

Nevada's Education Service Center

This FAQ provides general information about how Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) function nationwide, which may be useful to inform the design of Nevada's Education Service Center (ESC). Nevada-specific information follows the national perspective on ESAs.

The National Perspective

What are Educational Service Agencies (ESAs)?

An Educational Service Agency (ESA) is a regional public multi-service agency authorized by state law to develop, manage, and provide a wide range of services or programs to local education agencies (LEAs), to include school districts and charter organizations.

An ESA acts as a bridge or intermediary between the State Education Agency (SEA) and individual LEAs by providing direct support and services to LEAs, often by achieving economies of scale and providing specialized expertise that smaller LEAs might not be able to afford or manage on their own. The key difference between an SEA and an ESA lies in their function, focus, and relationship with LEAs. SEAs serve as the regulatory and oversight body at the state level, while an ESA is designed to be a support and service delivery hub at the regional level.

How many states have ESAs?

Educational Service Agencies are widely used across the United States. According to the Association of Educational Service Agencies¹, ESAs operate in over 39 states and are known by various names across the country, including:

- Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs or ESCs)
- Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES)
- Education Service Cooperatives
- Area Education Agencies (AEAs)
- Educational Service Districts (ESDs)

What are the typical services provided by ESAs?

Nationally, ESAs offer a broad and diverse portfolio of services customized to the needs of the schools in their region, which can be categorized in two ways:

1. Instructional and Student Support Services

- *Professional Development*: Training and continuing education for teachers, administrators, boards, and staff.

¹ [Home - Association of Educational Service Agencies | AESA](#)

- *Curriculum & Instruction Support*: Development and dissemination of curriculum resources, instructional materials, and adoption of best practices.
- *Special Education Services*: Providing or coordinating specialized staff, to include offering supportive services like counseling, occupational therapy, and physical therapy for students with disabilities. (e.g., speech therapists, psychologists), conducting evaluations, and ensuring compliance with federal mandates like IDEA.
- *Technology & Media Services*: Providing access to educational media, technology integration support, and technical assistance.

2. Management, Planning, and Operations

- *Fiscal and Administrative Support*: Offering services such as joint purchasing of supplies (to lower costs), accounting, and payroll processing.
- *Accountability & Compliance*: Providing assistance with state and federal reporting, data collection, and compliance monitoring.
- *Consultation and Technical Assistance*: Providing expert advice on school improvement, leadership coaching, and strategic planning.
- *Human Resources & Staffing*: Assisting districts with recruitment, licensure, and managing substitute teacher pools.

How do ESAs engage in the field?

Themes of how ESAs engage the field in providing services include:

- *Extend State Capacity*: ESAs serve as regional delivery systems for state-mandated initiatives, helping the State Education Agency execute priorities on a local level, especially in rural or hard-to-reach areas.
- *Facilitate Compliance with and Implementation of state/federal policy*: Many ESAs provide technical assistance to support implementation of state/federal statutes with fidelity and in compliance with the law.
- *Promote Collaboration*: They convene and facilitate working groups among district leaders (e.g., superintendents, curriculum directors) to encourage the sharing of best practices and innovative educational approaches.
- *Deliver Services Cost-Effectively*: By purchasing services and resources in bulk, or by providing shared specialized staff (like school psychologists), ESAs help districts achieve significant economies of scale.

Nevada-Specific Information

How was the Nevada Education Service Center created?

The development of the ESC was driven by a legislative mandate² to improve academic achievement and accountability, particularly in low-performing schools. The creation of the ESC expands technical assistance and support for LEAs to support system-wide school improvement. The bill specifically mandated the creation of the ESC, including:

- *Creation of the Center*: Establishing the ESC as an entity to support the state's public education system.
- *Governing Body*: Providing for the appointment of a seven-member governing body for the Center to oversee its operations and strategic direction.
- *Clear Purpose*: Requiring the Center to provide assistance and guidance to public schools and school districts designated as low-performing or underperforming by the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

What is the goal and purpose of the Nevada Education Service Center?

The Nevada Education Service Center (ESC) focuses on providing support and resources to Nevada's school districts and charter operators, aligning with the national ESA model to improve student performance and operational efficiency across the state. The enabling legislation outlines the ECS's specific purpose as follows:

- At the request of superintendents, provide recommendations for strategies and interventions for school improvement.
- Provide support for the initiatives and efforts of this State to improve the performance of schools and school districts in this State, including, without limitation, evidence-based and research-based support for the improvement of schools and school districts identified for rigorous interventions.
- Implement or support the implementation of state or federally funded initiatives assigned to the Education Service Center by the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and
- Avoid duplication of programs and services to ensure a streamlined and efficient delivery of educational services.

In essence, the Nevada ESC was developed as a state-level mechanism for implementing strategic academic interventions and providing targeted resources to improve student outcomes. It is independent from the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) but supports the state superintendent and NDE in ensuring LEAs have what they need to excel. The ESC is built for collaboration, not compliance enforcement, and will work alongside school district leadership and trustees, governing bodies of charter schools, and school staff to analyze performance data, diagnose specific challenges, and co-develop solutions that are tailored to the unique needs of each school community. All accountability measures remain the sole purview of NDE.

² S.B. 460, 2025 Nev. Leg

How can the Nevada ESC help my local school district or charter school?

Right now, local stakeholders are being asked to provide input on how the ESC will operate. Long term, the Nevada ESC aims to provide expertise and resources that will allow local districts to:

- Enhance student performance through high-quality instructional support.
- Operate more efficiently and economically by leveraging shared services.
- Implement state-wide initiatives and educational reforms as directed by NDE or the Legislature.

How is the ESC different from the Nevada Department of Education?

	Nevada Department of Education (NDE)	Education Service Center (ESC)
Primary Function	Governance, Regulation, & Accountability	Service, Support, & Capacity Building
Level	State-Level Agency (Top)	Regional/Intermediate Agency (Middle)
Relationship to LEAs	Oversight and Enforcement. Ensure LEAs comply with state and federal laws (e.g., IDEA, Title I) and administer the state's accountability system.	Partnership and Resource Sharing. Work directly with LEAs to provide services.
Core Responsibilities	1. Policy & Standards: Set statewide curriculum standards, graduation requirements, and educator licensure rules. Establish statewide system of accountability and	1. Specialized Services: Provide support for the initiatives to improve the performance of schools and districts. Carry out differentiated support to LEAs identified.

	<p>framework for differentiated support.</p> <p>2. Funding: Administer state and federal education funds to LEAs.</p> <p>3. Monitoring: Oversee the Nevada School Performance Framework and ensure compliance with law.</p>	<p>2. Economies of Scale: Run cooperative purchasing programs and shared financial services.</p> <p>3. Professional Learning: Deliver regionalized professional development and other evidence-based or research-based support.</p>
Focus	System-Wide Coherence and Equity through rules and policy.	Operational Efficiency and Local Needs through direct services.