

Washington County

School Districts Study

Building a 21st Century
Regional Learning and Planning Community

A Collaborative Model

November 2012



CAPITAL AREA SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

**University at Albany – East Campus
5 University Place – A409
Rensselaer, New York 12144**

In Appreciation

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Superintendent Jan Jehring	Argyle Central School District
Superintendent Vincent Canini	Cambridge Central School District
Superintendent Maureen VanBuren	Fort Ann Central School District
Superintendent Mark Bessen	Granville Central School District
Superintendent Thomas Abraham	Hartford Central School District
Superintendent Mark Doody	Hudson Falls Central School District
Superintendent Kerri Piemme, PhD	Salem Central School District

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Forward

The Washington County schools have been realistic and proactive in regard to the fiscal picture they are facing to maintain programs and operations as school districts. In the beginning of the 2011-12 school year, the superintendents and school boards at each of these districts began the difficult task of having discussions with their communities about the fiscal realities facing their rural schools. The school districts have committed to expanding shared services, regionalization of schools and the potential for consolidation/merger of school districts.

The District Superintendent, seeing the common thread of conversations, has provided leadership in gathering the districts together to formalize what is already happening at the local level. Shared services exist currently in pockets and pooling of resources has happened organically between some districts. All of these districts are concerned about the fiscal picture since their schools serve as the center of daily life in their communities.

The Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA) was approached by the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES to propose a study for seven school districts in the county: Argyle, Cambridge, Fort Ann, Granville, Hartford, Hudson Falls, and Salem. WSWHE BOCES requested that CASDA study the feasibility of sharing services in targeted programs and operations within the seven school districts. In March 2012, Dr. Jennifer Bashant, Terrance Brewer, Dr. James Butterworth, Executive Director of CASDA, Rebecca Gardner, Betsey Schuhle and Dr. Jerome Steele met with five superintendents and their respective board members to refine a list of goals and priority areas for sharing regional school programs and operations. The planning session generated a timeline for the study and specific areas of concentration: Administrative Structure, Family/Student Support, Financial/Operations and Instructional/Co-Curricular. Program study effort began in May 2012 and included several qualitative and quantitative fact-finding activities with school administrators, staff and the communities involved.

CASDA team leaders visited each district and conducted interviews and/or focus groups related to the feasibility of shared services within the seven districts. Interview participants included district office administrators (school business officials, directors of curriculum & instruction), superintendents of schools and building administrators. Information generated from document review along with data from the consultations and current research findings formed the basis for opportunities to develop, restructure or share educational programs and operations regionally.

Overview

In the past three years, the fiscal climate for school districts in New York State has diminished significantly with the loss of State and Federal aid that support programs within school districts. The loss of revenue support for educational programs and operations has placed a significant burden on school districts to sustain or maintain programs that supported students, staff and the community in past years. In the current climate of fiscal uncertainty, many school districts are deciding to examine both the efficiency and effectiveness of the services they are providing. Since the financial outlook for schools appears to be a concern for at least the years immediately, efficient utilization of available funds must be carefully planned in order to minimize any negative impact on student learning and school performance.

The opportunities for consideration in this report have been developed in the spirit of a regional approach to solving issues that have an impact upon academic programs for students in rural settings. Financial questions that are not totally resolved in this report are tied to contract obligations of individual school districts, such as step alignment, health insurance contributions, and district responsibilities to ERS and TRS. Legislation and/or contract negotiations are the necessary avenues to address these financial concerns. This report does focus upon expanding educational opportunities for the students and provides the framework for professionals to engage in strategic planning to address the financial concerns of these seven school districts through collaborative initiatives. *(Please refer to section one of this report for more detailed financial information.)*

In order to meet the demands of this current society, more students must be adequately prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and/or be career ready. In acknowledgment of the increasing demands on schools, proposals to share services and close examination of effectiveness must be balanced with the social responsibilities and emergent accountabilities of schools.

As we become a more global society, the demands of the 21st century will require educational leaders, especially leaders of rural schools, to rethink delivery models and consider options beyond the traditional models that have long been used. The challenge of being geographically isolated puts rural schools at a significant disadvantage. The use of technology, distance learning, and shared educational services are essential for rural schools to explore in order to provide a well-rounded and diverse education for students. This report aims to describe the current operations within these seven school districts, and to provide opportunities for consideration in order to:

- Enhance educational programs
- Improve the quality, efficiency and/or scope of current services
- Reduce operating and/or capital expenses

Challenges for rural schools

Rural schools face a unique set of issues and challenges, such as declining enrollment and demographic changes, sharing educational services with other districts, consolidation, while also focusing on improving academic and extracurricular programs while keeping tax levies in check. According to the New York State Center for Rural Schools, “Communities across the state are experiencing declining population, changing demographics, declining property values, increasing property tax rates, and increasing healthcare and pension fund costs. Communities are also challenged to support improvements in their public schools to meet the new Regents Learning and Graduation Standards implemented in 2000 and federal requirements through the No Child Left Behind Act of 2002.” During the 2011 legislative session, a 2% cap on school property tax levies was enacted by New York State outlining the process for establishing school property tax increases for school districts. The new tax levy process reduces the ability of school districts to raise additional revenues for school program and operations without a 60% majority approval margin.

Shared Services

Many states recommend the sharing of services as a way to reduce administrative costs and improve educational programs. Because the phrase “shared services” has many interpretations, districts have come to a variety of understandings and conclusions about the nature of shared services. Shared service arrangements can be formed when two entities agree to share services such as vocational-technical training, mentoring programs, services for students with disabilities, transportation or facilities maintenance services. Other examples of services that can be shared between districts are administration, computing, payroll and auditing, legal services, and grant management. Incorporating research, experience and legislation, the CASDA team developed the lists in Figure 1 to clarify this concept. Throughout the remainder of this report, “shared services” should be interpreted using the construct in the left column entitled, “sharing is.”

Figure 1. *Description of shared services*

“SHARING IS...”	“SHARING IS NOT...”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preserving integrity of program - A partnership - Empowering - A collaboration - Reciprocal relationships - Expanding efficiency - Defining and ensuring sustainability - Something for all - An element of learning - Pays dividends later on - Synergy - sum is greater than parts - Building capacity - Reducing exposure - Identifying and replicating the best - Thinking differently - Creating new solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EASY - Job reduction - Combining duties - Doing things as usual - Losing autonomy, identity, local control - Passive or token sharing - Consolidation - A done deal because a study is done - For everyone - Designed to fragment provision of services

Essential Questions

In framing this study, we asked six essential questions to guide data gathering and analysis.

1. How can these seven districts share and expand academic opportunities for their students in a cost effective manner?
2. What is currently being shared among the districts and how can this be improved upon?
3. Given current structures, what may be shared? What are the obstacles?
4. What new structures will need to be created in order to support such sharing?
5. What cost savings are associated with these sharing opportunities?
6. Does the use of instructional technology provide an opportunity for greater sharing?

Methodology

During June and July of 2012, CASDA team members gathered information about the seven school districts through a series of interviews and focus groups with the superintendent of schools, building principals, school business officials, directors of curriculum and instruction, directors of special education, transportation supervisors and technology coordinators. Discussion, responses and any supporting documentation provided during interviews and/or

focus groups were coded for analysis by the CASDA team. This analysis provided emergent themes for consideration in our findings and recommendations. Discussion and interview questions will be found in Appendix A.

1.0 - Financial Implications – A Sense of Urgency

For the past three years, all school districts across New York State have experienced budget constraints which have led to cuts in staff and program as well as concerns of the so called “fiscal cliff.” Within the past year, ten districts in the Capital District Region have considered school consolidation as a means of rectifying their financial and academic concerns. In each case, however, consolidation was not approved by the voters in at least one district and as such the attempt to consolidate has been stalled. In fact, since 2000 only four school district consolidations have been approved in New York State by the voters with the most recent occurring in 2008. If school consolidation is not approved by local communities, then new thinking is needed to help school district navigate these uncertain fiscal waters. (Editorial, Times Union, 11/9/2012)

In the case of the seven districts involved in this study, all have all made significant cuts in staffing and program in recent years. (See Table 1 below.) Now with the implementation of the 2% tax cap and its implications, districts must continue to be engaged in financial planning over the short and long term to assure that academic opportunities are provided to their students. As districts continue their planning, fiscal responsibility and accountability are critical in how they provide academic opportunities for their students. For the foreseeable future any increases in state and federal aid will be negligible at least. As these districts became aware of these fiscal conditions, they planned and utilized district fund balances to offset the loss of aid and mitigate tax increases as well as further reductions in staffing and programs.

Table 1. Staff Reductions for the past three years.

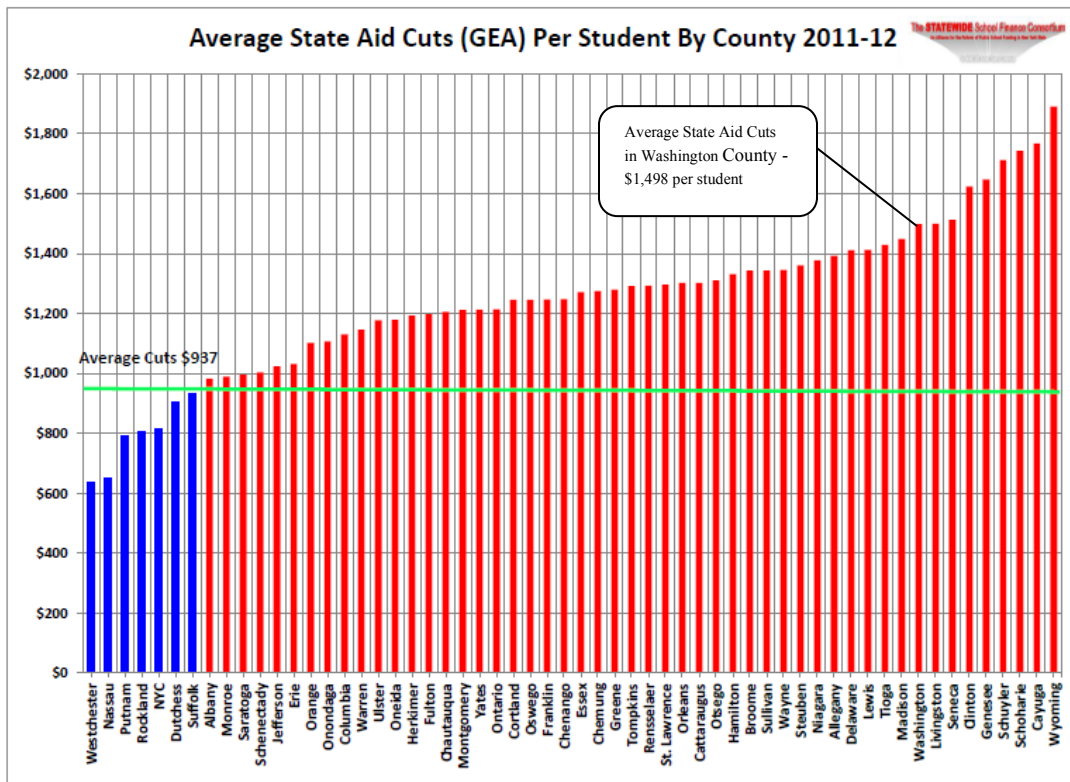
<i>District</i>	<i>Administrators</i>	<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Non instructional</i>
Argyle	.5	10	7
Cambridge	1	26	2
Fort Ann	1.3	13	15
Granville	0	3	1
Hartford	0	3*	1**
Hudson Falls	2	23.5	8
Salem	1	8.6	4
TOTALS	5.8	87.1	38

* Reduced to .8 FTE

** Through Attrition

Reductions in enrollment and staff have impacted academic programs across all seven districts. In general, some of these districts have experienced classes being reduced or eliminated in business, special education, health, English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and Agricultural Science, as well as many electives and Advanced Placement classes. In addition to academic programs, extracurricular activities including clubs and sports have also been reduced or eliminated. When considering the number of reductions indicated in Table 1 as well as the reductions in state aid on a per pupil basis indicated in Chart 1, the impact upon students and academic programs is significant.

Chart 1. Average State Aid Cuts Per Student



Source: Statewide School Finance Consortium

1.1 Current Conditions

As the seven districts begin to plan for the short and long term, it is necessary to consider some basic financial information that will serve to provide as a baseline for planning

purposes. The following charts are based upon financial data provided from financial reports filed by the districts with the New York State Education Department, along with discussions with agencies such as the Statewide School Finance Consortium and WSHWE BOCES. In order to graphically understand the financial concerns of all seven districts, an average was created for seven districts combined.

Also, keep in mind that during the 2009 - 2010 and 2010 – 2011, school districts received funding through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). This funding also partially offset the Gap Elimination Adjustment during 2011 – 2012. This funding is no longer available.

Charts 2-4 indicate that budgets, tax levies and state aid have been flat for these districts. It could be argued that given the current financial constraints, they are all treading water. The most serious concern moving forward, which is creating a sense of urgency within these districts, is noted in Charts 5-7. Chart 5 indicates the gap that has been created between actual expenditures and revenue. When these numbers are projected for the next two years, the gap widens and the fiscal cliff draws closer. In Chart 6, the average operating surplus and deficit is indicated prior to the use of any fund balance while Chart 7 shows the average use of fund balance since 2008-09.

As these districts continue to face the 2% tax cap, flat state aid and the continuation of rising costs in teachers’ retirement, state retirement, and health insurance over which they have limited control, a sense of urgency is growing regarding their ability to serve the academic needs of their students. Table 2 illustrates the upward trend in retirement costs and these are projected to continue increasing over the short term.

Table 2. Employer Contribution Rates for TRS and ERS

	Teacher’s Retirement	Employers’ Retirement
2008-09	7.6 %	8.5 %
2009-10	6.19 %	7.4 %
2010-11	8.62 %	11.9 %
2011-12	11.11 %	16.3 %
2012-13	11.84 %	18.9 %
2013-14*	15.5 – 16.5 %	21 %

*Projected

As Chart 2 indicates, on average, budgets over the past five years have remained relatively flat in growth as districts experienced reductions in state aid and tax revenues. School districts have controlled spending by reducing staff and programs. As revenue decreased and expenditures increased the reductions of staff and programs continued over recent years.

