabled students. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. In the area of new populations, mean scores indicate moderate direct instructional support for at-risk students. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate negligible direct instructional support for vocational-technical and gifted students. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate moderate direct instructional support for adult learners. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is

Table 11

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

Direct Instructional Support

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
High-incidence Disabled (14)				1.92
Mean	3.96	3.39	3.38	
S.D.	0.92	1.29	0.92	
N	26	18	8	
Low-incidence Disabled (15)				0.87
Mean	4.23	3.83	3.75	
S.D.	1.14	1.25	1.04	
N	26	18	8	
At-risk Students (16)				3.59*
Mean	3.81	3.05	3.13	
S.D.	0.98	1.03	0.99	
N	26	19	8	
Vocational-technical Students (17)				0.92
Mean	2.92	2.95	2.70	
S.D.	0.93	1.43	0.89	
N	26	19	8	
Gifted Students (18)				0.16
Mean	2.92	2.79	3.00	
S.D.	0.84	1.18	1.07	
N	26	19	8	

(continued)

Table 11

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

Direct Instructional Support (continued)

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Adult Learners (19)				7.00**
Mean	3.88	2.74	2.62	
S.D.	0.99	1.33	1.19	
N	26	19	8	
Pre-school Students (20)				4.43*
Mean	4.31	3.37	3.63	
S.D.	0.84	1.30	1.19	
N	16	19	8	
Geographically Isolated Students (21)				4.09*
Mean	3.77	2.95	3.38	
S.D.	0.86	1.03	1.06	
N	26	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p $\leq$ .05, **p $\leq$ .01

significantly higher than both school superintendents' and state policymakers' mean scores. Mean scores indicate moderate direct instructional support for pre-school and geographically isolated students. Scheffé contrasts show that the IU executive directors' mean scores are significantly higher than the superintendents' mean scores.

District support services.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in district support services subscale are presented in Table 12. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The second programming profile subscale is composed of 7 survey questions (22-28) addressing support services to school districts: computer skills, distance learning, instructional leadership, media and library services, parental involvement, academic competitions and graduation rates. Mean scores in Table 12 indicate extensive district support for computer skills, distance learning, and media and library services. Scheffé contrasts show that the executive directors' mean scores are significantly higher than the district superintendents' mean scores. Mean scores indicate extensive IU support services for instructional leadership. The Scheffé contrast shows that the IU executive directors' mean score is significantly higher than both the school superintendents' and the state policymakers' mean scores. Mean scores indicate moderate IU district support services for parental involvement and graduation rates. Scheffé contrasts show that the executive directors' mean scores are significantly higher than the district superintendents' mean scores. Mean scores indicate moderate IU district support for academic competitions. The Scheffé contrast indicates no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level.

Table 12

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

District Support Services

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Computer Skills (22)				10.89**
Mean	4.85	3.58	4.00	
S.D.	0.36	1.43	0.76	
N	27	19	8	
Distance Learning (23)				7.62**
Mean	4.85	3.74	4.13	
S.D.	0.36	1.48	0.83	
N	27	19	8	
Instructional Leadership (24)				6.30**
Mean	4.63	3.89	3.63	
S.D.	0.63	0.99	1.19	
N	27	19	8	
Media and Library Services (25)				5.43**
Mean	4.52	3.74	3.88	
S.D.	0.70	0.99	0.83	
N	27	19	8	
Parental Involvement (26)				5.50**
Mean	3.70	2.68	3.13	
S.D.	0.95	1.06	1.25	
N	27	19	8	

(continued)

Table 12

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

District Support Services (continued)

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Academic Competitions (27)				2.46
Mean	3.96	3.42	3.00	
S.D.	0.77	1.47	1.51	
N	26	19	8	
Graduation Rates (28)				0.35*
Mean	3.50	2.63	3.25	
S.D.	0.99	1.26	1.17	
N	26	18	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

National goals support.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the national goals support subscale are presented in Table 13. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The third programming profile subscale is composed of 4 survey questions (29-36) addressing services related to the national goals of education, including English and history curriculum development, geography curriculum development, information-age requirements, and staff development. Mean scores in Table 13 indicate moderate IU support services for English, history, and geography curriculum

Table 13

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

National Goals Support

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
English/History Curriculum (29)				0.50
Mean	3.89	3.74	3.50	
S.D.	1.01	0.99	0.93	
N	27	19	8	
Geography Curriculum (30)				0.40
Mean	3.85	3.74	3.50	
S.D.	0.99	0.99	0.93	
N	27	19	8	
Information-age Curriculum (31)				5.21**
Mean	4.48	3.74	3.63	
S.D.	0.75	1.10	0.74	
N	27	19	8	
Staff Development (32)				12.81**
Mean	4.63	3.42	4.14	
S.D.	0.69	0.90	0.90	
N	27	19	7	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$

development. Scheffé contrasts indicate no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate extensive IU support services for information-age requirements and staff development. Scheffé contrasts show that the executive directors' mean scores are significantly higher than the district superintendents' mean scores.

Nonrelated services.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the nonrelated services subscale are presented in Table 14. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The fourth programming profile subscale is composed of 4 survey questions (33-36) that addressed unrelated services including nonpublic school students, roles related to state-initiated student-performance accountability, variations in services dependent on school district demographics, and data processing services. Mean scores in Table 14 indicate extensive IU support services for nonpublic school students. The Scheffé contrast indicates that the executive directors' mean score is significantly higher than both the superintendents' and the policymakers' mean scores. Mean scores indicate extensive IU support services for student-performance accountability and data processing. There are no significant contrasts between the mean scores of any two groups at the 0.05 level. Mean scores indicate extensive differences in IU services based upon differing district demographics. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is significantly higher.

