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OPERATIONS CASE STUDY · TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Scaling Tennessee's EANS grant-delivery infrastructure.

~30 to 900+ vendor contracts. How I rebuilt a stalled statewide grant operation into a repeatable system that moved federal funding through a complex state and federal environment, at roughly thirty times the volume.

VENDOR CONTRACTS AT HANDOFF
~30

→ ~30× volume

VENDOR CONTRACTS DELIVERED
900+

~$146.5M FEDERAL FUNDING ADMINISTERED

110+ PARTICIPATING NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS

THE NATURE OF THE PROGRAM

The Emergency Assistance to Non-Public Schools program (EANS) helped eligible non-public schools respond to educational disruptions from COVID-19; Tennessee's portfolio was roughly **$146.5M** in federal funding. EANS did not work like a conventional grant where a school receives funds and manages its own purchases. Participating schools identified allowable needs and vendors, but **the Department contracted directly with and paid the vendors**, making the administrative process the mechanism of delivery rather than a step beside it.

School need → **Eligibility & allowability review** → **Vendor intake** → **State contracting** → **Purchase order** → **Service delivery** → **Vendor invoice** → **State payment**

Every request had to move accurately through multiple state teams, financial controls, and procurement rules, and each supporting vendor contract ultimately required the Commissioner of Education's signature.

WHAT I BUILT

I inherited a program with limited capacity, low participation, unclear processes, and roughly 30 vendor contracts, with the work spread across grants, finance, procurement, contracting, legal, and executive leadership, none of whom reported to me. I redesigned and scaled the operating infrastructure end to end:

- **Intake & assistance**
  Guided schools through eligibility, participation, and how to move a request.
- **Allowability review**
  Standardized how needs, services, and costs were reviewed for compliance.
- **Vendor & data standards**
  Standardized the information required to enter state procurement.
- **Contracting & routing**
  Built contract generation and routing through the Commissioner's signature.
- **Payments & monitoring**
  Coordinated purchase orders, invoicing, payment, and expenditure tracking.
- **Matrixed coordination**
  Directed a cross-division team, clearing bottlenecks to keep work moving.

THE RESULT

The infrastructure I built scaled execution from roughly **30 to more than 900 vendor contracts**, an approximately **30-fold increase** in transaction volume, while supporting **110+ participating schools**. The accomplishment was not processing more contracts; it was a **repeatable system** I designed to convert hundreds of school and vendor requests into accurate, compliant, executive-ready transactions. That model proved scalable enough to inform Tennessee's ~$63M Non-Public Schools GEER initiative, redeployed EANS funding rather than a separate award.

"Take a complex program constrained by unclear ownership, fragmented information, and procedural bottlenecks, and build the operating infrastructure required to deliver it at scale."

Program references: Tennessee EANS program guidance; Tennessee EANS 2.0 letter, ePlan, TN Dept. of Education