

# **Fiscal Assessment Study**

**for**

**Proposed Merger**

**of**

**Fayette County School Districts**

**September 2011**

**Prepared by The Education Management Group, LLC**

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## Executive Summary

### Financial Aspects of a Merger

#### Revenues

The ranges in revenues for the six Fayette County school districts are provided. The data for a merged district shows approximately the same reliance on local dollars as the Connellsville Area and Frazier School Districts. The data shows slightly more reliance on local revenues than Albert Gallatin Area and Brownsville Area School Districts. The merged district would have less reliance on local dollars than Laurel Highlands and Uniontown Area School Districts.

Information about revenue received from local sources is provided in the report. The most important local revenue, real estate taxes, has increased in all of the six Fayette County school districts. This report provides a five-year history of the Real Estate Tax Levy and Taxes Collected.

The 2011-12 General Fund Budgets of the six school districts are examined with regard to the taxable assessed value, number of mills levied, and the total tax levy. Using a collection rate of 87%, the school districts will receive approximately \$49,013,317 in real estate taxes. **If overall savings of approximately \$5.1 million can be generated, each district will receive a property tax reduction. These reductions will range from 0.5 mills to 4.5 mills. The greater the savings that are identified, the greater the tax reduction will be. Savings of far more than \$5.1 million are identified in this report.**

The data used to calculate the 2011-12 state aid ratios are identified for the merged district. The merged district would have higher aid ratios than Frazier, Laurel Highlands, and Uniontown Area School Districts and lower aid ratios than Brownsville Area, Albert Gallatin Area and Connellsville Area School Districts. Most state subsidies would not be affected by a merger.

Revenue from federal sources is also examined. The merged district would have a poverty rate of over twenty-five (25%,) thus making the merged district eligible for all four of the Title I grant awards, including basic, concentration, targeted and EFIG awards. The total amount for the 2011-12 fiscal year would be at least \$10,048,788.

#### Expenditures

Expenditures by function are provided for each of the six Fayette County districts. These include the annual average increase in expenditures for each district. If the average annual

increases were applied to both revenues and expenditures, projections for fiscal year 2012-13 would disclose an operating shortfall for each of the six school districts, ranging from a low of \$722,799 at the Uniontown Area School District to a high of \$7,559,412 at the Connellsville Area School District. These shortfalls do not include costs that many of the districts are incurring for updates of their physical plants.

Charts are included in the report that show expenditures using objects such as salaries, benefits, debt service, and transfers in order to obtain a clearer picture of how a district spends its money.

Spending on salaries and benefits ranged from a low of 59.46% of total spending at the Albert Gallatin School District to a high 67.08% at the Brownsville Area School District. In order for a merger to be successful, it must produce economies and thus staffing reductions are required.

Included in the report is a chart that shows the professional staff to pupil ratio for the years 2003-04 through 2009-10. **If the districts were staffed in 2009-10 using the same ratio of pupils to professional staff that existed in 2003-04, 108 fewer staff would be required. This reduction represents a savings of approximately \$7.1 million.**

Finally, expenditures are examined in terms of cost per pupil. Reducing staff numbers and costs would allow a merged district to have a lower cost per pupil.

### **Enrollments**

Combined, the six school districts lost 2,989 pupils or 14.30% of the 2000-01 pupil population.

Enrollment projections are provided in this report based on the PDE (Pennsylvania Department of Education) model and the EMG (The Education Management Group, LLC) model. Each of the projections shows a continual decline over the next ten years.

Actual live birth data are provided for the years 2000 to 2010 as reported by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Projected live birth data are provided for the years 2011 to 2014. The data for a merged school district shows a high of 1,472 and a low of 1,225. This represents a loss of 16.78% of the number of births reported since the year 2000.

Enrollment projections are calculated in this report by existing school district, by total, and by grade level configuration.

Each of the enrollment projections shows a continual decline in pupil membership over the next ten years of approximately 9.17% to 9.95%.

A plan to consolidate schools in a merged district will enable housing the students in fewer facilities. This will provide an economic benefit to the taxpayers of the county and an educational benefit to the students.

### **Physical Plant**

The high school facilities of each of the six school districts would remain as they are currently and would continue their academic endeavors with some changes to assure that graduation requirements are the same in all high schools. High school athletic teams would continue as they are now. This consideration was planned to assure that these schools retained the identities of the school communities in which they are located.

As a single school entity, the administratively merged school district would be more efficiently operated if grade configurations were made more consistent throughout the district. New certification guidelines would suggest that having a K – 4 configuration would permit teachers in K – 4 facilities to work together in a collaborative environment, improving their ability to teach children.

A Grades 5 – 8 configuration would allow the district to form a true middle school culture that is quite different from that of a junior high school and is supported by research that shows that today's youngsters enter adolescence at an earlier age. The number of Grades 5 – 8 middle schools is rapidly growing throughout the United States.

In summary, the administratively merged district would have the following configuration: K – 4, 5 – 8 and 9 – 12. While small schools could be closed throughout Fayette County without the K – 4 configuration, K – 4 and 5 – 8 configurations would help to facilitate the closure of as many as 6 to 8 small K – 5/K – 6 elementary schools for an estimated total savings of approximately \$1.5 million in non-teaching staff alone, without consideration for savings in the cost of energy and transportation. Teaching positions are not included in the estimated savings and are an unknown amount at this time. The administration of the new district should seek to maintain pupil-teacher ratios in the kindergarten level at approximately 17 to 1, in the primary grades (grades 1 – 3) at approximately 20 to 1, and in the intermediate grades (4 – 6) at approximately 25 to 1. The Board of Directors should eliminate staff that is superfluous to what is required to teach the district's children.

Small schools are inefficient and are more expensive to operate. In addition, many of them lack adequate educational materials, such as library/media centers, and adequate health care facilities. Most of them use itinerant teachers, much of whose time is wasted in travel from building to building. The taxpayers of Fayette County cannot afford to operate buildings that are not needed.

To facilitate the movement of pupils, attendance areas for each building will need to be analyzed and reconfigured in concert with the pupil transportation program and the location of students' homes throughout Fayette County.

Fayette County has two Career and Technology Centers that appear to overlap. Both schools are not needed. One could be closed by the merged district administration and the other could be used to bolster its service to students, both school students and adults. STEM subjects that would help to prepare college-bound students to become the skilled gold-collar workers of tomorrow who build, operate, maintain and repair the technological innovations through classroom experience and experiential learning need to be incorporated into the program. Businesses and industries throughout the greater Fayette County area should be consulted and linked to the Career and Technology component of the new Fayette County School District.

If the Connellsville Career and Technical Center were eliminated, the savings in salaries and benefits alone would be significantly greater than \$2 million, not counting the savings in utilities from closure of the facility. If the Fayette County Career and Technology Center were eliminated, the savings in professional staff alone would be approximately \$1.5 million annually. Many of closed school's current employees could be considered for hire by the still existing Career and Technology Center for expansion of programs and technologies.

The current school districts of Fayette County are losing extraordinary sums on an annual basis to charter and cyber charter schools. In the most recent fiscal year, the total for all current districts was \$3,172,890. The new Fayette County School District should compete for the dollars that are available for students within and without Fayette County by establishing its own cyber charter or brick and mortar cyber school(s).

### **Curriculum and Personnel**

The curriculum administrator of the merged school district will have the goal to improve the achievement of the subgroups to the level of students overall. The school staffs in the merged district should share their successes in reaching this goal at each grade span.

Many of the current districts have textbooks and technology that are outdated. The new district will need to assure that Curriculum Reviews are occurring annually and that teachers are using technology sources to update their instructional materials. In the merged district, staff will need to develop planned courses that are aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards based on the Common Core Standards adopted as Pennsylvania's standards. This procedure would benefit the merged district because current courses vary in their format, content, and alignment with the previous Pennsylvania Academic Standards.

Currently graduation requirement vary among the six districts. The number of required courses in the merged district should be based on content required to meet the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in each content area and to complete the Keystone Exams successfully. Advanced placement courses, dual enrollment, early graduation criteria and courses needed for entrance into specific college preparation programs are additional concerns for planning a high school program of studies.

If a merger is considered by the six Fayette County School Districts, new contracts with the employees should not extend beyond June 2013. A merged district contract can then be built

on the similarities of the individual districts and negotiated with new content. Under an administrative merger, thirty-four (34) central office staff could be eliminated for a savings of at least \$3.4 million. Additional potential savings of \$693,000 could be obtained with the reduction from fifty-one (51) current administrative support staff in the six current school districts to twenty-five (25) in the new merged district, for a total in central office staff savings of more than \$4 million.

### **Special Education**

Under a merged Fayette County school district, the following actions must be taken:

- Review all of the plans and reports of the previous districts to ensure future compliance.
- Consider the administrative needs for the new district's special education program.
- Adjust the special education caseloads and sharing of services in the county schools which may result in financial savings to the merged district.
- Develop a Special Education Plan addressing Least Restrictive Environment and the various types of instruction in each school, emphasizing that every special education student has access to a rigorous research-based curriculum.
- Address the special education subgroup's need for improving the students' achievement on the Pennsylvania System of School Achievement (PSSA).
- Develop a program for special education professional development.
- Assume responsibility for Chapter 15, Chapter 16 and Incarcerated Students.
- Determine what additional instruction and additional resources are needed to help the students reach their full potential.
- Apply for special education grants and Contingency Funding when appropriate.
- Submit for all billable services when appropriate.
- Determine the most cost effective delivery of psychological and social services.
- Consider implementing a Fayette County virtual school for savings to the merged district.

### **Pupil Transportation**

The six Fayette County school districts received \$11,128,557 in state reimbursement and paid out \$5,281,538 of local dollars for the \$16,410,095 transportation program provided in 2008-09.

The current cost per student for pupil transportation ranges from a low of \$599.74 in the Laurel Highlands School District to a high of \$1,147.90 in the Uniontown Area School District. The state average is \$788.33.

Buses that operate at least eighty percent of their total capacity are considered to be efficient. Eighty-six percent of the buses operated throughout Fayette County are not operating efficiently.

At an average of \$40,000 per bus for sixty-six-passenger or larger buses, the potential savings for the elimination of forty-seven (47) vehicles is approximately \$1.9 million. This does not take into account the smaller vehicles used by the current Fayette County school districts. A



single Fayette County school district using sophisticated school transportation software that maximizes routes would provide even more savings. In addition, a single transportation contract with a countywide school district would be a huge savings that cannot be estimated at this time.

### **School Foodservices**

Only two of the current school districts, Brownsville Area and Albert Gallatin Area School Districts have a free and reduced price eligibility rate of 60% or more and receive two cents more per meal than the other school districts. Under a merged district, the percentage of free and reduced price meals would be 57.7% and insufficient to meet the 60% requirement for extra reimbursement. However, the countywide percentage has increased from 53.5% in the 2005-06 school year to the 57.7% in 2010-11. If the current trend continues, it seems certain a countywide school district would meet the 60% requirement in a few years and thus meet eligibility for the additional reimbursement.

Three of the current school districts are operating their school foodservice programs with a deficit and three are operating them with a surplus. Those operating with a negative fund balance in their cafeteria programs are eventually going to have to use money from the general fund, including money collected from local taxes, to reimburse the cafeteria fund. With a more efficient countywide school system, the negative balances would easily be overcome.

Schools with small enrollments (200, 300 or less) cannot operate school foodservice programs efficiently because of the economy of scale.

At the onset of any merger process, a combination of a few central kitchens with satellite schools would be a good option. Over a period of time, consideration could be given to a commissary system centrally located in the county. Members of the administration and Board of Directors of the merged district could visit other countywide school systems that operate a commissary and determine whether it would be a good idea for the new school district.

Savings would be at least as much as the current overall foodservice negative balance, or approximately \$546,000.

### **Additional Information**

Included in this report is additional information to assist in the merger process. These are as follows:

- History of mergers
- Requirements for a merger
- Current laws affecting mergers
- Local decisions required prior to a merger
- Selected data about Fayette County
- Listing of boroughs and townships in Fayette County
- Description of the current Fayette County school districts
- Historic, current and projected enrollment data
- Commonalities among the current six Fayette County school districts.

Following is a summary of possible savings identified in the body of this report

## **LISTING OF POSSIBLE SAVINGS**

<input type="checkbox"/> Reduction of staff using the same ratio of pupils to professional staff that existed in 2003-04	\$7,100,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Close small schools	\$1,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Reduce up to 7 maintenance positions	\$300,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Close one Vocational School	\$1,500,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Recover moneys paid to charter schools	\$3,172,890
<input type="checkbox"/> Elimination of central office staff	\$3,400,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Elimination of admin support staff	\$693,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate up to 47 buses for more efficient transportation program	\$1,900,000
<input type="checkbox"/> Make school foodservice program solvent	\$546,000

**Total \$20,111,890**

The findings and recommendations in this report are intended to provide information for the Boards of School Directors of the six Fayette County School Districts that are the subjects of it.

The data are based on the most recent data available from the school districts themselves or from the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other State Agencies. Actual financial data from the 2010-11 school year, for example, is not yet available. The Education Management group does not confirm the accuracy of the districts reported data. The data was the latest reported data as of June 30, 2011.

The potential savings are estimates and in some cases, such as closing one of the two career and technical education centers, does not include potential costs for any new programming or the absorption into the program of more students into the remaining school. There is no available data to accurately determine these additional costs.

It should be noted that the savings identified in this document are very conservative estimates.

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to examine the fiscal potential of a merger between the school districts of Fayette County.

The data used in this document came from reports generated by the respective school districts and from governmental agencies such as the Pennsylvania Department of Education, the Pennsylvania State Tax Equalization Board and the State Data Center. All data used is the “latest” available data and is historical in nature.

The conclusions and recommendations are based, to the degree possible, on data and not on the social and political concerns of the participants. It is the role of the respective Boards of School Directors to apply the social and political concerns of their constituents to the conclusions and recommendations. The single more important factor to be considered in the implementation of the recommendations of this study is the effect on the students.

## History

During the school year 1958-59, Pennsylvania had 2,361 school districts. Of this number, 146 districts had more than 2,000 pupils enrolled and 1,599 districts had fewer than 1,000 pupils enrolled. A study of school organization in Pennsylvania was conducted by the Governor's Committee on Education. Several of the findings of this task force were as follows:

1. Larger districts provide more specialized pupil services.
2. Larger districts are able to affect many operating efficiencies.
3. Smaller school systems are highly wasteful of personnel.
4. Local control is diluted through sharing as compared to reorganization (merger).
5. Larger districts afford a more varied curriculum and are better able to individualize programs.
6. Pupils from larger schools have more success entering college.
7. Equalization of educational opportunities is enhanced.
8. Smaller school districts often waste state and local funds.
9. Smaller schools are less cost efficient.

As a result of this study, the Commonwealth enacted Act 561 of 1961, which addressed the size and structure of Pennsylvania's school districts. This Act said that school districts should have at least 4,000 pupils except when topography, transportation, and other factors require smaller districts. The Act prohibited the operation of districts with fewer than 2,500 pupils except in the seventh and eighth class counties.

This study drew the conclusion that except for areas with sparse population (7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> class counties), school districts should not have fewer than 2,500 pupils enrolled. Act 299 of 1965 put the result of this study into operation and reduced the number of local districts from 2,361 to 505.

It should be noted that prior to Act 299 of 1965 in excess of 1800 (75%) of the local districts had entered into voluntary jointure arrangements in order to expand offerings and reduce costs.

Subsequent to Act 299 of 1965, the Federal Courts ordered the formation of the Woodland Hills School District in order to solve a problem of segregation. Woodland Hills School District was created from the districts of Swissvale, Turtle Creek, Churchill, Edgewood Borough, and General Braddock.

In 2007, Pennsylvania had 501 local school districts, 500 of which operate schools. Approximately seventy-five percent (75%) of these districts have fewer than 2,500 pupils enrolled. The number of school districts with fewer than 1,000 pupils is 65. Following a study by the Education Management Group, LLC, the State Board of Education approved a merger between the Center Area and Monaca School Districts, forming the Central Valley School District. Thus Pennsylvania now has 500 school districts.

## **Requirements for a Merger**

School districts are governed by the Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949 as amended and other laws, Regulations of the State Board of Education, and standards of the Pennsylvania Department of Education. These laws, regulations and standards impart a considerable amount of discretionary power to locally elected school boards and district superintendents. In seeking to raise sufficient revenues, present the best possible cost effective curricula, and provide high quality instruction, school boards may find that the only way to provide these services is to expand the size of the tax base, the area from which to draw pupils and the population to be served. These goals may be achieved by a merger of districts.

The following procedures are required for a merger to be accomplished. Section 224 of the Public School Code of 1949, 24 P.S. 2-224 established the following procedures:

1. A majority (5) vote of the boards considering the merger is required.
2. An application must be filed with the Secretary of Education.
3. The State Board of Education must approve the application. Approval is to be granted by the State Board as it deems wise and is in the best interest of the education system of the Commonwealth. If the State Board does not approve, the application must be referred to the applying districts for resubmission in accordance with the recommendations as may be attached thereto.
4. The Secretary of Education issues a certificate creating the new school district. The certificate lists the district name, components, classification, and the effective date of operation.

## **Selected Laws Affecting Mergers**

Section 225 (24 PS 2-225) states in part that all property and indebtedness of the former components become the property and indebtedness of the new district.

Section 226 (24 PS 2-226) states in part when changes in districts become effective.

Section 227 (24 PS 2-227) contains the procedures and time requirements for filing with the Secretary of Education.

Section 228 (24 PS 2-228) contains the criteria for approval or disapproval of the creation of a district.

Section 231 (24 PS 2-231) contains provisions for tax levy or debt for buildings or grounds pending a change in boundaries, etc.

Section 232 (24 PS 2-232) provides for the levy of a special tax if directed by court.

Section 271-277 (24 PS 2-271 to 2-277) contains provisions for the amicable adjustment and apportionment of debt and property.

Section 3-308 (24 PS 3-308) contains provisions for the election of directors of a merged district. In 1982 the Public School Code was amended to provide that school directors are elected for four-year terms.

## **Local Decisions Required Prior to Merger**

The Boards of School Directors of the component districts must agree on at least six items. These are as follows:

1. Name of the new district.
2. The name of the superintendent, his/her salary and the length of his/her contract.
3. What administrative structure will administer the district?
4. Which buildings will be operated?
5. Which area vocational technical school will pupils attend?
6. What is the appropriate time for the merger to be effected?

The Boards of School Directors may appoint an appropriate committee composed of a cross section of the community to advise them with respect to most of the above decisions.



## Fayette County

Fayette County was created on September 26, 1783, from part of Westmoreland County and named in honor of the Marquis de la Fayette. In 1825 Lafayette visited the county as Albert Gallatin's guest and addressed the public in Brownsville. Uniontown, the county seat, was laid out about 1776 as Beason's-town and later renamed in allusion to the Federal Union. It was incorporated as a borough on April 4, 1796 and as a city on December 19, 1913.

Fayette County is a fourth class county located in southwestern Pennsylvania. It has a population of 142,605 and encompasses approximately 790 square miles. The tables below, provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry, depict population, economic factors and employment statistics.

### Population by Male/Female, Race, and Age

Population	County	Pennsylvania
Total Population <sup>1</sup>	142,605	12,604,767
Male	69,518	6,138,709
Female	73,087	6,466,058
Population by Race <sup>2</sup>		
White	94.5%	85.2%
Black	4.0%	10.9%
Other	0.5%	3.9%
Hispanic Origin (all races)	0.6%	5.1%
Population by Age <sup>3</sup>		
Ages 0-14	23,441	2,264,939
Ages 15-19	8,683	891,918
Ages 20-34	24,830	2,376,560
Ages 35-49	29,751	2,615,299
Ages 50-64	31,168	2,509,785
Ages 65 and Older	24,732	1,946,266
<sup>1</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2009 Estimate		
<sup>2</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2009 Estimate		
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2009 Estimate		

The above table shows that with regard to sex and age groups, the Fayette County population is in line with the state averages. Population percentages by race show that the county has a small minority population as compared to the state.

### Income

Income	County	Pennsylvania
Per Capita Personal Income <sup>1</sup>	\$30,383	\$40,175
Total Personal Income (in thousands) <sup>2</sup>	\$4,332,812	\$506,397,440
Median Household Income (1999 dollars) <sup>3</sup>	\$27,451	\$40,106
Median Family Income (1999 dollars) <sup>4</sup>	\$34,881	\$49,184
<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis - 2009		
<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Economic Analysis - 2009		
<sup>3</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2000		
<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census - 2000		

This table shows the median family and household incomes are significantly below the state averages.

## Labor Force and Major Employers

Labor Force <sup>1</sup>	County	Pennsylvania
Civilian Labor Force	65,500	6,344,000
Employed	59,700	5,873,000
Unemployed	5,800	471,000
Unemployment Rate	8.8%	7.4%
<sup>1</sup> Preliminary May 2011 - Seasonally Adjusted		

The county unemployment rate is higher than the Pennsylvania average.

Major Employers <sup>1</sup>	Industry Sector
THE UNIONTOWN HOSPITAL	Health Care and Social Assistance
NEMACOLIN WOODLANDS INC	Retail Trade
CONNELLSVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	Educational Services
WAL-MART ASSOCIATES INC	Retail Trade
TELETECH SERVICES CORPORATION	Admin/Support, Waste Mgmt/Remediation Svcs
NE OPCO INC	Manufacturing
FAYETTE COUNTY	Public Administration
ALBERT GALLATIN AREA SCHOOL DIST	Educational Services
LAUREL HIGHLANDS SCHOOL DISTRICT	Educational Services
UNIONTOWN AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT	Educational Services
<sup>1</sup> 3rd Quarter 2010 - Final	

Four of the ten major employers are school districts in the county.

## Wages of Major Occupation Groups

Average Annual Wages by Major Occupational Group <sup>1</sup>			
SOC Code	Major Occupational Group	County Wage	PA Wage
00-0000	Total, All Occupations	\$34,230	\$42,040
11-0000	Management Occupations	\$81,520	\$99,810
13-0000	Business and Financial Operations Occupations	\$52,200	\$64,780
15-0000	Computer and Mathematical Occupations	\$57,960	\$73,090
17-0000	Architecture and Engineering Occupations	\$64,880	\$68,300
19-0000	Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	\$34,540	\$65,880
21-0000	Community and Social Services Occupations	\$35,820	\$38,780
23-0000	Legal Occupations	\$34,060	\$97,780
25-0000	Education, Training, and Library Occupations	\$44,780	\$52,000
27-0000	Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	\$35,540	\$45,470
29-0000	Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	\$51,590	\$65,120
31-0000	Healthcare Support Occupations	\$22,790	\$26,440
33-0000	Protective Service Occupations	\$37,740	\$41,480
35-0000	Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	\$22,160	\$21,160
37-0000	Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	\$23,330	\$25,690
39-0000	Personal Care and Service Occupations	\$20,240	\$23,810
41-0000	Sales and Related Occupations	\$29,350	\$36,210
43-0000	Office and Administrative Support Occupations	\$27,320	\$32,560
45-0000	Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	\$27,590	\$28,360
47-0000	Construction and Extraction Occupations	\$44,210	\$44,360
49-0000	Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	\$36,400	\$41,170
51-0000	Production Occupations	\$30,060	\$34,380
53-0000	Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	\$30,150	\$31,940
55-0000	Military Specific Occupations	N/A	N/A
<sup>1</sup> May 2009 Occupational Employment Survey			

In every major occupational group the county wage is significantly lower than the Pennsylvania state average.

The following cities, boroughs and townships can be found in Fayette County:

**Cities** that reside in Fayette County are Connellsville, Uniontown.

**Boroughs** that reside in Fayette County are Belle Vernon, Brownsville, Dawson, Dunbar, Everson, Fairchance, Fayette City, Markleysburg, Masontown, Newell, Ohiopyle, Perryopolis, Point Marion, Seven Springs, Smithfield, South Connellsville, and Vanderbilt.

**Townships** that reside in Fayette County are Brownsville, Bullskin, Connellsville, Dunbar, Franklin, Georges, German, Henry Clay, Jefferson, Lower Tyrone, Luzerne, Menallen, Nicholson, North Union, Perry, Redstone, Saltlick, South Union, Springfield, Springhill, Stewart, Upper Tyrone, Washington, and Wharton.

<http://www.pennsylvania.n2genealogy.com/pa-county-fayette.htm>

## Fayette County Public School Districts



The **Albert Gallatin Area School District** is a school district located in southwestern Fayette County, Pennsylvania. It is named after Albert Gallatin, former U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, planner of the Lewis and Clark expedition, engineer of the financial details of the Louisiana Purchase, and founder of New York University. It serves the Boroughs of Masontown, Fairchance, Point Marion, and Smithfield. It also serves German, Springhill, Georges, and Nicholson Townships. It encompasses approximately 142 square miles (370 km<sup>2</sup>). According to federal census data, it serves a resident population of 25,340. The school district is a large, rural area that included six elementary schools, two middle schools, and one senior high school.

The **Brownsville Area School District** spans portions of two counties and covers 56.6 square miles. In Fayette County, Pennsylvania it covers the borough of Brownsville and Brownsville Township, Luzerne Township and Redstone Township. In Washington County, Pennsylvania it covers the borough of West Brownsville. The population of the district is 15,085. The school district operates one Middle/High School and three Elementary Schools. District enrollment is 1738, and was created in 1966 as a merger of the Brashear, Redstone Township, and Luzerne Township School Districts.

The **Connellsville Area School District** is located in the northeast section of Fayette County and covers the city of Connellsville, the boroughs of Dawson, Dunbar, Ohiopyle, Seven Springs, South Connellsville and Vanderbilt and Bullsken Township, Connellsville Township, Dunbar Township, Saltlick Township, Springfield Township and Stewart Township. The district covers 216.8 square miles and serves a population of 38,310. The school district has one high school, two junior high schools, eight elementary schools and one career and technical center.

The **Frazier School District** is a small public district located in Northern Fayette County, Pennsylvania, about 35 miles south of Pittsburgh. It serves the boroughs of Perryopolis and Newell, and the townships of Perry, Jefferson, and Lower Tyrone. It covers 59.4 square miles and serves a population of 8,525. The district is named for a wealthy Perryopolis resident named Mary Fuller Frazier, who provided the struggling school district then named Perry Area with an endowment. Frazier is the smallest district in Fayette County.

The district operates four schools. There are two elementary schools: Central Elementary School and Perry Elementary School. Both schools serve grades K-5. There are two secondary schools: the Frazier Middle School and Frazier High School. They are connected together and are located in Perryopolis Borough. There is also a library that is open to the community and an athletic field.

**Laurel Highlands School District (LHSD)** is a school district located in Fayette County, Pennsylvania. It serves North and South Union Townships and surrounds the city of Uniontown. The school district covers 55.5 square miles and serves a population of 25,425. Buildings consist of one high school, one middle school and four elementary schools.

LHSD was created in 1965, merging rivals North Union and South Union School Districts. The change did not become official until the 1967-1968 school term. Students attended high school in the former high schools until completion of the current high school in 1972.

**Uniontown Area School District** is a highly fragmented school district located in Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania. It serves the city of Uniontown and the boroughs of Ohio, and Markleysburg. It also serves Wharton, Henry Clay, Menallen, Franklin, and Stewart Townships. The district encompasses approximately 250 square miles which makes it the largest in the county. Based on 2000 federal census data, it serves a resident population of 26,925. Uniontown has one high school, one middle school, two elementary/middle schools, and three elementary schools.

## **Commonalities among the Fayette County School Districts**

### **Description of Fayette County**

Fayette County is located in southwestern Pennsylvania, and its southern border forms a section of the Mason-Dixon Line with West Virginia and Maryland. The county is geographically divided by mountains and lowlands. The eastern portion is mountainous with Chestnut Ridge rising to heights of 2000 feet. To the west of the mountains, rolling hills form a gradual slope to the Monongahela River. The center of the county, near the city of Uniontown, is about 45 miles south and a little east of Pittsburgh. (The six school districts discussed in the report cover a major portion of Fayette County.)

The county incorporates a number of the Commonwealth's premier outdoor, historic and cultural resources. In addition to Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania's largest land-based state park, there is extensive state game land. Fayette County is home to Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural masterpiece, Fallingwater. The Fort Necessity National Battlefield Site, where a young Colonel George Washington fought the first engagement of the French and Indian War, is also located there.

Much of Fayette County's early development can be traced to river traffic on the Monongahela and the construction of the National Road (Route 40 in Uniontown) through the county in the early 1800s.

A wave of new immigrants came to southwestern Pennsylvania during the coal boom, which started in the late 1870s. The Italians, Slovaks, Poles and African Americans who came to work in the mines gave Fayette County an ethnic richness that continues to this day. The decline of the coal mines and coke yards in the early 1950s led to a decline in Fayette County's population and it was a severe blow to the area's economy.

In recent years, tourism has become a vital component of Fayette County's economy. In addition, county leaders are working to rebuild the manufacturing base with the development of industrial parks.

\*Source: Fayette Planning Commission

### **The People**

The population of Fayette County declined 4.1% between 2000 and 2009. This reduction was reflected in a decline in the school-age children that attend the six Fayette County schools in this report. Approximately half of the married couples currently have no children in school.

The people in six Fayette County school districts have much commonality in their makeup. They are predominately white, with Brownsville and Uniontown having the largest African American population. They are English-speaking. They live in a combination of urban and rural environments; for example, Brownsville Area School District is 70.5% urban and 29.5% rural; Connellsville Area School District is 51.2% urban and 48.8% rural. Frazier is categorized as 100% rural according to the 2010 Pennsylvania County Data Book. Slightly less than 20% of the residents have no high school diploma. The schools have a higher dropout rate

than the state rate (2%) with a range of .5% to 7.3% of the students that should be graduating from high school.

Between eighty and ninety percent of the people are categorized as non-movers because they have lived in the same county most or all of their lives. If they have moved, it was within Fayette County. Since there is limited access to mass transit in Fayette County, the people drive, carpool or walk to their destinations for shopping and recreation. It is not uncommon for children to be cared for a grandparent with higher incidences in the urban areas of the county.

The family income in Fayette County ranges from \$34,063 to the \$40,000s to \$65,547. In 2008, the median taxable income was \$21,088. Approximately eighteen percent (18%) of the families live below the poverty level; Brownsville, Connellsville and Uniontown have a percentage between twenty (20%) and thirty percent (30%). Homes range from locations without utilities to homes that far exceed \$85,000.

### **Opportunities**

Employment in Fayette County falls into three main categories: (1) government related positions, (2) tourism involving recreational, historical and cultural attractions, and (3) small businesses and improving manufacturing. Professionals, i.e., doctors, dentists, etc., are available for serving the people.

In addition to local and Pittsburgh radio stations and television, the people have access to three daily newspapers that highlight the local community and sports activities. The nationality clubs, such as Sons of Italy, Polish Club, as well as country clubs and gun clubs are available for social activity.

Shopping is centered in the Uniontown Mall and the surrounding area, which provide access to clothing stores, restaurants, a cinema, grocery and variety stores. Since Uniontown is in the center of the county, the people have easy access in addition to the small neighborhood shopping opportunities.

Recreation opportunities are available to all people regardless of economic situation. The state parks provide hunting, fishing, swimming, hiking, bird watching, biking, and picnicking. Aviation and skiing may be the recreation of choice of others. The rivers and lakes provide opportunities for boating and fishing. Nemaocolin Woodlands and Seven Springs Resort provide a variety of recreation. People regardless of age have opportunities for being active.

Fayette County schools provide a variety of educational opportunities. Public schools, charter schools, cyber schools and non-public schools provide parents with choices for their children. The sports available in each of the six Fayette County schools are supported by the school staff, the parents, community members and the media.

The six Fayette County school districts in this study provide similar educational experiences. There are pre-school classes, small elementary class sizes, advanced placement classes, dual enrollment for early admission to college, and a variety of elective planned courses.

The similarities among the environments, the people, the ethnic cohesiveness, and the employment and recreation opportunities provide the ingredients for a successful merger of the administrative and financial components of the six Fayette County school districts.



## Financial Aspects

### Revenue

School districts receive revenues from three major sources; these are local, state, and federal. Fund balances and transfers are not considered as revenue. They are other financing sources and are to be considered as reserves and are not included in any of the following charts.

