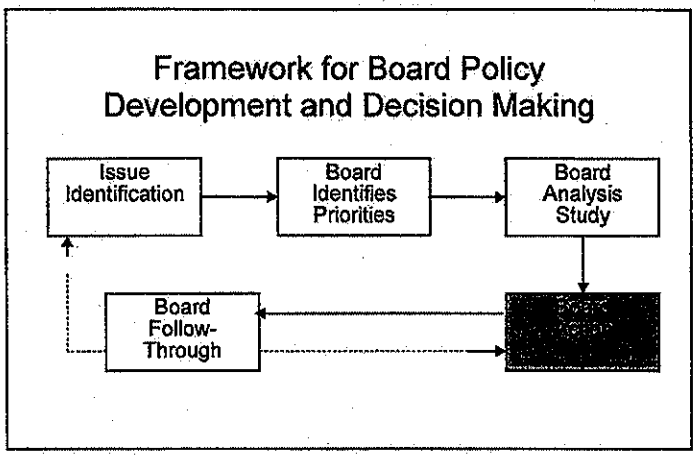
Iowa State Board of Education

Executive Summary

April 30, 2009



Agenda Item: AEA 13 and AEA 14 Reorganization Plan Approval

Iowa Goal: All K-12 students will achieve at a high level.

Equity Impact Statement: AEAs exist to provide equitable services to local schools, communities, and students.

Presenter: Del Hoover, Deputy Administrator
Bureau of Accreditation & Improvement Services

Glenn Grove, Chief Administrator
Loess Hills AEA 13

Connie Maxson, Chief Administrator
Green Valley AEA 14

Attachments: 1

Recommendation: It is recommended that the State Board approve the reorganization plan for AEA 13 and AEA 14.

Background: The 2001 Iowa Legislature passed legislation which allows AEAs to voluntarily reorganize. AEA 13 and AEA 14 are the tenth and eleventh agencies to undertake this endeavor. They have submitted a reorganization plan (attached) to the Department of Education which includes an executive summary. Web links to very detailed appendices can be found at http://sites.google.com/site/aeamerger/Home/reorganization-plan. All items submitted meet Code specifications for a reorganization study including, documentation that there were either no or very few comments at the public hearings. It is clear through the documents of board minutes and public hearings that the stakeholders support the reorganization. If the reorganization is approved, there will be nine AEAs in the state beginning July 1, 2010.

REORGANIZATION PLAN

Loess Hills AEA 13
Green Valley AEA 14

March 2009

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Loess Hills AEA 13 & Green Valley AEA 14

Introduction

Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13 (AEA 13) and Green Valley Area Education Agency 14 (AEA 14), pursuant to Iowa Code section 273.21, 2005, developed, approved, and are submitting this reorganization plan to the State Board of Education (State Board). The board of directors, as noted in Figure 00-01, approved the plan.

Figure 00-01
Reorganization Plan Approved by Board

AEA	Date of Approval
13	April 7, 2009 Board of Directors vote 8-0 in favor of submitting plan.
14	April 7, 2009 Board of Directors vote 7-0 in favor of submitting plan.

The purpose of the plan is to comply with the mandates of the Code Section 273.211, in order to implement reorganization (merger or consolidation) of AEAs 13 and 14, effective July 1, 2010. The proposed reorganization is a voluntary action, and the two boards seek the approval of the State Board as specified in Subsection 4, of Code Section 273.21.

The plan is organized in five parts, the first of which outlines the reorganization process and offers and overview of the context in which the merger plan is set. The second part is an examination of the criteria and a review of the expected outcomes. The third part presents information on other items that are required to be in the plan, and the fourth part offers a tentative outline of the design and the structure of the proposed reorganized agency. The fifth part concludes the plan with final comments and a formal request.

Chapter 1
Reorganization Procedures

Code Sections 273.20 to 273.23 govern the AEA reorganization process. This chapter summarizes the reorganization procedures mandated by the Code, addresses the compliance of those provisions by AEAs 13 and 14, and presents an overview of the conditions and evens that initiated the organization process between the two AEAs.

A. Mandated Procedures

The code provisions include a series of actions that are to be taken by the boards of directors of the "affected" area education agencies in order to effect reorganization. The procedures begin with the voluntary actions of the AEA boards and culminate with the approval of the reorganization plan by the State Board.

Figure 01-01

Code of Iowa AEA Reorganization Plan Requirements		
Section	**Subsection**	**Reorganization Plan Procedures**
273.21	1	Reorganize if a majority of the members of each board approves reorganization
3	a	Develop detailed studies
3	b	Survey school districts for needs
3	c	Consult with officials of school districts
3	c	Consult with other citizens
3	c	Hold public hearing during development of a plan for reorganization
3	c	Hold a public hearing on the final plan
3	d	Consult with the director of the DE in development of the surveys and plans
3	e	Develop a reorganization plan that: demonstrates improved efficiency of programs, demonstrates improved effectiveness of programs, includes a preliminary budget, documents public comment from the public hearings, provides for a board of directors and the number of members (273.8)
3	f	Set forth the assets and liabilities
273.23	1	State the number of directors on the initial board--either 7 or 9, specify the number of directors to be retained from each area--proportionate
273.21	3g	Transmit the completed plan to the state board by July 15.
	4	The state board shall review the reorganization plan and shall, prior to September 30, either approve the plan as submitted, approve the plan contingent upon compliance with the state board's recommendations, or disapprove the plan.

Figure 01-01 summarizes the reorganization steps. This is not an official listing, but it is the tool used by the AEA boards to monitor the process.

B. Procedures Followed by AEAs 13 and 14

After reviewing the State Board's "Area Education Agencies Restructuring and Reorganization Study" dated September 2001 (DE Study – 2001), and after studying the merger activities of AEA's 3 and 5, AEAs 2, 6, and 7, AEA's 4 and 12, and AEA's 15 and 16, AEA 14 initiated a study conducted by Dr. Phil Berrie, who gathered statewide data, similar to that in the DE 2001 study, to draw up an action plan ensuring the provision of continued efficiency, effectiveness and equity in services to the districts within its boundaries. The AEA 14 board was faced with four potential actions: remaining the same with no major chances, entering into "whole program" sharing with one or more contiguous AEAs, reorganization (merger) with one or more contiguous AEAs or dissolving as an AEA.

Additionally, in a move to collect comparative AEA 13 and 14 data, and to develop a document illustrating a comparison of philosophies, systems and service delivered by the two AEAs, a study guided by the administrative team members of the two AEAs generated an in-depth study of 28 services to determine likenesses and differences between the two AEAs. To date, no other AEA has gone to this depth of data analysis of service provision as part of a merger conversation. This document provided the two AEA boards with quantifiable data regarding services in the two AEAs to further the discussion of the viability of merger with efficiency, effectiveness and equity as the driving focus.

After reviewing these potential actions, the board and administrative team from AEA 14, began informal conversations about reorganization with the AEA 13 board. Chief Administrators from AEA 13 and 14 also had meetings with Iowa Director of Education Judy Jeffrey. The first joint AEA board conversations began in spring 2008 with a joint board meeting of AEA 13 and AEA 14 directors held in Anita, Iowa. This initial meeting was facilitated by Dr. Troyce Fisher from School Administrators of Iowa.

Following this initial meeting, the boards of AEA 13 and 14 came to consensus to continue to meet and explore merger options. The boards of directors of AEA 13 provided direction to expand the study conducted by AEA 14 by Dr. Phil Berrie to include AEA 13 data across all areas of study. Upon completion of this combined feasibility study, AEA 13 and 14 boards continued to meet and direct the work of the AEA 13 and 14 administrative teams to address questions and concerns.

