

HANCOCK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



DEPOSIT CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION
MARCH 24, 2025
6 PM
HANCOCK CSD AUDITORIUM



INTRODUCTIONS

Lori Asquith, Superintendent, Hancock CSD
Denise Cook, Superintendent, Deposit CSD

Hancock Board of Education:

Cliff Johnston, President

Christopher “Jake” Geer, Sr., Vice President

Nick Hazen

Vicky Bogart

Tanya Gibbs-Hinkley, Wayne-Highlands Representative

Deposit Board of Education:

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John Lanner, Vice President

Dawn Faulkner

Julie Martin

Stacey Axtell

Rebecca Stone, Superintendent of Broome-Tioga BOCES
Michael Rullo, Superintendent of DCMO BOCES

History of Merger Study/Shares

- Full merger study completed in 1992-1993: Potentially positive outcomes included efficiencies in combining staff to increase programming offers, additional aid to both districts for operations and capital improvements; Concerns included relocating students, losing district identity, and logistical items such as contracts.
- 2012: Shared Services Study completed in March; Meetings have continued since 2012 with annual opportunities for the Boards of Education to receive updates on the shares.
- To date, collaborations include: shared professional development opportunities; common language for student Codes of Conduct; Merged Athletics (exception bowling); common practice for reviewing administrative positions as adopted by the Boards of Education; Sharing of teaching positions and special services.
- Today, we're here to discuss the possibility of moving forward with the merger study.

What is School District Reorganization?

Reorganization is the act of creating a new school district in an area where one or more school districts previously existed.

School Districts “reorganize” when one or more existing districts merge/consolidate to form a single, larger school district.



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Why Reorganize?

School district organization in New York State is not permanently fixed, by design, to allow for necessary adjustments to meet the educational needs of area students, while also ensuring a sufficient tax-base to support the expenses related to that mission.

Acknowledging this, NY State Education Law §314 authorizes the Commissioner of Education to continue updating the “Master Plan for School District Reorganization in New York State,” originally commissioned in 1942 and revised in 1958.



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Why Reorganize?

- Larger Student/Tax Base + Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid:
 - More resources
 - More educational programs
 - More support services
 - More opportunities
- Reorganization Incentive Building Aid:
 - Upgrade and improve buildings, grounds, and other school facilities



Types of Reorganization

Centralization

- New school district is created that includes the entire area of the school districts to be merged.
- Can be established through the merger of any types of school districts except city school districts.
- The districts must share a boundary line.



Types of Reorganization

Annexation by Non-City School Districts

- New district is not created. An annexed district is dissolved and becomes part of the annexing Central school district.
- Central school districts can be annexed by another Central school district if they share a boundary line.



Starting the Reorganization Process

School districts in NY State are permitted to share services and expenses directly, in addition to utilizing a BOCES. Common shares can include extra curricular activities, intramural and NYSPHSAA athletics, performing arts groups, and even pedagogic expenses.

Over time, it may become an obvious next step to start discussing a permanent reorganization and merger...

Preliminary Reorganization Process

Step 1:

- Boards of Education of affected districts hold joint meetings to determine whether to undergo a formal reorganization study.
 - BOCES District Superintendent(s) are available as an informed, neutral party to provide information and support.

Preliminary Reorganization Process

Step 2:

- If Boards of Education agree, a formal feasibility study on reorganization is commissioned.
 - Each Board authorizes a study through a formal resolution (attorney consult).
 - Districts will advertise an RFP (Request for Proposals) from groups who offer the feasibility study service.
 - The approximate cost ranges from \$65,000 - \$105,000 and is aidable.



Feasibility Study may include:

- The study provides information for school district officials, community members, and the Commissioner of Education regarding the possibility and impact of reorganization between the named Districts.
- A study may include:
 - A review of student enrollment projections.
 - Ability to house and offer student programs.
 - Impact on facilities, transportation, staffing, athletics, and finances, including impact on revenue, tax rate and incentive operating aid.



