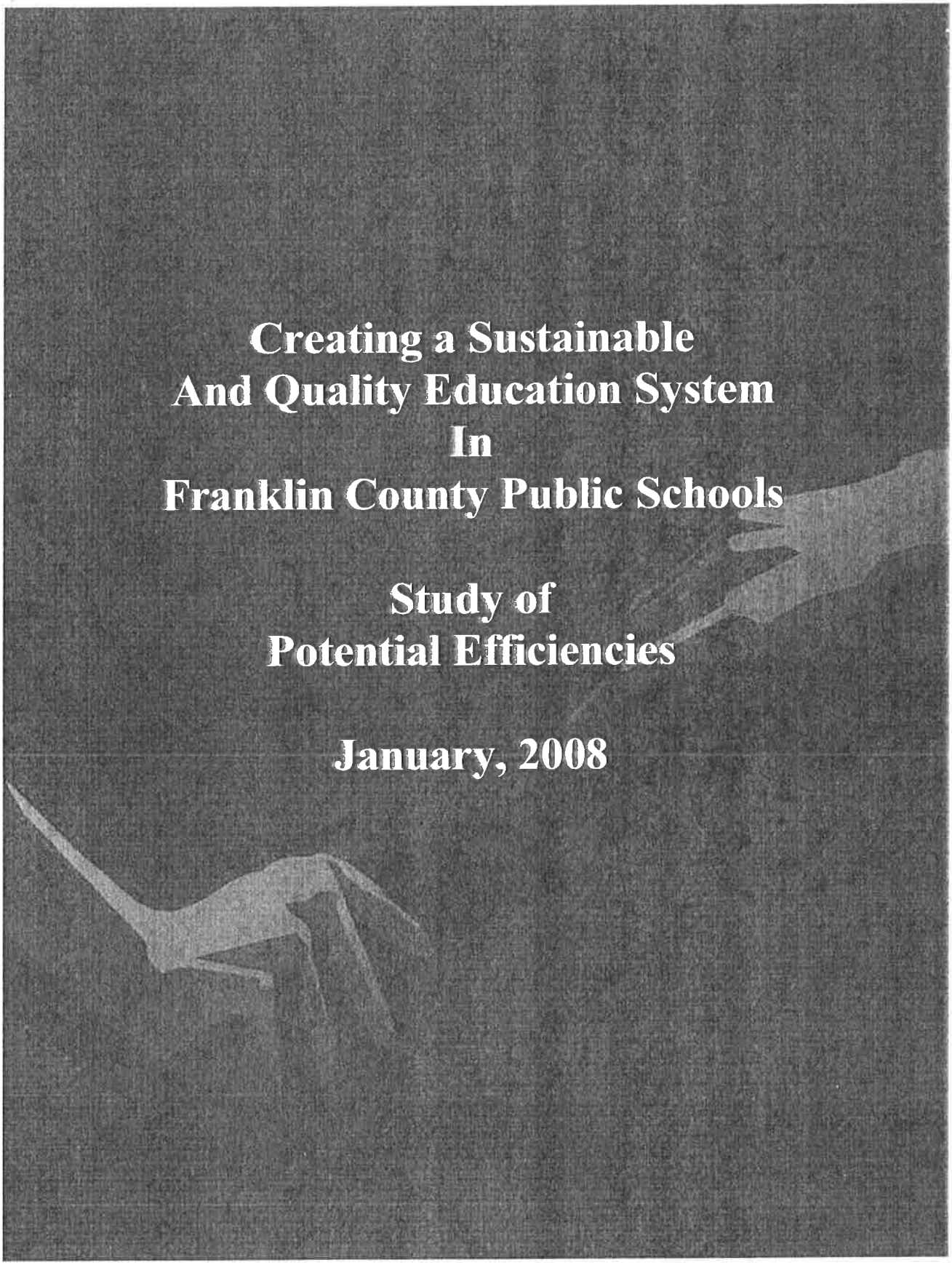
Creating a Sustainable
And Quality Education System
In
Franklin County Public Schools
Study of
Potential Efficiencies
January, 2008

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Creating a Sustainable and Quality Education System in Franklin County Public Schools

Study of Potential Efficiencies

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GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATION
Greenfield, Massachusetts

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CREATING A SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION SYSTEM IN FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

STUDY OF POTENTIAL EFFICIENCIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November, 2007, Greenfield Community College, on behalf of the Franklin County school districts, issued an RFP to study and identify potential areas where school districts could cooperate to create a more cost-effective delivery of present and future educational programs and services. This RFP represented Phase I of a two-phase study designed to create a more sustainable educational system in Franklin County. As can be seen from the attached map, other than the Frontier Regional School District, the majority of the Franklin County school districts are not members of an educational collaborative. Several area collaboratives, though, do provide programs and services on a fee-for-service basis. The Phase I Study was started in December, 2007. The goal of this study was to identify common areas of need and an interest in formalizing a cooperation delivery system for not only the cost-effective development, but also the maintenance of current educational programs and services. The scope of work included the following:

1. Identify the factors contributing to the current challenges being faced by the Franklin County school districts
2. Identify programs and services currently offered or recently discontinued by the Franklin County school districts
3. Identify school district resources which are possible to share
4. Identify other regional models of providing multi district cooperative programs and services
5. Identify those school districts who may be interested in participating in a cooperative model
6. Inventory their current programs and services and identify opportunities for collaboration
7. Quantify potential cost savings as a result of collaboration
8. Identify and recommend an organizational structure to support collaboration for those interested school districts which would be both cost effective and recognize the inherent value of small learning communities
9. Draft a collaborative agreement for school committee and Dept. of Education approval

With declining state and federal resources, it is incumbent upon school administrators to develop creative strategies to both continue necessary programs and services, but also to develop new initiatives to meet the emerging needs of both students and parents.

Interviews with the school district superintendents and their administrative staffs were completed during December. These interviews identified a variety of individual district needs, as well as district resources which may be shared. In addition, interviews with the county special education directors were held to identify current programs, out-of-district placements, and current special needs student enrollments. It was anticipated that there would be special education programs and services which, through collaboration, would yield both program improvement and cost effectiveness.

In recognition of existing organizations operating in and adjacent to Franklin County, the following organizational alternatives were considered:

1. Utilize the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) for the delivery of cooperative educational programs and services
2. Request admission to the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative serving the Greater Springfield suburban school districts
3. Request admission to the Hampshire Educational Collaborative serving the Hampshire County school districts and the Frontier Regional School District
4. Create a new county wide educational collaborative for all nine (9) Franklin County school districts;

After review of the various advantages and disadvantages of each of these alternatives, the recommendation is being presented to create a new Franklin County Education Collaborative in affiliation with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. This relationship has the potential to be mutually beneficial for both organizations, while reducing the possible redundancy of duplicate organizational structures which rely on public financial support.

Coincident to this study, a draft of a Collaborative Membership Agreement has been developed and included as Appendix A. This draft meets the current legal requirements under MGL Ch. 40 sec. 4e to establish an educational collaborative in Massachusetts and delineates the role and responsibilities of school committees relative to collaborative membership.

The following are the top (common) areas of need expressed by the Superintendents and School Administrators:

1. Loss of students to out of district placements, including, charter schools, school choice, parochial schools and home schooling and the resultant reductions in state aid
2. Reducing the high cost of school transportation services, especially out of district special education transportation.
3. Reduce the high cost of special education programs and services. Autism programs, Alternative Middle and High School programs, etc., i.e. satellite technical training programs
4. Additional vocational-technical education for students not accepted by Franklin County Tech
5. More cost effective professional development services, including teacher mentoring, expert facilitators for curriculum integration and low incidence professional development (content area), technology integration, etc.
6. Cooperative purchasing of goods and services, maintenance workers, modular classrooms, food and commodities, paper, custodial supplies, textbooks, technology, utilities, etc.
7. School security audits and funding alternatives.
8. Short term financing for textbooks and technology improvements.
9. External funding, grant writing for specific projects.
10. More cost effective after school and summer remedial, MCAS Prep and enrichment programs.
11. Development of "working templates" for DOE and other federal initiatives, i.e. pandemic response and plans, school safety plans, etc.
12. Shared administrative services.
13. Distance learning for low incident academic needs.
14. Maintaining necessary curriculum in spite of declining enrollments and reduced state aid

15. Shared professional services, i.e. legal, auditing, architect, high end technology experts, etc.
16. School maintenance projects-small renovation projects, HVAC maintenance contracts, boiler maintenance service agreements, etc.
17. Data warehousing and technical assistance in data mining and reporting
18. Review e rate submissions to see if maximized.
19. Review Medicaid Reimbursements and see if maximized.
20. Develop cost effective adult education programs.
21. School building infrastructure upgrades, i.e. telephone, WiFi (wireless)
22. Modular classrooms for short term educational space needs.
23. Formation of a private non profit charitable corporation (educational foundation)

As a result of the needs assessment and data gathering meetings with the prospective school districts, the following recommendations are presented:

- Based upon the four alternatives considered, establish a new county-wide Franklin County Education Collaborative.

- Organize the Franklin County Education Collaborative, under the umbrella of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), with the Collaborative housed in the FRCOG offices.

  - The Franklin County Education Collaborative Board of Directors to be member school committee members or their designees (Superintendents may be so designated by their respective school committee).

  - The member district school superintendents shall be designated as the Steering Committee, with regional subcommittees established.

- Authorize the FCOG to act as "fiscal agent" for the Collaborative while it is being organized and until such time as that organization is complete.

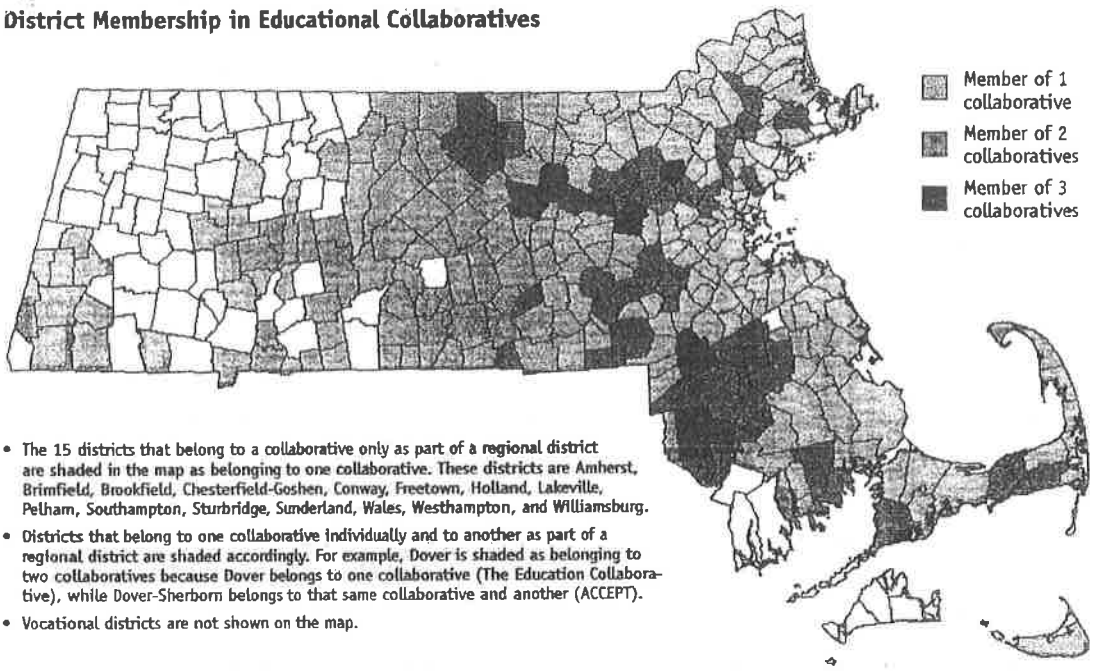
- The FRCOG, on behalf of the Franklin County Education Collaborative (FCEC), should immediately apply for grant and other funds to accomplish this reorganization and any other initiatives beneficial to the Collaborative and its prospective members.

- Organize a 501 C 3 private, non-profit charitable corporation -- The Franklin County Education Corporation -- to serve the nine (9) prospective school districts.

- Identify and prioritize program and service needs and begin implementation

For more information concerning this report or the recommended Franklin County Education Collaborative, contact Public Management Associates, LLC, Richard Labrie @ (413) 531-4047 or at Rlabrie691@ aol.com.

District Membership in Educational Collaboratives



- The 15 districts that belong to a collaborative only as part of a regional district are shaded in the map as belonging to one collaborative. These districts are Amherst, Brimfield, Brookfield, Chesterfield-Goshen, Conway, Freetown, Holland, Lakeville, Pelham, Southampton, Sturbridge, Sunderland, Wales, Westhampton, and Williamsburg.
- Districts that belong to one collaborative individually and to another as part of a regional district are shaded accordingly. For example, Dover is shaded as belonging to two collaboratives because Dover belongs to one collaborative (The Education Collaborative), while Dover-Sherborn belongs to that same collaborative and another (ACCEPT).
- Vocational districts are not shown on the map.

Districts that do not belong to any collaborative (whether individually or as part of a regional district):

Adams-Cheshire
Blue Hills Voc
Bristol County Agr
Bristol-Plymouth Voc Tech
Brockton
Central Berkshire
Chicopee
Clarksburg
Dartmouth
Deerfield
Edgartown
Erving
Essex Agr Tech
Fall River
Farmington River Reg
Florida
Franklin County
Freetown-Lakeville
Gateway
Gill-Montague
Gosnold
Granby
Granville
Greater Fall River
Greater Lowell Voc Tec
Greater New Bedford
Greenfield
Hancock
Hawlemont
Holyoke
Lanesborough
Leverett
MA Academy for Math and Science
Manchester Essex Reg
Martha's Vineyard
Minuteman Voc Tech
Mohawk Trail
Monson
Montachusett Voc Tech Reg
Mount Greylock
Nashoba Valley Tech
New Salem-Wendell
Norfolk County Agr
North Adams
North Brookfield
North Shore Reg Voc
Northampton-Smith
Northern Berkshire Voc
Oak Bluffs
Old Colony Reg Voc Tech
Palmer
Pathfinder Voc Tech
Pioneer Valley
Pittsfield
Richmond
Rowe
Savoy
Shawsheen Valley Voc Tech
Shutesbury
South Shore Reg Voc Tech
Southeastern Reg Voc Tech
Southern Worcester County Voc Tech
Springfield
Tisbury
Up-Island Reg
Westfield
Westport
Whately
Whittier Voc
Williamstown

VALUE OF SMALL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Research Findings

From the perspectives of both school security and academics, the research from the past decade has strengthened the consensus among educators that small schools are better than large ones. There is overwhelming evidence that small schools are safer and that violence is less likely in smaller schools. Studies have also evidenced the correlation between smaller school size and higher achievement, especially for poor and minority students; with all students performing at least as well as, if not better than, those students in large schools.

For decades, economies of scale and program comprehensiveness have provided the rationale for both national and state trends toward ever larger schools. High schools with 2,000 or 3,000 students are now commonplace and enrollment in many urban high schools now exceeds 5,000 students. Until recently, policymakers paid scant attention to the findings of school size research. In the last decade, episodes of school violence, as well as the national agenda to ensure the success of every student, has led a number of struggling school districts to launch bold school downsizing initiatives. These initiatives have resulted in large scale studies, involving hundreds of schools, the results of which provide compelling evidence for school districts to consider downsizing.

While no formula defines an optimal school size, research suggests a maximum size of 300-400 students for elementary schools and 400-500 for secondary schools. Perhaps, most notable, researchers have identified a correlation between school enrollment size, community poverty, and also concluded that:

"The poorer the community, the smaller its school size should be." (1)

Research findings indicate the following benefits from small schools:

1. **Students learn well and often, better**. A 1996 analysis of 103 research projects concluded that achievement in small schools – especially for poorer and minority communities- is at least equal to and most often superior to that in large schools. None of the studies reviewed found that large school academic achievement to be superior.

2. **Violence and behavior problems diminish**. Truancy, classroom disorders, vandalism, aggressive behavior, theft, substance abuse and gang related activity all decreased in small schools.

3. **Student attendance is higher and drop outs fewer**. Students in small high schools from high poverty communities attended, on an average, 5 more days per semester and dropped out at one third to one half the rates of similar students in large schools. The same students had a slightly higher grade point average and improved reading and mathematics test scores by the equivalent of almost half a year. (2)

4. **Extracurricular participation increases**. Students joined teams and clubs in significantly higher numbers- including students who were otherwise considered "marginal". (3)
5. **Poorer and minority students benefited most**. These students are currently concentrated in the nation's largest urban schools.

SIZE DOES MATTER

Small school size alone does not automatically translate to educational effectiveness. When small schools act like large ones- e.g. retaining departmental structures, little improvement is likely. Small schools offer an opportunity. A more human scale allows for much more personal attention and connection of teachers to students and teachers to administrators, along with the leeway to reform programs and practices in order to enhance learning.

Positive changes that small schools encourage include:

- **Strong personal bonds**. Students feel a greater sense of engagement, belonging and personal value when their classmates and teachers get to know them. Acting out decreases as informal behavior structures replace school rules. [4]

- **Parent and community involvement**. Parents and teachers who are on a first name basis can become allies in fostering student success. Business and community organizations have found it easier to establish links (e.g. student internships or collaborative projects with small schools).

- **Simplicity and focus**. Communication is much easier. Staff can work together to focus on learning and build a coherent, high quality curriculum across interdisciplinary lines and grade levels.

- **Improved instructional quality**. Student achievement is influenced much more by caliber of instruction than by the number of courses offered. Faculties who are collectively responsible for designing the curriculum delivery around results are more likely to press for meaningful professional development which will help them meet specific instructional goals.

- **Improved teacher working conditions and job satisfaction.** Teachers surveyed in small schools expressed greater satisfaction from being able to draw on the skills and insights from colleagues as well as influence the structure and direction of the school itself.

- **Built in accountability.** The "internal community of accountability" that develops among teachers, administrators, parents and students promotes a culture of both caring and educational rigor marked by hard work, higher aspirations along with an expectation of success.

In short, while large schools tend to be more impersonal, rule governed organizations; small schools are able to be more close- knit, flexible communities where no one is a stranger. As such, they are better able to temper the effects of poverty so that success is not stratified along socioeconomic lines.[5]

BARRIERS TO SMALL SCHOOLS

Despite the evidence from educational research, public interest in downsizing schools, changing long-established structures and behaviors is difficult. A number of political, economic and social factors often mitigate against school downsizing efforts, including:

- **Historical notions of school, especially high school.** The general public's image of what a high school should be is perhaps the greatest barrier to change. Most parents want better but not different. The majority like the idea of smaller high schools, according to recent surveys, but see other educational reforms (e.g. raising test scores, school security, etc) as more pressing.

- **Lack of time, resources and technical assistance.** Schools need sustained support from the district, state and other assistance providers to gain new kinds of knowledge, free up planning time, involve parents and community stakeholders, persevere in implementing new structures, schedules, and approaches, teaching methodologies and be able to evaluate progress.

- **System impediments.** Laws in some states create incentives for building larger schools; space planning for future growth was inherent in Massachusetts school building project approvals over the past several decades. Local school district policies which centralize decision making often restrict small schools autonomy and flexibility. Nationally and even statewide, the push for "one size fits all" curriculum and methods of instruction runs counter to both current educational research in the success of more individualized teaching and the value and success of small schools in providing it.

- **Cost concerns.** Many see small schools as an unaffordable luxury. Researchers who see large schools as ineffective counter that economies of scale do not support that premise. Researchers in recent years have analyzed costs in new ways. A much cited study in New York of small schools concluded ***that the cost per graduate is less in small schools than in large schools, due to lower drop out and higher graduation rates.*** The study concludes that "quite small higher budgets are well worth the improved educational outputs. [6]

Moreover, the recent Maine state educational planning agency study noted that often overlooked transportation cost increases associated with consolidated, non neighborhood, regional schools. Between 1970 and 1995 Maine's school enrollment decreased by 27,000 students, but their school transportation costs increased from $ 8.7 million to more than $ 54 million. [7]

Municipalities faced with rising enrollments and few quality school construction sites tend to construct larger multi story schools. One cost effective, small schools alternative, being promoted by the National Clearinghouse on Educational Facilities, is sharing space with colleges, social service agencies and/or cultural or community based organizations [8]

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recent research indicates that, especially in high schools, interventions aimed at improving educational outcomes may fonder if policies ignore school size. Similarly, the research supports that as long as large numbers of poor and minority students continue to attend large bureaucratic urban schools, attempts to close the achievement gap may remain largely ineffective.

State and District decision makers and stakeholders can support small school initiatives by:

- **Providing Incentives for creating and supporting small schools.** Recognition of the educational and cost effectiveness of small schools must be accepted by the Massachusetts School Building Assistance Bureau (SBAB). Start up capital to support the development and evaluation of current models coupled with external financial and technical assistance must be available to support small schools. The Commonwealth should provide matching grants to encourage private funding and investment in small schools.

- **Target resources to small schools with concentrations of poor and/or minority students.** The priority should be to down size both large middle and high schools. School building consolidation should only be supported to the limits of small school sizes. Any school restructuring efforts which increase enrollments beyond small school sizes should be discouraged.

- **Identify and eliminate current disincentives that may exist in law or policy.** A coalition of small schools should audit existing state statutes, policies, regulations and procedures for provisions which may not support or may, in fact, inhibit the development and support for small schools or, in the contrary, support large schools. Current SBAB funding formulae encourage consolidation and redistricting to close small schools when considering school renovation or school construction projects- "the more bang for the buck theory". With limited financial resources, the tendency is to approve and support larger projects serving larger numbers of students. Local building codes may also need to be reviewed relative to educational space sharing.

- **Let form follow function.** A coalition of small school supporters should identify architects who are experienced in small school design and construction that promote learning, school safety and functionality. Typical architect contracts and remuneration are typically contingent upon the size (budget) for the project. With small school construction, standard, non contingency fee arrangements are more likely to produce the desired results.

CONCLUSIONS

Small schools are not the panacea, but they may be the key ingredient of a comprehensive approach to improving the quality of education across the Commonwealth and specifically, in Franklin County. Realization of the value and effectiveness of small schools must be followed by a commitment to support and promote them. The educational research of the past two decades can not be ignored. Attention to the research is essential in addressing the educational needs of economically poor and minority students coupled with the public's expectation for positive educational outcomes and accountability. Small schools have proven that through their environment of personal caring, pursuit of competence, coupled with high student expectations, student performance can be improved. Finally, a more caring and personal educational environment, i.e. a more humanistic approach, is a potent antidote to student alienation with the educational process. Statistics indicate that large, impersonal schools may actually promote disruptive or violent behaviors, small schools, more conducive to trust and respect tend to diffuse those behaviors. All of these factors support positive educational outcomes.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES (ESA'S)

Educational Service Agencies (ESAs) - known as "educational collaboratives" in Massachusetts, Board of Cooperative Educational Services-BOCES in New York and Regional Education Service Centers-RESC's in Connecticut- have proven very efficient at providing high quality educational programs and services. By assuming many of the low-incidence programs and services of public school districts, ESAs save dollars; dollars which can be better applied to classroom instruction.

I. INTRODUCTION

With higher demands being placed on public school districts across the Commonwealth, combined with shrinking financial resources, school districts can not cost effectively continue on their own and hope to meet all of the educational challenges which they face. Evidence from both within and outside the Commonwealth confirms that participation in regional education service agencies (ESAs), or collaboratives, enable school districts to offer better and more cost effective educational programs and services. Studies that compare the cost of services provided regionally to the cost of services provided by individual school districts demonstrates that regional ESAs produce substantial cost savings and program quality improvement.

Today much is demanded of public schools. It is crucial that our children be well prepared for the future. Our public schools are charged with equipping their students with the skills and knowledge they will need to compete in a global economy. Through their implementation of the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), state education agencies hold public schools accountable for continuous improvement in student achievement. School districts must meet these challenges within the constraints of federal, state, and local budgets and, in Franklin County, with declining enrollments.

Massachusetts has 351 cities and towns. During the 2003-2004 school year, there were 386 operating school districts, including 56 charter school districts. Public school officials must examine every possible way to streamline, administrative and support services so as to maximize cost effectiveness and avoid duplication of efforts. With so many separate school districts, it is incumbent on our state leaders to pursue potential economies of scale in public education. Individual school districts cannot operate efficiently alone. Increased "regionalization", given the geographic limitations of the Franklin County area, coupled with the educational value of maintaining small schools, may not be feasible. Regional educational collaboratives offer a practical solution.

Educational service agencies (ESAs)-known as "educational collaboratives" in Massachusetts-have proven very efficient at providing high-quality education support services. Studies that compare the costs of the services provided by regional agencies to those of services provided by regional agencies to those of services provided by individual school districts demonstrate that regional ESAs produce substantial savings. Documented savings range from 15 percent to 50 percent. Every dollar saved on support services is a dollar that can be redirected to classroom instruction.

In April 2003, former U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige sent a letter to all chief state school officers suggesting how ESAs can help in the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), specifically noting their capacity to provide professional development and technical assistance. Secretary Paige had first hand experience with the Region IV Education Service Center in his former role as superintendent of the Houston School District. He stated that ESAs "are able to successfully respond to district needs in a flexible, adaptable, efficient, cost effective, and direct manner. Economies of scale through ESAs allow districts to leverage limited resources into targeted support for multiple schools and to share costs with other school districts."

II. EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCIES AND EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVES

Educational service agencies (ESA's) are publicly funded agencies organized on a regional basis and authorized in state statute or regulations. They are known by various names, including educational service districts (ESDs), intermediate units (IUs), boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES), regional education service agencies (RESAs), intermediate school districts (ISDs), and more. In 2004, there were more than 630 ESAs in 42 states.

In 1998, The Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA) conducted a detailed national survey, updated in 2000, of 527 ESAs in 37 states. The survey indicated that services were provided to local school districts serving more than 43 million students, which represented 80 percent of the K-12 student population in the United States. The 527 ESAs employed 100, 000 full-time staff, numerous consultants, and part-time employees.

Educational service agencies provided schools and other clients with a range of programs and services. ESAs are particularly effective providers of high-cost programs, those that require specialized staff, programs with significant startup costs, and those that can benefit from economies of scale. Figure 1 provides a partial listing of services offered by ESAs across the United States in 2004.

The most frequently cited benefits of interdistrict collaborative programs and services are improvement in efficiency, quality and /or equity. If one of these benefits comes at the expense of another, a regional service may not be the best solution. If a service declines in quality or increases in cost when provided by a collaborative, then regional delivery is not recommended. Also, if regional service delivery favors one school district over another, despite its quality or cost effectiveness, it will not be politically viable.

Figure 1. ESA service, Nationwide, 2004

# of ESAs	Type of Service
527	Professional Development
440	Special Education
429	Educational Technology
390	Early Childhood
350	Leadership Training
340	Cooperative Purchasing
318	Computer
316	Adult Education
308	Learning - Libraries
297	Vocational Education
286	Gifted Education
253	Incarcerated Students
251	Student Testing/Evaluation
239	Computer and Audiovisual Repair
228	Personnel Recruitment/Screening
186	Printing
186	Insurance
164	Safety/Risk Management
159	Teacher Training Centers
147	Telecommunications
128	Energy Management

III. CONNECTICUT- Regional Education Service Centers (RESC)

Connecticut has established six regional education service centers. All Connecticut school districts are geographically assigned to a RESC. They are supported through a combination of state aid direct from the State Legislature, funneled through the State Department of Education and tuitions and assessments paid by the member districts. The RESC have evolved to become multi service educational service agencies, serving the specific needs of their constituent school districts. Connecticut RESC's are established under the Connecticut General Statute 10-66 a-n. Through this legislation, Connecticut allows local boards of education to establish a RESC as a "public educational authority" for the purpose of "cooperative action to furnish programs and services". ESA's, such as these, are service delivery mechanisms in more than 75% of the states across the country.

CAPITAL REGION EDUCATION COUNCIL (CREC)

The Capital Region Education Council (CREC) is the first and the largest of Connecticut's six non-profit Regional Education Service Centers, serving the 35 Greater Hartford public school districts. CREC was founded in 1966 by local school districts coming together to solve common problems. Today, CREC offers more than 120 programs and services spanning the entire educational spectrum with that same goal. CREC's Magnet Schools Division strives to offer the highest quality educational opportunities that reduce racial, ethnic and socio-economic isolation of students by initiating, developing and managing innovative educational programs that individual school district could not afford.

CREC is supported by the educational community when it can meet recognized educational and related needs with higher quality and/or lower cost when compared to local school districts offering similar programs and services independently.

CREC is supported by local, state and federal and private funding. Local school districts become members of CREC with an annual fee of $.20 per pupil. Each CREC program has a discreet budget which totally supports it and contributes a proportionate share to CREC's overall management and development. CREC is also eligible for reimbursement under Connecticut's School Building Assistance statute.

CREC is a strategic bridge between State Department of Education and the region's school districts. This bridge attempts to transcend the gap that exists between the leadership and monitoring functions of the State Department of Education and the heavy direct service responsibilities of the local school districts.

CREC provides the organizational mechanism for school districts to work together to do things better and/or more cost effectively than they could alone.

CREC facts (FY'2008):

- School District Members: 35
- Student Population of Region: 155,000
- CREC Employees: 1200+
- CREC Annual Budget: $ 110 Million
- CREC Revenue: 63% Local, 35% State and Federal, 2% Private Funding
- CREC Programs and Services: 124
- CREC Program Locations: 11 Towns, 30 Locations

Due to increased demands for student performance and accountability, the need for and utilization of the CREC delivery system for educational programs and services has grown by 176% since July of 2001.

CREC is governed by one publicly elected board of education member, appointed by each school district board within the capital region. These representatives form the council with policy making responsibilities. From this council, a 10 member Board of Directors is elected annually to oversee policy, programmatic, personnel and fiscal items. The control of CREC remains a local district responsibility.

CREC's organizational structure is divided among the following divisions:

Institute of Teaching and Learning

- Curriculum, Assessment and Instructional Services
  - Early Literacy Programs and Services
  - Effective Instructional Strategies
  - Math Services
  - Middle Grades Reading Initiatives
  - Science Outreach and Resource Center
  - Understanding by Design
- Knowledge Management Services
  - Classroom Walk-Through Training
  - Data driven Decision Making
  - Standards Based Reporting
- Leadership and Organizational Services
  - Annual Book Club
  - School Improvement Academies
- Professional Development Services
  - BEST Support
  - Brain-Based Learning
  - Curriculum Mapping and Design
  - Curriculum Roundtables
  - Differentiated Instruction
  - New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Accreditation Support
  - Rubric Development
- Supplemental Services – Remedial Programs in Response to NCLB
- Montessori Training Center of New England (MTCNE)
  - Montessori Teacher Training

Student Services Division

- Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center
- River Street School
- Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center Transition Program
- Integrated Program Model Programs
- CREC Health Services
- CREC Magnet School Education
- Soundbridge School
- John J. Allison, Jr. Polaris Center
- Early Childhood Services
  - Birth to Three Programs
  - Preschool Intervention Programs
  - Parent Aide Program
- Connecticut Migratory Children's Program

Technology Services Division

- Educational Technology
  - Technology Audits
  - Creating Interactive Learning Communities
  - Effective Data Warehousing and Data Management
- Information Technology Acquisition and Technical Assistance
  - Hardware
  - Software
  - Networks
  - Servers
  - Databases
  - Wireless Networking
  - Distance Learning

Community Education

- Adult Basis Education Training
- Adult Training and Development Network
- CT Works-One Stop Employment Centers
- Opening Doors- Adult ESL
- Family Literacy Institute
- School to Career & Career and Technical Education Summer Institutes
- Transition to Employment- Adult Basic Skills and Job Readiness
- University of Hartford Magnet School Even Start Program
  - Early Childhood
  - Parenting
- Youth Programs-Summer and Year Round-Academic Support and Job Placement
- Workplace Education Training and Support-Basic Skills and Customized Training

Technical Assistance and Brokering Services

- New Business Development
- Administrative Support Services-Short term and Long Term
- Development Services for Superintendents
- Regional Educational Assessment and Consultation Team (REACT)
- Contracted Services to Connecticut State Agencies
- Special Services Support Team
  - Program Reviews, Research, Data Collection and Analyses
  - Research Based Strategies
  - Diversified Instruction Programs
  - Classroom Management/ Student Behavior Training
  - Transition Services
  - Paraprofessional Training
  - Staff Recruitment and Training
  - Conference and events Management
- Educational Technology
  - On Site Professional Development
  - Cooperative Purchasing
  - On Line Course Development
  - Emerging Technology Research, Demonstration and Evaluation
  - Digital Video Design and Production
- Employee Assistance Program
  - EAP Administration
- School Assessment and Consultation
  - Data Collection and Analysis
  - Goal Setting and Action Planning
  - School Improvement Planning

- Research Based Strategies for Teaching and Learning Improvement
- Evaluation, Program Monitoring and Adjustment

Brokering Services
- Recruitment and Placement of Hard to Locate Specialists and Faculty

Small and Regional Schools Services

Connecticut Technical High School System Events Management

Virtual High School
- 150 On Line Courses
- International Baccalaureate Program
- Advanced Placement Courses
- Teacher Training

Partners in Educational Leadership
- New Administrators Academy

Operations, Facilities & School Construction

Pre-Construction Services
- Educational Specifications and Operational Plans
- Document Preparation for DOE Approval and Other Governmental Agencies
- Designer RFP's, Construction Management RFP's, Project Consultants
- Assemble & Coordinate Project Management Team, Architects, Construction Managers and Construction Specialists

Construction Phase Services
- Monitor Construction Progress & Chair Construction Job Meetings
- Establish Internal Procedures for Budget Control against project Schedule
- Coordinate and Direct Project Bidding Process, Including
  - Construction Bids
  - Technology Integration
  - Media Distribution
  - Telephone and Wireless
  - Security Systems
  - Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment
- Operational Phase Services
  - Schedule, Direct and Monitor All Activities Related to the Transition from the Construction Phase to the Building Operations Phase
  - Train Staff in Use of New Building Systems, Security, Technology
  - Review On-Site School Transportation Plans
  - Coordinate Food Services Program
  - Property Management Services
  - Oversee Building Maintenance Program
  - Manage Other Activities Specific to New Building
- Experienced Professionals in School Business Administration & School Construction
- Grants and Development
  - Research and Development
  - Professional Grant Writers
  - Needs Assessments
  - Research Potential Sources of Funding
  - Program Design
  - Establishing Sponsorships and Partnerships – Public & Private

Choice Programs

Capital Region Choice Program for 1200 Students Attending 29 Suburban Schools
Grant Writing Workshops
Interdistrict Programs- Managing 20+ DOE interdistrict Cooperative grants
Summer Interdistrict Grant Programs
Full Year Interdistrict Grant Programs

Magnet Schools

CREC owns and operates nine Magnet Schools which are Public Schools of Choice

University of Hartford Magnet School- Multiple Intelligences: Verbal-Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Visual, Spatial, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, Body Kinesthetic and Naturalistic.
Student Body: 395 Grades: K-5 and 3 and 4 year olds
(Early Childhood Center)

- Early Childhood Education Center
- Family Wellness Center with Licensed Clinic
- Family and Parenting Support Center
- University Affiliated Teaching Laboratory for Early Childhood and Elementary Education
- Specialized Facility Supporting Multiple Intelligences
- Even Start Program

Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts- Half Day Arts in Voice, Instrument Music, Theater, Musical Theater, Dance, Creative Writing, Visual Arts and Technical Theater. Student Body: 380 Grades: 9-12

- Emphasizes Arts, diversity and Leadership
- Apprenticeships with Professional Artists
- Extended Day 1:00-4:15 P.M.
- College and Career Preparatory Focus

East Hartford-Glastonbury Elementary Magnet School- Science, Technology and Global Studies, Integrated Language Arts and Mathematics Utilizing Inquiry-Based Approach to Stimulate Higher Order Thinking. Student Body: 258 Grades K-5

- Technology, with 1:3 Computer-Student Ratio
- Japanese Language Instruction K-5th Grades
- Active Parent Involvement
- Differentiated Instruction
- Hands-On Science Labs

Two Rivers Magnet Middle School-Science and Technology, Environmental Sciences, Geology, Chemistry, Physics, Watershed History. Student Body: 600 Grades: 6-8

- Technology, with 1:1 Computer- Student Ratio
- Regular Field Experiences for Every Student
- Spanish Language Instruction
- Extended Day Program
- Career Development
- Integrated Curriculum
- New Facility
- Watershed Laboratory

Hartford Magnet Middle School- Full Core Curriculum with Focus on Arts and Sciences. Student Body: 600 Grades: 6-8

- New State of the Art Building
- CREC's Academy of the Arts
- CREC's Academy of Mathematics & Science
- Leading Edge Technology with 1:3 Computer-Student Ratio
- Small Class Sizes (20 max.)
- Community Partnerships to Enhance Curriculum Applications
- Specialized Math & Science Laboratories

Metropolitan Learning Center- Global and International Studies with Emphasis on World Languages and Integrated Technology. Utilizes latest research on brain-based learning. Student Body: 600 Grades: 6-12

- Global Systems Integrated Curriculum
- Wireless Computer for Each Student
- Spanish, French, Chinese & American Sign Language
- College Preparatory Focus
- Virtual High School Courses
- Incorporates Service Learning
- Multicultural Education

Greater Hartford Academy of Mathematics and Science- Half Day Program. Emphasis on Inquiry Based Instruction and Scientific Research Methods. Student Body: 200 Grades: 9-12

- Integrated Curriculum
- College Preparatory Focus
- Lap Top Computer Assigned to Each Student
- Cell Culture Lab, Laser Lab, Molecular Genetics Lab & Robotics Lab.
- Students Work with Area Scientists, Engineers & Mathematicians
- Affiliation with Hartford Hospital and Trinity College

Great Path Academy at Manchester Community College- Innovative Learning Environment for Accelerated Post Secondary Studies. Student Body: 300 Grades: 11-12

- On College Campus Environment
- Small, Personalized Learning Community
- College Preparatory Focus with Transferable Credit
- Emphasizes Leadership, Community Service & Lifelong Learning
- On and Off Campus Internships

Montessori Magnet School- Interdistrict Public Montessori School. Student Body: 285 Grades: 3-12 year old students

- Public Montessori Education
- Multi Age Classrooms
- Integrated Curriculum
- Before/After School Care (7:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.)
- Association of Montessori International Recognized
- Partnership with Trinity College

IV. MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVES

In Massachusetts, ESA's are referred to as "educational collaboratives." Most collaboratives started circa 1974 in response to the passage of Chapter 766, the state's special education law, which required school districts to provide a free and appropriate education program for all children, regardless of disability. School districts reasoned correctly that they could address this task more efficiently if they worked together with neighboring school districts. The state legislature responded by enacting MGL Chapter 40, Section 4 E, which begins as follows:

> ***Pursuant to the provisions hereof, two or more school committees of cities, towns and regional school districts may enter into a written agreement to conduct education programs and services which shall complement and strengthen the school programs of member school committees and increase educational opportunities for children. The school committees shall collaborate to offer such programs and services, and the association of school committees which is formed pursuant hereof to deliver such programs and services shall be know as an education collaborative.***

Massachusetts has 32 collaboratives: 246 (75 percent) of the Commonwealth's 330 operating school districts (excluding the 56 charter school districts) belong to at least one educational collaborative, leaving 84 districts and all 56 Charter school districts unaffiliated with a collaborative (of the 84 districts, 15 do not belong to a collaborative as individual districts but are part of a regional district that does belong to a collaborative. The following map shows these districts as shaded.) Fifty-eight school districts are members of more than one collaborative. As can be seen from the map, the majority of school districts in Franklin County do not currently belong to an educational collaborative. Many do, though, purchase services from both the Lower Pioneer Valley and the Hampshire Educational Collaboratives. As non-member districts, they pay to utilize collaborative services; they do not "own" any part of the organization and are not represented on the Collaborative's governing board. Non-member tuitions and fees are usually higher than member tuitions and fees, by an average of 15 to 20 percent.

In 1974, collaboratives generally offered only special education programs and services, but during their 30-year history, most have evolved to offer a wider range of services. Massachusetts collaboratives include a few very small single-purpose cooperatives with annual budgets of a few hundred thousand dollars, as well as large multi-purpose organizations with annual budgets of close to $20 million. An annual survey conducted by the Massachusetts Organization of Education Collaboratives found that all 29 collaboratives belonging to MOEC in 2007 offered special education programs and professional development; 18 offered some pupil transportation services (typically only for special education students); 11 offered cooperative purchasing for their member districts; 17 offered some technology services; 12 managed their district' Medicaid reimbursement; 15 had job alike groups (job-specific discussion and learning networks); and seven offered regular education programs (See Attached MOEC Profile of Services on pg. 25).

In the early 1980's, the Franklin County school districts formed the Franklin County Collaborative (FCC). After only a few years of operation, the FCC was terminated. While the quality of program offerings was high, it never developed the economy of scale to be truly cost effective. Ongoing personnel issues, combined with financial problems led to the wholesale withdrawal of member school districts. Support among the current Superintendents to form a new Collaborative is high. Unanimously, they recognize the increasing need to cooperate in order to solve mutual problems of declining financial resources and declining enrollment.

V. WHY DO COLLABORATIVES WORK?

Massachusetts school administrators and school committee members unfamiliar with ESA structures in other states often ask just how a collaborative venture will improve efficiency, quality, and equity across their school districts. The following are specific examples.

- **Improves quality.** By pooling state and local resources, the collaborative can contract with a presenter with more expertise than an individual district can afford and share that resource on a multi district basis.

- **Avoids duplication of services.** Instead of 15 school districts running 15 after school workshops on MCAS remediation, a collaborative might run workshops in three schools spread out across the collaborative area to enable all teachers in the region to attend.

- **Reduces administration and coordination costs.** Each district would no longer need a full or part-time professional development coordinator; the entire professional development function would be handled by the collaborative, with input provided through an advisory committee composed of district representatives.

- **Saves on material costs**. Districts would no longer have to design and print their own brochures on professional development opportunities. A larger, more comprehensive schedule of offerings would be distributed to all district educators through the collaborative. In Texas, for example, each of its 20 Educations Service Centers (ESCs) publishes a catalog of several hundred pages of workshops, seminars, and courses available to all educators within their respective service areas.

- **Improves equity of opportunity**. Teachers from smaller and/or poorer districts could avail themselves of the same professional development opportunities available to educators from larger or more affluent districts.

- **Facilitates standardization**. By contracting with fewer presenters, the state Department of Education and its collaboratives could better monitor the content of what is being presented to ensure that all educators are receiving the same information.

Unfortunately, there are few studies documenting the savings of ESA initiatives. However, seven studies conducted overt the past 15 years demonstrate the significant savings that can be realized by adopting a regional approach to education support services. These are provided in Review of Cost-Effectiveness section of this report.

VI. REGIONAL GOVERNANCE - NOT REGIONAL GOVERNMENT

The governance of Massachusetts collaboratives is prescribed in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 4e:

> ***The education collaborative shall be managed by a board of directors which shall be comprised of one person appointed by each member school committee. Such person shall be either a school committee member or his designee or the superintendent of schools or his designee. Members of said board of directors shall be entitled to a vote according to the terms of the education collaborative agreement. The department of education shall appoint an individual to serve in an advisory capacity to the education collaborative board. Said individual shall not be entitled to vote on any mater which comes before the board of directors of***

the education collaborative. The board of directors of the education collaborative shall have the authority to employ an executive officer who shall serve under the general direction of such board and who shall be responsible for the care and supervision of the education collaborative.

Of the 28 member agencies of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives in 2007, 15 are governed by boards composed of school superintendents, seven are governed by boards composed of school committee members (typically utilizing an advisory board of superintendents), one is governed by a special education administrator board, and the remaining five are governed by boards composed of various combinations of the above. The Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative, for example, is governed by a board composed of two superintendents, one assistant superintendent three special education administrators, and two school business officials.

Cooperative ESAs are usually governed by boards appointed by their member districts. There is an increasing use of advisory groups composed of stakeholders of the services of the agencies, typically the superintendents of schools. Special district ESAs tend to have elected rather than appointed boards, either elected by members of constituent member district school boards or by general election. Regional SEA/ESAs are typically governed directly by the state with an appointed advisory board.

Appointment or election of board members by the member districts, as opposed to a general election, contributes to the board having a direct knowledge of the needs of the ESA. The same holds true for the executive officer. He or she should be appointed by the governing board instead of elected by the general populace. In Ohio, Oregon, and Nebraska, board members are elected by the general populace, and in Arizona, Arkansas, California, and Illinois, the chief executive officer is elected for a prescribed term.

It appears that the most effective ESA board members are those who are either members of or elected by constituent district school boards. There is increased accountability when an agency is governed by the same parties that own and operate it.

VII. MODELS FOR MASSACHUSETTS

Two potential models for the governance of Massachusetts ESAs are Connecticut RESAs (regional educations service agencies) and Colorado and New York BOCES (boards of cooperative education services). Both are governed by boards composed of representatives of constituent school committees rather than independently elected governing boards. This maintains the operative construct of "regional governance" as opposed to "regional government".

Local control has generally proven very effective, and when the superintendent serves as the school committee representative on the collaborative boards, he or she can act directly on behalf of the district, streamlining the decision-making process. However, a superintendent can sometimes find himself/herself in an uncomfortable position when the interest of the collaborative conflicts with the interest of the individual school district. This, combined with the rising turnover rate among superintendents, provides a valid argument for a school committee member to serve on the collaborative board instead. Although there are notable exceptions, school committee members are typically more "connected" to the community over the long term than today's superintendents. The State Department of Education representative is extremely important to providing a linkage to the state, but over the last decade, cutbacks in staffing have led to DOE representatives being generally absent from collaborative boards. This is unfortunate; the State should make every effort to restore its representatives to collaborative boards.

VIII. FUNDING

The primary sources of funding for ESAs are state and local. New York's BOCES and in the recent past Texas's ESC's received approximately half their budgets from the state. Iowa's AEAs receive 90 percent of their funding from the state. Collaboratives in Connecticut and Minnesota receive the majority their funding from local school districts. ESAs receive varying amounts of money from federal grants and from private sources, such as corporations and foundations, but these usually amount to a very small percentage of an agency's revenue stream.

Massachusetts collaboratives rely almost totally on local tuitions and fees as their primary source of revenue. State funding is available for discretionary grants and consolidated grant applications submitted on behalf of two or more member districts. Collaboratives also act as vendors for state-run programs for institutionalized or incarcerated youth or developmentally delayed adults. Some collaboratives received limited amounts of corporate and foundation grant money, and few have received federal grant money directly.

IX. ACCOUNTABILITY

Due to their local control, Massachusetts Collaboratives are directly accountable both to their constituent districts and to the state. This accountability is crucial to the development and sustainability of any effective district partnership. The following components are essential to an effective ESA accreditation system:

- standards of excellence for collaborative programs and services
- specific performance measures based upon the standards
- defined procedures to ensure that performance measures are being met
- strategic plans for educational collaboratives
- annual reporting mechanism to address a Collaborative's progress toward meeting the performance measures and strategic goals
- periodic evaluation to grant continuing accreditation to the collaborative and membership.
- Accountability system should include evaluation containing the following components:
    - an annual audit of the Collaborative's finances
    - a review of the Collaborative's performance on standards and indicators established by the legislature and the Department of Education
    - review of stakeholder satisfaction regarding programs and services provided
    - other facts deemed appropriate by the Collaborative board

These evaluations should be disseminated to all stake holders in that particular Collaborative and to the Department of Education.

X. RECOMMENDATIONS

Just as private sector organizations outsource services that support their core functions, school districts can and should pool and leverage public resources for maximum cost effectiveness.

The research indicates seven emerging areas of responsibilities of ESAs:

- equalizing educational opportunity in the state system
- enhancing the quality of education in the state system
- promoting technical assistance/capacity building in the state system
- the cost-effective delivery of new priorities of the state system
- serving as the information custodian and processing center in a sub-state region
- building coalitions among and between the education community and other human service provider.
- Addressing educational issues relative to declining enrollments

Dr. Mark McQuillan, Connecticut Commissioner of Education (former Massachusetts Deputy Commissioner of Education) echoed many of these suggestions:

- Provide technical assistance to districts, not just professional development. Technical assistance is provided to districts to help them with a variety of specific tasks, such as how to comply with the provisions of new federal and state legislation, policies, and regulations. According to McQuillan, State Departments of Education do not currently have sufficient manpower to perform this function adequately.

- Collect and process for districts data that would aid them in developing strategic improvement plans.

- Help the state address two major needs-services for limited English-proficient students and mathematics instruction-by capitalizing on the "train the trainer" model.

- Help the state with districts declared "underperforming" by the state under the provision of No Child Left Behind. Collaboratives are needed now more than ever before because many districts just do not have the capacity and/or the knowledge to make the necessary improvements on their own.

Dr. Tom Scott, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), agreed that collaboratives can play an important role in providing technical assistance to local school districts. The state simply does not have the capacity, in terms of personnel and monetary resources, to do this effectively. Nor does the State have the built-in connection- "network of sharing and collegiality". Collaboratives have minimal "ramp up time" to implement new initiatives.

ESA's are included as eligible applicants and program providers in the No Child Left Behind Act. The law's inclusion of ESAs along with LEAs affords opportunities for development and expansion of services to serve more children in effective and efficient ways.

In addition to providing services for the state and for its local districts ESAs can develop a strategic platform to advocate for education while promoting networking in a region.

XI. REVIEW OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS RESEARCH

➢ Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives Study

The Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives conducted a survey in 1989 among its 29 member collaboratives to estimate the savings realized by collaborative programs and services. The data indicate a significant savings in the following three special education services.

- Special education tuitions - 40% to 60%
- Special needs transportation services - 20% to 30%
- Itinerant therapists (OTs, PTs, SLPs) - 25% to 50%

➢ The Southwest and West Central Educational Cooperative Service Unit (Minnesota) Studies

This Minnesota service agency conducted two very comprehensive cost-effectiveness studies, one in 1989 and another in 1995. Both studies report significant savings from purchasing products and services regionally.

• *The 1989 Study*

For every service offered by this Educational Cooperative Service Unit (ECSU), the cost through the ESA was compared to the individual school district cost. Figures for the 1988-89 school year (FY 89) were used for all analyses. Results for four major service categories follow:

Special Education: The cost of services obtained through the ECSU was compared to the cost of services through private schools, mental health centers, and hospitals. During the year under study, member districts paid $1,176,101 to the ECSU, while the cost for the same services through the other providers was $3,767,550. The difference of $2,591,449 represents a 69 percent savings to the participating school districts.

Cooperative Purchasing: The cost of supplies purchased through the ECSU joint bid, $3,324,944, was compared to a cost of $4,443,944, resulting in a savings of $1,118,726, or 25 percent. Table C-2 indicates the percentage of savings by product.

Film services: The ECSU rental price per film or videotape ($6.84) was compared to the only local alternative available, the film library of the University of Wisconsin, where the cost averaged $21.14 per film or videotape. ECSU fees for this service during fiscal year 1989 were $240,546. The cost of the alternative would have been $752,909. The ECSU saved $512,363 or 68 percent.