The boards of AEA 13 and 14 engaged in five step processes (see Figure 01-02), modeled by other AEAs conducting restructuring efforts that lead to the eventual reorganization decision. Some of the activities included informal contacts, whereas, others were official board actions. Careful planning and conscientious analysis of data was taken at every given opportunity.

Figure 01-02

Description of Five General Stages in AEA Reorganization Process
Study: This stage included a wide range of activities beginning with casual contacts among AEA board members and AEA administrator sharing. These tentative steps led to board action to contract for a reorganization feasibility study that was conducted in both AEA's, thorough review of the study, development of a comparison of services study, continued dialogue by the boards, and many other actions, both official and informal, that advanced to the decision to submit the reorganization plan to the Department of Education for State Board approval. **Preliminary Activities**: This stage was intermixed with the study stage, but it involved activities that were designed to bring the two agencies closer together. The program and sharing activities between the two AEAs helped the boards in the decision making process, but they also advanced the AEAs toward the eventual merger. **Plan for State Board**: This stage involved the development of the plan that is being submitted for State Board approval. This stage officially ended with the approval actions of the AEA boards as listed in Figure 00-01. **State Board Approval:** This is the current stage, with the decision making process resting with the State Board of Education. **Implementation:** This is a two part stage that includes specific reorganization actions to be taken by the two AEA boards subsequent to State Board approval, but prior to the July 1 merger date, and the actions taken by the new single board and AEA after the merger date.

Chapter 2
Study Criteria

The boards of AEA 13 and AEA 14 focused their study and decision making, to the maximum extent possible, through identification of education and business criteria. Clearly, personal and political elements were ingrained in the reorganization decision making process, yet it was the goal of both boards to keep the notions of efficiency, effectiveness and equity of services in the forefront of all analysis and decisions.

Chapter 2 identifies the criteria included in the AEA reorganization process, offers an examination of the key criteria examined by the boards, and the examination of anticipated outcomes.

A. Legislated Study Criteria

Code Section 273.21 includes a limited number of criteria that are to be examined in an AEA reorganization study. These criteria are summarized below in Figure 02-01.

Figure 02-01

Legistlated Study Criteria

Sectio	Subsection		Description	Location
273.21	3	a	Facilities	Appendix XXVII of AEA13/14 Information Study
			Property	Appendix XXVII of AEA13/14 Information Study
			Services	Appendix II of Reorganization Plan
			Staffing Necessities	Chapter 5 of AEA13/14 Information Study
			Equipment	Chapter 3 of Reorganization Plan
			Programs	Appendix II of Reorganization Plan
			Other Capabilities	

These criteria, along with data pertaining to other categories of analysis, are outlined in detail in the AEA13/14 Information Study and comparison documents, which are included as addendum to this plan.

B. Key Study Criteria

Figure 02-02 lists the key study criteria categories as they are reported in the AEA 13/14 Information Study.

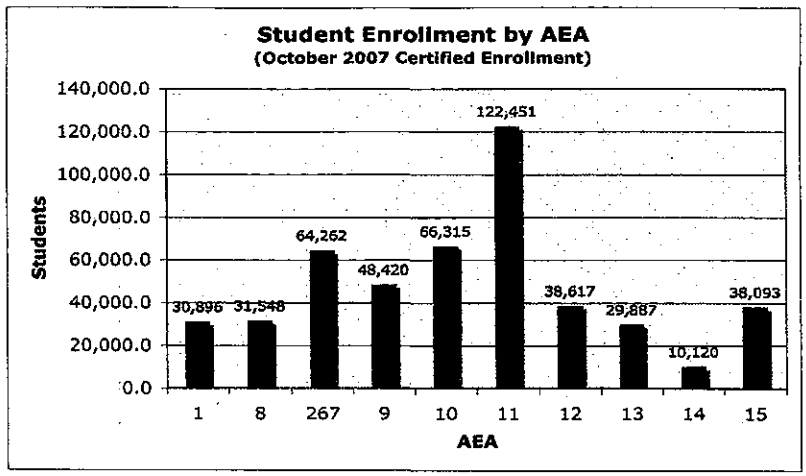
Figure 02-02

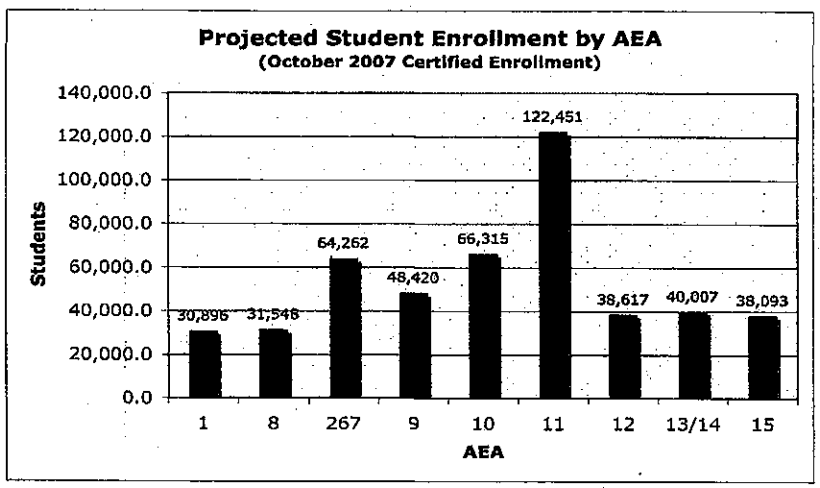
General Study Criteria	
1	Enrollment and Population
2	Geography
3	Finances
4	Employees and Salaries
5	AEA Facilities and Equipment
6	Schools and Districts Served
7	Assessment of Schools and Districts Served
8	AEA Programs and Services

Enrollment and Population

Of related interest is the density of students per square mile served by AEA. The table and charts below show the comparisons among AEAs by enrollment and student density with the current and projected status.

Current					Projected				
AEA	Student Density	Rank by Density	Oct 2007 Cert Enrollment	Rank by Enrollment	AEA	Student Density	Rank by Density	Oct 2007 Cert Enrollment	Rank by Projected Enrollment
1	6.1	7	30,895.9	8	1	6.1	6	30,895.9	9
8	4.0	9	31,548.0	7	8	4.0	9	31,548.0	8
267	7.1	4	64,262.1	3	267	7.1	4	64,262.1	3
9	19.8	1	48,419.6	4	9	19.8	1	48,419.6	4
10	15.2	3	66,315.3	2	10	15.2	3	66,315.3	2
11	18.7	2	122,451.3	1	11	18.7	2	122,451.3	1
12	6.2	6	38,617.1	5	12	6.2	5	38,617.1	6
					13/14	4.7	8	40,006.7	5
13	6.4	5	29,887.1	9					
14	2.6	10	10,119.6	10					
15	6.0	8	38,092.8	6	15	6.0	7	38,092.8	7
State	8.5		480,608.80						





Geography

Green Valley AEA 14 is located in the sparsely populated southwestern region of the state. The AEA serves eight counties encompassing 3939 square miles. Loess Hills AEA 13 is located to the west of AEA 14 and includes the large Council Bluffs school district. In order to understand the geographical relationship of AEAs 13 and 14 to the other AEAs in the state, comparisons are made below in terms of physical size, number of districts served, and student density.

In comparison to the geographical area served AEA 14 ranks ninth of ten AEAs (AEA 15 and AEA 16 was officially merged as of July 1, 2007) and AEA 13 ranks seventh of ten. The combined area of 8,599 square miles would place the rank of the merged 13/14 as second of nine.

