

Reorganization Feasibility Study  
On Behalf of the  
Frankfort-Schuyler,  
Herkimer,  
Ilion, and  
Mohawk  
Central School Districts

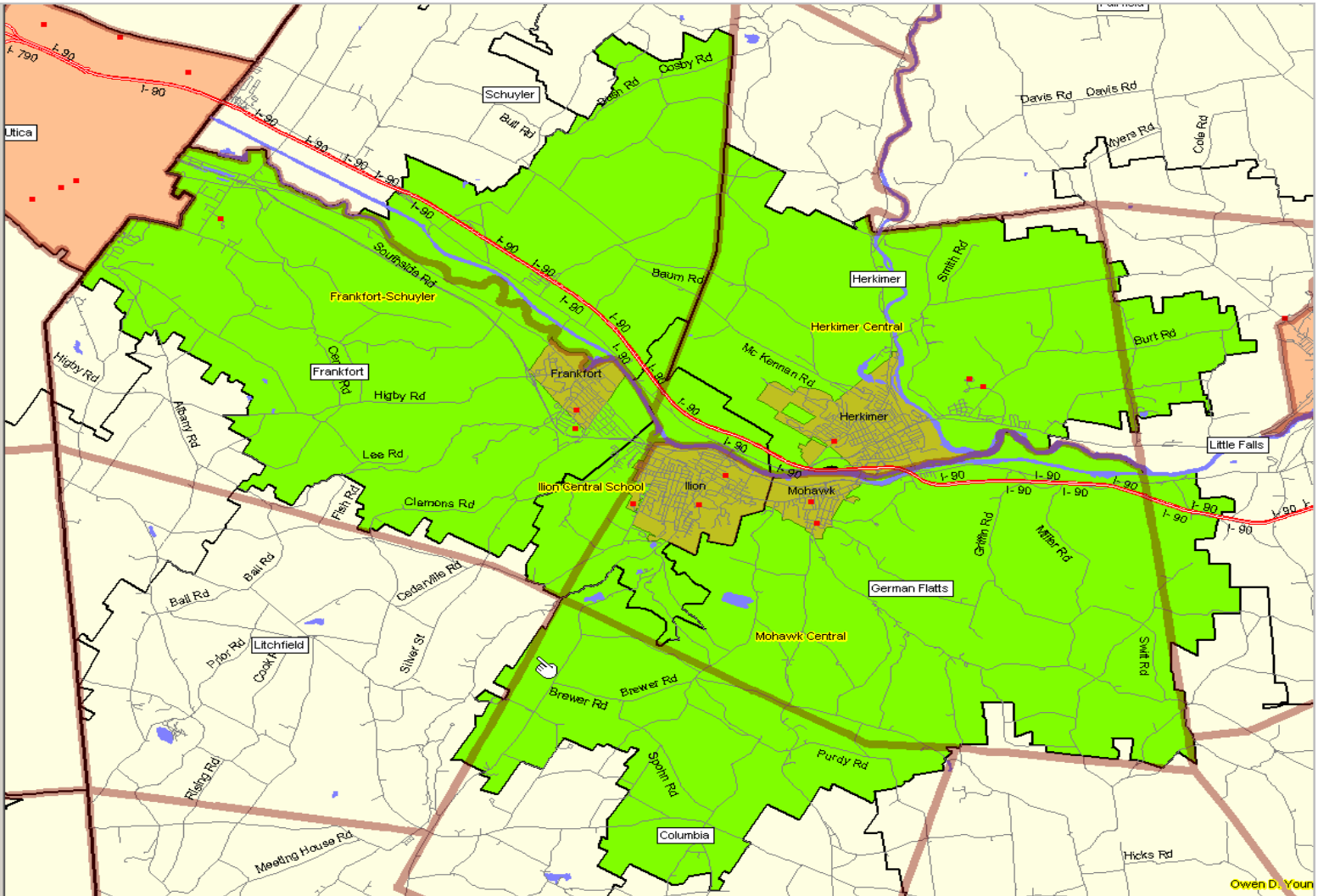
*October, 2011*

***ABSTRACT***

Prepared by:  
The SES Study Team, LLC.

*This report was prepared with funds provided by the New York State  
Department of State under the local government efficiency grant program.*

- City Subdivisions
- Interstate
- K-12 Schools
- US & State Hwy
- Census Blocks 10
- 043 Roads/Edges
- Water
- 043 Water
- Counties
- SD 07-08
- Places
- School Districts
- School Districts
- %HS Grad ACS 05-09 x Tract
  - Less than 70%
  - 70 - 80%
  - 80 - 90%
  - 90 - 95%
  - 95% or more
- %HS Grad ACS 05-09 x SD
  - Less than 70%
  - 70 - 80%
  - 80 - 90%
  - 90 - 95%
  - 95% or more
- SMHI 07 x Tract
  - Less than \$30,000
  - \$30,000 - \$70,000
  - \$70,000 - \$150,000
  - \$150,000 or more
- Blocks
- States
- Canada



*Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion and Mohawk Central  
School Districts*

**Purpose of the Study:**

*“To Determine if the reorganization (through centralization) of the four districts will provide enhanced educational opportunities and, at the same time, increase efficiencies and lower cost for the overall operations by forming a reorganized school district. The Study will identify potential savings, educational opportunities, management improvements, and benefits to the community.”*

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**School District Community Advisory Committee Members Appointed by the Respective Boards of Education to Work with and Advise the SES Study Team in the Preparation of the Feasibility Study**

	<b>PRIME COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY</b>
<b><i>COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</i></b>		
Andrew Zaffarano	Retiree	Program
Carmen Nicotera	Parent of secondary students	Support operations
Connie Castellano	Parent of secondary students	Finance
Deborah Windecker	Business person	Finance
Diane Bielejec	Music booster	Program
Ellen Tasovac	District faculty member	Program
John Dodge	Parent of elementary children	Program
John Spina	Parent of elementary and secondary students	Support operations
Joseph McCoy	Business person	Finance
Karlee Tamburro	Municipal leader	Finance
Megan Lape	Parent of elementary and secondary students	Program
Rachel Rogers	Parent of elementary and secondary students	Support operations
Robert Lusiak	Empty nester	Finance
Salvatore Rotundo	Business person	Support operations
Shelley Vanderwerken	Parent of secondary students	Support operations
<b><i>COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR HERKIMER CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</i></b>		
Dale Miller	Municipal Leader	Program
Daniel Guzewich	Parent of Secondary Students	Finance
Denise Rodriguez	Parent of Secondary Students	Finance
Diann Fischer	Empty-Nester	Finance
Eugene Beirne	Retiree	Programs
Father Mark Cunningham	Clergy	Support operations
Franca Wandell	District Support Staff Member	Support operations
Harold Stoffolano	Retiree	Support operations
John Elnicky	Empty-Nester	Support operations
Melody Couchman	District Faculty Member	Programs
Michael Carney	Athletic Booster	Programs
Nathaniel Getman	Parent of Pre-School Children	Finance
Peggy Henry	Retiree	Support operations
Robert DeCarlo	Business Person/Chamber of Commerce	Programs
Stephen Gloom	Empty-Nester	Support operations
Theresa Tangorra	Empty-Nester	Programs

	<b>PRIME COMMUNITY REPRESENTATION</b>	<b>SUB-COMMITTEE FOR THE STUDY</b>
<b><i>COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR ILION CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</i></b>		
Barbara Lennox	District support staff member	Support Operations
Cassie Castle	Parent of elementary and secondary students	Support Operations
G. Stephen Getman	Empty-nester	Finance
Jack Fitzer	Business person	Support Operations
Joan Prymas	Community member at large	Program
Joanne Moore	Municipal leader	Finance
John Gilmartin	Retiree	Finance
Laura Wastowicz	Parent of elementary children	Program
Mary Ann Hoffman	Community member at large	Finance
Melanie Welch	Parent of pre-school children	Program
Nick Pannes	Retiree	Program
Scott Hendrix	Business person	Support Operations
Steve Crane	Community member at large	Finance
Susan Zaccaria	District faculty member	Program
Tom Wells	Retiree	Support Operations
<b><i>COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR MOHAWK CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</i></b>		
Allison Deutschman	Student	Program
Barbara LaPorte	Parent of elementary and secondary students	Finance
Chad Elthorp	Parent secondary student	Program
Dave Bliss	Retiree	Support operations
Eric Deutschman	Music Booster	Finance
Erika Kramer	Athletic Booster	Support operations
Georgia Waite	Parent of elementary children	Support operations
Glenny Monahan	Support Staff Member/Resident Taxpayer	Support operations
Harry Bosch	Retiree	Program
Jeff Mower	Faculty member/Resident Taxpayer	Program
John LiBritz	Empty-nester	Finance
Matt Obreza	Business person	Finance
Melissa Burns	Parent of Elementary Children	Program
Molly Bonnell	Under 30 unmarried citizen	Finance
Todd Rankins	Elected/Municipal Leader	Support operations
Vicki Coffin-Judd	Parent of pre-school children	Program

***The Boards of Education, the Superintendents, and the SES Study Team sincerely thank the volunteer Community Advisory Committee Members for their time, diligence, collaboration and advice in the preparation of this study.***

The SES Study Team acknowledges and thanks Suzanne Spear and Jay O'Connor of the State Education Department and Sean Maguire of the Department of State as helpful collaborative resources for the study. The hospitality of Mr. Mark Vivacqua, District Superintendent of the Herkimer BOCES, and his staff for hosting the Community Advisory Committee meetings at the BOCES facility is warmly appreciated.

## *Preface*

### **Frankfort-Schuyler Central School District**

Board of Education Members: Dominick Bellino; Jack Bono; Michael Button; Joseph Ciccone; Robert Gillette, Jr.; Lisa LoRe; Angela Service

Superintendent of Schools: Robert F. Reina

Frankfort-Schuyler is situated in central New York State, Herkimer County, in the towns of Frankfort and Schuyler. The City of Utica is five miles to the west and the city of Little Falls is approximately eleven miles to the east. The village of Frankfort is the commercial center of the school district.

The school district encompasses approximately 70 square miles. Of the four schools in this Feasibility Study, Frankfort-Schuyler is on the western edge.

In 2010-11, students were housed in three school buildings; the Junior-Senior High School for grades 7-12; Reese Road Elementary School (grades K-6) and West Frankfort Elementary School (grades K-6). While this study was in progress, the board of education decided to close the West Frankfort School for the 2011-12 school year.

### **Herkimer Central School District**

Board of Education Members: Anthony Brindisi; John Cipriano; Mark Conley; Diann Fischer; Robert Mihevc; Nicholas Netti; Harry Reeder

Superintendent of Schools: Gary A. Tutty – Interim  
Carol Zygo – former

Herkimer Central School is in the western sector of Herkimer County. The city of Utica is located approximately thirteen miles to the west and Little Falls is approximately five miles to the east. Major highways serving the District include Interstate 90 (at Exit 30) and New York State Routes 5 and 5S.

The school district encompasses approximately one hundred square miles. The character of the school district is primarily residential and agricultural in nature.

Herkimer is the home of Herkimer County Community College which offers opportunities to local students and families and well as provides employment to area residents. Other facilities and services include the Bassett Health Center; Wal-Mart Super Center, Lowe's Superstore and the Mohawk Valley Health Network.

The Herkimer Central School District is housed in two buildings. The Herkimer Elementary School was constructed in 1991, located on a campus in East Herkimer and serves students in grades K-6. The Junior-Senior High School serves students in grades 7-12.

## **Ilion Central School District**

Board of Education Members: Bonnie C. Coffin; Stephen G. Coupe; Thomas F. Goldin; Daniel A. LaLonde; Clifford Lane; Deanna R. Stublely; James Vitale

Superintendent of Schools: Cosimo Tangorra, Jr.

The Ilion Central School is an 11 square mile district located on the southern bank of the historic Mohawk River. Ilion is a quaint village steeped in tradition, but the community also boasts a progressive attitude. The same might be said of the school district

The Ilion Central School District is comprised of three buildings. Barringer Road Elementary serves students in grades K-6 and Remington Elementary serves grades Pre-K through 6. The Junior-Senior High School houses students in grades 7-12. In 2003, the district completed a \$32 million dollar building project and is currently completing a \$25 million dollar EXCEL project to improve facilities, infrastructure and grounds. The district has a fitness center that is available for community use.

Remington Arms is one of the largest employers in the district.

## **Mohawk Central School District**

Board of Education Members: Ronald Bunce; Vincent Casale; James Fleming; Vicki C. Judd; John Pickett; Lori Sementilli

Superintendent of Schools: Joyce M. Caputo

The Mohawk Central School District is located in the heart of the Mohawk Valley encompassing the Village of Mohawk and the surrounding rural area. The school district encompasses approximately 39 square miles and includes the Towns of German Flats, Columbia, Little Falls and Litchfield. The character of the district is primarily rural with the majority of homes being single-family dwellings. There is high mobility between Mohawk and other valley school systems during the academic year. This calls on close networking of information to insure the smooth transition of services.

Mohawk Central School is housed in two buildings; the Harry M. Fisher Elementary School (K-6) and the Gregory B. Jarvis Jr/Sr High School. Harry M. Fisher was a beloved principal of the elementary school , Gregory B. Jarvis was a Challenger astronaut, who was a 1962 Mohawk graduate. In October 1994, the Jarvis building was devastated by fire and students were temporarily housed in Ilion Central School facilities. An ensuing four-year building project resulted in a total reconstruction of the Jarvis building and expansion of the Fisher building.

## INTRODUCTION

### **A MATTER OF THE ECONOMY AND NOT POOR STEWARDSHIP OF PUBLIC RESOURCES**

Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion, and Mohawk Central School Districts have a history of good stewardship of public resources as evidenced by the support of their communities. However, school districts just like individuals and businesses have had to reduce expenditures for staff, student programs, and general operations to deal with the recession of 2008 and its continued fallout for the foreseeable future.

With state aid revenues likely to remain flat, it is projected that school district expenditure reductions will need to continue in order to offset these declining revenues. It is believed by the Boards of Education of the four school districts that local community members are unable to shoulder the burden of a transfer of the shortfall in state aid revenues to increased property taxes to raise the revenue.

In addition with the passage of the 2% property tax levy limit law by the NYS Legislature and Governor, schools cannot legislatively go beyond that measure without over 60% of their voting residents agreeing to do so. For upstate school districts that typically receive 60+% of their revenues from state aid, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain even the most basic of school programs. Indeed, for both the short and long term, the forecast for upstate school districts is not good.

### **THE DILEMMA FACING COMMUNITIES AND THEIR RESPECTIVE BOARDS OF EDUCATION**

1. State aid to support local school districts may stay flat for the foreseeable future;  
*And,*
2. The capacity for local taxpayers of a school district to shoulder more revenue responsibility may or may not be possible;  
*And,*
3. School district communities, the State of New York, and the Federal perspective are expecting higher measured student achievement for all students;  
*And,*
4. School district communities, the State of New York, and the Federal perspective are requiring the delivery of an educational program to all students that will enable them to be productive citizens in the workforce, and to be competitive in the global economy, as well as have the basic skills to pursue post-high school specialized education opportunities.

### **EXAMPLES OF OTHER DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES AT WORK AFFECTING THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION**

- A. Declining community population and a declining school-age population, 2/3 of NYS population resides in 12 downstate counties;
- B. Declining job market opportunities;
- C. Growing federal budget deficit and sluggish economy;
- D. Rural NYS experiencing a 44% less growth in property values compared to metro areas of the State;
- E. Increasing health insurance and employee pension costs;
- F. Unemployment rate in rural NYS of about 10.5% is almost one fifth higher than the unemployment rate in metro areas of the State;

- G. Global threats to the US economy by increases in international student measured achievement;
- H. Unfunded mandates expected of school districts;
- I. Equity issues in how school funding by the state affects less wealthy school districts.

### **DUE DILIGENT PLANNING BY THE FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER, HERKIMER, ILION, AND MOHAWK BOARDS OF EDUCATION AND THIS STUDY**

The four Boards of Education collaboratively applied for and were awarded a NYS Department of State Grant to determine if reorganization could provide enhanced opportunities for all pupils of the four school districts and, at the same time, increase efficiencies and lower cost for the overall operations by forming a reorganized school district.

The four Boards of Education and their superintendents had no pre-conceived notions about the findings of the study or a pre-conceived advocacy for what the findings should be.

They believe they can work together to deliver the program and deal with the long-term financial reality facing school districts, other municipalities, and local school district residents. In addition, the Boards recognize that the financial projections and economic projections underscore that “business as usual” probably will not be a viable option for all school districts across the state and their residents.

Because of the due diligence of the four Boards of Education in exploring options, the information offered in this study provides a concrete way for the four communities and their Boards of Education to engage public discussion in an open and transparent fashion. The SES Study Team ‘holds up a mirror’ in the study to various kinds of data about the four school districts; organizes that data into useable resource tools; and reports the findings of the analyses of the data without bias or advocacy as to what decision the Boards and communities should implement.

We hope our work in collaboration with 64 volunteer community members from the four school districts will be a valuable tool to help local decision-making deal with the dilemma facing public schools in an economy that likely will not provide increased financial support to deliver Pre-K through grade 12 public education.

We thank the districts for allowing us to work with you and the four Community Advisory Committees on this study.

**The SES Study Team, LLC**  
Fall, 2011

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

*ABSTRACT*

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**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY  
DATA**

**This section is in the complete study and is not duplicated in this abstract of the study. Please note that all data references have been posted to the website of each school district since January 2011 as the data were used by the Community Advisory Committees in their work.**

**Data Reference Tools Compiled by the Study, Analyzed by the Four Community Advisory Committees, and Posted on the Website of Each School District as the Study Progressed since January 2011**

**(Page numbers refer to the page numbers in the Data Section of the Feasibility Study Document.)**

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## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### **PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The Boards of Education of Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion and Mohawk Central School Districts engaged this study as part of their on-going long-range planning efforts. The four Boards, similar to most school districts in New York State, continuously balance the mission to provide a comprehensive educational program as a foundation that will enable students to be ‘globally competitive’ as adult citizens, and the responsibility to provide such a program within the financial means of the communities that the school districts serve.

The New York State Department of State and the New York State Education Department provided a grant opportunity for the four school districts to study the *feasibility* of reorganization of the districts as a possible method to deliver educational services collectively to the adjoining school districts and communities.

The four districts accepted the grant with no preconceived conclusions as to what the findings of the study might be. The four Boards of Education and their superintendents sought the grant as a resource to exercise their *due diligence* in providing information about a possible option for delivery of public education by the four districts for review and possible consideration by the respective communities.

The services of the SES Study Team, LLC were engaged by the four Boards of Education to implement a feasibility study to answer:

*Would the reorganization (through centralization) of the four districts provide enhanced educational opportunities and, at the same time, increase efficiencies and lower cost for the overall operations by forming a reorganized school district?*

The role of the SES Study Team is to prepare a study that provides practical, useful data to help the Boards of Education, the Community Advisory Committees, and the communities to first engage in a public policy discussion as to how best to serve the young people of the communities in the future and, then, second to make decisions about that future.

### **METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

✓ Guiding values and principles of the study process included:

1. Inclusion of, and sensitivity to, all points of view from the communities involved;
2. A focus on answering a set of questions by school district and community stakeholders;

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

3. An approach that begins with the collection of data, a review of major findings, sharing of perceptions, recommendations based upon challenges and opportunities, and finally modeling of potential options as a result of reorganization;
  4. The role of school district instructional, instructional support, and administrative staff in providing comprehensive data for the study to use to answer its questions;
  5. Public transparency of the work and data developed and compiled by Community Committees and the Study Team;
  6. The creation of a study report that becomes the prime useable tool by members of the communities as they decide how best to educate their children in the future.
- ✓ The key element of the methodology of the study is the four Community Advisory Committees. Sixty-four community members from the four school districts met from January through September with the consultant team. The purpose of the Community Advisory Committees is to provide representation for all residents, taxpayers and stakeholders of each respective district in the study process. The charge given to the ad hoc Committees appointed by each Board was:
- ◇ To listen to presentations and discussions and provide perspectives and feedback about the data and their analysis during the study process.
  - ◇ To advise the consultants on issues related to the study.
  - ◇ To help keep district residents informed with accurate information about the study.
  - ◇ To promote 3-way communication among school district officials and personnel, the citizens of the districts, and the SES Study Team consultants.

Starting on page -2- of the **DATA** section of the study report are the criteria used by the Boards to appoint Committee members from those who volunteered.

- ✓ The Community Advisory Committees first identified a set of questions that their work and the study should address. These questions became the guide for the research of the study and the agendas of the work sessions of the Community Advisory Committees.

Starting on page -3- of the **DATA** section of the study report are the questions developed by the Committees to guide the work of the study.