#### Revenue Sources

ALBERT GALLATIN REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	%
2006	\$11,066,823.40	25.9%	\$29,394,224.40	68.8%	\$2,235,481.71	5.2%
2007	\$10,665,200.24	24.7%	\$30,274,157.32	70.1%	\$2,221,877.11	5.1%
2008	\$10,974,375.47	24.3%	\$31,951,797.22	70.7%	\$2,281,072.29	5.0%
2009	\$8,976,266.58	19.2%	\$35,516,330.41	75.8%	\$2,367,673.65	5.1%
2010	\$9,063,464.96	19.3%	\$31,065,008.38	66.2%	\$6,807,626.52	14.5%

BROWNSVILLE REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	%
2006	\$4,709,089.29	21.6%	\$15,264,263.09	69.9%	\$1,868,409.28	8.6%
2007	\$5,309,657.95	23.4%	\$16,040,223.25	70.8%	\$1,304,578.59	5.8%
2008	\$5,031,702.32	22.4%	\$16,087,496.26	71.7%	\$1,314,856.12	5.9%
2009	\$4,365,443.92	19.2%	\$16,765,124.40	73.7%	\$1,608,860.03	7.1%
2010	\$4,162,078.63	18.0%	\$15,412,472.66	66.6%	\$3,558,065.50	15.4%

CONNELLSVILLE REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	%
2006	\$17,235,100.52	29.6%	\$38,067,055.20	65.4%	\$2,876,349.95	4.9%
2007	\$17,656,713.74	28.9%	\$40,768,163.06	66.8%	\$2,567,452.28	4.2%
2008	\$18,017,216.13	30.1%	\$39,886,968.56	66.7%	\$1,869,355.24	3.1%
2009	\$16,573,894.13	26.3%	\$43,863,551.53	69.6%	\$2,603,563.35	4.1%
2010	\$16,841,385.39	26.5%	\$40,791,416.62	64.3%	\$5,814,265.57	9.2%

FRAZIER REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	%
2006	\$3,943,832.04	31.4%	\$8,219,966.96	65.4%	\$396,904.18	3.2%
2007	\$4,166,572.67	31.1%	\$8,866,054.89	66.1%	\$372,342.84	2.8%
2008	\$4,421,525.36	31.2%	\$9,313,323.44	65.6%	\$451,910.98	3.2%
2009	\$4,128,016.81	28.8%	\$9,755,595.32	68.0%	\$466,377.86	3.3%
2010	\$4,399,213.66	28.9%	\$9,052,923.19	59.5%	\$1,773,762.56	11.6%

LAUREL HIGHLANDS REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	
2006	\$15,991,944.42	44.6%	\$18,192,370.85	50.8%	\$1,648,650.48	4.6%
2007	\$16,595,094.44	44.0%	\$19,255,818.04	51.1%	\$1,862,764.36	4.9%
2008	\$17,231,746.47	43.8%	\$20,107,657.83	51.1%	\$1,990,882.13	5.1%
2009	\$16,354,466.97	41.8%	\$20,998,810.67	53.7%	\$1,785,928.35	4.6%
2010	\$16,560,138.90	40.4%	\$19,930,288.74	48.7%	\$4,457,286.44	10.9%

UNIONTOWN REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	
2006	\$13,712,878.30	38.3%	\$20,009,547.92	55.9%	\$2,065,351.81	5.8%
2007	\$15,264,128.01	40.0%	\$20,634,824.66	54.1%	\$2,226,957.83	5.8%
2008	\$14,058,705.11	37.5%	\$21,164,481.10	56.5%	\$2,251,996.41	6.0%
2009	\$12,735,579.06	33.9%	\$22,806,743.70	60.6%	\$2,071,124.48	5.5%
2010	\$12,821,233.72	32.9%	\$20,905,493.51	53.6%	\$5,285,068.40	13.5%

MERGED DISTRICT REVENUE HISTORY						
	LOCAL	%	STATE	%	FEDERAL	
2006	\$66,659,667.97	32.2%	\$129,147,428.42	62.4%	\$11,091,147.41	5.4%
2007	\$69,657,367.05	32.2%	\$135,839,241.22	62.9%	\$10,555,973.01	4.9%
2008	\$69,735,270.86	31.9%	\$138,511,724.41	63.4%	\$10,160,073.17	4.7%
2009	\$63,133,667.47	28.2%	\$149,706,156.03	66.9%	\$10,903,527.72	4.9%
2010	\$63,847,515.26	27.9%	\$137,157,603.10	60.0%	\$27,696,074.99	12.1%

### Comparison of Revenue Ranges

District	Local % Range	State % Range	Federal % Range
A.G.A.	19.2 to 25.9	66.2 to 75.8	5.0 to 14.5
B.A.	18.0 to 23.4	66.6 to 73.7	5.8 to 15.4
C.A.	26.3 to 29.6	64.3 to 69.6	3.1 to 9.2
F.	28.9 to 31.4	59.5 to 68.0	2.8 to 11.6
L.H.	40.4 to 44.6	48.7 to 53.7	4.6 to 10.9
U.A.	32.9 to 40.0	53.6 to 60.6	5.5 to 13.5
<b>Merged</b>	<b>27.9 to 32.2</b>	<b>60.0 to 66.9</b>	<b>4.7 to 12.1</b>

The data for a merged district shows approximately the same reliance on local dollars as Connellsville Area and Frazier School Districts. The data shows slightly more reliance on local dollars than Albert Gallatin Area and Brownsville Area School Districts. The merged district would have less reliance on local dollars than Laurel Highlands and Uniontown Area.

## Revenue from Local Sources

The most important local revenue source is the Real Estate Tax. The Real Estate Tax is levied as mills on taxable assessed value. The following table contains the taxable assessed value of the real estate in the Albert Gallatin Area, Brownsville Area, Connellsville Area, Frazier, Laurel Highlands, and Uniontown Area School Districts. The data is from the Annual Financial Reports for the fiscal years 2005-06 to 2009-10.

### Taxable Assessed Value

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Connellsville Area SD	\$1,068,329,670.00	\$1,080,048,980.00	\$1,080,048,980.00	\$1,080,048,980.00	\$1,105,172,930.00
Albert Gallatin Area SD	\$571,547,240.00	\$581,274,900.00	\$586,580,010.00	\$586,580,010.00	\$606,803,260.00
Brownsville Area SD	\$305,643,188.00	\$306,529,053.00	\$301,070,266.00	\$270,261,979.00	\$400,510,000.00
Frazier SD	\$263,921,700.00	\$264,882,493.00	\$270,191,210.00	\$272,983,220.00	\$276,439,500.00
Laurel Highlands SD	\$929,857,950.00	\$960,511,984.62	\$978,272,460.00	\$936,348,541.00	\$944,705,974.00
Uniontown Area SD	\$809,376,950.00	\$821,193,170.00	\$824,747,980.00	\$834,255,410.00	\$840,802,860.00

*\*The figure listed for the Brownsville Area School district for 2010 could be incorrect.*

The above chart shows that the Real Estate Tax Base has increased in all of the aforementioned districts.

Listed below is a five year history of the Real Estate Tax levy and taxes collected for the school districts that are part of this study.

### Tax Levied

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Connellsville Area SD	\$13,460,953.84	\$13,608,617.00	\$13,608,617.00	\$13,608,617.00	\$13,925,179.00
Albert Gallatin Area SD	\$6,355,605.00	\$6,463,196.00	\$6,522,183.00	\$6,522,183.00	\$6,747,045.00
Brownsville Area SD	\$3,283,355.65	\$3,457,675.30	\$3,406,412.56	\$3,045,164.00	\$3,426,237.00
Frazier SD	\$2,925,308.00	\$3,110,780.00	\$3,314,976.00	\$3,070,934.00	\$3,470,697.00
Laurel Highlands SD	\$12,115,018.00	\$12,486,655.80	\$12,717,541.98	\$12,543,793.00	\$12,655,754.00
Uniontown Area SD	\$10,538,088.00	\$10,691,935.00	\$10,738,219.00	\$11,554,437.00	\$11,645,120.00

### Tax Collected

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Connellsville Area SD	\$12,330,857.00	\$12,405,348.00	\$12,526,876.00	\$11,265,631.00	\$11,484,719.00
Albert Gallatin Area SD	\$5,183,071.00	\$5,281,111.00	\$5,471,116.00	\$4,878,827.00	\$4,952,677.00
Brownsville Area SD	\$2,697,577.00	\$2,843,848.00	\$2,853,048.00	\$2,593,750.00	\$2,843,942.00
Frazier SD	\$2,604,888.00	\$2,805,817.00	\$2,985,624.00	\$2,760,023.00	\$2,862,726.00
Laurel Highlands SD	\$10,896,562.00	\$11,300,850.00	\$11,456,406.00	\$11,379,430.00	\$11,442,864.00
Uniontown Area SD	\$9,613,769.00	\$9,367,525.00	\$9,409,794.00	\$9,184,343.00	\$9,167,884.00

The 2011-12 General Bund Budgets contained the following data:

<b>District</b>	<b>Taxable Assessed</b>	<b>Mills</b>	<b>Tax levy</b>
Albert Gallatin	\$613,396,460.00	12.487	\$7,659,482.00
Brownsville	\$306,598,210.00	16.57	\$5,080,332.00
Connellsville	\$1,107,743,450.00	12.6	\$13,957,567.00
Frazier	\$278,495,540.00	13.33	\$3,712,345.00
Laurel Highlands	\$1,030,684,370.00	14.211	\$7,659,482.00
Uniontown	\$873,592,160.00	14.43	\$12,605,935.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,210,510,190.00</b>		<b>\$57,662,727.00</b>

Using a collection rate of 87%, the districts will receive approximately \$49,013, 317 in real estate taxes (part of this revenue will be replaced by the State Property Tax Reduction Allocation). If savings are generated of approximately \$5,100,000, each district will receive a tax reduction. The reductions will range from 0.5 mills to 4.5 mills. The greater the savings that are identified, the greater the tax reduction will be.

One or more school districts levy 6146 Mechanical Devices Tax, 6157 Mercantile Tax, and/or 6154 Amusement Tax. It is not clear if the merged district can levy the aforementioned taxes.

## Revenue from State Sources

Most state revenues are distributed on a per pupil basis, on a flat grant, or on an aid ratio basis. Revenues distributed on a per pupil basis or as a flat grant would not be affected by a merger. State revenues distributed on an aid ratio basis would be affected by a merger. Two different aid ratios are used for the payment of subsidies. The market value/personal income aid ratio (MVPIAR) is used in the payment of Special Education subsidy, Secondary Vocational Education subsidy, School Employees Retirement Funding and School Employees Social Security Funding.

The market value aid ratio (MVAR) is used in the payment of the Pupil Transportation subsidy. Either the applicable permanent capital account reimbursement fraction or the market value aid ratio, whichever is greater, is used in the School Building Rentals and Sinking Fund subsidies.

The procedure for calculating aid ratios will be supplied to each district if requested. The data for calculating the 2012-13 aid ratios is not yet available. The data used to calculate the 2011-12 aid ratios are in the following table:

<b>Data</b>	<b>Merged School District</b>
2009 Market Value	\$4,206,737,500
2009 Personal Income	\$1,876,486,342
2009-10 WADM	21,900.296
MV/WADM	\$192,085
PI/WADM	\$85683
State Total MV/WADM	\$347,646
State Total PI/WADM	\$134,551
<b>2011-12 MV/PIAR</b>	<b>0.7066</b>
<b>2011-12 MVAR</b>	<b>0.7238</b>
<b>2011-12 PIAR</b>	<b>0.6816</b>

The merged district would have higher aid ratios than Frazier, Laurel Highlands and Uniontown Area School Districts. The merged district will have lower aid ratios than Brownsville Area, Albert Gallatin Area, and Connellsville Area School Districts.

Most state subsidies should not be affected by a merger.

## **Revenue from Federal Sources**

Most of the federal grants can be found in the Curriculum Section of this report.

The merged district would have a poverty rate over twenty-five percent (25%). This would make the merged district eligible for all four of the Title 1 grant awards—basic, concentration, targeted, and EFIG. The merged district would receive the total of all existing federal grants. The amount for 2011-12 would be at least \$10,048,788.

### **Conclusions**

1. The merged district would have an increasing tax base.
2. If \$5,100,000 in economies were implemented, the districts will receive a tax cut.
3. Revenue from state sources may increase in a merged district.
4. A merger would have little or no effect on revenues from federal sources. Foodservice revenues may increase.
5. The solicitors should investigate the status of the vocational schools if a merger occurs.

## Expenditures

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, school district general fund expenditures are classified by function and objects. The functions are: Instruction (1000), Support Services (2000), Operation of Non-Instructional Services (3000), Facilities Acquisition, Construction and Improvement Services (4000), Other Expenditures and Financing Uses (5000). The primary objects are Salaries (100), Benefits (200), Purchased Professional & Technical Services (300), Purchased Property Services (400), Other Purchased Services (500), Supplies (600), Property (700), and Other Objects (800).

### A Five Year Listing Of Expenditures by Function

Albert Gallatin Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$27,018,604.45	\$14,984,767.34	\$978,419.68	\$5,000.00	\$4,452,763.09
2009	\$26,425,513.18	\$14,162,288.74	\$841,423.04	\$185,162.95	\$4,601,949.85
2008	\$25,824,970.22	\$13,948,656.68	\$842,054.43		\$6,665,761.36
2007	\$25,118,551.46	\$13,375,700.82	\$857,840.18	\$527.52	\$4,628,705.09
2006	\$24,463,855.83	\$13,137,521.79	\$734,332.05		\$3,748,529.67

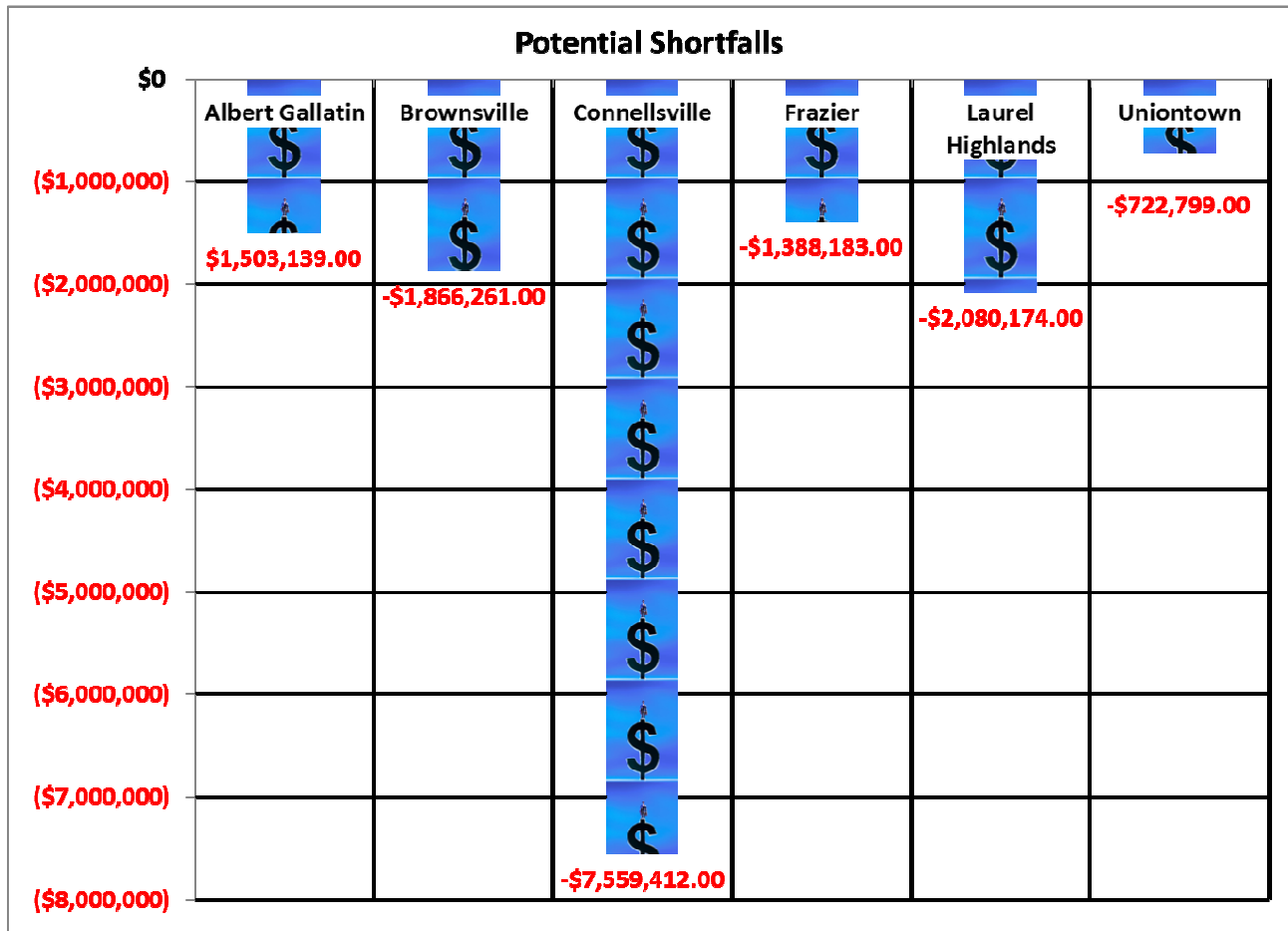
Brownsville Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$14,569,805.84	\$7,052,990.97	\$298,388.99		\$1,634,734.71
2009	\$14,196,254.62	\$7,105,161.66	\$396,718.58		\$1,917,714.84
2008	\$13,759,173.49	\$7,591,136.49	\$410,679.87		\$1,890,993.72
2007	\$13,492,794.59	\$7,314,248.81	\$392,429.61		\$1,405,002.06
2006	\$14,235,757.18	\$7,138,853.26	\$382,181.45		\$1,479,981.70

Connellsville Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$38,618,680.56	\$19,448,546.30	\$1,012,882.16		\$7,463,037.07
2009	\$35,299,908.00	\$18,309,956.32	\$986,903.58	\$127,708.78	\$6,415,997.53
2008	\$34,772,958.68	\$18,011,235.87	\$1,010,836.80		\$6,483,106.75
2007	\$34,524,476.49	\$17,811,356.50	\$1,007,201.79		\$4,967,367.67
2006	\$33,765,190.89	\$17,848,517.77	\$990,299.42		\$4,954,191.19

Frazier Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$9,485,339.72	\$4,557,166.70	\$227,059.31	\$2,500.00	\$995,591.66
2009	\$8,785,668.68	\$4,386,026.38	\$229,154.27		\$987,529.69
2008	\$8,847,307.08	\$4,217,158.38	\$225,615.64		\$970,447.95
2007	\$8,068,172.05	\$4,212,919.54	\$214,507.97	\$3,650.00	\$979,917.60
2006	\$7,294,690.33	\$3,963,313.30	\$198,750.48		\$888,746.07

Laurel Highland Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$24,817,769.27	\$11,498,643.34	\$772,811.06		\$4,228,990.79
2009	\$22,699,822.02	\$11,240,700.67	\$678,054.20		\$4,029,064.65
2008	\$22,987,161.29	\$10,813,862.20	\$715,966.05	\$18,990.00	\$4,602,768.92
2007	\$20,611,619.22	\$11,271,457.49	\$688,582.64		\$3,679,587.40
2006	\$19,771,867.17	\$10,881,465.36	\$674,457.53		\$3,323,823.63

Uniontown Historical Expenditures by Function					
	1000	2000	3000	4000	5000
2010	\$22,451,895.74	\$12,785,379.04	\$754,015.81		\$3,946,192.41
2009	\$21,963,243.74	\$13,475,563.48	\$717,190.15		\$4,138,267.58
2008	\$21,630,710.23	\$13,004,036.96	\$731,458.98		\$4,281,021.05
2007	\$20,049,523.60	\$11,939,679.76	\$855,473.06		\$1,562,545.94
2006	\$19,987,926.84	\$12,468,454.86	\$626,882.26		\$4,095,394.98



Expenditures increased in the Albert Gallatin Area School District by \$5,352,315 or 12.73% of the base year of 2005-06. The annual average increase in expenditures for the district was 03.18%. During this same period, revenue increased by \$4,299,570 or 10.08% of the 2005-



06 base. The average annual increase in revenue was 02.52%. These percentages should be adjusted annually after the district's audits are completed. The percentages will be useful in projecting future revenues and expenditures. If the aforementioned average annual increases were applied to both revenue and expenditures, projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue would equal \$50,574,639 and expenditures would be \$52,077,778. An operating shortfall of **\$1,503,139** would exist. This projection does not address the cost of updating the physical plant.

Expenditures increased in the **Brownsville Area School District** by \$319,156 or 1.37% of the base year of 2005-06. The average annual increase in expenditures was 00.34%. During this same period, revenue increased by \$1,290,855 or 5.91% of the 2005-06 base. The average annual increase in revenue was 01.48%. As stated above, the percentages should be adjusted annually and they may be useful in the preparation of preliminary budgets. If these averages were applied to both revenue and expenditures, the projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue would be \$24,174,980 and expenditures would be \$26,041,241. An operating shortfall of **\$1,866,261** would result.

Expenditures increased in the **Connellsville Area School District** by \$8,984,946 or 15.61% of the base year of 2005-06. The average annual increase in expenditures was 03.90%. During the same period, revenue increased by \$4,862,503 or 08.36% of the 2005-06 base year. The average annual increase in revenue was 02.09%. As stated above, these percentages should be adjusted annually and they may be useful in the preparation of preliminary budgets. If these averages were applied to both revenues and expenditures, the projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue \$67,076,866 and expenditures would be \$74,636,278. An operating shortfall of **\$7,559,412** would result.

Expenditures increased in the **Frazier School District** by \$2,922,157 or 23.67% of the base year 2005-06. The average annual increase in expenditures was 05.92%. During the same period, revenue increased by \$2,665,196 or 21.22% of the 2005-06 base year. The average annual increase in revenue was 05.30%. As previously stated, these percentages should be adjusted annually and may be useful in the preparation of the preliminary budgets. If these averages were applied to revenue and expenditures, the projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue would be \$16,754,701 and expenditures would be \$18,142,884. An operating shortfall of **\$1,388,183** would result.

Expenditures increased in the **Laurel Highlands School District** by \$6,666,600 or 19.24% of the base year 2005-06. The average annual increase in expenditures was 04.81%. During the same period, revenue increased by \$5,114,748 or 14.27% of the 2005-06 base year. The average annual increase in revenue was 03.57%. As previously stated, these percentages should be adjusted annually and may be useful in the preparation of the preliminary budgets. If these averages were applied to both revenue and expenditures, the projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue would be \$45,491,639 and expenditures would be \$47,571,813. An operating shortfall of **\$2,080,174** would exist.

Expenditures increased in the *Uniontown Area School District* by \$2,758,824 or 07.42% of the base year 2005-06. The average annual increase in expenditures was 01.86%. During the same period, revenue increased by \$3,224,017 or 08.26% of the 2005-06 base year. The average annual increase in revenue was 02.07%. As stated above, these percentages should be adjusted annually and may be useful in the preparation of the preliminary budgets. If these averages were applied to both revenue and expenditures, the projections for the fiscal year 2012-13 would be as follows: revenue would be \$41,484,922 and expenditures would be \$42,207,701. An operating shortfall of \$722,799 would exist.

It is useful to examine expenditures using objects such as salaries, benefits, purchased services, debt service, and transfers in order to obtain a clearer picture of how a district spends its money. The following tables classify the 2009-10 expenditures by function and object:

### Expenditures by Function/Object

	AG	BRWN	CNNV	FRAZ	LH	UNION
ADMIN	\$175,476.00	\$6,504.00	\$34,958.00	\$22,584.00	\$37,470.00	\$47,684.00
BENEFITS	\$8,997,063.00	\$4,258,295.00	\$11,810,010.00	\$2,308,933.00	\$8,183,502.00	\$8,490,705.00
BUSINESS	\$9,113.00	\$20,817.00	\$15,619.00	\$10,554.00	\$43,252.00	\$6,769.00
CENTRAL OFF.	\$90,568.00	\$4,475.00	\$494,069.00	\$0.00	\$7,662.00	\$105,719.00
DEBT.SRVC.	\$4,346,986.00	\$114,783.00	3789622.84	\$917,549.00	\$219,986.00	\$114,543.39
INSTR.	\$1,196,857.00	\$434,197.00	\$2,910,254.00	\$498,956.00	\$1,520,044.00	\$500,038.00
OP.PLANT	\$629,561.00	\$234,741.00	\$1,702,147.00	\$195,540.00	\$499,877.00	\$399,205.00
PUP/HEALTH	\$75,241.00	\$7,700.00	\$76,871.00	\$52,869.00	\$115,380.00	\$56,618.00
PUR.SERV	\$9,224,006.00	\$3,596,826.00	\$7,030,087.00	\$2,605,862.00	\$5,560,568.00	\$6,100,423.00
SALARIES	\$19,612,337.00	\$11,529,678.00	\$28,994,222.00	\$7,011,915.00	\$18,752,906.00	\$17,247,183.00
STD.ACCT	\$187,696.00	\$32,154.00	\$177,426.00	\$2,329.00	\$227,414.00	\$74,618.00
TRANSFERS	\$105,777.00	\$1,519,152.00	\$700,000.16	\$78,043.00	\$4,009,005.00	\$3,841,648.00
TRANSPORTATION	\$2,871,232.00	\$1,775,030.00	\$5,440,119.00	\$1,144,367.00	\$1,998,502.00	\$2,657,513.00

### Percentages of Expenditures by Function/Object

	AG	BRWN	CNNV	FRAZ	LH	UNION
ADMIN	0.37%	0.03%	0.06%	0.15%	0.09%	0.12%
BENEFITS	18.93%	18.09%	18.69%	15.55%	19.87%	21.42%
BUSINESS	0.02%	0.09%	0.02%	0.07%	0.11%	0.02%
CENTRAL OFF.	0.19%	0.02%	0.78%	0.00%	0.02%	0.27%
DEBT.SRVC.	9.15%	0.49%	6.00%	6.18%	0.53%	0.29%
INSTR.	2.52%	1.84%	4.61%	3.36%	3.69%	1.26%
OP.PLANT	1.32%	1.00%	2.69%	1.32%	1.21%	1.01%
PUP/HEALTH	0.16%	0.03%	0.12%	0.36%	0.28%	0.14%
PUR.SERV	19.41%	15.28%	11.13%	17.55%	13.50%	15.39%
SALARIES	41.27%	48.99%	45.89%	47.22%	45.54%	43.51%
STD.ACCT	0.39%	0.14%	0.28%	0.02%	0.55%	0.19%
TRANSFERS	0.22%	6.46%	1.11%	0.53%	9.74%	9.69%
TRANSPORTATION	6.04%	7.54%	8.61%	7.71%	4.85%	6.70%

The following information represents the spending on salaries and benefits: Albert Gallatin Area 59.46%, Brownsville Area 67.08%, Connellsville Area 64.58%, Frazier 62.77%, Laurel Highlands 65.41%, and Uniontown Area 64.93%. The largest items in purchased services are monies spent for contracted special education, transportation and payments to the Intermediate Unit. It should be obvious that if a merger is to produce economies, staff reductions are required.

	2009-10 Prof. Personnel	2003-04 Prof. Personne	03-04 Enrollment	09-10 Enrollment	03-04 Ratio	9-10 Ratio	Staff Needed
Albert Gallatin Area SD	299	308	4,081	3,677	13	12	278
Brownsville Area SD	148	157	1,974	1,934	13	13	154
Connellsville Area SD	392	426	5,766	5,425	14	14	401
Frazier SD	96	97	1,136	1,256	12	13	107
Laurel Highlands SD	265	246	3,675	3,376	15	13	226
Uniontown Area SD	280	278	3,543	3,064	13	11	240
County Totals	1,480	1,512	20,175	18,732	13	13	1,404

The above table calculates a professional staff to pupil ratio for the years 2003-04 to 2009-10. If the districts were staffed in 2009-10 using the same ratio of pupils to professional staff as existed in 2003-04, 108 fewer staff would be required. This reduction represents a savings of approximately \$7,100,000. Additional staff reductions are identified in other sections of this report.

It is also useful to examine expenditures in terms of the cost per pupil. For the purposes of this report, the cost per pupil was calculated by dividing the total expenditures, including transfers, by the October enrollment as reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The 2012-13 cost was calculated by dividing the projected expenditures by the enrollment projected by the EMG, LLC.

### Cost per Pupil

District	2005-06 Cost	2012-13 Cost
Albert Gallatin Area	\$10,620	\$14,951
Brownsville Area	\$11,753	\$13,684
Connellsville Area	\$10,337	\$15,611
Frazier	\$10,744	\$15,119
Laurel Highlands	\$9,649	\$14,696
Uniontown Area	\$10,586	\$15,667

One can clearly see the effect of economies of scale on the above cost data. Reducing staff numbers and costs would allow a merged district to have a cost per pupil at or below the projected Brownsville Area School District cost.

## **Conclusions**

1. Salaries and benefits are approximately 59.46% to 67.08% of the Fayette County school districts' expenditures.
2. Salaries and benefits as a percent of the total expenditures are slightly above the state average.
3. Economies in salaries and benefits of approximately \$7,100,000 may be achieved with a merger.
4. Additional savings will be realized as the result of closing several elementary school buildings if the districts merge.
5. If a merger does not occur, several districts will experience a substantial increase in debt service if buildings are renovated.
6. Expenditures for the districts will increase faster than revenues due to the decline in enrollment.
7. Expenditures for vocational education will be reduced by a merger.
8. The school districts should negotiate short term contracts with their employees in order to facilitate a merger.
9. Increased cooperation between the districts can create economies as early as September 2012. Suggestions are made in other sections of this document.

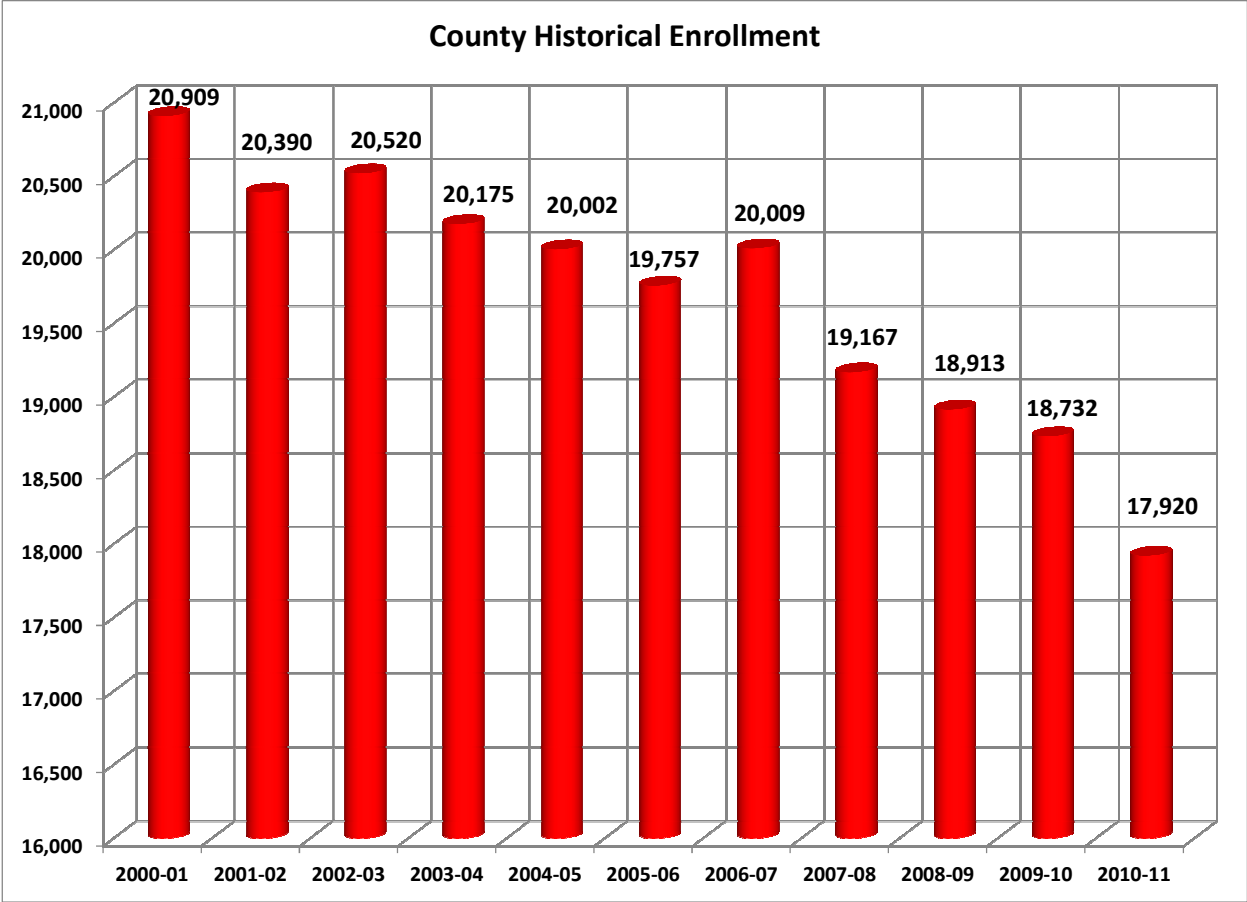
## Enrollment

This part of the report depicts actual enrollment figures for the 2000-01 to 2010-11 school years for the component school districts. The historic data is from the Elementary Secondary Pupil Enrollment Report (ESPE) and the Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) as submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) each October. The data used by the Education Management Group, LLC (EMG) comes from the aforementioned reports in order to provide valid comparisons. Pupil enrollment changes frequently in most school districts. The ESPE and PIMS data provides a common basis for comparing and projecting pupil enrollment.

