

**Consolidation Feasibility Study Summary of Findings Document  
Washington Township School Districts  
March 2012**

**General Items for Discussion from the Feasibility Study:**

1. The report recommends the Washington Township Elementary Districts consider consolidation.
2. Transportation costs in a consolidated elementary district would not necessarily increase but the final change would depend on the transportation of students to the D50 schools and any boundary configurations.
3. Boundaries of the current elementary districts would potentially be changed to allow for flexibility in enrollment growth in D51 and D52.
4. A consolidated elementary district is required to honor all multi-year contracts currently in force.
5. A newly reorganized district would be obligated to renegotiate all Collective Bargaining Agreements.
6. Financial savings could be captured in the personnel required to manage one district office instead of three but the savings will likely be offset by the equalization of fringe benefits and non-certified staff salaries.
7. In a reorganized elementary district there may be reductions in non-certified and certified staff.
8. Incentives for reorganization provide a short-term infusion of funds providing for the transition period.

**Advantages to District Reorganization:**

1. A consolidated elementary district would create efficiencies of district facilities and promote a coordinated, articulated and aligned curriculum.
2. The consolidated elementary district curriculum could be improved through curriculum mapping, unified textbook adoption, streamlined technology support, professional development and an internal review process.
3. A consolidated elementary district would provide flexibility for the enrollment growth in District 51 and 52. New boundaries (attendance zones) would need to be drawn to capture open classrooms in D51 and D50.

**Disadvantages to District Reorganization:**

1. An elementary district consolidation may be a financial expenditure increase.
2. A K-12 consolidation would not be financially feasible due to the inordinate salary disparity between the high school and elementary staff.
3. The tax rate of a consolidated elementary district would range from \$2.37 to \$3.11. This range is not all inclusive. The new district may exceed the current rates in determining the future financial needs of the district. Also, the range does not include any outstanding bond debt. Current tax rates: WCHS - \$2.06, D50 - \$3.11, D51 - \$2.45, and D52 - \$2.37. (These rates are without the bond rate.) All bonded debt in the new district will be paid by the original residents of the district that encumbered the debt.
4. The stagnant Illinois economy may cause local and state revenues to be reduced, pro-rated, or not received in a timely manner.

Page	Recommendation	Quote
126 - 127	K-8 Consolidation	<p>recommendation of the consultants that districts involved in this study consider consolidating only the elementary districts utilizing the 11-EB method.</p> <p>efficiencies that may be involved in utilizing all future district facilities</p> <p>opportunity for a coordinated curriculum articulation between the elementary districts</p> <p>Financially, the districts may not realize any savings and may indeed be a financial expenditure increase due to factors including: the coordination of all fringe benefits between the existing certified and certified staff and the coordination of salaries of the non- certified staff of the current districts. These large and significant issues will require all of these to be equalized between the current districts with no resulting state incentives to help offset the costs.</p>
126 - 127	K-12 Consolidation	<p>The formation of a new unit district would be adversely affected by the inordinate salary disparity between the current high school staff and elementary staff. While more GSA could be generated to offset this problem, there would remain a two million gap between the salaries needed and the increased GSA. Therefore, Scenario One would not be financially feasible.</p>
142 145 155	<p>Curriculum Alignment would benefit</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common Core</li> <li>• PK-8 Textbook Adoption</li> <li>• Technology curriculum services, support and support staff</li> <li>• Professional Development / Teacher Training</li> <li>• Internal Review Process</li> <li>• RtI data collection</li> <li>• Add foreign language instruction</li> </ul>	<p>Since Illinois State testing currently reflects either the state goals or learning standards, alignment of local curriculum through curriculum maps can potentially better prepare district students for these achievement tests, as well as, localized assessments.</p> <p>Common Core Standards need to be addressed across each K-8 district and high school district.</p> <p>A new PK-8 textbook adoption schedule would have to be established over time in a reorganized district since each district is following a different schedule. When this occurs, curriculum design should precede textbook purchases. This proposed procedure will help teachers and administrators develop more meaningful curricula that are not dictated by textbook companies. Supplemental materials which enhance and help address subject content, skills, and assessments.</p>