- ✓ The Community Advisory Committees met with the SES Study Team for ten work sessions from January through September 2011. Data sets were collected, analyzed, and discussed by the Advisory Committees and the SES Study Team to address the purpose of the study:

*Would the reorganization (through centralization) of the four districts provide enhanced educational opportunities and, at the same time, increase efficiencies and lower cost for the overall operations by forming a reorganized school district?*

The role of The SES Study Team was to “hold up a mirror” to data about each of the school districts; organize the data without analysis; provide the data to the Community Advisory Committees in an unbiased manner; answer questions of the community volunteers; listen to the perceptions about what are the possible *opportunities and challenges* if the communities of the four school districts chose to reorganize into one school district. The data included information about the following major categories:

- ◇ Demographics of the four districts.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ◇ The current fiscal condition profiles of each district.
- ◇ Current property taxes.
- ◇ Pupil capacities of the existing school buildings.
- ◇ Building conditions of the existing school buildings.
- ◇ Current class sizes in delivering the program currently.
- ◇ The elementary program offerings.
- ◇ The secondary program offerings.
- ◇ Co-curricular and athletic offerings.
- ◇ State student assessment data.
- ◇ College enrollment data about school district graduates.
- ◇ How the school districts currently share regionally with other school districts.
- ◇ Current instructional and instructional support staffing and deployment.
- ◇ Current expenditures for staffing and program.
- ◇ Elements of current labor contracts.
- ◇ Historical retention pattern of staff.
- ◇ Current expenditures to deliver the educational program separately in the four districts.

The agendas for each of the work session meetings of the Community Advisory Committees are included starting on page -8- of the **DATA** section of the study report

## FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF DATA ABOUT EACH SCHOOL DISTRICT

### A. Demographics of the Four School Districts

#### 1. Estimated Enrollment Projections of the four school districts.

The six sources of current and projected school district enrollment are:

- live births within the school district and their eventual kindergarten enrollment in the district;
- new household population with children who move to the district;
- new population who move to the district who are at child-bearing age and plan to begin a family;
- enrollment of students from non-public schools or from home schooling settings;
- school program and academic intervention changes that may increase the success of the school district in keeping existing enrollment as long as possible to culminate in high school graduation;
- a change by other public schools, if any, who tuition students to attend the school district.

All enrollment projections have inherent uncertainties because the assumptions on which they are based can be affected by changes in human behavior, by the economy, or by other events. Key factors of population change relating to school enrollments are often interrelated and can multiply as one or more factors unexpectedly change or change significantly from their status at the time of this study. Future enrollments are positively affected by:

- Added births in the district and the resulting added kindergarten enrollments.
- The reductions in private school/home school/charter school enrollments
- The increase in the enrollment retention of students through grade 12 as completers of a diploma program.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- A robust employment market that can attract new residents with children and/or who are at childbearing age.
- A robust housing market that can attract new residents with children and/ or who are at childbearing age.
- Increased enrollment of tuitioned students from other school districts.

Similarly, future enrollment projections can be negatively affected by the antitheses of the same variables. Therefore, the enrollment projection estimates should be revisited and updated yearly if there are any major changes in: the assumptions that base the methodology of this study; the annual live birth data for the district; major shifts in the housing market and employment market opportunities from what has been expected; changes in the educational program offered; and/or changes in the non-public school, charter school, or out of school district enrollments by school district residents; or major immediate changes to the numbers of pupils tuitioned from other school districts.

The enrollment projections calculation study data tool is in the **DATA** section of the study report starting on page -31-.

The baseline cohort enrollment projections for the four districts five years into the future for grades K-6 and ten years into the future for grades 7-12 are charted below.

<i><b>DATA SNAPSHOT FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER</b></i>			
<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Grades K-6</b>	<b>Grades 7-12</b>
CURRENT ENROLLMENT	2010-2011	622	583
<b>Baseline Cohort Low Range</b>	2015-2016	559	
	2020-2021		530
<b>Baseline Cohort Mid Range</b>	2015-2016	583	
	2020-2021		543
<b>Baseline Cohort High Range</b>	2015-2016	589	
	2020-2021		537

<i><b>DATA SNAPSHOT HERKIMER</b></i>			
<b>Calculation</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Grades K-6</b>	<b>Grades 7-12</b>
CURRENT ENROLLMENT	2010-2011	653	556
<b>Baseline Cohort Low Range</b>	2015-2016	665	
	2020-2021		629
<b>Baseline Cohort Mid Range</b>	2015-2016	686	
	2020-2021		629
<b>Baseline Cohort High Range</b>	2015-2016	699	
	2020-2021		656

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

<i>DATA SNAPSHOT ILION</i>			
Calculation	Year	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12
CURRENT ENROLLMENT	2010-2011	790	734
<b>Baseline Cohort Low Range</b>	2015-2016	739	
	2020-2021		661
<b>Baseline Cohort Mid Range</b>	2015-2016	836	
	2020-2021		713
<b>Baseline Cohort High Range</b>	2015-2016	847	
	2020-2021		714

<i>DATA SNAPSHOT MOHAWK</i>			
Calculation	Year	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12
CURRENT ENROLLMENT	2010-2011	419	388
<b>Baseline Cohort Low Range</b>	2015-2016	357	
	2020-2021		298
<b>Baseline Cohort Mid Range</b>	2015-2016	395	
	2020-2021		320
<b>Baseline Cohort High Range</b>	2015-2016	415	
	2020-2021		324

Summarized below are the enrollment projection data calculations as they apply to a reorganization of the four districts into one K-12 school district.

<i>DATA SNAPSHOT</i>				
Calculation	Year	Grades K-6	Grades 7-12	TOTAL GRADES K-12 FOR INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING
<b>CURRENT COMBINED ENROLLMENT OF THE FOUR DISTRICTS</b>	2010-2011	2484	2261	4745
<b>Baseline Cohort Low Range</b>	2011-2012	2465	2208	4673
	2012-2013	2445	2153	4598
	2013-2014	2430	2121	4551
	2014-2015	2385	2112	4497
	2015-2016	2320	2150	4470
<b>Baseline Cohort Mid Range</b>	2011-2012	2500	2208	4708
	2012-2013	2510	2153	4663
	2013-2014	2515	2121	4636
	2014-2015	2515	2112	4627
	2015-2016	2500	2150	4650
<b>Baseline Cohort High Range</b>	2011-2012	2513	2208	4721
	2012-2013	2523	2153	4676
	2013-2014	2538	2121	4659
	2014-2015	2550	2112	4662
	2015-2016	2550	2150	4700

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### FINDINGS:

**Frankfort-Schuylers:** Elementary grades K-6 enrollment is estimated to decrease between 30 and 65 pupils over the next five years. Grades 7-12 enrollment is estimated to decrease between 40 and 55 pupils over the next ten years.

**Herkimer:** Elementary grades K-6 enrollment is estimated to increase by about 10 to 45 pupils over the next five years. Grades 7-12 enrollment is estimated to increase by about 70 and 100 pupils over the next ten years.

**Ilion:** Elementary grades K-6 enrollment is estimated to either increase by about 55 pupils or decrease by about 50 pupils over the next five years. Grades 7-12 enrollment is estimated to decrease between 20 and 65 pupils over the next ten years.

**Mohawk:** Elementary grades K-6 enrollment is estimated to remain stable and may likely decrease by about 60 pupils over the next five years. Grades 7-12 enrollment is estimated to decrease between 60 and 90 pupils over the next ten years.

If the communities authorized a reorganization of the four districts into one, the new district can expect an elementary K-6 *high range* enrollment estimate of 2550 pupils in five years compared to the 2010-2011 enrollment of 2484 for grades K-6. The new district can expect a grades 7-12 *high range* enrollment estimate of 2150 pupils in five years compared to the 2010-2011 enrollment of 2261 for grades 7-12.

The most conservative enrollment projection estimates a total of 4470 pupils in grades K-12 for a reorganized district in five years. A mid-range projection estimates a total of 4650 pupils and the high-range projection estimates a total of 4700 pupils for grades K-12. Currently, the four districts combined serve 4745 pupils in grades K-12.

The study uses the most conservative enrollment projection in its analyses. The *high enrollment projection* of 4700 pupils in grades K-12 is used as a baseline in reviewing program opportunities, staffing, and use of facilities to deliver a ‘*what if*’ program if the four districts reorganized into one.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the enrollment projections data:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
◇ The larger potential base of students combined allows more participation in more and different classes.	◇ Combined K-12 data trend for each of the four districts is in overall decline.
◇ Better use of the faculty and staff we have without increasing class sizes or running classes that are just too small because of declining overall enrollment.	◇ Keeping costs under ‘control’ by individual districts while the student enrollment base may be declining probably will be difficult.
	◇ Will we need all the school buildings we have now as future enrollments probably will decrease?
	◇ When is the point when a student population just too small to offer a complete program with quality?

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### 2. Federal Census Demographic Data Snapshot of the Four School Districts

A valuable tool to use as the Boards and communities make value judgments about future enrollments and the outlook for the Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion, and Mohawk is Federal Census data. Within 24 months, 2010 Census data will begin to be available for use by school districts. Below is a chart that lists some of the most salient demographic characteristics reported by the 2009 Census estimate. The Census data are included in this report to provide a tool for more in-depth analysis which may provide insights into how potential new population, new housing or employment opportunities may or may not affect the enrollment of the school district in the future. In addition, a review of the Census data variables can provide insights into: community education program opportunities, K-12 program variables related to the community profiles, public relations/communication strategies with various subsets of the population in the district, and other school district issues and roles as the school districts plan for the future. Discussing the similarities and dissimilarities of the characteristics of the four school districts can be valuable as the Boards, senior leadership, and the communities define short range and long-range plans for the districts. The Census data are meant to engage discussion about how to serve the pupils and the communities of the school districts.

The **DATA** section of the study report starting on page -80- includes a comprehensive list of demographic characteristics of each school district in four categories: *Demographic and Housing Estimates, Social Characteristics, Economic Characteristics, and Housing Characteristics*.

An example discussion question for Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion, and Mohawk based on the Census data might include:

- ✓ What challenges and/or opportunities do the following demographic characteristics present to the mission of providing public education in the four districts reorganized into one; separately?
  - 6.4% of the F-S school district population is under five years old; 5.6% for the Herkimer school district; 7% for Ilion; 6.8% for Mohawk
  - the median age of the F-S school district is 40.7 years; 43.4 for Herkimer; 35.4 for Ilion, and 39.9 for Mohawk. The median ages of two of the districts are close to the top of the span considered to be ‘child-bearing years’ for the general population.
  - 29.3% of the F-S school district households include one or more people over 65; 28.8% for Herkimer; 23.1% for Ilion; and 24.4% for Mohawk
  - 28.5% of the F-S school district households include one or more people under 18; 30.3% for Herkimer; 37.2% for Ilion; and 31.3% for Mohawk
  - 87% of the population in the F-S school district were in the same residence one year ago—8.2% lived in the same county one year ago; 81.6% of the population in the Herkimer school district were in the same residence one year ago—9.7% lived in the same county one year ago; 89.1% of the population in the Ilion school district were in the same residence one year ago—7.6% lived in the same county one year ago; 87.7% of the population in the Mohawk school district were in the same residence one year ago—9.6% lived in the same county one year ago

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- 87% of the F-S population has a high school diploma or higher; 85.1% of the Herkimer school district population; 86.9% of the Ilion school district population; and 87.4% of the Mohawk school district population
- average household income in the F-S district is \$49,771; \$44,128 in the Herkimer district; \$51,682 in the Ilion district; and \$49,926 in the Mohawk district
- average family household income in the F-S district is \$59,309; \$56,590 in the Herkimer district; \$59,264 in the Ilion district; and \$60,064 in the Mohawk district
- 8.4% of all the family households in F-S are below the poverty level; 11.6% in Herkimer; 11.5% in Ilion; and 7.2% in Mohawk
- 17.2% of all the family households in F-S that are below the poverty level have related children under age 18; 15.9% in Herkimer; 18.3% in Ilion; and 12.1% in Mohawk
- 5.1% of all the family households in F-S that are below the poverty level have related children under age 5; 15.2% in Herkimer; 32.7% in Ilion; and 20.5% in Mohawk
- 11.6% of the total population of F-S are below the poverty level; 18.1% in Herkimer; 13.9% in Ilion; and 10.3% in Mohawk
- 20.1% of all people under 18 in F-S are below the poverty level; 16% in Herkimer; 16.9% in Ilion; and 15.8% in Mohawk
- 9.2% of all people 65 years and older in F-S are below the poverty level; 13.7% in Herkimer; 7.35 in Ilion; and 4.4% in Mohawk
- 72.8% of the housing units in F-S are owner-occupied; 57.7% in Herkimer; 61.2% in Ilion; and 74.3% in Mohawk

A team of ‘guest outsiders’ cannot judge what characteristics are *similar* or *dissimilar*—only those who live in the districts who are part of the culture and value system can make that judgment. The ‘number’ data reported by the Census for many demographic characteristics of the four school districts seem to be in close range to each other.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the census demographic characteristic data:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
◇ Despite the four districts represent four district “communities”, the demographics are remarkably similar.	◇ Overcoming community resistance to giving up unique sense of each school district.
◇ Given that the demographics are very similar it’s possible a merger would be cohesive and that what individual communities desire for their children are aligned communities desire for their children are aligned.	◇ Loss of identify by some because of what they sense are local ‘cultural’ differences.
◇ Ability by the four communities to blend the Mohawk Valley to eliminate parochialism.	◇ Some people’s attitudes about their private issues with the “other side of the tracks”.
◇ The four school districts are supporting very similar students.	

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### 3. Geographic Distances between the School Buildings of the Four School Districts

Square Mile Sizes of School Districts in the Herkimer BOCES region:

Poland	Dolgeville	W.Canada Valley	Mount Markham	Richfield Springs	Oppenheim-Ephratah	Owen D. Young	Little Falls	Mohawk	Frankfort	Herkimer	Ilion
458.83	175.92	107.21	96.44	87.85	83.76	65.97	57.41	43.97	39.54	22.43	11.13

- ✓ Potential size of reorganized district made up of Frankfort, Herkimer, Ilion and Mohawk: **117.07 square miles**
- ✓ Distances between the current ten school buildings in the four school districts and the BOCES campus:

	MOHAWK JARVIS HS.	MOHAWK FISHER EL.	HERKIMER HS.	HERKIMER EL. .	ILION HS	ILION BARR. RD. EL.	ILION REM. EL.	F-S. HS.	F-S. REESE RD. EL.	F-S. W.FRANK EL.
HERKIMER BOCES	5.17	5.52	4.57	.53	6.51	7.87	5.68	7.85	8.69	14.9
F-S. W.FRANK EL.	11.39	11.64	11.78	14.92	10.91	9.47	10.0	7.6	7.89	
F-S. REESE RD. EL.	4.24	7.98	4.99	8.26	3.36	2.71	2.82	.46		
F-S. HS.	4.21	4.95	4.96	8.23	3.57	2.68	2.79			
ILION REM. EL.	1.55	2.59	2.26	5.07	1.28	1.89				
ILION BARR. RD.EL.	3.81	4.06	4.31	7.34	1.05					
ILION HS	3.25	3.50	3.17	5.98						
HERKIMER EL.	3.88	4.13	4.04							
HERKIMER HS.	2.12	2.37								
MOHAWK FISHER EL.	1.09									

- ✓ Distances between the current bus garage/repair centers:

	113 SPRUCE STREET, ILION	2245 DWYER AVENUE, UTICA	145 GROS BOULEVARD, HERKIMER
22 EAST MAIN STREET, MOHAWK	2.18	11.89	3.92
145 GROS BOULEVARD, HERKIMER	4.78	14.48	
2245 DWYER AVENUE, UTICA	10.45		

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the geography of the location of the existing school buildings of the four school districts:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
◇ The locations of the buildings are close to each other to house different configurations of grade levels.	◇ Looking at redefining the existing busing pattern to be more cost effective and allow children of different age levels to have their own bus routes.
◇ The buildings can provide specialties that can provide ‘magnet school’ type specialty programs	◇ Younger children (probably grades K through 4) should be bused the least. Possibly maintain local elementary schools in the overall plan.
◇ West Frankfort is now closed, but it is the most ‘isolated’ school geographically in the region of the four school districts.	◇ Try and keep bus routes to no longer than one hour for all students.
◇ Separate bus runs for elementary and secondary students may help manage behavior on the buses.	

### 4. Fiscal Condition Profiles of the Four Districts

Mr. Patrick J. Powers, CPA, PFS senior partner of D’Arcangelo & Co. analyzed the financial characteristics of the four school districts. School District fiscal condition is dependent on a number of issues. A major challenge in the current economic environment the school district needs to be able to absorb State Aid decreases and increasing expenditures while maintaining a sound educational program.

Some indicators of fiscal health include such items as:

- Fund balance, including reserves
- Excess of revenues over expenditures
- How reliant is the school district on State aid?
- Excess appropriation of fund balance
- Comparison of budgeted revenues and expenditures to actual
- School Lunch subsidies?
- Status of tax certiorari or any litigation outstanding

The **DATA** section of the study report starting on page -92- includes an analysis of expenditures, revenues, fund balances, and long term debt of the four districts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010.

Charted below are the unreserved/unallocated fund balance percentages of the annual approved budgets for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2010 and June 30, 2011.

Unreserved/Unallocated Fund Balance as a % of the Annual Approved Budget				
	Frankfort-Schuyler	Herkimer	Ilion	Mohawk
June 30, 2010	4.39%	5.7%	13.31%	3.97%
June 30, 2011	4.21%	5.01%	7.99%	3.59%

Below is a fiscal condition summary comparison of the four districts for 2010.

# FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

## FISCAL CONDITION COMPARISON

AS OF JUNE 30, 2010

	INDICATORS	SCHOOL DISTRICT				OBSERVATIONS
		Frankfort-Schuyler	Herkimer	Ilion	Mohawk	
1	General Fund Excess Revenues Over Expenditures Last Two Years?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Excess revenues for all but Mohawk decreased sharply in 2010. Mohawk excess was approx. \$171,000 in 2010, up from only \$47,000 in 2009.
2	State and Federal Aid / Total Revenue	60.65%	60.79%	78.91%	71.77%	Ilion and Mohawk highly dependent on State Aid as a revenue source. Future reductions in State Aid would force higher than average increases in the tax levy and/or expenditure reductions. The average for similar regions is 58%.
3	K-12 Public School Enrollment including Charter Schools	1,205	1,209	1,524	807	4,745 total enrollment
4	General Fund Expenditures per Pupil	\$13,454	\$15,129	\$14,717	\$16,885	Mohawk has a higher expenditure per pupil due to the inability of the smaller enrolment to absorb the fixed costs.
5	Debt Service as a % of Expenditures	11.31%	13.67%	13.04%	10.96%	Herkimer and Ilion are slightly higher than the percentage for similar regions - approx. 12%.

6	Percent of Unexpended 2010 Budget	5.3%	4.8%	6.0%	3.4%	
7	Percent of Revenue Under Budget	-1.00%	0	0	-1.0%	
8	2010 Excess (Deficit) Revenues and Expenditures to Budget	4.3%	4.8%	6.0%	2.4%	Mohawk at a total of 2.4% has a close budget. A total of 5.0-7.0% is acceptable.

9	% of Pupils Eligible for Free/Reduced Price Lunches	38.0%	55.0%	47.0%	43.5%	
10	School Lunch Fund Balance at June 30, 2010	\$93,559	\$243	\$62,062	\$66,743	Mohawk operated at a loss in 2010.
11	School Lunch Subsidy from General Fund?	No-contracted out	No-contracted out	No.	No.	Mohawk does not charge health insurance to the lunch fund.

### OVERALL FINDINGS:

- ✓ Ilion is financially the strongest with 24% of expenditures in fund balance, including several reserves.
- ✓ Mohawk is the weakest financially with 5.86% in fund balance with no reserves other than encumbrances from outstanding purchase orders from the year before.
- ✓ Final expenditures by each district are within 96.4% to 94% of estimated expenditures at the time of budget preparation. The percent of unexpended budget in 2010 therefore ranges from 3.4% to 6.0%. Therefore, the districts are not inflating expected expenditures in their estimated budgets at the time of budget preparation. Similarly, each district is accurately estimated their revenues at the time of budget preparation, therefore there is little to none money 'left over' from more than expected revenues received during the budget year.
- ✓ Existing reserves are low and do not adequately protect the taxpayers from unexpected financial liabilities like unemployment, tax certiorari challenges, worker's compensation, property loss and liabilities, and facility capital expenses.
- ✓ Each district has allocated fund balances to reduce taxes. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient funds from not spending estimated expenditures and from unexpected revenues not planned at the time of budget preparation to continue carrying over much money into a future year's budget to offset the property tax levy.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A chart that shows the 2011-2011 property tax levies and rates of each of the school districts is provided below.

