§ 316. Teacher resource and computer training centers. 1. As used in this section, unless another meaning clearly appears from the context:

a. "Teacher resource and computer training center" means any site operated by a school district, board of cooperative educational services or a consortium of school districts and/or boards of cooperative educational services which is specifically established pursuant to this section to provide professional support services to teachers within the state in order to:

(1) assist teachers, diagnose learning needs, experiment with the use of multiple instructional approaches, assess student outcomes, assess staff development needs and plans, and train other school personnel in effective pedagogical approaches;

(2) provide demonstration and training sites where teachers are trained, specifically in the use of computers as teaching aids; the criteria for school acquisition and use of computer equipment and software; and the evaluation of computer-related materials;

(3) develop and produce curricula and curricular materials designed to meet the educational needs of students being served through application of educational research or new or improved methods, practices, and techniques;

(4) provide training to improve the skills of teachers in order to enable such teachers to meet the special educational needs of the pupils they serve, and to familiarize such teachers with developments in curriculum formulation and educational research, including the manner in which the research can be used to improve teaching skills;

(5) provide a location where teachers may share resources, ideas, methods and approaches directly related to classroom instruction and become familiar with current teaching materials and products for use in their classrooms; and

(6) retrain teachers and other educational personnel to become better qualified to teach in subject areas necessary to prepare students for the developing high technology era, in the disciplines of mathematics, science and computer technology.

b. "Site" for the purposes of this section shall mean the location or locations where the curriculum development and training activities of

the teacher resource and computer training center take place.

2. In order to provide the school districts and teachers of the state with an opportunity to develop systematic, ongoing in-service training programs, assure the dissemination and application of educational research developments to classroom instruction and develop new curricula and curricular materials specifically designed to meet the educational needs of the students served, the commissioner shall, within available state appropriations and subject to the procedures established in this section, provide funds to school districts and boards of cooperative educational services to plan, establish and operate teacher resource and computer training centers. Any school district or board of cooperative educational services requesting such funds shall make application therefor at such time, in such manner, and containing or accompanied by such information as the commissioner may through this section or by regulation require. Applications shall be made within the following categories:

(i) a school district with a teacher population of one thousand or more;

(ii) a school district with a teacher population of five hundred or more but less than one thousand;

(iii) a school district with a teacher population of less than five hundred;

(iv) a board of cooperative educational services; or

(v) a consortium of two or more school districts and/or boards of cooperative educational services.

3. Each such application shall be reviewed by the state professional standards and practices board for teaching. The board shall in each instance recommend to the commissioner action, as appropriate, including specific reasons when it is negative. Any school district, board of cooperative educational services or consortium whose original application is rejected may resubmit a revised application for further review. Notwithstanding any other provision to the contrary, an application to continue a teacher resource center which was in operation prior to the nineteen hundred eighty-four--nineteen hundred eighty-five school year shall be deemed automatically approved.

4. The commissioner shall establish criteria and standards by which applications shall be evaluated which shall include provisions for furnishing technical assistance and information provided by the department through the facilities of the proposed teacher resource center, provided, however, that such criteria and standards shall be consistent with federal regulations which were applicable to teacher resource centers in operation during the nineteen hundred eighty-two calendar year.

5. Any school district, board of cooperative educational services or consortium having an application approved under this section may collaborate, consult and contract with an approved institution of higher education in New York state to carry out activities under or provide technical assistance in connection with such application. Each application shall be reviewed by the professional practices subcommittee of the state professional standards and practices board for teaching.

6. Each teacher resource and computer training center shall be operated by a board, the majority of which shall be composed of elementary and secondary school teachers representative of teachers served by the teacher resource and computer training center. Teacher members shall be designated by the collective bargaining agent of the teachers served by the teacher resource and computer training center. Such board shall also include individuals designated by the school board or board of cooperative educational services served by such center and at least one representative designated by the institutions of higher education located in the area served by such center. Such board shall also include at least one parent of an elementary or secondary school pupil and at least one representative of a business or industry that uses, produces or is involved with computer equipment and software.

7. The powers and duties of each teacher resource and computer training center board shall include policy formulation, the employment of staff or consultants, budget control and expenditure of funds to accomplish the purposes of this section, recommendations for subcontracting to secure technical and other kinds of assistance, and

any other appropriate managerial or supervisory activities not otherwise prohibited by state or local law or regulations of the commissioner.

7-a. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, a teacher resource and computer training center board may collaborate, consult and contract with a school district or board of cooperative educational services which is included in the application for the establishment of such teacher resource and computer training center for the assignment of teachers employed by such school district or board of cooperative educational services; provided, however, in such case such teacher shall continue to accrue all employment rights and benefits, including seniority, with the employing school district or board of cooperative educational services and the teacher resource and computer training center board shall reimburse such school district or board of cooperative educational services for the services of such teacher.

8. Funds provided each school year to school districts and boards of cooperative educational services by the commissioner to plan, establish and operate teacher resource and computer training centers shall not exceed two million dollars per center, except that for the city school district for the city of New York such center shall not exceed sixteen million eight hundred thousand dollars and provided further that each approved center shall receive not less than twenty thousand dollars. In any year in which there is a statewide increase in funding for teacher resource and computer training centers, such increase shall be distributed proportionately among existing centers that have satisfactorily fulfilled the requirements of such centers' current grant. A portion of the increase shall be made available to new applicants to establish new teacher centers, and to current teacher centers to develop and implement regional and statewide teacher center activities.

9. Evaluation and annual reports. a. Teacher resource and computer training centers shall provide data annually as prescribed by the commissioner.

b. The commissioner shall prepare and submit to the governor, the

temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly, not later than May first, nineteen hundred ninety-nine and by the first day of January in each year thereafter, a report detailing the financial and programmatic information for teacher resource and computer training centers. Such report shall, at a minimum, set forth with respect to the preceding school year: cost information for individual services provided by such centers; numbers of teachers and other staff served, summarized in the aggregate, by elementary and secondary school levels, and by home school district; lists of programs and courses offered, including identification of those with credit toward college graduate degrees and those which relate to specific academic areas and higher learning standards; and aggregate expenditure data for the following categories: administration, staff development services, rent and other facilities costs, and other services; and such other information as deemed appropriate by the commissioner to assist the commissioner in identifying cost-effective services and programs which may be successfully replicated in other centers, school districts and boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES). The format for the report shall be developed by the commissioner in consultation with school district officials, and teacher resource center officials, provided that all information in such report shall be displayed on both a statewide and individual center basis. Such report shall include changes from the year prior to the report year for each such item for all teacher resource and computer training centers and shall be made available to other interested parties upon request.

c. Funds provided under the teacher resource and computer training centers program may be used to contract with educational organizations for the purpose of conducting a statewide program evaluation. The professional practices subcommittee of the professional standards and practices board shall review and approve grant applications submitted for this purpose.