

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Elizabethtown-Lewis-Westport Merger Study Advisory Committee  
FROM: Suzanne Gilmour, Deb Ayers, Alan Pole and Bill Silky  
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of January 24, 2018  
DATE: January 31, 2018

**Attendance:**

Committee Members: Cena Abramo, Paul Buehler, Alexa Doherty, Michelle Feeley, Jason Fiegl, Judy French, Dina Garvey, Scott Gibbs, Ryan Hathaway, Sarah Kullman, Tonya Lackey, Josh Meyer, James Monty, Pam Nicholas, Roger Sandwick, Sam Sherman, Debbie Spaulding, Kathleen White, and Rob Witkiewicz

Consultants: Alan Pole, Bill Silky, and Deb Ayers

Superintendent Advisors: Scott Osborne and A. Paul Scott

Observers: Evan George, Jeff Scott, Cathy Brankman, Eve Bailey, Alvin Reiner, Jennifer Peck, Arin Burdo, Heather Olson, Midaro Sherman, Dawn Gay, Micah Stewart, Tracy Cross-Baker, Gwen Goff, Douglas Westover, Stites McDaniel, Mark Davey, Susan Kiath, Tom Kohler, Ofa Vaiciulis, and Rachel Dowdy-Beech

Location: Westport Central School

1. Bill Silky welcomed everyone to the meeting and reviewed the meeting protocol. He also provided an overview of the meeting schedule for the advisory committee as follows.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Location</b>
August 23	Organization, Overview, and Enrollment Projections	Westport
September 27	Instructional/Extracurricular Program	E-L
October 25	Facilities	Westport
December 6	Transportation	E-L
<b>January 24</b>	<b>Staffing</b>	<b>Westport</b>
February 28	Finances	E-L
April 25	Review Findings and Recommendations/React to Draft Final Report	Westport

2. Bill asked if there were any changes that should be made to the notes from the December 6 meeting. There were none.

3. Bill then reviewed the major study conclusions from the first four meetings regarding student enrollments, the instructional program, facilities, and transportation. He also discussed two diagrams representing the current transportation system as well as a proposed transportation system (a shuttle system option) should the districts decide to merge. More information will be provided about a second transportation option at the next meeting.

4. Alan Pole presented an overview of staffing program for both districts. School districts are very people intensive organizations routinely spending 70-75% of their budgets on staff salaries and fringe benefits.

Alan reviewed an overview of the teacher contracts from both districts. Like any two teacher contracts, no clauses are exactly the same. However, it is apparent that the contracts are more similar than they are different. Should the districts decide to merge, a new teacher contract would be negotiated to cover all the teachers in the merged district.

Elizabethtown-Lewis has 34 teachers while Westport has 28.5 teachers. The Westport teacher salary schedule is higher than the Elizabethtown-Lewis salary schedule for approximately the first 20 steps. The average teacher salary in Elizabethtown-Lewis is \$58,209 while the average teacher salary in Westport is \$62,191. The cost to level up Elizabethtown-Lewis teacher salaries to the Westport teacher salary schedule is approximately \$148,105 or \$185,131 with related fringe benefits.

Alan explained that there might be the potential to reduce some positions in the merged district, in part due to the efficiencies gained from merging classes in the high school. He described two methods for reducing staff: involuntary reductions where the district decides what positions and persons will be eliminated or attrition where reductions are accomplished by not filling certain vacancies when staff resigns. He said that the study would recommend attrition as method for reducing staff so no staff members would lose their positions involuntarily.

Should the school districts decide to merge, the contracts of the superintendents that are in place at the time of the merger have to be honored. The new board of education is free to appoint either of the sitting superintendents to the position of superintendent of the merged district. However, neither superintendent has rights to that position and the board would be free to appoint another individual should they wish to do that. It might be possible to reduce two administrative/supervisory positions should the districts decide to merge. This would save approximately \$220,400.

The support staff collective bargaining agreements were also compared. Much like the teacher contracts, no portions of the support staff contracts are the same. However, it appears that the contracts are more alike than different. Should the districts decide to merge, a new collective bargaining agreement would be negotiated to cover the support staff in the merged district.

Summarizing the financial implications of a potential merger, it is projected that it would be possible to reduce two administrative/supervisory positions, two teaching positions, and one clerical position. Offsetting these savings with the cost of leveling up teacher salaries projects a net staffing savings of \$255,832 including the cost of fringe benefits.

5. Questions and comments were then received from the audience members who attended the meeting.

6. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 28, 2018 at Elizabethtown-Lewis at 6:00 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on January 24. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact me. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on 2.28.18 in E'town!

C: Scott Osborne  
A. Paul Scott  
Mark Davey  
Christina Coughlin  
Althea Johnson

