

TESTIMONY - INTERMEDIATE UNITS

- - - PRESENTED TO - - -

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- BY -

INTERMEDIATE UNIT I

FAYETTE-GREENE-WASHINGTON COUNTIES

HARRY J. BROWNFIELD, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

CONNELLSVILLE AREA SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

AUGUST 4, 1976

## I. INTRODUCTION:

HONORABLE MR. LINCOLN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON BASIC EDUCATION, I, HARRY BROWNFIELD, AM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF INTERMEDIATE UNIT I, WHICH COMPRISES THE COUNTIES OF FAYETTE, GREENE, AND WASHINGTON.

I AM MOST APPRECIATIVE OF THE INVITATION TO PROVIDE THIS TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT CONCEPT IN PENNSYLVANIA. I HAVE EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO MEMBERS OF OUR ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF TO ASSIST IN THE PRESENTATION OF THIS TESTIMONY BY BEING AVAILABLE FOR QUESTIONS AT YOUR DISCRETION.

(INTRODUCTION OF STAFF MEMBERS)

THE SUBCOMMITTEE IS CERTAINLY TO BE COMMENDED FOR YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PERMIT INTERMEDIATE UNITS TO RELATE OUR CONCERNS AND OUR IDEAS FOR IMPROVING THE REGIONAL APPROACH TO EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

IT IS ESPECIALLY COMFORTING TO BE ABLE TO PRESENT THIS MATERIAL IN OUR OWN BACKYARD WITH ONE OF OUR OWN LEGISLATORS AS YOUR SUBCOMMITTEE CHAIRMAN.

THANK YOU FOR THIS WONDERFUL OPPORTUNITY.

## II. FUNDING THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT PROGRAM

INTERMEDIATE UNIT I PROVIDES SERVICES TO TWENTY-FIVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA IN A RURAL AND RURAL-URBAN SETTING. THESE SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE AID-RATIOS WHICH RANGE FROM .5110 TO .8488. THE ABILITY TO INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FUNDING FOR EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. HOWEVER, MANY OF OUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEED REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, DUE TO SMALL ENROLLMENTS AND A LIMITED NUMBER OF STAFF MEMBERS TO PROVIDE THESE NEEDED SERVICES. THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAVE UTILIZED THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT SERVICES THAT HAVE BEEN PROVIDED ON A REGIONAL BASIS AND HAVE BEEN VERY COOPERATIVE IN SUPPORTING OUR EFFORTS TO OFFER A QUALITY PROGRAM OF SERVICES.

WE REFER TO THE SEVEN MANDATED SERVICES AS PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL LAWS OF PENNSYLVANIA AND FUNDED THROUGH THE GENERAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET. REFERENCE IS NOT BEING MADE TO THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM AND/OR THE NON-PUBLIC SCHOOL PROGRAM WHICH ARE FUNDED IN A DIFFERENT MANNER.

INTERMEDIATE UNIT I IS FACING THE SERIOUS PROBLEM OF THE NEED TO EXPAND AND IMPROVE THE PROGRAM OF SERVICES IN

ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS. THE STATE ALLOCATION FOR THE GENERAL OPERATIONAL BUDGET HAS REMAINED ALMOST CONSTANT SINCE 1971.

THE FOLLOWING CHART IS PRESENTED TO SUPPORT THE ABOVE STATEMENT:

	STATE <u>ALLOCATION</u>	NO. OF ADMINISTRATORS, PROGRAM SPECIALISTS, <u>AND/OR TECHNICIANS</u>
1971-72	269,280.00	13
1972-73	297,870.00	12
1973-74	269,280.00	12
1974-75	275,930.00	11
1975-76	298,213.00	14

AS YOU MAY DETERMINE, IT IS OBVIOUS THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN IRRESPONSIBLE IN EXPANDING THE ADMINISTRATIVE AND SPECIALIST STAFF. WE HAVE ATTEMPTED TO SECURE WELL-QUALIFIED SPECIALISTS TO REPLACE RETIRING PERSONNEL WHO HAD SERVED IN ADMINISTRATIVE ASSIGNMENTS. THE EMPHASIS IS DIRECTED TO CURRICULUM SPECIALISTS TO SERVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF INSTRUCTION.

