Cost Saving Alternatives for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District

February 2017

Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management

McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES

UMASS BOSTON

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Table of Contents

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management at the University of Massachusetts Boston was hired by the towns of Adams and Cheshire and the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District to identify and analyze alternatives to reduce costs for Adams-Cheshire Regional School District (ACRSD). This effort is being funded at no cost to the towns and District by a Community Compact grant from the Baker-Polito administration. The project included three separate deliverables including the *Community and Schools Trends Report*, the three Community Conversations held in October and November 2016, and this *Cost Saving Alternatives* report.

The overarching task initially defined for the Center was "to identify and analyze alternatives to reduce costs" based upon the preliminary understanding that the resources available from state and local sources were not sufficient to fund the continuation of regular year over year cost increases experienced by the District, and that multi-year declines in student enrollment called into question whether District facilities could/should be consolidated. Since then it has become evident that per pupil spending at ACRSD is already well below state average, indicating that a strategy of continued cuts will not be viable over the long term. Further, data on student achievement and the rapid increases in the number and percentage of students with disabilities suggest that students are not receiving needed supports that will allow them to thrive within District classrooms.

In recognition that simply reducing costs will not successfully address the breadth issues facing ACRSD, the project team came to the understanding that its responsibility was to develop ideas on how the District can best increase its financial stability – as opposed to simply reducing costs. To that end, this report includes a series of "best practices" actions that the Center would recommend the District undertake to strengthen its financial stability and improve student achievement whether enrollment was increasing or decreasing. These include 13 best practice recommendations that collectively total $905,000+ in cost savings and approximately $350,000 in increased investment.

In addition, the report offers eight interrelated Space Use Alternatives that consider changes to the grade configurations at the District's elementary, middle, and high schools in an effort to improve academic attainment while also reducing costs by between $376,500 and $550,600. All recommendations and alternatives presented in this report are evaluated through four lenses identified by the Center – financial, operational, academic, and community values/sense of community.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

SUMMARY OF COSTS/SAVINGS of BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS *Adams-Cheshire Regional School District*				
Page	**Recommendation**	**Time Frame**	**Cost Increase**	**Cost Reduction**
29	Recommendation 1: Transfer health benefits for current employees and retirees from the Berkshire Health Group to the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC).	FY2018	Will need to pay off any outstanding obligations to BHG	$750,000
33	Recommendation 2: Transfer pension system assets from the Town of Adams' retirement system to a system with a better rate of return such as the State's Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT). (ACRSD is responsible for almost 40% of Adams Retirement System pension assessments for employees not covered by the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System).	FY2018	No cost identified	Increased earnings TBD
35	Recommendation 3: Undertake steps to reduce special education enrollment and costs to approach the state average. Actions include:	FY2018-FY2022		$125,000+
	3a. Create of a defined special education team chairperson structure, where a limited number of well-trained educators are the only people involved in team meetings with the authority to commit District dollars.	FY2018	$10,000 to $15,000	
	3b. Enhance data collection around special education to create indicated programming and other targeted interventions to reduce IEPs.	FY2018	No cost	
	3c. Increase professional learning spending to focus on strategies for inclusion and meeting the needs of all students in the regular education classroom, creating or enhancing child study teams, and other topics designed to enable classroom teachers to better meet the needs of their students.	FY2018	See #5 below.	
	3d. Staff every kindergarten and first grade classroom with a paraprofessional, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for including one-to-one paraprofessionals in IEPs.	FY2018-FY2022	No cost as existing staff are redeployed	
	3e. Enhance the District's Response to Intervention (RtI) Tier 2 and 3 strategies and staffing to reduce number of IEPs	FY2018-FY2019	$285,000	
39	Recommendation 4: Increase enrollment in the high school by increasing offerings and incenting students/parents to choose the regional public school for their secondary education. Actions include:	FY2018-FY2019		Increased revenues TBD
	4a. Consider partnering with a local vocational school to provide programming not currently available at those schools or to offer satellite classrooms open to ACRSD students. Consider providing programming on own (examples include biotechnology, environmental science).	FY2019		Grants available
	4b. Actively strive to retain 7-8th graders as they move to high	FY2018	No cost	

SUMMARY OF COSTS/SAVINGS of BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS *Adams-Cheshire Regional School District*				
Page	**Recommendation**	**Time Frame**	**Cost Increase**	**Cost Reduction**
	school (e.g., allow to participate in appropriate extracurricular activities with HS students, have HS student liaisons visit the MS, take MS students on tour and allow to sit in classes; allow adequately prepared MS students to take classes at HS.)			
41	Recommendation 5: Increase District-wide funding for professional learning to support District goals.	FY2018	$30,000	
42	Recommendation 6: Reduce teacher absenteeism and provide additional funding for teacher substitutes as needed. Actions include:	FY2018-FY2019	$20,000	TBD
	6a. Closely monitor teacher attendance data to identify strategies to reduce absenteeism and amend contract to incentivize attendance.	FY2018-FY2019	No cost	
	6b. Consider utilizing the language from the collective bargaining agreement to have teachers who have free periods cover classes during colleague absences.	FY2018-FY2019	No cost	
	6c. At a minimum, cover classes that contribute to improvement to current Level 3 status of schools (e.g., English, mathematics and science).	FY2018	Included above	
	6d. Consider hiring permanent substitutes at the middle/high school level. If they are not needed in the classroom on a particular day, they can assist teachers however possible.	FY2018	Funded by reduction in daily substitutes	
45	Recommendation 7: Control/moderate fiscal impact of future teachers' cost of living and annual step increases on the budget. Actions include:	FY2018-FY2019		Addresses equity; Long-term savings TBD
	7a. Review teachers' salary schedule and revise to smooth out the steps in the schedule. Review top steps to ensure they are within areas medians.	FY2019	No cost	
	7b. Review administrative salaries to ensure they are within areas medians. Consider a temporary freeze on increases for non-union personnel.	FY2018	No cost	
47	Recommendation 8: Reduce number and value of stipends offered to teachers for particular duties, until District more closely aligns with state average.	FY2018		$30,000
48	Recommendation 9: Develop or enhance the District nepotism policy.	FY2018	No cost	
49	Recommendation 10: To address the District's Level 3 status, develop and implement a plan of Turnaround practices.	FY2018	TBD	TBD
51	Recommendation 11: Continue to engage in discussions with surrounding communities around joining the district, negotiating a tuition agreement to accept a community's pupils in particular grades or otherwise sharing services.	FY2018	No cost	TBD
52	Recommendation 12: Improve communication with students and parents, and increase their sense of commitment to	FY2018	No cost	

SUMMARY OF COSTS/SAVINGS of BEST PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS *Adams-Cheshire Regional School District*				
Page	**Recommendation**	**Time Frame**	**Cost Increase**	**Cost Reduction**
	ACRSD. Actions include:			
	12a. Create and distribute an electronic survey to middle/high school students and electronic/paper surveys to parents to identify areas of concern to students and/or parents, and to gather positive feedback on accomplishments.	FY2018	Nominal cost	
	12b. Send a regular newsletter to parents keeping them informed about District activities and progress.	FY2018	No cost	
	12c. Consider renaming the District.	FY2018	No cost	
54	Recommendation 13: Create a Feasibility Study Committee and hire a consultant to determine the District's elementary school space needs and evaluate at least three scenarios for where those needs could be met: a) renovation of Cheshire Elementary School; b) renovation of Plunkett Elementary School; and, c) construction of a new school or addition at the Hoosac Valley Middle/High School campus.	FY2018	TBD	
	TOTAL		**$350,000**	**$905,000**

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL CONFIGURATION ALTERNATIVES *Adams-Cheshire Regional School District*				
Page	**Alternative**	**Time Frame**	**Cost Increase**	**Net Cost Reduction**
57	Alternative A: Increase student body at Hoosac Valley School.			
59	Alternative A1: Transfer 8th graders to the high school, relocate 4th and 5th grade to the middle school portion of the building.	FY2018	No cost	Minor transp savings / revenues
61	Alternative A2: Transfer 8th graders to the high school, relocate pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grade to a designated section of the building.	FY2018	Minor one-time capital costs	
63	Alternative B: Consolidate elementary school students into one location.			
66	Alternative B1: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.	FY2018	*Minor one-time capital costs*	$555,600
68	Alternative B2: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.	FY2018		$426,600
70	Alternative B3: Move all 2nd to 5th to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.	FY2018		$513,100
72	Alternative B4: Move all 2nd to 5th to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.	FY2018		$376,500

SUMMARY OF SCHOOL CONFIGURATION ALTERNATIVES *Adams-Cheshire Regional School District*				
Page	**Alternative**	**Time Frame**	**Cost Increase**	**Net Cost Reduction**
74	Alternative C: Move pre-K to 7th to HVMHS, move 8th to 12th to Plunkett Elementary.	FY2019	TBD	TBD
74	Alternative D: Create three separate districts (Cheshire Elementary, Plunkett Elementary, and Hoosac Valley regional) under the administrative oversight of a superintendency union.	No earlier than FY2019	$603,000 increase for Cheshire	$290,000 decrease for Adams

CHALLENGES FACING THE ADAMS-CHESHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HISTORIC CHALLENGES

The challenges facing ACRSD today are not unique to the two towns, have developed over many years, and stem from no one single source. Instead international, national, and regional forces have put into place a series of trends that are affecting the vitality and sustainability of the District and its partner towns of Adams and Cheshire. At the highest level are the structural changes to the U.S. economy that have, over many decades, led to steep declines in the numbers of manufacturing and labor jobs and an increasingly service-based economy. In Berkshire County, this structural change can be seen in the declining numbers of businesses, jobs, and real wages. Specifically, in 1998, the County housed 4,114 business establishments providing 54,752 jobs and paying $1.52 billion in annual wages. In 2016, this same area contained 3,900 establishments (-214 businesses) offering 52,802 jobs (-1,950 jobs) and collectively paying just under $2.2 billion in annual wages. Although wages increased, their combined buying power has declined, since $1.52 billion in 1989 translates into $2.95 billion in 2016 dollars once inflation is taken into account.

Despite the magnitude of the large scale economic trends, each organization – and local residents and businesspersons – have tools they can use to formulate a strategic response. However, oftentimes change is so gradual that the ramifications cannot really be felt until many years later and a dramatic response may be necessary, as opposed to a modest course correction. (The *Community and School Trends Report for the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District* prepared by the Collins Center describes the trends affecting the area in detail and can be found on the ACRSD website.)

Specific trends that have affected the District and towns include:

- Population declines in Adams starting in 1910 and in Cheshire beginning in 1990;
- Declines in the number of school-age youth in the two towns;
- Declines in the number of students attending ACRSD schools due, in part, to the smaller youth population but also due to students' ability to choose other public schools, vocational schools, or charter schools at no additional cost to their families (in 2016, 25.1% of school-attending children living in Adams and Cheshire attended out-of-district schools, as compared to 17.2% statewide);
- Increases in the percentage and absolute number of students with special educational accommodations identified through Individualized Education Plans (IEPs);
- Level to declining State funding to towns and schools despite increasing costs;
- Constraints to town resources resulting from Proposition 2 ½ (e.g., town revenues cannot increase more than 2.5% per year regardless of costs), limited new growth generated from new construction or renovation, and the fact that residential properties constitute the vast majority of the tax base of both towns; and,
- Constraints on household's ability to provide additional resources (e.g., funding an operating

override) to the schools given per capita income figures that are well below the State average ($20,378 in Adams, $25,862 in Cheshire as compared to $35,879 across Massachusetts in 2013)[1].

Numbers of School-Attending Residents in Study Area (2000-2016)						
	2000	**2005**	**2010**	**2016**	**Change 2000-2016**	**% Change**
Total School-Attending Residents	**1,953**	**1,902**	**1,713**	**1,636**	**-317**	**-16%**
In-District Public Schools	1,708	1,631	1,408	1,226	-482	-28%
Voc/Tech Regional Schools	80	108	131	156	76	95%
Charter Schools	NA	NA	NA	75	75[2]	NA
Out-of-District Public Schools	19	40	79	72	53	279%
Home Schooled	NA	NA	NA	26	26	NA
Private and Parochial Schools	146	123	95	81	-65	-45%
All non-district	**245**	**271**	**305**	**410**	**165**	**67%**

Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

On a positive note, housing costs in the area remain well below State average, and per capita incomes in Cheshire grew more rapidly than the State average between 2005 and 2013 (23% growth versus 16% growth) and faster than the rate of inflation, thereby resulting in real growth in wages in that town. This occurred despite the 2008-2010 Great Recession. Also, while unemployment rates remain above the State average, they have fallen significantly from a high in 2010 down to 5.4% in Cheshire and 6.8% in Adams, as compared to a State average of 5.0%.

In recent years, the responses to increasing school costs have been twofold: a) increasing financial contributions from both towns; and, b) spending cuts at ACRSD. Over the past five years, town contributions to the District have increased by $2 million. (This figure includes approximately $870,000 in annual tax-payer funding for the renovation of the Hoosac Valley Middle/High School, with the balance coming from town revenues.) Combined, this represents a 33% increase in town contributions, but the dollar amount and percent change difference have fallen more heavily on the Town of Adams.

ACRSD Assessments (FY2012 - FY2017)				
	FY2012	**FY2017**	**Dollar Change**	**Percent Change**
Adams	$3,940,208	$5,446,707	$1,506,499	38.23%
Cheshire	$2,129,685	$2,640,065	$510,380	23.97%
Total	**$6,069,893**	**$8,086,772**	**$2,016,879**	**33.23%**

Source: ACRSD

When the cost of the local vocational school (McCann Technical School) is factored into the calculation, it is clear that spending on education is taking up an increasingly significant portion of the towns' budgets, budgets that must also support other municipal services such as public safety, library, public works, recreation, etc. that affect residents' quality of life. If education costs as a share of total budget continue to increase at the rate experienced in the past five years, it will become more and more

[1] According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2011-2015 ACS), 9.8% of Adams residents and 5.4% of Cheshire residents live below the poverty rate.

[2] Note: Charter and Homeschooled students were enumerated separately by DESE beginning in 2011. Prior to this, these students were included in counts of students attending Private and Out-of-District schools.

difficult for the town governments to be able to provide basic public services. Even today Cheshire has only a part-time town administrator and a part-time police chief.

School Spending as Percent of FY2017 Town Budgets					
	ACRSD Assessment	Vocational Assessment	Total Education	Gen Fund Budget	Education Percentage
Adams	$5,446,707	$808,841	$6,255,548	$14,414,253	43.4%
Cheshire	$2,640,065	$346,559	$2,986,624	$5,322,935	56.1%

Source: Towns of Adams and Cheshire, MA DOR

Over the past four fiscal years, even as the towns have added resources to support the District, the District has also reduced its budget (or provided one-time funds) in the amount of nearly $2.8 million. In FY2017, the District's general fund and Chapter 90 operating budget total just over $18 million, so the budget reductions (excluding the one-time monies provided by the District in FY2014) represent a 11.6% reduction in funding since FY2013.

As can be seen below, at least 16 teaching and academic support positions have been eliminated over the past four years. In FY2017, the District retains 178 locally-funded positions (FTE) and an additional 46.5 FTE funded by grants and other special revenue funds. The reduction of 16 positions translates into 8.2% of the locally-funded work force that were providing services to students in FY2013, but are no longer with the District today.

ACRSD Budget Reductions (FY2014-FY2017)		
Year	**Description**	**Amount**
FY2014	○ $258,000 in personnel changes, retirements, resignations ○ $315,000 in building maint (e.g., cleaning contract, contingency) ○ $417,000 in personnel charged to revolving funds (one time only)	-$1,100,000
FY2015	Position reductions: ○ Hoosac Valley Librarian ○ Hoosac Valley Math Teacher ○ High School Science Teacher ○ High School Home Economics ○ High School Social Studies/CAD (1 FTE) ○ High School English Teacher	-$469,000
FY2016	Position reductions: ○ High School Science Teacher ○ Middle School Writing Teacher ○ Middle School Math Teacher ○ High School History/Tech (1 FTE) ○ High School SPED Supervisor	-$400,000
FY2017	Position reductions: ○ Middle School Math Interventionist ○ Middle School English Language Arts (ELA) Interventionist ○ High School Math Teacher ○ Curriculum Coordinator ○ Tech Director	-$816,000
	TOTAL REDUCTIONS & ONE-TIME FUNDING	**-$2,785,000**

CURRENT CHALLENGES

Academic Performance

Based upon the results of state-wide test scores, students across ACRSD are struggling academically today. The District's reputation as a place to get a good education is also suffering. Between 2008 (the date from which data is available) and 2014, the share of ACRSD students scoring proficient or better on Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams in three subjects (English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science/technology) was 7 to 25 percentage points below state averages. Indeed, the share scoring proficient or better fell each year from 2010 to 2014, by 9 percentage points total in ELA, 13 percentage points total in math, and 17 percentage points in science), even as statewide scores were increasing slightly. A small uptick in scores can be seen in ACRSD in 2015, but it is not clear yet that these results represent the beginning of an upward trend since the 2016 figures for science shows no change from 2015 (ACRSD students took the PARCC test, instead of the MCAS, for ELA and math assessment in 2016, so comparable data for these subjects is not available post-2015).

State Ratings of ACRSD Schools

	Cheshire Elementary		Plunkett Elementary		Hoosac Valley MHS	
	Level	***Percentile***	**Level**	***Percentile***	**Level**	***Percentile***
2012	2	22	3	15	2	39
2013	3	16	3	10	2	22
2014	3	18	3	5	3	16
2015	2	23	3	4	3	14
2016	2	16	3	6	3	11

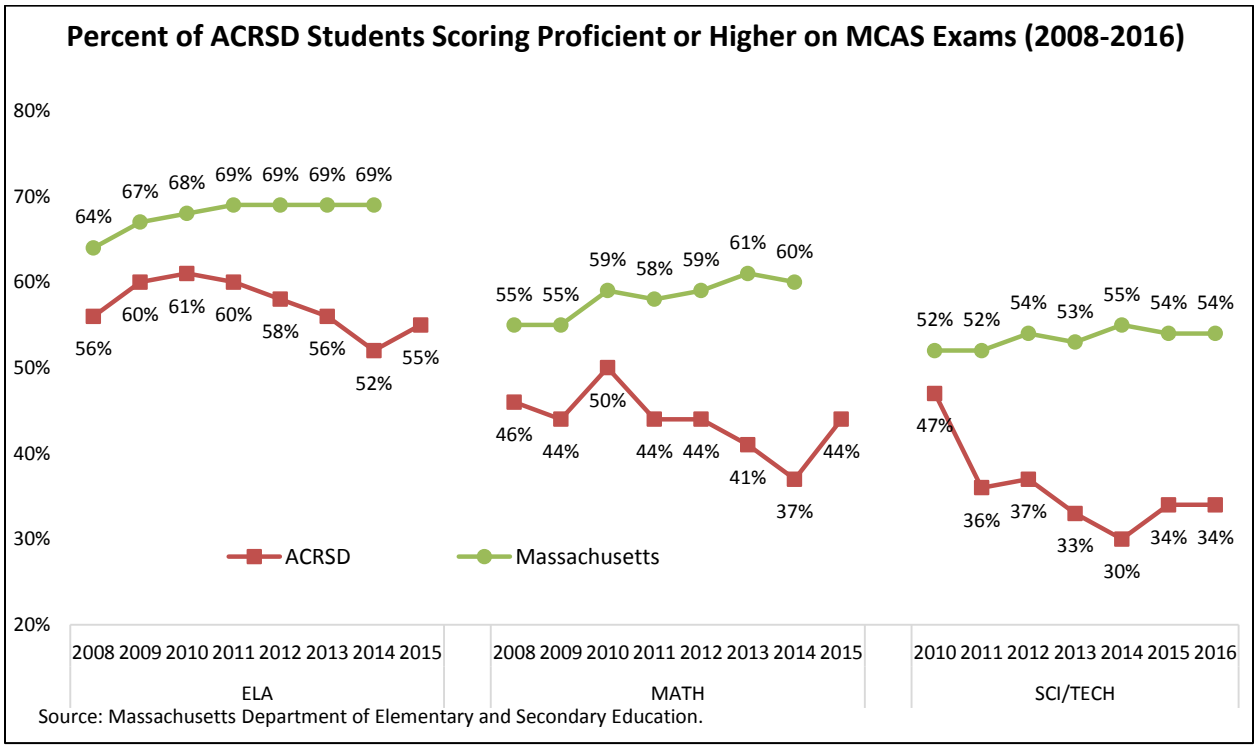
Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Each year, public schools and districts in Massachusetts are rated by the State on a scale of 1-5, with a level 1 rating indicating achievement of goals, level 3 suggesting a need for technical assistance, and level 4 and 5 schools requiring direct DESE intervention. Since 2012, when the system was implemented, none of ACRSD's schools have received a level 1 rating. In fact, Cheshire Elementary received a level 3 for 2 of 5 years, Plunkett Elementary received a level 3 for all 5 years, and Hoosac Valley MHS has received a level 3 for 3 of 5 years. The state also reports the percentile of each school, which is the share of comparable schools that are performing as poorly or worse that the school being evaluated. For 2016, 84% of comparable schools were performing better than Cheshire Elementary, 94% were better than Plunkett Elementary, and 89% better than Hoosac Valley MHS.

Per State regulation, a level 4 school is an "underperforming" school that is both low performing on the MCAS over a four year period in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, and science, and has not shown signs of substantial improvement over that time. Schools are classified as level 3 if they are among the lowest 20 percent relative to other schools in their grade span statewide.[3] The lowest achieving, least improving level 3 schools are candidates for classification into level 4 and 5. A district is generally classified into the level of its lowest performing school.

[3] Cheshire Elementary is not classified as a Level 3 school in 2016, despite being in the bottom 20% relative to comparable schools, because students there took the PARCC exam, instead of the MCAS, in 2016.

Level 3 schools are responsible for using DESE's self-assessment process to revise plans and monitor strategies in the school and/or district. These schools/districts are also given priority for assistance from the Commonwealth (e.g., self-assessment, planning guidance, etc.). The school and/or district may also be eligible for technical assistance or intervention in special education, depending on: a) over-identification of low-income students as eligible for special education; and/or, b) inordinate separation of students with disabilities across low income and/or racial groups.



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Level 4 schools/districts must collaborate with DESE to develop and implement (for DESE approval) a redesign plan that addresses rapid implementation of Conditions for School Effectiveness. Districts may also be required to develop a level 4 district plan to accelerate district improvement and strengthen supports/interventions in the lowest-performing schools. Recent MCAS performance and percentiles at all three ACRSD schools suggest that, unless significant improvements are made in the very near future, the District is at risk of falling to level 4.