Table 14

Analysis of Variance of Programming Profile

Nonrelated Services

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Nonpublic Schools (33)				16.72**
Mean	4.04	2.21	3.43	
S.D.	0.71	1.40	1.13	
N	27	19	7	
Student Performance Assessment (34)				3.65*
Mean	4.07	3.32	3.38	
S.D.	0.83	1.25	0.92	
N	27	19	8	
School District Demographics (35)				6.93**
Mean	4.07	3.16	3.88	
S.D.	0.68	0.96	0.99	
N	27	18	8	
Data Processing Services (36)				2.90
Mean	4.04	3.39	4.13	
S.D.	0.85	1.20	0.64	
N	27	18	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

Funding

The funding research issue (Part E) is addressed by 10 survey questions (37-46) consisting of three subscales: state support, categorical regional taxes, and service contracts.

State support.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the state support subscale are presented in Table 15. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The first subscale contains 3 survey questions (37-39) addressing increased state support in the areas of direct instructional support, Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations, and student-performance accountability systems for new state priorities. Mean scores in Table 15 indicate an extensive increase in state support for direct instructional support, for Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations, and for student-performance assessment systems. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level.

Categorical regional taxing.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the categorical regional taxing subscale are presented in Table 16. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

The second funding subscale contains 5 survey questions (40-44) addressing categorical regional taxing power in the areas of full range of programs and services, disabled regional schools, regional vocational-technical schools, early childhood program administration, and math and science program administration. Mean scores in Table 16 indicate negligible support for granting categorical regional taxing power to IUs in any of the areas listed above. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level.

Table 15

Analysis of Variance of IU Funding

State Support

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
District Instructional Support (37)				2.78
Mean	4.04	3.47	3.25	
S.D.	0.82	1.35	1.28	
N	26	19	8	
Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations (38)				2.92
Mean	4.11	3.63	3.12	
S.D.	0.86	1.30	1.12	
N	26	19	8	
Student Performance Assessment (39)				1.38
Mean	4.08	3.67	3.50	
S.D.	0.84	1.19	1.20	
N	26	18	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p $\leq$ .05, **p $\leq$ .01

Service contracts.

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the service contracts subscale are presented in Table 17. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance of IU Funding

Categorical Regional Taxes

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Full Range IU (40)				0.62
Mean	2.42	1.95	2.38	
S.D.	1.53	1.40	1.41	
N	26	19	8	
Regional Schools for Disabled (41)				0.19
Mean	2.60	2.32	2.38	
S.D.	1.53	1.57	1.77	
N	25	19	8	
Regional Vocational-Technical Schools (42)				2.27
Mean	2.58	1.74	2.25	
S.D.	1.30	1.33	1.28	
N	26	19	8	
Early Childhood Administration (43)				1.11
Mean	2.85	2.16	2.38	
S.D.	1.54	1.50	1.77	
N	26	19	8	
Math and Science Administration (44)				0.71
Mean	2.19	1.74	2.00	
S.D.	1.33	1.10	1.41	
N	26	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

Table 17

Analysis of Variance of IU Funding

Service Contracts

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Optional District Services (45)				3.69*
Mean	4.19	3.21	3.88	
S.D.	1.02	1.51	0.83	
N	26	19	8	
Nonpublic Schools (46)				0.05
Mean	3.46	3.58	3.50	
S.D.	1.14	1.50	0.93	
N	26	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix in E.
*$p \leq .05$, **$p \leq .01$

The third funding subscale contains 2 survey questions (45-46) addressing service contracts. Mean scores in Table 17 indicate extensive use of district service contracts for optional services. The Scheffé contrast shows that the executive directors' mean score is significantly higher than the district superintendents' mean score. Mean scores indicate moderate support for nonpublic school contracts. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level.

Accountability

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the accountability subscale are presented in Table 18. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

Table 18

Analysis of Variance of IU Accountability

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Organizational Effectiveness (47)				0.15
Mean	3.58	3.78	3.63	
S.D.	1.33	1.11	0.92	
N	26	18	8	
Organizational Processes (48)				0.03
Mean	3.54	3.61	3.50	
S.D.	1.30	1.09	1.20	
N	26	18	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p $\leq$ .05, **p $\leq$ .01

The accountability research issue (Part F) is addressed by 2 survey questions (47-48) relating to performance indicators for organizational effectiveness and organizational processes. Mean scores in Table 18 indicate moderate support for IU accountability based on process indicators for both organizational effectiveness and organizational processes. There are no significant contrasts between the means of any two groups at the 0.05 level.

Organizational Development

Item means, standard deviations, and F tests for each item in the organizational development subscale are presented in Table 19. F test results, one for each item, are presented in the column labeled F.

Table 19

Analysis of Variance of Organizational Development

	Group			
Variable	*I*	*II*	*III*	*F*
Core Professionals (49)				4.15*
Mean	4.48	3.78	4.00	
S.D.	0.64	1.11	0.53	
N	27	18	8	
Full PSS Partners (50)				11.01*
Mean	4.78	3.74	4.50	
S.D.	0.51	1.05	0.53	
N	27	19	8	

Note. I = Executive Directors, II = School Superintendents, III = State Policymakers. Numbers in parentheses refer to the survey questions on the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*p ≤ .05, **p ≤ .01

The organizational development research issue (Part G) is addressed by 2 survey questions (49-50) related to professional development of the operating core of professionals and full partnership credibility in the state educational system. Mean scores in Table 19 indicate extensive commitment of IU resources for core professional development and full Pennsylvania School System (PSS) partnership. Scheffé contrasts show that the executive directors' mean scores are significantly higher than the district superintendents' mean scores.