Chart 2. Five Year Average Budget Trends

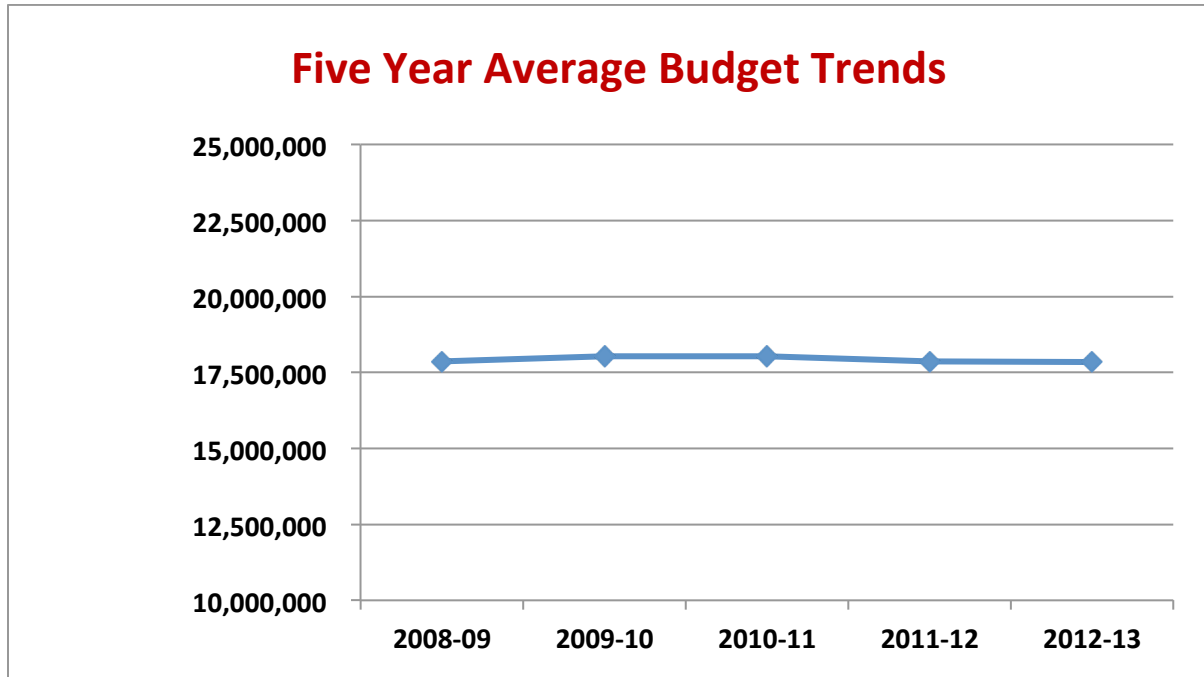


Chart 3 indicates that tax levies have remained level over the past five years for school communities. The tax levies remained low due to the increased use of fund balance and the use of ARRA (American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) funding during 2009-10 and 2010-11.

Chart 3. Five Year Average Tax Levy Trends

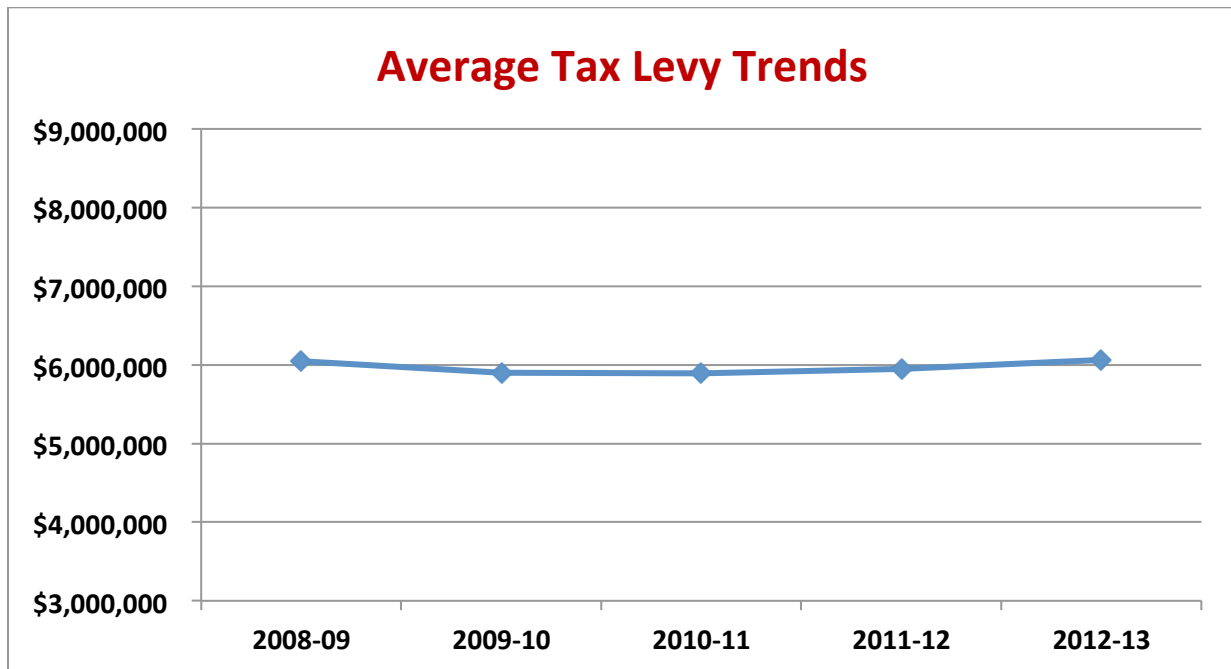


Chart 4 indicates that the school districts of Washington County have experienced a significant loss of state aid from 2008-09. The loss of aid for student programs (Chart 1-GEA), is one of the highest in the state. The loss of state aid will continue to have an impact upon the school districts over the next few years.

Chart 4. Five Year Average General State Aid Trends

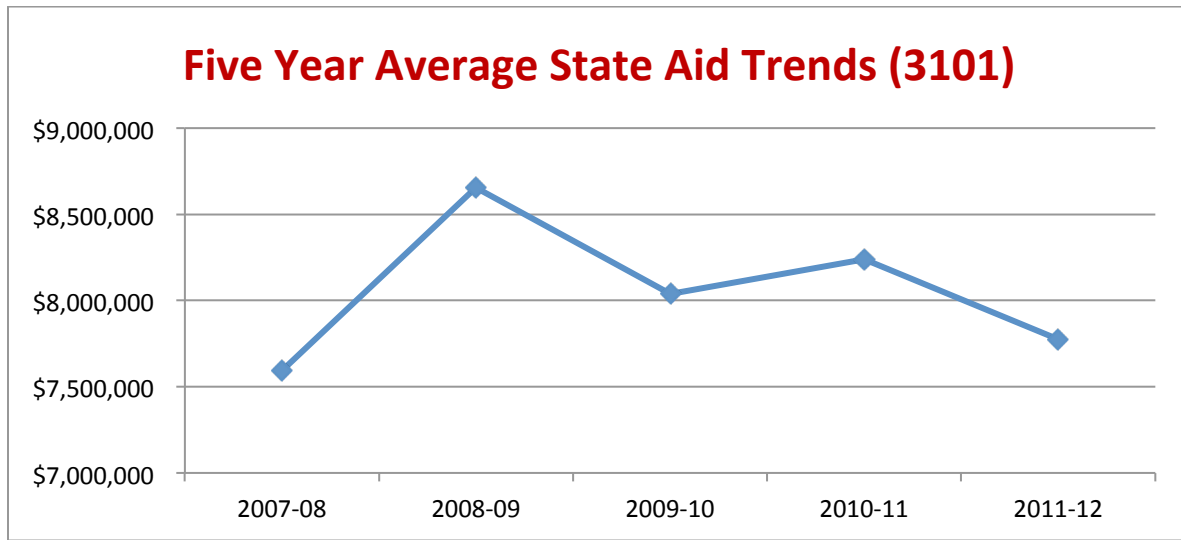


Chart 5 is significant as it show that Districts will continue to see the “gap” in expenditures and revenue widen even with the reduction of staff and programs. The required costs for pension support, health insurance and other mandated programs will continue to grow. The only way to off-set this loss of revenue is the use of school district’s fund balance.

Chart 5. Average Actual Expenditures and Revenues and 2 year projection

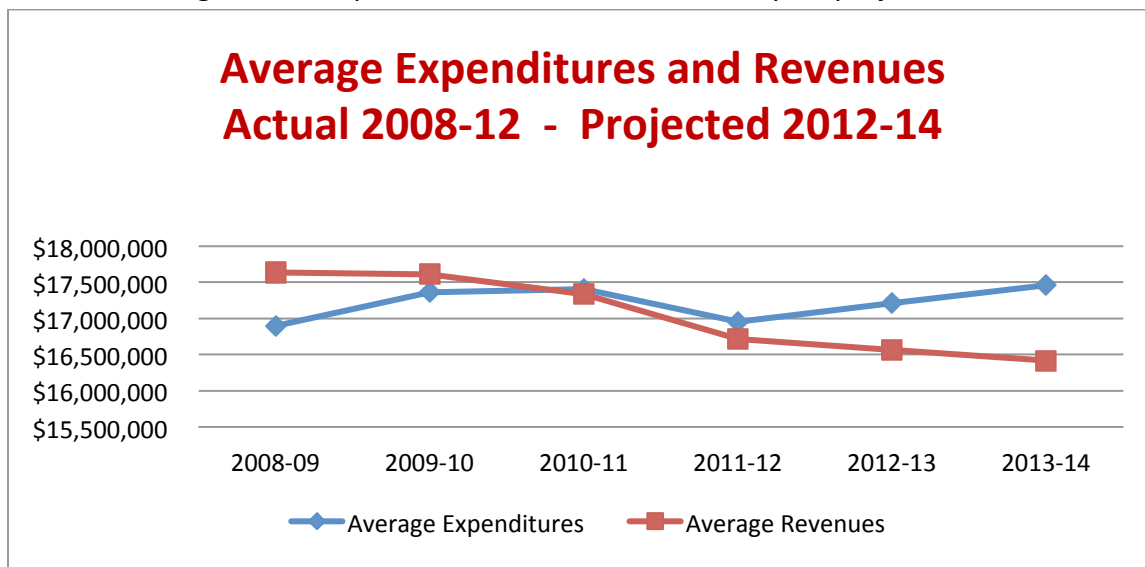


Chart 6 illustrates the projected operating deficit for the next several years. As such, school districts have planned for the projected loss of revenue, state aid and property tax limits, by the use of unrestricted fund balance. The districts have used and will continue to use fund balance as they develop future budgets. The fund balance reserves will continue to be depleted over the next several years.

Chart 6. Average Operating Surplus or Deficit Prior to Use of Fund Balance

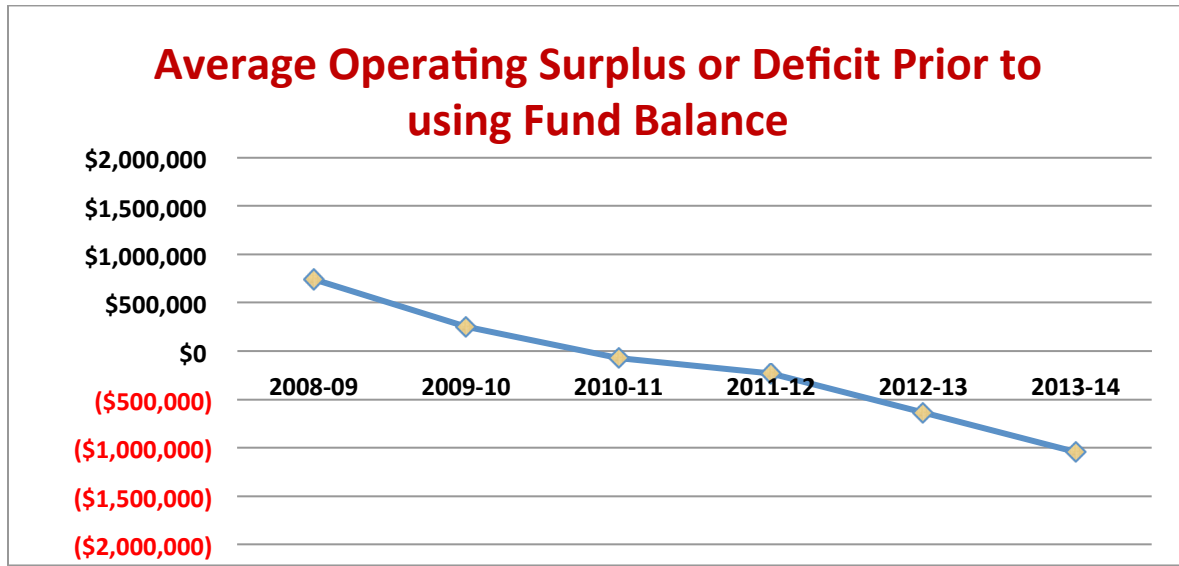
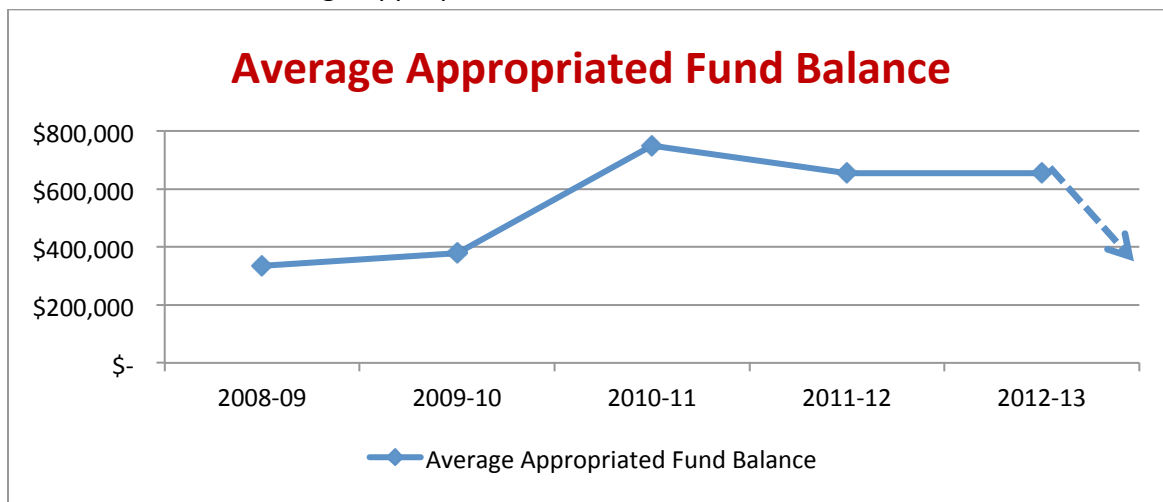


Chart 7 indicates the average use of fund balance as districts are using more and more fund balance to mitigate the lack of revenue and the 2 % tax cap. The local fund balance is the primary source to address the revenue shortfall and given the projections in Chart 6 average appropriated fund balance will begin to decrease beyond the current school year.

