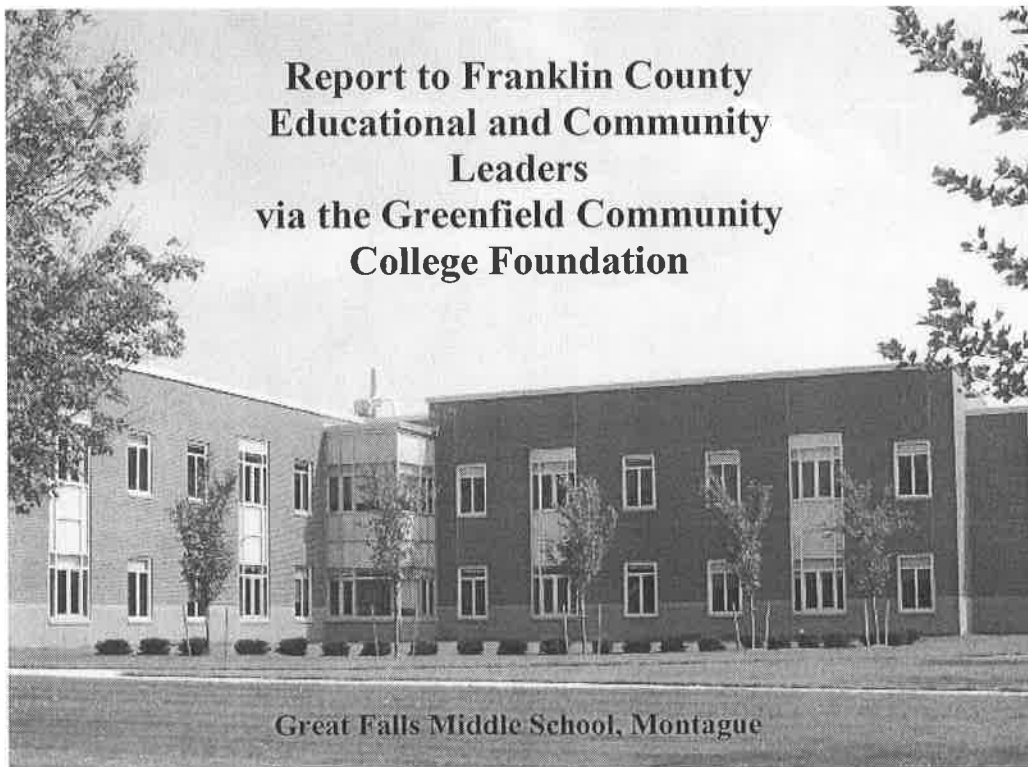


NESDEC

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FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS: A 2020 VISION



April 27, 2009

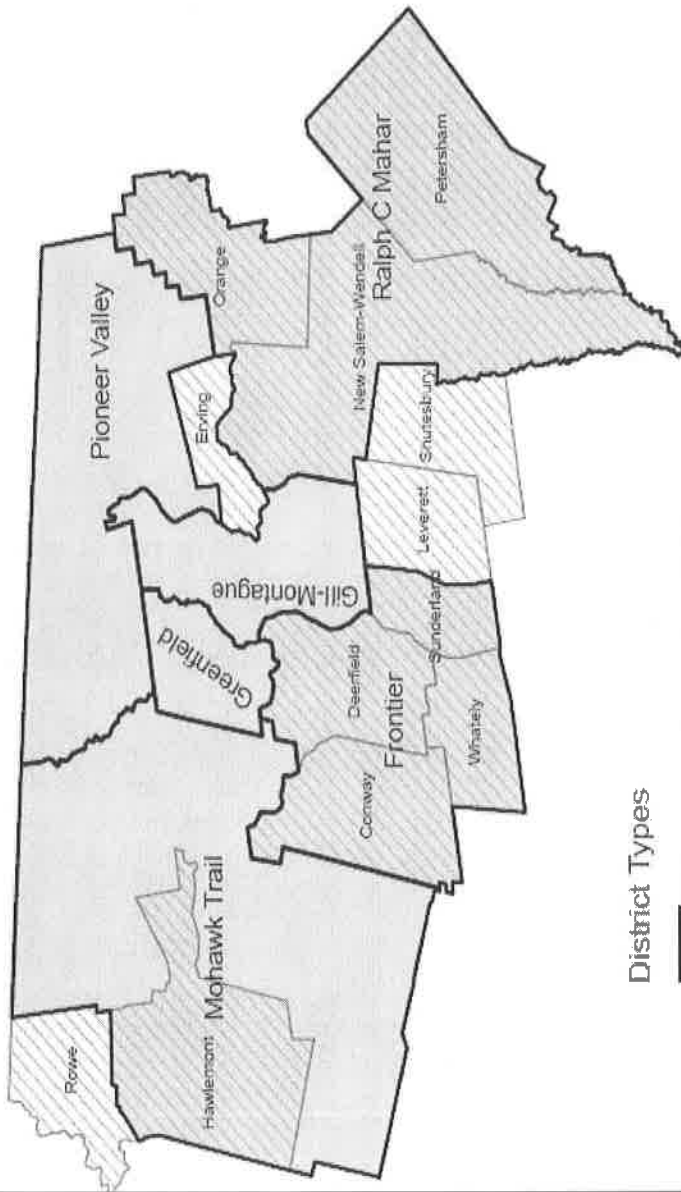
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	i
Executive Summary	ii
Identifying and Defining the Issues	1
Summary of Community Discussions	3
What the Franklin County Economy Needs	4
State and National Concerns about Education	5
The National and State Research on School District Size and School Size	7
Analysis of the Costs of Franklin County Schools	15
MODELS for County and Local Discussion	17
Greenfield Community College	22
Suggestions for Massachusetts State Leaders	23
Next Steps for Franklin County	26
Reports and Other Resources	29
Appendices	
<u>Appendix A</u> Franklin County Schools by Size	
<u>Appendix B</u> Franklin County Schools Financial Analysis PowerPoint	
<u>Appendix C</u> Franklin County Public Schools Survey	
<u>Appendix D</u> The Future of Education in Franklin County Interim Report February 12, 2009 PowerPoint	

School Districts of Franklin County



District Types

 K12 or regional secondary district

 elementary district

District	Organization
Conway	Elementary District
Deerfield	Elementary District
Erving	Elementary District
Frontier	Regional Secondary
Gill-Montague	Regional PK-12
Greenfield	PK-12
Hawlemont	Regional Elementary
Leverett	Elementary District
Mohawk Trail	Regional PK-12
New Salem-Wendell	Regional Elementary
Orange	Elementary District
Pioneer Valley	Regional PK-12
Ralph Mahar	Regional Secondary
Rowe	Elementary District
Shutesbury	Elementary District
Sunderland	Elementary District
Whately	Elementary District

Franklin County Regional Voc Tech is in Montague; Four Rivers Public Charter School is in Greenfield. Petersham is in Worcester County.

Introduction

The Franklin County Public School report should focus on pupils, on improving education, on helping educators make children and adults “ready” for college and careers. The President, the Governor, the country, major employers are dissatisfied with the drop out rates, the pupil achievement gaps, and the way that other nations are improving education faster than the United States. It would be a mistake to view this report as concerned only with finances or forms of school district organization. The teachers, the taxpayers, and elected officials instead must debate how best to ensure that every dollar is invested in educational improvement. Old governance formats must yield to new forms of collaboration and central leadership. The formats that served well in earlier days must be revisited and, quite possibly, restructured. Again, the purpose is to help children achieve their potential as citizens and contributors to a strong economy and dynamic culture. Franklin County has always cherished creativity and innovation, and the schools should also reflect those priorities.

Executive Summary

Scope of Study (see pages 1-2)

Greenfield Community College invited proposals to assist Franklin County educational and community leaders identify strategies that might lead to more effective planning decisions. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) offered to prepare a report that “provides a basis for future consideration of strategies that could lead to synergies, efficiencies, and cost savings such as: technology (i.e. distance learning), collaborative and cooperative arrangements, public school/higher education partnerships and possible regional education models.”

The scope of work agreed on by Greenfield Community College and NESDEC included:

- A. An analysis of aggregate and demographic data for the county to examine the composition and size of the future county enrollment
- B. Macro-analyses of the expense budgets of selected districts and of two or three regional models, with possible economies, efficiencies and opportunities
- C. A look at possible economies and efficiencies so that more funds might be allocated to instruction and improvements in educational programs
- D. Identify the impact on Franklin County of Governor Patrick’s READINESS Education proposals

NESDEC was asked to conduct its work in conjunction with another firm, Allan Hurwitz Associates (AHA). The initiatives by AHA (Hurwitz Associates) and NESDEC represent an effort to build upon the earlier work of Richard Labrie and Public Management Associates which was presented in a report: *Creating a Sustainable and Quality Education System In Franklin County Public Schools: A Study of Possible Efficiencies*. That report, considered Phase One of the 2007-2009 study, was presented in January 2008. The PMA report included discussion of the possibilities and economies potentially gained by collaboration among school districts, school committees and administrators. That study included descriptions of each school and school district, their successes and challenges. The PMA report provides data useful to anyone looking at the county, both in terms of the educational challenges and opportunities.

The PMA (LaBrie) Report identified more than \$1,200,000 in potential annual savings for Franklin County, especially in special education and regular transportation and by joining together in cooperative purchasing. The report did not estimate additional revenues possible by collaboration on grant writing, yet mentioned that small districts have been far less likely to win competitive proposals that frequently are won by larger districts and collaboratives elsewhere in the state.

Citizen and Educator Input

The Franklin County Education Oversight Committee asked that the NESDEC-AHA study begin with a round of active listening to the views of parents, teachers, principals,

superintendents, special education administrators, technology directors and community leaders including state legislators. To meet this request, NESDEC, conducted a web-based survey and AHA conducted several facilitated discussions (focus groups) in Franklin County. Both firms then reported to the Oversight Committee regarding their tabulations of citizen and educator comments.

Summary of the AHA Facilitated Discussions (see pages 3-4 and Interim Report)

1. Important local values include “uniqueness,” parent access, and accountability of schools to the community.
2. The importance of geography/topography, the diversity of Franklin County versus centralization of authority.
3. School budget busters include School Choice, Charters and Special Education.
4. There are many concerns about the state approach and priorities for the County.
5. There is skepticism about any savings resulting from consolidations.
6. Cooperation, Collaboration, Consolidation: Legal definitions? Is one district the only model?
7. Sharing is possible on a wide range of resources: special education, teachers, business matters.
8. The focus on educational quality must be central.
9. There are financial weaknesses with the status quo, short term, and long term.
10. There is confusion about the process, the flow of information.
11. Teachers (some) would contribute pay, if the savings went to their schools.
12. There is openness to considering fewer districts, even a county district, provided that authority (certain key decisions) remained in the current districts.
13. Special Education administrators will explore the return of students placed out-of-district.

The AHA consultants concluded that many persons knew what they wanted or didn't want. Many citizens would like to see options displayed, and to know more about the context of the decisions.

Respondent Comments to the NESDEC Survey (see Appendix C and Interim Report)

NESDEC surveyed the county using a web-based instrument and tabulated the comments, evaluations, and suggestions of 272 citizens and educators on elementary and secondary education, issues of quality and possible cost savings.

65% of respondents were very satisfied and 29% “somewhat satisfied” with elementary schools.

49% were satisfied, 44% “somewhat satisfied” with Secondary Education. Fewer than 8% were “not at all satisfied” with either level.

90% of respondents rated the Quality of Teachers and of Administrators the most important factor. Small classes and community schools were very important to

more than 70%. MCAS scores and keeping costs constrained were less important but dozens checked at least “somewhat important.”

Both the AHA focus groups and the NESDEC survey showed strong support for local control and small community schools.

Parents want more art, music, drama and physical education restored to the school day.

Some parents responded favorably to a suggestion that they emphasize how much they supported the long-standing opportunity to send children to Amherst High School (Hampshire County).

Taxpayers support collaboration (purchasing transportation, Special Education) and the search for economies.

Many respondents believe that the state and federal government should contribute more to Special Education, transportation and choice, including charter schools.

There is support for county wide services, including the search for external funds, collaboration, and savings from fewer administrators.

NESDEC Enrollment Projections (see Appendix D)

Each year NESDEC analyzes population trends for local school districts in New England, information useful in making planning decisions such as for additions, new schools or closing underutilized schools. NESDEC agreed to look at all of Franklin County as a unit for analysis and offer county-wide projections. Here are the trends and projections:

- From 1998-00 to 2008-09, PreK-12 enrollments in Franklin County public schools declined by about 2,130 students (11,899 pupils in 1998-99 v. 9,768 in 2008-09).
- For many years, Franklin County experienced about 1,000 births per year. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of births dropped to about 700 and has remained in that general range for 12 years (with fewer than 700 births from 2002-06).
- Most of the related Grade PreK-6 enrollment decline already has occurred. Grades 7-12 have slightly larger enrollments, and will continue to shrink.
- Two bits of recent data that suggest Franklin County enrollments will begin to flatten out and increase are: a. there were 702 Franklin County births in 2007 (the first year to rise above 700 births since 2001); and b. in 2008-09 there were 18 more Kindergarteners than births (five years previous) for only the third time in 15 years...an indication of some in-migration.

- Franklin County PreK-12 enrollment, through 2018-19, is projected to remain flat in Grades PreK-6 at about 5,350 pupils; to decline in Grades 7-8 by only 63 students (1,401 in 2008-09 v. 1,338 in 2018-19); and to shrink by 367 pupils at the high school level (2,987 at present v. 2,620 in 2018-19). Reducing the high school dropout rate could wipe out the Grade 9-12 decline. At present about 149 Franklin County freshmen do not make it to Grade 12; if only 37 of these made it to graduation there would be no decline.

The Costs of Franklin County Schools (see pages 15-17 and Appendix B)

Franklin County pupil expenditures were \$12,697 per pupil compared with the average of \$11,858 using the state published averages as a “benchmark” for comparing Franklin County combined cost performance. Taking into consideration an adjustment for school choice, Franklin County’s per pupil cost when restated is \$13,198; that is \$1,340 over the state average as compared to the \$838 above the state average computed using the state’s methodology. **Having made this observation, this NESDEC report and the attached appendices use the state’s methodology in order to maintain a consistent and comparable analysis.**

The three largest sources of **above average** Franklin County school expenditures are:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Health Insurance and Retirement costs | \$3.5 million a year |
| 2. Other Teaching Services | \$3.1 million a year |
| 3. Pupil Services, including transportation
Food services, school nurses | \$2.3 million a year |

The two budget items for leadership include instructional leadership (principals) and general administration (9 superintendents).

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 4. Instructional leadership | \$1.2 million a year |
| 5. Administration | \$1.1 million a year |

For all administration, including business managers and directors, Franklin County spent \$4.8 million compared to the state average of \$3.7 million serving an equal number of students. Other districts with 9,000 students might have 10-15 principals, rather than 30, and one or two superintendents, not nine. Obviously, whether the distribution of population is sparse or dense is a major driver of these costs.

Franklin County schools spend less than the state average for guidance and testing, less for professional development, and less for classroom teachers and specialists. Franklin County on the whole under-invests in teacher development, which can hold back increases in pupil achievement.

The NESDEC analysis finds that as much as \$12 million dollars or 10% of the overall costs could be saved or reallocated to other instructional purposes including counselors, specialists and teacher (counselor and principal) professional

development. This assumes that Franklin County schools would want to match statewide average expenditures per pupil. The under-performing schools will need above average financial and staff support.

