

CHAPTER 15.1-09.1
REGIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS

15.1-09.1-01. Definition.

For purposes of this chapter, "regional education association" means a group of school districts that have entered a joint powers agreement that has been reviewed by the superintendent of public instruction and verified as meeting the requirements of section 15.1-09.1-02.

15.1-09.1-02. Regional education associations - Review by superintendent of public instruction - Criteria.

In order for a group of school districts to be designated as a regional education association, the superintendent of public instruction shall review the joint powers agreement that the districts have entered and verify that the requirements of this section have been met.

1. The school districts must:
 - a. Have a combined total land mass of at least five thousand eight hundred square miles [1502193 hectares];
 - b. (1) Have a combined total land mass of at least four thousand five hundred square miles [1165494 hectares]; and
(2) Number at least twelve;
 - c. (1) Have a combined total land mass of at least four thousand square miles [1035995 hectares]; and
(2) Have at least three thousand students in average daily membership; or
 - d. (1) Have a combined total land mass of at least one thousand five hundred square miles [388498 hectares]; and
(2) Have at least seven thousand five hundred students in average daily membership.
2. The school districts must be contiguous to each other or, if the districts are not contiguous to each other, the superintendent of public instruction shall verify that the participating districts can provide sound educational opportunities to their students in a fiscally responsible manner without injuring other school districts or regional education associations and without negatively impacting the ability of other school districts or regional education associations to provide sound educational opportunities to their students in a fiscally responsible manner. A decision by the superintendent of public instruction under this subsection may be appealed to the state board of public school education. A decision by the state board is final.
3. The joint powers agreement must require that the participating school districts maintain a joint operating fund.
4. The joint powers agreement must provide:
 - a. Criteria for the future participation of school districts that were not parties to the original joint powers agreement;
 - b. An application process by which school districts that were not parties to the original joint powers agreement can become participating districts; and
 - c. A process by which school districts that were not parties to the original joint powers agreement and whose application to participate in the agreement was denied can appeal the decision to the superintendent of public instruction.
5. The joint powers agreement must provide for the employment and compensation of staff.
6. The joint powers agreement must:
 - a. Establish the number of members on the governing board;
 - b. Establish the manner in which members of the governing board are determined;
 - c. Require that each member of the governing board be an individual currently serving on the board of a participating school district or the designee of a participating school district's board; and
 - d. Allow for the inclusion of ex officio nonvoting members on the governing board.

7. The joint powers agreement must provide that the board of the regional education association shall meet at least quarterly.
8. The joint powers agreement may not permit the regional education association to compensate members of the regional education association board for attending meetings of the board and does not permit the regional education association to reimburse members of the board for any expenses incurred in attending meetings of the board.

15.1-09.1-02.1. Regional education association - Services to be offered.

1. In order to be eligible for state funding, a regional education association must offer the following services to its member districts:
 - a. Coordination and facilitation of professional development activities for teachers and administrators employed by its member districts;
 - b. Supplementation of technology support services;
 - c. Assistance with achieving school improvement goals identified by the superintendent of public instruction;
 - d. Assistance with the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student achievement data; and
 - e. Assistance with the expansion and enrichment of curricular offerings.
2. Subsection 1 does not preclude a regional education association from offering additional services to its member districts.

15.1-09.1-02.2. Regional education association - Review process.

In order to be eligible for state funding, a regional education association shall participate in and meet the requirements of a review process that is:

1. Designed to raise the quality of services offered by a regional education association to its members, in accordance with this chapter, through a continuous cycle of improvement; and
2. Approved by the superintendent of public instruction.

15.1-09.1-03. Regional education association - Provision of special education and related services - Annual plan.

A regional education association may prepare an annual plan regarding the provision of special education and related services on behalf of its members and submit the plan to the superintendent of public instruction for approval.

15.1-09.1-04. Regional education association - Provision of special education and related services - Powers.

A regional education association that provides special education and related services may:

1. Receive and expend state and federal moneys for the provision of special education and related services to the students of its member districts;
2. Employ personnel necessary to carry out administrative services, itinerant instruction, coordinative services, and related services; and
3. Receive and expend private and public moneys.

15.1-09.1-05. Regional education association - Provision of special education and related services - Student transportation - Coordination.

A regional education association shall plan and coordinate the transportation of students who are enrolled in its member districts and to whom it provides special education and related services.

15.1-09.1-06. Regional education associations - Receipt and use of moneys.

The board of a regional education association may receive and expend moneys for the provision of administrative functions, student services, and any other lawful activities.

15.1-09.1-07. Joint operating fund - Accounting functions.

The board of a regional education association may contract with any person, including a school district, for the maintenance of the association's joint operating fund and for the performance of any business or accounting functions required by law or necessary for the association's operation.

15.1-09.1-08. Regional education association - Report of expenses.

1. The board of a regional education association shall submit annually to the superintendent of public instruction, at the time and in the manner designated by the superintendent, a report detailing all expenses incurred by the association and shall attribute the expenses on a per student basis by participating school district.
2. The board shall deposit any moneys received by or on behalf of the regional education association into the association's joint operating fund.

15.1-09.1-09. Compensation - Reimbursement - Extraordinary service.

The board of a regional education association may provide compensation and reimbursement to any board member who, at the direction of the board, performs extraordinary service on behalf of the board. For purposes of this section, "extraordinary service" means duties beyond those reasonably expected of members of the board and includes travel to and attendance at national meetings or conventions.

15.1-09.1-10. State aid - Payable to a regional education association - Obligation of district.

The superintendent of public instruction shall forward the portion of a school district's state aid which is payable by the superintendent under subdivision I of subsection 1 of section 15.1-27-03.1 as a result of the district's participation in a regional education association directly to the association in which the district participates. The superintendent shall forward the amount payable under this section at the same time and in the same manner as provided for other state aid payments under section 15.1-27-01, unless otherwise directed in accordance with section 15.1-09.1-12.

15.1-09.1-11. Rights of employees.

Any individual employed by the board of a regional education association has the same statutory rights as those accorded to an individual employed by a public school district for the same purpose.

15.1-09.1-12. Regional education association - Audit.

To be eligible for state funding, a regional education association must be audited, at least once every two years, by a certified public accountant, a licensed public accountant, or the state auditor. The audit must be presented to the state board of public school education. If any irregularities are noted, the state board of public school education may direct the superintendent of public instruction to withhold all payments to a regional education association until the board determines the irregularities have been addressed.