Chart 7. Five Year Average Appropriated Fund Balance.



1.2 Findings

- 1.2.1 In Chart 2, the five year budget trend indicate that on average, school district budgets are almost exactly the same as they were in 2008-2009.
- 1.2.2 In Chart 3, the five year tax levy trend also indicates that levies for these districts have remained at the same level as in 2008-2009.
- 1.2.3 In Chart 4, the five year trend in state aid also indicates a downward track.
- 1.2.4 The most significant finding was the indication in Charts 5 and 6 showing the creation of a structural deficit and extending out for the next several years. The projected “gap” between revenues and expenditures over the next few years are based upon average increases over the previous four years.
- 1.2.5 The districts are using more and more fund balance to mitigate the lack of revenue and the 2 % tax cap. The local fund balance is the primary source to address the revenue shortfall.
- 1.2.6 Sharing of academic programs and other services will not have an impact on larger financial concerns such as retirement system contributions.

1.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 1.3.1 With the fiscal constraints and trends indicated in the charts above, CASDA believes that the seven districts should consider formalizing the sharing that is already in place as well consider additional opportunities to maximizing sharing among and between these districts.
- 1.3.2 To create greater efficiency, the districts should consider the creation of a Central Business Office that would be responsible for the major business functions. This could be done for all seven districts or on a cluster basis. The cluster concept will be defined in section 9.0.
- 1.3.3 CASDA also believes that these districts should consider collaborating in creating cost efficiencies in the following areas:
 - Teachers’ Contract
 - Health insurance
 - General Liability Insurance

Given the financial status and current mandates on school districts for contracts and other financial obligations of these seven districts as outlined above, the primary focus of this report will be on ways in which they may be able to collaborate to create cost efficiencies and greater academic opportunities for their students as long term solutions to financial issues by the Collaborative. (See Section 9.0)

2.0 - School District Snapshots

2.1 Current Conditions

The primary purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which seven school districts within Washington County had the capacity to leverage their ability to share instructional and non-instructional services to create greater opportunities for students, as well as create cost efficiencies and academic proficiencies. The seven districts including Argyle, Cambridge, Fort Ann, Granville, Hartford, Hudson Falls and Salem are all experiencing the problems created by the fiscal climate over the past few years. With the tax cap now in place and implemented for the 2012-13 school year, these districts have recognized that their fiscal capacity is diminishing and need to plan both for the short and long term to continue to offer quality educational programs for their students. There is a genuine willingness on the part of all these districts to think differently and by tapping into their strengths they will create better opportunities for their students and communities.

From our discussions, however, there are also some gaps and needs that these districts are attempting to rectify. Given the financial climate, districts want to insure the continuation or expansion of certain programs. These are specifically at the high school level and include mathematics, sciences, art and music, engineering, agricultural sciences, criminal justice, alternative education, and GED programs as examples. Some districts also want to be able to expand their offerings for advanced placement courses.

The following snapshots provide a quick overview of each of the districts participating in this study.

2.1.1 Argyle Central School District

Argyle is a K-12 rural public school district in northern Washington County, New York and covers 61.39 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 600 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 32 % and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 85.75 %.

Its administrative team consists of a Superintendent/K-6 Principal, 7-12 Principal, K-12 Assistant Principal, a .5 Director of Special Education, and Business Manager. The administrative team oversees approximately 55 instructional staff as well as 49 non-instructional personnel. The Board of Education consists of five members who are elected to five year terms.

The administrative team cited strengths in the area of curriculum, discipline, and community based knowledge, good working relationships with teachers and parents, and technology. At the high school level, eligible students are able to enroll in honor level classes at

Argyle and college level courses at SUNY Adirondack. Students may also participate in the New Visions program through BOCES. The administrative team also expressed that they have a number of needs to improve their academic programs. They would like to offer Advanced Placement (AP) courses as well as online courses to their students to create a variety of electives, but they are not available at this time. Also, Argyle students do not currently attend the Myers Center. The administrative team is seeking collaboration in transporting their students. For students who are nontraditional learners, Argyle would be supportive of a regional GED program that is BOCES based or based at Argyle. In non instructional areas, Argyle would like to see support in management, legal and contractual areas. The administrative team has made significant cuts over the past several years and is fighting to keep academic programs for their students.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$10,963,420. The budget for 2012-13 is \$11,111,170 which represents a 1.35% increase.

2.1.2 Cambridge Central School District

Cambridge Central is K-12 rural public school district located in southern Washington County, New York and covers 104 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 920 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 33% and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 83.75 %.

Its administrative structure consists of a Superintendent, Pre-K-6 Principal/Co-CSE Chair K-6, 7-12 Principal, Associate Principal/Co-CSE Chair 7-12 and Business Manager. The Board of Education consists of five members who are elected to three year terms.

The administrative team is proud of the K-12 literacy program. Cambridge Central has been recognized by the Albany Business Review as ranking 11th out of 85 school districts in the capital region for their accomplishments in English Language Arts. At the high school level, students have access to AP courses in Calculus, Environmental Science, English, Global History, and U.S. History. Students also have access to courses through SUNY Albany and SUNY Adirondack. There are a number of needs that have been recognized by the administrative team. Cambridge is just beginning the process of curriculum mapping and additional time and staff development are required to implement maps throughout the district. Although Cambridge is predominantly a farming community, it does not offer an Agricultural Science program. The mathematics program requires updating as the Common Core is implemented. Also, it was noted that there is no GED program for those students seeking this alternative. Cambridge offers its students courses through SUNY Adirondack and online. Also, Cambridge would like to see a common bell schedule developed to facilitate sharing courses via distance or online among the districts.

As a result of attrition, Cambridge has eliminated the position of Director of Special Education and the responsibilities have fallen upon others in the district.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$17,710,280. The budget for 2012-13 is \$17,273,518 which represents a 2.47% decrease.

2.1.3 Fort Ann Central School District

Fort Ann Central is a K-12 rural public school district located in northern Washington County, New York and covers 106.54 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 540 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 32 % and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 81.75 %.

Its administrative structure consists of a Superintendent, Pre-K-5 Principal/CSE Chairperson, 6-12 Principal, and Business Manager. The Board of Education consists of seven members who are elected to three year terms.

The administrative team is strong in the area of curriculum and instruction. There is also a new Teacher/Leader program that emphasizes literacy as well as Science Technology and Math (STEM). Students at the high school level have access to courses at SUNY Adirondack. Electives for high school students are also available through the Virtual High School. Currently there are 33 students involved in this online learning.

The administrative team also noted several needs in the area of special education, upper level technology courses, college level courses and art. During the 2011-2012 school year an Alternative Education Program was in place for non-traditional learners but has been eliminated for 2012-13.

During the spring of 2011, Fort Ann Central was involved in an administrative review study as a preliminary step to develop regional based discussions maximizing sharing potential with other school districts in Washington County. This administrative review was conducted by CASDA and is available for review.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$10,996,302. The budget for 2012-13 is \$10,738,426 which represents a 2.35% decrease.

2.1.4 Granville Central School District

Granville Central School District is a K-12 rural public school district located in northern Washington County, New York and covers 83.68 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 1356 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 47 % and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 76.25 %.

Its administrative structure consists of a Superintendent, K-3 Principal, 4-6 Principal, 7-12 Principal, 7-12 Assistant Principal, Director of Special Education, Director of Technology and

Information, and Business Manager. The Board of Education consists of 9 members who are elected to three year terms.

The administrative team cites strengths in the area of curriculum and instruction, reading, and a strong foundation in Response to Intervention (RtI). The strongest curriculum area cited is English. The district also has a fully functional distance learning facility that has been operating for six years and there are three classes offered on site and three classes offsite. These classes are shared with Schuylerville, Corinth, South Glens Falls and Johnsbury. Additionally Granville has developed strong relationships with Syracuse University and SUNY Adirondack to provide five Advanced Placement classes. A partnership has been established with the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) to provide students with a High School Engineering course for college credit through “Project Lead the Way.” A “Gateway to Technology” program also is in place in the middle school.

The superintendent and administrative team have recognized a number of areas that could be implemented to provide efficiencies. They indicated that Granville lacked a strong program in Agricultural Science and is interested in the programs at Greenwich and Salem. There is also an interest in the development of regional high schools with the Granville serving as one. Granville also sees the need for a Central Business and Human Resource Office that could serve many of the districts in this study. As such, they could focus on payroll and other financial operations as well as contract negotiations. Granville Central also receives students on a tuition basis from schools in Vermont.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$24,048,554. The budget for 2012-13 is \$24,585,875 which represents a 2.23% increase.

2.1.5 Hartford Central School District

Hartford Central is a K-12 rural public school district located in northern Washington County, New York and covers 60.09 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 457 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 33% and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 84.5 %.

Its administrative structure consists of a Superintendent, Pre-K-5 Principal/(CSE, CPSE and 504 Chairperson), 6-12 Principal, and Business Manager. The Board of Education consists of 5 members who are elected to five year terms.

The administrative team noted that their strength lies in their knowledge of the community and their longevity. The Superintendent’s tenure spans twenty years and the current administrative team has been together for six years. Academically, students at the high school level have the opportunity to participate in Advanced Placement classes as well as courses through SUNY Adirondack and SUNY Plattsburgh. Additionally, there are a number of online courses that students may enroll in for credit.

The superintendent also noted that Hartford has been in the forefront of clean technology. The school district has been recognized for its implementation of an alternative energy source with the building of a woodchip burning energy system. It was noted that this system has helped to cut energy costs in half. Hartford also has a close relationship with the Town of Hartford as it is involved in a project to jointly develop athletic fields next to the school campus.

The administrative team noted that in the past there was a need for a regional approach for transportation as their bus inspections passing rate was only at 50%. This has improved to 90%, but this is an area that could be explored on a regional basis to create efficiencies.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$10,331,912. The budget for 2012-13 is \$10,247,157 which represents a 0.82% decrease.

2.1.6 Hudson Falls Central School District

Hudson Falls Central is a K-12 public school district that serves the village of Hudson Falls and is located in north central Washington County and covers 52.84 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 2288 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 50 % and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 71.5 %.

Its administrative structure consists of a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Pre-K-K Principal, Primary School Principal, Intermediate School Principal, Middle School Principal and Dean of students at the Middle School, High School Principal, Assistant Principal at the high school, Assistant Principal/Director of PE and Athletics at the high school, Director of Business Service, Director of Technology, Transportation Director and a Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds. The Board of Education consists of 9 members who are elected to five year terms.

Hudson Falls Central provides its students with the broadest number of courses both at the general and advance levels. It also takes advantage of distance learning due to the tremendous technology infrastructure that is in place. Students are able to take advantage of programs through SUNY Adirondack, SUNY Albany as well as the Tech Smart program through HVCC. Yet, it has the lowest graduation rate of the seven school districts participating in this study.

The administrative team noted that there were a number of areas that needed to be addressed. The special education program has been reviewed by CASDA and recommendations are being made to help Hudson Falls restructure in this area. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction is also the Director of Special Education. These are duties that could be shared with another district.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$39,998,809. The budget for 2012-13 is \$39,809,513 which represents a 0.47% decrease.

2.1.7 Salem Central School District

Salem Central is a K-12 rural public school district located in central Washington County, New York and covers an area of 81.72 square miles. It has an enrollment of approximately 575 students, a three year average free and reduced lunch rate of 41 % and an average graduation rate for the years 2007 through 2010 of 75.5% and currently at 81%.

Its administrative structure consists of Superintendent, Curriculum Coordinator, K-12 Principal, Director of Special Education, Business Manager, Transportation Supervisor, and Supervisor of Building and Grounds. The Board of Education consists of 5 members who are now elected to three year terms, which was a recent change from five year terms.

The administrative team noted that Salem Central has a number of strengths including the integration of curriculum maps, updated technology system, the Agricultural Technology program, and the Agricultural Business program. Salem also works with Hudson Valley Community College, SUNY Adirondack, Cornell University, and SUNY Morrisville to provide programs for their students. The administrative team also noted that students have participated in Odyssey of the Mind competition and have reached the finals in New York State. Over the past few years, Salem has developed into an “Arts Community” and as such the school district has been developing a strong school/community partnership. There is also an internal GED program that could serve districts on a regional basis.

Salem also receives students from Vermont on a tuition basis.

The administrative team also acknowledged their ability to provide professional development and build capacity among their faculty. This has been evidenced in their training for differentiated instruction, autism, and Academic Intervention Services (AIS).

The Salem administrative team outlined several areas as needs from their perspective. One is the improvement of technology. In the area of transportation, Salem is open to sharing as well as creating a central dispatch system.

The budget for 2011-12 was \$11,070,785. The budget for 2012-13 is \$11,099,916 which represents a 0.26% increase.

2.2 Administrative Structure and Enrollment

The seven districts although serving mostly rural areas are somewhat diverse. They range in enrollment from a low of 450 students to a high of 2200 students. Each of these districts is generally structured in the same manner. Each has a Superintendent, Elementary Principal, High School Principal, Director of Special Education, Business Manager, Director of Transportation and Director of Buildings and Grounds. In the smaller districts the Superintendent may also serve as the Elementary Principal and in other cases the Elementary

Principal may serve as the Director of Special Education. With the absence of a clearly identified administrative support for Special Education and Human Resources as these are hybrid positions, this clearly indicates that there is a requirement for better coordination in these areas. Only two of the districts have a position that coordinates curriculum and instruction. In the other districts this is divided among the principals. With the added responsibilities of APPR, implementation of the Common Core, Student Learning Objectives (SLO's), and RtI facing elementary, middle and high school principals, to couple these responsibilities with other positions such as director of special education, professional development or curriculum and instruction imposes an unnecessary burden upon these administrators. These hybrid positions will certainly have an impact upon the ability of principals to do their jobs effectively and ultimately effecting student achievement.

As outlined below, each district has a position of School Business Official. With the increased accountability and differentiation of responsibilities, recommendations regarding a shared Central Business Office will be reviewed later in this report. Table 3 outlines the administrative structure for each of the seven districts.

Table 3. Administrative Structure.