Earlier, the Public Management Associates Report identified potential savings of \$1.2 million through collaboration, joint purchasing, and countywide bidding on regular and special education. Those savings are included in the \$12 million identified through this analysis. Transportation savings could be achieved **either** through bidding through a collaborative or by having one county education administrative unit. The administrative savings (an additional two to three million) might be realized **only** through consolidation of school districts.

MODELS for County and Local Discussion (see pages 17-22)

Option 1: A Franklin County Unified School District

Instead of nine superintendents serving 20 school committees in the 26 communities, there would be a single Franklin County School Committee, one superintendent, one deputy for teaching and learning and one for business and finance.

Option 2: One County with Three School Districts, Each with a School Committee

Two of the districts would have 4,200-4,700 K-12 pupils each and the third would be the Franklin County Technical School, as currently exists. One school district might serve the East County, Pioneer Valley, Orange, Mahar and Gill-Montague, and one for the West County communities including Greenfield, Mohawk Trail and Frontier.

Option 3: Six Regional School Districts (Five K-12 Academic Districts Plus Franklin County Voc-Tech); Each with a Superintendent; Each with a Business Manager

Each school committee would meet once each quarter. The education and curriculum specialists might also work on a county wide-basis, much like a southern state county or many of the New York State BOCES.

Greenfield Community College (see pages 22-23)

To help more Franklin County pupils become “ready” for college and careers will require a new look at Greenfield Community College and its potential contributions to the county schools, families, and employers. The old model suggested that only high school graduates would be eligible for community college classes. That has changed. The new model assumes that dozens and perhaps hundreds of students from each high school can take one or more courses at the community college before graduating from high school, perhaps beginning in grades 10 or 11.

Suggestions for Massachusetts State Leaders (see pages 23-26)

Next Steps for Franklin County (see pages 26-28)

FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOLS: A 2020 VISION

Identifying and Defining the Issues

Franklin County includes 26 communities and 37 schools serving approximately 9,750 students in Grades PreK-12. School leaders might define the Franklin County School problem as too little state funds and too many mandates and required reports coming from state and federal agencies. In fact, state funds since 2000 have declined as a portion of the cost of public schools in Franklin County. Several schools also complain that state school choice laws further drain students and tuition dollars from the inadequate financial base, several millions of dollars each year.

State officials express deep concern about the management capacities of small school districts in the state. Franklin County has received attention in this regard. Mohawk Trail schools required state intervention ten years ago when local towns could not agree on school budgets. More recently, it has been reported that Greenfield may have over expended its budget by approximately two million dollars in school expenditures. A Franklin Tech administrator was convicted of equipment theft. Gill-Montague schools required state supervision for inadequate educational achievement. Orange and Ralph C. Mahar may lack the financial base to make needed instructional improvements. Of the 37 schools, 19 failed to make Adequate Yearly Progress in 2008 on the State English Language Arts standards. The nine superintendents 2000-2008 rarely collaborated and lost millions of possible savings in transportation, purchasing of school supplies and other economies that school collaborative organizations in other counties achieve each year. The soaring costs of health insurance required other types of collaboration, including joining the state Group Insurance Commission program or other employer health consortia.

Rather than send in more state funds to maintain the status quo, state officials made a series of grants to stimulate Franklin County school collaboration, as did the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. Several grants explored the possibilities of school restructuring and possible links to the Massachusetts Readiness initiative. Earlier, Governor Deval Patrick had asked a Readiness Commission to define the goals and strategies needed to make Massachusetts pupils ready for college and careers and more competitive in the world.

Franklin County enjoys many successes and access to resources, including colleges and the University at Amherst, museums and cultural centers. Greenfield and the County aspire to be leaders in creating a green economy. The Frontier district already collaborates with the Hampshire Educational Collaborative. Mohawk has responded by implementing business-like practices. The four towns in the Pioneer Valley Union reorganized into a regional school district in 1991-92 showing how it could be done. Greenfield and Gill-Montague take advantage of the Northeast Foundation for Responsive Education to help teachers. Gill-Montague has launched an impressive turnaround plan. Franklin County Technical School is well regarded. The churches and Big Brothers Big Sisters mentor the youth of Franklin County. Several districts have

closed schools, never an easy or popular process. But much more must be done to achieve the ambitious Readiness goals of the state and the nation including all children graduating from high school and attending college for one or two years. Franklin County may approach 80% graduation rates, but that is not enough for the second grade students graduating in 2020, who need a new “2020 vision” to guide them.

The Methodology of the Several Studies and Reports

Franklin County schools in 2008 and 2009 have been studied closely, at the urging of state legislators and other officials. This NESDEC report is the fourth installment of a state-sponsored study. The first was a *Study of the Efficiency of Franklin County Schools* by Public Management Associates that recommended formation of a county education collaborative. The study team led by Richard Labrie visited each school in Franklin County and described models of school district collaboration, especially in Connecticut and New York State. The second review was by Alan Hurwitz Associates and summarized ten focus groups of county school parents, teachers, principals, special education teachers, technology directors, superintendents and community leaders including state legislators. These reports were commissioned by a Franklin County Public School Oversight Committee chaired by Greenfield Community College President Robert Pura, and supported by Linda Dunlavy of the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments.

The third was labeled an “interim report” in February 2009 and summarized the previous two reports and examined county demographic trends, concluding that the enrollment declines of the 1990’s would end within three years. This fourth report analyzes the school cost structures and proposes three organizational models for Franklin County schools. Finally, the report looks at the economic needs of Franklin County, reviews the research on school size and school districts, and suggests how the Commonwealth Educational Readiness discussion might shape and upgrade education in Franklin County. The third report and this fourth document were prepared by the New England School Development Council under a contract with Greenfield Community College. The principal contributors were NESDEC Consultants Arthur Bettencourt and Donald Kennedy, each of them former school superintendents, Richard Sulc, a former director of administrative services, and Joseph Cronin, former State Secretary of Education and a former school principal and college president.

The impetus for these reports came from the repeated efforts of local schools to seek more state resources for education. The state response was to ask if Franklin County schools might be better organized both for collaboration, efficiencies and economies. The county schools have suffered from superintendency turnovers, budget shortfalls, cost overruns and educational performance deficiencies that required a careful county-wide study. State Education Secretary Paul Reville visited Franklin County four times in 2008-2009; these reports were prepared independently.

A. Summary of Community Discussions

A major component of the 2008 and 2009 studies of Franklin County was devoted to listening to school and community leaders. More than 400 citizens expressed their values or made suggestions either in focus groups or to an electronic opinion survey. A full discussion appeared in the Interim Report filed by NESDEC in January 30, 2009 (and available on the Franklin County website). A few highlights deserve mention again.

Of 272 respondents:

98% thought that the quality of teachers was the most important factor in Franklin County education

93% thought small classes either “very important” or “somewhat important”

89% wanted assured access to school administrators

88% valued having a “community school”

88% thought local control and decision-making equally important

65% were very satisfied and 29% somewhat satisfied with elementary schools

49% were very satisfied and 44% somewhat satisfied with secondary schools

MCAS scores were important to 39%, only “somewhat important” to 35%

73% thought keeping school costs constrained to municipalities was important

The open-ended comments proved to be very useful to this study:

26 urged forming a collaborative to save money and share costs of transportation, food services, health services, technology and pursuit of grants

12 called for reducing fragment school districts, possibly having one instead of nine superintendents

8 said “cut out school choice” or let the state pay for charter schools

7 called for more art and music in the schools

Other Comments:

Principals and community leaders suggested **magnet or theme high schools**, academies that might have a special flair or specialties, like the Technical School or the Five Colleges

“Make Greenfield Community College part of the free public education system”

Save money on energy

These ideas were useful in paving the way to an examination of educational improvements and the cost structures of Franklin County schools.

B. What the Franklin County Economy Needs

Well into the 1900's, it was only necessary for half of the population to achieve a high school diploma and go to college. But America, and Franklin County, have changed dramatically. Franklin County lost most of the paper mills and many of the manufacturing plants that used to employ young people with an eighth grade education. Even automotive repair shop staff must know how to diagnose vehicle ailments by computer. Most of the new jobs require some college, and good careers require a degree. New companies relocate to regions with a highly skilled workforce.

Bill Gates, cofounder of Microsoft, said “Our (Gates) foundation has learned that graduating from high school is not enough anymore. To earn enough to raise a family, you need some kind of college degree, whether it is a certificate or an associate's degree or a bachelor's degree... Our focus will be on helping improve community colleges and reducing the numbers of kids who start community college but don't finish.” (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Letter, January 2009)

Franklin County is part of a Western Massachusetts Economic Development Region that periodically updates a Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the County and several adjoining communities including Amherst and Athol. The plan includes discussions of the adequacy and performance of the schools, and lists the graduation rates for the senior high schools. Pupils who drop out weaken the prospects for attracting new employers and jobs to Franklin County and the Pioneer Valley. The statewide high school graduation rate is approximately 80%, up from 65% in the 1960's. Three Franklin County high schools have graduation rates below the state average, with only 70-75% graduating. The number of jobs in paper mills and manufacturing plants declined sharply by 2005, bad news for high school dropouts in grades 10, 11, and 12. How severe is the problem? Of the approximately 10,000 pupils now in Franklin County schools, perhaps only 8,000 will earn their diplomas by age 19. The state and county will pay for the health and unemployment and other costs for the dropouts and, for some, their incarceration.

Every Massachusetts parent wants their children to be happy and to become good citizens. But parents also want their children to qualify for good jobs and productive careers. There are significant economic job clusters identified in 2008 by Franklin County planners. These must be part of the purposeful discussion about strengthening education, especially at the high school and community college level. Here are the major job clusters:

Accommodations and Food Services, including tourism and lodging

Agriculture, from dairy farms and llamas to blueberries, maple syrup and tobacco

Arts and Crafts and the Cultural Economy, including photography

Education, including the 18 private schools and six colleges and universities

Energy and Environmental, including solar, photovoltaics and hydropower

Health Care, hospitals, medical centers and Social Assistance

Manufacturing, still 20% of the Franklin County workforce, precision tools, plastics, and candle products

Virtual home offices, including telecommuting

Wood and forest products

The plan acknowledges the end of the baby boom era and the increased importance of educating every young person to their capacity to learn and earn. Fields such as Clean Energy and Organic Farming and At-Home Employment in Virtual Offices (now 5% of the Franklin County workforce and growing) usually require not only a high school diploma, but also college level preparation. Sixty percent of the new jobs being created require high-level skills. The County has many highly educated adults, but also thousands of less educated workers seeking employment with limited skills. The quality of the Franklin County workforce is an essential factor in attracting new employers to locate in the Pioneer Valley. Moving from 75-85% high school completion towards 95-100% should be a very high priority. President Obama has said "To drop out is to fail yourself and to fail the country."...and the county.

C. State and National Concerns About Education

The National Governors are alarmed about stagnating high school graduation rates and the continued need for more than 20% of college students to have to take one or more remedial courses in college. Together, with state commissioners of education and state boards of education, they have committed to more rigorous high school diploma requirements (in Massachusetts the Mass CORE Curriculum) and to forging closer ties between higher education and public schools. In Massachusetts, the Secretary of

Education position was reestablished to promote Preschool through Grade 16 cooperation and coordination.

The largest U.S. employers, beginning with Microsoft, IBM and other manufacturers, complain that United States education has been losing ground the last three decades. The U.S. ranks only 20th on international mathematics and science examinations. The U.S. has fallen from 2nd in the world (1995) in the percentage of college graduates to 15th (2007). The shortages of U.S. born scientists and engineers reflect badly on our nation, even in Massachusetts, which has excellent engineering schools.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act was designed to increase pupil performance, and recent evaluations show Massachusetts leading the 50 states and rivaling the best performing nations of the world. But state officials are far from satisfied by graduation rates, the achievement gaps, and shortages of scientists and engineers.

No Child Left Behind was enacted with strong Massachusetts support to raise education standards, emphasize English, mathematics and science achievement, and publicize gaps and work to be done. It will be revised and possibly strengthened in 2009, potentially making high schools more rigorous, more magnetic and effective in preparing for college and careers. Franklin County must prepare for even higher state and federal and employer and university expectations. **Control over the curriculum and graduation standards has shifted from the local community to colleges, employers, state and federal agencies, all in the interest of sustaining American competitiveness in the world arena.**

These state and national pressures conflict with high parent satisfaction with community schools and produce resentment about testing and the time taken away from art, music, physical education and recess. Since the early 1990's, local control over the curriculum has been taken back by the state where responsibility was embedded in the Massachusetts Constitution drafted by John Adams.

However, the state education reform statutes recognize the need for local input and provide for School Councils, which have taken on some of the responsibilities of the School Committee (which grew out of village one room school management three centuries ago). The local School Council can be a vehicle for local school support, local control, volunteers, after school programs, fundraising and other activities recommended by Franklin County focus groups and the NESDEC survey.

But Franklin County schools must become even more productive than at present. Of every 800 first graders, 600 graduate twelve years later. Franklin County high schools graduate between 70 and 85% of ninth graders, and that level of productivity fails to meet state and national expectations. The solutions include stronger pre-school programs, (building on excellent full-time kindergartens), a longer school day and year (195-200 days, like other nations) more rigorous middle school and high school programs, use of electronic courses and community college courses, social support services, and adult

mentoring of pupils by organizations such as Big Brother Big Sister which are very strong in Franklin County.

The organizational structure of schools must be reviewed, discussed and revamped. Franklin County has approximately the same number of students as Quincy, Plymouth or Framingham, yet has nine school superintendents, seven business managers and more than 20 school committees all voting on budgets and contracts. The county organization resembles a patchwork quilt of K-6 schools and high schools, one K-6 union feeding into three high schools with separate expectations and different school committees... too many bureaucratic levels.

Franklin County Technical School is regarded as one of the best in Massachusetts, and is very selective, choosing students with the right ambitions, behavior, work attitudes, and grades. However, only 19 of the 26 communities signed up 30 years ago, and others should now be invited to join. Also, more than 100 applicant pupils are turned down each year. They need high school and college career education options elsewhere in the county or many will drop out and try to find low level jobs.

Greenfield Community College is a vital part of public education in Greenfield-Franklin County. The college has signed agreements with three high schools to provide pupils with early access to college courses while in high school. Nationally, this is regarded as a strategy that will keep bright students on the track to college, saving time and money as they accelerate their preparation for transfer to a four-year program and completion.

D. The National and State Research on School District Size and School Size

What is known about the ideal size of schools and of school districts? Do national and state researchers agree? What are the costs and benefits? How does Franklin County measure up?

Franklin County has 26 elementary schools ranging in size from 65 pupils to 450. None of these can be considered large by national standards.

The County has seven high schools in grades 9-12 ranging from 300 to 600 students. Several have middle schools attached so the "campus" includes as many as 750 students. These are considered small to midsize secondary schools.

Sizes of Franklin County High Schools	
Turners Falls High School Grades 9-12	347
Greenfield High 9-12	429
Pioneer Valley 7-12	501
Franklin County Tech 9-12	525
Mohawk Trail 7-12	621
Frontier Regional 7-12	716
Mahar Regional 7-12	759

Amherst High School, where Leverett and Shutesbury students attend, has 1,200 students, thought now by experts to be a comparatively large high school. Brockton High School enrolls 4,000 students and Lowell High School enrolls 3,000. Those are very large high schools, and their leaders have broken them into smaller schools within a school. Amherst Regional High School is divided into two units, one for grades 9 and 10, another for grades 11 and 12. The Amherst Middle School divides pupils and teachers into teams. There are certain advantages to size. Amherst high pupils can choose among 11 Advanced Placement courses, can design a senior year built around community service, or can take courses at Greenfield Community College under the Early Entrant Program.

