



BERK₁₂

Berkshire Educational Resources K12

SUSTAINABILITY STUDY: PHASE II

Mohawk Trail & Hawlemont Regional School Districts

(2DTowns)

H. Jake Eberwein, BERK12 Director
January 8 & 10, 2024

CHARGE.

Support ongoing study and analysis of the operating and organizational structures of the two Regional School Districts



ABOUT US, WHAT.

We bring school and community partners together

Our mission is to support school districts, educators, and community partners by collaboratively offering solutions to short and long-term issues, in order to promote, sustainable, high quality public education - which all children deserve, regardless of background or circumstance (including where they live).



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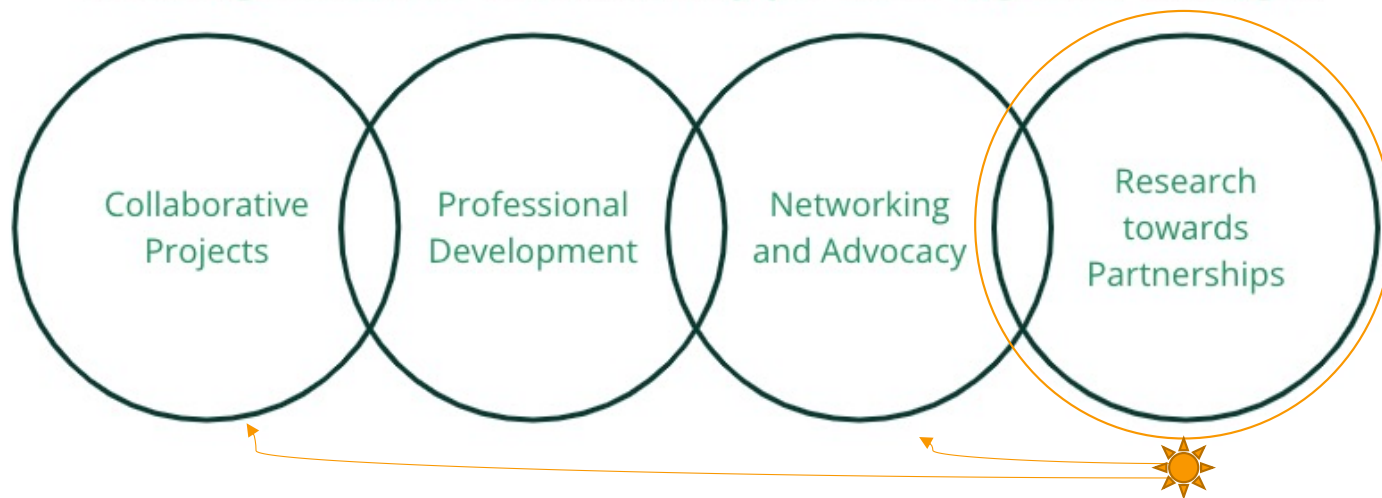
ABOUT US, WHY.

In light of *declining enrollment and stretched resources* (people and dollars), we believe that connecting partners is imperative to improving student outcomes and the social, cultural, and economic conditions throughout rural regions.



ABOUT US, WHAT.

We bring educators & community partners together through:





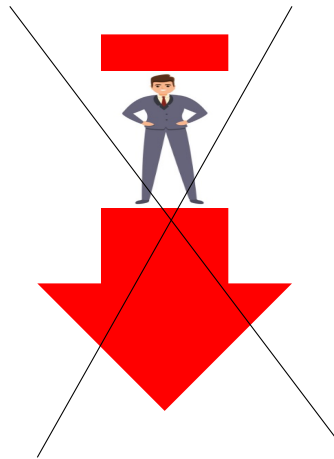
8 TOWN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT PLANNING BOARD