### Historical Enrollment Data

	Enrollment History										
	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
<b>Albert Gallatin</b>	4,265	4,173	4,149	4,081	4,062	3,960	3,944	3,826	3,785	3,677	3596
<b>Brownsville</b>	2,182	2,060	2,087	1,974	1,970	1,977	1,915	1,911	1,885	1,934	1885
<b>Connellsville</b>	5,997	5,867	5,851	5,766	5,618	5,568	6,004	5,513	5,660	5,425	4886
<b>Frazier</b>	1,219	1,190	1,153	1,136	1,194	1,149	1,148	1,155	1,222	1,256	1200
<b>Laurel Highlands</b>	3,742	3,703	3,742	3,675	3,637	3,591	3,606	3,498	3,327	3,376	3331
<b>Uniontown</b>	3,504	3,397	3,538	3,543	3,521	3,512	3,392	3,264	3,034	3,064	3022
<b>County</b>	20,909	20,390	20,520	20,175	20,002	19,757	20,009	19,167	18,913	18,732	17,920

During the period 2000-01 to 2010-11, the Albert Gallatin Area School District lost 669 pupils or 15.69 percent of its highest enrollment. The Brownsville Area School District lost 297 pupils or 13.61 percent of its highest enrollment. The Connellsville Area School District lost 1,111 pupils or 18.53 percent of its enrollment. The Frazier School District lost 19 pupils or 1.56 percent of its enrollment. The Laurel Highlands School District lost 411 pupils or 10.98 percent of its enrollment. The Uniontown Area School District lost 482 pupils or 13.76 percent of its enrollment. Combined, the districts lost 2,989 pupils or 14.30 percent of the 2000-01 pupil population.



The above table shows the enrollment history of the proposed merged district. This data was reported on the previous page.

## Live Birth Data

	LIVE BIRTHS ACTUAL AND PROJECTED						
	LAUREL HIGHLANDS	ALBERT GALLATIN	BROWNSVILLE	CONNELLSVILLE	FRAZIER	UNIONTOWN	TOTAL
2000	260	257	147	389	78	341	1472
2001	231	258	149	401	72	318	1429
2002	226	242	122	370	80	310	1350
2003	205	243	150	333	70	271	1272
2004	217	234	159	312	67	253	1242
2005	237	257	164	381	70	313	1422
2006	184	251	123	402	72	308	1340
2007	200	227	147	374	64	310	1322
2008	209	240	153	326	69	265	1262
2009	221	231	162	305	66	248	1233
2010	225	248	161	399	69	300	1402
2011	226	251	131	369	66	309	1352
2012	201	246	147	340	71	277	1282
2013	213	237	156	319	68	259	1252
2014	225	228	165	299	65	243	1225

The above table contains the actual live birth data for the years 2000 to 2010 as reported to the Pennsylvania Department of Health. The chart also contains projected live birth data for the years 2011 to 2014. This data forms the basis for most enrollment projection models.

The data shows that Albert Gallatin Area live births ranged from a high of 258 to a low of 228. This represents a loss of 30 or 11.63% of the highest number of births reported since 2000. The data for Brownsville Area shows a high of 165 and a low of 122. This represents a loss of 43 or 26.06% of the highest number of births reported since 2000. The Connellsville Area data shows a high of 402 and a low of 299. This represents a loss of 103 or 25.62% of the 2000 births. The Frazier data shows a high of 78 and a low of 64. This represents a loss of 14 or 17.95 % of the 2000 births. The Laurel Highlands data shows a high of 260 and a low of 184. This represents a loss of 76 or 29.23% of the 2000 births. The Uniontown Area data shows a high of 341 and a low of 243. This represents a loss of 98 or 28.74% of the 2000 births.

The data for a merged district shows a high of 1,472 and a low of 1,225. This represents a loss of 247 or 16.78% of the number of births reported since 2000.



## Enrollment Projections

Two different enrollment projections are presented in the tables below.

### PDE Enrollment Projections

	Enrollment Projections										
	20010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Loss/Gain
Albert Gallatin	3596	3563	3511	3491	3444	3417	3390	3358	3334	3297	-299
Brownsville	1885	1881	1884	1864	1862	1848	1843	1843	1842	1863	-22
Connellsville	4886	4791	4750	4665	4601	4528	4459	4381	4294	4206	-680
Frazier	1200	1196	1204	1207	1216	1226	1233	1247	1255	1243	43
Laurel Highlands	3331	3318	3227	3164	3115	3037	3020	2995	2973	2954	-377
Uniontown	3022	2946	2912	2862	2805	2759	2732	2678	2626	2567	-455
<b>Total</b>	<b>17920</b>	<b>17695</b>	<b>17488</b>	<b>17253</b>	<b>17043</b>	<b>16815</b>	<b>16677</b>	<b>16502</b>	<b>16324</b>	<b>16130</b>	<b>-1790</b>
	Actual	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected	Projected

\*The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) projections were completed on 7/2010 and used the 2009 enrollments. The 2010-11 projections are seven (7) pupils lower than the actual 2010-11 enrollment for the merged district.

The PDE model uses actual enrollment data submitted annually by all local education agencies on the October enrollment report. Resident live birth data is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Health. Grade progression is provided by calculating retention rates for grades two to twelve using the most recent years of enrollment data. Retention rates for kindergarten are determined from births five years earlier and first grade from births six years earlier. These rates are evaluated in order to determine if a pattern is discernable, or if any retention rates are unusual. If a pattern is found, the pattern is continued in making the projections. Unusual retention rates are discarded and the average of the remaining rates is used in making the projections. Live birth rates are projected using a linear projection technique. A more detailed description of the PDE model may be obtained from the PDE web site.

### EMG Enrollment Projections

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	change
AGA	3,619	3,541	3,483	3,460	3,408	3,376	3,347	3,316	3,300	3,272	-347
BA	1,917	1,900	1,903	1,889	1,889	1,879	1,867	1,863	1,863	1,868	-49
CA	4,850	4,814	4,781	4,695	4,631	4,557	4,578	4,471	4,414	4,362	-488
F	1,175	1,193	1,200	1,202	1,210	1,220	1,229	1,243	1,255	1,248	+73
LH	3,336	3,311	3,237	3,183	3,152	3,102	3,103	3,087	3,078	3,060	-276
UA	2,968	2,811	2,759	2,694	2,626	2,566	2,529	2,490	2,446	2,416	-552
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,865</b>	<b>17,570</b>	<b>17,363</b>	<b>17,123</b>	<b>16,916</b>	<b>16,700</b>	<b>16,653</b>	<b>16,470</b>	<b>16,356</b>	<b>16,226</b>	<b>-1639</b>

This model shows projections that are fifty-five (55) pupils lower than the actual 2010-11 enrollment for the merged district.

The EMG model differs from the PDE model as follows:

1. Retention rates are calculated for grades one to twelve.
2. The actual average retention rates are used to calculate grade progression.
3. A moving average is used to calculate future births.

A complete description of the model will be made available if requested.

The following table compares combined total enrollment projections for the years 2010-11 to 2019-20 as prepared by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and The Education Management Group.

**Total Combined Enrollment**

<u>Year</u>	<u>PDE</u>	<u>EMG</u>
2010-11	17,913	17,865
2011-12	17,695	17,570
2012-13	17,488	17,363
2013-14	17,253	17,123
2014-15	17,043	16,916
2015-16	16,815	16,700
2016-17	16,677	16,593
2017-18	16,502	16,470
2018-19	16,324	16,356
2019-20	16130	16,226

Each of the enrollment projections shows a continual decline in pupil enrollment over the next ten years. The decline is expected to be between 09.17% and 09.95%. Most enrollment projections are more accurate in the first five years due to the fact that they are based on real live birth rates. Projections six years and longer are based on projected live births and are less accurate due to the extra variable.

### **Building and Grade Level Projections**

The following projections are arranged based upon the possible building configurations of a merged district. What follows are nine year projections based on the operation of buildings with a K-4, 5-8, and 9-12 grade configuration. If a merger occurs, in all probability, several elementary schools would be closed. **No current high school would be closed.** Possible building configurations are discussed in the physical plant section of this report.

#### **K-4 Projections**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>PDE</u></b>	<b><u>EMG</u></b>
2010-11	6,783	6,827
2011-12	6,705	6,647
2012-13	6,584	6,550
2013-14	6,418	6,412
2014-15	6,355	6,328
2015-16	6,273	6,248
2016-17	6,189	6,247
2017-18	6,131	6,222
2018-19	6,088	6,214
2019-20	6,046	6,211

The K-4 enrollment projections for a merged district show a decline of 09.02% to 10.87% over the next ten years.

### **Grades 5-8 Enrollment Projections**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>PDE</u></b>	<b><u>EMG</u></b>
2010-11	5,599	5,592
2011-12	5,520	5,444
2012-13	5,552	5,510
2013-14	5,580	5,511
2014-15	5,515	5,488
2015-16	5,432	5,431
2016-17	5,348	5,309
2017-18	5,182	5,193
2018-19	5,150	5,118
2019-20	5,182	5,057

The projections for grades 5-8 pupils range from 07.45% to 09.57%. The various options for housing these pupils and the rationale for the grade configuration are found in the physical plant section of this report.

### **Grades 9-12 Enrollment Projections**

<b><u>Year</u></b>	<b><u>PDE</u></b>	<b><u>EMG</u></b>
2010-11	5,500	5,531
2011-12	5,429	5,488
2012-13	5,303	5,352
2013-14	5,200	5,285
2014-15	5,080	5,173
2015-16	5,021	5,110
2016-17	5,037	5,142
2017-18	5,055	5,169
2018-19	5,024	5,084
2019-20	4,960	5,002

The enrollment projections for grades 9-12 pupils show a decline of 09.56% to 09.82% over the next ten years. The rationale for this grade configuration and building utilization is found in the physical plant section of this report.

### **Conclusions**

This section presented two different enrollment projection models and both reached similar conclusions. The general conclusions are as follows:

1. The decline in enrollment will enable a merged district to reduce a significant number of professional employees.
2. The PDE model projects that a merged district will lose 1,783 pupils or 09.95% of the 2010-11 enrollment over the next ten years.
3. The EMG model projects that a merged district would have a decline in enrollment of 1,639 or 09.17% over the next ten years.
4. A plan to consolidate schools in a merged district will enable the new district to house its pupils in fewer facilities. This will provide an economic benefit to the taxpayers of the districts.
5. The combining of facilities will provide an educational benefit to the districts' pupils.

## **Physical Plant Introduction**

Prior to embarking on this study, The Education Management Group, LLC was provided with the following requirements:

- The study is to include the following six school districts of Fayette County:
  - Albert Gallatin Area School District
  - Brownsville Area School District
  - Connellsville Area School District
  - Frazier School District
  - Laurel Highlands School District
  - Uniontown Area School District

(Although two additional school districts have areas of land within Fayette County, they are not considered a part of this study. These are the Belle Vernon and Southmoreland School Districts, both of which are located chiefly in Westmoreland County.)

- High Schools (grades 9 through 12) within the six school districts listed above would remain as they currently are and would not be considered for closure, even under a consolidated administrative structure. This consideration was planned to assure that these schools retained their identities and the identities of the school communities in which they are located.

### **Major Impact of Facilities Study on Merger**

In the study of a merger between two or more school districts, two major aspects of the operation and maintenance of the physical plant are important to analyze:

#### **1. Facilities Used after the Merger**

Except for the high schools that, as mentioned above, were excluded from the study, all of the facilities used by each of the separate school district entities may not be needed under a merger. If savings are available through the closure of a building that is not necessary for the education of the children in Fayette County, consideration is given to its closing under the rules and regulations of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

If facilities are closed, savings would be available in **operational** costs, such as heat and light, as well as **personnel costs across all levels of employment**.

#### **2. Custodial and Maintenance Staffing Considerations That Impact the Merger**

Building cleaning and maintenance requirements will change as a result of changes in the uses of facilities after a merger. It is important to keep custodial and maintenance staffing in line with the needs of the facilities as determined by nationally recognized standards.

## **Configuration of Schools**

The six school districts that are the focus of this study operate five 9 – 12 senior high schools, one 6 – 12 Middle – High School, twenty-five K – 5 elementary schools, three K – 8 elementary schools, six grades 6 – 8 middle schools, and two grades 7 – 8 junior high schools.

As a single school system, the Fayette County School District would be more efficiently operated if grade configurations were made more consistent throughout the county.

The State Board of Education a few years ago changed the guidelines for elementary certification. These guidelines provide for a separate certification for teachers who teach in a pre-K through third grade setting. It will be different for teachers who receive certification for the fifth and sixth grades, although teachers at the fourth grade level will be able to have either elementary certification. These new guidelines go into effect for teachers at the elementary level in the year 2013, and already went into effect in 2009 for higher education institutions that train teachers.

Buildings that contain K – 3 or K – 4 grade configurations permit teachers in these facilities to work together in a more collaborative environment, improving their ability to educate the children.

These new guidelines give credence to the Fayette County School District's Board of School Directors to adopt a configuration that would allow the merged district to easily follow the new certification guidelines and, at the same time, provide for consistency of grade configuration throughout the district.

A grade 5 – 8 configuration would allow the district to form a true middle school culture that is quite different from that of a junior high school. The change in grade level configuration to permit the middle school concept generally began in the 1960s based on:

- increasing evidence that children are maturing at an earlier age
- puberty beginning approximately four months earlier every decade
- reasons for change in configuration
- the belief that ninth grade was more attached to the high school and
- more sophisticated evaluation and research methods and materials that provided more accurate data.

Most researchers agree that generally the quality of the school and the instruction is much more important than the grade configuration in viewing the academic progress of students. However, the evidence strongly supports the social consequences of grade level configuration.

The time of puberty is a time of intense learning when students must deal with a new body, a new world, new responsibilities and new intellectual pursuits, according to H. Jurgen Combs, an early supporter of the middle school concept. Middle schools throughout the United States tend to include either grades 6 – 8 or grades 5 – 8.

Research has indicated that fifth and sixth graders should be included in a middle school because the differences in the various maturity levels were greater between grades four and five than they were between either grades five and six or grades six and seven (**Hillyer**). Also students in a grades 5 – 8 middle school showed higher self concepts than students in other school configurations (**Schoo**). Schoo also concluded that grades 5 – 8 schools provide an easier transition for students from elementary schools.

The advantages of a 4-4-4 configuration (K – 4, 5 – 8, 9 – 12) are as follows (**Combs, 2008**):

- Supports many research findings which show that today youngsters enter adolescence at an earlier age
- Groups pupils who are more alike than either elementary or secondary pupils
- Supports pupils at an age where they need reinforcement and extension of skills through application
- Facilitates a flexibility in grouping students for instructional purposes and affords even broader curriculum offerings than the 5-3-4 (K – 5, 6 – 8, 9 – 12) configuration
- Provides for more orderly transition to secondary school
- Provides an identity for the middle school.

The disadvantages are as follows (**Combs, 2008**):

- The 4-4-4 plan assumes that the maturation patterns of fifth grade pupils are more like those of sixth, seventh and eighth grade students than they are like third and fourth graders.

The Middle School is.....

- A grade pattern that begins with either the fifth or sixth grade and ends with the eighth grade
- An educational philosophy that emphasizes the needs and interests of students
- A willing attitude on the part of the staff toward an emphasis on individual instruction and guidance for each pupil
- A focus on educating the whole child and not just the intellect
- A program to help ease the transition between childhood and adolescence.

A summary of the research of middle schools is as follows (**Combs, 2008**):

- The overwhelming majority of the research supports the middle school concept.
- Grades 7 – 8 combination is the least desirable configuration based on the current research.
- The grades 6 – 8 combination is the most common configuration at this time.
- The grades 5 – 8 combination is rapidly growing as research is becoming more supportive based on the constantly changing needs of students.



The vast amount of literature about school configurations shows that the great majority of high schools throughout Pennsylvania and the United States are grades 9 – 12 facilities. Middle schools are about equally split between grades 6 – 8 and grades 5 – 8 facilities. Relatively few middle schools serve students at the ninth grade level.

According to David L. Hough in *Principle* (v74 p 6 – 9), “elemiddle” schools serve the needs of young adolescents, aged 10 to 14, in any combination of grades 5 through 8, as part of an organizational structure that includes lower grades. Research has shown that middle schools with 5 – 8 grade spans and K – 8 schools are most likely to implement child-centered programs, practices and policies than schools with 7 – 9 or 7 – 12 grade spans.

A study in Connecticut, (Tucker, Charlene G. and Andrada, Gilbert N. *Accountability Works: Analysis of Performance by Grade Span of School*), concludes that schools that continue to grades 6 or 8 produced better performing students in those grades. Implications for developing accountability systems are discussed.

**Grade Configuration: Who Goes Where?** (Paglin, Ceatherine and Fager, Jennifer, July 1997) is the fourth in a series of hot topic reports that address current educational concerns. The booklet examines questions related to grade configurations, its purpose being to increase awareness and understanding of issues surrounding grade span. It explores the ways that schools have addressed concerns associated with particular grade spans and suggests avenues for further inquiry. The text focuses on historical trends in grade configuration and the various contexts of grade spans, such as whether a school is in a rural or in an urban area. The bulk of the volume describes eight schools’ experiences with grade spans, discussing such issues as how the grade span came about and how the schools were structured to meet the needs of the particular grades it contains.

A study entitled *Update on the Relationship between Elementary Grade Span and Student Achievement: Identification of Human Interactions and Behaviors in a Kindergarten – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Configured Young Primary Elementary Which Resulted in Superior Student Achievement Observed in the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade* indicates that students who attended a K – 2 facility achieved better than their peers who attended a K – 6, K – 8, or K – 12 configured school.

**The Effect of Grade Span Configuration and School-to-School Transition on Student Achievement** (Wren, Stephanie D., 2003) examines the effect of grade span configuration and school-to-school transition on student achievement. The Michigan Education Assessment Program test was used to collect data on the passing rate of students in 232 schools in a large urban inner city school district in the Midwest. The results indicate that grade span configuration and school-to-school transition had significant positive and negative effects on student achievement respectively. The paper discusses implications for school districts.

Researchers at the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory looked at eight school districts with seven different grade spans. They examined the history of each school district’s decision on grade configuration along with observed advantages and disadvantages of each configuration and principals’ comments on the success of their programs. Based on this

research, they compiled a list of nine factors that school districts might want to consider when making decisions about configurations of individual schools:

- The cost and length of student travel, particularly in a school district that covers a large area
- A possible increase or decrease in parent involvement, possibly affected by the distance to the school and the number of schools a family's children attend
- The number of students at each grade level, which may affect class groupings and courses offered
- The effect of school setting on achievement, particularly for grades 6 – 9
- The effect of whether the neighborhood schools close or remain open
- The number of school transitions for students
- The opportunities for interaction between age groups
- The influence of older students on younger students
- The building design—is it suitable for only a few or for several grade levels?

Perhaps the most crucial consideration above is the number of school transitions for students. Studies show that moving from building to building has a significant impact upon student performance.

### **Recommendations**

The Fayette County School District's Board of School Directors should adopt in general a K – 4, 5 – 8 and a 9 – 12 configuration for the sake of consistency throughout the district. **This would help to facilitate the closure of as many as six to eight small K – 5/K – 6 elementary schools for an estimated total savings to the administratively merged district of \$1,430,000 in salaries and benefits alone without consideration for savings in energy and transportation costs.**

Pupil membership in all but a few of the elementary schools is declining. According to information provided earlier in this report, total enrollment in the six Fayette County schools has declined from 20,909 in 2001-02 to 17,920 in 2010-11. Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) enrollment projections show that enrollment will continue to decline over the next several years and that by the 2019-20 school year will be 16,130. This would represent a decline from 20,909 in school year 2000-01 to 15,130 over a 20-year span of time, or a loss of 5,779 pupils, a 27.6 % loss. To operate the same number of facilities year after year with class sizes as small as 10 in some elementary buildings is a waste of taxpayer's money. It is time to close some facilities for significant savings.

These savings would include the operational costs of the facility as well as costs of personnel, including administrative personnel, clerical staff, custodians, foodservice employees, and a limited number of teaching positions. Since the current K – 8 schools would generally follow the 4-4-4 pattern, they would remain a viable school configuration under the new school configuration guidelines.

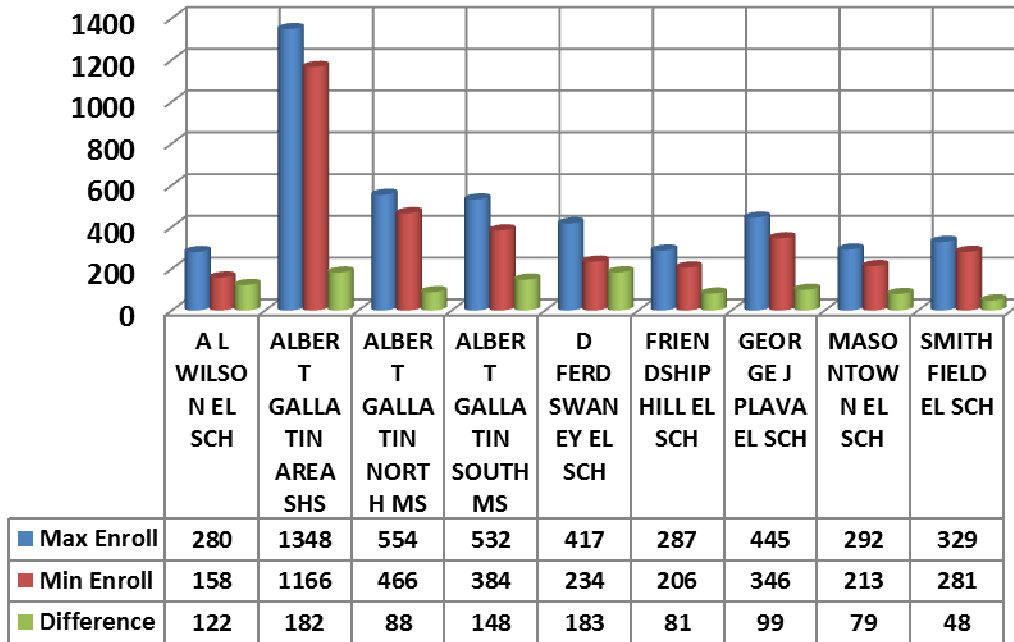
As enrollment continues to decline, the Board of School Directors of the administratively merged school district should continue to monitor the use of facilities and determine which schools could be closed to the financial benefit of the district's taxpayers.

Very small schools with enrollments of three hundred (300) or fewer students are inefficient and more expensive to operate. In addition, many of them are so small that they lack adequate health care facilities, library/media center materials, and full-time school leadership and oversight. Many of them must employ itinerant staffs who waste considerable time moving from building to building. Because of the economy of scale, custodial and foodservice programs are more expensive to operate. Neighborhood schools are nice, but the fact is that very few children these days are afforded the opportunity to walk to school. If small neighborhood schools are retained, the taxpayers must bear the brunt of funding them. The following pages would suggest that closing small schools could save the administratively merged school district and the district's taxpayers significant money.

Teaching positions are not included in the estimated savings and represent an unknown amount. In the elimination of any teaching positions, the administration of the new district should keep pupil-teacher ratios at the kindergarten at approximately 17 to 1, in the primary grades (1 – 3) at approximately 20 to 1, and at the intermediate grades (4 – 6) at approximately 25 to 1.

For each of the current six school districts, elementary schools with low enrollments were identified to determine if any could be closed at significant savings to the citizens of Fayette County. The six graphs for each existing school district show each school within that district, the maximum and minimum enrollments for each school and the difference that exists between the maximum and minimum enrollments over the 2000–2010 school years.

## Albert Gallatin Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

The largest difference in enrollment occurred at Albert Gallatin Area Senior High School; the smallest occurred at the Smithfield Elementary School.

### Consideration

Thought should be given to closing school facilities with low enrollments, such as Friendship Hill, Masontown and D. Ferd Swaney facilities. October, 2010 enrollments for these K – 5 facilities were 239, 238 and 233 respectively.

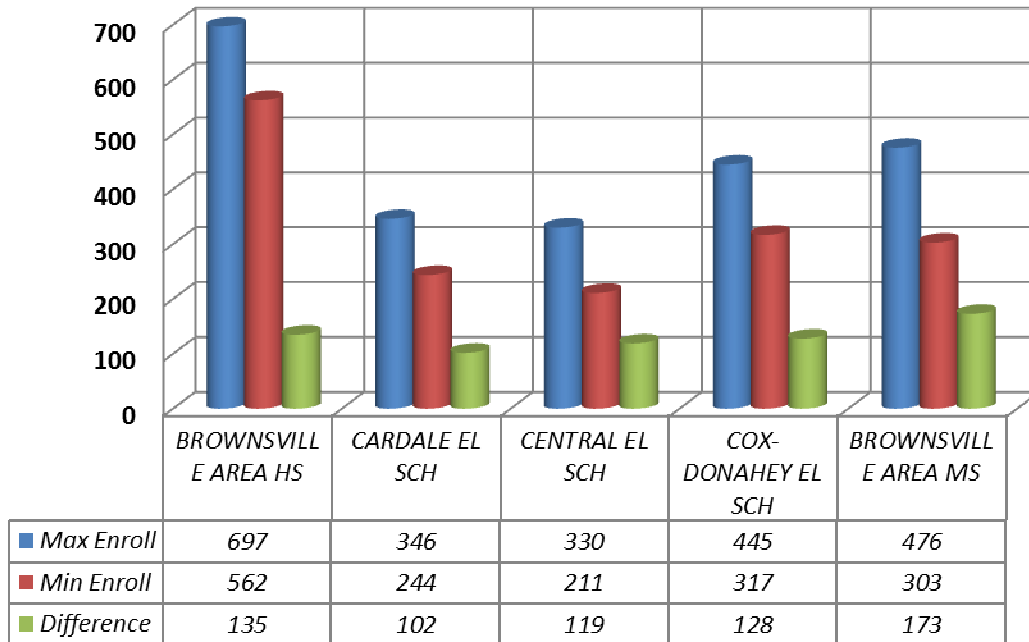
### Potential Savings

Custodial, cafeteria, and clerical staff would not be needed in a closed facility. The cost of utilities would be another large savings. Closing any one of these facilities would result in savings.

The Friendship Hill and Masontown buildings employ three custodians each; the Swaney Elementary School employs five custodians.

Savings from the elimination of custodial, clerical, and foodservice employees would save at least \$130,000 per building. Operational costs, such as heat and light, would be another significant savings. If any teacher or administrative positions could be eliminated, even more savings would occur.

## Brownsville Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

Of the K – 5 facilities, the Central Elementary School has the lowest pupil membership and could easily be closed. Also the facility is land-locked with no possibility of ever adding more classroom space. The difference between the maximum and minimum enrollments in the other two elementary facilities would suggest that space is available to house the students currently at Central Elementary School.

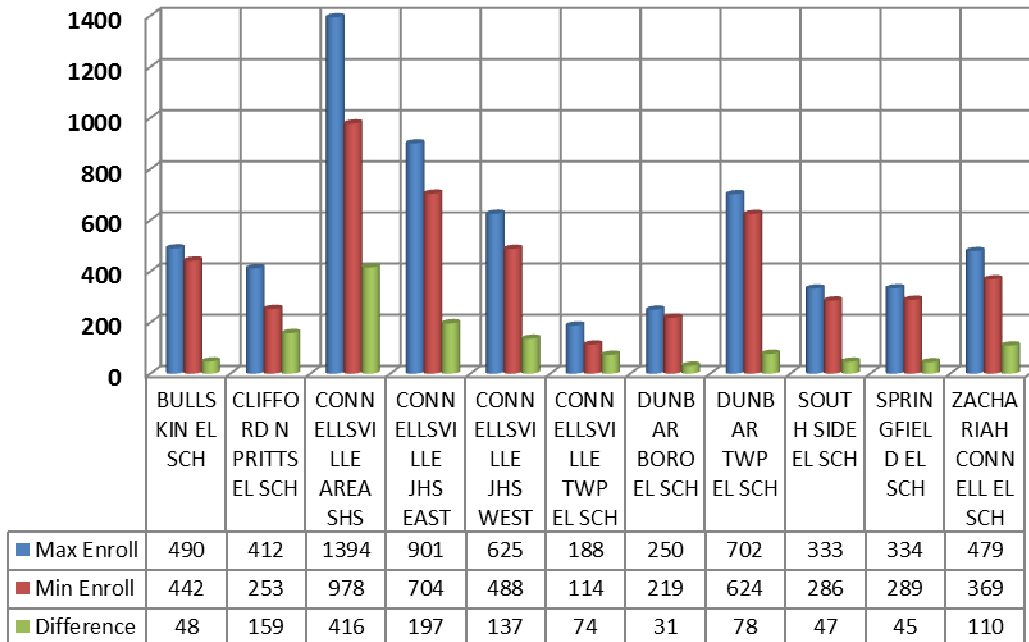
### Consideration

The K – 5 Central Elementary School could be closed for savings to the district's taxpayers. The building's October 2010 enrollment was 216.

### Potential Savings

Three custodial, one clerical and three foodservice positions could be eliminated for an estimated savings of \$160,000. Significant savings in operational costs (heat, light, etc.) are also available.

## Connellsville Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

The facility with the largest difference in enrollment over the 2000 – 2010 timeframe is the Connellsville Area Senior High School; the smallest is Dunbar Borough Elementary School.

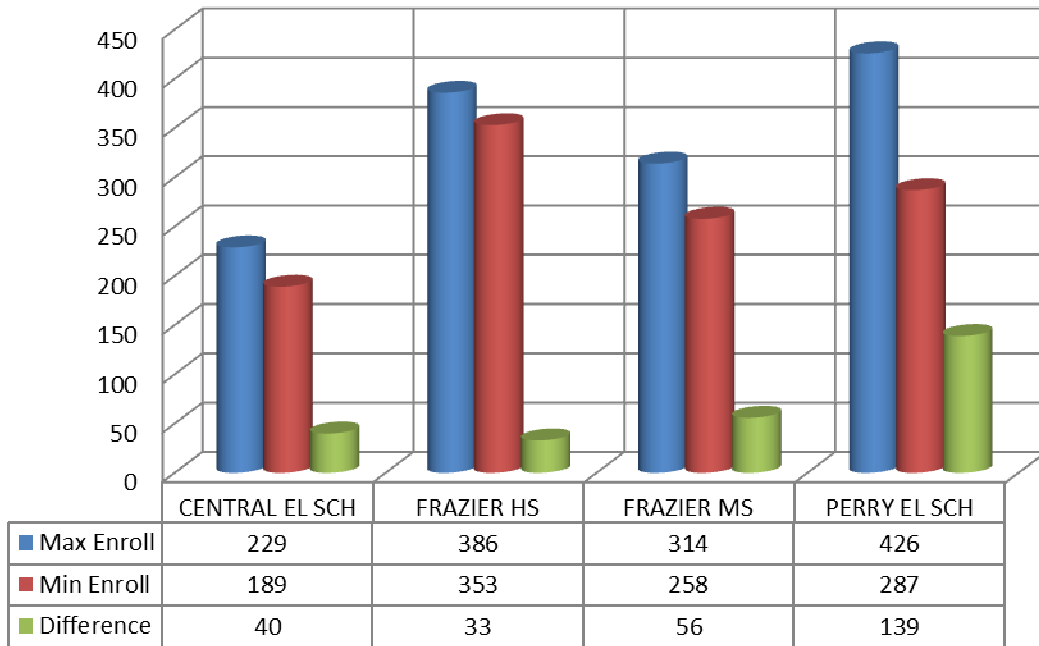
### Consideration

It would seem that the two K – 6 buildings with small enrollments, Connellsville Township Elementary School and Dunbar Borough Elementary School, could be closed and those student moved to other facilities. The October 2010 enrollment for Connellsville Township Elementary School was 142; for Dunbar Borough Elementary School, it was 237.