In reviewing the positions that have been reduced from the ACRSD budget and those that remain, it is evident that typical academic supports and preventative services are not available in sufficient measure in ACRSD schools. Of particular note is the fact that the special needs population at ACRSD schools (including students with IEPs) has been increasing each year over the past five years – the same years where financial conditions became increasingly difficult and multiple positions were reduced. While reducing these "regular education support" positions is a common response to decreasing budgets, this strategy often has the unintended consequences of increasing special education referrals, placements, and services. This is because special education then becomes "the only game in town" for providing services for students.

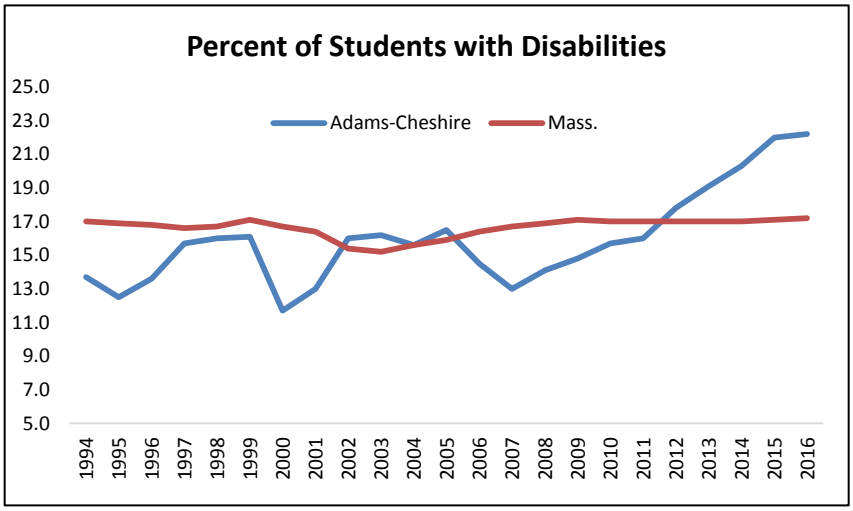
These services (many of which have been reduced or eliminated in Adams-Cheshire over the past five years) include literacy support, math support, counseling, speech, and special education team

chairpersons. Simply put, while districts often proceed to reduce or eliminate these roles to save dollars in difficult budget climates, the changes that they implement often result in increased costs to fulfill the mandate of a legal document (an IEP).

The failure to fund other preventative measures (e.g., classroom paraprofessionals in kindergarten and first grade) has a similar effect of making special education the only way to garner the support that some parents and teachers feel that students need. The lack of preventative supports will most certainly increase the number of these supports that become included in IEP documents.

Another final area where districts, including ACRSD, make reductions is in professional learning and coaching for regular education teachers. Districts that spend targeted dollars in these areas in support of district and school goals around student success in regular education classrooms typically see decreased costs in special education. Unfortunately, when these expenditures are reduced or eliminated (like in Adams-Cheshire), teachers are less able to support all students and, as a result, special education numbers increase.

Another measure of special needs in ACRSD schools is the share of students with disabilities (including developmental emotional, learning, and physical). As can be seen, the District experienced a rapid increase in the number and share of students with disabilities beginning in 2007, around the same time that ACRSD and other districts were facing dramatic funding constraints. Even so, ACRSD did not exceed the state average in share of students with disabilities until 2011. The percent of students with disabilities has continued to increase to the point that recently released DESE data indicates that in SY2016-17 ACRSD is now at 23% (304 students) of student population. In fact, ACRSD now has the 37th highest percentage out of 404 districts reporting across the state.



Although the State average has risen from 17.0% to 17.4%, the increase in ACRSD's share of students with disabilities means that there are 74 more students on IEPs in ACRSD than there would be if the District was at the state average share. This, in turn, has implications for the District's budget and program in the short and long term. For example, it is easier to exit students from regular education interventions than from a legal document (IEP), meaning that undertaking preventative measures can, over time, reduce long term expenditures. In addition, costs associated with the structures of special education (e.g., more teachers, case managers, liaisons, etc.) are reduced if students receive preventative services early and, in many cases, can then be exited in the intermediate and/or middle grades.

Facility Condition and Space Utilization

Facility Condition

As discussed in the *Trends Report*, apart from Hoosac Valley Middle/ High School, District schools are worn and not state-of-the-art. Added to and renovated in 2012 at a cost of $40.5 million,[4] HVMHS has the technology and amenities expected of a modern day public school. The building contains 6 science labs, 4 computer labs, a library, a series of special education rooms, 2 art rooms, an arts lab room, 2 music rooms, 2 gyms (one for the high school and one for the middle school), and a 535-seat auditorium. All evidence indicates that the building is being maintained in exemplary condition.

In contrast, the two elementary schools are markedly older and show it. The two buildings were built within one year of each other. Cheshire Elementary was built in 1922 and was approximately 22,000 square feet in size at the time. A modest addition (7,500 square feet) was completed 1952. In 1961, a large addition (40,000 square feet) more than doubled the size of the building. C.T. Plunkett Elementary was built in 1923 and received a partial renovation in 1994.

Facility Size and Age

						Enrollment	
Name	**Address**	**Year Built**	**Re-novate**	**SF**	**Class-rooms**	**2010**	**2016**
Cheshire Elementary	191 Church Street, Cheshire	1922	1961	61,600	20	268	243
Plunkett Elementary	14 Commercial Street, Adams	1923	1994	88,300	35	594	451
Hoosac Valley MS/HS	125 Savoy Road, Cheshire	1971	2012	174,370	55	691	624

Although the project team toured both schools, the team was not tasked with performing technical analysis of the buildings, and did not do so. However, it was apparent from the walk throughs that both buildings need renovation, or at least a significant refresh of the physical environment.

A Statement of Intent (SOI) was prepared by the District for the Cheshire Elementary School and submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) in FY2014. The goal of an SOI – from a district's perspective - is to make the case that a project should be considered for State funding, and thus is written to identify as many building issues as possible to make a compelling argument for funding. Therefore, the Cheshire SOI offers considerable detail about building needs including roofing, heating/ventilation, windows, insulation, flooring, etc. – all of which point to the need for a complete renovation. However, a parallel document has not been prepared for Plunkett, creating a disparity in the information available about the physical needs of the two buildings.

[4] 78% of the project was funded by the MSBA, leaving approximately $8.9 million to be funded by the two towns. Annual debt service funded by a debt exclusion approved by the voters of both towns and the amount is divided proportionate to enrollment in the prior year.

Issues identified at Cheshire Elementary School as part of the SOI include[5]:

- Heating distribution system needs to be replaced;
- "Plumbing and room heating units are outdated causing rooms to be unreasonably warm or cold"
- "The roof in the 1923 section is an old built up roof with aggregate." The roof leaks and has no insulation. A new roof and possibly some structural work is needed;
- "The electrical distribution system is old and is in very poor condition";
- "The windows throughout the school are old and for the most part single pane offering no insulating value. The wooden sills and sashes are in poor condition and have deteriorated";
- "The ceilings and floors are in extremely poor condition. The floor tile is old and contains asbestos";
- "The walls have no insulation…";
- "The gymnasium was built as an addition in 1951, below ground level. The facility has been conducive to water penetration, leaking, and safety related to these conditions"; and,
- "All of the classrooms in original section of the building are 372 sq. ft. (*sic, figure should be 672 sq. ft.*) well below state recommendations…The nurses office is only 168 sq. ft., the physical therapy room is located in a basement area that has been cited by the state. Kindergarten and pre-school play areas are in the basement with improper lighting, flooring and ventilation…. The two bathrooms for all students in the 1923 section are in the basement…".

District officials also indicate that an existing ADA lift must be replaced at the cost of $68,000 and a new lift is needed to access the gymnasium; expectations are that this will likely be at a lower cost than the replacement lift.

Information on facility conditions at Plunkett Elementary School provided by the District indicates that several facilities issues exist there, including the need to:

- Replace an ADA lift ($38,000);
- Repair roof and ceiling of Boiler Room (TBD);
- Repair the slate roof on the gym/auditorium (TBD); and,
- Replace the rubber roof on the main building (TBD).

Additional information from the District offers details such as the roof contractor has replaced over 1,000 slate tiles on that section of the roof in the past 5 years and is recommending full replacement, and the roof over the renovated portion of the building is 25 years old and had a 10-year warrantee. In addition, the project team toured the facility and observed two exterior brick arches where bricks were at risk of falling (one was supported by a temporary wood structure) and was told of leakage in the walls of the wing housing the auditorium. It was also clear that the cafeteria was undersized for the student population (the school has six lunch periods from 10:30 am to 1:05 pm) and the project team recommended that the wall to what is now the computer room be opened up to provide more seating space. Bathrooms throughout the school appeared to be in working order, but very worn and in need of renovation.

Since the *Trends Report* was published, the Town of Adams has indicated that it has $130,000 in capital funds available to repair the roof and ceiling of the boiler room and is pursuing estimates for the work.

[5] ACRSD, MSBA Statement of Interest, submission date 4/7/2014, p. 12-18.

It is not possible as part of this effort to provide full information on the physical needs of the Plunkett Elementary School. Additional technical analysis will be needed.

Space Utilization

All three ACRSD school buildings are underutilized today. When evaluating projects for potential funding, the MSBA uses two separate space measures to determine the level of funding they will provide. A school district could elect to provide more space than the MSBA will reimburse for, but this additional space would have to be funded locally, as opposed to being funded by the State, or they could make an appeal for a special circumstance. The MSBA measures are used here to evaluate space utilization in ACRSD schools as impartial benchmarks; they are not intended to indicate that all facilities much match these benchmarks.

The first MSBA measure is a ratio of gross square feet of building per student, where the MSBA's ratios vary depending upon the type of school (e.g., elementary, middle, and high school) and the number of students projected to be enrolled. A comparison of ACRSD enrollment in 2016 with the MSBA measures for square footage per student by type of school reveals that all three schools have space in excess of what the MSBA would fund. Districtwide, the MSBA measures suggest that ACRSD should have approximately 247,000 square foot of school space. However, the District's existing space, which totals approximately 324,000 square feet, is 77,000 square feet greater than the MSBA figure. (A way to understand the magnitude of this space is to recognize that the excess space is approximately 15,000 square feet larger than the size of the entire Cheshire Elementary School; or, is just 11,300 square feet smaller than all of Plunkett Elementary School.)

Space Needs by Square Foot per Student Measure

				Gross SF/student			
	Square Footage	**10/2016 Enrollment**	**# Class-rooms**	**MSBA sf per student**	**SF needed (MSBA)**	**SF above measure**	**Actual SF as % of SF needed**
Cheshire Elementary	61,600	243	20	180	43,740	17,860	141%
Plunkett Elementary	88,300	451	35	163	73,513	14,787	120%
Hoosac Valley MHS	174,370	624	55	See below			
Middle School**	69,748	301		190	57,190	12,558	122%
High School**	104,622	323		226*	72,998	31,624	143%
TOTAL	**324,270**	**1,318**	**110**		**247,441**	**76,829**	

*MSBA standard for HS with less than 600 students is "TBD". For 600-619 students is 226 sf.

**Square footage in the middle and high schools have been estimated proportionate to the number of grades.

A total of 32,600 square feet of the underutilized space can be found in the two elementary schools, with the balance at the middle/high school complex. (It should be noted that the MSBA does not have a ratio for high schools with less than 600 students; that is negotiated with the MSBA on a case-by-case basis. However, for the purpose of this analysis, the 600-student figure of 226 square feet per student was used. This ratio is the largest in the MSBA's table of measures, i.e., space per student declines as enrollment grows.)

The excess space per MSBA standards in the middle/high school is not surprising given that the 2011-2012 addition/renovation was designed for a student body of 805 students in grades 6-12.[6] However, the building has never housed that many students since the work was completed.

Space Needs by Students per Classroom Ratio						
	10/2016 Enrollment	**# Class-rooms**	**MSBA student per classroom**	**Classrm needed (MSBA)**	**Classrms above standard**	**Actual rooms as % of rooms needed**
Cheshire Elementary	243	20	23	11	9	189%
Plunkett Elementary	451	35	23	20	15	178%
Middle/High School	624	55	23	27	28	203%
TOTAL	**1,318**	**110**		**57**	**53**	**192%**

The second measure used by the MSBA is the ratio of students to classrooms across a school building. (Note that the ratio of students to classrooms should not be equated with class size. Establishing class sizes is a policy decision made by district administrators and community members based upon student needs. The MSBA measure speaks to the size of a school building and what the State will fund based upon projected enrollment.) For this measure, the MSBA uses a ratio of 23 students per classroom regardless of the grade. At present, all ACRSD facilities have significantly more classrooms than the MSBA measures would suggest. (That said, the below analysis is greatly simplified from the spreadhseets MSBA uses to formally analyze a school proposal. These spreadsheets identify specific standards for different types of rooms such as art room, gymnasium, resource room, etc. based upon projected enrollment.)

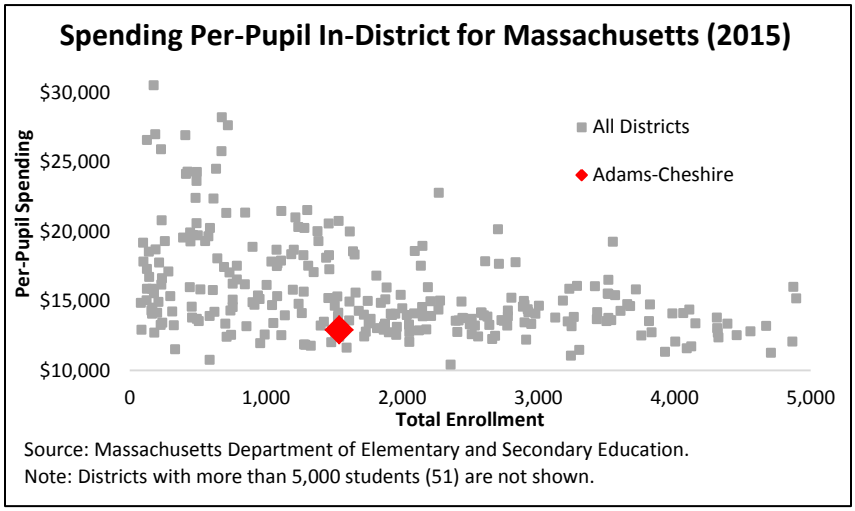
Specifically, the MSBA measure of students per classroom suggests that it would approve reimbursement for 57 classrooms districtwide while ACRSD presently has 110 classrooms across all three buildings. The middle/high school has the greatest variance from the MSBA measures, while each elementary school has nearly 2 times the number of classrooms that the MSBA would expect.

Financial Resources

In 2013, the amount expended per in-district pupil in ACRSD ($13,480) was nearly identical to the state average ($13,509) across all funding sources. However, average spending across the state has increased by $931 to $14,440 per pupil, while spending in ACRSD has decreased by $236 to $13,244. As can be seen from the graphic prepared by DESE, although ACRSD's per pupil spending in-district is not the lowest in the state, it is significantly lower than other schools in its same size category. However, even though ACRSD spends considerably less than the state average per pupil in-district across all expenditure categories, two areas where spending is considerably higher than the state average exist.

[6] MSBA press release, "The MSBA Helps Break Ground for the Addition/Renovation Project at Hoosac Valley Middle/High School", June 1, 2011, retrieved from http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/node/41705, January 2, 2017.

Healthcare Costs



Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
Note: Districts with more than 5,000 students (51) are not shown.

First, ACRSD spends $635 more per pupil on employee benefits and fixed charges than the state average ($3,125 per pupil in ACRSD and $2,490 for the state.) Review of the sub-categories within Benefits and Fixed Charges reveals that the District is paying nearly double the state average for health insurance for retired employees (+$432), and more for active employee insurance (+$181), and retirement contributions (+$89). The $635 difference multiplied by the number of students in-district in 2015 (1,393 students), translates into approximately $885,000 in spending above the state average in this category. District budget data reveals that in FY2017, ACRSD is spending 25% ($4.5 million) of its local fund operating budget on benefits, including health and dental insurance, retiree health insurance, pension, Medicare/disability, and unemployment insurance and worker's compensation.

Benefits and Fixed Charges Per Pupil Detail (2013-2015)

	Adams-Cheshire			State			2015 Difference	
	2013	2014	2015	2013	2014	2015	Amount	Percent
Benefits and fixed charges	**$3,030**	**$3,052**	**$3,125**	**$2,367**	**$2,434**	**$2,490**	**$635**	**25%**
Employer Retirement Contributions	$475	$441	$501	$404	$393	$412	$89	22%
Employee Separation Costs	--	--	--	--	$38	$37		
Insurance for Active Employees	$1,634	$1,675	$1,662	$1,417	$1,457	$1,481	$181	12%
Insurance for Retired Employees	$866	$884	$878	$443	$439	$446	$432	97%
Other Non-Employee Insurance	$44	$45	$42	$54	$56	$61	-$19	-32%

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Special Education Costs

Second, a higher share of ACRSD students have disabilities than found across the state (23% of students as compared to 17.4% statewide in 2016). Since DESE does not offer data on special education costs separate from general education costs, comparison to costs across the state is not possible. However, the District has provided data that indicates that spending on special education at each of the three schools and in central administration combined is approximately $2.75 million in FY2017 including grant ($570,000) and local funds ($2.18 million). Although all Massachusetts schools are grappling with the issue of increased cost of special education, at present ACRSD is spending 12.1% of its local operating budget on special education. Again, these numbers are not surprising, given the reduction of regular education interventions and preventative measure, along with the lack of focus on a funded professional development plan focused on bolstering the skills of classroom teachers with respect to inclusive classroom strategies.

District reports that in Fall 2016, a majority (155 out of 244) of students ages 6-21 with an IEP received special instruction or services less than 21% of their time, with the rest of their time spent in full inclusion with regular education classes and activities. Another 51 students received partial (21-60% time) special instruction. Only 34 had substantially separate (over 60% of the time) instruction, and only four students received services out of the district. The number of students with low levels of intervention call into question whether these students' need can be addressed outside of a formal legal document, (i.e., IEP) and instead met through supports found in districts across the state and the U.S.

Per Pupil Spending per School

When reviewing general fund spending by the District at a school site level, significant disparities can be seen in the level of funding received at each of the elementary schools. As part of the analysis in preparing this report, the project team received data on each school's budget and the budget for districtwide expenses. When the school-specific discretionary budgets (i.e., town financial contributions, Chapter 70, school choice, and tuition revolving funds) were divided by the number of students in attendance (excluding pre-K since that is only at one site), it become apparent that there are significant differences in the amount of spending per school. Specifically, local funding for Cheshire Elementary is budgeted at $9,635.42 per pupil, while Plunkett is budgeted at $6,498.49 per pupil. This means that Plunkett students in FY2017, are receiving $3,136.94 less in local funding per pupil than Cheshire, though significant grant and revolving fund revenues are expended at Plunkett as explained in the next paragraphs.

Comparison of Spending per Pupil (Excluding Pre-K)
(Local Discretionary Funds[7])
FY2017

	Budget	Students[8]	$/Student
Cheshire	$1,724,741	179	$9,635.42
Plunkett	$2,930,817	451	$6,498.49
Hoosac Valley MHS	$5,005,583	624	$8,021.77
If Plunkett was budgeted at Cheshire's rate			
Plunkett (revised)	$4,345,576	451	$9,635.42
Difference	**$1,414,759**		
If both schools were budgeted equally ($7,389.77 per student)			
Cheshire (equalized)	$1,322,770	179	$7,389.77
Plunkett (equalized)	$3,332,788	451	$7,389.77
Difference Cheshire	-$401,971		
Difference Plunkett	$401,971		

If Plunkett was budgeted at the same per pupil rate as Cheshire (i.e., $9,635.42), the school would have an additional $1.4 million in funding. If the budgets in both schools were equalized, as will need to occur now that the disparity has been identified, Cheshire's budget would be reduced by $401,971 while Plunkett's would increase by the same amount so that both were budgeted at $7,389.77 per pupil.

It must be noted that the District has deployed most of its federal grant funds to Plunkett Elementary including funding from the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Title I (*Education for the Disadvantaged*), and Title II (*Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals*) in the amount of $506,566. (Cheshire also receives $39,707 in IDEA funding for the pre-K program but that is not included in this analysis.). Title I and Title II are eligible to schools that have students from low

[7] Includes town financial contributions, Chapter 70, school choice, and tuition revolving funds
[8] Includes all students, including school choice since both elementary schools have 7 each and the cost impacts of deducting 7 students does not significantly change the tabulations.

income families. The Title I threshold is 15% of student population and Title II is 20%. Both Cheshire (28.8% economically disadvantaged) and Plunkett (54% disadvantaged) meet the grant thresholds, so the per pupil analysis above can also be done for all funds.

Comparison of Spending per Pupil (Excluding Pre-K) (All Funds) FY2017			
	Budget	**Students**[9]	**$/Student**
Cheshire	$1,724,741	179	$9,635.42
Plunkett	$3,437,383	451	$7,621.69
If Plunkett was budgeted at Cheshire's rate			
Plunkett (revised)	$4,345,576		$9,635.42
Difference	**$908,193**		
If both schools were budgeted equally ($8,193.85 per student)			
Cheshire (equalized)	$1,466,699	179	$8,193.85
Plunkett (equalized)	$3,695,425	451	$8,193.85
Difference Cheshire	**-$258,042**		
Difference Plunkett	**$258,042**		

Including the grant funds in the analysis would mean that the equalized spending would be $8,193.85 per pupil at the elementary level. Cheshire's present budget would need to be reduced by $258,042 while Plunkett's would be increased by the same amount to equalize spending between the schools.

It is important to recognize that the federal government prohibits recipients from using the grant funds to supplant local funding and instead the grants are supposed to be used to provide additional services/ academic offering to students. Therefore, the District should be very cautious about how it deploys these funds in a budget that include reductions in locally funded positions.

The reasons for the variation in spending between the two schools appears to be generated by at least two different factors. First, 14 of Cheshire's 19 (74%) elementary school teachers have 9+ years of experience. This puts them very high upon the salary schedule while Plunkett has a smaller percentage at that level, (59% of teachers).Second, differences exist in the class size between the two schools with Cheshire having classes ranging from 13 students per class (1st grade) to 26 (4th grade). At the same time, Plunkett's classes range from 19 (one 3rd grade and one 4th grade class) to 25 students (5th grade). Of particular note is the fact that three 1st grade classes at Plunkett Elementary have 22 students each as compared to 13 students per 1st grade class at Cheshire Elementary.

