

Building Regional Partnerships and District Capacity Across the Commonwealth

Executive Office of Education
June 9, 2009

Current Organizational Environment

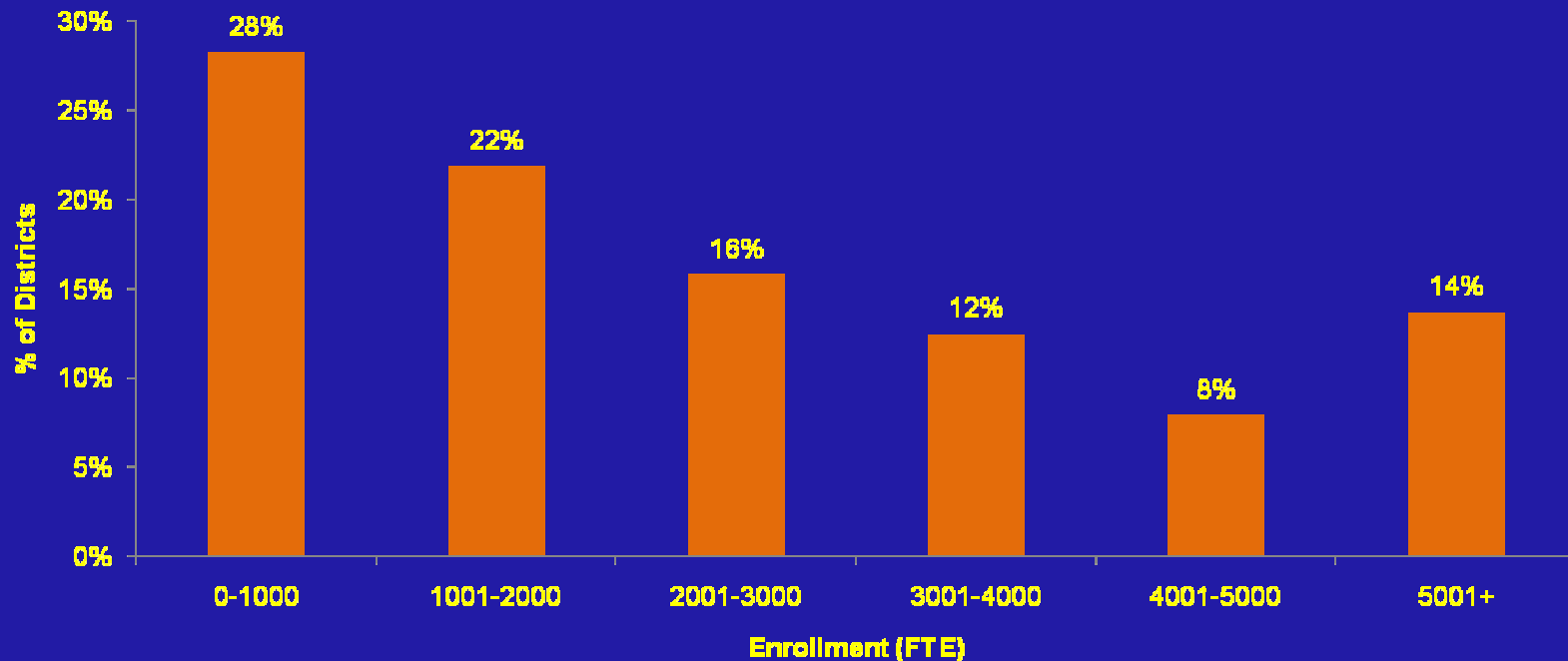
329 districts (excluding charter districts) are currently serving 958,910 students

- 177 comprehensive K-12 districts
- 32 K-12 regional districts
- 23 partial elementary or secondary regional districts
- 53 partial districts
- 30 vocational districts
- 14 tuition-out districts
- 20 superintendency unions and districts that share superintendents that encompass 73 districts

Distribution of School Districts by Size

88 percent of Massachusetts' 329 school districts enroll fewer than 5,000 students

- 79 percent enroll fewer than 4,000 students
- 51 percent enroll fewer than 2,000 students



Comparison Among States

	Number of Districts	Number of Students
Massachusetts	329	958,910
Maryland	24	845,700
North Carolina	115	1,441,872
Virginia	132	1,231,057