Workshops: The ECSU average daily price per participant for workshops was $27.32. This was compared to an average price of $50 through other sources available to district teachers. During FY 1989, a total of 2,903 educators participated in work-shops at a cost of $79,296. The comparative cost was estimated at $145,140. Total savings were $65,854 or 45 percent.

Overall, member school districts of the Southwest and West Central ECSU spent $11,409,798 for collaborative services during fiscal year 1989. Without the benefit of the ECSU, they would have spent an estimated $16,926,415. The difference of $5,516,617 represents overall savings of 33 percent.

• *The 1995 Study*

In 1994-95, the Southwest/West Central ECSU analyzed the audited records of member districts' expenditures in 10 categories: media services, cooperative purchasing, equipment maintenance, health and safety services, and science kits for classrooms, special education, a Regional

Management Information Center, group insurance, technology services, and professional development activities.

➢ **The Stanley Study**

This research compared the cost of individual school districts performing six specific services to the projected cost of the districts acting jointly to provide the services.

Actual fiscal year 1990 costs for eight school districts in northeastern Massachusetts were compared to the projected costs of a collaborative service, as determined by the researcher and stakeholders from each of the eight districts participating in the study. Projected costs rather than actual costs for the collaborative service were used for this analysis as the collaborative models could not actually be implemented during the course of the study without the approval and funding of the school districts.

Analyses of the cost data indicated significant savings in three of the six services studied: shared personnel recruitment/job bank, shared staff for low-enrollment courses, and cooperative purchasing of printing services. Projected savings in these three areas were 39 percent, 78 percent, and 22 percent, respectively

Very slight and insignificant differences in costs were found in the grants directory (1.2 percent less expensive) and learning resource library (1.7 percent more expensive). Start-up costs for a shared computer network were responsible for a lack of cost savings, as the savings in materials through a cooperative purchase were determined to be 21.7 percent. A cost comparison of data-processing services could not be performed. Districts were unwilling to share the required data because that was not an option school districts wanted to pursue at the time. Records of 98 school district members were reviewed. Membership fees to the Southwest/West Central ECSU totaled $168,194. The total amount spent by all the entities was $25,140,886 for the products and services they needed. Estimated savings for a single school year was $16,085,758. The percent saved is shown in table C-2.

Table C-2

Film/video services	70%
Equipment repair service	45%
Computer repair service	44%
Health and safety programs	49%
Health and hospitalization insurance	33%
Life insurance	12%
Long-term disability insurance	20%
Professional development activities	80%
Shared personnel costs in special education (compared to individual district hiring)	
shared special education directors	78%
shared psychologists	65%
program coordinators	51%
teachers and therapists	42%
low incidence consultants	88%
Cooperative purchasing of materials and supplies	
paper	24%
custodial supplies	26%
office and classroom (including audiovisual) equipment and supplies	52%
computer peripherals and supplies	42%
athletic and industrial arts supplies	22%

In general, regional programs tend to make sense if a critical mass of students is required for a program to be operated cost-effectively, or if a high degree of staff specialization is required. High start-up costs, if shared among many school districts, can prompt collaboration or, as seen in the cases above, they can limit the development of a program if districts are unwilling or unable to fund these costs.

➢ The Washington State Study

In 1995, the Legislative Budget Committee (LBC) for the State of Washington evaluated the services provided by the state's Educational Service Districts (ESDs).

This study is notable in that it assessed the perceived quality of ESA programs in addition to their cost-effectiveness. Seven services were chosen for analysis: data processing, unemployment insurance, special education, educational technology, workers compensation, Head Start programs, and Early Childhood Education and Assistance programs.

The LBC found that recipients of ESD services were generally, if not highly, satisfied with service quality. In fact, access to quality services was stated to be one of the major benefits of ESD programming. Also, the report stated that some of the services were unlikely to be available to school districts if not performed by the ESD.

Regarding cost-effectiveness, the report stated that districts viewed ESD prices to be affordable, especially when the only other alternative was to provide them internally. For example, districts with low numbers of children receiving physical therapy as part of a special education program would have not been able to afford to hire a therapist. ESDs were among the largest providers of in-service professional development training in the state. They provided workshops and nationally recognized speakers on a regional scale, again, services that many local districts would have not been able to afford.

In summary, the LBC found that the current ESD system indeed met the "criteria of providing quality and affordable services to its customers."

➢ Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative, A 20-Year Study

Since 1979, the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative (GLEC), a consortium of 10 school districts in northeastern Massachusetts, has been comparing its tuition rates and fee schedules for special education programs and services to rates available in the private sector for the provision of comparable services. Over the 20-year period between FY79 and FY98, the author demonstrated that GLEC member districts saved $13,221,163 in special education tuitions alone. This does not include additional savings in transportation costs, gained by having students closer to home than they typically would be if they were attending private schools. The average savings from interdistrict collaboration in special education programming during this 20-year period was 33 percent.

A comparison of collaborative special education program tuition rates to similar private sector program rates is made by many collaboratives on an annual basis to support their budget requests; savings are typically similar to those documented by the GLEC study.

➢ **The Clackamas (Oregon) ESD Study**

Campbell (2001) conducted a cost-effectiveness study of four services provided by the Clackamas Education Service District (ESD) in fiscal years 1996-97 and 1997-98. Campbell determined the unit of measurement for identifying and describing the cost of each program, product or service, then compared this cost against private sector providers offering comparable programs, products, and services. For example, in the case of professional development, he took into account the number of participants, the length of the activity in hours and all direct and indirect costs and then compared the unit cost per service to private sector providers.

Analyses of actual audited expenditures were completed in each of the four program areas, as follows:

- **Media library rental fees** – $9.13/item Clackamas cost versus $60.40/item vendor cost; *85% savings*

- **Clackamas print shop** – Item A: $45.54 Clackamas versus $104.35 private vendor; Item B: $33.05 versus $59.60; Item C: $2,420 versus $3,011; *41% average savings*

- **Professional development activities** - $78.18 for a six-hour Clackamas workshop versus $103.88 for a comparable workshop from other providers; *24% savings*

- **Student evaluation** – a full evaluation requiring 30.75 hours conducted by Clackamas cost $1804 whereas a comparable evaluation conducted by a private vendor costs $2380; *24% savings*

▶ **The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative Cost Benefit Analysis FY'98 and FY'2000**

In both fiscal year 1998 and again in fiscal year 2000 the LPVEC conducted a cost benefit analysis of all of its programs and services. It compared each of these programs and services to the comparable cost of providing them through other private or outsourced entities, such as private placements for special education or private contractors for transportation services. The following summarizes those savings both by program area and by each participating school district:

LPVEC COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS
FY'98 & FY'2000
Summary

Program/Service	Savings/Revenues	
	FY'98	**FY'2000**
Special Education	$ 5,280,362	$ 3,497,008
Vocational-Technical Education	$ 1,101,824	$ 1,029,456
Transportation Services	$ 695,460	$ 1,687,699
Municipal Medicaid Revenue	$ 1,146,167	$ 888,270
Energy Management Services	N/A	$ 468,598
Portable/Modular Classrooms	N/A	$ 878,425
Itinerant Therapists	N/A	$ 493,971
Itinerant Trade Services	N/A	$ 46,592
Grant Savings/Revenue	$ 392,645	$ 449,718
Total Annual Savings To the Collaborative Member Districts	**$ 8,616,458**	**$ 9,439,737**

District	Savings/Revenues 1998	2000
Agawam	$ 1,149,609	$ 1,419,282
East Longmeadow	$ 1,957,937	$ 1,726,302
Longmeadow	$ 554,701	$ 892,217
Ludlow	$ 2,327,098	$ 1,804,156
Hampden-Wilbraham	$ 1,042,983	$ 1,378,881
Southwick-Tolland	$ 265,258	$ 200,684
West Springfield	$ 984,030	$ 1,217,736
LPVEC Programs/Services	$ 334,842	$ 1,294,450
Total Savings	**$ 8,616,467**	**$ 9,439,737**

XIII. SUMMARY

➢ **Collaborative Development**

Collaboratives have developed in response to two factors – the increased educational demands on local school districts and the fluctuating nature of their fiscal resources. Astute school committees and school administrators have seen the value of creating and utilizing an economy of scale principle in providing a host of programs and services to students and staff. In fact, long before the much-touted "mergers" of health insurance providers, hospitals, and other types of service organizations, the educational collaboratives of Massachusetts were demonstrating the economic efficiency and programmatic advantages resulting from their efforts.

Today, Massachusetts collaboratives provide services in the form of management support, cooperative purchasing, student transportation, research, and technology development, the implementation of health and safety initiatives, professional development, teacher licensure programs and job-alike groups. These services are in addition to the multiple special and regular education programs that the collaboratives provide to an ever-expanding population.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the twenty-nine educational collaboratives that are members of MOEC are providing services to both local and regional school systems. The total of the collaboratives core budgets exceeds $267 million in FY 07. They employ over 4900 full and part-time professional and support personnel. Growth of the collaboratives over the last thirty years has been phenomenal.

The success of each collaborative is measured by the effectiveness of its response to the needs of its member school systems. The responsibility of the collaborative is to aid the members in assessing their individual and collective needs and to demonstrate through model programs the efficiency of a collaborative venture. The characteristics of the entrepreneurial organization-risk taking and mentoring-must be evident to the member systems at all times.

Educational collaboratives, therefore, must model for member districts the strategies that succeed in today's public sector: the use of effective planning and process tools, conflict resolution skills, and inclusive decision making. The Collaborative's personnel and financial resources must be used to maintain a balance between the funding and support for current programs and services and those initiatives that stimulate untapped opportunities.

➢ **Survey Results**

The current survey of the state's educational collaboratives reveals that they:

- Serve over 5700 children whose special education requirements cannot be met in their school system programs.
- Serve thousands of children in non-special education programs: gifted and talented, occupational education, migrant education, school-to-work and after school.
- Returned to participating communities over $23 million in Medicaid reimbursements in FY06.
- Operate a variety of alternative school programs for children with psychological or behavioral disorders.
- Manage extensive multi-district pupil transportation systems.
- Provide all forms of professional development and licensure programs for teachers, paraprofessionals and staff.
- Serve as grant managers for member districts.
- Provide management consultation, job-alike services and school committee policy development
- Utilize 325 classrooms in public school buildings and 405 "classrooms" in non-public space.
- Have established fourteen site-based licensing programs in partnership with colleges and universities with DOE approval.

The chart contained herein illustrates the scope of programs and services reported by each member collaborative in December 2007. This data demonstrates the entrepreneurial roles that collaboratives play.

The existence of the collaboratives and their services save Massachusetts 'taxpayers' dollars. In the public sector, the collaboratives have no competitors from a fiscal standpoint.

The expansion of inter-collaborative programs is demonstrated in their efforts to address special education transportation, licensure programs for professionals, cooperative purchasing and professional development. Private and public organizations are recognizing the collaboratives as the vehicles that will produce efficiency and cost savings.

The following chart profiles the various programs and services offered through Massachusetts educational collaboratives in 2006-07.

Profile of Services: MASSACHUSETTS EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVES 2007	ACCEPT	ASSABET	BICO	CAPE COD	CAPS	CASE	CENTRAL MASS	CHARMS	COASTAL	EDCO	FLLAC	GLEC	HAMPSHIRE	LABB	LPVEC	MERRIMACK	N. RIVER.	N. SHORE	PILGRIM	READS	SEEM	SHORE	SPOKE	S. BERK.	S. COAST	S. SHORE	S. WOR. C.	SOUTHEASTERN	TEC	SUMMARY
FY 07 BUDJET: $MILLIONS	6.5	5.4	10.	70	4.3	11.	7.2	6.5	2.6	18	5.3	12.	17.	14.	197	15.0	6.7	13.	6.0	4.9	16.	14.	1.8	N	12.	12	4.8	4.7	57	267.4
No. Member Districts	14	9	15	20	10	14	2	6	7	21	11	10	17	5	7	9	7	17	9	14	10	10	4	O	5	9	13	7	15	290
Total Districts Served	26	9	30	24	18	38	16	42	12	21	11	10	65	60	30	61	7	40	32	39	28	10	13		53	4	20	12	75	762
Total employees (F.T. & P.T.)	176	39	149	250	103	236	121	95	48	390	57	158	454	218	340	237	139	270	135	108	201	263	25	D	184	15	153	109	144	4961
students served: sped prog	63	43	220	45	11	171	305	18	60	990	11	190	109	375	158	401	180	300	14	166	238	190	31	A	247	275	20	76	124	5725
Public classrooms used	9	3	28	9	5	25	0	15	2	8	12	9	5	0	44	8	10	18	15	11	4	6	7	T	24	1	14	4	16	325
Non-public classrooms used	0	1	7	12	14	0	66	18	6	1	12	0	7	33	0	41	9	40	8	9	44	22	0	A	17	31	1	2	4	405
Programs & Services																														
Autism Spectrum	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	26
Deaf Blind	X				X	X		X		X			X		X		X			X						X			X	11
Mul1Iply handicapped	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	25
Social/emotional		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	26
OT/PT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	26
Pre-vocational	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	25
School-to-work			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	24
Adult clients								X	X	X		X	X			X				X		X				X	X	X	X	11
A1temative schools			X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	22
School transportation	X	X		X	X	X		X				X		X	X	X		X		X	X				X	X	X	X	X	18
Professional development	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	28
Cooperative purchasing		X				X			X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X					X		X	X			X	14
Job-alike groups		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X	X			X	21
Technology programs	X								X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X	X	X			X	X			X	15
Medicaid reimbursement	X			X		X			X						X	X	X			X	X	X			X				X	12
Amount reimbursed	2.5			2.		unk			15						4.5	664	1.7			220	2.0M	7.5M			229					23.4M
Contracts "":Ih MDSS	X							X	X				X			X	X					X			X	X				9
Contracts w/MDMR 7 MDSS									X	X		X	X			X	X	X		X		X				X	X	X		11
Contracts w/non-profits	X	X				X			X						X	X	X					X				X		X		10
Regular Education programs			X							X			X		X		X	X			X				X				X	9
Other prog: See narrative	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	X			X	X	X		X	20
Professional Licensure prog.	X			X				X	X	X			X		X	X	X			X		X			X	X			X	14

FRANKLIN COUNTY: An Overview

Franklin County is the most rural and sparsely populated county in the Commonwealth. It has a population of only 72,000 spread over a 725 square mile area. While population grew at a modest .98% from 2000 to 2003, it has seen a dramatic school enrollment decline since then. The current declining enrollments being experienced throughout Franklin County is due to several factors which include the out migration of young adults and a declining birth rate. On January 5, 2008 USA Today wrote that "Franklin County, Massachusetts is among several other counties in New England where, last year, deaths exceeded births. In 2005 the population was 70,928. An important distinction is population density of which Franklin County's is approximately 102 per square mile as compared to the state average of 810 per square mile. Approximately 19% of the population was under the age of 15. Calculating student population density indicates approximately 19.4 students per square mile in Franklin County, as compared to 160.4 state average. More current school enrollment projections estimate as much as a 20% decline over the next 5 years. Of the adult population almost 60% have not completed a college education, as compared with 51% statewide. Median household income was $ 40,768 as compared with the state average of $ 50,502. This was most dramatic in the 25-34 age group, where the Franklin County median was $ 38,258, as compared to the state average of $ 51,855. Race and ethnicity statistics show the population as being 96% white and only 4 % all other races combined, as compared to 84.5 % white and 15.5% all other races combined.

Like most Massachusetts counties, Franklin County exists today only as a geographic region, and has no county government. The Franklin County Commission voted itself out of existence, and all former state-mandated county functions were assumed by state agencies in 1997. The sheriff and some other regional officials with specific duties are still elected locally to perform duties within the county region. Counties in Massachusetts and New England Generally are historically weak governmental structures. Communities are permitted to form regional compacts for sharing services. The municipalities of Franklin County have formed the Franklin Regional Council of Governments. The regional council provides various services on a regional basis, and a majority of the county's towns are members of the Franklin County Solid Waste Management District, which provides municipal waste disposal and recycling services to its members. Public transportation throughout the county and in the North Quabbin area of northwestern Worcester County is provided by the Franklin Regional Transit Authority. Franklin County is the only county in the Commonwealth which does not currently have an educational collaborative.

Much has been written recently concerning the status of the Franklin County schools. Several "position papers" and other reports have been developed describing various problems and financial issues faced by particular school districts. Mohawk Trail Regional School District, given the high visibility of its Superintendent, has had a great deal of publicity. But the current enrollment and financial condition of Mohawk is not an isolated case. Most of the school districts throughout Franklin County are facing or will soon face a similar situation- declining school enrollments coupled with inadequate, and in most cases, declining state aid. The result of these factors is that the Franklin County cities and towns have increased their budgets and assessments in order to support their schools. From fiscal year 2000 to fiscal year 2007, these municipalities have appropriated increasing amounts of their levy capacity to support education and their local schools.

A review of the town's excess capacity over these seven years clearly shows that they have assumed the financial burden disproportionately to that of state aid. Their limitations imposed under proposition 2 1/2 no longer afford them that ability, even if they wished to provide additional funding. Quite simply, most of these municipalities are already taxing at their maximum allowable limits. Overrides for ongoing operational costs are not cost effective in the long term, but would only be a one year "fix".

Many school districts have relied on excess revenue from recruiting larger numbers of students from their neighbors under school CHOICE. While they have done so for their very economic survival, the revenue generated is not dependable from year to year. Furthermore, it does not address the fundamental inequities associated with small and rural schools. Among these inequities are the following:

1. Declining enrollments hit small schools harder than for larger schools which are able to better absorb small enrollment losses from year to year.

2. Declining enrollments trigger reductions in State aid as the current Ch. 70 formula is devised. Small school districts are less able to absorb even small state aid reductions.

3. The MGL Ch. 70 state aid formula has failed to even keep pace with inflation. State aid increases have only been approximately 4% statewide compared to required budget increases of 6-8% for level service school budgets.

4. School budget "fixed costs" which make up a significant portion of school budgets have increased at a faster rate than either state aid or inflation. These "fixed costs" include such budget items as health insurance, fuel and utilities, school transportation, special education costs, collective bargaining increases, building maintenance as school buildings age and deteriorate.

5. The state aid reductions in fiscal year 2004 have never been restored. This financial burden was assumed by the municipalities.

6. The State has never fully reimbursed school districts for the costs associated with special education under Ch. 766.

7. The State has never fully reimbursed regional school districts for the costs associated with regional school transportation under MGL Ch. 71.

8. The failure of the federal government to reimburse school districts for those costs associated with the mandates of "No Child Left Behind".

The result of these inequities has been the reduction of nonessential educational programs and services to students and staff in order to maintain a core educational program and maintain annual yearly progress (AYP) under MCAS.

School districts have been forced to raise additional revenue, generally at a cost to their community. These revenues have taken the form of athletic fees, school transportation fees for ineligible students, direct request to parents for school supplies, among others. These additional revenues have been coupled with reductions in non essential programs and services such as art, music, electives, technology, educational research and new curriculum development, distance learning and student support services. A natural result of these cuts has been students who are mobile enroll in area schools which do have these perceived reductions and have been able to maintain a more comprehensive curriculum. This further exacerbates the existing enrollment and financial problems of that district. It is a vicious cycle- cuts to programs leading to loss of students leading to further budget cuts, etc.

The following excerpt is taken from a position paper entitled: Redefining the Problem of Declining Enrollment, February 2007 and authored by Ken Rocke, Interim Superintendent of Gill-Montague Regional School District:

"Sparsely populated school districts with declining enrollment that are relatively poor have been adversely affected by declining state aid to education. Although declining enrollment is a contributing condition to the fiscal woes of these districts, the primary cause is the decline in state aid. If declining enrollment alone were the cause of the problem, per-pupil state aid, adjusted for inflation, would remain relatively constant over the past several years. Instead, the numbers show a significant decline in state aid per pupil. As real dollars per-pupil decline in poorer communities, schools quickly reach limits on their towns' ability to shoulder an increasing percentage of the cost of education, and cuts to programs and services inevitably ensue.

Schools in sparsely populated areas, which must constantly seek a balance between maintaining community-based schools and supporting schools large enough to realize some economy of scale, are especially hard hit.

Declining state aid to education has hurt the schools of Western Massachusetts. Relatively poor to begin with, and struggling with the expenses of providing quality education in areas that are sparsely populated, districts have been hit hard by both declining enrollment and declining state aid. Many have reached a critical 'tipping point': loss of revenue leads to loss of educational programs and services, students opt out of the district to receive their schooling in other districts, in charter schools, or to be home-schooled. Loss of students leads to additional loss of revenue and further cuts in services: inevitably, further loss of students ensues.

Although the Chapter 70 Formula – the primary funding mechanism for state aid to education – is intended to be equitable, and to provide sufficient aid to enable local districts to provide an adequate education to all students, the unintended consequence of recent cuts in aid has been to impoverish a sizeable group of schools, and to place them at a competitive disadvantage. These schools are overwhelmingly located in rural areas of Western Massachusetts.

Both the charter school movement and the school choice law are intended to promote healthy competition among schools, and to thus inspire public schools to provide better education more efficiently. It's a noble aim, and many of the charter schools in particular have shown great promise. But public schools cannot compete on an uneven playing field, and that is exactly what the Chapter 70 Formula has created.

Although this loss of funding is felt most acutely by the students deprived of essential educational services, it also quickly becomes a community economic development issue. Without good schools, towns typically find it difficult to attract new residents with the kinds of skills necessary in the new economy. Without these residents, towns find it difficult to attract new businesses. And without new businesses, towns cannot continue to make up the gap in funding caused by the decline in state aid to education. Finally, without the funds to provide basic educational services, schools cannot hope to provide schooling that meets the needs of all of their students – college preparation for those headed to college, and career training and preparation for those entering the workforce."

Unlike larger school districts, small and rural school districts cannot reduce costs efficiently as enrollment declines. Fixed costs, such as debt service, health insurance, energy and utilities costs as well building maintenance costs do not proportionately reduce when enrollment continually drops. As enrollments decline, a larger percentage of each district's budget is allocated to fixed costs and overhead, leaving funding available for direct educational services delivered to students in the classroom. In the 1980's and 90's SBAB typically estimated and approved new school construction assuming a 10% annual enrollment growth. This accounts for the current space excess and extraordinary high building maintenance and management costs being experienced by some Franklin County school districts.

The State Ch 70 funding formula directly benefits districts with increasing enrollment (Growth Aid), but does not address districts with declining enrollment. State aid per-pupil has declined for most districts since FY'2002. The difference is that wealthier communities, with a broader tax base are better able to accommodate this through local business and residential property taxes. Schools in small, rural and poorer communities only had the basis core educational services in place when cuts in state aid became necessary. As a result core educational programs and services were cut. Among them were art, music, technology and student support services.

It is evident that small and rural districts, which have less population density, are unable to achieve the economies of scale possible in more densely-populated areas. The fact is that it costs more to run small schools in rural areas. In addition, the cost of school transportation is much higher in rural, less populated areas. Given the geographic size of the county and some of the school districts, more efficient multiple tiers of transportation are not possible. In many rural school districts, students spend in excess of an hour traveling to and from school. Many Franklin County roads remain unpaved and are even impassable during certain times of the year (winter and "mud season"). Many of them will not accommodate full size school buses, so students must be transported in less efficient smaller vehicles; even four- wheel drive vehicles.

Franklin County has had a dramatic loss of its business and manufacturing base over the past several decades. Consequently, the cost of funding local schools then falls disproportionately on property owners i.e. residential property taxes. In many Franklin County communities, the combination of declining state aid combined with increasing educational budgets has driven many towns to the point of exasperation. While they may wish to support their local schools, they are limited by Proposition 21/2 from increasing their appropriations sufficiently to do so.

A recent report drafted by the Massachusetts Department of Education entitled Preliminary Report on Current Fiscal conditions in Massachusetts School Districts verifies much of these conditions present throughout Franklin County. The following excerpts are from the January 2008 draft:

Summary and Key Findings

"Over the past decade and a half, the Commonwealth has moved steadily to increase expectations on school districts, schools, teachers, and students to meet the demands of a global economy. It has also added fiscal resources to support reaching these expectations, increasing state aid for education by almost 11 percent per year throughout the 1990s. Recent fiscal challenges at the state level, however, coupled by rising fixed costs and shifting enrollment patterns for districts, have combined to create substantial challenges for districts in sustaining the momentum of education reform. This initial investigation found that:

- **Academic expectations and challenges have risen, but spending on instructional services has not kept pace.** From fiscal years 2002 to 2007, total spending by districts and spending per pupil have remained flat relative to inflation. At the same time, the academic expectations for districts, schools, educators, and students have appropriately increased, and the demographic characteristics of the state's students have changed. Spending on instructional services is being crowded out by increases in other budget areas such as health insurance and out-of-district student placements. As a result, instructional services are declining as a share of total spending.

- **On average, districts spend 18 percent more than their foundation budget** and nearly every district in the state is spending over foundation. This suggests that the current foundation budget formula may not reflect the cost of providing an adequate education to all students. Health insurance, payments to other districts, and teacher salaries were areas of particular concern; actual expenditures in these areas substantially outpaced the assumptions behind the foundation budget.

- **Chapter 70 aid increases did not keep up with inflation between 2003 and 2006.** From fiscal year 2003 to fiscal year 2006, most districts saw little or no increase in their aid, and many districts experienced cuts in fiscal year 2004. With the adoption of changes to the Chapter 70 formula in fiscal year 2007, aid has increased by more than 6 percent in each of the last two years. But after adjusting for inflation, state aid has only recovered to fiscal year 1999 levels, well below the high-water mark of fiscal year 2002.

- **Despite the Chapter 70 aid cutbacks, many districts were able to maintain their overall spending levels, but only by increasing local funding**, and, to a much lesser degree, imposing user fees for transportation and extracurricular activities. Although these actions helped protect school budgets, they created added pressure on municipal budgets and on parents and community members.

- **A number of districts have experienced enrollment declines, which can have both a positive and negative fiscal impact.** Declining enrollment should make it easier to maintain services when budgets are tight, but in extreme cases it may also require school consolidations and teacher layoffs. Declines have been especially common in districts that serve large percentages of low-income students.

- **Districts have employed a variety of strategies to maintain services for students despite constraints in their instructional budgets.** In some cases, staff reductions have compensated for higher-than-average salary increases. In other cases, lower-than-average salary increases have helped maintain staffing levels but leave the district at risk of not being able to attract qualified new teachers. Statewide, average salaries have grown more slowly than inflation but more quickly than assumed by the foundation budget and student-teacher ratios have edged up slightly during the period.

In summary, at a time when districts need to be moving forward quickly to address their students' growing educational needs, they are hard-pressed to maintain their expenditure levels, let alone increase them to meet higher expectations. And unlike the situation in the late 1980s, when school budget cuts were disproportionately affecting the poorer urban districts, today's fiscal pressures appear to affecting a much broader range of districts, including many middle-class communities that have traditionally taken great pride in the quality of their school systems.

The current statewide foundation budget is $8.4 billion. Some short-run increase in this funding level is likely necessary to address the rising cost of education in the Commonwealth. Beyond that, the Board of Education may wish to recommend a detailed study to update the foundation budget formula to ensure that it provides an adequate level of fiscal resources for both current and future needs. While the state continues to work toward a sustainable long-range funding plan, it will need to continue other initiatives to ensure that it is making the best use of its existing resources. Examples include:

- Creating incentives for local participation in the state health insurance and pension fund programs, to help bring the cost of these programs under control.

- Expanding the use of educational collaboratives and other regional entities to more efficiently provide services such as special education transportation, professional development, and specialized education programs.

- Helping districts to identify and adopt instructional practices and models that have been proven effective at improving student outcomes at a reasonable cost.

- Addressing the inefficiencies and lack of capacity created by the large number of small school districts in the state. Currently, 284 of the state's 328 operating districts serve fewer than 5,000 students.

Bringing all these resources to bear will allow districts to provide an adequate education to every child and allow the state to reach the vision and promise of education reform."

A review of the data indicates that the school districts have attempted to maintain quality education in spite of either marginal increases or actual reductions in state aid. In fact, most Franklin County municipalities have exhausted their financial resources in order to support public education and, in particular, their schools.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts
FY'2002 – FY'2007

PER CENT CHANGE FY'2002 TO FY'2007 (Reference Appendix C)* CATEGORY	ERVING	FRANK. TECH	FRONTIER	GILL-MONTAGUE	GREENFIELD	MOHAWK TRAIL	HAWLEMONT	ROWE	ORANGE	PIONEER	RALPH C MAHAR	AVERAGE	STATE AVERAGE
Total District Spending-All Funds	38.67	24.35	31.97	20.4	4.52	15.56	19.79	49.62	26.72	33.62	37.37	27.51	21.05
Health Insurance Increases-All Funds	91.15	97.21	105.49	79.42	30.32	94.3	82.41	1623.89	141.51	98.84	113.51	232.55	70.09
In District Enrollment	30.05	3.32	13.52	-17.52	-21.85	26.03	7.23	7.95	-5.15	-8.49	1.16	-1.44	-4.29
Chapter 70 State Aid	-7.51	33.54	10.6	-3.03	-4.82	17.84	-18.25	-4.66	-7.55	1.36	25.35	0.65	9.08
Local Contribution	44.01	15.94	39.19	38.6	22.35	n.a.	24.67	38.87	n.a.	55.01	36.58	35.02	23.63
Net School Spending	36.96	22.84	28.01	16.38	8.53	n.a.	0.25	36.32	n.a	30.12	30.96	11.07	17.68
Chapter 70 as Per Cent of Net School Spending	-4.44	3.41	-5.32	-8.9	-6.26	n.a	-10.5	-1.76	n.a.	-10.26	-2.14	-5.13	-2.99

It is clear that the current situation can not continue and that change is necessary. The questions are- whether that change comes on the expenditure side or the revenue side, or a combination of both or whether the changes needed are locally developed or State mandated.

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS

During the fall of 2007, project staff met with the nine Superintendents and members of their administrative staff to understand the issues facing each district, assess their needs, learn about creative ideas, and discuss their interest in and possible areas for collaboration.

Of the nine school systems in Franklin County, no two school districts are alike. In addition to municipal school districts, there are regional school districts and school unions. Some are elementary or middle/high school only, while others are PreK-12. Some elementary districts feed into the same secondary school, while others disperse in 7th grade. Two districts, Mohawk and Mahar, include towns outside Franklin County. All but two districts serve children from predominately economically impoverished communities.

Interviews with the Superintendents addressed the following areas:

1. **FINANCIAL IMPACTS**: *The impact over the past 4-5 years and how their District has accommodated for: State aid; declining enrollment; out of district programs such as Charter schools, home schooling, Choice, and special education placements; overall district budget increases and fixed cost increases like utilities and health insurance.*

   - All districts are experiencing losses from decreasing State aid, for many school districts have reached critical proportions – especially in the already economically challenged towns. The burden of making up for the losses in State aid has fallen increasingly on the towns through property taxes. The school assessments are the largest items in the town budgets, in some cases accounting for 65% or more of a town's budget. While the towns value education, several of them have reached the point where they are no longer able to keep up with the rising expense burden placed on them due to the lack of increases in State aid. Several districts had to make deep staffing cuts to accommodate the huge state funding cuts in 2002. As state funding has remained basically level since that time, while the actual costs of education have increased, and towns cannot make up the difference, districts have continually been forced to make further cuts. Some districts have had to cut or greatly reduce program offerings, like art and music, and increase class sizes. Only two districts, in wealthier communities or where there is a significant business contributing to the tax base, are thriving. Several noted the unjust inequity of educational opportunities between communities at different ends of the wealth spectrum both locally and statewide – and the responsibility of the state to do something to correct this.

   - All districts are experiencing declining enrollment, though some have been able to maintain stability primarily due to attracting more Choice students than they lose. Several districts have lost as many as 100 students over the last year. For some the enrollment loss has been a result of demographics and the loss of industry. Two school districts have maintained their enrollment numbers without Choice and only one district has grown. For Franklin County Tech, enrollment decline manifests itself as a declining number applications and a reduction in the qualifications of applicants. This year FCT did not accept over 129 students, who did not meet their admissions standards.

   - School Choice: While Choice students benefit some schools, the losses hurt others -creating a downward financial spiral. Some schools are experiencing debilitating losses, while others are keeping afloat only because of the incoming Choice revenues. And even for those that realize net financial gains from Choice, those gains are unpredictable and leave them vulnerable. This was not the intention of the state and should be reviewed. (See attached article from 12/15/07 Greenfield Recorder – which provides details on how Choice is affecting Franklin County schools)

- The majority of Superintendents identified the loss t of students to Charter Schools, especially the inequitable funding for charter schools, as a serious problem for their and neighboring school districts

- Overall school district's operating budgets have increased – even with staff reductions to appropriate levels for declining enrollments and other program reductions. This is largely due to the fixed cost increases and to collective bargaining contracts. In addition, the savings when making staff reductions are offset by expenses such as unemployment expenses. One district (Mahar) presented a 0% increase budget that still presented significant assessment increases that some of their member towns could not afford.

- Fixed cost increases, most notably in the areas of health insurance and fuel and energy costs, have been enormous and unsustainable, generally accounting for a large percentage of school budget increases. Many of the supporting towns are not able to keep up with these huge annual increases, which have been largely beyond the district's control. Some municipal districts have been better able to handle health insurance – as many of them get their insurance through the Hampshire Insurance Group that also covers their towns. The regional districts have been part of a Franklin County Insurance Group. However, the Mohawk and Gill-Montague Districts have just joined the Group Insurance Commission (GIC), a move that is projected to provide substantial savings starting in FY09. Their switch leaves the rest of the group too small to cost effectively continues. Therefore others are likely to soon move to the GIC as well. One district, Mahar, provides its own self-funded insurance at 85%/15% split, which has been working well. Skyrocketing fuel and utility costs present another huge challenge. Efficiencies in this area are still sorely needed. Some schools are engaging in energy audits, taking steps to make their buildings more efficient, or are exploring various "green" alternatives. Cooperative purchasing could also provide some relief.

- Managing special education costs is also a huge issue – especially unforeseen out of district placements, unanticipated special education expenses, and the substantial un-reimbursed costs for special education transportation. Early results from a legislatively sponsored statewide Special Education Transportation Pilot Project which promotes multi district routing and scheduling promises some financial relief. In addition, since special needs transportation is included in a student's IEP, it should be considered a "related service" and eligible for reimbursement under the State's circuit breaker legislation.

2. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES:

What does the district need to do to continually meet AYP under MCAS? What are the High School dropout rates (see attached charts)? Are summer remediation or after school programs offered? Are they cost effective? What resources would most help to make the district even better educationally?

The differences between what the school districts in Franklin County can offer and what is offered in eastern Massachusetts schools, are significant and places Franklin County students at a great disadvantage educationally. The State must look at this issue in terms of equalizing educational access, not as just saving money through consolidation and redistricting.

The effects of the funding cuts noted above are felt most acutely by the students, deprived of essential educational services. In general, the schools or districts with more resources have done better at meeting AYP.

- Four districts: Pioneer; Erving; Rowe; and Frontier, all meet AYP. Frontier always scores in the top 25 statewide, sometimes in the top 10 or higher, although this year, for the first time a special education subgroup at Frontier did not make AYP. Rowe's AYP very high (their per pupil spending is $18,000+; the highest in the State).

- Mohawk, Hawlemont, Greenfield and Gill-Montague each have 1 or 2 schools that have not made AYP but are doing better or are showing improvement. Gill-Montague noted that their improvement or lack thereof is mostly a function of demographics. These districts are all struggling financially. All have had to make deep reductions or cuts in educational and support staffing during the last several years in order to meet the financial ability of their towns to fund education.

- Mahar has made target aggregate results, but special education populations still needs to be adequately addressed.

- Although Orange has not made AYP two years in a row, due to different groups each time, if their scores were adjusted for socio economic issues, they would be 2nd in the state. Their population is generally very poor (more than 50 % of their students are on Free/Reduced meals program) and has a high level of domestic violence. Many students come from families with high levels of distress, low literacy skills and about 30% of the Kindergartners enter school already suffering from post traumatic stress. Orange has focused on in depth analysis of their data to create teaching strategies to meet the specific needs of their students.

- Gill-Montague is in the process of drafting a corrective action plan in response to the DOE's determination that the district is under-performing because there are not enough administrators and not enough money is being spent on education.

- The dropout rates for Franklin County high schools, as projected by the DOE for the class of 2009, average 15.85% compared to a statewide average of 9.5%. Gill-Montague's rate projection is the highest in the county at 25.5%, placing it 13th worst in the state. Greenfield is 22nd worst with a projected rate of 22.6%. Mohawk's rate is the lowest in the county, projected at 8.8%, with Frontier at 9.8. Statewide, the lowest is less than 1%. At Mahar the dropout rate has been a top priority and has been reduced from 7% to 4% over the last 3 years. When a student drops out, the superintendent meets with each student and works to help them figure out how to stay.

STATEWIDE AVG. 9.5%

Projected Dropout Rates for the Classes of 2002 – 2009 (Appendix X)

DISTRICT	CLASS OF							
	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Franklin County Tech	20	14.5	11.8	13.2	9.8	10.5	11.9	12.7
Frontier	5	6.9	3	8.6	15.6	11.4	10.4	9.8
Gill-Montague	19	21.2	24.8	10.8	41.8	32.4	37.1	25.5
Greenfield	22	14.3	19.9	24.9	25.6	24.9	26.1	22.6
Mohawk Trail	10	12.7	12.6	10.5	12.1	21.9	16.7	8.8
Pioneer Valley	10	20.4	18.2	16.7	10.3	14.9	7.4	15.5
Ralph C. Mahar	27	22	20.1	16.3	25.4	22.7	21.7	15.7
	113	112	110.4	101	140.6	138.7	131.3	110.6
County Average	**16.1**	**16.0**	**15.8**	**14.4**	**20.1**	**19.8**	**18.8**	**15.8**
State Average								**9.5**

After School and Summer Remediation Programs:
The districts offer after school and summer programs to varying degrees:

- Mahar provides summer school and virtual HS paid for by parents. Many students work after school, so the program is not run at that time. They have created a "success center" with academic coaching to help students during the school day.

- Orange holds a summer enrichment program at the most at-risk apartment complex in town – as much to provide healthy safe activities as for supporting academics. As Orange is far from available human services, the school also provides essential community education, activities, and support services. Once a month they provide a Saturday program for families, bringing in Mad Science, arts programs, or taking them to ball games. They not only prepare students for the MCAS, they also help families learn how to raise children. They have an after school program funded through a 21st Century Grant.

- Erving provides a summer tutorial for special needs students only.

- Frontier has offered before and after school programs in all 5 schools for 16 years – all grant funded. They run an elementary reading camp for grades 3-6 by invitation.

- Pioneer and Greenfield have summer and after school programs which are grant funded.

- At Franklin County Tech, MCAS prep is part of the 9th – 10th grade curriculum. FCT has not had an active summer program for the past five years. However, it was discontinued when DOE funding for the program and transportation ended. They still provide a late bus, but most students drive and have work responsibilities after school. Students say they will stay after for MCAS prep, but about 75% of them drop out. Therefore, MCAS prep is delivered during the academic day, by a retired engineer. They also have double math periods in regular curriculum and hire extra tutors to help prep for the November MCAS retake test. Only 3 students have been denied graduation due to failed MCAS tests. They also send some to other districts for summer remediation programs. About 25-30% of the graduates go on to college, usually a 2-year college.

- Gill-Montague is exploring extended learning time and extended year. They have some AP courses. They have a special asset, an elementary principal who provides his extensive experience with the Responsive Classroom, a program model which helps to improve preconditions for academic learning

- Mohawk has after school programs at only some schools and only special needs students receive summer tutoring.

How does the district address staffing for low incidence academic needs, i.e. foreign languages, A.P. courses, and special education? Do they provide distance learning or dual enrollment programs? Does the district offer Adult Education?

Distance Learning, Dual Enrollment, AP classes, and Adult Education:

- Distance Learning: At Mahar approximately 10 students a year use distance learning through the University of Arizona and they are offering new courses in Chinese language and art. Pioneer offers some distance learning. Frontier provides distance learning through Virtual High School with the University of Nebraska program and offers dual enrollment with Greenfield Community College (GCC). Gill-Montague does not currently provide distance learning, but would like to explore if it can find the finances to support it.

- Dual enrollment: Several districts (Mohawk, Frontier, Greenfield) provide dual enrollment with Greenfield Community College (GCC). Mahar partners with Worcester State College to provide an Evening Academy after school. The college comes to Mahar offering technology and academic courses for students, veterans, seniors and other community members. Franklin County Tech offers electives only in 11th & 12th grades, but has offered Spanish, art, music, film, theater, etc. in the past. Since MCAS testing, electives have been curtailed in favor of MCAS preparation. They are exploring the possibility of some course swapping with Gill-Montague for technology students who want AP academic classes and Gill-Montague students who want technical training. Gill-Montague is currently exploring dual enrollment courses with GCC.

- Most districts offer AP classes and languages at the middle/high school level, though some have had to reduce their offerings from lack of funds or declining enrollment. Mohawk offers AP courses rotating every other year, and languages from 7th grade on. Rowe Elementary offers Spanish and funds a middle school teacher at Mohawk to support those students through graduation. Frontier offers Spanish starting at the elementary level in all of its schools.

- Adult education: Mohawk offers some adult education through financial assistance from the Mary Lyon Foundation. For Orange, adult education is a critical part of improving education for their students. Franklin County Tech is looking into this with assistance from the Regional Employment Board (REB), and an evening program with Greenfield Community College for carpentry, welding and machine trades. In the past, they tried some night programs like quilting and computer, but did not get enough interest to offer.

Professional Development: *How does the District provide professional development, in particular for low incidence needs?*

- Greenfield, Mohawk, Frontier, Ware, Orange and others collaborate on a Summer Academy in August and on the Franklin County Day (not for their half day in service days). The group, with one representative from each district, meets once a month to plan what teachers need/want, brainstorm possible resources, and create brochure offerings. There is no cost for teachers to attend and teachers receive in service credit for their successful participation. They can, therefore, meet their relicensing requirements at no cost. They need a minimum of 10 participants to run a program or workshop. If one district has a particular need that the others do not share, then they pay for that particular presenter – though others may attend on a space available basis. All districts help pay for the brochure/program and other fixed costs.

- Greenfield also uses Hampshire Educational Collaborative, Pioneer Valley STEMNET, the Hanson Initiative, and UMASS Literacy Program for re-certification workshops for their teachers and administrators. They reimburse teachers for classes in their content areas at a 75% of the UMASS course rate.

- Orange is partnering with the Bay State Reading Institute, sending all teachers for three days to learn what it means to teach reading. They are training teachers to assess, predict, give direct instruction (rather than just silent reading) and design interventions – starting with students who do not know how to hold a book or a pencil. This has already been so successful that they need better books for Kindergartners who are now ready to read. They are keeping careful track of the data at all grade levels to show the gains and remaining needs. They also train aides in cooperative games to improve their ability to supervise recess.

- Gill-Montague offers Responsive Classroom workshops in-house for their teachers. They use Fresh Pond curriculum mapping for curriculum development, have developed new English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics curriculum at the elementary level. Gill-Montague offers a summer teachers' institute which could be expanded to countywide. Last summer they offered 2-3 weeks workshops and included other districts on a space available basis. It proved to be both financially successful as well as educationally successful. It would be beneficial to all districts if an organization could establish a professional development academy in Franklin County for local district cohort groups. Similar professional development academies are offered in Bennington, VT and in the eastern part of the State through various educational collaboratives. The consensus of opinion was that Franklin County needs to address technology applications to learning and high-level curriculum. As building technologies continue to become more sophisticated, there is a need for technical training for facilities managers and head custodians.

- Franklin County Tech provides teachers with up to $1200/year through their collective bargaining contract. Courses and workshops must be directly related to their area of teaching and the superintendent must approve the course or workshop in advance.

- Pioneer mostly provides in-house professional development. A committee of teachers and administrators evaluates the current year and develops a plan for next year. Low incidence needs are addressed through Franklin County in-service, though is used less than in previous years. Some teachers attend workshops offered by the Hampshire Educational Collaborative. But generally, Pioneer does more in-house training, utilizing the expertise of their own staff. This method seems to provide more variety and creativity. They reimburse for course work at 100% up to 4 credits per year and are generous with approval for conferences directly related to the district's goals.

- Mohawk teachers participate in summer academies. Dot Lyman does their in-service programming and schedules 2-3 in service workshops each year. For college coursework, they pay 75% of the UMASS course rate.

- Erving Union #28 has a professional development line item in both the school union budget and in each school building budget. They do some joint days sharing a presenter. On 70% of Wednesdays they close at 1:00 to have "job alike" days, bringing all the same focus area teachers together (like all kindergarten or all SPED). They use both internal resources and expertise and they bring in presenters and/or consultants when necessary.

- Frontier is able to recruit and retain high quality teachers and therefore is able to provide high quality professional development supported through their budget and from grants. They contract with the best people in the Valley, from across the state and also contract with nationally recognized experts. They share with other districts, participate in the Franklin County day in October, work with the Brain Trust at Harvard and utilize local Responsive Classroom resources.

- Mahar provides the usual half and full in-service days. They partner with Harvard University on-line for groups to take specific courses. Teachers can receive professional development points (PDP's) through schoolkit.com. Over the past several years, they have doubled their budget for professional development for both teachers and administrators. They take part in the Franklin County professional development day, both as presenters and attendees.

3. **EDUCATIONAL & TECH RESOURCES**:
How does the District plan for and update textbooks, other curriculum materials, and technology resources?

- For many of the districts, textbook and curriculum requests tend to get under-funded or severely reduced during the budget development process. Most districts have developed reasonable 5-year plans for replacing and updating textbooks and educational technology, but most do not have the funds to implement their plans. The wealthier districts have generally had the funding available to update these resources - one district currently exceeds the state's goals. Some are only able to provide new texts one class or grade at a time. One district can only buy new books on a dollar-by-dollar basis. One district has had a stabilization account for this, which has helped, but that fund is now nearly depleted.

- Several districts purchased new technology within the last 5 years, when they built or renovated buildings. However, those computers now need upgrading and for most districts there is little or no money for doing so. Several districts do have resources and are able to keep their technology up to date. One district is experimenting with renting computers on a 3-year plan.

- There was universal interest in collaborative purchasing and financing for both textbooks and technology acquisition.

4. **ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES:**
Exploring the possibilities for shared Administrative Services: Who does them? Do you already share any of these services? Would you consider doing so? Which ones?

The project staff identified who currently provides the following services for each district: Auditors, Legal, Collective Bargaining, Management Information System Network, Grant Writing, Payroll/Business Services, Software program licenses, and Facility Management as follows:

- Auditors include: Melanson & Heath, Hilber & Haines, Bruce Norling, Tom Scanlon, Polumbo & Kulas, while other audits are done through the towns.

- Five districts use Attorneys Fred and Russell Dupere. Others use Regina Tate of Murphy, Hesse, Toomey & Lehane, Peter Smith, Mike Long, Donna MacNicol and the towns' attorneys for the town schools.

- Most districts' collective bargaining includes their attorneys and representatives of the MTA. However, several schools do their own interest-based collective bargaining. One district (Pioneer) noted that having a good (and long-term) relationship with the Union really helps them to be able to negotiate without having lawyers or the MTA in the room. Another (Orange) has studied win-win labor management negotiations. Recently the school committee made dinner for everyone and they all worked to identify and collaboratively solve problems. When legal help is needed, they generally use the lawyers previously noted.

- All districts were very interested in getting help with grant writing. They all manage their entitlement grants, but very few have been successful with more competitive grant sources. Of those who are able to do additional grant writing, most are doing it themselves, or with other Central Office staff. Most districts just do not have the time or the expertise. They especially liked the idea of contracting with grant writers who work on a contingency arrangement and get paid a percentage amount based on their success.

- Several districts who utilize common software were interested in possibly sharing licenses and fees for software programs, updates and training.

- Management Information System: Several districts use Budget Sense, some use Fund Sense or MUNIS. Technology management staffing is limited and has been recently reduced due to budget constraints. Most districts rely on teaching staff that volunteer or are paid a stipend to attend to building technology needs.

- Payroll and Business services are generally done in-house by either the Central Office staff or by the Town. One district recently tried outsourcing its payroll function but it was a disaster. Payroll processing required just as much work and administrators had less access to data for either reporting or for decision-making. Only one district is pleased with outsourcing.

- Unemployment and Workers Compensation claims are handled either internally or by the towns.

- Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement. All Franklin County school districts are currently doing Medicaid billing for their eligible students. Several are utilizing the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) on a contingency arrangement for Medicaid billing. One district utilizes UMASS Medical and several others do it in house with their own staff. None of the Superintendents know if they are, in fact, maximizing all available revenue from this program. The LPVEC has, in the past, conducted Medicaid audits, in order to determine if school districts have identified all potential students and all eligible services.

- Facility Management: Some districts have only one building while others have several to maintain and manage. All but one with multiple buildings has facility managers or heads of maintenance. Some just have head custodians in each school building. Some buildings are maintained by the towns. The Franklin County Tech, because it has the technical ability to do so, does much of their own building maintenance.

- Food Service Programs mostly lose money or, at best, break even. In some cases it is balanced within a district (i.e. elementary schools lose money, but high schools make money), though most have to make budget transfers at the end of the year to cover small or moderate losses. Greenfield's program makes money. One elementary district boasts that its food is "outstanding and beyond". It is small enough to provide home-style cooking using locally grown produce whenever possible. This school serves both breakfast and lunch to all students and staff.

5. **BUILDING RESOURCES, UTILIZATION & CONDITIONS**: *Where is there available space? Age and condition of buildings, capital improvement needs, and ability of annual maintenance budgets to adequately meet the needs. What has been done to address space issues? What does the district have for school security systems and internet access (WIFI, etc)?*

The buildings in most of the districts have recently been built or renovated and are generally in good shape. Greenfield, Gill-Montague's elementary schools, and Orange stand out as districts with old buildings in need of significant repairs and renovations – and with no funding currently available. Most districts (Pioneer, Frontier, Erving) have the resources to keep up with needed repairs. Mohawk has newer buildings that are now starting to need repairs, but does not have the funds. Franklin Co Tech does a lot of its own maintenance and repairs and is generally regarded as being in "good shape".

Pioneer's four elementary schools and the regional middle/high school were built or renovated in the last 5-10 years. Leyden was renovated 10 years ago, Bernardston was renovated 8 years ago, Northfield was renovated about 15 years ago, Warwick built a new elementary school 5 years ago, which is the smallest SBAB approved new school in the State, Pioneer Middle/High School was totally renovated 3 years ago ($25mil). Pioneer needed to get waivers to build smaller (to their projected size instead of the states). Consequently, they did not overbuild and do not have excess capacity or excess debt. All districts have five-year maintenance plans. Most of the elementary schools are owned by the towns and leased to the district. They must then work cooperatively to develop plans and budgets for maintenance and repair projects. These appropriations are generally funded through separate warrant articles and have averaged about $15 – 50,000 each year depending on the size of the school. For the modular buildings housing the Central Office and for the Middle School/High School building, need the unanimous vote of the towns to approve capital expenditures. Northfield needed overrides the last few years. The override did not pass, even though Northfield has the lowest tax rate and is the largest member of the regional school district. This has created conflict with the remaining members.