### Potential Savings

Both schools share a principal with another school. That single position for both schools could be eliminated for an estimated \$100,000 in savings. Together the two schools employ 4.5 FTE custodians, two secretaries and 4.5 FTE cafeteria employees for an annual savings of approximately \$340,000. The cost of energy would add significantly to these savings.

## Frazier Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

The largest difference in attendance between the years 2000 and 2010 was at the Perry Elementary School; there is a difference of 139 students between the highest and the lowest enrollment. The smallest difference (33) was at Frazier High School.

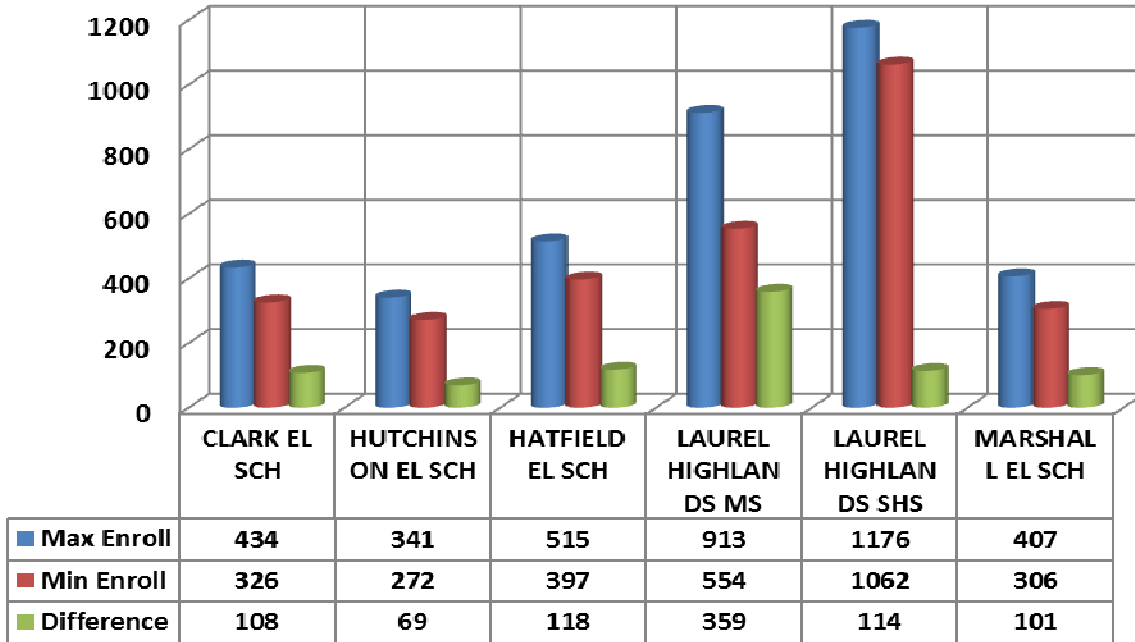
### Alternatives

The new Fayette County School District should consider closing the Central Elementary School under the new configuration guidelines (K – 4) for elementary facilities for considerable savings in salaries and benefits and operational and maintenance costs.

### Potential Savings

The school employs two custodians and three cafeteria employees for an estimated savings of \$145,000 in salaries and benefits. Additional savings would be available in the cost of utilities.

## Laurel Highlands Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

The largest difference in pupil membership occurred at the Laurel Highlands Middle School, where there is a difference from 2000 to 2010 of 359 students. The smallest difference is at Hutchinson Elementary School with a difference of 69 students during that timeframe.

### Alternative

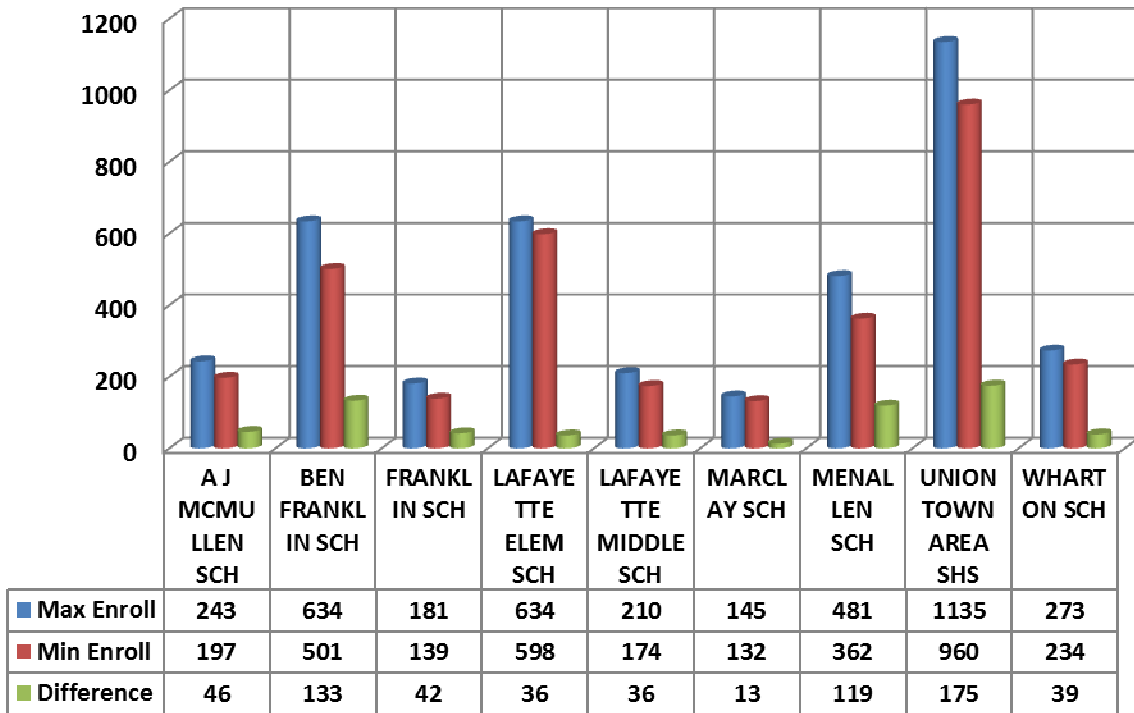
Either the Hutchinson or Clark Elementary School could be considered for closure. The October 2010 enrollment for Hutchinson Elementary School was 309; for Clark Elementary School, it was 349.

### Potential Savings

Each building has one principal, four custodians, .5 security personnel, 2.5 FTE cafeteria employees, and one secretary. Estimated savings would be approximately \$355,000 annually for just one facility, not counting savings from energy.



## Uniontown Maximum and Minimum Building Enrollment 2000-2010



### Analysis

Of the district's elementary schools, the one showing the biggest decline in enrollment over the ten years depicted on this table is the Franklin K – 6 facility.

Although the enrollments in Franklin and Marclay K – 6 schools are low and either one or both could be closed under the suggested school configuration plan, information from the school district indicates that the Marclay School was recently constructed in 2005 and that the Franklin School received comprehensive renovations and additions in 2002.

### Considerations

Consideration could be given to closing the Franklin K – 6 and the Marclay School (K – 5) facility for substantial savings to the new school district. With low enrollments (October 2010) of 139 and 136 respectively, both facilities could be closed.

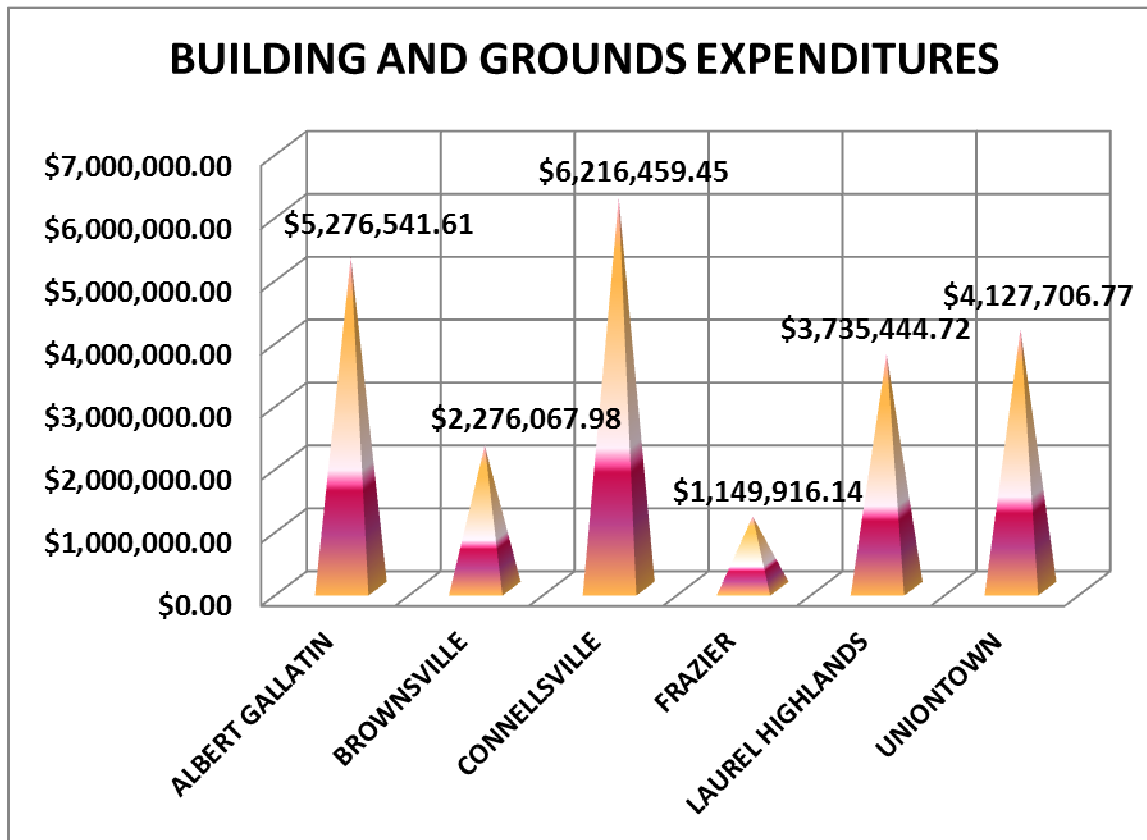
### Potential Savings

The Franklin School employs 1.5 custodians and the Marclay School employs two custodians. Both schools share a principal. The number of cafeteria and clerical employees, if any, is unknown. Savings in staffing costs are at least \$187,500 in salaries and benefits alone.

In addition to the current district school information provided above, the new merged Fayette County school district would require seven (7) fewer maintenance positions for a savings of approximately \$300,000 annually in salaries and benefits.

This is based on the total numbers and sizes of facilities compared with other school districts of similar numbers and sizes on a national basis.

### Building and Grounds Expenditures



#### Analysis

Expenditures for upkeep and maintenance of facilities comprise a large portion of each district's total expenditures. The table above shows what each of the Fayette County school districts spent in the 2010-11 fiscal year in the area of facilities. These totals include the salaries and benefits of custodial and maintenance employees, except for the Director of Buildings and Grounds, purchased services, purchased property services, other purchased services, supplies, property, and "other objects." The Annual Financial Report does not separate the cost of building maintenance by building. However, this breakdown gives some indication of the amount of savings in maintenance alone that can be achieved through closure of school buildings.

The lowest cost school district was Fayette County's smallest school district, Frazier, with a cost of \$1,149,916 in fiscal year 2009-10. The highest was the county's largest district, Connellsville, with \$6,216,459 in annual expenditures.

**Recommendation**

The administratively merged school district should close what buildings it can now at significant savings and continue to be vigilant about closing additional facilities as pupil membership continues to decline.

**Attendance Areas**

To facilitate the closing of schools, attendance areas for each building will need to be analyzed and re-configured. This should be accomplished in concert with the district's pupil transportation program and the location of students' homes throughout the Fayette County School District.

## **Career and Technology Centers**

Fayette County has two career and technology centers, the Connellsville Area Career and Technical Center within the Connellsville Area School District and the Fayette County Area Vocational – Technical School in Uniontown within the Laurel Highlands School District. Students from four school districts attend the Fayette County Vocational-Technical School: Brownsville Area, Laurel Highlands, Albert Gallatin Area, and Uniontown Area. Vocational students of the Frazier Area School District attend the Central Westmoreland Career and Technology Center in neighboring Westmoreland County. Connellsville Area Career and Technical Center serves students within the Connellsville Area School District.

These centers appear largely to be for students who do not perform well in a regular school setting rather than a well-planned program using the information on career paths that are actually available within Fayette County. An example is that job growth within the county in the area of mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction is an area of job growth, yet it appears that neither of the centers is currently providing training that would lead to positions in gas drilling. The Department of Labor ranks Fayette County as #4 in Pennsylvania for job openings in this area advertised online.

Fayette County needs to add to its career and technical component. STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math) would appeal not only to its non-college bound students, but also to potentially college bound youth who will become the skilled gold-collar workers of tomorrow who build, operate, maintain and repair the technological innovations through classroom experience and experiential learning, the philosophy of learning by doing. Computer technology, for example, gets smaller and faster with each passing year and its capabilities seem unlimited. Fayette County needs educated and trained workers and entrepreneurs to capitalize on these new capabilities.

Businesses and industries throughout Fayette County must be consulted and linked to the career and technology component of the new Fayette County School District to integrate academics and industry. These links would include internships, co-ops, and job sharing to provide real-world experience long before entering the workforce. Students apply classroom learning in the field. A business mentors program could be established that pairs students with professionals in their career field. These mentors would introduce and guide their protégés through the professions they are pursuing in study.

The current school districts of Fayette County do not support or use any one career and technical center and one district uses a career and technical center located in another county. Fayette County does not need two career and technical centers.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Board of School Directors of the new Fayette County School District should determine which of the current career and technical centers it will continue to operate and close the other at huge savings to the county's taxpayers.

2. The single Career and Technical Center should focus on the availability of jobs within the Fayette County area and establish specific programs that will allow for employment of their students in these jobs.
3. A STEM program should be established that would appeal, not only to non-college bound students, but to college-bound students who have an interest in preparing for industries and technologies located in the Fayette County area.
4. A more sophisticated link between the career and technical center to the manufacturers, businesses and industries in the Fayette County area should be established.

### **Potential Savings**

If the Board of School Directors of the administratively merged school district were to eliminate the Connellsville Career and Technical Center, the district would save \$2,056,369 alone based on the 2009-10 professional staff salary schedule. Salaries and benefits for 3.5 custodians would be eliminated for a savings of approximately \$122,500 annually. One full-time and two part-time cafeteria employees at a total of sixteen hours daily would be eliminated for an estimated savings of \$30,000 annually. Energy costs would be a significant expenditure for a building of its size, 104,189 square feet.

If the Board of School Directors of the administratively merged school district were to eliminate the Fayette County AVTS, savings in professional staff alone would be approximately \$1,493,891.

These savings would be mitigated by the costs required to transport children to one Career and Technical Center, the costs required to research and implement STEM programs and the cost to research and implement programs that are more closely aligned with industries and organizations in which job growth is evident through continual surveillance of the job market.

There is no way to estimate these costs but they are certainly much less than any savings that would occur through closure of either of the facilities.

## **Charter and Cyber Charter Schools**

The current school districts of Fayette County are losing extraordinary sums on an annual basis to charter schools and cyber charter schools operated by organizations outside of the school districts. The total paid by Fayette County school districts for charter school enrollment in the most recent fiscal year for which data are available was \$3,172,890. [Please refer to the final page of the Special Education section of this report for amounts paid by each Fayette County School District.]

According to the Pennsylvania School Boards Association (PSBA) the districts actually paid much more. In most cases, PSBA reasons, only a handful of students from each district attend charter and cyber charter schools. Districts are unable to reduce their overhead costs, such as heating and electricity, nor are school districts able to reduce the size of their faculty and other staff.

Furthermore, the PSBA points out that the students do not leave a school district to attend a charter school or cyber charter school in numbers of thirty (30) students per class and thus allow the district to downsize its teaching force. Most charter schools are multiple grade levels and because there are many charter schools that students may attend, the ability to save money with fewer than thirty (30) students attending charter schools does not exist.

In addition, the number of students attending charter schools, and especially cyber charter schools, is continuing to increase. Between 2003-04 and 2008-09 the number of charter school students increased at an annual average rate of 13.5%.

It would seem certain that a good way for the Fayette County School District to combat a situation that is unlikely to change is for it to compete by establishing its own brick and mortar charter and/or cyber charter school.

### **Recommendation**

The Fayette County School District should establish its own Fayette County Cyber Charter School to compete for the dollars that are available for students within and without Fayette County. The district could also use its empty buildings to establish one or more brick and mortar charter schools, but the cost of reopening and operating facilities must be considered.

### **Potential Savings**

There is no way to effectively estimate the start-up costs for the establishment of a brick and mortar and/or cyber charter school. It is also difficult to estimate how many children currently attending public and/or charter schools outside of Fayette County would be encouraged to attend one closer to home. It is difficult to determine how many students currently attending school in one of the Fayette County school districts would find attendance at a charter school within Fayette County a more attractive alternative. However, to compete with the charter schools that are currently receiving funding from tax dollars paid by Fayette County residents could bring substantial dollars to the combined Fayette County School District.

## Senior High Schools

**Albert Gallatin Area High School  
1119 Township Drive  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 9167**

Year original construction	1917, 1938, 1966	# architectural square feet	197,770
Years of additions	1966	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	11	# library media centers	1
# teachers	75	# gymnasiums	2
# teaching areas	66	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	58	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	1
# students 9 - 12	1,111	# stages	1
Years renovated	2003, 2004	# plumbing fixtures	333

Renovated over the 2003-04 school year, the building contains fifty-eight (58) classrooms, including thirty-nine (39) regular classrooms, 5 computer labs, 6 specialty classrooms, 4 life skills/learning support classrooms, and 4 science labs. Teaching areas include the band room, chorus, gymnasium, auxiliary gym, auditorium, media center, stage, and cafeteria because these are areas where students gather and teaching and learning could occur.

The building is in good condition.

**Brownsville Area Middle/High School  
Falcon Drive  
Brownsville, PA 15417**

Year original construction	1967	# architectural square feet	257,980
Years of additions	2005	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	1
# teachers	HS 43 MS 26	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	71	# cafeterias	2
# classrooms	63	# kitchens	2
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	1
# students 6 - 12	MS 456 HS 572	# stages	1
Years renovated	2005	# plumbing fixtures	338

The facility was completely renovated with significant new construction in 2005. In addition to sixty-three (63) classrooms, the facility contains an auditorium, stage, large gym with a track and with its own entrance, fitness center, 2 cafeterias, 2 kitchens, and 2 industrial technology rooms.

The facility is in good condition.

**Connellsville Area Senior High School  
732 Rockridge Road  
Connellsville, PA 15425 - 2556**

Year original construction	1970	# architectural square feet	248,423
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	11	# library media centers	2
# teachers	77	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	79	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	73	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	1
# students 9 - 12	1,726	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

The facility contains seventy-three (73) classrooms, including 2 family/consumer science rooms, 7 business labs, 10 science labs, 3 music/band/chorus rooms, 2 art rooms, 2 computer labs, 3 special education rooms, 1 large group instruction room, and 1 small group instruction room. Additional teaching areas include 1 gymnasium, 1 auxiliary gymnasium, 1 auditorium, 1 library media center, 1 cafeteria, and 1 wrestling room.



The facility is currently undergoing renovations and additions, including a natatorium and, according to the district's filing of Part F of PlanCon, will have total square footage of 304,988. The new facility will include space for the education of the district's ninth grade students, according to the PlanCon document.

**Frazier Middle/High School  
142 Constitution Street  
Perryopolis, PA 15473 - 1390**

Year original construction	MS 1920s HS 1957	# architectural square feet	125,000
Years of additions	1965, 1991	# floors	MS 3 HS 1
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	1
# teachers	HS 27 MS 23	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	46	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	MS 14 HS 30	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	1
# students 6 - 12	MS 258 HS 357	# stages	1
Years renovated	MS 1989 HS 1989	# plumbing fixtures	204

The Frazier Middle School and High School are actually separate buildings that are attached. According to the floor plan provided by the district, the middle school has three floors and the high school is just one story.

**Laurel Highlands Senior High School  
146 E. Fayette Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 3666**

Year original construction	1972	# architectural square feet	179,715
Years of additions	NA	# floors	3
# FTE custodians	11	# library media centers	1
# teachers	87	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	60	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	54	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	1
# students 9 - 12	820	# stages	1
Years renovated	1991	# plumbing fixtures	187

Current floor plans of the existing facility were unavailable. A district-wide feasibility study was completed with drawings of the high school with suggested changes. The conclusion of the study is that the condition of the building is poor and needs renovation.

The facility is currently undergoing renovations.

**Uniontown Area Senior High School  
148 E. Fayette Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 3510**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	254,401
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians		# library media centers	
# teachers		# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	64	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students 9 - 12	957	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	114

Floor plans and extensive information about the buildings are currently unavailable. The facility is currently undergoing additions and renovations.

## Junior High Schools

### Connellsville Junior High East Locust Street Extension Connellsville, PA 154251956

Year original construction	1956	# architectural square feet	147,738
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	8	# library media centers	1
# teachers	57	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	59	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	49	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	1
# students 7 - 9	704	# stages	1
Years renovated	1999	# plumbing fixtures	

The facility contains forty-nine (49) classrooms, including specialty rooms for family and consumer science, technical education, and science laboratories. In addition, the building houses a gymnasium, an auditorium, a library/media center, a cafeteria, 2 small group instruction rooms, and rooms for music, band, and art.

### Connellsville Junior High School West 215 Falls Avenue Connellsville, PA 15425 - 1930

Year original construction	1960	# architectural square feet	92,706
Years of additions	1999	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	38.5	# gymnasiums	2
# teaching areas	41	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	32	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students 7 - 9	490	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

The facility has thirty-two (32) classrooms, including 2 special rooms for technical education, 2 for family and consumer science, and 3 science labs. In addition, the facility contains a gymnasium, an auxiliary gym, a stage, areas for music, band and art, a cafeteria, and 2 computer laboratories.

**K – 8 Elementary – Secondary Schools**

**Ben Franklin School  
351 Morgantown Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 4856**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	61,575
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	4.5	# library media centers	
# teachers	41	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	39	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 8	496	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	185

Floor plans and building information were currently unavailable.

**Lafayette School  
303 Connellsville Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 3812**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	78,997
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE Custodians	4.4	# library media centers	
# teachers	41	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	22	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 8	327	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	105

Floor plans and building information were currently unavailable.

**Grades 6 to 8 Elementary Secondary Schools**

**North Middle School  
113 College Avenue  
McClellandtown, PA 15458**

Year original construction	1915, 1962	# architectural square feet	89,950
Years of additions	NA	# floors	3
# FTE custodians	5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	34	# gymnasiums	2
# teaching areas	31	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	25	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	3	# auditoriums	0
# students 6 - 8	484	# stages	0
Years renovated	2003	# plumbing fixtures	175

**South Middle School  
224 New Geneva Road  
Point Marion, PA 15474**

Year original construction	1958	# architectural square feet	73,525
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	1
# teachers	35	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	26	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	22	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students 6 - 8	396	# stages	0
Years renovated	2001	# plumbing fixtures	189

**Laurel Highlands Middle School**  
**300 Bailey Avenue**  
**Uniontown, PA 15401 - 2461**

Year original construction	1967	# architectural square feet	160,000
Years of additions	2003	# floors	3
# FTE custodians	10	# library media centers	1
# teachers	47	# gymnasiums	1
# teaching areas	26	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	22	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students 6 - 8	820	# stages	0
Years renovated	1991, 2003	# plumbing fixtures	212

**A. J. McMullen School**  
**7527 National Pike**  
**Markleysburg, PA 15459 - 9638**

Year original construction	1971	# architectural square feet	116,000
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	
# teachers	19	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	27	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students 6 - 8	209	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	109

Building information and floor plans were currently unavailable.

Note: The Brownsville Area Middle School and the Frazier Middle School also have grades 6 – 8 student facilities but they are attached to their respective senior high schools and were thus accounted for in the Senior High School section of this report.

**Grades K – 6 Elementary Schools  
Franklin School  
242 Buena Vista Road  
Vanderbilt, PA 15486 - 3510**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	1.5	# library media centers	
# teachers	9	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	15	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 8	139	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	44

Building information and floor plans are currently unavailable.

**Menallen Elementary School  
7527 National Pike  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 0031**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	3.5	# library media centers	
# teachers	34	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	34	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 8	381	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	105

Building information and floor plans were currently unavailable.

**Wharton School  
136 Elliottsville Road  
Farmington, PA  
15437 - 9503**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	2	# library media centers	
# teachers	14	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	19	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 8	245	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	81

Building information and floor plans were currently unavailable

**Bullskin Elementary School  
125 Pleasant Valley Road  
Connellsville, PA 15425**

Year original construction	1956, 1961	# architectural square feet	48,623
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	1
# teachers	30	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	27	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	23	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	438	# stages	1
Years renovated	1999	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to twenty (20) classrooms, the facility contains a library media center, a multi-purpose room with a stage and a small special education classroom.



**Connellsville Township Elementary School  
730 Rock Ridge Road  
Connellsville, PA 15425**

Year original construction	1962	# architectural square feet	35,287
Years of additions	1965	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	2.5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	11	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	11	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	8	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	7	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	142	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to eight (8) classrooms, the facility has a multi-purpose room, a library and a computer lab. The administrative offices of the Connellsville Area School District are attached to this facility.

**Clifford N. Pritts Elementary School  
1542 Creek Valley Road  
Melcroft, PA 15462**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	42,977
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	21	# gymnasiums	1.5
# teaching areas	24	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	19	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	251	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to nineteen (19) classrooms, the facility has a tiny room used for a gym, a computer lab, a library/media center, a small speech room, a multi-purpose room and a stage.

**Dunbar Borough Elementary School  
175 Pechin Road  
Dunbar, PA 15431**

Year original construction	1974	# architectural square feet	40,748
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	2.5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	17	# gymnasiums	.5 .5
# teaching areas	20	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	16	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	237	# stages	platform
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to sixteen (16) classrooms, this facility has a multi-purpose room, a computer room, a library/media center, and a room used for large group instruction.

**Dunbar Township Elementary School  
711 Ridge Boulevard  
Connellsville, PA 15425**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	87,124
Years of additions	2003	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	4.5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	42	# gymnasiums	1.5
# teaching areas	39	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	35	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	611	# stages	1
Years renovated	2003	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to thirty-five (35) classrooms are a library/media center, 2 computer labs, a multi-purpose room, a stage, and a room used as a small gym.

**South Side Elementary School  
1135 Race Street  
Connellsville, PA 15426**

Year original construction	1965	# architectural square feet	32,401
Years of additions	NA	# floors	3
# FTE custodians	2	# library media centers	1
# teachers	18.5	# gymnasiums	1.5
# teaching areas	21	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	14	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	3	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	306	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

The facility has fourteen (14) classrooms, 2 computer rooms, a multi-purpose room, a stage, a small special education room, a library/media center and a tiny room used as a gymnasium.

**Springfield Township Elementary School  
14 South House Road  
Normalville, PA 15425**

Year original construction	2003	# architectural square feet	72,352
Years of additions	NA	# floors	3
# FTE custodians	3.5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	19	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	20	# cafeterias	1
# classrooms	15	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	277	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to fifteen (15) classrooms, the facility has a computer room, a multi-purpose room, a cafeteria, and 2 small rooms for speech.

**Zachariah Connell Elementary School  
700 Park Street  
Connellsville, PA 15425**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	67,289
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3.5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	27	# gymnasiums	1,5
# teaching areas	29	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	22	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 6	412	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	

In addition to twenty-two (22) classrooms, the facility has a multi-purpose room, a library-media center, a small special education classroom, a computer room and a stage.

**K – 5 Elementary Schools**

**Marclay School  
111 Bruceton Road  
Markleysburg, PA 15459 - 9615**

Year original construction	2005	# architectural square feet	23,274
Years of additions	NA	# floors	
# FTE custodians	2	# library media centers	
# teachers	8	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas	15	# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	136	# stages	
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	37

Building information and floor plans were currently unavailable.

**A.L. Wilson Elementary School  
100 Al Wilson Drive  
Fairchance, PA 15436 – 1308**

Year original construction	2008	# architectural square feet	40,340
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	12	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	24	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	19	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	257	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	101

In addition to nineteen (19) classrooms, the facility has a small room for speech, a library/media center, a multiple-purpose room and a stage.

**D. Ferd Swaney Elementary School  
1152 Township Drive  
Uniontown, PA 15401 – 9805**

Year original construction	1964	# architectural square feet	53,390
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	5	# library media centers	1
# teachers	13	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	26	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	21	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	233	# stages	1
Years renovated	1996	# plumbing fixtures	140

The facility has 2 portable classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a stage, and a small room for speech.

**Friendship Hill Elementary School  
218 Geneva Road  
Point Marion, PA 15474 - 9722**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	30,550
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	11	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	17	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	14	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 8	239	# stages	0
Years renovated	1995	# plumbing fixtures	98

In addition to fourteen (14) classrooms, the school has a multi-purpose room, a small gym, and a library/media center.

**George J. Plava Elementary School  
120 Puritan Road  
McClellandtown, PA 15458 - 9720**

Year original construction	1963	# architectural square feet	41,800
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	18	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	27	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	23	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	343	# stages	1
Years renovated	1989	# plumbing fixtures	99

As part of the twenty-three (23) classrooms, the school has 3 portable classrooms, 1 used as an art classroom, which are included in the room count. Other areas not included in the classroom count are a multi-purpose room, a stage, a library and a computer room.

**Masontown Elementary School  
201 Spring Street  
Masontown, PA 15461 - 1896**

Year original construction	1928, 1959	# architectural square feet	40,875
Years of additions	NA	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	17	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	22	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	18	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	2	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	238	# stages	0
Years renovated	1999	# plumbing fixtures	114

In addition to eighteen (18) classrooms, the school contains 1 small learning support classroom, a computer room, and a multipurpose room used as both a gym and a cafeteria.

**Smithfield Elementary School  
23 Liberty Street  
Smithfield, PA 15479 - 9705**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	31,536
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1 small
# teachers	15	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	17	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	14	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	3	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	303	# stages	0
Years renovated	1995	# plumbing fixtures	97

In addition to fourteen (14) classrooms, the facility contains a multi-purpose room, a room for small group instruction and a library/media center.

**Cardale Elementary School  
192 Filbert-Orient Road  
New Salem, PA 15468 - 1132**

Year original construction	1962	# architectural square feet	41,554
Years of additions	1965	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	20	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	22	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	20	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	273	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	100

**Central Elementary School  
234 Arensburg Road  
East Millsboro, PA 15433 - 1210**

Year original construction	1964	# architectural square feet	62,500
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	18	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	22	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	20	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	216	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	110



**Cox-Donahey Elementary School**  
**112 Thornton Road**  
**Brownsville, PA 15417-2256**

Year original construction	1968	# architectural square feet	66,550
Years of additions	NA	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	3	# library media centers	1
# teachers	26	# gymnasiums	.5
# teaching areas	28	# cafeterias	.5
# classrooms	25	# kitchens	1
# administration offices	1	# auditoriums	0
# students K - 5	318	# stages	1
Years renovated	NA	# plumbing fixtures	110

**Central Elementary School**  
**142 Constitution Street**  
**Perryopolis, PA 15473 - 1390**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	32,000
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	1.5	# library media centers	
# teachers	15	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	216	# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	62

Building information was currently unavailable.