### Frankfort-Schuyler CS

Frankfort	214,441,923	0.7500	285,922,564	6,740,776	85.448290%	5,759,877.82	26.86
Schuyler	43,579,489	0.8950	48,692,166	6,740,776	14.551710%	980,898.18	22.51
Total	258,021,412		334,614,730		100.000000%	6,740,776	
<b>20.19</b> Tax Rate per \$1000 on True							

### Herkimer CS

Herkimer	338,182,772	0.9400	359,768,906	7,475,944	96.782711%	7,235,421.28	21.40
Little Falls	8,371,707	70.0000	11,959,581	7,475,944	3.217289%	240,522.72	28.73
Total	346,554,479		371,728,487		100.000000%	7,475,944	
<b>20.86</b> Tax Rate per \$1000 on True							

### Mohawk CS

German Flatts	119,562,576	0.7715	154,974,175	3,876,316	80.277674%	3,111,816.32	26.03
Columbia	28,975,415	0.95	30,500,437	3,876,316	15.799433%	612,435.95	21.14
Little Falls	5,175,860	0.7	7,394,086	3,876,316	3.830187%	148,470.15	28.69
Litchfield	170,019	0.95	178,967	3,876,316	0.092706%	3,593.58	21.14
Total	153,883,870		193,047,665		100.000000%	3,876,316	
<b>20.08</b> Tax Rate per \$1000 on True							

### Ilion CS

Frankfort	16,416,810	0.75	21,889,080	4,590,000	8.057738%	369,850.17	22.53
German Flatts	189,324,250	0.7715	245,397,602	4,590,000	90.334984%	4,146,375.77	21.90
Herkimer	3,550,341	0.94	3,776,959	4,590,000	1.390362%	63,817.62	17.98
Schuyler	527,384	0.895	589,256	4,590,000	0.216915%	9,956.40	18.88
Total	209,818,785		271,652,897		99.999999%	4,590,000	
<b>16.90</b> Tax Rate per \$1000 on True							

## 5. Historical Perspective of Referendum Votes of Each District

Since 2005 there have been a total of 39 public referenda in the four school districts for the annual budget, bus purchases, and capital projects. Only 4 of the public referenda were not approved by the voters since 2005.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

<b>HISTORY OF PUBLIC REFERENDUM: FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER</b>											
<b>BUDGET REFERENDUM</b>				<b>BUS REFERENDUM</b>				<b>CAPITAL BUDGET REFERENDUM</b>			
<b>DATE</b>	<b>\$ AMOUNT</b>	<b># VOTED 'YES'</b>	<b># VOTED 'NO'</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>\$ AMOUNT</b>	<b># VOTED 'YES'</b>	<b># VOTED 'NO'</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>\$ AMOUNT</b>	<b># VOTED 'YES'</b>	<b># VOTED 'NO'</b>
May 2005	14,451,829	451	169								
May 2006	15,213,107	326	143								
May 2007	15,822,636	247	79					June 2007	\$3.7	74	21
May 2008	16,590,536	409	156								
May 2009	16,944,449	319	103								
May 2010	17,689,785	380	164								
May 2011	17,569,141	431	336								
<b>HISTORY OF PUBLIC REFERENDUM: HERKIMER</b>											
05/17/05	\$15,323,682	436	181								
05/16/06	\$16,191,012	323	186	07/25/06	\$320,000	88	15				
05/15/07	\$17,161,963	362	222					05/15/07	\$11,900,000	321	260
05/20/08	\$18,072,477	272	136	05/20/08	\$200,000	274	128				
05/19/09	\$18,923,335	267	191	05/19/09	\$250,000	276	180				
05/18/10	\$19,969,462	423	258	05/18/10	\$160,000	407	267				
05/17/11	\$19,969,462	370	287	05/17/11	\$218,000	300	335				
<b>HISTORY OF PUBLIC REFERENDUM: ILION</b>											
May 2005	20,950,000	391	111								
May 2006	20,947,654	377	478								
June 2006	20,947,654	808	433								
May 2007	21,987,654	428	155								
May 2008	23,108,965	355	93					May 2008	25,006,000	283	65
May 2009	23,839,590	313	97								
May 2010	25,901,000	307	138								
<b>HISTORY OF PUBLIC REFERENDUM: MOHAWK</b>											
5/17/05	11,827,221	320	134	5/16/06	240,000	259	98	5/15/07	11,812,000	334	247
5/16/06	12,213,781	259	107	10/27/09	250,000	183	90				
5/15/07	12,760,575	403	195								
5/20/08	13,386,629	219	101								
5/19/09	14,139,348	236	273								
5/18/10	14,573,533	289	172								
5/17/11	14,209,294	282	221								

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### **B. The School Buildings in the Four School Districts**

#### **1. Pupil Capacity of Each of the School Buildings**

The study provides a school building pupil capacity assessment that first documents how the instructional spaces in all of the school buildings of the four school districts are utilized in the 2010-2011 school year to deliver *the pre-kindergarten through grade twelve program including special education*. Second, it provides an assessment of pupil capacity of each building as defined by local class size teacher contractual definitions and the local school district goals of each school district.

The pupil capacity analysis of each school building starts on page -102- in the **DATA** section of the study report.

The pupil capacity analysis is based on the following assumptions:

- There is no new construction of additional space and no immediate renovations of existing space forecasted.
- *Unassigned* pupil capacity is factored to ensure flexibility of program delivery, allow for program enhancements, and allow for appropriate space for instructional support activities.
- All existing instructional support spaces remain instructional support spaces. (Example: reading rooms, speech rooms, resource rooms.)
- There is factored in an allocation of eight classrooms district-wide for Pre-K at class section size of 18 pupils (288 half day; 144 full day pupils).
- The analysis, at the present time, does not include renting classrooms to the BOCES to host consortium shared programs.
- Current spaces currently used for central administration in each of the four school districts are not ‘re-claimed’ for instructional program pupil capacity at this time.
- Pupil Capacity of classrooms for direct instruction are based on the following class sizes:
  - ◊ Kindergarten and grade 1: 20 pupils
  - ◊ Grades 2 and 3: 22 pupils
  - ◊ Grades 4, 5, and 6: 24 pupils
  - ◊ Grades 7-12: 25 pupils\*

\*(Note: Often for *specialized* Grades 7-12 courses, it is likely that the class sizes for such specialized courses may be between 10-(or fewer pupils as approved by the board)-and 25 pupils. During other instructional periods of the day, it is likely a classroom will host class sizes near the 25 pupil number for other courses less specialized.)

During the process of the study, the Frankfort-Schuyler West Frankfort Elementary School was closed. The Results of the Pupil Capacity Analysis below reflect that decision:

CURRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS	K-6 PUPIL CAPACITY	CURRENT SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS	7-12 PUPIL CAPACITY
FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER Reese Road El.	634 (the F-S housing plan for 2011-2012)	FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER High School	784
FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER West Frankfort El.	252		
HERKIMER Elementary	800	HERKIMER High School	879

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

<b>ILION Barringer Rd Elementary</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>ILION High School</b>	<b>1340</b>
<b>ILION Remington Elementary</b>	<b>530</b>		
<b>MOHAWK Fisher Elementary</b>	<b>578</b>	<b>MOHAWK Jarvis High School</b>	<b>560</b>
<b>TOTAL K-6 PUPIL CAPACITY AVAILABLE WITH THE CURRENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS</b>	<b>3378</b>	<b>TOTAL PUPIL CAPACITY AVAILABLE WITH CURRENT GRADES 7-12 BUILDINGS</b>	<b>3563</b>
<i>Anticipated Pupil Capacity Need in five years:</i>	<i>2320-2550</i>	<i>Highest Anticipated Pupil Capacity Need in ten years:</i>	<i>2118-2231</i>

There exists between 1058 and 828 school building pupil capacity in excess of the 2320 to 2550 kindergarten through grade 6 enrollment estimated in five years. Between 33% and 24% of the existing grades kindergarten through grade 6 pupil capacity is likely not to be needed within five years. There exists between 1445 and 1332 school building pupil capacity in excess of the 2118 to 2231 grades 7 through 12 enrollment estimated in ten years. Between 40% and 37% of the existing grades 7 through 12 pupil capacity is likely not to be needed within ten years.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the existing school building pupil capacity in the four school districts:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
◇ A reorganization of the four school districts into one likely will not need new construction or massive renovations.	◇ Determining which buildings get used for what purpose. Might be emotional for some.
◇ Reorganization might make better use of the school buildings of the current four school districts.	◇ Loss of identify by some because of what they sense are local ‘cultural’ differences.
◇ The districts’ buildings are under utilized in that they are capable of serving many more students.	◇ Other uses for school buildings in this economy are limited.
◇ Reconfiguration of grade levels housed in the various buildings could enhance education concentration and success; and could eliminate some costs for the short and long term.	◇ The buildings of the districts are underutilized—the districts separately will need to somehow deal with it since enrollment estimates for the future look to be flat at best.

### 2. Infrastructure Condition of the Existing School Buildings

Prior to the commencement of the reorganization study, the four school districts operated a total of ten instructional school buildings. While the reorganization study was in progress in May 2011, the Frankfort-Schuyler board of education decided to close West Frankfort Elementary School for the 2011-

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

12 school year. In addition, all four districts operate a maintenance and/or transportation facility for a total of 14 buildings.

Each of the districts completed its five-year Building Condition Survey during the 2010-11 school year as required by NYS law. Those documents, completed by licensed architects and filed with the New York State Education Department provide a thorough assessment of each of the buildings in each of the districts.

The summary of the Building Condition Surveys of each School District building begins on page -127- in the **DATA** section of the study report.

In the hundreds of items and systems examined in each of the 14 buildings, a small number of items were judged “Unsatisfactory.” One item was judged “non-functioning.” That was the swimming pool at Fisher Elementary School in Mohawk. No item was judged “critical failure.” (see DATA Set page -130- for definitions). The total estimated capital construction expenses for all four districts through 2015-2016 as per the Building Condition Survey Reports of 2010 would be approximately \$14.1 million over the next five years.

Those areas deemed “Unsatisfactory” include such items as : VCT floor tiles; exterior door hardware; hot water heater; furnace; lighting fixtures; gym wood flooring; air handling system; swimming pool (at Fisher Elementary).

While the Building Condition Survey Reports do suggest some repairs, renovations etc, none of the buildings will require major renovations to house students safely in the new district should reorganization occur.

The four school communities, through their respective boards of education and administration, have maintained their school buildings through periodic and responsible repairs, renovations and additions via capital projects over a sustained period of time.

Due to declining enrollment over time, the economies of scale realized when reorganizing four districts into one and the planning the districts did in protecting and maintaining the facilities, no new construction or major renovations should be required to house students and staff safely in year one if these districts reorganize. It should be noted that demographics like enrollments and conditions may change over time for this reorganized district as with other school districts in the state. Therefore, any housing or capital

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

improvement initiatives will change in subsequent years from the plans considered for year one by the findings of this study.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the building conditions of the buildings in the four school districts:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The reorganized school district should be able to house safely all students and staff. The facilities would not require immediate additions, renovations or repairs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ At some time prior to or within the first year of the reorganized district, management may need to address issues of parking on several of the school campuses. A shift of student populations and staff (at the current Ilion High School for example) may require an immediate as well as long-term plan and policy to address parking.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The new District could avail itself of the possible 98% incentive building aid ratio that will exist for ten years. This state building aid ratio and subsequent contract with NYS could substantially fund repairs and renovations to all facilities and grounds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The swimming pool in what is now the Herkimer High School may need an upgrade to its pool area, to replace the HVAC system and replace chemical tanks at an estimated cost of \$400,000.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Since some schools in the reorganized district would not be scheduled to house the aged students as they were originally designed, some retrofitting in subsequent years may be required as to support program/curriculum delivery decisions made by the district.</li> </ul>

### RECOMMENDATION:

If the Districts' communities affirm a reorganization as prescribed by law, the new district should immediately establish a Facilities Transition Committee to address the issues related to facilities, grounds and playing fields. This committee should have broad-based composition including, but not limited to, representatives from all merged districts; buildings and grounds staff, students, faculty, support staff, parents, community and perhaps a school architect as an advisor.

The new District could avail itself of the possible 98% incentive building aid ratio that can be accessed during the first ten years of the new district. This state building aid for a newly organized school district could substantially fund repairs and renovations to all facilities and grounds that could last and serve the community and generations of pupils far into the future.

The new district has a ten-year window to qualify for the enhanced building aid. The State Education Department requires signed contracts with a general contractor for any capital project *within* the ten-year window. Reasonably, it usually takes up to two years to plan a capital improvement project, propose a

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

public referendum, design, obtain final SED approval and complete the competitive bidding process. Therefore, it is recommended that the new District upon organization should immediately engage the services of a professional architectural firm and, with their assistance, carefully and cost-effectively develop a long-range plan to address all the items listed in the Building Condition Survey Reports and any facilities-related changes necessary for program improvement. In addition, the newly organized District should consider engaging the services of an experienced architect and/or consultant with expertise in renewable energy systems. It is suggested that the long-range plan should also include steps to institute a variety of renewable energy options to reduce energy expenses in the district's annual operating budget.

### **C. The Educational Program in the Four School Districts**

#### **1. Current Class Sizes Grades preK-12**

Charted below is a list of any teacher contract language and/or School Board policies currently in place that refers to class size.

Frankfort-Schuyler	Teacher contract; Article III, sub paragraph 4: <i>Any teacher, with a class size of more than twenty-seven (27), shall be permitted to have scheduled an individual fourth (4<sup>th</sup>) day of parent conferences, with appropriate relief, provided the supervisor approves.</i>
Herkimer	Teacher contract; Article X, paragraph I (Distance Learning): <i>The number of students in a class, including those at receiving sites, shall not exceed that which is traditional in the host district for teachers in the particular discipline being offered.</i>
Ilion	Teacher contract: Article XIII, paragraph I: <i>It shall be the policy of the Board to establish a district class size range of 25-30 students insofar as it is practicable.</i>
Mohawk	none

Charted below is a summary of the grades pre-kindergarten through grade 6 class section size ranges and averages in each of the four school districts as of October 1, 2010. The class sizes of self-contained special needs classrooms are also listed by district.

The total collection of class size data, including the size of each grade level section across the four districts starts on page -131- of the DATA section of the study report.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**  
**2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR GRADE LEVEL CLASS SECTION ENROLLMENTS AS OF**  
**OCTOBER 1, 2010**

<b>GRADE LEVEL</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER Reese Road El.</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER West Frankfort El.</b>	<b>HERKIMER Herkimer Elementary</b>	<b>ILION Barringer Rd Elementary</b>	<b>Ilion Remington Elementary</b>	<b>Mohawk Fisher Elementary</b>
<b>RE-K Range</b>	18-18		17-17		13-19	16-17
<b>PRE-K Average</b>	18		17		16.2	16.3
<b>K Range</b>	18-23	20-20	17-20	20-20	18-19	15-18
<b>K Average</b>	21.3	20	18.9	20	18.3	16.3
<b>GRADE 1 Range</b>	21-24	27-27	18-22	18-21	21-23	15-19
<b>GRADE 1 Average</b>	22.5	27	20.6	19.3	22.3	16.5
<b>GRADE 2 Range</b>	21-22	22-24	20-24	20-21	20-21	16-17
<b>GRADE 2 Average</b>	21.5	23	22.5	20.3	20.6	16.3
<b>GRADE 3 Range</b>	24-24	24-25	18-20	21-22	16-20	20-21
<b>GRADE 3 Average</b>	24	24.5	19	21.5	18	20.3
<b>GRADE 4 Range</b>	19-20	20-21	20-21	15-18	17-22	19-22
<b>GRADE 4 Average</b>	19.5	20.5	20.75	16	19.3	20.3
<b>GRADE 5 Range</b>	18-20	22-23	19-22	17-18	21-24	19-21
<b>GRADE 5 Average</b>	19	22.5	20	17.3	22.6	19.7
<b>GRADE 6 Range</b>	18-22		21-25	26-27	26-27	18-19
<b>GRADE 6 Average</b>	20.5		22	26.5	26.5	18.3
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOMS (TYPE-RATIO)</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER Reese Road El.</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER West Frankfort El.</b>	<b>HERKIMER Herkimer Elementary</b>	<b>ILION Barringer Rd Elementary</b>	<b>Ilion Remington Elementary</b>	<b>Mohawk Fisher Elementary</b>
12:1:1	12		13		9	5
12:1:1	13		14			
12:1:1			9			
12:1:1			8	12		
15:1:1				12	7	
15:1:1					9	
15:1:1					9	

Charted below is a summary of the grades 7 through 12 English class section size ranges and averages in each of the four school districts as of October 1, 2011. The class sizes of self-contained special needs classrooms are also listed by district.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY  
2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR GRADES 7-12 ENGLISH  
CLASS SECTION ENROLLMENTS AS OF OCTOBER 1, 2010**

<b>ENGLISH CLASSES GRADE LEVEL</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER High School</b>	<b>HERKIMER High School</b>	<b>ILION High School</b>	<b>MOHAWK Jarvis High School</b>
<b>GRADE 7 Range</b>	22-27	16-19	14-24	9-18
<b>GRADE 7 Average</b>	23.75	17.6	18.8	14.25
<b>GRADE 8 Range</b>	19-26	17-23	20-23	9-21
<b>GRADE 8 Average</b>	21.7	20	22.2	14.25
<b>GRADE 9 Range</b>	24-30	25-27	12-24	10-21
<b>GRADE 9 Average</b>	26.9	25.5	18.7	17.25
<b>GRADE 10 Range</b>	16-25	17-23	12-23	11-20
<b>GRADE 10 Average</b>	21.3	19.8	20.1	16.25
<b>GRADE 11 Range</b>	18-28	14-25	15-21	7-18
<b>GRADE 11 Average</b>	24.75	19	18	13
<b>GRADE 12 Range</b>	13-32	11-21	21-26	10-16
<b>GRADE 12 Average</b>	20.6	17.3	23.5	13.5
<b>SPECIAL NEEDS SELF-CONTAINED CLASSROOMS (TYPE-RATIO)</b>	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER High School</b>	<b>HERKIMER High School</b>	<b>ILION High School</b>	<b>MOHAWK Jarvis High School</b>
12:1:1		4	8	9
12:1:1		3		
12:1:1		2		
12:1:1		4		
15:1:1			10	

The superintendents report that each district tries to achieve the following class section sizes as a best practice in serving the pupils and in utilizing the skill sets of the teachers at each grade level:

- Pre-Kindergarten: 18 pupils per class section
- Kindergarten and grade 1: 20 pupils per class section
- Grades 2 and 3: 22 pupils per class section
- Grade 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8: 24 pupils per class section
- Grades 9, 10, 11, and 12 (core subjects): 25 pupils per class section

The chart below summarizes how the current grade level section average class sizes in each of the districts are below, at, or above the class section goals listed above.

**Findings:**

- ✓ Across the four school districts and across all grade levels, in only one instance is a district at the class section size goal.
- ✓ Across the four school districts and across all grade levels, the class section sizes are below the class section size goal in 50 instances.
- ✓ Across the four school districts and across all grade levels, the class section sizes are above the class section size goal in 12 instances.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Average class section sizes: below the goal, at the goal, or above the goal.						
Grade/ Class Size Goal	<b>FRANKFORT- SCHUYLER Reese Road El.</b>	<b>FRANKFORT- SCHUYLER West Frankfort El.</b>	<b>HERKIMER Herkimer Elementary</b>	<b>ILION Barringer Rd Elementary</b>	<b>Ilion Remington Elementary</b>	<b>Mohawk Fisher Elementary</b>
Pre- K; 18	At goal	(not offered)	Below goal	(not offered)	Below goal	Below Goal
Grade 1;20	Above goal	Above goal	Above goal	Below goal	Above goal	Below goal
Grade 2; 22	Below goal	Above goal	Above goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 3; 22	Above goal	Above goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 4; 24	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 5; 24	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 6; 24	Below goal		Below goal	Above goal	Above goal	Below goal
Core Subject Class Size Goal:			<b>FRANKFORT- SCHUYLER High School</b>	<b>HERKIMER High School</b>	<b>ILION High School</b>	<b>MOHAWK Jarvis High School</b>
Grade 7; 24			Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 8; 24			Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 9; 25			Above goal	Above goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 10; 25			Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 11; 25			Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal
Grade 12; 25			Below goal	Below goal	Below goal	Below goal

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the class section sizes currently in the four school districts:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Together the districts might have a better chance of keeping the lower class size goals instead of having to increase them due to the lack of money to keep instructional staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Pupil enrollments are likely to continue to decline and they usually decline across all grade level ages as opposed to just one or two grade level age groups. Low class section sizes may decrease even further without necessarily reducing expenses because of fewer children enrolled.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A combined volume of students at each age level/grade level probably will allow the four districts keep low class sizes and do it with the same or fewer employees than are now on staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The lack of a volume of enrollment at certain grade levels in the four districts does not allow the individual school districts to fully use the skills of the staff they have already. For example, if there are only 18 pupils in a grade 7 class with a local class size cultural standard of 24 pupils, then only 18/24 or 75% of the professional skill sets of the instructor are being utilized to serve pupils. At least a 90% utilization of instructor skills and thus working</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

	to reach at least 90% of the grade level section class size goal is a prudent, diligent goal to deliver instruction.
◇ A larger geographic area to provide public education in together will help to deal with decreases or increases of school age population in any one area.	◇ As finances get tighter, will the separate districts have to raise the class size goals to meet an affordable total budget?
◇ Similar class sizes now generally indicate that the districts have similar philosophies regarding appropriate class size.	◇ Will the number of high school students in grade 9-12 decline so that a full comprehensive set of courses cannot be offered and still be affordable in each individual district?