Gill-Montague's elementary schools are old and have had no major renovations since they were built: Sheffield was built partly in 1935 and half of it rebuilt in 1985 after a fire. The Hillcrest and Gill elementary schools were built in 1955, and the Montague Center School was built in 1935, although with some renovations around 1950. None of the elementary schools have current bonding debt. They all have been generally well maintained, roofs are weather tight and some boilers have been replaced, as needed. Most buildings do need better and more energy efficient doors and windows. The buildings also are not ADA accessible or equipped with either elevators or rest rooms. The Superintendent is currently creating a five-ten year building improvement plan, in conjunction with building consolidation and redistricting efforts. He is recommending consolidation only if it will improve education, while making better use of resources. The school committee recently approved a plan to consolidate the elementary schools from four to either two or three buildings, making at least one building available for other use. The middle/high school is basically new, having been totally remodeled about three or four years ago, and is currently still bonded.

Orange has three elementary schools: Fisher Hill was built in 1991 and enrolls 330 students in grades K-2, Dexter Park was built in 1950 and is in generally poor shape and enrolls 80 PreK-K (in modular classrooms) and 225 in grades 3-4, and Butterfield was built in 1870 (with some renovations since, but none recently) and enrolls 225 in grades 5-6. The district currently lacks the funding necessary to cover needed capital maintenance and repairs; anything beyond basic custodial services. When a boiler failed two years ago the town had to take out a five year loan to replace it, as neither the school nor the town had the funds to replace it. Butterfield now needs a new roof, estimated at $90,000 and Fisher Hill has a collapsing road to repair, but there is no money available for either. The district currently utilizes most of their available educational space.

Mohawk has four elementary schools – Sanderson Academy (150 students) and Heath (60 students) were built within the last 10 years, Colrain Central (120 students) was recently renovated, and Buckland/Shelburne Elementary (BSE) (185 students) is in relatively good shape except for a wing that is currently closed due to needed major repairs ($500K). The Middle/High School has also been recently renovated. These buildings are now starting to need repairs and there has not been adequate money available for other than routine custodial maintenance. There is ample extra space available at all the elementary schools, with Sanderson Academy and Buckland/Shelburne having closed entire wings. **Hawlemont Elementary** (110 students) has been recently renovated. **Rowe Elementary** (48 students) is older and will need major renovations in about 10 years.

Greenfield has three elementary schools which were built in the early 1900s with enrollments of about 200-240 each, a grade 5-8 middle school (550 students) was renovated in 2001, and a high school (450 students) was built in 1958. Most of the other buildings had some renovations about 20 years ago, but are now old and in generally poor condition. The middle school still has MSBA bonding payments. There is virtually no money available for even routine maintenance projects. The high school is on the state's SBAB request list but has not yet been approved. The general condition of the school buildings and infrastructure is a major reason why so many Greenfield students opt for school choice in either Mohawk or Amherst-Pelham.

The Erving School Union has four elementary schools serving five towns: Erving, Leverett, Shutesbury, and a small regional serving Wendell and New Salem together with enrollments of 150-191 in each school. It has been a school union since 1901 and has no desire to fully regionalize. Leverett and Erving have had major renovations since 2000 and the others have had major renovations and maintenance projects i.e. roofs, floors, etc. They currently have adequate funding from their towns to keep the buildings well maintained.

Frontier includes four elementary schools in Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately – all built about 14-16 years ago – and a middle/high school completely renovated about nine years ago. Each of these buildings is in excellent shape and is well maintained. All of the school buildings are full, due to a high School Choice enrollment. While all educational space in Sunderland is currently being utilized, one or two classrooms could be made available if necessary.

Mahar has one building housing a grade 7-12 regional middle and high school for the towns of Orange, New Salem, Wendell and Petersham (outside Franklin Co.) The building is in excellent shape as the result of a $36million renovation project completed in 2005. The building was built for 1,000 and has a current enrollment of 856. Although the building is currently all in use, they could reconfigure to make space available.

Franklin County Tech's building is 31 years old and is still in excellent shape. They do much of their own maintenance with students. The biggest problems are the air handling units. They are currently conducting an energy are audit, which will address this problem. They currently utilize all their space and could use more for program expansion. They need to add a social studies teacher and currently have no classroom available. FCT would be interested in portable classrooms to meet their short term space needs.

Space Available for Collaborative, Magnet Programs, etc:
The districts that have the most space available for housing a collaborative or magnet program are Gill-Montague, Mohawk and Greenfield. Greenfield has a closed school and space in several other buildings, Gill-Montague is about to have at least one vacant school building and Mohawk has two schools with empty wings and space at the Middle/High School. Funds would be needed for repairs to some of these spaces, but others are in relatively good shape. Mahar also has some space that could be made available.

Security:
Most schools have some degree of security system in place; generally consisting of locked doors or an accessible and observant front desk. Few districts have full camera security systems. Many of the towns and communities do not support the need for security cameras and full security systems.

WIFI: All districts have at least basic internet access. Where there are internet access limitations, they are due to community funding and to a lack of available broad band services in rural areas (some schools still have telephone dial-up access). All Superintendents see the need for improved educational technology for both student learning and for teacher professional development.

6. **GREATEST CHALLENGES**:
What are the District's greatest challenges and needs-short term and long term?

- **FINANCIAL:** The greatest problems faced by the Franklin County school districts relate specifically to inequitable funding coupled with the effects of declining enrollment; specifically, the perceived flaws in the Ch 70 funding formula. Franklin County School districts continue to suffer from the 2002 state funding cuts, followed by essentially level funding since. Actual costs of education continue to increase while the Franklin County town's ability to pay also continues to decrease. The Ch 70 funding formula needs to be revised to take into account rural density, declining enrollments and area-specific economic factors. The formula needs to recognize the value of small schools. Most of the Franklin County towns are stretched and are no longer able to shoulder increasing educational costs, even if they wanted to. The towns are limited to 2.5% increases plus growth, which is minimal throughout the county. Districts are forced to provide, at best, level service budgets. Some of the districts are already facing serious financial crisis, while others, currently in better shape, have growing concerns. Both short and long-term sustainable funding solutions are needed. Increased funding is the biggest need for all the schools – but from sources other than their towns. The state should revise the funding formula for rural schools and to increase funding overall in support of education.

- **INFRASTRUCTURE**: Some districts have old buildings in serious need of repair or replacement, but are not even on the state's SBAB list for funding projects (Orange, Greenfield, Gill-Montague elementary schools, one Mohawk elementary school, and air quality at Franklin County Tech, among others). Several towns and districts are not able to allocate the funds required for more than routine custodial and maintenance. Therefore, buildings – even some of the newer ones – go without needed repairs and maintenance.

- **TIME**: There are huge increases in work demands on teachers and administrators to comply with requirements of NCLB, MCAS, etc. but the same amount of time is available to do this, as well as everything else. Trying to address the state standards and requirements for students at all levels in the time available is an enormous challenge. The state and federal governments increasingly expect more than can be accomplished given the limited staff available. Teachers feel burned out and there is no longer enough time to address the societal and emotional issues students come to school with.

- **DATA:** Small and rural school districts, in particular, need access to technical assistance. They need help in making the best good of educational data and dealing with the huge amount of data and accountability requirements. Specifically they need assistance translating and then utilizing that data to support educational improvements in classrooms.

- **DECLINING ENROLLMENT and SCHOOL BUILDING CAPACITIES**: Regional agreements, a desire to maintain autonomy and local control of schools, transportation issues and the benefits of small schools generally make closing schools impossible or undesirable. In some cases closing schools would net only small savings or even cost more due to increased transportation costs. In some regional districts, consideration of closing schools has caused huge conflicts among their towns and created instability that adversely affects enrollment. One district (Pioneer) obtained a waiver from the state to construct smaller schools – a model for the state and others to consider. Some schools, like Franklin County Tech, need more space for teachers and shops in order to expand to meet the student demands for technical education, as well as their academic needs to meet the high school graduation requirements.

- **SPECIAL EDUCATION**: The high and somewhat unpredictable costs associated with special education present a challenge for all schools. In particular are unanticipated costs, unfunded transportation expenses, and out of district placements (both tuition and transportation). Although circuit breaker funding helps, the remaining gap still presents funding challenges. One town, (Orange) has several state wards that the state often moves without notice to placements that may cost significantly more, inadvertently creating huge budgetary problems for the district. These costs are not currently reimbursed adequately by the state, other than through the Ch. 70 state aide formula.

- **MAINTAINING CURRENT EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS and CLASS SIZES**: In several districts the lack of adequate funding has resulted in a slow strangling of educational programs (especially the arts and music) and increased class sizes or the number of multi-grade classes, which has not had adequate teacher training or support. Some districts have successfully stretched to maintain educational performance despite budget cuts, but this presents an increasingly difficult challenge. Some have taken extra Choice students, making class sizes larger than desired, in order to be financially able to provide art (Orange). Mahar was once famous for their arts programs. Because of budget cuts, the program has been greatly reduced. In some districts, creating appropriate long-term visions (educational technology), is discouraging when there is no money for implementation.

- **SCHOOL DROP OUT RATES:** In several districts, the dropout rate is significantly higher than the state average. Every district is working hard to make improvements and to retain and support students through graduation. Mahar, in particular, has made significant progress in reducing their numbers of drop outs. They continue to strive in reducing that rate even further.

- **LOW INCIDENCE STAFFING**: Most small and rural school districts find it challenging to find low incidence staff, especially technology staff. While one district (Erving) had 21 applicants for an academic teaching position, they had no applicants for a technology support position.

- **HIGH TURNOVER of SUPERINTENDENTS and CENTRAL OFFICE STAFF**: Several Superintendents noted the lack of long-term stability as one of the biggest challenges facing the Franklin County school districts. Each administrative transition means philosophical and style changes. Furthermore and relationships and gaining credibility takes time to develop. The number of night meetings required is staggering. In some school unions, Superintendents attend well over 100 night meetings a year – in addition to working a full day. Something needs to be done to make the job more sustainable and humane for a longer term. In addition, the pool of potential school superintendent candidates is not deep. Administrator licensure programs are not graduating enough qualified candidates to meet either the current of the future needs of the Commonwealth. Consequently, districts often hire first-time superintendents or administrators from other states. Both scenarios require a period of "adjustment" to the local community. Another factor is that many administrators of small and rural schools do stay beyond their first contract and move east, where salaries are generally higher and where there appear to be greater educational resources.

- **STABILITY:** School districts that have been exploring consolidation, redistricting or school closures, have found that the conflicts, instability, and uncertainty about what schools will be available has cost the district further student losses under school Choice. In addition, these explorations and publicity have created strained relationships among district towns and between towns and schools.

7. **SUCCESS STORIES and CREATIVE IDEAS**:
Superintendents shared the following successful initiatives and creative ideas that could be tried for improving education. Some are specific to individual schools, while others are ideas that could be wider reaching. Some could become areas for collaboration.

- **CONCEPT OF MAGNET SCHOOLS** – The Franklin County school districts could cooperatively develop magnet programs/schools within their respective districts, with each district developing its own area of specialization. Magnet schools could focus on different teaching models, or curriculum areas such as environmental sciences, math and science, computer technology, health, engineering, etc. Franklin County schools could specialize in ways that could serve the whole county – like Franklin County Tech now does. The districts could create career themed high schools as exist in the eastern part of the State. The districts through this cooperative model would focus on countywide collaboration for education, rather than recruiting students from each other for financial survival. Magnet schools would also address parents' and students' desire for a different kind of education, such as now provided by charter schools or through school choice.

- **PILOT VOC TECH PROGRAMS WITHIN SCHOOLS**: Ken Rocke (Gill-Montague) noted that when he was at Blue Hills, there were models of academic regional school districts with vocational technical programs. He'd like to see Ch 74 programs created within the schools with two entry points – the 8th/9th grade and again at 11th/12th grade level. Not all students are prepared to make life long career decisions at the 8th grade level as is now required to attend Franklin County Tech. The programs should be Ch74 quality, linked to licenses and industry standards, and funded at an adequate level to guarantee quality and relevancy. Vermont has regional voc tech schools attached to regional high schools, with such offerings as pre-law, video production, theater arts, pre-engineering – technical programs for students at all academic levels. Ken suggests three potential partners for such programs: Greenfield Community College, Franklin County Tech, and UMASS (for both technical transfer programs and for provision of teaching interns). The programs could be operated by Franklin County Tech as satellite programs housed in other schools, or by the districts themselves. The current model at Franklin County Tech serves kids well, but can not currently serve all students who want or need technical training.

  Mohawk has developed plans to create an in-house vocational program to attract and retain students while improving education. Currently about 40 Mohawk district students apply to area vocational schools, but only about 15 are accepted annually. Of the 25 who do not get in, approximately 10 drop out of school prior to graduation. A proposal has been drafted, but there is no available funding to implement it. Mohawk is struggling just to stay financially solvent. Gill-Montague is also interested in this concept, but start-up funding is also needed in order to move the plan forward.

- **MAGNET PROGRAMS WITHIN SCHOOLS:** Mahar is exploring the possibility of providing a Virtual High School magnet program. They have also developed a two year CISCO Networking Academy from which students will graduate from as certified network technicians.

  Mahar has transformed their after-school detention into a "Success Center" providing academic coaching and remediation.

- **EXPANDED SCHOOL UNION:** Exploration of creating an expanded school union between two districts: Mohawk and Greenfield is currently being explored.

- **STAFF SHARING**: The Erving School Union is in the process of creating a Shared Employee Agreement to make it easier for their districts to share "itinerant" staff that will work part-time for more than one of their districts. Salaries and benefits would be provided by one district but the cost shared by both. It is complex because each district may have different salary scales or benefit packages. This agreement, if successful, could serve as a model for other districts. School superintendent supported districts working together to share low-incidence staff, being able to jointly offer full-time employment and thus saving money by the bundling and sharing of fringe benefits.

- **TECHNOLOGY INITIATIVES**: Orange has a 6th grade after-school program where students are learning computer repairs. Last year their group of students won 15th place in a world wide technology competition. Mahar wants to create a technology lab where students would each build their own laptop computer. These lap tops, when completed would then be supported, maintained and repaired by the program. This program could either serve as a model for replication in other districts or could be expanded to serve more students from other districts.

- **FOUNDATION/ ENDOWMENT FUND**: The Superintendents would like to explore the creation of a Foundation and/or an Endowment Fund for the Franklin County public schools; similar to those of colleges and Universities.

- **MAINTAIN SCHOOL CULTURE and TRADITIONS**: In Franklin County, each school/district has its own cultures and traditions that have proven to be positive for both students, the school, and also for the community (i.e. science fairs, plays, music performances, special annual events, etc).

- **VALUE OF SMALL SCHOOLS**: Several Superintendents noted Nick Young's (Hadley) study of small rural schools as important. A small schools study is needed to identify optimal school sizes- how small is too small – for educational rather than just for financial reasons.

- **MONITOR TRAINING**: Orange sees a need to train recess monitors to teach cooperative games to various sized groups in order to show students positive ways to play and interact.

- **LOCAL RESOURCE UTILIZATION**: All districts need to make better use of the exceptional educational resources that are available locally, i.e. the Responsive Classroom.

- **SUPERINTENDENT AS ROLE MODEL**: Superintendents in small rural schools provide key role models and provide individual attention that makes a huge difference in students' lives. In a low-income high-risk community with a high rate of domestic abuse, the Superintendent is a model of being a large man who is also gentle, as he sits on the floor reading with students. Another, in a district that has struggled with high dropout rates, contacts each dropout personally to help them figure out a way to stay in school. Some noted that having fewer superintendents would not be good for students, and that there is no research on the educational impact that reducing the number of superintendents would have on district costs or district educational performance.

- **LOCAL FARM PRODUCE**: In rural areas the special education vans could pick up local farm produce along their routes in order to help improve food services while supporting local farmers. Orange provides a delicious, nutritional and successful food service program with home-style cooking. This program both feeds students well and teaches them about good nutrition. They also operate a student garden. (Orange)

- **IN HOUSE PUBLISHING**: Erving has a small publishing company in the school, creating event posters and publishing student written materials and books.

- **IN HOUSE PROGRAMS**: Frontier has a creative writing program for grades 3-6, Spanish foreign language programs in all elementary schools, an invitational summer school Reading Camp for grades 3-6, and has just revised their elementary report cards (HS was computerized 4 years ago). They provide several in-house special education programs to keep students local and integrated. The teachers send postcards to welcome their incoming students. They pay teachers to write their own entire curriculum in-house, to framework standards. School Committee members are oriented before their first meeting and are invited to staff development day. Frontier provides professional development for all; staff, food service and custodial as well as teachers and administrators.

- **PARENT GROUPS**: A new "Parents for Mahar" group has raised funds for Connect Ed and to start a Virtual High School program. They have also developed a 2-year CISCO Networking Academy graduating certified CISCO technicians.

- **SHARED MAINTENANCE RESOURCES**: The Tech School students and staff help to maintain their own buildings. Another district (Orange) suggested cooperatively hiring trades people, like electricians and plumbers and collectively with other towns and districts and create a school maintenance/repair team. This team could then provide maintenance and repairs which school custodians are unable to on a multi district, cost shared basis. This method, utilizing "public employees" as opposed to contractors would eliminate the time and expense associated with public bidding and procurement.

- **SUPERINTENDENT SABBATICALS** – Given the amount of time required for the position, especially the number of night meetings, some type of time off is needed to help make the job more sustainable over the long term.

- **SUMMER TEACHERS' INSTITUTE**: The Franklin County school districts should cooperatively offer a countywide summer teachers' institute. Gill-Montague sponsored an institute last summer and included other districts on a space available basis. A collaborative could establish a professional development academy in a convenient Franklin County location (maybe with GCC – or as a satellite in one of the district's schools) for local cohort groups to pursue advanced degrees or licensure or certifications.

8. EXPERIENCE of, INTEREST in, & OPPORTUNITIES for COLLABORATION:

During the administrative interviews, Rich Labrie shared information about Massachusetts Educational Collaboratives. We discussed superintendents' previous or current experiences with educational collaboratives, their interest in collaboration now, and assessed which programs and services would most benefit from collaboration. We specifically noted any relationships and experiences with Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), and the former Franklin County Educational Collaborative.

RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPERIENCES WITH FRANKLIN REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, AND THE FORMER FRANKLIN COUNTY EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE:

- Only one superintendent has been around long enough to remember the former Franklin County Educational Collaborative. He remembered that it provided helpful services, but was terminated after only several years due to internal personnel and financial problems. It never developed the economy of scale necessary to cost effectively carry the overhead structure.

- Most Superintendents indicated that they have had little or no experience with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments before this study, other than attending meetings there. All are interested in learning more about the FRCOG and how it might assist them in meeting their educational and financial challenges.

CURRENT COLLABORATIONS:

- Greenfield, Mohawk, Frontier, Orange and others collaborate on a Summer Academy in August and on the Franklin County Day for professional development. Some participate in Hampshire Educational Collaborative's professional development offerings.
- Some collaborate with the Northeast Foundation for Children.
- The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative provides Medicaid billing for several of the Franklin County school districts and energy/fuel procurement for others.
- Some municipal districts are part of the Hampshire County Insurance Group, with their towns, for providing insurance and several uses the Hampshire Council of Governments. bid process for various supplies.
- Several districts benefit from a variety of community service agencies, though for most the services are too far away.
- Several districts partner with Greenfield Community College or other colleges and universities to provide dual enrollment programs, and with a variety of programs providing distance learning.
- A non-profit Gill-Montague education group is being organized.
- Frontier collaborates with PVMA on history projects. For example, students learn to build houses, sew costumes, garden with original plant varieties, etc. They also get interns, including student nurses from UMASS. Since they are geographically closer to the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, they use HEC's services more than the other districts in Franklin County.
- Mahar partners with Athol Hospital to share Nurse Substitutes and with CAPS Collaborative for special education programs and services.
- Orange partners with the Bay State Reading Institute for learning how best to teach reading.

AMONG THE SUPERINTENDENTS THERE WAS UNIVERSAL INTEREST IN EXPLORING:

- **COLLABORATIVE PURCHASING AND SHORT TERM FINANCING**: Cooperative purchasing, coupled with the ability to finance short term would be extremely valuable service for the acquisition of such things as: textbooks and curriculum materials; technology purchases, food commodities, building upgrades, fees, licenses and technical support; fuel and other building utilities; copy paper and other consumables. All of these were seen as ways to save money, to provide more educational resources to students, and free up central office staff time. Districts would want to maintain some autonomy of choices in ordering, especially educational materials. Mohawk, Hawlemont and Rowe currently have a shared software fee agreement among the three districts, dividing the fees by the number of computers in each district.

- **GRANT WRITING RESOURCES:** Experienced grant writers could be shared or hired as consultants and paid a contingency fee, based on their success (thus low-risk for districts). Districts are writing their allocation grants, but most do not have the time, the staff or the expertise to seek out and successfully apply for competitive grants. Their concern is that most grants are for new programs and do not allow supplanting. Teachers and administrators do not have the time or other financial resources for new program development. There was also some interest in having a shared person to focus on government relations and help encourage government grants, the plight of small and rural schools and the educational value of maintaining small schools.

- **SHARED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** opportunities and resources, especially for low-incidence staff. Several Superintendents suggested creating a countywide Summer Academy for a few weeks at Greenfield Community College or located at one of the schools. There is need for training teachers in teaching multi-grade classes and training recess monitors in cooperative games. There is a need for technology training for facilities managers, which no one is doing and for more teacher training for distance learning. In addition there is a need for a cost effective delivery system of professional development for teacher recertification and for sustained curriculum integration.

- **LOW INCIDENCE STAFF SHARING**. Cooperation would help provide more educational resources to schools and enable districts to save money by hiring on a full-time basis. (Erving has a Shared Employee Agreement that could be used as a model.) Small and rural districts have difficulty in recruiting and retaining part time teachers. Often times, they must pay for a full time benefit package, while only receiving part time teaching benefit. Cooperative staff sharing arrangements would allow for full time employment and the cost sharing of both salary and benefits. Teacher retention would, therefore, be increased.

- **SHARED SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES** such as therapy, medical services, and transportation. In rural areas there is a scarcity of services, especially for low incidence special education needs including adaptive physical education, occupational therapy, speech and language, physical therapy, services for hearing or sight impaired, etc. Services which do exist are often far away, with resultant high student transportation costs. These transportation costs are not reimbursed and take district funds away from education. Research into potential collaborative special education transportation, including out-of-district, has already been initiated through the Special Education Transportation Pilot Project funded by the State Legislature. The Franklin County Tech School is currently developing the project on behalf of all of the school districts in Franklin County. State reimbursement for special education transportation would have an enormous positive impact on school district budgets.

- **CREATING COLLABORATIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION** programs and services housed within the districts, with different districts specializing in particular special education needs could be beneficial. It was noted however that the Circuit Breaker has not promoted collaboration. Collaborative costs are often below the Circuit Breaker threshold and therefore, not eligible for reimbursement. There needs to be a way to provide incentive to districts to collaborate, or at least hold them financially harmless when they benefit from so doing.

- **LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING** are needed to coordinate any collaborative initiatives that emerge from this study. While many districts have informal cost sharing arrangements with their neighboring districts, they districts do not have staff available to sustain it on an ongoing basis. There needs to be an organizational structure and adequate initial funding to support it until it develops an economy of scale of programs and services to be cost effective and self sustaining. Leadership commitment and funding are needed for at least 3 years, to provide a successful start. Working with the FRCOG could strengthen both the schools and the FRCOG. For collaboration and change to succeed, the State needs to provide "carrots rather than sticks."

INDIVIDUAL DISTRICTS HAD INTEREST IN THESE AREAS:

- **CREATING MUTUAL DUAL-ENROLLMENT TYPE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING STUDENTS**: Gill-Montague and Franklin County Tech have been exploring the possibility of opening classes to each other's high school students for mutual benefit. For example Tech students might take an AP class at Gill-Montague while Gill-Montague students could take technical training classes.

- **MORE COLLABORATION ON SUMMER REMEDIATION PROGRAMS**: None of the districts are able to offer a cost effective summer remediation program. Their individual numbers are just too small. Cooperative regional programs could pool the students from area school districts and create the economy of scale to cost effectively provide these needed programs.

- **DATA WAREHOUSING:** A county wide organization could create a Franklin County "Data Warehouse" to help address the overwhelming amounts of data that must now be collected, processed, interpreted, applied to improving education, and used to assess improvements. Help is needed to interpret and understand how to best utilize available data to improve education. Creating templates for districts to use for data analysis would also be helpful. (Pioneer, Orange)

- **EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH and DEVELOPMENT**: The Franklin County districts need technical assistance in researching existing educational information in order to save time, money and reduce trial-and-error mistakes of implementing new curriculum (i.e. finding the best reading intervention program for that particular district's needs). (Orange)

- **ENERGY IMPROVEMENTS**: Explore with FRCOG how to bundle building energy improvements after energy audits are completed. (Mohawk)

- **IMPROVED INTERNET ACCESS** – Some schools in the Mohawk system do not have access to high speed or broad band internet. Some schools are still on telephone dial-up for internet access.

OTHER AREAS TO CONSIDER:

- **FOOD SERVICES**: There is a need for improved efficiency of most of the school food services programs. Many lose money, some break even but few make money. Further research into what makes the more successful ones work, would benefit the rest. There is a great deal of duplication in small schools. They could benefit from creating shared elements of their programs. Most schools are too far apart to share services completely. Linking with local farmers would provide healthier locally grown food, while providing community support.

- **REDUCING DROPOUT RATES**: The dropout rates for two Franklin County districts fall within the worst 25 in the state. Others are better, but the county average is nearly twice that of the state average. The districts need to develop programs and services to support and retain more students through graduation. Such programs could include magnet type programs, satellite vocational technical training programs, distance learning and dual enrollment programs. Districts also need additional staff and student support personnel in order to provide more individual student attention.

- **TRANSPORTATION:** Small and rural school districts often do not receive more than one bidder for their school transportation contracts. Multi-district bidding could provide the economy of scale to interest other bidders in relatively small contracts.

- **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:** When present the MTA provides teachers with professionally trained negotiators. Several districts have had success in collaborative bargaining methods. It may be advantageous to train school administrators and school committee representatives in collaborative bargaining or in negotiations training approaches such as outlined in *Getting to Yes*. One Superintendent suggested that the State negotiate with the MTA to set reasonable salary scales for each region of the State.

THE FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS

Franklin County Technical School
The Franklin County Technical School is a regional vocational technical school that serves nineteen cities and towns in Franklin County. The district encompasses 580 square miles and has an enrollment of 526 students in grades 9-12. This year alone there were 290 student applicants and after interviewing each, only 170 were accepted. Franklin County Technical School is recognized as the #1 Voc/Tech School in the state.

The administrative team consists of the school principal, a director of pupil personnel, a special education coordinator, and a director of curriculum and instruction.

The school offers fourteen vocational programs along with a complete range of academic, sports and extracurricular activities in one 160,000 square foot building located in the industrial park in Turners Falls. The building is thirty one years old and in very good condition. The facility sits on a large campus, which is beautifully maintained by the students in the landscape program. Recently all the mechanicals (furnaces, electric wiring and plumbing) were replaced under a performance-based contracting agreement at no cost to the school.

Technology is a large part of the daily program. There is wireless Internet service throughout the building and laptops and desktops are in every classroom. Each classroom has a video projector. Although the school has not undergone budget cuts, the budget is barebones. Another social studies class is needed and classroom space is at a premium.

Freshmen participate in a half year exploratory program. The students have a half time academic program and a half time vocational program. There are approximately sixty certified teachers and four paraprofessionals. Thirty seven percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

There is a special education program for students with cognitive delays. They are tuitioned in and learn life and vocational skills by working on projects such as Habitat for Humanity. There is a proactive guidance department staffed by one director, three counselors and one school adjustment counselor. Because the school receives Title One funds students who qualify receive extra support in language arts and mathematics. A paraprofessional staffs the library. The curriculum director oversees the alignment of curriculum to state standards. Each teacher receives $1200 per year for professional advancement. Throughout their four years, students create an individual portfolio of their best work, which is judged by a juried panel. The portfolios are bound and able to be kept as a memory of their accomplishments at the school. Greenfield Community College offers free courses for teacher in the field of renewable energy. The administration is proud of the dedicated staff the level of skill achieved by the students. They are involved in community based activities such as building a boat house for a local community, working in nursing homes, and for Habitat for Humanity

Erving School Union #28
Union #28 is comprised of four elementary schools districts Erving Elementary, Leverett Elementary, Shutesbury Elementary, and Swift River School that educates students who reside in New Salem and Wendell. All schools are PK-6. These four school districts share Central Office staff and expenses yet each has its own school committee. Students from Leverett and Shutesbury attend the Amherst Pelham Regional School District for grades 7-12. Students from Swift River attend the Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District. Erving Elementary students attend Great Falls Middle School and Turners Falls High School.

The enrollment of the elementary schools ranges from a low of approximately 150 at Swift River to a high of 189 at Erving Elementary. Each school has one or two classes of each grade and Swift River and Shutesbury Elementary have some combination or multi grade classes. There are two or sometimes three special education teachers and several special and regular education paraprofessionals at each school.

All students have special classes in art, music and physical education, although not uniformly throughout the district. For example students at Erving Elementary have art and music twice per week, but students in Leverett have these classes once per week. Spanish is taught at all grades in Leverett, but no other school has a world language program.

Some of the schools qualify for grants such as Title One or REAP, but not all do. All schools have a staffed library and well equipped computer lab. At Erving Elementary each teacher has a laptop computer. Each school has a half-day of professional development every Wednesday. There is not a curriculum director for the district. Shutesbury Elementary has a math coach and a strings and winds instrumental music program. At Swift River all students in grades 3-6 have an "Alphasmart" keyboard to use in school and at home.

The district has an early release day every Wednesday, which allows teacher time for professional development and curriculum work.

Their 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- All four elementary schools have made AYP in ELA and math for all groups and subgroups. There is an especially strong showing in ELA.

Programs and resources are somewhat inconsistent across the district but all schools enjoy strong ties to the community and good parental support.

Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts

The Frontier Regional and Union #38 School Districts are composed of five separate school districts serving the towns of Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately with each town having a PK-6 elementary school which together forms Union #38. Frontier Regional School is a grade 7-12 middle and high school. The total enrollment is approximately 1200 students.

The per capita income of these four towns is substantially higher than some others in Franklin County. The budgets are somewhat inconsistent when compared to each other. For example, Deerfield Elementary and Conway Elementary have experienced increased funding in the past several years. Yet, Sunderland Elementary cut two teaching positions two years ago and Whately Elementary receives fewer dollars from the state and faces budgeting challenges each year. Two years ago the town voters overrode proposition 2 ½ to fully fund the school budget. All schools benefit from having students in the School Choice program. There are two district curriculum directors, one at the elementary level and one at the secondary level. The district IT department oversees technology at all of the schools.

Conway Grammar has an enrollment of 170 students with one class of each grade. There are 24 School Choice students in the school. The district "Wings" program for behaviorally challenged students is located at Conway. Each classroom has a teacher and a paraprofessional. There are two special educators; one assigned to grades one through three and the other for grades four through six. There are four paraprofessionals to assist the students in special education.

Conway is typically "white collar" and the population is increasing. The community is supportive of education and the funding has been generous. The building was constructed in 1991. Although the capacity is 225, there are no empty classrooms. Extra classrooms are serving as special education resource rooms or used for occupational and physical therapy. More space for storage is needed.

Students have music and physical education twice each week. Health education and art is taken once each week. A small group of local artists have created a weekly program that kindergarteners enjoy called "Mud Pie". Fourth fifth and sixth grades take instrumental music lessons. There is a full time certified librarian who functions as the lab coordinator. There is a well-resourced computer lab. A full time reading teacher conducts the Reading Recovery program and teaches reading groups in grades K, 1 and 2. There is a fulltime school psychologist and a Spanish teacher gives weekly lessons to children in grades K-4.

A before and after school program is run by Union #38. Seventeen percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch but many of these are "Wings" students. The school does not receive Title One funds.

Conway Grammar is known throughout Western Massachusetts as a school that historically scored very well in MCAS. This is a veteran staff and literacy is taught all morning in grades K-3. Through creative scheduling the ratio for literacy instruction is four students to one teacher. The staff believes strongly that early intervention is the key and they attribute their strong MCAS scores to their early intervention program.

The principal would like staff training in language-based program, some students could benefit by that approach. She is proud of the staff that works well together and shares the common goal of high student achievement.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- AYP met in the aggregate in ELA and mathematics and in the white subgroup

Deerfield Elementary, built in 1992, has an enrollment of 470 students. There are two preschool classes and three classes of each at the other grades. The administrative team is comprised of a full time principal and assistant principal. The school embraces the "Responsive Classroom" philosophy. There are two Reading Recovery teachers, eleven paraprofessional's four special education teachers with one or two paraprofessionals. A full time and a part time librarian staff the library. Students take art and music one time each week and instrumental music (including strings) is offered to grades three through six. Grades five and six participate in band. There is a school psychologist and a school adjustment counselor. The school nurse does some health education. Parents bear the cost of before and after school enrichment programs. Only ten percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The computer lab is well equipped and the school recently acquired four "smart boards" for classroom use.

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Deerfield Elementary has been experiencing a yearly increase in enrollment. The school budget has been increasing, although less so this school year. The autism program at the school entitled "Daybreak" costs $400,000 to run and it is largely funded through school choice money. There are seventy seven students in the School Choice program.

The principal is proud of the caring staff, positive school culture, happy students and the good relationship the school has with the community.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- AYP met in the aggregate in ELA and mathematics and in the white subgroup

Sunderland Elementary has 220 students with two of each grade except second and third, where there is one of each. There are twenty-nine School Choice students, many from Montague, Greenfield, Hatfield and Orange. There is a special education teacher for grades K-3 and one for grades 4-6. Students have art and music one time each week and physical education twice each week. There are strings lessons for grades 3-6 and band for fifth and sixth graders. There is certified librarian four days per week, a reading specialist, a math specialist and a Spanish immersion program for fifth and sixth grade students. There is a guidance counselor and a school psychologist. A 21st Century grant provides a before and after school enrichment and homework program. Between thirty and forty percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Title One funds support part of the Reading Recovery program. Union #38 provides a summer camp for at risk readers for a nominal fee.

Sunderland Elementary is a newer building but its roof collapsed several years ago. The damage has now been fully repaired. Sunderland has the second highest ratio of apartments per capita in the state. The operational budget has been level for the past several years but enrollment has been declining and two teaching positions were eliminated several years ago. There are two empty classrooms, which are currently used meetings or small group instruction. The lab has 20 new computers and there are two or three in each classroom.

The principal feels fortunate that federal grants have allowed the purchase of materials that may not have been possible with local budgets. She is proud that the school is a community center and the staff teams well to create a welcoming environment for students and parents.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- AYP met in the aggregate in ELA and mathematics and in the white subgroup

Whately Elementary has an enrollment of 125 students. There is one of each grade, the smallest class has fourteen students and the largest has eighteen. In addition to the teacher there is a paraprofessional in each classroom. There are twenty nine students in the School Choice program. The budget has recently been a challenge. Two years ago the town overrode Proposition 2 and 1/2. Whately has a "funding problem" in that it receives the least amount of funding from the state than the other towns in the district.

Students have art and music one time each week and physical education two times each week. Students in grades four through six have instrumental music lessons once each week. A full time librarian staffs the library media center. There are 18 desktop computers, 18 wireless laptops and four computers in each classroom. Each teacher is assigned a laptop. There is a Reading Recovery teacher, school nurse, a guidance counselor four days per week and school psychologist one day per week. The district runs the before and after school programs.

The principal is concerned about inequities in school funding, the need for more space for small group instruction and the autism program. She is proud of hard working staff, the welcoming atmosphere and the sense of community in the school.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- AYP met in the aggregate in ELA and mathematics and in the white subgroup

Frontier Regional School built in 1998 educates 725 middle and high school students. The principal and assistant principal are the administrative team. The middle school uses a team approach and the high school has a block schedule. There are seventy five teachers for grades 7-12 and 20 special educators. Class size ranges from ten to twenty nine students. The space in the school is adequate. There are ninety four School Choice students enrolled, from towns including Ludlow, Greenfield and Amherst. Historically, the four towns of Conway, Deerfield, Sunderland and Whately have supported the school and the budget has been relatively stable. Approximately twenty two percent of the students qualify for free or reduced lunch.

The library is staffed with a certified librarian and assistant. There are fifty computers in the media center. One full time Title One teacher teaches math at the middle school. The guidance department consists of a director, one counselor for the middle school and two others for the high school. There are several programs at the school to meet the various needs of students: six special education programs, a Life Skills Program for middle and high school students, a transitional program for emotionally challenged students, teams at the middle school with a special educator on each, a language based learning disabilities program for students two to four years below grade level. After school and summer MCAS tutorial programs offer intensive help. There are five computer labs and technology education occurs in the classrooms. There are many after school activities: arts, drama, music and some community service clubs.

Staff is participating in curriculum mapping on professional development days. The school has little ethnic but a lot of economic diversity. The staff is receiving training Bully-Bystander is program that empowers students to take a stand against bullying behavior. The principal would like to expand staff and move to team approach for the ninth and tenth grades. She is proud of the community and family atmosphere and the respectful way the students treat each other.

The 2007 MCAS scores are as follows:

- The school did make AYP in the aggregate and in the white subgroup for ELA. It did not make AYP in the special education or low income subgroups.

- The school did make AYP in the aggregate and in the white subgroup for mathematics. It did not make AYP in the special education or low income subgroups.

Greenfield Public Schools

The Greenfield Public Schools provide an education for 1840 students in grades PK-12 as well as a publicly funded special education day school. There are seven buildings in the district that house the students: The Academy of Early Learning at North Parish School (PK, 3 and 4 year olds), three K-4 elementary schools: Federal Street School, Four Corners School, and Newton School. The Greenfield Middle School (5-8) and Greenfield High School (9-12) provide for pre-adolescent and adolescent students. The Green River School closed last year and is now called the Poet Seat School (the special education day school). All schools in Greenfield practice the "Responsive Classroom/Design" model for social and emotional growth. Several students have left the district through the School Choice program.

As a community Greenfield has fallen upon hard times. Much of the industrial base of the town has disappeared. Tax dollars for education are scarcer each year. One administrator spoke about always being in a "crisis" mode. Over the years, resources have been cut but teacher positions have not been eliminated to the degree they might have especially at the elementary level. This has helped class size to remain small and manageable. Poverty casts a dark shadow over the schools and broken homes are commonplace. Federal and state grants at all levels have bolstered the system. All schools in Greenfield have an extended day program. According to administration the program is proving to be academically successful and students have easily transitioned into a longer school day.

Poet's Seat has recently moved into the former Green River School. The staff is pleased to be in this roomier facility. The school serves approximately 14 students in grades 5-12 who have severe special needs, many with multiple diagnoses. They are not cognitively disabled but are rather emotionally challenged students. Some have missed a lot of schooling and some have a difficult time connecting with the learning process. The goal of the educators is to transition these students to a less restrictive environment. Some students attend the Greenfield Middle or Greenfield High School for physical education or art. The middle and high schools' sports programs are available for Poet's Seat students. A social worker, two special education teachers, a full time nurse and three clinically trained counselor aides serve the students. Occupational and physical therapy are given as required by IEPs. Eighty percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. Many of these students come from broken homes and parent involvement is a challenge. The administration is concerned about the lunch program, the food is often cold and the selections minimal. More certified staff is needed to meet the complex needs of these students.

The Academy for Learning educates approximately ninety five of Greenfield's youngest students. The building has been remodeled but is at capacity and increased enrollment will pose a problem. There are nine certified teachers and twelve paraprofessionals. The curriculum integrates music, art and physical education into the daily program. The Academy has a part time social worker, school psychologist, speech teacher and art time physical and occupational therapists. Because of space considerations, there is not a school library. Sixty five percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. A full kitchen provides breakfast and lunch each day. Teachers have computers and there are a few computers in classrooms for students. With an early release each Friday, teachers spend the afternoon conferencing with parents or developing curriculum. The local YMCA provides an extended day program for about fifty nine of the youngsters.

Several grants provide additional assistance for parents and families. "The Children Trust Fund" is a parenting skills program for pre-release incarcerated fathers. The school also is involved in Community Partnership for Children and a Universal PK grant. "Reach" enables the mothers of 2 and ½ year olds to meet other parents while the children participate in supervised playgroups. There is a need for more staff and more help is needed in applying for and managing grants. Many of these young children are traumatized by domestic violence and the school provides as much family and emotional support as resources allow.

The three elementary schools are older buildings. Newton, home to 198 students was built in 1945 and was renovated in 1990. It is handicapped accessible. Four Corners, with a student enrollment of 211, is an older one story building renovated the same year. Federal is an older two story building was renovated in 1992 when a new gym and cafeteria was added. It is handicapped accessible and with an elevator connecting the two floors. Federal is home to 255 students. The

This is the first school year that the district's fifth grades are located at the middle school. The move has freed up space at all three elementary schools but they are currently operating at capacity without any free space. Greenfield has a transient population, this puts a stress on the system at all levels. It is not uncommon for a grade to gain or lose thirty percent of students during any school year. There is a large Moldovian (Russian/Romanian) population at one of the housing projects. Thirty percent of the families are serviced in some way by the Department of Social Services. These non-English speaking children need English Language Learning programs and more concentrated time in small group instruction.

Parent volunteers staff the libraries at each elementary and Title One funds provide for a Literacy Coordinator and reading support for the three elementary schools. Literacy education is a large part of the program each day. Art, music and physical education is on a rotating basis and staff is shared among the three schools. A technology person is shared and all three schools have desktops and laptop computer in labs and in classrooms. The extended day enables principals to meet with small

groups of teachers to work on curriculum and programs. Each school has one full time behavioral psychologist. Newton School struggles to meet the needs of two children with brain injuries some with Aspersers Syndrome, and many with challenging behaviors. 21st Century, Reading First, and Extended Learning Time grants help to soften the blow of recent budget cuts.

With the fifth grade move to Greenfield Middle School this year, enrollment is at 500 and the thirteen empty classrooms have now been filled. The middle school is an older 3 story building that was renovated in 2000. The impact of diminishing funding has been less and less supplies each year. The librarian's position had been eliminated but has been restored this year. Grade 5 students have a behavioral psychologist and there are two social workers for the 6th, 7th, and 8th graders. Art, music, health, physical education, computer, wood shop, drama and world languages (French and Spanish) are offered on a nine week basis. The school benefits form the 21st Century Grant, which provides after school enrichment during the extended day. Sixty percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The building has three labs but only one has current technology.

In spite of dwindling resources, the new administration is bringing new energy to the staff and is proud of their work ethic and willingness to come together in creating a new positive culture in the school.

Greenfield High School has an enrollment of approximately 431 students. Fifty School Choice students attend the school. Enrollment has been declining; the building once housed 620 students. Enrollment is projected to increase next school year. The building was constructed in 1957; however an addition expanded the school in 1971. Capital improvements are sorely needed. The school has recently had to cut the nursery school program, a home economics teacher and one academic teacher in each department. Pothole money enables 15 juniors and seniors to attend Greenfield Community College. Forty percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch; however there are no Title One services at the high school.

All students with IEPs are integrated into the general education classrooms. There is a separate program for behaviorally challenged students. The school has a higher than average drop out rate and steps are being taken to remedy that issue as DOE is funding an alternative program for at risk students. There are five computer labs as well as desktops in the library. The "Virtual High School" is an on-line course.

The district curriculum director works closely with department heads to keep curriculum aligned with state standards. Curriculum mapping is an ongoing project. There is an assistant principal, two guidance counselors.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- This is the first year Federal did not met AYP in the aggregate and in the low income subgroup for ELA and math.
- Four Corners met AYP in the aggregate for ELA and math but not in the low income subgroup.
- Newton met AYP in the aggregate for ELA but not in the low income subgroup. AYP was met in the aggregate for math but not in the white subgroup.
- Greenfield Middle School met AYP in the aggregate in ELA but failed to do so for the special education subgroup. In math they did not meet AYP in the aggregate or in the white or special education subgroups. They did meet AYP in the low income subgroup.
- Greenfield High did not meet AYP in the aggregate or in the low income subgroup for ELA. They did meet AYP in the aggregate in math but not in the low income subgroup.

Each school in the district would benefit from increased staff and material resources. However, administrators are proud of their dedicated teachers and support personnel who are working under challenging conditions with some of Franklin County's most needy students.

Mohawk Trail Regional School District
Mohawk Trail Regional School District K-12
Hawlemont Regional School District
Rowe Elementary School District

The K-12 Mohawk Regional School District includes eight member towns: Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley, Heath, Plainfield, and Shelburne. Each town participates at grades K-12 except for Charlemont and Hawley, which participate at grades 7-12.

Sanderson Academy in Ashfield is a K-6 school with an enrollment of 143 students. The principal serves as part time principal and part time elementary curriculum coordinator.

Thirty percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Budgets have been declining in the past several years. Physical education was cut from twice to once per week. There is less money for classroom materials and maintenance. Due to decreasing enrollments one wing of the building has been closed off and two classrooms in the main building are not being used. Physical education and music time allocation decreased from 45 minutes to 35 minutes. The technology has not been kept up to date, no replacements or repairs has resulted in old machines with slow Internet connections.

In its prime, Sanderson had an enrollment of 240-250 students. There are broken windows that need replacing, but the money has gone to higher priority items. There is ongoing discussion and debate on whether or not the school should close. This feeling of instability takes its toll on teacher and parent morale. The principal would like to have more funding for maintenance, materials and staff. A full time remedial math teacher and second special education teacher and increased time for physical education and music are priorities. There is one class per grade and a 1^{st} 2^{nd} combination. Each classroom has an instructional assistant. Students take art, music and physical education one time per week. The library is staffed three days per week by a paraprofessional. There is a full time reading teacher and a half time Title One math teacher a fulltime nurse and a school psychologist.

The school is proud of its exchange program. For thirty-eight years the sixth graders change schools with another country (last year it was Mexico) for several weeks each year. There is an after school soccer and basketball program staffed by volunteers. The veteran staff at Sanderson has worked closely with one another and the principal to turn the academic problems around.

The 2007 MSCAS results are as follows:

- AYP was met in ELA and in mathematics

The Buckland-Shelburne Regional School in Shelburne Falls is a pre-k-6 with a part time principal. There are 183 students with a full day PK program partially paid for by parents. The building was constructed in the 1950's and renovated and added to in the 80's. Heat, electricity and plumbing should be upgraded. The ceilings are in poor condition. Due to decreasing numbers of students one wing of the school has been closed.

The school is in a rural area and there is a high poverty rate. Thirty three percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Buckland-Shelburne is losing its industrial base and there is little work for parents. Many of the newer town residents are retired professionals and artists. Declining budgets have resulted in cutting the principal's position to half time, some other staff cuts and sharps cuts in supplies. The students have art and music once per week and physical education twice per week. Instrumental music is offered to 4-6 graders. The school uses its half time Title One position for remedial math instruction. The library is staffed by a full time paraprofessional. There is a full time reading teacher, full time school psychologist, and full time school nurse. Before and after school programs are self-sustaining. The computer lab is being moved to a larger room and plans are in the works to get refurbished computers from the high school.

A problem that plagues the school is the high cost of transportation and little reimbursement from the state conflicting with the desire to keep students close to home and parents preference for neighborhood schools.

The principal would like to see major capital improvements, a full time administrator, money for more materials and supplies, and updated technology suitable for on line accelerated learning. The principal speaks highly of the supportive community, caring staff, home-grown anti-bullying program and children with respectful attitudes.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- AYP was not met in the aggregate in ELA, nor was it met in the low income and white subgroups.
- AYP was not met in the aggregate in math, but it was met in the low income and white subgroups.

Colrain Central is a PK-6 school located in the town of Colrain. The once thriving Kendall mills fueled the economy of the town but now there are fewer and smaller families. The cost of homes in Colrain is prohibitive for some and many what were once primary family homes are now vacation homes for aging boomers.

The principal shares her time between Colrain Central and Heath. There are approximately 125 students in the school; the PK is a private school. There is one class of each grade. There were two classes of each grade years ago and declining enrollments have resulted in a reduction of staff. The school's computer lab is deteriorating but an upgrade is in process through pothole money from the state.

There are before and after school programs, which provide clubs and enrichment activities for students. Approximately thirty five percent of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. The students take art, music and physical education one time per week and the full time nurse oversees health education twice per month. A paraprofessional staffs the library. Title One funds one full time position for the remedial math program and the reading teacher is at the school four days per week.

The building does not adequately serve students, as there is no art room or music room. The principal is concerned with the lack of updated technology and the scarcity of hands-on math materials. She is proud of the warm, open, and caring staff whose morale is constantly being challenged by dwindling enrollments and an uncertain future.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- The school met AYP in the aggregate in ELA and in the white subgroup.
- It met AYP in the aggregate in mathematics and in the white subgroup.

Heath Elementary is a PK-6 school with only sixty five students. In the past several years enrollment has declined dramatically. Twelve years ago Heath was created as a multiage school with one class per grade; now there are only four multi-grade classes. The building is fully occupied. Over 50% of students qualify for free and reduced lunch. Twenty five students are enrolled in the School Choice program. There is no computer lab and there are son older, slower computers in the classrooms. The parents of Colrain have a vision of excellence about the school. There is a strong affiliation and the thought of closing the building is, for some, unthinkable. Yet, declining enrollment has created pressure to do so. Responsive Classroom is a core component of the curriculum

This is a school with high achieving students and there is no program to meet the needs of gifted and talented learners. The principal would like to provide staff training in gifted and talented education. Recently a grant funded a program in robotics and bridges for Colrain students at the Buckland-Shelburne Regional School.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- The school made AYP in ELA and in mathematics.

The Hawlemont Regional School District is a K-6 regional elementary district with two member towns: Charlemont and Hawley. There are 117 students enrolled in the school. There is one grade of each class and three special education teachers.

Hawlemont is a Title One School and students are provided services in math and reading accordingly. Reading Recovery is offered each afternoon. Students take art, music and physical education once per week. The library is staffed half time by a paraprofessional. The school psychologist is at the school two days per week and counsels students individually or in small groups. The part time school nurse serves as the health educator for the school. The PTO sponsors after school enrichment programs and other activities. Forty three percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. The computer lab has twenty student desktop computers and there is a small lab in the school library. There are two or three computers in each classroom. In the past several years Hawlemont's budget has been decreasing along with its number of students. This is partially due to a low birth rate.