In recent years, many of the research summaries on school size might be labeled as Advocacy Research. The authors or compilers reached a conclusion and seek out studies to support their position, either urging consolidation or else arguing against any change. Sometimes they combine research on school size and school district size, which is a mistake. A larger school district with eight or even twenty small schools may work quite well, since the central office team plays an administrative and support role much less visible to parents and children.

What does research say about small high schools? Since 1964, national researchers gathered persuasive evidence that small high schools (generally 400 to 800 pupils) produce a higher percentage of graduates, better attendance, a higher percentage of leadership positions held by students, more community support and less violence than high schools of 2,000 or more. These studies have been replicated, and few educators in recent years have proposed building new high schools larger than 1,000 students.

There is no evidence that an elementary school of less than 100 pupils is better than a school of 200 or 300. In Franklin County and elsewhere, schools of less than 150 pupils often have to share a principal with another small school, perhaps five miles away. Franklin County has eight elementary schools that share four principals. Five of the six smallest schools (56-105 pupils) met state AYP standards last year, compared to none of the eight Franklin County schools with 200-300 pupils, the opposite of what might be expected; that larger schools are better for children. (See Appendix A) Principals potentially are the key instruction leaders and are relied upon to develop strategies to raise achievement levels at their school. In Franklin County, the level of poverty may explain the below average pupil achievements more than the size of the school.

Many policy analysts point out that topography and transportation routes are factors that must be considered in reviewing the size of a school. There is a general consensus that an elementary child should not be riding on a bus for more than half an hour each way, and a high school students one hour each way. If Franklin County tried to merge the smaller elementary schools, some children would double their ride time each way from 20 to 40 minutes on narrow roads.

In Massachusetts, the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy looked at School District Size and Spending in 2008. The state has 327 school districts, with 73 of them

organized into 20 superintendency unions (two are in Franklin County). There are 55 regional districts (academic) and 29 vocational or agricultural school districts, including Franklin County Technical High School. Half of Massachusetts school districts enroll fewer than 2,000 students, while 5% enroll 7,500 pupils or above. Boston has 55,000 students and Springfield approximately 30,000. Those are considered very large districts.

The 2008 Rennie Center Report describe recent state proposals to promote consolidation and reduce the number of school districts:

Arkansas, which tried to set a minimum number of students;

Nebraska by eliminating “Elementary Only Districts”;

Maine that called for cutting the numbers of school administrative districts from 260 to 80, proposing 2,500 pupil districts as the minimum size;

And N.Y. State that offered financial incentives to school district consolidation.

The most commonly discussed rationale is that of seeking “Economies of Scale” and spreading administrative costs over a larger number of students. In Massachusetts, the average cost per pupil is around \$12,000 except for vocational schools that average close to \$18,000 which is true for Franklin County Technical as well.

Looking at district size, the Rennie Center research found that those Massachusetts districts under 1,000 were more likely to spend 1% more on operations and 2% more on teaching (possibly because of fewer pupils per classroom) 1% less on pupil services and 1% less on specialist teachers (art, music, physical education etc.). In smaller districts, administration consumed 5% of the total budget rather than 4%. Equipment and professional development costs were about the same. Each percentage point was equivalent to \$120 per pupil, so these numbers and any estimated “savings” seem modest until one multiplies them by 1,000 pupils and discovers that \$120,000 pays for additional specialist teachers.

The Rennie Center reviewed a 2002 economic study that found financial savings potentially sizeable for districts with 3,000 to 4,000 students, with some minor diseconomies beginning to emerge above 6,000 students (and major diseconomies above 10,000 students). So a school district size of 3,000-8,000 would be worth discussion. The Rennie Center Report suggests that student outcomes, geography, and the culture of the communities also be taken into consideration as well.

For the full report, see *Massachusetts Context and a First Look at District Size and Spending*, Lisa Famularo, Ph.D., Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy, September 2008.

The Massachusetts Executive Office of Education staff met in December with leaders of the School Committee, Superintendents and other state associations. The state

presentation included MCAS achievement test data showing that as school district size rose, so did test scores, and costs tended to go down (at least for districts under 8,000). However, the slope of improvement was gradual and the regression chart showed many cases of school district achievement results or spending above as well as below the line. So on the average there are test score gains for larger districts, but many exceptions.

Nationally, the Rural School and Community Trust (an advocacy group helping rural schools and communities get better) cites research that suggests no clear agreement on school size but a preference for small schools. The research summary by Kathleen Cotton thought 300-400 students appropriate for an elementary school, and 400-800 for a high school. It cited research that schools in this range had strong attendance, graduation rates, parent involvement and a feeling of “belonging” and caring. Cotton thought savings did not always follow school consolidations since they were used up by longer bus routes and sometimes by higher average teacher salaries.

The Trust issued a paper on school funding issues that pointed out that rural schools:

1. Too often lacked state priorities for facility funds
2. Suffered more from gasoline price increases, because of longer bus and van routes
3. Could not quickly reduce fixed costs when pupil enrollments dropped by 10 or 20 students, so the per pupil expenditure rose
4. Were hurt more by underfunded mandates such as special education
5. Often could not afford modern information systems

The Rural School Trust white paper urged reliance not on one financing source but a mixture of property, sales and income taxes. It complained that reviews of state school aid formula were too infrequent, and often occurred only when plaintiffs filed a lawsuit. It called for incentive plans to make educational progress in rural schools possible.

The Trust points out that consolidation of schools (not school districts) carry these potentially negative consequences:

1. Increases in transportation costs and longer bus routes
2. Higher dropout rates
3. Lower participation rates in school activities, athletics
4. Negative impact on the social and economic health of the community

Again, the Rural School Trust is an advocacy group funded by major foundations and corporations and provides advice and training to small rural schools. Their work has been used to critique and moderate state pressures to close small schools and consolidate school districts.

The National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities is a center for helping school architects and planners. A more neutral source, they cite John Slate’s 2007 article on “The Effects of School Size: A Review of the Literature” which reports that increasing

size brings economic efficiencies and the chance for increased academic achievement with a school of 500-1,000 students achieving peak efficiency. Over that size school there are diminishing returns, especially at more than 2,000 pupils in one school.

The review says size is only one factor, that teacher quality, parent involvement, the poverty factor, transportation patterns all affect what is a good school. One commentator says "size is just the wrapping," the box in which school instruction is placed. Slate's article urges great caution and describes the prevalence of biased "advocacy research" by advocates of very small or large schools.

How does this research apply to Franklin County?

1. None of the high schools are too small or too large, according to research on size.
2. Only three of the 25 elementary schools serve more than 300 pupils. Four schools serve fewer than 100 pupils. However, all but one of the smaller schools are meeting state achievement standards and have made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Schools of less than 200 are more likely to share a principal with another school. Franklin County has 20 small schools, but the schools with 150 or more students seem well staffed and effective.

Once schools were the only public center in small towns. Seven Franklin County communities now have senior centers as a gathering place, decreasing the traditional pressure that the schoolhouse be the community social headquarters for all age groups and families.

Franklin County school district opportunities for collaboration efficiencies were studied very closely in 2007-08 by a team led by Richard Labrie of Public Management Associates. The report mainly recommended the Formation of an Education Collaborative with the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments. However, the PMA report also describes the many serious problems faced by Franklin County School Districts.

**FRANKLIN COUNTY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENCIES
2008**

Districts	Number of Pupils
Franklin County Tech	525
Erving K-6 (Union 28)	600 4 towns
Orange K-6	786
Ralph C. Mahar 7-12	860
Gill-Montague	1062
Pioneer Valley	1105
Mohawk Trail	1300
Frontier (Union 28)	1747 4 towns
Greenfield	1840

Richard Labrie in the 2008 Public Management Associates report on Franklin County identified these specific problems and limitations affecting small school districts:

1. Charter schools and school choice hurts small school districts more rapidly than larger school districts (such as Boston or Springfield). These programs have reduced enrollments and state aid to Gill-Montague and Greenfield. (See PMA Report, page 35)
2. Small and rural school districts cannot reduce costs quickly as enrollments decline. Fixed costs including energy, utilities, health benefits soar even as enrollment declines and state aid drops or is level funded.
3. Economies of scale are much less available to school districts under 3,000, which is all of the Franklin County school districts.
4. Small districts compete less effectively for state and federal discretionary education grants (against large districts with grant writers).
5. Technology staff size and resources are limited by district size, although most Franklin County schools have technology directors and many have computers and Smartboards.
6. Smaller school districts and schools face more challenges getting support from State School Building. (PMA Report, page 49)
7. Small school districts must fill out as many state reports (over 100 each year) as a larger district, including MCAS and special education reports and audits. Gill-Montague officials agreed to coordinate county reports with the state Education Data Warehouse, but there are further economies of scale to be achieved (a federal stimulus priority).

8. Small districts are disproportionately affected by special education low incidence moving in, especially in midyear.
9. Turnover of local superintendents in smaller districts is high. Often after two years, a superintendent can earn an additional \$50,000 a year by moving to a larger district, perhaps reporting to only one school committee rather than three, four or more.
10. Small school districts do not have time to take advantage of cooperative purchasing, county-wide transportation, and special education economies, although some Franklin County business managers have used Lower Pioneer Valley and Hampshire purchasing discounts.
11. Small districts often cannot afford summer remediation programs, which many low-income students need to stay on grade.

Again, the PMA study did not argue for school district consolidation, suggesting first a county collaborative agreement, but identified these many reasons why restructuring is either desirable or inevitable.

The Gill-Montague superintendent summarized the last six years of Franklin County financial trends in a way that illuminates the above issues and the reasons schools felt a severe cost squeeze:

Total spending on education	Up 27%
Health Costs	Up 225%
(State Group Insurance Commission health costs up only 70%)	
Chapter 70 state school aid	Up 0.6%
Local Aid (property tax)	Up 35%

Perspectives on Massachusetts “Localism”

There are other interesting 2009 perspectives on smallness and “local control”:

A new book on the 50 states includes a provocative chapter on Massachusetts written by John Hodgman, who owns a home in Western Massachusetts. He suggests that Massachusetts is a place where people preserve an “absolute inability to be near anyone different.” He explains historically that “Towns would gather by necessity around a central green and turn their backs on one another. We would sit by the fire and brood and make brooms and bridles and such, and since familiarity among neighbors was scarce, we would instead, through sheer Yankee ingenuity, breed contempt from *unfamiliarity*. The result of this contempt: an ironic “commonwealth” of closely knit groups of isolationists.”

(Review of *State by State: A Panoramic Portrait of America*, Boston *GLOBE*, December 28, 2008 by Tom Haines)

Senator Stan Rosenberg and State Representative Patricia Haddad (then the Education Chair in the Massachusetts House) at a Rennie Center conference in September 2008 discussed local attitudes: “There is the perception among many in our state that regionalization is a bad approach because it forces communities with different values to jointly educate their children and removes local control. Many believe that their community is different than that of their neighbors. We contend that, to the contrary, most communities are more alike than they are different – valuing a strong and robust education for their children. Some argue that regionalization removes local control. But if our structure of delivering education is inefficient and ineffective, this perceived local control is not best serving our children.” (January 2009 report in the Rennie E-Forum.)

They also mention that of the 60 Massachusetts school superintendent vacancies in 2008, 30 were unfilled at the start of the school year. There are more superintendency positions and school districts in Massachusetts than there are qualified superintendents. New superintendents may find themselves meeting with three, four or even eight school committees; 80-100 meetings a year becoming a great burden. Often they leave after one contract, moving to a school district with one school committee. School superintendent turnover, the use of interim superintendents, the disruption of continuity of leadership, has been a problem for several Franklin County communities.

The idea of sharing school superintendents between multiple school committees was an early 1900’s “solution,” prevalent in northern New England. It may have been necessary when school committees had full power over the curriculum standards, selection of teachers, and graduation standards, state responsibilities once delegated to local towns but now reclaimed. But the “school union” today looks and feels like a Model T in an age of bullet trains and energy efficient hybrid vehicles.

State education leaders have another strong reason for criticizing the large number of school districts with a small central staff. “For a small district, there is simply not the managerial or staff capacity to affect positive change in a struggling school.” To improve, a district must have the professional staff capacity to review and analyze pupil achievement data, change the curriculum, coach teachers, improve lesson plans and redesign the teaching to meet state standards and quality results.

It is said that every town needs an elementary school to preserve its identity as a community. In Franklin County, there are instructive exceptions:

- Hawley and Charlemont combined an elementary school, called Hawlemont.
- Shelburne and Buckland share an elementary school.
- Wendell and New Salem share the Swift River School.
- The town of Munroe closed a one-room school and sends students to Berkshire County, elementary pupils to Florida, and high school pupils to North Adams.

E. Analysis of the Costs of Franklin County Schools

Franklin County school leaders have expressed to state officials that more state funds should be allocated to Franklin County schools. State officials raise another question, which is whether the existing school funds are well spent. They asked whether collaboration, joint bidding of transportation, cooperative bulk purchasing, and other economies might be achieved.

The Public Management Associates Report in January 2008 found that \$1.2 million might be saved, more than half of it by cooperative bidding of more efficient school transportation for students including special education. Other economies could be achieved by cooperative purchasing of paper, supplies and equipment because of economic discounts to larger purchases. Also, schools joining the Group Insurance Commission for faculty and staff health coverage save substantial money, as the Gill-Montague schools did a year ago.

NESDEC asked Richard Sulc, MBA and former director of administrative services (Norwell Public Schools) to examine Franklin County school expenditures and compare them to the state averages. The report is available in Power Point format as Appendix B)

In 2007, Franklin County schools spent \$133,388,207 for the education of 9,740 pupils. Almost twenty million (\$19,954,219) of this was grant money allocated under federal and state statutes such as Title One funds for low income pupils, No Child Left Behind or special education funds, or revolving funds for athletics, school breakfast and lunch programs. The total expenditures also include \$4.8 million paid (transferred from one district to another) for School Choice tuitions.

Franklin County pupil expenditures were \$12,697 per pupil compared with the average of \$11,858 using the state published averages as a "benchmark" for comparing Franklin County combined cost performance. Since the state averages are computed using the number of Choice students, both in the calculation for per pupil cost for "In District Membership" (for the receiving district) and in the "Out of District Membership" (for the sending district), the actual per pupil cost for all districts combined is understated. From a state-wide perspective, this is not a material issue. For Franklin County, when looked at as a whole, the state's methodology understates its per pupil cost. Taking this adjustment into consideration, Franklin County's per pupil cost when restated is \$13,198; that is \$1,340 over the state average as compared to the \$838 above the state average computed using the state's methodology. Having made this observation, this report and the attached appendices use the state's methodology in order to maintain a consistent and comparable analysis.

The most dramatic economies in Franklin County have been achieved by holding down "out of district" tuitions to an average of \$13,162 compared to the state average of \$19,341. Although hundreds of Franklin County parents exercise school choice, most special education students (even those with severe challenges such as autism) are educated in Franklin County. Greenfield (Poets Seat School) and other communities

have responded with compassion and outreach to those with disabilities. Elsewhere in the state, many pupils are placed in expensive residential settings, including in several Franklin County facilities. Overall, the expenses are seven million dollars less than the state average and \$700,000 less for out of district transportation. This is a very positive finding, a success story of “inclusiveness” in serving pupils with disabilities. When these “out of district” costs are further analyzed by looking at the School Choice and non School Choice students and costs separately, it can be seen that Franklin County districts paid Choice tuition for 765 students (almost 8% of total students or 62% of “out of district” students) at an average per pupil cost of \$6,179, and 477 non Choice students (less than 5% of total students and 38% of “out of district” students) at an average per pupil cost of \$24,139. Usually, only the very severe special needs students are enrolled out of district.