[9] Includes all students, including school choice since both elementary schools have 7 each and the cost impacts of deducting 7 students does not significantly change the tabulations.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

FOUR DIMENSIONS OF REVIEW

As part of the original scope of work, the Collins Center indicated that all alternatives would be reviewed through four lenses. These include:

- **Financial** – How does the potential alternative help improve the District's financial stability? What costs and savings are associated? Are outside resources potentially available?
- **Operational** – How does the potential alternative impact District operations, e.g., facility maintenance, transportation, administrative oversight, etc.? Are there operational savings involved, including saved time and money?
- **Academic** – How does the potential alternative strengthen the District academically? How will student learning be improved? Will additional supports, services, and course offerings be available to students? Is the alternative consistent with the District's improvement plan? If not, why not?
- **Community Values / Sense of Community** – How well does the alternative align with identified community values (see below)? How might it impact residents' sense of community?

In the Alternatives Analysis section below, best practices recommendations and alternatives will be reviewed through four lenses

IDENTIFICATION OF COMMUNITY VALUES

In recognition that community engagement is central to the success of any project intended to ensure long-term financial health and effectiveness of a school district, the Collins Center facilitated three "Community Conversations Regarding the Future of ACRSD". These public activities were intended to enable residents to share their perspectives in four areas: the current state of the district and the partner communities, an envisioned future for the district and communities, values and ideas that could contribute to desired outcomes, and possibilities and concerns that might influence future changes. Data from these community conversations was used to identify a wide range of values and ideas important to residents. The data collection and subsequent analyses are rooted in the principles of decision modeling, or the process of using data to inform decisions regarding short-term activities and long-term strategies that optimize objectives important to various stakeholders.

Data collection

Results from the three Community Conversation meetings were used to identify values, priorities, and ideas that could guide the development of recommendations for ACRSD. These conversations were based on the "World Café" model of community engagement (http://www.theworldcafe.com/) in which large numbers of participants are encouraged to share their ideas, concerns, and priorities in multiple small-group settings to maximize the level of comfort and willingness to connect with neighbors and friends in a non-judgmental and flexible environment. Three World Café events were held in the Adams-Cheshire district, on Saturday, October 22, Thursday, November 3, and Friday, November 4, 2016. The

first two events were open to all who wished to attend. Open meeting participants included current and former parents of Adams-Cheshire students, some ACRSD students, and other interested community members. The last community conversation was limited to students attending Hoosac Valley Middle/High School.

Each Community Conversation event was about three hours long, and consisted of an overview of the community, the school district and current challenges, followed by breakout conversations at multiple tables of 6 – 8 participants, on themes consisting of 'present', 'future', 'values and ideas' and 'possibilities and concerns'. After each conversation, participants were encouraged to circulate among tables to keep the conversations fresh. Participants wrote notes on large, tabletop graphics during the course of each of their conversations.

At the end of conversations three and four, participants summarized their thoughts in two 'harvests' and reported their thoughts out to the entire group. Harvest notes were captured on the tabletop sheets and also on a graphic recording at the front of the room that was created as people spoke.

Of primary interest to this effort are the conversations devoted to values and ideas. The questions provided to prompt and guide participant discussions were:

(1) Given the fact that hard decisions will have to be made, what do we Value? How might those values guide us?

(2) What Creative Ideas do we have to strengthen the District financially and help students get a great education?

Participants were encouraged to think broadly, and to focus on positive, forward-looking ideas. Conversations across the room were lively and no lulls were heard in the discussions. All participants were encouraged to take the opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Community conversation data were collected from the tabletop graphics and in the graphic recording captured on a large sheet in the front of the room, as recorded by a Collins Center team member. All impressions were transcribed into word processing documents.

Data analysis

The project team's analysis of the community conversation data was based on the principles of 'values-focused thinking', an extension of a decision modeling domain called decision analysis that was developed by Dr. Ralph Keeney over two decades ago (Keeney, 1992). Transcriptions of community members' contributions to the three community conversations were used to build 'values structures' by which the team could identify connections between 'fundamental values', or principles that that guide the participation of residents in the life of the school district, 'means objectives', or more-specific principles that can provide guidance to stakeholders on changes to consider for the district, and 'metrics', or candidate measures by which progress towards achieving goals represented by 'means objectives' could be measured. The team then used these objectives and metrics, combined with an understanding of the practical concerns associated with implementing wide-ranging changes to school district operations and strategy, to build a framework by which ACRSD may decide which particular recommendations made by the Collins Center team should be pursued, in what sequence and at what time. Implementation of the suggestions the Center team has created is beyond the scope of the current

project.

Findings

The table below summarizes the results of the analysis. It distinguishes between values findings associated with all residents (the October 22 and November 3 community conversations) and those associated with students (the November 4 community conversation), as the differences between these groups in age, life experience, and engagement with public education, may have perspectives that significantly differ. A 'core' fundamental value, or a statement of purpose that guides members of each group in their attitudes and activities with respect to ACRSD is recorded. Contributing, or 'means' values that contribute to achievement of the core fundamental value, and metrics associated with the 'means' values are also identified. Metrics can be used to evaluate progress made towards the 'means' values according to policy, operations and strategy recommendations ultimately selected ACRSD.

The Future of Adams-Cheshire Regional School District Values and Metrics	
'Core' Fundamental Value Maximize contribution of ACRSD to community sustainability	**'Core' Fundamental Value** Maximize student preparedness for the next phase of life
General Community Values • Strengthen local community • Improve educational outcomes • Increase district financial sustainability • Improve in-school experience • Increase system enrollment • Improve district administration and operations • Improve community image	**Student Values** • Strengthen community connections and values • Improve educational outcomes • Improve district financial sustainability • Improve in-school experience • Maximize community impacts
Community Performance Metrics • Student safety • Level of satisfaction with curriculum and programming • Educational quality • Level of engagement with the district • Level of satisfaction with the community • Perceived community quality • Building usage • Alternative sources of revenue • Budget surplus • Alternative district configurations • Level of employer engagement with the community, including partnerships • Attractiveness of district for employer relocation/expansion	**Student-generated Performance Metrics** • Educational outcomes • Student satisfaction with classes and activities • Community cohesion • Town population levels • Level of student involvement with the community • Educational quality • Class sizes • Breadth of offerings • Savings from school consolidation • Funding levels

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

COLLINS CENTER PRINCIPLES

In the course of gathering information regarding the schools and towns, but prior to identifying potential alternatives for action, the project team developed a series of professional principles to filter out ideas that ultimately would not be consistent with the Center's mission of:

> *…improving efficiency, effectiveness, governance, and accountability at all levels of government, with a particular focus on state and local government. The Center's aim is to enable public entities to provide high quality services to the people they serve on a sustainable basis.*

The identified principles and the thoughts behind them are listed below:

- **Acknowledge that change needs to occur** –As noted above, to date, the response of the two towns and the District to declining enrollment and increased costs has been to increase town contributions while also reducing the District's budget. Taken to their end, these trajectories will leave the towns without the capacity to provide other municipal services while at the same time offering students fewer academic offerings and services. Neither of these two end states is positive and, as a result, this principle acknowledges that a course correction is needed.

- **Maximize funding spent in classroom** – In all school districts, at all times, the goal should be to ensure that dollars are spent on students. This means that regular education supports, preventative services, and professional learning focused on the needs of students and creating classrooms where all students can flourish should be the priority for spending in a district and schools. In other words, dollars spent in central administration and in facilities should be reviewed carefully to ensure they are needed.

- **Use space efficiently and use the "best" space first** – this principle recognizes that space is an asset to be used, just as funding is used, to support student achievement. Studies have shown a connection between the quality of the physical environment and academic performance (see Appendix A); In particular, these studies have found that:
  - *Students in poor buildings tend to perform less well than students in functional buildings.*
  - *Most researchers found students in poor buildings scored between 5 to 10 percentile rank points lower than students in functional buildings, after controlling for socioeconomic status.*
  - *The difference in scores for students in poor buildings can be as high as 17 percentile rank points.*[10]

- **Place students at the center of all decisions** – By asking what is best for students at every juncture

[10] Earthman, GI, "Prioritization of 31 Criteria for School Building Adequacy", American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Maryland. Retrieved from http://www.schoolfunding.info/policy/facilities/ACLUfacilities_report1-04.pdf, February 19, 2014, p. 8-9.

in the process of deciding how to move ACRSD forward, it is hoped that common ground can be developed and the optimal outcome can be found. This may mean that individual preferences will have to be set aside in favor of student learning.

- **Rigor, transparency, and accountability in decisions** – This principle applies to all three governmental entities engaged in this effort, and to the project team's work itself. All need to recognize that if members of the public are not provided detailed information about finances and financial decision-making they can lose trust in the budgetary process and in the organizations themselves. This will make difficult choices even harder to make.

- **Consider a new concept of 'small-town' that involves collaboration, and does not emphasize autonomy** – The ACRSD represents a 50+ year partnership between the towns of Adams and Cheshire, and the District has been able to combine administrative functions, teacher oversight and academic offerings, and build an outstanding middle/high school. However, at the elementary school level, separation has remained. At present, the significant financial difficulties the District faces demands increased community collaboration so that an action plan can be put in place that will provide a high quality education to those students who rely on the District, even if this action plan requires that significant changes occur.

- **Provide 3+ classrooms per grade per school** – This principle has been added since the January 9th presentation to reflect the academic difficulties that arise in the operation of a very small school. Experience has shown that small elementary schools (with 1-2 classrooms per grade level) often fail to provide students with the full or partial inclusionary opportunities required for success. This then tends to result in more students on IEPs and more students exiting the building to district-wide or out-of-district special education programs. In addition, these smaller schools tend not to be able to provide programs and services (e.g., art, music, academic and social emotional support, etc.) in an efficient manner. In the experience of the project team, schools that can offer 3-4 classes per grade level have more opportunities for inclusion and support and can provide a wider array of programs and support in an economical fashion.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

This section provides a description of the various best practices recommendations and space use alternatives developed by the Collins Center for consideration by the Adams-Cheshire Regional School District and the towns of Adams and Cheshire. As mentioned in the Executive Summary, when the scope of the project was being developed, the task for the Collins Center was "to identify and analyze alternatives to reduce costs" and, at that time, the Center anticipated that it would merely identify alternatives the District could consider, but would not make formal recommendations.

Since then, the project team's thinking has evolved in two ways. First, upon realizing that per pupil spending at ACRSD is already well below state average, it became apparent that the project really was about identifying ways to improve the financial stability of the District. In some instances, stability may be promoted by reducing spending, but in other areas increased spending may show results that will lead toward improved stability. Second, while researching the trends affecting the District and towns, and the District's budget, the project team came across a series of areas where it would recommend action be taken even if the District did not have a challenge with student enrollment, i.e., there are "best practices" actions that the Center would recommend the District undertake regardless of the size of the student body. "Best practices" is a term used to describe efficient and effective practices seen in high performing organizations.

As a result, this report is not constrained to only ideas that reduce costs in the short term, it also identifies investments that are needed to stabilize the District and the potential actions the District may undertake are divided into Best Practices Recommendations and Space Use Alternatives. All will be evaluated through the lenses identified by the Center – financial, operational, academic, and community values/sense of community.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

BEST PRACTICES RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1: Transfer health benefits for current employees and retirees from the Berkshire Health Group to the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC).

Background

In FY2017, active employee health and dental insurance and retiree health insurance spending together constitute approximately 19.6% ($3.5 million) of the total ACRSD operating budget. Spending such a large portion of the operating budget on health insurance restricts the District's ability to spend on direct educational services to its pupils. Most active employees (92%) in the District enroll in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield Network Blue HMO plan, with the District covering 75% of the plan premiums and employees paying the remaining 25%. The District share of PPO and POS plans was lowered to 60% in FY2017, but relatively few active employees participate in these more expensive plans.

Comparing District health insurance rates with the State's Group Insurance Commission (GIC) rates shows that there are potential savings that could be realized by the District. The GIC was originally established by the State Legislature to provide health insurance to State employees and retirees, but as a result of recent legislation, it is now an option for cities, towns, and regional school districts. The GIC offers competitive and relatively low cost health insurance options through the use of co-payments and deductibles, its substantial negotiating power with 436,000 covered members, and careful management of those eligible for insurance. Analysis shows that this savings might be as much as $750,000 per year for the District (see below). In addition, it is estimated that employees and retirees will personally save approximately $325,000 per year on premiums with the transfer.

Actions

To move forward on this issue, the District will need to review the project team's analysis of potential savings with the GIC and compare it to what it would pay with the existing health insurer if deductibles and co-payments for services were raised to the level of the most popular, comparable GIC health plans. School Committee adoption of MGL c. 32B, §§21-23 allows the District to use a process to achieve these savings through negotiation with the Public Employee Committee (PEC), representatives from each bargaining unit, and a retiree representative. The District must also prepare a proposal to mitigate or moderate the impact of proposed changes on subscribers, particularly those with low incomes, retirees and those with high out-of-pocket costs.

If negotiations are unsuccessful within a 30 day period, then a review panel process is triggered with one member appointed by the School Committee, a member appointed by the PEC, and an impartial third member. The panel has the authority to verify savings calculations for both transferring subscribers to the GIC and implementing GIC-like plan design changes with the current insurer. The panel also reviews the proposed mitigation efforts to determine if they are adequate. If the savings are verified, the panel can approve immediate implementation of plan design changes or a transfer to the GIC if savings for the GIC option are at least 5 percent greater than the savings from plan design changes.

If the District officially informs the GIC of its intent to join before July 1, 2017, transfer can take place on January 1, 2018. This would offer ½ year's savings in FY2018 (approximately $375,000) and a full year's savings in each subsequent year. Considerable work will need to take place in the six month period between the notice to transfer and the actual transfer. Specific steps will include, but not be limited to:

- Review Berkshire Health Group agreement with District counsel to assess if the District will be liable for any penalties for withdrawing;
- Initiate the process to educated employees and retirees about the transition to GIC and schedule and hold health fairs where plan specific information is disseminated;
- Schedule an open enrollment period where employees and retirees select their new health plans; and,
- Work with GIC to ensure that all beneficiaries are documented properly and eligible for benefits with GIC.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td>Will result in the greatest cost savings to the District of all the recommendations and alternatives. Offers sufficient cost reductions that portion can be redeployed to fund needed investments and still reduce costs.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td>Substantial work will need to be done between June and December 2017 to support the transfer on January 1, 2018. This may require the hiring of limited duration support staff to assist the administration, employees, and others participating in the impending change. District staff will need to be trained on the appropriate forms and procedures to enroll new employees and transfer existing employees from active to retiree status.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td>Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability" and "Improve district administration and operations". See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td><u>Strengths</u>:
○ State process streamlined; if agreement not reached District can still move forward
○ Significant buying power of GIC is directed toward keeping costs down
○ If unsatisfied with GIC performance, District can pursue new plan, but will be starting from a lower cost basis
○ District and employees will receive savings
○ Has been done in many cities, towns, and school districts across Massachusetts</td><td><u>Weaknesses</u>:
○ Deadlines must be rigorously meet to facilitate rapid transfer
○ District employees will need to select new plans
○ Unknown impacts to employees' current health care providers</td></tr>
<tr><td><u>Opportunities</u>:
○ Savings are substantial enough to fund needed investments and still save money</td><td><u>Threats</u>:
○ Will result in change for District employees
○ School committees often have difficulty approving changes that affect teachers</td></tr>
</table>

Adams-Cheshire RSD Health Insurance Analysis									
BERKSHIRE HEALTH GROUP	**District %**	**Enrollees**		**Annual Rate**		**District Cost**		**Employee Cost**	
Active Employees		**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**
Network Blue HMO	75%	47	106	8,760	23,484	308,790	1,866,978	102,930	622,326
Blue Choice Value PPO	60%	4	1	10,356	27,816	24,854	16,690	16,570	11,126
Blue Choice Deductible	60%	1	0	9,492	25,440	5,695	0	3,797	0
Blue Care Elect POS	60%	3	4	13,068	35,052	23,522	84,125	15,682	56,083
		55	111			**362,862**	**1,967,792**	**138,978**	**689,536**
Retired Employees									
Network Blue HMO	75%	10	22	8,760	23,484	65,700	387,486	21,900	129,162
Blue Choice Value PPO	60%	1	18	10,356	27,816	6,214	300,413	4,142	200,275
Blue Choice Deductible	60%	0	1	9,492	25,440	0	15,264	0	10,176
Blue Care Elect POS	60%	0	1	13,068	35,052	0	21,031	0	14,021
Medex	75%	196	0	3,840	0	564,480	0	188,160	0
						636,394	**724,194**	**214,202**	**353,634**
Total FY2017 Current Costs							**3,691,242**		**1,396,350**
GROUP INSURANCE COMMISSION	**District %**	**Enrollees**		**Annual Rate**		**District Cost**		**Employee Cost**	
Active Employees		**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**	**Individual**	**Family**
Harvard Pilgrim Primary Choice HMO	75%	47	106	7,320	17,880	258,030	1,421,460	86,010	473,820
Unicare Indemnity Plan/PLUS	60%	5	1	7,860	18,792	23,580	11,275	15,720	7,517
Tufts Navigator POS	60%	3	4	8,232	20,100	14,818	48,240	9,878	32,160
						296,428	**1,480,975**	**111,608**	**513,497**
Retired Employees									
Harvard Pilgrim Primary Choice HMO	75%	10	22	7,320	17,880	54,900	295,020	18,300	98,340
Unicare Indemnity Plan/PLUS	60%	1	18	7,860	18,792	4,716	202,954	3,144	135,302
Tufts Navigator POS	60%	0	1	8,232	20,100	0	12,060	0	8,040
Fallon Senior Plan (Medicare)	75%	196	0	3,744	0	550,368	0	183,456	0
						609,984	**510,034**	**204,900**	**241,682**
Estimated FY2017 Costs with GIC							**2,897,420**		**1,071,688**
Assumptions:						**Projected Savings District**	**$793,822**		
Network Blue HMO to Harvard Primary Choice HMO						**Projected Savings Employees/Retirees**	**$324,662**		
Blue Choice Value & Deductible to Unicare Indemnity/Plus									
Blue Care Elect to Tufts Navigator									
Medex to Fallon Senior Plan									

*Tufts Navigator and Harvard Pilgrim are used as examples only; actual plans available will be determined when/if the District joins the GIC.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Recommendation 2: Transfer pension system assets from the Town of Adams' retirement system to a system with a better rate of return such as the State's Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT). (ACRSD is responsible for almost 40% of Adams Retirement System pension assessments for employees not covered by the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System).

Background

Pension-eligible ACRSD employees that are not covered by the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS) are covered under the Town of Adams' retirement system. However, as a governmental unit in the Adams Retirement System, the District's budget must fund 39.44% or $612,668 of the total annual appropriation required to fund the Adams Retirement System ($1,553,419 in FY2018). The Adams Retirement System receives and invests the contributions of the employees and participating governmental units and pays retirement benefits to retirees for the Town of Adams, the ACRSD, the Adams Fire District, the Adams Housing Authority, and the Northern Berkshire Solid Waste District. Adams is legally responsible for about 50% of the total required appropriation determined by the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC). PERAC determines the annual funding that must be provided annually to reach full funding by the FY2033, as determined by the Adams Retirement Board. The Adams Retirement System is one of the smallest retirement systems in the state.

Since pension costs represent long-term liabilities for municipalities and school districts, the rate of return on system investments is a critical factor in reaching a fully funded retirement system. According to data from the Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC), the agency that oversees all public pension systems in Massachusetts, the investment returns realized by the Adams Retirement System have historically not kept pace with the returns of the State's Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT). As of 2015, PRIT assets totaled about $60 billion, which enable fund managers to create a highly diversified portfolio that makes use of alternative investment vehicles not available to smaller institutional investors (e.g., private equity, direct hedge funds, timber, and private real estate).

Investment Return History

	One Year	Five Years	31 Years
Retirement System	**2015**	**2011-2015**	**1985-2015**
Adams	-3.33%	4.66%	7.69%
Berkshire County	1.17%	7.50%	8.95%
State – PRIT	1.14%	7.53%	9.49%

To illustrate the financial implications, consider the 31 year average rate of return for the Adams Retirement System (7.69%) in comparison to the State PRIT fund 31 year average return (9.49%). (The difference in investment returns was even greater over the most recent five years; with Adams averaging a 4.66% return between 2011 and 2015, while PRIT averaged 7.53%.) If a town had $1 million 31 years ago and invested it in the Adams Retirement System, after 31 years the $1 million would have grown to $9.94 million. However, if the initial $1 million was invested with the State PRIT, the $1 million would have grown to $16.6 million, a balance 67% higher than realized at the rate of return of the Adams System. While this is a simplified example that does not take into account the inflows and outflows of a public pension system, it shows what a powerful influence the system's rate of return on investment has on the system's fiscal outlook.

Actions

There are two approaches that local officials from the Town of Adams and ACRSD can take to improve the rate of investment returns for pension assets in the future. First, these stakeholders could meet with the Adams Retirement Board and recommend that they transfer custody and investment responsibility of all System's assets to PRIT. Alternatively, the parties could agree to pursue special legislation to eliminate the Adams Retirement System entirely and join the Berkshire County Retirement System. In the second alternative, the County would invest all System assets and administer pension benefits. Recently, another very small municipality (Athol) was successful in eliminating its municipal retirement system (Athol Retirement System) and joining the Worcester County Retirement System through special legislation. This legislation can be found at:
https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2014/Chapter360.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">The specific financial implications of the change can only be calculated when the new retirement system has been identified (either Berkshire County or PRIT), but either will offer a better rate of return than the Adams Retirement System. One of the areas of discussion should be the annual District contribution and the schedule for fully funding pension benefits.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability" and "Improve district administration and operations". See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Strengths:
○ District's annual pension contribution is a significant number and any alternative that could potentially reduce that has merit to be pursued
○ Improving pension rates of return will help employees feel that their long term needs are being taken into account by the District</td><td>Weaknesses:
○ Staff time will be required to determine the best alternative for the District
○ Special legislation may be required</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Opportunities:
○ A change in the pension plan to optimize the rate of return could benefit the Town of Adams, the Adams Fire District, Adams Housing Authority, and the North Berkshire Solid Waste District, which are all current members</td><td>Threats:
○ Adams Retirement Board may not be amenable to a friendly transfer to a new pension system</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 3: Undertake steps to reduce special education enrollment and costs to approach the state average.

Background

As mentioned above and in the *Trends Report*, ACRSD has a greater percentage of students with disabilities than the state average (23% as compared to 17.4%, respectively), and the number of students and percentage of total student body has increased annually since 2007. Across Massachusetts, districts are facing challenges with growing number of students being identified with special needs. Nevertheless, ACRSD stands out among the group as it has the 37 highest rate of students with disabilities among 404 reporting districts.