Educating the school's gifted and talented population is a concern; more enrichment materials and more staff are needed to provide an adequate program. The principal is proud of the up to date technology, the teachers' ability to work collaboratively in analyzing MCAS data and gearing instruction to individual needs of students.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- The AYP was not met in the aggregate for ELA but AYP was met in the white subgroup.
- AYP was met in the aggregate in mathematics and in the white subgroup.

The Rowe Elementary School District

Rowe Elementary is a K-6 elementary district with an enrollment of about 61 students The 7-12 grade students are tuitioned into Mohawk Trail Regional Middle/High School. The town derives about eighty percent of its tax revenue from the Bear Swamp Hydro-Electric Plant so the residential tax rate is lower than many communities. Rowe elementary has fared well in recent years. With a moderate increases in the budget, the school has been able to maintain staff positions and keep supplies and services at a stable level. Enrollment has moderately increased over the past ten years. There are twenty three School Choice students enrolled in the school.

The building lacks a faculty room and storage space is at a premium. There is a vocal minority in the town that promotes tuitioning out the students and using the facility as a Senior Center.

Rowe does not receive Title One funds, but there is a district funded reading/math teacher. The principal is a part time administrator and a part time reading recovery teacher and language arts coordinator for the Mohawk, Hawlemont and Rowe districts. There is one class of each of grades K-2, a combination 3rd and 4th and a combination 5th and 6th. There is at least one instructional assistant in each class. A science specialist teaches the science program. A school psychologist works with students individually or in small groups. There is one fulltime speech pathologist. Free and reduced numbers are less than ten percent Breakfast is served before school and the students can stay for an after school sports/arts program run by staff. Technology is fairly new and plentiful. A portable lab of forty laptops coupled with teacher and student Macs are easily used within the building as grades 3-6 have wireless Internet access. Flexible inter and intra grade grouping is a central part of the school. Art, music and health education are taught one time each week and physical education twice per week. Instrumental music is taught in grades 4-6. The librarian doubles as the Spanish teacher. Using the "Total Physical Response System" (a movement method) the teacher introduces the language to all students PK-6.

The teachers at Rowe tie the curriculum to the environment whenever possible. The nearby park and lake provides a real life, hands on laboratory for the students. At times they put on snowshoes and walk the trails of the park to look for animal tracks and to gather scientific data. The school has strong community support, a PTO that provides enrichment programs including an artist in residence and a cultural study of Japan.

Mohawk Trail Regional Middle/High School has an enrollment of 640 students and educates students from the towns of Ashfield, Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Hawley Heath, Plainfield, Rowe and Shelburne. Central office is located in the building. The principal serves as the school's curriculum director. There is an assistant principal and one athletic director. There are over fifty five teachers and some twenty four paraprofessionals. Twenty eight percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. There are some School Choice students enrolled from towns such as Greenfield, Conway, Goshen, and Florida, MA. At capacity the school can house 850 students there has been a drop of 210 students in four years.

The middle/high school has experienced cuts in recent years. There has not been a summer program since 2004, art was cut at the middle school level last year but has now been restored. Woodshop was cut, but that was restored this year as well. A recent cut of $300,000 eliminated five certified teaching positions this school year. Twenty five percent of the school's population is in special education and there is a need for more space to accommodate their academic programs. The students spend seventy five percent of their school day in instruction and a quarter of the time is spent in study hall, necessitated by staff cuts. The principal would like to add staff and eliminate the study halls, which number forty per week. Some budget relief may be in the offing as Halifax, Vermont is considering sending their students to Mohawk under a tuition agreement.

A 21st Century grant is used for the after school athletic and enrichment program. However, funding will be soon terminated. The school is very proud of its outstanding cross-country team. There is a strong extracurricular music component at the school. 300 students participate in chorus, instrumental music, dance or jazz band. The after school athletic program is for is for both middle and high school students. A reading grant, "Read Naturally" is an accelerated reading program that serves 38 students at the middle level who need extra support. The library is staff by a certified librarian; there is one guidance person for the middle school and one for the high school. There is a school psychologist and a part time adjustment counselor. Since the school received a "warning" in math there is extra help for tenth graders after school several days each week.

There are 40 shared computers in the library but are out dated. The school has four labs, which are currently being upgraded. There are twenty five laptops on a cart for student use and 15 desktops in another area of the building. There was a program at one time that allowed teleconferencing with Gateway Regional School but the program is no longer funded.

The staff has sixteen hours of professional development each year and they are working with the rest of the district on the philosophy of Understanding by Design by Grant Wiggins. By working in interdisciplinary and intergrade level teams and study groups they are seeking essential questions and creating common final exams at the high school level.

The school faces the annual problem of declining enrollment and budgets. The principal would like the school to move toward being a more comprehensive high school with more offerings for students. He is proud of the pre-vocational life skills program that provides the more challenged students with real life experiences. He is also proud of the hard working staff that seems to rise to every challenge and meets or exceeds his expectations for performance. They are willing to raise the bar for all students and to inspire those who are not engaged in learning. They are quick to identify at risk students and give lots of support to help them succeed. He wishes they weren't always operating in a "crisis mode" but applauds the staff for finding creative ways to reach students with fewer and fewer resources each year.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- The school met AYP in the aggregate for ELA but not in the special education and low income subgroups. It did meet AYP for the white subgroup.

- The school did not meet AYP in the aggregate for mathematics, nor did any subgroup meet AYP (special education, low income and white).

Orange Public Schools

The Orange Elementary School District is a PK-6 school system of approximately 870 students. Fisher Hill School is a K-2, Dexter Park houses the pre-school and grades 3-4, and Butterfield School serves students in 5-6. Students attend Ralph C. Mahar Regional School for grades 7-12.

Orange is feeling the pinch of unsteady enrollment numbers and shrinking budgets. Over the past several years certified teachers and support positions have been eliminated. Attrition has accounted for some positions, but in FY' 05-06 the overall budget was down by approximately $200,000. The after school program at Dexter Hill was cut last year. Art was eliminated two years ago but has been restored this school year. There is some relief with School Choice money, but like many school districts in Franklin County the high cost of materials and manpower prove to be a challenge. Some relief is found by way of grants. A 21st Century grant provides before and after school enrichment and academic support programs for the students. Baystate Readers is a state funded reading intervention program at Dexter Park and Fisher Hill. Additionally, both of these schools benefit from Title One funding. Over fifty percent of students in the district qualify for free or reduced lunch. Breakfast is

provided in each of the elementary schools. The educators of the district face the challenge of educating children from impoverished homes and broken families. High absenteeism is a concern. Some families are homeless

Although built in 1991 Fisher Hill Elementary is faced with less than adequate space for small group instruction, a key ingredient for an early childhood program. Dexter Park School was built in the 1950s with a new addition completed in the 1970s. The electricity and plumbing need to be upgraded. Lavatories are in poor condition. There is no music, art room or science lab. There is insufficient space for storage. Butterfield School built in 1875 is located in the old high school. The electricity has been upgraded. A new lab, four classrooms and a cafeteria/auditorium are newer additions.

Each school has at least one full time guidance counselor and nurse. There is a school psychologist serving the three schools and paraprofessionals staff the libraries. Students take art, music and physical education classes one time each week. Health education occurs one time every two weeks. Some staff is shared among the three schools. Each school has a lab staffed by a paraprofessional. There are also some computers in the classrooms.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- Dexter Park has met AYP for ELA in the aggregate and in all subgroups. AYP has been met in math in the aggregate but not in the low income subgroup.

- Butterfield has met AYP for ELA in the aggregate but not in the special education subgroup. AYP has been met in math in the aggregate and in all subgroups

In the Orange school district some of the more pressing needs are upgrades to the facilities, new materials, particularly social studies and additional reading support. In spite of the daily challenges of dwindling resources and at risk children who are often not emotionally available for learning, the principals boast of the district's dedicated teachers and paraprofessionals. They are proud of their ability to maintain a safe and stable environment and high expectations for learning.

Pioneer Valley Union 18 Regional School District

Pioneer Valley Union 18 Regional School District, one of the northernmost districts in the county, is comprised of four PK-6 elementary schools and Pioneer Valley Regional School, which educates students in grades 7 through 12. Each of the four towns in the district has an elementary school; Bernardston Elementary in Bernardston, Pearl E. Rhodes in Leyden, Northfield Elementary in Northfield and Warwick Elementary in Warwick. These students attend Pioneer Valley Regional School for 7-12 grades.

This school district has not experienced the same degree of budgeting challenges and declining enrollment that many of the other district have faced in recent years. Principals attribute this to a very supportive community, a significant number of school choice students, and a large population of students from Vernon, Vermont who are tuitioned in at the high school. They also proudly speak of the "lean" central office staff and the operational efficiency of the district. Although some staff cuts have occurred in recent years, they have not been at a level comparable to other districts in the county.

The **Warwick Elementary** and **Pearl E. Rhodes** schools have the smallest enrollment with seventy and fifty six students respectively. Principals at these two schools serve as part time administrators. With the exception of Northfield elementary the elementary facilities are in good condition. **Northfield Elementary** is a large older building that needs some new windows, plumbing and smoke alarms. The lack of space for conferences, small group instruction and special education programs is problematic.

The **Pioneer Valley Regional School** has been recently built and is located on a spacious campus with beautiful athletic fields.

Title One funds provide extra support for math and reading at the elementary schools. Twenty to thirty percent of students in the district qualify for free and reduced lunches. Curriculum materials are updated and there is a district technology integration specialist and a curriculum coordinator.

The 2007 MCAS scores reflect the following:

- The elementary schools have met AYP in both ELA and math. (Pearl E. Rhodes School's small population does not provide enough scores to be statistically significant).

- The Pioneer Valley Regional School has met AYP in the aggregate in ELA but not in the special education and low income subgroups. In math the aggregate failed to meet AYP as did the special education, low income and white subgroups.

Principals are most proud of the welcoming climate in their buildings, strong community support, dedicated staff, and students who come to school eager and willing to learn.

Ralph C. Mahar School District

Ralph C Mahar is a regional school district, grades 7-12, serving the towns of Orange, New Salem, Wendell, and Petersham, with student enrollment of 770. The administrative team consists of the School Principal, Dean of the High School, Dean of the Middle School, a Special Education Director, a Director of Curriculum and an Athletic Director.

The building is a newer facility with up to date equipment, a well-resourced library with twenty desktop computers and two computer labs staffed by two network managers. Virtual High School is offered as an on line course. Every bit of space in the building is utilized. The "Success Center" is the in school suspension room and there is an English Language Learner Program as well. The school houses an alternative "school within a school". There are about forty students enrolled in the School Choice Program, which helps the school's revenue. Forty one percent of students qualify for free or reduced lunch. High dropout rates are problematic.

There has been no increase in the budget over the past several years and the school may be facing a reduction in staff in the near future. Students enjoy a full block scheduled curriculum including a unified arts program, health, physical education, jazz ensemble, band and drafting. AP courses are somewhat limited. MCAS support programs were cut several years ago and have yet to be restored. There is a full compliment of after school offerings including athletics, student government, National Honor Society song writing and composing, fish and game club and instrumental music.

The guidance department consists of the chair of the guidance department, three full time counselors and two adjustment counselors. Twenty five percent of the seniors qualified for the state sponsored Abigail Adams program. The administration is interested in working on a School to Career program and using the team approach at the high school level. Given more funding, Mahar Regional would benefit by adding more staff particularly more math instruction at the middle school level and updated texts and supplies.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- The school has met AYP for ELA and mathematics in the aggregate, but did not meet AYP in the special education subgroup for both subjects at the middle school level.

Most of the administrative team is new and there is an excitement about the direction the school is taking. They are particularly proud of the facility, strong teaching staff, work on vertical articulation of the curriculum and the team approach to meeting the needs of students.

Gill-Montague Regional School District

The Gill-Montague School District is a PK-12 district providing education to the children of the town of Gill and the five villages that comprise Montague. There are four elementary schools. Gill Elementary, a K-6 is the only school in Gill. The schools in Montague are Hillcrest PK-2, Montague Center K-3, Sheffield Elementary 3-5, Great Falls Middle School 6-8 and Turners Falls High School 9-12.

Gill-Montague, a low socio-economic community, has experienced declining enrollment over the past several years (29% over the past 10 years). Low income students represent 43% of the student body as compared to the state average of 29%. The declining enrollment is attributable to two factors. The first is the decline in the general population of the towns which is due largely to a loss of business and industry. The second contributing factor is the significant number of students opting for the state's School Choice program and choosing to be educated elsewhere. Both of these trends have resulted in lower revenues for the schools for the past several years. Recently, teacher, paraprofessional and other staff positions have been reduced or eliminated and capital improvements in some of the schools have been curtailed. The purchase of consumable and non-consumable materials has been reduced. There have been persistent rumors in recent years of school consolidation at the elementary level in Montague. This threat has resulted in higher numbers of students enrolled in School Choice outside of the district as well as a feeling of instability on the part of school staff. A large percentage of students qualify for the free and reduced lunch program. Breakfast is provided in each of the elementary schools. Gill Elementary and Sheffield elementary Schools receive federal Title One funds.

In November 2007, the Board of Education formally notified the district that-

> "the Gill-Montague Regional School District was in need of formal state intervention to guide, support and monitor the development and progress of the district's improvement efforts."

It is unclear at this time, whether the Board of Education acting through the Department of Education will provide any financial or personnel resources to address the ongoing financial and enrollment issues facing these communities.

The facilities at the elementary level are dated and in severe need of repair and renovation. Handicapped accessibility remains a concern. In some schools volunteers staff the library and other schools share a part time paraprofessional. In two of the district's elementary schools there is no reading or math support programs provided to students during the academic day. Some schools do not have a full time principal as he/she either has two schools to administrate or has part time responsibility for curriculum development. Each of the elementary school embraces the Northeast Foundation for Learning Responsive Classroom model for social responsibility.

The **Great Falls Middle School** and **Turners Falls High School** are newer facilities with beautiful athletic fields, up to date computer labs and a sound amplification system in every classroom. Through grant funding several programs have been established to help at risk students meet with success. This is the first year that the district's 6th grade students are housed at the middle school. The school is now operating at capacity and previously empty classrooms are now filled.

Some of the elementary schools in the Gill-Montague School District need handicapped accessibility, capital improvements, custodial help, more staff, full time administrators, and new classroom computers. The high school needs more funding for the athletic programs. User fees are high and the booster clubs bear the responsibility for funding a large part of the athletic program. Increased funding for professional development is a need felt throughout the district. Curriculum coaches and/or a full time curriculum director would help the district administrators and teachers keep teaching skills and content updated, relevant and aligned with state standards.

The 2007 MCAS results are as follows:

- Gill Elementary has not yet met AYP in the aggregate or in the white subgroup for ELA but has met AYP in the aggregate and in the white subgroup in mathematics.
- Sheffield Elementary has met AYP in the aggregate for ELA but failed to meet AYP for the special education and low income subgroups. The school did not meet AYP in the aggregate or in the special education and low income subgroups in mathematics. AYP was met for the white subgroup.
- Great Falls Middle School has met AYP in the aggregate and the low income subgroup for both ELA and math
- Turners Falls High School has met AYP in the aggregate and in the white subgroup for ELA and math
- Hillcrest Elementary does not administer the MCAS test and Montague Center's scores are not reported.

The principals are proud of the dedicated teachers and paraprofessionals who work with limited resources under sometimes very difficult conditions. Teachers put students needs first, are competent and dedicated, and have successfully created communities of learning that provide a safe and nurturing place for their students to learn and grow.

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

The following information was obtained from the Franklin County School Business Administrators. The data and information solicited was designed to provide an overall understanding of the role, responsibilities of the district business offices and specifically, the role of the Business Administrator. In addition, the Business Administrators were asked about financial decision making, collective bargaining, school transportation, municipal Medicaid reimbursements, e-rate reimbursements, building maintenance, budget areas which have been under funded and areas of potential cooperation with other area school districts.

- **Budget Development and Financial Management**

  Generally, Franklin County school business administrators have full responsibility for initiating, gathering, compiling, documentation and reporting of salary and non salary budget expense items. In several districts, the Superintendent takes responsibility for development of the revenue side of the budget; however, for most school districts both revenue and expense are monitored and modified by the business administrator throughout the budget process with close coordination with the Superintendent.

  For budget development, several districts use integrated personnel and budget modules to compile both wage and salary staff total cost by code function, object, program etc. assuming collective bargaining agreements are complete and subsequent year data is entered into the system. In bargaining years, estimated salary amounts are noted as contingencies and distributed when contracts are settled.

  Non salary items, (contracted services, supplies etc.) likewise are estimated annually based on a combination of prior year trends, existing contracts, and current market estimates. In most cases, the basis for those estimates are documented and modified as new information is gathered throughout the 5-6 months of the budget process.

  The presentation of the annual budget drafts is normally split between Superintendent and the Business Administrator. In the municipal districts (Orange, Greenfield), the Superintendent makes budget narrative presentations to governing boards and other subcommittee groups. Regional district presentations generally are split between the Superintendent and the Business Administrator, particularly during multiple town and subcommittee evening meetings.

- **Accounting Systems are/will be (8 of 9) compatible by FY2009**

  Six of nine district business offices track annual expenses and other data on Budgetsence accounting packaged software. Annual software licensing for use and phone and online support is mandatory with the purchase of the software and may be an area, which a jointly negotiated price structure can be negotiated. Two other districts, Greenfield and Frontier are within a year or two of also purchasing the Budgetsence system. Franklin County Tech uses IFIPS software, now in use for 10 years, but is capable of A/P and P/R, as well as full state coding and end of year reporting. Mahar's system incorporates remote purchase order entry and "read only" data access so department heads can monitor expenses within the building. At Erving Union #28, Budgetsence accounting software is networked to schools so that reports and outstanding requisitions are available to principals. Prior to 07, no P.O. system was available

  BudgetSence software comes with several module packages, the basic module(s) being the accounts payable and payroll/personnel modules. A budget module (normally included with the initial purchase), asset tracking module, software upgrades, technical assistance and support and remote purchase order entry module being others modules which may make sense for joint purchase.

Financial Reporting:
District financial reports prepares by the business administrators, in the form of "treasurer reports", "monthly revenue/expense reports" are exclusive to all of the school committees by all districts. In some cases, towns request financial updates periodically. However, reports to towns are normally limited to changes in budget estimates during budget preparation periods from January through April. Consolidated reporting would only be feasible within the context of a countywide school district. Various revenue/expenditure reports are monitored and reported to both school administrations on no less than a monthly basis by all school districts. Those business administrators in financially troubled school districts monitor expenditures on a more frequent basis; often bi weekly.

State Reporting (EOY, SIMS, EPIMS, Grant Reporting, Food Service Reporting, etc.)
The DOE End of Fiscal Year financial report is consistent from district to district in that the business administrator is the primary contact and functionary in extracting financial data for completion of all schedules relevant to the report. SIMS and EPIMS reporting is generally a function of a technology staff member. Grant financial reporting is limited in all districts to monthly reimbursement DOE "portal" data and is completed by either the business administrator or a member of his/her staff. Food service free and reduced reimbursement monthly reports are discussed under the Food Service paragraphs.

- **Human Resources**

  Human resources responsibilities are generally split between Superintendent and the Business Administrator.

  Coordination of job postings:
  Generally, advertising and posting of positions is a function of the Superintendent's office, as is receipt of and noting new applications. Resignations and retirement letters are also received by the Superintendent with a shared (principal/supervisor) decision to fill or leave a position vacant Applications are usually then forwarded to the school or department in which the vacancy exists for screening and recommendation.

  Screening and appointment/rejection of applicants:
  Consistent with districts statewide, the screening process is a responsibility of the principal/supervisor who then either consults with the Superintendent on his/her recommendation or recommends a candidate independently. Applicants normally receive either an appointment or rejection letter from the Superintendent (Central) office but occasionally from the school or department.

  Explanation of, participation in, and signup - district fringe benefits for the newly appointed employees:
  In all districts, explanation of election and participation in health insurance, life insurance, dental plans, 403B salary reduction agreements, and group insurances, as well as W4 deduction filings are conducted within the business office. In the absence of a payroll clerk or payroll supervisor, the Business Administrator may take the responsibility for this function on a temporary or permanent basis. In regionals, health and group life plans are administered within the district with the Business Administrator normally versed in the details of the benefits package, should additional information be necessary to the new employee.

  Maintenance of Personnel Files
  As noted, the majority of the Franklin County districts either have installed or are planning to upgrade their accounting systems to Budgetsence. The system incorporates an integrated personnel module capable of tracking contractual benefits regarding vacation

(12 month employees), sick, family sick personal, and bereavement, etc. time limits. Data entry is the responsibility of a business office staff member, under the premise that the payroll function is linked to parameters of personnel benefits outlined in a particular contract.

Collective Bargaining

The Business Administrator is also generally responsible for salary cost estimates, data re: comparable pay scales in neighboring districts, development of contract language re: finances/human resources and costing of any negotiations cost items.

Almost exclusively, the Business Administrator's role in collective bargaining is limited to development of financial cost estimates at various levels of wage and salary increases. This practice holds true for Unit A bargaining as well as similar data collection for other bargaining groups. Regional school business administrators will also calculate health costs if health benefit contract language changes are under consideration. At Gill Montague Regional School District, the Business Administrator has acted independently in bargaining the Maintenance/Custodial contracts. Conducting collective bargaining on a countywide basis would be problematic, as agreements among contiguous towns attempting to regionalize have been contentious and difficult to arrive at consensus of salary and benefits. There would be an opportunity however, if the State were to bargain with the Massachusetts Teachers Association for a common salary schedule on a county wide or regional basis.

- **Other Financial Issues**

Financial/Personnel Staffing Adequacy and Data Backup for A/P and P/R Functions are Inconsistent

In some districts, business administrators expressed concern that budgeted office staff was not crossed trained to complete the (1) order entry, purchase order, account payable functions, as well as the (2) payroll/salary function. In several cases the Business Administrator was the backup in the event of illness or extended absences. They also were very concerned that, given the current level of responsibility coupled with a shortage of staff, the oversight was not being done as often or as completely as should be. The Pioneer Valley Regional School District, employs a 1.0 FTE payroll/benefits clerk however, a .5 FTE part time person does the account payable function with the Treasurer who is .2 FTE. and who manages the accounts receivables, bank reconciliation and revenue/banking functions. The Assistant Superintendent, where a position exists, oversees the annual budgets, revenue estimates, as well as purchasing, transportation, insurances and other business and/or curriculum and MCAS testing related functions. There is therefore a total 2.7 FTE's staff in the Pioneer RSD business office. The Mohawk Trail Regional School District similarly employs a benefits person, accounts payable, payroll, bookkeeper and a .5 treasurer for a total of 5.5 FTE staff, including a Business Administrator, but has a slightly larger district. The Gill Montague Regional School District employs a business office staff similar to Mohawk Trail RSD with comparable students and staff but with only two member towns.

The Orange Public School Central Office has not replaced 2.0 FTE clerical staff in the last few years and is operating with 1.0 FTE payroll/human resources person and a .5 FTE A/P part time person. The Superintendent acts in the capacity of the Business Administrator. Some work is outsourced i.e. the End of Year (EOY) report. Greenfield Public Schools employs a 1.0 FTE payroll clerk (newly hired), as well as a .75 FTE account payable clerk (30 hrs/wk). A 1.0 FTE Grant/Human Resources staff member works with the newly hired (1.0 FTE) Business Administrator. Frontier Regional School District & Union, Mahar Regional School District, Erving School Union and Franklin County Voc Tech are similarly inconsistent in Business Office staffing.

Reasons for these inconsistencies are several. Criteria for justification of any level of office staff is generally a function of:

(1) Size of budget, number and complexity of (26) warrants with associated paper trails, volume of requisition/purchase orders and disposition of oversight information required for keeping payments to vendors active. This includes data entry for all operating, revolving, food service, grant, and sometime, student activity accounts. Often, account charges are budgeted between two or more of the above accounts mentioned.

(2) Size of paid staff- salaried and non salaried, (payroll person must process volumes of weekly time sheets, coaches stipends, student activity position stipends, substitute pay, benefits, as well as tracking expensed contractual salaries and wages as the fiscal year progresses) The accounting reconciliation must balance perfectly each time.

(3) Number of students serviced and size of school transportation operation.

(4) Number and age of school buildings.

(5) An often under informed view by school committees, town government, and Superintendents regarding the amount of work required from the DOE, as well as maintaining good accounting and business practices..

(6) Evolution over time of the degree of expectations/required work volume from office staff by Administration.

(7) The abstract nature of job descriptions precludes an absolute match of individual skill levels to accomplish a particular level of work requirements. In most cases, the estimate of what comprises a reasonable amount of labor to accomplish a task is more often an art than a science resulting in the inconsistencies noted, even though the work requirements are roughly similar from district to district The guess of whether or not staffing levels are adequate often are gut reactions rather than empirically based and are based on the quantity, training and experience of the current staff, as well as the amount of and use of the latest educational technology available.

(8) Town and community expectations for immediate information and data...

The level of Business office staffing can be consistently predetermined however; allowances for district-to-district nuances as well as individuals are a necessary variable. It should be noted that some small districts have begun to outsource the business administrator function. It remains to be seen whether this outsourcing will improve overall business office operations and save money.

- **Analysis and Explanation of the Foundation Budget, Target Share and Relative Wealth/EQV Data to Member Towns and Town Officials.**

  Explanation of the state's funding Ch70 formula and other funding criteria when addressed is usually by the District Superintendent rather than the Business Administrator. More often than not, the funding explanation is limited to increases/decreases in students and increases or decreases in projected State aid. It is incumbent upon the Business Administrator to understand the formula and how it plays out for his/her particular school district.

INSURANCES

- **Health Insurances**

Former Franklin County Health Group members

The Gill Montague Regional School District expects to realize approximately $500,000 in savings in district Blue Cross/Blue Shield (including an indemnity plan) health plan premiums by having the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) administer health insurance for active and retired subscribers. The district formerly experienced double digit increases with a 79.42% increase in premiums over the past five years.

Mohawk Trail RSD:

Recently impact bargained to leave the Franklin County Health Group (FCHG) to be under the GIC health plan(s) umbrellas. As FCHG members, premium increases were estimated to be in the 15-20% increase range, with a 94.3% increase over the past five years. With the GIC affiliation, savings are projected to be under slightly fewer than one million dollars. The district maintains a 70/30 premium split for active employees.

Franklin County Health Group

Franklin County Tech

Franklin County Tech is a member of Franklin County Health Group (FCHG) with Group Benefit Strategies (GBS) as advisor. With Mohawk Trail RSD and Gill-Montague RSD having left the group to go to the GIC, remaining members (Frontier and Pioneer) anticipate that GBS will recommend that they also affiliate with GIC. Over the past five years, their health insurance premium increases have been 97.21%.

Frontier Regional/Union #38 School Districts:

The Frontier RSD currently offers a Blue package consisting of and HMO and PPO in addition to a Health New England HMO. Frontier may be forced, by circumstance to join the GIC due to the reduced participation in the Franklin County Health Group. Frontier RSD insurance premiums have increased by 105.49% over the past five years.

Pioneer Valley Regional School District:

Pioneer valley RSD is self funded for health insurance as are other FCHG members. The district offers the Blue Cross- Blue Shield package, including an indemnity (Master Health) plan as well as the HMO Blue and PPO at a 75/25 premium split. They may also be forced, by the reduction of FCHG members to join the GIC. . Pioneer Valley RSD's insurance premiums have increased by 98.84% over the past five years.

Remaining Four Districts

Greenfield Schools:

Health plans for both town and a private insurer administers health plans for school employees. Greenfield currently offers Health New England PPO and HMO plans and offers dental and group life in addition to the traditional health plans.

Orange Schools:

Orange offers a Network Blue (Blue Cross-Blue Shield) through the town. An Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) is active for both town and school employees.

Mahar RSD:
Mahar is self insured through an independent trust. They offer complete Blue Cross-Blue Shield offerings with an indemnity, a PPO, and an HMO plan at an 85/15 split on premiums. Retirees continue to be offered a Master Medical but the majority of active employees participate in the Network Blue HMO with only 16 opting for the PPO.

Erving School Union:
The Erving School Union is members of the Hampshire County Health Group rather than the Franklin County Health Group. Leverett & Shutesbury look to the Amherst Pelham RSD/Amherst for rates with New Salem/Wendell and Erving. This group is currently investigating joining the GIC. All groups currently have Blue Cross/Blue Shield as their plans.

- Workers Compensation, Property and Casualty, E & O, Umbrella, BAP, Boiler etc. are Using Either MEGA or MIIA

  Most Franklin County school districts are using either MEGA the Mass Education and Governmental Association) or the Mass Insurance Association (MIIA) for administration of their Worker Compensation insurances. Claims are normally scrutinized by an agent of either of the two organizations in efforts to control costs. Rates for both groups are reviewed and modified annually following audits and review of both active and incurred but unreported claims. The exception to the MEGA or MIIA administration is Gill Montague RSD, which uses AIG as their agent for Workers Compensation coverage. This is an area which may lend itself to a cooperative effort, through creation of a county wide group for rate setting.

  Other insurances, which would include property, casualty, errors and omission, boiler, business auto and umbrella /catastrophic policies, appear to be underwritten primarily by the Massamont/Metrogard Agency located in Greenfield. MIIA also underwrites similar policies for a few of the districts (i.e. Mohawk RSD)

JOINT AND COLLABORATIVE PURCHASING WITH BUYING COOPERATIVES

Business Administrators were unanimously interested in forming some type of cooperative purchasing group. To date, no one among them has had the staff time to try and organize and go through the Ch. 30B procurement process. Consequently, most districts purchase this service through other existing entities.

- School and Office Supplies & Equipment

  Copy paper appears to be the largest of the purchases within the Franklin County schools. Collectively, the school districts make 22 to 25 million copies annually consuming approximately, 4,400 to 5,000 cases of paper at $90,000 to $100,000 per year. Other office and school supplies purchases are through a number of sources which include Hampshire Council of Government (HCOG), a purchasing cooperative providing anything from fax and printer cartridges to general school supplies, state bid lists, request for bids from vendors, (B.F. Mason, School Specialties), or lowest discount off catalogue pricing (Staples). Milk, bread and other food commodities and purchases are either bid or best vendor pricing.

- Natural Gas, #2 Diesel ,Gasoline & Other – Primarily LPVEC and FCOG

  Six of the nine entities currently use the cooperative purchasing services of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) for fuel oil, natural gas, diesel fuel, electricity and gasoline bids. Once the lowest cost of transportation/delivery of the commodity (fuel of natural) is determined, schools individually track the New Haven price for #2 fuel oil (with help from the LPVEC) a per gallon price is locked for various amounts of fuel use. The lock price may be made for an entire heating season or less. Similarly, the above Hampshire COG also bids fuel oil for Pioneer Valley RSD and Mahar RSD. With deregulation, natural gas delivery likewise, is based on the best delivery price.

- Electricity Brokers- Wide Variety

  Brokers and resellers for electricity vary widely throughout the nine county school districts. Resellers included Western Mass Electric, Con Edison, Shortsleeve, Devent Energy and Select Energy. Both National Grid and WMECO provide power throughout the region. Each of the entities, including individual towns (i.e.Leverett, Shutesbury) contract independently with their own brokers. No one reseller appears to have a monopoly on delivery within the country. Given the amount of energy consumed by the school districts, it makes sense to try to bundle their energy requirements and bid for a single broker or reseller.

REGULAR AND SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS

School transportation contract costs varied significantly across the county. Much of the variation is due to length of bus runs, number of tiers being operated and level of competition for these relatively small contracts.

Special education transportation costs also varied and, again, attributable to length of out of district roués and a general lack of competition. The Franklin County Network is addressing multi district routing and scheduling this year under a legislatively appropriated grant. It is expected to reduce the redundancy of current individual district routing and create multi district cost shared routes. Every route eliminated will save approximately $36,000 collectively.

- Annual contracts, cost per bus, vendor of record

Vendor		*Annual contract*	*Routes*	*Cost/bus/day*
FRSD	Grybko			
Union #38				
Conway		59,517	3	330.65
Deerfield		89,374	5	496.52
Sunderland		63,635	3	353.53
Whately		28,980	2	161.00
Mahar	Swift River Bus (Yr3 of 3)	474,420	15	175.71
Orange	Swift River Bus	238,500	10	6 @ 106.00 3 @ 212.00 1 @ 53.00
Greenfield	Kusmeskus (yr3 of 5)	323,055	6 tier one 6 tier two	149.56 149.56

GMRSD	Kusmeskus	260,280	6	241.00
Pioneer	Kusmeskus (3 of 5)	545,436	13	233.10
Erving #28	Kusmeskus			
	Erving	126,846	3	234.90
	Wendell	80,145	2	222.60
	New Salem	79,714	2	221.45
FCVTech	Kusmeskus	560,351	12	256.57
Mohawk Rowe Hawlemont	First Student	1,115,370	16 buses 1 bus/1 SUV 2 buses/2 SUV	253.00

Given the number of potential vendors throughout the county, it may make sense to bundle the transportation needs of the nine school districts and develop a cooperative bid. Presumably forcing the current vendors to bid against each other in order t retain their contracts would lower the overall cost while still providing a known and trusted vendor. In addition, given the total county wide volume it may make sense to acquire a routing software system on behalf of the school districts, develop optimized routes and bid all districts simultaneously on a county wide basis.

- **Contract Administration & Safety, Development of Routing, Pickup & Drop-off, Late Busses Schedules etc , Financial Responsibility for Transportation**

  In all cases, the Business Administrator is responsible for all aspects of bus transportation contract administration.
  Contracts are drafted normally using prior contract terms and conditions as a point of departure for subsequent year(s) transportation requirements, along with any compliance or policy changes of which vendors must be made aware. Sections of the bid documents normally include the proposed contract, instructions to bidders (ITB) outlining regular routes, late buses, athletic transportation and on occasion, special needs transportation requirements. Also included are bid pages outlining and explaining the method of how pricing needs to be structured by the bidding vendor. Bid amounts are either per bus per day or on occasion by route.

  Route requirements are either loosely outlined or may be included in the bid specification depending on the district but are normally defined in a way that allows for contractor variations in routing dependent on where students live. It appears that in all districts interviewed the Business Administrator's responsibility is limited to the bid/contract and monitoring of the expense associated with the contract. It also includes making administration aware of potential excesses in both regular and special needs transportation spending as well as occasionally monitoring the length and time of routing in the event that routes can be combined for cost reduction purposes. Historically, the vendors have developed the specific routes based upon the student information provided by the schools.

- **Bus Route Sharing with Other Districts**
  In all districts Vanpool provides both in district and out of district special needs transportation. Districts will coordinate with each other and with Vanpool for pickup and dropoff of students from contiguous districts going in the same direction to and from the same schools or out of district placements. This practice is not widespread because of the distance between students and drop locations however, as stated above, routes are shared where possible.

The legislatively funded Special Education Transportation Pilot Project is currently negotiating with area special education transportation vendors, including Van Pool, for their participation in multi district routing and scheduling and split billing to the respective participating school districts.

MAINTENANCE OF BUILDING AND GROUNDS/NEW CONSTRUCTION

- **Central Maintenance – Individual Schools, Town, Use of Contractors**
  Seven of the nine districts employ some form of centralized maintenance with the persons in charge,
  having titles ranging from Maintenance Director/Facilities Director/Manager (Frontier, Gill-Montague RSD, Mohawk Trail RSD, Pioneer Valley RSD, Franklin County Tech and Mahar RSD). Greenfield employs an individual who oversees both maintenance and transportation while both Erving Union and Orange employ head custodians to monitor and provide maintenance for both building and grounds.

  Tiers of Maintenance:
  Maintenance Director/Facilities Director/Manager(s) typically handle building trade maintenance issues beyond the expertise of head/day custodians in each building. Some are expert in HVAC, others in electrical, plumbing or have general mechanical skills and act in support of building principals throughout the district. No data was collected of very specific skills levels but it was clear that maintenance departments were structured by (1) general cleaning, moving furniture and supplies within the school, and day to day light maintenance/boiler-heating operations are the responsibilities of the custodial staff. (2) Mid level repair and maintenance of heating and other building controls, boiler operations, roofing issues, general troubleshooting, etc, were performed by directors of maintenance, if in their area of expertise. (3) Maintenance problems not able to be performed internally warranted the services of outside contractors where the director of maintenance coordinates and monitors the service performed. There was no commonality of contractors being utilized by the various school districts. There were several areas which would lend themselves to a common contract on a county wide or, at least regional basis. Among these are boiler maintenance service contracts, HVAC controls maintenance and service contracts, and vehicle maintenance and service contracts.

  Capital Projects:
  Most district Business Administrators in coordination with their respective Maintenance Directors submit annual requests for capital project installation or repair/replacement either through the School Committee (K-7-12) or in K- (6-8) situations, through a Capital Planning Committee (CPC) within the town. In the absence of a CPC, select boards are made aware of emergencies and/or potential large maintenance issues generally by the Superintendent.

- **Development of Maintenance Budget (normally reduced as budget progresses)**
  In all cases, individual school buildings have maintenance line items for general repair of routine items i.e. broken windows, door repair, locker repair etc... Requested amounts per line item are usually a function of prior year actual combined with projected needs. The consensus among the Business Administrators is that those budget request figures are often severely reduced to minimal amounts as the budget process unfolds. Building maintenance budgets have been cut in favor of maintaining direct service programs to students. The result of this, after several years of under funding, is buildings which are in need of significant repair or even replacement.

- **Participation in Construction/Renovation Projects:**
  Where and when appropriate, most Business Administrators in Franklin County participate in the initial cost development of new construction, as well as school addition, renovation, roof and window replacement, boiler replacements and other reimbursable and non reimbursable capital projects. In most cases, they are actively involved with clerks of the work, architects and general contractors in the day-to-day progress of the project. They often act as liaison between the architect, general contractor and the building committee for change orders, and approval of payments to all parties.

  The Business Administrators also monitor expenses associated with the project as well as work with Treasurers on borrowing and cash flow from lending institutions.

- **Purchase of Major Equipment Item (mowers, lifts, utility vans, etc)**
  Capital acquisition of major asset purchases is individual by district and managed by the Business Administrator. There appears to be no collaboration in splitting and sharing tractors, movers, lifts, welding equipment etc, or any other large ticket items. Apparently, distances between districts and logistics of moving equipment over those distances have precluded any equipment sharing. This is an area which has potential for cost sharing among, at least, contiguous school districts.

- **Shared Contractors for Telephone Repairs, HVAC, Plumbing etc:**
  There was no active coordination between districts for sharing contractors or skilled employees performing general repair. This area has a great deal of potential for not only costs savings, but for districts to receive more in services for the amounts of money budgeted.

TECHNOLOGY

- **Participation in the Planning, Estimating, Purchasing, Installation of Backbones, Routers, Hubs, Cabling, Software and Hardware.**
  Generally, Franklin County Business Administrators are not involved in the architecture of technology systems but do take part in Technology Committees regarding the costing and cost control of annual and emergency technology purchases.

  Mahar, Gill Montague, Pioneer, Frontier, and Mohawk Regional School Districts, Franklin County Tech and Greenfield each employ either a Director of Technology or a Network Administrator. In the Erving Union #28, each individual school employs technology specialists. Orange similarly has technology specialists who are responsible for networking, hardware setup and software installation in each of the schools. In most of the districts, schools employ an individual who teach computer science and/or staff computer labs and troubleshoot computer problems, networking and printer issues in their respective buildings.

GRANTS

- **Grant Writing and Application Responsibilities for Non Entitlement (pothole, environmental, security, etc.**
  Business Administrator involvement with federal, state and private grants appears to be limited to the monthly expense/reimbursement and reporting function. In some cases, grant expenditure general ledger information is entered from the business office and in other cases, the information is sent to the state directly from the Special Education office.

  In certain cases (i.e. pothole grants or security grants) the Business Administrator acts as the grant writer particularly for the general financial information included in the grant budget. Again, the Business Administrator monitors expense related issues regarding the grant. None of the districts employ a grant writer specifically dedicated to searching out and applying for competitive grants. This is an area for potential cooperation.

FOOD SERVICE

- **Responsibility for Free/Reduced, Reimbursement, Commodities, Long Report, Daily Production and Cash Receipts**
  Of the districts visited, six of the nine employed either a Food Service Manager or Director. In all six cases, the individual had responsibility for full food service operations. Typically, that included hiring, purchasing, ordering commodities, working with vendors, menu planning, day to day staff food preparation, cooking and cleanup, production reports and filing for free and reduced reimbursement with the state on the secure portal. Only in the Gill-Montague RSD was the business office responsible for filing for free and reduced state reimbursement. Four of the nine districts use Point of Sale (POS) scanners for lunch counts, production control, accounting and for free and reduced lunch student privacy issues.

  All managers or directors report to the Business Administrator regarding financial, staffing and union (if applicable) issues. The business administrator, in turn, tracks monthly revenue and expense data and reports to the Superintendent and School Committees as appropriate.

  Both Unions (28 & 38) and Pioneer RSD employ a Cafeteria Manager in each school rather than a district wide Food Service Director. In each case, all managers made deposits and replicated what the Food Services directors in the other districts did.

- **Consideration of Outsourcing**
  With the exception of Gill-Montague RSD, sales volume in each of the districts interviewed appeared to preclude outsourcing as an option.

  It was apparent that, the Franklin County school business offices are currently overworked and under staffed. While developing cooperative programs and services would take some initial time and effort on behalf of the Business Administrators, they unanimously agreed that so doing would be an investment which would pay off very quickly. Attempting to consolidate district business offices was not seen as either cost effective or an improvement to the provisions of business services to the respective districts. Rather, attempting to consolidate staffing would further dilute the business expertise available and weaken financial management and oversight functions It is noted, however, there appear to be a number of programmatic and service related areas where interdistrict cooperation could increase efficiency, reduce the redundancy of services and, ultimately save money.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

After completion of interviews with the Franklin County school district Special Education Directors regarding special education programs and services, it was apparent that there are many quality special education programs in their respective school districts. All of the districts have many of their own substantially separate programs for students with significant special needs. Surprisingly, the percent average of students with special needs in most schools was significantly above the state average. The main exception was at the elementary grade level. A breakdown of this average was as followed:

Elementary Pre K-6.

Conway	26.8 %
Hawlemont	23.9 %
Orange	17.9 %
Deerfield	10.3 %
Sunderland	16.1 %
Rowe	15.9 %
New Salem/Wendell	15.1 %
Erving	14.5 %
Whately	12.7 %
State Average	**16.9 %**

Of the ten elementary schools more than half were below the state average of 16.9 %

It was also very clear that the elementary schools were very inclusive in providing special education services. For the last available Department of Education Report for 2005-2006, the state target for the percentage of students with IEPs in full inclusion was 43.4 %. A review of the Franklin County schools indicates that almost all schools have reached this target. This shows that there is a limited need for additional substantially separate programs in these schools. The percentage for full inclusion in the elementary schools is as follows:

Elementary Pre K-6.

Rowe	100 %
Whately	83.3 %
Erving	77.8 %
Orange	70.8 %
Deerfield	59.6 %
New Salem/Wendell	57.9 %
Sunderland	46.9 %
Hawlemont	43.5 %
Conway	37.3%
State Target	**43.4 %**

In looking at this same data for grades 7-12 and by Public School District the percentage in special education was much higher. The data is as follows:

Grades 7-12.

Franklin County Technical	27.0 %
Frontier Regional	20.6 %
Mohawk Trail Regional	20.6 %
R. Mahar Regional	19.6 %
State Average	**16.9 %**

By District K-12.

Gill Montague Regional	18.6 %
Greenfield	17.7 %
Pioneer Valley Regional	17.0 %
State Average	**16.9 %**

In Grades 7-12 and by Public School District it appears that both categories have adequate middle school and high school special education programs. In the K-12 districts it would be expected that the elementary programs would be more inclusive than the middle and high school programs.

The target rate for full inclusion for all schools is 43.4 %. The rates for these districts are follows:

Grades 7-12.

Ralph Mahar Regional	48.9 %
Mohawk	45.1 %
Frontier	28.9%
Franklin County Tech	0 %
State Target	**43.4 %**

By District K-12.

Pioneer Valley Regional	75.7 %
Gill Montague Regional	47.1 %
Greenfield	11.3%
State Target	**43.4 %**

It is important to note that while Franklin County Tech had 0 % full inclusion they had a 100 % partial inclusion rate. Because of the vocational technical training curriculum, full inclusion programming is not feasible. It is also clear that the high schools have individual courses, credits, and requirements which make it much more difficult to have full inclusion. It was significant, though, that the majority of schools did reach the State target inclusion rate.

Another important statistic in the Grade 7-12 and K-12 public schools is the graduation rate for special education students, as compared to regular education students. This statistic is of great concern and should be addressed through a cooperative effort among area school districts, since it seemed to be pervasive throughout the County with the exception of Franklin County Tech.

Their graduation rates for special needs students are as follows:

Special Education Graduation Rates (as reported by the Dept. of Education).

Franklin County Technical	75.0 %
Frontier Regional School District	51.4 %
Pioneer Valley Regional	44.4 %
Mohawk Trail Regional	40.0 %
Gill Montague Regional	30.0 %
Greenfield Public Schools	29.4 &
Ralph Mahar Regional	26.3 %
State Target	**61.1 %**

The regular education graduation rates were considerable higher and were as follows:

Regular Education Graduation Rates.

Frontier Regional School District	94.5 %
Mohawk Trail Regional Schools	89.4 %
Pioneer Valley Regional Schools	87.5 %
Franklin County Technical	82 %
Greenfield Public Schools	74.4 %
Ralph Mahar Regional	72.1 %
Gill Montague	68.4 %
State Target	**61.1 %**

For the majority of school districts, the rate for graduation for regular education students is nearly double of that for special needs students. A comparison of the school drop out rates does not account for this disparity in the graduation rates. The special education drop out rates are as follows:

Special Education Drop Out Rates.

Gill Montague	11.5 %
Frontier Regional School	11.0 %
Greenfield	10.2 %
Mohawk Trail Regional	8.00 %
Pioneer Valley Regional	6.00 %
Ralph Mahar Regional	5.60 %
State Target	**5.60 %**

Within the exception of Ralph Mahar Regional, all of the Franklin County high schools have drop out rates for special education, significantly higher than the expected target rates, as established by the Department of Education.

It is clear that in Franklin County a closer look needs to be taken at the rate of students who drop out from high school and the reasons why they drop out. The Department of Education expected target rate is 5.6 % and nearly all of the schools are significantly above or equal to this established target rate. A closer looks also needs to be taken at the graduation rate for special needs students. A

review of the respective MCAS results indicates that the high schools appear to be mostly monitoring their annual yearly progress. The Special Education Directors should form a county wide committee to discuss why these rates are so high since they are all above the state average and State target rates. This would be an ideal opportunity for them to develop cooperative strategies, programs and services.

All of the Franklin County districts have some exceptional special education programs. Many of these programs are at the middle school and high school level, where there is high stakes testing. The following are some of these exceptional programs:

Elementary Autism
Life Schools Middle School
Life Schools High School
Transitional Middle School
Transitional High School
High School Language Based Program
High School Alternative Program

The majority of these districts indicated that they had room in many of their programs and that they could tuition in students, as long as they had slots available. In fact, several districts aré already doing this on an informal and limited basis. Several of these programs, even though they have different names, are similar in nature, in that they serve the same type of special needs student. It would be beneficial for the Special Education Directors to develop a coordinated list of programs, with program descriptions and the tuition costs of these programs. It may be possible to merge programs to improve gradation rates, drop out rates and cost effectiveness, as well as maintain the viability of low enrollment programs.

The elementary schools, on the other hand have a variety of highly effective special education programs. All seem to have effective and impressive early childhood programs. Many have effective autism programs, behavioral programs, and other specialized special education programs. Their rates of exclusionary practices are exemplary. It is still possible, though, for schools to share their programs to both better meet the needs of special education students and to reduce redundancy of programs and increase cost effectiveness overall. Since each child is unique they may need additional special education programs in the future. This is why a structure for cooperation over a multi district geographical area is important. Once again there s a need inventory and develop a coordinated list of programs, tuitions, and requirements for enrollments. This can only be done through a cooperative effort. Given the lack of staff and current work loads of special education staffing, a formal structure for cooperation on a Franklin County wide basis would be needed to accomplish this task

Transportation- Out of District Placements

Many of the schools in Franklin County currently utilize Van Pool Inc. to provide their out of district special education transportation. Most districts have students attending common private programs such as White Oak School, Curtis Blake School, Valley West School, Tri County and NEARI. In many instances, neighboring or close by school districts do not share routes to split or reduce costs. Once again it would be beneficial for the Special Education Directors to collaborate in the spring of the preceding year on common placements and similar transportation requirements. This would significantly reduce costs through the sharing of routes. An example of this is that one district has eleven vehicles transporting fifteen students out of a district.

It may also be very effective, long term for a collaborative to be formed to purchase and share their own buses for special education transportation on a county wide basis. This would involve a much more in sophisticated and in depth study of routes, current costs, need for monitors and an effective

software routing system. In similar geographic areas this method has been found to be very cost effective even, with the addition of a staff person to coordinate the routing and scheduling system. This effort is currently underway through a legislatively funded Pilot project for Multi District Special Education Transportation. The project is currently being developed by Franklin County Tech on behalf of the Franklin County school districts. To date, the computerized software system has been purchased and a FCT staff member trained in it use. The special needs student data base has been developed, along with the current method of providing that transportation. Multi district routes are currently being developed for implementation during the summer of 2008 and for September 2008. In addition the SNT Pilot project is negotiating with the major transportation contractors in the region to obtain their cooperation in multi district routing and scheduling and split billing of routes for the respective participating school districts. Should the private contractors refuse to participate, then a strategy could be employed to bid these routes on a county wide basis or to develop a cooperative transportation system similar to that provided by the Lower Pioneer Valley educational Collaborative for their member school districts. Early indications show the potential for significant cost savings through the elimination of the redundancy of routes. Each route that is eliminated will save approximately $ 36,000 for the effected school districts. Given that the Franklin County network is in its first year of operation, it is hopeful that the State legislature, given the potential for significant costs savings, will refund this project for another year. At the conclusion of the pilot project, it is expected that the program will be self sufficient.

Out of District Placements

In general all of the districts had relatively small numbers of students attending out of district placements throughout Western Massachusetts and even smaller number attending private residential schools throughout New England. However, several districts had a relatively high number of students (over 4) at local private schools. In fact one district had nine students at the White Oak School in Westfield, MA. The tuition cost for this program is approximately thirty thousand dollars ($30,000) without the inclusion of transportation. This district is therefore paying close to two hundred and seventy thousand dollars ($270,000) plus transportation costs. Other area districts have one or two students at the same school. It may be beneficial to create a more local program to serve these students. Doing so would also save on the transportation cost. In order to bring students back from private schools, a district must first create a program that is at least equal to, if not better than the one that the students are presently attending. Parents need to be assured that the district is creating a program that is equal or better. Consultants may need to be hired to develop such a program. Most importantly, there needs to be some one to coordinate the program. This is necessary insure high quality assurance and the educational integrity of the program. It may be cost prohibitive for districts to develop programs on their own for their relatively small program populations. A person, collaboratively shared between districts would be able to develop multi district programs and services and reduce costs.

