

Draft Report - Sept. 9, 2007

The purpose of the Merge/Collaboration Workgroup has been to look at options for combine some or all of our school operations with another school. Although we identified a number of local schools that might be candidates for such a relationship we narrowed the list to Danville and Barnet schools due to proximity. It should be noted that we have been approached, very enthusiastically, by a Monroe School Board member, Carl Johnson, at he request of the Monroe School Board. They are interested in joining CCSU as they are not part of a supervisory union. Additionally they were very interested in merging with the Peacham School. They felt that it was important for the community to keep the elementary/middle school children together but are similar to us in dealing with small numbers. However the conversation ended with Mr. Johnson stating that the board did not want to send any of the Monroe students out of town. Rob Ide and I chose not to pursue this option due to distance and the fact that we would need to be the group making compromises.

I contacted Barnet School Board chair Nancy Franks who was very receptive to talking to me. Barnet has issues of increasing numbers and little space. In the past year 2 classrooms used for specials, specifically music and Family and Consumer Science have been converted to regular classrooms. This event has meant the loss of FCS and Technology (Industrial Arts). These classrooms have been used to accommodate the added classrooms. Barnet considered moving CREEP to Peacham but not all of the board was in agreement and the CREEP parents protested. She agreed to take a look at the options for Vermont School Governance and take this to the Barnet School Board meeting. She did not sound optimistic and I did not hear back from them with interest for further discussion.

Rob Ide contacted Fred Kitchel who is on the Danville School Board. Fred attended our July meeting to discuss their ideas for collaborating with the Peacham School. He expressed sincere interest in working with us. He envisions a joint agreement to take elementary students only, possibly middle school. He is interested in keeping preschool and kindergarten in Peacham and bringing Danville students here for those grades. He added that the extra classroom space in the Peacham School could be utilized by CCSU who is looking for additional office space, thus creating income for Peacham. We had questions about specials and whether this age group takes part in specials at this time.

It is believed that this arrangement of sending students to Danville would significantly lower costs for Danville and would offer Peacham a lower cost per student while keeping the children together and close to the Peacham community. It would be closer for some families to go to Peacham. There is currently a bus service that takes middle and high school students to Danville.

The Peacham school board might better provide bus service. Current Danville busing is included in the tuition we pay to Danville.

The question was raised as to who would pay for special ed costs. Do we only pay if a student's needs go beyond the specialists in the school, such as an aid?

Fred offered that should we decide to add 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade that students could possibly come to Danville for some of their specials (Walden does this) and join Danville for sports teams.

Rob Ide is interested in seeing a model of costs if we had entered into this type of agreement 5 years ago and costs if this had been the case last year. This projection may be difficult to obtain due to time and workload at CCSU.

The pros for this arrangement include lower costs per student. It also means keeping the community of students together through 6<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Larger schools offer more possibilities for students' diverse learning styles. Larger school can offer more social possibilities. If all students, within a given grade range, attend Danville, it is expected that costs would lower for both towns.

The cons would include increased transportation for most Peacham children. There is a possibility that as a result they either travel very early or miss school sponsored breakfast. Peacham would also lose some revenues that it receives for having a school in town. We would lose the small groupings that offer more intimate learning and social environments. No mechanism for accommodating (financially), at the elementary level, the current *increasing* population of students. It is assumed that we would pay a "price" per student unless we become "*one district.*"

Oct. 8 Update  
Attachments 1, 2, 3

The attachments to the Sept. 9 report show numbers as compiled by Rob Billings at CCSU. Please refer to these for this update. These figures are a best estimate based on this year's budgets at both school.

We looked at 3 options. Option 1 sends all K-6 students to Danville while retaining choice for 7-12. Option 2 sends 1-6 to Danville. Danville sends PreK/K to Peacham. Option 3 sends all Peacham students to Danville and there are no *Choice* options. Another option is to send K-8 to Danville and retain choice for high school. We did not look at that option.

Governance of the district for the first 2 scenarios, which designates Danville for K-6, is open for discussion. Would we retain 2 separate boards and designate Danville or would we form a joint board for K-6 and a separate board for 7-12. This would have to be negotiated by the boards. The third option would be a

Unified Union District and would merge our board into one board with Peacham having smaller representation on the board.

We did not look at the option of keeping the Peacham School and designating middle and high school.

Pros:

Option 1 saves some money provided numbers stay the same or decline.

Option 2 keeps PreK/K in Peacham for school

Option 3 offers a significant savings in money to the town.

Cons:

Option 1:

If numbers increase costs will increase. (Note that for 2007-08 Peacham School has seen an increase in numbers.)

Option 2:

More costly to keep PreK/K in Peacham. Would we need a school nurse?  
Would require *Specials* teachers traveling to Peacham.

Option 1, 2 & 3:

Class sizes might be larger in Danville.

We will lose Personal Learning Plan enrichment program that was implemented last year at the recommendation of Art and Shelley Green.

Option 3:

We would lose school choice.