

Bridgewater - Pomfret Joint District School Proposal



How did we get to this point?
What Is A Joint District School?
Why would we want to join a JDS?
Educational changes in this proposal?
What are the financial implications?
Do we have other options?
What are the next steps?
How do we vote on this proposal?

How did we get here?



- In the fall of 2013 The School Boards of Barnard, Bridgewater, Pomfret, and Woodstock formed a study committee to examine the sustainability of their four elementary schools in the face of declining enrollment and rising costs.
- They looked at several possibilities for actions that would improve elementary educational opportunities and at the same time increase the efficiency of the system.
- With the support of a small study grant from the Vermont Agency of Education, the committee worked with a consultant to gather and analyze information; sought feedback from citizens through a series of local meetings and arrived at a recommendation for a “first phase” consolidation action to form a Joint Contract School between the towns of Bridgewater and Pomfret.

What is a Joint School District?



- Each town maintains its own school board as well as having representatives on the Joint Board.
- In this proposal each district will have 3 members on the Joint Board.
- The Joint Board operates school(s) in the same manner that the individual local boards do.
- Majority of voters to enter into the Agreement, 2/3rds to exit.
- This would be a NEW school. The Pomfret School would close, and reopen with a new name.

Why a Joint District Agreement?



- Education Funding in Vermont is directly tied to per pupil spending in each school.
- Fewer kids = Higher costs = higher taxes
- Fewer kids = reduction in programs and staff
- Fewer kids = less social and peer opportunities
- Higher taxes = less desirable real estate
- Higher taxes = Fewer kids



Why a Joint District Agreement?



- By joining together, we can lower costs and increase Educational and Social Opportunities for all Students.
- Allows for increased programs in several areas such as Arts and Music, Physical Education, Guidance, and other services such as School Nurse.
- Each Town maintain representation and influence over school operations.
- Preserves the Pomfret Campus as an option for WCSU students in the future.

Educational Opportunities



- Fewer multi-grade classrooms
- Increases in Arts, Physical Education, Guidance, School Nurse
- Larger peer groups and socialization opportunities
- Outstanding resources at the Pomfret campus including 30 acres of forest and trails, Cloudland and Barnard Brooks, Horizons Observatory, and athletic fields.

Financial Considerations



Savings of \$460,000 from individual school budgets

ITEM	Bridgewater	Pomfret	Joint Contract	WES
Number of students	37	53	90	90
Number of Equalized Pupils	41.61	54.91	96.52	NA
THE STATUS QUO & JOINT SCHOOL CASES				
Budgets for 2015-16	\$ 892,799	\$ 1,061,549	\$ 1,523,909	NA
Revenues including Small School Grants	\$ 203,578	\$ 190,120	\$ 393,698	NA
Education Spending	\$ 689,221	\$ 871,429	\$ 1,130,211	NA
Per pupil Education Fund spending	\$ 16,564	\$ 15,870	\$ 11,710	NA
THE TUITION CASE				
WES Tuition Rate for 2015-16	NA	NA	NA	\$ 9,800
Town Budgets for tuition costs	\$ 362,600	\$ 519,400	NA	NA
Town Budget for transportation	\$ 32,770	\$ 32,284	NA	NA
Town Budget for Special Education	\$ 47,944	\$ 50,297	NA	NA
Town Budget for SU Assessment	\$ 55,000	\$ 55,000	NA	NA
Town Budget for other expenses	\$ 60,000	\$ 100,000	NA	NA
Town Revenue for transportation	\$ 12,077	\$ 12,078	NA	NA
Town Revenue for Special Education	\$ 23,324	\$ 38,340	NA	NA
Other Town Revenue (no Small Schools Grant)	\$ 23,099	\$ 26,130	NA	NA
Town Education Fund Spending	\$ 499,814	\$ 680,433	NA	NA
Per pupil Education Fund spending	\$ 12,012	\$ 12,392	NA	NA
History of per pupil Education Fund spending				
	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Bridgewater	\$10,747	\$12,064	\$15,243	\$15,551
Pomfret	\$14,624	\$14,775	\$16,394	\$16,833
Woodstock	\$13,176	\$13,739	\$14,037	\$14,519


Other options



- If the Joint School Agreement is not approved by the voters of both Towns, both schools would operate next year in the similar fashion to the current year.
- Tuition to other schools
 - No influence on programs, staffing, budget, or curriculum
 - No representation, no voting rights
 - Potential for significant cost increases
 - All staff positions would be eliminated
 - Similar cost to Joint School

Next Steps



- February – School Visit for Bridgewater Families
- March 3rd – Town Meeting Day
 - Bridgewater School District Meeting at 8 AM
 - Pomfret School District Meeting at 1 PM
- March – April – Staff appointment
- May – Name the new school competition
- March 
 - Professional Development with Staff and Administration

The Future



- The Joint District School is only a first step towards a more cohesive and vibrant education landscape for the students of the WCSU.
- We are addressing some pressing needs right away, however our goals are to expand the educational opportunities for all WCSU students.
- We will be working with other WCSU schools to find opportunities that benefit all interested communities and their students and taxpayers.

Questions, Suggestions, Tour