Certainly, there are districts with higher rates than ACRSD such as, North Adams (26%), Gloucester (24.2%), and Holyoke (23.3%), but it is the professional belief of the project team that these higher rates speak more to internal district processes than they speak to unique characteristics of their student populations. This is emphasized when considering other urban communities with lower rates such as Boston (19.5% students with disabilities), Brockton (13%), Lawrence (19.4%), Lowell (16%), and Worcester (18.8%).

In addition, ACRSD data indicates that most students with IEPs today require assistance less than 21% of time (155 of 244 students), indicating that significant accommodations are not needed for most students. This is further evidence that, in the absence of traditional supports, parents who realize their child needs some additional assistance have no other avenue but to pursue IEPs, or placement outside the district at a potentially even greater cost, to have those needs met.

Actions

To stem the growth in the numbers of students on IEPs and to begin to bring the District closer to the State average, a series of actions will be needed. These include:

3a. Create of a defined special education team chairperson structure, where a limited number of well-trained educators are the only people involved in team meetings with the authority to commit District dollars.

Depending on the structure selected, this could require the creation of a position or moving someone from another role. Training will be needed for the involved staff so that they can be informed of the new processes, roles and responsibilities, and of the supports available to students outside of the IEP process. It is important to recognize that an IEP represents a legal obligation on the District to provide identified services and, for many students, once an IEP exists it continues to be renewed. Services cannot be discontinued without a formal determination and signature of the parties involved. Instead, it behooves the District to strengthen the supports it offers outside of the IEP process and direct students and parents to those supports, as appropriate.

3b. Enhance data collection around special education to create indicated programming and other targeted interventions to reduce IEPs.

Data should be collected to examine how students are being referred to special services (e.g., teachers,

parents, others), the types of evaluations being conducted, and the needs that are being identified, etc. Regular review of these data will help identify when additional programming and other interventions are needed to provide appropriate services to students without requiring an IEP. Out-of-district placements will also need to be closely monitored as it is often more cost effective to offer programming in house or via a collaborative than through an outside placement. Data on students seeking outside placement and IEPs should be reviewed with principals at their annual review.

3c. Increase professional learning spending to focus on strategies for inclusion and meeting the needs of all students in the regular education classroom, creating or enhancing child study teams, and other topics designed to enable classroom teachers to better meet the needs of their students.

See Recommendation 5 below.

3d. Staff every kindergarten and first grade classroom with a paraprofessional, thereby reducing or eliminating the need for including one-to-one paraprofessionals in IEPs.

The benefits of providing students with appropriate classroom supports in kindergarten and grade one cannot be overemphasized. As noted earlier, school districts that provide the necessary regular education supports and interventions at these younger grades tend to see less of a need for 1:1 paraprofessionals and IEPs in the later primary and intermediate grades. Moreover, ACRSD teachers have indicated that more of their students are coming to school in need of life skills (e.g., learning to tie their shoes, washing hands, etc.). For these reasons, it is recommended that regular education paraprofessionals be deployed in each kindergarten and first grade classroom throughout the district, even though this could represent a substantial cost in the initial years of the program.

In FY2017, the District has 65 paraprofessionals budgeted districtwide (see Appendix C), 12 at Cheshire Elementary, 31 at Plunkett Elementary, and 22 at the middle/high school. While 23 of the elementary school paraprofessionals provide support to classroom teachers, another 15 are assigned to serve as one-on-ones for individual students. Over time and as appropriate based on student needs, the District should strive to reassign the paraprofessionals so that the maximum provide support at the classroom level. This will be cost effective as additional funding will not be needed, yet support will be provided to greater numbers of students and teachers.

The District presently has paraprofessionals budgeted at all 4 pre-K classrooms and in the 5 kindergarten classrooms. A total of 5 existing paraprofessionals would need to be redeployed to provide support to all of the 1st grade classrooms.

3e. Enhance the District's Response to Intervention (RtI) Tier 2 and 3 strategies and staffing to reduce number of IEPs.

As noted above, the project team believes that the increase in students with IEPs in the district is at least partially due to the decreased level of regular education supports available. When these supports are not available as part of the regular education program, parents and teachers will seek them through special education, thereby creating a legal mandate for long-term intervention. Providing increased support in literacy and mathematics, as well as through special education facilitation, will help ensure that more families can receive services without the need for an individualized education plan (IEP). These supports will also assist the District in improving student achievement overall.

The Superintendent has indicated that he will be seeking additional funding for Tier 2-3 supports in the District's FY2018 budget proposal. These requests will include:

- 1 ELA/Reading Specialist ($57,000)
- 2 Math Interventionist ($114,000)
- 2 Special ED Coordinators ($114,000)

The project team is supportive of these requests and recommends review of workload per position to consider adding more specialists in future years.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">Taking control of special education costs will require an upfront investment in staffing to oversee the IEP process and provide Tier 2 and 3 supports that no longer exist today or that need to be expanded. However, staffing kindergarten and 1st grade classes with paraprofessionals can be accomplished by redeploying existing staff were possible. A return on this investment will be seen in improved test scores and student behavior, with financial savings occurring over several years.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">A new review process for IEPs will need to be implemented and all teachers trained on services that are available outside of the IEP process. Over time, teachers will receive additional in-classroom support via the deployment of paraprofessionals.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">The academic benefits of the actions designed to bring the District's special needs numbers closer to the state average are multifold. First, the District will be reinstituting, and hopefully expanding, Tier 2 and 3 supports that can benefit all students and positively influence test scores. Second, the assignment of paraprofessionals in all kindergarten and 1st grade classes will help students become accustomed to classroom expectations and allow them focus on learning. Teachers will be better able to divide the class into sub-groups so that learning can be better tailored to student needs. All students will benefit if those with behavioral challenges have the support that they need.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of "Improve in-school experience" and "Improve district financial sustainability". See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">No impact on class size, but as the District focuses on inclusion, classroom diversity can increase.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Strengths</u>:
○ This series of actions will directly target one of the Districts greatest cost drivers – rapidly escalating special needs costs
○ All students will benefit from additional supports and will benefit as students with behavioral challenges get the support that they need</td><td><u>Weaknesses</u>:
○ Parents will need to feel confident that the District will meet their child's needs outside of a formal IEP process
○ Costs will increase over the near term to create the chairperson structure and create Tier 2 and 3 supports</td></tr>
</table>

○ With the support of paraprofessionals, teachers will have greater capacity to work with individual students and sub-groups in the classroom to meet their unique needs	
Opportunities: ○ Academic performance of all District students can be improved, not just that of students on IEPs today ○ Improved supports will improve teacher morale ○ Parent confidence in the district will grow as they see the District meeting their child's needs	Threats: ○ Teacher and principal support for inclusion is needed ○ Low income and special education students should not be "blamed" for District budget concerns

Recommendation 4: Increase enrollment in the high school by increasing offerings and incenting students/parents to choose the regional public school for their secondary education.

Background

Declining enrollment adversely affects District resources in several ways. First, when students choose to attend other schools, funding is transferred to the school they have selected to attend. Second, fixed costs for electricity, heating, and even teachers and support services does not go down in a linear way so that the loss of 1 student in a classroom reduces all costs by 1/20th. Instead, a classroom will not be eliminated or a wing of a school closed until dramatic declines have taken place. Until then, costs will remain largely the same, but the revenues will go down.

A particularly steep decline in enrollment can be seen between 8th and 9th grade in ACRSD, when students move from the middle to high school. BART charter school and McCann Technical High School both actively recruit Hoosac Valley Middle School students to attend their programs; Hoosac Valley High School does not do the same.

In addition, course offerings at the high school have declined over time (as exemplified by the fact that only one language – Spanish – is offered at the school) and the school does not have any vocational classes (such as cooking classes or wood shop) as were typically found years ago. In addition, due to a practice in recent years to provide no substitute teachers at the high school when classroom teachers are absent, in the 2015-16 school year students had to attend 1,100 unplanned study halls (see Recommendation 6). Students are very aware that college admittance is highly competitive across the country and that they need to make themselves stand out among the applicant pool through their academic performance and extracurricular activities. At present, HVHS's schedule offers little variety or offerings that are cutting edge. Nearly all participants in the community conversation expressed strong dissatisfaction with the high school today and one student indicated he was in the process of transferring to another school to have more challenging work.

Actions

4a. Consider partnering with a local vocational school to provide programming not currently available at those schools or to offer satellite classrooms open to ACRSD students. Consider providing programming on own.

ACRSD loses a substantial number of rising 9th grade students to McCann Vocational School each year. While McCann does provide students with a quality vocational experience, there are vocational programs not currently offered by the school which are popular in many other vocational schools and which train students for jobs that exist in Massachusetts (e.g., biotechnology, environmental science, etc.). Moreover, the Commonwealth has prioritized creating additional seats in vocational schools/programs through grant funding, given the number of students currently on waiting lists across the state. It is believed that the grants will be designed to reward partnership, so ACRSD staff should approach McCann and other vocational schools to discuss how they could collaborate.

4b. Actively strive to retain 7-8th graders as they move to high school (e.g., allow to participate in appropriate extracurricular activities with high school students, have high school student liaisons visit the middle school, take middle school students on tour and allow to sit in classes; allow adequately

prepared middle school students to take classes at the high school.

Students at the community conversation reported that they felt that high school officials had not reached out to them much regarding offerings at the high school when they were in 7th and 8th grade – even though they are located in the same building. They did acknowledge that they were able participate in some extra-curricular activities with the high school students, which they appreciated, but they indicated they would have liked more interaction, tours, and visits from older students as they were deciding where to go for 9th grade.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">Increasing enrollment at the high school will over time benefit District revenues as students decide not to choose another high school and choice-in students select Hoosac Valley HS. Grant funds are available to fund vocational offerings, including capital costs, as this is a high priority for the state. Costs for increasing marketing to middle schools is largely staff time, although some written materials may be needed.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">Reducing underutilized space will be better for school operations and will reduce the cost per pupil for fixed costs like electricity and heating.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">Academic offerings are very constrained due to the small size of the student body. As District resources become healthier and enrollment grows, the District should strive to offer distinctive and challenging new classes. A student survey could be used to find out what types of classes the students would like to see.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of “Improve educational outcomes” and “Improve community image”. See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">The District can monitor class sizes as students select courses and ensure that class size is appropriate for the subject matter.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Strengths</u>:
○ Will ensure the great space in the building is used by age groups that can best benefit
○ Revenue increases with increased enrollment
○ More academic and extra-curricular offerings possible with more students</td><td><u>Weaknesses</u>:
○ High school administrators will need to change the way they do business and begin to market to middle school students
○ Considerable work will be needed to apply for grant funds and begin to offer some vocational classes</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Opportunities</u>:
○ HVHS can be reenergized by a larger student body
○ Enthusiastic teachers and students will improve test scores</td><td><u>Threats</u>:
○ Potential complacency by high school administrators
○ Potential obstacles created by middle school administrators</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 5: Increase District-wide funding for professional learning to support District goals.

Background

Although increased funding for professional development is clearly needed, spending more money alone will not make a difference for students and achievement levels. The system must target additional spending to school and District goals that are focused on all students succeeding in the regular education classroom, as well as in special education settings. Furthermore, so that the public feels comfortable with the investment, the District must be transparent in reporting how these dollars are being spent, and should provide regular updates on the metrics established with respect to the school and District goals.

Actions

Each year as part of the budget development process, District administrators should identify the goals for the upcoming year, the amount of professional development needed, and how the professional development will support progress in meeting the goal.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td>Cost of $25,000-$30,000.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td>Training that focuses on District goals, such as improving literacy, should show results in student test scores. It will take several years for the full benefit to be shown.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td>Consistent with values of “Improve educational outcomes” and “Improve in-school experience”. See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Strengths:
○ The best way to approve student achievement is to better equip teachers to assist in their learning
○ Modest investment can show results if is targeted and aligned with annual goals</td><td>Weaknesses:
○ Amount proposed is still very low</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities:
○ Train-the-trainer model should be used where teachers are expected to train each other or at least report back on outside trainings they attend
○ Site visits to other districts/schools with quality programs is encouraged</td><td>Threats:
○ If annual goals are not sufficiently focused and professional development dollars targeted, the investment will not show results</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 6: Reduce teacher absenteeism and provide funding for teacher substitutes as needed.

Background

During the community conversation with HVMHS students and in a meeting with teachers, the project team learned that the District did not provide funding for substitute teachers at the high school level (or at least high school administrators were directed not to spend money on substitutes), meaning that whenever a teacher was absent, the students in the classes he/she taught had to go to unplanned study halls. One student remarked that there was a day last year when she only had one class and another remarked that the day of the community conversation he only had 2 classes. The students further reported that they were expected to learn the class curriculum on their own when the teacher was out.

Upon inquiry, the District reported that, in the 2015-16 school year, 220 teacher absences at the middle/high school resulted in 1,100 unplanned study hall periods, and as of the end of November 2016, there were 48 teacher absences translating into 240 unplanned study halls.

Absenteeism at any grade level affects the District's budget as a substitute must be brought in and continuity in student learning is lost, even when a substitute is available for the day.

Actions

The District should consider long-term steps to reduce teacher absenteeism and ensure that students have access to qualified teachers in every class every day. Suggestions regarding steps that could be taken through the collective bargaining process are included within Recommendation 6a below. However, more immediate actions should be taken to ensure that students have access to their scheduled courses on a daily basis. Specifically, classes must be covered by qualified teachers, whether they are substitutes or regular teachers (using the current collective bargaining contract language). This language reads as follows:

> "If a teacher is ill or otherwise unavailable, the District shall diligently seek to provide a substitute teacher or such other professional or paraprofessional services, as the District deems appropriate. If such substitute is not available, a teacher from within the system may be required to so substitute. provided, however, that such substitution shall be distributed upon an equitable basis."

6a. Closely monitor teacher attendance data to identify strategies to reduce absenteeism and amend contract to incentivize attendance.

Monitoring attendance data will reveal if patterns exist in teacher absences, such as absences on Fridays or Mondays, or in advance or after a holiday or school vacation. However, the bargaining agreement could be strengthened in a number of areas to the benefit of the District and its teachers. Areas for discussion include:

- If possible, negotiate a reduction in the number of personal days from five (5) to four (4). Consider allowing the use of sick leave for family illness (up to five days, with possibility of requesting more time from the Superintendent) instead of personal days.
- Continue to allow personal days to be rolled into accumulated sick time at the end of the year.

Consider removing the "up to two days per year" cap as it incentivizes teachers to use the other personal days during the school year.

- Revise the yearly compensation program so that teachers may sell unused sick/personal days back to the District at a rate of $25 per day up to a maximum of $250 per year. While this will cost more on an annual basis, it will reduce the long-term liability associated with sick/personal days.
- Establish a program to allow teachers to be compensated for unused sick/personal days at retirement. Consider the following structure: $0 per day for the first 50 sick/personal days; $50 per day for sick/personal days 51 through 150; $75 per day for sick/personal days 151 through 200.
- Incorporate language that allows the District to meet with teachers for the purpose of potential discipline where a "pattern" of abuse of sick days can be established. A pattern of abuse could consist of, but is not limited to, the following: Mondays and/or Fridays, days before and after a holiday, etc.
- Establish a restriction in the use of personal days after June 1st.
- Restrain the allowable percentage of teachers using personal days on any given day to 10 percent.

6b. Consider utilizing the language from the collective bargaining agreement to have teachers who have free periods cover classes during colleague absences.

As noted above, the current collective bargaining agreement provides an opportunity to have teachers in the building substitute when colleagues are absent or unavailable. While the language requires that the District "diligently" seek to obtain substitute teachers, it does provide a coverage option that is not available in other school systems. The District should work with the teachers' union to clarify this language and create additional parameters that better define key terms (e.g., diligently, equitable basis, etc.).

6c. At a minimum, cover classes that contribute to improvement to current Level 3 status of schools (e.g., English, mathematics, and science).

If the District must prioritize when to bring in substitutes and/or provide teacher coverage of classes, leaders should prioritize English, mathematics, and science classes, given their impact on the overall school and district rating system. While this prioritization is less than optimal, it may need to be part of the short-term strategy until some of the longer term recommendations can be bargained and implemented.

6d. Consider hiring permanent substitutes at the middle/high school level. When not needed on a particular day, substitutes can assist teachers in the classroom.

Depending on what an analysis of current absenteeism patterns reveals, another effective strategy for ensuring that classes are covered could be the employment of daily (permanent) substitutes. These individuals, who should be people licensed in English, mathematics, and/or science, can then be deployed within the building (or district) quickly and efficiently when the need arises. In addition, these positions provide the added benefit of allowing building leadership to have additional supports available on days when all teachers are present.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">Increased funding will be needed for substitutes at the high school, but this should contribute to improved student satisfaction and performance. Establishing contract provisions to allow teachers to sell back unused sick leave will increase the annual payments, but reduce a long term District liability that is particularly impactful when teachers retire.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">As teacher absences decline, student performance should improve as continuity in the classroom is maintained.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of “Improve educational outcomes” and “Improve in-school experience”. See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Strengths</u>:
Having qualified, motivated teachers in the classroom is the most important tool for improving student achievement
Incentivizing teachers to be in the classroom reduce the amount of funding needed for substitutes</td><td><u>Weaknesses</u>:
Considerable negotiation will be required to implement all of the recommended provisions
Teachers may be concerned by administrators increased attention to absences</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Opportunities</u>:
Having more teachers in attendance can improve morale as they are more engaged in their school
Students at the high school will feel that their voices were heard when they expressed concerns about the lack of substitutes</td><td><u>Threats</u>:
District administrators must be diligent about monitoring absences or else the culture change proposed in this recommendation will not be maintained</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 7: Control/moderate fiscal impact of future teachers' cost of living and annual step increases on the budget.

Background

Just under $6.5 million of the District's $18 million operating budget consists of teacher salaries (including salaries for administrators, paraprofessionals, and other staff bring labor costs closer to $10 million). As such, annual payroll increases for teachers in the form of step increases and cost of living adjustments (COLA) is one of the greatest cost drivers affecting ACRSD year after year. A review of the salary schedule for ACRSD teachers reveals a rather unique structure where the percentage increase between steps varies significantly based upon years of service and educational attainment (see Appendix D). A few observations include:

- Less tenured teachers with bachelor's degrees, who start at $39,023 in FY2017, receive step increases of less than 1% until they reach Year 6 of their tenure. This likely will impact their willingness to stay with the District, if other opportunities arise;
- A first year teacher with a masters' degree only makes $584 more than a first year teacher with a bachelors' degree ($39,023 as compared to $39,586). However, the annual increase for a teacher with a masters' degree is much greater so that by Year 6 the difference has grown to $6,404;
- A 9-10% single year step increase takes place in Year 8 of tenue, followed immediately after by an 8+% increase in Year 9. This means that teachers in these two years receive increases of between 18-19% of pay over these two years exclusive of any COLA increases; and,
- Year 5 for teachers with masters' degrees is another significant increase of between 6.5% and 7%, but is followed by a less than 2% increase in Year 6.

There are multiple issues with the schedule as it exists including the fact that less senior teachers, who start at a low salary, do not see measurable increases in pay until Year 6; specifically in the first 5 years of work, their salary only increases by a total of $1,500. If the District was in a hiring mode, it may be difficult to attract newer teachers. Further, if the purpose of steps is to increasingly value teachers as they get more experience, why are the steps for teachers with masters so much greater than those with bachelors – it would be more appropriate for the difference to be felt in the actual salary in the first year when their primary credential is their level of education, with the future increases being more or less equal as they gather on-the-job experience.

Another significant concern is the dramatic increases in salary that take place in years 8 and 9 of tenure. It is unclear why their value as educators would rise so dramatically in those years, and if large numbers of teachers reach those steps at one time, the impact on the annual District budget can be substantial and could potentially require the layoff of another position to accommodate the step increases.

COLA increases should also be carefully negotiated as the actual cost of living in the U.S. has risen less than 2% per year since 2012.

Actions

7a. Review teachers' salary schedule and revise to smooth out the steps in the schedule. Review top steps to ensure they are within areas medians.

Given the recommended substantial changes in high impact areas such as employee health insurance, it will be difficult for the District to negotiate significant revisions to the salary schedule for existing employees. Nonetheless, the District should pursue this change for new teachers or for new hires or those in the first couple of years of their careers (see Appendix E for options).

7b. Review administrative salaries to ensure they are within areas medians. Consider a temporary freeze on increases for non-union personnel.

As mentioned in the *Trends Report*, the cost of living in Adams and Cheshire is 24% below the state average. Local salaries should be calibrated to take this into account.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">Modification to the teacher salary schedule will offer some savings, but perhaps more importantly will provide greater equity among teachers and increase the incentive for newer teachers to stay with the District. Annual budgetary impacts due to steps will be leveled out so that one year is not significantly different than the prior.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">Greater equity among teachers should increase employee morale overall.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of “Increase district financial sustainability” and “Improve district administration and operations”. See. See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">No impact.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Strengths:
Will result in some cost savings
Will improve equity in teacher pay
Will make budget forecasting less complex and less volatile</td><td>Weaknesses:
Will require contract negotiation to address</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Opportunities:
By improving the pace of increase of less senior teachers, the District can incentivize them to stay instead of leave for other opportunities
Even if not discussed on a regular basis, the disparity in increase affects the morale of teachers receiving smaller increases</td><td>Threats:
More senior teachers or those with 5-7 years of service will not want to lose significant increases currently in place in Years 8 and 9</td></tr>
</table>

Recommendation 8: Reduce number and value of stipends offered to teachers for particular duties, until District more closely aligns with state average.

Background

District data indicates that the FY2017 budget incorporates approximately $190,000 budgeted for stipends ranging from less than $100 for testing, summer program prep, homework help, and MKEA help, among others to over $5,000 for the athletic director, football director, band director, IT support, and teachers with sheltered English immersion endorsements (SEI) (see Appendix F). In some instances, positions that would be full time in a larger district are stipended in ACRSD, such as the Title I director. Nevertheless, this is a significant budgetary item and should be reviewed with a goal of bringing the District closer to the state average.

Actions

Each stipend should be reviewed in terms of whether it continues to be needed, the amount of hours needed to undertake the responsibilities, and whether it should be continued.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	Financially this may offer modest budget relief, but in some organizations, the numbers of stipends continue to grow to the point that staff expect to receive a stipend for increasingly modest tasks.
Operations	No impact
Academic	Many of the stipends are for extracurricular activities and the level student participation should be considered when determining whether to continue the stipend. Community volunteers may be willing to offer oversight of an extracurricular activity (after proper screening) at little or no cost
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Improve community image". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	No impact
Class Size	No impact

SWOT ANALYSIS	
Strengths: ○ Will have a modest financial impact ○ Could encourage teachers and others to participate at no cost in support of the District and students	Weaknesses: ○ Recipients of stipends will not want to lose them
Opportunities: ○ The District could create a culture where staff participate voluntarily in activities because they are enthusiastic about where the District is headed instead of participating because they are paid	Threats: ○ Staff who receive stipends may complain about the loss to students and parents

Recommendation 9: Develop or enhance the District nepotism policy.

