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# Regional School District Planning Board

# Present School Organization

- Grades PreK-6 – Each town has a School Committee and one or more elementary schools
  - Amherst and Pelham are School Union 26  
Share Superintendent and central office with Regional School District
  - Leverett and Shutesbury are in School Union 28  
Share Superintendent and central office with Erving, Wendell, and New Salem
- Grades 7-12 – Regional School District of Amherst, Leverett, Pelham and Shutesbury

# Amherst Planning Committee

- Town Meeting Created Amherst Regional School District Planning Committee (Special Town Meeting, November 9, 2011)
- Committee appointed by Moderator
  - Katherine Appy, School Committee
  - Alisa Brewer, Select Board
  - Andrew Steinberg, Finance Committee

## Process step 1 – Consider: Whether to join with other towns to form a Regional School District Planning Board (RSDPB)

- Public Meetings
- Research
- Joint meetings with other Towns in current 7-12 region
  - Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools
  - Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)
- Public Forums
  - April 11, Amherst Regional High School
  - May 24, Amherst Media

# Potential benefits of regionalization

- respond to shifting student demographics
- improve long-term fiscal stability
- address facility needs
- react to a shrinking pool of qualified administrators
- better articulate curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12
- increase district capacity to serve the academic needs of students

From Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education Research Brief “School district consolidation in Massachusetts: Opportunities and obstacles” , November 2009

# Options

- Form a new preK-12 region with all 4 towns
  - Shutesbury and Leverett withdraw from Union 28, Union 26 is dissolved, 4 towns create preK-12 region to replace current 7-12 region
- Maintain current 7-12 Region and form a new preK-6 region with all 4 towns
  - Shutesbury and Leverett withdraw from Union 28, Union 26 is dissolved, 4 towns create a new preK-6 region, current 7-12 region continues

## Process step 2 – Decide whether to propose a new region

1. Understand the educational and financial consequences
  - with assistance of experts with experience in regionalization studies
2. Consider other core issues in the formation of a region
3. Engage the community
  - Meetings at each school
  - Reports from education and finance consultants – January
  - Forums in each town – February
4. RSDPB decides whether to propose a new region

# Process step 3 – Develop a Regional Plan

(if a new region will be proposed)

1. Regional School Agreement
2. Long-range Educational Plan
3. Financial Plan



# Process step 3, continued

- **April 2013:** The RSDPB will hold a second forum in each town to explain its decision and gather input for design of a Regional School Agreement
- **June 2013:** The RSDPB will complete a draft Regional School Agreement and Long Range Educational Plan
- **July 2013:** The RSDPB will hold a third forum in each town to review the draft Regional School Agreement and Long Range Educational Plan
- **August–September 2013,** the RSDPB develops a revised version of the Regional School Agreement plus the Long Range Educational Plan  
Consultation with DESE, and finalize both on the basis of its feedback
- **October 2013:** The RSDPB will present the Regional School Agreement and the Long Range Educational Plan in a four-town forum
- **November 2013:** Each town will vote separately whether or not to approve the regional agreement – special town election required
- **December 2013:** DESE considers approval of the Regional School Agreement
- **July 1, 2014:** Assumed start date for a new region

# OUR VALUES GUIDE US

The Regional School District Planning Board's (RSDPB) work is being guided by the following values:

- Be good stewards. We received good schools from past generations, and take seriously our responsibility to invest in the future by handing off good schools to the generations that follow.
- Be fiscally responsible. Be thoughtful and realistic about cost to the towns, and understand short and long-term results of any investment.
- Provide ample opportunities for town and resident input.
- Learn about, respect, and reflect the culture of the different communities.
- Maintain the best features of current schools; capitalize on their strengths.

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