Current				Projected			
AEA	Square Miles	Rank (Sq. Mi.)	Cert Enrollment October 2007	AEA	Square Miles	Rank (Sq. Mi.)	Cert Enrollment October 2007
1	5,056	6	30,895.9	1	5,056	7	30,895.9
8	7,890	2	31,548.0	8	7,890	3	31,548.0
267	9,046	1	64,262.1	267	9,046	1	64,262.1
9	2,440	10	48,419.6	9	2,440	9	48,419.6
10	4,366	8	66,315.3	10	4,366	8	66,315.3
11	6,558	3	122,451.3	11	6,558	4	122,451.3
12	6,275	5	38,617.1	12	6,275	6	38,617.1
13	4,660	7	29,887.1	13/14	8,599	2	40,006.7
14	3,939	9	10,119.6				
15	6,359	4	38,092.8	15	6,359	5	38,092.8

Finances, Salaries, Facilities and Equipment

Financial, employee salaries, and facilities and equipment details are extensively outlined in the AEA13/14 Information Study, Appendices XXIV through XXVII. Controlled funding, fund balances, revenues/expenditures, and financial projections are outlined. Both boards are aware that with the prospect of continued declining enrollments, in both AEAs, revenues will also continue to decline. Reorganization of the two AEAs, in and of itself, will not result in reduced revenues. However, the boards recognize that reorganization will afford the opportunity to reduce overhead, provide an opportunity for a redesign of services, and allow for greater increased resources, through reprioritization, of services and service delivery design.

Schools and Districts Served

Green Valley AEA 14 is an area comprised of twenty public school districts and one non-public school ranging in student population from slightly under 100 to over 1400. The service delivery model recently developed is organized into three regions as follows:

AEA 14 District Name		Region	K-12 Certified Enrollment 2007-08	Enrollment Rank
Creston		C	1,362	1
Nodaway Valley		C	730	4
East Union		C	501	8
Lenox		C	362	11
Orient-Macksburg		C	231	15
St. Malachy School		C	126	18
Clearfield (K-6)		C	89	20
Prescott (K-6)		C	95	19
Diagonal		C	89	20
	Subtotal		3,585	
Clarke		E	1,335	2
Central Decatur		E	671	6
Mount Ayr		E	677	5
Lamoni		E	339	12
Mormon Trail		E	271	14
Murray		E	281	13
	Subtotal		3,574	
Red Oak		W	1,327	3
Corning		W	514	7
Bedford		W	495	9
Villisca		W	383	10
Stanton		W	208	16
New Market (K-8)		W	160	17
	Subtotal		3,087	
Public			10,120	
Non-Public			126	

Loess Hills AEA 13 is an area comprised of thirty-one public school districts and six non-public school systems ranging in student population from slightly under 100 to over 9000. The service delivery model recently is organized into three regions as follows:

AEA 13 District Name	Region	K-12 Certified Enrollment 2007-08	Enrollment Rank
Council Bluffs	C	9,297	1
St. Albert's	C	749	10
Trinity Lutheran	C	20	37
Subtotal		10,066	
Harlan	N	1,594	4
Atlantic	N	1,459	5
Missouri Valley	N	930	7
Underwood	N	761	9
Tri-Center	N	737	11
Logan-Magnolia	N	665	13
A-H-S-T	N	646	14
Griswold	N	621	15
West Harrison	N	515	17
Boyer Valley	N	464	19
Woodbine	N	439	20
IKM	N	421	21
Elk Horn-Kimballton	N	284	25
ANITA	N	259	28
Walnut	N	231	30
C and M	N	213	32
Shelby County Catholic	N	122	33
St. Patrick	N	26	36
Subtotal		10,387	
Lewis Central	S	2,559	2
Glenwood	S	2,121	3
Shenandoah	S	1,063	6
Clarinda	S	876	8
Riverside	S	684	12
Treynor	S	591	16
Fremont-Mills	S	478	18
Sidney	S	378	22
Malvern	S	305	23
Essex	S	285	24
Hamburg	S	284	25
Farragut	S	261	27
South Page	S	239	29
Nishna Valley	S	230	31
Clarinda Lutheran	S	106	34
Heartland Christian	S	43	35

	Subtotal	10,503
Public		29,887
Non-Public		1,066

The February 2008 AEA13 and 14 Comparison of Philosophies, Systems and Services study offers extensive information about programs and services. Based upon the data reported in this study, and work by the AEA 13 and 14 administrative teams in analysis of the most discrepant service delivery options in the two AEAs, the respective boards of directors have noted that reorganization affords the opportunity to design and craft new service delivery models for the benefit of students, schools and consumers of AEA services. By blending the skills in the personnel in the two AEAs, the strengths and weaknesses of each AEA can serve to compliment their partner in designing expanded supports for schools in the areas of curriculum, instruction, assessment and special education support.

C. List of Expected Reorganization Outcomes

Legislative intent and the 2001 Department of Education study on the AEA system outlines three anticipated outcomes of reorganization. As mentioned throughout this report, effectiveness, efficiency and equity are the expected outcomes (see Figure 02-03)

Figure 02-03

Expected Outcomes of AEA Reorganization

House File 2549—Bill That Mandates DE Study - 2001

1 The equitable delivery of core services to students and schools
2 The effective delivery of core services to students and schools
3 The efficient delivery of core services to students and schools

Board discussion, with input and resources from administration and the various conducted studies conclude that a merged AEA 13/14 would produce an AEA for southwest Iowa that would be more equitable, effective and efficient for students and schools, alike. The new board would be charged with directing administration to continue to address equity, effectiveness, and efficiency in the design and implementation of AEA services to meet the changing needs of students and schools. Newly designed services would be anchored in the Iowa CORE Curriculum and embedded with 21st Century Learner skills.

Chapter 3

Other Required Plan Contents

Provisions of Code Chapter 273 list several additional components that are required to be included in an AEA reorganization plan. Those items are contained in this chapter.

A. Preliminary Budget

Subsection 6 of Section 273.23 states that, *"For the school year beginning on the effective date of an area education agency reorganization as provided in this subchapter, the media services cost per pupil as determined under section 257.37 for all districts in a newly formed area education agency for the budget year shall be the highest amount of media services cost per pupil for any of the affected area education agencies. ."* Subsection 7 of Section 273.23 renders similar provisions for educational services.

Tables 03-01 and 03-02 depict what the media services and educational services district costs of a reorganized AEA would be using the most recent data available. The largest per pupil amount of the two AEAs is carried forward to the subsequent year for the new AEA.

Table 03-01

District Costs
FY09

AEA	Media Services District Cost	Enrollment Served	Per Pupil District Cost
13	$1,410,221.91	31,069	45.39
14	$460,064.98	10,147	45.34
Set Amounts		41216	45.39
	Combined		$1,870,794.24

Table 03-02

Districts Costs
FY09

AEA	Educ. Services District Cost	Enrollment Served	Per Pupil District Cost
13	$1,560,285.18	31,069	50.22
14	$505,523.54	10,147	49.82
Set Amounts		41216	50.22
	Combined		$2,069,867.52

Subsection 8 of Section 273.23, states *"for the school year beginning on the effective date of an area education agency reorganization as provided in this subchapter, the special education support services cost per pupil shall be based upon the combined base year budgets for special education support services of the area education agencies that reorganized to form the newly*

formed area education agency, divided by the total of the weighted enrollment for special education support services in the reorganized area education agency for the base year plus the allowable growth amount per pupil for special education support services for the budget year as calculated in section 257.8."

Table 03-03 depicts what the AEA special education support district cost of a reorganized AEA would be using the most recent data available. The calculated per pupil amount is carried forward to the subsequent year.

