



OCTOBER UPDATE

Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts Sustainability Study explores five models

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Following a comprehensive data collection and review process, the 2districts8towns Steering Committee has identified the five most promising models to consider in its ongoing study and analysis of the operating and organizational structure of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts. The Sustainability Study aims to deliver the highest quality educational experiences for students in the eight towns that comprise the districts while reflecting fiscal realities.

The Steering Committee reviewed over 177 possible ideas and options that were generated from surveys, focus groups, community meetings, review of historical literature, and best practices related to rural education. These ideas were narrowed down to the most promising options after a series of 2districts8towns planning sessions held over the summer. A full progress report with more information about this process can be found [HERE](#).

Through the process of identifying sustainability models to explore further, there were a number of compelling ideas proposed by various stakeholder groups (primarily in community meetings or through surveys) that will be taken into account in the modeling process. These are ideas that could be implemented by school administration or School Committees under any future operating plan. Examples include adding more career and technical courses at the high school; utilizing a single-tier bus schedule to reduce transportation costs; or implementing effective strategies to attract and retain local students.

The five models that will be explored are:

1. **No Change.** Examine the status quo with projections into the near future if the districts remain as they are currently. No school closures.
2. **Districts Merge.** Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts become a single PK-12 regional school district with 8 towns. No school closures.
3. **Move 6th Grade.** Move students to Mohawk Trail Regional School (MTRS), making it a grade 6-12 school with a 6-8 middle school. All elementary schools become PK-5. No school closures. The two scenarios to be considered are maintaining HRSD and MTRSD as separate districts and merging the two districts into a single PK-12 district.
4. **Move 6th grade (and possibly 5th) to MTRS and close one to three elementary schools.** The three scenarios to be considered are closing one elementary school, closing two elementary schools, or having all elementary schools consolidate at the Buckland-Shelburne Elementary site.
5. **Single Campus.** All schools combine onto a single PreKindergarten-12 campus at MTRS.

The research team, in the next several months, will carefully detail the five models. Each model will be evaluated by considering several broad questions:

- Does the model improve or at least allow the districts to sustain educational quality?
- Does the model advance sustainable finances for the 8 towns in the near- and long-term?
- Does the model lead to greater district efficiency and alignment?
- Is the model feasible?

Additionally, the research team and Steering Committee will consider the impact of each model on school identity, family experience, staffing, retention/recruitment, facilities, transportation, and community partnerships

On October 10, BERK12 provided a virtual update on progress of the Sustainability Study, including an explanation of the research conducted to date and the process for identifying the five models. For those who missed that session or want to listen in again, a second session will be offered on November 14, 6:30 - 8:00 pm. The session will be held at the Mohawk Trail Regional High School Superintendents' Conference Room and can also be accessed virtually through these links:

VIDEO LINK <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83357032331>

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It is important to note that no decisions have been made, and no “favorite” solutions have been predetermined. Rather, the 2districts8towns Steering Committee has used a high-level process to capture ideas generated from stakeholders, and those ideas now need to be fully modeled to determine if they make sense, or not. Once the five models have been explored, community outreach sessions will be held to gather input and address questions. It is anticipated that these sessions will occur in January and February. Ultimately, the decision to support any change will be up to the residents of the eight towns.

Community members are encouraged to review the resources section of the [2districts8towns website](#), which includes a comprehensive progress report of work to date along with additional reports and presentations related to the study. Questions or comments can be submitted through the [CONTACT](#) link on the website. For those just becoming familiar with the Sustainability Study, a one page project overview is available [HERE](#).

For more information, contact project manager H. Jake Eberwein, jakeeberwein@gmail.com.