INTERMEDIATE UNIT I HAS CONSISTENTLY TRIED TO IMPROVE THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES PROVIDED UNDER THE GENERAL

OPERATIONAL BUDGET, AND AT THE SAME TIME, TO BE SENSITIVE TO THE LIMITED FINANCIAL RESOURCES OF THE COMPONENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT SYSTEM WOULD BENEFIT BY A REVISED METHOD OF DETERMINING STATE SUPPORT. WE URGE THE SUBCOMMITTEE OF BASIC EDUCATION TO CONSIDER THIS NEEDED REVISION IN ORDER TO PERMIT THE INTERMEDIATE UNITS TO SERVE SCHOOL DISTRICTS EFFECTIVELY.

### III. LOCAL CONTROL OF INTERMEDIATE UNITS:

INTERMEDIATE UNIT I IS COMMITTED TO THE PHILOSOPHY OF LOCAL CONTROL. WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS MUST CONTINUE TO EXERCISE CONTROL OVER THE PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE INTERMEDIATE UNIT BUDGET. THIS LOCAL CONTROL SHOULD BE MAINTAINED THROUGH THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT AND LOCAL BOARDS OF EDUCATION.

IN REGARD TO THE PRINCIPLE OF LOCAL CONTROL AND BECAUSE WE NEED TO RELY HEAVILY ON LOCAL BOARDS OF SCHOOL DIRECTORS, WE BELIEVE THAT LEGISLATIVE CONSIDERATION COULD IMPROVE AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPPORT. WE REFER TO THE ANNUAL CONVENTION WHICH IS CALLED FOR ALL SCHOOL DIRECTORS.

IT IS OUR BELIEF THAT CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO AUTHORIZE THE PAYMENT FOR ATTENDANCE TO THE ANNUAL CONVENTION. THIS WOULD BE IN ADDITION TO ACTUAL EXPENSES INCURRED WHICH ARE CURRENTLY ALLOWED. WE FEEL THAT THE ABOVE PROVISION WOULD STRENGTHEN BOARD INVOLVEMENT.

OTHER PROVISIONS NECESSARY TO IMPROVE THE PRESENT INTERMEDIATE UNIT STRUCTURE AS OUTLINED BY THE SCHOOL CODE ARE INCLUDED IN THE RECODIFICATION PROCESS. WE SHALL NOT ENUMERATE THESE ITEMS AT THIS TIME.

#### IV. SUMMARY -

WE ARE OF THE OPINION THAT INTERMEDIATE UNITS ARE SERVING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THAT THE PRESENT STRUCTURE IS MUCH MORE EFFECTIVE THAN THE PREVIOUS COUNTY SCHOOL OFFICE PROGRAM. THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IS THAT INTERMEDIATE UNITS PROVIDE SERVICE FUNCTIONS RATHER THAN ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS.

IT IS OUR FEELING THAT SCHOOL DISTRICTS NEED A VARIETY OF PROGRAMS. WE HAVE EXPERIENCED THAT LOCAL NEEDS ARE VASTLY DIFFERENT. OUR PROGRAM IS FLEXIBLE AND IS DESIGNED TO MEET THESE DIFFERENT NEEDS.

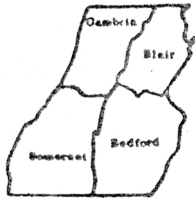
WE HAVE NOT DISCUSSED THE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM. INTERMEDIATE UNIT I HAS A VERY EXTENSIVE AND VARIED

PROGRAM. IT HAS EXPANDED GREATLY DUE TO THE REQUESTS OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR PROGRAMS TO SERVE THEIR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EXCEPTIONALITIES. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE RAPID EXPANSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS IS THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION MANDATE FOR ALL MENTALLY RETARDED CHILDREN.