www.8towns.org

The screenshot shows the homepage of the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board website. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for HOME, WHO WE ARE, MEETINGS, RESOURCES, and NEWS, along with a search bar. Below the navigation is a large image of students sitting on a bench, reading books. A banner below the image reads "OUR SCHOOLS BETTER TOGETHER" and "VOTE AT YOUR SPECIAL TOWN MEETING". Below the banner are two links: "READ THE PROPOSED 8 TOWN REGIONAL AGREEMENT, HERE" and "READ THE 8 TOWN BOARD RECOMMENDATION REPORT, 9.26.23, HERE". A section titled "We Are Better Together" contains a paragraph about the board's goal and a link to "READ MORE". Below this is a row of five buttons: "FAST FACTS", "ENROLLMENT", "TRANSPORTATION", "EDUCATION", and "FINANCIAL FACTS". A section titled "8 TOWN RSDPB NEWS & UPDATES" contains a paragraph and a link to "READ MORE NEWS". Below this are three news items, each with a small image and a title: "A Rare Opportunity to do something that is good for Everyone's Wallets and for Their Children", "Find the Time & Place for Your Special Town Meeting", and "Let's Talk! Conversation with Jesse Stewart of WSBS". To the right of the news items are three buttons: "READ THE REGIONAL AGREEMENT", "RECOMMENDATION REPORT", and "WHAT DOES A YES OR NO VOTE MEAN". At the bottom right is a "FULL CALENDAR" button.

ASSET-BASED APPROACH

Mobilize the **energies, talents & perspectives** of local communities to develop the innovative, sustainable solutions needed to advance educational excellence for all students across rural regions.



BUILDING UPON YOUR WORK.

- Potomac Reports (2013)
- Long Range Planning Committee (2015)
- BEST Study (2016/2017)
- Jetzon Data Report (2022)
- Phase I: MARS (2023)



Long-term sustainability plan (obstacles, observations, options)....**foundation for developing specific strategies** to make the district sustainable.

OUR AIMS.

We believe the aim of the Phase II study, the deliverable, is to clarify the current state of the district, to project into the future, and to generate viable alternatives/solutions that result in a sustainability plan that is actionable and will be supported by community stakeholders.

1

Analyze data as provided in Phase I

2

Project enrollment, finance, educational factors, and buildings in developing alternative options/solutions (regionalization, consolidation, other possibilities)

3

Assist a community group representing the 8 towns to determine the impact of doing nothing (*status quo*) as well as study, consider, and evaluate possible alternatives

4

Refine options that ensure high-quality educational delivery that are fiscally sustainable

5

Create and lead a communications/engagement plan that ensures a consistent stream of information and affords for broad public involvement

OUR APPROACH.





OUR APPROACH.

Domains:

- Project Management
- Educational Quality
- Finance
- Operations/Facilities
- Personnel
- Community Engagement
- Legal/Regulatory
- Advocacy

OUR PLAN.

Stage 1. Process Organization, Context Setting, Community Engagement (A)
Target dates: January 1, 2024 through May 1, 2024

Stage 2. Deep Data Dive & Analysis, Option Generation
Target dates: May 1, 2024 through August 1, 2024

Stage 3. Preferred Models, Community Engagement (B), Final Report/Next Steps
Target dates: August 1, 2024 through January 15, 2025

Final Report Delivery: February 28, 2025

	2024												2025			
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	...	Jun
Stage 1	█	█	█	█	█	█										
Stage 2					█	█	█	█	█							
Stage 3									█	█	█	█	█	█		
Final Report														█	█	█

STAGE 1. ORGANIZATION, CONTEXT, INITIAL ENGAGEMENT

- 1. Setup**
- 2. Initial Community Outreach**
- 3. Historical/Literature Review**
- 4. Launch Data Collection**

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1. **Project Planning:** Work with the leadership team/committee to define the work plan, priorities, any remaining questions, consulting team, and schedule.
2. **Administration.** Establish budget, invoicing/accounting processes, contracts and processes for subcontractors.
3. **Committee:** Identify/Recruit/Establish membership and subcommittee structure, if any. Hold meetings to orient and launch.
4. **Website:** Draft website framework for review.
5. **Tours/Visits (2 days):** Site visits to schools, district offices, facilities - initial meetings with administration & staff.

