

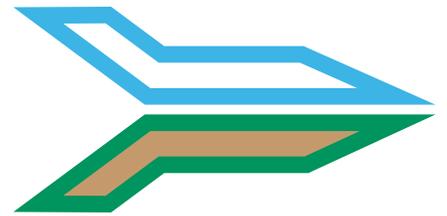


Fall 2018 Edition

Westport CSD ❖ Elizabethtown-Lewis CSD

# MERGER STUDY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## BOARD OF EDUCATION TO HOLD ADVISORY REFERENDUM VOTE ON SCHOOL MERGER *(Continued)*

Residents are invited to vote on **Tuesday, October 9, 2018 from noon until 8 PM in the hallway outside the Bulles Auditorium** on whether or not the school merger proposal should continue to be considered.

The following resolution is what will appear on the October 9th ballot for school community voters:

*"Should the Westport Central School District and the Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School District be joined together as a single district by centralization [merger]?"*

Qualified and registered voters of the school district will be able to cast their vote on Tuesday, October 9, 2018 from noon until 8 PM. Absentee ballots will be available by contacting the District Clerk at 962-8244.

**PROPOSAL VOTE**

# OCTOBER 9th

## 12pm - 8pm

Hallway outside the Bulles Auditorium



# Facts Established During the Merger Study Process

The following key facts were established during the past school year as the merger study consultants engaged with the advisory committee, the school superintendents and the district offices of both school districts:

**1** Student enrollment at both school districts has been declining, with the percent of decline at Elizabethtown-Lewis somewhat greater than the percent of decline at Westport.

**2** Student enrollment projections for both school districts suggest student enrollment will stabilize for both school districts in the near-term future.

**3** Elizabethtown-Lewis operates a pre-kindergarten program; Westport does not.

**4** 34% of secondary grades classes at Elizabethtown-Lewis enroll fewer than ten students; 60% of secondary grades classes at Westport enroll fewer than ten students.

**5** Both school districts have experienced significant reductions to student programs since year 2000.

**6** Student achievement on Regents examinations and graduation rates are more similar than different between the two school districts.



**7** Both school districts already combine most of their athletic teams, other than basketball and golf.

**8** The Elizabethtown-Lewis schoolhouse was completed in 1951. The Westport schoolhouse was completed in 1933.

**9** Both school districts have bus garages that are severely deteriorated.

**10** Outdoor athletic facilities and fields at both school districts are inadequate.

**11** Both school districts have a school bus fleet that is in good shape.

**12** Per-student operating expenses are similar between the two school districts.

**13** Full-value property wealth and the full-value per-student property wealth are essentially the same in both school districts.

**14** The merged school district would receive \$6,249,465 of incentive operating aid across a fourteen-year period.

**15** In addition to incentive operating aid, the merged school district's financial foundation would benefit from increased operating efficiencies and staffing efficiencies.

# Recommendations for the Merged School District

The final report associated with the merger study process featured specific recommendations for the prospective new school district and its associated new board of education, in the event a majority of voters in both communities vote in favor of an October 2018 advisory referendum and a December 2018 final referendum. **Examples:**

**A** Quickly begin work on a policy manual for the merged school district.

**B** Establish annual updating of multi-year student enrollment projections.

**C** Any staff reductions due to increased program efficiencies and operating efficiencies be accomplished through attrition.

**D** A Pre-K program should be established for all interested and eligible Pre-K students.

**E** A committee of elementary grades teachers and an administrator should be convened as soon as possible to examine the existing curriculum and make recommendations for a district-wide curriculum for grades pre-k through sixth grade.

**F** The new Board of Education should attempt to provide all of the high school courses currently being offered in both school districts, assuming there is a sufficient number of students interested in enrolling in those high school courses.

**G** The new Board of Education should attempt to expand the roster of elective high school courses and extra-curricular activities, clubs and programs for students.

**H** The new school board should appoint a new committee on special education and a new committee on pre-school special education.

**I** The new board of education should establish that pre-k through sixth grade would be offered at both of the existing schoolhouses; a grades 7-8 middle school program would be provided in Westport and a high school program would be offered in Elizabethtown.

**J** Within the first year of a merged district, the board of education and administration should address facilities issues for the merged school district, including comprehensive repairs and modernization of the current schoolhouses, improvement of outdoor athletic facilities and consideration of a 21st Century pre-k through 12th grade schoolhouse. Any such comprehensive repairs and modernization of existing facilities or construction of new facilities proposed by the new board of education would be subject to voter consideration.

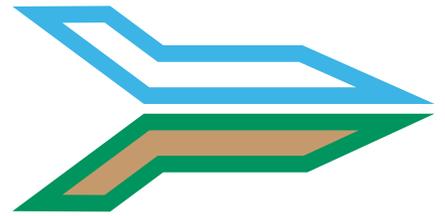
**K** Within the first year of a merged district, the board of education and administration should closely scrutinize the first budget, to ensure that the projected efficiencies are actually achieved, thus ensuring local property tax relief.

Within the first year of a merged school district, the board of education should develop a financial plan to ensure fiscal stability for the merged school district. The financial plan should give thoughtful consideration to the percentage of incentive aid used to reduce the property tax burden in the first five years following the merger.



# MERGER STUDY

ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Fall 2018 Edition

## BOARD OF EDUCATION TO HOLD ADVISORY REFERENDUM VOTE ON SCHOOL MERGER

At the September 13th regular school board meeting, the Westport CSD Board of Education voted unanimously to establish a school community vote on the proposal to merge Westport Central School with Elizabethtown-Lewis Central School. The Board of Education is asking the residents of our school district to weigh-in on the school merger proposal.

*Continues inside on pg 1*

**PUBLIC FORUM**

**OCTOBER**

**4<sup>th</sup>**

**6:00PM**

A Public Forum has been scheduled for **Thursday, October 4th at 6:00pm in the Bulles Auditorium**. This forum will serve as an opportunity for school parents and residents to be informed of the merger study proposal prior to the October 9th vote, and for residents to share feedback on the proposal.

Josh Meyer  
*Interim Superintendent of Schools*

[www.westportcs.org](http://www.westportcs.org)

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- Mr. James Carroll, Vice President
- Mr. Thomas Kohler
- Dr. Suzanne Russell
- Mr. Jason Welch

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