

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Morrisville-Eaton District Advisory Committee

FROM: Jessica Cohen and Alan Pole

RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of April 23, 2014

DATE: April 28, 2014

Present: Committee Members-David Andrews, Corinne Banker, Chris Brewer, Cynthia Busic-Snyder, Chris Doroshenko, Debra Dushko, Kyle Graves, Lauren Haswell, Jennifer Hilts, Jessica Jacobs-Broedel, Valerie Kampf, Danielle Kochman, Cooper Koehl, Les Kraft, LeeAnne Lake, Mary Maitland, Sarah Marcellus, Jamie McCarthy, Michelle Morgillo, Cliff Moses, David Palmer, Judy Parker, Jennifer Pierce, Emilie Roher, Kathy Roher

Consultants: Jessica Cohen and Alan Pole

Observers: Michael Drahos, Nick Will, Debra Everson, Jackie Groves, Nikki Doroshenko

Location: Middle School/High School Library

1. Superintendent Mike Drahos welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the committee members for agreeing to serve. Superintendent Drahos then introduced the study consultants and turned the meeting over to them.
2. Alan Pole also offered his welcome and thanked the committee members for agreeing to serve. Alan provided background on himself and then his colleague, Jessica Cohen, did the same. Committee members then introduced themselves.
3. Alan Pole reviewed why the district decided to engage in this study. Like many school districts in the state, requirements for students continue to escalate while enrollments decline and financial resources are scarcer than ever before. Business as usual is not an option and Morrisville-Eaton, like many other districts, is being proactive in trying to determine the future of its school district.
4. The future meeting dates were reviewed as shown in the table that follows. Alan indicated that the location of each meeting will be rotated

from the middle school/high school to the elementary school and that an optional tour of each building will be conducted for anyone interested starting at 5:15 pm prior to the next two meetings. Interested committee members should meet in the main lobby of the school for the tour.

<b>Meetings Begin at 6:00 pm</b> <b>**Tours Begin at 5:15 on May 15 and June 11</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Location</b>
April 23	Organization, Overview, and Enrollment Projections	MS/HS
May 15	Instructional/Extracurricular Program**	Elementary
June 11	Facilities & Transportation**	MS/HS
July 23	Staffing	Elementary
August 20	Finances	MS/HS
September 17	Options	Elementary
October 1	Review Findings & Recommendations/React to Draft Report	MS/HS

5. The procedures for distributing materials to committee members were outlined. Alan said that the consultants would make every effort to send out via e-mail the agenda and PowerPoint presentation prior to each meeting date. Meeting notes will also be emailed to the committee members after each meeting. This is the reason that e-mail communication is so important for the committee work.

6. Alan then outlined how the study process would involve the public. Essentially, every meeting of the committee is a meeting in public. Any members of the community and staff are welcome to attend and observe the committee do its work. At the end of each meeting there will always be an opportunity for observers to ask questions and/or make comments. In addition, both he and Jessica Cohen will remain after the meeting is over to answer any questions individuals care to pose.

7. Alan then presented a PowerPoint presentation that covered a number of general issues related to the merger study process including:

- Why conduct this study?
- Why closing a school may be difficult
- The two purposes of this efficiency study

- Expectations of the committee members
- The role of the consultants
- Criteria against which the final report recommendations will be benchmarked
- Common reactions people typically have about the study process
- A review of the committee meeting schedule
- Ways in which each district will inform its public throughout the study process

As part of the discussion regarding the topics listed above, the committee requested the numbers of people who voted in the merger referendum with Hamilton. The following table shows those numbers.

Community Referendum in Hamilton/Morrisville-Eaton Merger Vote			
District	# of Yes Votes	# of No Votes	% of Yes Votes
Hamilton	249	720	25.7%
Morrisville-Eaton	339	163	67.5%

The 502 people that voted in the merger referendum can be compared with the 459 people who voted on the district’s capital project in 2006 and the 278 people who voted on the 2013 school district budget.

8. Continuing with the PowerPoint presentation, Alan reviewed some background information on the district. He indicated that the district is approximately half as wealthy as the average district in New York State and, as a result, the district does receive a significant amount of its budget revenue from state aid.

Alan then turned the meeting over to Jessica Cohen.