Feasibility Study may include:

- Current and projected professional staffing plans.
- Options for education programs and curricula.
- Offer pros and cons of any reorganization, a review of any transitional period pending such reorganization, and review the possibility, and impact, of both mergers and annexations.
- Projected fiscal implications of the reorganization: State Aid, expenditures, and local tax impact.



Preliminary Reorganization Process

Step 3:

- Boards of Education share information from the feasibility study.
 - Maintain transparency and hold multiple public information meetings to help ensure a fully informed community.
 - Meeting dates, times, and discussion topics are made available to all voters in each district. Questions are encouraged; honest answers are provided.



Preliminary Reorganization Process

Step 4:

- Boards of Education hold non-binding “straw vote” or collect signatures by petition to assess public support for reorganization.
 - Straw vote must occur in each district, separately, at a specific date and time (majority vote)
 - Petition - # of signatures required is the 3-year average of total ballots cast in each budget vote plus 1, done separately in each district (no timeline)
 - Neither the “straw vote” nor the petition is legally binding, but assessment of public support is necessary in the process.
 - The Commissioner of Education will not order a statutory vote without clear evidence of public support.



Preliminary Reorganization Process

Step 5:

- BOCES District Superintendent(s) formally report results of “straw vote” or petition to the Commissioner of Education, indicating whether or not to proceed further.
 - A BOCES DS letter to the Commissioner of Education in support of reorganization formally starts the statutory (legal) reorganization process.



What's The Difference?

Centralization and Annexation

CENTRALIZATION	ANNEXATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner issues an Order “laying out” a new school district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Commissioner issues an Order to dissolve and annex one district to another.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Eligible voters of each district <u>must</u> request a vote by petition for centralization to occur.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Order is final after 60 days, <u>unless residents petition for a vote.</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A second petition from each district is needed in order to vote in multiple locations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vote is not legally required and will only occur in districts that petition for a vote.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A majority in favor at each voting location is needed to form a new district.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A majority in favor at any voting district is needed to finalize the annexation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If vote is in favor of reorganization, a new district is formed, and a new Board is elected.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If in favor of annexation, the annexed district is dissolved. No new Board is elected.





Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid (RIOA)

- RIOA is additional State Aid apportioned to a new district after a reorganization to support expenses resulting from the reorganization.
- RIOA is available for 14 years beginning with the first school year of operation as a reorganized district.

Local Revenue Calculations

Name	Local Revenue	Local Revenue Effort Rate
DEPOSIT CSD	8,338,331	13.72
HANCOCK CSD	4,443,826	13.65
Combined Total	\$ 12,782,157	

*NOTE: The feasibility study will provide specific details on all fiscal considerations so that the Boards and stakeholders have the necessary information.



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Reorganization Incentive Building Aid: New Buildings / Adding New Space

When adding new space, the highest district building aid ratio prior to reorganizing is increased by 30%, up to a maximum Aid Ratio of 95%. The Office of Facilities Planning calculates a **Maximum Cost Allowance for Building Aid (“MCA”)**, based on projected enrollment after reorganizing, for all new construction projects. **Costs above the MCA are not eligible for Building Aid.**

New projects must start within 10 years of a merger to take advantage of the enhanced Building Aid Ratio.

Reorganization Incentive Building Aid: Renovating Existing Facilities and Existing Capital Debt

- If the reorganized District renovates current buildings without adding new space, approved projects are aided at the enhanced Building Aid Ratio.
- Maximum Cost Allowance for existing buildings will not be reduced if no new space is added during renovation.
- Additionally, NYSED will adjust Building Aid payments for existing capital debt to match the higher of the two previous districts' building aid ratios (**Aid Ratio is not enhanced**).



Example Reorganization Timeline

16-24 month process

- Spring: - Boards resolve to undergo feasibility study
- Summer: - Feasibility study begins in earnest
- Fall: - Final draft of study is presented to Boards of Education
- Fall/Winter: - Boards resolve to continue process
- Public meetings and info-sessions take place
- Straw Vote or petition in each district to gauge public support
- Early Spring: - Statutory Vote takes place
- July 1: - Earliest date a new district can begin operating**





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THANK YOU!