Summary

The return rate for the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey was 100% for executive directors, 70% for superintendents, and 45% for policymakers, with a

cumulative return of 74% for the study. Full scale reliability index for the survey is 0.94. This chapter reports F test results for the three rater groups' recommendations for the population of Stephens and Turner's anticipated dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs. Results indicate negligible, moderate, or extensive support based upon the mean scores. Significance contrasts are also reported.

The next chapter summarizes the ascribed desirability and intergroup agreement on each dimension, with specific characteristics of each. The text also discusses the conclusions and implications of the study. Finally, the chapter recommends future research studies.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

Summary of Study

The United States and Pennsylvania educational systems are undergoing intensive critical evaluation. A study of Pennsylvania's intermediate units is timely because they play a key role in equity, quality, and cost-effective education in the state's local school districts, critical issues in this evaluation. The purpose of the study was to determine the recommended future roles and functions for Pennsylvania's IUs as perceived by three groups—executive directors, school district superintendents, and state policymakers—all of whom have decision making power over these ESAs.

A review of the literature indicated that E. Robert Stephens is a recognized, national expert on interdistrict collaboration typically assigned to ESAs. Stephens and Turner (1991) predicted seven major categories to determine the future of ESAs on a national level: governance features, structural features, expanded mission, extended programming profile, finite funding, rigorous accountability, and organizational development. Since the origin and historical development of Pennsylvania's IUs followed national patterns, it is appropriate that a study of these intermediate units address Stephens and Turner's anticipated dimensions for ESAs across the United States.

A measurement instrument, the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey, was constructed to collect recommendations of IU executive directors, school district superintendents, and state policymakers on the advisability of Stephens and Turner's

dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs. Content validity was assured through a jury-of-experts review. Reliability was determined through the SPSSX program.

Survey results were analyzed using correlations and ANOVA procedures in the SPSSX program on the Youngstown State University mainframe. The following recommended future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs are based on study results.

Conclusions of the Study

This section summarizes future dimensions for Pennsylvania's IUs as recommended by IU executive directors, school district superintendents, and/or state policymakers. First, a discussion compares results for each subscale by the three respondent groups. Second, a comparative discussion addresses each specific feature within each category. Third, a discussion of anticipated dimensions for IUs, based on the recommendations of leaders who exercise power over Pennsylvania's IUs, concludes each section. This pattern follows each discussion of the seven major anticipated dimensions delineated by Stephens and Turner (1991) for ESAs across the nation.

Analysis of the Results

Comparison of mean scores on various dimensions between groups served to identify concurrence of opinion regarding future roles and functions of IUs. It is reasonable to argue that when the state policymaking authorities, school district representatives, and implementors of state policy (executive directors) concur, the likelihood for a particular future is greater than when the critical actors disagree

substantially—the fact that the three groups may possess unequal formal power to affect change, notwithstanding.

For this reason, the research identified future dimensions, and specific features of these dimensions, on which there is highest intergroup agreement, moderate intergroup agreement, or lowest intergroup agreement based on differences between group mean scores as measured by ANOVAs. **Specific features for which F ratios have a probability greater than .50 are categorized as having highest intergroup agreement; specific features for which F ratios have a probability greater than .05 but less than .50 are categorized as having moderate intergroup agreement; and specific ratios for which F ratios have a probability less than .05, that is, statistically significant at the .05 level, are categorized as having lowest intergroup agreement. The mean scores for specific features were ranked in descending order. Those in the top third are categorized as having highest ascribed desirability; those in the middle third are described as having moderate ascribed desirability; those in the low third are categorized as having lowest ascribed desirability.**

In order to accurately interpret the Analysis Matrix, **note that some specific features within the lowest ascribed desirability range reflect moderate (3.00 - 3.49) survey mean scores.** Therefore, these specific features are moderately recommended, but not as highly, as specific features within the moderate and highest ascribed desirability range. Also, while the lowest degree of agreement reflects statistical significance between the mean scores of the three rater groups, it does not

reflect total lack of support, but less support for that specific feature by at least one rater group. The categorization of the 50 specific features (survey items) is found in Table 19.

Governance Features

Within the governance subscale (Part A), survey results indicate lowest ascribed desirability for reducing the number of independent IUs within the Pennsylvania School System, with highest intergroup agreement between the three groups. Including urban IUs (Philadelphia and Pittsburgh) and Instructional Support Centers (ISCs)—the Eastern Instructional Support Center, the Middle Instructional Support Center, and the Western Instructional Support Center—within interdistrict IU agencies is highly recommended by the study, however, with low agreement between the three rater groups. In summary, the study predicts no reduction in the **number of independent IUs**, but including **urban IUs** and **ISCs** in interdistrict agencies could occur, if superintendent and state policymakers become convinced of the desirability of these changes.

Structural Features

Regarding structural features (Part B), survey results from all three rater groups indicate moderate desirability for involving program advisory groups in planning, implementing, and evaluating IU programs and services. However, a moderate recommendation (lowest range) is ascribed to granting substantial decision making