However, in 2009, Greenfield and Gill-Montague report a net “school choice” outflow of more than 400 pupils that reduces their state pupil reimbursements.

The three largest sources of above average Franklin County school expenditures are:

- | | |
|---|----------------------|
| 1. Health Insurance and Retirement costs | \$3.5 million a year |
| 2. Other Teaching Services | \$3.1 million a year |
| 3. Pupil Services, including transportation
Food services, school nurses | \$2.3 million a year |

These were 2007 end of year numbers. Six superintendents have either joined the state Group Insurance Commission health plan or a comparable Hampshire County plan that will show reductions of as much as 20% in 2010.

Other Teaching Services include teacher assistants, substitute teachers, and therapists.

The Pupil Services costs include transportation where traditionally only a handful of vendors will compete for a small district, compared to bidding for a larger region where savings of 10% or more might be achieved.

The two budget items for leadership include instructional leadership (principals) and general administration (9 superintendents).

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 4. Instructional leadership | \$1.2 million a year |
| 5. Administration | \$1.1 million a year |

For all administration, including business managers and directors, Franklin County spent \$4.8 million compared to the state average of \$3.7 million serving an equal number of students. Other districts with 9,000 students might have 10-15 principals, rather than 30, and one or two superintendents, not nine. Obviously, whether the distribution of population is sparse or dense is a major driver of these costs.

Franklin County schools spend more than the state average on Instructional Materials and Technology \$900,000, and on Operations and Maintenance \$366,000, but these also may be explained by the low population density and small rural school size. They add up to less than one percent of the budget. The technology investments have great potential for improving education.

Franklin County schools spend less than the state average for Guidance and Testing, less for Professional Development, and less for Classroom Teachers and Specialists. The Public Management Report describes many schools in South Franklin County with ample specialists but there may be less staff in the other schools. Professional development is the term used to describe ways that teachers study and acquire more effective ways of helping students achieve at higher levels or stay in school, through teaching methods, counseling and motivation (subject matter coaches, courses, seminars, workshops). Franklin County on the whole under-invests in teacher development, which can hold back increases in pupil achievement.

This analysis finds that as much as \$12 million dollars or 10% of the overall costs could be saved or reallocated to other instructional purposes including counselors, specialists and teacher (counselor and principal) professional development. This assumes that Franklin County schools would want to match statewide average expenditures per pupil. The under-performing schools will need above average financial and staff support.

Earlier, the Public Management Associates Report identified potential savings of \$1.2 million through collaboration, joint purchasing, and countywide bidding on regular and special education. Those savings are included in the \$12 million identified through this analysis. Transportation savings could be achieved EITHER through bidding through a collaborative or by having one county education administrative unit. The administrative savings (an additional two to three million) might be realized ONLY through consolidation of school districts.

F. MODELS for County and Local Discussion

Before looking at models of organization, it is important to define a “vision” of what education and schools might provide pupils and families. Any “2020 vision” for Franklin County should include preschool, out-of-school opportunities, technology, and the role of the community college, much more than traditional Kindergarten through grade twelve (K-12) services. The county and the country expects more than what has previously been “the school.” Franklin County between 2009 and 2020 can become a leader in rural education by designing a highly productive educational delivery system. The 2020 vision might incorporate and build on these educational components:

1. All low income pupils would enroll in full day early education programs at ages 3, 4 and 5, ensuring a high quality early start in building a larger vocabulary, becoming comfortable with numbers and objects, stimulated by music and the arts, exposed to scientific wonders, and learning how to work with others in small

groups. Much more than day care, the programs would meet high state safety, health and educational standards. (see Readiness recommendations, Appendix X)

2. All Franklin County pupils would become computer literate, learning early how to compose reports and essays, present numbers on Excel spreadsheets, download and file documents, and later to prepare PowerPoint and graphic presentations. These are among the 21st Century Skills now being considered by the State Board of Education at the urging of major employers. Each school would have broadband access, many pupils would take courses online including advanced placement courses, and each child would have a low cost computer.
3. Franklin County teachers would take part in a Pioneer Valley Readiness Center, linking UMass, the Hampshire Education Collaborative, and Greenfield Community College and existing teacher centers, providing course materials, teaching videos, modules, ideas on introducing new topics to advance pupil knowledge about the world, stimulating creativity and problem solving.
4. The high schools of Franklin County would graduate at least 95% of the pupils, aiming for the ideal of 100%, up from 75-85% graduation rates in 2008. Each high school would continue to offer the common core of English, social studies, mathematics and basic science. But each will have a magnet theme and specialty, including related work experiences and community service at each school. Themes might include:
 - a. Music, drama and the arts
 - b. Technology and electronics
 - c. Health and social services
 - d. Business and finance, including entrepreneurship
 - e. International and global studies, including languages

Each student would complete an applied project or major paper demonstrating their readiness for career or college or both. These “multiple pathway” programs would be coordinated with Greenfield Community College and Franklin County Technical School so as to complement each other and reach 100% of the interested pupils including the 1,000 pupils age 16 or 17 who now drop out. The Tech School could have several satellite locations in other high schools, and admit some transfer students in grade eleven, as is done elsewhere in Massachusetts.

5. Greenfield Community College would expand the early entry, dual enrollment program reaching out to mature, motivated high school students ready to benefit from college courses at age 16 and 17, many of whom have passed MCAS or displayed interest in advanced work. Concerns about “one size fits all” pertain to the high school curriculum, which does not serve adequately 20-30% of the pupils now or satisfy 56% of respondents to a 2008 Franklin County survey about high school satisfaction.

6. Several hundred high school students might enroll in Virtual High School courses which would be offered electronically online. Greenfield Community College and U Mass Online offer dozens of college courses electronically that may become available to eligible high school students under an early college plan. Both Massachusetts and Florida have Virtual High Schools now, the latter enrolling more than 10,000 high school pupils in electronic courses not generally available in high schools in the county. There will be increasing reciprocity among states and counties.

These ideas are among those recommended to Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick by 250 citizens including at least ten leaders from the Pioneer Valley and five citizens from Franklin County. Their suggestions will guide the Executive branch and legislators from now to 2020.

There is another issue, the right of parents and teachers to shape the character of a local school. A very large number of Franklin County citizens insisted that they wanted to keep involved with and have a say in the quality of local schools, an important shared value. Local control of schools will increasingly be focused on each building, although the county will have one or more school committees functioning as a board of education. The School Councils, already established in Massachusetts law, will provide and retain the local access to ensuring school quality and teacher support that Franklin County parents feel so strongly must be preserved. School Councils already may, by state statute:

- a. Interview candidates for principal
- b. Interview new teacher candidates who meet state requirements
- c. Examine and comment on the school budget
- d. Review school performance on state achievement tests and other measures
- e. Help formulate, with principal and teachers, the School Improvement Plan
- f. Recruit volunteers, mentors, and others to help pupils and the schools
- g. Enrich the school program with music, art, drama and service projects

All of these opportunities are allowed under Massachusetts law, Chapter 59 C. They frequently are not utilized in small towns that also retain a School Committee.

Governor Patrick appointed a Readiness Finance Commission to pricetag the recommendations and search out savings and economies. While noting the tension between “centralization” and the tradition of local control, “it was largely agreed that the luxury of autonomy is too expensive under current fiscal circumstances.” The Commission included the presidents of the Massachusetts High Technology Council, Stop and Shop, Bentley University, the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation and the Massachusetts Teachers Association.

Meanwhile, the structure of Franklin County school governance might well be reorganized in order to provide for a better education and to assure state officials that funds will be wisely spent to improve education. Staying the course will not suffice or provide the level of educational readiness for college and careers in the 21st Century.

Looking for the future, these are three overall governance models that should be discussed:

These are presented as models or “options” for local discussion. **There is no state plan or preferred model.** These are not the only options possible, but are intended to stimulate debate and discussion on whether to keep the existing structures, despite the extra millions of dollars in costs and reduced capacities for continuous improvement.

Option 1: A Franklin County Unified School District

Instead of nine superintendents serving 20 school committees in the 26 communities, there would be a single Franklin County School Committee, one superintendent, one deputy for teaching and learning and one for business and finance. The central staff, instead of 50.4 individuals in nine offices in 2009, might have:

- a. Three assistants, one for business services, one for curriculum, and one for technical education
- b. A Director of Special Education and a Director of Pupil Services
- c. A Purchasing agent, Director of Transportation, a Director of Buildings and Grounds
- d. Ten subject matter teacher coaches, or coordinators of academic content areas, from arts to science, to improve teacher and pupil achievement
- e. A professional development coordinator

There may be a few communities that might opt out, as Monroe has already (sending pupils and tuitions to North Adams and Florida). Leverett and Shutesbury send their middle and high school pupils to Amherst, where many parents work and shop. Those two towns now in Union 28 might become part of a regional school district with Amherst and Pelham.

One county regional school district would allow for a redesign of staff, even with closing no schools. A total of 26 professional compared to 50 employees will save an estimated \$2,800,000 a year. (See Appendix B)

Option 2: One County with Three School Districts, Each with a School Committee

Two of the districts would have 4,200-4,700 K-12 pupils each and the third would be the Franklin County Technical School, as currently exists. One school district might serve the East County, Pioneer Valley, Orange, Mahar and Gill-Montague, and one for the West County communities including Greenfield, Mohawk Trail and Frontier.

This requires a staff of 37.5 professionals, at a savings of \$1,233,000 a year.

Option 3: Six Regional School Districts (Five K-12 Academic Districts Plus Franklin County Voc-Tech); Each with a Superintendent; Each with a Business Manager

Each school committee would meet once each quarter. The education and curriculum specialists might also work on a county-wide basis, much like a southern state county or many of the New York State BOCES. This modest change was suggested by several respondents to the NESDEC electronic survey. However, the results provide savings of only \$852,000 and perpetuates the rivalry and competitiveness of current school choice policies.

Are there other models? Citizens suggested one district for elementary and one for secondary schools, but already there are too many “hinges” and barriers to curriculum alignment and program articulation.

Presumably, the County might keep school committees, but contract with one entity (such as a Hampshire-Franklin County Education Collaborative) for all business services and many educational services. HEC has the capacity now to run education programs for the state Youth (correction) Services and there might be savings.

In 20 or perhaps, 50 years a great portion of education might be online, including exams, papers and laboratory experiments just as Advanced Placement and other courses are now. It is not too early to think about “virtual school systems” but these plans are in the early stages and a challenge to estimate cost savings.

Discussion:

Franklin County already has a respected county technical high school and a well-regarded community college, fine precedents for thinking about the county as a logical unit. Franklin County schools subscribe to a Technology Education Project collaboration which has begun to show the advantages of teacher training and cooperation for Franklin and Hampshire County teachers and principals. Certain building blocks are in place and represent the future potential of a countywide approach.

Although Franklin County was the first county to turn away from the old county government structure, the local town officials now pool resources to provide municipal and town services on a more cost effective basis, and pursue state and federal grants very successfully through the Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (COG).

Franklin County, plus Amherst and Athol, is a well-defined economic development region wherein the schools provide the base for a labor force needed to supply the work force in the six industrial parks, at home telecommuting workplaces, and the emerging industries including polymer, photovoltaics, solar, biofuel, and other enterprises.

The multiple local school districts over the last ten years have encountered serious difficulties of assuring state regulators and other officials that they can collaborate, raise

achievement scores, educate all pupils through the high school, and set and monitor school budgets. The 19th Century school governance structure has been overtaken by world competitive forces and by much higher state and national expectations.

On the other hand, Franklin County is not an isolated geographical unit:

- a. Monroe tuitions its children to Berkshire County schools.
- b. Several Vermont towns tuition their children to Franklin County schools.
- c. Leverett and Shutesbury send middle and high school students to Amherst.
- d. Several school districts take advantage of Hampshire County and other educational Collaboratives to save money.

Other exceptions and special arrangements keep county educational boundary lines fluid.

The Pioneer Valley school committees in the early 1990's, with serious financial incentives from the state, show that regionalizing a cluster of separate towns (the former Union 38) into one K-12 school district could work in Franklin County, leading to the construction of a new high school meeting state standards.

One school committee? The existing Technical School district could share the central office function with K-12 districts as a Superintendency Union. Or form a new, large region. Or, one K-12 district could contract with the technical school for administrative services. Or, there could be a special statute enacted for Franklin County schools.

G. Greenfield Community College

To help more Franklin County pupils become "ready" for college and careers will require a new look at Greenfield Community College and its potential contributions to the county Schools, families, and employers. The old model suggested that only high school graduates would be eligible for community college classes. That has changed.

The new model assumes that dozens and perhaps hundreds of students from each high school can take one or more courses at the community college before graduating from high school, perhaps beginning in grades 10 or 11. There are already two types of Franklin County pupils enrolled in the Early College or Early Entrant category:

1. High aptitude or gifted pupils who have passed the MCAS and are impatient at a curriculum aimed at average youth, and are ready for specialized courses, and;
2. At risk youth, often from low-income families, who have no sense that they could ever go to college, but should be introduced to college courses.

Already Greenfield Community College enrolls 120 high school students from three area high schools, about half from each of the two categories. Rhode Island high schools have expanded a similar program, often called "dual enrollment" because a pupil pursues both a diploma and college credits simultaneously. The college instructors often teach a

course in the high school, which is very convenient for pupils and prepares them to think about college standards and careers.

In Connecticut, 3,500 high school pupils take college courses at the University of Connecticut, which suggests that UMass Amherst and Westfield State might also enroll dozens of Franklin County pupils. Major national foundations have financed startup Early College programs in New York State and New England states over the last ten years. The Massachusetts Readiness Commission endorsed these “early college” policies.

If a pupil can earn 30 college course credits while still in high school, the family saves a year of college tuition and the young person enters the work force a year early.

People debate whether MCAS has increased the dropout rate, but a closer look suggests that the tests are not the cause of dropouts. Almost half of high school dropouts have passed MCAS. Many would welcome the challenge of college level courses even while in high school.

Half of the graduates of Greenfield Community College later transfer to four year colleges. GCC has transfer “articulation agreements” not only with public institutions (U. Mass, Mass College of Liberal Arts, and other state colleges), but also with private or independent colleges such as Amherst College and Western New England College. Massachusetts has begun to consider pre-school through “Grade 16” bachelor’s degrees as “one continuous system” rather than a series of disconnected modules punctuated by graduation ceremonies.

GCC will also provide “Continuing Education” for high school and college graduates as technologies change; for example, in the conservation and environmental area or in health fields. Some persons attending GCC will, in fact, already have a Bachelor’s degree.

Finally, GCC reaches out to high school dropouts from the past and offers General Education (GED) training and examinations for high school equivalency. The workforce of 2020 requires that everyone pursue the maximum, not the minimum, of schooling and education.

H. Suggestions for Massachusetts State Leaders

Franklin County has responded to cutbacks in state aid and unfunded federal mandates by increasing the reliance on the local property tax, not always but often, at an average countywide percentage of 6% a year since 2002. This is much higher than the architects of Proposition 2 ½ originally intended, and more than municipal leaders think reasonable. It is possible because many of the Franklin County communities share the strong educational values of the Five Colleges and because two communities benefit from hydroelectric power generation and storage facilities. Still, there is a high incidence of poverty in Franklin County, as high as 25-50% in several communities, and state leaders

must show leadership in addressing the needs which affect the entire Massachusetts social and economic fabric.