Table 03-03

Combined District Costs and Per Pupil District Costs
FY09

AEA	Spec. Ed. Supp. District Cost	AEA Weighted Enrollment	Per Pupil District Cost
13	$8,169,587.00	34,132.39	239.35
14	$2,860,494.00	11,508.25	248.56
Combined	**$11,029,973.47**	**45,640.64**	**241.67**

B. Assets and Liabilities

Subsection 3f of Section 273.21 states *"The affected boards contemplating a voluntary reorganization shall do the following: f) Set forth the assets and liabilities of the affected area education agencies, which shall become the responsibility of the board of directors of the newly formed area education agency on the effective date of the reorganization."* Table 03-04 summarizes the fixed assets and the long-term debt of AEAs 13 and 14. Table 03-05 lists the total fund balances (current assets less current liabilities) of the General Fund. Other detail can be found on the AEA 13/14 Information Study, Appendix XXIV.

Table 03-04

Fixed Asset Detail
All Governmental Funds – Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008

	AEA 13	AEA 14	Total
Land	20,394	70,210	90,604
Land improvements	11,074	---	11,074
Buildings and improvements	1,471,241	784,252	2,255,493
Machinery and equipment	3,099,989	2,300,337	5,400,326
Total	$4,602,698	$3,154,799	$7,757,497
Long-term Debt	0		0

Table 03-05 lists information regarding the actual enrollment served during the 2007-08 school year, the fund balance at the end of the 2007-08 school year, and the fund balance per enrollment. These figures are shown for each AEA separately and for combined totals.

Table 03-05

2007-08

AEA #	Enrollment Served	Fund Balance	Fund Balance Per Enrollment
13	31,338	$1,724,191	$55.02
14	10,497	$987,175	$94.04
Totals	41,835	$2,711,366.00	$ 64.81

C. Comments from Public Hearings

Public Hearings were held on February 16, 2009, and on March 16, 2009, at Green Valley Area Education Agency. Pubic Hearings were held on February 24, 2009, and on March 24, 2009, at Loess Hills Area Education Agency. Agenda and minutes of those hearings are included in Appendix X of this Reorganization Plan.

D. Survey of Needs

Subsection 3b of Section 273.21 of the Code states *"the affected boards contemplating a voluntary reorganization shall do the following: b) Survey the school districts within the affected area education agencies to determine the districts' current and future programs and services, professional development, and technology needs."*

Needs assessment data were generated from AEA boards, AEA employees, school personnel, and superintendents to determine the current and future needs of the schools in AEAs 13 and 14. These data were collected via focus group meetings and other small group meetings with different stakeholder groups.

Identified needs provide direction for the planning of services, service delivery, and organization of the reorganized AEA. Results from these different methods can be found in the appendices of the feasibility which is included as an appendix in this document. The methods included:

- Data Input AEA 14 Staff Western Region
- Data Input AEA 14 Staff Eastern Region
- Data Input AEA 14 Staff Central Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 14) Western Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 14) Eastern Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 14) Central (Group 1) Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 14) Central (Group 2) Region
- Data Input AEA 14 Administrative Cabinet
- Board Rankings (AEA 14) of Target Statements

- Data Input AEA 13 Staff Northern Region
- Data Input AEA 13 Staff Southern Region
- Data Input AEA 13 Staff Central Region
- Data Input AEA 13 Administrators/Certified Staff
- Data Input AEA 13 Halverson Center (HCE) Staff
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 13) Northern Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 13) Southern Region
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 13) Administrator's Advisory x
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 13) Council Bluffs Teachers
- Data Input LEA Staff (AEA 13) Council Bluffs Principals

Joint Cabinet meetings, involving administrative staff of AEAs 13 and 14, met during the 2008-09 school year and reviewed the needs assessment data listed above. Minutes from the meetings are included in Appendix V.

The chief administrators of AEAs 13 and 14 met with their respective superintendents' advisory committees to review data and gather further input. A meeting was also convened of a combined superintendents' advisory committee to review some initial service planning options. Data from these meetings were used to develop merger plans and establish delivery of service for the new AEA to meet the needs of the schools within the boundaries of AEAs 13 and 14.

E. Accreditation Standards

Subsection 3e of the new Section 273.21 of the Code requires that the reorganization plan, "... *demonstrates improved efficiency and effectiveness of programs to meet accreditation standards* ...."

Subsection 9 of Section 273.23, states that, *"Within one year of the effective date of the reorganization, a newly formed area education agency shall meet the accreditation requirements set forth in section 273.10, and the standards set forth in section 273.11. The newly formed area education agency shall be considered accredited for purposes of budget approval by the state board pursuant to section 273.3. The state board shall inform the newly formed area education agency of the accreditation on-site visit schedule."*

AEAs 13 and 14 are currently fully accredited according to the Department of Education accreditation standards. The new AEA will build upon this status through the work of the joint administrative cabinet and sub-committees whose members include administrators and staff of AEAs 13 and 14. These groups will continue their work and planning during the 2009-10 school year, extending the foundation established by this reorganization plan. The mission, vision, beliefs, and guiding principles will be developed by the new AEA board, reviewed and revised by the joint administrative cabinet and staff, and adopted by the new Board of Directors. The joint administrative cabinet will establish priorities, timelines, and processes to assist with the merger process.

The new AEA will undergo a comprehensive site visit in the spring of the 2010-11 school year. A Comprehensive Improvement Plan (CIP) will be written during the 2011-12 school year based

upon the common needs of the new agency. The accompanying goals and action plans will be designed to address those needs. The CIP will be submitted to the Department of Education by April 1, 2012.

F. Designation of Initial Board

Subsection 1 of the new Section 273.23 of the Code states that, *"A petition filed under section 273.21 shall state the number of directors on the initial board which shall be either seven or nine directors. The petition shall specify the number of directors to be retained from each area, and those numbers shall be proportionate to the populations of the agencies. If the proportionate balance of directors among the affected agencies specified in the plan is affected by school districts petitioning to be excluded from the reorganization, or if the proposal specified in the plan does not comply with the requirement for proportionate representation, the state board shall modify the proposal. However, all area education agencies affected shall retain at least one member."*

It is the decision of the boards of directors of AEAs 13 and 14 to retain nine members on the initial board. The proportionate numbers are shown in Table 03-06 below.

Table 03-06

AEA #	Population 2000 *	Percent of Total	Proportionate Number	Initial Board**
13	227,526	76%	6.84	6
14	71,511	24%	2.16	3
Total	299,037	100%	9	

*Population based on 2000 Census
**The joint boards of AEAs 13 and 14 determined the number of Initial Board members

G. Redraw the Boundary Lines of Director Districts

According to Subsection 11, of Code Section 273.23, *"Unless the reorganization of an area education agency takes effect less than two years before the taking of the next federal decennial census, a newly formed area education agency shall, within one year of the effective date of the reorganization, redraw the boundary lines of director districts in the area education agency if a petition filed by a school district to join the newly formed area education agency, or for release from the newly formed area education agency, in accordance with section 273.22, subsections 4, 6, and 7, was approved. Until the boundaries are redrawn, the boundaries for the newly formed area education agency shall be as provided in the reorganization plan approved by the state board in accordance with section 273.21."* A director district map for the new AEA can be found in Appendix IX.

The initial board will meet as soon as possible following the State Board's approval of the Reorganization Plan of AEAs 13 and 14. Director district convention dates in each of the director

districts will be established. The initial board will develop a 30-day publication notice and will receive nominations. Director district conventions will be held not later than August 15th with the new board convening not later than the fourth Tuesday in September 2009.