Table 19

Analysis Matrix

Degree of Agreement (Significance Level of F Ratio)	Ascribed Desirability (Mean Score)			
		Lowest (1.00 - 3.49)	Moderate (3.50 - 3.99)	Highest (4.00 - 5.00)
Highest Agreement (0.51 - 1.0)		Program Evaluation (C)*	English & History Curriculum (D)	
		Vo-Tech Students (D)	Geography Curriculum (D)	
		Gifted Students (D)	Organizational Effectiveness (F)	
		Disabled Schools (E)	Organizational Processes (F)	
		Full Range of Services (E)	Equalize Education (C)	
		Reduction in # of IUs (A)	Nonpublic Contracts (E)	
			Program Advisory Groups (B)	
Moderate Agreement (0.06 - 0.50)		Early Childhood (E)	Student Accountability (D)	Cost-effective Education (C)
		Regional Vo-Techs (E)	State Accountability (E)	Coalition Building (C)
		Math & Science Admin. (E)	Data Processing (D)	Information Stewardship (C)
			Chapter 5 Curriculum Regulations (E)	Low-incidence Disabled (D)
			Instructional Support (E)	
			High-incidence Disabled (D)	
			Academic Competitions (D)	
Lowest Agreement (0.00 - 0.05)		At-Risk Students (D)*	Pre-school Students (D)	Technical Assistance (C)
		Geographic Isolation (D)*	Service Contracts (E)	PSS Full Partnership (G)
		Nonpublic Student Services (D)*	District Demographics (D)	Distance Learning (D)
		Adult Learners (D)*	Program Initiation (C)	Computer Skills (D)
		Parental Involvement (D)*		Instructional Leadership (D)
		Graduation Rates (D)*		Core Development (G)
		Superintendents' Advisory (B)*		Media & Library (D)
				Staff Development (D)
				Enhance Quality (C)
				Urban IUs (A)
				Information-age Society (D)
				ISCs (A)

Note: Parts A through G refer to sections of the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey. See questionnaire in Appendix E.
*Reflects a survey moderate mean score.

power over IU budgets and programs to the superintendents' advisory group with strong disagreement from the executive directors. Thus, the study moderately supports (moderate range) **program advisory groups;** however, the study moderately supports (lowest range) granting substantial decision making roles to the **superintendents' advisory council,** only if executive directors' support can be obtained.

Mission

Within new or expanded dimensions of the IU mission (Part C), 6 specific features are highly recommended. Of these, three—**cost-effective delivery of education, coalition building,** and **stewardship of state information**—are highly recommended with a moderate degree of agreement between the three rater groups. In spite of the high recommendation for two other specific features—**technical assistance and capacity building** and **enhancing educational quality**—there are significant contrasts between the three rater groups. Three specific features of the mission are moderately recommended. **Equalizing educational opportunities** was moderately recommended, with the highest degree of agreement between the rater groups. **Program initiation** by local school districts is also moderately recommended, but with significant disagreement between the groups. One remaining specific feature, **program evaluation**, was moderately recommended (lowest range) with a high degree of agreement between the rater groups. Therefore, the study supports the extension of the mission in all 8 areas of the dimension.

Programming Profile

The anticipated major programming profile (Part D) contains five subscales. The first addresses direct instructional support to exceptional children and new special populations. First, the subscale addresses direct instructional support to disabled students. Both mean scores and intergroup relationships are highly supportive of direct instructional support for **low-incidence disabled students**; however, only moderate desirability and intergroup agreement exist for **high-incidence exceptional students**. Second, this subscale addresses direct instructional support to six new special student groups. Providing direct support to two new populations—vocational-technical students and gifted students—received lowest ascribed desirability with highest agreement between the rater groups. Also, three student populations—at-risk students, geographically isolated students, and adult learners—received moderate recommendations (lowest range) and showed lowest intergroup agreement. Finally, direct instructional support to pre-school age students (moderate range) was moderately recommended, but with lowest agreement between the groups. Thus, the study highly recommends direct instructional support to low-incidence disabled students, but only moderately supports direct instructional support for high-incidence disabled students. The feasibility of direct instructional support for new populations is low, for **vocational-technical students** and **gifted students**; however, moderate support exists for the remaining four groups—**pre-school students, at-risk students, geographically isolated students, nonpublic students,** and **adult learners**, but with significant disagreement on the part of district superintendents.

The second subscale within the programming profile addresses district support services to school districts within seven areas. While 4 of these areas—distance learning, computer skills, instructional leadership, and media and library—received highest ascribed desirability ratings for district support services, significant disagreement existed between the three respondent groups. Support services for academic competitions received moderate mean scores, with moderate intergroup agreement. Furthermore, district support services related to increased parental involvement and high school graduation rate improvement received moderate recommendations (lowest range) with lowest intergroup agreement. In every area, the IU executive directors' group gave the highest desirability scores, with the superintendents' group consistently showing significantly lower desirability scores. With strong leadership from executive director, increased services in the areas of **distance learning, computer skills, instructional leadership**, and **library and media** may be feasible. However, district support services related to increasing **parental involvement** or **high school graduation** needs stronger superintendent support.

The third subscale within programming relates to 4 district support services for the achievement of national education goals. IU services related to information-age requirements and staff development were highly recommended, but with significant differences between the three rater groups. Curricular development was moderately recommended, with a high degree of agreement between the three rater groups. The study moderately supports IU services for **English, history, and geography curriculum development**, but highly supports IU services for **information-age**

requirements and **staff development**. Again, the mean directors' rating was highest and the superintendents' rating was lowest in all areas.

The last subscale within the anticipated programming profile addresses 4 unrelated areas. Instructional support services to nonpublic school students received low mean scores with lowest intergroup agreement. Student-performance accountability services received both moderate desirability and moderate agreement ratings. Moderate support exists for differing IU roles and functions depending on the demographics of the constituent school district, but with significant difference between the rater groups. Data processing and information management received moderate desirability scores, with moderate agreement between the groups. Once again, the directors' mean scores were consistently higher than the means of the other two rater groups. The desirability of IUs providing instructional support services, other than mandated **nonpublic services**, is very low. However, **student performance accountability services** and **data processing services** are moderately supported by the study. In order for IU services to differ based on **school district demographics**, superintendents must be convinced of the desirability of this approach.

Funding

Three concepts for future funding (Part E) are anticipated. First, increased state support for programs and services related to new state priorities including direct student instruction, new Chapter 5 Curriculum Rules and Regulations support, and state student-performance accountability system assistance received moderate desirability ratings with moderate intergroup agreement. The likelihood that **state**

funds will be increased to finance programs and services related to new state priorities is supported by the study.