What can the Governor and legislators do? In Fiscal years 2009 and 2010, the state will be severely constrained in the ability to invest more state funds in education. Now is the time to look out three to five years and promote strategies that are more productive.

Several sound Massachusetts state policies and practices should be restored and funded properly:

1. Restore Chapter 70 state foundation aid to the 2002 levels (the highpoint) and adjust for inflation each year. The percentage of state school aid in Massachusetts has slipped from the mid 40's to the mid 30's of the cost of education over the last twelve years. The goal by 2020 might be 45% or preferably 51% statewide. Those states that pay 50% or more of local education costs are more entitled to suggest a new and streamlined governance structure. Why should Massachusetts rank #12 in local financing of public financing if it aspires to be the leading state in high technology including biotechnology, nanotechnology and alternative power?
2. Appropriate Chapter 71 transportation funds according to the statutory formula, of critical importance to towns with a mix of narrow asphalt and dirt roads. In 2009, the state actually appropriated 89% of the funding formula, a number that might sink as low as 60% in 2010. Even while Chapter 70 general aid is level-funded, a decline in Chapter 71 funds is in fact a reduction in state aid that local towns must somehow absorb.
3. Restore the multi-year state incentives for regional districts (perhaps 10% add-on to Chapter 70 funds), so useful in helping four Pioneer Valley school districts consolidate in the 1990's. Continue the practice of allocating state funds for studies of regionalization which is the key to building local consensus. Allow enough time for an orderly district transition and cover the extra costs of consolidation for a year or two. Allow the transfer of state financed (School Building Authority) school buildings for other town purposes or the forgiveness of debt on closed buildings if needed. To achieve regionalization, "the state will need more carrots than sticks," suggested one of those studying Franklin County school issues.
4. Restore the state funding of MCAS summer and afterschool remediation programs for schools with unsatisfactory passage rates and less than adequate yearly progress status. Those state appropriations for the first decade of "Ed Reform" boosted Massachusetts pupil performance to record high levels. Franklin County educators recommend such programs not only for tenth graders, but for pupils in grades 6, 7 and 8 when pupil performance difficulties become visible. The alternative measure is for the state to expand "Extended Learning Time" which can boost pupil achievement. A Franklin County program funded at

\$500,000 per year would cover both instruction and transportation.

Commonwealth leaders also should consider these additional strategies for promoting collaboration and improved readiness for college and careers:

1. Appropriate funds to help all Education Collaboratives maintain and improve their usefulness to local schools by appropriating at least 10% of staff costs, as does Connecticut (funding their six regional councils) and New York State (Boards of Cooperative Educational Services where the state pays 50% of the cooperative services to schools). The PMA Report (2008) includes a valuable description of “regional service agencies.” Massachusetts allows districts to form collaboratives without the state assuming any of the financial responsibility. As a result, Franklin County and other rural towns have suffered without the improvements and efficiencies the PMA report thought highly desirable and perhaps essential. One Franklin County school committee chair suggested that the state should require membership in at least one collaborative or otherwise the economies will be watered down or lost.
2. Require all schools and districts to join the state Group Insurance Commission, unless they can prove similar economic efficiencies and quality of employment health service. Gill-Montague, joining the GIC in 2008, not only reduced the annual rate of increase, but enjoyed a rebate from the prior health insurance vendor. So has the Mahar district. Pioneer Valley schools, Frontier, and Franklin Tech joined (with their towns) the Hampshire County Group Insurance Trust which will pursue equivalent savings. The other districts should take similar measures to reduce and contain employee health costs.
3. Place a cap on school choice. The competition for students from adjoining districts escalates hostility and undermines the prospects for collaboration between communities and school leaders. Gill-Montague has lost half a million dollars and Greenfield even more by families opting out of the districts, sharply reducing funds for the majority who remain. This has slowed the “turn around” efforts.
4. Cushion the impact of Charter Schools on local budgets, perhaps by a separate line item for charter schools in the state budget. Even if a charter lures away only five students per grade, it is extremely difficult for the home district to reduce the budget accordingly, while state per pupil funds are immediately reduced. The state Readiness Finance Commission made a similar suggestion in December 2008. In Franklin County that would require 240 Grades 7-12 charter school pupils \$2.9 million in 2007 dollars.
5. Extending Broadband to Franklin County rural communities and funding 1 to 1 laptops for all pupils and teachers, following the lead of Maine. Require an educational plan, teacher training, and a local assessment of pupil proficiencies in information processing, as outlined by the Technology Education Partnership of

Western Massachusetts and the State Board of Education 21st Century Skills report. Also the state should financially support the Virtual High School and online courses for the gifted and talented, including Advance Placement courses in science, mathematics, engineering, history and other fields of study. (Each Franklin County high school now offers 4-7 AP courses, but online courses would enable access to 25 or more AP courses for potential college credit and to challenge the talented pupils.)

6. Assist the county high schools willing to expand Dual Enrollment/Early College programs with Greenfield Community College, UMass Amherst, and other colleges, state and independent. The models developed in Rhode Island and Connecticut show the way. Jobs for the Future in Boston is a center of expertise on both the benefits and incentives needed. Greenfield Community College charges \$400 a course or \$2,000 for a high school pupil taking a full load of college courses. The state has appropriated funds for this program; that potentially saves pupils and family a year of college costs (\$10,000 a year or more) since a pupil pursues a diploma and a year of college simultaneously.
7. Finance a Readiness Center in Franklin County (or Franklin and Hampshire Counties) with the help of UMass Amherst, the state colleges, Greenfield Community College and existing teacher centers in Western Massachusetts, with a focus on improving the seamless flow of pupils from early childhood programs to schools and to college, reducing the dropout rates and increasing the readiness for college and careers. The State Office of Education might prepare specifications and performance expectations, possibly using stimulus funds for planning.
8. Set a target of reducing or consolidating ten state required reports each year. In 2008, Vermont eliminated more than a dozen required state education reports that no one read or acted upon, often superseded by newer federal education or other state laws. There is an extremely heavy financial and time burden on local schools updating data, sharply accelerating since enactment of the Mass Ed Reform Act and No Child Left Behind. This giant tree needs periodic pruning. The impact might include reducing local administrator and clerical time by \$20,000, and state data collection costs by an equivalent amount. The federal stimulus package includes funds for expanding a computerized Educational Data Warehouse, but this should include consolidation and reducing required local reports.

I. Next Steps for Franklin County

Certain actions should be reviewed, discussed and acted upon within the county.

1. All local schools including the Ralph C. Mahar School should join an Educational Collaborative. Eight of the nine superintendents indicate a preference for joining the Hampshire Education Collaborative (HEC) of which Frontier is already a

member and Orange the recipient of a state grant, through HEC. This organization provides a variety of special education services, grant writing and professional development services which are needed in Franklin County to make education better. There might be a HEC office in Franklin County, possibly at the Franklin County RCOG. The Public Management Associates report estimated savings of from one to \$1.2 million a year.

2. Franklin County should adopt the Public Management report recommendation that it create a 501(c) 3 foundation eligible to receive corporate and foundation grants and gifts. This might be created in cooperation with the Franklin County Council of Governments, and should have a part-time person to prepare grant requests and monitor the grants and investments. Other communities in Massachusetts solicit from thousands to millions of dollars of non-government funds for worthy investments in school programs.
3. Study the restructuring and READINESS options described in this report. The State may be willing to finance planning studies for a county regional school district to see if \$2.8 million can be reallocated to instructional programs. Franklin County needs also to look at the extended day, the summer remediation courses (to meet AYP), and at other school improvement strategies. Federal and state stimulus grants could finance the development of a full action plan to make the high schools more magnetic and more responsive, and develop multiple pathways to college and careers.

Other actions might be considered at the state level. For example, the state Secretary and Commissioner of Education and legislators might consider enacting a statute creating one county school district with a board structure resembling that of the Franklin County Technical School with one member from each town. The budget assessment would require that a majority of towns must approve the county school district budget each year, as they now do for the regional technical school.

1. The Franklin County school board for the transition could be the Franklin County Technical school board. Several towns not now part of the Technical School could be invited to join. Several who prefer to join up with Athol or Amherst schools could be invited to join or form what could be other regional school districts.
2. The state should restore the regional incentive grants that made the Pioneer Valley region possible in the early 1990's to cover the one time costs of consolidating the school systems.
3. Strengthen the School Council statute (Chapter 59 C) so that each community continues to feel a sense of ownership in the local elementary school. Authorize a local town owing money to the School Building Authority to share or turn over the school building for an early education center or a senior center or both.

4. Continue to promote discussion both of Readiness opportunities and of a more appropriate school organizational format to build the capacity for continuous school improvement and greater financial accountability. Some school districts with many low income families will need to spend more than the state average expenditure per pupil, but it should not be spent on excessive health benefits, transportation costs, and administrator costs.

At one Franklin County meeting a citizen reminded all that the Daniel Shays rebellion originated in Western Massachusetts. The next rebellion, perhaps of taxpayers joined by teachers, might be about the reallocation of funds, the reorganization of districts, and the Readiness of pupils for colleges and careers. Those are the building blocks, the new Three R's, towards achieving a 2020 vision for Franklin County.

REPORTS AND OTHER RESOURCES

A. Franklin County

Creating a Sustainable and Quality Education System in Franklin County Schools: A Study of Potential Efficiencies, Public Management Associates, Westford, MA, January 2008

The Future of Education in Franklin County, An Interim Report. New England School Development Council, Marlborough MA, January 2009

The Greater Franklin County Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, 2008 Annual Report, Franklin County Regional Council of Governments (website)

B. State and National

Preliminary Report on Current Financial Conditions in Massachusetts School Districts, Mass Department of Education, January 2008

Ready for 21st Century Success, the New Promise of Public Education, Governor Deval Patrick, June 28, 2008

Massachusetts Context and a First Look at District Size and Spending, Lisa Famularo, Ph.D., Rennie Center for Educational Research and Policy

Long Term Financing, Governors Readiness Subcommittee on Finance, March 7, 2008

Readiness Finance Commission Report, Massachusetts Government Education homepage, December 31, 2008

National Clearinghouse for Education Facilities

Rural School and Community Trust

NESDEC Study

APPENDIX A



Franklin County Schools by Size

All Students - 4 Year Trends in Enrollment and Performance (2005-08)

Grades	Enrollment						MCAS - ELA						MCAS - Math														
	05		06		07		08		Status	CPI - Aggregate				Status	CPI - Aggregate												
	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	08	05	06	07	08	08	05	06	07	08	08	05	06	07	08				
Poet Seat	0	15	11	18							50.0	50.0										25.0	25.0				
Rhodes	44	48	59	57	III-A						93.2	90.5	81.3	76.1									83.3	75.0	82.6	Yes	
Rowe Elementary	61	61	63	61							88.9	93.1	92.0										80.6	89.2	90.0	Yes	
Warwick	63	64	71	67							82.3	70.0	78.0	80.9									58.9	47.1	73.5	74.2	Yes
Montague Center	83	96	86	70							82.1	90.2	85.7	91.7									87.0	73.2	83.3	Yes	
Heath	69	80	77	75							90.4	84.1	84.8	90.4									86.8	84.1	88.0	89.5	Yes
Academy for Learning	0	0	97	90																							
Gill Elementary	94	109	103	105	III-A						79.3	92.1	84.8	85.8									76.8	71.8	76.5	77.5	Yes
Hawlemont Regional	137	129	117	118	III-A						91.0	84.8	79.2										68.3	77.5	68.2	No	
Colrain Central	158	145	142	127							83.1	85.1	87.0	83.2									70.8	69.1	83.4	82.5	Yes
Whately Elementary	136	123	124	128							88.6	90.1	93.4										80.7	83.6	83.2	Yes	
Sanderson Academy	158	150	145	135							78.8	83.1	88.3	90.9									68.8	69.4	82.0	90.9	Yes
Swift River	156	147	159	147							84.2	87.7	79.8										83.3	83.8	80.1	Yes	
Sheffield Elementary	264	262	255	153	CA-9						72.7	73.8	75.4	74.1									59.3	56.4	58.9	58.2	No
Leverett Elementary	139	165	171	161							84.8	86.7	84.6										76.1	78.7	75.9	No	
Shutesbury Elementary	163	185	155	167							94.3	95.1	94.9										79.0	84.3	86.0	Yes	

Schools: ELC/ECC/JEES - Early Learning Center, Early Education Center/School; ESM/MSHS - Elementary School/Middle School/High School
 Status: I1 - Identified for Improvement; CA - Corrective Action; RST - Restructuring; A - Aggregate; S - Subgroups
 CPI - Composite Performance Index



Franklin County Schools by Size

All Students - 4 Year Trends in Enrollment and Performance (2005-08)

Grades	Enrollment				MCAS - ELA				MCAS - Math									
	05	06	07	08	Status	CPI - Aggregate	05	06	07	08	Status	CPI - Aggregate	05	06	07	08		
	Agg	Subgr	Agg	Subgr	08	05	06	07	08	08	08	05	06	07	08	Agg	Subgr	
Conway Grammar	152	158	166	177		96.9	94.8	95.9		Yes	Yes	93.7	93.0	89.1	Yes	Yes		
Hillcrest	159	175	173	178		82.9	76.4	75.8	78.8	Yes		59.3	59.4	73.5	Yes			
Barnardston	173	184	186	181	II2-S	75.0	80.5	64.2	79.4	No	No	60.1	72.9	76.4	78.3	Yes	Yes	
Erving Elementary	176	185	183	189		75.2	84.4	81.5		No	No	64.4	71.9	73.4	Yes	Yes		
Four Rivers Charter	102	138	161	193		93.1	93.6	95.4		Yes	Yes	78.0	81.6	81.2	Yes	Yes		
Buckland-Shelburne Re	243	233	219	195	III-A	79.4	85.5	80.7	79.3	No	No	65.0	74.8	75.0	79.6	Yes	Yes	
Newton	182	195	195	196	RST2-A	79.5	79.4	79.7	76.7	No	No	57.0	67.8	67.9	76.7	Yes	Yes	
Sunderland Elementary	245	228	218	220		86.4	86.8	84.0		No	No	81.0	80.6	81.3	Yes	Yes		
Four Corners	226	230	263	224	III-S	77.9	87.8	87.5	84.4	No	No	80.7	84.3	84.7	92.9	Yes	Yes	
Butterfield	220	229	214	226	II1-S	80.2	81.0	80.5		No	No	68.0	64.3	67.3	68.8	No	No	
Federal	247	247	258	262	III-A	86.5	83.6	79.7	76.3	No	No	82.3	80.4	74.5	82.4	Yes	Yes	
Great Falls Middle	224	191	178	273		80.2	84.5	87.4	84.5	No	No	RST2-S	46.6	56.6	69.7	63.6	No	No
Dexter Park	251	269	282	267		82.6	79.2	83.7	81.4	No	No	III S	70.6	80.2	80.3	79.4	Yes	No
Northfield	265	292	290	301		80.8	80.8	82.7	80.3	No	No	II2-A	62.0	68.5	77.4	73.0	No	No
Fisher Hill	267	292	296	310		85.9	81.6	90.1	84.9	No	Yes		78.2	86.6	79.0	Yes	Yes	
Turners Fall High	364	352	384	347		90.3	81.8	86.5	88.2	Yes	Yes	85.4	83.6	89.5	85.8	Yes	Yes	

Schools: ELO/EEC/EES - Early Learning Center, Early Education Center/School, ES/MS/HS - Elementary School/Middle School/High School
 Status: I1 - Identified for Improvement, CA - Corrective Action, RST - Restructuring, A - Aggregate, S - Subgroups
 CPI - Composite Performance Index