	Argyle	Cambridge	Fort Ann	Granville	Hartford	Hudson Falls	Salem
Superintendent	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Elementary Principal	0	x	x	x	x	x	na
Middle School Principal	na	na	na	x	na	x	na
High School Principal	x	x	x	x	x	x	na
K-12 Principal	na	na	na	na	na	na	x
Principal of Curriculum	na	na	na	na	na	na	x
Director of Curriculum & Instruction	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Business Manager	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Director of Special Education	.5	0	0	x	0	0	x
Transportation Supervisor	0	x	x	x	x	x	x
Director of Human Resources	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Director of Technology	0	0	0	x	0	x	0

X = FTE 1.0

0 = Responsibilities are attached to a building principal or other administrator

Yellow highlighting indicates areas of potential collaboration.

The enrollment projections for these districts are also very telling. In the past ten years, the combined enrollment of the seven districts has dropped by almost 1100 students with

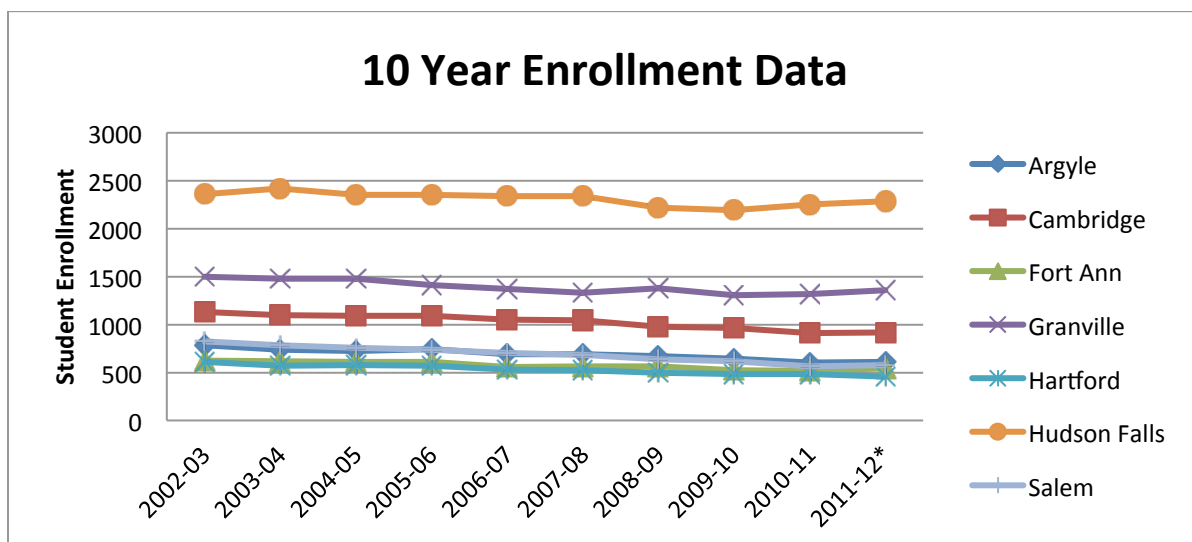
enrollment for 2011-12 at 6751. The two larger districts proportionally lost fewer students than the other five. This is occurring during a time of diminishing resources

The snapshots provided above show the capacity of these districts to help their students. Nevertheless, this capacity is being strained by the impact of the tax cap and current financial climate. In order to build on this capacity, our attention is next focused upon the current status of sharing among and between the districts. Based upon decreased enrollments, several school districts have excess classroom capacity that could support shared programs and professional development on a regional basis.

Table 4. Ten year enrollment data for the seven districts.

Enrollment Trends - Washington County Schools										
	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12*
Argyle	786	740	722	743	690	688	674	646	601	610
Cambridge	1,129	1,096	1,089	1,092	1,054	1045	980	962	908	920
Fort Ann	624	614	610	609	555	567	563	527	517	545
Granville	1,497	1,475	1,476	1,413	1,373	1,329	1,377	1,306	1318	1356
Hartford	610	571	579	571	532	521	500	487	485	457
Hudson Falls	2,361	2,418	2,355	2,351	2,336	2,337	2,220	2,192	2253	2288
Salem	826	782	760	740	703	684	635	619	564	575
<i>Enrollment Data based on BEDS as presented in the NYS Report Cards</i>										
<i>* Based on the 2012-13 NYS Property Tax Report Card</i>										

Chart 8. Enrollment Data for the seven districts.



3.0 - Current Status of Sharing

3.1 Current Conditions

In order to provide the most opportunities for their students, these districts have formally and informally shared their resources. This has been accomplished through a variety of methods by each of these districts. Sharing has occurred in the area of special education programming, academic programming at the high school level, utilization of BOCES programs, sharing teachers between districts and taking advantage of courses through the various SUNY Colleges. Figure 4 indicates the extent of this type of sharing.

Table 5. Current status of sharing among the seven districts.

	<i>Argyle</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>Fort Ann</i>	<i>Granville</i>	<i>Hartford</i>	<i>Hudson Falls</i>	<i>Salem</i>
Type of Sharing							
Special Education	X	X		X			X
Sharing of Teachers	X		X		X	X	
Students attending other districts		X	X				
BOCES							
CTE	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
New Visions	X	X			X		
Distance Learning	No	No	No	X	No	X	No
Online Learning			X		X	X	
Professional Development	X		X			X	X
Human Resources							
Transportation	X	X	X	X			X
SUNY Albany		X					
Hudson Valley CC						X	
SUNY Adirondack	X	X	X		X	X	X
SUNY Plattsburg						X	
SUNY Cobleskill							X
SUNY Morrisville							X
With local communities					X		X
Washington County	X			X			X

3.2 Findings

3.2.1 The expansion of shared resources among these rural districts has great potential. At the present time with the exception of the relationships with the various SUNY Colleges, much of the sharing that is taking place is done informally. District personnel will contact other districts to determine the extent to which programs in special education or other academic areas are available and then request that their students be enrolled

in these programs. BOCES has provided very structured programs which exist on a continuous basis and are utilized by all seven districts. The Career and Technical Education (CTE) and New Visions programs offered through BOCES are excellent examples of current programs accessed by the students of each district.

- 3.2.2 The programs offered through the various SUNY Colleges presents an additional opportunity for students in these districts to take advantage of college level courses for credit. This enables students to enter college with credits toward their degree.
- 3.2.3 Another area of potential expansion is the sharing of teachers across districts. Several districts have shared physics teachers, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists. Recognizing that in most cases these are part time positions in one district, by sharing across districts these teachers are able to be employed full time.
- 3.2.4 With the implementation of the Common Core in English and Mathematics, Response to Intervention, Student Learning Objectives, and the Annual Professional Performance Review, building capacity through quality professional development is absolutely necessary. In most cases, districts utilize their superintendent conference days as one-shot opportunities to tackle many of these issues.
- 3.2.5 All of the seven districts have broadband internet capability. Only two districts within this study have Distance Learning classrooms. These are utilized but not with the other five districts due to the lack of DL classrooms and common bell schedule. Additionally, all of the districts take advantage of online learning in one form or another. In some cases it is used for credit recovery, but mostly for elective courses that are not offered by the district. As districts continue to feel the financial constraints, full implementation of either Distance Learning or Online Learning has great potential.
- 3.2.6 Several districts have attempted both alternative education as well as GED programs. In both cases these have been abandoned due to lack of students.

3.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 3.3.1 Given the reality of diminishing resources, it is imperative that these districts develop a stronger partnership to facilitate formalized sharing. This will be outlined in greater detail in section 9.0.
- 3.3.2 The seven districts should coordinate with SUNY Adirondack to maximize the potential for providing their students with online and face-to-face courses.
- 3.3.3 The seven districts should review the potential for sharing teachers and other educational personnel to enhance their efficiency and thereby be cost effective.
- 3.3.4 The seven districts should develop a variety of professional learning communities to address the ongoing concerns of professional development. We would also recommend the creation of a position to coordinate professional development. See section 9.0.

- 3.3.5 Through collaboration, the seven districts should consider creating a regional alternative education center and GED program. These specific programs will provide the necessary support for the nontraditional learner.

4.0 - Instructional Programs

4.1 Current Conditions

Each of the seven districts offers all the mandated programs required by Commissioner's Regulations. Each district individually offers a variety of academic programs that meet these mandates and provide their students with opportunities that will prepare them for the demands of the 21st century. Each of the districts has strengths within their academic program, but also has needs in order to better prepare their students for our global economy.

Within the administrative structure across the seven districts hybrid positions have been created to deal with diminishing resources. In some cases, the area of curriculum and instruction is shared by building principals or even the superintendent. Special education responsibilities have been rolled into the principal's responsibilities. The added responsibilities from hybrid positions, along with new enacted law, such as APPR, it becomes incumbent upon each of these districts to maximize the effectiveness of these positions.

4.2 Findings

The following is a listing of the type of courses beyond the common core requirements that are being offered across the seven districts. However, these courses are offered only in some of the districts. Specific districts have demonstrated real strengths in developing and offering these courses.

4.2.1 Advanced Placement Courses

- Biology
- Calculus
- English
- US History
- World History
- Business
- Psychology
- Spanish

4.2.2 Agricultural Science

- 4.2.3 Agricultural Business
- 4.2.4 Animal Science
- 4.2.5 Engineering
- 4.2.6 Statistics
- 4.2.7 Computer Assisted Design
- 4.2.8 Criminal Justice
- 4.2.9 Advanced Art Classes
- 4.2.10 Nanotechnology
- 4.2.11 Alternative Education
- 4.2.12 GED programs

There are also several other areas that these districts have utilized or underutilized that offer potential for maximizing student opportunities.

- 4.2.13 Effective use of the SUNY Community Colleges for enhancing student achievement
- 4.2.14 Use of instruction technology for online learning – electives not Common Core
- 4.2.15 Professional development is underutilized among and between the seven districts

As districts struggle to maximize their funding resources, their ability to maintain these programs is becoming more difficult. In order to alleviate these constraints and create cost efficiencies, districts may want to consider a collaborative model.

4.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 4.3.1 Create a common bell schedule at least for high school students across the seven districts. This will provide the districts with opportunities to share via web based or online learning. See Appendix B for a potential common bell schedule.
- 4.3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of certain courses i.e. Ag. Science, Ag. Business, Engineering and determine if these could be taught at one or two districts that could effectively serve all seven.
- 4.3.3 Create or modify courses to be taught online – the technology infrastructure is already present.
- 4.3.4 Use a common web based interactive instructional tool – such as Moodle.
- 4.3.5 Some districts are already sharing teachers. Build upon their capacity to develop online or hybrid courses.
- 4.3.6 Use WSWHE BOCES to coordinate efforts to maximize student opportunities

- 4.3.7 Use WSWHE BOCES to coordinate efforts to implement ongoing professional development activities in the area of RtI, Common Core, Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) and Curriculum Mapping.
- 4.3.8 Expand the connections with the SUNY Colleges to broaden online elective courses for students.
- 4.3.9 Consideration should be given to creating Professional Learning Communities as PLCs have been proven to be an effective mechanism to study and discuss instructional concerns across the curriculum.

5.0 - Instructional Technology and Distance Learning

With the current state of technology and being cognizant of how rapidly it changes, it is essential that these seven districts have a coordinated plan to fully maximize instructional technology within each of their districts. Distance learning as an instructional model was developed more than twenty years ago. With the advent of smart phones, ipads, online learning, and clouds, the concept of distance learning today is far different than it was two decades ago. Today the thinking is “anywhere, anytime, any device.” The concept is that anyone could access information or instruction from anywhere on any device. If you take this to the next level, textbooks as sources of information are obsolete. Also, the idea that you need a classroom dedicated to distance learning is also obsolete.

5.1 Current Conditions

Each of the seven school districts participating in this study has the technical capacity to utilize the internet for instructional purposes. They each have state of the art computer labs, smartboards, laptops, ipads or other devices that are capable of accessing data and information via the internet. Each of the districts also has the infrastructure for wired as well as wireless connectivity. Only two of the seven districts, Granville and Salem, have invested in a Distance Learning classroom. As such, these districts participate in DL with other districts beyond the scope of this study.

5.2 Findings

- 5.2.1 All districts have broadband connectivity through the Northeast Regional Information Center.
- 5.2.1 All the districts have extensively used fiber optic technology within their infrastructure.

- 5.2.2 The districts have updated or are in the process of updating their servers.
- 5.2.3 Some districts are considering the use of “Cloud” technology so that students would have access “anytime, anywhere.”
- 5.2.4 All districts provide their students with the opportunity to participate in online courses.
- 5.2.5 Five of the districts have a common support network (person) with BOCES

5.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 5.3.1 Maximize use of the technology for students and the community.
- 5.3.2 Districts should introduce the use of Ipads or similar devices for all students.
- 5.3.3 Textbooks are obsolete as information is provided through web based sources. These should be investigated and implemented.
- 5.3.4 Districts should collaborate with each other to develop online or hybrid courses based upon the strengths of the academic programming within each district.
- 5.3.5 Distance learning should be reviewed with the future in mind. The seven districts should consider the capabilities of Cisco Telepresence and Polycom as examples of updating distance learning for the 21st century.
- 5.3.6 Districts should review the potential of using Khan Academy <http://www.khanacademy.org/> and the concept of the Flipped Classroom to augment instruction. <http://resources.echo360.com/flipped-classroom-sem?gclid=CNjm4LyXnLICFYKK4AodGhsABA>
- 5.3.7 Technology coordinators should create a professional learning community to build capacity and understanding as technology and instructional delivery models change.

6.0 - Transportation

6.1 Current Conditions

Each of the seven districts utilizes their own transportation system for transporting students. Five of the seven districts have a one tier system, while two districts have a two tiered system. They each have a director or supervisor of transportation. With one exception, they all use Transfinder as their routing system. Also, invariably all of these districts informally share transportation for special education and BOCES.

6.2 Findings

The following matrix summarizes the status of transportation for the seven districts within this study. At the present time there are four regional transportation studies being conducted in New York State. The outcome of these studies should serve as a basis for considering regional planning in Washington County.

Table 6. Transportation Variables among the seven districts.