Chapter 4
Design and Structure of Reorganized Agency

A. Organizational Structure

Loess Hills AEA 13 is organized around three regional service centers, comprised of a total of eight regional offices: Atlantic Regional Office (Atlantic); Missouri Valley Regional Office (Missouri Valley); Glenwood Regional Office (Glenwood); Harlan Regional Office (Harlan); Halverson Center for Education/Halverson Regional Office (Council Bluffs); Peterson Center/Council Bluffs Regional Office (Council Bluffs); Manawa Regional Office (ISD Campus; Council Bluffs); and Shenandoah Regional Office (Shenandoah). Green Valley AEA 14 is organized around three regional service centers, comprised of a total of three offices: 1) Central Region and Central Office (Creston); 2) East Region (Osceola); and 3) West Region (Red Oak). The reorganized AEA will maintain the existing regional service center structure with the central office located in Council Bluffs, Iowa. The Creston site will continue to function as a media service center and regional service center, housing regional and media staff/personnel, to keep the delivery of services close to the customers throughout the merged AEA. It is the intent of the current AEA boards that the Shenandoah office be combined with the Red Oak office, at a site in Red Oak.

B. Administrative Structure

The Administrative Structure is depicted in Appendix VIII. The flowchart demonstrates the relationships and the organization of the reorganized AEA. A steering committee, comprised of six current AEA 13 board members and three current AEA 14 board members reviewed administrative structure options and chose the option in Appendix VIII for the new AEA. The structure was chosen as a result of it being flat and closer to the customer (schools we serve). Its flat nature and location closer to the customer will result in more responsive services for our customers.

C. Programs and Services

The structure for the delivery of services includes Instructional Services and Media/Technology services. What has historically been referred to as Educational Services and Special Education Services, respectively, will be integrated into one division.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

Subsection 4 of Section 273.21, states that, *"The state board shall review the reorganization plan and shall, prior to September 30, either approve the plan as submitted, approve the plan contingent upon compliance with the state board's recommendations, or disapprove the plan. A contingently approved plan shall be resubmitted with modifications to the department not later than October 30. An approved plan shall take effect on July 1 of the fiscal year following the date of approval by the state board."*

It is our belief this Voluntary Reorganization Plan and Appendices satisfy the requirements of Chapter 273 of the Code of Iowa. We further believe the plan demonstrates a new Area Education Agency that will efficiently and effectively meet the needs of students, schools, and communities entrusted to our care. Therefore, the boards of directors of Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13 and Green Valley Area Education Agency 14 request the State Board of Education approve this duly transmitted reorganization plan in accordance with the above noted provision of Chapter 273 to be effective July 1, 2010.

Reorganization Feasibility Study
Loess Hills AEA 13 and Green Valley AEA 14
Executive Summary
February 2, 2009

On October 16, 2006, the Green Valley Area Education Agency 14 board of directors voted to hire Phil Berrie, Ph.D., to conduct a feasibility study. On May 19, 2008, the boards of directors of Loess Hills Area Education Agency 13 (AEA 13) and Green Valley Area Education Agency 14 approved a motion for a joint feasibility study to be conducted by Phil Berrie, Ph.D. The feasibility study was completed in October 2008, and it included 78 pages of narrative, tables and graphs, plus supporting appendices with supporting data and related information. Following the introductory pages, the study report is divided into nine parts, as are reported in this executive summary narrative. This executive summary was prepared for those who want a quick review of some study highlights, but it is not intended to take the place of the complete document.

Green Valley Area Education Agency 14

Green Valley Area Education Agency (AEA 14) serves approximately 10,500 students within twenty public school districts in an eight county region. Kindergarten through twelfth grade enrollments range from a minimum of fewer than two hundred to a maximum of over 1400 per district. The intent of the formation of the AEAs was to provide Special Education, Media and Other Services to local school districts in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner to allow all children in Iowa to benefit at a high level from their educational experience.

General services currently offered to local districts within AEA 14 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- School-Community Planning
- Professional Development
- Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment
- Multicultural, Gender-Fair Support
- Diverse Learner Support (Special Education, TAG, etc.)
- Media Services
- School Technology
- Leadership

More specifically, some services provided by AEA 14 include assistive technology, child health specialty clinic, consultation, early childhood early childhood special education, early intervention services, hearing conservation/education, hospital/homebound program, lending library, occupational therapy, parent educator connection, physical therapy, professional development, school psychology, school social work, special education consulting, speech-language, technology integration support, transition, and visually impaired education.

Background

In 2001, the Iowa Department of Education (DE) conducted a study to comply with House File 2549 as enacted in the 2000 legislative session. The legislation required the DE to "study and

make recommendations for the alignment of area education boundaries in the event of voluntary area education agency merger or restructuring to best ensure the equitable, effective, and efficient delivery of core area education agency services to students and schools."

At that time, there were fifteen AEAs and it was noted in the study that enrollments in all but two declined from 1995 to 2000 and were projected to decline in all but one by 2005. Other demographic data including population, economics, staffing, and size were examined in a comparative manner across all AEAs.

While deemed successful by the study in providing the intended equitable, effective, and efficient services, AEAs were charged with continuing to change as accreditation standards, demographics, financial resources, technology advances, and LEA needs determine the direction of AEA services. It was stated *"with the change in demographics noted in the study, there will be diminished financial capacity on the part of some AEAs to provide the high quality of programs and services to meet the accreditation standards. It may very well be necessary for those AEAs to reallocate resources, change administrative structure, collaborate in new and efficient ways, or seriously undertake reorganization discussions to ensure the agencies have the capacity to continue to meet the accreditation standards and the continuing emerging needs of the state."*

It further went on to *say "that the AEA system is successful and should dispel the myth that AEAs are not efficient, effective, or needed. As with the rest of public and private sectors, AEAs must not rest on past achievements, but must project future needs and make the changes that will enable them to continue to be successful. While the AEA system is an important component of Iowa's education enterprise, it is no longer necessary to have the system comprised of 15 separate AEAs."*

The first recommendation of the study was *"that some AEAs be reconfigured through voluntary consolidation of agencies. In order for this recommendation to be accomplished, the following actions are suggested:*

- *AEAs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 14, 15, and 16 merge with other AEAs in whole or in part.*

- *If the AEAs as identified above do not undertake voluntary means to consolidate with each other or remaining AEAs by 2005, legislation should be established to provide the State Board of Education with the authority to establish the number and boundaries of the agencies through a state plan that is reviewed periodically.*

- *Mergers of AEAs shall take into consideration current community college boundaries/campuses and other regional units of state government agencies. To the extent possible, any mergers shall provide for increased collaboration and integration of programs and services that impact pre-K through grade 12 children and families."*

Post 2001 AEA Reorganization Action

Since the release of the study, there have been four Area Education Agency reorganizations to make changes as indicated in the above report recommendation.

AEA	AEA	AEA	Resulting AEA
AEA 3	AEA 5		AEA 8
AEA 2	AEA 6	AEA 7	AEA 267
AEA 4	AEA 12		Northwest
AEA 15	AEA 16		Great Prairie

In 2007, Green Valley AEA 14 initiated a study to examine much of the same type of information that was gathered during the 2001 statewide study by the Department of Education. The overall intent was to develop a plan of action for the immediate future that will help ensure continued efficiency, effectiveness and equity in services to the districts within its boundaries.

Options open to the Board of Directors along with a brief description follows:

1. Remain the same – no major changes.
   - Basically not an option based on the 2001 study and the message delivered by the Department of Education Director during the summer of 2006.
2. Enter into 'whole-program' sharing with one or more contiguous AEA(s).
   - This could take on many forms, but it basically involves having one AEA direct a program for two or more AEAs. Each involved AEA could concentrate efforts on the assigned program to manage. LEA whole-grade sharing is similar in concept and usually considered short term while examining a more permanent solution..
3. Reorganization (merger) with one or more contiguous AEA(s).
   - A permanent solution requiring agreement by the participating boards and much planning by boards, administration, staff and local districts to obtain optimal solution.
4. Dissolve as an AEA.
   - This would require the Department of Education to decide the structure that connects districts to AEAs. Perhaps the easiest solution but it means giving up all control and say in the resulting outcome.