Support Services

The majority of the districts appear to have an adequate amount of special education support services. These support services consist include Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Adaptive Physical Education, Autism Consultants, Behavioral Consultants, and Psychological Services.

However while many had sufficient support staff, they have a relatively low FTE and had reported high turnover of these positions. Only a few reported needs for the remainder of this year and next year. It may be easier to hire full time staff and share them, as opposed to finding part time staff for only a few hours. In addition, if the part-time staff are over half time, they are eligible and participate in the district's benefit package, including health insurance. This makes the cost of providing these services on a per-hour or per-student basis relatively expensive. It may also be worthwhile to

investigate outsourcing these services on a contracted services basis. However, given private consultant rates in the Pioneer Valley, it is likely that savings, if any, would be marginal. Hiring and sharing staff on a full-time basis and distributing the fringe benefit cost across participating school districts would be feasible.

Data Management

A majority of the school districts utilize ESPED for their Special Education student management software and special education data management. The remainder utilizes SEMSNET (Eutactics). Some directors expressed dissatisfaction with SEMSNET and said they were considering changing to ESPED. Since there would only be a couple of districts left with SEMSNET it may be worthwhile to consider a cooperative purchase of ESPED and negotiate reduced costs for all districts. In addition, if all districts utilized the same software, training, technical assistance, program upgrades and mutual user groups would be possible. ESPED is compatible to most regular education software packages. Since the districts use a variety of regular education software, software compatibility is important.

Kindergarten/Early Childhood

Full day kindergartens exist in almost all the districts and with no tuition cost. The Franklin County districts have excellent programs. They were one of the fore runners in providing early childhood programming with peer partners. Since these programs are currently well enrolled, there seems to be no need to share these services, except for programs and services for the autistic population.

Autism is a disability which, over the past five years has been diagnosed at a much earlier age; at the early childhood age level. Most of the school districts had two programs. It may be beneficial for the Special Education Directors to inventory their needs for this population and to cooperate with each other to meet that the level of need. Programs could be developed which adopts the different educational philosophies and approaches to educating this population (ex. ABA, Floortime, electric).

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COLLABORATION

During the winter of 2007, project staff met with the Superintendents and members of their administrative staff to discuss the status of their school districts, their needs and their resources. Several data gathering instruments were developed and utilized to document information and perceptions relative to current programs, financial trends, available resources and programmatic needs. These instruments included Superintendents, Business Administrator, Special Education and School Principals interviews checklists and qualitative notes. During those interviews information was provided concerning the value inherent in cooperation among small and rural school districts. In addition, the types of programs and services offered by the various Massachusetts educational collaboratives were discussed, as well as their legal structure.

Superintendents Interviews
The Superintendents interviews were designed not only to provide information about potential areas for cooperation, but also to elicit opinions relative to:

- Issues and problems being faced by the district
- Areas of interest for cooperation
- Specific programmatic needs
- Resources that they would be willing to share with other school districts
- Interest in forming or joining an educational collaborative
- Possible organizational structure and method of operation for the delivery of cooperative programs and services

Business Administrators Interviews
The Business Administrators interviews were more specific in nature and content. They were designed to provide specific information concerning cost effectiveness of current district programs, costs related to out of district placements, cost of outsourced services, current staffing, facility and staff utilization, procurement methods, Medicaid revenue, e-rate revenue, software costs, school transportation costs, needed school building infrastructure maintenance and improvements and identification of possible areas of district cooperation.

Special Education Directors Interviews
The Special Education interviews were designed to collect specific information concerning the district's current special education programs and services, along with enrollments, space availability, etc. The survey solicited the information for both in district and out of district placements. The survey also identified the number of, as well as the future need for professional therapeutic services in support of special education. Information was collected regarding the ridership numbers for both in district and out of district placements. (The Franklin Special Education Transportation Pilot Project is currently developing a more cost effective approach for implementation in FY'2008). The interviews also identified the number of full day vs. half day kindergarten classes being offered and the need for more full-day alternatives. Lastly, the survey collected data on all out of district placements, including special education, home schooling, charter schools, school choice, parochial schools and vocational technical education.

School Building Principals Interviews
The Principal interviews were designed to collect information specific to their respective buildings. This information included staffing, class sizes, space utilization, facilities, curriculum development, educational technology, school choice, textbooks and curriculum materials, annual yearly progress (AYP), MCAS testing and specifically the effects of recent budget cuts.

From qualitative research, interviews and the data collected, the following programs and services were identified for possible collaboration and cost savings:

Reducing the high cost of school transportation services, especially out of district special education transportation.

The cost of school transportation services has outpaced both inflation and the ability of school districts to adequately increase their budgets for direct educational services to students. These increases, coupled with other fixed costs increases, such as health insurance, fuel and utilities, insurances, and negotiated wage increases severely limit the district's ability to maintain quality and cost effective programs and services for all students. Multi district routing and scheduling for special education transportation and multi district routing and bidding for regular transportation have proven effective in reducing and containing long term cost increases.

MA SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REGULAR EDUCATION TRANSPORTATION COSTS

FISCAL YEARS 1995 TO 2007

	SPECIAL EDUCATION			*REGULAR EDUCATION*		
FISCAL YEAR	**TOTAL SPED EXPENDITURE**	**ANNUAL % INCREASE**	**CUMULATIVE % INCRESE**	**TOTAL REGULAR ED EXPENDITURE**	**ANNUAL % INCREASE**	**CUMULATIVE % INCREASE**
95	84,424,884			105,676,494		
96	91,321,342	8.2%	8.2%	110,671,629	4.7%	4.7%
97	97,875,680	7.2%	15.9%	115,544,145	4.4%	9.3%
98	105,075,909	7.4%	24.5%	120,782,200	4.5%	14.3%
99	116,869,372	11.2%	38.4%	128,237,343	6.2%	21.3%
00	129,429,988	10.7%	53.3%	134,736,212	5.1%	27.5%
01	138,825,076	7.3%	64.4%	144,814,174	7.5%	37.0%
02	150,500,350	8.4%	78.3%	157,102,021	8.5%	48.7%
03	159,829,896	6.2%	89.3%	158,501,890	0.9%	50.0%
04	167,616,568	4.9%	98.5%	156,608,943	-1.2%	48.2%
05	173,930,125	3.8%	106.0%	176,374,420	12.6%	66.9%
06	190,424,833	9.5%	125.6%	181,387,896	2.8%	71.6%
07	205,087,545	7.7%	**142.9%**	187,924,465	3.6%	**77.8%**
AVE.		**7.7%**			**5.0%**	

Transportation costs continue to grow at a more rapid rate than that for regular transportation. Between the years 1995 and 2007, costs for special education statewide increased by 143% as compared to a growth of 78% fro regular transportation. Small and rural school districts, in particular, are at a disadvantage in providing cost effective transportation services. Generally there are a small number of students in a large geographic and sparsely populated area. This leads to long and costly routes. In addition, given the cost of capitalization to effectively operate long routes for small districts, restricts competition. In most cases the incumbent provider is favored by circumstance. This, in turn leads to little completion, if any, for these routes. Most Franklin County school districts reported only 1 or 2 bidders for their contracts.

Franklin County costs, with the exception of Orange, Mahar, and Greenfield mirrored school transportation costs in the Pioneer Valley region.

REGULAR AND SPECIAL NEEDS TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS
Annual contracts, cost per bus, vendor of record

Vendor		*Annual Contract*	*Routes*	*Cost/bus/day*
FRSD	Grybko			
Union #38	Conway	59,517	3	330.65
	Deerfield	89,374	5	496.52
	Sunderland	63,635	3	353.53
	Whately	28,980	2	161.00
Mahar	Swift River Bus (Yr3 of 3)	474,420	15	175.71
Orange	Swift River Bus	238,500	10	6 @ 106.00 3 @ 212.00 1 @ 53.00
Greenfield	Kusmeskus (yr3 of 5)	323,055	6 tier one 6 tier two	149.56 149.56
GMRSD	Kusmeskus	260,280	6	241.00
Pioneer	Kusmeskus (3 of 5)	545,436	13	233.10
Erving #28	Kusmeskus			
	Erving	126,846	3	234.90
	Wendell	80,145	2	222.60
	New Salem	79,714	2	221.45
FCTech	Kusmeskus	560,351	12	256.57
Mohawk **Rowe** **Hawlemont**	First Student	1,115,370	16 buses 1 bus/1 SUV 2 buses/2 SUV	253.00

In order to provide true competition, the districts could bundle their transportation needs and bid for these services on a county wide or at least a regional, multi district basis. Prospective vendors could bid by individual district, groups of districts or county wide, for all of the districts. This would allow the current vendors to bid, while still creating competition. New vendors, given the size of the potential contract would be able to effectively capitalize and spread their costs over multiple district contracts. The end result should be not only an initial savings, but also long term cost avoidance, especially if one of the lower cost local contractors won the bid.

Reduce the high cost of special education programs and services. Autism programs, Alternative Middle and High School programs, etc.
As school districts and the medical community continue to advance diagnostic services, more students and students with more pronounced special needs are being identified and referred for special education services. While the Massachusetts "circuit breaker" has assisted in the high cost placements, it is incumbent upon special education administrators to provide the appropriate programs and services in the most cost effective manner. In small and rural school districts, where there does not exist the "economy of scale" to operate these programs cost effectively, the sharing of educational resources among contiguous school, districts may provide some financial relief. Through the development of regional "magnet" type special education programs, districts' reliance on high cost private placements can be reduced. This sharing would also reduce the relatively high cost of special needs transportation; a hidden cost to special education costs, in general.

Special Education- Opportunities for Cooperation

In reviewing the information it became apparent that districts could indeed share programs and reduce their costs. It also was apparent that districts may be able to bring back students from private schools and develop and share programs to further reduce costs. In general all of the districts had relatively small numbers of students attending out of district placements throughout Western Massachusetts and even smaller number attending private residential schools throughout New England. However, several districts had a relatively high number of students (over 4) at local private schools. In fact one district had nine students at the White Oak School in Westfield, MA. The tuition cost for this program is approximately thirty thousand dollars ($30,000) without the inclusion of transportation. This district is therefore paying close to two hundred and seventy thousand dollars ($270,000) plus transportation costs. Other area districts have one or two students at the same school. It may be beneficial to create a more local program to serve these students. Doing so would also save on the transportation. If other nearby communities had other students attending White Oak, it could be a cooperative program, which would result in higher savings to all participating school districts.

If the districts were able to do this on a consistent basis, not only would they be able to reduce program costs, but there would be significant savings in transportation costs. If Franklin County were divided into three geographical areas such as Southern, Central and Northern, it would be logical that area based magnet type special education programs be developed. It would also be logical to locate the identified programs in the North-Central-South Franklin area schools in order to reduce transportation time and subsequent transportation costs.

Throughout those schools that returned the survey, there were differences in the way that district special education support services were being provided. This included Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy, Adaptive Physical Education, Nursing and School Psychologist. Some were providing full time employment, while others only part time. Almost all, though, were providing full time benefits, even if there need was for only part time staffing. Cooperatively, they could hire full time staff to fill these positions. Experience in educational collaboratives and other educational service agencies have demonstrated that it would reduce costs and provide more consistent service delivery. By comparison, contracted service providers usually charge in excess of sixty dollars ($60) per hour to provide these same services. By locating regional magnet programs in North-Central-South County, a Collaborative could effectively schedule staff to provide the maximum amount of service even with staff travel time between sites.

In looking at the programmatic data gathered, there seems to be a need to develop or cooperatively offer three distinct groups of programs. They would be as follows:

1. Adjustment/Behavioral/Emotional Programs
2. Learning Disabilities/Mild/Moderate Academic Delays
3. Multiple Handicapped/Moderate Severely Disabled

Descriptions of Potential Cooperative Programs

I. Adjustment/Behavior - For Students Who Have School Adjustment Problems

Elementary Adjustment

Grades 3-6
Would serve students with moderate adjustment problems who could not function in their home school environment but who do not require placement in a separate private program.

Transitional Alternative

Student Ages 12-18 years
Would serve middle school and high school students who are in transition between program placements. The program is designed as a temporary placement for a student either suspended from school or awaiting placement in a more permanent program.

Alternative Secondary I

Grades 6-8
Would serve students located in a middle school, this academically-oriented program would be designed to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate adjustment problems.

Alternative Secondary II

Grades 9-12
Located in a high school, this academically-oriented program would be designed to meet the needs of students with serious social skills deficits, which combined with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, can lead to significant adjustment problems.

Off Campus Alternative Program

Grades 9-12
This program would be designed for high school students who, as a result of moderate behavior disorders, are in able to function in a regular high school environment. Students will have sufficient academic ability to complete a high school curriculum.

This program could be operated on the campus of Greenfield Community College.

II. Programs for Learning Disabilities and Mild to Moderate Academic Delays

Career Preparation

Grades 9-12
Designed for adolescents with moderate delays in academic language skills and social skills, the program is in a self-contained classroom which provides academic remediation, awareness of the world of work, and appropriate life skills within a high school.

Collaborative Middle School Program for Students with Aspergers Syndrome

Student Ages 11-15 years
Would be developed for students 11-15 years of age with Aspergers Syndrome, PDD-NOS, Non-Verbal LD and related high functioning autism spectrum disorders. This program is an academically oriented program for students who have average and above academic ability but need a more individualized, structured program in a small class setting.

Secondary Skills

Student Ages 12-15 years
This program would be designed for young adolescents with mild to moderate delays in language, socialization and cognition. It provides a self-contained environment for language and other academic development as well as awareness of the world of work.

Career Skills I

Grades 9-12
Designed for adolescents with mild to moderate delays in academic language skills and social skills, the program is in a self-contained high school classroom which provides academic remediation, awareness of the world of work, and appropriate life skills.

VOC PREP

Grades 9-12
Designed for students with moderate cognitive delays and/or significant learning disabilities. Students who need training in social skills and pragmatic language. This program combines vocational training with applied academic and employability skills.

III. Programs for Multiple Handicapped/Moderate to Severely Disabled

Elementary Developmental

Student Ages 5-12 years
This program is designed for students with significant degrees of developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders.

Elementary Transitional I

Student Ages 10-13 years
The program focuses on development of vocabulary, expansion of syntactic structures and readiness skills.

Elementary Transitional II

Student Ages 13-16 years
The program focuses on development of vocabulary, expansion of syntactic structures and readiness skills.

Pre-Vocational

Student Ages 17-22 years
This program would be designed for adolescent and young adult students with moderate to severe developmental disabilities. Academic instruction is functional; emphasis is on age appropriate academic and functional daily living skills. Pre-vocational training is provided as well as community-based skills and instruction.

Secondary Developmental

Student Ages 16-22 years
Program would be designed for students with developmental disabilities and multiple handicaps, including medical, who require a multi-disciplinary approach to their education and clinical services.

Vocational Preparation I

Student Ages 16-22 years
This program would be designed for students with moderate delays in cognitive ability. It provides for acquisition of language and academic skills as well as activities of daily living. It provides a half day of functional academics and a half day of vocational skills training either in a vocational educational program or in a community job placement. The program prepares students to make the transition from school to the world of work and adult life.

Vocational Preparation II

Student Ages 16-22 years
This program would be designed for students with moderate delays in cognitive ability. It provides for acquisition of language and academic skills as well as activities of daily living. It provides a half day of functional academics and a half day of vocational skills training either in a vocational educational program or in a community job placement. The program prepares students to make the transition from school to the world of work and adult life.

Kindergarten-Elementary Program for Students with Autism

Students Ages 5-7

This program would focus on the needs of students who exhibit Autism spectrum disorders. The program is designed to train students to function as meaningfully and independently as possible in both school and the broader community.

Itinerant Professional Services

Through a cooperative effort, full and part time Therapists could be retained to supplement the staff of the member school districts. These Itinerant staff would be cost shared among those school districts for which they provide the services. They could include Adaptive Physical Education Teachers, Teacher for the Blind and Visually Impaired, School Nurses, Physical Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Speech & Language Pathologists and trained paraprofessional staff.

Currently, the majority of the school systems in Franklin County use ESPED software to create IEPs and to manage their special education student data. Through a cooperative purchasing effort, all of the systems could use the same software which would allow for a smooth transition of student data among school districts sharing programs. It would also allow districts to track students with similar needs to more easily create additional programs, when warranted.

Collaboration is based on the premise that there are many things in education that can be done more effectively and efficiently by pooling districts resources. A major thrust of a new collaborative in the Franklin County area should be in the area of special education. Through cooperative programming and cost sharing, the participating school districts would experience not only program enrollment stability, but also a substantial cost savings, while maintaining the organizational capacity to react to the individual student needs of the member school districts.

More cost effective professional development services, including teacher mentoring, expert facilitators for curriculum integration, and low incidence professional development (content area) technology integration, etc.
Small and rural school districts, in particular are hard pressed to identify and provide quality professional development services for their teaching staff and administrators. This is especially true for their low incidence staff, i.e. science, mathematics, foreign languages, etc. where content area professional development is required for recertification. Multi district professional development offerings have proven to be, not only more cost effective but also of higher quality. Through multi district cooperation, specific experts can be utilized for curriculum integration and ongoing support. Area networking can enhance professional development through the development of support groups to help sustain momentum for change. Summer Institutes for teacher professional development,

offered on a county wide or regional basis, can provide a much more cost effective method to bring in outside "experts", consultants who individual school districts could not afford. Through cooperative model, ongoing and continuous support for curriculum integration can be provided throughout the year.

Cooperative purchasing of goods and services, maintenance workers, modular classrooms, food and commodities, paper, custodial supplies, textbooks, technology, utilities, service contracts, etc.

School administrators agree that combining the buying power of multiple school districts can result in cost savings for all. Currently several school districts utilize joint purchase groups e.g. Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative for energy procurement, Hampshire Educational Collaborative for school supplies and several Insurance Groups for health insurance. Business administrators agree that cooperative bidding for such items as custodial supplies, technology, textbooks, service contracts, tradesmen, bread, milk and other food commodities, copy paper, etc. will result in significant cost savings to all. Combined with ability to finance through tax exempt financing would also provide a cost effective method for districts to acquire the items and services necessary. Having a central organization for the procurement of these goods and services would also reduce the current redundancy of each individual district having to bid under Ch. 30B for these same items.

Loss of students to out of district placements, including, charter schools, school choice, parochial schools, home schooling. Create magnet programs for area districts.

In general, Franklin County is experiencing population reduction. This coupled with reductions in school enrollments, exacerbates the problem of being able to maintain an economy of scale to insure program cost effectiveness. As a result, districts continue to eliminate or consolidate programs in order to maintain essential programs and services. Historically, low enrollment programs, such as AP courses, languages, art and technology, and a variety of electives, etc. have been discontinued at alarming rates. As a result of these curriculum reductions parents see charter schools, school choice, parochial schools and home schooling as better options for their children. Similar to special education, districts can cooperate as opposed to competing with each other for students in order to maintain their budgets and class sizes. Jointly developed "magnet" type programs across the county can help to stem the loss of students to outside placements. Marketed, these magnet programs could satisfy the needs expectations of parents and students for change and educational quality. Franklin County Tech, already a county wide "magnet type" program has already proven to be effective. Since FCT has typically more student applications than are accepted and they have no available space for expansion, but various schools throughout the county have available classroom space, FCT could develop satellite vocational-technical programs throughout the county. These programs could be developed as half day programs, where students take their academic requirements at their sending high school and take only their technical training through these satellite programs. This model has proven effective for the school districts of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, as well as various comprehensive high schools throughout the Northeast. Tuition rates for this model are typically significantly less than full day programs. This model could also help address the relatively high drop out rates for regular students and improve the graduation rates for special needs students.

School security audits and funding alternatives.

Cooperating on the purchase of services such as school security audits, building renovations and improvements can lead to an economy of scale to reduce individual district costs. Cooperation on seeking external school security grants as opposed to competing individually for them will enhance each district's ability to access external funding. Multi district contracts have proven effective in both cost savings and improved quality of product. Multi district maintenance contracts have also proven to be cost effective.

Short term financing for textbooks and technology.
Utilizing a public educational service agency can provide the vehicle to finance the acquisition of textbooks and technology through short term tax exempt borrowing. This allows the district to realize the full educational impact of the acquisition and pay for it over time from their operational budgets. Replacement of computers, which were originally grant funded, is becoming increasingly necessary. A strategic cost effective method for computer replacement and upgrades is seen as crucial to the continued effective utilization of educational technology in the respective Franklin County schools.

External funding, grant writing for specific projects.
Given their current financial condition, all school districts rely on external funding for new or expanded programs or services. It is very difficult, given their financial demands, to generate "risk capital" for new activities. Such a decision comes at the cost of other valuable programs and services already in place. Through cooperation, Franklin County school districts can increase their eligibility for various grants and sources of external funding. Through participation, the districts can employ a professional grant writer familiar with the various grant sources and have the "lobbying" power to successfully compete for these limited financial resources. There are grant writers who, if they perceive a high chance of success, will prepare and lobby for competitive grants on a contingency basis. They receive payment based upon their success.

More cost effective after school and summer remedial, MCAS Prep and enrichment programs.
In order to maintain and improve MCAS scores and annual yearly progress (AYP) most school districts offer a variety of remedial and grade recovery educational programs. While some of these programs are built into the school day, others are after school and during the summer. Small and rural school districts find it difficult to offer and sustain these programs cost effectively due, primarily to low enrollments and distances students must travel to the program. Cooperative regional "magnet" type programs can provide a larger enrollment pool and therefore be more cost effective as well as being able to offer more sections based on individual and small student group needs. In addition, regional programs may be more eligible for grant funding for financial support.

Development of "working templates" for DOE and other federal initiatives, i.e. pandemic response and plans, school safety plans, etc.
While this was not a high priority for administrators, there was certainly interest in cooperating on research and development type activities in response to Dept. of Education and No Child Left Behind federal initiatives. The time required for state and federal reporting was reported as contributing to administrative staff "burn out".

Shared administrative services.
District administrators, especially the partial regional school districts, were open to the sharing of various administrative positions between two or more contiguous school districts. Among the positions discussed were the following: food services director, payroll capabilities, curriculum director, skilled tradesmen (electrician, plumbers, HVAC technicians, carpenter, etc), school nurses, therapeutic and medical related services, special education therapists, etc. The question inherent in staff sharing is which salary and benefit schedule to utilize along with staff supervision. Utilizing a collaborative, where the collaborative has a distinct and separate salary and benefit schedule addresses this issue.

Distance learning for low incident academic needs.
In an effort to maintain low incidence curriculum and meet the specific educational needs of students, several school districts are participating in distance learning programs. Virtual High School (VHS) can provide an educational opportunity to expand and maintain curriculum for low incidence student needs. It can provide educational instruction for home bound students as well as provide a method for grade recovery. Marketed effectively, VHS can provide an education "tailored" to students' interests and provide the educational vehicle for students to pursue specific areas of interest as part of their elective educational program. For motivated students, VHS provides an opportunity for grade acceleration through coursework at other than traditional school times.

Maintaining curriculum with declining enrollments.
Almost all of the Franklin County school districts are suffering from the educational effects of declining enrollments. These effects included a consolidation and elimination of courses, especially in the arts and humanities, foreign languages, advanced placement courses and technology. A by-product of this consolidation has been the growth of charter schools and increased interest in school choice. Parents see the "greener pasture" and broader educational opportunity with charter schools or in the neighboring school district. In more severe cases, parents have opted for home schooling. Over the past several years there has been an increased student interest in vocational-technical education. Recent studies indicate that students are dropping out of high school, not because they can not meet the educational requirements for graduation, but for other reasons. One reason is that they do not feel that their education is relevant. Vocational-technical education provides that relevancy. While politically laudable, the resulting reduction in district revenues for those students who seek their education outside the traditional public school setting is having drastic community and educational consequences. Several school districts are wrestling with having to close relatively new school buildings, especially their small rural schools, which have proven to be educationally sound but no longer financially viable.

Creating "magnet" type regional programs can help reduce the flight of students from the public schools. Magnet type programs can provide the financial assistance to maintain community school buildings, while providing school districts with rental revenue.

Shared professional services, i.e. legal, auditing, architect, high end technology experts, etc.
School district administrators agree that it is cost effective to cooperatively select and utilize various professional services. Doing so reduces the learning curve when doing business the first time. Multiple projects and fewer contractors provides for a longer term relationship, resulting in both higher quality work and cost savings to each participating school district. Kaizans (cadre of selected vendors) in Japan allow Japanese companies to build long term relationships with their respective vendors. This has assisted Japanese manufacturing to be and remain highly competitive in the global economy. Current public procurement laws and regulations can be followed while still developing shared professional services. These professional services can include legal services, architectural and design service, financial auditing, computer network administrators, e-rate experts, etc.

School maintenance projects-small projects, HVAC maintenance contracts.
Through collaborative itinerant tradesmen, small local maintenance projects can be accomplished more easily and cost effectively. Through the utilization of collaborative employees, neither public bidding nor prevailing wages are required. Through cooperative purchasing various maintenance contracts (HVAC) can be bid and negotiated at a cost savings to each of the participating school districts.

Data warehousing and technical assistance in data mining.
While not a high current priority, there was recognition among the majority of Superintendents that there was an emerging need for districts to both maintain historical data and to develop a method to extract or mine that data in order to respond to public pressure for accountability and for both state and federal reporting. Technical assistance in both the warehousing of data and the mining of that data for consistent reporting among area school districts was seen to be important for the future.

Review e rate submissions to see if maximized.
Recognizing the need to maximize all available financial resources, there was common interest in assessing whether each district was submitting for all available e-rate reimbursements. Cooperatively contracting for this review and perhaps ongoing technical assistance was supported by the majority.

Review Medicaid Reimbursements and see if maximized.
Most districts were satisfied with their level of Municipal Medicaid revenue. The exception was for the municipal districts and school unions, where the revenue generated went to the municipality rather than the school district. It may be worthwhile in assessing whether the Franklin County districts were, in fact, maximizing their Medicaid revenue by having identified all students and all services eligible for reimbursement. The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative routinely provides such an assessment.

MUNICIPAL MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

DISTRICTS	Contract Service	Amount Paid	Total Spec. Enrollment	Annual Revenue FY' 2007	Revenue per Spec. Ed. Student
Pioneer Valley RSD	LPVEC	$11,833	181	$ 118,330.64	$ 653.76
Greenfield	LPVEC	$39,082	268	$ 390,817.04	$ 1,458.27
Ralph C. Mahar RSD					
Gill-Montague	LPVEC	$ 26,865	216	$ 268,648.51	$ 1,243.74
Frontier RSD	LPVEC	$ 4,335	149	$43,345.62	$ 290.91
Franklin County Tech	LPVEC	$ 167	141	$1,671.30	$ 11.85
Sunderland	LPVEC	$ 585	32	$ 15,854.75	$ 495.46
Orange					
Deerfield	LPVEC	$ 1,869	57	$ 18,688.20	$ 327.86
Conway	LPVEC	$ 943	35	$9,431.19	$ 269.46
Mohawk Trail Regional	LPVEC	$ 24,149	256	$ 241,489.89	$ 943.32
Hawlemont Regional	LPVEC	$ 3,035	23	$30,354.01	$ 1,319.74
Rowe Elementary	LPVEC	$1,346	10	$13,455.73	$1,345.57
Erving	LPVEC	$652	18	$ 6,520.71	$362.26
New Salem-Wendell	LPVEC	$ 411	19	$ 4,111.02	$ 216.37
	TOTAL	**$ 116,272**	**1405**	**$1,162,718.61**	**$827.56 AVERAGE**

In December of 1993, the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) organized and developed an electronic billing system to obtain Federal Medicaid reimbursement for school based health and medical related services to students. In addition to the seven LPVEC member school districts, the LPVEC provides this service to nonmembers on a fee-for-service basis. The LPVEC currently provides this service for **seven** of the nine Franklin County school districts.

Reimbursement from the Municipal Medicaid Program is available for students in special education who receive benefits from a variety of different entitlement programs from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The program has two parts. Part A, direct services, is an individual- per student claiming process. Part B is a quarterly claiming process prepared in the aggregate across the school district.

A review of the following chart indicates the amounts received by those districts and a revenue comparison per district total special education enrollment by district by vendor.

Develop cost effective adult education programs.
There was significant interest among the majority of superintendents to either develop or expand adult education offerings. For those districts who currently offered adult education programs there was interest in expanding their potential enrollment pool to make these programs more cost effective. Satellite programs in rural areas should also be considered, since they could be operated for adult populations after traditional school hours and on weekends and summers. Regional "magnet" schools can provide this vehicle.

School building infrastructure upgrades, i.e. telephone, WiFi (wireless)
A majority of the school administrators echoed the need for a more consistent approach to school building upgrades, especially for the support for educational technology enhancement. In addition, platforms to support greater Internet access were seen as necessary. School security systems and telephone upgrades were also necessary, in addition to other school security measures. A coordinated security assessment of the schools, with a multi year plan for improvement was identified as important and necessary.

Modular classrooms for short term educational space needs.
Only Franklin County Tech indicated a need for short term space while awaiting School Building Assistance Bureau consideration of building renovation and expansion projects. In particular, modular classrooms for both academic type classrooms and labs were seen as a cost effective approach to providing temporary short term space. Their immediate need was for classroom space for a needed Social Studies class. An educational collaborative could acquire and relocate modular classrooms among the member school districts as they had periodic need for short term space, thereby addressing FCT's need for added temporary classroom space.

Formation of a private non profit (foundation) corporation.
All of the Superintendents expressed the need to form a 501 (c) (3) charitable tax exempt corporation which could solicit external and grant funds for which public schools may not be eligible. In addition, the private entity could be utilized for other educationally related purposes when the use of a private sector entity is more feasible and cost effective.

FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLDISTRICTS	School Transportation	Special Education	Professional Development	Magnet Programs	Cooperative Purchasing	School Security	Upgrade Texts & Technology	Grants/External Funding	MCAS Prep/After School Remediation	DOE "data templates"	Shared Administrative Services	Distance Learning	Maintain Curriculum/Enrollments	Professional Services	School Maintenance	Data Warehousing/Mining	E-Rate Maximization	Medicaid Reimbursement Maximization	Adult Education	School Building Infrastructure Upgrades	Modular Classrooms	Private Foundation
Erving School Union	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	•	▲	▲	•	▼	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▼	•	•	•	▲	▼	▲
Franklin County Tech	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	•	▼	▲	▲	•	▲	▼	•	•	▲	▲	▲	▲
Frontier Regional	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▼	▲	▼	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲
Gill-Montague	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	•	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲
Greenfield	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	▼	•	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	•	•	▲	•	▼	▲
Orange	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	•	•	•	▼	•	▼	▲
Pioneer Valley Regional	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	•	▲	▲	•	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	•	▼	•	•	▼	▲	▼	▲
Ralph C. Mahar	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	•	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	•	▼	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲
Mohawk Trail Regional	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲
Hawlemont Regional	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲
Rowe Elementary	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	•	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	•	•	▲	▲	▼	▲

Legend		
	▲	High Demand
	•	Moderate Demand
	▼	Low Demand

While each of the preceding areas of potential cooperation will save the participating school districts both time and money, none individually could support a separate organizational structure to organize and manage them. But taken together, as a group, they have the ability to sustain an organizational structure while improving district efficiencies.

POTENTIAL COST SAVINGS

None of the identified programs and services, with the exception of school transportation services, has the potential for a great deal of savings. But taken together, they can not only provide needed educational improvement, but can save a significant amount of money which can then be redirected to the classroom. The following is an effort to quantify the potential savings by programmatic area. Actual savings would entirely depend on the number of participating districts and the volume of bundled items and services at that time.

School Transportation Services- Multi District Bidding

Regular Transportation

A conservative estimate by utilizing multi district bidding would be 10% of the total now being expended to provide the current level of service. Depending upon the cost of their current contract some districts may realize a greater percentage of savings.

Total of District RNT Contracts: $ 4,045,623

Potential Savings @ 10%= $ 404,562

Special Needs Student Transportation-Multi District Routing & Scheduling

Preliminary estimates from the Franklin County Special Needs Student Multi District Transportation Project being managed by Franklin County Tech indicates that through multi district routing and scheduling, the following savings could be realized in FY'2009:

Current Individual School District Routes: 42
Potential Multi District Routes: 26
Difference: 16 Routes
Average Cost per Day per Route: $ 189.00
Potential Savings (180 days) = $ 544,320

Special Education Programs and Services

Special Education Programs

Consolidation of special needs student enrollments currently attending private schools could realize significant savings over time. An example would be the creation of a comparative White Oak Program. This program for approximately 12 students would save the participating school districts approximately 20% of their current out of district tuition cost.

Current O.D. Tuition Cost: $ 30,000 per student
Total O.D. Tuition (12) = $ 360,000
Estimated Cost of Cooperative Program: $ 200,000
Potential Net Savings: $ 160,000
Potential Savings per Student = $ 13,333 per student

Transportation could also be significantly reduced by greatly reducing the mileage and time associated with out of district transportation. Conservatively 1 route could be eliminated by creation of a more local program.

Eliminate 1 Route @ $ 189 per day (180 days) = $ 34,020

Special Education Support Services

Coordination and cost sharing of special education support staff could also result in savings. More importantly, by offering full time employment to these specialists who are in high demand, districts would be able to recruit and retain their staff. While the salaries of these specialists may not decrease, spreading the fringe benefit package, currently born by the employing school district for part time staff, across cooperating school districts would result in cost savings to each.

Assuming Fringe Benefit as Percentage of Salary= 22.5%
Average Therapist Salary ($37 per hr) = $ 51,338
Fringe Benefit per Therapist = $ 11, 551
Potential Savings per Cooperative Therapist per District= $ 5775

Special Education Data Management Software Systems

It is conceivable that if school districts cooperatively selected that software currently utilized by the majority of the Franklin County school districts (ESPED), a negotiated contract for acquisition, maintenance, training and support could be realized.

Current Annual License Support Fees: $ 2500
(Average Cost for Small Districts)
Estimated Cooperative Savings @ 10% = $ 250 per district
Potential Savings: $ 2,250

Professional Development Services

It is conceivable that by developing a cooperative programs for professional development services on a county wide basis, the cooperating school districts could, not only enhance their current offerings, but could save money. Studies have shown that professional development services offered through educational service agencies are in fact more cost effective than individual district programs. The Hampshire Educational Collaborative, a collaborative leader in professional development offers a comprehensive menu of professional development offerings to not only its 19 member school districts but also to 50+ nonmember area school districts. The results of pooling are that HEC is able to offer non college credit courses for an average of $400 per course. Students are awarded 37.5 PDPs for their successful participation. The HEC tuition rate represents a 40% savings as compared to the tuition rate for similar courses at area public colleges and a 79% savings as compared to area private colleges. HEC graduate courses (credit) cost an average of $ 625 per credit or a savings of 6% over public college tuition and 67% savings over private college tuitions. HEC also offers four licensure programs at a cost of $ 4400 each, in school administration, reading, special education and middle school teacher. The licensure program can be completed in 15 months, as compared to two years in area public colleges. As important, local teachers travel time and cost of travel is significantly reduced, making teacher participation more attractive. Since most districts reimburse teacher professional development at a set rate, their reimbursements to teachers are also reduced. This model can be developed either through a negotiated agreement with the Hampshire Educational Collaborative or by developing a parallel structure for the Franklin County school districts. Either option will reduce the costs currently being expended by these school districts.

Cooperative Purchasing

By pooling the various goods and service requirements of the nine Franklin County school districts, an economy of scale can be developed and utilized to negotiate down current unit prices. This economy of scale follows the age old business practice of "the more you buy, the less you pay per unit".

Joint Energy Purchasing (Fuel oil, natural gas, diesel, gasoline and electricity)

Energy procurement is probably the largest line item procurement, other than salaries and benefits) whose annual growth account for a significant impact on school district budgets. Typically, these utilities are bundled and bid and subsequently purchased from third party distributors, aggregators and marketers.

Through a single cooperative entity contracts are able to be bid during times when the "market" is low and futures prices are also low. Multi year contracts are most often employed. Therefore, savings are locked in, as the supply is prepurchased at a guaranteed price. Legal costs associated with bidding and contract negotiation is spread over the participating school districts and municipalities, again reducing the

comparable cost to each. A recent study conducted by the Pioneer Institute of the cost savings generated through the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative (GLEC) indicated a savings of 16% on electricity and a 15% savings on natural gas purchases. Average savings per school building was $ 6333 on electricity and $ 6437 on natural gas. District and municipalities which participate in the Franklin COG, the Hampshire COG or the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC) typically experience similar savings.

	ANNUAL SAVINGS						
District or Municipality	**NAT. GAS**	**FUEL OIL**	**DIESEL**	**GASOLINE**	**ELECTRICITY**	**CONSULTING SERVICES**	**TOTAL SAVINGS**
Conway Schools		$ 2,250.00					$ 2,250.00
Deerfield Schools	$2,757.00						$ 2,757.00
Franklin County Tech		$15,180.00	$ 300.00	$ 125.00			$15,605.00
Frontier RSD		$10,500.00					$10,500.00
Gill-Montague RSD		$19,350.00					$19,350.00
Greenfield	$7,506.00	$42,300.00	$8,100.00	$2,500.00			$60,406.00
Mohawk Trail RSD		$14,325.00					$14,325.00
New Salem-Wendell		$2,400.00					$ 2,400.00
Shelburne		$2,895.00	$1,500.00				$ 4,395.00
Sunderland		$3,375.00					$3,375.00
TOTAL	**$10,263.00**	**$112,575.00**	**$9,900.00**	**$2,625.00**	**$ -**	**$ -**	**$135,363.00**

Other benefits to a cooperative energy procurement program are:

- Reviewing and verifying monthly billing invoices for accuracy.
- Assistance in forecasting and budgeting
- Centralized technical expertise for technical assistance
- Contract protection of a performance bond to guarantee uninterrupted delivery ands service
- Combined energy consumption profiles by building and averaging of peaks and valleys across the region

It may make sense to combine the energy procurement needs of the LPVEC and FCOG and HCOG constituents in an effort to reduce redundancy and obtain the greatest buying power.

School and Office Supplies & Equipment

Joint purchase contracts for school related supplies and office supplies are readily available and common. Most vendors have predetermined volume pricing discounts. While these have varied "break points" they typically include reductions of approximately 1.5% per price point volume. The Franklin County schools currently make approximately 25 million copies collectively, consuming approximately 5000 cases of copy paper. At the current state contract price of $19.95 per case (grade 90 or above), this equates to an annual expenditure of approximately $ 100,000. A three (3) per cent price break could result in savings of approximately $ 3000. Several districts purchase various supplies through the Hampshire Council of Governments, Hampshire Educational Collaborative or from vendors based on "best vendor pricing". If all district cooperatively purchased through a single entity, a greater economy of scale could be realized and greater cost savings.

Creation of Magnet Type Educational Programs
With continued declining enrollment, it is evident that there exists excess space in many school districts. Typically, for financial survival, districts are forced to market their programs and recruit students from their neighboring school districts. Given the language of regional agreements, coupled with the desire for towns to maintain their community schools, consolidation and reorganization of school districts will not occur soon. In the meantime, students and parents continue to pursue other educational alternatives under school choice and charter schools.

If magnet programs did little more than retained those students leaving the Franklin County public schools in favor of out of district schools under school choice, such as Amherst-Pelham Regional and various charter schools, the financial effect would be worthwhile. Creation of satellite vocational-technical programs would keep some, if not most, potential drop outs in school, while providing much needed educational training programs to students whom Franklin County Tech can not accept. Developed as half day training programs, the satellite program would not duplicate what the existing high school programs can already provide.

For every student retained through these programs, the sending district would realize approximately $ 5500 increase in their Ch. 70 state aid.

Magnet type programs, housed in public schools would allow low enrollment school buildings to remain open and viable. Closing relatively new school buildings which still have bonding payments is financially impossible. Municipalities do not have the financial resources to pay off the outstanding bond principle to affect a school closure. Utilization of this available space is an approved educational use under both SBAB regulations and Dept. of Education policy. This collaborative use of the existing space in these buildings would provide significant cost avoidance to those municipalities and school districts, while improving educational access to those education programs and services to that community. Possible magnet program locations could include Gill-Montague RSD, Mohawk Trail RSD, Frontier RSD and Pioneer Valley RSD.

Public Cooperative Entity for Financing of Technology and Textbook Purchases
Utilizing a public educational service agency can provide a financial vehicle for the participating school districts to acquire and upgrade technology and curriculum materials and textbooks at very competitive tax exempt rates. Short term tax exempt borrowing rates are typically based on bank LIBOR rates with extremely low closing costs. Consequently, for short term needs, this type of borrowing is advantageous and comparatively fast as compared to traditional bonding. While typically, not a cost saving measure, this short term borrowing allows school districts to better utilize those funds available and to maximize the educational impact of that purchase in a shorter period of time.

Grant Writing
Typically, small and rural school districts have difficulty in finding and obtaining competitive grants. Single districts simply do not have the demographic impact to warrant private investment. Cooperative grant applications would have the necessary impact to be competitive in that arena. Furthermore, the cost of expert assistance in preparing grant applications and lobbying for their approval can be shared among several school districts, the cost of which is cost prohibitive for single districts. The Hampshire Educational Collaborative has been extremely successful in obtaining multi district grants on behalf of their member school districts. Grant "indirect costs" can assist in the funding of the necessary overhead structure associated with operating an educational service agency.

Shared Services
The most common problem associated with informal staff sharing arrangements occurs when the participating school districts have different salary and benefit schedules and collective bargaining contract provisions. Utilizing an educational service agency can eliminate that problem. Typically ESAs develop salary and benefit schedules compatible with those of their member school districts; adopting either averaging or majority policies. This shared staffs are supervised by the ESA, with input from the participating school districts. The down side of this ESA staff sharing agreement is where the municipality funds the fringe benefit cost of the school district staff. With the ESA model the benefit cost would be billed directly to the school district ad paid from their operational budget. Given, though, that the majority of the Franklin County school districts are regional and unions, this issue should not be problematic for the majority.

Distance Learning
The effects of declining enrollments and sate aid have resulted in the elimination of curriculum across the Franklin County school districts. Typically, these have included art, music, various electives, student support services and technology. Priority for the available educational resources and emphasis has been focused on those core subject areas tested by MCAS. This has become necessary in order for districts to maintain their annual yearly progress (AYP). Distance learning programs can and have been successful in providing needed low incidence curriculum. Students, who wish to focus their education, but have no ability to do so within their home school, can do so through distance learning. This may also help maintain school enrollments, if students are positively engaged in their education. The majority of school districts who offer distance learning utilize Virtual High School, a proven distance learning program. Once established, VHS student tuitions average approximately $300 per on line course; significantly less than traditional classroom instruction. VHS districts are required to develop and offer on line courses in return for a fixed number of "seats" in other on line courses. Through an educational service agency, this on line curriculum development and the resultant on line "seats" can be brokered to the benefit of all Franklin County school districts.

Shared Professional Services
A variety of professional services were identified as potential areas for cost savings. Among these were attorneys, architects, technology consultants and auditors. By negotiating long term cooperative retainer agreements, districts could benefit from not only reduced costs but also from the stability of the persons providing those services. Typically, a cost reduction of 10% could be realized if all of the Franklin County school districts were to jointly participate.

School Maintenance and Building Repair Projects
The area of school building infrastructure repairs and maintenance has been severely under funded in most school districts for several years. The result is that buildings are now in need of major repairs and improvements. SBAB has not been adequately funded to accommodate all of the building needs statewide. Future funding for these improvements and repairs is not likely in the near future. Consequently, other cost effective measures must be taken in order to address this issue and maintain a safe and comfortable educational environment.

Through a single entity, like repair or construction projects can be bundled and effectively bid under current state procurement regulations. In addition, bundling the various Franklin County school service contracts and negotiating with providers would not only provide interest from more vendors, but would also lead to reduced costs for those individual districts. Service contracts could include boiler maintenance and

repairs, HVAC controls, window and glass repairs, roof repairs, building technology upgrades and school security audits and upgrades. Coordinated service contracts can typically save from 10-20% over the cost of individual school district contracts and labor rates.

Another option would be for an educational service agency to hire, as ESA employees, various tradesmen. As public employees, these tradesmen are not subject to the state prevailing wage. In addition, as an ESA member, school districts are not required to bid for those services provided under a collaborative agreement. These s services are exempt from biding under Ch. 30B or Ch 149 as an intergovernmental agreement. Repair and maintenance projects could then be assigned and billed on an hourly or project basis at a reduced rate, as compared to private contracting. Prevailing wage alone has been estimated to increase construction costs by as much as 30%. Savings in this area would allow school districts to better utilize those funds available and accomplish more for less.

Purchase and Sharing of Specialized Equipment
Major asset purchases have been limited over the past several years in most school districts. The result is equipment which is in need of costly maintenance and repair. These items include mowers and other grounds maintenance equipment, lift equipment, welding equipment, specialized technology testing equipment, etc. It is conceivable that contiguous school districts could purchase and share this type of equipment; whereby each would save in both capital costs and repairs.

Itinerant Technology Experts and Network Administrators
While several school districts have afforded high end technology experts, most districts rely on teaching staff to help maintain their school based technology. These districts also rely on outside technology consultants, usually associated with technology providers, to assist them in planning and implementing technology upgrades and acquisition of building or district wide technology. Typically, technology upgrades were included in building renovation and expansion projects. The technology is now in need of attention with regard to remaining technologically relevant. These upgrades include building networks, hubs, routers, WIFI distribution, cabling improvements, and both hardware and software acquisitions.

Food Service and School Lunch Programs
Given that most of the school lunch programs do no better than breaking even, this is a potential area for increased cooperation. The potential sales volume in these districts makes outsourcing of these services generally cost prohibitive. Food commodities available from USDA have, in recent years, been reduced as to availability of certain food items. Unavailability of these commodities from month to month has resulted in Food Services Managers looking for alternative sources, usually local purveyors, for their supply. Increased state and federal nutritional requirements, coupled with the elimination of "snack type" items has, in many cases reduced student participation in school lunch programs. Increasing overhead and utility costs have put strains on even the best of programs. Considering the distances between school buildings across the county, "satelliting" school lunches is not practical. Therefore, unless subsidized by the general fund, food services operations must become more cost effective. One method to do so would be the cooperative purchasing of those common commodities used by most, if not all school lunch programs. These could include bread, milk and dairy products, fresh vegetables and meat products. Bundling these products and commodities. Along with negotiated drop shipping to each school building could be an effective method to controlling costs.

A savings of as little as 5% could make most school lunch programs self sufficient, thus relieving the general fund of year end transfers to balance revenue vs. expenditures. In addition, through a cooperative effort all schools could implement point of sale (POS) technology and improve their accounting practices and reporting. POS technology also protects the integrity of those students eligible for free and reduced lunch, thereby increasing their level of participation. This in turn would result in greater reimbursement in support of the general school lunch program.

Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement

An area of potential revenue enhancement is Medicaid revenue. Several Massachusetts educational collaboratives have developed electronic Medicaid reimbursement programs for their and other area school districts. The Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative currently provides this service to the following Franklin County school districts at a cost equivalent to 10% of the funds generated:

DISTRICTS	Contract Service	Amount Paid	Total Spec. Enrollment	Annual Revenue FY' 2007	Revenue per Spec. Ed. Student
Pioneer Valley RSD	LPVEC	$11,833	181	$ 118,330.64	$ 653.76
Greenfield	LPVEC	$39,082	268	$ 390,817.04	$ 1,458.27
Ralph C. Mahar RSD					
Gill-Montague	LPVEC	$ 26,865	216	$ 268,648.51	$ 1,243.74
Frontier RSD	LPVEC	$ 4,335	149	$43,345.62	$ 290.91
Franklin County Tech	LPVEC	$ 167	141	$1,671.30	$ 11.85
Sunderland	LPVEC	$ 585	32	$ 15,854.75	$ 495.46
Orange					
Deerfield	LPVEC	$ 1,869	57	$ 18,688.20	$ 327.86
Conway	LPVEC	$ 943	35	$9,431.19	$ 269.46
Mohawk Trail Regional	LPVEC	$ 24,149	256	$ 241,489.89	$ 943.32
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Erving	LPVEC	$652	18	$ 6,520.71	$362.26
New Salem-Wendell	LPVEC	$ 411	19	$ 4,111.02	$ 216.37
	TOTAL	**$ 116,272**	**1405**	**$1,162,718.61**	**$827.56 AVERAGE**

It would be possible for a local county wide educational service agency to employ and train a Medicaid expert and manage the Municipal Medicaid program for all of the Franklin County school districts at a cost savings. Collectively, these school districts currently expend over $116,000 for the outsourcing of these services and for a total revenue of $1,162,719. Typically, competing agencies charge between 5-7% of those amounts generated. A savings of 3-5% would result in a reduced cost of approximately $50,000. This amount could be used to partially fund the overhead cost of the educational service agency.

E Rate Submissions
Most Franklin County school districts participate in e rate reimbursement for some technology related cost items. It may be prudent to contract with an e rate consultant to ascertain if each district is maximizing their e rate reimbursement potential. If not, an educational service agency could contract county wide for a consultant to develop and monitor a maximized e rate program. Typically, these consultants are paid a percentage of any subsequent increase in funding. Given the size and volume associated wit the Franklin County schools, bundling their purchases would be the only way to make this type of a contingency arrangement worthwhile and economically feasible for the vendor and cost effective for the school districts and municipalities.

A portion of these savings could be used to fund the overhead of the education service agency.

Modular Classrooms and Short Term Space Planning
Historically, short term leasing of modular buildings is cost prohibitive. To meet the short term needs for educational classroom space for their own programs and for their member school districts, the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative has acquired approximately $ 6 million of portable/modular classrooms. These units are routinely relocated and refurbished as school districts need short term space. The district rental costs are significantly less than short term leasing and the LPVEC enjoys the financial advantages of the subsequent equity. The LPVEC currently has excess modular units which could be acquired, at a reasonable cost by a Franklin County educational service agency for use by the area school districts. This acquisition would not be subject to bidding as it would be exempt as an intergovernmental transaction. The result is that space could be initially provided to Franklin County Tech for their social studies classroom and subsequently to any other school district or the ESA needing short term space. Area banks have usually providing 100% tax exempt financing for the purchase and renovation of modular classrooms.

Educational Foundation and/or Not For Profit Charitable Corporation
Creating an affiliated non profit educational corporation which could act as an educational foundation for the Franklin County school districts would provide another vehicle to obtain and hold funding. Many colleges and universities have such foundations. There are currently a number of grant sources for which public school districts are not eligible to apply. The non profit though would be an eligible recipient. In addition, the foundation as a private entity is allowed to carry over funds from year to year. The establishment of a charitable corporation would provide an added dimension to grant writing and obtaining other private foundation support for Franklin County school initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Background

Coincidentally with determining if there was a significant potential for creating efficiencies among the Franklin County school districts, the study also focused on how to organize and be able to actualize those efficiencies. While some Franklin County districts have had some effective informal arrangements, this process has not been effective long term. What is needed is an intermediate organization whose sole aim is to improve the cost effectiveness of the school districts through cooperative efforts; an organization which will only exist, if it is successful in so doing. We therefore researched any organizational structures within the county which were already in existence and which could operate educational programs and services county wide.

Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG)

An obvious organization is the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG), a quasi governmental entity, located in Greenfield. The FCOG is a voluntary organization of 26 municipalities in Franklin County. It currently provides a broad array of programs and services; some on a fee for service basis. The FRCOG advocates on behalf of the region. It has been very successful in grant writing, economic development planning, enhancing the telecommunications infrastructure and broadband services to rural areas, environmental assessments, a revolving loan fund for hazardous contamination clean up, community open space and watershed projects, groundwater protection studies, technical assistance in reviewing and proposing zoning by laws, interoperable public safety radio communications system, homeland security, public health nursing services, boards of health support, health inspections, school based programs to reduce teen alcohol and drug use, programs to reduce teen pregnancy and high school drop outs. The FRCOG also provides building, electrical, plumbing and gas inspection services, itinerant town accounting staff with internet remote access to FCOG housed accounting software, cooperative purchasing for various highway products, #2 heating fuel, diesel and gasoline. The FRCOG also provides a number of transportation related planning projects, including a regional transit center, bikeways, traffic studies and safety studies. It also has and provides GIS maps in support of various projects, in addition to providing civil engineering services to the member communities. Based upon their 2006 Financial Summary, the FCOG appears to be diversified and financially sound. The FRCOG has along history of working with the Franklin County municipalities and assisting them in assessing their needs and developing strategies to meet those needs. While the majority of Superintendents indicated that they had little or no knowledge regarding the FCOG, they were open to any type of relationship which might benefit their school districts.

Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative (LPVEC)

The LPVEC is an approved educational collaborative representing seven member school districts suburban to Springfield. It is one of the largest and most multi purpose of the Massachusetts educational collaboratives. Established in 1981 to provide vocational-technical education to the seven member district high schools, the LPVEC has grown to providing educational programs and services to over 550 students and provides transportation services to over 19,000 students daily. In addition to educational programs and school transportation services, the Collaborative provides variety of business related services throughout the Pioneer Valley region. Among these services are, cooperative purchasing, professional development, itinerant therapists, Municipal Medicaid reimbursement, and energy procurement. While not located in Franklin County, the LPVEC provides several programs to area school districts and municipalities on a fee for service basis. These include Municipal

Medicaid reimbursement and energy procurement. Non LPVEC members pay an administrative overhead fee of 16% to participate in these programs.

Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC)
The Hampshire Educational Collaborative organized in 1974 is a non profit, multi service agency serving the Hampshire County school districts and Pioneer Valley Regional School District, among others. HEC offers a variety of educational programs and services including, special education, professional development, early childhood, after school and adult education. HEC also provides education programs to Department of Youth Services residential programs. HEC routinely assists area school districts with regional planning efforts and to enhance educational opportunities and share critical resources. HEC currently coordinates several regional programs; they include Family Network Centers, Community Partnerships for Children, Strategic Planning for Families and Youth, and Department of Youth Services, statewide. Many of the Franklin County school districts routinely purchase services from and participate in services sponsored by the Hampshire Educational Collaborative.

Technology in Education Partnership (TEP)
Founded in 1997 by Greenfield Community College and the school districts of Franklin County and other area school districts, the Technology in Education Partnership (TEP) is responsible for the planning and implementation of appropriate technologies and technological resources for their members. TEP's promotes the successful integration of technology across the education spectrum. By its very nature, TEP encourages institutional cooperation. Partnering organizations routinely share technology infrastructure, electronic information access, professional development and training, and technical support to school based personnel. TEC is a leader in the field of data warehousing technology. Through their buying program, members can receive discounts for a variety of hardware and software programs.

While each of these organizations provides some of the needed educational resources to Franklin County school districts, none has that as its primary focus or is broad based enough to meet all of the identified needs for greater cost effectiveness.

Organizational Alternatives Considered

1. **Expansion and Reorganization of the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative to include the Franklin County school districts. (If they so vote to join).**
   Over the past several years, the LPVEC has not accepted new members and has chosen not to expand geographically by admitting new member school districts.

   There was little interest by the Franklin County Superintendents to join the LPVEC.

2. **Expansion and Reorganization of the Hampshire Educational Collaborative to include the Franklin County school districts. (If they so vote to join).**
   There was little interest of the Franklin County Superintendents to join HEC.

3. **Expand the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to include the Franklin County School Districts.**
   Most of the Franklin County school districts were generally unaware of the FCOG's current programs and services or their potential to provide educational programs and services. They were, however, open to any type of a relationship which could help address their common needs.

4. **Create a New County Wide Educational Collaborative.**
This option, when discussed with the Superintendents and other school district administrators generated the most enthusiasm and promise for creating interdistrict cooperation leading to improved service delivery and cost savings.

Recommendations

1. **Based upon the four alternatives considered, the recommendations to establish a new county wide Franklin County Educational Collaborative.**

2. **Organize the Franklin County Education Collaborative under the umbrella of the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, with the Collaborative housed in the FRCOG offices.**

   The Franklin County Education Collaborative Board of Directors to be member school committee members or their designees (Superintendents may be so designated by their respective school committee).

   This structure fulfills the requirement of Ch. 40 Sec. 4 (e) M.G.L. while yet allowing Superintendents to become Board members, if so designated by their respective school committees. The Board, once organized, may elect an executive committee to work with their executive director and district superintendents on a more day-to-day basis.

   The member district school superintendents shall be designated as the Steering Committee, with regional subcommittees established.

   In order to maintain administrative and financial viability, the role of the superintendents, relative to all aspects of the operation of the Collaborative is critical. They must be actively involved in and support any collaborative initiatives. They are responsible for balancing the relative needs of their school districts and allocating financial and other resources according to their district priorities. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the Collaborative to only develop and offer programs and services consistent with those member district priorities.

   Given the geographic size of Franklin County and in order to maintain and foster more regional approach to program and service delivery, the Franklin County Educational Collaborative should establish "regional" Steering Subcommittees representing North, Central and South County.

   This structure will not only provide the opportunity for County-wide initiatives, but will also provide the opportunity for more local programs among more contiguous school districts. There is nothing to prohibit any subset or group of superintendents from working together on initiatives of common interest or mutual benefit.

3. **Authorize the Franklin Regional Council of Governments to act as "fiscal agent" for the Collaborative while it is being organized and until such time as the organization is complete.**
This relationship will be mutually beneficial to both organizations. The relationship falls within the general scope of the FCOG and would allow for the initial development of the Collaborative at a relatively low overhead cost.

4. **The FRCOG, on behalf of the Franklin County Education Collaborative (FCEC) should immediately apply for grant and other funds to accomplish this reorganization and any other initiatives beneficial to the Collaborative and its prospective members.**

Utilizing the FRCOG as the fiscal agent for the Franklin County Education Collaborative (FCEC) will allow Collaborative to immediately apply for grants to support both the organizational development of the Collaborative, but also educational initiatives already identified.

Every Massachusetts educational collaborative was organized with the assistance of the Dept. of Education through a "Commissioner's Discretionary Grant". These grants, provided in the early 1980's were funded in the range of $90,000- $100,000 and covered the first year cost of organization and staffing. It is conceivable that the Dept. of Education, given the recent support by both the State Legislature and the Board of Education to promote collaborative growth and the utilization of collaboratives, would favorably consider such funding. The South Berkshire Educational Collaborative (SBEC) was recently awarded a similar grant to promote the reorganization of the SBEC to include all of the Berkshire County school districts.

The Franklin County Superintendents Roundtable, acting on behalf of the Franklin County Education Collaborative should immediately contact the Commissioner of Education and begin to research grant opportunities which are consistent with the DOE's past practices of supporting collaborative development.

In addition, since the highest priority identified by the Franklin County superintendents was for relief from the ongoing escalation of school transportation costs, the FRCOG should immediately apply for funds to coordinate routing and scheduling of all member school district out of district special needs students. The current program being operated by the Franklin County Tech School could be relocated to the FCOG at very little expense or loss of time. It is anticipated that the State Legislature will continue the appropriation for the Dept. of Education sponsored Pilot Study for Collaborative Special Needs Transportation. This appropriation includes additional funding and support for the six additional project networks, of which Franklin County is one. The Franklin County Educational Collaborative would then coordinate the out of district special needs transportation for its member districts. Through the elimination of duplicate routes and through the cost sharing of vehicles, multi district transportation provided through collaboratives has proven to be cost effective. For those school districts which currently operate their own school transportation vehicles, they can become a resource to other area districts through cost sharing of their routes and vehicles; thereby becoming revenue producers.

In addition to special needs student transportation, the FCEC/FRCOG could begin to plan for the multi district bidding for regular school bus transportation contracts. Only through a coordinated bidding approach, will relatively small and rural school districts develop the economy of scale to solicit true contract competition. It is this current lack of competition which leads to annual transportation cost increases which exceed inflation, budget growth and almost any other economic factors. If necessary to obtain fair market prices, the Collaborative should consider providing school transportation services itself for it member school districts. The regional county structure will also lend itself to regional transportation services. This may require several school districts to either award or not award available option years in order to bring contiguous school districts onto the same bidding schedule

5. **Organize, a 501 C 3, private non profit charitable corporation- The Franklin County Education Corporation to serve the nine (9) prospective school districts.**

The goal of this private organization would be to solicit grants from private foundation sources to support professional development and any other education related efforts of the member school districts.

Given that there are a number of private and foundation funding sources for which public school districts are not eligible applicants, it would be prudent to also organize a "Franklin County Education Corporation". This educational and charitable corporation, in conjunction with the Franklin County Education Collaborative would then be in the position of being able to generate support from a variety of funding sources for the benefit of the member school districts. The nine (9) Franklin County school superintendents, acting in their private capacity, could be come the Corporation Board of Directors. The caution is that any dealings between the Collaborative and the Corporation must be "arms length" transactions. Accounting and financing must be separate and distinct for each entity, with no commingling of funds. Since the FRCOG already maintains an accounting system in house for several small municipalities, this separation of accounting should not be problematic.

6. **Identify and Prioritize Program and Service Needs and Begin Implementation.**

a. **School Transportation Services.** Transition the current project from the Franklin County Tech School to the Franklin County Education Collaborative and begin to coordinate the out of district special education transportation for all of the Franklin County school districts. Build the data base for special education students from both area private schools, as well as local in district and out of district programs. Route and schedule on a multi district basis, thereby eliminating the duplication of routes and better utilizing the vehicles available. Meet with the Franklin County school business managers and develop a formula for cost sharing of vehicles, which will support this initiative long term.

b. **Special Education**. Meet with the Franklin County special education directors to begin the process of planning for regional "magnet" type special education programs. Through cooperation, a student enrollment base can be developed which will make the current programs offered more cost effective and will also reduce the reliance on more expensive out of district programs. These programs should include Kindergarten-Elementary Programs for Students with Autism, Alternative Education Programs for Middle and High School Students, a Transitional Alternative Program for 45 day diagnostic evaluations and program placement, Vocational-Technical Education Programs for Special Needs Students (Culinary Arts, Hospitality Management, Landscape, Building & Grounds Maintenance, etc.

c. **Itinerant Services**. Identify the need for full time and part time therapists and advertise for such to be employed by the Collaborative and cost shared among the member school districts. This will be more cost effective and reliable than contracting for them. The therapists could include Adaptive Physical Education, Speech and Language Pathologists, Physical therapist, Occupational Therapists, Vision Specialists, Hearing and Language Disorder Specialists.

Based upon the review of both member district programs and out of district (private placements) programs, it appears that the following special education programs and services may be viable and should be explored further:

ELEMENTARY ADJUSTMENT

STAFF: Teacher
Classroom Assistantt
Consulting Social Worker
Speech/Language Pathologist
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 10

GRADES: 3-6

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Students with moderate adjustment problems who could not function in their home school environment but who do not require placement in a separate private program. Typically students may be passive/aggressive or "acting out". They may have a low self-esteem, poor coping and social skills and an immature sense of themselves. Students are generally at or slightly below grade level academically.

PROGRAM GOALS

This self-contained program would have opportunities for inclusion, the goals include, developing self-esteem through successful school experiences, appropriate behavior through effective behavior modification techniques, and positive attitudes toward school, teachers, and peers. In a small structured, consistent, individualized program students are helped to cope with the distraction, frustration, pressure and demands of a regular school environment.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To diagnose from an education and functional behavioral perspective the extent of the student's adjustment problem or behavior disorder.
- To change inappropriate school behaviors and attitudes through behavior modification programming, focusing on the positive reinforcement, limit setting with consequences and social skills training.
- To provide consultation and support to the home and other professionals working with the child so as to develop a comprehensive, consistent behavior program.
- To develop academic skills to the student's fullest potential through small group and individualized instruction and the intensive use of technology.
- To help develop better impulse control, internal control and acceptance when things go wrong or they do not get their way.
- To generalize appropriate behaviors to mainstream situations and the home environment.

CRITERIA

Students would be appropriate whose adjustment problems, behavior disorders, or ADHD are such that they cannot be maintained as a regular classroom, but not severe enough to prevent them from functioning in self-contained structured class in a public school setting. This program is not designed for students with severe emotional problems or significant developmental lags.

TRANSITIONAL ALTERNATIVE PROGRAM

STAFF: Teacher
Classroom Assistant
Psychological Consultant
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher
Therapies and other support services (as needed)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

STUDENT AGES: 12-18 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

TAP serves middle school and high school students who are in transition between program placements. The program is designed as a temporary placement for a student either suspended from school or awaiting placement in a more permanent program. Participation of a student in this program may be for a day, a few days or a few weeks. This program is not intended for long term placement. The maximum length of placement is 45 days.

Behavioral expectations and consequences in the program will be firm, consistent and clearly understood by each student.

The educational program will be completely individualized, based on the student's grade and academic skill level, and will be delivered through individual or small group instruction. The instruction will be a continuation of the student's home school program in order to facilitate the transition from TAP to the next placement.

The program will utilize computers capable of accessing the internet. Technical service and assistance for the computers and their software would be provided through the Collaborative. Textbooks and other specific classroom materials, such as worksheets and assignment sheets, will be sent by the sending school when enrolling the student. Miscellaneous school supplies would be provided by the Collaborative.

PROGRAM GOALS

To provide, for students in transition, a continuation of their education, and to help these students prepare for either return to their home school or to placement in another program.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide temporary educational instruction and, as needed, support counseling to students while suspended from or in transition between public education.
- To provide these students a well-supervised highly structured setting.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will be suspended/expelled or in transition between programs, but will not be considered dangerous to themselves or other students or severely emotionally disturbed.

ALTERNATIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL

STAFF: Teacher
Classroom Assistant
Speech & Language Pathologist
Counselor
Adaptive Physical EducationTeacher
Learning Disabilities Specialist (consult/direct)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

GRADES: 6-8

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Located in a middle school, this academically-oriented program would be designed to meet the needs of students with mild to moderate adjustment problems of both an active and passive nature, who, for various reasons, are not finding success in their home schools. The program occupies one room in the building and has complete access to all resources and activities of the school as deemed appropriate, including inclusion in general education. The program runs on the regular school schedule. Academics are geared to the individual needs/skills of each student as determined by their IEP and the Massachusetts Frameworks. There would be a very strong emphasis on technology-based learning as a way of enhancing and accelerating student success.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide a small, structured program that allows for much-needed individual attention, academically and socially.
- To help each student develop coping skills, learning skills, organizational skills and technology skills to enhance their potential for success.
- To maximize academic success and general school adjustment by developing self-esteem, skill confidence, responsibility and appropriate interpersonal behavior.
- To participate in general education within the school as soon as it is deemed feasible by the TEAM in hopes of returning the student back to their home district as soon as it is appropriate.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will have mild to moderate adjustment problems and/or learning disabilities and/or ADHD. These are students who would benefit from a small structured, supportive school program that can be tailored to their needs. Students must have the academic and emotional ability to function in a regular middle school environment. This program is not appropriate for students who exhibit significant acting-out behaviors, who have substantial developmental delays, or who have diagnosed severe emotional problems.

ALTERNATIVE HIGH SCHOOL
(Affiliated with Greenfield Community College)

STAFF:
Teacher
Classroom Assistant
Speech & Language Pathologist
Counselor
Adaptive Physical EducationTeacher
Learning Disabilities Specialist (consult/direct)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

GRADES: 9-12

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Located on the campus of Greenfield Community College this academically-oriented program would be designed to meet the needs of students with serious social skills deficits, which combined with learning disabilities and/or ADHD, can lead to significant adjustment problems. These are students who can deal with the stresses and distractions of a regular high school setting. The program would occupy one room in the building and would have access to school resources and activities as appropriate. The program runs on a regular school schedule. Academics are geared to the individual needs and skills of each student in relation to their IEP and the Massachusetts Frameworks. There is a strong emphasis on social skills training, pragmatic language and technology throughout the curriculum.

PROGRAM GOALS

- To provide a small, structured adjustment program that develops social skills in an academic setting.
- To help each student develop academic skills, coping skills, organizational skills and technology skills to enhance their self-esteem through success.
- To help each student develop responsibility, independence and good decision making in a school setting.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will have mild to moderate adjustment problems due to significant social skills deficits. These students would benefit from a small, structured, consistent adjustment program that focuses on social skills training, pragmatic language and technology skills in an academic setting. Students must have academic and emotional ability to function in a regular high school environment. The program is <u>not</u> appropriate for students with acting-out behaviors, significant developmental delays or serious emotional problems.

CAREER SKILLS

STAFF: Teacher
Classroom Assistant
Consulting/Social Worker
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher
Speech/ Language Pathologist

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

GRADES: 9-12

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Designed for adolescents with mild to moderate delays in academic language skills and social skills, the program would be in a self-contained classroom which provides academic remediation, awareness of the world of work, and appropriate life skills. Completion of this program may lead to a diploma or a certificate of attainment. The first (2) years would be spent in full day academics while the last 2-3 years offer the option of attending a Collaborative Career or Vocational program each afternoon. A work placement would be possible in the senior year.

PROGRAM GOALS

In a small, structured, challenging academic program to maximize learning skills, social skills, technology skills and vocational skills that will lead to a successful career and/or higher education. Intensive teacher attention, repetition and technology are critical resources used to help students master the curriculum at their own pace.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To develop the academic skills needed to graduate.
- To develop social skills needed in school, community, and on the job.
- To develop vocational skills.
- To participate, when appropriate, in supervised work experience.
- To participate in mainstreaming opportunities when appropriate.

CRITERIA

Students will be considered who have cognitive delays or learning disabilities in the mild to moderate range and who need a small supportive, self-contained setting for social, academic, and vocational growth. Students with any substantial behavior problems or serious, emotional problems would not be appropriate for this program.

SECONDARY SKILLS

STAFF:

Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologist
Consulting Psychologist/Social Worker
Registered Occupational Therapist (as needed)
Registered Physical Therapist (as needed)
Physical Therapy Assistant (as needed)
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

STUDENT AGES: 12-15 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program would be designed for young adolescents with mild to moderate delays in language, socialization and cognition. It would provide a self-contained environment for language and other academic development as well as awareness of the world of work. Appropriate social skills would be taught. Supported inclusion would also be available as appropriate.

PROGRAM GOALS

Development of language, academic, social and pre-vocational skills is the primary goals.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

- To develop and expand receptive and expressive language skills.
- To enhance social skills with both peers and adults.
- To develop academic skills, as appropriate.
- To develop functional, age-appropriate skills for community living.
- To begin the exploration of career options and opportunities for future vocational training.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students would have moderate delays in language and cognition and the need for self-contained programming. Students must be able to benefit from individual and small group instruction, community activities and inclusive settings when applicable. The program is <u>not</u> designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

VOCATIONAL PREPARATION

STAFF: (each class)

Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologist
Counseling Psychologist/Social worker
Registered Occupational and Physical Therapists and assistants (as needed)
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12 in each class

STUDENT AGES: 16-22 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program would be designed for students with moderate delays in cognitive ability. It would provide for acquisition of language and academic skills as well as activities of daily living. It would also provide a half day of functional academics and a half day of vocational skills training either in a vocational educational program or in a community job placement. The program prepares students to make the transition from school to the world of work and adult life.

PROGRAM GOALS

Emphasis is on preparing students for the world of work. Vocational training is provided through community-based work sites or area vocational programs. Academics are taught in the context of this vocational training and community awareness.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To develop academic skills and generalize these skills into the daily living and work competencies.
- To develop interpersonal skills as needed in school, the community and on the job.
- To develop abilities to utilize community resources.
- To participate in appropriate pre-vocational or vocational work experiences.
- To transition from school to supported or independent work upon graduation.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students with moderate level of cognitive ability, who are ready for pre-vocational and vocational training. While students with physical or sensory disabilities may be enrolled in the program, this is not a program for students with severe developmental disabilities. The program is <u>not</u> designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

ELEMENTARY DEVELOPMENTAL

STAFF:
Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologist (part time)
Registered Physical Therapist (as needed)
Registered Occupational Therapists (as needed)
Physical Therapy Assistant (as needed)
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher (part time)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 8

STUDENT AGES: 5-12 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is for students with significant degrees of developmental disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. Emphasis is placed on the development of readiness skills in all cognitive areas while developing self-confidence, independence and positive self-image. Through group participation and cooperative play activities the student expands awareness of self in relation to the environment, of feeling of others, of choices in terms of behavior and consequences to ones behavior.

TEACCH and ABA methodologies incorporated as appropriate.

PROGRAM GOALS

This program addresses skills in all cognitive areas while encouraging a high level of self-confidence, independence and a positive self-image. Staff work with therapists, psychologists and families. While programs are self-contained, a variety of integrative opportunities are provided for all students.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To develop independent behaviors in the classroom setting and the school.
- To provide setting where student's handicaps are minimized and the accomplishments are maximized.
- To provide opportunities to assess and, as appropriate, alter behaviors.
- To provide experiences in positive cooperation play situations.
- To provide clinical therapy in the classroom settings, related to educational progress.
- To provide an integrated trans-discipline approach to total programming.
- To evaluate student progress at designated intervals and to determine aappropriateness of programming.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will be functioning cognitively at the pre-readiness to readiness levels and will be of elementary school age. Students may require physical assistance, personal care and medical care. The program is not designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

ELEMENTARY SECONDARY TRANSITIONAL

STAFF:
Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologists
Registered Physical Therapist (as needed)
Registered Occupational Therapist (as needed)
Physical Therapy Assistant
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

STUDENT AGES: 9-17 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The program focuses on development of vocabulary, expansion of syntactic structures and readiness skills. Inclusion in non-academic and academic areas, when applicable, is an important component. The program is designed to develop self-confidence, self-esteem, daily living skills, group participation, cooperative play and successful relationships with peers and adults.

PROGRAM GOALS

Independence in all areas is emphasized. Therapies are an integral part of the curriculum. Mainstreaming opportunities are provided as appropriate.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Through individual and small group instruction,
- To develop independent behaviors in the classroom setting, the school, and the community.
- To participate in clinical therapies integrated into the classroom program.
- To integrate to the extent appropriate, with children in general education.
- The program includes evaluation of student progress as appropriate.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will be diagnosed with mild to moderate level of developmental disability and functioning on at least early reading skills. The student will be able to participate in community activities and be in inclusive settings when applicable. The program is not designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

PRE-VOCATIONAL

STAFF:
Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologist
Consulting Psychologist/Social Worker
Registered Occupational Therapist (as needed)
Physical Therapy Assistant
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 12

STUDENT AGES: 17-22 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

This program is designed for adolescent and young adult students with moderate to severe developmental disabilities. Academic instruction is functional; emphasis is on age-appropriate academic and functional daily living skills. Pre-vocational training is provided as well as community-based skills and instruction. Developmental communication skills are integrated into each activity.

PROGRAM GOALS

Community-based pre-vocational training is incorporated into the weekly routine. Students are offered support services in all areas to promote independence commensurate with ability.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To develop functional academic skills.
- To develop daily living skills.
- To increase pre-vocational skills.
- To promote age appropriate behavior in school, the community and vocational training site.
- To improve abilities to communicate effectively.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will be those between the ages of 17 and 22 with moderate to severe development delays. Students must be able to benefit from individual and small group instruction. The program is not designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

SECONDARY DEVELOPMENTAL

STAFF:
Teacher
Classroom Assistants
Speech/Language Pathologist
Physical Therapy Assistant (as needed)
Registered Physical Therapist
Registered Occupational Therapist
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 8

STUDENT AGES: 10-22 years

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Program is designed for students with developmental disabilities and multiple handicaps, including medical, who require a multi-disciplinary approach to their education and clinical services. Students are monitored medically. Multi-discipline assessments guide in reaching individual potentials, ranging from learning simple responses to more advanced communication.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals are highly individualized to the varied cognitive and physical abilities of the students. Emphasis is placed on helping each student reach their maximum potential. Major components of the program include constant sensory stimulation, language and communication skills, and activities of daily living.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVIES

- To provide multi-disciplinary programs tailored to the complex need of these students.
- To include the family in planning educational and therapeutic services.
- To coordinate with other agencies involved with these students to plan each student's future services.
- To assess students frequently to determine progress, and changing needs.
- To help students become as independent as possible.

CRITERIA

Appropriate students will have multiple developmental disablities at a severe level, with a wide variety of special needs. Students may require physical assistance, personal care and medical care.

ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL AUTISM PROGRAM

STAFF: Teachers
Classroom Assistants
Psychological Consultant
Speech/Language Pathologist
Registered Occupational Therapist
Adaptive Physical Education Teacher
ABA Therapist (if needed)

NUMBER OF STUDENTS: Maximum of 8 students

STUDENT AGES: 5-11 years

PROGRAM DESIGN:

Developed for young children with autism and PDD. The program is based on the elective approach to meet children with autism needs. The major priorities include centering on the individual, understanding the nature and culture of autism, individualized assessment, adopting appropriate adaptations and a broadly based intervention strategy, building on existing skills and interests.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

The program incorporates organizing the physical environment, developing schedules and work systems, making expectations clear and explicit and using visual materials. These techniques have been found to be effective for developing skills and allowing the children to use these skills independently of adult prompting and cuing.

PROGRAM GOAL:

- To enable individuals with autism to function as meaningfully and independently as possible in school and in the broader community.

DETAILS OF THE PROGRAM:

The Program is equipped with specially designed adaptive devices and computer technology.

CRITERIA:

Appropriate students will have a diagnosis of autism at the moderate to severe end of the autism spectrum and at elementary school age range. Students would benefit from a small teacher/student ratio and very structured environment. Appropriate students will be functioning cognitively at the pre-readiness level and will be of elementary and middle school age. Students may require physical assistance, personal care and medical care. The program is not designed for children with severe and unmanageable behaviors that may result in injury to themselves or others.

It appears that most of the school systems in the Franklin County use ESPED for software to create IEPs and to manage their data. If a collaborative would be formed, all of the systems should use the same software which would allow for a smooth transition of data. It would also allow districts to track students with similar needs to create programs if necessary.

Collaboration is based on the premise that there are many things in education that can be done more effectively and efficiently by pooling districts' resources. A major thrust of a new collaborative in Franklin County should be in the field of special education. It is evident that this would allow for a more cost-effective system for providing direct services to a diverse population.

ITINERANT PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

ADAPTIVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Teachers who have been specifically trained to work with students with special needs provide physical educational activities and health education. These teachers collaborate and TEAM-teach with classroom school-based staff.

PROGRAM GOALS

Vary with different programs. A broad range of gross motor, coordination, team and competitive activies are provided.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide adaptive physical education services to each student as determined in the pupil's educational plan.
- To provide health education as appropriate.
- To work cooperatively with the classroom staff.

CRITERIA

Adaptive physical education is provided to any district students assigned. The service is tailored to various programs and individual educational plans.

ITINERANT TEACHER FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A teacher, specifically trained and certified in education of the blind and visually impaired, is available to school systems upon request. Sometimes direct services are required, and at other times the teacher serves as a consultant to the classroom teacher or both.

PROGRAM GOALS

For all students, the goal is to make their lives as normal as possible, and to provide them with the specific training and tools they need to function to their maximum ability.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide individualized programs for each student recommended.
- To advise and train classroom teachers, individual aides, and the parents toward assisting the student to function to their maximum ability.
- To provide the appropriate materals for the child (large print books, materials in Braille).
- To evaluate students in order to prioritize the needs of each child and the group.

CRITERIA

Any student with visual impairment is potentially appropriate, as recommended by the vision specialist and the Special Education TEAM.

NURSING SERVICES

(Affiliated with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments Public School Nurses Project)

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION:

Registered nurses, trained to work with students with special needs, available to programs to supplement nursing services provided in the schools. The nurses also oversee acquisition and transfer of medical records within the Collaborative.

PROGRAM GOALS

The nurse will assist schools in serving medical needs of the students in Collaborative programs.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To assist school nurses in administering medications as needed.
- To address other medical needs as appropriate.
- To help determine if further medical attention is necessary.
- To accompany field trips when nursing coverage is needed.
- To serve as consultant on medical issues to Collaborative and school staff.
- To work with physicians, parents and others concerning medical matters.

PHYSICAL THERAPY

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

To provide physical therapy services to the Collaborative and district students. Physical Therapy staff will work with classroom staff in providing PT services to students as prescribed in the IEP.

PROGRAM GOALS

To provide physical therapy services for students as needed and defined in the IEP.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVE

To collaborate with the teacher, paraprofessionals and parents and other service providers on carryover of specific therapeutic goals and objectives.

CRITERIA

Appropriateness of referrals is determined by the physician, RPT and Special Education TEAM. Each student is evaluated to determine type and amount of direct therapy services as needed.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Occupational Therapists who have been specifically trained in pediatrics provide services to students in Collaborative and district classes. Direct services, as well as consultations, are available. Occupational Therapy staff will work with classroom staff in providing OT services to students as prescribed in the IEP.

PROGRAM GOALS

Each therapist will provide services to students upon evaluation and recommendations of the Special Education TEAM.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide direct therapy services to each student as recommended.
- To collaborate with classroom staff, families and other service providers.

CRITERIA

The physician, OTR and Special Education TEAM, determines appropriateness of referrals. Each student is evaluated to determine type and amount of direct therapy services needed.

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Therapists who have been very specifically trained to work with students with special needs are available to Collaborative and district programs. Language services are an integral part of each program through direct services, consultation and TEAM teaching. Therapist and classroom staff work together within the classroom setting.

PROGRAM GOALS

The pathologist, working with classroom staff, provides direct services for acquisition of language skills.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide speech and language services for each student as appropriate.
- To work directly with staff, reinforcing appropriate language skills for each student determined by the individual educational program.

CRITERIA

Appropriateness of referrals is recommended by a speech pathologist and determined by the Special Education TEAM.

SUMMER DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM (6 WEEKS)

PROGRAM

Each summer the Collaborative could provide a Summer Developmental Program at an area school building. The Summer Developmental Program is designed for the severely developmentally disabled student who needs an extended school year. Program focuses on maintaining skills acquired during the school year, preventing significant regression. This would be a 6-week program.

PROGRAM GOALS

The program is educational and recreational in nature. Therapy services are integrated within the daily routine. Activities center on the student's individual educational plans to prevent regression.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- To provide educational, physical and social activities that will maintain skills during the summer months.
- To continue the delivery of the therapeutic services as appropriate.
- To supervise medical needs.

CRITERIA

Students between the ages of 5-22 years old with multiple developmental disabilities in need of extended-year services, as defined in the IEP.

In addition, the special education directors can begin to inventory their need for other types of professional services, such as special education legal representation, school psychologists, testing specialists, etc. with the idea of coordinating those services through the Collaborative and cost sharing them.

c. **Grant Writer**. The Collaborative should identify and contract with a proven effective grant writer to assist in the solicitation of financial support for the various Collaborative programs and services. This person could be paid on a consult agreement, based upon their effectiveness and success. This "contingency" arrangement would then be risk free to the Collaborative members, while yet providing the incentive for success.

d. **Municipal Medicaid Reimbursement**. The Collaborative member school district should consider hiring a Medicaid specialist and managing their own Medicaid reimbursement. As can be seen from the Medicaid Reimbursement report on Page 101, two districts do not appear to be realizing their full financial potential revenue. In addition, for those contracting for this service, even at the same rate, could direct any excess revenue to support the Collaborative, as opposed to the contracting agency.

e. **Cooperative Purchasing.** Through meetings with the area business managers, items conducive to cooperative purchasing should be identified. Those items of interest, included bread and milk, food commodities, paper goods, copy paper, custodial and maintenance supplies, etc. Through creation of a larger purchasing block and economy of scale, all participating school districts can share in the savings.

- **Textbooks**. Through meetings with area district curriculum personnel, the Collaborative can begin to plan for the sequential replacement of textbooks at all levels throughout the school districts. Through creation of a larger purchasing block and economy of scale, all participating school districts can share in the savings. In addition, in order to effectuate the optimum education benefit, on a school or district wide basis, Collaborative could finance the acquisition of these textbooks with the participating school districts paying the debt service over time.

- **Technology.** Through meetings with area district curriculum personnel, the Collaborative can begin to plan for the sequential replacement of technology at all levels throughout the school districts. Through creation of a larger purchasing block and economy of scale, all participating school districts can share in the savings. In addition, in order to effectuate the optimum education benefit, on a school or district wide basis, Collaborative could finance the acquisition of technology with the participating school districts paying the debt service over time. This would be especially beneficial for middle and high school lap top initiatives. Through level funding this school budget line item, districts would be on a sequential replacement schedule without dramatic budget increases every three to five years.

  An option would also be to partner with the Technology in Education Partnership and jointly address the specific needs of the Franklin County School Districts. The Collaborative, as a public entity could provide the tax exempt short term financing for these purchases.

- **Financing.** The Collaborative, by its very structure, is capable of borrowing for both short term and long term projects. The MassDevelopment Finance Agency has several loan programs for which educational collaboratives are eligible recipients. These include TECH Loans for technology, as well as capital tax exempt bonds for capital and long term financing. The vote of the Collaborative Board of Directors, along with collateral acceptable to a bank is the only requirement to affect such borrowing. Area banks have typically provided 100% financing, thereby reducing upfront costs associated with this financing.

f. **Magnet Schools**. Through the Collaborative, the member school districts should investigate the option of creating a Magnet schools, similar to those offered by the Capital Region Education Council CREC) in Connecticut. Many of the Collaborative member districts are experiencing moderate to severe declining enrollment. Some of this decline is due to the impact of area charter schools, school choice, parochial schools and home schooling. Through the creation of Magnet Schools, the interests of parents for "something different" can be recognized without the district suffering the accompanying dramatic loss of revenues. By pooling the resources of several contiguous school districts, the magnet school alternative could be educationally and financially sound, while eliminating the "competition" for students and resources.

The creation of a magnet school will give the school districts the opportunity to be creative in meeting the demands of parents for specific change and educational delivery improvements.

g. **Professional Development**. The Collaborative member districts all share the need for cost effective professional development. This is especially true for their low incidence content area professional development i.e. sciences, mathematics, technology integration, as well as curriculum integration, as well as on going teacher support. None of these districts can independently afford the high cost expert professional development or the on going cost of expert facilitators. Through the Collaborative these costs can be shared and thus become cost effective. In addition, through the Collaborative regional on going technical support and networking can be developed for mutual benefit.

The Collaborative should meet with those district based professionals responsible for professional development to begin the process of inventorying their respective professional development requirements. Once the inventory is completed, the Collaborative can begin to coordinate that professional development common to several school districts.

h. **Shared Administrative and Professional Services**. Through the Collaborative the participating school districts may be able to coordinate and share the cost of various administrative personnel and other professional services. These shared services could include legal services, auditors, short term technical assistance, i.e. architects, technology experts, food services directors, nutritionists, etc. A review of e-rate information suggests that the school districts may not be maximizing their revenue potential under e-rate. An e-rate expert should review the current e-rate submissions to ascertain whether the district is receiving all reimbursements for which it is eligible. The cost sharing of this investigation can be funded though additional savings generated.

i. **Data Warehousing & Data Mining**. Given the requirements of No Child Left Behind along with the increased need for accountability, school districts are hard pressed to maintain and generate the data necessary for both compliance reporting, longitudinal tracking of data and data interpretation consistent with other districts reporting. This sometimes results in unfair comparisons among school districts based upon data interpretation and data aggregation instead of actual student results. It is imperative that school districts manage and interpret their data in a consistent manner for federal, state and local reporting requirements. Through the Collaborative a system of data warehousing, along with the technical expertise for data mining can be developed through the Technology in Education Partnership, affiliated with Greenfield Community College. This partnership will not recreate what TEC has already developed and will guarantee consistent reporting across the region. In addition, through this Collaborative/TEP partnership an economy of scale can be realized, freeing up technical resources for other school district priorities.

In addition, as more and more accountability and reporting become necessary, a central entity with district data access can create "working templates" for school district administrators reporting. These templates can then be customized for each district, utilizing their specific data. Such templates could include pandemic response plans, school safety plans, etc. This effort will foster consistency and commonality among area school districts, as well as save the individual school district time and energy.

j. **Shared Contractual Services**. Several school districts discussed the need for various short term building infrastructure and renovation projects. These ranged from improved telephone and communication systems, improved building networking for technology (WiFi, wireless), energy related projects i.e. window replacements, lighting replacements, school security audits and resulting improvements, HVAC maintenance contracts, electrical services, plumbing services, etc. Through coordination among the Collaborative area business administrators, common needs can be identified, along with potential contractors to meet those needs. Through the Collaborative, the requirements of Ch. 30 B M.G.L. for procurement, i.e. bidding, RFP's, etc. can be met and the cost shared. Since these can provide immediate savings and is not labor or capital intensive, these meetings should occur relatively quickly. The potential for cost savings is both high and immediate.

k. **Low Incidence Curriculum Improvement.** Due to moderate and severe declining enrollment, the majority of school districts are finding it difficult to maintain low incidence curriculum. Each year, as school finances dictate, programs, services and curriculum are eliminated. Proposition 2 ½ overrides for operational budget deficiencies have generally not been approved. The results have been detrimental to the following curricular areas: advanced placement programs, foreign languages, technology integration, arts, music and humanities, etc. This fact has exacerbated the already discontent of some parents with their child's current and future education within that district. The result has been the growth of charter school enrollments, school choice the greener pasture syndrome), home schooling and parochial schools. Each of these drains the district not only of enrollment to keep programs viable but also the revenue for program improvements.

Several school districts currently participate in some type of distance learning project. Distance learning can be especially cost effective in addressing the low incidence needs of school districts and for curriculum enrichment. A consistent provider for distance learning should be identified and a contract secured through the Collaborative which will both enhance low incidence offerings as well as expand the program to other districts on a more cost effective basis.

Because of the emphasis placed on MCAS scores, districts are required to address the on going need for Annual Yearly Progress (AYP). In some school districts, this effort for a relatively small number of students requires a disproportionate share of resources, oftentimes at the expense of the general school population. Each district offers some type of remedial program and MCAS preparation, either in school, after school and/or summers. Very few of these programs are seen as cost effective, given the relatively low enrollments. Through the Collaborative "magnet" after school and summer programs can be developed in a more cost effective manner. Summer enrichment and recreational programs can also be offered and managed more cost effectively.

l. **Short Term Space Needs**. Several school districts discussed their respective space needs. Due to declining enrollments, several districts have excess space, some of which is located in relatively new school buildings. Others, due to the age of their existing buildings have a need for either additional space or space dedicated for other curricular areas. The most immediate need was for additional classroom space at Franklin County Tech fro a new social studies class. Given the continued limitations of School Building Assistance, financial assistance for these types of projects is neither guaranteed nor quickly available. Therefore, outside sources of funding, along with a more creative approach to providing short term educational space is necessary. In addition, the Collaborative could acquire and finance the installation of portable classrooms for those districts that may need additional space. Portable construction is one third of the time and half the cost of typical school construction or renovation projects. For those districts in need of short term space, an architect should be engaged to develop a preliminary site analysis and budget. The Collaborative should then locate portable classroom units and market this alternative to various funding sources for tax exempt financing. Rental agreements with the school district would then provide the revenue necessary to cover the debt service.

m. **Collaborative Leadership**. The key element in affecting change and creating consensus on any of the preceding initiatives will be attracting and maintaining the quality of leadership necessary to both conceptualize and implement successful programs and services. While some initiatives have a quick return on the investment of time and energy, others will take time to develop. In order to attract and maintain this leadership, the Collaborative should offer the successful candidate, no less than a three year contract at a prevailing salary and benefit package for School Business Administrator or Assistant Superintendent. Annual personnel evaluations will dictate this person's tenure. This type of contract will provide that person with both the security and incentive to make the Collaborative successful. Housing the Collaborative and the staff with the FRCOG in Greenfield will provide on going support and in place resources for a quick start up, with a minimal investment by the school districts. Should grant funds be realized from the Dept. of Education, local school district funds may not be needed to support the initial organization phase. Once proven effective, the Collaborative can be supported from member district. cost savings.

While none of the identified programs and services provide the panacea to solve the current problems facing the Franklin County school districts, the creation of an educational service agency, in conjunction with the already established and successful Franklin Regional Council of Governments can effect positive change, focus available resources on interdistrict cooperation an develop programs and services to meet the common need of the county school districts. In addition, by creating a county wide organization, an educational collaborative, the county school districts can benefit from a larger demographic base for which to apply for competitive grants. In addition to various private sources of funding, the State Dept. of Education has indicated an interest in helping small and rural school districts meet their current challenges. The Federal U.S. Office of Education also has funding available through their Small and Rural School Initiative. In their current leadership positions in Congress, Rep. John Olver and Senators Kennedy and Kerry could be influential in securing funds for a county "demonstration project" that attempts to create interdistrict efficiencies while recognizing and maintaining the inherent value of small learning communities. Through a Collaborative, government relations can be cost effectively enhanced with the intent of securing government funding for local initiatives. The Hampshire Educational Collaborative has proven to be very successful utilizing this strategy; to the benefit of not only their member school districts, but to the region as a whole.

As an extension of the member school districts he Franklin County Education Collaborative would exist for the expressed purpose of providing cost effective educational programs and services to the member school districts. Affiliated with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, whose membership is primarily Franklin County municipalities, would provide the optimum organizational structure for the planning and delivery of services to both, without diluting the integrity of either.

SUMMARY

M.G.L. Ch. 40, Section 4e states:

> ***"two or more school committees....may enter into a written agreement to conduct educational programs and services which shall complement and strengthen the school programs of member school committees and increase educational opportunities for children..."***

As a result of this legislation, education collaboratives have been developed across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, serving over 85% of the cities and towns. Massachusetts educational collaboratives have been and continue to be successful because they continue to serve the purposes of their constituent school districts.

Massachusetts educational collaboratives, purely voluntary organizations, embody the entrepreneurial philosophy; identifying and assessing the needs of its member school districts and proactively developing cost effective programs and services in response to those needs. While some may see the growth of collaboratives as more government or "empire building", it is an "empire" which serves and is wholly owned and controlled by the member school committees.

As more and different demands are placed on public school districts across the Commonwealth, Massachusetts educational collaboratives are positioned to assist in the development and sharing of programs, services and strategies to meet those demands. With these demands come new opportunities.

Educational collaboratives are the best organization for school districts to cooperate in order to receive maximum value for their available educational dollars spent on educational improvement. Through a cooperative cost sharing approach, member districts are able to create economies of scale to both maintain current and develop new programs and services. The savings resulting from these cooperative efforts increase the amount of funding available for their own in district educational programs and services.

In summary, educational collaboratives exist only to serve their member school districts. To be successful, a collaborative must be responsive to those school districts and remain cost effective. Since the collaborative structure is voluntary, school districts who are not totally satisfied with their collaboratives performance may withdraw at any time.

Most recently both the State Legislature and the Department of Education have recognized the need for statewide regional service delivery for initiatives. For FY'2009 the State Legislature is being asked to support the expansion of the State "circuit breaker" for high cost special education reimbursement to include reimbursement for high cost special education transportation, if done through a collaborative or regional network. In addition, the State Board of Education has recognized not only the successes of the Massachusetts educational collaboratives but also their potential in helping the Department to meet its current and future challenges.

To this end, the formation of an educational collaborative serving the Franklin County School Districts, affiliated with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, will assist those school districts in meeting both current and future educational challenges of the new millennium. It only takes the will and the commitment of the stakeholders to make the initial investment. The timing is optimum and the return on the investment can be substantial.

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Papers & Articles: (*that address key issues for Franklin County districts (transportation, funding, building use, etc.)*

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Redefining the Problem of Declining Enrollment, a position paper for MARS, Draft by Ken Rocke

West County Tech: Preparing All Students for Work and for College, proposal draft by Kenneth Rocke; and *Voc/Tech Feasibility Action Plan* draft for MTRSD by Ken Rocke

Orange Community Profile

Projected Drop-out Rates charts from DOE and edited for Franklin County by Ken Rocke and Mary Link

Alternatives for Regional School's Transportation, by Marguerite Willis

Shelburne Falls Independent articles:
March 15-28, 2007: *The roots of Mohawk's Fiscal Woes*

Greenfield Recorder Articles:
12/15/07 on School Choice: *School Choice by the numbers*, and *Towns look to solve problems posed by School Choice*
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12/20/07: Editorial: *The money trail* (also on School Choice)

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School Superintendents, Districts & Interview Date:

Kevin Courtney	Pioneer Valley Regional	11/14/07
Michael Buoniconti	Mohawk Trail RSD, Hawlemont RSD & Rowe Elem. District	11/16/07
Richard Lane	Franklin County Tech	11/19/07
Marcia Evans	Greenfield Public Schools	11/19/07
Joan M Wickman	Erving School Union #28	11/26/07
Regina Nash	Frontier Regional & Union #38	11/26/07
Paul Burnim	Orange Public Schools	11/28/07
Dr. Reza Namin	Ralph C Mahar Regional	11/28/07
Ken Rocke	Gill-Montague Regional	12/4/07

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

DRAFT 1/8/08

FRANKLIN COUNTY COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into on **July 1, 2008**, pursuant to General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 4E, as amended, by and between the school committees of **Mohawk Trail Regional, Hawlemont Regional, Rowe, Greenfield Public Schools, Frontier Regional School District, Pioneer Valley Regional School District, Franklin County Tech School, Orange Public Schools, Ralph C. Mahar Regional School District, Gill-Montague Regional School District and Erving School Union #28 (hereafter referred to collectively as the "Members"),** acting for and on behalf of their school districts. In consideration of the mutual promises and agreements contained herein, the Members agree as follows:

1. PURPOSE

The members hereby agree to form a collaborative which shall be known as the and under the name of "**Franklin County Collaborative" (hereafter referred to as the "Collaborative")** pursuant to M.G.L. c. 40, sect. 4E.

The purpose of this agreement is to conduct joint educational programs and/or services including, but not limited to the following:

Special Education	Vocational/Technical Education
School Transportation	Special Needs Student Transportation
Professional Development	School Building Maintenance
Distance Learning	Cooperative Purchasing
Medicaid Reimbursement	Educational Technology
Early Childhood	Adult Education & Training
Learning Libraries	Gifted & Talented Programs
Student Assessment	Safety/Risk Management
Teacher Induction/Training	Energy Management
School Safety	Shared Administrative Services
Fund Raising & Grants	Government Relations

Facilities Planning & Utilization
Low Incidence Academic Programs
Innovative and Creative Programs and Services

The services to be provided by the Collaborative also include surveying and making recommendations concerning student, members' and program needs, and coordinating and seeking state, federal and/or private grants, donations and gifts. These cooperative programs and/or services will maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort.

Notwithstanding any other provisions of this Agreement, the Collaborative is organized exclusively for educational purposes as specified in 501(C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and in its implementing regulations, and shall not carry on any activities not permitted by an entity exempt from federal income tax under section 501(C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and its implementing regulations.

No substantial part of the activities of the Collaborative shall be carrying on lobbying, or, otherwise, attempting to influence legislation (except as otherwise provided by the Internal Revenue Code, as amended, and its implementing regulations), or participating in or intervening in (including the publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for public office.

2. EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE BOARD

A. Composition

Each Member shall appoint one person from its own school committee membership or designate one person from outside its membership to be its representative on the Board of Directors of the Franklin County Collaborative Board of Directors (hereinafter referred to as the Board). Board members may be current school committee members, superintendents, past school committee members or anyone so designated by the School Committee. The term of each person so appointed shall terminate upon the vote of a Member to replace that Board member, whose appointment shall become effective immediately. If a vacancy occurs among the persons appointed to say Board, the School Committee for which said vacancy has occurred shall appoint a successor to serve for the remainder of the term of said vacancy. The Department of Education shall appoint an individual to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board. The Department of Education designee shall serve in an ex-officio, non-voting status.

The officers of the Board shall include Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Clerk/Secretary.

The Board shall establish an advisory committee known as the Superintendents' Steering Committee, comprised of each member district's Superintendent. The purpose of the Superintendents' Steering Committee shall be to advise the Board regarding any and all issues related to the operation of the Collaborative. The Executive Director shall meet, no less than monthly, with the Superintendents' Steering Committee and shall review all recommendations to be presented to the Board for their approval and recommendation. The Superintendents' Steering Committee may elect to report to the Board either through the Executive Director or directly through the Board Chairperson.

B. Powers and Duties

The Board is vested with all authority given it by Chapter 40, section 4E of the General Laws, as amended from time to time, and may take any necessary action to oversee the operation of the Collaborative consistent with G.L.c.40, sect. 4E and this Agreement, including but not limited to the following:

1) The Board shall adopt by-laws and policies governing the day-to-day operation of the Collaborative, and shall adopt an annual budget after recommendation by the Executive Director.

2) The Board shall meet monthly, or as necessary, to conduct its business, one meeting of which shall be a joint meeting with the Superintendents' Steering Committee. The June meeting shall be designated as the annual meeting, at which meeting Board officers for the following year shall be elected effective July 1st.
A majority of the Board Members will constitute a quorum at any meeting and a majority vote of the quorum shall be necessary to pass any resolution brought before the Board.

3) The Board shall ensure that an internal fiscal and program audit shall be undertaken annually of the Collaborative by a certified public accountant. Upon acceptance by the Board, a copy of the audit report will be forwarded to the Department of Education and any other requesting agencies.

4) The Board shall select an Executive Director who shall have such powers and responsibilities as determined by the Board and as stipulated in the by-laws adopted pursuant to this Agreement. The Executive Director shall have the authority and responsibility to supervise and manage the day-to-day functions of the Collaborative as described in the Executive Director job description and/or employment contract. The Executive Director shall be responsible to and report to the Board as a whole.

5) The Executive Director shall notify each Board Member of the times of Board meetings in advance of such meetings. Notices of Board meetings shall be posted in Member municipal and district offices and/or school committee offices in advance of such meetings. All Board meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with Chapter 39, Sec. 23A, B, C of the General Laws. Minutes of all Board meetings shall be maintained and sent to Board Members and to the secretaries of each Member.