	<i>Argyle</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>Fort Ann</i>	<i>Granville</i>	<i>Hartford</i>	<i>Hudson Falls</i>	<i>Salem</i>
Transportation Variable							
Director/Supervisor of Transportation	na	X	X	X	X	X	X
Transfinder Routing System	X	X	X	X	X	X	
One Tier	X	X	X		X		X
Two Tier				X		X	
Late Runs							
Number of Buses	14	27	19	10	16	43	15
Number of Drivers	11	25	19	10	13	34	14
Substitute Drivers	2			3	5	5	2
Bus Garage/Maintenance Facility	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sharing of Transportation		With Hoosick Falls, Salem and Greenwich	With Granville	With Fort Ann, Hudson Falls, Glens Falls, Whitehall	Has considered sharing maintenance with other districts	Share with other districts on an informal basis	With Greenwich and Cambridge

6.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 6.3.1 The Washington County districts should conduct a thorough exploration of sharing opportunities in the area of transportation where a number of promising regional approaches are possible.
- 6.3.2 In the area of transportation routing, the Washington County districts should consider the advantages to be obtained through a regional approach to pupil transportation within the Washington County catchment area. A single routing system for the entire county in lieu of seven separate routing systems should be explored. This transportation study should be predicated on the sharing of academic and career/technical experiences among the cooperating districts, as well as for common out-of- region educational opportunities (e.g., regional routing system and/or routes, shared routes for out-of-district, special education, private/parochial, TVHS, CTE).
- 6.3.4 In the area of bus maintenance facilities, the Washington County districts should consider the advantages to be obtained through a regional approach to the provision of bus maintenance within the Washington County catchment area. This study should

focus on the expertise of the mechanics and transportation support personnel available in the participating districts, as well as those associated with contract carriers and those private providers not currently associated with school pupil transportation. The districts should consider centralized bus maintenance in two central locations, including activities such as: centralized DOT inspections in a single location; and specialized existing maintenance shops for specific types of major maintenance (e.g., engine overhaul, transmission work, body/frame repair).

- 6.3.5 In the area of fueling facilities, the Washington County districts should consider the advantages to be obtained through a regional approach to the provision of fueling services within the Washington County catchment area. This study should focus on the location, design, security, and computerization of fueling stations, as well as on the mechanisms of cooperative agreements among the various educational, political, and emergency service organizations within the region that are in need of fueling. Illustrative sharing examples may include: Development of cooperative agreements with other districts and/or local municipalities and emergency services for provision of fuel; and computerizing fueling stations to monitor fuel use by vehicle/municipal partner.
- 6.3.6 Transportation supervisors should create a professional learning community to anticipate and address issues. This PLC could also be used to study more efficient use of resources across the districts.

7.0 - Student and Family Support Services

7.1 Current Conditions

Special Education is an area in which sharing is already occurring across the districts. It is also an area where coordinated professional development could build capacity as RtI is fully implemented or to build capacity in emerging areas such as addressing autism.

7.2 Findings

- 7.2.1 Only one district provides for a full time Director of Special Education. In each of the other districts, the position is a hybrid filled by a building principal or assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.
- 7.2.2 The districts have employed psychologists, speech therapists, occupational and physical therapists some of which are full time while others are part time. These positions could potentially be shared across the districts based upon district proximity.
- 7.2.3 Districts have collaborated on sharing transportation for students with special needs.

7.2.4 Student with special needs and their families tend to transfer between and among districts. When this happens, it could have a financial impact upon a district.

Table 7. Current status of special education.

	<i>Argyle</i>	<i>Cambridge</i>	<i>Fort Ann</i>	<i>Granville</i>	<i>Hartford</i>	<i>Hudson Falls</i>	<i>Salem</i>
Director of Special Education				X			X
Duties performed by Other Adm.	X	X					
Percent of student enrollment	15.5	13.7	15.1	18.2	15.4	14.7	12.6
Special Education Teachers	8	12		24	4	18	9
Special Education Program Structure							
Self-contained co-teaching model	X						X
12:1:1	X		X	X	X	X	
15:1:1				X			
8:1:2	X					X	X
Resource Room			X	X		X	X
Integrated Model			X			X	X
Life Skills	X		X	X	X	X	
Staff Provided by Districts							
Psychologist	1	2		3.2	1	3	1
Speech Therapist	2	1		2	0.4	4	1.5
Occupational Therapist	0.6				1.4	1	.6
Physical Therapist	.2					1	
Social Workers	1					4	
Staff Provided by BOCES							
Psychologist							
Speech Therapist		X					
Occupational Therapist		X	X				
Physical Therapist		X	X	0.8	0.7		
Social Workers							
Assistive Technology							.2
Staff provided by Outside Vendors							
Music Therapy – Capital District Beginnings							X

Shaded in yellow – Fort Ann students attend the Granville program.

7.3 Opportunities for consideration

7.3.1 As the position of Director of Special Education is a hybrid in all but one district, the potential exists to share this position across the districts. This could be done in groupings of 3 or more districts geographically located in close proximity.

7.3.2 Professional development for special education should be coordinated across all districts. All districts should have the same level of professional development to build capacity to meet the challenges of the Common Core for students with special needs.

- 7.3.3 A Professional Learning Community should be created to collaborate and discuss concerns regarding special education and the requirements for the implementation of RtI. (Response to Intervention)
- 7.3.4 Coordination among the districts would allow for better preparation when students with special needs and their families transfer between districts due to the financial impact that these transfers may create.

8.0 – Food Service, Operations and Maintenance

8.1 Current Conditions

Table 8 illustrates that there is a range of profitability and loss within food service operations. As such, professional learning communities should be established to review their effectiveness. According to current law, Food Service operations may not operate with a deficit. Consider Tables 8 and 9 below:

Table 8. Food Service Operations

District	Supervision	Owned or Contracted	Full Time Staff	Part time Staff	2010-11 Profit/Loss	2011-12 Profit/Loss	Sharing with other districts	Central Kitchen Location
Argyle	Food Service Manager	Owned	3	4	Loss	Loss	No	On Site
Cambridge	Food Service Director	Owned	4	5	Profit	Profit	No	On Site
Fort Ann	Food Service Manager	Contracted	1	5	Profit	Profit	No	On Site
Granville	Cafeteria Manager	Owned	10	5	Loss	Profit	No	On Site
Hartford	Director of Food Services	Owned	1	6	Profit	Profit	No	On Site
Hudson Falls	Director of Nutrition Services	Owned	19	7	Loss	Loss	Yes	On Site
Salem	Cafeteria Supervisor	Owned	3	4	Loss	Loss	No	On Site

Table 9. Operations and Maintenance

District	Supervision	No. of Staff	Sharing with other districts	Recently Purchased Vehicles/Equipment
Argyle	Buildings & Grounds Coordinator (Stipend)/ Business Manager Supervises	6	No	None
Cambridge	Superintendent of B & G	11	No	None
Fort Ann	Director of Facilities and Trans	6	No	None
Granville	Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds	15	No	None
Hartford	Director of Buildings and Grounds	7	No	None
Hudson Falls	Superintendent of B & G	27	No	Bucket Loader and Single axle dump truck
Salem	Buildings & Grounds Supervisor	8	No	None

8.2 Findings

- 8.2.1 All districts operate a food service department.
- 8.2.2 All districts have a supervisor for the food service department.
- 8.2.3 The food service department in three districts has been operating at a loss for the past 2 years, while four districts have been profitable.
- 8.2.4 Only one district shares on a limited basis.
- 8.2.5 All districts have operations and maintenance departments.
- 8.2.6 All districts have a supervisor for the operations and maintenance department.
- 8.2.7 None of the districts are involved in sharing.
- 8.2.8 One district has purchased a bucket loader and single axle dump truck.

8.3 Opportunities for consideration

- 8.3.1 Establish professional learning communities for food service, operations and maintenance supervisors.
- 8.3.2 Review the potential for sharing food service operations in school district clusters, especially if a district has been operating at a loss.
- 8.3.3 Review the potential for sharing expertise among operations and maintenance personnel.
- 8.3.4 Review the potential for sharing equipment among and between the districts, i.e. bucket loader and/or truck with bucket lift.
- 8.3.5 Review the potential for formulating agreements with municipalities and/or other agencies to share expertise and equipment.

9.0 – Regional High School Model versus A School District Collaborative Model

Over the past several years as our economy has declined, its impact upon school districts has been significant. Districts that have faced fiscal uncertainty have looked at a variety of options to insure that students are provided the academic programming they deserve. One of these options has been school district reorganization or consolidation. However, in the past ten years there have been only four successful reorganizations. In the aftermath, of many failed attempts to reorganize, districts have sought other solutions, including tuitioning their student to other districts or seeking legislation to create regional high schools. In seeking these solutions for their high schools, the hope was to maintain their elementary schools and continue a sense of identity for their communities. This solution, however, has not come to fruition for many school districts.

9.1 Regional High School

Several years ago, a bill was introduced in the New York State Legislature that would authorize the creation of Regional High Schools. As of the end of the legislative session for 2012, no action has been taken on this proposal. According to the proposed legislation, the development of a Regional High School would allow districts to send their students in grades 9-12 to one campus to create greater academic opportunities in a cost effective manner. By committing to this regional concept, each district would lose their high school program. The cost benefits for this proposal are still undetermined and any potential for state aid has not been addressed. Obviously, there are potential reductions in staff as programs are consolidated on a regional campus. In addition to this, the athletic programs would be consolidated at the Regional High School. This would also have impact upon the community and school culture. Until this legislation is enacted, we do not consider it a viable option at this time. See Appendix C for the proposed legislation.

9.2 School District Collaborative and Shared Campus Model

Another approach to consider is a shared school campus concept through a collaborative of all the districts. (See Figure 2.) This would allow each district and community to maintain their identity and capitalize on their individual strengths. Essentially, each district remains intact with its own governance and administrative structure. Students would be allowed to enroll in districts that offer specific programs not offered within their own district. These courses could be shared based upon Commissioner's Regulations for NYS BOCES COSERS. Throughout NYS, there are many programs that have been made available through

the COSER process. In this way, districts could capitalize on the strengths of their own programs and then share them across the collaborative while housing the program on their own school campus. Engineering programs could be offered on one campus, agricultural programs could be offered on another campus.

For example, one student from Salem may take an engineering course at Cambridge, while a Cambridge student may enroll at Salem to participate in their Agricultural Science program. Each district becomes a campus within the collaborative. Having students travel from Granville to Cambridge to participate in certain courses may not be feasible. Given these circumstances, the collaborative could create a virtual learning environment operating off a common schedule to facilitate student participation.

With seven districts participating in this campus concept collaborative, it may not be feasible that all schools are involved in exchanging students for academic programming. However, school districts could cluster geographically to achieve this efficiency. Currently, these districts are sharing programs and teachers. By formalizing this organizational structure, it helps to create a greater culture of sharing among and between these districts as resources continue to diminish. It also offers greater opportunities for specific types of grants that may not be available to individual districts but collectively would have a better chance of becoming recipients.

Additionally, it may be more cost effective to consolidate certain types of services through shared positions or offices. For example, positions such as Director of Special Education, Director of Human Resources are positions that could be shared by all or several districts within the collaborative thereby creating an economy of scale. These positions could be created for the collaborative or clusters within the collaborative under the auspices of the WSWHE BOCES. By pursuing this pathway, the districts share in the cost but also receive BOCES aid through the Coser that is implemented. Other part time positions could also be created in this manner including school psychologists.

Figure 2.

The Washington County School Collaborative

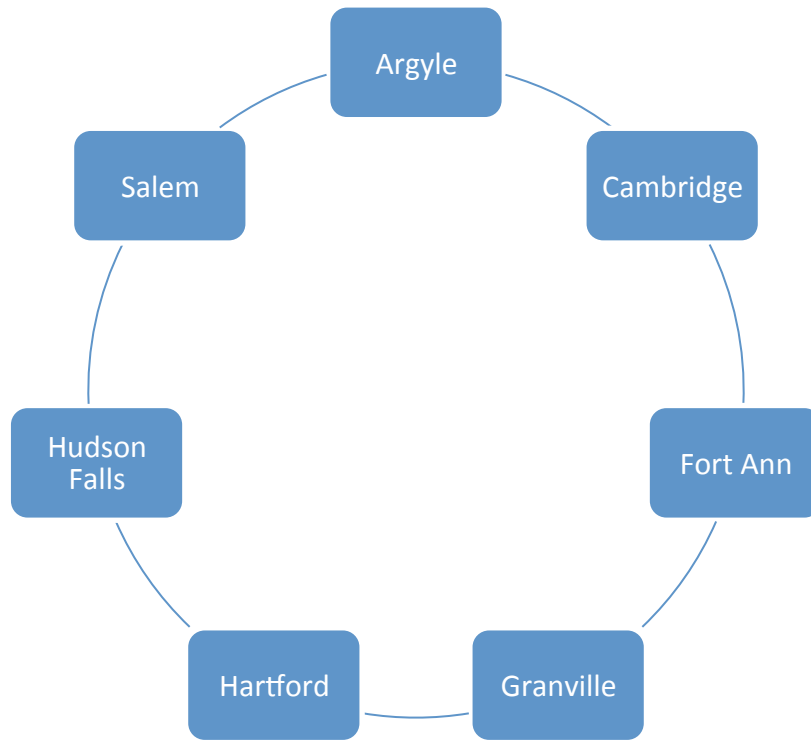
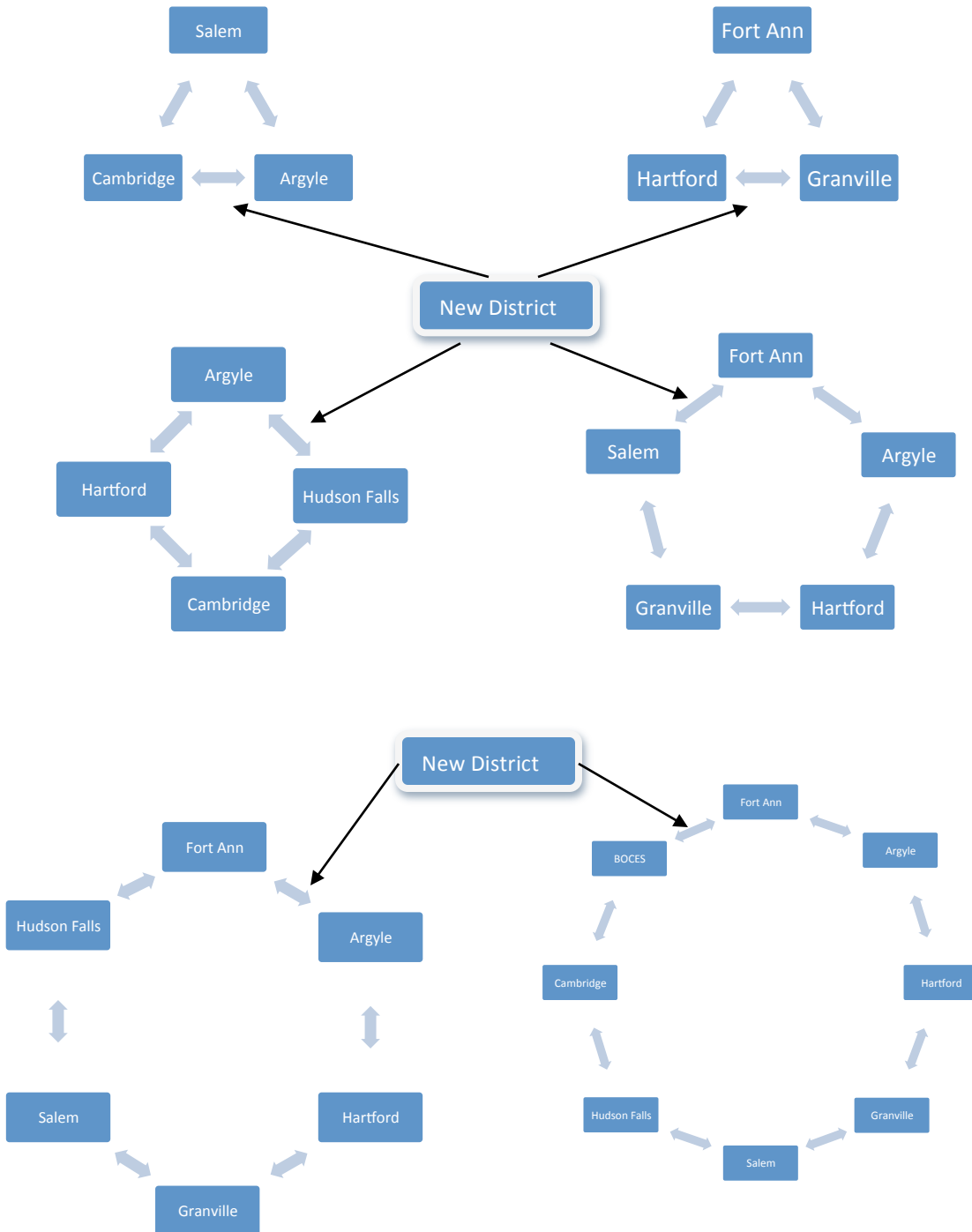