Purpose of the AEA 14 Study

In a book entitled "Leadership and the New Science", Margaret Wheatley stated that while information 'informs' us, it also goes beyond mere informing. She states that information also 'forms' us. Ms. Wheatley cautions us to not make decisions too quickly but to continue gathering

information until patterns begin to emerge. These patterns serve to shape and direct decisions made from information collected. The overall purpose of this study was to provide the AEA 14 Board of Directors with information covering a multitude of avenues, suggest ways in which to examine the data, and begin to look for emerging patterns to guide in decision-making.

With that in mind, the following Chapters examine comparative information on geographic, population, enrollment, student achievement, staffing, expenditures and revenues, perceptions of local district and AEA staffs, and board perceptions and goals.

Revision of the AEA 14 Study to Include AEA13

Subsequent to the acceptance of the study by the Green Valley AEA 14 Board of Directors in April 2008, it was determined that dialogue should be initiated with the Loess Hills AEA 13 Board of Directors and respective administrative staffs to discuss the possibilities of merger. In addition, the Iowa Department of Education suggested that AEA 13 also conduct a feasibility study similar in content to Green Valley's.

This resulting feasibility study document is a revised version of the original Green Valley feasibility study containing the results of multiple focus group meeting gathering identical information from teachers, principals, superintendents, and AEA 13 certified and non-certified staffs. Where possible, tables and charts from the original study were updated to include 2007-08 data.

Green Valley AEA 14 is located in the sparsely populated southwestern region of the state. The AEA serves eight counties encompassing 3939 square miles. Loess Hills AEA 13 is located to the west of AEA 14 and includes the large Council Bluffs school district. In order to understand the geographical relationship of AEAs 13 and14 to the other AEAs in the state, comparisons were made in terms of physical size, number of districts served, and student density.

Geographical/Population Data

In comparison to the geographical area served AEA 14 ranks ninth of ten AEAs (AEA 15 and AEA 16 was officially merged as of July 1, 2007) and AEA 13 ranks seventh of ten. The combined area of 8,599 square miles would place the rank of the merged 13/14 as second of nine.

Current				Projected			
AEA	Square Miles	Rank (Sq. Mi.)	Cert Enrollment October 2007	AEA	Square Miles	Rank (Sq. Mi.)	Cert Enrollment October 2007
1	5,056	6	30,895.9	1	5,056	7	30,895.9
8	7,890	2	31,548.0	8	7,890	3	31,548.0
267	9,046	1	64,262.1	267	9,046	1	64,262.1
9	2,440	10	48,419.6	9	2,440	9	48,419.6
10	4,366	8	66,315.3	10	4,366	8	66,315.3
11	6,558	3	122,451.3	11	6,558	4	122,451.3
12	6,275	5	38,617.1	12	6,275	6	38,617.1
13	4,660	7	29,887.1	13/14	8,599	2	40,006.7
14	3,939	9	10,119.6				
15	6,359	4	38,092.8	15	6,359	5	38,092.8

The chart at the top of the following page illustrates the number of public school districts served by each AEA. The range is a broad one from 20 districts in AEA 14 to 61 in AEA 267. AEA 13 with 31 districts ranks seventh in number. The combined AEA 13/14 with 51 districts would create a ranking of third out of nine.

Current			Projected		
AEA	Number of Districts	Rank	AEA	Number of Districts	Rank
1	24	8	1	24	8
8	48	3	8	48	4
267	61	1	267	61	1
9	22	9	9	22	9
10	33	6	10	33	7
11	54	2	11	54	2
12	36	4	12	36	5
13	31	7	13/14	51	3
14	20	10			
15	36	4	15	36	5

District Enrollment Figures

Green Valley AEA 14 is an area comprised of twenty public school districts and one non-public school ranging in student population from slightly under 100 to over 1400. The service delivery model recently developed is organized into three regions as follows:

AEA 14 District Name	Region	K-12 Certified Enrollment 2007-08	Enrollment Rank
Creston	C	1362	1
Nodaway Valley	C	730	4
East Union	C	501	8
Lenox	C	362	11
Orient-Macksburg	C	231	15
St. Malachy School	C	126	18

AEA 14		K-12 Certified Enrollment	Enrollment
Clearfield (K-6)	C	89	20
Prescott (K-6)	C	95	19
Diagonal	C	89	20
Subtotal		3585	
Clarke	E	1335	2
Central Decatur	E	671	6
Mount Ayr	E	677	5
Lamoni	E	339	12
Mormon Trail	E	271	14
Murray	E	281	13
Subtotal		3574	
Red Oak	W	1327	3
Corning	W	514	7
Bedford	W	495	9
Villisca	W	383	10
Stanton	W	208	16
New Market (K-8)	W	160	17
Subtotal		3087	
Public		10246	
Non-Public		126	

The three regions are basically equal in student population with Creston, Clarke, and Red Oak being considerably larger than the rest of the districts.

Loess Hills AEA 13 is an area comprised of thirty-one public school districts and six non-public school systems ranging in student population from slightly under 100 to over 9000. The service delivery model recently is organized into three regions as follows:

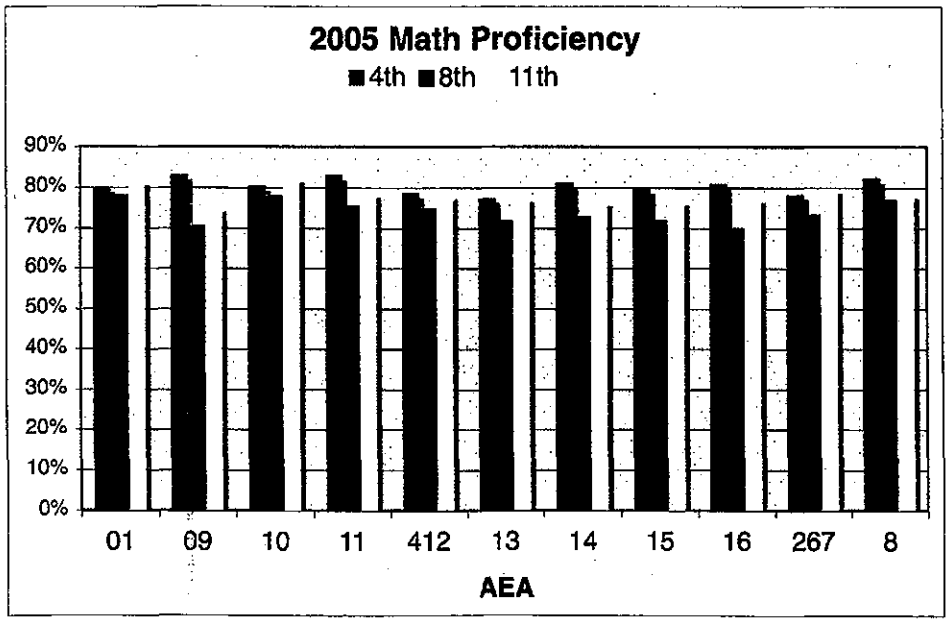
AEA 13 District Name	Region	K-12 Certified Enrollment 2007-08	Enrollment Rank
Council Bluffs	C	9,297	1
St. Albert's	C	749	10
Trinity Lutheran	C	20	37
Subtotal		10,066	
Harlan	N	1,594	4
Atlantic	N	1,459	5
Missouri Valley	N	930	7
Underwood	N	761	9
Tri-Center	N	737	11
Logan-Magnolia	N	665	13
A-H-S-T	N	646	14
Griswold	N	621	15
West Harrison	N	515	17
Boyer Valley	N	464	19
Woodbine	N	439	20
IKM	N	421	21
Elk Horn-Kimballton	N	284	25
ANITA	N	259	28
Walnut	N	231	30
C and M	N	213	32
Shelby County Catholic	N	122	33
St. Patrick	N	26	36
Subtotal		10387	

