

**STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION
ADMINISTRATIVE CODE
COMMENT/RESPONSE FORM**

This comment and response form pertains to the May 6, 2015, State Board of Education meeting, when the proposal was discussed.

Topic: Enlargement of Purpose of an Educational Service Commission

Meeting Date: May 6, 2015

Code Citation: N.J.S.A. 18A:6-61 through 70

Level: Proposal Level

Division: Field Services

Completed by: County Office Administrative Unit

Summary of Public Comments and Responses:

The following is a summary of the comments received from State Board of Education members and members of the public, and the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission's and the Department's responses. Each commenter is identified at the end of the comment by a letter or number that corresponds to the following list:

A. Mark Biedron, President
State Board of Education

B. Joseph Fisicaro, Vice President
State Board of Education

C. Edithe Fulton, Member
State Board of Education

D. Dorothy Strickland, Member
State Board of Education

E. Peter Simon, Member
State Board of Education

1. Jean Public
Member of the Public

1. **COMMENT:** The commenter inquired about services the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission (MRESC) provides and which service may have the largest growth potential. **(E)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated its seven special education schools are at full capacity. Additionally, the MRESC said it will be expanding educational services for individuals with special education needs who are over 21 years of age and will increase the amount of educational services provided to nonpublic schools. Non-educational services include the 550 school districts that belong to the MRESC "coop" and MRESC anticipates that school district participation in the Digital Readiness Learning Program (DRLP) will grow and will save districts money in the future.

2. **COMMENT:** The commenter requested clarification regarding the DRLP and how it works. (A)

RESPONSE: The MRESA explained the DRLP is a Statewide bid process requested by the Department for Internet access, transport services, and intra-district wide-area network (WAN) services for school districts. The MRESA said DRLP will decrease the cost for Internet services and triple the amount of Internet access for school districts. School districts that were included in the bid have been assigned to an Internet provider for the designated region and may sign a contract with the provider.

3. **COMMENT:** The commenters stated the MRESA is requesting an enlargement of scope and purpose, but it is unclear what services will be new. The commenters requested clarification of the reason for requesting enlargement of scope and purpose since the MRESA appears to have already expanded based on the presentation by MRESA. (B,C)

RESPONSE: The MRESA said it cannot anticipate future requests from public and nonpublic school districts and agencies and would like to be prepared when requests for services are made. Additionally, the Statewide Internet network will expand to provide educational services through cloud technology. Lastly, the MRESA stated the purpose of the expansion request is to confirm both the authority for the significant increase in volume in MRESA activities and, more significantly, to provide the services on a Statewide basis. Therefore, the expansion involves volume as well as geography. The MRESA is concerned that proceeding to increase its activities in these areas without State Board action would result in potential complaints.

4. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked what entities can be members of the MRESA. (C)

RESPONSE: The MRESA explained its members include school districts, county governments, colleges, and municipalities. The MRESA also can contract with other public entities to provide services.

5. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked if the MRESA was requesting a name change. (A)

RESPONSE: The MRESA indicated they are not requesting a name change at this time.

6. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked for what territory the MRESA provides services. (A)

RESPONSE: The MRESA stated it provides services Statewide.

7. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked if the MRESA is competing with the other educational services commissions in the State. (A)

RESPONSE: The MRESA stated its philosophy is to provide services only within Middlesex County, unless solicited by school districts and entities outside the county.

8. **COMMENT:** The commenter wanted to confirm the MRESC is limited in educational services but not limited in municipality services. Additionally the commenter wanted to know how many municipalities the MRESC serves and in which counties they provide services. **(B)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated it is not limited in either educational or municipality services. The MRESC has seven schools that service 81 school districts in 12 counties. There are approximately 200 municipalities in all 21 counties that receive services from MRESC.

9. **COMMENT:** The commenters inquired about the structure and the general oversight of the MRESC. **(A, B)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated it has the same oversight as traditional school districts and the same day-to-day structure and operation as traditional school districts such as having one superintendent, having one principal in each building, administering PARCC assessments, implementing the Common Core State Standards and requiring the same teacher certification.

10. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked if MRESC's schools are the same as the county special services school districts. **(B)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated its schools are not the same and are governed by a different statute. Additionally, the governance of the MRESC is different than school districts throughout the State because its board of directors has a member from each of the 24 school districts in Middlesex County.

11. **COMMENT:** The commenter asked how many people the MRESC employs. **(C)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated it has between 1,100 and 1,200 full and part-time employees.

12. **COMMENT:** The commenter wanted the MRESC to explain and to provide an example of hybrid learning. **(B)**

RESPONSE: The MRESC stated some students who attend three of the schools would benefit educationally by providing a differentiated approach to learning. For instance, the lesson design is divided into three segments: traditional lecture, individual and group work.

13. **COMMENT:** The commenter stated that no taxpayer dollars should be spent on the expansion of any educational services commission. **(1)**

RESPONSE: Educational services commissions have the authority under N.J.S.A. 18A:6-69 to request an enlargement of purposes and the State Board of Education must consider any such request and decide whether to approve it. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:6-63 ESCs shall determine fees to be charged for providing services and programs to school districts and nonpublic schools. They may also enter into contracts with other public and

private agencies for the provision of approved services and programs to participating public school districts and nonpublic schools. These services and programs are designed to bring efficiencies to school districts through leveraging economies of scale in purchasing and through providing supplemental programs to school districts and nonpublic schools in more cost effective ways. ESCs were developed to save taxpayer expenditures through county and regional collaboration.



**Adoption Resolution
June 3, 2015**

State of New Jersey

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

**RESOLUTION
REQUESTING ENLARGMENT OF PURPOSE PURSUANT TO N.J.S.A. 18A:6-69 FOR
THE MIDDLESEX REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES COMMISSION**

WHEREAS, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-52*, the State Board of Education approved the establishment of the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission in or about December, 1977, to provide educational and administrative services and programs to member school district boards of education; and

WHEREAS, the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission was approved to provide services to nonpublic schools, cooperative transportation to out-of-district schools, cooperative purchasing, adult education, summer school, computer services, specialized consultants, printing and duplicating services, equipment maintenance services, and other specialized services; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-69*, the State Board of Education approved an enlargement of scope of purpose for the Middlesex County Educational Services Commission in or about December, 1991, which permitted the provision of nursing services to nonpublic schools; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Education approved a name change request from the "Middlesex County Educational Services Commission" to the "Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission" in or about June 2005; and

WHEREAS, since its inception, the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission has provided a wide variety of education services to twenty-four (24) school districts in Middlesex County, as well as educational and business services to numerous school districts and municipalities throughout the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, at the present time, the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission is providing services to over eight hundred (800) school districts, colleges, county colleges, and municipalities in all twenty-one (21) counties throughout the State of New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, in light of the fact that the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission is no longer only serving the needs of the greater Middlesex County area, but also presently meeting the educational needs of over eight hundred (800) public entities in all twenty-one (21) counties throughout the State of New Jersey, the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission believes it is appropriate to expand its areas of service beyond those identified in its original petition; and

WHEREAS, the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission believes that an expansion in its areas of service and geographic area served would better identify and authorize the scope of services it now provides to its clientele; now therefore be it

RESOLVED that, pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-69*, the State Board of Education grants approval to the Middlesex Regional Educational Services Commission to enlarge its purpose beyond those identified in its original petition, and to accurately represent its areas of service and geographic areas served.

David C. Hespe, Commissioner
Secretary, State Board of Education

Mark W. Biedron, President
State Board of Education