Concerns About the Existing Environment

- Many superintendents and district administrators have multiple roles because there are not enough staff members in the central office – which means that in many cases, these administrators are unable to devote a sufficient amount of time to supporting instruction
- Some superintendents are required to respond to multiple school committees, attend multiple town meetings, and address multiple sets of administrative and operational issues
- Some districts do not have the capacity to provide all students with a broad range of rigorous academic courses, differentiated programs, and extracurricular opportunities
- Some districts are not structured to promote instructional and curricular alignment across different grade levels
- Some districts are not financially viable and also allocate more resources to bureaucratic versus instructional costs

EOE Analyses

- Review of Literature and Research
- Financial Analysis
 - *Among districts with fewer than 5,000 students, on average and holding other observable demographic and structural characteristics constant, larger districts are associated with smaller proportions of expenditures on bureaucratic costs and more on teaching and instructional salaries*
- Academic Analysis
 - *Among districts with fewer than 5,000 students, on average and holding other observable demographic and structural characteristics constant, larger districts are likely to have higher MCAS Math and ELA performance*
- Legislative Analysis

Why We Are Pursuing School District Re-Organization

- To increase the capacity of all districts to support all students in all schools by adopting more effective and efficient district structures
- To increase the financial viability of all districts across the state
- To implement consensus-driven recommendations from the Governor's Readiness Project which called for the creation and expansion of incentives for educational collaboratives to expand services and also the consolidation or regionalization of districts
- To respond to high levels of interest from district administrators, community members, legislators, and other stakeholders

EOE Goals for Constructing Legislation

- Increase the capacity of all school districts across the Commonwealth to improve academic outcomes for all students and provide a broad range of high-quality academic and programmatic options for a diverse population of students
- Increase the financial efficiency and viability of all districts and ensure that more resources are allocated to instructional versus bureaucratic costs
- Establish a clear, comprehensive, and fair process for assessing all districts
- Promote the creation of comprehensive K-12 districts
- Provide, to the extent possible, short-term financial incentives to explore regionalization and technical assistance or support as necessary to help districts

What is the EOE not trying to do?

- Establish a set number of districts for the Commonwealth
- Eliminate local autonomy, flexibility, and control
- Increase school size
- Close schools
- Reduce central office capacity
- Force regionalization on high-performing, high-capacity, and fiscally viable districts

Core Legislative Concept

- All districts in the Commonwealth will be reviewed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in accordance with an objective process that will utilize multiple indicators to assess central office capacity, academic and programmatic quality, and financial viability.

Possible Indicators:

- Central Office Capacity – total number of staff members and the number of staff members specifically focused on instruction
- Academic Achievement – MCAS scores and other student outcome data
- Instructional Opportunities – range of academic courses offered, types of differentiated programs
- Fiscal Efficiency – percentage of district funding allocated to instructional versus bureaucratic costs and the portion of operational and administrative costs that are shared with other districts

Core Legislative Concept (continued)

- On the basis of the review, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education will direct that:
 - 1) No action is needed by the district;
 - 2) The district will collaborate with one or more districts, an educational collaborative, a municipality, or other entity to address one or more areas of need identified in the review; or
 - 3) The district and partner districts will form a regional school district to address one or more areas of need identified in the review.

Core Legislative Concept (continued)

- The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will work with the district to identify an appropriate partner(s) for regionalization.
- In recognition of the transition costs related to restructuring districts, efforts will be made to provide limited and one-time transition costs to facilitate the regionalization process.

Tasks of the EOE

- Continue discussions with multiple stakeholders including district and school administrators, community members, Legislators, and other stakeholders regarding the benefits of district re-organization and the core legislative concept
- Draft legislation in Summer 2009
- Collaborate with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to develop the process by which all districts will be reviewed

Benefits of District Re-Organization

- All school districts will have a sufficient number of highly qualified staff members in the central office, which will allow district administrators to devote sufficient and much-needed time to instruction.
- All school districts will have greater capacity to support high-quality instruction and promote high levels of achievement for all students in all schools.
- All school districts will have greater capacity to offer a broader range of high-quality academic opportunities and enriching programmatic options to all students.

Benefits of Re-Organization (continued)

- All school districts will lower operating and administrative costs through economies of scale, thereby allowing for a greater proportion of funds to be allocated to support instruction.
- A smaller number of organizational units will promote greater coherence and alignment of initiatives across the state.

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