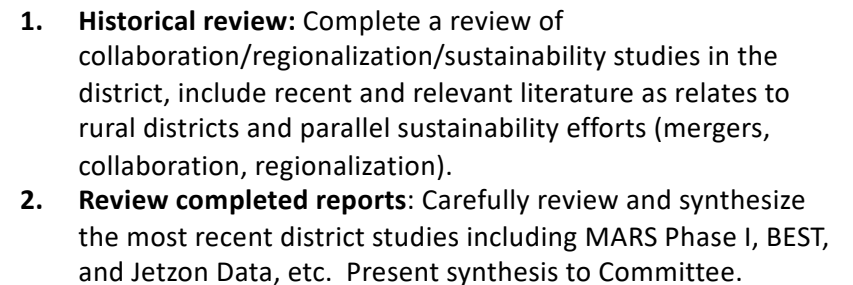
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1. **Key Stakeholders:** Following site visits, schedule meetings with established groups such as staff, PAC/School Council, union leads, select boards/finance committees. Use question protocol to collect perspectives, early thoughts/ideas, aspirations/opportunities, challenges, and non-negotiables.
2. **Community Survey:** Develop a community survey to be distributed electronically through school/community listservs. Aggregate data.
3. **Website:** By close of Stage 1, launch a website and establish social media (FB/IG) presence. Curate mailing lists and mechanisms for public submissions.
4. **Develop communications plan:** In concert with PM and Committee, draft a communications plan for 12 months forward, by the close of Stage 1.
5. **Press/Update:** Jointly develop press release/updates to send to stakeholders as part of monthly outreach.
6. **Delegates:** Meet with the local delegation to review aims of the Study, seek input and support, and build a foundation for advocacy.

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- 1. Historical review:** Complete a review of collaboration/regionalization/sustainability studies in the district, include recent and relevant literature as relates to rural districts and parallel sustainability efforts (mergers, collaboration, regionalization).
 - 2. Review completed reports:** Carefully review and synthesize the most recent district studies including MARS Phase I, BEST, and Jetzon Data, etc. Present synthesis to Committee.

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Using specialized consultants, organize and launch a process to begin a deep dive into a number of functional domains with the aim of establishing a deep understanding of the current state of the district. In doing so, options explored in Stage 2 & 3 can be evaluated for impact (the value proposition) within each domain. Note: a particular emphasis will be placed on finance, educational indicators, and buildings.

1. **Enrollment.** Review NESDEC, update enrollment projections independently, examine student flow (choice/tuition).
2. **Educational Quality.** Use school/district review protocol when meeting with key district leaders, reviewing plans, examining outcomes, cataloging programs, services and supports, student activities, specialized programming (special education, ELL, alternative education, career education), etc.
3. **Finance & Operations.** Build a model for budget projections (revenue and expenses for both operating and capital based on actuals) that can be manipulated based on varying options, examine select operational systems (facilities, food, technology) as time/funds allow.
4. **Personnel.** Establish clarity of organizational charting, roles/responsibilities, assignments (load), longevity, salary/benefits, etc.
5. **Buildings.** Advance MARS work in clarifying physical plant needs, capacity, appropriateness of educational spaces.
6. **Contracts/Agreements.** As is useful towards understanding the present and future state of the district, review contracts and regional agreement to establish key considerations.

STAGE 1. ORGANIZATION, CONTEXT, INITIAL ENGAGEMENT



Deliverables

- Established Committee (and subcommittees if appropriate), meetings
- Evidence of meetings and interviews (question protocol)
- Approved work plan
- Published website
- Protocol for stakeholder meetings and evidence of meetings
- Draft and final stakeholder survey, distribution of survey, data collection
- Literature/Historical review
- Communications plan
- Press/Monthly updates

THINGS TO LOOK FOR.



Website (early stage)

Outreach meetings

Steering Committee (call for volunteers)

Updates

Survey

...AS WE PARTNER

adapt.flex.adjust.

OUR TEAM.

H. Jake Eberwein, Project manager and lead researcher

Brendan Sheran, Project research/facilitator (data, educational quality)

Mary Nash, Project research (community outreach & engagement)

Judy Rush, Project research (educational quality, organizational systems)

Robert Putnam, Project research (historical review, literature)

Matt/Mark Abrahams, Project research (finance, operations, facilities)

Mark Maloy, Berkshire Regional Planning Commission, Project research (enrollment, town finance & economic indicators)

Russell Dupere (legal, regulatory)

Caroline Alexander (website development)

QUESTIONS/DISCUSSION/CONTACT.



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Berkshire Educational Resources K12

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