Franklin County Schools by Size
All Students - 4 Year Trends in Enrollment and Performance (2005-08)

Grades	Enrollment						MCAS - ELA						MCAS - Math												
	05		06		07		08		05		06		07		08		05		06		07		08		
	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	05	06	07	08	
Greenfield High	546	495	489	428	83.1	86.9	82.4	82.3	82.6	86.0	82.1	87.6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	82.6	86.0	82.1	87.6	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Deerfield Elementary	447	468	464	487	86.0	89.2	87.1		79.0	83.7	84.2		Yes	Yes			79.0	83.7	84.2		Yes	No			
Greenfield Middle	482	437	385	489	CA-S	86.2	81.3	84.3	81.7	No	No		No	No			RST2-A	81.1	83.3	83.9	87.2	Yes	No		
Pioneer Valley Regl	527	506	508	501	III-S	91.0	88.2	87.6	87.9	Yes	No		Yes	No			88.5	70.5	70.4	79.5	Yes	Yes			
Franklin County Tech	528	543	528	525		83.7	77.9	87.0		Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes			79.1	88.9	82.5		Yes	Yes			
Mohawk Trail Regl High	779	706	688	621	III-S	86.1	88.4	86.9	87.0	Yes	No		Yes	No			III-S	74.9	68.1	85.9	71.3	Yes	No		
Frontier Regional	728	727	714	716	III-S	92.0	89.4	90.1		Yes	No		Yes	No			III-S	82.1	78.1	80.6		Yes	No		
Ralph C Mahar Regiona	689	710	747	758	III-S	86.8	87.9	84.6		No	No		No	No			III-S	66.5	68.5	70.0		No	No		

Schools: ELC/EEC/EES - Early Learning Center, Early Education Center/School; ES/MS/HS - Elementary School/Middle School/High School
 Status: I1 - Identified for Improvement; CA - Corrective Action; RST - Resubmitting; A - Aggregate; S - Subgroups
 CPI: Composite Performance Index

NESDEC Study

APPENDIX B

Franklin County FY 2007

Financial Analysis
Compilation of Total Cost
for
FC Public Schools Except
Franklin County Vocational Tech
and
FC Voc Tech and Three Area Voc Techs

Franklin County – Summary of Total
School Expenditures

- General Fund Appropriations \$113,433,988
- Grants, Revolving & Other \$ 19,954,219
- Total All Funds \$133,388,207

Total Expenditures by Function

	Appropriations	Grants & Revolving	Total All Funds	Function as % of Total
Administration	\$4,692,835	\$130,575	\$4,823,410	3.62%
Instructional Leadership	\$7,045,886	\$1,304,205	\$8,350,091	6.26%
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$35,409,478	\$5,598,752	\$41,008,230	30.74%
Other Teaching Services	\$8,973,857	\$1,743,758	\$10,717,615	8.03%
Professional Development	\$738,433	\$770,407	\$1,508,840	1.13%
Instructional Materials & Tech	\$2,228,353	\$2,001,263	\$4,229,616	3.17%

Total Expenditures (continued)

	Appropriations	Grants & Revolving	Total All Funds	Function as % of Total
Guidance / Testing	\$2,750,433	\$192,488	\$2,942,921	2.21%
Pupil Services	\$7,306,114	\$5,023,309	\$12,329,423	9.24%
Operations & Maintenance	\$9,681,501	\$79,996	\$9,761,497	7.23%
Insurance / Retirement	\$20,261,951	\$1,104,741	\$21,366,692	16.02%
Out-of-District	\$14,345,147	\$2,004,725	\$16,349,872	12.26%
TOTAL	\$113,433,988	\$19,954,219	\$133,388,207	100.00%

Per Pupil Cost
Comparison of Franklin County vs. State

- Department of Education requires schools to report annual financial information by eleven (11) Functional Categories and by sixty-three (63) Sub-Functions
- The slides below compare the eleven Functional Categories for Per Pupil Cost for Franklin County vs. the Average Per Pupil Cost for all schools within the State

Why Use Average State Per Pupil Expenditures

- Use of average State Per Pupil Expenditures allows the use of a benchmark that is understood in the public school arena.
- When used as a benchmark, we are not establishing this number as a goal, but as a reference relating the base (Franklin County) to the overall state financial results.
- The use of the benchmark allows the reader to better understand the relevance of the number being compared.
- Accordingly, results drawn from the analysis can only show a “potential” savings or need. In the end, a more detailed analysis must be conducted to more precisely measure the opportunities for savings or need.

Considerations when Comparing Per Pupil Cost

- State Average Per Pupil Costs include all state public schools; both academic and vocational schools.
- Vocational schools tend to be more costly to operate and these higher costs can increase the state PPC averages.
- Salaries in the large metropolitan areas tend to be higher than in Western Mass and rural areas, again possibly increasing the state PPC averages.
- For these reasons, when analyzing FC Per Pupil Costs, one must remember that the discrepancy between FC and the state may be greater than the absolute values shown in the charts.

Analysis of Per Pupil Cost #1

	FC PPC	State Average PPC	(Over) Under State
Administration	\$521	\$401	(\$119)
Instructional Leadership	\$901	\$770	(\$131)
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$4,427	\$4,514	\$87
Other Teaching Services	\$1,157	\$819	(\$338)
Professional Development	\$163	\$222	\$60
Instructional Materials & Tech	\$457	\$356	(\$101)
Guidance / Testing	\$318	\$328	\$10
Pupil Services	\$1,331	\$1,080	(\$250)
Operations & Maintenance	\$1,054	\$1,014	(\$40)
Insurance / Retirement	\$2,307	\$1,928	(\$378)
Out-of-District	\$13,162	\$19,341	6179
TOTAL	\$12,697	\$11,858	(\$839)

Analysis of Per Pupil Cost #2a

	(Over) Under State PPC	FC Costs at State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase)	Cumulative Potential Savings
Insurance / Retirement	(\$378)	\$17,863,270	\$3,503,422	\$3,503,422
Other Teaching Services	(\$338)	\$7,585,510	\$3,132,105	\$6,635,527
Pupil Services	(\$250)	\$10,009,026	\$2,320,397	\$8,955,924
Instructional Leadership	(\$131)	\$7,133,636		
Administration	(\$119)	\$3,717,535		
Instructional Materials & Tech	(\$101)	\$3,296,416		
Operations & Maintenance	(\$40)	\$9,395,320		
Guidance / Testing	\$10	\$3,038,891		
Professional Development	\$60	\$2,060,758		
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$87	\$41,812,567		
Out-of-District	\$6,179	\$24,025,626		

Analysis of Per Pupil Cost #2b

	(Over) Under State PPC	FC Costs at State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase)	Cumulative Potential Savings
Insurance / Retirement	(\$378)	\$17,863,270	\$3,503,422	\$3,503,422
Other Teaching Services	(\$338)	\$7,585,510	\$3,132,105	\$6,635,527
Pupil Services	(\$250)	\$10,009,026	\$2,320,397	\$8,955,924
Instructional Leadership	(\$131)	\$7,133,636	\$1,216,455	\$10,172,379
Administration	(\$119)	\$3,717,535	\$1,105,875	\$11,278,253
Instructional Materials & Tech	(\$101)	\$3,296,416	\$933,200	\$12,211,453
Operations & Maintenance	(\$40)	\$9,395,320	\$366,177	\$12,577,630
Guidance / Testing	\$10	\$3,038,891		
Professional Development	\$60	\$2,060,758		
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$87	\$41,812,567		
Out-of-District	\$6,179	\$24,025,626		

Analysis of Per Pupil Cost #2c

	(Over) Under State PPC	FC Costs at State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase)	Cumulative Potential Savings
Insurance / Retirement	(\$378)	\$17,863,270	\$3,503,422	\$3,503,422
Other Teaching Services	(\$338)	\$7,585,510	\$3,132,105	\$6,635,527
Pupil Services	(\$250)	\$10,009,026	\$2,320,397	\$8,955,924
Instructional Leadership	(\$131)	\$7,133,636	\$1,216,455	\$10,172,379
Administration	(\$119)	\$3,717,535	\$1,105,875	\$11,278,253
Instructional Materials & Tech	(\$101)	\$3,296,416	\$933,200	\$12,211,453
Operations & Maintenance	(\$40)	\$9,395,320	\$366,177	\$12,577,630
<u>INVESTMENT REQUIRED</u>				
Guidance / Testing	\$10	\$3,038,891	(\$95,970)	\$12,481,660
Professional Development	\$60	\$2,060,758	(\$551,918)	\$11,929,742
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$87	\$41,812,567	(\$804,337)	\$11,125,405
Total Potential Savings				\$11,125,405

Analysis of Per Pupil Cost #2d

	(Over) Under State PPC	FC Costs at State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase)	Cumulative Potential Savings
Insurance / Retirement	(\$378)	\$17,863,270	\$3,503,422	\$3,503,422
Other Teaching Services	(\$338)	\$7,585,510	\$3,132,105	\$6,635,527
Pupil Services	(\$250)	\$10,009,026	\$2,320,397	\$8,955,924
Instructional Leadership	(\$131)	\$7,133,636	\$1,216,455	\$10,172,379
Administration	(\$119)	\$3,717,535	\$1,105,875	\$11,278,253
Instructional Materials & Tech	(\$101)	\$3,296,416	\$933,200	\$12,211,453
Operations & Maintenance	(\$40)	\$9,395,320	\$366,177	\$12,577,630
<u>INVESTMENT REQUIRED</u>				
Guidance / Testing	\$10	\$3,038,891	(\$95,970)	\$12,481,660
Professional Development	\$60	\$2,060,758	(\$551,918)	\$11,929,742
Classroom Teachers/Specialists	\$87	\$41,812,567	(\$804,337)	\$11,125,405
Total Potential Savings				\$11,125,405
Out-of-District (Should Maintain)	\$6,179	\$24,025,626	0	\$11,125,405

Insurance, Retirement & Other

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Insurance for Active Employees (5200)	13,743,761	(356.32)	10,443,021	3,300,740	-31.61%
Insurance for Retired School Employees (5250)	3,438,343	(64.85)	2,837,595	600,748	-21.17%
Other Non-Employee Insurance (5260)	593,999	(14.71)	457,710	136,289	-29.78%
Potential Savings				4,079,242	
Short Term Interest RAN's (5400)	52,195	18.86	226,863	(174,668)	76.99%
Employer Retirement Contributions (5100)	3,369,833	43.30	3,770,986	(401,153)	10.64%
Unlikely Cost Increase				(575,821)	

Major Components of Other Teaching Services

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Non-Clerical Paraprofs./Instructional Assistants (2330)	6,909,472	(271.48)	4,394,604	2,514,868	-57.23%
Medical/Therapeutic Services (2320)	1,906,261	(32.00)	1,609,811	296,450	-18.42%
Librarians and Media Center Directors (2340)	966,512	(28.27)	704,674	261,838	-37.16%
Potential Savings				3,132,105	

Pupil Services

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Food Salaries and Other Expenses (3400)	3,781,480	(83.10)	3,011,656	769,824	-25.56%
Medical/Health Services (3200)	1,799,497	(75.15)	1,103,375	696,122	-63.09%
In-District Transportation (3300)	4,486,021	(62.30)	3,908,919	577,102	-14.76%
Other Student Body Activities (3520)	933,466	(45.81)	509,122	424,344	-83.35%
Athletics (3510)	1,297,247	(23.46)	1,079,939	217,308	-20.12%
Attendance and Parent Liaison Services (3100)	11,212	13.71	138,211	(126,999)	91.89%
School Security (3600)	20,500	25.62	257,803	(237,303)	92.05%
Potential Savings				2,320,397	

Major Components of Instructional Leadership

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
School Leadership-Building (2210)	4,881,289	(75.51)	4,181,822	699,467	-16.73%
Curriculum Directors (Supervisory) (2110)	1,971,486	(54.76)	1,464,189	507,297	-34.65%
Building Technology (2250)	461,359	(20.46)	271,791	189,568	-69.75%
Instructional Coordinators and Team Leaders (2315)	521,993	(11.95)	411,299	110,694	-26.91%
Curriculum Leaders/Dept Heads-Building Level (2220)	461,241	14.75	597,866	(136,625)	22.85%
Department Heads (Non-Supervisory) (2120)	52,723	16.62	206,669	(153,946)	74.49%
Potential Savings				1,216,455	

Major Components of Administration Cost

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if FC Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Superintendent (1210)	1,479,617	(85.49)	687,722	791,895	-115.15%
Business and Finance (1410)	1,633,682	(32.79)	1,329,961	303,721	-22.84%
Other District-Wide Administration (1230)	396,742	(18.10)	229,086	167,656	-73.18%
School Committee (1110)	281,315	(9.89)	189,716	91,599	-48.28%
Assistant Superintendents (1220)	67,752	17.81	232,699	(164,947)	70.88%
Potential Savings	4,823,410			1,105,875	

Major Components – Instructional Materials, Equipment & Technology

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Other Instructional Services (2440)	1,668,913	(105.10)	695,318	973,595	-140.02%
Classroom Instructional Technology (2451)	572,489	(30.02)	294,394	278,095	-94.46%
General Supplies (2430)	742,627	(11.53)	635,847	106,780	-16.79%
Instructional Equipment (2420)	45,939	26.53	291,708	(245,769)	84.25%
Textbooks & Related Software/Media/Materials (2410)	507,259	27.17	758,959	(251,700)	33.16%
Potential Savings				933,107	

Operations & Maintenance

	FC Total All Funds FY 2007	PPC (Over) under State Average	Total Costs if F C Per Pupil Costs @ State Averages	Potential Savings / (Increase) in Costs	Percentage (Higher) / Lower than State PPC
Heating of Buildings (420)	1,945,029	(71.94)	1,278,641	666,388	-52.12%
Utility Services (4130)	2,332,832	(26.12)	2,090,865	241,967	-11.57%
Maintenance of Grounds (4210)	570,044	(21.00)	375,542	194,502	-51.79%
Maintenance of Equipment (4230)	353,446	(13.80)	225,566	127,880	-56.69%
Maintenance of Buildings (4220)	1,017,619	81.93	1,776,554	(758,935)	42.72%
Potential Savings				366,177	

Another Look at Administrative Overhead

	Franklin County	Framlingham	Plymouth	Quincy
Districts	17	1	1	1
Schools	36	13	14	18
Students Not Including FCVT	9,248	8,038	8,312	8,883
Superintendent of Schools	8.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Assistant/Associate/ Vice Superintendents	1.0		2.0	1.0
School Business Official	6.1	1.0	1.0	1.0
Other District Wide Administrators	4.9	18.8	5.0	3.5
Supervisor/Director of Guidance	2.0			
Supervisor/Director of Pupil Personnel			1.0	1.0
Special Education Administrator	8.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Arts	0.1	0.6	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord of Assessment			1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord of Curriculum	6.7	1.0		1.0
Supervisor/Director/Coord: English	0.4	1.8		1.0
Supervisor/Director/Coord: English	0.3	0.6	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Foreign Language	0.5	0.6		
Supervisor/Director/Coord: History/Social St	0.5	0.6	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Library/Media				0.3
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Mathematics	0.3	0.6	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Reading	2.1			
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Science	0.5	0.6	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord: Technology	3.1	0.4	1.0	
Supervisor/Director/Coord Professional Dev	0.2			
School Nurse Leader	0.7		1.0	1.0
Total District Administrators	45.4	28.6	19.0	12.8
Pupils Per Administrator	203.9	281.0	437.6	692.4

