

Potential Models for Governance of  
Montana's Vocational Technical Centers  
under the Aegis of the  
Board of Regents of Higher Education

March 1986

## Introduction

The Interim Legislative Committee on Vocational Education requested the Commissioner of Higher Education to propose governance models which it might consider in its deliberations. A similar request was made of the Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Before transmitting the models to the committee, it is necessary for the Board of Regents to review the models to determine whether any of the models are not acceptable to the board or if any specific model is preferred.

## Four Models

This presentation broadly outlines four models which might be useful: (1) community college model, (2) state system model, (3) single branch campus model and (4) multi-branch campus model.

The models briefly state perceived advantages and disadvantages. If the Board of Regents believes more detail and/or organizational charts would be useful, they can be developed.

Under all four models the Board of Regents would be the "sole state agency" for administering the federal Vocational Education (Carl Perkins) Act.

## Community College Model

Five vocational technical districts would be created, each with its own board of trustees, sharing governance responsibilities with the Board of Regents in a manner similar to existing community college governance.

The state and the districts would participate in the center funding under legislation authorizing budgeting authority and establishing state and district funding percentages.

Personnel, including a center director, faculty and staff, would be employed by the district trustees, who would set salaries and duties as well. Collective bargaining would be the responsibility of the district trustees.

The Board of Regents would hire a coordinator or administrator for vocational education.

Organization and responsibilities. The administrative organization and responsibilities could be established as outlined below.

Vocational Technical District creation. The legislature could establish districts or allow the voters of a designated area to determine the boundaries of the district. Each district would elect trustees whose sole responsibility would be to govern the institution under general guidelines established by the Board of Regents.

Trustee responsibilities. The powers and duties of the trustees would be established by law and by policy of the Board of Regents. The trustees would adopt local policy for the center. The trustees would negotiate the transfer of facilities and capital equipment with the local school district. School district employees would be transferred to the vocational technical district as a result of negotiations with trustees, according to law and Board of Regent policy.

Board of Regent responsibilities. The Board of Regents would supervise and coordinate the vocational technical district centers according to the legislative enactment. The Board of Regents would approve the employment of a Coordinator for Vocational Education by the Commissioner of Higher Education. Other staff members, employed by the Commissioner of Higher Education and approved by the Board of Regents, would carry out duties established under state legislation and in support of the Board's role as the "sole state agency" for vocational education under the Carl Perkins Act.

The Board of Regents, in conjunction with the trustees, would determine the appropriate division of authority and responsibility for governance.

Governance process. The following options address some of the concerns expressed earlier by center directors and legislators about the governing process.

1. The Board of Regents could establish an advisory council, composed of a representative of each of the five boards of trustees, to advise about the coordination and articulation of academic programs, legislation, funding, fees and facilities construction.

2. The Commissioner of Higher Education could establish a council, composed of center directors and the state coordinator, to develop an efficient and effective postsecondary vocational system. Periodically, university system presidents, community college presidents and the center directors would meet to consider common concerns and establish alliances to promote postsecondary education in Montana. Program coordination and collaboration could be much more effective than is currently possible.

3. The Board of Regents would approve all program offerings of the vocational technical centers, upon recommendation of the district board of trustees. Ad hoc programs could be established by the trustees to meet a short-term state or local need; e.g., less than 3 years. Such programs would not require regental approval.

4. Vocational technical center trustees could be given authority to submit a tax levy to the voters to expand budgets beyond amounts legislatively authorized or to dedicate funds to pay bonded indebtedness for capital construction.

Advantages. The advantages of this model are to:

1. place responsibility for all public, postsecondary education under a single board (Board of Regents).

When the governor appoints regents, he could consider individuals who have an alliance to vocational education as well as higher education.

2. retain local involvement in the centers.

3. create local boards of trustees whose only concerns are the center and who can be local and state-wide advocates for the centers.

4. utilize a previously proven mechanism for transition of authority and operations.

In the early 1970's a similar transition occurred when the community colleges, which were jointly governed by local districts and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, were transferred to joint jurisdiction by the Board of Regents and local boards of trustees.

5. create a stronger alliance for postsecondary education in Montana.

Disadvantages. The model's disadvantages include:

1. retention of a local tax burden to support the centers.
2. a difficulty of agreeing upon an uniform funding formula with a fixed state-to-local ratio, when there is a large disparity among district mill values.
3. continuation of local pressure for program duplication.

#### State System Model

The existing vocational technical centers would be placed through legislation directly under the control and supervision of the Board of Regents as individual institutions, much like a unit of the Montana University System currently.

The centers would be entirely financed by state funds, including a state-wide mill levy. Facilities, campuses and movable and fixed equipment would become state properties through negotiations with the local school districts. Center personnel would become state employees.

The Board of Regents would appoint all personnel, determine their duties and approve their salaries. Collective bargaining negotiations would be a joint responsibility under the jurisdiction of the Commissioner of Higher Education similar to current bargaining within the Montana University System.

Organization and responsibilities. The Board of Regents would hire center directors and fix their compensation. Other staff including a Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Education would be employed by the Commissioner of Higher Education to administer the policies of the Board of Regents and perform its duties as the sole state agency for administration of the federal Vocational Education (Carl Perkins) Act.