### 2. The Elementary Program Offerings

The Community Advisory Committee reviewed program offerings by analyzing district information provided in data sets from each district about the elementary program and through panel discussions with representatives of the four district elementary schools.

The data set which begin on page -137- of the DATA section of the study provide a snapshot of the programs by listing out the various program elements of each district’s elementary offerings.

As a result, the Community Advisory Committees were able to review a side-by-side analysis of the core and special area curriculum of each district. In addition, co-curricular and intramural sports available to students are listed as is information related to special education and enrichment program options. After a review of the information at one of their meetings, the subsequent meeting brought school representatives including the superintendent, building principal, and a teacher representative. The CAC members were able to ask questions of the panel members to clarify information from the program charts and hear directly from the school representatives about the specific elementary programs in each district.

Major findings from the review of the elementary program offerings include:

- ✓ All four districts have maintained their core offerings for elementary students that meet required mandates and provide for an elementary program as per Part 100 of Commissioner’s Regulations.
- ✓ The communities of all four districts hold their elementary schools in high regard. There is a strong feeling about the importance of the schools as the hub of their local communities.
- ✓ As a result of budget limitations, enrichment opportunities for students have been reduced, or in the case of Mohawk were eliminated.
- ✓ Psychological, speech, and other related services primarily are used to meet IEP requirements of special education students and are not generally available to the non-IEP student population.
- ✓ The reading approaches of the districts are similar in scope and in reading book series used by each district.
- ✓ All four districts provide Pre-K instruction for eligible students.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ✓ Special education programming in all four districts utilizes in-district classrooms as well as BOCES special education (both on site and at the center) and outside private placements as needed.
- ✓ Although the Community Advisory Committee members and district staff mutually expressed a desire to have foreign languages begin at the elementary levels, foreign language instruction is not available at the elementary level presently.
- ✓ Both CAC members and district staff expressed the importance of the culture at their schools and the caring support of the faculty and staff for the students.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the Pre-Kindergarten through grade 6 program offering in the four school districts:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<p>◇ There is the potential for greater coordination and articulation of curriculum in one district. With a similar time schedule, textbook series and support materials that are unified, and professional development that can focus on similar goals, there is the opportunity for strong improvement in all areas of the curriculum.</p>	<p>◇ Should the districts choose to reorganize, it will be very important to maintain the supportive culture of the individual schools that has been developed over the years.</p>
<p>◇ There presently are not foreign language opportunities at the elementary level. Research points to the importance of beginning a secondary language at an early age. A reorganized district could provide new opportunities for second language instruction at the elementary school.</p>	<p>◇ CAC members shared their concern regarding the potential loss of the individual cultures of the elementary schools. The challenge for a reorganized district would be to find an organizational structure that could both maintain and build upon that culture. As part of this, it will be important to continue seeking ways to keep the closeness between the staff and students in order for that relationship to remain close.</p>
<p>◇ At the same time, the CAC members and district staff saw this challenge as a potential opportunity. The possibility of “fresh faces” in different buildings with different ideas could spur on a new sense of excitement in their new surroundings.</p>	<p>◇ District staff and the CAC members discussed the challenge of blending new staff. If the district reorganizes and there are movements of staff to different buildings, this could pose challenges in integrating the staff into a new setting and potentially new curriculum and instruction models.</p>
<p>◇ With combined staffing, there would be the potential for greater enrichment, co-curricular and intramural offerings for students at the elementary level.</p>	<p>◇ Parents are used to routines with their individual schools. It was shared that a challenge would be to work with parents to make them feel comfortable with the education of their children should there be any changes to the programs or settings of how/where their children receive their elementary instruction.</p>
<p>◇ Coordinated scheduling and combining of staffing could lead to increased opportunities for students in the areas of speech and psychological support services. CAC members and district staff expressed a desire to expand</p>	

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

<p>these services to general education students where needed.</p>	
<p>◇ If the districts were to reorganize, there could be a better utilization of the talent of the different schools. As an example, there are several highly skilled instructors in the elementary schools who are advanced in the use of technology instruction. A reorganized district could better utilize and coordinate the various talents of staff in the different buildings.</p>	
<p>◇ The CAC and district staff expressed a desire to increase the instructional time for the arts. With a reorganized district, the possibility for coordinated scheduling and pooling of both staff and material resources could lead to both increased time and enhanced instruction for elementary students.</p>	

### **Long Range Opportunity for the Elementary Program in a Reorganized School District**

There is the potential for an instructional model change that could provide interesting benefits for the students of a potentially new reorganized district. If the districts were to reorganize, the instructional pattern of educating the elementary students could be set up to provide options for parents. If there were four elementary programs, the district could examine the potential of a mixed delivery system. One or more of the buildings could have a traditional grade level organization of the elementary program and one or more of the buildings could have a multi-age approach. The possibility of offering different instructional models could be an exciting benefit to parents and students.

The multi-age instructional delivery technique uses a flexible age and curricular approach to instruction. Students within an age range of usually a two year span are grouped together into classroom sections. The focus of curriculum delivery in a multi-age classroom is using varied learning opportunities such as learning centers that emphasize a ‘shared learning’ experience with other students and the teacher. The multi-age delivery method can help students more readily learn at their own pace with recognition of the varied learning styles of individual students.

Besides the potential for providing options for instruction of students, the multi-age model also can better handle fluctuations in student enrollment. In a traditional class section model, a drop in students at one level can cause one classroom to end up with higher enrollment while another may have quite lower enrollment. With a multi-age model, student numbers that go up or down can be more easily absorbed without negatively impacting other classrooms.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Should the districts reorganize, there will be plenty to keep everyone busy without adding a new instructional model. At the same time, the reorganization of a school district provides an outstanding opportunity to examine how things have been done in the past and discuss how they might be improved upon for the future.

### 3. The Secondary Program Offerings

The Community Advisory Committee reviewed secondary program offerings in a similar manner as to how they examined the elementary program. They were given charts of the major program elements of the secondary programs of the four districts and had the opportunity to discuss these elements with representatives of the four districts.

The data set which begin on page -144- of the DATA section of the study provide a snapshot of the programs by listing out the various program elements of each district's secondary offerings.

In a panel presentation format, the CAC met with the superintendent, building principal, guidance counselor and a secondary teacher from each of the four school districts to review and ask questions about the secondary program.

Major findings of the review of the secondary program elements include:

- ✓ The four districts have maintained a core educational program to meet the requirements of Part 100 Regulations. At the same time, budget cuts of the recent past have limited the options available to students at the secondary levels of all four school districts.
- ✓ The districts have worked to continue to offer enrichment opportunities for their students. Although the superintendents of the districts would like to offer more advanced placement and college level courses, they have worked diligently to keep these options available to students in light of continuing budget cuts across the board.
- ✓ The 7/8 core programs of F-S, Herkimer and Ilion have specific staff assigned to teach core instruction at the 7/8 levels. Mohawk shares much of their 7/8 staff with their 9/12 program. All four districts share special areas staff between the two programs. Sharing of the staff makes it difficult to have a focused middle level instructional plan that can flexibly provide options to student learning at this level.
- ✓ The use of technology for on-line learning has been explored mostly at Ilion with their Chinese language instruction and courses in Psychology and Sociology. F-S uses on-line learning for AP Biology. The technology has not been utilized at Herkimer and Mohawk.
- ✓ Spanish and/or French are the major languages taught at the secondary levels. As noted above, Ilion offers Chinese as another choice to students.
- ✓ Business course offerings are still in place at F-S, Herkimer, and Ilion, but they have been reduced. There is concern about retaining the business courses in light of continued budgetary cuts. Mohawk is no longer able to offer business courses.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- ✓ Basic fine arts of art, music and drama opportunities are available to students. All four Boards and their superintendents have maintained these program areas but are concerned they do not have the resources to provide more advanced offerings for students of talent in the arts.
- ✓ F-S offers the Project Lead the Way engineering curriculum to secondary students. The program is not available in the other districts. The other districts have expressed a desire to offer more technology rich programs, but limited budget funds have not made it possible.
- ✓ Each of the districts has many singleton courses with low enrollments. These are courses that can only be offered in one class section because there is not the volume of students to justify more class sections. Usually these are advanced courses in math, science, language arts, and foreign language. Often these courses are eliminated as budget revenue constraints require decisions that serve the most students first. Since there is only one class section of these advanced courses it also is sometimes not possible to schedule enrollment in the course because of the other courses a student has chosen as part of his/her program. The availability of more students wishing advanced courses would allow more sections of a subject to be offered which enables the scheduling of the course for more students who wish to take it.
- ✓ The panels of district staff members who met with and worked with the Community Advisory Committees expressed that offering a comprehensive academic program at the secondary level is a priority in budgeting decisions. Due to the continued decline in budget revenue, it is likely that other program areas like interscholastic athletics, co-curricular, and music/drama will be reduced first in order to use what resources there are to provide as complete an academic offering as possible.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding the secondary program data:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
◇ There is a strong desire to have more enrichment opportunities for students if the districts were to reorganize.	◇ Successfully integrating the students of all four districts into a single middle level and high school program will be a challenging task.
◇ An expanded curriculum that includes more course options such as engineering, technology, and business applications could be offered.	◇ Successfully integrating the various staffs into one middle level and high school will pose challenges for the new district.
◇ Expanded second language opportunities could be available to students.	◇ Communication to all key constituencies regarding the secondary program will be very important and will need different strategies to be successful.
◇ There may be more options available for special education classes in the home districts and options to rent more space to BOCES for special education instruction.	◇ If there is one middle school and one high school, CAC members were concerned about the potential for different time schedules of those buildings in relation to the elementary schools. Many older siblings are responsible for younger ones and the new system may provide logistical problems for parents.
◇ More opportunities for students involved with the fine arts.	◇ The secondary program of the individual districts have local traditions and customs. It will be a major challenge to integrate those traditions into a newly formed secondary school program.
◇ A separate middle level and high school program with dedicated staff to each program could provide strong program enhancements for students.	◇ There are local community members who have very strong ties to the current individual High Schools. Encouraging the support of these community members

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

	is very important.
◇ Combining singleton courses could allow for better utilization of teachers and as a result, provide more options for students. With coordinated staffing and scheduling, singleton courses could be offered on a more regular, semester to semester basis.	◇ CAC members discussed the challenge of keeping a small school feel in a much larger high school. If there is a reorganized district, the new district would have to develop a strategy to ensure that students do not “fall through the cracks” and get the instructional, counseling, and advocacy support valued by the community and four school districts now.
◇ A reorganized district could provide a single, coordinated effort for staff development. More teachers receiving on-going professional development means a staff with more options in their professional “tool box” to help students succeed. This would hopefully lead to better results on secondary exams and higher percentages of students receiving Regents Diplomas	
◇ There could be greater opportunities for students in interscholastic sports and co-curricular programs if the districts reorganized.	

### 4. Co-curricular, Music/Drama, and Athletic Offerings

Currently, all four districts offer a wide array of sports for both boys and girls encompassing the fall, winter and spring seasons.

The complete inventory of co-curricular, athletic and music/drama program offerings are charted starting on page -155- of the DATA section of the study report.

All four districts compete in the Center State Conference within Section III of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association. While the classification may vary by sport, for the most part, Ilion competes at the Class B level while Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer and Mohawk compete at the Class C level.

All schools offer opportunities within each sport season. However, the number of sports teams at all levels varies from a high of 48 teams in Ilion to a low of 32 teams in Frankfort-Schuyler. (Mohawk has 38 and Herkimer has 42). This is exclusive of elementary programs. Within those sports teams, there is also a wide range of participation levels. In some cases, the level of student participation is barely sufficient to safely field a competitive team. On other teams, the participation level is strong.

Coaches in the sports within each district are remunerated for their services based upon contractual agreements developed through the collective bargaining process.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

During the study process, the respective Directors of Athletics participated in discussions with the Community Advisory Committee. The Community Advisory Committees and the athletic directors discussed current offerings, various participation levels, opportunities available if reorganization occurred and the challenges facing a new athletic program.

The Community Advisory Committees discussed how important it would be in a reorganized school district that additional athletic opportunities be made available to order to ensure that if any student wants to participate there is an athletic activity or team that the student can pursue. In keeping with the direction of the Community Advisory Committees that new opportunities for the students are created in the athletic, music/drama and co-curricular programs, the estimated expenditure budget for a reorganized district includes an additional 10% in financial resources to above the expenditures currently budgeted by the four districts separately. The four districts spent \$1,335,073 in 2010-2011 for interscholastic athletics, co-curricular and music/drama. 2010-2011 expenditures are used as a benchmarked because major reductions were made in athletics, co-curricular and music/drama programs for the 2011-2012 budget. Therefore, it is suggested that an additional \$133,507 be allocated in the budget of the reorganized districts.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding interscholastic athletics:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A reorganized school district with a larger student population base may be able to offer more and different athletic opportunities for its students. Depending on student interest and community interest and support, the new district may be able to add new sports teams (i.e. lacrosse; Nordic or alpine skiing; swimming and diving; gymnastics; ice hockey).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ An increase in the number of student athletes through a larger student body creates a situation whereby fewer opportunities (or slots on a team) may exist for an athlete to participate on the team or position of his/her choice (i.e. a starting point guard in the former district may not start on a reorganized district team).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The reorganized district may be able to provide junior varsity, freshman and/or modified teams in more sports, pending student interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ With one team per sport (vs. four teams currently), it reduces the number of slots available to play. With more student athletes to select from, the competition to be selected for a particular team may increase.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ All students would be eligible to participate in sports that might not be offered in their current district, but are offered in one of the new 'partner' schools.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The transition of supporting a different school with different loyalties may be difficult for some. The sense of identity with the local school (and community) will change. Some old rivalries will be lost.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ With more sports teams available, more students might have the opportunity to play a high school sport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The current schools are accustomed to playing in the relatively smaller Section III Classifications (B and C) for sectionals and the NYS tournaments. The new, larger student enrollment (approximately 1196) could place the new district in Class AA. It could take time</li> </ul>

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

	for the new athletic program to adjust to the new level of competition. It is possible that the local teams may not be prepared for the level of competition that comes with the new classification.
Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Intramural sports opportunities to involve more students than those participating in interscholastic teams may be developed (elementary through high school). Currently, none exist in the four districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Reclassified in Class AA would necessitate a change in sports leagues and in opponents. This also could increase the travel time for students and costs to compete with more schools in other areas (i.e. Utica, Rome, Watertown, and Syracuse). This shift (combined with 'merging' local rivals) would eliminate the traditional school rivalries that go back in history.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A larger talented pool of teachers and others who are available to coach specific sports.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The new district will need to set up a process to identify, select and remunerate the coaching staffs from among the current quality coaches for many of the combined sports. One 'head coach' would be needed for a sport where four were needed prior to reorganization.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Swimming instruction will be provided for all students in grades 5 and 6 so that every student has the opportunity to move to the middle school having developed that life skill. The potential of interscholastic swimming might be an opportunity in the future.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Initial cost to replace an entirely new set of uniforms and possibly new equipment needs to be planned and phased in.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The cooperative development of a new set of policies reflecting cultural issues and priorities will need to be established (i.e. policy about cutting; sportsmanship; academic eligibility; rubric for evaluation of skills).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The cooperative development of a new set of policies reflecting cultural issues and priorities will need to be established (i.e. policy about cutting; sportsmanship; academic eligibility; rubric for evaluation of skills).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The various town feeder programs (i.e. Pop Warner; basketball; soccer) could be coordinated with community sponsors and coaches.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The various town feeder programs (i.e. Pop Warner; basketball; soccer) should be coordinated with community sponsors and coaches.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Since each district prior to any reorganization has good quality facilities, gymnasiums and playing fields, there will be more gym space available for practices at all levels as well as good quality fields for all playing levels.(i.e. Herkimer High School currently does not have a practice field for girls' softball once the season begins)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The perception by some that student athletes may be chosen for teams based on 'location' in the new district.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Transition to new teammates may be easy since many student athletes from the different schools currently know each other from youth leagues, and other settings.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Exposure to increased levels of competition may increase the skill levels of individual or team athletes. It may also enhance the opportunity for a continuum of consistent skill development within the athletic program from</li> </ul>	

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

elementary school through high school.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The increased level of competition that may come from reorganizing coupled with a more favorable state building aid ratio might provide an opportunity to further enhance the athletic facilities, playing fields and equipment.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Late buses to enable students to participate in athletics, co-curricular activities, and music/drama are a likely option because of the resources available to accommodate all students of the entire district.</li> </ul>	

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

If the four communities affirm a reorganization referendum, the new district should immediately establish a Student Activities/Athletics Transition Committee to work together to plan and implement the new interscholastic athletic program. This committee should have broad-based composition including, but not limited to, representatives from all merged districts; athletic directors, coaches, students, faculty, support staff, community, and alumni.

The reorganized district should acknowledge that any program expansion should be limited to and dependent upon availability of facilities, transportation costs, overall district budget priorities, availability of coaches, availability and cost of equipment and most of all, student interest.

Many of the same OPPORTUNITIES and CHALLENGES listed above with respect to athletics are relevant and valid when viewing the music/drama and co-curricular programs. Many of the same clubs, music organizations, and honor societies exist in some manner in all of the schools. Similar to athletics, stipends are paid to faculty advisors to lead the various organizations according to collective bargaining agreements.

A list of current co-curricular activities is a part of the Program Elements chart starting on page –155- in the DATA section of the study.

*Themes of observations by the Community Advisory Committees regarding additional opportunities and challenges for co-curricular and the music/drama programs:*

Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A larger student body allows the new district to present larger and more intricate drama and musical productions with casts that are usually large enough to accommodate all students who wish to participate in main roles or in supportive roles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ An increase in the number of students interested in music/drama and co-curricular activities through a larger student body creates a situation whereby fewer opportunities (or slots) may exist for an student to participate in the activity or role of his/her choice (i.e. there may be only one female lead in the school musical).</li> </ul>

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Possible Opportunities:	Possible Challenges:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ With a larger student body, students within the reorganized district could have more clubs and student organizations from which to choose, especially if the district elects to maintain all the clubs and organizations currently existing in all the former districts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ An increase in the number of students interested in music/drama and co-curricular activities through a larger student body creates a situation whereby fewer opportunities (or slots) may exist for an student to participate in the activity or role of his/her choice (i.e. there may be only one female lead in the school musical).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ A larger talented pool of teachers and others who are available to advise and organize dramas and musicals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Recruiting, selecting and remunerating the directors and advisors from among the current quality advisors for many of the clubs, organizations and music groups may be challenging</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ If the reorganized district maintains the string program currently in Ilion, more students will have the option of playing a string instrument and therefore, be eligible to play in the orchestra.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ Recruiting, selecting and remunerating the directors and advisors from among the current quality advisors for many of the clubs, organizations and music groups may be challenging</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◇ The reorganized district might expand any music/drama and co-curricular program dependent upon availability of facilities, transportation costs, overall district budget priorities, availability of advisors and student interest. This is relatively less cumbersome since co-curricular programs are generally less expensive than interscholastic athletics.</li> </ul>	

### 5. State Student Assessment Data and High School Graduation Data

The Community Advisory Committees reviewed a summary of the elementary student academic performance on State student assessments to help illustrate a picture of the elementary school programs.

Each of the districts administered appropriate and required New York State student assessments during the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school year. The assessments include grades 3-8 mathematics and English language art along with grades 4 and 8 science. Published results for 2008-2009 and for 2009-2010 are in the DATA section of the study. Published results for 2010-2011 are not available at this time.

The summary of the student performance measures begins on page –162- of the DATA section of the study document.

Comparisons of assessment results among schools with small student enrollments can vary depending on the year and composition of a specific grade level. It is not uncommon also, for there to be differences between schools depending on the grade level as the scope and sequence of the English, math and science curriculums are delivered over a set of years.

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Therefore, in reviewing the assessment results in totality, there appears to be more similarities than differences in the student assessment performance as measured by the New York State Assessment tests among the four school districts. The range of the percentages of students who scored at or above a Level 3 for the 2009-2010 state assessments is charted below. Level 3 is defined as “Meeting Learning Standards; student performance demonstrates an understanding of the content expected in the subject and grade level.”

State Assessment:	Range of the percentages of the students of the four school districts who scored at or above Level 3
<b>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS (ELA)</b>	
Grade 3	55 – 80%
Grade 4	50 – 74%
Grade 5	46 – 69%
Grade 6	68 -- 74%
Grade 7	42 -- 8%
Grade 8	42 -- 59%
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	
Grade 3	52 – 71%
Grade 4	50 – 79%
Grade 5	50 – 79%
Grade 6	54 – 79%
Grade 7	54 – 71%
Grade 8	
<b>SCIENCE</b>	
Grade 4	89 – 98%
Grade 8	60 – 87%

Charted below are the high school diplomas awarded by the four school districts from 2008-2009.

### NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMAS

YEAR OF GRAD	DIPLOMA TYPE	F-S	HERKIMER	ILION	MOHAWK
2008	ADVANCED REGENTS	18	27	42	26
	REGENTS	31	44	31	30
	LOCAL	18	14	27	18
	IEP	2	3	4	15
	GED	0	0	0	0
2009	ADVANCED REGENTS	23	32	29	21
	REGENTS	50	52	43	37
	LOCAL	11	30	24	10
	IEP	4	1	7	6
	GED	0	0	0	0
2010	ADVANCED REGENTS	32	27	36	21
	REGENTS	43	44	47	29
	LOCAL	11	17	24	9
	IEP	1	4	3	7
	GED	0	0	6	1

Charted below are the high school graduation rates for 2007-2010. The rates represent the percentage of grade 9 students who four years later graduated with a high school diploma.

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HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION RATES**

YEAR **	COHORT COUNT	FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER	HERKIMER	ILION	MOHAWK
2007	ALL STUDENTS	72	97	113	48
(2003 grade 9 COHORT)	GRADUATION RATE %	86%	85%	77%	71%
2008	ALL STUDENTS	74	101	129	101
(2004 grade 9 COHORT)	GRADUATION RATE %	82%	83%	75%	76%
2009	ALL STUDENTS	94	139	116	96
(2005 grade 9 COHORT)	GRADUATION RATE %	82%	77%	77%	74%
2010	ALL STUDENTS	96	144	118	96
(2006 grade 9 COHORT)	GRADUATION RATE %	80%	74%	76%	74%

The important aspect of reviewing any student performance measures is to provide data for a school district to determine an instructional delivery plan the school can implement to help all students achieve at least a level 3 or 4 on the state assessments and to achieve a high school diploma. The assessment data snapshot from 2009-2010 results and the graduation rate data were the springboard for the Community Advisory Committees and the school district program representatives to discuss and list other instructional programs not now in place that could help increase the number of students who achieve at least a 3 or 4 on the state assessments and increase the numbers of students who complete high school. The discussion with staff helped the Community Advisory Committees to formulate their vision of the elementary and secondary programs if resources were available through a reorganization of the four districts into one.

**6. College Enrollment Data about School District Graduates**

The Community Advisory Committees analyzed data from the National Student Clearinghouse Database which collects collegiate enrollment and college degree data about high school graduates specific to each of the four high schools of this feasibility study. For example, charted below are the most common institutions of initial enrollment for all Ilion, Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, and Mohawk graduation classes since 2003.

	ILION	FRANK-SCHUYLER	HERKIMER	MOHAWK
1	HCC-295	HCC-172	HCC-294	HCC-180
2	MVCC-93	MVCC-119	MVCC-50	MVCC-40
3	UTICA COLLEGE-15	UTICA COLLEGE-25	ONONDAGA CC-9	UTICA COLLEGE-16
4	CLARKSON-10	RIT-8	ONEONTA-8	SUNY TECH UTICA-12
5	SAINT ROSE-10	BUFFALO-7	ALBANY-7	CORTLAND-9

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The data helped the Committees consider what should be the vision of a high school program if the resources were available through a reorganization of the four school districts into one.

The National Clearinghouse Data about High School Graduates Since 2003 that the Committees discussed starts on page –166- of the DATA section of the study.

The data encouraged discussion about the following possible opportunities:

*What added high school learning opportunities might increase the success of the current efforts to:*

- ✓ Help students have the skill sets and goal setting skills to consider a higher education opportunity after high school graduation?
- ✓ Help the students—who choose not to pursue higher education options after high school graduation—have marketable employability skills for the work place as a major part of their high school programs for graduation?
- ✓ Help reduce the number of high school graduates of the four school districts who do not return to a college program after their freshman (first) year?
- ✓ Help influence the number/share of high school graduates who achieve/obtain a higher education degree?
- ✓ Enlarge the range of higher education options that are *academically* considered for attendance by high school graduates of the four school districts?
- ✓ Enlarge the range of higher education options that are *financially* considered for attendance by high school graduates of the four school districts?

The discussion and analysis by the Committees based their suggestion that there should be ample opportunities for students in the high school of a reorganized school district to take college and/or Advanced Placement Courses in addition to such opportunities as engineering curriculum through the Project Lead the Way courses. The Community Advisory Committees also identified that a high school of a reorganized school district should provide access to business courses and to guidance counselors who **specialize** in career counseling of all students; both thinking of going on to college right after high school and those thinking of the work world or the military first after high school.

### 7. Regional Sharing with Other School Districts

It is expected that the new district if authorized will purchase a similar total of services from the Herkimer BOCES as well as through cross-contracts with other BOCES in the state. Many of the purchased services will be the same. For example, very few school districts on their own can afford the state-of-the-art Career and Technical instruction available cooperatively with other school districts through the BOCES. It is likely that the BOCES will turn to the new district to rent any available classroom space in order to provide regional programming in the buildings of the newly organized district. The newly formed district will have a comprehensive set of programs that can be a major asset in integrating special needs pupils in skill areas they can excel in like any other pupil. In addition, the opportunity to begin new

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shared services is likely. For example, the Community Advisory Committees discussed with the guest secondary principals, teachers and guidance counselors the potential for the newly organized school district to offer a comprehensive alternative education program for pupils “who just need a different delivery of instruction to succeed.” There may be many benefits to the new school district as well as to the school districts of the region if the alternative education program, if implemented, is hosted by the new school district with the help of the BOCES.

### Special Education Services:

It is likely that the newly organized school district will purchase fewer shared services for special needs pupils because the new district likely will have enough students with a similar disability to provide the service at the home school with home school staff. Charted below are the numbers of special needs students served within the home schools and served outside the home schools as of October, 2011.

Special Needs Program K-12  As of October, 2011	Frankfort-Schuyler		Herkimer		Ilion		Mohawk	
	#served in the home district	# served outside the home district (by others, not the home district)	#served in the home district	# served outside the home district (by others, not the home district)	#served in the home district	# served outside the home district (by others, not the home district)	#served in the home district	# served outside the home district (by others, not the home district)
12:1:1 (15:1:1)	37	14	69	9	124	8	64	2
8:1:1		10		5		9		5
6:1:1		2				1		
autistic			8	1		3		
Others receiving Sp.Ed. services	92		59	2		2	55	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>17</b>

Regardless of the financial means of a school district, it is prudent practice when beginning a new program or program enhancement to--as a step toward implementation-- request the BOCES District Superintendent to: one, let the district know if the shared service is allowed through the BOCES model; and, two what might be the gross and net cost to the district if there is multiple district sharing through the BOCES model. In this way, the district will have accurate up-to-date data as to which method—on its own or through a sharing model--is most advantageous financially. Simultaneously, the district can determine which approach might better achieve quality and comprehensiveness of the delivery of a pupil program or support service—on the district’s own or through sharing with other districts.

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**ANALYSIS BY THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES ABOUT HOW TO USE THE EXISTING BUILDINGS WITH A POSSIBLE REORGANIZATION OF THE FOUR DISTRICTS INTO ONE**

**D. Building Use Options Identified by the Community Advisory Committees**

Over a series of three Community Advisory Committee meetings from March 2 through May 18, the members representing the four school districts identified the following options for use of the existing school buildings to deliver the program if a reorganized district is approved by the communities. The options defined by the Committees are based upon the highest enrollment projections calculated for five years from now; the pupil capacities defined by the pupil capacity analysis (page -101- in the DATA section of the study); the class size goals of the four districts; and initial premises by the Committees of a future program vision of the elementary and secondary curricula that a reorganized school district could implement and deliver.

**PRIORITY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION TO DELIVER THE PROGRAM IN A REORGANIZATION OF THE FOUR DISTRICTS INTO ONE**

<b>OPTION 1</b>
<i>Four K-5 elementary attendance zones are drawn with one K-5 school within what is now each school district. Secondary pupils are served in two grades 6-8 middle school attendance zones and one high school grades 9-12.</i>
<b>OPTION 2</b>
<i>Four K-5 elementary magnet schools are offered with one K-5 school within what is now each school district. Secondary pupils are served in two grades 6-8 middle school magnet schools and one high school grades 9-12.</i>
<b>OPTION 3</b>
<i>Five K-6 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-6 school within what is now each school district. Two grades 7-9 junior high school attendance zones and one high school grades 10-12.</i>
<b>OPTION 4</b>
<i>Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. One grades 5-6 elementary school; two grades 7-8 school attendance zones; and one high school grades 9-12.</i>

**PLUS THESE VARIANCES OF THE ABOVE OPTIONS**

<b>A. VARIANCE OF OPTION 3 AND OPTION 4</b>
<i>Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. One grades 5-6; two 7-9 junior high school attendance zones; and one high school grades 10-12.</i>
<b>B. VARIANCE OF OPTION 2 and 3</b>
<i>Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. Two grades 5-8 attendance zones; and one high school grades 9-12.</i>
<b>C. VARIANCE OF OPTION 4</b>
<i>Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. One grades 5-6 elementary school; one grades 7-8 school; and one high school grades 9-12.</i>
<b>D. VARIANCE OF OPTION 3</b>
<i>Four K-6 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-6 school within what is now each school district. Two grades 7-9 junior high school attendance zones and one high school grades 10-12.</i>

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The Committees further analyzed and discussed the opportunities and challenges of each option of how to use the existing buildings to deliver the program in a reorganized district with the elementary and secondary principals, guidance counselors, and the superintendents. On June 9 the four Community Advisory Committees identified the following option as the prime option to be considered to implement if the four school districts reorganized into one.

The comprehensive *What if* picture of how the program is delivered and how the buildings are used starts on page -201- of the DATA section of the study.

### Prime Option to Deliver the Program in a Reorganized School District

***Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. One grades 5-6 elementary school; one grades 7-8 school; and one high school grades 9-12.***

The following opportunities and challenges of this prime building use option were discussed by the Committees with the leadership of the four school districts.

<b><i>OPPORTUNITIES</i></b>
Vertical and horizontal alignment of the curriculum is more possible—consistency, completeness, and definition of mastery steps for pupils will be enabled and possible because there will be enough of a cohort of professionals working together to share and achieve this time consuming, but critical instructional decision making.
Neighborhood schools still in tact for the youngest of pupils. (Pre-K through grade 4)
The grades 5-6 building will allow for effective transition time between elementary and middle school.
The 7-8 building will allow the development of a true middle school that uses teaming, an integrated curriculum, and techniques that focus on learning and adolescent development.
There are already 8 pre-k classrooms recognized to be served in the elementary Pre-K through 4 schools. There is classroom space available to increase the number Pre-K rooms if the reorganized district wishes within the resources available.
Reorganization of bus routes and runs.
More flexibility in transportation options.
Probably lower cost in transportation.
Two fewer buildings and the costs associated.
Available room to rent to BOCES at the Pre-K to grade 4 level for support of regional shared programming to serve special needs pupils.
Available room to rent or partner with other community service agencies to provide services to pupils and families in the four elementary attendance zones. For example, the Advisory Committees discussed the possibility of the availability of health clinics in partnership with hospital(s) in the elementary schools.
Opportunity to better match skill sets with specific grade levels.
Finally enough room at primary grades for OT and PT services for special needs pupils
Often, pupils move among the four school districts of the study throughout the year. With reorganization, these children will have a new stability in that they might attend a different elementary school attendance zone, but they will have the same curriculum scope, materials, and expectations for them.
Will be easier to meet the physical education requirements for the elementary grades.
Team teaching and deeper collaboration among staff because the range of responsibilities will be more focused on specific grade levels.
Staff development can now be delivered in a less generalist way.
It will be more possible to have a consistency of curriculum and standards because there will be more colleague

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partners serving a more narrow range of grade levels at fewer buildings.
Can customize professional assignments to the strengths of staff members---all do not have to be generalists.
It seems we can bring back program items that recently have been lost to budget trimming and cuts.
<b>CHALLENGES</b>
Identifying new transportation routes.
Maybe transportation cost; possibly travel time in some cases.
Moth balling of two buildings and the effort to rent or sell them.
The decisions about the deployment of the best available talent to serve the three schools serving grades 5 through 12.

### **E. School Day Time Schedule and Pupil Transportation**

The Community Advisory Committees endorsed the following assumptions that should guide decisions about school day times, transportation times, and bus runs/routing if the four districts did reorganize into one.

#### **Assumptions:**

- ✓ All Pre-K through grade 4 pupils attend the elementary school within the original school district ‘attendance zone’. However, parents who wish to have their elementary children attend an elementary school of the new reorganized school district that is **closer** to their home may request that attendance at their discretion.
- ✓ The goal is that no child is on a bus longer than 1 hour; the norm will be likely **45 minutes or less**.
- ✓ The existence of two current methods to provide transportation services—district owned and third party contractor—is an asset to the reorganized district to ensure the number of bus runs necessary to achieve the program and transportation goals. Frankfort-Schuyler and Ilion contract pupil transportation services with Birnie Bus. Herkimer and Mohawk own buses and the bus drivers are employees of the respective districts.
- ✓ Smaller (less than 66 passenger) buses will probably be used to transport pupils who currently live at the most outer limits of the current school district geographic boundaries.
- ✓ A current ‘walker’ will be transported to his/her respective school if it is not located in the current school district. The new district will define the definition of a ‘walker’. It is suggested that ‘a walker’ reflect the current policy of the four school districts that is most beneficial for students.

## **CURRENT PERSONNEL DATA AS REVIEWED BY THE COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEES**

### **F. Profile of the Major Elements of all Labor Contracts in Place in the Four Districts for the 2010-2011 School Year**

#### **Instructional Contracts**

Of the four districts, two of the instructional contracts are in force. (Ilion through June 30, 2012 and Herkimer through June 30, 2011.) Frankfort-Schuyler’s contract ended June 30, 2009 and Mohawk’s on

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

June 30, 2010. With all four districts being in such close proximity and with very similar demographics, it is understandable that the contracts are similar in nature. The districts have similar language regarding workplace conditions and time of instructional day and their leave language for sick/personal leave is also more alike than not.

The health insurance plans and co-payments are also similar with three of the four districts taking part in the Herkimer BOCES insurance consortium. Only Frankfort-Schuyler is not a member of the consortium. The coverage for active employees is relatively the same across the four districts. For both Frankfort-Schuyler and Herkimer, employees pay 13% of the premium for individual and family plans. In Ilion and Mohawk, employees pay 10% of the costs for their health insurance plans. Although the costs for active employees are similar in premiums paid, the premium costs of coverage for retirees are not. Frankfort-Schuyler's retirees pay 13% of the cost of insurance after 10 years of service and Mohawk's retirees pay 10% of the cost after 15 years of service. Ilion's retirees pay 25% of an individual policy and 40% of a family plan. Herkimer's retirees have a formula for pay based upon years of service. Individuals who are already retired from a school district may have certain retiree health insurance protections contained in Chapter 504 of the Laws of 2009. Chapter 504 prohibits reduction of health insurance for retirees and their dependents unless there is a corresponding reduction of benefits or contributions for the corresponding group of active employees.

A review of the salary structure for the four districts also shows the districts are more similar than dissimilar in nature. The beginning base salary of all four districts is within a few thousand dollars. Frankfort-Schuyler beginning pay with Masters in \$37,193, Herkimer is \$37,000, Ilion is \$39,000 and Mohawk's is \$34,400. Mohawk's pay scale is the lowest throughout the range of salaries in comparison to the other districts. These levels of pay remain fairly constant throughout the contract levels, with the exception of Ilion where beginning with 10+ year teachers, the gap in pay widens. Ilion's 10<sup>th</sup> year faculty member earns \$9,000 more a year on base salary (\$53,085) than the lowest salary schedule (Mohawk's at \$44,470). This ratio continues with similar amounts for 15 year staff (F-S: \$56,983, Herkimer: \$51,166, Ilion: \$60,092, and Mohawk: \$50,945). By the time instructional staff reach the 20<sup>th</sup> year, the gap has closed somewhat with Ilion's faculty earning \$6,000 more per year than Mohawk's.

### **Instructional Support Staff Contracts**

Of the four school districts, two of the four have contracts in force. Ilion and Herkimer have contracts through June 20, 2012. Mohawk's contract expired on June 30, 2011. Frankfort-Schuyler's contract

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expired June 30, 2009. The four contracts are very close in their major benefit elements of their contracts. Leave times and benefits associated with leave are nearly identical for all four districts. For example: for personal sickness, F-S provides 13 days per year, Herkimer has 15, Ilion 12, and Mohawk has 12.

Insurance packages are similar and the premium payments range from a low of 9% employees cost on a family plan to a high of 13% of the cost. F-S employees pay 9%, Herkimer 13%, Ilion 10%, and Mohawk 8%. Similar to the instructional staff, the districts pay the majority of the costs associated with retiree health insurance. This ranges from the lowest percentage paid by Ilion (60% of a family plan for retirees) to the highest percentage paid by Mohawk (90% of an individual/family plan until age 65 and then 95% plus payment for Medicaid reimbursement). There are opt out plans in each of the districts if a staff member chooses to decline health insurance coverage. In F-S, the opt out is for \$1,100, Herkimer is 50% of the premium savings, Ilion 25% of the premium savings and Mohawk is 50% of the premium savings.

A profile of the major elements of the instructional and instructional support labor contracts starts on page -184- of the DATA section of the study.

The Appendix starting on page -240-- includes a *Q and A* about the process with regard to personnel when a school district reorganization through centralization. The process is guided by New York State law, case law, and the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB) decisions. If the communities approve of a reorganization of the school districts, the employee groups then choose what bargaining agents will represent them. This is an employee responsibility and the Board of Education is not involved. Once the new bargaining units identify their bargaining agents, then the agents and the new school district must make a good faith effort to negotiate new collective bargaining agreements. The new negotiated agreements do not have to be in place by July 1, 2012. The existing agreements specific to each school district are administered until a new contract is agreed upon and ratified.

There is one other opportunity/challenge to note regarding the contracts of the four districts. The incentive aid that will go to the four districts should they centralize, will help to support and increase programs for students, improve the long term fiscal stability of the district, and help to moderate the tax levies for the taxpayers of the new school district. Additionally, part of the new incentive aid will be used to help create new labor contracts with each employee labor unit. There will be many conversations between the labor units and the board of education during the negotiation process relative to new language, benefits, and salaries. At this time of economic distress nationally, the negotiations process should be an open dialogue between all parties to eventually craft reasonable agreements that are balanced in all areas. As with many aspects of our economy, “business as usual” actions probably will not ensure a viable long-term financial plan for the school district or for the employees. In previous school district reorganizations

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in the 1980's and 1990's the practice of 'leveling up' salary amounts among existing salary schedules was common and the main focus of establishing new contracts with the new school district. The practice of "leveling up" that has taken place in previous mergers is not required as a starting point for negotiations. It is suggested that the process of coming to collaborative agreement on new contracts for a reorganized district be globally focused on how to *balance all elements* of remuneration including health insurance benefits, leave time, salary and other items that have specific dollar benefits for employees.

### **G. Average and Median Total Full Time Equivalent Personnel Expenditures Across the Four School Districts Benchmarked to the 2010-2011 School Year**

The study uses the average and median Full Time Equivalent Costs for each segment of employees employed by the four school districts in 2010-2011 to estimate possible future personnel costs for the first year of a newly organized school districts given the instructional program envisioned with the help of the Community Advisory Committees. It is important to note that the full time equivalent costs reported equals the grand **total** of salary, **PLUS** employer FICA costs, employer health insurance costs, employer retirement costs, and any other benefits (if any). Please note that the differences in cost per FTE per staff category is primarily due to the longevity differences of various FTE's at each respective school district; the different retirement 'tier' an FTE falls under based on what state 'tier' was in place at time of hire; along with contractual pay guidelines.

