

MEMORANDUM

TO: Elizabethtown-Lewis-Westport Merger Study Advisory Committee
FROM: Suzanne Gilmour, Alan Pole and Bill Silky
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of October 25, 2017
DATE: October 27, 2017

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, Pam Nicholas, Roger Sandwick, Keegan Sewell, Sam Sherman, Debbie Spaulding, and Kathleen White

Consultants: Suzanne Gilmour, Alan Pole, and Bill Silky

Superintendent Advisors: Scott Osborne and A. Paul Scott

Observers: Ofa Vaiciulis, Gwen Sherman, Tim Sherman, Arin Burdo, Stites McDaniel, Kim Dedam, Kaitlin Egglefield, Jennifer Peck, Ellen Cole, Medara Sherman, Cathy Brankman, and Joanne Mazzote

Location: Westport Central School

1. Suzanne Gilmour welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked Josh Meyer for providing a tour of the building prior to the meeting. She recognized the girl's soccer team who will be playing in the sectional finals against Moriah this Saturday. Suzanne also provided an overview of the meeting schedule for the advisory committee as follows.

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

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

3. Bill Silky reviewed the major study conclusions from the first two meetings regarding the declining enrollments in both districts as well as the instructional program highlights from both districts. Bill also provided updated enrollment data for the 2017-18 school year. He indicated that these final projections show that the K-12 enrollment in Elizabethtown-Lewis will go from 247 in 2017-18 to 234 in 2024-25 and that the enrollment in Westport will go from 209 in 2017-18 to 213 in 2024-25.

4. Alan Pole presented an overview of the facilities for both districts. The Elizabethtown-Lewis building was built in 1951 and has 95,961 square feet; the Westport building was built in 1933 and has 77,257 square feet. Elizabethtown-Lewis has 36 full size classrooms while Westport has 25.

The Building Condition Survey was completed for both districts in 2015. The BCS is not a blueprint for a modern, 21st century school; rather it identifies the minimum work needed to maintain the schools and keep them operational. It does not address other educational improvements. The BCS identified \$1,171,800 worth of work to be done in Elizabethtown-Lewis and \$1,248,750 worth of work to be done in Westport.

The BCS was also conducted for the bus garages located in the two districts. Both bus garages are seriously deteriorated and need significant attention. Consideration should be given to the construction of a shared bus garage. In addition to the needs identified in the BCS, Westport has developed a long-range capital improvement plan that would enhance the educational standing of the district. This would add another \$1,338,250 for this work.

The athletic facilities for both districts were also reviewed. Other than basketball, most of the athletic teams for the two districts are already shared. Neither district has quality outdoor athletic facilities on its campus. Soccer is being played at Camp Dudley this year. These games are usually played at the Town of Elizabethtown fields on Noble Terrace.

Middle school and high school room utilization was studied for both districts. Usage at Elizabethtown-Lewis is at approximately 70% while Westport is at 66%. While a little low (the target rate is 80%), the rates show buildings that are used quite efficiently.

The building aid ratio for Elizabethtown-Lewis is .693 and Westport's is .653. If the districts were to merge, the building aid ratio would be approximately .901, 30% higher than the higher of the current districts' aid ratios (30% of .693=.208;.693 + .208=.901). In addition, Westport's current debt that is currently aided at .653 would be aided at .693 if the districts were to merge.

For the future, two options were considered. The districts' architect has estimated that building a new K-12 campus between the two towns would cost approximately \$50,000,000. The preliminary thinking of the consultants is that, should a merger occur, there should be a Pre-K-6 elementary school in Elizabethtown-Lewis and a Pre-K-6 elementary school in Westport; in addition, the combined 7-8 junior high school should

be located in Westport and the combined 9-12 high school should be located in Elizabethtown-Lewis.

5. Questions and comments were then received from the audience members who attended the meeting. While there were a number of questions and comments, it was clear to everyone that not all of the details will be in place when the Boards and communities vote on merger. It will take a lot of trust on everyone's part that the adults who are making decisions about the future of the schools will have the best interests of all students at the front of their thinking.

6. The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, December 6, 2017 at Elizabethtown-Lewis. The meeting of the Merger Study Advisory Committee will begin at 6:00 p.m. Any news about a tour will be provided prior to the meeting.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on October 25. 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 12.6.17 in E'town!

C: Scott Osborne

A. Paul Scott

Mark Davey

Christina Coughlin