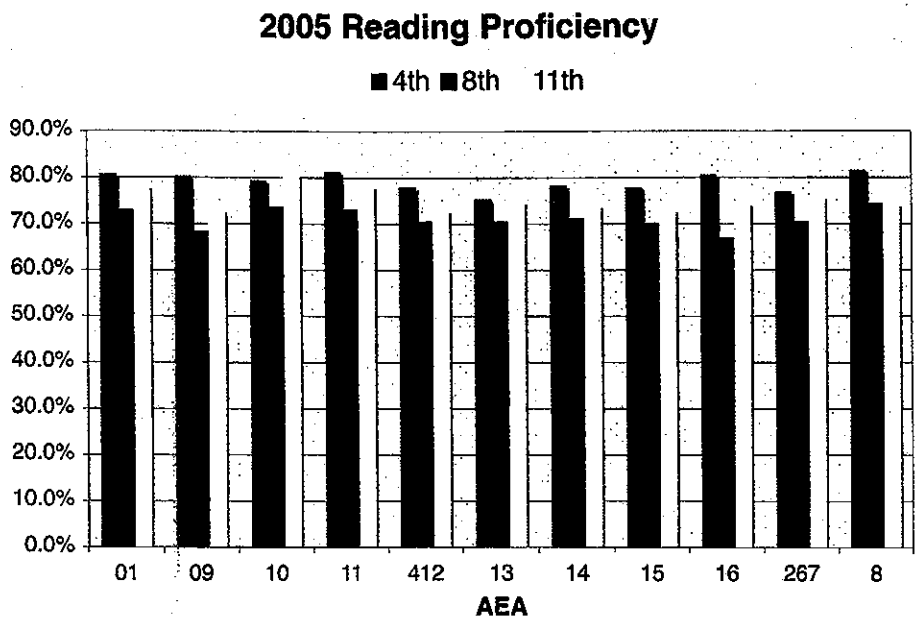
AEA 13		K-12 Certified Enrollment	Enrollment
Lewis Central	S	2,559	2
Glenwood	S	2,121	3
Shenandoah	S	1,063	6
Clarinda	S	876	8
Riverside	S	684	12
Treynor	S	591	16
Fremont-Mills	S	478	18
Sidney	S	378	22
Malvern	S	305	23
Essex	S	285	24
Hamburg	S	284	25
Farragut	S	261	27
South Page	S	239	29
Nishna Valley	S	230	31
Clarinda Lutheran	S	106	34
Subtotal		10460	
Public		29,887	
Non-Public		1066	

The three regions are basically equal in student population with Council Bluffs by far the largest district. Lewis Central and Glenwood are next in size with enrollments over 2000.

Student Achievement Reading/Math Grades 4, 8, and 11

A look at the achievement scores across all AEAs for 2005 yields more similarity than not in grade level and subject area. In particular, note that AEA 14 and AEA 13 have nearly identical charts in both math and reading




2005 Reading Proficiency
4th 8th 11th
90.0%
80.0%
70.0%
60.0%
50.0%
40.0%
30.0%
20.0%
10.0%
0.0%
01
09
10
11
412
13
14
15
16
267
8
AEA

Staff/Teacher Data

An examination of staffing patterns from 2001-02 to 2005-06 was made across AEA 14 and the three contiguous AEAs of 11, 13, and 15 (plus 16 which will be part of the merged 15/16 next school year). See the table on the following page for more information.

Position	01-02 AEA 14	05-06 AEA 14	01-02 AEA 13	05-06 AEA 13	01-02 AEA 15	05-06 AEA 15	01-02 AEA 16	05-06 AEA 16	01-02 AEA 11	05-06 AEA 11
Director	2	2	3	1	2	2	1	1	3	3
Manager									1	
Asst Dean/Dir									1	
Administrator	1	1	9	11	1		1	1	1	3
Consultant	8	5	27	35	23	21	15	16	116	144
Clinician Prof Rec									1	1
Clinician Cert	1	2			3				9	10
Librarian/med	1	1			1	1		1		
Sch Soc Wkr-SPR	7	5	8	7	12	9	10	10	41	38
Psychologist	9	5	25	31	11	13	13	12	54	59
Specialist	1	1	1		1	6				2
Educ Strategist									6	7
Instructor	4	15	3	1	7	1	5	1	7	10
Coordinator	1	2		1	3	7	4	8	22	18
Supervisor	6	4	6	5	6	6	5	1	8	10
Tech Coordinator					1	1	1	1		
School Aud Cert	2	1	1		1	2	2	2		
School Aud Prof Rec			3	4					1	
Therapist Prof Rec	2	1	6	6	4	4	4	3	23	25
SLP (Certified)	15	10	38	37	20	19	17	13	77	85
SLP (SLP)	1	1	5	6	1		3	6	3	5
Sp Ed Nurse (SPR)										2
Teacher	2	2	5	8		3		3		7
Itinerant Teacher	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	32	24
Resource Teacher									1	
PreSchool Teacher			1							
Integrated Teacher	3									
Teacher/Coordinator				2	1	4				
Self-Cont 2.39					5		2	1		
Self-Cont 3.79							2	1		
HM INTV PK TC	3	4	9	10	10	8	5	5	3	11
SP ED D D S D S			1							
# AEA staff	71	63	152	166	116	109	91	88	410	464
Certified Enrollment	11412	10535	31577	30563	23114	22157	17549	17083	116349	119823
# FT LEA Teachers	903	875	2265	2184	1683	1669	1222	1205	7807	8135
# Districts	20	20	31	31	24	23	13	13	55	54

The table on the following page table traces the change in teacher population since 2000-01 for the AEA 14 districts. Overall there has been a decrease of 5.7%. However, several districts have seen modest growth with the addition of certified teachers. The accompanying charts display the changes that have occurred.

District Name	2000-2001 Number of Full-Time Teachers	2007-2008 Number of Full-Time Teachers	Change	Percent Change
BEDFORD	52	46	-6	-11.5%
CLARKE	99	100	1	1.0%
CLEARFIELD	9	6	-3	-33.3%
CORNING	47	45	-2	-4.3%
CRESTON	116	110	-6	-5.2%
DIAGONAL	13	14	1	7.7%
EAST UNION	39	38	-1	-2.6%
NODAWAY VALLEY	66	62	-4	-6.1%
LAMONI	31	35	4	12.9%
LENOX	38	36	-2	-5.3%
MORMON TRAIL	30	25	-5	-16.7%
MOUNT AYR	66	58	-8	-12.1%
MURRAY	31	30	-1	-3.2%
NEW MARKET	13	7	-6	-46.2%
ORIENT-MACKSBURG	34	21	-13	-38.2%
PRESCOTT	7	8	1	14.3%
RED OAK	91	98	7	7.7%
STANTON	23	21	-2	-8.7%
VILLISCA	31	29	-2	-6.5%
Total	896	845	-51	-5.7%

AEA 13 Number of Full Time Teachers – Change

As in the previous section, the following table traces the change in teacher population since 2000-01 for the AEA 13 districts. Overall, there has been a decrease of 4.2%. However, several districts have seen modest growth with the addition of certified teachers. The accompanying charts display the changes that have occurred.