Potential Administrative Savings

	Franklin County	Franklin County	Total Franklin County	Model #1	Model #2	Model #3	Franklin County
	Franklin County Voc Tech	17 Academic Districts	17 Academic Districts Plus FC VocTech	One District Including FC Voc Tech	Two Academic Districts Plus FC Voc Tech	Five Academic Districts Plus FC Voc Tech	Estimated Cost Per FTE (Including Fringe Benefits)
Chairs	1	17	18.0	1	3	6	
Schools	1	36	37	37	37	37	
Students Including FCVT	525	9,248	9773.0	9,773	9,773	9,773	
Superintendent of Schools	1.0	8.0	9.0	1.0	3.0	6.0	\$142,000
Assistant/Associate/ Vice Superintendents		1.0	1.0	3.0	2.0	0.0	\$98,000
School Business Official	1.0	6.1	7.1	1.0	3.0	6.0	\$94,000
Other District Wide Administrators		4.9	4.9	5.0	8.0	6.0	\$75,000
Supervisor/Director of Guidance		2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	\$75,000
Supervisor/Director of Pupil Personnel	0.5		0.5	1.0	2.0	0.0	\$110,000
Special Education Administrator	0.5	8.0	8.5	2.0	3.0	6.0	\$110,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Arts		0.1	0.1	1.0	1.0	0.0	\$75,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord of Assessment			0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$75,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord of Curriculum	1.0	6.7	7.7	1.0	2.0	2.0	\$97,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. English		0.4	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. English		0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Foreign Language		0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. History/Social St		0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Library/Media			0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Mathematics		0.3	0.3	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Reading		2.1	2.1	1.0	2.0	2.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Science		0.5	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord. Technology	1.0	3.1	4.1	1.0	2.0	2.0	\$70,000
Supervisor/Director/Coord Professional Dev		0.2	0.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
School Nurse Leader		0.7	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0	\$70,000
Total District Administrators	6.0	46.4	50.4	26.0	37.5	46.6	
Pupils Per Administrator	105.0	203.9	194.1	375.9	260.6	214.8	
Total Cost of District Administrators	\$613,000	\$4,458,280	\$4,872,290	\$2,182,000	\$3,273,000	\$4,120,000	
Potential Savings:				\$2,780,290	\$1,689,290	\$862,290	
Average Cost per FTE	\$102,600	\$98,309	\$98,735	\$83,923	\$87,280	\$90,649	

Note: Estimated Compensation based on Highest FY 2008 salaries plus 30% fringe benefits

Summary of Findings

- \$11 to \$12 Million of potential cost savings have been identified above
- To achieve a significant portion of these savings, a restructuring or reorganizing of the educational delivery system likely will be required
- Likewise, the analysis has shown that there are major areas where investments can/should be made
- These areas of investment are primarily in the direct academic and student support areas, not in overhead areas
- Available savings could provide the funding needed to restructure organizationally, and to increase funding in under-funded areas, needing new/improved efficiencies, effectiveness and programs for the delivery of academic and support services

Summary of Findings (continued)

- It should be beneficial to include Franklin County Voc Tech in any reorganization or revised delivery system
- Both cost savings and opportunities for expanded academic programming might be possible by including FC Voc Tech
- All reorganization options should be further evaluated and potential cost savings identified and incorporated in future planning initiatives
- The potential for the savings tends to vary, depending upon the approaches adapted for reorganization, collaboration or organizational consolidation
- The potential cost savings (as presented) could be greater because of the difference in economic factors between the state average PPC and those of Franklin County

Overall Summary of Findings

- This analysis indicates that available savings could provide the funding needed to restructure organizationally and to increase funding in under-funded areas, to improved efficiencies, effectiveness and programs for the delivery of academic and support services in Franklin County
- This analysis using 2007 as a benchmark should be used for measuring progress going forward

NESED EC Study

APPENDIX C

Franklin County Project

FRANKLIN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS SURVEY

In advance of anticipated changes by state government, elected and educational leaders in Franklin County have been working on a project over the past two years to review how public schools are organized in our county and to generate ideas and plans that provide sustainable approaches to quality education in the future.

Two consulting firms have been retained to assist with this project. The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) is providing expert evaluation of data and operations based on its extensive experience with projects in other states and educational systems. Alan Hurwitz Associates was retained to facilitate a process of collecting stakeholder input through a series of focus groups conducted in October 2008.

Understanding that not everyone who may be interested was able to attend the focus groups, this survey is intended as an additional opportunity for stakeholders, including members of the public, to offer their ideas and input. Thank you for taking the time to share your perspective.

Responses will be accepted until 12:00 noon on Tuesday, January 6, 2009. Copies of the final Report, which will be based upon data, interviews, focus groups and survey responses, will be available in the Office of each Superintendent of Schools and at the following websites: www.franklincountyeducation.info, www.gcc.mass.edu and www.frcog.org.

1. From the list below, please choose the one response that most closely describes how you see your role in relation to public education in Franklin County.

- Franklin County Parent/Taxpayer
- Franklin County Student/Alumnus
- Franklin County Municipal Government Leader-elected or appointed
- Franklin County Public School Employee
- Franklin County Town Employee
- Franklin County Business

2. Are you satisfied with the quality of your district's elementary education?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your district's secondary (high school) education?

- Very satisfied
- Somewhat satisfied
- Not at all satisfied

Franklin County Project

4. Please rate the following items in terms of their importance to you in elementary education.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Community school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small class sizes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MCAS scores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity of curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extra-curricular options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping cost to municipality constrained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local control and decision-making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)				

5. Please rate the following items in terms of their importance to you in secondary education.

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Community school	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Small class sizes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
MCAS scores	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Diversity of curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Extra-curricular options	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Access to administrators	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Keeping cost to municipality constrained	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Local control and decision-making	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports program	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Virtual High School	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Graduation rate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advanced placement courses	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other (please specify)				

Franklin County Project

6. Under conditions of limited local funding and limited state funding, please indicate what suggestions you have to maintain and enhance the quality of education in Franklin County.

7. Under conditions of limited local funding and limited state funding, please indicate what suggestions you have to make education in Franklin County more efficient, or suggestions you have to achieve cost savings.

Franklin County Project

1. From the list below, please choose the one response that most closely describes how you see your role in relation to public education in Franklin County.

	answered question	272
	skipped question	0
	Response Percent	Response Count
Franklin County Parent/Taxpayer	66.9%	182
Franklin County Student/Alumnus	0.0%	0
Franklin County Municipal Government	10.3%	28
Leader-elected or appointed		
Franklin County Public School Employee	20.2%	55
Franklin County Town Employee	2.2%	6
Franklin County Business	0.4%	1

2. Are you satisfied with the quality of your district's elementary education?

	answered question	268
	skipped question	4
	Response Percent	Response Count
<u>Very satisfied</u>	66.0%	177
Somewhat satisfied	27.6%	74
Not at all satisfied	6.3%	17

3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your district's secondary (high school) education?

	<u>answered question</u>	<u>267</u>
	<u>skipped question</u>	<u>5</u>
	Response Percent	Response Count
<u>Very satisfied</u>	49.1%	131
Somewhat satisfied	43.8%	117
Not at all satisfied	7.1%	19

4. Please rate the following items in terms of their importance to you in elementary education.

answered question 272

3. Are you satisfied with the quality of your district's secondary (high school) education?

	skipped question				0
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Response Count
Community school	71.6% (194)	16.6% (45)	9.6% (26)	2.2% (6)	271
Small class sizes	73.1% (198)	20.3% (55)	5.2% (14)	1.5% (4)	271
MCAS scores	9.6% (26)	29.3% (79)	35.2% (95)	25.9% (70)	270
Diversity of curriculum	50.6% (137)	37.6% (102)	10.7% (29)	1.1% (3)	271
Extra-curricular options	26.2% (71)	45.8% (124)	21.4% (58)	6.6% (18)	271
Quality of teachers	93.4% (253)	6.3% (17)	0.4% (1)	0.0% (0)	271
Quality of administrators	74.0% (199)	24.2% (65)	1.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	269
Access to administrators	55.0% (148)	34.2% (92)	9.3% (25)	1.5% (4)	269
Keeping cost to municipality constrained	23.5% (64)	46.0% (125)	27.6% (75)	2.9% (8)	272
Local control and decision-making	67.4% (182)	21.5% (58)	10.0% (27)	1.1% (3)	270

Other (please specify) 64

5. Please rate the following items in terms of their importance to you in secondary education.

	answered question				270
	skipped question				2
	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	Response Count
Community school	42.5% (114)	34.3% (92)	19.0% (51)	4.1% (11)	268
Small class sizes	49.8% (134)	38.7% (104)	10.4% (28)	1.1% (3)	269
MCAS scores	13.9% (37)	36.0% (96)	29.2% (78)	21.0% (56)	267
Diversity of curriculum	55.6% (149)	37.3% (100)	5.6% (15)	1.5% (4)	268
Extra-curricular options	46.4% (124)	40.1% (107)	12.4% (33)	1.1% (3)	267
Quality of teachers	93.7% (252)	5.9% (16)	0.0% (0)	0.4% (1)	269
Quality of administrators	75.0% (201)	23.1% (62)	1.9% (5)	0.0% (0)	268
Access to administrators	51.3% (137)	36.3% (97)	10.9% (29)	1.5% (4)	267
Keeping cost to municipality	27.1% (72)	46.2% (123)	24.1% (64)	2.6% (7)	266

5. Please rate the following items in terms of their importance to you in secondary education.

constrained Local control and decision- making	57.0% (151)	27.5% (73)	14.3% (38)	1.1% (3)	265
Sports program	21.9% (58)	41.5% (110)	28.7% (76)	7.9% (21)	265
Virtual High School	6.8% (17)	22.8% (57)	33.6% (84)	36.8% (92)	250
Graduation rate	59.8% (158)	32.2% (85)	5.7% (15)	2.3% (6)	264
Advanced placement courses	44.5% (118)	42.3% (112)	11.7% (31)	1.5% (4)	265

Other (please specify) 60

6. Under conditions of limited local funding and limited state funding, please indicate what suggestions you have to maintain and enhance the quality of education in Franklin County.

answered question 197
skipped question 75

**Response
Count**

197

7. Under conditions of limited local funding and limited state funding, please indicate what suggestions you have to make education in Franklin County more efficient, or suggestions you have to achieve cost savings.

answered question 185
skipped question 87

**Response
Count**

185

NESDEC Study

APPENDIX D



New England School Development Council

28 Lord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752 • Tel: 508-461-9444 • www.nesdec.org

THE FUTURE OF EDUCATION IN FRANKLIN COUNTY INTERIM REPORT

February 12, 2009

**New England School Development Council
(NESDEC)**

THE NESDEC TEAM

Joe Cronin - Team leader

Don Kennedy

Dick Sulc

Art Bettencourt

NESDEC's Goal

- . . .to provide options and models for consideration, and as a context for future decision-making.

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATES **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Form a collaborative with the help of Franklin County Council of Regional Governments
- Formation of a 501(c)(3) to accept private and corporate contributions and grants
- Identified \$1,200,000 (number has been questioned) in potential annual savings especially in SPED and regular transportation
- Other additional revenues from grant writing

PMA RECOMMENDATIONS (cont.)

- Franklin County Superintendents have agreed to meet to consider forms of collaboration and to pursue economies.
- First step: preparation of a menu of possible joint purchases, and planning in the spirit of seeking efficiencies and improvements in services; coordinated by Kevin Courtney. Appreciation to Senator Rosenberg who helped identify state grant and resources.

ALAN HURWITZ ASSOCIATES (AHA)

(Alan Hurwitz and Len Lubinsky)

- Important local values include “uniqueness” parent access, and accountability of schools to the community.
- The importance of geography, the diversity of Franklin County versus centralization of authority.
- School budget busters include School Choice, Charters and SPED.
- There are many concerns about the state approach and priorities for the county.
- There is skepticism about any savings resulting from consolidations.

AHA (continued)

- “Cooperation”, “collaboration”, “consolidation”: legal definitions? Is one district the only model?
- Sharing is possible on a wide range of resources: SPED, teachers, and business matters.
- The focus on educational quality must be central.
- There are financial weaknesses with the status quo, short term and long term.
- There is confusion about the process, the flow of information.

AHA (continued)

- Teachers (some) would contribute pay, if the savings went to their schools.
- There is openness to considering fewer districts, even a county district, provided the authority (certain key decisions) remained in the current districts.
- Special education administrators will explore the return of out-of-district placements.

AHA SUMMARY

- The AHA consultants concluded that many persons knew what they wanted or didn't want. Many citizens would like to see options displayed, and to know more about the context of the decisions.

NESDEC WEB-BASED SURVEY (272 RESPONSES)

Commentary

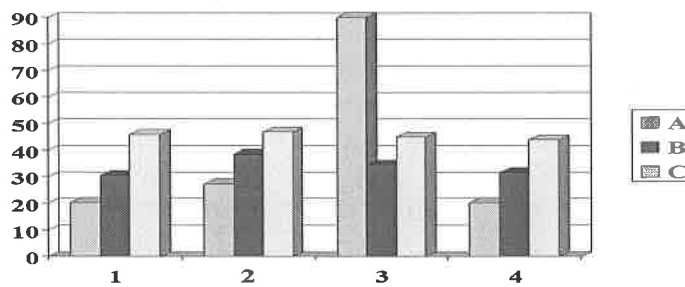
- Some parents emphasized how much they supported the long-standing opportunity to send children to their choice of High Schools.
- Both AHA focus groups and the NESDEC survey showed strong support for teacher quality, local control and small community schools.
- Many parents want more art, music, drama, and P.E. restored to the school day.
- Many parents support collaboration (purchasing, transportation, special education) and the search for economies.

NESDEC SURVEY (continued)

- Respondents believe that state and federal government should contribute more funds to special education, transportation, and choice (including charter schools).
- There is support for organizing certain county-wide services, including the search for external funds, collaboration, and achieving savings from fewer administrators.



DEMOGRAPHY & ENROLLMENT TRENDS

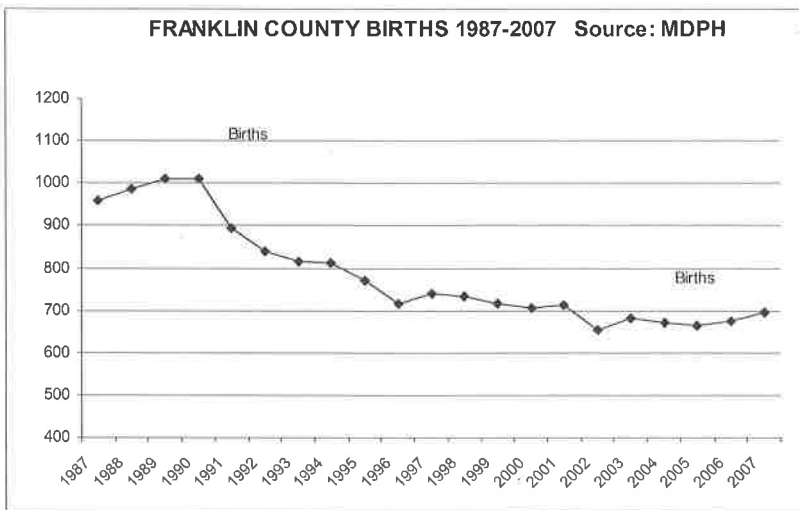


FRANKLIN COUNTY POPULATION, 1980-2020

	U.S. CENSUS	MISER
1980	64,317	
1990	70,092	
2000	71,535	
2001	71,601	
2002	71,820	
2003	71,864	
2004	71,918	
2005	71,913	
2006	71,706	
2007	71,602	
2010		72,375
2020		73,806

Sources: U.S. Census 1980-2000; U.S. Census Estimates 2000-07; MA Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) at UMass Amherst projections for U.S. Census Bureau in 2003

FRANKLIN COUNTY BIRTHS 1987-2007 Source: MDPH



Franklin County births have been quite flat since 1996...and appear to have bottomed out. Most children born in that year entered Kindergarten in 2001, and are now in Grade 7. On a county-wide basis, it appears that most of the K-6 enrollment decline already has occurred. Grades 7-12 still have somewhat larger enrollments left over from their earlier elementary school days. These data have special meaning as we wrestle with the question: "How far will Franklin County enrollments continue to fall?"