**Perry Elementary School  
142 Constitution Street  
Perryopolis, PA 15473 - 1390**

Year original construction		# architectural square feet	60,000
Years of additions		# floors	
# FTE custodians	1.5	# library media centers	
# teachers	20	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5		# stages	
Years renovated		# plumbing fixtures	105

Building information was currently unavailable.

**Clark Elementary School  
200 Water Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 2434**

Year original construction	1962	# architectural square feet	
Years of additions	1999	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	
# teachers	14	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	349	# stages	
Years renovated	1999	# plumbing fixtures	104

Floor plans and building information were currently unavailable.

**Hatfield Elementary School**  
**370 Derrick Avenue**  
**Uniontown, PA 15401 - 2434**

Year original construction	1954	# architectural square feet	48,680
Years of additions	1991	# floors	1
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	1
# teachers	21	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	434	# stages	
Years renovated	Minor 2006	# plumbing fixtures	63

Floor plans and building information were currently unavailable.

**Hutchinson Elementary School**  
**213 Mountain View Road**  
**Uniontown, PA 15401 – 9405**

Year original construction	1964	# architectural square feet	
Years of additions		# floors	2
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	
# teachers	16	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	309	# stages	
Years renovated	2006	# plumbing fixtures	64

Floor plans are building information were currently unavailable.

**Marshall Elementary School  
335 Park Street  
Uniontown, PA 15401 - 9801**

Year original construction	1966	# architectural square feet	
Years of additions	1991	# floors	2
# FTE custodians	4	# library media centers	
# teachers	18	# gymnasiums	
# teaching areas		# cafeterias	
# classrooms		# kitchens	
# administration offices		# auditoriums	
# students K - 5	367	# stages	
Years renovated	2005	# plumbing fixtures	45

Floor plans and building information were currently unavailable.

## Curriculum and Personnel

### Curriculum

The curriculum of a school district determines what the teachers will teach, what concepts and skills the students will learn and be able to use, and what concepts and skills parents can expect their children to show progress in mastering throughout the elementary and secondary grades. In Pennsylvania the State Board of Education has issued regulations that set the parameters for the state's educational program that all school districts must incorporate in their local education plans. These regulations are contained in Pennsylvania School Code Title 22 Education Chapter 4 Academic Standards and Assessment, General Provisions § 4.12 (a) (8) (9). On July 1, 2010 the State Board of Education adopted the Common Core Standards as Pennsylvania's Academic Standards in English language arts and mathematics. Beginning July 1, 2013, following full implementation of a transition plan to be developed by the Department in collaboration with education stakeholders, academic standards will be based on the Common Core State Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects and for mathematics. These standards will form the basis for the Keystone Exams being developed for assessment in core academic subjects in the secondary schools. School boards and administrators must review these new Academic Standards to determine if they necessitate changes in the local education program. Chapter 4 provides the minimum educational program a school district must provide; the school board and administrators, in cooperation with teachers and parents, determine the final content of the school district's educational program.

The information in this section of the report is based on the material provided by each Fayette County school district or from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. If information is missing in the tables, the district did not provide the information, it was not in a usable form, or the listing was not applicable to the district.

### **Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) 2010 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

Based on a review of the PSSA Adequate Yearly Progress Status for 2009-10, five out of six school districts met the state criteria for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). The table below summarizes the percentages of students that were at the *Proficient* and *Advanced* levels in reading and mathematics and the resulting AYP status for each grade span district-wide. The state performance goal at the *Proficient* and *Advanced* levels for 2010 was fifty-six percent (56%) in mathematics and sixty-three percent (63%) in reading. The 2011 PSSA data was unavailable for publication at the time of this report. The state performance goal at the *Proficient* and *Advanced* levels has increased to sixty-seven percent (67%) in mathematics and seventy-two percent (72%) in reading; the new AYP goals may have resulted in a change of status in some districts. The 2011 PSSA data will be useful for the merged district for future planning.

**2010 PSSA Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) District Status**

<b>School District Grade Span</b>	<b>3-5</b>		<b>6-8</b>		<b>9-12</b>	
Albert Gallatin SD Math	68.8%	Yes	64.7%	Yes	40.7%	No
Albert Gallatin SD Reading	62.3%	Yes CI	64.2%	No**	54.2%	No
<b>District Status: AYP</b>	Elem	Yes 4/6*	MS	Yes 1/2	HS	No
Brownsville SD Math	73.6%	Yes	60.6%	Yes	66.9%	Yes
Brownsville Reading	56.1%	No**	64.0%	Yes	55.9%	Yes CI
<b>District Status: AYP</b>	Elem	Yes 3/3	MS	Making Progress in School Improvement II	HS	Making Progress in Corrective Action II
Connellsville SD Math	74.6%	Yes	63.3%	No	46.9%	No
Connellsville SD Reading	65.3%	No**	65.1%	No**	57.9%	No
<b>District Status: Improvement I</b>	Elem	Yes 5/8	JHS 2/2	Corrective Action	HS	Making Progress in Corrective Action II
Frazier SD Math	83.9%	Yes	87.6%	Yes	62.3%	Yes
Frazier SD Reading	66.3%	Yes	79.3%	Yes	76.6%	Yes
<b>District Status: AYP</b>	Elem	Yes 2/2	MS	Yes	HS	Yes
Laurel Highlands SD Math	74.6%	Yes	62.6%	Yes	53.2%	Yes
Laurel Highlands Reading	62.6%	Yes	67.0%	Yes	65.6%	Yes
<b>District Status: AYP</b>	Elem	Yes 4/4	MS	Yes	HS	Yes
Uniontown SD Math	74.4%	Yes	68.8%	Yes	57.3%	No***
Uniontown SD Reading	64.4%	Yes	66.9%	Yes	66.4%	No***
<b>District Status: AYP</b>	Elem	Yes 7/7	MS	Making Progress in School Improvement I	HS	Warning

Codes: AYP-Adequate Yearly Progress

CI -Confidence Interval

\* AYP status is reported as Yes or No plus the number of schools compared to the total number of schools in the grade span.

\*\* Special Education subgroup did not make AYP.

\*\*\* Economically Disadvantaged subgroup did not make AYP.

The PSSA data reveals the need for attention to the instruction provided to the special education students to determine if they are having the opportunity to learn the content that will be assessed in the Pennsylvania Academic Standards for the grade level. Schools that were having difficulty making AYP are having significant gains in achievement and must identify and maintain the strategies that have produced the student achievement growth. The merged district curriculum administrator/s goal will be to improve the achievement of the subgroups to the level of the students overall. The school staffs in the merged district should share their successes in reaching this goal at each grade span.

## **Curriculum Review Cycle**

Each of the six Fayette County school districts has identified a formal or informal Curriculum Review Cycle, a plan for the systematic review of each subject area over a five-six year period. If the districts were merged, a uniform Curriculum Review Cycle would be introduced based on the needs of the new district over a period of years.

The Curriculum Review Cycle should not be affected by the lack of funding to buy new textbooks. It should be the review of any changes in the Pennsylvania Academic Standards, an analysis of the PSSA data to determine the areas that need more instruction, and the selection of new teaching strategies to meet the needs of the subgroups. This five-six year process may lead to the selection of a new textbook or technology to keep the information up-to-date.

Half of the six school districts provided a list of current textbooks with their copyright dates. Based on the copyright dates provided, many textbooks are between five and ten years old which may indicate a lack of alignment with Pennsylvania Academic Standards. Some elementary reading and K-12 science have been updated recently. The economic situation of the Fayette County schools may have contributed to this; hopefully the Curriculum Reviews are occurring annually and teachers are using technology sources to update their instructional materials.

## **Standards Aligned Planned Courses**

Although several districts have chosen a technology program for planned course development, there is no uniform selection or no use of technology in writing planned courses. The six Fayette County school districts are at various stages of curriculum development; no district has revised its curriculum to align with the new Common Core standards. In a merged district, the selection of a uniform format for course development would be necessary before the teachers do further curriculum development or textbook selection.

The merged district staff will need to develop planned courses that are aligned with the Pennsylvania Academic Standards based on the Common Core Standards adopted as Pennsylvania's standards. This procedure would be beneficial to the students in the merged district because the current courses vary in their format, content, and alignment with the previous Pennsylvania Academic Standards. In the elementary schools, the analysis of the PSSA data and the revised Pennsylvania Academic Standards can form the basis for dealing with any lack of achievement in the subgroups—special education, economically disadvantaged and all students who are experiencing difficulty achieving the standards for an area of learning. Based on the PSSA results and the pending Keystone Exams, the secondary planned courses should be the priority.

## High School Course Selection and Graduation Requirements

This report will not deal with the *differences* in planned courses currently offered by each district. The decisions about planned courses will require attention to the Pennsylvania Academic Standards in each subject area, what courses are necessary for students to become *Proficient* on the PSSA or on Keystone Exams, what courses must have specific sequences, and what electives are appropriate in a standards-aligned system of education. Since the high schools will retain their identity in a merged district, the decisions about course offerings can be made as part of the Curriculum Review Cycle. However, each high school staff, in cooperation with the merged district administrator for Curriculum and Assessment, must begin work as soon as possible to determine if their sequence and content of courses meets the requirements in subjects that will have Keystone Exams.

The table below indicates the number of credits for graduation required in each Fayette County school district. Although the high schools will retain their own identities, this information is provided for future reference and planning.

Planned Courses	Albert Gallatin	Brownsville	Connellsville	Frazier	Laurel Highlands	Uniontown
English	4	4	4	4	4	4
Social Studies	4	4	3.5	3	4	4
Mathematics	4	3.5	3	4	4	5
Science	4	4	3	4	4	4
Electives	5	2	8.5	9	4.5	6.5
PE/Health	2.5	2.5	2	2	2.5	1.5
	Computer .5	Computer 2 School to Career .5	PASS .5	Freshman seminar .5 Arts/H 2	Freshman seminar .5 Arts/Humanities 2	Computer 1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>30*</b>	<b>25.5</b>	<b>26</b>

\*Board Approval in July, 2011.

The graduation requirements vary among the six districts. The number of required planned courses should be based on the content required to meet the PA Academic Standards in each content area and complete the Keystone Exams successfully. Four planned courses in English, mathematics, and science have been the criteria established in many Pennsylvania schools; this is the recommendation for the merged district. The mathematics courses should enable all students to have functional skill in algebra applications. Schools can use greater flexibility in planning the remainder of the curriculum. The emphasis on preparing students for post-secondary education or work should be part of the planning; this is reflected in each school's current course selection/program of studies book. Advanced Placement courses, dual enrollment, early graduation criteria, and courses needed for entrance into specific college preparation programs are additional concerns when planning a high school program of studies.

The Graduation Project has been developed in each school district to involve community service, writing, an oral presentation using technology, and a portfolio of the project work in compliance with Chapter 4.



## Scheduling

The table below provides some information on the differences and similarities in schedules in the six Fayette County school districts. Because each district compiles information in various formats, some information was not available to this writer at the time of the report.

	<b>School Districts</b>					
	<b>Albert Gallatin</b>	<b>Brownsville</b>	<b>Connellsville</b>	<b>Frazier</b>	<b>Laurel Highlands</b>	<b>Uniontown</b>
<b>School Year</b>	180 + 4	180 + 5	180 + 5	180 + 6	180 + 5	180 + 4
<b>Work Day</b>	7 hrs 20 min	7 hrs 15 min	7 hrs 25 min	7 hrs 30 min		7 hrs 15 min
<b>Personal Days</b>	4	4	4	4	4	5
<b>Secondary Instructional Periods for teachers</b>	6	Not to exceed 6 hours K-12	6			HS 3 90 min block MS 6
<b>Preparation Periods</b>	Sec 5/week Elem 1/day 45min	1 teaching period or 45 min. Elem 35Min	Elem 7 per week Secondary 1/day	Elem 45 min/day MS 40 min/day HS 45 min/day		Elem & Secondary 45 min/day
<b>Teacher Duties</b>	Yes	Limited	Yes	limited		Yes
<b>Department Chairs</b>	5					13
<b>Head Teachers</b>	MS 2 El 6					JHS 1 Elem 4
<b>Career &amp; Technology Center</b>	Fayette County	Fayette County	Own Center	Westmoreland	Fayette County	Fayette County
<b>Teacher Contract Expiration date</b>	8-15-2010	6-30-2010	6-30-2013	8-31-2012		8-15-2010

None of the contractual components involve major differences. If a merger is considered by the six Fayette County School Districts, new contracts with the employees should not extend beyond June 2013. A merged district contract can then be built on the similarities of the individual contracts and negotiated with new content.

## Expenditures for Instruction

	<b>1000-610-640</b>	<b>Total 2010-11 Expenses</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Per student</b>
<b>Albert Gallatin SD</b>	\$1,118,292.24	\$47,439,554.56	2.36%	3596	\$310.98
<b>Brownsville SD</b>	\$409,266.33	\$23,555,920.51	1.74%	1885	\$217.12
<b>Connellsville SD</b>	\$2,852,037.02	\$66,543,146.09	4.29%	4886	\$583.72
<b>Frazier SD</b>	\$343,691.27	\$15,267,657.39	2.25%	1200	\$286.41
<b>Laurel Highlands SD</b>	\$1,321,787.94	\$41,318,214.46	3.20%	3331	\$396.81
<b>Uniontown Area SD</b>	\$458,385.42	\$39,937,483.00	1.15%	3022	\$151.68

Administrators' and teachers' salaries are a major expenditure for instruction. There are additional costs for instructional materials such as general supplies, textbooks, and periodicals. The table above indicates the percentage of the total budget spent for these materials and the cost per student based on the October 2010 enrollments and the latest Annual Financial Report.

### Federal Program Grants

The six Fayette County school districts receive federal and state grants that support the instructional programs in their schools. These grants are proportional to the size of the school district and/or the number of low income families residing in the district. The availability of staff to complete the required applications is a factor that affects a district's ability to obtain competitive grants; a merged district could have a Central Office staff person available to develop grant applications and submit one instead of six. The Title I grant is used here to demonstrate how a merged district could benefit from the consolidation of federal funds.

#### Title I 2011 Preliminary Allocation

<b>District (LEA)</b>	<b>TOTAL FORMULA COUNT</b>	<b>AGE 5-17 pop</b>	<b>PERCENT FORMULA</b>	<b>PA Determined Allocation (w/o Neglected)</b>	<b>PA Determined TOTAL ALLOCATION</b>
<b>Albert Gallatin SD</b>	<b>1,127</b>	<b>3,912</b>	<b>28.81%</b>	<b>\$2,319,966</b>	<b>\$2,319,966</b>
<b>Brownsville SD</b>	<b>658</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>31.57%</b>	<b>\$1,408,165</b>	<b>\$1,408,165</b>
<b>Connellsville SD</b>	<b>1,373</b>	<b>5,910</b>	<b>23.23%</b>	<b>\$2,524,563</b>	<b>\$2,524,563</b>
<b>Frazier SD</b>	<b>190</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>16.67%</b>	<b>\$332,600</b>	<b>\$332,600</b>
<b>Laurel Highlands SD</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>3,539</b>	<b>22.83%</b>	<b>\$1,484,317</b>	<b>\$1,484,317</b>
<b>Uniontown SD</b>	<b>1,009</b>	<b>3,870</b>	<b>26.07%</b>	<b>\$1,979,177</b>	<b>\$1,979,177</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,165</b>	<b>20,455</b>	<b>25.25%</b>	<b>\$10,048,788</b>	<b>\$10,048,788</b>

A review of the poverty data indicates the merged district would have a 25.25% poverty level. This poverty level would make the merged district eligible for all four of the Title I grant awards--basic, concentration, targeted and EFIG--and would benefit all the districts proportionately. However, because a merger takes a few years to show up on the USDE records, the merged district may not actually experience that increase in funding for two years. Until then, the individual district allocations would be added together, as indicated above, and the total amount awarded to the new merged district.

#### Present Grade Level Configurations

<b>District</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Junior High</b>	<b>Middle School</b>	<b>High School</b>
<b>Albert Gallatin</b>	K-5		6-8	9-12
<b>Brownsville</b>	K-5		6-8	9-12
<b>Connellsville</b>	K-6	7-9		9-12
<b>Frazier</b>	K-5		6-8	9-12
<b>Laurel Highlands</b>	K-5		6-8	9-12
<b>Uniontown</b>	K-5, K-6		6-8	9-12

Only one district has a junior high school configuration; the remaining districts have a middle school configuration. The merged district must review the new teacher certification requirements (K-4, 5-8, 9-12) which become effective in 2013 to determine if the grade level configuration in each building is appropriate or if a reorganization of the buildings is necessary in order to provide the appropriate curriculum and instruction by properly certified teachers.

## Personnel

The single largest expenditure of any school district is the cost of salaries and related benefits for the professional staff and the support staff. These costs are paramount when districts are considering the feasibility of a merger between two or more districts. The purpose of a consolidation of the six Fayette County school districts is focused leadership for (1) efficient fiscal administration and (2) for educational program growth for all Fayette County students. How can a streamlined administration team eliminate the repetition in the administrative work done in six smaller school districts? How can the cost savings benefit the students?

The type and number of personnel are determined by the size of the merged school district, the nature of the instructional program and its support services, and the resources available for maintaining staff. The State Board of Education has regulations concerning required personnel for every school district. In addition there are non-mandated positions that enhance the delivery of service to the students.

As a starting point for the consideration of the merger of the administrative responsibilities of the Fayette County school districts, a major area that can be compared among the districts is the administrative organization patterns:

### Administrative/Professional Organization

An **X** indicates a current position in a school district or the position title has been listed under the specific district.

Estimation was used for persons with multiple positions.

Central Office Positions	Albert Gallatin	Brownsville	Connellsville	Frazier	Laurel Highlands	Uniontown	Total
<b>Superintendent</b>	X	X	Acting	Acting	X	X	<b>6</b>
<b>Assistant Superintendent</b> Curriculum, Assessment, Special Education, Federal Programs		X	X				<b>2</b>
<b>Supervisor/Director</b> Secondary Curriculum & Instruction Elem/Federal Funds Special Education Data Analyst	3.5 Total		X	2 Total	3 Total	3 Total	<b>13</b>
<b>Business Manager</b>	X	X	X+ Assistant	X	X	X	<b>7</b>
<b>Human Resources</b>			X				<b>1</b>
<b>Head of Security</b>		X	X+ Facilities		X		<b>3</b>
<b>Building &amp; Grounds and/or Maintenance</b>	X	X	X	X	X	X	<b>6</b>
<b>Food Service</b>	X	X	X	X (.5)	X		<b>4.5</b>
<b>Technology</b>	X	X		X			<b>3</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	X (.5)	X	X + Athletics	X (.5)	X+ Assistant MSP*	X	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Project Manager</b>						X	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>							<b>50</b>

\*middle school principal

The merger of the six Fayette County school districts would reduce the duplication of many administrative roles. One person would not need to be responsible for more than one program component. The table below presents one option for the configuration of the administrative team in the merged district as compared to current district level positions.

Current Central Office Positions		Merged District Positions	
Superintendent	6	Superintendent	<b>1</b>
Assistant Superintendent	2	Deputy Superintendent Chief Academic Officer	<b>2</b>
Supervisor/Director	13	Elementary, Secondary, Accountability/Technology, Special Education, Community & Student Services	<b>5</b>
Business Manager	7	Chief Fiscal Officer	<b>1</b>
Human Resources	1	Human Resources Manager	<b>1</b>
Head of Security	3	Security Manager	<b>1</b>
Building & Grounds and/or Maintenance	6	Facilities and Maintenance	<b>2</b>
Food Service	4.5	Child Nutrition Manager	<b>1</b>
Technology	3	See above	-----
Transportation	3.5	Transportation/Procurement Manager	<b>1</b>
Project Manager	1	Planning/External Funding Manager	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

Currently school district administrators often have multiple roles in serving their districts. In the merged district Central Office administrators would provide leadership within one component of the district's program with support from supervisory staff at lesser salaries. Sixteen Central Office administrators would maintain the types of current service with the appropriate number of support staff. The reduction of Central Office positions would be cost effective for taxpayers.

### Central Office Support Staff

Current Positions	Albert Gallatin	Brownsville	Connellsville	Frazier	*Laurel Highlands	Uniontown	Total
Superintendent's Secretary	1	1	1	1	1	1	6
Central Office Secretaries	3.5	1	11	3	3	9	30.5
Business/Clerks	3.5	2	1	2	4	2	14.5
<b>Total</b>							51

\* Estimate

Support positions in the Fayette County school districts have a variety of job titles and diversified job responsibilities. With the transfer of administrative and business functions to one merged central office, the number of support staff would be reduced at the current district level. The merged district could realize a potential reduction of positions and corresponding staff.

### Merged District Central Office Staff

Merged District Positions	Administrative	Support
Superintendent	1	1
Deputy Superintendent Chief Academic Officer	2	2
Elementary, Secondary, Accountability/Technology, Special Education, Community & Student Services	5	5
Chief Fiscal Officer	1	4
Human Resources Manager	1	1
Security Manager	1	---
Facilities and Maintenance	2	1
Child Nutrition Manager	1	1
Transportation/Procurement Manager	1	1
Planning/External Funding Manager	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>

Because of the limited information on administrative and support staff salaries provided by several school districts, the projected cost of merged Central Office staff was not possible.

In an effort to provide some evidence of the potential savings from central office administrative and support position staff reduction, the tables below were developed based on the current salaries of the administrative positions in one Fayette County school district.

### Potential Savings of Administrative Costs

Current Central Office Positions		Merged District Positions		Difference	Savings Estimate
Superintendent	6	Superintendent	1	5	\$522,120
Assistant Superintendent	2	Deputy Superintendent Chief Academic Officer	2	0	0
Supervisor/Director	13	Elementary, Secondary, Accountability/Technology, Special Education, Community & Student Services	5	8	\$748,088
Business Manager	7	Chief Fiscal Officer	1	6	\$498,000
Human Resources	1	Human Resources Manager	1	0	0
Head of Security	3	Security Manager	1	2	\$ 60,000
Building & Grounds and/or Maintenance	6	Facilities and Maintenance	2	4	\$235,700
Food Service	4.5	Child Nutrition Manager	1	3.5	\$136,500
Technology	3	See above	-----	---	---
Transportation	3.5	Transportation/Procurement Manager	1	2.5	\$116,889
Project Manager	1	Planning/External Funding Manager/Grant Writer	1	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>		\$2,317,297

Further analysis will be required to determine the additional supervisory positions needed for daily operations at the current districts' level.

### Potential Savings of Administrative Support Staff Costs

Current Central Office Support Positions	Current Total	Merged District	Remaining at local level	Potential Savings
Superintendent's Secretary	6	1	0	\$234,545
Central Office Secretaries	30.5	7	8	\$501,808
Business/Clerks	14.5	9	0	\$191,260
<b>Total</b>	51	17	8	<b>\$693,068</b>

Further analysis will be required to determine any additional support staff positions needed for daily operations at the current districts' level.

Another way to analyze the effect of a merger of the administration and business offices of the Fayette County school districts is presented in the table below.

### Administration Expenditures in Fayette County School Districts

School District	Superintendent's Office Expenditures	School Board Expenditures	Business Office Expenditures	Total
<b>Albert Gallatin</b>	\$958,291.35	\$67,084.59	\$437,574.07	\$1,462,950
<b>Brownsville</b>	\$274,970.30	\$42,856.41	\$232,498.89	\$550,326
<b>Connellsville</b>	\$159,446.73	\$68,352.28	\$391,770.47	\$619,569
<b>Frazier</b>	\$190,617.27	\$34,263.74	\$276,578.67	\$501,460
<b>Laurel Highlands</b>	\$203,712.84	\$39,995.92	\$784,482.08	\$1,028,191
<b>Uniontown</b>	\$297,121.88	\$55,570.66	\$343,393.46	\$696,086
<b>Total</b>	\$2,084,160.37	\$308,123.60	\$2,466,297.64	\$4,858,582

The current expenditures in the six Fayette County school districts for the offices of the superintendent, the school boards and the business offices total \$4,858,582. If the merged office needed the largest amount spent by a school district or even increased the amount necessary, the savings could exceed three million dollars (\$3,395,632).

The total cost for administration expenditures for the Fayette County school districts exceeds the administration costs of comparable size school districts.

School District	Superintendent's Office Expenditures	School Board Expenditures	Business Office Expenditures	Total
<b>Allentown City SD</b>	\$608,088.03	\$107,897.92	\$1,689,514.65	\$2,478,400
<b>Reading SD</b>	\$1,628,166.19	\$123,252.98	\$1,894,400.57	\$3,645,819
<b>Fayette County SD Total</b>	\$2,084,160.37	\$308,123.60	\$2,466,297.64	\$4,858,582

If the merged Fayette County district had comparable administration expenditures to these districts of comparable size, the savings would remain between 1 and 2.5 million dollars.

### Building Level Positions

Because the districts did not provide summary information by position category and building, it was not possible to present an accurate picture of the building level staffing patterns. However, it appears from the available data that the Fayette County School districts have appropriate building level positions. In a merged district, the building staff would be reviewed annually to determine if any cost savings were possible based on the current student enrollment.

### Teachers

The table below indicates the total district staff count, the pupil /teacher ratio and the full-time teacher equivalency and the student enrollment for 2009-10.

**2009-10 District Staff Information\***

District	Total Staff	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	FTE Teachers	2009-10 Enrollment
<b>Albert Gallatin Area SD</b>	447.5	14.0	262.9	3,677
<b>Brownsville Area SD</b>	226.5	14.3	135.5	1,934
<b>Connellsville Area SD</b>	621.5	14.4	341.0	5,425
<b>Frazier SD</b>	139.5	14.8	85.0	1,256
<b>Laurel Highlands SD</b>	415.5	14.6	231.6	3,376
<b>Uniontown Area SD</b>	397.5	12.7	242.0	3,064
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,248.0</b>	<b>Ave 14.1</b>	<b>1,298.0</b>	<b>18,732</b>

\*2009-10 The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

This information should be updated as soon as it becomes available for 2011-12. There should be decreases in the FTE teachers due to declining enrollment which would result in cost savings for the merged district.

The table below compares the staff in comparable size districts with the staff in a merged Fayette County school district if the staff remained at the current level.

**2009-10 District Staff Comparison**

District	Total Staff	Pupil/Teacher Ratio	FTE Teachers	2009-10 Enrollment
<b>Allentown City SD</b>	2,215.86	15	1,161.16	17,465
<b>Reading SD</b>	2,200.00	15.5	1,149.25	17,869
<b>Fayette County SD</b>	2,248.00	14.1	1,298.00	18,732

The merged district administration should review the class sizes in each school to determine if reduction in staff is possible without a major increase in class size.

### Teachers' Salaries

<b>Degree</b>	<b>Lowest Starting Salary</b>	<b>Highest Starting Salary</b>	<b>Highest Step Salary</b>	<b>Highest Step</b>
Bachelor of Science	\$28,500	\$37,653	\$72,050	15
Master of Science	\$28,800	\$38,421	\$72,800	16
Masters + 60	-----	\$46,004	\$76,733	14

The salary ranges for teachers with various levels of education vary with each district. Because the teacher contracts were not provided by all the districts and some districts are negotiating new contracts, this information may become outdated during 2011-12.

The data from this report appears to indicate that significant savings are possible if the six Fayette County school districts would merge the administrative and business offices. It is recommended that a similar study be done using the 2011-12 student enrollments, teaching staff and expenditures.



## Special Education

The mission of Special Education is to set high standards for all exceptional students in the Commonwealth receiving special education services and programs. Its role is to provide effective and efficient administration and management of the Commonwealth's resources dedicated to enabling school districts to maintain high standards in their delivery of a Free and Appropriate Education (FAPE) to exceptional students. It is the function of special education to provide effective and efficient planning, administration, monitoring, and training activities which result in an appropriate education aimed at increasing standards for all exceptional students. [\[www.pde.state.pa.us/special\\_edu\]](http://www.pde.state.pa.us/special_edu)

**IDEA 2004** [The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004)], is a major reauthorization of IDEA 97, that continues to ensure that all children with disabilities have a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and that the rights of such children and their parents are protected. It also aligns to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act.

**Special Education Regulations in Pennsylvania** for school districts are found under the 22 PA Code, Chapter 14. Chapter 14 provides regulatory guidance to ensure compliance with the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004, and its regulations. The provisions of Chapter 14 ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that is designed to enable the students to participate fully and independently in the community, including preparation for employment or higher education. Chapter 14 also ensures that the rights of students with disabilities and parents of these students are protected. Final Chapter 14 regulations were published in the Pennsylvania Bulletin on June 28, 2008, and became effective on July 1, 2008.

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Chapters 14 and 15 of the State Board Regulations, the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides general supervision over all public schools, school districts and other public education agencies within the state to ensure that each student with a disability receives a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and that each family has the benefits of procedural safeguards. To fulfill this responsibility, the Bureau of Special Education requires that each school district and intermediate unit submit a Special Education Plan and applications for federal funds which meet requirements of federal and state Regulations.

The Bureau of Special Education also conducts Compliance Monitoring for Continuous Improvement of school districts, charter schools, and early intervention programs to ensure compliance with applicable regulations.

- *Cyclical Monitoring* is conducted every six (6) years among all public school districts and charter schools.
- *Focused Monitoring* may be conducted annually among school districts and charter schools whose data does not meet established accountability benchmarks: PSSA/PASA.
- *Targeted Monitoring* may be conducted among school districts and charter schools where particular compliance issues are noted requiring closer review.

In accordance with the Gaskin Settlement Agreement, Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) Monitoring will be conducted among school districts that are the lowest ranking in the state in including special education students in regular education classrooms for all or part of the school day. Following monitoring visits, PDE sends reports to the school districts detailing the results. The school district must correct any difficulties that are present. The Bureau of Special Education verifies the school districts' corrective actions.

<b>Special Education Monitoring</b>						
<b>Type of Monitoring</b>	<b>Albert Gallatin</b>	<b>Brownsville</b>	<b>Connellsville</b>	<b>Frazier</b>	<b>Laurel Highlands</b>	<b>Uniontown</b>
District Compliance Monitoring	04/2010	11/2010	12/2010	03/2009	04/2010	05/2010
District Corrective Action Verification/ School District Compliance Plan	05/2010	01/2011	01/2011	04/2009	05/2010	06/2010
LRE Focused Monitoring Compliance Plan for Corrective Action	07/2010	Not applicable	02/2008	07/2008	Not applicable	Not applicable
Special Education Report	05/2011	07/2006	06/2009	06/2010	06/2011	07/2008

The reports listed above were reviewed for the six Fayette County school districts. Since the Pennsylvania Department of Education monitors and verifies special education compliance and compliance is *not* the focus of this study, this study will *not* address special education compliance issues.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new Fayette County administration would need to review all the plans and reports listed above in order to ensure future compliance by the merged district.

## **Special Education Program**

### **Special Education Department Personnel**

Based on the information provided by the six Fayette County school districts, each of the present districts has a central office administrator who serves as the district Special Education LEA. Many of these administrators who are responsible for special education are also responsible for such programs as Chapter 15: Gifted; Alternative Education for regular and special education students; Incarcerated Students; English as a Second Language (ESL); Homeless (under the McKinney-Vinto Homeless Act); Student Assistance Program; and/or all Out-of-District Placements for regular and special education students.

The six Fayette County school districts' special education programs also include: district and/or IU-contracted teachers and district and/or IU-contracted support staff, including psychologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, paraprofessionals, etc.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new merged district would need to consider a county special education director, a county special education assistant director or directors and/or district LEAs.

## Special Education Caseloads

The six Fayette County school districts provide special education services for all identified exceptional students. The caseloads of the special education teachers are based on three (3) types:

**Full-time** - Special Education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 80% or more of the school day.

**Itinerant** - Special Education supports and services provided by special education personnel for 20% or less of the school day.

**Supplemental** - Special Education supports and services provided by special education personnel for more than 20% but less than 80% of the school day.