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**Summary of FTE Personnel Costs Benchmarked to 2010-2011 in the Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion and Mohawk Central School Districts:**

<b>STAFF SEGMENT</b>	<b>Range of Total cost per FTE benchmarked to the 2010-2011 School Year</b>	<b>Average FTE Cost</b>	<b>Median FTE Cost</b>
Pre-K through grade 6 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others):	\$67,917 - \$72,633	\$70,481	\$70,688
Grade 7-12 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others):	\$66,340 - \$81,522	\$75,111	\$76,290
<b>Grades K-12:</b>			
Teacher Assistants ( <b>certified</b> )	\$12,486 - \$31,970	\$24,587	\$29,304
Teacher Aides (civil service payroll)	\$10,871 - \$36,789	\$22,358	\$20,886
<b>Grades K-12:</b>			
OT/PT (civil service payroll)	\$35,938 - \$83,650	\$59,790	\$59,790
Social worker (civil service payroll)			
Nurse (civil service payroll)	\$44,836 - \$60,339	\$53,444	\$55,158
<b>K-12 certified administrators:</b>			
Include all district administrators including the business official if she/he serves in a civil service position	\$117,398 - \$131,767	\$124,428	\$124,274
<b>On Civil Service payroll: (CONSIDERED FTE'S)</b>			
Supervisors of any support function	\$60,583 - \$78,150	\$70,182	\$70,998
Bus drivers	na		
Bus aides			
School lunch workers	na		
Operations and Maintenance workers	\$25,041 - \$58,135	\$43,743	\$45,899
Secretaries	\$37,911 - \$48,587	\$44,114	\$44,979
Business Office staff <u>other</u> than secretarial OR business official	\$49,732 - \$84,267	\$55,643	\$51,008
Technology support staff	\$64,264 - \$71,854	\$68,059	\$68,059
<b>CONSIDERED HOURLY EMPLOYEES ON CIVIL SERVICE PAYROLL</b>			
Bus drivers	\$14.67 - \$17.47	\$16	\$16
Bus aides	\$9.67 - \$12.39	\$11	\$10
School lunch workers	\$10.24 - \$14.40	\$12	\$10
Part-time cleaners	na		

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

A profile of the number of staff in each segment by district and the total expenditure in 2010-2011 of each segment starts on page –196- of the DATA section of the study.

### **H. Full Time Equivalents of Staff Who Have Left the Districts for All Reasons Except Reduction in Force for the School Years 2007-2008 Through 2010-2011**

The combining of the pupils from four separate school districts to serve as one set of clients by one district inherently creates efficiencies in how human resources are able to be utilized to serve students. Going from four high schools to one allows better scheduled use of the talents of the instructional staff. For example, the “What if” staffing for a possible reorganized school district is based on a vision that includes many enhanced program offerings for all children Pre-K through grade 12. Even with the comprehensive list of additional program offerings, the new reorganized school district is estimated to have 603 instructional and instructional support employees compared to the 628.9 instructional and instructional support employees employed currently by the four school districts. In addition, some of the 603 employees estimated for the new school district have different certifications and/or skill sets compared to those employed by the four separate school districts currently. Therefore, the reorganization of the four school districts into one could likely include the reduction in force of some employees and/or changes in how current employees serve their school and pupils now.

However, implementing program enhancements is a planned, careful process. For example, one enhancement suggested by the Community Advisory Committees is the expansion of the Project Lead the Way engineering curriculum for all grades 7-12 (a part of the program currently exists in Frankfort-Schuyler). It is a proven successful program across the state and is an outstanding opportunity for the pupils, but it takes time to decide how to phase in the curriculum. Many of the program enhancements will take 12 to 24 months to fully implement.

Charted below are the total numbers of various segments of staff of the four separate school districts who have left their district for all reasons not including reduction in force by the school district over the past four years from 2007 – 2011.

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<b>STAFF SEGMENT</b>	<i><b>TOTAL OVER 4 YEARS WHO HAVE LEFT ONE OF THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS (REDUCTION IN FORCE EMPLOYEES NOT INCLUDED)</b></i>
Pre-K through grade 6 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others)	46
Grade 7-12 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others):	41
Grades K-12:	
Teacher Assistants ( <b>certified</b> )	17
Teacher Aides (civil service)	48
Grades K-12:	
OT/PT (civil service)	
Social worker (civil service)	1
Nurse (civil service)	
K-12 <b>certified</b> administrators:	10
<b>Civil Service:</b>	
Supervisors of any support function	1
Bus drivers	16
Bus aides	2
School lunch workers	4
Operations and Maintenance workers	18
Secretaries	9
Business Office not secretarial	3
Technology support staff	

The normal historical pattern of employees who leave the employment of the four districts in total suggests that it is quite possible that normal attrition will allow for a very few employees to actually have to experience reduction in force.

A profile of the number of each staff segment by district who left their district is on page –200- of the DATA section of the study.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

# What might a ‘reorganization’ roadmap look like?

### What might the program for students look like?

#### **I. Breath of Program Offerings and Enhancements Suggested by the Community Advisory Committees if Reorganization of the Four School Districts into One is Approved by the Communities**

Over a series of meetings the Community Advisory Committee met with teams consisting of teachers, counselors, principals and the superintendents to discuss and analyze the current elementary and secondary program offerings. At each of the meetings, the staff representatives answered questions from Community Advisory members about the delivery of their instructional programs. As part of those conversations, school representatives were asked to respond to the following question:

*“What are specific ideas and examples about enhanced (elementary/secondary) program/learning opportunities that are possible for the pupils of the four districts if resources were available through reorganization?”*

From the responses to the question by the different sets of school staff (superintendent, principals, elementary and secondary teachers, and guidance personnel) the Community Advisory Committees heard what district staff believed could be program enhancements specifically addressing the needs of the students of the four school districts if a reorganization did occur. This program visioning process helped the Community Advisory Committees to craft a set of program enhancements that they suggest ought to be planned for if a reorganization is approved by the communities.

A district-wide program enhancement is basing grade level section class sizes as follows: 18 pupils in Pre-K; 20 pupils in grades kindergarten and one; 22 pupils in grades two and three; 24 pupils in grades four, five, six, seven, and eight; and 25 pupils in grades nine through twelve in core subject classes.

A second district-wide program enhancement is the availability of 8 Pre-K teachers, two per elementary school. In this way, Pre-kindergarten education is available throughout the school district.

Another district-wide enhancement is that it will be likely that more special needs pupils will be able to be served in the new school as opposed to having to travel to an out of district site. There are 83 special needs pupils of the four school districts attending an instructional program outside the home school. ‘Least restrictive environment’ and ‘educationally sound’ criteria must guide the decisions as to which program is best for these unique students. It is expected that the resources and collective talent in the new

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

school district will enable such appropriate programs for many of these students to be delivered by the home school district.

Listed below are program enhancements identified by the Community Advisory Committees and the Study Team to guide the ‘what if’ planning for a reorganization of the four districts into one.

A comprehensive description of the program/staffing vision for the new school district starts on page –209- of the DATA section of the study.

### **K-4 Program Enhancements**

A full-time librarian
Full-time foreign language teacher.
Full-time guidance counselor.
Full-time social worker.
Full-time speech teacher at each building to deliver services to special needs students as per their Individual Education Plans and to general education students in need of speech improvement services.
Half-time occupational therapist and a half-time occupational therapist
Half-time school psychologist
Half-time English as a Second Language instructor
Additional staffing for special needs/resource/reading/and Academic Intervention services.
Instrumental music instruction as well as vocal music instruction
Full-time speech teacher at each building to deliver services to special needs students as per their Individual Education Plans and to general education students in need of speech improvement services.
Funds to develop co-curricular opportunities
A technology technician to ensure that computers, software and other technology is functioning and available for instruction.
Half-time Instructional Specialist/Trainer to work with teachers to create instructional strategies and to find ways to improve existing strategies in serving students.

### **5-6 Program Enhancements**

Half-time English as a Second Language instructor.
3 vocal and instrumental music teachers.
Additional staffing for special needs/resource/reading/ and Academic Intervention services.
2 Full-time foreign language teachers.
2 Full-time art teachers
2 Full-time guidance counselors.
Full-time social worker.
Half-time Psychologist.
Full time health teacher, full time technology teacher, and full time Home and Careers Teacher to start students on beginning the requirements they must achieve by the end of 8 <sup>th</sup> grade.
Full-time speech teacher at each building to deliver services to special needs students as per their Individual Education Plans and to general education students in need of speech improvement services.
Full time librarian.
Funds to develop co-curricular opportunities and athletic intramurals
A technology technician to ensure that computers, software and other technology is functioning and available for instruction.
Half-time Instructional Specialist/Trainer to work with teachers to create instructional strategies and to find ways to improve existing strategies in serving students.

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### 7-8 Program Enhancements

Staffing resources to deliver instruction in a middle school model which includes 8 core subject teams of teachers with each team serving same 100 pupils for English, social studies, math and science.
One math teacher, one foreign language teacher and one science teacher to join the 8 core teams to provide acceleration courses to those grade 8 pupils ready to begin high school courses for graduation credit.
Additional staffing for special needs/resource/reading/ and Academic Intervention services.
Half-time English as a Second Language instructor.
3.5 vocal and instrumental music teachers
Full-time social worker.
4 guidance counselors
Full-time speech teacher at each building to deliver services to special needs students as per their Individual Education Plans and to general education students in need of speech improvement services.
Half time occupational therapist and a half time physical therapist.
2 technology/Project Lead the Way engineering curriculum teachers
3 Full-time art teachers
Half-time Psychologist
2 foreign language instructors.
Full time health instructor.
Full time school librarian.
Funds to develop co-curricular opportunities and athletic intramurals
A technology technician to ensure that computers, software and other technology is functioning and available for instruction.
Half-time Instructional Specialist/Trainer to work with teachers to create instructional strategies and to find ways to improve existing strategies in serving students.

### 9-12 Program Enhancements

Additional staffing for special needs/resource/reading/ and Academic Intervention services.
Full-time speech teacher at each building to deliver services to special needs students as per their Individual Education Plans and to general education students in need of speech improvement services.
Full time English as a Second Language Teacher
5 foreign language teachers
2 business teachers
4 vocal and instrumental music teachers
4 art teachers
4 additional English, social studies, science, and math subject area teachers to provide college level and Advance Placement courses.
2 Project Lead the Way engineering instructors in addition to 3 Technology teachers
2 social workers
Half-time Psychologist
5 counselors including 2 who specialize in career and vocational counseling
Half-time occupational therapist, and half-time physical therapist.
Funds to develop co-curricular opportunities, athletic intramurals, and interscholastic athletics.
A technology technician to ensure that computers, software and other technology is functioning and available for instruction.
A full-time Instructional Specialist/Trainer to work with teachers to create instructional strategies and to find ways to improve existing strategies in serving students.

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**Where would the students go to school?**

**J. Prime Building Use Option Identified by the Committees to Implement the Pre-K through 12 Program if the Schools Reorganized into One**

The recommended consensus option by the four Community Advisory Committees to how the buildings would host the program is:

**Four K-4 elementary attendance zones are drawn with at least one K-4 school within what is now each school district. One grades 5-6 elementary school; one grades 7-8 school; and one high school grades 9-12.**

<b>Grade Level:</b>	<b>School:</b>	<b>Estimated Enrollment:</b>
Pre-K-4	Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary	415
Pre-K-4	Herkimer Elementary	485
Pre-K-4	Fisher Elementary	310
Pre-K-4	Barringer Elementary	620
5 and 6	Upper Elementary  (Current Herkimer HS building)	721
7 and 8	Middle School  (Current Frankfort-Schuyler HS building)	785
9 through 12	High School  (Current Ilion HS)	1365

The details that are foundation for the consensus about where grade level should be taught starts on page -201- of the DATA section of the study document.

**What would be the plan for bus transportation?**

**K. Example School Day Time Schedule and Pupil Transportation if the Prime Building Use Option is Implemented to Serve the Pupils in a Reorganized District**

The foundation of the pupil transportation plan is that no student is on a bus longer than 1 hour; the norm will be likely 45 minutes or less.

It is expected that the student day in a reorganized school district would closely follow the times charted below:

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	<b>PreK-4</b>	<b>5-6</b>	<b>7-8</b>	<b>9-12</b>
Student Instructional Day-Not counting an 'afterschool' activity period (6.5 hours)	8:20-2:50	8:35-3:05	8:35-3:05	7:55-2:35
School location:	Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary  Herkimer Elementary  Barringer Elementary  Fisher Elementary	Upper Elementary 5-6 (at current Herkimer High School)	Middle School 7-8 (at current Frankfort High School)	High School 9-12 (at current Ilion High School)

The current school day schedule of the four school districts separately is:

	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER</b>	<b>HERKIMER</b>	<b>ILION</b>	<b>MOHAWK</b>
Current Elementary Student Day	8:20-2:10	8:10-2:30	8:30-2:30	7:55-2:30
Current Secondary Student Day	7:55-2:44	7:55-2:45	8:00-2:50	7:57-2:33
First student pickup time:	7:15	6:55	7:30	7:00

The current geographic boundary of each of the four current school districts will be the geographic boundary of the attendance zone of each of the four Pre-K through grade 4 elementary schools.

To transport pupils under one hour or less to the designated grade level school buildings, each attendance zone will have separate bus runs as noted below based on age and grade level of students:

	Frankfort-Schuyler Attendance Zone	Herkimer Attendance Zone	Ilion Attendance Zone	Mohawk Attendance Zone
PreK-4 and 7-8	Bus run			
PreK-6		Bus run		
Grades 5-6	Bus run			
Grades 7-8		Bus run		
Grades 9-12	Bus run	Bus run	Bus run	Bus run
PreK – grade 8			Bus run	Bus run

The newly organized school district would have more bus routes than the current four districts separately.

	<b>FRANKFORT-SCHUYLER</b>	<b>HERKIMER</b>	<b>ILION</b>	<b>MOHAWK</b>
Total number of bus routes currently:	19	11	8	7
Expected total number of bus routes with reorganization:	23	25	15	14

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Two of the current school transportation programs are provided by a third party and two are provided by the districts. The combination of district-run transportation with employees and contract transportation with a vendor allows flexibility to implement the transportation plan for a reorganized district. It is expected that no new buses (beyond what the four districts have historically done annually to achieve their replacement plans for old buses) will need to be purchased. All of the existing transportation bus drivers and buses on staff at Mohawk and Herkimer would be used first for the transportation plan. All other routes would be contracted with the third party vendor as needed.

### Estimated Cost to Achieve the Preliminary Transportation Framework Plan:

<b>Current Number of Bus Routes Collectively by the Four Districts:</b>		<b>Estimated Number of Bus Routes for Initial Planning by a Reorganized School District Given the Program Grade Level Instructional Delivery Configurations and Transportation Assumptions:</b>	
45		77	
Estimated transportation cost:			
In February 2011, a study commissioned by the districts of the Herkimer BOCES records the following total costs per bus route by each of the four is reported as follows:			
Frankfort-Schuyler	Herkimer	Ilion	Mohawk
\$42,474	\$53,467	\$38,433	\$52,146
<b>Average cost for per bus route run <i>plus 10% for inflation and the cost of fuel</i> for budget planning :</b> <b>\$51,293</b>			
<b>Estimated expenditure to the four school districts for transportation without reorganization:</b> <b>45 bus routes x \$51,293 = \$2,308,385</b>			
<b>Estimated budgeted expenditure cost to achieve the Preliminary Transportation Framework Plan in a reorganized school district:</b> <b>77 bus routes x \$51,293 = \$3,949,561</b>			
<b>Estimated budgeted revenue from state transportation aid which is 90% of all approved expenditures:</b> <i>It is suggested that this estimate be conservative. In the February 2011 study, each of the school districts received the following state transportation aid percentages for expenditures submitted to the state:</i> Frankfort: 84.7%; Herkimer 74%; Ilion 79.7%; Mohawk 87.5%.			
<b>Estimated state transportation aid to the four school districts for transportation without reorganization:</b> <b>\$2,308,385 x .70 = \$1,615,729; local cost without reorganization: \$692,656</b>			
<b>Estimated state transportation aid to the new reorganized district based on the preliminary transportation framework plan:</b> <b>\$3,949,561 x .70 = \$2,764,693</b>			
<b>Estimated net local share to achieve the preliminary transportation framework plan with a reorganization into one school district:</b> <b>\$1,184,868</b> <b>Estimated net change: \$492,212</b>			

### What staff would the reorganized school district probably need?

**L. *What if Picture* of the Program and of the Staff Necessary to Deliver the Program**

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Below is a summary of the staff resources it is expected that the new organized school will need to deliver the enhanced comprehensive educational program to all students.

The detailed program/staffing document analyzed and discussed by the Community Advisory Committees starts on page –209- of the DATA section of the study report.

The staffing ‘*what if*’ picture takes into account the class size goals of: 20 pupils in grades Kindergarten and grade 1; 22 pupils in grades 2 and 3; 24 pupils in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8; and 25 for grades 9 through 12 in core courses (for example: English, Social Studies). The staff resources suggested also reflect the recommendation of the SES Study Team as to what resources the new school district would need to *sustain* the quality, comprehensiveness, and the ‘one-to-one’ service to students when needed as occurs now in each of the four separate school districts. The staffing scenario also ensures that each of the four Pre-K through grade 4 elementary schools have available the same equitable instructional and instructional support services for all students.

### **Instructional Staffing:**

<b>STAFF SEGMENT</b>	<b>THE CURRENT PROGRAM STAFF COLLECTIVELY IN THE FOUR DISTRICTS</b>	<b>ESTIMATED <i>WHAT IF</i> SCENARIO WITH A REORGANIZED SINGLE SCHOOL DISTRICT</b>
	<b>Full Time Equivalents</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalents</b>
Pre-K through grade 6 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, social workers, librarians and similar others):	211	208.5
		Plus 2 due to unforeseen grade level program delivery issues
Grade 7-12 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others):	207	163.5
		Plus 2 due to unforeseen subject program delivery issues
Grades K-12: OT/PT (civil service payroll)	2	7
<b>STAFF SEGMENT</b>		
Social worker (civil service payroll)	0	8
Nurse (civil service payroll)	7	8
Estimated Totals:	427	399

### **Instructional Supervision at the School Building Level:**

The *What if* instructional staffing picture uses a benchmark of about 25 full time equivalent staff as the number of direct reports that a supervisor can serve and evaluate performance with expected quality. It is

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assumed that Special Needs teachers, social workers, speech teachers, Occupational therapists, Physical Therapists, Reading teachers, ESOL teachers, AIS teachers, librarians, guidance counselors, nurses, and psychologists are evaluated by a district-wide supervisor/administrator with the collaborative input of each building principal. Such a benchmark also addresses the enrollment size of a school building with regard to resources necessary to help ensure the health and safety of students and staff.

<b>Buildings:</b>	<b>Estimated Enrollment of the Building</b>	<b>Building/Program Supervision</b>	<b>Responsible for the Evaluation of Estimated Number of Class Section and/or subject Instructional Staff</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Total Instructional Staff in the Building</b>
Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary	415	Principal	26	37
Herkimer Elementary	485	Principal	29.5	40
Fisher Elementary	310	Principal	21.5	32
Barringer Elementary	620	Principal Assistant Principal	38	50.5
Upper Elementary	721	Principal Assistant Principal	43	56.5
Middle School	785	Principal Assistant Principal	52.5	70
High School	1365	Principal Assistant Principal Assistant Principal	84	100
Estimated total:	4701	12	294	386 (not including up to 4 FTE's available due to unforeseen grade level/subject level program delivery needs/issues)

### **Instructional Support in each Building to Work with Teachers:**

The staffing plan for the buildings also includes 4 Instructional Specialist/Trainers. The positions are held by well-experienced teachers or administrators on ‘special assignment’. They work daily in the school buildings to mentor, and help teachers and groups of teachers identify strategies to deliver instruction. The four instructional specialists are also turn-key trainers. For example, they help ensure that new staff are able and trained to execute district-wide instructional expectations like *curriculum mapping*. They do not evaluate the performance of instructional staff, but likely would be helpers to individual teachers who may need help or support to improve performance.

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<b>Buildings:</b>	<b>Estimated Number of Total Instructional Staff in the Building</b>	<b>District-wide Resource Serving All Teachers in Each Building</b>	<b>Full Time Equivalent</b>
Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary	37	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
Herkimer Elementary	40	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
Fisher Elementary	32	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
Barringer Elementary	50.5	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
Upper Elementary	56.5	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
Middle School	70	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	.5
High School	100	Instructional Specialist/Trainer	1
Estimated total:	386 (not including up to 4 FTE's available due to unforeseen grade level/subject level program delivery needs/issues)		4

### **Instructional Support Teacher Aides and Teacher Assistants:**

The four school districts currently deploy 37 NYS certified Teacher Assistants. There are 88 civil service teacher aides currently in the four school districts.

#### Teacher Aides

It is suggested that:

- ✓ 24 teacher aides be tentatively designated to serve the 8 pre-kindergarten classes and the estimated 16 self-contained special needs classrooms
- ✓ 7 teacher aides be tentatively designated to serve the 7 libraries in the new district
- ✓ It is estimated that there will be about 83 grade level classroom sections for grades kindergarten through grade 4. It is suggested that 28 teacher aides be tentatively designated to serve 3 grade level sections each.
- ✓ What cannot be defined at this time is how many special needs pupils may require one-to-one assistance as part of their Individual Education Plans as defined by the Committee on Special Education in collaboration with the pupils' parents. It is suspected that the remaining 29 teacher aides currently on staff in the four school districts will need to be deployed to serve these students.

#### Teacher Assistants

It is suggested that:

- ✓ 29 teacher assistants be tentatively designated to help the estimated 29 reading and Academic Intervention teachers serve students
- ✓ 7 teacher assistants be tentatively designated to serve the seven instructional computer labs expected in the new district
- ✓ What cannot be defined at this time is how many special needs pupils may require one-to-one assistance as part of their Individual Education Plans as defined by the Committee on Special Education in collaboration with the pupils' parents. It is suspected that the remaining 1 teacher assistant currently on staff in the four school districts will need to be deployed to serve these students.