The second funding concept is granting of categorical regional taxing power to IUs. All categorical regional taxes received lowest ascribed desirability ratings. Two of these categories—funding a full range of IU programs and services and funding regional schools for the disabled—received lowest desirability ratings with highest agreement between the three rater groups. The remaining three categories—early childhood program administration, regional vocational-technical school administration, and math and science program administration—also received lowest desirability scores, but with moderate agreement between the rater groups. The study does not support **categorical regional taxing power** for IUs.

The third anticipated funding source is service contracts. Moderate support exists for service contracts for both optional IU programs and services and nonpublic school services. While the intergroup agreement for nonpublic school contracts was high, there was significant disagreement between the group ratings on district service contracts for optional services. The study supports continued **nonpublic school contracts**; however, the extension of IU **optional contracted services** to school districts needs stronger superintendent support.

Accountability

The accountability subscale (Part F) addresses IU accreditation, using performance indicators to assess organizational effectiveness and organizational processes was rated moderately desirable, with the highest degree of agreement

between the three respondent groups. An IU accountability system with **performance indicators** is moderately supported by the study.

Organizational Development

The organizational development (Part G) subscale addresses committing IU resources for staff development of the professional operating core and granting IUs full partnership credibility in the Pennsylvania School System. Both these areas relating to organizational development were moderately recommended and with the highest degree of disagreement between the rater groups. Again, executive directors' recommendations were significantly higher than superintendents' recommendations. The survey supports **professional development for core operating IU professionals** and **full partnership credibility for IUs**—issues related to organizational development.

Implications of the Study

The results of this study of the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs support some specific characteristics within each of the seven dimensions anticipated by Stephens and Turner in 1991. This section discusses the implications for implementing study results in IUs. The study adds to the knowledge base that state, local, and regional officials need for open dialogue and for sound decision making on the future of these middle-echelon educational agencies.

Based on the results of this study, IUs should expand and extend services related to the cost-effective delivery of education to local school districts, coalition building between/among the human service agencies, and provision of state-level

information to the local districts. Also, direct instructional support should continue to be provided to low-incidence disabled students. Furthermore, efforts should be made to gain state level support for including urban IUs and ISCs in interdistrict IUs.

While increased state funding for programs and services directly related to new state priorities are indicated, no consideration should be given to granting categorical regional taxing power to IUs. Service contracts should continue to be used for nonpublic school services. Optional district services should be contracted where adequate superintendent support can be obtained.

While the study highly supports the following recommendations, the executive directors' ratings were significantly higher than the superintendents' ratings. Therefore, the following recommendations should only be implemented if adequate superintendent support can be established. IUs could assume responsibility for enhancing the quality of education and providing technical assistance and capacity building in the local school districts. Also, IUs could extend or enhance programming support services to school districts related to the following topics: distance learning, computer skills, instructional leadership, media and library, staff development, and information-age requirements. Given the necessary support, IUs could expend resources to provide extensive professional development opportunities for the core operating team. IUs should also be extended full partnership creditability within the state educational system with adequate agreement among the three leadership groups.

In addition, an IU accountability system based on performance indicators of organizational effectiveness and organizational processes should be initiated. Advisory

groups, consisting of district personnel, should be convened for planning, implementing, and evaluating IU programs and services, but granting budgetary decision making power to superintendents' advisory councils needs stronger executive directors support. Furthermore, IU curriculum services related to planned course development should be provided. Finally, IUs should carry a primary responsibility for equalizing educational opportunities and enhancing educational quality for all students in the region's school districts.

Given adequate local support, each IU should consider the possibility of providing the following programs and services: data processing, instructional leadership, academic competitions, and student performance accountability. Also, with stronger district support, direct instructional services could be provided to high-incidence disabled students and pre-school age children. Local consideration should be given to differentiating IU services based on demographics of constituent school district, as well as program initiation in school districts. IU executive directors and district superintendents should work for consensus in determining those programs and services needed in the regional area.

IUs should not consider services for vocational-technical students, at-risk students, geographically-isolated students, and gifted students. Programs related to parental involvement, high school graduation rate improvement, program evaluation, or nonpublic school students should not be implemented without stronger superintendent support.

Clearly, strong support for IU programs and services exists within the three respondent groups. Note that all programs and services received moderate or extensive mean scores from all three rater groups. Better communication between IU executive directors and school director superintendents could enhance decision making on a regional level. Educational leaders should capitalize on the ascribed desirability of IU programs and services expressed in the survey results and implement as many study recommendations as possible. Since the three respondent groups exercise position power over IUs, it is critical that all decisions be derived through consensus based on current research and adequate information.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations for further research are proposed. First, a more in-depth study of governance and structural features of Pennsylvania's IUs is warranted, especially at this time of financial crises and educational reform. The study would include the issue of fiscal feasibility of operating parallel organizations providing similar services. Also, this study would address budgetary review, especially as it relates to programming decisions, by the superintendents' advisory groups. In addition, the study would investigate the impact of the inclusion—or exclusion—of Pennsylvania's urban IUs in interdistrict organizations on educational equity. Certainly, these three issues warrant further investigation at this time of educational restructuring.

Second, since equity, quality, and efficiency are key components of Pennsylvania IUs' mission and are the most frequently cited reasons for supporting IU

programs and services (Stanley, 1996), further study of performance-based accountability based on specific criteria relating to the IUs' mission is warranted. While this study showed moderate ascribed desirability with moderate to highest agreement between the three rater groups for accountability based on organizational effectiveness and organizational processes, further studies should address more specific criteria on which to base IU ratings. At this time of increased accountability, this could lead to a quality accreditation system.

