

RESTRUCTURING SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT, OCTOBER 2019

This committee was created and tasked with investigating consolidation/reconfiguration models, determining the risks and benefits associated with each model and returning to the SAU Board in October 2019 with findings and a recommendation.

Sub-Committee members:

David Chen
Michelle Croteau
Porter Dodge
John Glover
Ellen Grudzien
Sarah Lawrence
Steve O'Keefe
Adam Steel
Laura Taylor

Legal Resource Team:

Dean Eggert
Kathy Peahl

Meeting Dates:

March 14, 2019
March 26, 2019
April 11, 2019
May 2, 2019
May 13, 2019
June 13, 2019 – Sarah Lawrence and Superintendent Steel met with Union representatives
(Ms. Mary Epstein, Ms. Sherry Franceour, Ms. Jan Mattie, Mr. Larry Ballard)
June 13, 2019
September 12, 2019
October 10, 2019

Meeting minutes and all supporting documentation is on the Sub-Committee Trello Board for review by any Board Member.

The Consolidation/Reconfiguration Models we assessed:

Model	Assessment	Reality
K-12	Biggest benefits for students	Least likely to pass
5/6-12	Moderate benefit/Moderate Risk	More likely to be approved
Continued Streamlining	Opportunity for continued alignment and efficiency	No impact except potential savings

Continued Streamlining Benefits/Risks/Limitations:

- ✓ Ability to test and trial without much skin in the game
- ✓ Transition/Streamline/Align with long term goal of fully folding the districts into one
- ☒ May not be possible to effect real change needed at the student level
- ❖ No tangible risks

K-12 Benefits/Risks/Limitations:

- ✓ Best educational experience
- ✓ Equity of opportunity and experience for students and staff
- ✓ Greatest ability to leverage resources; flexibility with materials, staffing and buildings
 - Ability to respond to population shifts, special ed needs and enrichment opportunities
- ✓ Streamlines SAU and administration/governance and aligns with Vision and Mission
 - 1 ballot
 - Streamlined board process
 - Provides clarity of vision --> one set of board goals, rather than 3
- ☒ Least likely to gain community support
 - Fear -- loss of local control/local voice in Mont Vernon
 - Fear -- tax impact in both towns
- ❖ Contract/Labor costs
- ❖ Property issues; Allocation of costs for new construction/repairs

5/6-12 Benefits/Risks/Limitations:

- ✓ Better educational experience for 5/6-12 students
- ✓ Equity of opportunity and experience for students 5/6-12 and potential for 5/6-12 staff
- ✓ Some ability to leverage resources; flexibility with materials, staffing and buildings
 - Ability to respond to population shifts, special ed needs and enrichment opportunities if negotiated by agreement
- ✓ Both communities retain local control of elementary schools
- ✓ More likely to gain voter support
- ☒ Tax impact
- ☒ Contract/Labor issues – Middle School teachers would go into the new Cooperative as a unit. Adds a unit.

All three models require trust and an aligned commitment to the quality education and community that SAU 39 posits in our Mission and Vision. The K-12 Cooperative model offers opportunity for equity of education/experience, fully aligned curriculum and the flexibility to address space and staffing both now and in the future so that taxes may be more stable. However, there are risks and benefits for taxpayers in both communities that may trigger fear, and shifting into a K-12 model would require a huge effort in both communities as well as significant negotiations. 5/6-12 is a moderate step, but the gains are small for the effort required and the added Union complexity. Continued Streamlining is the model recommended by the majority of the Sub-Committee with the acknowledgement that the benefits of K-12 is the ideal we are striving to reach.

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah Lawrence, Sub-Committee Chair

Risks, Benefits and Considerations

6-12 Model

Risks	Benefits	Considerations
<p>MS union must move over</p> <p>Too many unions</p> <p>Board structure</p> <p>Limitations on flexibility of staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potentially short term until negotiations of new contracts <p>Taxpayer impact: + \$300K for Amherst from tuition perspective</p> <p>- \$300K in MV without tuition</p> <p>Unknown \$ risk for MV from capital improvement perspective, unless built into agreement</p>	<p>5/6-12 Students could access resources in both schools</p> <p>One campus model</p> <p>Towns keep their elementary school control</p> <p>MV 6-8 get benefits of shared experience</p> <p>Taxpayer benefits: Potential benefit for MV</p> <p>Administrative: Dealing with enrollment shifts more easily</p> <p>School board "burden" eases - cooperative board becomes main board and then elementary boards become less complex</p> <p>Leveraging programs to reduce special ed costs</p>	<p>Sharing of resources is not easy because of the MS unit</p> <p>Taxpayer impact from MVEA teachers moving down = 5-20K</p> <p>Sports?</p> <p>Applied apportionment formula of Co-op to expenditures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o all student enrollment together, 50% based on students 50% based on valuation in both towns