Allowable Teacher's Caseload				
Type of Service	Code	Itinerant	Supplemental	Full Time
Learning Support	LS	50	20	12
Life Skills Support	LSS	20	20	12 (Grades K-6) 15 (Grades 7-12)
Emotional Support	ES	50	20	12
Deaf or Hearing Impaired Support	DHIS	50	15	8
Blind or Visually Impaired Support	BVIS	50	15	12
Speech and Language Support	SLS	65		8
Physical Support	PS	50	15	12
Autistic Support	AS	12	8	8
Multiple Disabilities Support	MDS	12	8	8

A merger of the six Fayette County school districts may provide the opportunity for the adjustment of special education caseloads and sharing of services in the county schools which may result in a financial savings for the merged district.

## Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

Educational Placement – LRE Data are derived from students' IEPs. The number of students assigned to each of three (3) settings must be reported. These are the number of children with IEPs aged 6-21 who are (1) inside the regular class 80% or more of the day; (2) inside the regular class less than 40% of the day; or (3) in other settings.

The six Fayette County school districts provide various types of instructional environments to meet the needs of the special education students. These types of instructional environments include inclusion, pull out for supplemental help, special education full time support, support by a paraprofessional in the classroom, etc.

According to the six Fayette County school districts, special education students have access to the same curriculum as other students at their grade level with accommodations and adaptations based on their individual IEPs.

A Fayette County Special Education Plan would need to be developed if there was a merger of the six Fayette County school districts. This plan would address Least Restrictive Environment and the various types of instructional environments in each school with an emphasis on the need for each special education student to access a rigorous research-based curriculum.

In order to monitor and address LRE, the merged district would also need to review each of the six (6) Special Education Data Reports for 2011-2012 to obtain the LRE information and the LRE Focused Monitoring Reports, when applicable.

In a merged school district, any change of placement would require the IEP Team to consider this change of placement and the specific needs of the individual student to determine if the placement is the least restrictive environment.

### Special Education Student Achievement

The most recent student achievement data available for public access is as follows: Pennsylvania Department of Education 2009-2010 Academic Achievement Report based on the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA) <http://paayp.emetric.net>

District 2010 PSSA IEP-Special Education Academic Performance						
District	Albert Gallatin	Brownsville	Connellsville	Frazier	Laurel Highlands	Uniontown
Percentage of Special Education Students at or above the <i>Proficient</i> Level on the PSSA*						
Reading: Grade 3-5	26.4 SHC	25.3 x	32.6 x	50.9 SHC	30.9 SHC	32.5 SHC
Reading: Grades 6-8	17.1 SHC	38.3 SH	21.7 x	55.1 CI	24.8 SHC	23.0 SHC
Reading: Grades 9-12	11.4 x	---	11.7 x	---	---	---
Math: Grades 3-5	37.4 SH	50.6 CI	54.1 CI	64.9 ✔	50.5 CI	52.8 CI
Math: Grades 6-8	20.5 x	42.0 SH	26.3 x	73.5 ✔	30.8 SH	32.5 SH
Math: Grades: 9-12	6.8 x	---	8.5 x	---	---	---
*Reading 2010 Target: 63%      Math 2010 target: 56%						

Codes:



Group met measure



Group met goal using Confidence Interval



Group met target using Safe Harbor

SHC Group met target using Safe Harbor with Confidence Interval

x Group did not meet measure

--- Fewer than 40 students tested

The merged district should address the achievement of the special education subgroup as noted on the District 2010 PSSA IEP-Special Education Academic Performance Chart. Some of the districts' special education subgroups made AYP by other methods, such as Confidence Interval (CI), Safe Harbor (SH), or Safe Harbor with Confidence Interval (SHC). The new merged district administration must consider the achievement of all special needs students. **In order to increase student achievement for all special education students, the merged district should ensure that all special education students have access to a rigorous, relevant curriculum.**

## Professional Development

The six Fayette County school districts provide special education professional development within the district for its faculty and staff. They also utilize Intermediate Unit #1, PaTTAN and others to provide training. Intermediate Unit #1 and PaTTAN also provide trainings at their sites and invite district staff to participate in those various trainings.

The six Fayette County school districts have already initiated a collaborative effort to provide trainings for parents. For example, in an effort to increase parent participation in training activities, Uniontown Area School District has partnered with the other five Fayette County school districts and Fayette County Mental Health Services to provide training opportunities for parents through Community Connections. Trainings are provided at various locations, well-advertised, and represent a collaboration between school personnel, IU personnel and outside agencies.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the merged district would be responsible for future special education professional development.

### Chapter 15: Protected Handicapped Students

Chapter 15 addresses a school district's responsibility to comply with the requirements of Section 504 and its implementing regulations at 34 CFR Part 104 (relating to nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap in programs and activities receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance) and implements the statutory and regulatory requirements of Section 504.

<b>Chapter 15: Protected Handicapped Students</b>	
<b>District</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Albert Gallatin School District	20
Brownsville School District	6
Connellsville School District	36
Frazier School District	9
Laurel Highlands School District	58
Uniontown Area School District	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>

## Chapter 16: Gifted Students

Chapter 16 specifies how the Commonwealth will meet its obligations to suspected and identified gifted students who require gifted education to reach their potential. The student's instruction is based on the Gifted Individualized Education Plan (GIEP).

<b>Chapter 16: Gifted</b>	
<b>District</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Albert Gallatin School District	65
Brownsville School District	24
Connellsville School District	144
Frazier School District	36
Laurel Highlands School District	98
Uniontown Area School District	66
<b>Total</b>	<b>433</b>

## Incarcerated Students

Presently the Uniontown Area School District is responsible to educate the incarcerated students from Fayette County. Relevant documentation for the Uniontown Area School District is provided at the scheduled IEP team meeting. The Uniontown Area School District then provides a highly qualified special education teacher to instruct, monitor, and report progress towards IEP goals/objectives.

Inclusion in the regular education environment with a full range of supplemental aids and services is the team's first option. The districts ensure that educational placement is an IEP team decision. The IEP team reviews all data including present education levels, strengths and needs, specially designed instruction and related services to determine the student's needs. After determining which services will be provided, the IEP team discusses and determines educational placement to ensure FAPE is provided in the least restrictive environment.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new merged district administration would need to consider who would be responsible for Chapter 15, Chapter 16, and Incarcerated Students.

## Special Education Enrollment

The Child Count Data is posted on the web at <http://penndata.hbg.psu.edu> for 2010-2011:

<b>Special Education Data Report</b>							
<b>2010-2011 Enrollment (School Age)</b>							
District	District Special Education Enrollment	% of District Special Education	% of State Special Education				
Albert Gallatin School District	734	20.0%	15.2%				
Brownsville School District	357	18.5%	15.2%				
Connellsville School District	907	18.5%	15.2%				
Frazier School District	151	12.0%	15.2%				
Laurel Highlands School District	492	14.6%	15.2%				
Uniontown School District	523	17.1%	15.2%				
<b>Total</b>	<b>3164</b>						

Exceptionality	Albert Gallatin	Brownsville	Connellsville	Frazier	Laurel Highlands	Uniontown	State
% of Special Education by Exceptionality							
							%
Autism	2.9%	7.3%	4.5%	---	4.9%	4.0%	7.0%
Emotional Disturbance	4.8%	11.8%	13.1%	18.5%	11.2%	9.2%	8.8%
Hearing Impaired Including Deafness	---	---	1.3%	---	---	---	1.0%
Mental Retardation	27.2%	19.0%	9.3%	9.9%	14.0%	17.6%	7.6%
Other Health Impairment	5.2%	3.4%	7.1%	---	10.6%	5.9%	9.0%
Specific Learning Disability	40.9%	40.6%	42.3%	32.5%	35.0%	37.1%	48.3%
Speech or Language Impairment	17.4%	14.8%	21.3%	21.9%	21.3%	22.9%	16.2%

This symbol --- indicates that PDE is not reporting these data to guard against improper statistical comparisons due to small group size (n=10 or less) and to protect the confidentiality of those students with disabilities who comprise these categories. For the same reason, Deaf-Blindness, Multiple Disabilities, Orthopedic Impairment, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visual Impairment including Blindness are not included in the list. Items in red on the chart indicate that the number/percent is greater than the state number/percent.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new Fayette County administration would need to consider the percentage of students with special needs when viewing student performance because these students often require **additional instruction** and **additional resources** to help them achieve their full potential.

## Special Education Financial Information

### Special Education Funding and Expenses 2010-2011

<b>Most Recent Annual Financial Report (AFR): Revenues – Function 7271 Special Education Funding for School A</b>	
Albert Gallatin School District	\$2,845,385.15
Brownsville School District	\$1,297,278.06
Connellsville School District	\$4,526,690.94
Frazier School District	\$669,449.32
Laurel Highlands School District	\$2,196,907.56
Uniontown School District	\$2,117,804.70

<b>Most Recent Annual Financial Report (AFR)-Fiscal Year 2010: Total of 1200 Function - Special Education Expenses</b>	
Albert Gallatin School District	\$5,785,745.14
Brownsville School District	\$2,941,604.85
Connellsville School District	\$8,022,368.86
Frazier School District	\$2,131,758.94
Laurel Highlands School District	\$4,367,440.41
Uniontown School District	\$4,719,528.33

### Estimated 2010-2011 Special Education Allocation and Estimated IDEA

District	Estimated 2010-2011 Special Education Allocation	Estimated IDEA School Age Allocation
Albert Gallatin School District	\$2,824,451.86	\$871,667.00
Brownsville School District	\$1,287,702.77	\$400,919.00
Connellsville School District	\$4,495,460.22	\$1,102,828.00
Frazier School District	\$664,587.92	\$202,265.00
Laurel Highlands School District	\$2,135,293.55	\$589,940.00
Uniontown School District	\$2,103,271.33	\$609,204.00

#### Grants

Based on the information provided for this study, in 2008-2009 Connellsville School District received a LRE Mini Grant for \$16,868.16 and in 2010-2011 received a Membership, Participation and Learning Grant for \$9,276.00. In 2009-2010 Frazier School District received a LEA Min Grant for \$20,000.00.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new merged district should apply for special education grants, when appropriate.

#### School-Based ACCESS Program (SBAP)

The School-Based Access Program began in 1992 and currently services over 500 school districts, intermediate units, approved private schools, charter schools, and other local education agencies across the Commonwealth. It includes Direct Services and Administrative Claiming.



The number of SBAP billable services expanded throughout the history of the program. The following is a list of SBAP billable services:

SBAP Billable Services		
Assistive Technology Devices	IEP Meetings	Audiology
Nursing	Orientation and Mobility	Physical Therapy
Occupational Therapy	Personal Care Assistant	Physician
Special Transportation	Vision	Interpreter
Social Work	Psychological Services	Psychiatric Services
Speech, Language and Hearing	Teacher of the Hearing Impaired	

The Leader Services Reports can be accessed on the Leader's website: [www.leaderservices.com/pa](http://www.leaderservices.com/pa). In order to get this information, the district needs a district username and password to access the reports.

ACCESS: Revenues, Project Payments and Account Balance from 2007-2011								
District	Revenues through 6/2007	Revenues 7/07-6/08	Revenues 7/08/6/09	Revenues 7/09-6/10	Revenues 7/10-6/11	Total Revenues	Project Payments	Account Balance
Albert Gallatin	\$106,422.00	\$66,959.00	\$54,151.00	\$64,318.00	\$50,279.00	\$342,129.00	\$93,663.00	\$248,466.00
Brownsville	\$34,485.00	\$5,007.00	\$23,100.00	\$9,952.00	\$4,002.00	\$76,546.00	\$73,385.00	\$3,161.00
Connellsville	\$293,571.00	\$109,492	\$259,914.00	\$112,144.00	\$486,658.00	\$1,261,779.00	\$1,021,908.00	\$239,871.00
Frazier	\$128,052.00	\$43,484.00	\$23,170.00	\$179,275.00	\$71,703.00	\$445,693.00	\$335,127.00	\$110,566.00
Laurel Highlands	\$774,136.00	\$154,612.00	\$143,220.00	\$205,344.00	\$136,110.00	\$1,413,422.00	\$1,251,802.00	\$161,620.00
Uniontown	\$683,184.00	\$149,429.00	\$154,254.00	\$192,586.00	\$142,153.00	\$1,321,606.00	\$1,192,832.00	\$128,774.00

Since ACCESS can provide additional revenue, if the six Fayette County school districts merge, the new merged district should submit for all billable services when appropriate.

### Psychological Services and Social Work Services

Intermediate Unit #1 instituted the shared services model for psychological services and for social work services. Under the shared services model, IU1 continues to use a fixed amount of IDEA funds to support psychological services and social work services at current levels.

The new county administration will need to determine the most cost effective delivery of psychological and social work services.

### Contingency Funds

The Secretary of Education under P.S. §25-2509.8 was given the authority to establish guidelines for the application, approval, distribution and expenditure of funds for extraordinary special education program expenses, also known as Special Education Contingency Funds. The fund's purpose is to provide additional state funding for the implementation of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a student with significant disabilities. A contingency fund application may be submitted by a school district or charter school to partially meet the extraordinary educational needs of an individual child with significant disabilities who requires a

highly specialized program or related services in order to receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new merged district should apply for Contingency Funding, when appropriate.

### **Tuition Rates**

The tuition rates for the six Fayette County school districts based on the 2009-2010 School Year Operation will be used during the 2010-2011 Fiscal Year (Certified: May 2011).

<b>2020-2011 Fayette County School District Tuition Rates</b>		
<b>District</b>	<b>Elementary</b>	<b>Secondary</b>
Albert Gallatin School District	\$6,881.78	\$8,857.98
Brownsville School District	\$6,335.94	\$9,054.38
Connellsville School District	\$7,746.94	\$9,387.29
Frazier School District	\$7,798.25	\$10,170.43
Laurel Highlands School District	\$7,604.07	\$8,783.24
Uniontown School District	\$7,936.48	\$9,920.20

The 2010-2011 Tuition Rates will be used for 2011-2012 until the final rates are released in May, 2012.

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, there would be a county elementary tuition rate and a county secondary tuition rate.

It is important to note that if a special education student from the merged district would be placed in any school in the merged district based on the decision of the IEP Team, there would be no percentage of the cost to operate the program (teacher costs and benefits, paraprofessionals, supplies, etc.) unless the placement would be in an IU-operated class taught by an IU teacher and supported by IU paraprofessionals.

If a special education student from the merged district was placed in a non-Fayette County School based on the decision of the IEP Team, there would be no change in the current practice.

### **Charter Schools**

According to the Charter School BEC, 24 P.S. §17-1701-A, the Charter School Law (“CSL”) requires that, upon request, assistance must be provided to charter schools and cyber charter schools to address the needs of students with disabilities. Because there has been confusion about what “assistance” the CSL requires to be provided to students with disabilities enrolled in a charter school or a cyber charter school, the Department has stated its position on this issue:

The CSL requires the Intermediate Unit (“IU”) in which a charter school is located to provide the charter school, upon request, with “services to assist the charter school to address the

specific needs of exceptional students.” However, for cyber charter schools, the CSL requires that upon request, the IU or school district in which a student resides must “provide assistance, to the cyber charter school in the delivery of services to a student with disabilities.” In either case, an IU or school district may not charge a charter school or a cyber charter school more for such services than they charge school district.

The Department’s interpretation of the “assistance” required by the CSL is that an IU or a school district is generally not required to provide direct services to charter school or cyber charter school students with disabilities. However, at a minimum and upon request, assistance must be provided to help a charter school or a cyber charter school locates providers who could provide services necessary to address the needs of their students with disabilities. This would include providing the names of providers, contact information, etc.

The goal of all segments of the educational community should be to ensure that all students receive appropriate educational services. Thus, the Department expects and encourages school districts, IUs and cyber charter schools to work together to ensure that appropriate educational services are provided to all students with disabilities.

<b>Total Amount Paid to Charter Schools for the School Year 2009-2010 (PDE-432): Due Date April 8, 2011</b>	
Albert Gallatin School District	\$911,636.94
Brownsville School District	\$563,140.47
Connellsville School District	\$1,235,480.12
Frazier School District	\$164,373.45
Laurel Highlands School District	\$256,506.13
Uniontown School District	\$685,626.95

If there is a merger of the six Fayette County school districts, the new county administration may consider implementing Fayette County Virtual Schools in some of the Fayette County Schools which would provide the academics, extracurricular opportunities, a high school diploma and possible financial savings to the merged school district.

**Changes to the IEPs**

**Final Note**

If the six Fayette County schools districts would merge, all students IEPs in all six (6) districts would need to be revised to indicate the change from the present school district to the new merged school district.

## **Transportation**

The transportation of pupils to and from school is an optional program for school districts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. However, it is a program that parents have come to expect from districts. The demand for service increases from year-to-year in spite of the fact that fewer pupils are enrolled.

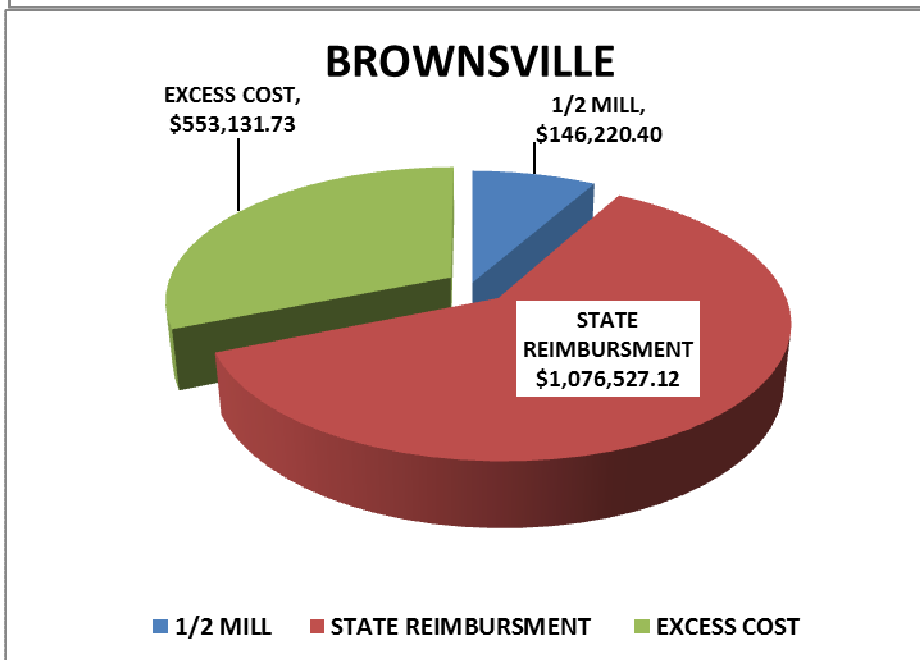
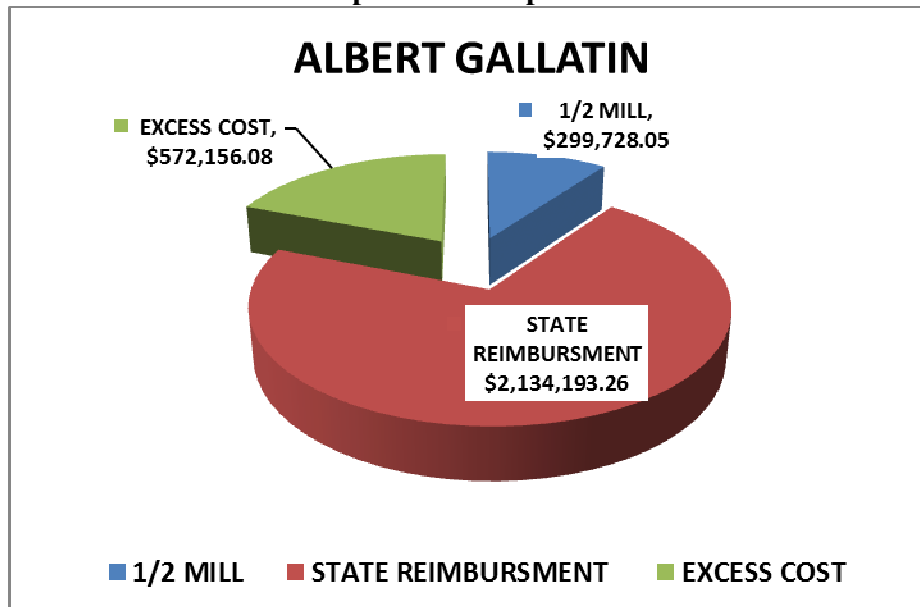
The transportation program can be very expensive for a district that organizes its system on demand rather than on the basis of efficiency and economy. In order to have an efficient system, several criteria must be met:

- The buses must travel at least seventy (70) miles per day, if possible.
- Each bus must travel more miles per day with pupils than without pupils.
- Each bus must be filled to capacity on at least one run.
- The district must understand the state reimbursement formula in order to organize its program in a cost effective manner.

Simply put, districts are reimbursed on the following factors: (1) the age and capacity of buses, (2) the number of miles traveled by buses and (3) the extent to which buses are filled to capacity on at least one run.

Transportation is difficult to analyze due to the fact that a district is reimbursed in one year for the service provided in the previous year. The reimbursement also contains moneys for service provided by other units on behalf of a school district.

## Transportation Expenditures

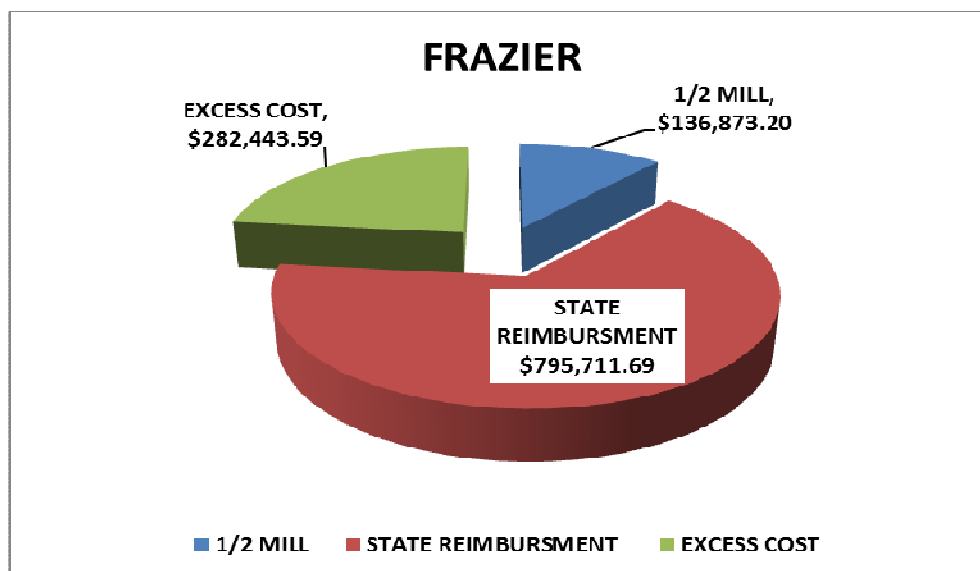
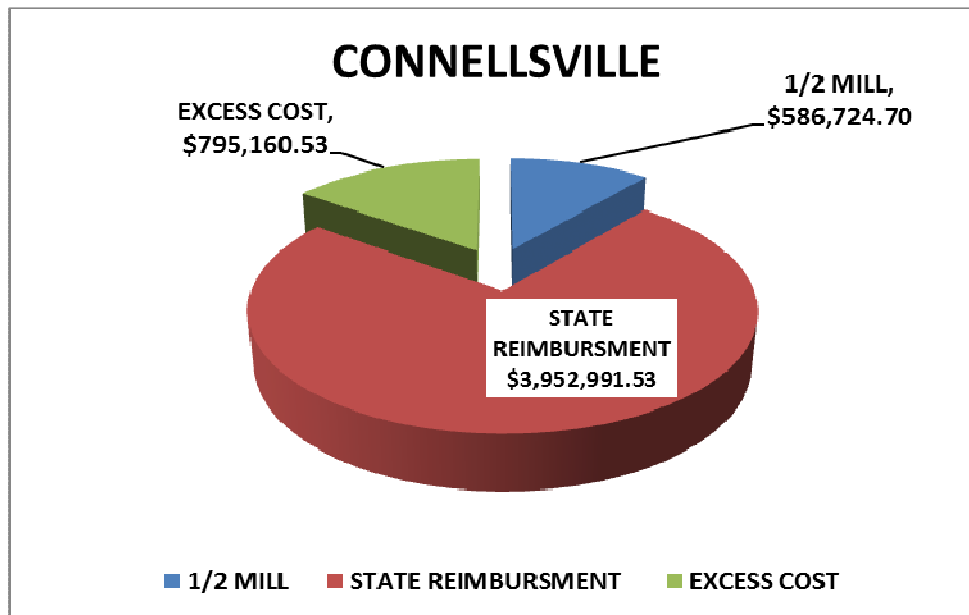


### Description

These charts show the relationship of the cost of pupil transportation represented by the entire “pie” for the 2008-09 fiscal year and the reimbursement received in the 2009-10 fiscal year. The numbers used to create the above charts came from the districts’ 2008-09 and 2009-10 Annual Financial Reports.

### Analysis

In the first chart one can see that the Albert Gallatin School District received \$2,134,193.26 in state reimbursement and paid out \$871,884.13 of local dollars for the \$3,006,077.39 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09. The second chart shows that the Brownsville district received \$1,076,527.12 in state reimbursement and paid out \$699,353.13 of local dollars for the \$1,775,879.25 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09.

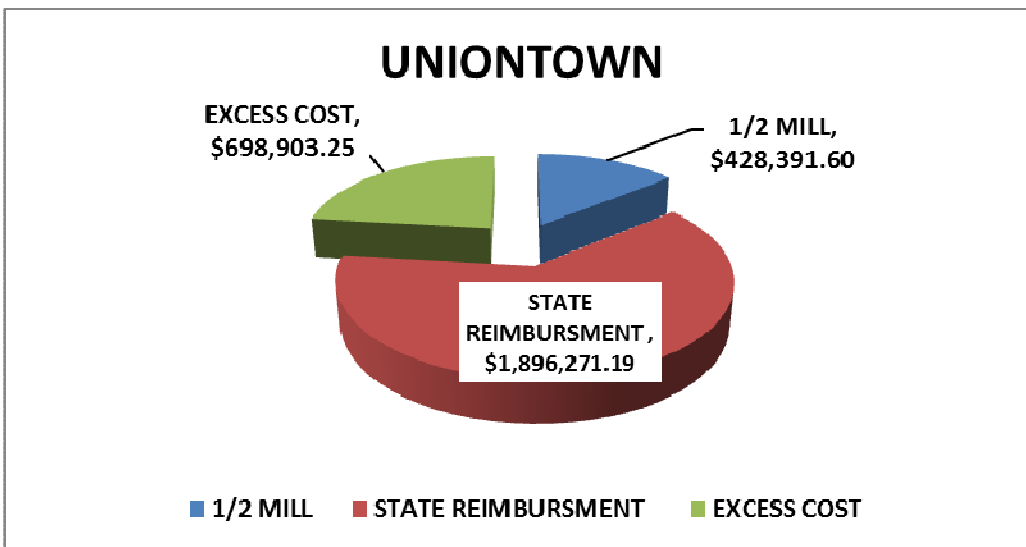
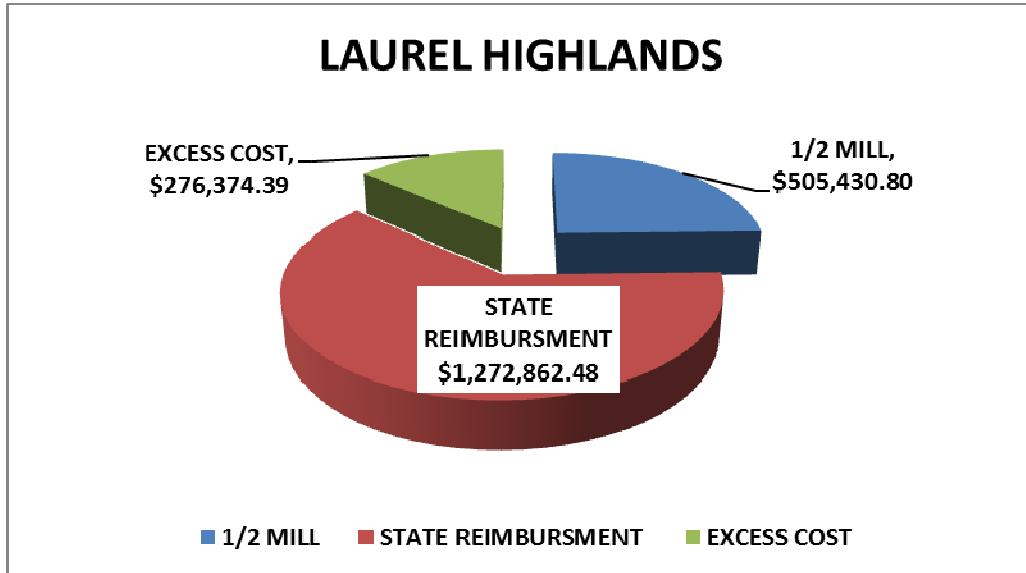


**Description**

These charts show the relationship of the cost of pupil transportation represented by the entire “pie” for the 2008-09 fiscal year and the reimbursement received in the 2009-10 fiscal year. The numbers used to create the above charts came from the districts’ 2008-09 and 2009-10 Annual Financial Reports.

**Analysis**

In the first chart one can see that the Connellsville district received \$3,952,991.53 in state reimbursement and paid out \$1,381,885.23 of local dollars for the \$5,334,876.76 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09. The second chart shows that the Frazier district received \$795,711.69 in state reimbursement and paid out \$419,316.79 of local dollars for \$1,215,028.48 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09.

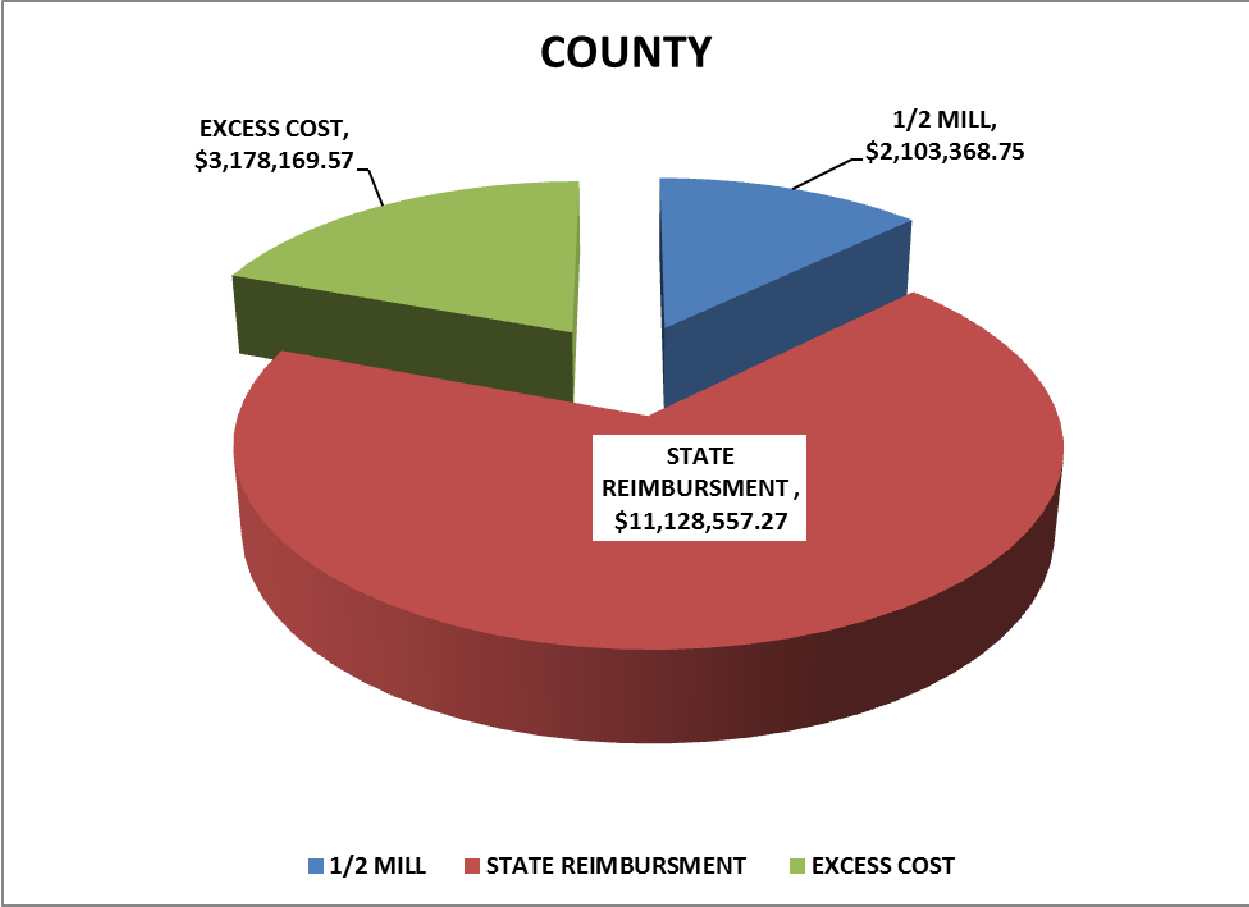


**Description**

These charts show the relationship of the cost of pupil transportation represented by the entire “pie” for the 2008-09 fiscal year and the reimbursement received in the 2009-10 fiscal year. The numbers used to create the above charts came from the districts’ 2008-09 and 2009-10 Annual Financial Reports.