Background

One of the issues that was raised regularly during interviews and the community conversations was the need for a nepotism policy for the District. While much of what was heard was anecdotal in nature, the clear perception is that ACRSD has a practice of giving preferential hiring treatment to relatives and friends of current employees. While this may not be the case, the perception that seems to exist throughout the community can only be harmful to the District's reputation and, ultimately, to students.

Actions

The District, through the Superintendent and School Committee, should take immediate action to craft and implement a nepotism policy for the schools. Model policies are available through the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and other school systems. The adopted policy should then be available on the District website and well-advertised in the communities. Furthermore, District administration should provide the School Committee with a public report at least annually regarding hiring practices, retention rates, and other aspects of the recruitment, induction, and retention practices in order to provide transparency regarding these important functions.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	No impact.
Operations	Hiring processes will need to follow the requirements of the nepotism policy. This may mean that the composition of interview panels, advertising of positions, and reporting to the School Committee may need to change.
Academic	No impact other than the perception of the District will improve
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Improve district administration and operations" and "Improve community image". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	No impact
Class Size	No impact

SWOT ANALYSIS	
Strengths: ○ This is a best practice that should be in place in all districts ○ Will increase public confidence in the District and its hiring practices	Weaknesses: ○ Once in writing, the policy must be followed
Opportunities: ○ Participating in thorough and transparent hiring processes can increase the confidence of the candidate selected and their peers	Threats: ○ Some candidates may not make it through the hiring process and may be disgruntled

Recommendation 10: To address the District's Level 3 status, develop and implement a plan of Turnaround practices.

Background

As noted earlier in this report, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) requires that Level 4 schools/districts develop and implement (for DESE approval) a redesign plan that addresses rapid implementation of Conditions of School Effectiveness, otherwise known as a Turnaround Plan. Level 3 schools/districts are responsible for using DESE's self-assessment process to revise plans and monitor strategies in the school and/or district. These schools/districts are also given priority for assistance from the Commonwealth and are eligible for technical assistance in special education if they meet certain conditions.

Actions

ACRSD should make the development of the plans/strategies document(s) a public, collaborative process. Furthermore, ACRSD should take advantage of the technical assistance available from DESE with respect to the development of these plans and in special education. Lastly, ACRSD should utilize the Conditions for School Effectiveness as a guide in developing its school and district turnaround strategies. Such a plan, developed in concert with the community, will have an increased chance of being embraced and funded by both Adams and Cheshire, by parents, teachers, and other stakeholders.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td>If the redesign plan identifies areas for increased spending, it may have financial impacts.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td>Implementation of a well-designed redesign plan should, over time, increase student achievement and reduce the potential for schools or the District to become level 4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td>Consistent with values of "Improve educational outcomes" and "Improve community image". See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td>No impact</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td>Potential impacts depending upon the redesign strategies selected</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Strengths:
Will show the parents and DESE the District's commitment to improvement
A collaborative process will encourage parent and teacher participation
A collaborative process could get business engagement and/or facilitate fundraising for particular actions</td><td>Weaknesses:
Considerable staff time will be needed to manage the development and implementation of the plan. The District has limited staff that can do this work</td></tr>
<tr><td>Opportunities:
Having a strategic turn-around plan is critical to begin improving student achievement.</td><td>Threats:
Past practices will likely need to change, including in the classroom</td></tr>
</table>

○ Developing and implementing it in an open way will help get teachers and staff on the same page and moving in the same direction ○ Will increase employee morale as a vision is put in place and student achievement rises	○ Teachers will need to work closely together to ensure continuity and consistency in curriculum

Recommendation 11: Continue to engage in discussions with surrounding communities around joining the district, negotiating a tuition agreement to accept a community's pupils in particular grades or otherwise sharing services.

Background

To counter the trend of declining student enrollment, the District will need to improve student achievement and encourage existing students to stay through their high school years. In addition, accepting students into available seats through school choice or tuition can help ensure that classrooms remain filled. In addition, the District could continue to see additional towns to join the partnership since many if not all are facing challenges with population declines and dwindling enrollment.

Actions

The District should actively participate in the Berkshire County Education Task Force efforts as they consider enrollment challenges across the county and also individually reach out to abutting communities.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	Increasing student enrollment will increase revenues, but caution should be taken to make sure that school choice does not create negative financial impacts
Operations	No impact
Academic	Larger student enrollment, particularly at the high and middle schools can result in increased offerings in courses and extracurricular activities.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Increase system enrollment". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	Potential change depending upon if other communities are added to the District.
Class Size	No change anticipated

SWOT ANALYSIS	
Strengths: ○ Increasing the size of the district and establishing a facilities plan that aligns with realistic enrollment can improve ACRSD's financial stability ○ Participating in broader regional efforts will strengthen relationships and produce partners to assist in these efforts	Weaknesses: ○ Adding another community will require modification to the regional agreement and a different leadership composition ○ Collaboration is difficult ○ Abutting communities appear to be investing in new facilities and may be unlikely to join another district
Opportunities: ○ The challenges facing ACRSD are not unique and through a multi-community partnership a broader solution could be found	Threats: ○ ACRSD may have to give up something (e.g., different number of seats on the school committee) in order to have another community join

Recommendation 12: Improve communication with students and parents, and increase their sense of commitment to ACRSD.

Background

ACRSD has experienced a number of years of uncertainty, regarding budget reductions and the potential for school closure. This, coupled with student test scores, can cause parents to consider other school options for their children and teachers to consider looking for new positions. Confidence can be restored and sense of commitment increased if, as the District strives to stabilize its finances, communication with parents, students, community members, and teachers is frequent and transparent. Communication, of course, flows two ways so information can and should also be gathered from these same groups as the District moves forward.

Actions

12a. Create and distribute an electronic survey to middle/high school students and electronic/paper surveys to parents to identify areas of concern to students and/or parents, and to gather positive feedback on accomplishments.

Surveys should be distributed to students and parents to understand their level of satisfaction / dissatisfaction with the District. Questions should be largely kept the same over a number of years to see how responses change, but unique questions could also be added to gather input into potential actions or activities that are unique to any one or two years. Survey results should be tabulated and reported to the School Committee and communitywide.

12b. Send a regular newsletter to parents keeping them informed about District activities and progress.

12c. Consider renaming the District.

One of the participants thoughtfully inquired as to why the District is still named for the two member towns and does not yet have a unique name. This is an important question and exemplifies the way the regional agreement has created a long term partnership, yet not fully integrated the two towns. Specifically, District policy JCA requires students to generally attend school in their attendance area, although the Superintendent can issue a special exception based upon certain criteria. While this policy is common across many Massachusetts school districts, locally, it has led to separation between students and their parents which make resolving the District's financial challenges even more difficult.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	May require a modest cost to access an online survey tool and make photo copies of paper surveys.
Operations	Someone in the District should be assigned to facilitate communication and outreach as a portion of their job.
Academic	Increased communication can lead to new ideas to strengthen academics and greater support for the District as a whole.

Community Values	Consistent with values of "Strengthen community connections and values", "Improve community image", and "Improve district administration and operations". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	No impact
Class Size	No impact

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths: ○ Regular and transparent communication is an expectation of parents and community members across the U.S. ○ Regular communication will strengthen the District and make conversations about difficult choices easier to have	Weaknesses: ○ Attention will need to be paid to communicating in advance of changes, as opposed to telling people after the fact ○ Staff will need to tabulate and report on survey results
Opportunities: ○ Having a community process to establish a new name for the district can begin the process of bringing the two towns together ○ A regular survey will let District officials know how they are doing and what the needs of their customers are	Threats: ○ A survey could result in a series of questions and concerns, and officials may seek to downplay them, but should not ○ Individual-specific information should not be published in survey results at the risk of demoralizing staff or committee members

Recommendation 13: Create a Feasibility Study Committee and hire a consultant to determine the District's elementary school space needs and evaluate at least three scenarios for where those needs could be met: a) renovation of Cheshire Elementary School; b) renovation of Plunkett Elementary School; and, c) construction of a new school or addition at the Hoosac Valley Middle/High School campus.

Background

As noted above and in the *Trends Report*, it is the position of the project team that both elementary schools require significant capital investment to make them state-of-the-art and to support the academic turnaround that is necessary at this time. Give this, the space use alternative (see alternatives below) ultimately selected by the School Committee as a result of this process need not be the end state for the District. Instead, the School Committee could select a temporary space utilization plan with the intent to engage in a process to renovate an existing elementary school or construct a new school to serve the student population.

As part of its process, the MSBA requires that each district seeking funding form Feasibility Study Committee and prepare a Statement of Interest (SOI) that describes the physical challenges facing one or more of its facilities. If a district is accepted into the MSBA process, it is then be required to explore multiple alternatives to determine the one that best meets the academic goals of the district in the most cost effective manner. After communication with the MSBA to discuss the appropriate approach, ACRSD could submit a SOI that articulates the space issues with both buildings so that both communities have a full understanding of the buildings' needs. Then, the District could explore at least four alternatives:

- Renovate Cheshire Elementary;
- Renovate Plunkett Elementary;
- Construct new elementary school at Hoosac Valley campus; and,
- Build addition to existing Hoosac Valley Middle/High School to accommodate elementary and pre-K students

The MSBA has told the Superintendent and the project team that if the District needs to consolidate into one elementary school for financial reasons, they can still consider both sites as part of the MSBA process.

Actions

Engage in discussion about the appropriate size and composition of a Feasibility Study Committee and hire a technical expert to perform a comprehensive physical assessment of both elementary schools. To remain balanced, submit an SOI that covers both buildings so long as this approach is acceptable to the MSBA. Pursue a fully transparent and public process of information gathering and school design so that community members from both towns feel that they are well-informed and have had an opportunity to contribute to the selection of the best site and building design.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	Developing an SOI and analyzing alternatives for the siting of the elementary school will require a significant investment by ACRSD, the District did receive 78% reimbursement for the renovation at HVMHS. That said, the debt service

	for that project will continue for another 14 years and any new debt will need to be approved by the voters of both towns.
Operations	No impact
Academic	No impact during the Feasibility Study process, but with a goal to develop an elementary school facility that is supportive of high student achievement
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations", and "Improve community image. See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	No impact during Feasibility Study process, but transportation will need to be a dimension reviewed when selecting the preferred alternative
Class Size	Will be considered as part of design of building alternatives

SWOT ANALYSIS	
Strengths: ○ Initiating the process of developing a state-of-the-art elementary school may help parents feel more comfortable about short term changes ○ Ensuring that elementary school students have a high quality environment in which to learn will improve their academic performance	Weaknesses: ○ Considerable work will need to be done to assess the existing buildings, develop alternatives, and go through the MSBA process and the District has limited staff to do this work ○ The outcome will require another debt exclusion and voters may be concerned
Opportunities: ○ Ability to bring communities together to create a vision for a future elementary school ○ Opportunity to provide students with better learning environment	Threats: ○ Cost and time of process to identify and select the preferred alternative

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

SPACE USE ALTERNATIVES

At least four of the principles developed by the Collins Center address the use of space in District facilities and how spending on facilities affects other budget categories. These principles include:

- Maximize funding spent in classroom;
- Use space efficiently and use the best space first;
- Place students at the center of all decisions; and,
- Provide 3+ classrooms per grade per school.

It is with these principles in mind that the project team developed a series of space use alternatives for consideration by ACRSD and its partner communities. Using limited resources to support underutilized buildings is inconsistent with the principle of maximizing funding in the classroom, using space efficiently and the best space first, and placing students at the center of all decisions. In addition, depending on how underutilized a building, is it may not fulfill the fourth principle which is to provide 3+ classrooms per grade.

A series of community values were identified that are clearly associated with this difficult decision. These include: "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community". Moreover, one could argue that outcomes associated with the choice of any of these space use alternatives should be evaluated on the basis of metrics derived from the community conversations, such as "Level of satisfaction with community", "Town population levels" and "Community cohesion", as presented in Appendix B.

The alternatives below do not project any declines in student enrollment resulting from the changes under consideration. The reason for this is multifold. First, there is no way to accurately project how many families will make a choice to enroll their child elsewhere in response to ACRSD changes. Second, the ability to transfer a student to another district is contingent upon seat availability in another district, availability that varies year to year. That said, both alternatives for Hoosac considered below result in enrollment figures slightly above MSBA measures, so a modest reduction in middle/high school students can be accommodated.

Alternatives to Increase Enrollment at Hoosac Valley Middle/High School

HVMHS was renovated in 2012 for a projected enrollment of 805[11] students in grades 6 through 12. However, the school has never reached that level since the renovation was complete and now holds 624 students in grades 6-12. Since the school provides the best quality space for academic learning of all three facilities, two alternatives were developed that increase the number of students attending that school and take it from being underutilized to being fully utilized. These alternatives include:

[11] MSBA press release, "The MSBA Helps Break Ground for the Addition/Renovation Project at Hoosac Valley Middle/High School", June 1, 2011, retrieved from http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/node/41705, January 2, 2017.

- Alternative A1: Transfer 8th graders to the high school and relocate 4th and 5th grade to the middle school portion of the building; and,
- Alternative A2: Transfer 8th graders to the high school and relocate pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grade to the building.

In both Hoosac alternatives, 8th grade students become part of the high school. This offers them access to the science laboratories, gym, and other amenities available in the high school section of the building. District officials will need to determine which of the course offerings and extra-curricular activities will be open to them as well.

There are presently 97 students in the 8th grade, so this would bring total enrollment in the high school to 420. Since there has been a steep drop in the number 8th grade students enrolling in the high school in the 9th grade (see Recommendation 4 above), this shift will give all 8th grade students an opportunity to see what the high school has to offer them and may encourage them to continue with ACRSD until they graduate.

Potential Enrollment for Hoosac Valley Alternatives (A1-A2)						
	Existing		Alternative A1		Alternative A2	
Facility	**Grades**	**Students**	**Grades**	**Students**	**Grades**	**Students**
HVHS	9-12	323	8-12	420	8-12	420
HVMS	6-8	301	4-7	419	6-7	204
HV Elem					Pre-K*, K-1	219
	TOTAL	**624**	**TOTAL**	**839**	**TOTAL**	**843**

*Each pre-K student counts as ½ student as they attend school for half a day.

Using an estimated enrollment of 420 in each school and comparing that to the MSBA measure of square feet per student, it becomes clear that either alternative will fully utilize the space at the school. Of course, square footage is only a general measure and District officials will need to determine if the number and type of classroom will be sufficient for the potential number and grades of students.

Space Needs by Square Foot per Student Measure (HVMHS) Alternatives A1-A2							
				Gross SF/student			
	Square Footage	**Projected Enrollment**	**# Class-rooms**	**MSBA sf per student**	**SF needed (MSBA)**	**SF above measure**	**Diff %**
High School**	96,872	420		226*	94,920	1,952	102%
Middle School**	77,498	420		190	79,800	-2,302	97%
TOTAL	**174,370**	**843**	**55**		**174,720**	**-350**	

*MSBA standard for HS with less than 600 students is "TBD". For 600-619 students is 226 sf.

**Square footage for middle and high schools have been estimated proportionate to the number of grades.

<u>Alternative A1</u>: Relocate 4th and 5th graders to Hoosac Middle School.

This alternative will transfer students in 4th and 5th grades to the middle school. Students in grades 4 through 7 will have classes in the section of the building already dedicated to the middle school and 8th graders will move to the section presently dedicated to the high school. (The elementary school(s) will then serve students from kindergarten (or pre-K) to grade 3 as seen in Alternatives B1-2 below.)

The 4th and 5th graders will have access to the middle school gym and will share the cafeteria and library with the high school. A total of 215 students are presently enrolled in grades 4-5 which will bring middle school enrollment up to 419. No needed capital expenses have been identified, although it would be appropriate to relocate some play equipment to Hoosac for the 4th and 5th graders. The middle and high schools will each have a principal and vice principal along with an office paraprofessional and an administrative assistant.

Potential exists to also relocate the Pre-K program to a room that was originally designed for early childhood programming.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	No specific cost savings have been identified with the transfer of 4th and 5th graders to Hoosac. Potential exists for one bus route to be eliminated (see Transportation Impacts below.)
Operations	4th and 5th grade teachers would be relocated, but ample parking is available for them. The library may need to add new books for the younger audience.
Academic	The District will determine what classes and extracurricular activities will be open to the 8th graders in the high school. 4th and 5th grade students will benefit from their improved surroundings including better classrooms, a larger library, and access to the gym and ballfields. By bringing the students together, the District will be able to more efficiently provide student supports in reading, math, science, etc. and support improved inclusion with the greater number of classrooms per grade.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community".. See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	Hoosac is located 2 miles from Plunkett Elementary and 4 miles from Cheshire Elementary so little or no meaningful impacts are anticipated to travel time for 4th and 5th grade students.
Class Size	Class sizes for 4th and 5th graders will be equalized.

SWOT ANALYSIS	
<u>Strengths</u>: ○ Will increase activity level and vitality, at MSHS ○ No capital improvements needed ○ May encourage more students to stay with the district for high school ○ Centrally located school has sense of ownership from both communities	<u>Weaknesses</u>: ○ 4th and 5th graders will arrive at school earlier than they do at the elementary schools today

Opportunities:	Threats:
○ Ability to enliven MSHS by fully utilizing spaces ○ Potential to use early childhood room for pre-K	○ Parents may be uncomfortable having younger students at same school as older students

<u>Alternative A2</u>: Relocate pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and 1st graders to Hoosac.

This alternative will move the District's youngest students from the pre-kindergarten, kindergarten, and 1st grades to Hoosac. In this alternative, the pre-K students will be located in a room near the music rooms that was originally created to offer early childhood education to the high school students. According to staff, kindergarten and 1st grade would be most likely located in a portion of the building where the middle school presently is located and the middle school classrooms will be reduced to accommodate the estimated 200 students. Districtwide, there are 187 students in kindergarten and 1st grade and 64 pre-K students that would be relocated.

For those parents who drive their children to school, the site offers easy parking and dropoff. The potential locations for pre-K and kindergarten – 1st grade rooms are near entry and exit doors so parents will not need to come far into the building in order to drop off or pick up their child.

High school students will benefit as the District can begin to offer courses in early childhood education with direct experience possible by working in the pre-kindergarten room. This may encourage local high school students to remain with the district and will also draw in students from other areas.

No significant capital costs are anticipated. Some play equipment will need to be relocated for use by the younger students.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	No specific cost savings have been identified with the transfer of the pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grade to Hoosac.
Operations	Will need to create pickup and drop off area for pre-K, K, and 1st grade students. The kindergarten and first will require an administrator specifically for those grades. The library will need to add new books for the younger audience.
Academic	The District will determine what classes and extracurricular activities will be open to the 8th graders in the high school. High school students will have an opportunity to participate in early childhood education classes and direct experience. The kindergarten and 1st grade students will benefit from their improved surroundings including better classrooms and larger library. By bringing the students together, the District will be able to more efficiently provide student supports in reading, math, science, etc. and support improved inclusion with the greater number of classrooms per grade.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	Hoosac is located 2 miles from Plunkett Elementary and 4 miles from Cheshire Elementary so little or no meaningful impacts are anticipated on travel time for the pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grade students. They will be transported separately from the middle and high school students.
Class Size	Classes for kindergarteners and 1st grade students will be equalized.
SWOT ANALYSIS	

Strengths: ○ The District's youngest students will have access to its best facilities ○ The high school can offer curriculum and hands on learning in early childhood education ○ Will increase activity level and vitality, at MSHS ○ Little or no capital improvements needed ○ Centrally located school has sense of ownership from both communities	Weaknesses: ○ Will need to carefully allocate space to youngest students and provide separation from older students in building ○ Will require an administrator specifically for the pre-K to 1st grade students
Opportunities: ○ Potential to offer vocational program in early childhood education ○ Ability to use space designed for early childhood education ○ Should District enrollment continue to decline additional grades could be brought into the building	Threats: ○ Parents may be uncomfortable having younger students at same school as older students

Alternatives to Consolidate Elementary School Students

After either 4th to 5th graders or pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st graders are relocated to Hoosac, fewer students will remain at the elementary schools and they can be consolidated into one school building. Such a consolidation not only offers financial savings, it offers several academic benefits. In a district that is at risk for falling to Level 4, the project team believes such benefits should be weighed heavily. Benefits include:

- Spending per elementary school pupil can be adjusted so that students from both communities have a more equitable opportunity to receive services needed for success. Moreover, access to regular education supports (Tier 2 and 3) and specials (including art and music) is more evenly distributed in schools with three sections per grade level than in smaller buildings, where these service providers are often part-time or shared between buildings.
- Student to teacher ratios can be better equalized so that all students have the opportunity to be in smaller classes than are possible across two school buildings. Specifically, schools with 1-2 sections per grade level often see more variation among class sizes than schools of 3+ sections where variations can be more easily accommodated.
- Opportunities for inclusion, along with the resulting savings in special education costs, are more feasible in a school that offers at least three classrooms per grade level. Having fewer than three classes per grade level makes this more difficult because of increased variance in class sizes and less availability of appropriate supports in smaller schools (particularly regular education supports).
- Generally speaking, schools with 3+ sections per grade level are able to offer a more varied program of special programs and extra-curricular activities than smaller schools.
- Given that district-wide special education programs are rarely housed in elementary schools of 1-2 sections per grade level, there is often an inequitable distribution of these programs to larger buildings in a given district. This is certainly true in ACRSD, where all of the district-wide special education programs are housed at Plunkett Elementary.

Four alternatives were developed for a single elementary school building. In each scenario, District administration must be relocated either because Cheshire Elementary is no longer in use or Cheshire Elementary is the single school for the district and the space used for administration today will be needed for classrooms. These include:

- Alternative B1: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.
- Alternative B2: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.
- Alternative B3: Move all 2nd to 5th to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.
- Alternative B4: Move all 2nd to 5th to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.

In all four alternatives, which actually consist of two different grade configurations (e.g., Pre-K to 3rd or 2nd to 5th) in two different locations (e.g., Cheshire and Plunkett), enrollment is projected to be between 440 and 450 students, as compared to 662 today.