Governance process. The governance process might be enhanced by the establishment by the Board of Regents of an advisory council of interested Montanans to advise the Commissioner and the Board of Regents. A council of center directors, with the Deputy Commissioner for Vocational Education as chair, could be a useful mechanism.

The Board of Regents would need to adopt mission statements for each center, set policies for tuition, fees and financial aid, determine admissions standards and completion requirements in concert with center faculty, and establish academic program approval and review mechanisms. It would also establish fiscal and physical facilities policy and procedures.

Advantages. The advantages of this model are to:

1. place responsibility for all public, postsecondary education under a single board (Board of Regents) which would provide an opportunity for coordination of all public postsecondary education through cooperation and collaboration among the institutions.



2. create a state system of vocational education under a single board.

3. provide a greater opportunity for students to transfer within the system.

4. create a stronger alliance for postsecondary education in Montana.

Disadvantages. This model's disadvantages include:

1. creation of additional workload for the Board of Regents.

2. establishment of a larger target of opportunity for budget reductions, closings and program eliminations.

3. community dissatisfaction about losing local control and potential loss of community involvement.

4. problems in transferring ownership of buildings, land and capital equipment.

## Single Branch Campus Model

Each vocational technical center would become a branch campus of one of the units of the Montana University System. An example of how this might be organized follows. Several other arrangements are also feasible:

<u>Main Campus</u>	<u>Branch Campus</u>
University of Montana	Missoula Vocational Technical Center
Eastern Montana College	Billings Vocational Technical Center
Montana Tech or WMC	Butte Vocational Technical Center
Northern Montana College	Great Falls Vocational Technical Center
Montana State University	Helena Vocational Technical Center

The legislature would need to authorize the transfer and the Board of Regents might need to adopt new policies or expand current policies to incorporate this function.

Organization and responsibilities. Each center would be assimilated into the appropriate unit of the university system which would need to adopt new, or modify existing, local policies to meet its new responsibilities.

Financial management of the centers would need to be incorporated into the overall fiscal administration of the campuses and the university system. Funding might be derived wholly from state sources, including a state-wide mill levy, or it might be obtained from a combination of state and local sources.

Personnel management and collective bargaining would probably be incorporated into existing processes with appropriate participation by the vocational technical center staff and faculty.

Physical facilities, land and equipment would probably be transferred to campus jurisdiction after negotiations with local school districts.

Academic supervision, planning and review would be a responsibility of local campus administration, subject to Board of Regent approval.

Advantages. The advantages of this model are to:

1. place the responsibility for all public, postsecondary education in Montana under one board (Board of Regents).
2. provide a simple transition mechanism to the new arrangement.
3. create a strong alliance in the state for postsecondary education.
4. ameliorate problems of students transferring between vocational technical centers and units of the university system.
5. eliminate the potential for the centers to seek degree-granting authority.

6. provide greater program coordination and operational cooperation.

7. make it easier to secure a state-wide levy for financing the centers by increasing the existing levy from 6 to 8 mills.

Disadvantages. This model's disadvantages include:

1. a potential difficulty in convincing existing center personnel of its viability.

2. potential elimination of some administrative positions.

3. potential collective bargaining problems since faculty bargaining does not currently exist at Montana Tech and Montana State University while the vocational technical centers to be assigned to these units bargain collectively.

4. a fear that vocational education would be over-shadowed by more traditional collegiate academia to the detriment of vocational education.

5. transfer of buildings, land and capital equipment would be difficult.

## Multi-branch Campus Model

This model would establish each vocational technical center as a branch campus, administered by Northern Montana College. The responsibilities would be generally the same as outlined under the single-branch campus model.

Advantages. The advantages of this model are to:

1. place the responsibility for all public, postsecondary education in the state under one board (Board of Regents).
2. create a state system of postsecondary vocational education.
3. create a strong alliance for Northern Montana College and the University system.
4. provide for a simpler transition mechanism.
5. simplify transfer of vocational technical students and program articulation.
6. eliminate the need for the centers to seek degree granting authority.
7. utilize Northern Montana College's current role in vocational education as a focal point for administering postsecondary vocational education.

Disadvantages. The model's disadvantages include:

1. difficulty in convincing current center personnel of its desirability.
2. the creation of a vocational technical image for Northern Montana College resulting in fewer collegiate program enrollments.
3. problems in transferring ownership of buildings, land and capital equipment.
4. lack of identification of some branch campuses with the main campus because of distance.
5. potentially larger coordination costs due to distance among units and Havre
6. potential need for a NMC office in Helena.

The last two models may raise concerns about potential affect upon the accreditation status of units of the university system or the vocational technical centers.

Under all four models, special attention should be paid to equipment needs, which in vocational education institutions are large.

Library resources and computer facilities may require additional outlays.

If vocational technical centers are assimilated into one or more university campuses, will there be an effect upon student governance organizations and student services such as health?

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The foregoing Vo Tech Governance Models were received on March 21, 1986 by Regents of Higher Education Montana University System.

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Secretary