

OPINION 65-34**Syllabus:**

Membership fees in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools may not be considered as payment for a survey within the meaning of Section 3315.061, Revised Code.

To: Chester W. Goble, Auditor of State, Columbus, Ohio

By: William B. Saxbe, Attorney General, March 12, 1965

Your request for my opinion poses the following question:

"Can membership fees in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools be considered as payment for a survey within the meaning of Section 3315.061 of the Revised Code?"

Section 3315.061, Revised Code, provides:

"The board of education of any school district may expend funds for the purpose of conducting, or entering into contracts for, studies or surveys pertaining to school district organization and building needs, and needs for improved or additional services that may be rendered by such board. The board of education of any school district may publish reports prepared in connection with such activities."

The answer to your question must necessarily be found by inquiry into the purpose and activities of the North Central Association. The object of the North Central Association is found in Article I of the Constitution of the Association, which reads as follows:

"THE OBJECT of the Association shall be the development and maintenance of high standards of excellence for universities, colleges, and secondary schools, the continued improvement of the educational program and the effectiveness of instruction on secondary and college levels through a scientific and professional approach to the solution of educational problems, the establishment of cooperative relationships

between the secondary schools and colleges and universities within the territory of the Association, and the maintenance of effective working relationships with other educational organizations and accrediting agencies."

Although a branch of the Association, the Commission on Research and Service, does conduct studies, the studies are not conducted on a local basis or for the benefit of a single school or school district but rather on a wide scope and dealing with general problems. Thus, I must conclude that the dues payable to the North Central Association are not authorized by Section 3515.061, Revised Code, since the Association's objects do not include the rendering of survey or study services for individual schools or school districts.

It must be noted that Section 3313.87, Revised Code, provides that boards of education may join school board associations. However, the North Central Association is not a school board association. It is an association of secondary schools and the member schools are represented by their chief administrative officers, principals or administrative heads. Thus the membership fee may not be paid under authority of Section 3313.87, Revised Code.

Therefore, it is my opinion and you are advised that membership fees in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools may not be considered as payment for a survey within the meaning of Section 3315.061, Revised Code.