		<p>Technology curriculum, services, and support staff should be evaluated to offer a newly organized district the best possible program. Much organization would be needed to catalog hardware, software, and equipment. A reorganized technology curriculum will need to be developed. Current Technology Coordinators can help the administration and teaching staff with this process.</p> <p>If consolidation occurs in any combination, teachers from the districts involved will need time for training on the “new” curriculum and a plan will need to be developed on how the new K-8 elementary district’s curricula will mesh in this process.</p> <p>The institution of curriculum alignment with Illinois learning standards activities in each district is a functional means of grade level articulation. Teachers in all of the affected districts will need more experience in and to become more familiar with current district standards from one grade to the next.</p> <p>The "Internal Review" process, whether required or not, provides a clearly defined process of school improvement. It is intended as a forum for articulation about curriculum. A reorganized district would be able to encourage more articulation among buildings through the Internal Review Team of each school.</p>
167	Enrollment	<p>If all of the elementary schools became a unit this would impact the unit district and not just District 51 but housing flexibility would emerge that does not currently exist.</p>
169  171	Transportation	<p>Should these districts reorganize into one district it is doubtful these costs would change a great deal and the final change would depend upon transporting students to District 50 to accommodate the increasing student populations for district 51 and 52.</p> <p>Student transportation should not be a negative factor when considering any of the proposed merger scenarios for these districts.</p> <p>The proximity of the districts to each other and the fact that they already share special education transportation reduces the opportunity to increase or decrease these costs.</p>

		<p>The increased flexibility for placement of students could reduce overcrowding that exists in some of the buildings.</p> <p>The final cost would depend upon school boundary configurations and how many students could be shared on buses that are not currently being shared.</p> <p>The special education costs would not be impacted as these are addressed through a private provider, resulting in the most efficient use of transportation on a per pupil basis.</p>
179	<p>Facilities</p> <p>The projected classroom needs by 2016-17 could be met if all of the elementary schools were one.</p>	<p>This would increase the flexibility for use of the existing buildings for the elementary schools and would enable adjustments of boundaries to spread the student population among the existing buildings.</p> <p>There is limited space available for District 52 and the crowded conditions at the Intermediate level could be reduced if all schools were part of the same district.</p> <p>Student projections indicate a need at the intermediate level for 12 additional classrooms by 2016-17 with seven (7) of those available located in District 50 and five (5) in District 51. However, the five in district 51 will be used by their increasing population making the buildings in district 50 the area where these additional students could be housed.</p> <p>This scenario could reduce the need for construction at this time.</p>
197	<p>Tax Rate</p> <p>Utilizing a range of current total rates of \$2.37 to \$3.11 it is reasonable to assume that the new rate will be somewhere in between the current rates</p>	<p>notwithstanding the bond and interest rate which is different for each district.</p> <p>The author feels that the range of rates is not all inclusive and the new district may exceed the current rates in determining the future financial needs of the district due to the decline of state support for education in the recent past.</p> <p>Note: The reader needs to keep in mind that the High School is not included in this calculation as they will remain distinct and separate from a newly reorganized elementary district.</p>

200		it is assumed that the taxpayers of the districts would indeed realize a tax increase in some measure depending upon their current rate and what will be recommended to be on the ballot for future financial needs
198	Other Financial Considerations Multi-year Agreements	Current statutes for all reorganizations require that all multi-year agreements that are currently in force by any of the reorganizing districts must be honored by the newly created district.
198	Other Financial Considerations Collective Bargaining Agreements	a newly reorganized district would be obligated to renegotiate all such contracts, including individual and commercial multi-year agreements.  certified and non-certified staff union agreements, the collective bargaining agreements in place in all districts would be abolished
198 199	Other Financial Considerations District Office	there will only be one superintendent of a new district.  it would be normal to assume that only one bookkeeper; payroll clerk and/or superintendent's secretary would be necessitated.  there would be financial savings in the personnel required to manage one district office instead of three.  While there will be savings in a combined district office staff, it will likely be offset by the aforementioned equalization of fringe benefits and salaries of certified and non-certified staff.
198	Other Financial Considerations Fringe Benefits and Non-Certified staff	Areas not included in state incentives are fringe benefits for any collective bargaining agreements and non-certified staff collective bargaining agreements. These two areas are a significant expense for a newly reorganized district and will undoubtedly be a large factor in the future expenditures for a newly reorganized district which will not be reimbursed by the state incentives
199	Other Financial Considerations Staff Reductions	In this reorganization, there will possibly be non-certified/certified staff reductions based upon the needs of the newly enlarged district. The certified staff that will be affected the most will be the possibility of junior high school staff and district office administrators.  Currently all districts are offering a duplicated junior high school curriculum

		and while the number may not be known at this time, it will certainly entail a reduction of some full-time and possibly part-time certified staff members as the needs of the new district are determined after a successful referendum.
200	Other Financial Considerations Incentives	The fund balances are currently healthy. While the reorganization incentives should provide a short-term infusion of discretionary funds, these funds are provided for the transition period between the successful reorganization period and its initial years.
200	Other Financial Considerations Economy	stagnant Illinois economy causing state and local revenues to be reduced, pro-rated or not received in a timely manner for budgetary considerations.