Figure 3 illustrates a variety of district cluster examples representing opportunities for these districts to continue the sharing already in place as well as considering new possibilities. The districts each have specific areas of strengths and a demonstrated need for programs that have been reduced over the past three years. The collaborative model of “campus clusters” and “magnet programs” can provide expanded educational opportunities for students across the seven school districts. As such, the “clustering” or “magnet” approach will provide short term financial relief.

Figure 3.

Examples of School Campus Clusters



By developing a culture of sharing through a collaborative, it enables districts to take advantage of diminishing resources collectively. Examples:

- Utilizing WSWHE BOCES as a facilitator of this collaborative
- Academic programming
- Coordination of Common Core implementation
- Implementing a common bell schedule for efficiency
- Use of technology
- Central Business Office
 - Purchasing
 - Payroll
 - Internal Audit functions
 - Others?
- Transportation
- Special Education
- Professional Development
- Human Resources
- Shared expertise
- Building of capacity
- Collectively developing stronger relationships with communities and businesses
- Expanding the articulation agreements with local colleges
- Consideration of at risk students
- Alternative Education Programming
- Embedded regional GED program
- To assess and evaluate better utilization of programs at the SAEC and Myers Center
- Coordination of career pathways for the 21st century workforce
 - Work
 - Military
 - Community College
 - 4 year College
- Central Registry

9.3 Opportunities for consideration

9.3.1 **Common Bell Schedule** – Development of a common bell schedule across all districts to facilitate the sharing of programs, teachers and students.

- 9.3.2 **Collaborative Governance** – If the seven districts create a School Collaborative, it should be governed under the direction of the seven superintendents as well as a designated member for each board of education with each district having equal standing.
- 9.3.3 **Director of Special Education** – As many districts have hybrid positions that incorporate the responsibilities of the Director of Special Education, greater efficiencies and cost savings could be realized by creating a shared position for the collaborative or for collaborative clusters. In so doing, the person filling this position would have overall knowledge of the needs of each of the districts for who they are responsible.
- 9.3.4 **Director of Professional Development/Curriculum and Instruction** – The districts should consider the creation of a Shared Director of Professional Development/Curriculum and Instruction. With all of the new mandates regarding the implementation of RtI, the Common Core, Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) and more, the position would coordinate professional development activities throughout the collaborative to build capacity among and between the districts. Through this coordination, professional learning communities could emerge that will enable the teachers to continue to build upon best practices and thereby provide quality instruction for their students. Also, as the use of Data Driven Instruction emerges as a tool for better academic planning, this model will also enable the development of common language and strategies across and between the school districts.
- 9.3.5 **Director of Human Resources** – A centralized Human Resource Director serving all the districts in the study would create administrative efficiencies by streamlining accountability for professional development, hiring practices, and recording of student assessment outcomes on a regional basis. The efficiencies created by the shared position would allow in-house administrators to focus on the daily operations of their schools and expand professional development training in a regional manner. In addition to monitoring professional accountability, the Human Resource Administrator could coordinate contract reviews for the districts in the county in an effort to equalize contract provisions for employee groups. This could provide a basis for regional discussions about hiring practices, salary schedules and benefit provisions for employee groups.

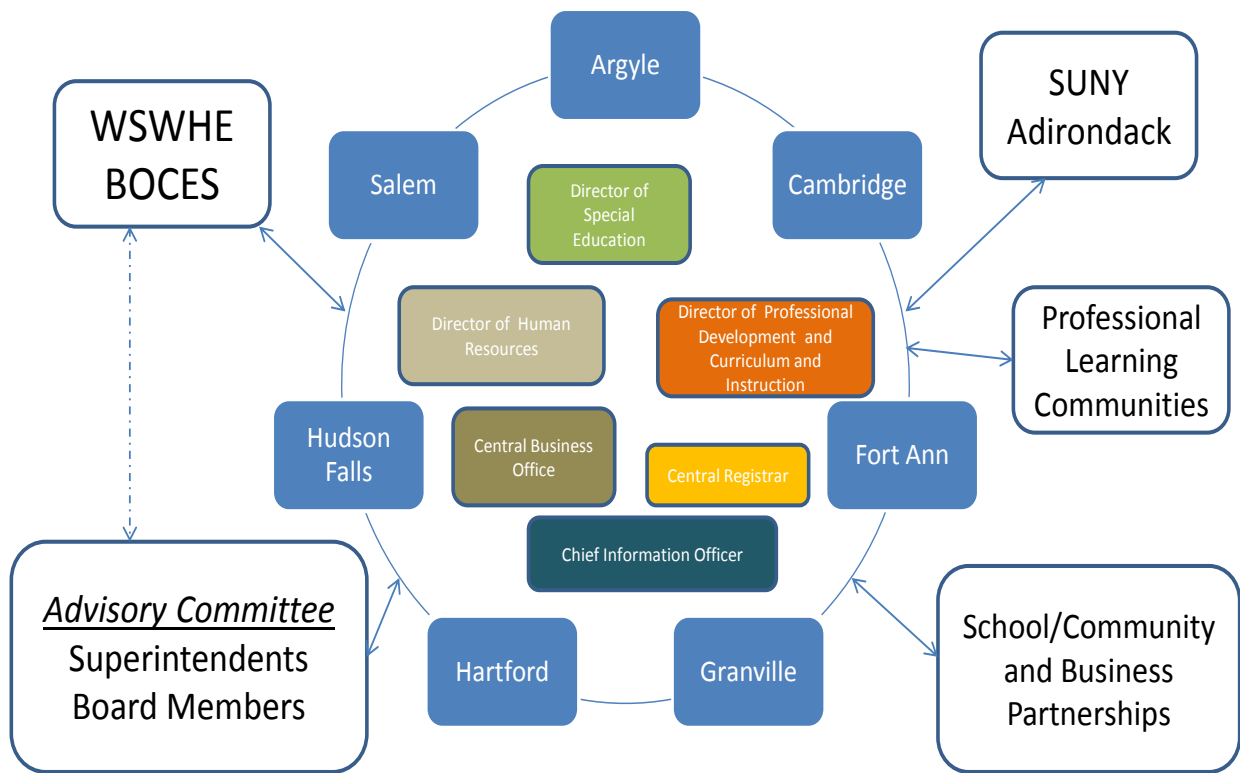
A regional training center that could afford all staff members the opportunity for training in close proximity to their home district/schools. The potential savings in travel and time away from school buildings by administrators could provide the financial incentives for the shared position of Director of Human Resources. The position of Director of Human Resource Administrator could be constructed through a shared contract with the WSWHE BOCES. A shared service contract might afford districts BOCES aid and reimburse them at their BOCES aid ratio for on-going support of the position.

- 9.3.6 **Central Business Office** – A Central Business Office (CBO) service can be as simple as any combination of two or more districts contracting with one another for any business processes, i.e. Payroll, Property Tax billing and Accounts Payable. The districts could retain their current staffs, and by attrition or reallocation of tasks, improve their efficiency and costs. They would then have opportunities to use reclaimed staff time no longer required for Payroll and Accounts Payable, to improve other business office efficiencies and/or focus on recouping lost revenues such as Medicaid reimbursements and HR management of health benefits. Regional BOCES (Questar III and ONC) are studying or have implemented the CBO as a shared opportunity among districts. A process for sharing could potentially be coordinated through regional BOCES to capture reimbursable dollars based on district aid formulas, through consolidation grants with other districts, municipal agreements between districts and towns or through consolidated purchasing/ services agreements in such areas as transportation, food service and custodial services.
- 9.3.7 **Central Registrar** – A regional center for a registry of students would assist in the data collection on families and support services needed to educate students in a seamless manner. The transience of families could be better monitored as they relocate within the region. The single enrollment registry for schools in the region would maintain accurate cohort data for all students in the region, track high cost students and special education costs, providing districts with information for budgeting by tracking student movement within and between schools. Educational record keeping enhances the opportunity for school districts to increase the number of special education programs eligible for reimbursement by NYSED as well as the opportunities to compete for grants based on regional socio-economic data and resources. The collection of data for free and reduced lunch (SES) can create a more complete assessment of family and educational needs in the region and assist with local census information to determine enrollment patterns for each school district. The central registry can be housed in any district within the collaborative.
- 9.3.8 **Partnership with SUNY Adirondack** – Each of the school districts in this study has an ongoing partnership with SUNY Adirondack. Students are able to take courses either online or on site through an Adjunct from SUNY Adirondack. Each of the districts have been able to offer their students a variety of courses that otherwise would not be available. This is partnership that could be expanded through the collaborative school cluster model. CASDA recommends that through the collaborative one person serve as the liaison for all the school districts. This would allow the collaborative to plan all courses available through SUNY Adirondack. Mr. Brian Durant, Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs is the primary contact for these programs and may be reached at 518-743-2236.

Figure 4, as indicated below, represents the organizational structure of the Washington County School Collaborative. It is designed to focus on students and build capacity for administrators, faculty and staff. The “collaborative model” as proposed has the potential generate financial savings both long and short term by utilizing regional strategic planning. This has been illustrated through the use of Educational Collaboratives in Massachusetts and other states.

Figure 4.

The Washington County School Collaborative A 21st Century Regional Learning and Planning Community



10.0 - Building Stronger Partnerships between Schools and Communities

Schafft, Alter and Bridger (2006) noted that;

In rural areas, schools may be in a strategic position to leverage the kinds of formal and informal community resources necessary to create favorable conditions for the type of local development described above. Rural schools are an important source of community solidarity, a primary node of social interaction and community reproduction, and often are the largest employers in rural areas. Consequently, educational leaders are particularly well placed to enhance local collective action (Bauch, 2001; Dewees & Velázquez, 2000; Merz & Furman, 1997; Starratt, 2002), and they can play a key development role by purposefully developing relationships among community actors and identifying shared interests across diverse segments of the community (Miller, 1995). As these connections are strengthened, we hypothesize that local capacity to enhance individual and social well-being will also be strengthened.

As rural school districts and communities have experienced declining enrollments and population, it is necessary for school leaders to understand the relationship that they have with the communities they serve. Moving forward, school districts need to partner with each other, their BOCES, local colleges, businesses as well as their local town and village governments and community agencies. By strengthening these bonds, there will be a greater sense of place and students will be able to identify with it as a place to live and work. This is not to say that students will return after college or time in the military, but it will offer them an opportunity to consider returning home to build their future.

The strengthening of these bonds between school and communities also has an effect upon all residents. With the current unemployment rate at 7.6 % in Washington County, the school – community relationship could serve as a bridge during these difficult economic times. It is important to recognize that schools serve their communities. Today, school system leaders need to think beyond the pre K-12 framework and actively engaged all community members to take advantage of the educational opportunities available not only on their school campus but through neighboring school districts as well as college campuses.

It seems that the cards are stacked against rural communities. With declining enrollment and outmigration, why should school leaders be concerned with building stronger relationships with businesses and communities? The better questions to ask, however, is what will happen if school leader fail to make these connections? If communities are to continue to support their local school districts, even through difficult financial times, then they also need to be invested in building stronger partnerships with schools. School districts leaders must begin to think regionally to understand the economic opportunities available to their students.

Although Washington County is primarily an agricultural economy, it is in close proximity to the many transformative enterprises that are taking this area and the nation into a new era of nanotechnology and entrepreneurship. Through a school collaborative approach, these seven school districts have the potential to initiate greater connections with businesses that will serve as a catalyst for the future.

As Harmon and Schafft (2009) noted:

Schools also provide economically integrative local roles. In rural areas, schools are often the principal source of employment. Good schools represent important amenities for local areas that help to maintain or increase property values. Perhaps most obviously, schools produce human capital by educating cohorts of young people and providing them with skills and knowledge to become economically productive adults. Availability of human capital presents an asset to local businesses requiring a well-educated workforce and an incentive for new businesses to locate in the community (Gibbs, 2005)

The best example of building stronger partnerships with business and the community has been demonstrated through the Career Opportunities in Rural Education Institute (CORE) at Milford Central School District. CASDA encourages the seven school districts to review the information on the CORE website <http://www.coreinstitute-milford.org>. This program is not only designed to help students find career pathways, but any member of the community can access their resources. CORE could serve as a model for building strong community, business and school partnerships in Washington County.