6) The Board shall appoint a Treasurer who shall have such powers and responsibilities as determined by the Board and as stipulated in the by-laws adopted pursuant to this Agreement.

7) The Board shall be responsible for the hiring and termination of staff which authority the Board may delegate to the Executive Director. The Executive Director shall be responsible for the ongoing supervision of staff and necessary personnel actions, including, but not limited to, assignments, transfers, discipline and evaluation.

8) The Board shall be responsible for adopting admissions and referral procedures for incoming students, including, not limited to, establishing the conditions under which the Collaborative will admit students from non-member districts which conditions may include, among others, an additional fee non-member fee.

3. EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE TRUST FUND

The Board herein agrees to establish and manage the Franklin County Collaborative Trust Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Trust Fund) which shall be the depository for all funds and/or reimbursements received from Member municipalities and districts and all grants or gifts from the federal government, state government, charitable foundations, private corporations, or any other source. No member of the Collaborative Board shall be eligible to serve as Treasurer of said Board. The Treasurer of the Trust Fund shall be authorized, subject to the direction of the Board, to receive and disburse any monies of the Trust Fund without further appropriation. The Treasurer shall give bond annually for the faithful performance of his duties in a form or an amount approved by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue and the Board. Any funds of the Trust Fund not immediately necessary for operations during the fiscal year may be invested by the Treasurer, consistent with the provisions and requirements of Section 54 of Chapter 44 of the General Laws and any amendments thereto. Any funds unexpended at the end of any fiscal year may, at the sole discretion of the Board, be designated for specific purposes of the Collaborative, allocated to a reserve fund or to operations, or refunded to the Members.

No part of the net earnings of the Collaborative shall inure to the benefit of any Member, director, officer of the Collaborative or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to, of or for the Collaborative), and no Board Member, director or officer shall be entitled to share in the distribution of the Collaborative assets upon the dissolution of the Collaborative.

In the event of dissolution, all the remaining assets and property of the collaborative shall, after necessary expenses thereof, be distributed to Member towns and school districts on a prorated basis based on each Member's percentage of fiscal participation as outlined in Section IX – Termination.

4. CONTRIBUTIONS OF MEMBER DISTRICTS

The Board shall determine the exact amounts to be contributed by each Member for each fiscal year beginning July 1. Each Member shall contribute an annual payment including any membership assessment, as determined by the Board, and a program tuition/assessment on a per pupil basis for each collaborative program utilized by the Member as outlined in Paragraph 5 (B).

The Board reserves the right to determine payment procedures and schedules in accordance with sound accounting practices.

The Board shall have the authority to borrow money for any reason approved by the Board. A school committee of any city, town, or regional district may authorize the prepayment of tuition for any educational program or service of the Collaborative, to the Treasurer of the Collaborative.

5. APPORTIONMENT AND PAYMENT COSTS

A. Administrative Costs

Administrative costs shall include but not be limited to office expenses, supplies and equipment, travel, office rental, clerical salary, legal retainer, postage, telephone, and the salaries of the Executive Director and other administrative staff.

The Board shall determine all administrative costs and allocate them to the member districts based upon their previous year's October 1 enrollment, as a percentage of the NET Collaborative approved administrative budget.

B. Program Costs and Tuitions

Program costs shall include all costs not included in administrative costs as defined in Section 5 (A). Program tuition/ assessments will be determined annually by the Board and will be billed to Members and other sending school districts on a per pupil tuition or utilization assessment basis.

C. Time of Payment

The Franklin County Collaborative Board shall establish an appropriate billing system, and it shall be the obligation of Members and non-member school districts to pay such amounts as may be due within thirty (30) days of receipt of such invoice. The annual share of each Member and non-member school district program/tuition or assessment shall be invoiced on a monthly basis based upon a schedule to coincide with Board meetings. Failure to pay in a timely manner may subject a Member and/or non-member school district to interest payments in an amount set by the Board, or other penalties, including, but not limited to, termination of students' placement in the Collaborative or no further acceptance of any referred student until invoices and interest payments, if any, are paid.

D. Applicable Period-Fiscal Year

All apportionments for program costs and tuitions shall be applicable for the fiscal year beginning July 1 of each year and ending June 30 of each year.

6. **POWER TO EMPLOY**

The Collaborative shall be deemed a public employer and have the authority to employ personnel, including, but not limited to, teachers, nurses, therapists, paraprofessionals, non-professional employees, administrative staff, attorneys and consultants to carry out the purposes and functions of the Collaborative. The Board may adopt any salary schedules, terms and conditions of employment and qualifications for such positions in its discretion.

7. **PAYMENT OF THE COLLABORATIVE LIABILITIES**

The Members, Directors, and Officers of the Collaborative shall not be personally liable for any debt, liability, or obligation of the Collaborative. All persons, corporations, or other entities extending credit to, contracting with, or having any claim against the Collaborative may look only to the funds and property of the Collaborative for the payment of any debt, damages, judgment or decree, or of any money that may otherwise become due or payable to them from the Collaborative.

8. **AMENDMENTS**

Any proposal for amendment may be initiated by any member of the Collaborative Board, the Executive Director, or by any Member by a majority vote of its school committee. The Executive Director shall mail or deliver notice in writing of the proposed amendment to the Board of Governors for its vote. A copy of the Board's voted recommendation will be mailed along with the proposal to each Member to notify them that a proposal to amend this Agreement has been made and to advise them of the Board's recommendation regarding the proposal. The Executive Director shall place the proposed amendment on the Board agenda at its next regularly scheduled meeting. All amendments except those necessitated by the admission of a new Member must be submitted to the Department of Education for approval by the Commissioner of Education. Such proposed amendments shall take effect upon accepting by two-thirds (2/3) vote of its Members (acceptance by each Member to be a majority vote of the School Committee) and upon approval of the Commissioner of Education.

9. **ADMISSION OF A NEW SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Any non-member school district may apply to the Board of Directors of the Collaborative for consideration for membership in the Collaborative. The Board may, in its discretion, accept or deny such application for consideration, without recourse by the applying school district.

In the event that the Board of Directors accepts such school district for consideration for membership in the Collaborative, the following procedure shall apply: The school district shall be given a one fiscal year probationary membership, beginning on the July 1 of the fiscal year subsequent to the date of the Board's approval. During this probationary membership, the Executive Director will give bimonthly reports to the Board of Governors in which the Executive Director shall assess the programmatic and fiscal impact of the applying school district on the Collaborative, as a whole.

During this probationary membership, the designee to the Collaborative Board of Directors from the applying school district will be allowed to participate as if a regular Member, except that he/she shall not be allowed to vote on, or participate in, the following actions:

A. The applying school district's own membership as a regular Member:

B. Admission, or consideration for admission, of a new Member; or

C. Termination of the Collaborative.

The applying school district would be entitled to share in payment of funds designated by the Board for return or credit to the Members from the fiscal year of its probationary membership, based on its percentage of fiscal participation for that fiscal year only. In the event the fiscal report determines there are liabilities for such fiscal year, the applying school district will share in the payment of liabilities by its percentage of fiscal participation for that fiscal year.

If the school committee of the applying school district wishes to seek regular membership in the Collaborative, its request for membership must be submitted in writing by April 1 of the probationary membership period to be placed on the Board of Directors' agenda for that month's meeting as a proposed amendment to the Collaborative Agreement. The Board of Directors, in its sole discretion, may vote to approve or deny such regular membership, without recourse by such school district. The procedure for amending the agreement will be followed as outlined under Section 10 of the present agreement, if the Board of Directors approves the regular membership of the applying school district. If the Board does not approve the regular membership, the probationary membership shall expire as of June 30th of that year.

10. TERMINATION

This agreement, and the Collaborative, may be terminated only at the end of a fiscal year by a two thirds (2/3) vote of the Board provided that each Member submit to the Board written evidence of a majority vote of its school committee approving said termination.

Upon termination of this agreement, the Collaborative Treasurer will provide for a final fiscal audit, by a certified public accountant, at which time all assets or liabilities determined by said audit will be distributed on a prorated basis. Prorated basis will be determined by the Members' percentage of fiscal participation from the base year of Collaborative organization: FY 2009 to June 30th of the termination year.

Furthermore, the Collaborative shall determine the fair market value of all assets, including equipment and supplies held by the Collaborative or any of the Members pursuant to this agreement, and shall make a distribution of such equipment and supplies to the Members on a prorated basis within one year of the termination of this agreement.

Upon termination of this agreement and the Collaborative, any student records maintained by the Collaborative shall be returned to the appropriate school district. All fiscal records of the Collaborative shall be maintained for a period of seven (7) years by the designated member school district designated by the Board to hold such records. The Department of Education will be notified of the Collaborative's intent to terminate no less than thirty days (30) prior to the effective date of termination.

11. WITHDRAWAL

Any Member may withdraw from the Collaborative by notifying each of the other Members, the Board, and the Department of Education, in writing of its intent to withdraw, and must include evidence of a majority vote of its school committee approving its intent to withdraw. Such notice must be received by all other Members and the Board at least by December 31 of the fiscal year for such withdrawal to be effective in the subsequent school year.

Upon withdrawal of a Member, the Board shall ensure that the withdrawing Member share in any payments from funds designated by the Board for return or credit to its Members for the current fiscal year only. Other than funds designated by the Board for return to the Members, individual Members choosing to withdraw will not be entitled to receive a share of any other assets of the Collaborative, nor any distribution of assets in the event that the Collaborative eventually terminates.

The annual excess of revenues over expenses will be determined through the end of the year fiscal audit. Funds designated by the Board for return to the Members will be released to all Members based on the following formula:

> *Each Member's percentage of fiscal participation will be calculated annually by dividing that Member's fiscal contribution by the total Collaborative receipts from all Collaborative Members in that fiscal year.*
>
> *In the event the end of the year fiscal audit determines there are liabilities, the withdrawing Member will share in the payment of liabilities by the same formula as they would have shared in the assets.*

Equipment and supplies on loan from the withdrawing Member will be returned to said Member if requested. Equipment and supplies on loan to the withdrawing Member will be returned to the Collaborative by the end of the fiscal year. Upon withdrawal from the Collaborative, any student records maintained shall be returned to the withdrawing school district.

If a majority of Members withdraw from the Collaborative, and there are less than four (4) remaining Members, this Collaborative Agreement will be considered terminated and the provisions outlined under Section IX will be followed. All notices of withdrawal must be submitted to the Department of Education at least thirty days (30) in advance of the effective date of the withdrawal of a Member.

12. INDEMNIFICATION

Neither the Executive Director nor any other employee of the Collaborative nor any member of the Board shall be liable to the Collaborative or to any Member thereof for any act or omission of the Executive Director, of the Board, any employee of the Collaborative or any member of the Board or be held personally liable in connection with the affairs of the Collaborative except only for liability arising out of his own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty to the Collaborative or its Member town/school committees.

Neither the Executive Director nor any employee of the Collaborative nor the Board or any member of the Board or Member shall be personally liable for any debt, claim, demand, judgment, decree, liability or obligation of any kind of, against or with respect to the Collaborative or arising out of any action taken or omitted for or on behalf of the Collaborative and the Collaborative shall be solely liable therefore and resort shall be had exclusively to the Collaborative property for the payment or performance thereof and each Member of the Board, Member and the Executive Director or any other employee of the Collaborative shall be entitled to full indemnity and full reimbursement out of Collaborative property, including, without limitation, fees and disbursements of counsel, if, contrary to the provision hereof, such Board Member, Executive Director or any other employee of the Collaborative or Member town/school committee shall be held personally liable.

The Executive Director, any employee of the Collaborative and/or his heirs/legal representatives, each Board member and/or his heirs/legal representatives, and each Member and its legal representatives shall be indemnified by the Collaborative against all liabilities and expenses, exclusive of amounts paid in settlement and counsel fees, incurred in reasonable settlement of any action, suit or proceeding to which such member of the Board, Member or Executive Director or any employee of the Collaborative or his/its legal representatives may be made a party or otherwise involved by reason of his/its participation in the Collaborative, except only for liabilities and expenses arising out of his/its own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty to the Collaborative as finally adjudged in such action or, in the event of settlement or termination of such action without final adjudication, as determined by independent counsel for the Collaborative. Said right of indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which such member of the Board or Executive Director or any employee of the Collaborative or Member may be entitled as a matter of law or which may be lawfully granted to him/it.

13. EFFECTIVE DATE

The agreement must be voted on, signed and dated by each Member School Committee. The Agreement shall be considered effective upon vote and signature of all Member School Committees and signature of approval of the Commissioner of Education.

14. NON-DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES

The Collaborative admits students of any race, sex, color, religion, and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to its students and does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, disability and national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, administrative policies, scholarship or loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs or in employment.

The Executive Director is empowered and required to publicize the Collaborative policy of non-discrimination by including in the Collaborative publications, brochures, and other printed matter the following declaration:

"The Franklin County Collaborative admits students of any race, sex, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation and national or ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students in the Collaborative. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, disability, sexual orientation and national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, admission policies, scholarship and loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs or in employment."

15. GENERAL PROVISIONS

This Agreement shall be interpreted under Massachusetts law. Any lawsuit or action against the Collaborative, its Members, Board, individual members of the Board and/or any employee/agent of the Collaborative shall be brought in a court of competent jurisdiction in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Should any provision, or part of any provision, of this Agreement be deemed to be illegal or unenforceable, such determination shall not affect the validity of the other provisions of this Agreement or the Agreement as a whole.

WITNESS the Members whose signatures appear below:

Approved as to form:

_____ _____
Regina W. Tate, Esq. Date
Attorney for the Collaborative

Approved by the Member School Committees:

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Frontier Regional School Committee

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Franklin County Technical School Committee

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Gill-Montague Regional School Committee

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Greenfield School Committee

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Orange School Committee

_____ _____
Chairperson Date
Pioneer Valley Regional School Committee

Chairperson
Ralph C. Mahar Regional School Committee

Date

Chairperson
Erving School Union #28 School Committee

Date

Chairperson
Mohawk Trail Regional School Committee

Date

Chairperson
Hawlemont Regional School Committee

Date

Chairperson
Rowe School Committee

Date

Approved by the Commissioner of Education

Commissioner of Education

Date

APPENDIX B

Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section

Excess Levy Capacity

The levy is the amount a municipality raises each year through the property tax. The levy can be any amount up to the levy limit defined by Prop 2 1/2.

The levy limit is the maximum amount a community can levy in a given year. In the absence of special voted exceptions, the levy limit must be at or below the levy ceiling. The levy limit can exceed the levy ceiling only if the community passes a capital expenditure exclusion, debt exclusion or special exclusion.

The levy limit can grow each year by 2 1/2 percent of the prior year's levy limit plus new growth and any overrides.

Key Terms

Proposition 2 1/2
Excess Levy Capacity
Override Capacity
Override
Debt Exclusion
Levy Limits: A Primer on Proposition 2 1/2

Data in this file are derived from the Levy Limit sheet, Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet and the LA13 submitted by local officials to the Division of Local Services.

Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section

Fiscal Year 2000 - 2007 Excess Levy Capacity

FRANKILN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CITIES AND TOWNS HAVE SEVERELY DEPLETED THEIR AVAILABLE FUNDING UNDER PROPOSITION 21/2 IN SUPPORT OF EDUCATION BUDGETS. MUNICIPALITIES HAVE MADE UP THE BUDGET DIFFERENCES DUE TO INSUFFICIENT STATE AID FUNDING LEVELS.

Municipality	DOR Code	FY	Levy Limit without Debt & Capital Exclusions	Maximum Levy Limit	Total Tax Levy	Excess Capacity	Excess as a % of Maximum Levy	Tax Levy Ceiling	Override Capacity	Assessed Value	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	68	2001	2,275,201	2,517,891	2,145,897	371,794	14.77	3,013,900	738,699	120,556,009	1.78
	68	2002	2,411,249	2,680,389	2,297,922	382,467	14.27	3,502,930	1,091,681	140,117,216	1.64
	68	2003	2,545,817	2,802,457	2,532,524	269,933	9.63	3,597,335	1,051,518	143,893,408	1.76
	68	2004	2,696,322	2,927,103	2,751,634	175,469	5.99	3,698,433	1,002,111	147,937,330	1.86
	68	2005	2,871,830	3,065,154	2,997,177	67,977	2.22	5,097,240	2,225,410	203,889,600	1.47
	68	2006	3,005,733	3,134,268	3,027,189	107,079	3.42	5,605,906	2,600,173	224,236,243	1.35
	68	2007	3,157,530	3,302,706	3,237,832	64,874	1.96	6,132,258	2,974,728	245,290,328	1.32
DEERFIELD	74	2000	4,780,227	5,413,811	5,251,627	162,184	3.00	8,752,712	3,972,485	350,108,491	1.50
	74	2001	5,029,603	5,635,862	5,255,962	379,700	6.74	8,908,410	3,678,807	356,336,399	1.48
	74	2002	5,505,713	6,088,882	5,103,180	985,702	16.19	10,786,202	5,260,489	430,848,075	1.19
	74	2003	5,764,018	6,297,871	5,269,538	1,028,333	16.33	10,978,204	5,214,186	439,128,164	1.20
	74	2004	6,135,071	6,633,880	5,680,269	953,611	14.37	11,406,163	5,271,092	456,246,517	1.24
	74	2005	6,399,101	7,008,903	6,681,878	325,025	4.64	14,216,761	7,817,660	568,670,435	1.17
	74	2006	6,635,404	7,166,946	7,144,559	22,387	0.31	15,454,412	8,829,008	618,576,494	1.16
	74	2007	6,892,700	7,387,403	7,386,929	474	0.01	16,742,813	9,850,113	669,712,529	1.10
ERVING	91	2000	5,132,357	5,132,357	3,269,233	1,863,124	36.30	14,996,792	9,864,435	599,871,675	0.54
	91	2001	5,280,244	5,280,244	3,334,845	1,945,399	36.84	14,766,070	9,485,826	590,642,804	0.56
	91	2002	5,421,609	5,421,609	4,869,517	552,092	10.18	14,818,383	9,396,774	592,735,304	0.82
	91	2003	5,571,148	5,571,148	5,566,899	4,249	0.08	14,652,886	9,081,738	586,115,424	0.95
	91	2004	5,732,261	5,732,261	5,730,628	1,633	0.03	14,724,168	8,991,907	588,966,733	0.97
	91	2005	5,903,756	5,903,756	5,892,398	11,359	0.19	15,069,332	9,165,576	602,773,284	0.98
	91	2006	6,092,254	6,092,254	6,058,498	33,756	0.55	14,567,970	8,475,716	582,718,812	1.04
	91	2007	6,295,037	6,295,037	6,219,118	75,919	1.21	14,916,730	8,621,693	596,669,202	1.04
GILL	106	2000	1,136,954	1,194,606	1,130,221	64,385	5.39	1,854,036	717,082	74,181,453	1.52
	106	2001	1,183,843	1,235,288	1,234,584	704	0.06	1,866,059	682,216	74,642,340	1.65
	106	2002	1,227,240	1,266,277	1,265,796	481	0.04	2,058,874	831,634	82,354,953	1.54
	106	2003	1,284,480	1,326,359	1,325,562	797	0.06	2,097,408	812,928	83,896,321	1.58
	106	2004	1,442,305	1,644,288	1,633,137	11,151	0.68	2,118,756	676,451	84,750,245	1.93
	106	2005	1,503,781	1,617,998	1,605,261	12,737	0.79	2,804,439	1,300,658	112,177,575	1.43
	106	2006	1,561,448	1,669,890	1,668,428	1,462	0.09	2,740,519	1,179,071	109,620,751	1.52
	106	2007	1,619,053	1,619,053	1,618,107	946	0.06	2,987,643	1,368,590	119,505,709	1.35
GREENFIELD	114	2000	15,902,778	16,653,494	16,588,577	64,917	0.39	19,128,895	3,228,117	765,155,784	2.17
	114	2001	16,484,152	17,599,740	17,554,194	45,546	0.26	19,626,782	3,142,630	785,071,270	2.24
	114	2002	17,133,849	17,888,543	17,887,849	694	0.00	21,064,353	3,930,504	842,574,136	2.12
	114	2003	17,906,613	19,284,301	19,233,820	50,481	0.26	22,670,698	4,784,085	906,827,926	2.12
	114	2004	18,728,142	20,114,204	20,085,251	28,953	0.14	23,842,890	5,114,748	953,715,609	2.11
	114	2005	19,553,398	20,836,933	20,819,909	17,024	0.08	27,265,464	7,712,066	1,090,618,575	1.91
	114	2006	20,652,620	21,842,002	21,609,907	232,095	1.06	29,651,355	8,998,735	1,186,054,190	1.82
	114	2007	21,538,154	22,564,782	22,493,211	71,551	0.32	32,884,811	11,348,657	1,315,392,432	1.71
HAWLEY	129	2000	408,220	423,680	345,829	77,851	18.37	586,548	178,328	23,461,928	1.47
	129	2001	425,876	440,710	351,101	89,609	20.33	593,478	167,602	23,739,113	1.48
	129	2002	442,195	456,015	414,755	41,260	9.05	591,831	149,636	23,673,253	1.75
	129	2003	460,469	499,699	457,032	42,667	8.54	592,932	132,463	23,717,266	1.93
	129	2004	475,719	520,983	495,387	25,596	4.91	601,198	125,479	24,047,900	2.06
	129	2005	499,705	555,897	492,693	63,204	11.37	618,962	119,257	24,758,460	1.99
	129	2006	526,318	572,939	572,713	226	0.04	773,936	247,618	30,957,448	1.85
	129	2007	551,404	596,713	556,475	40,238	6.74	773,312	221,908	30,932,477	1.80
HEATH	130	2000	1,094,098	1,211,170	910,409	300,761	24.83	1,171,999	77,901	46,879,947	1.94
	130	2001	1,131,160	1,289,168	918,470	370,696	28.75	1,168,537	37,377	46,741,465	1.97
	130	2002	1,168,523	1,296,440	1,254,433	42,007	3.24	1,295,901	127,378	51,836,059	2.42
	130	2003	1,241,761	1,357,816	1,095,096	262,720	19.35	1,328,355	86,594	53,134,201	2.06
	130	2004	1,288,342	1,407,718	1,180,440	227,278	16.15	1,338,367	50,025	53,534,687	2.20

Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section

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Fiscal Year 2000 - 2007 Excess Levy Capacity

Municipality	DOR Code	FY	Levy Limit without Debt & Capital Exclusions	Maximum Levy Limit	Total Tax Levy	Excess Capacity	Excess as a % of Maximum Levy	Tax Levy Ceiling	Override Capacity	Assessed Value	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	130	2005	1,334,254	1,440,734	1,299,557	141,177	9.80	1,771,479	437,225	70,859,150	1.83
	130	2006	1,383,987	1,486,476	1,399,180	87,296	5.87	1,984,090	600,103	79,363,601	1.76
	130	2007	1,464,430	1,588,586	1,463,693	124,893	7.86	2,023,912	559,482	80,956,480	1.81
LEVERETT	154	2000	2,427,371	2,624,903	2,461,798	163,105	6.21	3,323,162	895,791	132,926,484	1.85
	154	2001	2,634,112	2,957,617	2,742,827	214,790	7.26	3,500,290	866,178	140,011,602	1.96
	154	2002	2,752,570	3,064,158	2,923,414	140,744	4.59	3,549,555	796,985	141,982,203	2.06
	154	2003	2,892,798	3,181,975	3,043,199	138,776	4.36	4,114,655	1,221,857	164,586,201	1.85
	154	2004	3,015,185	3,239,301	3,135,043	104,258	3.22	4,177,830	1,162,645	167,113,190	1.88
	154	2005	3,159,806	3,322,592	3,260,751	61,841	1.86	5,044,479	1,884,673	201,779,164	1.82
	154	2006	3,305,113	3,617,505	3,314,892	302,613	8.37	6,138,689	2,833,578	245,547,548	1.35
	154	2007	3,448,392	3,711,109	3,602,048	109,061	2.94	6,231,917	2,785,525	249,276,696	1.45
LEYDEN	156	2000	856,784	898,764	757,370	141,394	15.73	1,073,979	214,195	42,959,170	1.76
	156	2001	908,113	1,038,837	810,881	227,956	21.95	1,108,883	198,770	44,275,314	1.83
	156	2002	953,063	993,243	980,354	12,889	1.30	1,239,072	258,009	49,562,880	1.98
	156	2003	988,784	1,119,589	1,087,716	31,873	2.85	1,265,375	266,591	50,614,960	2.15
	156	2004	1,053,202	1,155,356	1,093,256	62,100	5.37	1,291,855	238,453	51,566,160	2.12
	156	2005	1,117,844	1,230,010	1,167,679	62,331	5.07	1,691,308	573,464	67,652,304	1.73
	156	2006	1,172,902	1,285,341	1,282,317	3,024	0.24	1,707,934	535,032	68,317,349	1.88
	156	2007	1,226,305	1,340,186	1,320,657	19,529	1.46	1,900,773	674,468	76,030,924	1.74
MONROE	190	2000	420,932	420,932	261,127	159,805	37.96	489,003	68,071	19,560,110	1.33
	190	2001	431,520	431,520	264,491	167,029	38.71	472,305	40,786	18,892,222	1.40
	190	2002	445,888	445,888	268,324	177,564	39.82	479,150	33,262	19,166,001	1.40
	190	2003	371,644	371,644	362,754	8,890	2.39	371,644	0	14,865,777	2.44
	190	2004	373,062	373,062	373,003	59	0.02	373,062	0	14,922,469	2.50
	190	2005	390,652	390,652	382,184	8,468	2.17	390,652	0	15,626,082	2.45
	190	2006	415,298	415,298	373,985	41,313	9.95	447,783	32,485	17,911,310	2.09
	190	2007	461,666	461,666	402,379	59,287	12.84	475,114	13,448	19,004,549	2.12
MONTAGUE	192	2000	7,340,346	7,488,818	7,488,571	247	0.00	10,090,667	2,750,321	403,626,578	1.86
	192	2001	7,652,577	7,772,376	7,770,171	2,205	0.03	10,535,773	2,883,196	421,430,925	1.84
	192	2002	7,984,839	8,216,205	8,167,482	48,723	0.59	10,700,569	2,715,930	428,022,785	1.91
	192	2003	8,369,516	9,409,680	9,409,171	509	0.01	11,407,441	3,017,925	456,297,636	2.06
	192	2004	8,842,632	9,949,630	9,945,913	3,717	0.04	13,006,702	4,064,070	520,268,096	1.91
	192	2005	8,332,944	9,790,890	9,789,831	1,059	0.01	14,242,944	4,910,000	569,717,741	1.72
	192	2006	9,654,205	10,039,372	10,036,425	2,947	0.03	15,127,033	5,472,828	605,081,324	1.66
	192	2007	10,058,097	10,148,783	10,148,258	525	0.01	17,247,865	7,189,758	689,914,610	1.47
NEW SALEM	204	2000	807,687	887,064	740,745	146,319	16.49	1,304,129	496,442	52,165,150	1.42
	204	2001	837,381	890,917	768,797	122,120	13.71	1,316,433	479,052	52,657,330	1.46
	204	2002	872,965	937,873	848,923	88,950	9.48	1,334,784	461,819	53,391,380	1.59
	204	2003	916,720	998,059	927,205	70,854	7.10	1,854,410	937,890	74,176,400	1.25
	204	2004	972,808	1,097,346	1,068,405	28,941	2.64	1,907,886	935,260	76,314,621	1.40
	204	2005	1,027,004	1,103,521	1,093,988	9,533	0.86	2,100,590	1,073,586	84,023,618	1.30
	204	2006	1,080,907	1,145,920	1,144,028	1,892	0.17	2,619,111	1,538,204	104,784,431	1.09
	204	2007	1,237,606	1,302,842	1,302,414	428	0.03	2,686,497	1,448,891	107,459,898	1.21
NORTHFIELD	217	2000	2,794,710	3,056,631	2,848,183	208,448	6.82	4,924,245	2,129,535	196,969,807	1.45
	217	2001	2,834,806	3,238,843	3,202,554	36,289	1.12	6,230,550	3,295,844	249,225,996	1.28
	217	2002	3,033,506	3,685,520	3,685,211	1,309	0.04	6,310,292	3,278,788	252,411,688	1.46
	217	2003	3,256,764	3,521,067	3,519,882	1,185	0.03	6,390,490	3,133,726	255,619,615	1.38
	217	2004	3,593,924	3,710,479	3,708,932	1,547	0.04	7,249,672	3,655,748	289,986,871	1.28
	217	2005	3,906,614	4,275,930	4,273,143	2,787	0.07	7,786,339	3,879,725	311,453,557	1.37
	217	2006	4,131,240	4,494,551	4,493,581	970	0.02	8,728,790	4,597,550	349,151,608	1.29
	217	2007	4,350,979	4,712,145	4,697,269	14,876	0.32	9,103,235	4,752,256	364,129,387	1.29
ORANGE	223	2000	4,781,217	4,893,704	4,688,171	205,533	4.20	5,807,942	1,026,725	232,317,685	2.02

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Municipality	DOR Code	FY	Levy Limit without Debt & Capital Exclusions	Maximum Levy Limit	Total Tax Levy	Excess Capacity	Excess as a % of Maximum Levy	Tax Levy Ceiling	Override Capacity	Assessed Value	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	223	2001	4,983,255	5,059,194	4,859,819	199,375	3.94	5,821,537	858,282	232,861,467	2.09
	223	2002	5,230,567	5,724,086	5,668,148	55,938	0.98	7,549,478	2,318,911	301,979,100	1.88
	223	2003	5,440,200	5,836,807	5,749,531	87,076	1.49	7,573,144	2,132,944	302,925,742	1.90
	223	2004	5,689,555	6,029,861	5,988,777	41,084	0.68	8,253,551	2,563,996	330,142,039	1.81
	223	2005	6,041,747	6,056,928	6,053,675	3,253	0.05	10,650,378	4,608,631	426,015,123	1.42
	223	2006	6,321,136	6,317,695	6,316,126	1,569	0.02	11,254,679	4,933,543	450,187,147	1.40
	223	2007	6,588,020	6,570,917	6,529,534	41,383	0.63	11,544,438	4,956,418	461,777,505	1.41
PLAINFIELD	237	2000	786,218	800,197	743,576	56,621	7.08	1,220,577	434,359	48,823,083	1.52
	237	2001	813,520	827,499	750,409	77,090	9.32	1,225,358	411,838	49,014,316	1.53
	237	2002	839,578	853,557	753,450	100,107	11.73	1,239,227	399,649	49,569,090	1.52
	237	2003	871,774	885,753	763,100	122,653	13.85	1,362,678	490,904	54,507,135	1.40
	237	2004	908,260	922,239	820,868	101,371	10.99	1,368,114	459,854	54,724,542	1.50
	237	2005	941,883	955,862	912,842	43,020	4.50	1,750,081	808,198	70,003,229	1.30
	237	2006	985,842	999,821	931,467	68,354	6.84	2,007,472	1,021,630	80,298,877	1.16
	237	2007	1,024,270	1,038,219	979,475	58,744	5.66	2,010,417	986,147	80,416,694	1.22
ROWE	253	2000	2,088,282	2,088,282	2,085,010	3,272	0.16	10,526,571	8,438,289	421,062,824	0.50
	253	2001	2,142,929	2,142,929	2,140,682	2,247	0.10	10,365,228	8,222,299	414,609,128	0.52
	253	2002	2,198,214	2,198,214	2,197,466	748	0.03	10,370,420	8,172,206	414,816,815	0.53
	253	2003	2,269,846	2,269,846	2,265,641	4,205	0.19	10,539,383	8,269,537	421,575,303	0.54
	253	2004	2,329,644	2,329,644	2,329,320	324	0.01	10,551,293	8,221,649	422,051,703	0.55
	253	2005	2,389,908	2,389,908	2,388,814	1,094	0.05	10,636,903	8,246,995	425,476,101	0.56
	253	2006	2,455,037	2,455,037	2,450,790	4,247	0.17	7,596,807	5,141,770	303,872,277	0.81
	253	2007	2,523,128	2,523,128	2,522,698	430	0.02	7,770,030	5,246,902	310,801,199	0.81
SHELBURNE	268	2000	1,744,134	1,891,911	1,715,365	176,546	9.33	2,901,497	1,157,363	115,059,872	1.48
	268	2001	1,856,689	1,994,975	1,670,803	324,172	16.25	3,024,626	1,187,937	120,985,032	1.38
	268	2002	1,971,123	2,101,241	1,746,390	354,851	16.89	3,538,068	1,566,845	141,522,716	1.23
	268	2003	2,079,315	2,204,950	1,811,806	393,144	17.83	3,635,245	1,555,930	145,409,798	1.25
	268	2004	2,196,952	2,320,665	1,885,472	435,193	18.75	3,773,964	1,577,012	150,958,549	1.25
	268	2005	2,288,238	2,422,264	2,186,565	235,699	9.73	4,422,663	2,134,425	176,906,528	1.24
	268	2006	2,368,544	2,502,167	2,497,353	4,814	0.19	5,176,934	2,808,390	207,077,367	1.21
	268	2007	2,529,106	2,656,546	2,552,765	103,781	3.91	5,304,998	2,775,892	212,199,928	1.20
SHUTESBURY	272	2000	2,333,069	2,555,412	2,542,956	12,456	0.49	2,864,980	531,911	114,599,200	2.22
	272	2001	2,436,433	2,639,629	2,605,201	34,428	1.30	2,935,108	498,675	117,404,300	2.22
	272	2002	2,543,439	2,752,003	2,699,557	52,446	1.91	3,379,515	836,076	135,180,600	2.00
	272	2003	2,660,171	2,850,071	2,849,340	731	0.03	3,432,940	772,769	137,317,580	2.08
	272	2004	2,776,486	2,959,069	2,957,686	1,383	0.05	3,487,838	711,352	139,513,500	2.12
	272	2005	3,083,305	3,241,364	3,149,093	92,271	2.85	4,302,040	1,218,735	172,081,600	1.83
	272	2006	3,200,555	3,319,736	3,318,403	1,333	0.04	4,795,380	1,594,825	191,815,200	1.73
	272	2007	3,318,259	3,447,332	3,447,029	303	0.01	4,838,615	1,520,356	193,544,600	1.78
SUNDERLAND	289	2000	2,563,359	2,871,099	2,706,023	165,076	5.75	4,249,408	1,686,049	169,976,321	1.59
	289	2001	2,692,830	2,980,963	2,821,874	159,089	5.34	4,507,787	1,814,957	180,311,467	1.56
	289	2002	2,820,220	3,056,835	3,008,272	48,563	1.59	5,204,623	2,384,403	208,184,932	1.44
	289	2003	2,945,801	3,161,293	3,083,435	77,858	2.46	5,565,767	2,619,966	222,630,684	1.39
	289	2004	3,061,557	3,604,773	3,325,816	278,957	7.74	5,633,158	2,571,601	225,328,310	1.48
	289	2005	3,165,629	4,027,040	4,012,582	14,458	0.36	6,961,454	3,795,825	278,458,176	1.44
	289	2006	3,305,943	4,152,116	4,126,503	25,613	0.62	7,658,691	4,352,748	306,347,645	1.35
	289	2007	3,440,329	4,274,552	4,252,755	21,797	0.51	8,622,780	5,182,451	344,911,181	1.23
WARWICK	312	2000	787,946	884,646	765,335	119,311	13.49	938,370	150,424	37,534,819	2.04
	312	2001	823,740	949,006	756,348	192,658	20.30	1,089,211	265,471	43,568,459	1.74
	312	2002	866,291	987,569	967,606	19,963	2.02	1,116,812	248,521	44,672,493	2.17
	312	2003	933,510	1,166,093	945,027	221,066	18.96	1,155,290	221,780	46,211,601	2.04
	312	2004	978,903	1,241,140	1,063,244	177,896	14.33	1,326,402	347,499	53,056,095	2.00

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Fiscal Year 2000 - 2007 Excess Levy Capacity

Municipality	DOR Code	FY	Levy Limit without Debt & Capital Exclusions	Maximum Levy Limit	Total Tax Levy	Excess Capacity	Excess as a % of Maximum Levy	Tax Levy Ceiling	Override Capacity	Assessed Value	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	312	2005	1,022,054	1,281,039	1,106,651	174,388	13.61	1,333,958	311,904	53,358,310	2.07
	312	2006	1,097,844	1,350,393	1,256,893	93,500	6.92	1,813,175	715,331	72,527,011	1.73
	312	2007	1,147,783	1,390,142	1,280,738	109,404	7.87	2,107,863	960,100	84,314,522	1.52
WENDELL	319	2000	936,297	958,615	886,341	72,474	7.56	1,099,879	163,382	43,987,153	2.01
	319	2001	984,194	1,005,713	940,197	65,516	6.51	1,115,034	130,840	44,601,366	2.11
	319	2002	1,055,770	1,086,004	1,062,689	23,315	2.15	1,158,102	100,332	46,244,080	2.30
	319	2003	1,099,418	1,134,159	995,466	138,693	12.23	1,279,519	180,101	51,180,765	1.95
	319	2004	1,175,178	1,229,560	996,953	232,607	18.92	1,309,025	133,847	52,360,993	1.90
	319	2005	1,236,924	1,277,208	1,058,275	218,933	17.14	1,393,935	157,011	55,760,982	1.90
	319	2006	1,385,325	1,414,019	1,250,356	163,663	11.57	1,883,066	487,741	75,322,654	1.66
	319	2007	1,456,808	1,579,293	1,361,932	217,361	13.76	1,898,857	442,149	75,958,295	1.79
WHATELY	337	2000	1,830,834	2,206,095	2,206,065	30	0.00	2,889,032	1,058,198	115,561,298	1.91
	337	2001	1,990,991	2,354,857	2,303,206	51,651	2.19	3,030,535	1,039,544	121,221,394	1.90
	337	2002	2,086,726	2,493,157	2,378,598	114,559	4.59	3,303,609	1,216,883	132,144,340	1.80
	337	2003	2,181,575	2,573,655	2,452,328	121,327	4.71	3,370,434	1,188,859	134,817,372	1.82
	337	2004	2,278,486	2,805,206	2,570,456	34,750	1.33	3,400,074	1,121,588	136,002,971	1.89
	337	2005	2,386,012	2,776,371	2,740,610	35,761	1.29	4,208,554	1,822,542	168,342,150	1.63
	337	2006	2,498,154	2,856,952	2,853,490	3,462	0.12	4,659,520	2,161,366	186,380,807	1.53
	337	2007	2,798,146	3,092,047	3,029,321	62,726	2.03	4,946,638	2,150,492	197,865,506	1.53
State Totals		**2000**	**7,088,341,887**	**7,294,560,425**	**7,103,557,417**	**191,003,008**	**2.62**	**10,987,364,803**	**3,879,022,916**	**438,694,590,980**	**1.62**
		2001	**7,488,038,825**	**7,724,994,951**	**7,520,052,344**	**204,942,607**	**2.65**	**12,525,983,918**	**5,037,945,093**	**501,039,355,755**	**1.50**
		2002	**7,917,516,289**	**8,202,054,011**	**8,003,918,195**	**198,135,816**	**2.42**	**14,227,198,762**	**6,309,682,473**	**569,087,949,273**	**1.41**
		2003	**8,380,040,152**	**8,675,291,979**	**8,494,021,114**	**181,270,865**	**2.09**	**15,951,354,324**	**7,571,314,172**	**638,041,388,391**	**1.33**
		2004	**8,862,847,876**	**9,190,535,757**	**9,016,234,138**	**174,301,619**	**1.90**	**18,322,994,346**	**9,460,146,470**	**732,916,233,342**	**1.23**
		2005	**9,325,173,097**	**9,655,831,483**	**9,483,454,968**	**172,376,515**	**1.79**	**20,763,205,409**	**11,438,032,312**	**830,527,063,850**	**1.14**
		2006	**9,832,173,119**	**10,180,422,593**	**9,983,137,896**	**197,284,897**	**1.94**	**22,876,574,403**	**13,044,401,284**	**915,062,308,347**	**1.09**
		2007	**10,343,293,227**	**10,693,238,232**	**10,488,786,561**	**204,452,671**	**1.91**	**24,567,007,094**	**14,223,713,867**	**982,718,590,191**	**1.07**

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LEVERETT	2,752,570	3,064,158	2,923,414	140,744	4.59	3,549,555	796,985	141,982,203	2.06		
NEW SALEM	872,965	937,873	848,923	88,950	9.48	1,334,784	461,819	53,391,360	1.59		
SHUTESBURY	2,543,439	2,752,003	2,699,557	52,446	1.91	3,379,515	836,076	135,180,600	2.00		
WENDELL	1,055,770	1,086,004	1,062,689	23,315	2.15	1,156,102	100,332	46,244,080	2.30		
TOTAL FY02											
FY03											
FRONTIER RSD											
CONWAY	2,545,817	2,802,457	2,532,524	269,933	9.63	3,597,335	1,051,518	143,893,408	1.76	1,433,240	127.8
DEERFIELD	5,764,018	6,297,871	5,269,538	1,028,333	16.33	10,978,204	5,214,186	439,126,154	1.20	3,293,350	123.7
SUNDERLAND	2,945,801	3,161,293	3,083,435	77,858	2.46	5,565,767	2,619,966	222,630,684	1.39	2,013,763	120.6
WHATELY	2,181,575	2,573,655	2,452,328	121,327	4.71	3,370,434	1,188,859	134,817,372	1.62	1,208,341	128.0
ELEMENTARY										7,948,694	
SECONDARY										6,702,200	145.8
TOTAL FY03	13,437,211	14,835,276	13,337,825	1,497,451	10.09	23,511,740	10,074,529	940,469,628	1.42	14,650,894	
GILL MONTAGUE RSD											
GILL	1,284,480	1,326,359	1,325,562	797	0.06	2,097,408	812,928	83,896,321	1.58		
MONTAGUE	8,389,516	9,409,680	9,409,171	509	0.01	11,407,441	3,017,925	456,297,636	2.06		
TOTAL DISTRICT FY03	9,673,996	10,736,039	10,734,733	1,306	0.01	13,504,849	3,830,853	540,193,957	1.99	11,834,006	109.6
GREENFIELD	17,906,613	19,284,301	19,233,820	50,481	0.26	22,670,698	4,764,085	906,827,926	2.12	19,051,408	109.2
MOHAWK TRAIL RSD											
ASHFIELD	2,035,262	2,207,199	2,192,478	14,721	0.67	3,460,350	1,425,088	138,414,002	1.58		
BUCKLAND	1,961,622	2,137,529	2,057,336	80,193	3.75	2,899,916	738,294	107,999,644	1.90		
COLRAIN	1,693,885	1,827,057	1,714,289	112,768	6.17	2,437,839	743,954	97,513,579	1.76		
HEATH	1,241,761	1,357,815	1,095,096	262,720	19.35	1,328,355	86,594	53,134,201	2.06		
PLAINFIELD	871,774	885,753	763,100	122,653	13.85	1,362,678	490,904	54,507,135	1.40		
SHELBURNE	2,079,315	2,204,950	1,811,806	393,144	17.83	3,635,245	1,555,930	145,409,798	1.25		
DISTRICT	9,883,619	10,620,304	9,634,105	986,199	9.29	14,924,383	5,040,764	596,975,359	1.61	13,243,381	113.6
CHARLEMONT	1,529,339	1,680,602	1,574,824	105,778	6.29	1,959,711	430,372	78,388,443	2.01		
HAWLEY	460,469	499,699	457,032	42,667	8.54	592,932	132,463	23,717,266	1.93		
DISTRICT K-6	1,989,808	2,180,301	2,031,856	148,445	6.81	2,552,643	562,835	102,105,709	1.99	1,390,971	136.8
ROWE	2,269,846	2,269,846	2,265,641	4,205	0.19	10,539,383	8,269,537	421,576,383	0.54	1,092,697	147.3
ORANGE	5,440,200	5,536,607	5,749,531	87,076	1.49	7,573,144	2,132,944	302,925,742	1.90	6,574,043	107.2
PIONEER VALLEY RSD											
BERNARDSTON	2,191,583	2,203,306	2,133,678	69,628	3.16	2,899,019	707,436	115,960,772	1.84		
LEYDEN	998,784	1,119,589	1,087,716	31,873	2.85	1,265,375	266,591	50,614,960	2.15		
NORTHFIELD	3,256,784	3,521,067	3,519,882	1,185	0.03	6,390,490	3,133,725	255,619,615	1.38		
WARWICK	933,510	1,166,093	945,027	221,066	18.96	1,155,290	221,780	46,211,601	2.04		
DISTRICT K-12										8,525,621	116.2
TOTAL FY03	7,380,541	8,010,055	7,686,303	323,752	4.04	11,710,174	4,329,533	468,406,968	1.64		

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UNION #28											
ERVING	5,571,148	5,571,148	5,566,899	4,249	0.08	14,652,886	9,081,738	596,116,424	0.95	2,375,549	122.7
LEVERETT	2,892,798	3,181,975	3,043,199	138,776	4.36	4,114,655	1,221,857	164,586,201	1.85	1,458,697	103.3
SHUTESBURY	2,680,171	2,850,071	2,849,340	731	0.03	3,432,940	772,769	137,317,580	2.08	1,702,583	123.4
NEW SALEM	916,720	998,059	927,205	70,854	7.10	1,854,410	937,690	74,176,400	1.25		
WENDELL	1,099,418	1,134,159	995,456	138,693	12.23	1,279,519	180,101	51,180,765	1.95		
NEW SALEM WENDELL RSD	4,676,309	4,962,269	4,772,011	210,278	4.22	8,666,869	1,890,560	282,674,745	1.82	1,414,626	101.6
5 TOWN UNION TOTAL FY03	**15,800,426**	**16,585,483**	**16,231,449**	**354,034**	**2.13**	**28,767,350**	**12,966,924**	**1,150,693,950**	**1.41**	**6,951,455**	
TOTAL COUNTY	**83,782,360**	**90,358,212**	**86,905,263**	**3,452,949**	**3.82**	**135,754,364**	**51,972,004**	**5,430,174,542**	**1.60**		

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Municipality	FY	LEVY LIMIT W/O DEBT & CAPITAL EXCLUSIONS	MAXIMUM LEVY LIMIT	TOTAL LEVY LIMIT	EXCESS CAPACITY	EXCESS AS A % OF MAX LL	TAX LEVY CEILING	OVERRIDE CAPACITY	ASSESSED VALUE	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
FRONTIER RSD										
CONWAY	2000	2,166,390	2,422,030	2,210,075	211,955	8.75	2,954,645	736,255	116,185,813	1.87
	2001	2,275,201	2,617,621	2,145,837	371,784	14.77	3,013,900	736,699	120,556,005	1.75
	2002	2,411,246	2,680,389	2,297,922	382,467	14.27	3,302,930	1,021,551	140,117,218	1.64
	2003	2,545,517	2,802,457	2,532,924	269,933	9.63	3,587,235	1,051,515	143,653,408	1.76
	2004	2,656,322	2,927,103	2,751,634	175,469	5.99	3,698,433	1,002,111	147,937,330	1.86
	2005	2,871,630	3,065,154	2,997,177	67,977	2.22	5,057,240	2,225,410	203,689,800	1.47
	2006	3,005,733	3,134,269	3,027,169	107,079	3.42	5,605,906	2,600,173	224,285,243	1.35
	2007	3,157,530	3,302,726	3,237,832	64,874	1.96	6,132,256	2,974,725	245,290,328	1.32
DEERFIELD	2000	4,760,227	5,413,611	5,251,627	162,184	3.00	8,752,712	3,972,485	350,108,491	1.52
	2001	5,029,602	5,635,662	5,255,962	379,700	6.74	8,968,410	3,679,807	356,336,395	1.48
	2002	5,505,713	6,086,642	5,103,180	983,762	16.19	10,766,202	5,260,469	430,648,075	1.19
	2003	5,764,016	6,397,871	5,369,838	1,028,033	16.33	10,978,204	5,214,166	439,128,164	1.20
	2004	6,135,071	6,633,850	5,680,269	953,611	14.37	11,406,163	5,271,092	456,246,517	1.24
	2005	6,399,101	7,006,903	6,681,878	325,025	4.64	14,216,761	7,617,662	568,670,435	1.17
	2006	6,635,404	7,166,946	7,144,559	22,387	0.31	15,464,412	8,629,005	616,576,494	1.16
	2007	6,862,700	7,387,423	7,386,929	474	0.01	16,742,813	9,650,113	669,712,525	1.10
SUNDERLAND	2000	2,563,356	2,871,059	2,706,023	165,076	5.75	4,249,406	1,656,045	169,976,321	1.69
	2001	2,692,830	2,980,963	2,821,674	159,089	5.34	4,867,787	1,814,957	180,311,467	1.56
	2002	2,822,220	3,056,835	3,006,272	46,563	1.59	5,204,623	2,364,403	206,164,932	1.44
	2003	2,945,801	3,161,293	3,083,435	77,858	2.46	5,565,767	2,619,966	222,630,664	1.39
	2004	3,061,557	3,604,773	3,326,816	278,957	7.74	5,632,158	2,871,601	228,326,310	1.46
	2005	3,165,625	4,027,040	4,012,552	14,488	0.36	6,961,464	3,795,925	276,458,176	1.44
	2006	3,305,943	4,152,116	4,126,503	25,613	0.62	7,658,691	4,352,748	306,347,646	1.35
	2007	3,440,329	4,274,552	4,252,755	21,797	0.51	8,622,780	5,182,451	344,911,161	1.23
WHATELY	2000	1,830,834	2,206,095	2,206,095	30	0.00	2,869,032	1,055,199	115,561,298	1.91
	2001	1,963,991	2,354,557	2,303,206	51,551	2.19	3,032,536	1,039,544	121,221,394	1.90
	2002	2,058,726	2,493,157	2,378,598	114,559	4.59	3,303,605	1,216,559	132,144,349	1.80
	2003	2,161,575	2,573,653	2,452,328	121,327	4.71	3,370,434	1,188,858	134,817,372	1.82
	2004	2,276,486	2,696,226	2,570,455	24,750	1.33	3,402,074	1,121,585	136,082,971	1.89
	2005	2,395,012	2,776,371	2,740,610	35,761	1.29	4,265,554	1,622,542	168,342,150	1.63
	2006	2,495,154	2,656,952	2,653,490	3,462	0.12	4,652,520	2,161,366	186,360,807	1.52
	2007	2,795,146	3,092,047	3,029,321	62,726	2.03	4,946,636	2,150,492	197,865,508	1.53
GILL MONTAGUE RSD										
GILL	2000	1,135,954	1,194,606	1,130,221	64,385	5.39	1,854,038	717,082	74,161,488	1.62
	2001	1,183,643	1,238,288	1,234,554	704	0.06	1,866,056	652,216	74,642,340	1.65
	2002	1,227,240	1,268,277	1,268,796	481	0.04	2,058,574	831,634	82,354,963	1.54
	2003	1,264,486	1,326,359	1,326,552	797	0.06	2,057,408	812,928	83,696,321	1.55
	2004	1,442,305	1,644,266	1,633,127	11,151	0.65	2,118,756	676,451	84,750,245	1.93
	2005	1,503,781	1,617,936	1,605,261	12,737	0.79	2,804,435	1,330,685	112,177,576	1.43
	2006	1,561,445	1,669,690	1,666,428	1,462	0.09	2,740,515	1,179,071	109,620,761	1.52
	2007	1,619,053	1,619,053	1,618,107	946	0.06	2,967,643	1,358,592	119,505,705	1.35
MONTAGUE	2000	7,340,346	7,486,618	7,486,571	247	0.00	10,090,697	2,750,321	403,626,675	1.85
	2001	7,652,577	7,772,376	7,770,171	2,205	0.03	10,535,773	2,853,195	421,430,925	1.84
	2002	7,954,636	8,216,205	8,167,452	48,723	0.59	10,703,566	2,715,930	428,022,765	1.91
	2003	8,389,516	9,409,680	9,409,171	509	0.01	11,407,441	3,017,925	456,267,636	2.06
	2004	8,842,632	9,949,630	9,945,913	3,717	0.04	13,006,702	4,064,070	520,268,096	1.91
	2005	9,332,941	9,790,690	9,789,631	1,059	0.01	14,242,944	4,910,000	569,717,741	1.72
	2006	9,654,205	10,039,372	10,036,425	2,947	0.03	15,127,033	5,472,825	605,081,324	1.66
	2007	10,088,097	10,146,755	10,146,258	525	0.01	17,247,865	7,189,765	689,914,610	1.47
GREENFIELD	2000	15,902,776	16,853,454	16,586,577	64,917	0.39	19,125,895	3,226,117	765,155,764	2.17
	2001	16,464,152	17,599,740	17,554,154	45,545	0.26	19,626,782	3,142,630	785,071,270	2.24
	2002	17,133,649	17,856,543	17,857,849	694	0.00	21,064,353	3,930,504	842,574,136	2.12
	2003	17,906,613	18,284,301	18,233,820	50,481	0.28	22,670,698	4,764,065	906,827,926	2.12
	2004	18,729,142	20,114,204	20,085,251	28,953	0.14	23,842,890	5,114,745	953,715,609	2.11
	2005	19,553,396	20,836,933	20,819,909	17,024	0.08	27,268,464	7,712,066	1,090,618,578	1.91
	2006	20,652,620	21,642,002	21,609,907	232,095	1.06	29,651,355	8,929,735	1,186,054,190	1.82
	2007	21,538,154	22,864,762	22,493,211	71,551	0.32	32,884,811	11,346,657	1,315,392,432	1.71
MOHAWK TRAIL RSD										
ASHFIELD	2000	1,791,572	2,049,363	2,011,001	38,362	1.87	2,960,837	1,169,265	116,433,495	1.70
	2001	1,856,627	2,076,662	1,986,676	89,775	4.32	3,124,016	1,227,362	124,960,752	1.65
	2002	1,970,002	2,165,650	2,100,149	65,501	3.03	3,176,268	1,226,266	127,060,731	1.65
	2003	2,035,265	2,207,199	2,192,478	14,721	0.67	3,462,350	1,425,084	136,414,002	1.55
	2004	2,141,449	2,305,077	2,237,241	67,836	2.94	3,672,424	1,520,975	146,696,971	1.52
	2005	2,229,396	2,397,161	2,372,022	25,139	1.05	4,415,819	2,189,422	176,752,758	1.34
	2006	2,327,019	2,445,550	2,418,077	27,473	1.12	5,359,214	3,022,195	214,368,547	1.13
	2007	2,453,037	2,574,712	2,565,105	9,606	0.37	5,823,465	3,070,448	220,929,368	1.16
BUCKLAND	2000	1,747,647	1,993,413	1,843,999	149,414	7.50	2,473,175	725,525	96,927,011	1.85
	2001	1,816,079	2,116,360	1,932,781	183,579	8.67	2,575,499	659,420	107,019,964	1.81
	2002	1,854,088	2,129,460	2,046,162	83,295	3.91	2,685,155	811,067	107,806,195	1.90
	2003	1,961,622	2,137,629	2,057,336	80,193	3.75	2,699,916	738,294	107,996,644	1.90
	2004	2,061,237	2,211,695	2,083,459	128,435	5.81	3,425,742	1,365,305	137,069,678	1.62
	2005	2,235,347	2,388,740	2,219,347	169,393	7.09	3,689,076	1,450,729	147,862,998	1.60
	2006	2,344,956	2,519,852	2,488,654	30,908	1.23	4,366,886	2,011,932	174,275,521	1.42
	2007	2,543,914	2,710,191	2,706,955	3,256	0.12	5,201,644	2,660,732	206,065,746	1.30
CHARLEMONT	2000	1,349,137	1,439,852	1,362,514	71,388	4.96	1,695,357	347,220	67,854,262	2.01
	2001	1,404,687	1,487,869	1,345,233	142,636	9.59	1,714,964	310,067	68,599,345	1.96