K-12 Model

Risks	Benefits	Considerations
<p>Negotiations could drag on for contracts</p> <p>Infrastructure and long-term capitol concerns (MV might have to pay into new construction)</p> <p>What about things that one town wants to do or fix with a building in their town? MV will never have the majority?</p> <p>Control of where students go to school, i.e. space in MV and want to send Amherst kids up or kids down, etc. (could be handled in articles of agreement, K-5 must be maintained in each town)</p> <p>Weighted vote issue Board structure</p> <p>Costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor <p>If all staff, K-12, unionize under the AEA contract, it will cost approximately \$145k to move all MVEA folks to the AEA contract and \$294k to move all Souhegan folks to the AEA contract.</p> <p>If all staff, K-12, took MVEA agreement, negligible difference in moving the Souhegan staff given the spread in salary impact. Moving all AEA folks to the MVEA agreement would save around \$800k. There is no chance of this happening.</p>	<p>Students could access resources in both schools</p> <p>Staff flexibility in all schools (greatest flexibility in staff assignments)</p> <p>Equity of opportunity for staff</p> <p>Valuable from a recruitment standpoint (advancement, connection, mentorship)</p> <p>Stability for staff</p> <p>Savings - administrative efficiency (200-500K yearly)</p> <p>One organization as opposed to 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 ballot • Streamlined board process • Provides clarity of vision --> one set of board goals, rather than 3 <p>Full Alignment</p> <p>Pre-K option would open up for MV community</p> <p>Leveraging programs to reduce special ed costs</p> <p>Test scores norm</p>	<p>New union would need to be created</p> <p>Outline rules of flexibility.</p> <p>Everyone comes under one employer</p> <p>Unlikely that PELRB will say everyone now is in one of the 2 units</p> <p>Only solution is a new bargaining unit that represents everyone</p> <p>Union and SB would have to come to an agreement about what both will accept</p> <p>Then sit with PELRB to discuss</p> <p>New union would be created and new contract would need to be negotiated.</p> <p>Some obligation to maintain status quo and not reduce salaries during negotiations</p>

Action Steps By Model

Before the March vote:

--> finding out what the union wants and then finding out what cooperative board wants and would go along with

6-12 model

- If we go forward with the 6-12 model, we would have, by agreement, a middle school unit
 - The Amherst Union continues to exist, MV Union exists, Middle school moves over to new employer (Cooperative board is new employer) as an existing unit (per PELRB)
- Say to union: Our plan is to put forward to the voters on March 20 this reconfiguration -- that we will, by agreement, seek certification of 2 middle school bargaining agreements
- Next step:
 - Present to the voters --- we are going to honor this CBA until it's renegotiated.
 - July 1 2021, negotiations would begin with middle school anyway
 - If the voters approve reorganization, then there would be an election for the union
 - We could go to PELRB and ask for a judgment before -- so we have their opinion before it goes before the voters
 - The union would not want to risk an election where they would lose.
 - With middle school unit contract, it would be very limiting to flexibility

K-12 model

- If we go forward with the K-12 model, we would have one employer
- Everyone comes under one employer
 - Unlikely that perlb will say everyone now is in one of the 2 units
 - Only solution is a new bargaining unit that represents everyone
- Discussions between Union and SB would involve coming to an agreement about what both will accept
- After that
 - Sit with PELRB to discuss
 - New union would be created
 - New contract would need to be negotiated.
 - Some obligation to maintain status quo and not reduce salaries during negotiations.

Don't go to the taxpayer without knowing as much as we can about the labor situation

Foundation process:

- Determine what makes the most sense for these districts and the cooperative?
- Sit down with Union and share direction, how can we work together?
 - What is the bargaining unit composition, in writing, but not voted on until election?
 - What are the things we need to make this work? This is what we can do for you.
- Target March 2021 vote
- Do we need to hire someone to manage the process?
 - Recently retired BA or Superintendent (what is the cost impact)
 - Cost impact of legal

Remaining questions for consideration:

What if the towns own the buildings and then lease them to the cooperative?

- ✓ Potentially solves issue in Mont Vernon of fear of loss of the Village School.

Capitol improvements have to be paid by the towns where they reside -- figure out how.

Capital expenditure apportionment question.

Clarity on how Mont Vernon would pay in for students.

What is the expense vs tuition agreement?