Potential Enrollment for Elementary School Alternatives (B1-B4)						
	Existing		Alternatives B1-B2		Alternative B3-B4	
Facility	**Grades**	**Students**	**Grades**	**Students**	**Grades**	**Students**
Cheshire	Pre-K-5	211	Pre-K – 3	152	2-5	123
Plunkett	K-5	451	K-3	295	2-5	320
TOTAL		**662**	**TOTAL**	**447**	**TOTAL**	**443**

*Each pre-K student counts as ½ student as they attend school for half a day. Existing enrollment at Cheshire is 243, but when pre-K is counted as ½, this reduces it to the true enrollment of 211.

Based upon current enrollment, if the two schools were consolidated, the number of students per grade and number of class rooms by grade would be as identified below. The average number of students per class would range from 19 to 22.

Combined Enrollment by Grade				
Grade	**2017 Enrollment**	**2018 Enrollment**	**# of Classrooms**	**Avg # Students**
Pre-K	64		2	
K	94	64	5	19
1	93	94	5	19
2	115	93	5	19
3	113	115	5	22.4
4	110	113	5	21.2
5	105	110	5	21.2
Subst Sep				

For the purpose of analyzing space needs for each of the alternatives, an enrollment of 445 students is used. This analysis reveals that while Cheshire Elementary will not meet the MSBA measure in terms of square feet per student, it does conform with the ratio of students to classrooms. In terms of square footage, the MSBA measure suggests that space at Cheshire Elementary will be used quite intensively under either alternative. Plunkett Elementary presently has an enrollment of 451, so the two alternatives under consideration for that site represent no change from today in terms of building utilization.

Space Needs by Square Foot per Student Measure (elementary school) Alternatives B1-B4								
					Gross SF/student			
#	**School**	**Square Footage**	**Grades served**	**Projected Enrollment**	**MSBA sf per student**	**SF needed (MSBA)**	**SF above standard**	**Diff %**
B1, B3	Cheshire Elementary	61,600	PK-3 or 2-5	445	160	71,200	-9,600	87%
B2, B4	Plunkett Elementary	88,300	PK-3 or2-5	445	160	71,200	17,100	124%

However, the discrepancy between utilization on a per square foot basis and on a classroom basis is due to the fact that the classrooms in the oldest part of Cheshire are 672 square feet in size when the contemporary measurement is 900 square feet per classroom at the elementary school level. Based upon existing enrollment by grade, the Superintendent indicates that 21 classrooms will be needed for the student population. Cheshire has 20 classrooms so potential exists for some reconfiguration of space to provide a sufficient number of classrooms.

Space Needs by Students per Classroom Ratio Alternatives B1-B4								
#	**School**	**Grades served**	**Projected Enrollment**	**# Class-rooms**	**MSBA student per classroom**	**Classrm needed (MSBA)**	**Classrms above standard**	**Diff %**
B1, B3	Cheshire Elementary	PK-3 or2-5	445	20	23	19	1	103%
B2, B4	Plunkett Elementary	PK-3 or2-5	445	35	23	19	16	181%

<u>Alternative B1</u>: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.

<u>Background</u>

This alternative will relocate all kindergarten to 3rd graders from Plunkett Elementary to Cheshire and is partnered with Alternative A1 which moves the 4th and 5th graders to Hoosac Middle School. In this alternative, ACRSD administration will need to relocate out of Cheshire Elementary since the space presently occupied will be needed for the school.

Student enrollment will more than double from 211 students at present to 455 (this figure counts pre-K students as ½ student due to their part-time status). This is an enrollment greater than the project team has been able to find historically in that school. The greatest enrollment found was in 1993, when 377 students attended the school and it included pre-K to grade 6. However, if the pre-K students are moved to Hoosac as is possible since a room exists for early childhood education that will lower the projected enrollment by 32 and bring the number of students anticipated at Cheshire down to 423, a figure that is still greater than the largest historic enrollment found to date.

While per MSBA measures the 20 total classrooms will accommodate the student body, rooms on the main level for art and music will need to be used as standard classrooms and those special classes will need to be relocated to the basement. As a result, some one-time capital investment will be needed in that area to provide partition walls between different uses. In addition, the building's long term capital needs will still need to be addressed in the future, including roof replacement, and issues with the heating and electrical systems.

<u>Reuse Alternatives</u>

In this case, the building to be reused is the Plunkett Elementary School. The building could potentially be renovated and converted into housing. Classrooms are approximately 900-1,000 square feet in size and could be transformed into one bedroom, or possibly two bedroom units. The units would be attractive because they are in walking distance of Adams center. Challenges exist because the local housing market is generally soft. The solid masonry interior walls offer good noise attenuation, but are difficult for wiring and telecom as would be expected in a modern housing development. In addition, Adams already has one school that needs to be repurposed and has been vacant for a number of years. Relocating the teachers to Cheshire could affect business activity in downtown Adams as over 65 staff presently work at the site and today are likely spend lunch dollars locally and shop at stores in Adams on their way to and from school.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	This alternative will save funds by reducing administrative positions from Plunkett, reducing one daily student bus, and increasing estimated transportation reimbursement in recognition that a portion of the cost of transporting students from Adams will be covered by the Commonwealth. One-time costs will include repairs to an existing ADA lift and installation of a new lift to access the gym and improvements to the basement to provide for additional classroom space.

Operations	The school will house a significantly larger number of students today which will impact the building's long term maintenance. It will be important to retain sufficient custodial staff to keep the facility clean and in working order. The school has limited bathrooms – one on the main floor and one in the basement – that will have to serve twice as main students as today. Analysis of cafeteria space will be needed to determine if other lunch periods should be added. Number of staff on-site will increase and analysis will need to be done regarding parking availability. The abutting lot serving a church could be a potential space for additional parking, but will require agreement from the church and potential payment. The play area / amount of play equipment should be enlarged for greater student population.
Academic	Academic benefits are the same for all elementary school alternatives and stem from the consolidation of schools, not from any one individual school site. See *Elementary School Alternatives* above.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	According to Dufour Bus, the longest route serving Adams children and bringing them to Cheshire will grow to 25 minutes, 10 minutes longer than the longest bus route for Adams children today.
Class Size	Class sizes will be equalized and will be approximately 19-22 students per class.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths: ○ Will keep elementary school in the center of Cheshire open ○ Large land area could allow for construction of addition in future (although must take into account the location and size of the septic field) ○ If on-site parking is not sufficient for expanded staff, can approach abutter to see if space can be used ○ Student transportation time will not be affected significantly	Weaknesses: ○ Projected student body will be much larger than today and greater than found historically ○ More classes will need to take place in the basement which is not an optimal location ○ Long term capital issues will remain; construction staging will be more difficult with larger student body and may require temporary relocation of students ○ Full renovation of school is needed
Opportunities: ○ Site has large grassy area and building could potentially be expanded after proper engineering review	Threats: ○ Some parents could choose to enroll their child in another district such as North Adams

<u>Alternative B2</u>: Move all pre-K to 3rd grade to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.

In this alternative, students from pre-K to 3rd grade would be relocated into Plunkett Elementary School in Adams. The alternative is partner to A1 which relocates 4th and 5th graders to Hoosac Valley Middle School. Cheshire Elementary would be closed and ACRSD administration would need to be relocated since Cheshire will no longer be available to them.

The anticipated student enrollment (455 students) is nearly identical to Plunkett's enrollment today (451 students) and is lower than it has been in the past. Classrooms range from 900 to 1000 square feet in size. Plunkett has a total of 35 classrooms which are more than large enough to provide designated classrooms for specials (i.e., art, music, etc.).

Although a portion of the building was renovated in 1991, that was 25 years ago and the building is in need of a full renovation or at least a refresh to bring it up-to-date. In addition, the school has an immediate need to repair/replace the roof and ceiling over the high-cost boilers and in the short term, to replace the building's slate roof and portions of the new roof. The cafeteria is not adequate for the school's size today as seen by the fact that the school has six lunch periods. The building is located on Commercial Street which is the main thoroughfare into Adams from the south.

<u>Reuse Alternatives</u>

In this case, the Cheshire Elementary School will be available for reuse. A potential use for the 10-acre site would be for multi-family housing, although site design would need to take into account the location of an appropriately-sized septic system. Senior housing, including independent and assisted living, should be considered as a possible use given that a challenge facing both towns is the fact that older families are aging in place and homes are not being transitioned to newer families. Since the Town owns the land, it could send out an RFP and include requirements in the proposal such as providing meeting space sufficient for annual Town Meeting.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	This alternative will save funds by reducing administrative positions from Cheshire, reducing one daily student bus, and increasing estimated transportation reimbursement in recognition that a portion of the cost of transporting students from Cheshire will be covered by the Commonwealth. One-time costs will include repairs to an existing ADA lift, relocating the District's administrative offices, and making short term capital repairs to the roofs.
Operations	Since the size of student body is remaining unchanged, no operating impacts are anticipated. However, administrators will need to ensure the safety of pre-K and increased kindergarten given that the school is on a large street.
Academic	Academic benefits are the same for all elementary school alternatives and stem from the consolidation of schools, not from any one individual school site. See *Elementary School Alternatives* above.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community".

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="2">See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">According to Dufour Bus, the longest route serving Cheshire residents is 20 minutes long. This alternative would increase time in transit by 10 minutes for a total of one-half hour.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">Class sizes will be equalized and will be approximately 19-22 students per class. However, additional rooms will remain available for specials and small group sessions.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Strengths:
○ Plunkett Elementary presently has the same number of students as proposed in this alternative
○ Student transportation time will not be affected significantly
○ School in downtown Adams will stay active and not become a maintenance/security issue</td><td>Weaknesses:
○ Long term capital issues will still need to be addressed
○ Full renovation of school is needed; depending upon the magnitude of improvement students may need to be temporarily relocated</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Opportunities:
○ Cheshire Elementary School site could be reused for needed senior housing</td><td>Threats:
○ Parents could be concerned about having very young students attend school on a busy road
○ Parents' perception that there is a difference between the two schools
○ Some parents could choose to enroll their child in another district such as Lanesborough</td></tr>
</table>

<u>Alternative B3</u>: Move all 2nd to 5th to Cheshire Elementary, and close Plunkett Elementary. Move District administration to Adams Town Hall.

This alternative is the same as Alternative B1, except that the grades at Cheshire Elementary would be from 2nd to 5th and the pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grades will be transferred to Hoosac. The savings in this alternative are less than B1 because a principal and administrative assistant would be required at Hoosac to manage the pre-K to 1st grade program.

REVIEW LENSES	
Finance	This alternative will save funds by reducing administrative positions from Plunkett and increasing estimated transportation reimbursement in recognition that a portion of the cost of transporting students from Adams will be covered by the Commonwealth. Recurring costs will include a principal and administrative assistant for the pre-K to 1st grade program. One-time costs will include repairs to an existing ADA lift and installation of a new one to access the gym and improvements to the basement.
Operations	Same as Alternative B1, except that enrollment would be slightly larger at approximately 445 students.
Academic	Academic benefits are the same for all elementary school alternatives and stem from the consolidation of schools, not from any one individual school site. See *Elementary School Alternatives* above.
Community Values	Consistent with values of "Increase district financial sustainability", "Improve district administration and operations" and "Strengthen local community". See Appendix B for details.
Transportation	Three tiers of buses will be needed: middle/high school, elementary school, and pre-K to 1 to go to Hoosac. State reimbursement is projected to increase. According to Dufour Bus, the longest route serving Adams children and bringing them to Cheshire will grow to 25 minutes, 10 minutes longer than the longest bus route for Adams children today.
Class Size	Class sizes will range from an estimated 19 students per classroom in grade 2 to 22.6 in grade 3. Rooms in oldest part of the school are 639 square feet in size which is smaller than contemporary rooms which are between 800 and 900 square feet each.

SWOT ANALYSIS	
<u>Strengths</u>: ○ Will keep elementary school in the center of Cheshire open ○ Large land area could allow for construction of addition in future (although must take into account the location and size of the septic field) ○ If on-site parking is not sufficient for expanded staff, can approach abutter to see if space can be used ○ Student transportation time will not be	<u>Weaknesses</u>: ○ Projected student body will be much larger than today and greater than historically ○ More classes will need to take place in the basement which is not an optimal location ○ Long term capital issues will remain; construction staging will be more difficult with larger student body and may require temporary relocation of students ○ Full renovation of school is needed

affected significantly	
Opportunities: ○ Site has large grassy area and building could potentially be expanded after proper engineering review	Threats: ○ Some parents could choose to enroll their child in another district such as North Adams

<u>Alternative B4</u>: Move all 2nd to 5th to Plunkett Elementary, and close Cheshire Elementary. Move District administration to 3rd floor of Plunkett or Adams Town Hall.

This alternative is the same as Alternative B2, except that the grades at Plunkett Elementary would be from 2nd to 5th and the pre-K, kindergarten, and 1st grades will be transferred to Hoosac. The savings in this alternative are less than B3 because a principal and administrative assistant would be required at Hoosac to manage the pre-K to 1st grade program.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="3">REVIEW LENSES</th></tr>
<tr><td>Finance</td><td colspan="2">This alternative will offer slightly less savings that B2 since a principle and administrative assistant will be needed for the pre-K to 1st grade students at Hoosac.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Operations</td><td colspan="2">No operational changes anticipated.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Academic</td><td colspan="2">Academic benefits are the same for all elementary school alternatives and stem from the consolidation of schools, not from any one individual school site. See Elementary School Alternatives above.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Community Values</td><td colspan="2">Consistent with values of “Increase district financial sustainability”, “Improve district administration and operations” and “Strengthen local community”. See Appendix B for details.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Transportation</td><td colspan="2">Transportation time for most pre-K students, who tend to be Adams residents, will be reduced when the program moves to Hoosac. Transportation impacts for other students will be minor.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Class Size</td><td colspan="2">Class sizes will range from an estimated 19 students per classroom in grade 2 to 22.6 in grade 3. Rooms are markedly larger than Cheshire.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="3">SWOT ANALYSIS</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Strengths</u>:
○ Plunkett Elementary presently has the same number of students as proposed in this alternative
○ Student transportation time will be reduced for most pre-K students; travel time for other grades will not be affected significantly
○ School in downtown Adams will stay active and not become a maintenance/security issue
○ Very young children will be at Hoosac, so concerns about Commercial Street traffic should be minimized</td><td><u>Weaknesses</u>:
○ Long term capital issues will still need to be addressed
○ Full renovation of school is needed; depending upon the magnitude of improvement students may need to be temporarily relocated</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"><u>Opportunities</u>:
○ Cheshire Elementary School site could be reused for needed senior housing</td><td><u>Threats</u>:
○ Parents’ perception that there is a difference between the two schools
○ Some parents could choose to enroll their child in another district such as Lanesborough</td></tr>
</table>

Transportation Impacts of Alternatives A1-A2 and B1-B4

The District's busing contract presently specifies 17 buses which traverse the two-town area in a three-tier pattern bringing students to HVMHS (7:30 am start), Plunkett Elementary (8:30 am start), and Cheshire Elementary (9:00 am start). The Superintendent met with the bus contractor to discuss the alternatives under consideration and they have determined that no additional buses will be needed and it may be possible to reduce the number buses. Specifically:

- Alternatives A1, B1, and B2, which transfer 4-5th graders to Hoosac will maintain the three-tier structure the District is accustomed to today and the tiers will have approximately 415 to 420 students each (i.e., grades 8-12, 4-7, and K-3). The number of buses could be decreased from 17 to 16, with a possibility to reduce to 15 after working with 16 buses for a period of time.
- Alternatives A2, B3, and B4, which transfer pre-K to 1st grade to Hoosac, will also maintain the three-tier structure but due to the unequal size of the tiers, 17 buses would continue to be needed. The tiers would be grades 6-12, grades 2-5, and pre-K -1. Since the grade 6-12 group will be so large (approximately 620 students), all 17 buses will be needed.

Transportation costs for students that live more than 1 ½ mile from school are presently reimbursable by the State in the amount of approximately $300 per student. For each alternative, differing numbers of students would be eligible for reimbursement and those figures have been taken into account in the cost estimates for each alternative.

Dufour Bus company has reviewed the alternatives and has not reported any significant impacts upon travel time from any of the alternatives[12]. While some routes may grow by 10 minutes, the company does not project any bus route being longer than 30 minutes, a travel time that is significantly lower than some bus commutes in urban areas with traffic and rural areas where large distances to school must be traveled. Specific changes include:

- More than ½ of pre-K students (38 of 66 students) relocated to Hoosac Valley will have shorter travel times since they are Adams residents;
- The longest travel times for Adams residents if they are transferred to Cheshire Elementary would grow from 15 to 25 minutes long; and,
- The longest travel times for Cheshire residents if they are transferred to Plunkett Elementary would grow from 20 to 30 minutes long.

[12] Email from Rob Putnam, Superintendent, to Monica Lamboy, Senior Associate, February 7, 2017.

Additional Alternatives

To additional alternatives have been requested by Adams town officials and analysis of them is included in this report. These include:

- Alternative B5: Move pre-K through 7th to HVMHS and move 8th to 12th to Plunkett Elementary.
- Alternative C: Create three separate districts (Cheshire Elementary, Plunkett Elementary, and Hoosac Valley regional) with a superintendency union to provide administrative services to all three districts.

Alternative C: B5: Move pre-K through 7th to HVMHS and move 8th to 12th to Plunkett Elementary.

This alternative would locate 834 students from pre-K through 7th grade at Hoosac Valley and move 420 8th to 12th grade students to Plunkett Elementary. It has not been fully evaluated by the project team as it does not align with the Collins Center's principles listed above. While this alternative will increase enrollment at the school with the best facilities (i.e., Hoosac), it will not be the best use of the school's amenities. For example, purpose-built rooms such as the school laboratories which have electricity and gas installed cannot be used by most of the younger children and the two gyms with locker rooms would not be fully utilized for the purpose for which they were built. High school students would need to be bused to Hoosac for athletics after school which would increase costs.

Alternative D: Create three separate districts (Cheshire Elementary, Plunkett Elementary, and Hoosac Valley regional) with a superintendency union to provide administrative services to all three districts.

This alternative would create three separate districts in the two-town area – one per school building. The grade configurations would remain unchanged. An extensive financial analysis was performed by the project team to determine the financial implications of separating the two schools from the regional district (see Appendix H) and a series of negative impacts were found:

- Per State statute, the superintendency union will have a joint school committee consisting of 3 members per town which will not reflect the relative population sizes of the two towns. The joint school committee will hire a shared Superintendent and will determine the cost of the superintendent and central office. Each elementary school will also have its own independent school committees that will determine each school's annual budget. The joint school committee;
- Cheshire's annual allocation will need to increase by approximately $201,000 to meet State required minimum spending. However, this will represent a $402,000 reduction in what is spent at the elementary school today. As a result, an increase of $603,00 will be needed to separate with the same level of services experienced today. The Town would also have to accommodate the capital costs for any renovation without another town partner;
- While on paper Adams' required allocation for Plunkett Elementary would go down based upon the Town's minimum contribution, spending in this scenario would fall from $6,498.49 to $5,959.26 per pupil, a figure that is $549 lower than the extraordinarily low figure spent today. As result, while it appears that costs for the Town of Adams would go down, the practical reality is that spending level is not sustainable without additional and dramatic cuts to the school's budget. The Town will also have to accommodate the capital costs of any needed improvements

without another town partner; and,

- If enrollment continues to decline, both towns will be responsible for maintenance and upkeep of an increasingly underutilized school building without an option for consolidation without reentering the regional district.

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDICES

A. Studies of School Quality and Conditions
B. Summary of Values and Recommendations
C. Paraprofessional Staffing
D. Salary Schedule
E. Alternative Salary Calculations
F. Teacher Stipends
G. Potential Cost/Savings per Configuration

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

APPENDIX A: STUDIES OF SCHOOL QUALITY AND CONDITIONS

Impacts of Teacher Absences

- Miller, R (2008). Tales of Teacher Absence: New Research Yields Patterns That Speak to Policymakers. Center for American Progress. https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2008/10/pdf/teacher_absence.pdf: A study of teacher absences finds that they negatively affect student performance, with every 10 absences reducing mathematics achievement by the same amount as a 2-3 decrease in teacher experience level. It also finds that absences appear to be in large part a function of the culture and policies governing absences at individual schools, rather than district-wide or region-wide conditions. This suggests that as many of half of teacher absences could be eliminated if schools develop incentives for taking fewer off-days (e.g. buy-back programs for unused sick days) or put more responsibility on the teacher for accounting for their absences (e.g. requiring them to report absences directly to the principal).

- Black, S. (2009). The Absentee Teacher. American School Board Journal, p. 48-49. http://elearning.nccsc.k12.in.us/pluginfile.php/93417/mod_resource/content/0/General_Information/The_Absentee_Teacher.pdf: Recommendations for reducing teacher absences include monitoring and reporting of absences to parents, setting clear expectations for teacher attendance and vigorously holding teachers to those standards, adopting incentives and rewards for high attendance, and scheduling non-instructional events so that they do not conflict with classroom time.

- Joseph, N. (2014). Roll Call: The Importance of Teacher Attendance. National Council on Teacher Quality, p. 1-14. http://www.nctq.org/dmsView/RollCall_TeacherAttendance: Study of teacher absences in 40 metropolitan school districts. Some strategies used by these districts to reduce absences include payouts for unused time off, rewards for high attendance rates (e.g. tickets to local events), and including attendance data on teacher evaluations. No clear associations were found, however, between different incentive/punitive policies and lower short-term absenteeism, though some improvement was noted in chronic absenteeism.

Impacts of Poor Conditions in Schools on Student Achievement

- Earthman, G.I. (2004). Prioritization of 31 Criteria for School Building Adequacy. American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Maryland. http://www.schoolfunding.info/policy/facilities/ACLUfacilities_report1-04.pdf: The author, a professor emeritus at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, finds that the physical condition of the learning environment influences student performance and educational outcomes. Specifically, his review suggests students in buildings in poor condition score lower on achievement tests than those in functional buildings. The conditions that he finds have the greatest importance on performance are (in order):

  (1) Human comfort – i.e., temperatures within the human comfort range as regulated by appropriate HVAC systems

  (2) Indoor air quality – i.e., appropriate ventilation and filtering systems also as regulated by appropriate HVAC systems

  (3) Lighting

(4) *Acoustical control*
(5) *Secondary science laboratories*
(6) *Student capacity – elementary*
(7) *Student capacity – secondary*

- Higgins, S. et al (2005). The Impact of School Environments: A Literature Review. The Center for Learning and Teaching, School of Education, Communication and Language Science, University of New Castle. http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/news/DCReport.pdf: The authors review the literature on the effect of school condition and design, including everything from mechanical systems to classroom layout. They find convincing evidence that while design and quality matter, though the magnitude of effects is heavily influenced by the context in which the school operates (e.g. a poor quality school may be reflective of a community in decline, imposing other ancillary effects on student performance). They also find, however, that small improvements can have a notable positive effect, as they signal to students that their educational environment matters.