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Municipality	FY	LEVY LIMIT W/O DEBT & CAPITAL EXCLUSIONS	MAXIMUM LEVY LIMIT	TOTAL LEVY LIMIT	EXCESS CAPACITY	EXCESS AS A % OF MAX LL	TAX LEVY CEILING	OVERRIDE CAPACITY	ASSESSED VALUE	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	2002	1,465,167	1,640,384	1,387,289	153,095	9 94	1,939,722	474,575	77,583,876	1.75
	2003	1,529,335	1,630,602	1,574,624	105,778	6 29	1,959,711	430,372	76,389,443	2.01
	2004	1,619,497	1,831,194	1,697,851	133,513	7 30	2,295,995	679,812	91,953,988	1.85
	2005	1,702,437	1,954,954	1,788,487	166,467	8 52	2,617,809	915,372	104,712,371	1.71
	2006	1,795,592	2,010,430	1,866,794	141,635	7 05	2,677,356	876,664	107,094,227	1.74
	2007	1,865,281	2,042,703	2,016,304	24,401	1 19	3,108,910	1,243,629	124,356,404	1.62
COLRAIN	2000	1,494,928	1,632,179	1,583,761	48,418	2 97	2,123,005	626,077	34,920,182	1.66
	2001	1,556,376	1,712,341	1,564,515	147,826	8 63	2,367,643	631,467	95,513,714	1.64
	2002	1,621,122	1,785,057	1,622,352	162,735	9 09	2,405,623	784,601	96,224,913	1.69
	2003	1,693,685	1,827,087	1,714,289	112,798	6 17	2,437,839	743,984	97,513,579	1.76
	2004	1,758,745	1,869,164	1,773,862	95,302	5 10	2,846,376	1,087,631	113,855,056	1.56
	2005	1,855,941	2,016,173	1,986,923	29,250	1 45	3,038,252	1,182,311	121,450,074	1.64
	2006	1,946,784	2,156,417	2,153,029	2,583	0 11	3,217,317	1,270,533	128,692,893	1.67
	2007	2,072,070	2,247,374	2,200,094	47,280	2 10	3,359,813	1,787,743	154,392,531	1.43
HAWLEY	2000	405,220	423,850	345,829	77,851	18 37	596,348	178,328	23,461,928	1.47
	2001	425,876	440,710	351,101	89,609	20 33	593,478	167,602	23,739,112	1.48
	2002	442,195	456,015	414,755	41,260	9 05	591,331	149,636	23,673,253	1.75
	2003	460,469	499,699	457,032	42,667	8 54	592,932	132,463	23,717,265	1.93
	2004	475,715	520,953	495,387	25,566	4 91	601,198	125,479	24,047,903	2.06
	2005	493,705	555,897	492,693	63,204	11 37	612,962	119,287	24,758,460	1.99
	2006	526,316	572,539	572,713	226	0 04	773,936	247,619	30,957,449	1.85
	2007	551,404	596,713	556,478	40,235	6 74	773,312	221,965	30,932,477	1.80
HEATH	2000	1,094,096	1,211,170	910,409	300,761	24 83	1,171,395	77,901	46,873,947	1.94
	2001	1,131,180	1,239,163	916,478	370,685	29 75	1,165,537	37,377	46,741,485	1.97
	2002	1,169,523	1,296,440	1,254,433	42,007	3 24	1,295,501	127,378	51,636,059	2.42
	2003	1,241,761	1,357,816	1,095,096	262,720	19 35	1,328,365	86,594	53,134,281	2.06
	2004	1,288,342	1,407,718	1,180,440	227,278	16 15	1,328,367	60,025	53,534,697	2.02
	2005	1,334,254	1,440,734	1,299,657	141,177	9 80	1,771,479	437,225	70,859,160	1.83
	2006	1,383,987	1,486,476	1,339,180	87,296	5 87	1,984,090	600,103	79,363,601	1.75
	2007	1,464,430	1,536,596	1,463,693	124,392	7 86	2,023,912	559,462	80,956,482	1.81
MONROE	2000	420,932	420,932	261,127	159,805	37 96	469,003	68,071	19,660,110	1.32
	2001	431,520	431,520	264,491	167,029	38 71	472,306	40,786	18,632,222	1.40
	2002	445,868	445,868	266,324	177,564	39 82	479,180	33,262	19,166,001	1.40
	2003	371,644	371,644	362,754	8,890	2 39	371,644	0	14,865,777	2.44
	2004	373,062	373,062	373,003	59	0 02	373,062	0	14,922,469	2.50
	2005	390,652	390,652	382,184	8,468	2 17	390,652	0	15,626,082	2.48
	2006	415,299	415,299	373,955	41,343	9 95	447,788	32,489	17,911,310	2.09
	2007	461,666	461,666	402,379	59,287	12 84	675,114	13,448	19,004,549	2.13
PLAINFIELD	2000	785,216	800,197	743,576	56,621	7 08	1,225,977	434,359	46,823,083	1.62
	2001	813,520	827,499	750,409	77,090	9 32	1,225,356	411,838	49,014,316	1.53
	2002	839,976	853,857	753,450	100,107	11 73	1,239,227	385,049	49,589,090	1.52
	2003	871,774	885,753	763,100	122,653	13 85	1,362,676	490,904	54,507,135	1.40
	2004	909,260	922,239	820,868	101,371	10 99	1,369,114	459,854	54,724,542	1.50
	2005	941,683	955,662	912,642	43,020	4 50	1,759,081	806,193	70,033,229	1.30
	2006	985,842	999,821	931,467	66,354	6 64	2,007,472	1,021,830	80,293,877	1.16
	2007	1,024,270	1,036,219	979,475	56,744	5 48	2,010,417	986,147	80,416,894	1.22
ROWE	2000	2,088,282	2,088,282	2,085,010	3,272	0 16	10,526,571	8,438,289	421,062,924	0.50
	2001	2,142,929	2,142,929	2,140,682	2,247	0 10	10,365,228	8,222,299	414,609,126	0.52
	2002	2,196,214	2,196,214	2,197,466	748	0 03	10,370,420	8,172,206	414,818,816	0.53
	2003	2,269,646	2,269,646	2,265,641	4,205	0 19	10,539,383	8,269,537	421,575,302	0.54
	2004	2,329,644	2,329,644	2,329,320	324	0 01	10,551,293	8,221,649	422,051,703	0.55
	2005	2,389,908	2,389,908	2,388,814	1,094	0 05	10,631,903	8,245,995	425,476,101	0.56
	2006	2,455,037	2,455,037	2,450,790	4,247	0 17	7,696,807	5,141,770	303,672,277	0.81
	2007	2,523,128	2,523,128	2,522,698	430	0 02	7,770,030	5,246,902	310,801,199	0.81
SHELBURNE	2000	1,744,134	1,891,911	1,715,365	176,546	9 33	2,901,497	1,157,363	116,059,872	1.48
	2001	1,856,689	1,994,975	1,670,833	324,172	16 25	3,024,626	1,167,937	120,965,032	1.38
	2002	1,971,123	2,101,241	1,746,390	354,851	16 89	3,533,066	1,666,945	141,322,716	1.23
	2003	2,079,315	2,204,950	1,811,805	393,144	17 83	3,635,249	1,655,930	146,409,799	1.23
	2004	2,196,951	2,320,655	1,885,472	435,193	18 75	3,773,964	1,677,012	150,953,545	1.25
	2005	2,288,239	2,422,264	2,186,555	235,659	9 73	4,422,563	2,134,425	176,906,526	1.24
	2006	2,388,544	2,502,157	2,497,353	4,814	0 19	5,178,934	2,663,395	207,077,367	1.21
	2007	2,529,106	2,656,546	2,552,765	103,781	3 91	5,304,998	2,775,892	212,199,926	1.20
PIONEER VALLEY RSD										
BERNARDSTON	2000	1,929,306	2,225,713	1,861,620	363,893	16 35	2,671,955	742,652	106,878,311	1.74
	2001	2,008,816	2,196,656	1,967,443	229,212	10 43	2,325,162	616,346	113,008,490	1.74
	2002	2,103,269	2,676,395	2,420,579	255,805	9 56	2,881,642	781,373	116,265,678	2.10
	2003	2,191,593	2,203,306	2,133,679	69,625	3 16	2,999,019	707,435	115,960,772	1.84
	2004	2,295,339	2,655,177	2,174,054	481,063	18 12	3,621,076	1,322,737	144,843,053	1.50
	2005	2,395,840	2,772,179	2,535,282	236,897	8 55	3,666,365	1,288,163	147,400,126	1.72
	2006	2,525,616	2,819,569	2,577,512	242,057	8 59	4,703,468	2,177,372	188,139,531	1.37
	2007	2,667,966	2,959,272	2,957,730	1,542	0 05	5,354,326	2,656,360	214,173,045	1.39
LEYDEN	2000	659,764	899,764	757,370	141,394	15 73	1,073,975	314,195	42,959,170	1.75
	2001	908,113	1,038,637	810,651	227,986	21 95	1,105,863	138,770	44,275,314	1.83
	2002	953,063	993,243	980,354	12,889	1 30	1,239,372	286,089	49,582,893	1.95
	2003	995,764	1,119,582	1,087,718	31,872	2 85	1,265,378	266,591	50,614,980	2.15
	2004	1,052,202	1,155,358	1,093,255	62,103	5 37	1,291,655	236,453	51,665,182	2.12
	2005	1,117,844	1,230,010	1,157,679	62,331	5 07	1,691,306	573,464	67,652,304	1.73
	2006	1,172,902	1,286,341	1,282,317	3,024	0 24	1,707,934	525,032	68,317,349	1.88

Massachusetts Department of Revenue
Division of Local Services
Municipal Databank/Local Aid Section

Fiscal Year 2000 - 2007 Excess Levy Capacity

Municipality	FY	LEVY LIMIT W/O DEBT & CAPITAL EXCLUSIONS	MAXIMUM LEVY LIMIT	TOTAL LEVY LIMIT	EXCESS CAPACITY	EXCESS AS A % OF MAX LL	TAX LEVY CEILING	OVERRIDE CAPACITY	ASSESSED VALUE	Tax Levy as % of Assessed Value
	2007	1,226,305	1,340,186	1,320,667	19,520	1.46	1,902,772	674,465	76,030,924	1.74
NORTHFIELD	2000	2,764,710	3,056,631	2,846,153	208,478	6.82	4,924,245	2,129,535	196,969,807	1.45
	2001	2,934,806	3,236,643	3,202,554	36,289	1.12	6,230,650	3,295,844	249,225,996	1.29
	2002	3,032,506	3,686,520	3,683,211	1,309	0.04	6,310,292	3,276,786	252,411,688	1.46
	2003	3,266,764	3,521,057	3,519,552	1,165	0.03	6,352,490	3,133,725	255,619,615	1.38
	2004	3,552,924	3,710,479	3,706,932	1,547	0.04	7,249,672	3,655,745	269,055,871	1.28
	2005	3,905,614	4,276,930	4,273,143	2,787	0.07	7,766,339	3,679,725	311,455,557	1.37
	2006	4,131,240	4,494,561	4,493,561	970	0.02	8,728,795	4,597,550	349,161,605	1.29
	2007	4,360,975	4,712,145	4,697,269	14,876	0.32	9,103,235	4,752,265	364,129,367	1.29
WARWICK	2000	787,945	864,646	765,335	119,311	13.49	938,370	150,424	37,834,815	2.04
	2001	822,740	949,005	756,348	192,658	22.30	1,005,211	255,471	43,868,455	1.74
	2002	866,291	937,559	967,636	19,963	2.02	1,116,812	246,521	44,672,493	2.17
	2003	932,510	1,166,093	946,027	221,065	15.96	1,155,290	221,763	46,211,601	2.04
	2004	978,503	1,241,140	1,063,244	177,896	14.33	1,325,402	347,499	53,056,095	2.02
	2005	1,022,554	1,251,039	1,106,651	174,388	13.61	1,333,956	311,964	53,358,310	2.07
	2006	1,087,844	1,350,393	1,256,893	93,502	6.92	1,813,175	715,331	72,527,011	1.73
	2007	1,147,763	1,390,142	1,280,738	109,404	7.87	2,107,863	960,102	84,314,522	1.52
UNION #28										
ERVING	2000	5,122,357	5,132,357	3,269,233	1,863,124	36.30	14,995,792	9,864,435	699,671,675	0.54
	2001	5,280,244	5,280,244	3,334,645	1,945,599	36.84	14,765,070	9,485,826	690,642,804	0.56
	2002	5,421,605	5,421,629	4,869,517	552,092	10.18	14,815,392	9,386,774	692,735,304	0.82
	2003	5,571,146	5,571,146	5,566,899	4,249	0.08	14,652,686	9,081,736	686,115,424	0.99
	2004	5,732,261	5,732,261	5,730,628	1,633	0.03	14,724,168	8,991,907	686,964,733	0.97
	2005	5,903,756	5,903,756	5,892,398	11,358	0.19	15,062,332	9,165,576	692,773,284	0.98
	2006	6,052,254	6,092,254	6,056,498	33,756	0.55	14,567,578	8,475,716	682,718,812	1.04
	2007	6,295,037	6,295,037	6,219,118	75,919	1.21	14,916,730	8,621,692	696,669,202	1.04
LEVERETT	2000	2,427,371	2,624,903	2,461,798	163,105	6.21	3,302,163	595,791	132,926,464	1.85
	2001	2,634,112	2,857,617	2,742,627	214,790	7.26	3,502,290	856,178	140,011,602	1.95
	2002	2,752,570	3,064,159	2,923,414	140,744	4.59	3,849,588	796,985	141,982,202	2.05
	2003	2,852,795	3,181,975	3,043,199	138,776	4.36	4,114,655	1,221,857	164,585,201	1.85
	2004	3,015,185	3,239,321	3,135,043	104,255	3.22	4,177,830	1,152,645	167,113,192	1.88
	2005	3,159,806	3,322,622	3,260,751	61,841	1.86	5,044,479	1,664,672	201,779,164	1.62
	2006	3,305,113	3,617,805	3,314,692	302,613	8.37	6,136,665	2,633,578	245,647,548	1.35
	2007	3,445,392	3,711,109	3,602,048	109,061	2.94	6,231,917	2,755,525	249,276,696	1.45
NEW SALEM	2000	807,667	887,064	740,748	146,316	16.49	1,304,125	496,442	52,163,182	1.42
	2001	837,361	890,917	768,797	122,120	13.71	1,316,433	479,052	52,657,332	1.46
	2002	872,965	937,873	845,923	68,950	7.48	1,334,784	461,619	53,391,362	1.59
	2003	916,720	986,059	927,205	70,854	7.19	1,864,410	937,692	74,176,400	1.25
	2004	972,606	1,097,346	1,066,405	26,941	2.64	1,997,666	935,260	76,314,621	1.40
	2005	1,027,004	1,103,621	1,093,966	9,655	0.86	2,102,590	1,073,566	84,023,615	1.30
	2006	1,082,907	1,148,920	1,144,028	1,892	0.17	2,612,111	1,535,204	104,764,431	1.09
	2007	1,237,606	1,302,642	1,302,414	428	0.03	2,685,497	1,446,891	107,469,898	1.21
SHUTESBURY	2000	2,333,069	2,555,412	2,542,956	12,456	0.49	2,864,980	631,951	114,699,200	2.22
	2001	2,435,432	2,639,629	2,605,201	34,428	1.30	2,935,105	496,675	117,404,300	2.22
	2002	2,543,436	2,752,023	2,699,867	52,446	1.91	3,375,515	836,075	135,180,500	2.00
	2003	2,660,171	2,850,071	2,849,340	731	0.03	3,432,940	772,769	137,317,560	2.08
	2004	2,776,486	2,959,069	2,957,686	1,383	0.05	3,487,535	711,352	139,513,500	2.12
	2005	3,063,305	3,241,354	3,149,093	92,271	2.85	4,362,340	1,218,735	172,051,600	1.83
	2006	3,200,558	3,319,736	3,316,403	1,333	0.04	4,795,360	1,594,825	191,613,200	1.73
	2007	3,316,291	3,447,332	3,447,029	303	0.01	4,838,516	1,520,355	193,544,600	1.78
WENDELL	2000	936,297	955,815	886,341	72,474	7.58	1,089,679	163,382	43,927,162	2.01
	2001	964,194	1,005,713	940,197	65,516	6.51	1,115,034	180,840	44,621,366	2.11
	2002	1,055,770	1,086,004	1,062,659	23,345	2.15	1,166,100	103,332	46,244,062	2.30
	2003	1,093,415	1,134,159	996,466	136,693	12.23	1,276,515	180,101	51,180,765	1.95
	2004	1,175,178	1,229,850	996,953	232,897	15.92	1,369,225	153,647	52,350,993	1.90
	2005	1,236,524	1,277,205	1,058,273	218,933	17.14	1,393,935	157,011	55,760,962	1.90
	2006	1,385,325	1,414,019	1,250,356	163,663	11.57	1,852,066	477,741	75,322,664	1.66
	2007	1,466,505	1,579,293	1,361,932	217,361	13.76	1,895,957	442,149	75,958,295	1.79
ORANGE	2000	4,781,217	4,893,764	4,586,171	225,532	4.20	5,807,942	1,026,725	232,317,665	2.02
	2001	4,963,255	5,059,184	4,859,619	199,375	3.64	5,821,537	656,262	232,661,467	2.09
	2002	5,232,567	5,724,086	5,568,148	55,938	0.98	7,549,478	2,318,911	301,979,100	1.85
	2003	5,440,205	5,636,627	5,749,531	87,076	1.49	7,573,144	2,132,944	302,925,742	1.90
	2004	5,669,555	6,029,661	5,966,777	41,064	0.69	8,253,681	2,553,999	330,142,035	1.81
	2005	6,041,747	6,056,928	6,053,675	3,253	0.05	10,652,378	4,598,631	426,015,123	1.42
	2006	6,321,136	6,317,695	6,316,126	1,569	0.02	11,254,578	4,933,542	450,157,147	1.40
	2007	6,568,030	6,570,917	6,529,534	41,382	0.63	11,544,436	4,956,418	461,777,505	1.41
State Totals	**2000**	**7,088,341,687**	**7,294,560,425**	**7,103,557,417**	**191,003,008**	**2.62**	**10,967,364,803**	**3,879,022,816**	**436,684,590,980**	**1.62**
	2001	**7,489,036,625**	**7,724,934,951**	**7,520,052,344**	**204,942,607**	**2.65**	**12,525,983,818**	**5,037,945,853**	**501,039,355,755**	**1.50**
	2002	**7,917,516,289**	**8,202,054,011**	**8,003,918,156**	**198,135,816**	**2.42**	**14,227,196,762**	**6,309,682,473**	**565,067,949,273**	**1.41**
	2003	**8,380,840,152**	**8,675,291,978**	**8,494,021,114**	**181,270,865**	**2.09**	**15,951,354,324**	**7,571,314,172**	**636,041,368,391**	**1.33**
	2004	**8,862,647,676**	**9,190,535,757**	**9,016,234,138**	**174,301,619**	**1.90**	**18,322,994,346**	**9,460,146,470**	**732,916,238,342**	**1.23**
	2005	**9,325,173,097**	**9,655,831,483**	**9,483,454,968**	**172,376,515**	**1.79**	**20,763,205,405**	**11,438,032,312**	**830,527,063,850**	**1.14**
	2006	**9,852,173,119**	**10,180,422,593**	**9,983,137,696**	**197,284,897**	**1.94**	**22,876,574,403**	**13,044,401,284**	**915,062,308,347**	**1.09**
	2007	**10,343,293,227**	**10,693,238,232**	**10,486,765,561**	**206,472,671**	**1.91**	**24,567,807,094**	**14,223,713,867**	**982,718,550,191**	**1.07**

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

91 ERVING

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	2,650,414	2,869,438	3,049,352	3,216,576	3,415,147	3,718,821	38.87%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	1,146,622	1,283,499	1,235,465	1,335,247	1,436,480	1,841,772	34.46%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	194,658	250,994	296,385	304,717	356,430	372,091	91.15%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		83.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.86%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	251	240	220	237	241	250	-0.40%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	1,726,417	1,690,824	1,804,080	1,664,758	1,739,037	1,886,102	8.25%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	1,629,118	1,629,118	1,350,916	1,685,627	1,696,174	1,693,156	3.93%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	306,667	306,667	245,334	245,334	257,384	283,845	-7.51%	9.05%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	1,935,783	1,935,783	1,596,850	1,910,961	1,953,558	1,976,801	2.12%	16.25%
11 Actual Local Contribution	1,935,024	2,068,882	2,200,635	2,316,172	2,396,480	2,786,623	44.01%	23.83%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	2,241,691	2,375,549	2,445,999	2,560,505	2,653,884	3,070,298	36.96%	17.85%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	13.7%	12.9%	10.0%	9.6%	9.7%	9.2%	-4.44%	-2.99% *
13 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	86.32%	87.09%	89.97%	90.42%	90.30%	90.78%	4.44%	2.99% *
14 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	129.85%	140.33%	162.62%	153.81%	152.67%	162.78%	32.94%	na *
15 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	1,222	1,278	1,115	1,035	1,068	1,135	-7.14%	9.94%
16 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	7,709	8,620	10,003	9,769	9,944	11,146	44.59%	24.80%
17 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	8,931	9,898	11,118	10,804	11,012	12,281	37.51%	18.80%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	131.1	168.1	153.3	160.2	180.7	170.5	30.05%	-5.29%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	15.5	14.5	14.3	14.1	15.3	15.5	0.00%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	8.6	11.6	10.7	11.4	11.8	11.0	30.05%	2.05%
21 Average Teacher Salary	46,950	50,686	46,426	48,183	48,249	50,310	7.16%	16.23%

Notes:
Fiscal year 2007 data is preliminary and not available for all districts either because the Department is following up on questions or the data has not been submitted
Total spending from all funds (line 1) excludes regional assessments, indirect cost transfers, asset acquisition, long term debt, and third party expenditures.
Foundation enrollment includes students that the district is financially responsible for, including students attending charter schools, other school districts, collaboratives, or private special education schools. Tuitioned-in students are not counted towards a district's foundation enrollment with the notable exception of METCO students, who are counted by the receiving in-district enrollment (FTE's) includes resident and tuitioned-in students adjusted for their time in membership in the district over the course of the school year.
* Percentage point change.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

618 FRANKLIN COUNTY TECH

	Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1	Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	7,463,743	7,821,742	7,859,947	8,303,377	9,212,578	9,306,122	24.68%		21.05%
2	Instructional Spending all Funds	4,432,852	4,697,449	4,630,456	4,559,856	4,996,092	4,991,782	12.61%		9.87%
3	Health Insurance all Funds	686,803	813,162	945,119	1,185,277	1,150,035	1,356,411	97.21%		70.09%
4	Spending from Athletic Fees	0	3,628	6,037	4,364	34,259	19,260			83.56%
5	Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0			324.66%
	Chapter 70									
6	Foundation Enrollment	495	490	484	492	495	499	0.81%		-0.78%
7	Foundation Budget	5,038,866	5,040,003	4,833,460	5,357,988	5,609,534	6,238,187	23.80%		18.91%
8	Required Contribution	2,730,570	2,878,048	2,908,214	2,954,660	2,938,885	3,104,015	13.68%		21.89%
9	Chapter 70	2,346,963	2,346,963	1,925,246	2,403,328	2,670,649	3,134,152	33.54%		9.06%
10	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	5,077,533	5,225,011	4,833,460	5,357,988	5,609,534	6,238,187	22.86%		16.25%
11	Actual Local Contribution	3,835,184	3,915,416	3,906,677	3,745,767	4,321,305	4,218,266	16.94%		23.63%
12	Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	5,985,147	6,282,378	6,831,923	6,149,075	6,991,954	7,352,416	22.84%		17.88%
13	Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	39.2%	37.5%	33.0%	39.1%	38.2%	42.6%	3.41%		-2.99% *
13	Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	80.79%	82.52%	66.99%	80.92%	61.80%	57.37%	-3.41%		2.99% *
14	Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	118.78%	124.25%	120.66%	114.76%	124.64%	117.88%	-0.92%		na *
15	Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	4,741	4,790	3,978	4,885	5,395	6,281	32.47%		9.94%
16	Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	7,750	7,991	8,072	7,613	8,730	8,453	15.01%		24.60%
17	Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	12,091	12,760	12,049	12,496	14,125	14,734	21.86%		18.60%
	Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries									
18	In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	494.0	510.4	500.1	510.0	521.4	510.4	3.32%		-5.29%
19	Teachers (FTE's)	58.8	59.6	57.0	59.5	57.6	56.0	-4.76%		-7.19%
20	Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	8.4	8.6	8.8	8.6	9.1	9.1	8.49%		2.05%
21	Average Teacher Salary	46,550	49,002	51,310	50,061	55,224	58,191	15.74%		10.23%

Notes
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Foundation enrollment includes students that the district is financially responsible for, including students attending charter schools, other school districts, collaboratives, or private special education schools. Tuitioned-in students are not counted towards a district's foundation enrollment with the notable exception of METCO students, who are counted by the receiving in-district enrollment (FTE's) includes resident and tuitioned-in students adjusted for their time in membership in the district over the course of the school year.
* Percentage point change.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

870 FRONTIER

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY03 - FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	8,211,938	8,622,512	8,656,106	9,629,803	10,462,159	10,837,887	31.97%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	4,685,520	4,712,689	4,617,704	5,126,049	5,641,703	5,795,510	26.41%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	638,503	795,579	849,176	1,014,737	1,184,301	1,312,071	105.49%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	48,344	48,565	73,713	72,058	72,769	79,312	64.06%	83.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	5,290	0		324.65%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	677	683	717	731	742	724	6.94%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	4,281,908	4,533,548	5,004,297	5,146,795	5,418,605	5,733,999	33.91%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	2,076,464	2,176,812	2,390,890	2,613,721	3,068,349	3,534,975	70.08%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	2,483,459	2,483,459	2,613,407	2,613,407	2,650,807	2,746,608	10.60%	9.08%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	4,561,923	4,662,271	5,004,297	5,227,128	5,736,856	6,281,583	37.70%	16.25%
11 Actual Local Contribution	3,870,886	4,218,741	3,940,419	4,491,335	5,153,885	5,387,866	39.19%	23.53%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	6,354,345	6,702,200	6,553,826	7,104,742	7,804,992	8,104,474	28.01%	17.88%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	39.1%	37.1%	39.9%	36.8%	34.0%	33.9%	-5.32%	-2.99% *
14 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	60.92%	62.95%	60.12%	63.22%	66.04%	66.23%	5.32%	2.99% *
15 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/8)	148.40%	147.84%	130.96%	138.04%	144.03%	141.36%	-6.64%	na *
16 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	3,668	3,636	3,645	3,575	3,572	3,794	3.42%	9.94%
17 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	5,718	6,177	5,496	6,144	6,946	7,442	30.15%	24.80%
18 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	9,386	9,813	9,141	9,719	10,518	11,238	19.70%	18.60%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
19 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	625.1	664.3	699.0	726.3	712.4	709.8	13.52%	-5.29%
20 Teachers (FTE's)	62.9	61.3	57.5	66.3	69.7	68.0	6.11%	-7.19%
21 Student Teacher Ratio (17/19)	9.9	10.8	12.2	11.0	10.2	10.4	5.00%	2.05%
22 Average Teacher Salary	43,286	44,410	46,929	44,919	46,891	48,742	12.60%	16.23%

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* Percentage point change

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

674 GILL-MONTAGUE

	Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1	Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	15,123,122	15,418,645	15,046,479	17,507,222	18,695,513	18,208,016	20.40%	21.05%
2	Instructional Spending all Funds	8,549,150	8,628,037	7,893,461	8,832,060	8,894,964	9,039,523	5.74%	9.87%
3	Health Insurance all Funds	1,543,314	1,744,433	1,835,619	2,092,617	2,548,072	2,769,053	79.42%	70.09%
4	Spending from Athletic Fees	6,605	7,124	6,527	3,748	50,133	91,690	685.82%	63.56%
5	Spending from Transportation Fees	2,700	900	0	250	0	0		324.85%
	Chapter 70								
6	Foundation Enrollment	1,418	1,522	1,381	1,266	1,226	1,239	-12.62%	-0.76%
7	Foundation Budget	9,902,584	10,787,964	10,196,245	9,678,822	9,776,132	10,382,291	4.84%	18.91%
8	Required Contribution	4,170,695	4,347,613	4,361,219	4,605,963	4,690,426	5,144,962	23.36%	21.99%
9	Chapter 70	6,419,909	6,450,351	5,837,026	5,837,026	5,896,326	6,225,637	-3.03%	9.06%
10	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	10,590,604	10,797,964	10,196,245	10,443,009	10,766,752	11,370,599	7.36%	16.25%
11	Actual Local Contribution	5,606,615	5,363,656	4,652,168	6,656,350	7,659,981	7,770,834	38.60%	23.63%
12	Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	12,026,527	11,834,006	10,469,194	12,693,376	13,558,307	13,996,471	16.38%	17.68%
13	Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	53.4%	54.5%	55.8%	46.0%	43.5%	44.5%	-8.90%	-2.99% *
14	Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	46.62%	45.49%	44.35%	54.02%	56.50%	55.52%	8.90%	2.99% *
15	Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	121.45%	109.69%	102.65%	131.15%	138.69%	135.07%	13.62%	na *
16	Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	4,527	4,238	4,227	4,611	4,811	5,025	10.96%	9.94%
17	Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	3,954	3,537	3,369	5,416	6,248	6,272	58.62%	24.80%
18	Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	8,481	7,775	7,585	10,026	11,059	11,297	33.19%	16.80%
	Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18	In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	1,412.3	1,418.6	1,246.8	1,200.2	1,211.4	1,164.9	-17.52%	-5.29%
19	Teachers (FTE's)	143.3	118.7	95.7	111.2	104.1	88.4	-38.35%	-7.19%
20	Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	9.9	11.9	13.0	10.8	11.6	13.2	33.78%	2.05%
21	Average Teacher Salary	40,996	46,631	49,899	46,000	51,689	62,337	52.05%	16.23%

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* Percentage point change.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

114 GREENFIELD

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	24,204,712	23,680,240	23,621,510	24,432,887	26,395,473	26,299,509	4.52%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	13,006,700	12,762,995	12,076,100	12,405,153	13,081,188	11,689,807	-10.27%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	3,321,561	3,426,200	3,859,464	3,938,679	4,443,830	4,328,695	30.32%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	49,666	137,157	86,101	101,628	94,425	92,745	86.81%	83.58%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.66%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	2,405	2,333	2,289	2,246	2,149	2,078	-13.66%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	16,884,007	16,682,305	16,903,525	17,191,021	17,313,188	17,803,384	5.45%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	7,432,672	7,922,106	8,278,307	8,820,309	9,111,371	9,263,824	24.91%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	9,512,771	9,512,771	8,825,218	8,825,218	8,732,668	9,054,173	-4.82%	9.08%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	16,945,343	17,434,876	16,903,525	17,245,527	17,844,039	18,317,997	8.12%	16.29%
11 Actual Local Contribution	9,193,849	9,538,637	10,473,816	10,464,449	11,119,758	11,236,934	22.26%	23.83%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	18,886,720	19,051,408	19,099,084	19,078,857	19,852,426	20,291,107	8.53%	17.84%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	50.9%	49.9%	46.2%	46.2%	44.0%	44.6%	-6.26%	-2.99% *
13 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	49.12%	50.07%	54.84%	54.79%	56.01%	55.38%	6.26%	2.99% *
14 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	110.74%	114.20%	112.99%	110.99%	114.67%	113.97%	3.24%	na *
15 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	3,955	4,077	3,788	3,840	4,064	4,361	10.26%	9.94%
16 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	3,819	4,089	4,576	4,658	5,174	5,413	41.74%	24.60%
17 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	7,774	8,166	8,344	8,495	9,236	9,774	25.73%	18.50%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	2,292.4	2,207.3	2,084.4	1,944.2	1,842.1	1,791.4	-21.85%	-5.29%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	196.8	192.1	172.5	174.5	179.9	189.3	-18.84%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	11.7	11.5	12.1	11.1	10.2	11.2	-4.07%	2.05%
21 Average Teacher Salary	41,894	42,789	44,802	44,622	47,002	49,343	17.76%	16.23%

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* Percentage point change

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

717 MOHAWK TRAIL

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	16,392,021	16,500,201	17,737,860	18,422,665	18,975,257	18,943,261	15.56%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	10,029,015	9,695,574	9,904,034	10,161,445	10,567,986	10,007,709	-0.21%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	1,270,740	1,414,940	1,664,677	1,844,498	2,199,959	2,460,738	94.30%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	34,564	0	0	59,532	44,648	50,793		83.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	8,600	0	0	26,535	55,040	0		324.66%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	1,608	1,593	1,522	1,454	1,353	1,254	-22.01%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	10,996,502	11,365,796	10,987,264	10,686,537	10,398,815	10,269,301	-6.63%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	4,141,467	4,314,061	5,062,830	5,262,211	5,552,327	5,648,614	36.39%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	7,345,280	7,345,280	5,904,434	5,904,434	5,972,084	6,034,784	-17.84%	9.08%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	11,486,747	11,659,341	10,967,264	11,166,645	11,524,411	11,683,398	1.71%	16.25%
11 Actual Local Contribution	5,386,857	5,888,101	7,130,755	8,020,600	8,558,071	*na*		23.63%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	12,732,167	13,243,381	13,035,189	13,925,234	14,530,165	*na*		17.65%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	57.7%	55.5%	45.3%	42.4%	41.1%	*na*		-2.99% *
13 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	42.31%	44.54%	54.70%	57.60%	58.90%	*na*		2.99% *
14 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/8)	115.78%	116.52%	118.65%	130.16%	139.72%	*na*		*na* *
15 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	4,568	4,611	3,879	4,061	4,414	4,812	5.35%	9.94%
16 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	3,350	3,703	4,685	5,516	6,325	*na*		24.60%
17 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	7,916	8,315	8,565	9,577	10,739	*na*		16.60%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	1,688.3	1,681.2	1,515.2	1,407.1	1,317.7	1,249.6	-26.03%	-5.29%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	151.0	132.7	138.3	138.7	120.7	114.4	-24.20%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	11.2	11.9	11.0	10.1	10.9	10.9	-2.41%	2.06%
21 Average Teacher Salary	40,447	46,060	42,345	42,064	46,599	48,213	19.20%	18.23%

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

685 HAWLEMONT

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	1,526,002	1,703,393	1,503,569	1,611,082	1,863,717	1,827,995	19.79%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	649,548	677,595	620,512	733,396	928,788	915,600	41.11%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	133,908	125,063	149,470	175,078	243,665	244,259	82.41%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		53.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.66%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	159	145	136	140	139	127	-20.13%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	1,125,005	1,016,560	954,271	999,595	1,068,768	1,007,233	-10.47%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	472,151	258,079	347,486	462,464	460,624	459,631	3.70%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	758,481	758,481	606,785	606,785	613,735	620,085	-16.25%	9.08%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	1,230,632	1,016,560	954,271	1,069,249	1,104,359	1,109,718	-9.83%	16.25%
11 Actual Local Contribution	574,263	632,490	692,800	700,242	808,107	715,955	24.67%	23.83%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	1,332,744	1,390,971	1,299,385	1,307,027	1,421,842	1,336,040	0.25%	17.66%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	56.9%	54.5%	46.7%	46.4%	43.2%	46.4%	-10.50%	-2.99% *
14 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	43.09%	45.47%	53.30%	53.58%	56.84%	53.59%	10.50%	2.99% *
15 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	118.47%	136.83%	136.17%	130.76%	133.04%	132.64%	14.18%	na *
16 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	4,770	5,231	4,397	4,334	4,415	4,885	2.38%	9.94%
17 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	3,612	4,362	5,019	5,002	5,814	5,637	56.09%	24.60%
18 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	8,382	9,593	9,418	9,336	10,229	10,520	25.51%	18.60%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	112.1	127.1	128.8	135.0	126.4	120.2	7.23%	-5.26%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	11.9	10.8	9.3	11.5	11.0	11.6	-3.19%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	9.4	11.8	13.8	11.8	11.5	10.4	10.76%	2.05%
21 Average Teacher Salary	28,477	32,514	35,635	37,194	48,510	46,003	61.54%	16.23%

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* Percentage point change

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

253 ROWE

	Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1	Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	1,089,264	1,067,337	1,485,567	1,582,181	1,458,668	1,629,775	49.62%	21.05%
2	Instructional Spending all Funds	575,124	544,627	583,175	668,336	708,804	732,359	27.34%	9.87%
3	Health Insurance all Funds	12,455	108,882	186,507	23,758	209,951	214,711	1623.69%	70.09%
4	Spending from Athletic Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		83.56%
5	Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.68%
	Chapter 70								
6	Foundation Enrollment	52	47	50	56	57	49	-5.77%	-0.78%
7	Foundation Budget	330,453	352,440	391,315	434,802	475,150	409,882	24.04%	16.91%
8	Required Contribution	629,314	647,816	662,262	662,262	667,430	614,824	-2.30%	21.99%
9	Chapter 70	53,056	53,056	42,445	42,445	45,295	50,582	-4.66%	9.05%
10	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	682,370	700,872	704,707	724,707	712,725	665,406	-2.49%	16.25%
11	Actual Local Contribution	653,490	678,541	1,094,105	1,365,765	1,175,631	1,185,223	38.87%	23.63%
12	Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	906,546	1,032,597	1,136,553	1,408,211	1,221,226	1,235,805	36.32%	17.68%
13	Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	5.9%	5.1%	3.7%	3.0%	3.7%	4.1%	-1.76%	-2.99% *
13	Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	94.15%	94.88%	96.27%	96.99%	96.29%	95.91%	1.76%	2.99% *
14	Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/8)	274.33%	292.95%	290.44%	323.87%	257.02%	301.50%	27.17%	na *
15	Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	1,020	1,129	849	758	795	1,032	1.17%	9.84%
16	Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	16,413	20,841	21,682	24,389	20,630	24,188	47.37%	24.50%
17	Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	17,434	21,970	22,731	25,147	21,425	25,221	44.67%	18.60%
	Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18	In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	56.6	48.0	60.7	60.6	60.7	61.1	7.95%	-3.29%
19	Teachers (FTE's)	7.6	8.4	8.6	9.6	9.5	8.5	11.64%	-7.19%
20	Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	7.4	5.7	7.1	6.3	6.4	7.2	-3.48%	2.05%
21	Average Teacher Salary	46,585	37,686	40,073	41,639	45,739	46,391	-4.52%	16.23%

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

223 ORANGE

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	7,238,073	8,455,211	7,962,019	8,164,090	8,246,814	9,171,819	26.72%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	4,848,054	5,487,503	5,157,030	5,133,808	4,783,652	4,978,252	0.63%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	480,033	715,101	569,489	797,545	1,021,206	1,159,349	141.51%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		83.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.56%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	794	781	757	739	714	709	-10.71%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	5,729,307	5,677,361	5,545,246	5,550,455	5,726,579	5,794,416	1.14%	16.91%
8 Required Contribution	589,404	763,151	669,404	530,418	1,106,334	1,366,123	103.93%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	5,367,303	5,367,303	4,875,842	4,875,842	4,911,542	4,961,896	-7.55%	9.06%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	6,036,707	6,130,454	5,545,246	5,706,257	6,017,876	6,327,921	4.81%	16.26%
11 Actual Local Contribution	575,857	1,206,740	1,317,572	1,559,812	1,616,013	*na*		23.63%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	5,942,960	6,574,043	6,193,414	6,432,654	6,627,555	*na*		17.68%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	90.3%	81.6%	78.7%	75.8%	75.2%	*na*		-2.99% *
14 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	9.69%	18.36%	21.27%	24.20%	24.76%	*na*		2.99% *
15 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	103.78%	115.79%	111.69%	115.84%	115.99%	*na*		*na* *
16 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	6,760	6,872	6,441	6,596	6,679	6,999	3.53%	9.94%
17 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	725	1,545	1,741	2,107	2,263	*na*		24.60%
18 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	7,485	8,417	8,182	8,705	9,142	*na*		18.60%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	826.7	795.4	781.4	790.0	790.3	784.1	-5.15%	-5.29%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	84.5	76.9	83.6	73.9	71.9	68.1	-19.41%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	9.8	10.3	9.3	10.7	11.0	11.5	17.69%	2.05%
21 Average Teacher Salary	38,959	44,819	40,527	43,955	44,717	48,678	24.97%	18.23%

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* Percentage point change.

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

750 PIONEER

	Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1	Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	10,726,672	10,412,000	11,277,335	12,276,395	12,644,773	14,335,624	33.62%	21.05%
2	Instructional Spending all Funds	6,644,780	6,665,350	6,682,353	7,126,563	7,028,741	8,053,164	17.55%	9.87%
3	Health Insurance all Funds	926,069	352,565	1,134,735	1,375,537	1,665,359	1,641,369	96.64%	70.09%
4	Spending from Athletic Fees	15,636	14,632	29,767	20,937	46,795	0		83.56%
5	Spending from Transportation Fees	0	0	0	0	0	0		324.66%
	Chapter 70								
6	Foundation Enrollment	1,051	1,019	1,050	996	979	960	-8.66%	-0.78%
7	Foundation Budget	6,678,433	6,751,330	7,328,766	7,076,177	7,285,294	7,629,462	14.24%	18.91%
8	Required Contribution	3,352,023	3,358,026	3,620,373	3,707,468	3,967,899	4,135,816	23.38%	21.99%
9	Chapter 70	3,977,734	3,977,734	3,808,395	3,808,395	3,857,345	4,031,666	1.36%	9.08%
10	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	7,329,757	7,336,760	7,328,768	7,515,863	7,825,241	8,167,482	11.43%	16.25%
11	Actual Local Contribution	4,595,588	4,646,887	5,397,032	6,319,599	6,102,542	7,123,646	55.01%	23.63%
12	Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	8,573,302	8,626,621	9,205,427	10,127,994	9,959,587	11,155,211	30.12%	17.66%
13	Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	46.4%	46.7%	41.4%	37.6%	38.7%	36.1%	-10.26%	-2.99% *
13	Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	53.60%	53.35%	58.63%	62.40%	61.27%	63.86%	10.26%	2.99% *
14	Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	128.37%	128.30%	125.61%	143.08%	136.71%	146.21%	17.84%	.08 *
15	Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/8)	3,785	3,904	3,627	3,824	3,940	4,200	10.96%	9.94%
16	Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/8)	4,373	4,464	5,140	6,345	6,233	7,420	69.70%	24.60%
17	Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/8)	8,157	8,358	8,767	10,169	10,174	11,620	42.45%	18.60%
	Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18	In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	1,127.0	1,119.3	1,075.1	1,093.4	1,027.4	1,031.3	-8.49%	-5.29%
19	Teachers (FTE's)	106.1	97.3	99.0	102.9	104.0	99.9	-5.80%	-7.19%
20	Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	10.6	11.5	10.9	10.6	9.9	10.3	-2.86%	2.05%
21	Average Teacher Salary	41,370	45,252	44,395	44,271	42,762	46,537	19.74%	16.23%

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* Percentage point change

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Selected Financial Indicators for Operating School Districts, FY02 to FY07 (Preliminary)

755 RALPH C MAHAR

Expenditure Categories	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	Percent Change FY02-FY07	State Average FY02-FY07
1 Total Spending all Funds (Excluding Capital Expenditures)	8,870,158	9,879,882	9,943,757	10,490,119	11,646,828	12,322,507	37.37%	21.05%
2 Instructional Spending all Funds	4,326,317	4,416,562	4,163,337	4,197,235	4,630,262	4,821,345	11.44%	9.87%
3 Health Insurance all Funds	811,379	836,736	1,227,150	1,226,023	1,195,033	1,732,341	113.51%	70.09%
4 Spending from Athletic Fees	9,311	3,199	11,647	20,042	18,757	22,115	137.51%	83.56%
5 Spending from Transportation Fees	0	842	0	0	0	0		324.66%
Chapter 70								
6 Foundation Enrollment	812	820	850	850	817	822	1.23%	-0.78%
7 Foundation Budget	5,692,801	5,854,291	6,270,928	6,457,033	6,412,185	6,917,262	21.51%	18.91%
8 Required Contribution	2,055,996	2,132,160	2,157,826	2,192,710	2,094,096	2,192,974	3.06%	21.99%
9 Chapter 70	3,600,828	3,800,828	4,113,302	4,324,328	4,355,173	4,784,288	25.35%	9.06%
10 Required Net School Spending (NSS)	5,859,824	5,932,978	6,270,928	6,457,033	6,450,269	6,917,262	17.44%	16.25%
11 Actual Local Contribution	3,799,182	4,183,550	4,142,195	4,065,701	4,374,309	5,196,863	36.78%	23.63%
12 Actual Net School Spending (NSS)	7,599,980	7,864,376	8,255,497	8,390,024	8,739,482	9,953,151	30.96%	17.88%
13 Chapter 70 Percent of Actual NSS (9/12)	50.0%	47.7%	49.8%	51.5%	49.9%	47.9%	-2.14%	-2.99% *
13 Actual Local Contribution Percent of Actual NSS (11/12)	49.99%	52.26%	50.17%	48.46%	50.05%	52.13%	2.14%	2.99% *
14 Actual Net School Spending Percent of Foundation (12/6)	133.50%	136.04%	131.66%	129.94%	136.29%	143.88%	10.39%	na *
15 Chapter 70 Per Pupil (9/6)	4,681	4,635	4,839	5,087	5,343	5,799	23.82%	9.94%
16 Actual Local Contribution Per Pupil (11/6)	4,679	5,078	4,873	4,783	5,354	6,312	34.92%	24.60%
17 Actual Net School Spending Per Pupil (12/6)	9,360	9,713	9,712	9,871	10,697	12,108	29.37%	18.60%
Student Teacher Ratio and Average Teacher Salaries								
18 In-District Enrollment (FTE's)	725.2	777.7	709.3	669.9	705.6	733.6	1.16%	-5.29%
19 Teachers (FTE's)	60.6	54.3	57.0	56.7	59.6	63.0	4.13%	-7.19%
20 Student Teacher Ratio (17/18)	12.0	14.3	12.4	12.2	11.9	11.6	-2.66%	2.05%
21 Average Teacher Salary	46,745	44,416	47,523	44,691	47,083	45,271	-3.15%	16.23%

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