**Analysis**

In the first chart one can see that the Laurel Highlands district received \$1,272,862.48 in state reimbursement and paid out \$781,805.19 of local dollars for the \$2,054,667.67 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09. The second chart shows that the Uniontown district received \$1,896,271.19 in state reimbursement and paid out \$1,127,294.85 of local dollars for \$3,023,566.04 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09.



**Description**

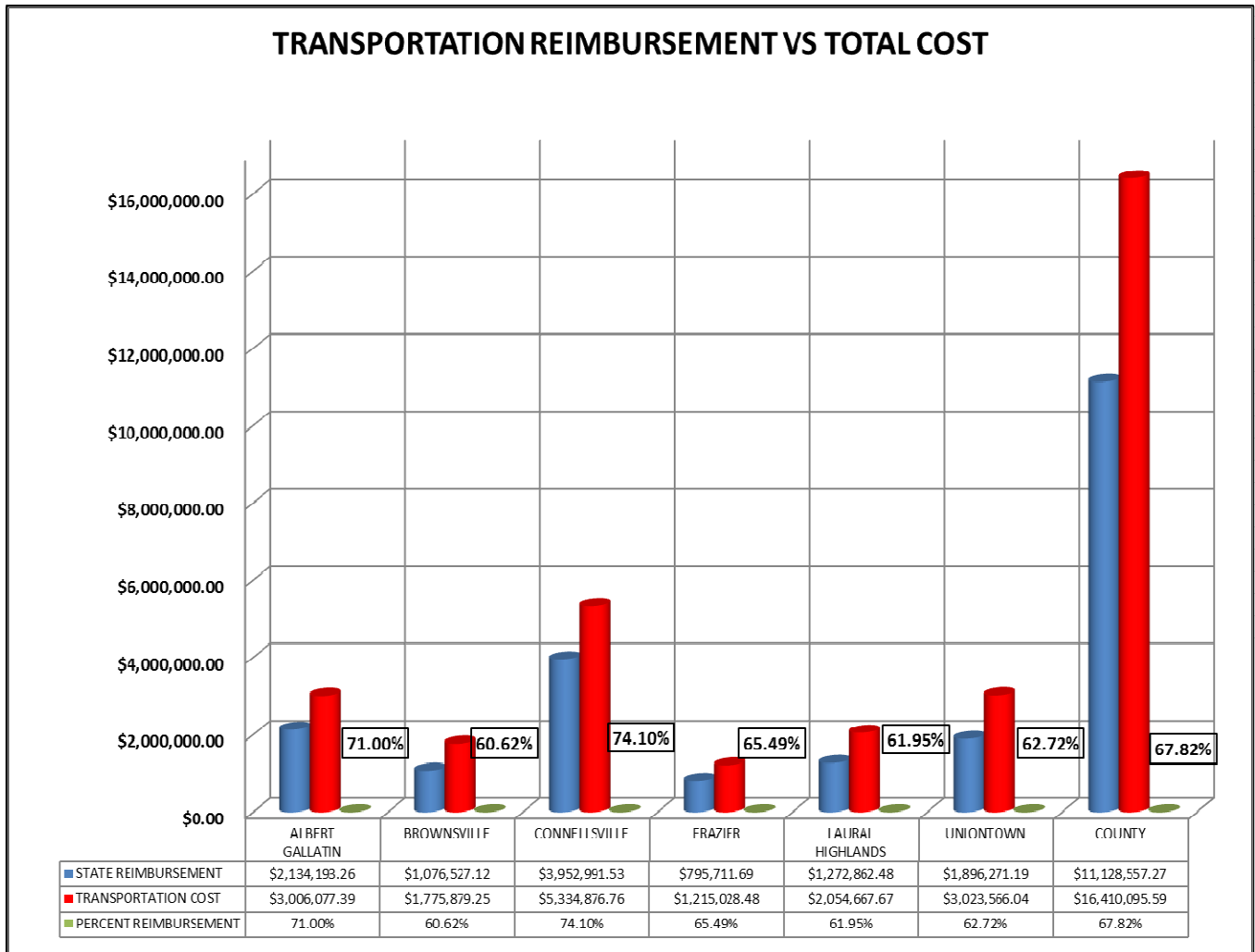
This chart shows the relationship of the cost of pupil transportation for combined Fayette County School Districts represented by the entire “pie” for the 2008-09 fiscal year and the reimbursement received in the 2009-10 fiscal year. The numbers used to create the above chart came from the districts’ 2008-09 and 2009-10 Annual Financial Reports.

**Analysis**

In the chart one can see that the Fayette County School Districts received \$11,128,557.27 in state reimbursement and paid out \$5,281,538.32 of local dollars for the \$16,410,095.59 pupil transportation provided in 2008-09.



## Transportation Reimbursement



### Description

This chart depicts the total transportation cost for each existing district as well as the total county costs. It also depicts the state reimbursement as well as the percentage of the reimbursement versus the total cost.

### Analysis

The transportation cost for the districts ranges from a low of \$1,215,028.48 for the Frazier School District to a high of \$5,334,876.76 for the Connellsville Area School District. A difference can be expected due to the difference in geographical size as well as the number of students transported in each district.

The percentage of reimbursement for the school districts ranges from 60.62% in the Brownsville Area School District to a high of 74.10% in the Connellsville Area School District. A higher reimbursement percentage reflects a more efficient use of transportation vehicles.

## Factors Affecting Transportation Costs and Reimbursements

The following table shows important financial data demonstrating the efficiency of the six Fayette County school districts.

District	State Reimbursement	Transportation Cost	Cost Per Student	Percent of Reimbursement	Students Transported
Albert Gallatin Area SD	\$2,134,193.26	\$3,006,077.39	\$767.25	71.00%	3918
Brownsville Area SD	\$1,076,527.12	\$1,775,879.25	\$960.45	60.62%	1849
Connellsville Area SD	\$3,952,991.53	\$5,334,876.76	\$940.40	74.10%	5673
Frazier SD	\$795,711.69	\$1,215,028.48	\$995.92	65.49%	1220
Laurel Highlands SD	\$1,272,862.48	\$2,054,667.67	\$589.74	61.95%	3484
Uniontown Area SD	\$1,896,271.19	\$3,023,566.04	\$1,147.90	62.72%	2634

Additional financial factors depicted in the above table include:

### 1. Cost of transportation per student

The transportation cost per student ranges from a low of \$589.74 in the Laurel Highlands School District to a high of \$1,147.90 in the Uniontown Area School District. The data for the state shows transportation cost per pupil ranges from a low of \$334.52 to a high of \$10,529.29 with an average of \$788.33.

One can see that four of the county districts are above the state average in cost per student with only the Laurel Highlands School District significantly lower in this category.

### 2. Percentage of reimbursement

As was mentioned, the percent of state reimbursement of the total transportation cost is an indicator of the efficiency of the district's handling of its student transportation. A reimbursement factor of 100% would indicate the district is receiving the same amount from the state reimbursement as it is spending on transportation. Statewide, this percentage ranges from a low of 9.38% to a high of 92.29% in state reimbursement percentages. School districts with less than \$1,000,000.00 of transportation expenditures were not included in this data. Also, districts who transport only a few students, such as special education students only, were not included as their reimbursement percentage could be very low and not comparable to most districts. The state average transportation reimbursement percentage is 59.86%.

## Vehicle Allowance

Vehicle allowance is an allowance that is based on the age and size of the vehicle. This table shows the age of the vehicles used in the 2008-09 school year.

		Combined Vehicle Ages							
Bus Age	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Number	12	29	19	50	48	43	51	44	34
	2.60%	6.29%	4.12%	10.85%	10.41%	9.33%	11.06%	9.54%	7.38%
Bus Age	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	20	
Number	41	33	22	10	16	5	2	2	
	8.89%	7.16%	4.77%	2.17%	3.47%	1.08%	0.43%	0.43%	28.42%

This table shows the seating capacities of the vehicles used in 2008-09.

Number of Vehicles by Capacity				
Capacity	# of Vehicles		Capacity	# of Vehicles
4	5		23	26
5	8		24	2
6	114		27	1
7	21		30	5
8	21		36	4
9	4		47	3
10	2		54	1
16	1		65	2
20	16		66	56
21	1		71	30
22	1		72	125

Each vehicle receives a basic allowance of \$540.00 except for vehicles with an approved rated pupil capacity of ten (10) or less in which case the allowance shall be \$360.00. Each qualifying vehicle shall be allotted an additional allowance determined by multiplying the rated pupil capacity of the vehicle times the amount shown in the following table:

Dollar Amount	Age of Vehicle
\$20	1-3 years
\$18	4-6 years
\$16	7-10 years
\$12	11-older

One hundred thirty one (131) or 28.4% of the buses used in Fayette County are eleven (11) or more years old while one hundred ten (110) or 23.86% are five years old or less. Using vehicles with a capacity of sixty-six (66) passengers or more, a savings of over \$25,000.00 could be realized if contractors were only permitted to use vehicles of age ten (10) years or less.

### **Mileage Allowance**

The number of approved miles a vehicle travels per day is the single most important factor in the reimbursement formula due to the fact that mileage is in the calculation twice. In order to be efficient, a vehicle should travel at least seventy (70) miles per day. One hundred and sixty eight (168) of the county's vehicles traveled fewer than seventy miles per day.

A second measure of efficiency is that a vehicle should travel more miles carrying pupils than empty. If a vehicle traveled more miles without pupils than with pupils, the district receives a penalty for each of these vehicles. The penalty is calculated by subtracting the difference between the empty miles and the loaded miles from the total miles traveled.

Two hundred eight (208) of the districts' vehicles traveled more miles empty than carrying pupils. The daily number of miles not reimbursed is 3,588. A single mile on a bus that is loaded to capacity on at least one run is worth \$.59 in reimbursement. **The daily lost reimbursement calculates to be \$2,116.92 (3,588 x .59), while the annual loss is \$376,811.76 (\$2,116.92 x 178 days).**

An additional penalty is applied for any vehicle that travels fewer than twenty (20) miles per day. Seven (7) of the county vehicles traveled less than twenty miles per day.

### **Utilized Passenger Capacity Miles Allowance**

Utilized passenger capacity miles are the product of the utilized passenger capacity times the approved annual mileage of the vehicle in transportation of pupils to and from school. The utilized capacity of a vehicle shall be the greatest number of pupils transported to and from school on a run. In order to maximize this allowance, districts should fill each bus to capacity on one of its runs. Any bus that operates with an eighty percent (80%) capacity is considered to be efficient. Only thirty-three (33) or 14% of the 238 full size (30 or more passengers) vehicles operate at or above eighty percent of capacity. **In other words, 86% of the full size vehicles are not operating efficiently.**

Increasing the utilized passenger capacity miles is only cost effective if the number of buses can be lowered. In terms of reimbursement, nothing is gained by increasing the student load on Bus A and lowering it on Bus B if both buses continue to operate the same routes. This is simply moving the student reimbursement factor from Bus B) to Bus A. On the other hand, eliminating buses can produce considerable savings. The national average contracted cost of a full size (66 passenger or more) bus in an urban area is in excess of \$50,000 per school year. The

average amount paid by the Fayette County school districts for a similar capacity vehicle is in excess of \$40,000.00 per year.

The combined number of full sized (66 or more passengers) in the Fayette County is two hundred eleven (211). To determine the savings for using full-sized buses efficiently, the Fayette County school districts would need to set up these conditions:

- All of these buses loaded to 80% capacity on each run
- Two students per seat for secondary students (middle school, junior high school and senior high school)
- A three tiered routing system, i.e. separate runs for elementary, middle/junior high, and senior high.

A total of 164 full sized buses would be needed, eliminating forty-seven (47) vehicles. At an average of \$40,000.00 per bus the potential savings would be \$1,880,000.00. This does not factor in vehicles smaller than sixty-six passengers. The combined districts contract four hundred sixty-one (461) vehicles which leaves other two hundred fifty (250) vehicles. Of these vehicles, with seating capacities of twenty (20) or more, fifty-nine (59) are less than 80% efficient on any given run. In addition, of the vehicles with seating capacities of twenty (20) or less, ninety-eight (98) are less than 80% efficient. These smaller vehicles are usually vans that are used to transport special needs students and by nature are more difficult to load to capacity. However, there is no doubt there is room to optimize the number of smaller vehicles used.

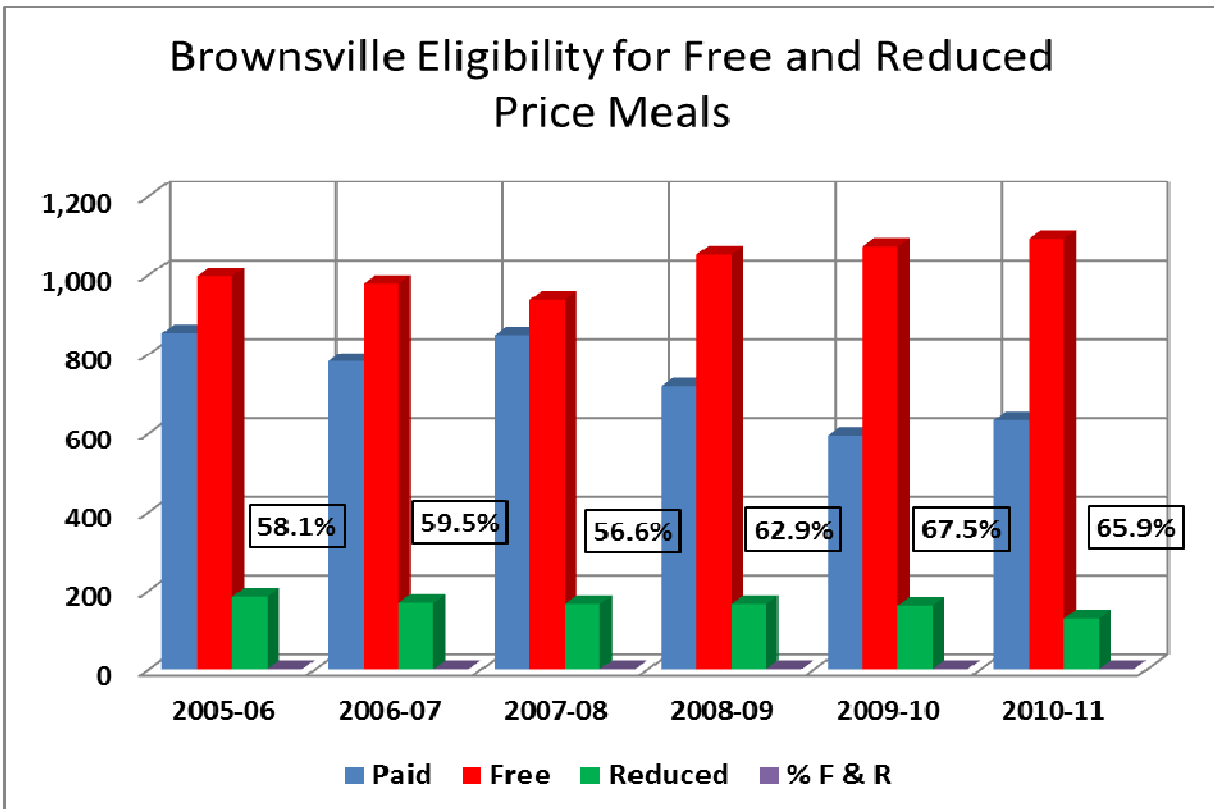
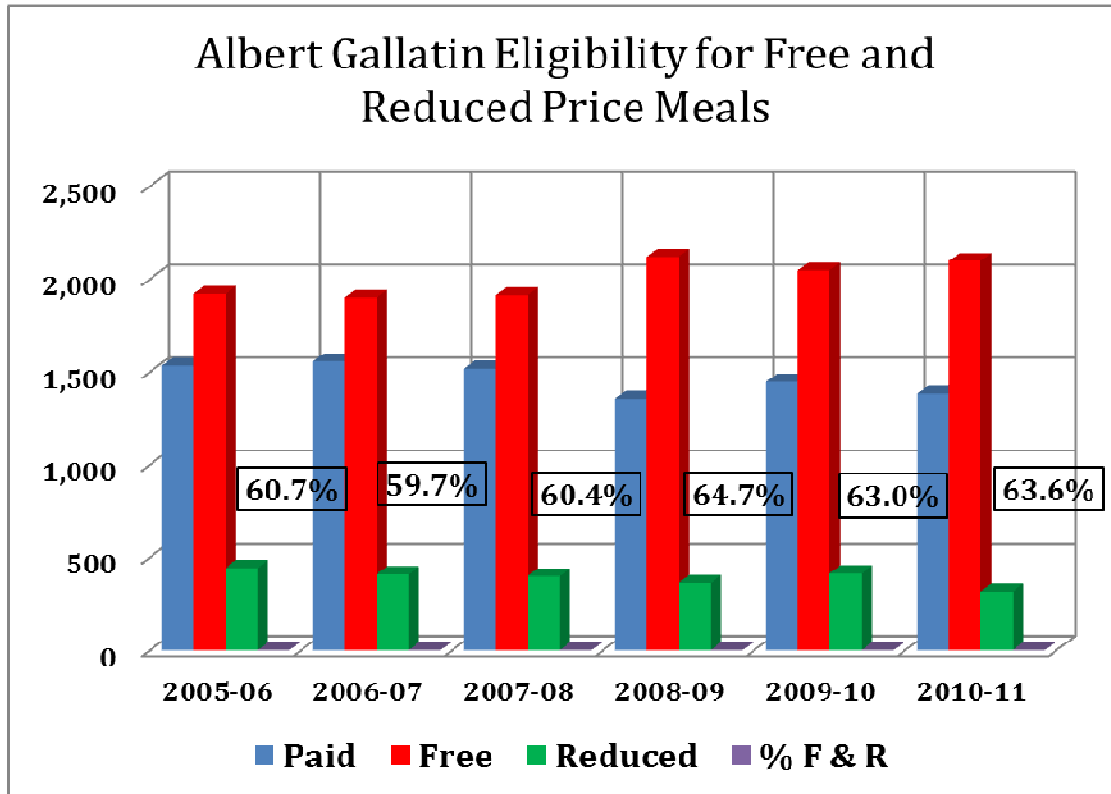
Each of the six Fayette County school districts could use the data and the transportation efficiencies described above to improve their student transportation systems and cut costs. However, a single transportation administration department using a sophisticated school transportation software program that could optimize routes would be more likely to achieve the savings described above.

## **School Foodservices**

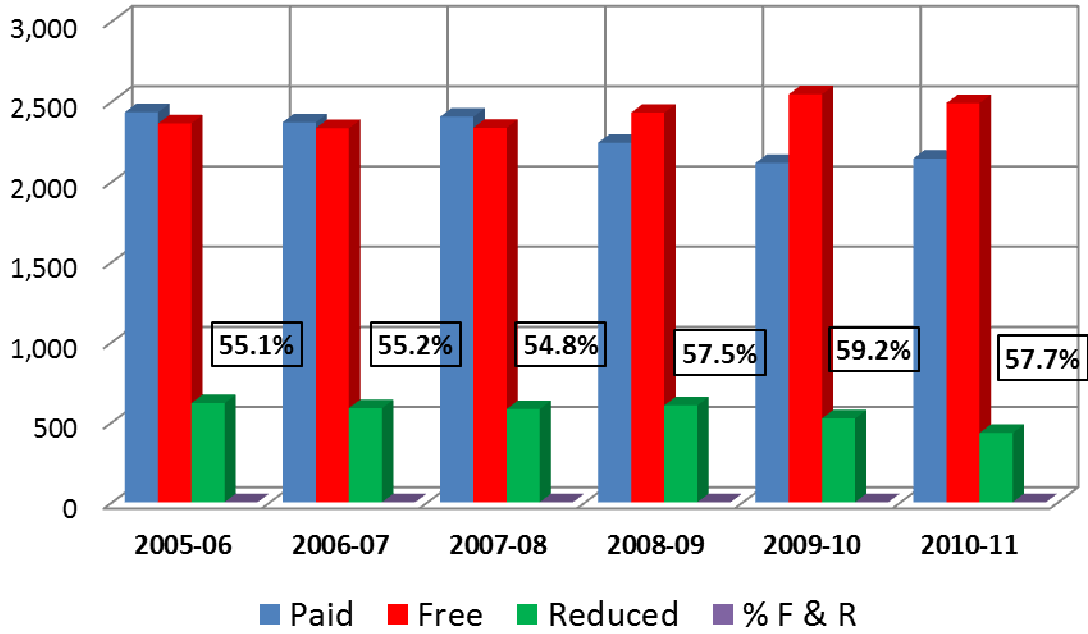
In the area of school foodservices, the following questions are important in determining whether an administrative merger would be a good idea for Fayette County:

1. Would the combination of districts under one administrative unit bring more federal/state dollars into the merged school district and thus reduce or eliminate the need for any contributions from the general fund? This factor would be determined by comparing the percentage of free and reduced-price eligible children in the six individual districts to the percentage under an administrative merger.
2. What kind of savings would be available to the merged district?
3. Would the consolidation of buildings within the merged district provide a more efficient and cost effective operation?
4. Would a change in the food delivery system bring any savings to the merged district?
5. What kind of food delivery system would offer the most savings to the merged district as planning for the future is done?

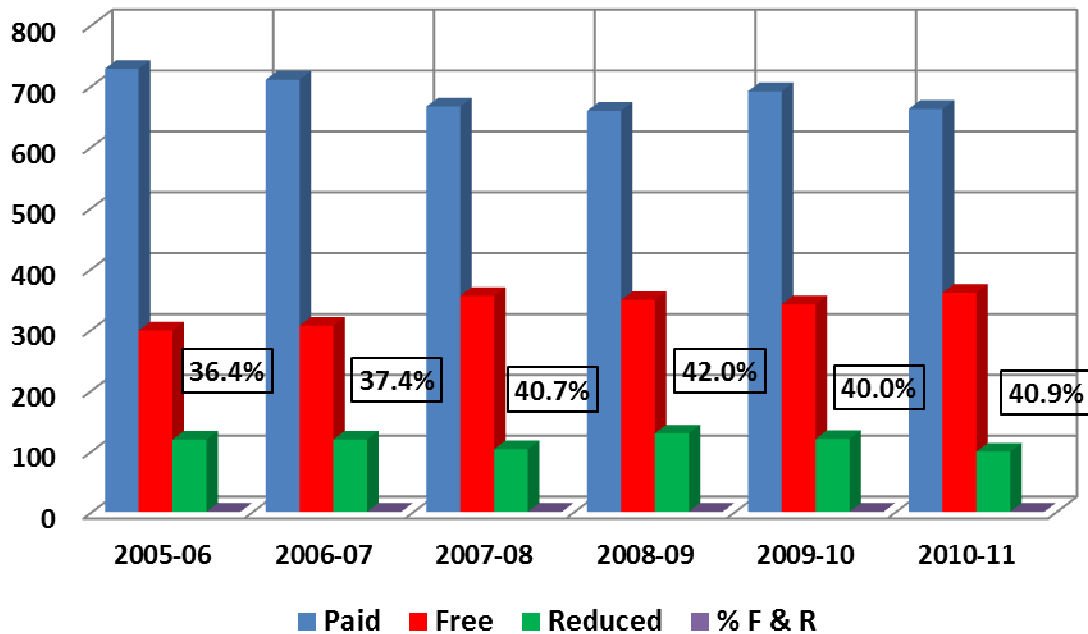
## Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals



### Connellsville Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals

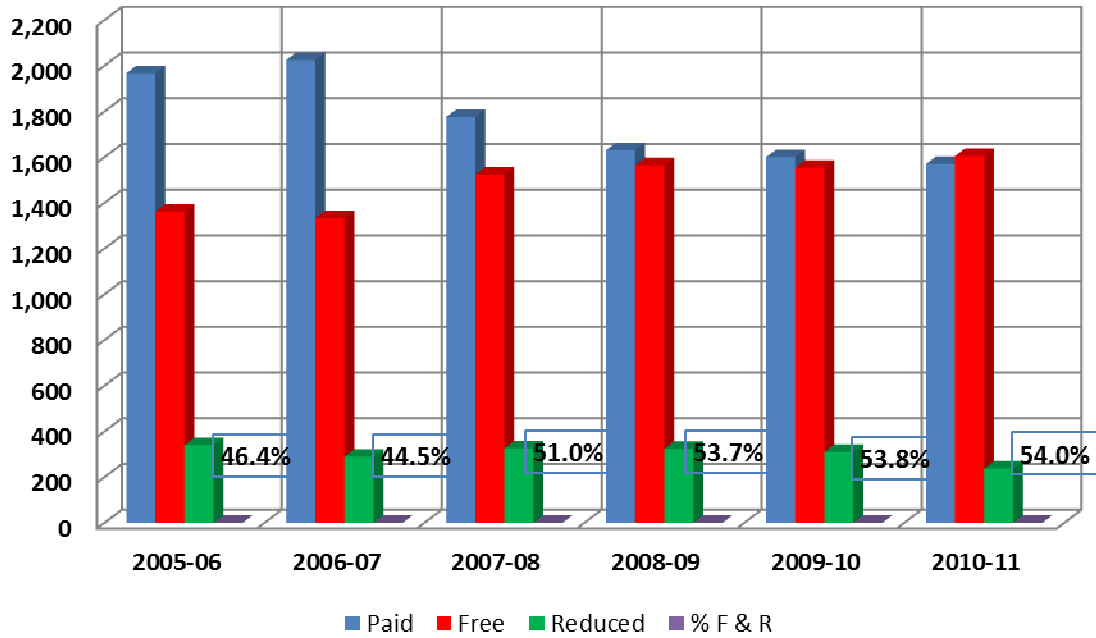


### Frazier Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals

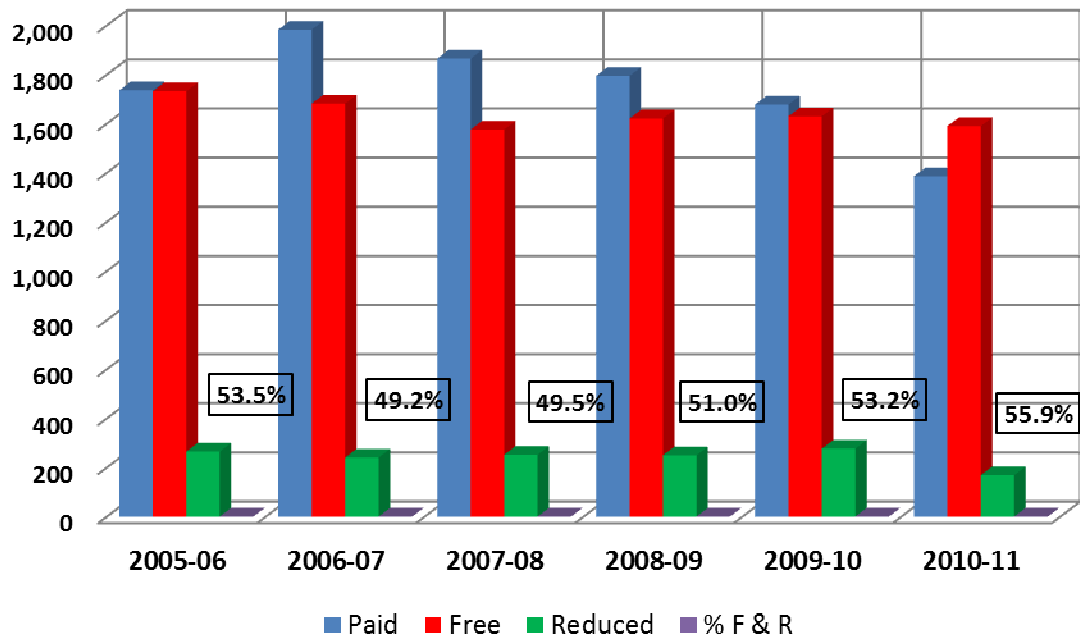




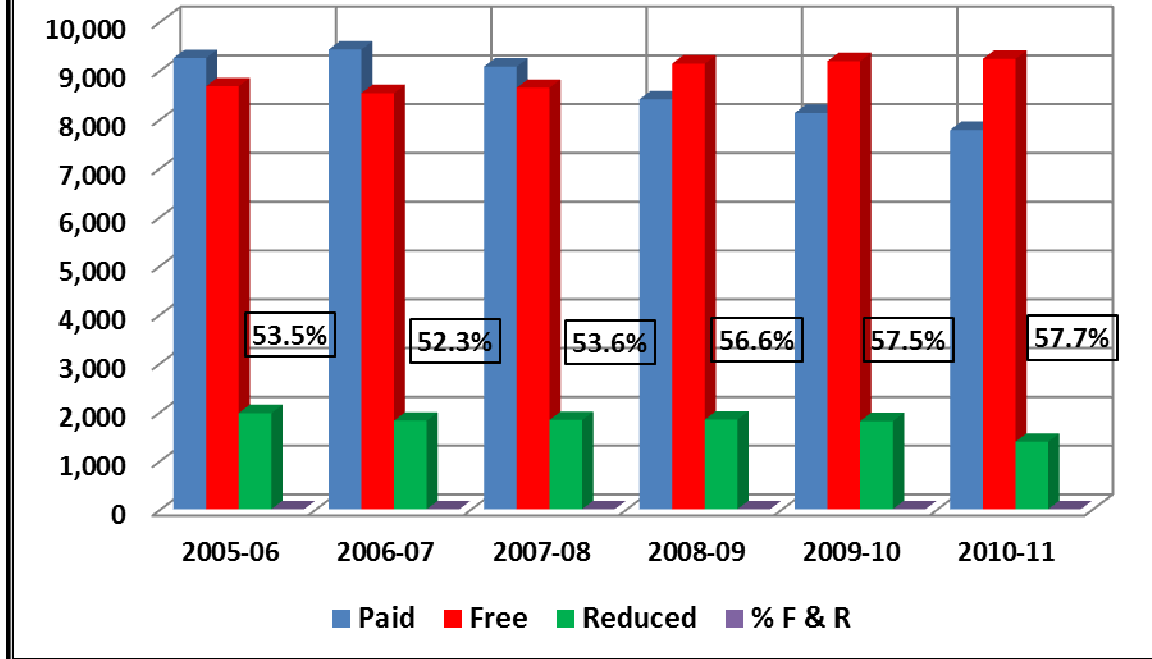
### Laurel Highlands Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals



### Uniontown Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals



## Countywide Eligibility for Free and Reduced Price Meals



### Analysis

School districts that have a free and reduced price eligibility rate of 60% or more on a district-wide basis receive two cents more per meal served. Individually, the Albert Gallatin and Brownsville Area School Districts meet that requirement and receive the two extra cents. Their percentages of free and reduced price eligibility are currently 63.6% and 65.9% respectively. The Connellsville Area School District has an overall 57.7% eligibility rate for free and reduced price meals, the Frazier School District has a 40.9% eligibility rate, the Laurel Highlands School District has a 54.0% eligibility rate, and Uniontown Area School District has a 55.9% eligibility rate.

