

Shared services yield savings for schools

Bryan Bullock, assistant editor

Ohio public schools have been hit with a depressed economy, diminished funding and declining revenues over the past several years, which has made it challenging to continue to offer the high-quality instruction and services residents have come to expect. Money, in short, is hard for school districts to come by, so school boards and school administrators are putting an increased emphasis on finding ways to stretch every dollar.

For decades, Ohio public schools have embraced shared services as a way to cut costs and increase efficiencies. The recent funding challenges facing schools in the state and nation have brought greater attention to these efforts, and encouraged districts to look for additional efficiencies.

Many Ohio districts currently are sharing services through partnerships with neighboring school systems or county, city and township governments, which have felt the pinch of the recession as well. These collaborations have resulted in major cost savings for taxpayers. Here are just a few examples of ways Ohio school districts have partnered with ESCs, local governments and community groups to share services and cut costs in recent years.

All figures represent annual cost savings from shared services initiatives unless noted otherwise. ■