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE REGIONAL APPROACH TO PROVIDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IS QUITE REALISTIC. WE MUST BE ACCOUNTABLE TO OUR CITIZENS DUE TO THE GREATLY INCREASED COSTS IN PROVIDING SERVICES. HOWEVER, WE MUST BE WILLING TO TAKE THE NECESSARY STEPS TO BE CERTAIN THAT CHILDREN RECEIVE THE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES NEEDED TO SUCCEED IN LIFE AND TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF A CHANGING SOCIETY. INTERMEDIATE UNITS ARE STRUCTURED TO ASSIST SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN PROVIDING THESE OPPORTUNITIES AT A FAVORABLE COST LEVEL. WE FEEL THAT BY COMBINING PARTS, A GREATER STRENGTH WILL OCCUR.

THANK YOU FOR BEING INTERESTED IN THE INTERMEDIATE UNITS AND FOR YOUR TIME AND COURTESY IN HEARING THIS TESTIMONY.

DC/



*Appalachia*  
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
George E. Kensinger

ASS'T. EXEC. DIRECTOR  
Joseph Tarris

TO: J. William Lincoln, Chairman  
Basic Education Subcommittee  
House of Representatives  
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

RE: Legislative Budget & Finance Committee Report on  
the Pennsylvania IU System - 1976

It is with deep appreciation that Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 has been extended the opportunity to present testimony today on the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee Report of 1976 pertaining to Intermediate Units. It is also appreciated that the opportunity has been given to express our feelings regarding other aspects of IU operation.

This report, which has been reviewed by the IU08 Board and Staff members, has much information which will help our Unit as we plan future programs for the education of children within the Counties of Bedford, Blair, Cambria and Somerset.



## SIZE OF IU08

The chart on page 49 of the report gives some statistics which make the provision of programs in our Unit challenging but yet assuring.

IU08 has 35 school districts (2nd highest in the State and double the State average) and 3, 457 square miles of area (again 2nd highest in the State and half the size of New Jersey). In addition, it covers 4 counties of diverse cultural and economic backgrounds. Two school districts are of the 2nd class while some are of the 4th class. Our enrollment is about 104, 000 of which 10, 000 represents nonpublic pupils. In addition to this enrollment, the Unit operates educational programs for two State Schools & Hospitals (Ebensburg and Cresson). This statistical information is presented to illustrate the task our IU assumes in serving the educational needs of a tremendously diversified geographic and demographic population. The communication process alone is very difficult. Even though this process is difficult, Unit 08 is providing quality services to children in many ways.

## CURRENT IU LEGISLATION

The seven services which the Public School Code allows an IU to provide establishes a sound base from which our programs are formulated. (Section 914-A) When more than a majority of districts agree on a service, however, the actual implementation of these services is difficult due to the constraints of the formula for securing district allocations as specified in Sections 917-A through 920-A. The State allocation to Intermediate Units has remained basically the

same since the inception of the IU and allocations received from districts have been difficult to increase due to the type of weighted formula that is followed. The only way IU08 has been able to operate under a static income is by reason of professional staff reduction. Where formerly in the four County Offices 14 professionals were employed, this number has now been reduced to 8. Of course this reduction in the number of personnel has resulted in individual staff members assuming responsibilities in several program areas. Therefore, some services have been affected by this staff reduction.

### IU CONTROL

The operation of the IU is controlled by the 13 member Board. The program of operation is determined through the combined efforts of the central IU administrative staff, the district superintendents of the Unit through the Advisory Council, and the PDE. This latter group, the PDE, may suggest, inspire, dictate, or even mandate programs to be implemented. However, State control is exerted on IU's only in the same fashion as it is exerted on local school districts. The reason it appears Intermediate Units are controlled more by the State is that the IU is called upon to assist in implementing district programs which the State can do more efficiently through the IU.

### LEGISLATION WHICH WOULD BENEFIT THE IU PROGRAM

1. The formula for district allocations to the IU should be revised so that it is based on pupil population alone instead of a combined pupil-wealth factor. This change is desirable so that as additional programs are contemplated, all

school districts will be encouraged to participate.