Third, an interesting and very political study of the relationships among the three respondent groups should be conducted. Due to the intermediary position of IUs, their relationships with Pennsylvania Department of Education, as well as constituent school districts, greatly impacts IUs' roles and functions. Also, since differences exist between executive directors' ratings and superintendents' ratings, a study of communication/political relationships between these two groups could enhance the findings of this study. In addition, because state funding was drastically reduced while this research recommends increased state funding related to new state priorities, a study of political issues related to IU funding could provide important information. Furthermore, a study of the political views of the Pennsylvania School System, especially the Pennsylvania IU System, could prove important in educational decision making and strategic planning.

Fourth, further studies should extend the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey to special district education service agencies in other states across the United States. This study supports some specific features in each of Stephens and Turner's

anticipated dimension for ESAs, for Pennsylvania's IUs. The proposed study would determine which other state ESA systems would benefit from implementation of Stephens and Turner's work. These recommended studies appear to be logical extensions/expansions of the current study of the future roles and functions of Pennsylvania's IUs.

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APPENDIX A
Content Validity of Survey

Recommended Changes to Survey Questionnaire

A. Recommended Changes to Format

·Replace PAIU with IU throughout the document to avoid confusion with the PAIU organization for executive directors.

·Review all levels of heading for size and page placement.

·Review all subheadings for appropriateness.

* On response scale, change all levels to Part A: Structural Features. Consider eliminating the response scale completely.

* Change III. Survey Questions to III. Future Dimensions

·Add additional sections to the survey questionnaire to reflect the content of the last three questions.

Make the question stems in Part C, D, E, and F stand out—shift margin to left, box, or whatever.

·Enlarge III to the size of I and II

*Disregarded recommendation.

B. Recommended Changes to Text

Page 1

·Write Pennsylvania, not PA, every time

·Write Intermediate Unit (IU), at least the first time.

* ·In the 1st sentence of the 1st paragraph, formation is incorrect because IUs are already formed.

·Rewrite the 1st sentence of the 1st paragraph because the sentence is hard to follow since regarding really goes with information.

·In the 2nd sentence of the 1st paragraph, omit in order and begin the sentence with To.

·In the 1st sentence of the 2nd paragraph, insert that after so.

·In the 2nd sentence of the 2nd paragraph, insert that after so.

·In the 3rd sentence of the 2nd paragraph, plus should be eliminated; plus should be replaced with indeed; plus should be replaced with in addition; change the to this.

·The 4th sentence in the 3rd paragraph is unclear; the sentence should end with survey, thus omitting the last phrase, change futuristic to proactive.

·In the 5th sentence in the 3rd paragraph eliminate very much.

Page 2

·In the introduction to descriptive data, change held in confidence to kept confidential.

*Disregarded recommendation.

·In the 1st bank of descriptive data, change years experience to years' experience.

·In the 2nd bank of descriptive data, change state policymaker to state agency; replace an with current.

·In the 3rd bank of descriptive data, eliminate the following two selections: Master's Degree plus 15, and Master's Degree plus 45; also, add one selection: Other: _____. Change 2nd selection to read Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Degree. Change 4th selection to read Master's Degree plus 30 Credits.

·Create a 4th bank on intermediate unit information to include descriptive information about IU characteristic, e.g., size, number of districts, funding level, geographic location, etc.

Page 3

·In the 1st sentence of the 1st paragraph, change differing to various or omit it and change predicted to as to.

·In the 1st sentence of the 2nd paragraph, omit In order and begin with To; change expected to involvement to reflect the change in questions.

·In the 2nd sentence of the 2nd paragraph, change which to that.

·On response scale, change you to your on the second level.

·Circle scores.

*Disregarded recommendation.

·Change headings to adverbs to read: very extensively, extensively, moderately, negligibly, not at all.

C. Recommended Changes to Questions

·Change all questions to read extent not extend.

·Part A

·In the 2nd question, change included to involved.

·Clarify the 5th question to reflect the Superintendents Council or lesser advisory groups.

·Part B

·Define prime and major. Potentially confusing to mesh prime or major with extensiveness scale. ·Simplify the questions to read: carry a responsibility.

·In the 5th question, move the phrase: to their advisory groups to the end.

·In the 6th through the 8th question, clarify the question by adding the clause in school districts.

·In the 8th question, eliminate the jargon: technical assistance/capacity building.

·In the 9th question, omit should.

·In the 10th question, does it mean information from the state?

·In the 11th question, change education to educational.

* ·Change the 12th question to reflect whether it means enforcement.

*Disregarded recommendation.

- In the 12th question eliminate adaptions of.
- In the 13th question, hyphenate first-line.

- Part C

  - In the 2nd bank of questions, the stem should read: To what extent should IUs initiate direct instructional support to new special populations.
  - In the 14th question, hyphenate high-incidence and replace the jargon word: exceptionalities.
  - In the 15th question, hyphenate low-incidence and hearing-impaired.
  - Change the 21st question to reflect a special population.
  - In the 3rd bank of questions, change the stem to read: local education agencies or school district.
  - In the 22nd through 28th question, make all words "ing" words.
  - In the 29th question, change field to fields.
  - In the 31st question, hyphenate information-age.
  - Change the 32nd question by eliminating continued.
  - In the 34th questions, hyphenate student-performance.
  - Change the 35th question by eliminating the initiation, organization, and. Omit the question.

*Disregarded recommendation.

·Change the 35th question to reflect a core of services provided by each IU with others chosen by customers. Customer selected services should have little to do offerings at least philosophically.

·Change the 35th question to reflect a difference based on demographics, not just enrollment.

·Part D

·In the 1st bank of questions, change the question stem to read: To what extent should state support be increased for programs and services directly related to the following new state priorities:

·Change the 38th question to be more descriptive.