Franklin County Age 0-19 Population 1980-2020

Ages	1980	1990	2000	2010 est.	2020 est.
0-4	4,115	5,069	3,725	3,626	3,727
5-9	4,483	5,095	4,522	3,620	3,723
10-14	4,773	4,477	5,346	3,999	3,900
15-19	5,245	4,374	4,909	4,446	3,581
TOTAL	18,616	19,015	18,502	15,691	14,931

Sources: 1980-2000 U.S. Census; 2010-2020 projection of population by MA Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) for U.S. Census Bureau

Franklin County Age 5-17 Population 1980-2020

Ages	1980	1990	2000	2010 est.	2020 est.
5-17	12,403	12,196	12,813	10,287	9,768
K-12 Public School Enrollment in County	11,479 (93% of age 5-17 population)	10,887 (89% of age 5-17 population)	10,761 (84% of age 5-17 population)		

Sources: 1980-2000 K-12 Enrollment, MA Department of Education; in 2008-09 K-12 county-wide enrollment was 9,322 students + 446 PK



Franklin County Historical Enrollment

School District: Franklin County

Date: 4/9/2009

Historical Enrollment By Grade

Birth Year	Births	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12	
1998	814	1998-99	598	732	793	879	905	910	951	993	985	998	998	998	998	740	722	7	11301	11839
1999	812	1999-00	557	770	753	805	815	860	910	914	868	888	883	817	804	876	5	11028	11615	
2000	771	2000-01	496	735	785	779	792	805	863	925	830	887	949	839	751	684	0	10783	11200	
2001	718	2001-02	538	723	766	781	732	803	870	938	844	837	902	820	735	668	0	10485	11015	
2002	711	2002-03	524	730	704	739	800	739	817	880	908	859	913	801	744	670	0	10172	10561	
2003	732	2003-04	448	731	758	664	721	784	729	811	831	918	827	825	794	684	5	10180	10520	
2004	717	2004-05	451	650	734	788	685	720	802	908	777	822	898	760	747	717	2	10070	10321	
2005	700	2005-06	498	708	663	734	721	685	785	789	701	781	884	858	758	660	0	9753	10221	
2006	714	2006-07	495	684	721	693	722	711	669	742	761	767	844	805	646	762	7	9644	10139	
2007	670	2007-08	519	638	712	723	638	731	711	708	705	724	781	780	743	723	12	9447	9965	
2008	683	2008-09	448	701	648	760	701	691	751	721	701	700	823	710	754	715	14	9322	9768	

Historical Enrollment in Grade Combinations

Year	PK-5	PK-8	K-8	R-4	5-8	6-8	7-8	7-12	9-12
1998-99	5828	6781	8103	7865	3707	2756	1823	5731	2308
1999-00	5678	6592	6335	7811	3638	2688	1778	5418	2342
2000-01	5588	6311	5812	7538	3534	2551	1728	4848	2223
2001-02	5711	6148	5818	7350	3495	2619	1681	4880	2185
2002-03	5662	5951	5427	7183	3462	2045	1750	4950	2194
2003-04	4838	5560	5209	6848	3270	2550	1730	4872	2233
2004-05	4725	5423	5003	6692	3160	2388	1680	4861	2281
2005-06	4784	5553	5055	6537	3020	2271	1482	4889	2207
2006-07	4725	5487	4892	6440	2880	2210	1408	4605	2197
2007-08	4709	5428	4880	6388	2888	2187	1478	4540	2067
2008-09	4645	5380	4820	6321	2873	2122	1401	4388	2067

Historical Percentage Changes

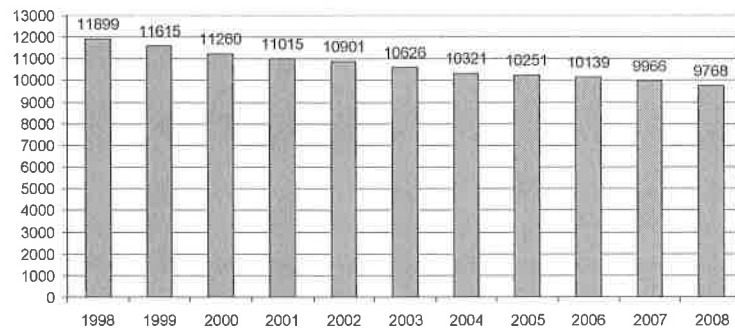
Year	Total	Diff.	%
1998-99	11301	0	0.0%
1999-00	11028	-273	-2.4%
2000-01	10783	-245	-2.2%
2001-02	10485	-298	-2.8%
2002-03	10172	-313	-3.0%
2003-04	10180	8	0.1%
2004-05	9970	-210	-2.1%
2005-06	9753	-217	-2.2%
2006-07	9644	-109	-1.1%
2007-08	9447	-197	-2.0%
2008-09	9322	-125	-1.3%
Change 1998-2008		-1879	-17.3%

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Franklin County Historical Enrollment

PK-12, 1998-2008



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Franklin County Projected Enrollment

School District: Franklin County

Date: 4/9/2009

Enrollment Projections By Grade*																			
Year	Births	School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	UNGR	K-12	PK-12
2003	685	2003-04	445	791	645	729	721	691	731	721	701	700	623	715	734	755	72	9122	9298
2004	675	2004-05	445	780	779	616	693	704	698	745	688	693	744	769	668	663	0	9184	9314
2005	688	2005-06	454	830	877	728	668	667	743	704	733	703	743	668	719	630	0	9048	9306
2006	679	2006-07	454	663	673	667	712	644	722	710	663	728	700	708	658	674	0	8800	9316
2007	608	2007-08	454	667	662	664	671	700	691	710	668	667	709	667	658	642	0	8848	9406
2008	690	2008-09	469	679	714	662	657	676	724	666	668	690	734	733	650	617	0	9022	9368
2009	678	2009-10	479	678	667	724	676	671	693	638	639	691	740	662	658	614	0	8987	9387
2010	661	2010-11	474	672	667	663	707	660	676	666	707	639	740	660	638	640	0	8974	9348
2011	664	2011-12	476	678	669	667	681	719	666	664	669	711	663	657	656	637	0	8923	9361
2012	666	2012-13	482	678	660	666	664	668	719	664	662	670	700	634	643	612	0	8927	9309
2013	652	2013-14	488	672	660	702	683	684	699	728	672	688	718	700	643	640	0	8811	9297

*Projections should be updated on an annual basis. Based on an estimate of births Based on children already born Based on students already enrolled

Projected Enrollment in Grade Combinations*							
Year	PK-5	PK-6	K-6	K-8	9-12	7-12	6-12
2003-04	4843	5388	6929	6233	2073	2127	1668
2004-05	4451	5339	6860	6221	2049	2100	1459
2005-06	4920	6271	6817	6552	2603	2440	1638
2006-07	4844	6261	6808	6226	2424	2150	1621
2007-08	4620	6272	6850	6320	2346	2084	1381
2008-09	4928	6204	6766	6188	2208	2044	1388
2009-10	4360	6310	6840	6167	2120	2027	1337
2010-11	4353	6253	6809	6158	2113	2014	1338
2011-12	4610	6301	6820	6200	2120	2011	1377
2012-13	4634	6339	6846	6173	2126	2028	1346
2013-14	4614	6332	6853	6181	2168	2063	1338

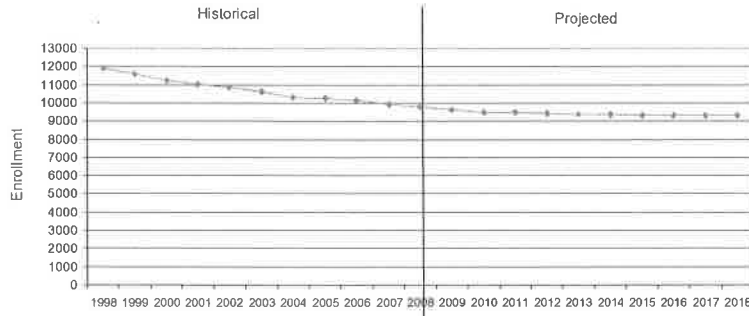
Projected Percentage Changes			
Year	Total	Diff.	%
2004-05	8924	9	0.1%
2005-06	9184	+260	+2.9%
2006-07	9046	-138	-1.5%
2007-08	9000	-46	-0.5%
2008-09	9022	22	0.2%
2009-10	8987	-35	-0.4%
2010-11	8923	-64	-0.7%
2011-12	8927	4	0.0%
2012-13	8811	-116	-1.3%
2013-14	8811	0	0.0%
Total			
Change 2004-2013	-111		-1.2%

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Franklin County Historical & Projected Enrollment

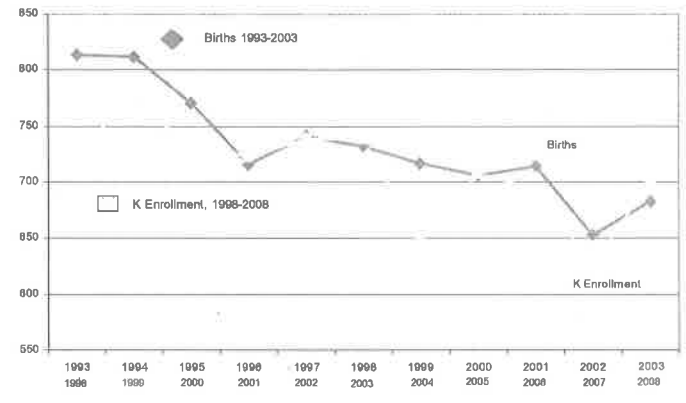
PK-12, 1998 TO 2018



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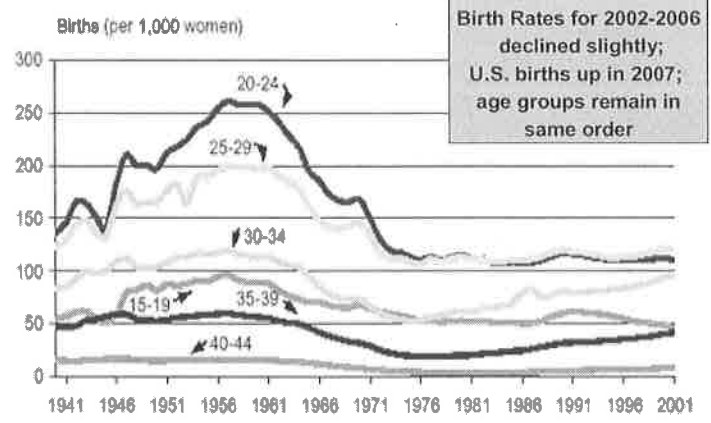


Franklin County Birth-to-Kindergarten Relationship



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Age-Specific Fertility Rates, 1940-2001



Birth Rates for 2002-2006 declined slightly; U.S. births up in 2007; age groups remain in same order

Source: AmeriStat, analysis of data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

Birth Rates by Age of Mother, 1990-2005

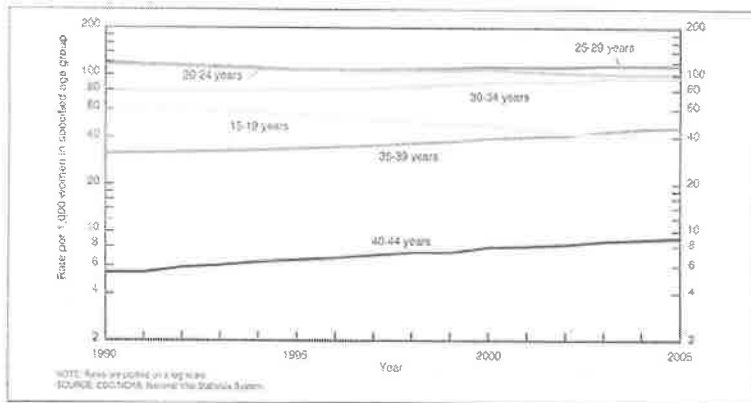
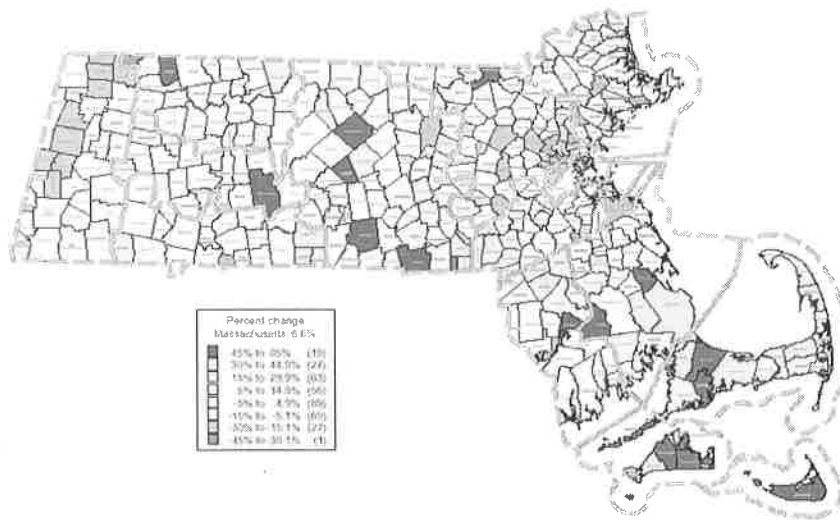


Figure 4. Birth rates by age of mother: United States, 1990-2005

Population Change Census 2000 to 2020 Middle Projection



FINDINGS

1. The number of Franklin County births that dropped in the early 1990's has leveled off over the last decade, and is now flat or growing slightly.
2. The overall county population has stabilized at nearly 72,000 during the first eight years of the 21st Century, and may increase by 2,000 persons by 2020 (MISER, UMass Amherst projection for the U.S. Census Bureau).
3. The percentage of Franklin County children, ages 5-17 not attending public schools within Franklin County, appears to have increased from 7% (1980) to 16% (2000).

FINDINGS

4. The total Franklin County public school population has declined from about 12,000 students to 10,000. After 2012, the decreases may end, and the school population is forecast to remain at between 9,000 and 9,700, and potentially higher if more of the 16-18 year olds remain in high school.
5. The Public Management Associates (Phase One) study noted that enrollment declines were heaviest in communities with paper mill or plant closings (as much as 30%) such as Greenfield and Gill-Montague, yet enrollments had increased in other communities such as Conway and Deerfield. This NESDEC study was of the total county.

**THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS WILL BE
INCLUDED IN THE FINAL REPORT**

1. The Financial Realities: Expenditures, Costs and Overhead
2. Research on District, School Size
3. What the Commonwealth Expects 2009-2018
 - a. Readiness Report
 - b. The Status of Local Control and State Responsibility
 - c. DOE Office of State Finance (08 paper)
4. Models for Consideration
5. Role of Greenfield Community College
6. Next Steps for Franklin County and the Commonwealth

**YOUR REACTIONS
IDEAS
SUGGESTIONS**

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