11.0 - Summary

At the beginning of this study, six questions helped to frame a structure for allowing these seven districts to collaborate, maximize their sharing capability and reduce costs in the process. These six questions are:

1. How do these seven districts share and expand academic opportunities for their students in a cost effective manner?
2. What is currently being shared among the districts and how is this improved upon?
3. Given current structures, what may be shared? What are the obstacles?
4. What new structures will need to be created in order to be more effective?
5. What cost savings are associated with these sharing opportunities?
6. Does the use of instructional technology provide an opportunity for greater sharing?

In working with these seven districts, CASDA has recognized that these districts are already sharing on an informal basis. This is being done through their special education programs, the sharing of faculty, even to some extent the transporting of special education and vocational education students. This sharing has created some modest savings for the districts, but long term these savings may not be sustained. As such because of the informality, these seven districts are not maximizing their sharing potential.

Based upon the findings outlined in this report, CASDA believes that a Washington County School Collaborative be created under the auspices of the WSWHE BOCES that would facilitate sharing opportunities among and between these seven school districts. As part of the collaborative, school district clusters could be created on a regional basis to allow for greater academic opportunities for students.

Given the size of these districts, we also believe that consideration be given for creating positions that would either serve all the districts or certain clusters of districts. The costs of these could be shared among the participating districts or through a BOCES COSER. These positions include a Director of Special Education, Director of Human Resources, Central Registrar, and a Director of Professional Development and Curriculum and Instruction. These positions could be created from existing personnel, which would be a savings for each of the districts.

In some cases, some of the districts have shared faculty. This is an area that could be expanded upon and create greater savings for each of the districts in the collaborative. In some cases, given the current technology, online courses could be created by shared faculty. These online courses could be provided within the clusters or across the collaborative and beyond. The potential for shared faculty also has potential cost savings. One of the obstacles to achieving this is a common bell schedule. CASDA believes that the seven school districts should

seriously consider creating a common bell schedule to facilitate distance or online learning as well as allowing students to take courses on different school campuses.

Today, instructional technology has evolved to a point where the instruction could be available to students “anytime, anywhere” and on any device. Web based programming such as Khan Academy and the concept of the Flipped Classroom are transforming instruction.

All of these districts have a connection to SUNY Adirondack for online courses or through courses offered by SUNY Adirondack faculty on school district campuses. This is a powerful model that should be expanded. The obstacle for expanding this model rests upon the credential necessary to certify school district faculty to teach these courses on site. The seven districts should collaborate as a unit with SUNY Adirondack to articulate the steps that are necessary for school district faculty to become credentialed to teach these courses.

At the present time, there are four regional studies in New York State regarding transportation. We recommend that these seven districts review these studies and take advantage of any of the best practices that emerge from them. Attempts have been made in the past to look at regional maintenance facilities. A thorough review should be made of this to eliminate duplication of services and create efficiencies. The district should also formalize the sharing transportation routes to eliminate duplicate buses going to SAEC or the Myers Center.

Cost Sharing Potential

In consideration of cost efficiencies, Table 2 outlines the possible savings if positions are shared on a cluster basis or across all seven districts. These positions could be shared through a BOCES coser and potentially create even more savings based upon each district’s BOCES aid ratio.

Table 10. Sharing of Positions

Position	Ave. Salary	Benefits	Total	Cost/3	Cost/7
Director Special Education	76,000	40,335	116,335	38,778	16,619
Director Human Resources	76,000	40,335	116,335	38,778	16,619
Director Professional Development	76,000	40,335	116,335	38,778	16,619
High School Teacher	50,865	33,297	84,162	28,054	12,023
Central Register	40,000	30,255	70,255	23,418	10,036
Business Manager	83,000	42,295	125,295	41,765	17,899
Accounts Payable	29,000	27,175	56,175	18,725	8,025
Accounts Receivable	29,000	27,175	56,175	18,725	8,025
Payroll Clerk	29,000	27,175	56,175	18,725	8,025
Food Service Director	50,000	33,055	83,055	27,685	11,865
Director of Technology	76,000	40,335	116,335	38,778	16,619
Director Operation & Maintenance	76,000	40,335	116,335	38,778	16,619
Transportation Supervisor	60,000	35,855	95,855	31,952	13,694

Benefits = HI fixed 19,055 + 28% of salary

If students are provided opportunities to take courses on different school district campuses as suggested in the cluster model, then what are the potential tuition costs for these students? The New York State Education Department provides a formula, sometimes known as the Seneca Falls Rate, for determining tuition rates for nonresident students. The Table 3 provides the estimated nonresident tuition rates for each of the seven districts for 2011-2012. Districts could choose to use these rates as a basis for exchanging students or establish a uniform rate within the collaborative. Any tuition rates utilized must be approved by the Board of Education of the receiving district, but must not exceed the state formula for determining these rates.

Table 11. Estimated Nonresident Tuition Rates for 2011-2012 (Grades 7-12)

School District	General Education Rate	Special Education Rate
Argyle	\$3,688	\$22,521
Cambridge	\$7,227	\$22,355
Fort Ann	\$8,394	\$26,534
Granville	\$2,334	\$15,274
Hartford	\$7,506	\$22,629
Hudson Falls	\$6,368	\$23,004
Salem	\$7,388	\$25,622
AVERAGE RATE	\$6,129	\$22,563

Phases of Implementation

CASDA believes that the Washington County School Collaborative should be implemented in three phases.

Phase 1 2012 – 2013

- Create Collaborative Advisory Committee
- Create Common Bell Schedule
- Identify clusters and magnet programs
- Review and discuss existing, shared, or new administrative positions*
- Develop plan for implementing shared positions
- Develop technology infrastructure for clusters and magnets
- Develop Professional Learning Community structures

Phase 2 2013 – 2014

- Continue Professional Learning Community structures
- Develop long term financial plans
- Evaluate revenue streams and aideable programs and services
- Strategic Planning for regional collaboration
- Evaluating program adjustments for staffing and academics

Phase 3 2014 – 2015

- Develop collaboration with towns, colleges businesses and community
- CORE Institute model for collaboration
- Continued collaborative model evaluation
- Regional contract assessment
 - Teacher Contract
 - Health Insurance
 - Liability Insurance
 - Others?

*Target areas of consideration:

School Business Finance and Management

Human Resources and Professional Development

Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education
Technology Infrastructure and Support {Chief Information Officer}
Final Thoughts

Educational Collaboratives are not a new concept. In Massachusetts, Collaboratives have been saving school district dollars since the 1970's when they were created to serve the needs of special education students. Today, they continue addressing issues of sharing by providing effective strategies for "professional development, special education, energy management, collaborative purchasing, transportation and managerial services." In some respects, the Educational Collaboratives in Massachusetts are similar to the 37 BOCES in New York . The type of consortium or collaborative that CASDA is proposing in this study, however, provides the seven school districts and WSWHE BOCES in Washington County the opportunity to work together to solve the fiscal constraints that have caused reductions in staff and programs that ultimately impact students. The Collaborative provides school districts a process for regional strategic planning while still maintaining the individuality of these school districts.

Howley, Howley, Hendrickson, Belcher and Howley (2012) completed a study of a four district collaborative that had shared services for over 15 years. Known in the study as the "Confluence Collaborative," it was composed of four school districts that wanted to share services as opposed to school consolidation. The communities wanted to hold on to their identity and their mascot. Each of these districts was similar to the seven in Washington County, who are facing declining enrollment as well as fiscal constraints. In their conclusion, the researchers noted the following:

Considering the scope of the challenges it faced, the Confluence Collaborative was using shared services in ways that fit with the expectations of at least some stakeholders and also kept academic performance high. These findings support the conclusion that, under some circumstances, shared administrative and instructional services across districts function as a workable compromise between complete district autonomy and extensive consolidation.

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- Howley, A., Howley, M., Hendrickson, K., Belcher, J., & Howley, C. (2012). Stretching to survive: District autonomy in an age of dwindling resources. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 27*(3).
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Resources

New York State Center for Rural Schools - <http://www.nyruralschools.org/index.php>

Khan Academy - <http://www.khanacademy.org/>

Career Opportunities in Rural Education Institute - <http://www.coreinstitute-milford.org>

Washington County – <http://www.co.washington.ny.us/>

Washington County Economic Opportunity Council - <http://www.washingtoncountyeoc.com/>

Washington County Local Development Corporation - <http://www.wcldc.org/links.html>

Washington County Tourism Association - <http://www.washingtoncounty.org/>

Appendix A. Discussion and Interview Questions

CASDA Interview and Study Questions for School Administrators:

School Governance and Structure:

- 1.1 What is the Administrative structure/organization in your district?
- 1.2 What are the curriculum strengths within the administrative team?
- 1.3 Are there any limitations /impediments that would prohibit the school district to meet Common CORE teaching with another district; contractual language, daily teaching schedule, or a common/regional school calendar?
- 1.4 Are there any current or past grievances/arbitration awards or mutually agreed upon past practices that will restrict sharing programs or classes?
- 1.5 Are there any restrictions on class size, class load, job sharing or past practice that could limit sharing of teaching or services with another school district?
- 1.6 Is there anything in the current teaching contract that CASDA should know about scheduling or teaching assignments that are restrictive to shared teaching or requires impact bargaining for regional teaching possibilities?
- 1.7 What is the grade level configuration and administrative support staff for each building?
- 1.8 What is the structure of your Board? How many members? Years of experience? And meeting schedule of the Board?

Current Status of Shared Services:

- 2.1 What shared services is your district currently involved in with BOCES or other regional Schools? List the courses and programs.
- 2.2 Is there an opportunity to develop or further foster a relationship with local colleges? In what areas would your district like to pursue opportunities with the colleges?
- 2.3 Is there a formal County committee established to bridge the gap and foster communication with development agencies, businesses, non-profits and county/town leaders?

Financial and Operations:

- 3.1 What is the loss of state aid over the past 3 years?
- 3.2 How much fund balance has been use by the district to off-set state aid in the past 3 years?
- 3.3 We will need to review ST-3 information for debt service, employee costs, and transportation and technology costs over the past 3 years.
- 3.4 What is the District's state aid ratio? What is the BOCES ratio for sharing services?
- 3.5 Who provides technology support to the district?
- 3.6 What is the technology platform for the district?
- 3.7 What is the network capability for distance learning from the school district? Is there broad-band width support for distance/web based learning from your school district?
- 3.8 Is the school district engaged in any distance learning with regional schools or BOCES at this time? If so, with what schools?
- 3.9 In the maintenance operations system is there coordination for regional purchasing of supplies and materials?

3.10 Is the sharing of maintenance equipment or combined rental agreements a possibility between districts? If already being done in what areas?

3.11 What is the status of debt service for capital improvements? What are the newest additions to your school?

Transportation:

4.1 What is the transportation routing system used in the district? How many tiers?

4.2 What is the transportation time frame for each tier?

4.3 How do extra-curricular activities and sports impact the routing system and end-of-the day transportation schedule(s)?

4.4 How many buses does the district own or lease? How many bus drivers?

4.5 What is the current debt on buses? Is there a plan to purchase buses on an annual basis?

4.6 What is the annual operating cost of the transportation program?

4.7 Is there any shared routing or regional sharing of transportation with the school district? What other districts share with your district? For what purpose and when?

Instructional Delivery Systems:

5.1 A current copy of the master teaching schedule and the master teaching schedule for 2012-13 will be needed for review by the CASDA team.

5.2 What enrichment programs are offered by the school district, AIS, IB, Honors, AP, etc.?

5.3 Is the district currently sharing programs with other school districts? List the school and course.

5.4 What is the bell schedule/teaching schedule for the district; regular, rotating, alternate day, block, etc.?

5.5 What is the student enrollment for the school district for 2012-13?

5.6 What academic intervention programs are provided to students; AIS, extended learning, BOCES programs?

5.7 What programs and learning opportunities are needed in your school to provide a balanced and supportive educational experience for your students?

5.8 How many students attend BOCES programs or programs with other schools in the region?

5.9 What professional development and planning opportunities are available to staff? What is the budget for staff development? What is shared with BOCES or other schools?

5.10 Are you current accepting tuition students from other school districts?

5.11 Have you discussed with your communities the possibility of tuitioning your students to other school districts as a part of a regional high school or magnet school concept?

Student and Family Support Services: (Special Education)

6.1 What is the structure and support for your special education programs?

6.2 What is the enrollment for special education? How many staff? What itinerate staff; OT, PT, social work, psychologists, counselors, etc., is provided by the district? Outside organizations private vendors or BOCES?

6.3 What special education programs/services are shared with other schools in the region; transportation, summer school, etc.?