9. Jessica introduced enrollment history and projections for Morrisville-Eaton. In doing so she discussed an unusual finding in the relationship of the number of children born in each district to those entering kindergarten five years later (the number of kindergarteners is larger than those born in the districts five years earlier). Jessica also pointed out that after 10 years of an average of 52 live births per year in the district, 71 babies were born in the district in 2012. The committee discussed reasons why these things might be happening. One suggestion was the development of a subsidized housing project that began in the district in 2010-11; another suggestion was simply that the 71 births is an anomaly. Jessica will continue to look at the live birth

data as well as the number of kindergarten children in 2014-15 and will make adjustments in the enrollment projections if appropriate.

Jessica then explained the enrollment history and projection table for the district. The K-12 student enrollment in Morrisville-Eaton has decreased from 779 in 2008-09 to 715 in 2013-14. It is projected that the enrollment will increase slightly in the future reaching 765 students in 2020-21. The committee asked for census data from the major towns in the district. This will be provided at the next committee meeting.

Jessica then showed that the district has averaged 14.4 home-schooled students per year and 31.4 students attending non-public schools per year over the past five years. She indicated that overall there does not seem to be any major trend shifts in either of these aspects that would result in a need to modify the enrollment projections.

Finally, Jessica showed that there are six non-resident students who are attending Morrisville-Eaton schools in 2013-14. It was hypothesized that this number might increase slightly because the recently negotiated teacher contract allows for Morrisville-Eaton faculty to bring their children to school in the district without the payment of tuition.

The highlights/takeaways from the presentation on enrollment projections are as follows:

- 1. Enrollment has decreased by 32% (343 students) since the 1998-99 school year.**
- 2. Over the past 10 years, enrollment has decreased by 19% (162 students).**
- 3. Projections indicate a slight increase in enrollment**

10. Jessica then asked to committee to work in groups to discuss the principles that should be addressed as we consider reorganizing the Pre-K to 12<sup>th</sup> grade programs in Morrisville-Eaton. The committees were asked to respond to the following questions:

1. What do we want to maintain in our schools?
2. What do we want to improve in our schools?
3. What can be eliminated or decreased in our schools?

The small groups had lively discussions. It was suggested that the principles to be followed in decision-making should come from the district's mission statement and its goals:

*Provide a diverse and safe learning environment that enables students to realize their full potential and become successful, productive citizens.*

*Goal 1 – To create an educational system in which all students will be critical thinkers, achieve excellence, and become lifelong learners.*

*Goal 2 – To foster an educational climate where all staff, students, and community members are treated equally with respect and dignity.*

*Goal 3 – To establish a long-term financial plan that ensures adequate resources are available to support the educational mission.*

*Goal 4 – To have a highly functioning and collaborative staff that has a positive impact on student development and achievement.*

*Goal 5 – To cultivate a partnership with parents and community members that enables us to realize the district mission.*

Reporting out of the discussions provided an opportunity to share the brainstormed ideas that were generated. The lists follow:

Committee members indicated that they wanted to maintain:

- Everything we currently have
- Small class sizes
- After school enrichment programs at the elementary school and the after school tutorials at the high school
- Two gymnasiums
- All the fields that are currently used
- The elementary playground

Committee members listed the following areas for improvement:

- AP classes
- Add an additional foreign language and begin languages earlier
- Provide more enrichment including computer opportunities
- Increase electives and clubs
- Develop an agriculture program
- Restore eliminated programs (arts, music, sports, clubs)
- Provide summer school and drivers education
- Provide opportunities for elementary students to integrate with high school students (plays, mentoring, tutoring)
- Collaborate with colleges
- Eliminating or decreasing the number of Career and Technical Education programs provided through BOCES

It was suggested that the list of what should be improved was very similar to the one that was generated during the discussions in the merger study. Following the meeting, one committee member also added the additional suggestions for the notes that the district should keep its own buses, drivers, and maintenance for buses and that team leaders and department chairs should be brought back.

11. The members of the public were then invited to introduce themselves, ask questions, and/or make comments.

At the conclusion of the questions and comments, Alan again thanked the committee members for volunteering for this work. He also asked committee members to check their personal information that was included on the committee roster and discuss any changes with either he or Jessica.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on April 23. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting. Please bring any corrections/additions and we will discuss them at the beginning of our next meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 8:35.

Looking forward to seeing you again-Thursday, May 15, 2014 at the Edward Andrews Elementary School---Tour at 5:15 pm and business meeting at 6:00 pm!

C: Michael Drahos