·In the 39th question, hyphenate student-performance.

·In the 2nd bank, state the question stem more clearly.

·Change the 45th question to read: local school district instead of LEA; change number 47 to read IU programs and services.

·In the 43rd question, change areas to area.

·In the 44th question, change districts to district.

·Change the 46th question by eliminating largely.

·In the 3rd bank, state the question stem more clearly.

·Include some examples in the 47th and 48th question. The 47th through the 50th questions, do not relate to finance.

*Disregarded recommendation.

- Change the 48th question to clarify its meaning, change ESA to IUs; or spell out educational service agency.
- In the 49th question, eliminate substantial and clarify professional staff—local school district or IU; replace on with to.

*Disregarded recommendation.

APPENDIX B
Human Subjects Research Committee Approval

The Department of Educational Administration
Youngstown State University / Youngstown, Ohio 44555-0001

April 22, 1996

Ms. F. Rosella Stellman
Department of Educational Administration
U N I V E R S I T Y

Dear Ms. Stellman:

The Human Subjects Research Committee has reviewed your proposal, "Envisioning the Future Roles and Functions of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units," (HSRC #96-22) and determined that it is exempt from review.

We wish you well in this study.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kasvinsky
Dean of Graduate Studies

kb

c: S. Ellyson, Chair of HSRC
H. Pullman, Educational Administration

APPENDIX C
Survey Cover Letters

April 15, 1996

Dr. John Smith
Executive Director
Local Intermediate Unit
1000 Intermediate Unit Drive
Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania 00000

Dear Dr. Smith:

Your participation is requested in a study of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units. The results of the study will increase the knowledge base for strategic decision making within Pennsylvania's educational community. At this time of financial crisis, accountability, and educational reform, a comprehensive, proactive study is warranted. The power of the study will be increased by every executive director who responds.

It is not necessary to sign the questionnaire; however, each questionnaire is coded for identification purposes. You have my assurance that all responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential. Also, no attempt will be made to rank or judge the quality of individual intermediate units. Finally, the results will not be used for political reasons.

This study is being used for partial fulfillment of the action research requirement by Youngstown State University's Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership. The doctoral candidate, Rose Stellman, is Coordinator of Educational Services/Curriculum & Instruction in an intermediate unit.

Please return this questionnaire as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Angelo Pezzuolo
Executive Director

nb
Enclosure

P.S.: If you have any questions about the survey questionnaire, address inquiries directly to the doctoral candidate, Rose Stellman, by telephoning (412) 458-6700, extension 227.

The Department of Educational Administration
Youngstown State University / Youngstown, Ohio 44555-0001

April 15, 1996

Dr. John Smith
Superintendent
Local School District
1000 Local School Drive
Small Town, Pennsylvania 00000

Dear Dr. Smith:

Your participation is requested in a study of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units. The results of the study will increase the knowledge base for strategic decision making within Pennsylvania's educational community. At this time of financial crisis, accountability, and educational reform, a comprehensive, proactive study is warranted. The power of the study will be increased by every superintendent who responds.

It is not necessary to sign the questionnaire; however, each questionnaire is coded for identification purposes. You have my assurance that all responses to the questionnaire will be kept confidential. Also, no attempt will be made to rank or judge the quality of individual intermediate units. Finally, the results will not be used for political reasons.

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Please return this questionnaire as soon as possible. Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Dr. Howard Pullman
Professor of Educational Leadership

nb
Enclosure

P.S.: If you have any questions about the survey questionnaire, address inquiries directly to the doctoral candidate, Rose Stellman, by telephoning (412) 458-6700, extension 227.

APPENDIX D
Survey Follow-Up Letters

May 20, 1996

Dr. John Smith
Executive Director
Local Intermediate Unit
1000 Intermediate Unit Drive
Intermediate Unit, Pennsylvania 00000

Dear Dr. Smith:

Early in April, you received a questionnaire pertaining to "Envisioning the Future Role and Functions of Pennsylvania's Intermediate Units." This survey instrument is being used as part of a doctoral research project at Youngstown State University. In order to compile adequate statistical data, completion and return of this document are vital.

Time does not permit further correspondence to solicit your assistance in collecting the data; please respond and return the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible.

Your cooperation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Angelo Pezzuolo
Executive Director

nb
Enclosure

The Department of Educational Administration
Youngstown State University / Youngstown, Ohio 44555-0001

May 20, 1996

Dr. John Smith
Superintendent
Local School District
1000 Local School Drive
Small Town, Pennsylvania 00000

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Time does not permit further correspondence to solicit your assistance in collecting the data; please respond and return the enclosed questionnaire as soon as possible.

Your cooperation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Dr. Howard Pullman
Professor of Educational Leadership

nb
Enclosure

APPENDIX E

Survey

Pennsylvania
Intermediate Unit Survey

Questionnaire

Please answer each question so that an accurate picture can be determined. Also, please complete and return the survey so that your Intermediate Unit can be adequately represented in the study. Indeed, the power of this study will be increased as the number of responses increases.

I. DESCRIPTIVE DATA

The background information is needed for statistical analysis of the data provided by the questionnaire. This information will be kept in confidence and will not appear in the report of data in such a way that an individual or a particular Intermediate Unit can be identified.

Respondent Information

- Years' experience in your current position as executive director/school superintendent/state policymaker? _____

- Years served as an employee in your current organization: IU, school district, state agency? _____

- Highest educational level completed.
  - [ ] High School Diploma
  - [ ] Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science Degree
  - [ ] Master's Degree
  - [ ] Doctorate
  - [ ] Other:

II. PREDICTED FUTURE DIMENSIONS OF INTERMEDIATE UNITS SURVEY

This survey will collect the opinions of executive directors, district superintendents, and state policymakers as to future dimensions of Intermediate Units (IUs). There are no right or wrong responses to any of these items.