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### **Transportation, food service and buildings operation and maintenance:**

TRANSPORTATION: No change. Two of the current school transportation programs are provided by a third party and two are provided by the districts. Utilize all current bus driver and mechanic employees. Contract with a third party vendor for added bus routes/runs that current staff cannot provide. Within the first two years of the new school district it is suggested that the district review, analyze and study the delivery of transportation services to identify ways, if any, that the service can be delivered more efficiently.

FOOD SERVICE: No change. Two of the current school lunch programs are provided by a third party and two are provided by the districts. No general fund money is budgeted to support any of the four school lunch programs. It is suggested that the school lunch programs as staffed continue for the newly reorganized school district (except in the school buildings that will not serve children—Jarvis, and Remington). Within the first two years of the new school district it is suggested that the district review, analyze and study the delivery of school lunch services to identify ways, if any, that the service can be delivered more efficiently.

BUILDING AND GROUNDS: No change. It is suggested that the school buildings and grounds operations and maintenance resources as staffed in each building continue for the newly reorganized school district (except in the school buildings that will not serve children—Jarvis, and Remington). Within the first two years of the new school district it is suggested that the district review, analyze and study the delivery of building services to identify ways, if any, that the service can be delivered more efficiently. For example, such an analysis can identify how best the new district can use differentiated staffing to achieve expected standards in cleaning; planned and scheduled maintenance of systems and equipment; availability of on-staff skill sets for electricity, plumbing, painting, refrigeration, and heating, ventilating and air conditioning to efficiently and cost-effectively operate the buildings of the district.

### **Instructional Technology Support:**

It is suggested that one instructional support technology technician be deployed in each of the seven buildings. This support staff keeps the instructional technology in functioning order and help staff with software questions or issues. The reorganized district may wish to explore receiving the building site based service instead as part of a BOCES shared service through the Regional Information Center instead of hiring employees.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### School Business Office Support Staff:

The four school districts currently employ 6.9 full time equivalents in total who support the four separate business office functions. It is suggested that the business office of a newly organized school district will require at least:

- ✓ One accounting support person for payroll.
- ✓ One accounting support person for accounts payable.
- ✓ One accounting support person for the accounting of employee benefits like health insurance.
- ✓ One accounting support person who is designated the assistant treasurer and internal auditor.
- ✓ One accounting support person for all grants accounting and financial reporting along with the responsibility for the accounting of any capital projects.

### Secretarial Support:

The four districts currently employ in total 35 full time equivalent secretarial support positions. It is suggested that the newly organized district will require 38 full time equivalent secretarial support positions. It is suggested that each school building have at least two secretaries; that support services like guidance, social work, and that Committee on Special Education Committees have secretarial support; and that each central office supervisor/administrator be assigned one secretary.

Suggested deployment of secretarial support:

Location	Administrators/Guidance Counselors/Social Workers	Secretary FTE's Assigned
Frankfort-Schuyler Elementary	3	2
Herkimer Elementary	3	2
Fisher Elementary	3	2
Barringer Elementary	4	2
Upper Elementary	5	3
Middle School	7	4
High School	10	5
Attendance Clerk		1
CSE committees (elementary, middle, high school)		3
		Total in the School Buildings: 24
District Office	14	14
		Total throughout the district: 38

### Supervision and Administration at the Central Office Level:

Charted below is the suggested central office resource to supervise and administrator an over \$80,000,000 school district that serves over 4500 pupils with about 629 staff members.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

	Primary Function	Full Time Equivalent
Superintendent	Chief Executive Officer	1
Director of Human Resources	Organizes and implements all tasks related to personnel of the district	1
Grant Writer	Seeks out grants for the district and helps to write them	0; purchase the service through the BOCES
Public Information Specialist	Plans, coordinates, and implements an ongoing public information plan to keep the communities well-informed about the school district	0; purchase the service through the BOCES
<i>Associate Superintendent for Transition (for at least 2 years)</i>	<i>Develops a transition plan with other district leaders; Coordinates the elements of that plan with the efforts of all staff; troubleshoots unexpected challenges and opportunities as the transition from four districts to one evolves.</i>	<i>1</i>
Assistant Superintendent for Instructional Services	Coordinates, implements, and evaluates all instructional services collaboratively with the building principals	1
Director of Pupil Services and Compensatory Education	Plans, implements, and evaluates all pupil support services collaboratively with the building principals. The role also coordinates, implements, and evaluates all government entitlement grants and other grants that serve instruction.	1
Director of Special Education	Coordinates, implements, and evaluates all services for special needs pupils including supervising those already on staff who chair CSE and PCSE committee meetings (ex. social worker who also is chair of Elementary CSE)	1
Coordinator of Technology	Coordinates, plans with others, and implements the technology plan for the district both for instruction and administrative services. Supervises a team of seven technology technicians who work in the buildings ensuring that hardware and software issues/problems are solved. Provide training to staff to ensure that they have the skill sets to use the technology available in the district.	1
Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation	Plans, coordinates, implements, and evaluates all interscholastic and intramural program elements for Pre-K through 12 and supervises all coaches and physical education instructors.	1
Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services	Chief financial officer. Coordinates the delivery and implementation of the budget and support services of the district. Organizes and implements the internal audit function of the district	1
Director of the Budget and Purchasing Agent	Functionally executes the district budget and purchasing for the district. Plans the borrowing and investing plan for the district.	1
Treasurer	Functionally monitors and executes the revenue plan for the district. Implements the borrowing and investing plan for the district. Implements the payroll and accounts receivable processes along with the functional implementation of the health insurance plan for employees.	1
Director of Buildings and Grounds	Ensures the maintenance and upkeep of all of the facility resources of the district.	1
Director of Transportation	Organizes and implements all transportation services of the district.	1
Director of Food Services	Organizes and implements all school lunch and breakfast services of the district.	1
Estimated Total Central Services/Office:	14	

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**  
**SUMMARY OF SUGGESTED STAFFING PLAN FOR THE NEWLY ORGANIZED SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPARED TO**  
**THE TOTAL STAFFING IN THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS SEPARATELY**  
*CURRENT STAFF IN THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS: 628.9*  
*ESTIMATED TOTAL STAFF IN THE REORGANIZED DISTRICT: 604*

<b>STAFF SEGMENT</b>	<b>FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS IN THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS BENCHMARKED TO THE 2010-2011 SCHOOL YEAR</b>	<b>ESTIMATED FULL TIME EQUIVALENTS IN A REORGANIZED DISTRICT INCLUDING PUPIL PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS</b>
Pre-K through grade 6 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, social workers, librarians, teacher certified nurses and similar others):	211	210.5 including 2 undesignated FTE's due to unforeseen grade level issues
Grade 7-12 <b>certified</b> teachers (including counselors, nurses and similar others):	207	165.5 including 2 undesignated FTE's due to unforeseen subject program delivery issues
Instructional Specialists/Trainers building-based direct service to teachers	0	4
OT/PT (civil service payroll)	2	7
Social worker (civil service payroll)	0	8
Nurse (civil service payroll)	7	8
K-12 certified administrators (buildings and central office), and certified or civil service Directors of school lunch, transportation, facilities	33	25
Technology Coordination	2	1
Teacher Assistants ( <b>certified</b> )	37	37
Teacher Aides (civil service payroll)	88	88
Technology Technicians	0	7
Secretarial	35	38
Business Office Accounting	6.9	5
Bus drivers	Continue current delivery plan	
Bus aides		
School lunch workers	Only change is to reflect closing of Remington and different use for Jarvis	
Operations and Maintenance workers	Only change is to reflect closing of Remington and different use for Jarvis	

**What would the financial picture look like for the new school district?**

**M. *What if Picture of the Estimated Long Term Budget Financials if the Four Districts Reorganize into One District***

The members of the four Community Advisory Committees are in concert regarding long-term financial viability and sustainability of a reorganized district if approved by the communities. The CAC members all advise that the Board of Education and the administration of a newly organized school district must make part of its operation culture to closely monitor with a clear planning process the annual expenditures and revenues with a long-term view.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Therefore, the financial plan framework suggested by the study reflects this explicit guidance by outlining a financial blueprint that ends the budget and property tax reliance on reorganization incentive aid terminating in the same year that the aid stops coming to the newly organized school district.

### **Estimated profile of the major elements of the first year's expenditure budget of the newly organized school district:**

Total of the 2011-2012 school budgets of the four separate school districts.	\$78,247,874
Anticipated inflation for 2012-2013 of at least 3%.	+ 2,347,436
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$80,595,310</b>
Estimated difference in the staffing budgets of 2011-2012 of the four school districts separately and with the estimated staffing budget of the reorganized district. The staffing levels are based on the program vision developed with the Community Advisory Committees as described in the attached document. This total savings results from the act of serving the pupils collectively as described in the grade level configuration document.	- 2,129,946
10% increase in the co-curricular, music/drama, and interscholastic resources budgeted separately by the four districts in 2010-2011 which totaled \$1,335,073.	+ 133,507
Estimated added expenditure for transportation based on the grade level configurations of the program and the location of the various school buildings.	+ 1,641,376
Closure of the Remington Elementary Building (Fields and Athletic Facilities still used as assets for the student program and the community).	- 350,000
Expenditures to address developing new labor contracts.	+ 714,816
<b>Net estimated <u>expenditure</u> budget for the first year of the newly organized district in 2012-2013:</b>	<b>\$80,605,063</b>

### **Estimated profile of the major elements of the first year's revenue budget of a newly organized school district based on 2011 current law.**

Total estimate of the 2011-2012 regular state and federal aid revenues. (2% less than the previous year)	\$54,453,541
Estimated new 'regular' transportation state aid on additional bus routing. *	+ 1,148,963
Estimated annual additional building aid due to a common building aid ratio applied to all existing bond debt of the four individual school districts.	+ 303,492
Cash from the four districts on June 30, 2011	+ 6,900,000
Year 1 of the reorganization incentive aid	+ 7,659,972
<b>Net estimated revenues not including property taxes for the first year of the newly organized district in 2012-2013:</b>	<b>\$70,465,968</b>

*\*This is an expenditure driven state aid. It is paid by the state in the year following the expenditure and will be paid to the new district in 2013-2014. The reorganization incentive aid in year one only will supply the \$1,148,963 revenue for the 2012-2013 budget. This is a prime example of how the incentive aid helps to enable the establishment of reorganized school districts.*

### **Elements of a Suggested Financial Blueprint for Planning:**

- ✓ It is estimated that the four districts combined will have about \$6,900,000 in cash and approved reserves on June 30, 2012 if a reorganization is approved by the communities. These funds are placed in reserves of the new district in the same pattern as they were in the approved reserves of each of the four school districts before reorganization.
- ✓ In the first year only \$1,148,963 of the reorganization incentive state aid is used to pay for the pupil transportation plan. In future years, starting with year two, transportation aid received as a

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

revenue from the previous year’s transportation expenditures will not require reorganization incentive aid to be allocated to transportation expenses.

- ✓ Starting in the first year of the new district, a yearly planned amount of the reorganization incentive aid is placed into approved reserves to protect the district and the communities against unforeseen expenditures and/or unforeseen economy factors over the first 15 years of the new district.
- ✓ Starting in 2013 through 2023, each year \$1,000,000 of the reorganization incentive state aid is allocated to pay down the collective debt of the four districts that came to the new district at the time of reorganization. The debt of the new district from the four districts ends more quickly. Also, the state building aid revenue on the debt still comes in to the new district at the yearly schedule matching the original term of the bond. As the state building aid revenue is received through 2025 on the advanced ‘mortgage’ pay-down payments, the revenue can be placed in an approved reserve for future projects or is available as may be necessary to moderate the property tax levy through 2026 and beyond.
- ✓ \$4,950,000 of the reorganization incentive state aid is allocated to reduce the tax levy and the property taxes for the 2012-2013 school year. Starting in year two (2013-2014) the newly organized school district will identify annually at least \$353,572 in on-going efficiencies to deliver the program over the next 14 years. Thus, over 15 years the reorganization incentive aid used initially to reduce the tax levy is reduced to \$0. Therefore, the reorganization aid is not relied on for the financial future of the district after it is phased out starting in 2026. **Instead, financial efficiencies that are implemented over 15 years because of reorganization are the prime factor in moderating the reliance on the property tax to deliver the program.**

### Suggested Plan for Allocation of the Reorganization Incentive State Aid over 15 Years:

Year	Incentive Aid	Incentive Aid Allocated to Reserves	Incentive Aid Allocated to Enable First Year Cost for the Pupil Transportation Plan	Incentive Aid Allocated to Pay Down the <u>Existing</u> Building Bond Debt of the four districts now the responsibility of the new district (Advanced Payment of Existing Debt)	Incentive Aid Allocated to Reduce the Tax Levy and Property Taxes	Totals:
2012	\$7,659,972	\$1,561,009	\$1,148,963		<b>\$4,950,000</b>	\$7,659,972
2013	\$7,659,972	\$2,063,544		\$1,000,000	<b>\$4,596,428</b>	\$7,659,972
2014	\$7,659,972	\$2,417,116		\$1,000,000	<b>\$4,242,856</b>	\$7,659,972
2015	\$7,659,972	\$2,770,688		\$1,000,000	<b>\$3,889,284</b>	\$7,659,972
2016	\$7,659,972	\$3,124,260		\$1,000,000	<b>\$3,535,712</b>	\$7,659,972
2017	\$6,893,974	\$2,711,834		\$1,000,000	<b>\$3,182,140</b>	\$6,893,974
2018	\$6,127,977	\$2,299,409		\$1,000,000	<b>\$2,828,568</b>	\$6,127,977
2019	\$5,361,980	\$1,886,984		\$1,000,000	<b>\$2,474,996</b>	\$5,361,980
2020	\$4,595,983	\$1,474,559		\$1,000,000	<b>\$2,121,424</b>	\$4,595,983
2021	\$3,829,986	\$1,062,134		\$1,000,000	<b>\$1,767,852</b>	\$3,829,986
2022	\$3,063,989	\$649,709		\$1,000,000	<b>\$1,414,280</b>	\$3,063,989
2023	\$2,297,991	\$237,283		\$1,000,000	<b>\$1,060,708</b>	\$2,297,991
2024	\$1,531,994	\$824,858			<b>\$707,136</b>	\$1,531,994
2025	\$765,997	\$412,433			<b>\$353,564</b>	\$765,997
2026	\$0	\$0			<b>\$0</b>	\$0
<b>Totals:</b>	<b>\$72,769,731</b>	<b>\$23,495,820</b>	<b>\$1,148,963</b>	<b>\$11,000,000</b>	<b>\$37,124,948</b>	<b>\$72,769,731</b>

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

### What is expected to happen to property taxes?

#### N. *What if Picture* of the Estimated Property Taxes in the First Base Year on a \$100,000 Home in Each of the Towns Served by the Reorganized School District

Below is a chart showing the actual property taxes for 2011-2012 of the four school districts separately. Also charted are the estimated property taxes for the first year of the newly organized single school district.

#### 2011-2012 PROPERTY TAXES OF THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS SEPARATELY

Town	Assessed Value Apportionment August-11	Equalization Rate	Full Value	School Tax Levy	Percent of Tax Levy	Tax Levy Dollars	2011-2012 Tax Rate/ \$1000 assessed
<b><i>Frankfort-Schuyler CS</i></b>							
Frankfort	214,441,923	0.7500	285,922,564	6,740,776	85.448290%	5,759,877.82	26.86
Schuyler	43,579,489	0.8950	48,692,166	6,740,776	14.551710%	980,898.18	22.51
Total	258,021,412		334,614,730		100.000000%	6,740,776	
			<b>20.19</b>	Tax Rate per \$1000 on True			
<b><i>Herkimer CS</i></b>							
Herkimer	338,182,772	0.9400	359,768,906	7,475,944	96.782711%	7,235,421.28	21.40
Little Falls	8,371,707	70.0000	11,959,581	7,475,944	3.217289%	240,522.72	28.73
Total	346,554,479		371,728,487		100.000000%	7,475,944	
			<b>20.86</b>	Tax Rate per \$1000 on True			
<b><i>Mohawk CS</i></b>							
German Flatts	119,562,576	0.7715	154,974,175	3,876,316	80.277674%	3,111,816.32	26.03
Columbia	28,975,415	0.95	30,500,437	3,876,316	15.799433%	612,435.95	21.14
Little Falls	5,175,860	0.7	7,394,086	3,876,316	3.830187%	148,470.15	28.69
Litchfield	170,019	0.95	178,967	3,876,316	0.092706%	3,593.58	21.14
Total	153,883,870		193,047,665		100.000000%	3,876,316	
			<b>20.08</b>	Tax Rate per \$1000 on True			
<b><i>Ilion CS</i></b>							
Frankfort	16,416,810	0.75	21,889,080	4,590,000	8.057738%	369,850.17	22.53
German Flatts	189,324,250	0.7715	245,397,602	4,590,000	90.334984%	4,146,375.77	21.90
Herkimer	3,550,341	0.94	3,776,959	4,590,000	1.390362%	63,817.62	17.98
Schuyler	527,384	0.895	589,256	4,590,000	0.216915%	9,956.40	18.88
Total	209,818,785		271,652,897		99.999999%	4,590,000	
			<b>16.90</b>	Tax Rate per \$1000 on True			
<b>GRAND TOTALS:</b>			<b>1,171,043,779</b>	<b>22,683,036</b>		<b>22,683,036</b>	

#### 2012-2013 "WHAT IF" PROPERTY TAXES IF THE FOUR COMMUNITIES CHOSE TO REORGANIZE THE FOUR DISTRICTS INTO ONE

TOWN	Assessed Value	Equalization Rate	Full Value	School Tax Levy	Percent of Tax Levy	Tax Levy Dollars	2012-2013 Tax Rate/ \$1000 assessed
German Flatts	308,886,826	0.7715	400,371,777	19,749,067	34.189309%	6,752,069.54	21.86
Columbia	28,975,415	0.95	30,500,437	19,749,067	2.604551%	514,374.52	17.75
Little Falls	13,547,567	0.7	19,353,667	19,749,067	1.652685%	326,389.87	24.09
Litchfield	170,019	0.95	178,967	19,749,067	0.015283%	3,018.25	17.75
Herkimer	341,733,113	0.94	363,545,865	19,749,067	31.044601%	6,131,019.05	17.94
Frankfort	230,858,733	0.75	307,811,644	19,749,067	26.285238%	5,191,089.26	22.49
Schuyler	44,106,873	0.895	49,281,422	19,749,067	4.208333%	831,106.50	18.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>968,278,546</b>		<b>1,171,043,779</b>	<b>-</b>		<b>19,749,067</b>	
			<b>16.86</b>	Tax Rate per \$1000 on True			

Estimated budget for the first year of a reorganized district in 2012-2013: **\$80,605,063**

Estimated 'regular' revenue for the first year of a reorganized district in 2012-2013: **\$55,905,996**

Estimated reorganization incentive aid applied to property taxes: **\$4,950,000**

**ESTIMATED TAX LEVY FOR 2012-2013: \$19,749,067**

**FINDINGS OF THE STUDY**

**Sample property taxes for a home with a \$100,000 market (true value):**

<i>Current Tax Year EXAMPLE FOR THE 2011-2012 SCHOOL YEAR</i>					
<b>School District</b>	<b>Town</b>	<b>Example True Value</b>	<b>Corresponding Assessed Value</b>	<b>2011-2012 Tax Rate Per \$1000 Assessed Value</b>	<b>2011-2012 Property Taxes</b>
<b>Frankfort-Schuyler</b>	Frankfort	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$26.86	\$2015
	Schuyler	\$100,000	\$89,500	\$22.51	\$2015
<b>Herkimer</b>	Herkimer	\$100,000	\$94,000	\$21.40	\$2011
	Little Falls	\$100,000	\$70,000	\$28.73	\$2011
<b>Mohawk</b>	German Flats	\$100,000	\$77,150	\$26.03	\$2008
	Columbia	\$100,000	\$95,000	\$21.14	\$2008
	Little Falls	\$100,000	\$70,000	\$28.69	\$2008
	Litchfield	\$100,000	\$95,000	\$21.14	\$2008
<b>Ilion</b>	Frankfort	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$22.53	\$1690
	German Flats	\$100,000	\$77,150	\$21.90	\$1690
	Herkimer	\$100,000	\$94,000	\$17.98	\$1690
	Schuyler	\$100,000	\$89,500	\$18.88	\$1690

<b>ESTIMATED FOR THE 2012-2013 SCHOOL YEAR IF THE FOUR SCHOOL DISTRICTS REORGANIZED INTO ONE SCHOOL DISTRICT:</b>					
	<b>Town</b>	<b>Example True Value of a home</b>	<b>Corresponding Assessed Value</b>	<b>2012-2013 Tax Rate Per \$1000 Assessed Value based on the tax levy reflective of the outlined financial plan for the newly organized school district for 2012-2013</b>	<b>2012-2013 Estimated Property Taxes on a \$100,000 market value ('true value') home</b>
<b>Reorganized School District</b>	Frankfort	\$100,000	\$75,000	\$22.49	\$1686
	Schuyler	\$100,000	\$89,500	\$18.84	\$1686
	Herkimer	\$100,000	\$94,000	\$17.94	\$1686
	Little Falls	\$100,000	\$70,000	\$24.09	\$1686
	German Flats	\$100,000	\$77,150	\$21.86	\$1686
	Columbia	\$100,000	\$95,000	\$17.75	\$1686
	Litchfield	\$100,000	\$95,000	\$17.75	\$1686

Summary:

- ✓ Please note that the estimated 2012-2013 school budget and property tax levy are conservative in that the actual budget and levy might be less. There are no expected additions. The estimated 2012-2013 property tax of a reorganized school district is compared to the 2011-2012 actual property taxes paid in each of the four districts for a \$100,000 home. An estimate of the 2012-

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

2013 budgets and tax levies for each of the *separate school districts* for 2012-2013 is outside the scope of the study. The four Boards of Education are in the process of preparing estimated budgets and property tax levies for 2012-2013 as four separate school districts.

