

**Brief History  
Of  
Starved Rock Associates for  
Vocational and Technical Education**

In January of 1985, the Illinois State Board of education/Department of Vocational and Technical education issued the guidelines for the development of Education For Employment regional delivery systems. On April 22, 1985, representatives of nineteen high schools, an area vocational center, and three ESR's met at the Holiday Inn in Peru, Illinois to begin the process of developing an EFE regional delivery system. It was felt that, geographically, the regional system should encompass nearly the same territory as the area vocational center and the local community college. This group formed a steering committee and appointed LaSalle-Peru Township High School as the fiscal agent for the planning. The steering committee was composed of superintendents from:

LaSalle-Peru High School  
Hall High School  
Ottawa High School  
Streator High School  
Mendota High School  
Spring Valley Elementary

Princeton High School  
Wenona High School  
Putnam County High School  
Western High School  
LaSalle County ESR

Mr. Carlson of Princeton High School was appointed chairperson of the steering committee.

On April 30, 1985, a second meeting was held at Illinois Valley Community College with state staff and IVCC staff present to begin official establishment of the delivery system. It was decided to plan a series of subsequent meetings to establish financial plans and get letters of intent available for all schools in an area equal to the community college (IVCC) district and adjacent school districts.

As subsequent meetings progressed, a grant proposal was prepared to submit to ISBE/DAVTE requesting a [planning grant. The name of Starved Rock Associates for Vocational and Technical Education was selected using the acronym of SRAVTE. Plans were made to recruit a planning grant director to operate the system through the planning process. The letters of intent were returned with 26 schools indicating an interest in participating in the planning grant process. On July, 22, 23 and 24 of 1985, the three representatives of the steering committee went to an inservice with ISBE staff to finalize the plans for the RDS development.

On July 24, the fiscal agent's board of education, acting on behalf of the planning grant steering committee, employed a full-time director for the RDS. A secretary was employed by the RDS board shortly thereafter. This marked the point at which the SRAVTE delivery system became operational. Following the August 30, 1985 meeting, the steering committee was formally dissolved and a planning council assumed responsibility for operation of the system.

The months of September and October were spent doing the routine activities necessary to get the system running. On October 22, 1985 an evening dinner and meeting was held for all staff in the newly formed territory. The purpose of this meeting was to explain the regional delivery concept to teachers and other staff who would be impacted.

A newsletter written by the planning grant director, with contributions from planning council members and community college personnel, was initiated in December, 1985. This newsletter was directed at informing staff and private/public sector employers of the progress of the RDS. This newsletter was maintained for about three years but was discontinued due to time and cost.

The planning council meeting of January 17, 1986 was the beginning step to develop a formal joint agreement. A joint agreement committee was formed to begin the development process. Also, January is the month when the program planning committees were formed. These committees were composed of teachers and business/industry people in the various program fields. These committees would be charged with the development of the occupational clusters and the curricula therein. These program committees completed the first stage of their work and presented their recommendations to the planning council on April 18, 1986. The recommendations were accepted as presented. The committees then proceeded to task list verification activities.

On April 10, 1986, the planning council attorney presented the draft of the cooperative agreement which would govern the RDS. A final draft was presented to the council on May 2. Each district was asked to review the cooperative agreement, and make decisions as to participation before the end of June. In July, the planning council received information that of the 26 schools participating in the planning of the previous year, 19 had decided to sign the joint agreement with SRAVTE. The area vocational center was technically owned by Lasalle-Peru Township High School and as such could participate on Lasalle-Peru's joint agreement. With this the SRAVTE consortium was established. Following this the Board of Control organized itself into working committees.

In the subsequent months, the curriculum committee's work went on with the appointment of program advisors and other chairpersons responsible for developing the regional curriculum. In November of 1986, the Board of Control turned its attention to developing a basic policy book for the system and an articulation agreement with the community college. On December 3, 1986 the articulation agreement was signed by the president of SRAVTE and the president of IVCC.

The next months were spent on committee work to develop a regional curriculum. Differences of opinion developed between Mr. Klitt of ISBE and SRAVTE regarding the concept of a regional curriculum. The explanations and comments by Dr. Klitt to the Board of Control only seemed to confuse the issue. Instead of moving toward a unified

common curriculum there seemed to be a tendency to move toward a decentralized status.

In February, 1987, SRAVTE was honored to have an advisory committee person selected as the first "VIP" to be recognized by the state staff and ICOVE. The system director and the VIP person were treated to a trip to Washington and to a dinner at the governor's mansion during May and June.

July, 1987 brought full implementation of the regional system. This meant that the planning stages were past and the system was to be operational. August brought the exercise of inventorying the existing curriculum in light of the task lists and the curriculum materials developed by the program committees. September, 1987 was the time when local schools were beginning to implement the regional curriculum as Stage 1. September also brought renewed emphasis on completing the policies for the system.

The winter months of 1987 and 1988 were spent completing the routine activities. Emphasis was placed on getting a functioning student services committee in operation. Much of the effort of the director was spent outwardly working with the other region II system directors and the state EFE task force. The spring of 1988 was used to write the first stage II regional plan for vocational education.

In March of 1988 SRAVTE faced the responsibility for financial support of the system by imposing a per student assessment on the member schools in order to raise enough money to support the administration needs of the system and to raise matching funds thus maximizing the state support.

Regional curriculum development began in August 1988 with the Board of Control authorizing vocational teachers to be released from teaching duties to participate in a retreat for the purpose of working on task list and course content. Subsequent months contained meetings which were directed toward finalizing a regional curriculum.

December of 1988 brought the first discussion of employing a special needs coordinator for SRAVTE. Final approval of the system policy handbook was official in January of 1989. In February of 1989, the recommendation came from the student services committee to employ an additional person to function as a special needs coordinator. This recommendation was approved thus creating the first additional personnel position. A person was employed in August of that year.

In May of 1989, the Board of Control took steps to operate financially independent of the fiscal agent. The system board would formally adopt the budget and be responsible for all financial matters. LaSalle-Peru High School would be paid a sum to continue handling the payroll and the LaSalle-Peru treasurer would continue to act as depositor for SRAVTE.

In October of 1989, SRAVTE moved into the tech-prep era when Dr. John Allen of Illinois Valley Community College gave a report from the Technical Preparations Task Force. One year later, in September of 1990, SRAVTE and IVOC officially joined forces and became partners in a tech prep grant from ISBE. In October, the Board of Control received an inservice on integration and tech prep and in November, the district principals and guidance counselors received the same. Teachers were also in-service at a later time.

The system has been working on transition for the special population students from high school to the workforce or community college. A transition handbook was prepared in FY'90 which describes the services that area agencies offer. We are currently revising this handbook which will be distributed to special population students. A Transition Fair was held in the spring of 1990 at the community college with over thirty agencies present to describe the services they provide to the special population people. Transition Fair II will be held once again this year.

Many in-service meetings have been held for members pertaining to integrating academic and vocational subjects to make learning more meaningful for the students.

An employability booklet, "Be Prepared" has been published and distributed to all juniors and seniors in the region. This guide for effective job seeking and job keeping skills provides helpful hints on such topics as resumes, applications, interviews, and thank you letters.

The system has received 8% JTPA tutorial funds, which have been used to tutor SRAVTE economically disadvantaged students who are one year below in reading and math.

The guidance counselors have been working closely with SRAVTE personnel to develop an Individualized Career Plan for all students at the high school, level. The ICP's are currently being printed.

In January of 1991, the new Carl Perkins Act was introduced and the initial plans were due in the spring. For the next several months, most efforts of SRAVTE were directed toward tech prep and Carl Perkins legislation.