- Cole, A. L. (2011). Critical Review of Elementary School Design. Architecture + Design Program, Department of Art, Architecture and Art History, University of Massachusetts Amherst. http://scholarworks.umass.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1749&context=theses: An exploratory comparison of two Massachusetts elementary schools with difference designs. The author contrasts a factory model school with an open plan school, and highlights how the two styles influence and are reflected in materials, use, flow, and functionality. Objective assessment of school performance, however, is not considered.

Impacts of School Performance on House Prices

- Haurin, D., & Brasington, D. (1996). School Quality and Real House Prices: Inter- and Intrametropolitan Effects. *Journal of Housing Economics 5*(4), p. 351-368. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Donald_Haurin/publication/4892839_The_effect_of_property_taxes_on_urban_areas/links/546427b20cf2c0c6aec4fd7c.pdf: Considered a foundational study of school effects on metropolitan house prices, this paper finds that school test scores are the most impactful variable to explain variations in house values. Specifically, each percentage point increase in the pass rate on ninth-grade proficiency exams is associated with a 0.5% increase in house prices. This effect was greater than distance from center cities, transportation accessibility, crime rates, demographic characteristics, average income, and presence of metro area cultural amenities.

- Nguyen-Hoang, P. & Yinger, J. (2011). The Capitalization of School Quality into House Values: A Review. *Journal of Housing Economics 20*, p. 30-48 https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Phuong_Nguyen-Hoang/publication/227419011_The_Capitalization_of_School_Quality_into_House_Values_A_Review/links/55d3943708ae7fb244f58c58.pdf: A detailed review of recent studies (from 2000-2010) on the effect of school quality on house prices. The authors find that, while methodological approaches and the inclusion of different variables greatly affect the outcome of different analyses, house prices are almost always positively associated with school quality, in the range of 1-4% increases in prices for each standard deviation (SD) improvement in test scores. Non-score measures of school quality (i.e. rankings), however, are not associated with differences in house prices in any U.S.-based studies (two European studies did find small effects).

- Clapp et al (2007). Which School Attributes Matter? The Influence of School District Performance and Demographic Composition on Property Values. *Journal of Urban Economics 63*(2), p. 451-466.

http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.534.2194&rep=rep1&type=pdf: The authors compare the simultaneous effect of school quality and neighborhood demographic characteristics on property values in Connecticut from 1994-2004, and find that the latter has more effect than the former. One standard deviation improvement in test scores is associated with a 1.3% increase in house values, while a 10% change in the share of African-American or Hispanic residents in the neighborhood are associated with 3.5% and 4.0% decrease in house values. That the effect of test scores is lower than in other studies that do not account for neighborhood demographic characteristics is taken as evidence that such characteristics are correlated with test scores and should be considered.

Impacts of School Closure/Absence on Student Outcomes and Local Community

- Bogart, W. T., & Cromwell, B. A. (2000). How Much Is a Neighborhood School Worth? *Journal of Urban Economics 47*, p. 280-305. https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2011/06/BC_neighborhood-school.pdf: A study of school redistricting (which included closing some schools) in an affluent and high-quality district in suburban Cleveland, Ohio in 1987. The authors use a difference-in-difference analysis of a repeat sales index to consider the change in house prices on properties that were sold in the 7 years after the 1987 redistricting, while differentiating between properties that did and did not change their assigned school district. They find that, all else equal (including changes in neighborhood and school racial composition, neighborhood characteristics, school test scores, school physical condition, and the addition of school bus service to the neighborhood due to redistricting), homes that did change districts had sales prices that were 9.9% lower (or $5,738) than those that did not change districts. The effect was found to diminish over time, however. The authors also found that introducing bus service to a neighborhood that did not previously receive it increased property values by 2.6%.

- Lyson, T. A. (2002). What Does a School Mean to a Community? Assessing the Social and Economic Benefits of Schools to Rural Villages in New York. Working Paper, Department of Rural Sociology, Cornell University. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED464777.pdf: Comparison of house values and other municipal economic characteristics in small rural villages in New York with and without local schools (though not necessarily as a result of school closures). Using descriptive statistics that do not control for exogenous variables, the author finds that small villages (populations 500 or less) with schools had a median house value that was 32% greater than those without schools, and medium-sized villages (populations 501-2,500) with schools had a median house value that was 16% greater than those without schools. Villages with schools also tended to have newer housing stock, municipal water and sewer systems, less income inequality (though not higher median incomes), lower poverty rates and receipt of public assistance, and higher employment – all of which may also contribute to the higher house values in these communities.

- Brasington, D. M (1997). School District Consolidation, Student Performance, and Housing Values. *The Journal of Regional Analysis and Policy, 27* (2), p. 43-54. http://www.jrap-journal.org/pastvolumes/1990/v27/27-2-4.pdf: The author looks at municipalities in Ohio, comparing those that share a joint school district with those that maintain independent districts. He finds that consolidated districts have larger schools, which correlates with lower performance on state proficiency exams (i.e. a doubling of school size resulting in 1% lower passage rate). Furthermore, consolidated districts have property values that are $1,344 less than independent districts, all else equal. The author concludes that $400 of this difference (or about a third) is due to the lower passage rate in consolidated districts.

- Billger, S. M. (2008). What Happens when the Local High School Closes? "Economies of Size" in Illinois. Working Paper, Department of Economics, Illinois State University. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.209.906&rep=rep1&type=pdf:
  Longitudinal data on public high schools in Illinois (excluding Cook County) reveals determinants and effects when a high school closes and students are absorbed into a neighboring school. Schools that closed had smaller enrollments, less experienced teachers, and were more likely to be located in rural/agricultural communities with little diversity and low incomes/higher poverty. After the closure, house values in these communities declined, but in strong housing markets (i.e. no effect on weak markets with already depressed prices).

- Hu, Y. & Yinger, J. (2008). The Impact of School District Consolidation on Housing Prices. *National Tax Journal 61*(4), p. 609-633.
  http://sites.maxwell.syr.edu/efap/Publications/Impact_of_Consolidation.pdf:
  A study of consolidating districts in New York State finds that the impact on house values varies with both the size of the district and economic condition of the community. In very small districts (enrollment <500), the impact of consolidation is an *increase* in house values of 24%, though this effect shrinks to 5.5% increase in districts with 1,500 students. Similar effects were found on building rents, though the magnitude was less than for house values. When median income of the community is included in the analysis, however, the effect of consolidation turns negative for high-income areas (though it remains positive and significant in low-income areas, and moderately positive in medium-income areas – see Fig 3).

APPENDIX B: SUMMARY OF VALUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations	Associated objectives/values from public discussions			Associated metric/attribute from public discussions			Constraints/limitations/concerns from analyst discussions		
	Value 1	Value 2	Value 3	Metric 1	Metric 2	Metric 3	Constraint 1	Constraint 2	Constraint 3
1. Transfer health benefits for current employees and retirees from the Berkshire Health Group to the Massachusetts Group Insurance Commission (GIC	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations		Budget surplus	Funding levels		Potential hardships for low-income employees	Town/district reluctance to cede authority	
2. Transfer pension system assets from the Town of Adams' retirement system to a system with a better rate of return such as the State's Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT)	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations		Budget surplus	Funding levels		Town/district reluctance to cede authority		
3. Undertake steps to reduce special education enrollment and costs to approach the state average	Improve in-school experience	Improve district financial sustainability		Educational quality	Funding levels		Limited staff for new SPED chair and committee	Limited resources to improve SPED data collection and analysis	Parent and teacher opposition
4. Increase enrollment in the high school by increasing offerings and incenting students/parents to choose the regional public school for their secondary education	Improve educational outcomes	Improve community image	Increase system enrollment	Educational quality	Level of satisfaction with the community	Attractiveness of district for employer relocation/expansion	Administrative time and costs to build and manage partnerships		
5. Increase District-wide funding for professional learning to support District goals	Improve educational outcomes	Improve in-school experience		Educational quality	Student satisfaction with classes and activities	[Community] satisfaction with curriculum and programming	Need metrics to assess effectiveness	Increased professional support costs must be offset	
6. Reduce teacher absenteeism and provide funding for teacher substitutes as needed	Improve educational outcomes	Improve in-school experience		Educational quality	Student satisfaction with classes and activities	[Community] satisfaction with curriculum and programming	Teacher opposition	Increased costs of hiring substitutes must be offset	
7. Control/moderate fiscal impact of future teachers' cost of living and annual step increases on the budget	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations	Improve community image	Budget surplus	Funding levels		District may be less attractive to current and potential teachers		
8. Reduce number and value of stipends offered to teachers for particular duties, until District more closely aligns with state average	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations	Improve community image	Budget surplus	Funding levels		Teacher opposition		
9. Develop or enhance the District nepotism policy	Improve district administration and operations	Improve community image		Perceived community quality			District may oppose intrusion on prerogatives	Administrative costs to draft new policies	

Recommendations	Associated objectives/values from public discussions			Associated metric/attribute from public discussions			Constraints/limitations/concerns from analyst discussions		
	Value 1	**Value 2**	**Value 3**	**Metric 1**	**Metric 2**	**Metric 3**	**Constraint 1**	**Constraint 2**	**Constraint 3**
10. To address the District's Level 3 status, develop and implement a plan of Turnaround practices	Improve educational outcomes	Improve community image		Educational quality	Level of satisfaction with the community	Perceived community quality	Opposition from stakeholders based on perceived stigma	Administrative time and costs to develop turnaround plan	
11. Continue to engage in discussions with surrounding communities around joining the district, negotiating a tuition agreement to accept a community's pupils in particular grades or otherwise sharing services	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations	Increase system enrollment	Level of satisfaction with community		Community cohesion	Town/district reluctance to cede authority	Potential adverse impacts on disadvantaged populations	Increased district transportation costs
12. Create a Feasibility Study Committee and hire a consultant to determine the District's elementary school space needs and evaluate at least three scenarios for where those needs could be met: a) renovation of Cheshire Elementary School; b) renovation of Plunkett Elementary School; and c) construction of a new school or addition at the Hoosac Valley Middle/High School campus	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations	Improve community image	Level of satisfaction with community	Community cohesion	Building usage	Reluctance to expend funds		
13. Improve communication with students and parents, and increase their sense of commitment to ACRSD	Strengthen community connections and values	Improve community image	Improve district administration and operations	Level of satisfaction with community	Community cohesion	Level of engagement with the district	Concern by administrators about level of community oversight/input into district decision-making	Additional staff time and resources to manage community engagement processes	
14. Space use alternatives	Increase district financial sustainability	Improve district administration and operations	Strengthen local community	Level of satisfaction with community	Town population levels	Community cohesion	Increased student travel time	Increased district transportation costs	

APPENDIX C: PARAPROFESSIONAL STAFFING - ACRSD 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Cheshire Elementary (PK-5)

Role	Grade	#
Classroom	Pre-K	4
Classroom	Kindergarten	2
Classroom	SPED Room	3
1:1	Pre-K	1
1:1	3rd Grade	1
	Speech	1
	TOTAL	**12**

170 students

Plunkett Elementary (K-5)

Role	Grade	#
Classroom	Kindergarten	3
Classroom	K-1 SPED	2
Classroom	2-3 SPED	1
Classroom	4-5 SPED	2
Classroom	Autism Room	4
Classroom	Substantially separate	1
Classroom	1st-2nd grade (title I)	1
1:1	Kindergarten	3
1:1	1st grade	3
1:1	2nd grade	2
1:1	3rd grade	1
1:1	4th grade	2
1:1	5th grade	1
1:1	Substantially separate	1
	Library	1
	Speech	1
	Student support	1
	Office	1
	TOTAL	**31**

451 students

Hoosac Middle/High School

Role	Grade	#
	Middle School SPED support	3
	High School SPED support	5
	Life skills	4
	High School EP Room	3
	Middle School EP Room	4
1:1	High School	1
	Library	1
	Guidance	1
	TOTAL	**22**

624 students

APPENDIX D: TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE - ACRSD 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Salary Amounts by Educational Level and Years in District

Years	BACH	B+18	B+36	M	M+12	M+24	M+36	M+48	M+60
1	$39,023	$39,394	$39,481	$39,586	$40,893	$42,219	$43,127	$44,453	$0
2	$39,394	$39,766	$40,476	$41,186	$42,510	$43,837	$44,746	$46,069	$0
3	$39,766	$40,138	$41,466	$42,798	$44,123	$45,449	$46,356	$47,290	$0
4	$40,138	$41,297	$42,992	$44,685	$46,012	$47,338	$48,244	$49,571	$0
5	$40,454	$42,703	$44,635	$46,572	$49,247	$50,572	$51,480	$52,806	$0
6	$42,382	$44,738	$46,761	$48,786	$50,178	$51,564	$52,471	$55,099	$0
7	$44,311	$46,770	$48,888	$51,004	$52,458	$53,909	$54,816	$56,267	$0
8	$46,987	$49,585	$52,785	$55,988	$57,459	$58,933	$59,840	$61,312	$0
9	$49,659	$52,400	$56,683	$60,970	$62,466	$63,961	$64,868	$66,360	$0
10	$0	$0	$58,379	$62,665	$64,320	$65,973	$66,878	$68,531	$0
11	$0	$0	$0	$64,951	$66,762	$68,577	$69,482	$72,434	$72,970
12	$0	$0	$0	$66,250	$68,098	$69,949	$70,872	$73,882	$74,429

Percent Increase by Years in District

Years	BACH	B+18	B+36	M	M+12	M+24	M+36	M+48	M+60
1									
2	0.95%	0.94%	2.52%	4.04%	3.95%	3.83%	3.75%	3.64%	0%
3	0.94%	0.94%	2.45%	3.91%	3.79%	3.68%	3.60%	2.65%	0%
4	0.94%	2.89%	3.68%	4.41%	4.28%	4.16%	4.07%	4.82%	0%
5	0.79%	3.40%	3.82%	4.22%	7.03%	6.83%	6.71%	6.53%	0%
6	4.77%	4.77%	4.76%	4.75%	1.89%	1.96%	1.93%	4.34%	0%
7	4.55%	4.54%	4.55%	4.55%	4.54%	4.55%	4.47%	2.12%	0%
8	6.04%	6.02%	7.97%	9.77%	9.53%	9.32%	9.17%	8.97%	0%
9	5.69%	5.68%	7.38%	8.90%	8.71%	8.53%	8.40%	8.23%	0%
10	0%	0%	2.99%	2.78%	2.97%	3.15%	3.10%	3.27%	0%
11	0%	0%	0%	3.65%	3.80%	3.95%	3.89%	5.70%	0%
12	0%	0%	0%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%	2.00%

APPENDIX E: TEACHER SALARY CALCULATIONS

1) Estimated Future Salary Costs using Existing Salary Schedule (Based on FY2017 schedule; Does not include COLA adjustments)

HOOSAC VALLEY MS/HS										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
1	B	1	$39,023	$39,023	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$39,766	$39,766
1	B	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$39,766	$39,766	4	$40,138	$40,138
2	B	3	$39,766	$79,532	4	$40,138	$80,276	5	$40,454	$80,908
1	B	6	$42,382	$42,382	7	$44,311	$44,311	8	$46,987	$46,987
1	B+18	9	$52,400	$52,400	9	$52,400	$52,400	9	$52,400	$52,400
1	B+36	2	$40,476	$40,476	3	$41,466	$41,466	4	$42,992	$42,992
1	M	7	$51,004	$51,004	8	$55,988	$55,988	9	$60,970	$60,970
2	M	8	$55,988	$111,976	9	$60,970	$121,940	10	$62,665	$125,330
3	M	9	$60,970	$182,910	10	$62,665	$187,995	11	$64,951	$194,853
2	M	11	$64,951	$129,902	12	$66,250	$132,500	12	$66,250	$132,500
8	M	12	$66,250	$530,000	12	$66,250	$530,000	12	$66,250	$530,000
1	M+12	8	$57,459	$57,459	9	$62,466	$62,466	10	$64,320	$64,320
5	M+12	12	$68,098	$340,490	12	$68,098	$340,490	12	$68,098	$340,490
1	M+24	2	$43,837	$43,837	3	$45,449	$45,449	4	$47,338	$47,338
1	M+24	5	$50,572	$50,572	6	$51,564	$51,564	7	$53,909	$53,909
7	M+24	12	$69,949	$489,643	12	$69,949	$489,643	12	$69,949	$489,643
4	M+36	12	$70,872	$283,488	12	$70,872	$283,488	12	$70,872	$283,488
3	M+48	12	$73,882	$221,646	12	$73,882	$221,646	12	$73,882	$221,646
8	M+60	12	$74,429	$595,432	12	$74,429	$595,432	12	$74,429	$595,432
53				**$3,381,566**			**$3,416,214**			**$3,443,110**

CHESHIRE ELEMENTARY										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
0.5	B	1	$39,023	$19,512	2	$39,394	$19,697	3	$39,766	$19,883
1	B	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$39,766	$39,766	4	$40,138	$40,138
1	M	2	$41,186	$41,186	3	$42,798	$42,798	4	$44,685	$44,685
0.5	M	3	$42,798	$21,399	4	$44,685	$22,343	5	$46,572	$23,286
2	M	6	$48,786	$97,572	7	$51,004	$102,008	8	$55,988	$111,976
3	M	11	$64,951	$194,853	12	$66,250	$198,750	12	$66,250	$198,750
2	M	12	$66,250	$132,500	12	$66,250	$132,500	12	$66,250	$132,500
1	M+12	9	$62,466	$62,466	10	$64,320	$64,320	11	$66,762	$66,762
1	M+12	10	$64,320	$64,320	11	$66,762	$66,762	12	$68,098	$68,098
2	M+12	12	$68,098	$136,196	12	$68,098	$136,196	12	$68,098	$136,196
3	M+24	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847
1	M+36	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872
1	M+48	12	$73,882	$73,882	12	$73,882	$73,882	12	$73,882	$73,882
19				**$1,163,999**			**$1,179,741**			**$1,196,875**

C.T. PLUNKETT ELEMENTARY										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
1	B	1	$39,023	$39,023	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$39,766	$39,766
1	B	5	$40,454	$40,454	6	$42,382	$42,382	7	$44,311	$44,311
1	B	6	$42,382	$42,382	7	$44,311	$44,311	8	$46,987	$46,987
1	B	8	$46,987	$46,987	9	$49,659	$49,659	9	$49,659	$49,659
1	B+18	7	$46,770	$46,770	8	$49,585	$49,585	9	$52,400	$52,400
1	M	2	$41,186	$41,186	3	$42,798	$42,798	4	$44,685	$44,685
1	M	3	$42,798	$42,798	4	$44,685	$44,685	5	$46,572	$46,572
1	M	4	$44,685	$44,685	5	$46,572	$46,572	6	$48,786	$48,786
1	M	5	$46,572	$46,572	6	$48,786	$48,786	7	$51,004	$51,004
2	M	6	$48,786	$97,572	7	$51,004	$102,008	8	$55,988	$111,976
2	M	10	$62,665	$125,330	11	$64,951	$129,902	12	$66,250	$132,500
1	M	11	$64,951	$64,951	12	$66,250	$66,250	12	$66,250	$66,250
6	M	12	$66,250	$397,500	12	$66,250	$397,500	12	$66,250	$397,500
1	M+12	4	$46,012	$46,012	5	$49,247	$49,247	6	$50,178	$50,178
1	M+12	8	$57,459	$57,459	9	$62,466	$62,466	10	$64,320	$64,320
1	M+12	12	$68,098	$68,098	12	$68,098	$68,098	12	$68,098	$68,098
3	M+24	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847
1	M+36	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872
4	M+48	12	$73,882	$295,528	12	$73,882	$295,528	12	$73,882	$295,528
1	M+60	12	$74,429	$74,429	12	$74,429	$74,429	12	$74,429	$74,429
32				**$1,898,455**			**$1,934,319**			**$1,965,668**

TOTAL			
104	**$6,444,020**	**$6,530,274**	**$6,605,653**
	Difference	+$86,254	+$75,380

2) Alternative Estimated Future Salaries using Across-the-Board 2.5% Increase for each Year in District (Based on FY2017 schedule; Does not include COLA adjustments)

HOOSAC VALLEY MS/HS										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
1	B	1	$39,023	$39,023	2	$39,999	$39,999	3	$40,999	$40,999
1	B	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$40,379	$40,379	4	$41,388	$41,388
2	B	3	$39,766	$79,532	4	$40,760	$81,520	5	$41,779	$83,558
1	B	6	$42,382	$42,382	7	$43,442	$43,442	8	$44,528	$44,528
1	B+18	9	$52,400	$52,400	9	$52,400	$52,400	9	$52,400	$52,400
1	B+36	2	$40,476	$40,476	3	$41,488	$41,488	4	$42,525	$42,525
1	M	7	$51,004	$51,004	8	$52,279	$52,279	9	$53,586	$53,586
2	M	8	$55,988	$111,976	9	$57,388	$114,775	10	$58,822	$117,645
3	M	9	$60,970	$182,910	10	$60,970	$182,910	11	$62,494	$187,483
2	M	11	$64,951	$129,902	12	$66,575	$133,150	12	$66,575	$133,150
8	M	12	$66,250	$530,000	12	$66,250	$530,000	12	$66,250	$530,000
1	M+12	8	$57,459	$57,459	9	$58,895	$58,895	10	$60,368	$60,368
5	M+12	12	$68,098	$340,490	12	$68,098	$340,490	12	$68,098	$340,490
1	M+24	2	$43,837	$43,837	3	$44,933	$44,933	4	$46,056	$46,056
1	M+24	5	$50,572	$50,572	6	$51,836	$51,836	7	$53,132	$53,132
7	M+24	12	$69,949	$489,643	12	$69,949	$489,643	12	$69,949	$489,643
4	M+36	12	$70,872	$283,488	12	$70,872	$283,488	12	$70,872	$283,488
3	M+48	12	$73,882	$221,646	12	$73,882	$221,646	12	$73,882	$221,646
8	M+60	12	$74,429	$595,432	12	$74,429	$595,432	12	$74,429	$595,432
53				**$3,381,566**			**$3,398,705**			**$3,417,516**