To make it easier for you to express your opinion, degrees of suggested involvement have been provided. Please circle the number that best describes your degree of recommendation for each dimension.

How to use the response scale:

Code: NAA=Not At All N=Negligibly M=Moderately E=Extensively VE=Very Extensively

Sample Question:

	NAA	N	M	E	VE
If in your opinion IU involvement in this dimension should be very extensive, you should circle your number like this:	1	2	3	4	(5)

Please return questionnaire to:

Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey

Please respond to each item.
Code: NAA=Not At All, N=Negligibly, M=Moderately, E=Extensively, VE=Very Extensively

III. SURVEY QUESTIONS

Part A: New Governance Features

	NAA	N	M	E	VE
1. To what extent should the number of IUs within the Pennsylvania system be reduced?	1	2	3	4	5
2. To what extent should all 501 school districts, including Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, be involved in IUs with other districts?	1	2	3	4	5
3. To what extent should instructional support centers be consolidated into the Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit system?	1	2	3	4	5

Part B: New Structural Features

4. To what extent should IUs increase their advisory groups to assist in planning, implementation, and evaluation of programs and services?	1	2	3	4	5
5. To what extent should IUs grant substantial decision-making authority over the programming and budgetary actions of the IU to their superintendents' advisory groups?	1	2	3	4	5

Part C: New Dimensions of the Mission

To what extent should IUs carry a responsibility:

6. ·for equalizing educational opportunities in school districts?	1	2	3	4	5
7. ·for enhancing the quality of education in school districts?	1	2	3	4	5
8. ·for providing technical assistance and building capacity in school districts?	1	2	3	4	5
9. ·for cost-effective delivery of the new priorities of the state system?	1	2	3	4	5
10. ·as a steward of state information and processing center in the substate region?	1	2	3	4	5
11. ·for coalition building among/between the educational community and other human service providers?	1	2	3	4	5
12. ·for program initiation by local school districts?	1	2	3	4	5
13. ·for evaluation of program initiatives adopted by local school districts?	1	2	3	4	5

Part D: Anticipated Major Programming Profile

To what extent should IUs continue to provide <u>direct instructional support</u> to special populations:

14. ·high-incidence disabilities, e.g., instructional support, emotional support?	1	2	3	4	5
15. ·low-incidence disabilities, e.g., sight-impaired, hearing impaired?	1	2	3	4	5

Please respond to each item.

Code: NAA=Not At All, N=Negligibly, M=Moderately, E=Extensively, VE=Very Extensively

Part D: Anticipated Major Programming Profile

To what extent should IUs provide <u>direct instructional support</u> to new special populations:	NAA	N	M	E	VE
16. ·at-risk students?	1	2	3	4	5
17. ·vocational-technical students?	1	2	3	4	5
18. ·students gifted in science and math?	1	2	3	4	5
19. ·adult learners?	1	2	3	4	5
20. ·pre-school age students?	1	2	3	4	5
21. ·geographically isolated students?	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent should IUs provide support services to school districts:					
22. ·skills and use of computers?	1	2	3	4	5
23. ·using distance learning technology?	1	2	3	4	5
24. ·skills in instructional leadership?	1	2	3	4	5
25. ·media and library services?	1	2	3	4	5
26. ·encouraging parental involvement?	1	2	3	4	5
27. ·promoting academic competitions?	1	2	3	4	5
28. ·increasing high school graduation rates?	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent should IUs provide services related to the national goals of education:					
29. ·curriculum development in the fields of English and history?	1	2	3	4	5
30. ·curriculum development in the field of geography?	1	2	3	4	5
31. ·requirements of the information-age society?	1	2	3	4	5
32. ·stress on staff development?	1	2	3	4	5
33. To what extent should IUs provide instructional support services to nonpublic schools?	1	2	3	4	5
34. To what extent should IUs play an important role in a more comprehensive, state-initiated student-performance accountability system?	1	2	3	4	5
35. To what extent should IU roles continue to differ according to the demographics of constituent school districts?	1	2	3	4	5
36. To what extent should IUs provide data processing services?	1	2	3	4	5

Pennsylvania Intermediate Unit Survey

Please respond to each item.
Code: NAA=Not At All, N=Negligibly, M=Moderately, E=Extensively, VE=Very Extensively

Part E: Funding

To what extent should state support be increased for programs and services directly related to continuing or new state priorities:	NAA	N	M	E	VE
37. ·direct instructional support?	1	2	3	4	5
38. ·new Chapter 5 Regulations?	1	2	3	4	5
39. ·student-performance accountability system?	1	2	3	4	5
To what extent should categorical regional taxing power be granted IUs for:					
40. ·full range of IU programs and services?	1	2	3	4	5
41. ·administration of regional schools for disabled students?	1	2	3	4	5
42. ·administration of regional vocational/technical schools?	1	2	3	4	5
43. ·administration of services in the areas of early childhood education?	1	2	3	4	5
44. ·administration of services in the areas of math and science?	1	2	3	4	5
45. To what extent should service contracts be used to support IU programs and services that are optional and requested by an individual local school district?	1	2	3	4	5
46. To what extent should services to nonpublic schools be based on service contracts?	1	2	3	4	5

Part F: Accountability

To what extent should an IU accreditation be developed using performance indicators:					
47. ·organizational effectiveness?	1	2	3	4	5
48. ·organizational processes?	1	2	3	4	5

Part G: Organizational Development

49. To what extent should IUs commit resources for professional development of their core professionals?	1	2	3	4	5
50. To what extent should IUs maintain the status of full partners in the Pennsylvania School System?	1	2	3	4	5