

THE EISENHOWER COOPERATIVE

A BRIEF HISTORY

Compiled by William Smith
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(Revised 2013)

The Eisenhower Cooperative was organized in 1962 for the purpose of improving horizontal curriculum articulation among the elementary schools and vertically between the elementary schools and High School District 218. The Cooperative began in four Districts in 1962 (125, 126, 127 and 218). In the next decade eight more Districts joined and two withdrew. In 1972 the Eisenhower Cooperative consisted of the same ten districts that are members in 1999. Those districts are Atwood Heights District 125, Alsip District 126, Worth District 127, Chicago Ridge District 127.5, Palos Heights District 128, Cook County School District 130, Calumet District 132, Midlothian District 143, Posen-Robbins District 143.5 and Community High School District 218.

The Eisenhower Cooperative, in the early 1970s provided curriculum based services to ten public school districts and 20 non-public schools. These districts and schools educated a total of 30,000 pupils in 60 buildings. There were six Executive Directors during 1962-1977 time period:

Denson Sprouse
Thomas Petrie
Frank Poole

William Adams
Brenden Foley
Phil Pemberton

Beginning in 1971 member districts began to include special education programs and pupils as a part of, rather than apart from the regular educational

program. We began to hire some of our own special education staff. The Southwest Cooperative for Special Education which served 25 southwest suburban school districts (including the 10 members of the Eisenhower Curriculum Cooperative) was growing rapidly and becoming more centralized.

In 1972, High School District 218 and the 9 underlying elementary school districts began an exhaustive study regarding the provision of special education services and programs on a more decentralized basis (i.e., school districts would provide more services to their own special education students while the Cooperative provided less). In 1974, after receiving approval from all 10 school boards and both the Cook County and State Special Education Advisory Committees, the 10 Eisenhower Cooperative districts formally withdrew from the Southwest Cooperative.

In 1975-76, the 10 member districts served 952 children with disabilities in 85 classes located in all 10 districts. In 25 years this number has more than doubled to 2,000 children with disabilities served in the ten districts. In recent years the Eisenhower Cooperative has significantly increased the number of programs it operates. Currently 300 children are receiving services through the Eisenhower Cooperative. Past and current Executive Directors for Special Education include:

Bill Ott (1972-77)
Howard Falk (1977-94)
Sue Ireland (1994-2013)
Angela Zajac (2013-Present)

The Eisenhower Cooperative offices have been in Atwood Heights School District 125; Worth School, Worth Terrace School, and Worthridge School, District 127; 12245 S. Crawford, Alsip; Indian Hill School, Palos Heights District 128; and now in the Administrative Center of Community High School District 218 in Oak Lawn.

The Administrative District for the Eisenhower Cooperative was initially Worth District 127. Midlothian District 143 assumed the responsibility from 1978-1992. Atwood Heights District 125 became the Administrative District on July 1, 1994. On January 1, 1999, Worth District 127 became the Cooperative's Administrative District. Chicago Ridge District 127.5 became the newest administrative district for the Cooperative on January 1, 2004.