- ✓ A property owner with a \$100,000 home in Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer and Mohawk can expect a lower property school tax bill of between \$315 and \$322 in 2012-13 compared to 2011-2012. The Ilion property tax owner will receive a smaller property tax reduction. Ilion is the least wealthy of the four separate school districts. As such, Ilion has relied less on the property tax for revenue because its lower wealth has generated higher levels of state aid in the past.
- ✓ With the expected reduction of state aid for 2012-2013 for all school districts even those with low wealth like Ilion, it is very likely that Ilion taxpayers will pay less in property taxes in 2012-2013 in a reorganized school district compared to what the property tax obligation will be if Ilion remains a stand-alone district. The same can be said for Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, and Mohawk. It is likely that the taxpayers of a \$100,000 home in those districts will pay less in property taxes in 2012-2013 in a reorganized school district compared to what the property tax obligation will be if each district remains a stand-alone district.

### **The New York State Property Tax Limit Legislation:**

During the 2010-11 session, the New York State Legislature and Governor Cuomo enacted a “Property Tax Cap.” This new legislation limits the increases in annual school district property tax levies (not the tax rate).

As this Feasibility Study goes to press, more information about this law is being released. For example, the amount that a tax levy may increase is now called a 'tax levy limit' by the governor and it will be determined by each school district according to an eight-step complex formula outlined in the law. Each school district must calculate that “limit” and it will vary by district. School districts will have the option to exceed their 'tax levy limit' with at least 60% voter approval. This new law will first affect the 2012-13 tax levies.

The full impact of this newly-enacted Tax Levy Limit may not be known until the budget development process for each individual school district is underway. Any long-range financial planning (including expenditures, revenues and fund balance) will be influenced.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Below is the language in the Property Tax Law with respect to setting the property tax levy limit for reorganized districts:

REORGANIZED SCHOOL DISTRICTS: WHEN TWO OR MORE SCHOOL DISTRICTS REORGANIZE, THE COMMISSIONER SHALL DETERMINE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT FOR THE REORGANIZED SCHOOL DISTRICT FOR THE FIRST SCHOOL YEAR FOLLOWING THE REORGANIZATION BASED ON THE RESPECTIVE TAX LEVY LIMITS OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT FORMED THE REORGANIZED DISTRICT FROM THE LAST SCHOOL YEAR IN WHICH THEY WERE SEPARATE DISTRICTS, PROVIDED THAT IN THE EVENT OF FORMATION OF A NEW CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, THE TAX LEVY LIMITS FOR THE NEW CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT AND ITS COMPONENT SCHOOL DISTRICTS SHALL BE DETERMINED IN ACCORDANCE WITH A METHODOLOGY PRESCRIBED BY THE COMMISSIONER.

If the districts choose to go to binding referendum regarding reorganization, then information should be received from the State Education Department to determine how the above law pertains to the four districts of this study.

### **What would the new school district need to do to prepare for the school year in September?**

#### **O. Outline of Major Transition Steps to Create One School District if the Communities Approve the Reorganization Referendum**

If the four district communities affirm a centralization of the four districts by referendum, the reorganized district faces a series of transition decisions that must be addressed prior to formal establishment of the centralized district on July 1, 2012 and others that need to be addressed by September 2012. In addition there are transition issues that will need decisions in the first one to two years of the new school district.

It is rare that communities have the opportunity to create an entirely new school district, with a new vision for its students, a new educational culture focused on students and teaching and learning; and a chance to increase the opportunities for student growth and development. In order to effectively and efficiently combine the various systems into one coherent, coordinated and seamless school district, a transition plan should be developed if the communities elect to reorganize.

The reorganized school district would be operating concurrently with the four original school districts for a period of time. Each district has its own activities, instructional calendar, assessment program and the like to conduct while the same people will be planning for a new school district to take affect July 1, 2012. Establishing a viable transition team and plan is critical to the smooth and successful implementation of a newly-reorganized district.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Implementing a transition plan will require the cooperation and collegiality of all aspects of the school and communities of each district. The major transition decisions (in no priority order) include, but are not limited to:

By July 1, 2012:

- ✓ Select and appoint a superintendent of schools
- ✓ Develop and prepare a 2012-13 school district budget for voter consideration
- ✓ Recognize bargaining units; begin to develop labor contracts with the various bargaining groups
- ✓ Approve a 2012-13 school district calendar
- ✓ Determine formal or 'common name' and file appropriate paperwork with SED
- ✓ Determine the usual school district items like: select auditing firm; school attorney; school physician, etc.

By September 1, 2012:

- ✓ Finalize the plan to house K-12 students and staff within the grade level configurations (K-4; 5-6; 7-8 and 9-12) and the buildings of the reorganized district for educational programming.
- ✓ Select and appoint administrative staff, instructional staff, and support staff
- ✓ Determine, implement and schedule grade 9-12 course offerings
- ✓ Approve a district athletic plan; appoint coaches; identify practice and competition fields
- ✓ Locate the District Office for the reorganized district
- ✓ Establish bus transportation routes and pick up schedules
- ✓ Prepare and approve student handbooks; code of conduct; faculty handbooks; parent handbooks
- ✓ Develop a student orientation plan for each school building especially for the upper elementary 5-6, the middle school 7-8, and the 9-12. The four elementary buildings are in place already in the four districts.
- ✓ Determine school “management” systems and policies such as attendance, use of facilities, and other day-to-day operating guidelines.

Within the first 12 to 24 months:

- ✓ Commence a long-range facilities plan
- ✓ Review and establish Board Policies
- ✓ Study and review the school lunch, operations and maintenance, and transportation programs.

The range of tasks and decisions are broad, but also exciting as a new district becomes set to serve the communities and the students. Establishing a thorough, well-managed, participatory process to guide the new board of education, administration and staff in establishing this new district is recommended.

One option is for the Board of Education to create a comprehensive Transition Committee to address and advise the Board about the many topics related to combining the systems of a new school district. This Committee should have broad-based composition including, but not limited to, representatives from the instructional staff; support staff; administration; students; parents; and community as well as specialized staff as appropriate.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The staffing plan suggested by this study includes an *Associate Superintendent for Transition* to be in place for at least two years. The study suggests that this resource is key to the success of the new school district. As the transition develops all other staff including teachers, support staff, supervisors, and administrators are accomplishing all of the tasks and responsibilities of delivering the program to students. Transition tasks and decisions are above and beyond the normal operation of a school district and should not be put on the 'back burner'. The board of education assigns this person to chair the Transition Committee and to oversee all the details of the transition for a period of one to two years.

The Associate Superintendent for Transition: develops a transition plan with other district leaders and staff; coordinates the elements of that plan with the efforts and talents of all staff; troubleshoots unexpected challenges and opportunities as the transition from four districts to one evolves culturally.

Other related topics that the four Community Advisory Committees discussed and wish the study to outline are:

- Governance – Board of Education Seats

The number of board of education seats and terms of office are determined, according to NYS Education Law; by the voting public at the time of a 'binding' vote should the reorganization process reach that point. The voting public will vote to determine if there should be 5, 7 or 9 board members on the new Board of Education along with what the terms of office should be, either 3, 4, or 5 years in length. The board seats are considered 'at large' seats within this new district. It is important to note that "prior agreements" or "gentlemen's agreements" whereby board of education seats of elected school board members are allocated among communities or 'former districts' comprising the new district have been invalidated by the NYS Commissioner of Education.

The matter of governance was discussed by members of the Community Advisory Committee. Although there was no consensus with respect to the number or term of office for the new board, Advisory Committee members expressed the hope that anyone running for a seat would be willing and able to commit the necessary time to the position.

- Name of the New District

Sections 315 and 1801 (2) of Education Law refer to the naming of a newly centralized district. They specify that each school district shall have a legal name consisting of a geographic designation. Boards of education have the sole authority to adopt a simplified name to be filed with the Commissioner of Education. The Community Advisory Committees discussed what might be a 'common name' of the new district. Members of the Advisory Committees do recommend that there should be a 'common name' in addition to the legal name of the "Frankfort-Schuyler-Herkimer-Ilion-Mohawk Central School District".

The Community Advisory Committee members suggest that the Transition committee establish a wide-reaching process that includes students and community to select a 'common name' for the new school district. The final 'name' must be approved by the new Board of Education and filed with the New York State Education Department by July 1, 2012.

## FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- School Colors and School Mascot

The four districts all have different school colors, mascots and nicknames. The Community Advisory Committee discussed a process for choosing new ones. They believe strongly that all students currently attending each of the respective schools should be asked to determine these, under the direction of a student organization (i.e. Student Council) that represents all students.

The Board of Education has the final legal authority for approval. However, this real life experience for the new student body to come together to both create and carry out a democratic process to select those aspects of the reorganized district that effect them most, is recommended by the Community Advisory Committees to be a valuable learning opportunity. The recommendation for school colors and mascot would be the initial accomplishment of a new student body which will help in creating a new school culture. The process should be completed before commencement in June of 2012 while all students are still in attendance. Therefore, prompt attention by the students and the Transition committee would be required.

The Committees cautioned against interference or ‘meddling’ from adults in what is recommended to be a student-directed process. Parameters should be identified in advance by the Transition Committee. Such parameters might include such items as: all students in grades K-12 should be permitted to participate; school colors currently used by any of the four districts would not be eligible; school mascots currently used by any of the four districts would not be eligible; and that the students develop a set of criteria to screen ideas consistent with local community tastes.

### **P. Study Question Summary**

The four Boards of Education commissioned the feasibility study to research data to answer the question:

*Would the reorganization (through centralization) of the four districts provide enhanced educational opportunities and, at the same time, increase efficiencies and lower cost for the overall operations by forming a consolidated school district?*

The major question facing the four communities is:

***Should the Frankfort-Schuyler, Herkimer, Ilion, and Mohawk Central school districts reorganize into one school district?***

The final opinion about the value of the study question asked by the Boards rests with the four communities. The decision judgment about proceeding with or not proceeding with the implementation of reorganization into one school district rests *solely* with the four communities as they review the opportunities and challenges documented in the study by the Community Advisory Committees and the SES Study Team.

## APPENDIX

### REORGANIZATION INCENTIVE AID

In New York State, when two or more school districts reorganize, the new district receives two forms of state aid not available to the predecessor districts. They are Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid and Reorganization Incentive Building Aid.

### REORGANIZATION INCENTIVE OPERATING AID (Section 3602(14)(d) and (d-1) of Education Law)

For school districts that merge after July 1, 2007, Incentive Operating Aid is available for 14 years starting with the first year of operation as a reorganized district.

For five years after reorganization, aid payable is equal to the sum of 40% of 2006-07 formula operating aid for each of the predecessor districts, based upon the data file that was created for the February 15, 2007 State Aid Database Gen Report.

Incentive Operating Aid for the first five years as a reorganized district =

.40 X (2006-07 Formula Operating Aid)

2006-07 Formula Operating Aid =

(2006-07 Selected Operating Aid per Pupil X Total Aidable Pupil Units or TAPU)

After receiving Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid for five years, the additional 40% apportionment will be reduced by 4 percentage points each year until the apportionment reaches zero in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of reorganization. The sum of Selected Operating Aid per pupil multiplied by TAPU plus Incentive Operating Aid may not exceed 95% of the district's Approved Operating Expenses (line 74) used for aid calculations in the current school year.

### ESTIMATING REORGANIZATION INCENTIVE OPERATING AID FOR A MERGED DISTRICT

An initial estimate of Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid payable may be calculated by retrieving the most current General Aid Output Reports (GEN), for districts considering a reorganization, from the NYS Education Department State Aid website at <https://stateaid.nysed.gov/>. Section VII of the GEN, which is partially completed for all districts, specifies the Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid calculation (line 73 on the most current web published GEN Report). Reorganization Incentive Operating Aid potentially payable to each district expected to be part of a merger, should be added together to determine an estimate of the total incentive operating aid payable to a presumed successor merged or reorganized district for a period of five years. Thereafter, the incentive operating percent on line 76 will decrease by .04 annually until it reaches zero in year 15.

### REORGANIZATION INCENTIVE BUILDING AID (Section 3602(14) of Education Law)

Incentive Building Aid is 30 percent of the Building Aid otherwise paid on an approved building project. Aid is paid on eligible projects (those initiated after reorganization) for which the general construction contract is signed prior to July 1, 2010 or within ten years of the effective date of the reorganization, whichever is later. In no case, however, may the sum of regular Building Aid (including the 10% incentive) and Reorganization Incentive Building Aid exceed 95% of approved building expenditures, or 98% for high need school districts. For high need districts, the 98% also includes the impact of the High Need Supplemental Building Aid Ratio adjustment.

## REORGANIZATION INCENTIVE OPERATING AID

**Districts:** **Base Aid as per SED ( line 73 on most current GEN report):**

Frankfort-Schuyler	\$3,640,716
Herkimer	\$4,392,301
Ilion	\$7,293,438
Mohawk	\$3,823,474
Total base	\$19,149,929

Anticipated first year of consolidation: 2012-2013  
Therefore, last of 14 years of incentive aid: 2025-2026

MERGER YEAR	TOTAL BASE AID	INCENTIVE AID %	EST. INCENTIVE	
1	\$19,149,929	40%	\$7,659,972	
2	\$19,149,929	40%	\$7,659,972	
3	\$19,149,929	40%	\$7,659,972	
4	\$19,149,929	40%	\$7,659,972	
5	\$19,149,929	40%	\$7,659,972	Total est. first five years: \$38,299,858
6	\$19,149,929	36%	\$6,893,974	
7	\$19,149,929	32%	\$6,127,977	
8	\$19,149,929	28%	\$5,361,980	
9	\$19,149,929	24%	\$4,595,983	
10	\$19,149,929	20%	\$3,829,986	
11	\$19,149,929	16%	\$3,063,989	
12	\$19,149,929	12%	\$2,297,991	
13	\$19,149,929	8%	\$1,531,994	
14	\$19,149,929	4%	\$765,997	Total est. incentive aid over 14 years: \$72,769,730
2026-2027		0%	\$0	

## APPENDIX

### **Labor Relations Implications Of School District Centralization** (April 28, 2011)

The following information is based on guidance materials from the State Education Department and general principles of public sector employment law. This document does not contain legal advice and should not be considered a legal opinion. For legal advice, the districts should contact their respective attorney counsels.

**1. Q: If two or more school districts centralize into one school district, what happens to the employees of the former school districts?**

Each teacher employed by a former school district becomes an employee of the new school district. Employees appointed pursuant to the Civil Service Law by a former school district may have varying rights in the new school district, depending on their civil service class (competitive, non-competitive, labor, etc.).

**2. Q: What happens to the collective bargaining agreements of the former school districts?**

The terms of those agreements may become elements of new agreements with the new school district. The new school district and the new bargaining units' bargaining agents must make a good faith effort to negotiate new collective bargaining agreements.

**3. Q: What happens to the seniority rights of teachers?**

Teachers are credited with seniority earned within a particular tenure area. When school districts centralize, the seniority lists are merged so that the new school district has only one seniority list per tenure area.

**4. Q: What happens to the seniority rights of employees appointed pursuant to the Civil Service Law?**

Competitive class employees are credited with seniority in accordance with the Civil Service Law. Other employees may have seniority rights set forth in their collective bargaining agreements.

**5. Q: What happens if the new school district needs fewer teachers?**

The Board of Education of the new school district may reduce teaching positions on the basis of seniority within a particular tenure area. If a teaching position is abolished, the affected individuals are placed on a preferred eligible list for a period of seven years.

**6. Q: What happens if the new school district needs fewer civil service employees?**

The Board of Education of the new school district may reduce competitive class positions on the basis of seniority as set forth in the Civil Service Law. Current collective agreements that cover civil service employees may have additional reduction in force references.

**7. Q: What happens to the administrators of the former school districts?**

Although the guidance materials from the State Education Department specifically reference the seniority rights of teachers, there is reason to believe the seniority rights of school administrators could be handled in a similar manner. However, since school administrator tenure areas may vary from district to district, the actual impact of these rights by individual job title/role is a case-by-case analysis.

## APPENDIX

### **8. Q: What happens to the superintendents of the former school districts?**

Superintendents of the former districts do not have any statutory rights to that position in the new district. The new school district board of education may select its own new superintendent. When the superintendent of a district included in the reorganization has an employment contract, that contract becomes an obligation of the newly reorganized school district. If the newly reorganized district determines not to employ the superintendent of a former school district, the new district may discharge the contractual obligation by paying the salary which he or she would have earned, less any income obtained from employment elsewhere during the term of the contract.

### **9. Q: What happens to the retirement benefits of the employees of the former school districts?**

Retirement benefits associated with the retirement system remain unchanged. Retirement benefits associated with an employment contract or collective bargaining agreement are governed by the terms of the employment contract or collective bargaining agreement. Individuals who are already retired from a school district may have certain retiree health insurance protections contained in Chapter 504 of the Laws of 2009. Chapter 504 prohibits reduction of health insurance for retirees and their dependents unless there is a corresponding reduction of benefits or contributions for the corresponding group of active employees.

### **10. Q: Are there other considerations relating to labor relations?**

When two or more school districts centralize into a new school district, it is possible that the local bargaining units are represented by different bargaining agents. It is important for the school districts and local bargaining units to work with their labor relations experts.

Since the success of any centralization endeavor depends largely on the participation of all affected stakeholders, it is important for the districts to provide labor union representatives with appropriate opportunities to discuss the impact of centralization on the rights of bargaining unit members. Often such opportunities come before a formal reorganization public referendum and sometimes before the non-binding 'strawvote' among the communities.

## SES STUDY TEAM

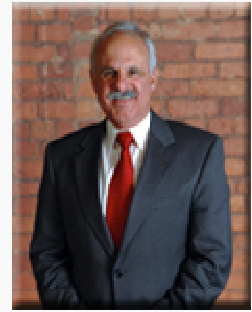
*"Custom tools and research to aid a school district in defining a vision and decision options for serving students in the future."*



Dr. Paul M. Seversky



Mr. Doug A. Exley



Mr. Sam A. Shevat

**The SES Study Team focuses its work on customized studies that deal with identifying opportunities to provide quality educational programs more effectively and in a cost-effective manner. The major areas of the Team's services are school reorganization through centralization analyses, and the identification and analysis of collaborative functional sharing opportunities between school districts.**

The SES Study Team, in an impartial manner, provides research, direction and facilitation through a guided process. The study process emphasizes a data-driven analysis and community involvement to identify possible options to serve pupils in the future.

The common elements followed by the Team to achieve customized studies include:

- A focus on answering a set of questions by school district and community stakeholders;
- Inclusion of, and sensitivity to, all points of view from the communities involved;
- An approach that begins with the collection of data, a review of major findings, sharing of perceptions, recommendations based upon challenges and opportunities, and the modeling of potential options;
- The central role of school district instructional, instructional support, and administrative staff in providing comprehensive data for the study to use to answer the study question(s) posed by the client district(s);
- Public transparency of the work and data developed, compiled, and analyzed by the Study Team;
- The creation of a study report that becomes the prime useable tool by members of the communities as they decide how best to educate their children in the future.

The Study Team brings a combined 105 years of public education experience to working with and helping school districts identify options in serving pupils and their communities. Each team member has served as a teacher, principal and superintendent of a K-12 school district. Doug and Sam each has served as a superintendent of a reorganized district through centralization. Paul has served as a superintendent of a district that explored reorganization and in a regional capacity as a Deputy District Superintendent of a BOCES. Sam has worked for a college to administer programs for public school pupils; Paul has taught graduate level courses in educational administration for 23 years; and Doug serves as a council member at a local university. The Study Team Members have provided consultant services to public school districts since 1998.

Contact the SES Study Team to discuss your school district's specific study project.

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