CHESHIRE ELEMENTARY										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
0.5	B	1	$39,023	$19,512	2	$39,999	$19,999	3	$40,999	$20,499
1	B	2	$39,394	$39,394	3	$40,379	$40,379	4	$41,388	$41,388
1	M	2	$41,186	$41,186	3	$42,216	$42,216	4	$43,271	$43,271
0.5	M	3	$42,798	$21,399	4	$43,868	$21,934	5	$44,965	$22,482
2	M	6	$48,786	$97,572	7	$50,006	$100,011	8	$51,256	$102,512
3	M	11	$64,951	$194,853	12	$66,575	$199,724	12	$66,575	$199,724
2	M	12	$66,250	$132,500	12	$66,250	$132,500	12	$66,250	$132,500
1	M+12	9	$62,466	$62,466	10	$64,028	$64,028	11	$65,628	$65,628
1	M+12	10	$64,320	$64,320	11	$65,928	$65,928	12	$67,576	$67,576
2	M+12	12	$68,098	$136,196	12	$68,098	$136,196	12	$68,098	$136,196
3	M+24	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847
1	M+36	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872
1	M+48	12	$73,882	$73,882	12	$73,882	$73,882	12	$73,882	$73,882
19				**$1,163,999**			**$1,177,516**			**$1,186,378**

C.T. PLUNKETT ELEMENTARY										
		FY2017			FY2018			FY2019		
FTE	Grade	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total	Years	Salaries	Total
1	B	1	$39,023	$39,023	2	$39,999	$39,999	3	$40,999	$40,999
1	B	5	$40,454	$40,454	6	$41,465	$41,465	7	$42,502	$42,502
1	B	6	$42,382	$42,382	7	$43,442	$43,442	8	$44,528	$44,528
1	B	8	$46,987	$46,987	9	$48,162	$48,162	9	$48,162	$48,162
1	B+18	7	$46,770	$46,770	8	$47,939	$47,939	9	$49,138	$49,138
1	M	2	$41,186	$41,186	3	$42,216	$42,216	4	$43,271	$43,271
1	M	3	$42,798	$42,798	4	$43,868	$43,868	5	$44,965	$44,965
1	M	4	$44,685	$44,685	5	$45,802	$45,802	6	$46,947	$46,947
1	M	5	$46,572	$46,572	6	$47,736	$47,736	7	$48,930	$48,930
2	M	6	$48,786	$97,572	7	$50,006	$100,011	8	$51,256	$102,512
2	M	10	$62,665	$125,330	11	$64,232	$128,463	12	$65,837	$131,675
1	M	11	$64,951	$64,951	12	$66,575	$66,575	12	$66,575	$66,575
6	M	12	$66,250	$397,500	12	$66,250	$397,500	12	$66,250	$397,500
1	M+12	4	$46,012	$46,012	5	$47,162	$47,162	6	$48,341	$48,341
1	M+12	8	$57,459	$57,459	9	$58,895	$58,895	10	$60,368	$60,368
1	M+12	12	$68,098	$68,098	12	$68,098	$68,098	12	$68,098	$68,098
3	M+24	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847	12	$69,949	$209,847
1	M+36	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872	12	$70,872	$70,872
4	M+48	12	$73,882	$295,528	12	$73,882	$295,528	12	$73,882	$295,528
1	M+60	12	$74,429	$74,429	12	$74,429	$74,429	12	$74,429	$74,429
32				**$1,898,455**			**$1,918,010**			**$1,935,185**

TOTAL			
104	**$6,444,020**	**$6,494,230**	**$6,539,079**
	Difference	+$50,211	+$44,849

APPENDIX F: ACRSD STAFF STIPENDS FOR 2016-2017 SCHOOL YEAR

Description	Amount FTD
HOOSAC VALLEY MHS	
ATHLETIC DIRECTOR	$10,130.00
HEAD VARSITY FOOTBALL COACH	$6,408.00
TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT	$5,900.00
BAND DIRECTOR	$5,719.00
VARSITY TRACK COACH	$4,918.00
CHEERLEADING COACH	$4,790.00
YEARBOOK ADVISOR	$4,085.00
GOLF COACH	$4,069.00
X-C RUNNING HEAD COACH	$4,052.00
LEO CLUB ADVISOR	$3,925.00
GIRLS JV SOCCER COACH	$3,476.00
SENIOR CLASS ADVISOR	$3,092.00
NATIONAL HONOR SOCIETY	$2,899.00
FRESHMAN CLASS CO ADVISOR	$2,723.00
SUMMER CUSTODIAN	$2,652.00
MUSICAL. CO DIRECTOR	$2,571.00
MUSICAL. CO DIRECTOR	$2,571.00
ATHLETIC TRAINER	$2,528.00
BCREB WORK STUDY	$2,500.00
TUTOR	$2,037.50
STUDENT ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR	$2,000.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$1,898.75
STUDENT COUNCIL CO ADVISOR	$1,882.00
STUDENT COUNCIL CO ADVISOR	$1,882.00
JUNIOR CLASS CO ADVISOR	$1,570.00
JUNIOR CLASS CO-ADVISOR	$1,570.00
SOPHOMORE CLASS CO ADVISOR	$1,289.00
SOPHOMORE CLASS CO ADVISOR	$1,289.00
ELA TEAM LEADER	$1,250.00
HISTORY TEAM LEADER	$1,250.00
MATH TEAM LEADER	$1,250.00
SCIENCE TEAM LEADER	$1,250.00
EP WORK STUDY/TRANSITION	$1,000.00
WRITE UPS	$775.00
LONGEVITY PAY	$750.00
LONGEVITY PAY	$750.00
LONGEVITY PAY	$750.00
WRITE UPS	$725.00
TESTING	$718.75
ATHLETIC TRAINER	$712.00
AP HISTORY PLANNING	$600.00
POST SEASON FALL	$577.00
POST SEASON FALL	$577.00
POST SEASON SPRING	$577.00
HOME WORK HELP	$575.00

Description	Amount FTD
LAB SET UP	$512.50
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR FY16	$500.00
WORLD OF DIFFERNCE ADVISOR	$500.00
WORLD OF DIFFERNCE ADVISOR	$500.00
WORLD OF DIFFERNCE ADVISOR	$500.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$495.00
SPED TUTOR	$462.50
SPED TUTOR	$437.50
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$410.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$360.00
HOME WORK HELP	$350.00
MENTOR	$350.00
TUTOR	$350.00
SUMMER PROGRAM TUTOR	$312.50
TECH SUPPORT	$300.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$270.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$250.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$250.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$250.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$250.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$250.00
ENGLISH PLANNING	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LONGEVITY PAY	$250.00
SUMMER WORK	$250.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL SITE DIRECTOR	$180.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$175.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$175.00
TUTOR	$175.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL EMT	$150.00
TESTING	$150.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$135.00
TUTOR SPED	$50.00
ATHLETIC OFFICIAL	$45.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$25.00
TOTAL HOOOSAC VALLEY MHS	**$122,883.00**
C.L. PLUKETT ELEMENTARY	
TITLE 1 DIRECTOR	$13,024.25

Description	Amount FTD
WRITE UPS	$3,750.00
SUMMER PROGRAM TEACHER	$2,025.00
SUMMER PROGRAM TEACHER	$1,950.00
SUMMER PROGRAM TEACHER	$1,875.00
SUMMER EXTEND TEACHER CTP	$1,825.00
LONGEVITY PAY	$750.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$600.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$600.00
SUMMER PROGRAM LANGUAGE PATHOLOGIST	$537.50
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
HOME WORK HELP	$450.00
BILLING	$303.75
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$300.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$300.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$250.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$250.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$250.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$200.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$200.00
SPEECH SERVICES	$164.71
ITQ WORKSHOP	$100.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$100.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$100.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$100.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$75.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$62.50
MKEA DATA INPUT	$50.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$50.00
SUMMER SCHEDULING	$50.00
CHILD CARE OF THE BERKSHIRES	$29.94
HOME WORK HELP SUB	$25.00
TOTAL C.L. PLUNKETT ELEMENTARY	**$34,847.65**
CHESHIRE ELEMENTARY	
SEI ENDORSEMENT COURSE	$5,575.00
SEI ENDORSEMENT COURSE	$5,575.00
SUMMER EXTEND TEACHER CES	$2,950.00
WRITE UPS	$2,087.50

Description	Amount FTD
HOME WORK HELP	$1,850.00
DATA MEETINGS	$825.00
SUMMER PROGRAM TUTOR	$750.00
WRITE UPS	$600.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$500.00
MENTOR	$500.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
LEADERSHIP TEAM	$250.00
GOLD TRAINING	$150.00
TESTING	$150.00
HOME WORK HELP SUB	$125.00
ITQ WORKSHOP	$100.00
CURRICULUM /SCHEDULING	$93.75
SUMMER PROGRAM PREP	$87.50
SUMMER PROGRAM PREP	$87.50
HOME WORK HELP	$75.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$75.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$75.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$75.00
MKEA DATA INPUT	$75.00
TESTING	$75.00
HOME WORK HELP SUB	$50.00
MONITOR STUDENT	$50.00
TOTAL CHESHIRE ELEMENTARY	**$23,806.25**
DISTRICT OFFICES	
TECHNOLOGY/TRANSPORTATION ASST.	$8,800.00
TOTAL ACRSD	**$189,736.90**

APPENDIX G: POTENTIAL COSTS/SAVINGS FROM ALTERNATIVES

Projected Enrollment	Alternative B1: Cheshire Elementary and HVMHS			
	Close CT Plunkett Elementary			
446	Move all Pre-K to 3rd Grade to Cheshire Elementary			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Dean, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
	Possible move of Central office to Adams Town Hall			
420	Move all 4th and 5th Grade to HVMHS where together with 6th and 7th would occupy former 6-8 MS space			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
428	Move 8th Grade to HS space in HVMHS (8-12)			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
		Savings/New Revenue	**Additional Costs**	**Notes**
	Close Plunkett	$402,203		Assumes reallocation of NMC of $18,000
	Eliminate 1 bus	$50,000		Only 16 of 17 existing bus routes necessary
	New Trans. Aid	$135,000		Year 2: More 4th, 5th pupils eligible, most Adams K-3
	Plunkett Building Ins.	$16,000		Allocates building insurance ($59,500) by square footage
	Health Insurance	$42,660		Assumed rate (weighted avg.) for three custodian positions
	Install/Repair 2 Lifts		$24,260	Assume no SBA, 108K, 5yr. Borrowing, 4% interest
	Relocate CO		$10,000	Move to Adams Town Hall possible
	Reconstruct classrooms		$20,000	Est. to convert existing CO to classrooms
	Unemployment costs		$36,000	Potential unemployment for three custodians
	TOTAL	**$645,863**	**$90,260**	
	NET SAVINGS		**$555,603**	Town with closed school responsible for closure/security costs

Projected Enrollment	Alternative B2: CT Plunkett Elementary and HVMHS			
	Close Cheshire Elementary			
446	Move all Pre-K to 3rd Grade to Plunkett (District office on 3rd floor)			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Dean, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
420	Move all 4th and 5th Grade to HVMHS where together with 6th and 7th would occupy former 6-8 MS space			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
428	Move 8th Grade to HS space in HVMHS (8-12)			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
		Savings/New Revenue	**Additional Costs**	**Notes**
	Close Cheshire	$298,237		Assumes reallocation of NMC of $10K
	Eliminate 1 bus	$50,000		Only 16 of 17 existing bus routes necessary
	New Trans. Aid	$82,500		Year 2: More 4th, 5th pupils eligible, some Cheshire K-3
	Cheshire Building Ins.	$10,000		Allocates building insurance ($59,500) by square footage
	Health Insurance	$28,440		Assumed rate (weighted avg.) for two custodian positions
	Boiler Room CTP		$0	Adams has committed to funding roof repairs estimated at $300K
	Replace Lift CTP		$8,600	Assume no SBA, 38K, 5yr. Borrowing, 4% interest
	Relocate CO		$10,000	Assumes little reconstruction of Plunkett needed
	Unemployment costs		$24,000	Potential unemployment for two custodians
	TOTAL	**$469,177**	**$42,600**	
	NET SAVINGS		**$426,577**	Town with closed school responsible for closure/security costs

Projected Enrollment	Alternative B3: Cheshire Elementary and HVMHS			
	Close CT Plunkett Elementary, possible move of CO to Adams Town Hall			
429	Move all 2nd - 5th Grade pupils to Cheshire Elementary			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
244	Move all PK-1st Grade to HVMHS			
	Administrative Staff: Principal and Administrative Assistant			
	Need for Autism program			
625	Keep HVMHS Grades 6-12: 6-8 MS section and 9-12 HS			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Administrative Assistant and office paraprofessional			
		Savings/New Revenue	**Additional Costs**	**Notes**
	Close Plunkett	$402,203		Assumes reallocation of NMC of $18,000
	New Trans. Aid	$142,500		Year 2: Adams 2-5th eligible, most K-1 from both towns
	Plunkett Building Ins.	$16,000		Allocates building insurance ($59,500) by square footage
	Health Insurance	$42,660		Assumed rate (weighted avg.) for three custodian positions
	Install/Repair 2 Lifts		$24,260	Assume no SBA, 108K, 5yr. Borrowing, 4% interest
	Relocate CO		$10,000	Move to Adams Town Hall possible
	Reconstruct to class		$20,000	Est. to convert existing CO to classrooms
	Unemployment costs		$36,000	Potential unemployment for three custodians
	TOTAL	**$603,363**	**$90,260**	
	NET SAVINGS		**$513,103**	Town with closed school responsible for closure/security costs

Projected Enrollment	Alternative B4: CT Plunkett Elementary and HVMHS			
	Close Cheshire Elementary, possible move of CO to Adams Town Hall			
429	Move all 2nd - 5th Grade pupils to CT Plunkett			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Administrative Assistant, and an office paraprofessional			
244	Move all PK-1st Grade to HVMHS			
	Administrative Staff: Principal and Administrative Assistant			
	Autism program for PK-1			
625	Keep HVMHS Grades 6-12: 6-8 MS section and 9-12 HS			
	Administrative Staff: Principal, Assistant Principal, Dean, Administrative Assistant and office paraprofessional			
		Savings/New Revenue	**Additional Costs**	**Notes**
	Close Cheshire	$298,237		Assumes reallocation of NMC of $10K
	New Trans. Aid	$82,500		Year 2: Cheshire 2-5th eligible, most K-1 from both towns
	Cheshire Building Ins.	$10,000		Allocates building insurance ($59,500) by square footage
	Health Insurance	$28,440		Assumed rate (weighted avg.) for two custodian positions
	Boiler room CTP		$0	Adams has committed to funding roof repairs estimated at $300K
	Replace lift CTP		$8,600	Assume no SBA, 5yr. Borrowing, 4% interest
	Relocate CO		$10,000	Assumes little reconstruction of Plunkett needed
	Unemployment costs		$24,000	Potential unemployment for two custodians
	TOTAL	**$419,177**	**$42,600**	
	NET SAVINGS		**$376,577**	Town with closed school responsible for closure/security costs

Configuration 5: PK-5 in separate districts, 6-12 at HVMHS

Allocation of Foundation Budget and Contributions

	FY2017 Foundation	FY2017 Required Contribution	Foundation Enrollment	Foundation Share
Adams	$11,241,700	$3,515,077	1,040	73.49%
Cheshire	$4,055,080	$1,987,506	375	26.51%
Adams-Cheshire RSD	$15,296,780	$5,502,583	1,415	
	Foundation per Pupil	**Contribution per Pupil**		
Adams	$10,809	$3,380		
Cheshire	$10,814	$5,300		

Allocation of Base Elementary Foundation Budgets

		Percent	Notes
Adams	$3,678,404	73.49%	
Cheshire	$1,326,866	26.51%	
Total	$5,005,270	100.00%	Includes $30K for ELL KF-12

Allocation of Incremental Foundation above Base

Incremental Cost above Base	Incremental Foundation	PK-5	6-12	TOTAL	Notes
Foundation Enrollment		$685	$730	$1,415	ELL KF-12 pupils: 3 to elem & 5 to MS/HS
SPED Out of District	$1,684,033	$815,239	$868,794	$1,684,033	
Economically Disadvantaged	$2,894,500	$1,401,224	$1,493,276	$2,894,500	
Total	$4,578,533	$2,216,463	$2,362,070		

Allocated Elementary Incremental Cost above Base

	Elementary Incr. Costs	Percent	Foundation Enrollment
Adams	$1,628,893	73.49%	503
Cheshire	$587,570	26.51%	182
Total	$2,216,463	100.00%	685

Projected PK-5 Foundation Budgets

	Foundation Base	Increment above Base	Foundation Budget
Adams	$3,678,404	$1,628,893	$5,307,297
Cheshire	$1,326,866	$587,570	$1,914,436
Total	$5,005,270	$2,216,463	$7,221,733

Allocated Foundation Budgets and Minimum Contributions

	FY2017 Foundation	Minimum Contributions	Foundation Share
Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	$8,075,048	$2,904,769	52.79%
Adams Elementary PK-5	$5,307,297	$1,659,496	34.70%
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	$1,914,436	$938,318	12.52%
Total	$15,296,781	$5,502,583	100.00%

Allocated District-wide Costs

Instructional Support - Superintendency Union	Allocated Admin. Union	Foundation Share	Notes
Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	490,767	52.79%	Excludes Athletic costs, all allocated to Hoosac
Adams Elementary PK-5	322,555	34.70%	
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	116,351	12.52%	
Total	929,673	100.00%	

Benefits/Insurance/Unclassified	Allocated Benefits	Foundation Share	Notes
Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	2,616,617	52.79%	Excludes Charter assessment, assumed all Hoosac
Adams Elementary PK-5	1,719,763	34.70%	
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	620,349	12.52%	
Total	4,956,729	100.00%	

Transportation	Allocated Transport	Foundation Share
Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	468,265	52.79%
Adams Elementary PK-5	307,766	34.70%
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	111,016	12.52%
Total	**887,047**	100.00%

SPED	Allocated SPED	Foundation Share

Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	444,199	52.79%
Adams Elementary PK-5	291,949	34.70%
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	105,311	12.52%
Total	841,459	100.00%

Allocated Budgets for Separate Districts

	Adams	Cheshire	Hoosac	Total	Notes
District School Budget	$2,257,513	$1,777,607	$4,936,583	$8,971,703	From FY2017 adopted budget
Pre-school program to Adams	110,137	-110,137	$0	$0	Pre-school program allocated on elementary foundation budgets
Substitutes, extra Para hrs, misc.	138,164	56,000	132,120	326,284	
Allocated Superintendency	322,555	116,351	490,767	929,673	
Allocated Benefits/Insurance	1,719,763	620,349	2,616,617	4,956,729	
Allocated Transportation	307,766	111,016	468,265	887,047	
Allocated SPED	291,949	105,311	444,199	841,459	
Charter Assessment	0	0	925,000	925,000	Charter, athletics and capital all allocated to Hoosac
Athletics	0	0	215,697	215,697	
Capital (Assume all Hoosac)	0	0	942,173	942,173	
TOTAL	$5,147,846	$2,676,497	$11,171,422	$18,995,765	

Chapter 70 Allocated on Target Aid Share

	Adams	Cheshire	Hoosac	Total
Foundation Budget	$5,307,297	$1,914,436	$8,075,048	$15,296,781
Target Aid Share	67.44%	50.29%	62.74%	
Allocated Ch. 70 at Target	$3,579,241	$962,770	$5,066,285	$9,608,296
Chapter 70 Above Target	$0	$0	$576,422	$576,422
TOTAL Chapter 70 Allocated	$3,579,241	$962,770	$5,642,707	$10,184,718

Projected District Revenues

	Adams	Cheshire	Hoosac	Total	Notes
Chapter 70 Aid	$3,579,241	$962,770	$5,642,707	$10,184,718	Allocated by multiplying target aid share by foundation budget of each district

Transportation Aid	$79,894	$28,819	$121,559	$230,273	Allocated proportionally to foundation shares
Charter Reimbursement	$0	$0	$84,000	$84,000	Assume all HS/MS leaving under charter
District Revenues	$142,252	$51,313	$216,436	$410,000	Allocated proportionally to foundation shares
TOTAL	$3,801,387	$1,042,902	$6,064,702	$10,908,991	
	Adams	**Cheshire**	**Hoosac**	**Total**	**Notes**
Net Costs/Minimum Contr.	$1,659,496	$1,633,595	$5,106,720	$8,399,811	Adams must spend allocated Minimum Contr.
Additional Spending to Min.	$313,037				

Allocated Hoosac Budget

	Adams	**Cheshire**	**Total Hoosac**
Minimum Contribution	$1,855,581	$1,049,188	$2,904,769
Amount over Minimum	$925,818	$333,959	$1,259,778
Capital (Existing allocation)	$715,699	$226,474	$942,173
Total Town Assessments	$3,497,098	$1,609,622	$5,106,720
Projected State Revenue			$6,064,702
Total Hoosac Budget			$11,171,422

Projected Costs by Town

	Adams	**Cheshire**	**Totals**	**Notes**
Elementary Costs	$1,659,496	$1,633,595	$3,293,091	
Hoosac assessments	$3,497,098	$1,609,622	$5,106,720	
Total Town Costs	$5,156,594	$3,243,217	$8,399,811	
Total State Aid			$10,908,991	
Total Separate Budgets			$19,308,802	Higher budget due to Adams' required spending at elementary

Total Town Costs: Current K-12 vs. Separate Districts

	Total Current Assessments	**Total Projected Separated**	**Difference**	**Notes**
Adams	$5,446,707	$5,156,594	$(290,112)	Adams' savings reduced by $313,037; must meet minimum contr.
Cheshire	$2,640,065	$3,243,217	$603,152	

Foundation Budget	FY2017 Foundation	Chapter 70 & Other District Revenue	Local Contrib.	Over Minimum Spending	Total spending	Transport	Estimated NSS	Status
Hoosac Valley MS/HS 6-12	$8,075,048	$5,943,143	$2,904,769	$1,259,778	$10,107,690	$468,265	$9,639,425	Well above Foundation spending
Adams Elementary PK-5	$5,307,297	$3,721,493	$1,659,496	$0	$5,380,989	$307,766	$5,073,223	Below Foundation, generates foundation aid
Cheshire Elementary Pk-5	$1,914,436	$1,014,082	$938,318	$695,278	$2,647,678	$111,016	$2,536,661	Well above Foundation spending
Total	$15,296,781	$10,678,718	$5,502,583	$1,955,055	$18,136,356	$887,047		

THIS PAGE IS INTENTIONALLY BLANK

ABOUT THE CENTER

The Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management in the McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston was established in 2008 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all levels of government. The Center is funded by the Commonwealth and through fees charged for its services.

Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management
John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies
University of Massachusetts Boston
100 Morrissey Blvd.
Boston, MA 02125
(617) 287-4824 (t)
(617) 287-5566 (f)
http://www.umb.edu/cpm

UMASS BOSTON

EDWARD J. COLLINS, JR. CENTER FOR PUBLIC MANAGEMENT
JOHN W. McCORMACK GRADUATE SCHOOL OF POLICY AND GLOBAL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON