



ESMEC
Serving the Public County School Systems of
Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent
Queen Anne's, Somerset, Talbot, Wicomico and Worcester

Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium

Jon M. Andes, Ed.D.
Executive Director

PRESS RELEASE

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EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM (ESMEC) RECOGNIZED

New Study Finds Collaboration Key to Advancing Educational Opportunity and Prosperity in Rural America

COLUMBUS, Ohio — In 2015, Battelle for Kids partnered with Education Northwest to study 17 of the most promising rural education collaboratives across the country, including the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC), to learn how they are advancing equity, economic growth, and educational change for rural students and communities. Their research and lessons learned are featured in a new white paper, *Generating Opportunity and Prosperity: The Promise of Rural Education Collaboratives*, published in January 2016. ESMEC is one of four rural collaboratives featured in the study.

“For most rural school districts, collaboration is not a choice, it is a necessity,” said Brad Mitchell, managing director of innovation at Battelle for Kids and the lead author of the paper. Mitchell explained that while many lessons can be taken from the research, three fundamental themes emerged as critical to building sustainable, scalable, and meaningful rural education collaboratives, including:

- Lasting change comes from within.
- Members of a collaborative get more than they give.
- Trust is the currency that matters most.

In addition to the white paper, Battelle for Kids and Education Northwest developed in-depth case studies of four of the collaboratives — Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium, Northwest Rural Innovation and Student Engagement Network, Ohio Appalachian Collaborative, and the Vermont Rural Partnership — using in-person and phone interviews, direct observations of collaborative activities, and other research.

With the recent passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), there will be opportunities for rural school districts to innovate through collaborative action to advance educational opportunity and economic prosperity.



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“The hopes of parents and educators in Rural America are the same as parents and educators in any setting,” said Jim Mahoney, executive director of Battelle for Kids. “The 17 rural collaboratives we studied are examples of the power of collaboration to help rural districts overcome challenges of poverty, isolation, and a lack of resources to move education forward for their students, educators, and communities.”

Battelle for Kids and Education Northwest researched 17 rural education collaboratives from 16 states serving more than 400,000 students across 600 districts. This group included the Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC).

“ESMEC is honored to be chosen as a model of rural collaboration. ESMEC is a great example of the Eastern Shore working collaboratively together to provide high quality educational services while creating efficiencies.” Dr. Jon Andes, Executive Director of ESMEC.

The report titled *“Generating Opportunity and Prosperity: The Promise of Rural Education Collaboratives”*, is available at: www.esmec.org or www.BattelleforKids.org

Over the past few years, Battelle for Kids has hosted the Rural Education National Forum to bring education leaders from across the country together to discuss the ideas and challenges raised in the white paper to move rural education forward. This year, Battelle for Kids is partnering with the National Rural Education Association to host the 2016 Rural Education National Forum and 108th NREA Convention and Research Symposium on October 13–15 in Columbus, Ohio. To learn more, visit: www.BattelleforKids.org

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About Eastern Shore of Maryland Educational Consortium (ESMEC)

ESMEC was formed in 1986 by the nine public school systems of the Eastern Shore of Maryland. The purpose of the Consortium is to collaboratively work together to address the educational needs of the Shore. By fostering cooperation among school systems to develop and implement new standards, building capacity in teachers and leaders through regional staff development, providing regional solutions to rising costs such as the Health Care Alliance and the Eastern Shore Energy Trust, and advocating for public education, the Consortium has greatly benefited the school systems, educators, and youth of the Shore. Learn more about ESMEC at www.esmec.org or 410-758-4885.

About Battelle for Kids

Battelle for Kids is a national, not-for-profit organization dedicated to moving education forward for students by supporting the educators who work with them every day. The organization’s mission-driven team of education, communications, technology, and business professionals provides innovative services, solutions, and products that empower teachers, develop leaders, and improve school systems to advance learner-centered education and ensure the growth and success of all. Learn more at www.BattelleforKids.org.