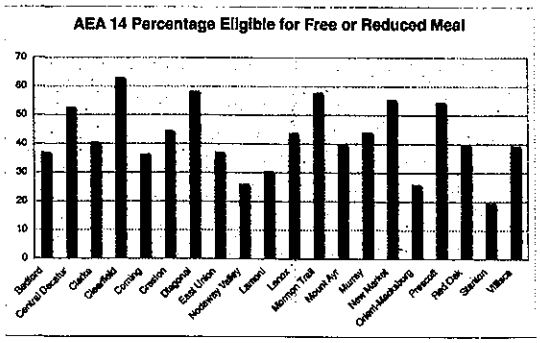
AEA 13 District Name	2000-01 Number of Full-Time Teachers	2007=08 Number of Full-Time Teachers	Change	Percent Change
Anita	33	26	-7	-21.2
Atlantic	109	112	3	2.8
A-H-S-T	51	39	-12	-23.5
Boyer Valley	45	35	-10	-22.2
C and M	20	18	-2	-10.0
Clarinda	94	88	-6	-6.4
Council Bluffs	664	606	-58	-8.7
Elk Horn-Kimballton	23	23	0	0.0
Essex	25	23	-2	-8.0
Farragut	25	24	-1	-4.0
Fremont-Mills	30	36	6	20.0
Glenwood	147	140	-7	-4.8

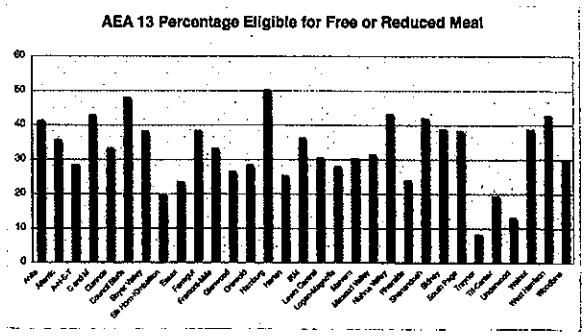
AEA 13 District Name	2000-01 Number of Full-Time Teachers	2007=08 Number of Full-Time Teachers	Change	Percent Change
Griswold	47	50	3	6.4
Hamburg	22	26	4	18.2
Harlan	108	111	3	2.8
IKM	39	35	-4	-10.3
AEA 13 **District Name**	**2000-01 Number of Full-Time Teachers**	**2007=08 Number of Full-Time Teachers**	**Change**	**Percent Change**
Lewis Central	167	179	12	7.2
Logan-Magnolia	51	49	-2	-3.9
Malvern	34	28	-6	-17.6
Missouri Valley	63	61	-2	-3.2
Nishna Valley	26	27	1	3.8
Riverside	59	52	-7	-11.9
Shenandoah	80	81	1	1.3
Sidney	37	34	-3	-8.1
South Page	29	23	-6	-20.7
Treynor	36	44	8	22.2
Tri-Center	53	53	0	0.0
Underwood	49	51	2	4.1
Walnut	23	17	-6	-26.1
West Harrison	42	36	-6	-14.3
Woodbine	34	42	8	23.5
Total	2265	2169	-96	-4.2

Student Characteristics

In addition to comparative teacher information, it is important to examine the relative characteristics of the students enrolled in districts within AEA 14. The following charts look at free and reduced meal counts, talented and gifted numbers, telecommunication usage, and ELL/LEP percentages across the contiguous AEAs and/or within AEA 14.

Free and reduced meal information is found below for AEA 14 and the three contiguous AEAs 13, 11, and 15.





Of interest is the percentage of non-English or limited-English speaking students within AEA 14 in comparison to contiguous AEAs (see the table on the following page). The highest percentage

is located in AEA 11 – a large metropolitan region. Green Valley AEA 14, with the sparsest population of all AEAs, has the next highest percentage.

AEA	ELL Students	Certified Enrollment	Percent ELL
AEA 14	233	10,535	2.21%
AEA 13	660	30,563	2.16%
AEA15	391	22,157	1.76%
AEA16	119	17,083	0.70%
AEA11	4819	119,823	4.02%
Total	**6,222**	**200,161**	**2.2%**

Expenditures and Revenue Figures

Highlights from this section of the report include:

- Low revenue reflects low student population. Outside monies are often needed for funding of special programs. A relatively large fund balance speaks well for solvency.
- AEA 14 expenditures are high for student support services and low for staff support. AEA 13 expenditures are high in instructional support and low in staff support and administrative services. Both AEAs are somewhat in the middle of the state in terms of central support and operation/maintenance.
- Both AEAs rank relatively low on percentage of salaries to general budget. AEA 13 ranks high in benefits and purchased services percentages.

Perceptions of LEA Staff, AEA Staff, and Board

Perceptual data included:

- Positive relationships exist between AEA and LEA staffs.
- Availability of materials, resources and personnel are at a high level.
- AEA staff is perceived to be spread too thin to allow for depth of expertise and quality time with schools.
- More stability in staff assignments is needed.
- Professional Development opportunities are high quality
- Too much emphasis on authoritative rather than collaborative relationships with districts.
- AEA and LEA staffs perceive both AEAs to have considerable room for growth.
- The GV Board of Directors wishes to devote energies and resources to developing a plan of action to ensure continuing growth in serving the needs of districts, teacher, and children.

Summary and Conclusions

The overall conclusion is that statewide AEA reorganization is an inevitable response to the loss of 130,000 students served and to the reduction of 85 school districts. The losses of the AEAs 13 and 14 customer bases have not been as great as those of some other AEAs that have already merged, but the enrollment declines of the two AEAs have been 31.4 and 24.8 percents, respectively.

A merger of AEAs 13 and 14 would result in an agency with a large number of square miles. One other AEA has a great number of square miles it serves.

The AEA funding supported by the state finance formula has been severely declining, and it will continue to do so. Federal funding has historically kept the AEA services at a higher level; however, federal funding has become more tenuous over the past five years, even declining in some program areas. The larger agencies that result from AEA reorganization are more able to reduce overhead expenditures and to absorb needed expenditure reductions. A combined AEA 13 and 14 should be able to benefit accordingly.

Demands for AEA programs and services have changed in the past ten years more than they did in the first 25-years, and these increased expectations will continue. National movements, such as No Child Left Behind and accountability are heavily impacting upon school districts and AEAs. An ample majority of the AEA 13 and 14 superintendents who participated in feasibility study and/or who took part in the superintendents' advisory group expressed a desire for the AEA to identify districts' needs and to provide the services required to meet those needs.

As is seen from the 2001 DE study and the current study, Green Valley AEA 14 is in a precarious position as a result of declining student population, an increasing local need for assistance/ services, demanding state accreditation standards, and few resources to sustain an equitable, efficient and effective operation. It was advised at the end of last year's study to initiate the development of a multi-year plan aimed toward increased sharing of programs across AEAs and eventually a viable merger with compatible partner(s). While AEA 13 is not currently facing the same population difficulties as AEA 14, it is clear that the two AEAs are compatible as partners in terms of geography, expertise of staff, service patterns, and established program sharing relationships to serve the local schools.

The totality of the information brought to the AEA 14 Board of Directors last year was designed to "inform" and to assist in "forming" emerging patterns for knowledgeable, rational, and meaningful decision-making for the future of the students, teachers and administrators served by Green Valley AEA 14. By providing the AEA 13 Board of Directors with the same type of information, similarities and differences between the AEAs can be drawn into discussions to determine starting points for the future configuration of the two AEAs.