2. Legislation should be enacted to allow Intermediate Units to own vehicles and other property. The IU program comes under the same scrutiny for expenditures as a local district board. Since this is the case, expenditures would be more economically made by owning (instead of leasing) in many cases. The right of an IU to have taxing power is not advocated; however, the continuance of providing good economical programs makes the ownership of property by the IU the proper procedure. For the nonpublic program alone (Act 89), the savings incurred by owning rather than leasing vehicles would be significant.

3. The State allocation to Intermediate Units should be increased in a fashion comparable to local district reimbursement increases. The State should allocate to IU's an appropriation based on a set percentage of the regular reimbursement paid to school districts over the State. If this method were employed, IU's would receive no additional money when districts reach their reimbursement limit. However, if the amount increases to districts, the IU's would receive this same percent increase.

At the July 22, 1976 meeting of the Appalachia Intermediate Unit 08 Board of School Directors, the following resolution was adopted for your consideration:

WHEREAS, new programs are being mandated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; and

WHEREAS, many of these programs so mandated for IU's are not properly funded by the State.

BE IT RESOLVED, that IU08 go on record that we urge the Department of Education from henceforth to fund these programs and that copies of this resolution be sent to the proper authorities.

4. The budget adoption process mandating individual district voting and convention voting is too detailed and cumbersome. It is recommended that the budget adoption step at the annual convention level (where a weighted vote is taken) be eliminated.

5. "Intermediate Unit" should be maintained as the basic name of this service agency; however, the term "education" should be incorporated to clarify our function to the public. Intermediate Education Unit could be a possibility.

#### A PROJECTED IU SERVICE

As stated earlier, (a) current IU law allows for a great variety of service offerings, (b) that these offerings are limited by finances available, and (c) that receiving additional district allocations by reason of the present pupil-wealth formula is difficult.

The alleviation of the restrictive factors would enable the IU to expand its services to districts through the implementation of a BOCES model. The BOCES (Board of Cooperative Educational Services) is the IU counterpart in New York State. It serves as the LEA for employing teachers who teach only very specialized subjects for regular students and who are shared with several school districts. This service properly implemented could reduce costs to districts who now struggle to provide these services. The current IU law allows us to provide this important service. The financial procedure involved, however, is the drawback.

## FEDERAL FUNDING

Legislation should encourage the PDE to write state plans so that Intermediate Units can receive federal funds as do local school districts. Currently many federal funds are allocated by numbers of pupils and since the IU technically has no pupils, these federal funds can be secured only when districts sign-off their allocations to the Intermediate Unit.

## CURRENT IU SERVICES

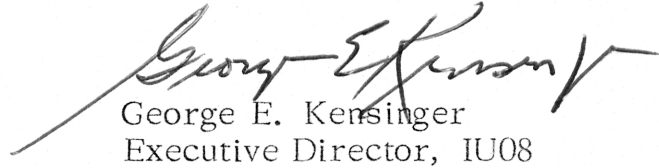
Time does not permit a detailed description of services Appalachia IU08 is now providing. Your report summarizes the statistical facts concerning our 20 program areas, the related costs, etc. Any document of the magnitude of the Legislative Budget & Finance Committee Report is confined to a statistical design, and the kinds of data collected may or may not be a total assessment of the program's value. There are aspects of our program which are difficult to show on paper or through oral testimony.

The influence of our program upon the profoundly retarded, the physically handicapped, the mentally gifted, and the thousands of children in our regular classrooms is indeed significant although difficult to assess. In addition to pupils, our services also reach administrators, teachers, school bus drivers, secretaries, and custodians.

I have attempted to illustrate some aspects of programs in IU08 and what legislation would be helpful for future operation. The Intermediate Units are vital to the survival of quality educational programs in Pennsylvania. I

invite each of you to visit our four county area to see first hand the kind of services provided daily in Intermediate Unit 08.

Thank you for this opportunity to appear here today.

  
George E. Kensinger  
Executive Director, IU08

8/4/76