6.4 What special educational programs/services are shared or provided with the County?

6.5 What is the budget for special education support for the district?

Appendix B – Common Bell Schedule for Discussion Purposes

55 | Washington County School Districts Study

Current Bell Schedules

	Argyle	Cambridge	Fort Ann	Granville	Hartford	Hudson Falls	Salem
Period							
1	8:20-9:00	8:09-8:50	8:10-8:53	7:53-8:38	8:13-8:56	7:45-8:27	8:00-8:42
2	9:03-9:43	8:54-9:35	8:56-9:38	8:41-9:21	8:59-9:39	8:31-9:18***	8:45-9:30
3	9:46-10:26	9:39-10:20	9:41-10:23	9:24-10:04	9:42-10:22	9:22-10:04	9:33-10:15
4	10:29-11:09	10:24-11:05	10:26-11:08	10:07-10:47	10:25-11:05	10:08-10:50	10:18-11:00
5	11:12-11:52	11:09-11:50	11:11-11:53	10:50-11:30	11:08-11:48	10:54-11:36	11:03-11:45
						11:24-12:06	
6	12:25-1:05	12:28-1:09	11:11-11:53	11:33-12:13	11:51-12:31*	12:10-12:52	11:48-12:30
7	1:08-1:48	1:13-1:54	11:39-12:21	12:16-12:56	12:24-1:04**	12:56-1:38	12:33-12:55
8	1:51-2:31	1:58-2:39	12:24-1:06	12:59-1:39	1:07-1:47	1:42-2:24	12:58-1:40
9	2:34-3:14	2:45-3:00	1:09-1:51	1:42-2:24	1:50-2:30		1:43-2:25
10			1:54-2:37				2:28-3:12
11							
12							

* High School only

** Middle School only

*** Includes 5 minute HR

HF Lunch
10:54-11:20
11:40-12:06

Common Bell Schedule For Discussion Purposes

84 - minute periods		40 - minute "skinnies"		84 - minute periods		40 - minute "skinnies"	
Day 1		Day 1		Day 2		Day 2	
Homeroom	8:00 - 8:05	"Skinnies"		Homeroom	8:00 - 8:05	"Skinnies"	
Period 1	8:09 - 9:33	Period 1.1	8:09 - 8:49	Period 5	8:09 - 9:33	Period 5.1	8:09 - 8:49
		Period 1.2	8:53 - 9:33			Period 5.2	8:53 - 9:33
Period 2	9:37 - 11:01	Period 2.1	9:37 - 10:17	Period 6	9:37 - 11:01	Period 6.1	9:37 - 10:17
		Period 2.2	10:21 - 11:01			Period 6.2	10:21 - 11:01
Lunch	11:05 - 11:35	Lunch A	11:05 - 11:35	Lunch	11:05 - 11:35	Lunch A	11:05 - 11:35
Period 3	11:39 - 1:03	Period 3.1	11:39 - 12:19	Period 7	11:39 - 1:03	Period 7.1	11:39 - 12:19
		Period 3.2	12:23 - 1:03			Period 7.2	12:23 - 1:03
Period 4	1:07 - 2:31	Period 4.1	1:07 - 1:47	Period 8	1:07 - 2:31	Period 8.1	1:07 - 1:47
		Period 4.2	1:51 - 2:31			Period 8.2	1:51 - 2:31
Activity Period	2:35 - 3:00	Activity Period	2:35 - 3:00	Activity Period	2:35 - 3:00	Activity Period	2:35 - 3:00

Alternate Lunch Periods

Period 3.1	11:05 - 11:35
Lunch B	11:39 - 12:19
Period 3.2	12:23 - 1:03

Period 3.1	11:05 - 11:35
Period 3.2	11:39 - 12:19
Lunch C	12:23 - 1:03

Alternate Lunch Periods

Period 7.1	11:05 - 11:35
Lunch B	11:39 - 12:19
Period 7.2	12:23 - 1:03

Period 7.1	11:05 - 11:35
Period 7.2	11:39 - 12:19
Lunch C	12:23 - 1:03

S5255-2011 Memo

BILL NUMBER: S5255

TITLE OF BILL:

An act
to amend the education law, in relation to authorizing the establishment
of regional high school districts in certain counties

PURPOSE OR GENERAL IDEA OF BILL:

Would authorize two or more school
districts in certain counties to enter into a contract to establish
and operate a regional high school

SUMMARY OF SPECIFIC PROVISIONS:

The Education Law is amended by adding a new article 39-A with
Sections 1920, 1921 and 1922.

Section 1920 authorizes two or more school districts that are wholly
contained within the same BOCES district in Allegany County,
Cattaraugus County or Chautauqua County, to enter into a contract to
allow BOCES to operate a regional high school. The contract shall be
for a minimum of two years and may be renewed by mutual agreement of
the respective boards of education and BOCES. The contract shall also
stipulate the manner of transportation of the students and that the
cost shall be charged to the student's district of residence. The
regional high school shall also operate its own extra-curricular
activities and athletics. Teacher and employee rights shall be
recognized in accordance with current state education law.

Section 1921 provides that BOCES shall take over all educational
programs of the regional high school and employees of the regional
high school shall be employees of BOCES. Upon termination of the
regional high school contract, the employees shall become employees
of the hosting school district of the regional high school. The
program and administrative expenses of the regional high school shall
be a charge upon the school districts participating in the regional
high school, and BOCES shall portion such expenses to the
participating schools in the manner prescribed in the contract
establishing the regional high school.

This section also provides that all schools and other facilities of
the participating school districts of the regional high school which

are used by BOCES in the operation of the regional high school, shall be deemed leased to BOCES at no cost. Additionally, students receiving instruction shall be deemed to be enrolled in their participating school district, and not BOCES.

The participating school district shall remain responsible for the performance of its regional high school students under the state educational accountability system.

Section 1922 provides that the boards of education which are parties to an agreement to operate a regional high school and do in fact operate one shall be eligible for additional state aid pursuant to section 3602 of state education law.

JUSTIFICATION:

This bill has been requested by several school districts and BOCES districts that would like the opportunity to share resources and cut costs while providing continued quality education for students.

In many districts in upstate New York-particularly in rural areas, schools have faced declining enrollment while standard operating costs and mandated and contractual expenses continue to rise. This bill would allow schools to consolidate resources, take advantage of regional resources and save taxpayers and school districts money.

The New York State Rural Schools Association has encouraged consideration of this option for several years. They work to help school districts address issues of declining enrollment and loss of tax base. They believe that regional high schools can enrich opportunities for secondary students by offering full curricular, co-curricular and interscholastic programs. They support the approach of having BOCES administer the programs because it keeps regional high schools within existing governance structures and does not create new layers of school governance.

PRIOR LEGISLATIVE HISTORY:

This is a new bill.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

None. Cost savings will be realized by participating school districts.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

The bill takes effect immediately.

S5255-2011 Text

S T A T E O F N E W Y O R K

5255

2011-2012 Regular Sessions

I N S E N A T E

May 3, 2011

Introduced by Sen. YOUNG -- read twice and ordered printed, and when printed to be committed to the Committee on Education

AN ACT to amend the education law, in relation to authorizing the establishment of regional high school districts in certain counties
THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, REPRESENTED IN SENATE AND ASSEMBLY, DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. The education law is amended by adding a new article 39-A to read as follows:

ARTICLE 39-A

REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOLS

SECTION 1920. REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; ESTABLISHMENT.

1921. OPERATION BY BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES.

1922. ADDITIONAL STATE AID.

S 1920. REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL; ESTABLISHMENT. A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL MAY BE FORMED BY A CONTRACT ENTERED INTO BY TWO OR MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS, WHICH ARE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN CITIES HAVING A POPULATION OF LESS THAN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE THOUSAND INHABITANTS, CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS, UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND/OR COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS, PROVIDED THAT ALL SUCH SCHOOL DISTRICTS ARE WHOLLY CONTAINED WITHIN THE SAME BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES SUPERVISORY DISTRICT, AND IS WHOLLY CONTAINED WITHIN ANY COUNTY HAVING BETWEEN ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-FOUR THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED THREE AND ONE HUNDRED THIRTY FOUR THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED SEVEN, EIGHTY THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED FIFTEEN AND EIGHTY THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED NINETEEN, OR FORTY-EIGHT THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED FORTY-FOUR AND FORTY-EIGHT THOUSAND NINE HUNDRED FORTY-EIGHT INHABITANTS ACCORDING TO THE TWO THOUSAND TEN DECENNIAL FEDERAL CENSUS. EXCEPT AS OTHERWISE PROVIDED IN THIS ARTICLE, THE PROVISIONS OF THIS

CHAPTER AS TO THE COURSES OF STUDY, THE QUALIFICATIONS AND EMPLOYMENT OF TEACHERS AND OTHER STAFF, AND THE MAINTENANCE, CONDUCT AND SUPERVISION OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL APPLY TO A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL. ANY CONTRACT FOR A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL BE SUBJECT TO EXPLANATION--Matter in ITALICS (underscored) is new; matter in brackets [] is old law to be omitted.

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APPROVAL BY THE COMMISSIONER, AND THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND THE CONTRACT SHALL MEET THE FOLLOWING REQUIREMENTS:

1. THE CONTRACT SHALL BE FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN TWO SCHOOL YEARS AND, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER, MAY BE RENEWED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION;
2. THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL COMMENCE OPERATIONS ON THE FIRST OF JULY, AND SHALL NOT CEASE OPERATIONS BEFORE THE THIRTIETH OF JUNE IN ANY SCHOOL YEAR;
3. THE CONTRACT SHALL STATE THAT THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL WILL BE OPERATED BY THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES PURSUANT TO A CONTRACT AUTHORIZED BY SECTION NINETEEN HUNDRED TWENTY-ONE OF THIS ARTICLE;
4. THE CONTRACT SHALL SPECIFY THE MANNER IN WHICH THE STUDENTS OF EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL BE TRANSPORTED TO THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE COST OF SUCH TRANSPORTATION SHALL BE A CHARGE AGAINST EACH SUCH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT AND BE FUNDED IN THE SAME MANNER AS TRANSPORTATION PROVIDED PURSUANT TO SECTION THIRTY-SIX HUNDRED THIRTY-FIVE OF THIS CHAPTER;
5. SUCH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL OPERATE ITS OWN EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND INTER-SCHOLASTIC ATHLETICS, AND THE STUDENTS ATTENDING SUCH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS AND SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH ACTIVITIES AND ATHLETICS OF THEIR PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT; AND
6. THIS SECTION SHALL IN NO WAY BE CONSTRUED TO LIMIT THE RIGHTS OF ANY OF SUCH TEACHERS OR OTHER EMPLOYEES DESCRIBED IN THIS SECTION GRANTED BY ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW.

S 1921. OPERATION BY BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION WHICH ARE PARTIES TO AN AGREEMENT TO OPERATE A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL PURSUANT TO THIS ARTICLE MAY, WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER, CONTRACT WITH THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES OF THE SUPERVISORY DISTRICT IN WHICH THEY ARE LOCATED FOR THE MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL. SUCH CONTRACT SHALL BE FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN TWO SCHOOL YEARS AND, WITH THE

APPROVAL OF THE COMMISSIONER, MAY BE RENEWED BY MUTUAL AGREEMENT OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. EVERY SUCH CONTRACT SHALL PROVIDE FOR THE COMMENCEMENT OF OPERATIONS OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ON THE FIRST OF JULY, AND SHALL ONLY CEASE OPERATIONS ON THE THIRTIETH OF JUNE OF ANY SCHOOL YEAR.

1. UPON ENTRY INTO SUCH CONTRACT, THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES SHALL TAKE OVER ALL OF THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND ANY EMPLOYEES OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL OR OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AS THE CASE MAY BE, SHALL BECOME EMPLOYEES OF THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION THREE THOUSAND FOURTEEN-A OF THIS CHAPTER SHALL APPLY. SUCH EMPLOYEES SHALL BE EMPLOYEES OF THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND SHALL NOT BE DEEMED EMPLOYEES OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL OR THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR ANY PURPOSE. UPON TERMINATION OF THE CONTRACT, THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL OR THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AS THE CASE MAY BE, SHALL TAKE OVER THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND THE EMPLOYEES SHALL BECOME EMPLOYEES OF THE HOSTING SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION THREE THOUSAND FOURTEEN-B OF THIS CHAPTER SHALL APPLY.

2. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY PROVISIONS OF SECTION NINETEEN HUNDRED FIFTY OF THIS TITLE OR ANY OTHER LAW TO THE CONTRARY, THE PROGRAM AND ADMINISTRATION

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TIVE EXPENSES ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE PROGRAMS OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL BE A CHARGE UPON THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL, AND THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES SHALL PORTION SUCH EXPENSES TO THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS PARTICIPATING IN THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL IN THE MANNER PRESCRIBED IN THE CONTRACT BETWEEN THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES. THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES SHALL NOT CHARGE ANY PORTION OF THE PROGRAM OR ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES INCURRED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBDIVISION TO ITS OTHER COMPONENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS. SUCH ADMINISTRATIVE AND PROGRAM EXPENSES SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR AID PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FIVE OF SECTION NINETEEN HUNDRED FIFTY OF THIS TITLE, BUT SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR AID PURSUANT TO SECTION THIRTY-SIX HUNDRED TWO OF THIS CHAPTER TO THE SAME EXTENT AS THE EXPENSES OF ANY OTHER HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM. NOTHING IN THIS SUBDIVISION SHALL BE CONSTRUED TO PREVENT THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS FROM CONTRACTING WITH THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FOR AIDABLE SHARED SERVICES IN THE SAME MANNER AND UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS AS ANY OTHER COMPONENT SCHOOL DISTRICT, AND THE COST OF SUCH AIDABLE SHARED SERVICES SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR AID PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FIVE OF SECTION NINETEEN HUNDRED FIFTY OF THIS TITLE.

3. DURING THE TERM OF A CONTRACT PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, ALL SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL WHICH ARE USED BY THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THE OPERATION OF THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL BE

DEEMED LEASED TO THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AT NO COST. SUCH SCHOOLS AND OTHER FACILITIES SHALL REMAIN THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND ANY CAPITAL EXPENSES AND BUILDING MAINTENANCE COSTS INCURRED WITH RESPECT TO SUCH FACILITIES SHALL BE A CHARGE UPON THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE TERMS OF THE CONTRACT. SUCH CAPITAL EXPENSES AND MAINTENANCE COSTS SHALL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR AID PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FIVE OF SECTION NINETEEN HUNDRED FIFTY OF THIS TITLE BUT SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR AID PURSUANT TO SECTION THIRTY-SIX HUNDRED TWO OF THIS CHAPTER TO THE SAME EXTENT AS SUCH EXPENSES OF ANY OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICT.

4. STUDENTS RECEIVING INSTRUCTION FROM THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL NOT BE DEEMED TO BE ENROLLED IN THE BOARD OF COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES, EXCEPT TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY ARE PARTICIPATING IN A SHARED SERVICE IN THEIR ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE WHICH SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE COUNTS OF THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF STATE AID. HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS SHALL BE ISSUED BY THE PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF EACH PARTICIPATING SCHOOL DISTRICT SHALL REMAIN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS STUDENTS IN THE REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL UNDER THE STATE ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM AS IF THE STUDENTS OF EACH PARTICIPATING DISTRICT WERE IN ATTENDANCE AT A HIGH SCHOOL OPERATED BY THE PARTICIPATING DISTRICT.

S 1922. ADDITIONAL STATE AID. NOTWITHSTANDING ANY OTHER PROVISION OF LAW TO THE CONTRARY, THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION WHICH ARE PARTIES TO AN AGREEMENT TO OPERATE A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL AND WHICH DO IN FACT OPERATE A REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL STATE AID PURSUANT TO SUBDIVISION FOURTEEN OF SECTION THIRTY-SIX HUNDRED TWO OF THIS CHAPTER IN THE SAME MANNER AND TO THE SAME EXTENT AS A SCHOOL DISTRICT WHICH QUALIFIES FOR SUCH AID PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH J OF SUBDIVISION FOURTEEN OF SECTION THIRTY-SIX HUNDRED TWO OF THIS CHAPTER.

S 2. This act shall take effect immediately.