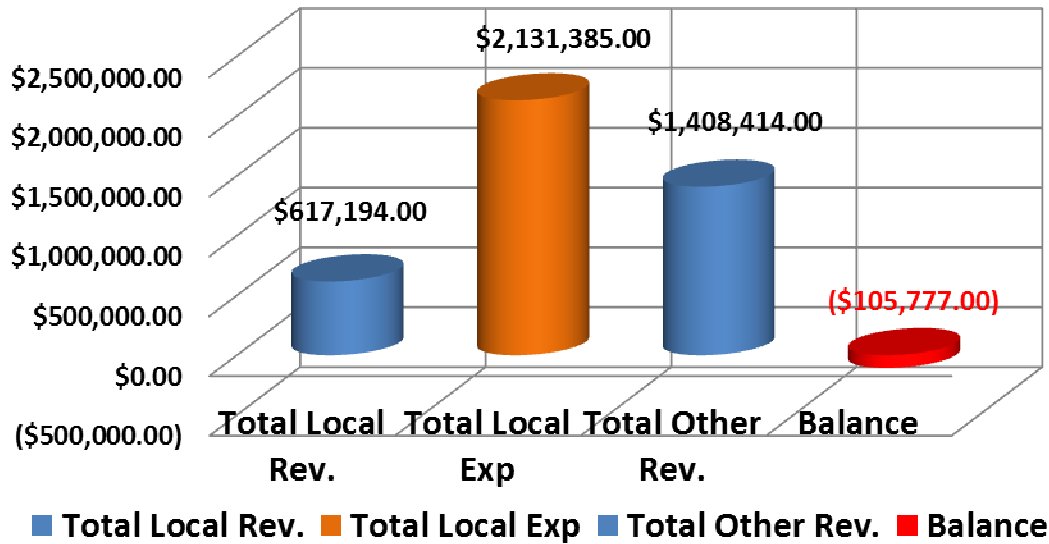
The merged school district would have a 57.7% eligibility rate during the most recent fiscal year for which data are available and would not now be eligible for the additional money. However, throughout Fayette County the eligibility rate for free and reduced price meals has grown from 53.5% in 2005-06 to 57.7% in 2010-11. Also, an effort to increase the number of students eligible at the high school level would produce the necessary 60% eligibility rate.

### Conclusion

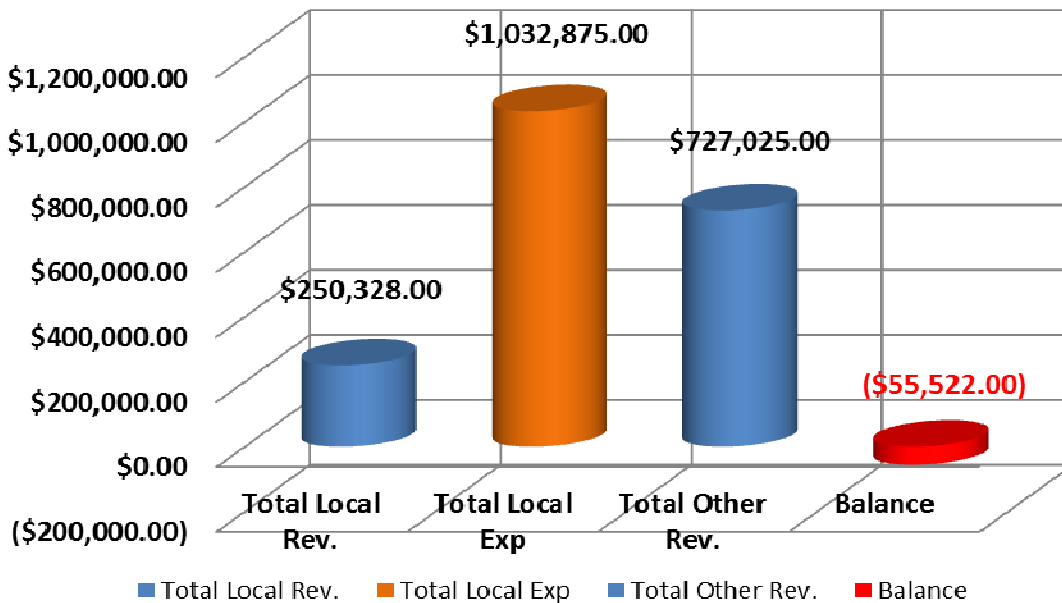
If this trend continues, it is likely that the school district would meet the requirements for the additional reimbursement within the next few years.

Foodservices Revenues and Expenses for 2010

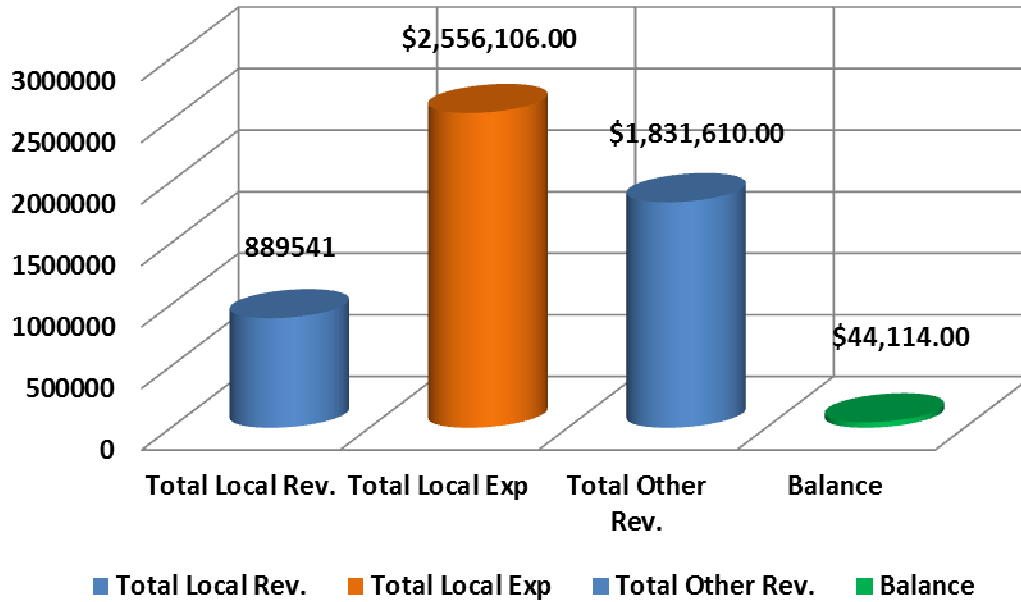
**Albert Gallatin Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010**



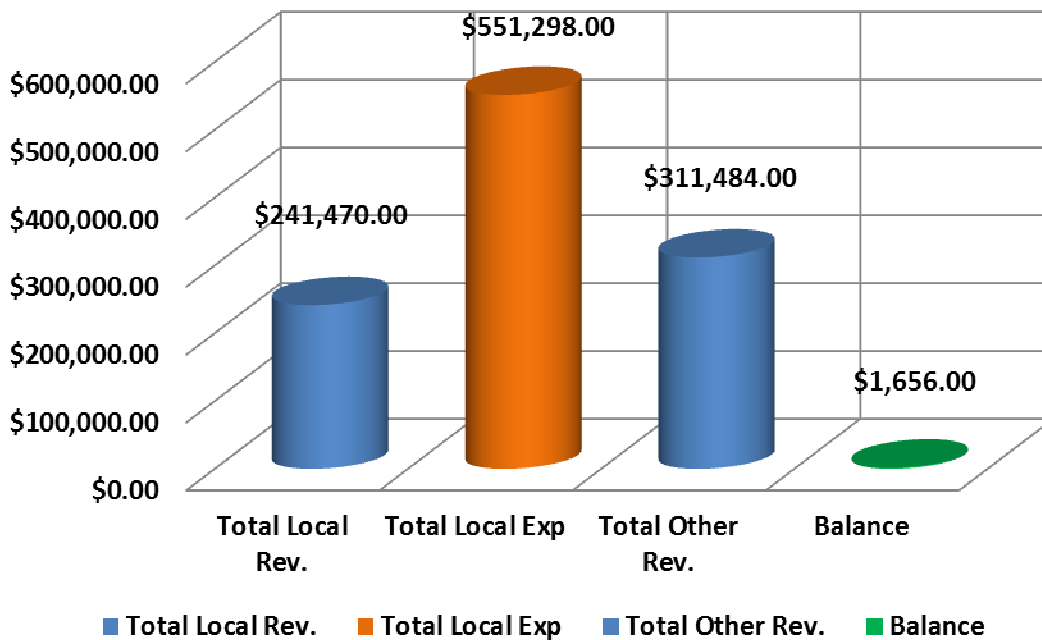
**Brownsville Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010**



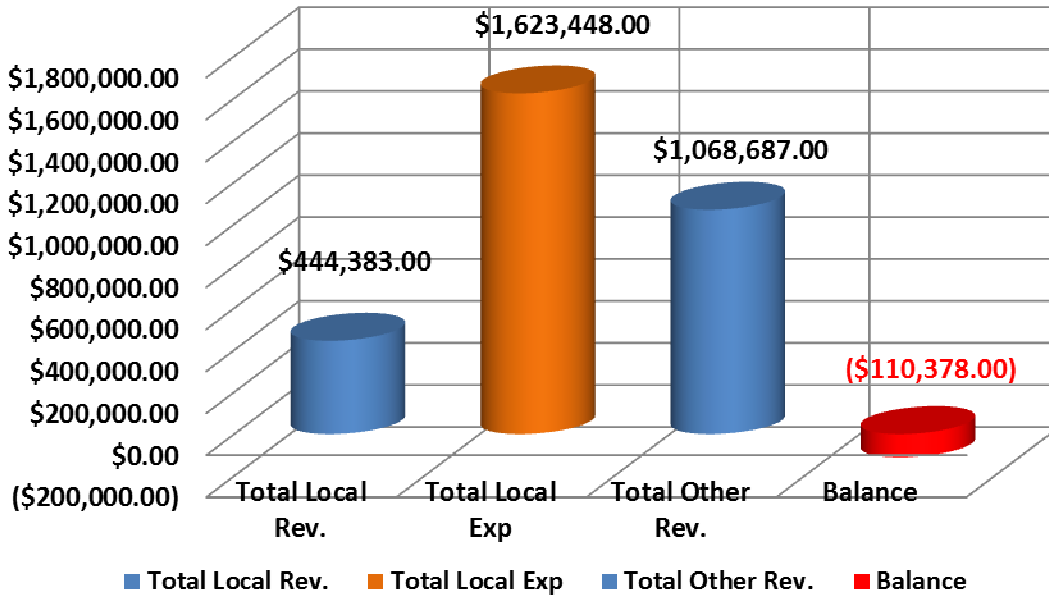
### Connellsville Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010



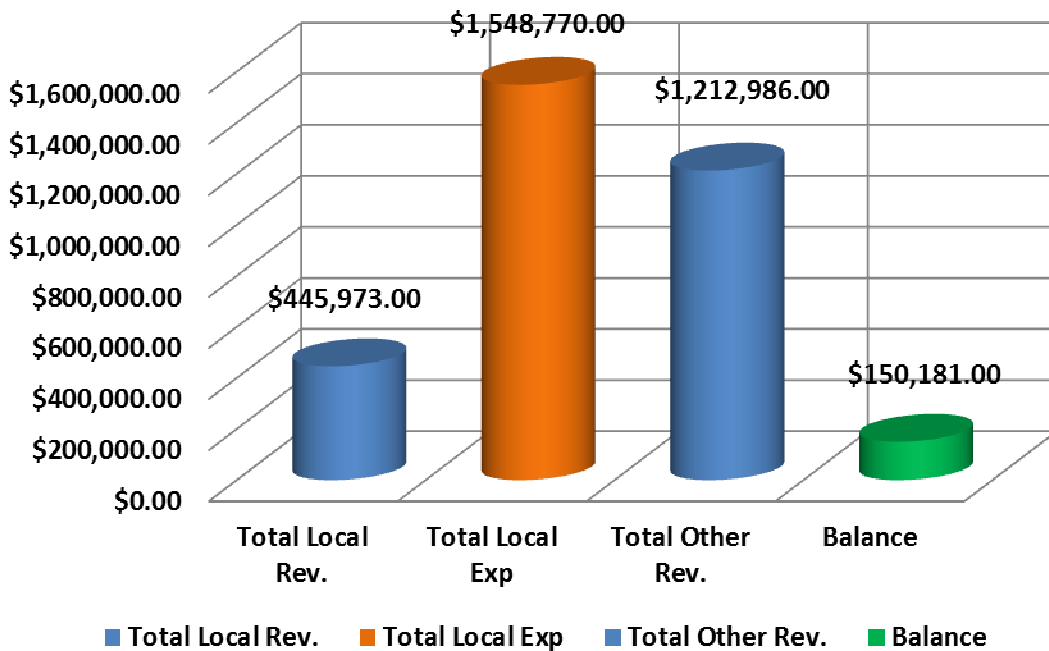
### Frazier Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010



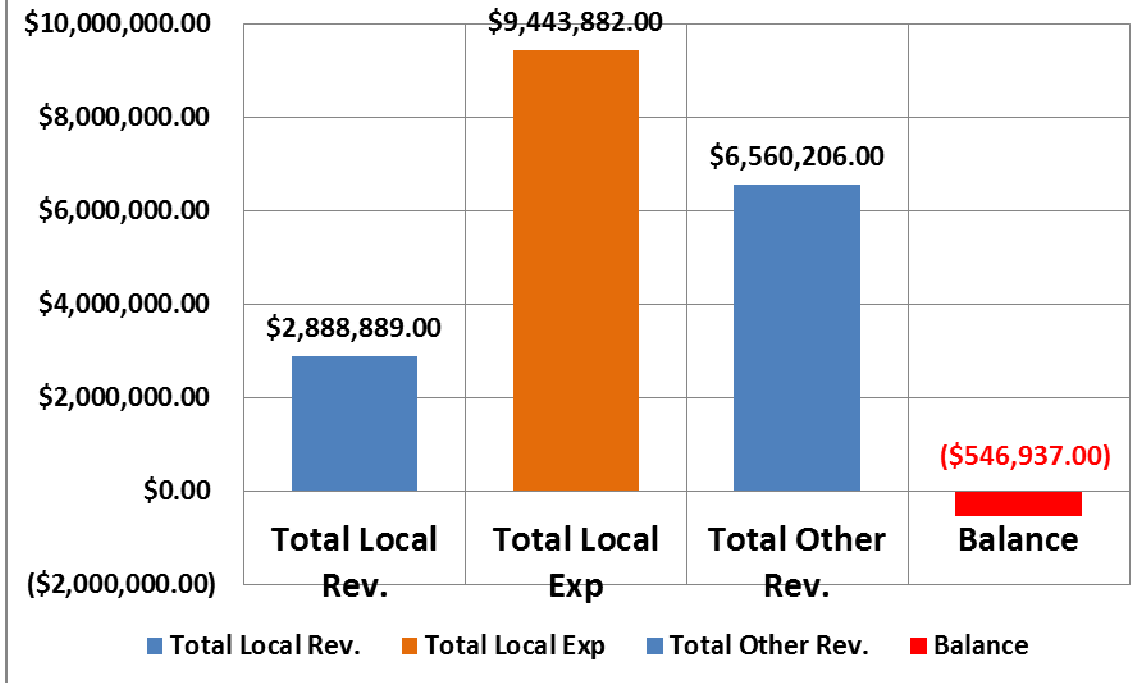
## Laurel Highlands Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010



## Uniontown Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010



## Countywide Food Services Revenues and Expenses for 2010



### Analysis

Total local revenues represent the funds received for sales of meals to children and adults. Total other revenues represent the reimbursement from the state and federal governments. Total local expenditures represent what the district spent and the balance is the difference between total revenues and total expenditures.

The Albert Gallatin Area School District had total revenues of \$202,560 and total expenditures of \$2,131,385, leaving a cafeteria fund balance of **(\$105,777)**. The Brownsville Area School District had total foodservice revenues of \$977,353 and total foodservice expenditures of \$727,025, leaving a balance of **(\$55,522)**. The Connellsville Area School District had total foodservice revenues of \$272,115 and expenditures of \$2,556,106, leaving a balance of \$44,114. The Frazier School District had total revenues of \$3,274,105 and expenditures of \$551,298, leaving a balance of \$1,656. The Laurel Highlands School District had total revenues of \$1,513,070 and total expenditures of \$1,623,448, leaving a balance of **(\$110,378)**. The Uniontown Area School District had total revenues of \$1,658,959 and total expenditures of \$1,548,770, leaving a balance of \$150,181.

In summary the Frazier, Uniontown Area, and Connellsville Area School Districts had positive balances and the Albert Gallatin Area, Brownsville Area, and Laurel Highlands School Districts had negative cafeteria balances.

A countywide school district would still have a negative cafeteria fund balance of **(\$546,937)**.

## **Conclusions**

Eventually the individual districts with negative balances would have to supplement their cafeteria with moneys from the districts' general fund, including local tax moneys, which should be used more effectively for the education of children. Some Fayette County districts have already been doing this on a regular basis.

A countywide school district would have a better chance of eliminating the cafeteria deficit through a more efficient and effective food delivery system.

## **The Impact of Building Consolidation on School Foodservices**

The advantage to building consolidation in school foodservices is that less foodservice labor is required as the numbers of students being served in a particular school increases.

Foodservice labor needs are measured in meals produced per labor hour. Depending upon the total numbers of meals served plus meal equivalents (such as *al a carte* items or breakfasts), a kitchen should be able to produce from nine (9) to twenty-one (21) meals per labor hour. **The reason for the large difference is "economy of scale."** Small kitchens that serve up to one hundred (100) meals are inefficient and cannot produce large numbers of meals per labor hour; large kitchens that serve as many as five hundred (500) meals should be able to produce twenty-eight (28) to thirty-four (34) meals per labor hour in a kitchen that serves a combination of conventional (preparation of food from raw ingredients on the premises) and convenience (using a maximum amount of processed foods) systems.

Thus the impact of school consolidation is that the foodservice operation will be more streamlined, efficient and cost-effective.

## **Current Food Delivery Systems in the Six School Districts**

### **Albert Gallatin School District**

The district through its foodservice management company provides foodservice programs for eleven (11) buildings. Nine (9) buildings are full production kitchens and two (2) are satellite buildings. The district also provides meals for an alternative school and a Catholic school. Breakfast and lunch are served in each building. Foodservice employees work a total of 209.5 hours. With 4617 meals/meal equivalencies served daily, the district is preparing a bit over twenty-two (22) meals per labor hour, a good production record.

### **Brownsville Area School District**

The district had been operated by a management company and recently returned to a self-operated program. It offers breakfast, lunch and afternoon snacks in all five (5) buildings. It obtains food and supplies through a consortium and through bids. Foodservice workers are employed for 110.75 hours daily to prepare and serve 1,387 meals/meal equivalencies for a production record of 12.5 meals per labor hour, a low production record.

### **Connellsville Area School District**

All eleven (11) buildings have on-site production kitchens that provide both cooking and baking. According to the Foodservice Director, one of the schools does not provide baking, but baked goods are transported from another larger kitchen. The total number of hours worked across all buildings is three hundred sixty-four (364) hours daily.

The district prepared and served 3743 lunches and 1125 meal equivalencies (breakfasts and *a la carte*) for a total of 4868 meals. This results in production across the school district of 13.4 meals prepared and served per labor hour. This is a low production per labor hour. Many employees are employed for seven (7) and eight (8) hours per day and, while the operation of a baking program is commendable, it is labor intensive.

### **Frazier School District**

The district uses the high school/middle school as its centralized kitchen to prepare most meals. The preparation kitchen then satellites meals to the two elementary schools. The foodservice employees at Frazier work fifty-four (54) hours daily to prepare and serve 88.1 meals/meal equivalencies. This does not count any *al a carte* meals that may have been prepared by the district, since that cost was not provided. The district provided 16.3 meals per labor hour, a fair to good production record.

### **Laurel Highlands School District**

The district provides a program for its high school, middle school and four elementary schools. The district served 2,673 lunches and meal equivalencies (breakfast and *al a carte*) on a daily basis for the month of October. With one hundred sixty (160) total hours being worked, this results in 16.7 meals prepared and served per hour of labor, a fair to good production record.

### **Uniontown Area School District**

No information was currently available.



## **The Kinds of Food Delivery Systems and Their Impact on Efficiency and Cost**

There are four categories of foodservice systems.

### **1. On-site production system**

This system refers to food preparation on the premises. The majority of the current school districts within Fayette County use this system. This system is used in 81% of all schools across the United States (Pannel-Martin, Dorothy, School Foodservice Management, 1999). However, it is not the prevalent system in intercity or large school districts. For larger districts, systems have been developed that are much faster and use fewer staff. This system will be discussed later in this report.

Under the on-site production system are two subsets of systems, conventional foodservice and convenience foodservice.

#### **A. Conventional Foodservice System**

This system of on-site production refers to cooking and baking from raw ingredients. It is the most labor-intensive and expensive system of school foodservice. If cost is not an issue for a school district, this system may be a good one. According to Pannel-Martin (School Foodservice Management, 1999), many rural school districts use the conventional system of preparing and serving food because of “geographical location, tradition, and over-staffing.”

Pannel-Martin lists the advantages and disadvantages of this system.

##### **Advantages:**

- A manager can determine the ingredients.
- More full-time and part-time jobs are provided for the community.
- USDA-donated commodities can be used in the form in which they are received, without the need for processing.

##### **Disadvantages**

- There is less efficiency and lower productivity than with other systems.
- Labor costs are higher.
- Better trained employees are required, such as cooks and bakers.
- Products may not be of the type or quality for appeal to today’s students.

Within Fayette County, the Connellsville Area School District is the best example of a district that is closest to the system described above. The district has many schools, a number of which are very small. The number of meals produced per labor hour is very low. The number of employee hours worked is very high.

## **B. Convenience Foodservice System**

Because of the high cost of labor, many of today's school districts use a convenience food system. This system allows food to be prepared without the need for skilled cooks and bakers. It deals with menu items that are pre-prepared and with finishing touches placed on them in the kitchen before the menu items are served.

Panell-Martin lists these advantages and disadvantages:

### **Advantages**

- More consistent quality
- Lower labor costs
- Reduced need for skilled labor
- Increased productivity
- More products that students of today prefer

### **Disadvantage**

- Convenience foods are more expensive

Because convenience foods are more expensive, when the use of them increases, thought must be given to decreasing labor hours and labor costs. Convenience may consist of making sandwiches with bakery bread, use of pre-cooked hamburgers with bakery bread, portion packs of condiments, use of premade pizza, etc.

Most of the school districts throughout Fayette County use a combination of conventional and convenience foodservice systems.

## **2. Kitchenless System**

This system refers to fully-prepared foods that are purchased, assembled, heated and served. It is possible to purchase high-quality frozen entrees that require no preparation except for re-heating prior to the time of service.

According to Pannel-Martin, "It is possible for a school district to obtain aseptic-packed, cook-chilled foods, custom made using the school district's recipes and USDA commodities, at no greater cost than most school districts would realize making the menu items from raw ingredients." Urban districts such as Baltimore and Detroit use this system.

### **Advantages**

- Better and easier inventory control
- Consistency in quality
- Consistency in portion size
- Higher productivity
- Reduced labor costs
- Reduced need for skilled employees

### **Disadvantage**

- Cost of fully prepared foods may supersede the savings in labor.

### **3. Central Kitchen or Satellite System**

Because of the “economy of scale” mentioned earlier in this report, kitchens in schools serving three hundred (300) or fewer meals are not cost-effective. When this is the case, on-site production kitchens are often converted into “receiving kitchens,” also known as “satellite kitchens.”

Receiving kitchens would require fewer employees and are thus much less expensive to operate. A central kitchen would prepare and portion foods into individual meals for service or prepare the food in bulk for transport to a receiving kitchen.

An important consideration for this type of kitchen is the distances to travel to receiving kitchens. If the distance between the preparation and receiving kitchens is not close, maintaining the correct temperatures of food during transport is an important consideration and trucks that are heated or refrigerated must be purchased.

Pannell-Martin and Josephine Martin and Charlotte Oakley, (Martin, Josephine and Oakley, Charlotte, Managing Child Nutrition Programs, 2008) provide advantages and disadvantages of a Satellite System.

#### **Advantages**

- Reduction in cost of food and supplies as a result of purchasing in greater volumes
- Reduction in labor costs
- Increase in productivity
- Standardization of the foodservice operations across the entire district
- Greater control of operational practices
- Contracts with other agencies to provide meals at a profit for the foodservice program

#### **Disadvantages**

- Possibility of food distributions problems in congested areas
- High cost of equipment and maintenance and repair of equipment
- Need for foodservice director with excellent management skills

Albert Gallatin Area and Frazier School Districts provide partial satellite systems.

### **4. Commissary System**

The Commissary System provides a central warehouse and a central kitchen for the preparation of meals that are chilled or frozen and delivered to individual schools for

refrigeration and serving the next day. Three commissary foodservice delivery systems exist: Cook-Chill, Cook-Freeze and Sous Vide (Managing Child Nutrition Programs, Martin and Oakley, 2008).

In *ready-food* systems, hot food items go through a second heat processing before service to children. In *cook-chill* operations, foods are partially heat processed, then chilled either in serving pans or in bags in a tumble chiller and then stored in refrigerators for five (5) to forty (40) days. These systems are becoming more prevalent in larger school districts. Brown (2005) reports that 22% of schools nationwide are using the *cook-chill* production system.

The Commissary System may be a good idea for a merged Fayette County school district. It would require a centralized kitchen located near the middle of the county with central warehousing. It could be that one of the closed school facilities could be converted into such a kitchen. The requirements for labor would be much less than the requirements under the current system. Martin and Oakley report that the use of a *cook-chill* system uses fewer skilled employees because foodservices using these systems typically operate a production unit for fewer hours in a week than do conventional systems.

The City of Reading and the Pittsburgh City School Districts use some form of a commissary program. The Montgomery County, Maryland schools have a *cook-chill* kitchen and warehouse facility that serves the entire county. The administration and board of the merged district are encouraged to visit the Montgomery County School District and explore this alternative.

#### **Advantages**

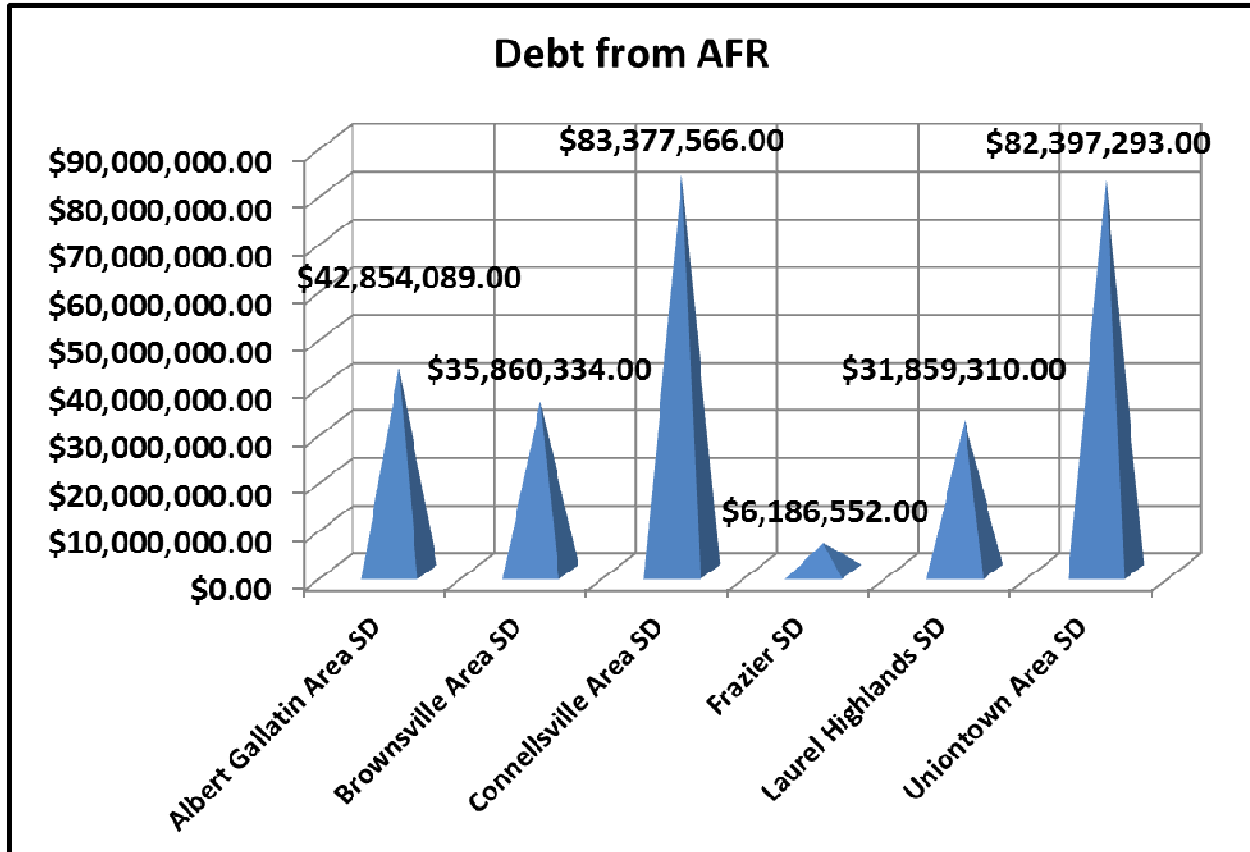
- Flexibility
- Cost-effectiveness
- Quality of food
- Food safety
- Nutritional value
- Less pressure by preparing ahead
- Heat in preparation for use
- More variety possible
- Efficiency of transportation (food transported the day prior or several days prior to service)

#### **Disadvantages**

- The system requires special equipment for doing the job properly.
- Employee training is required.
- Refrigeration is needed for storage of products.
- Food is considered a leftover even after the first time offered to students.

## Appendix

Following are charts and graphs that do not appear in the body of this document, but are used in presentations, etc. They are included for reference by the reader.

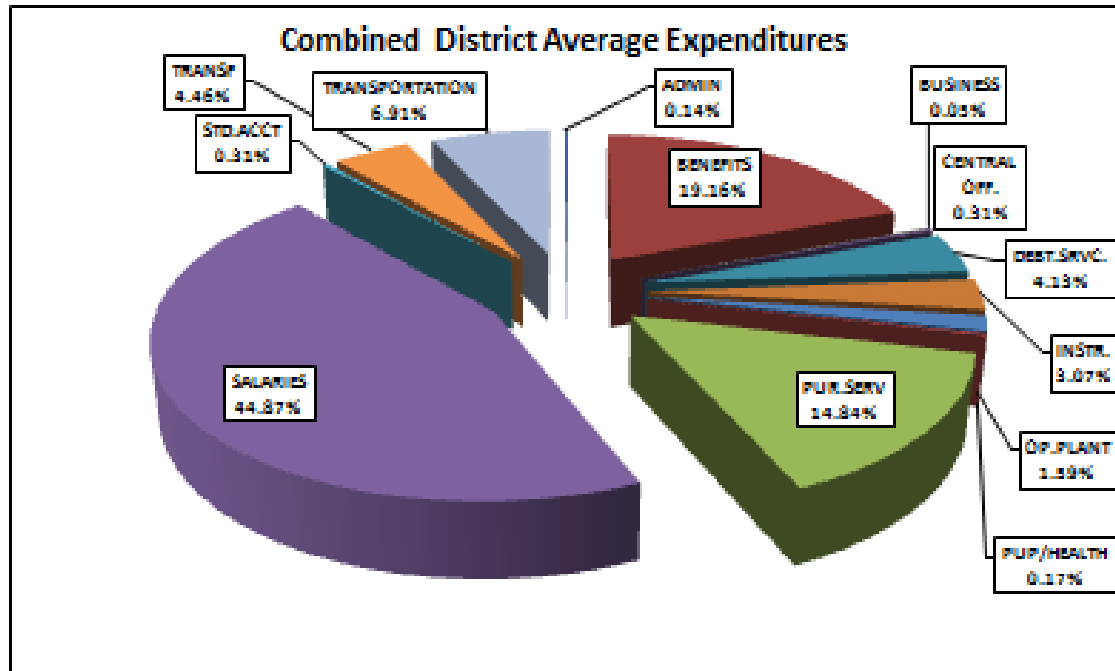


# FUND BALANCE

Fund Balance	
Albert Gallatin Area SD	\$8,331,172.00
Brownsville Area SD	(\$2,486,884.00)
Connellsville Area SD	\$15,218,136.00
Frazier SD *(Designated reserved)	\$567,092.00
Laurel Highlands SD	\$3,967,251.00
Uniontown Area SD	(\$1,052,455.00)

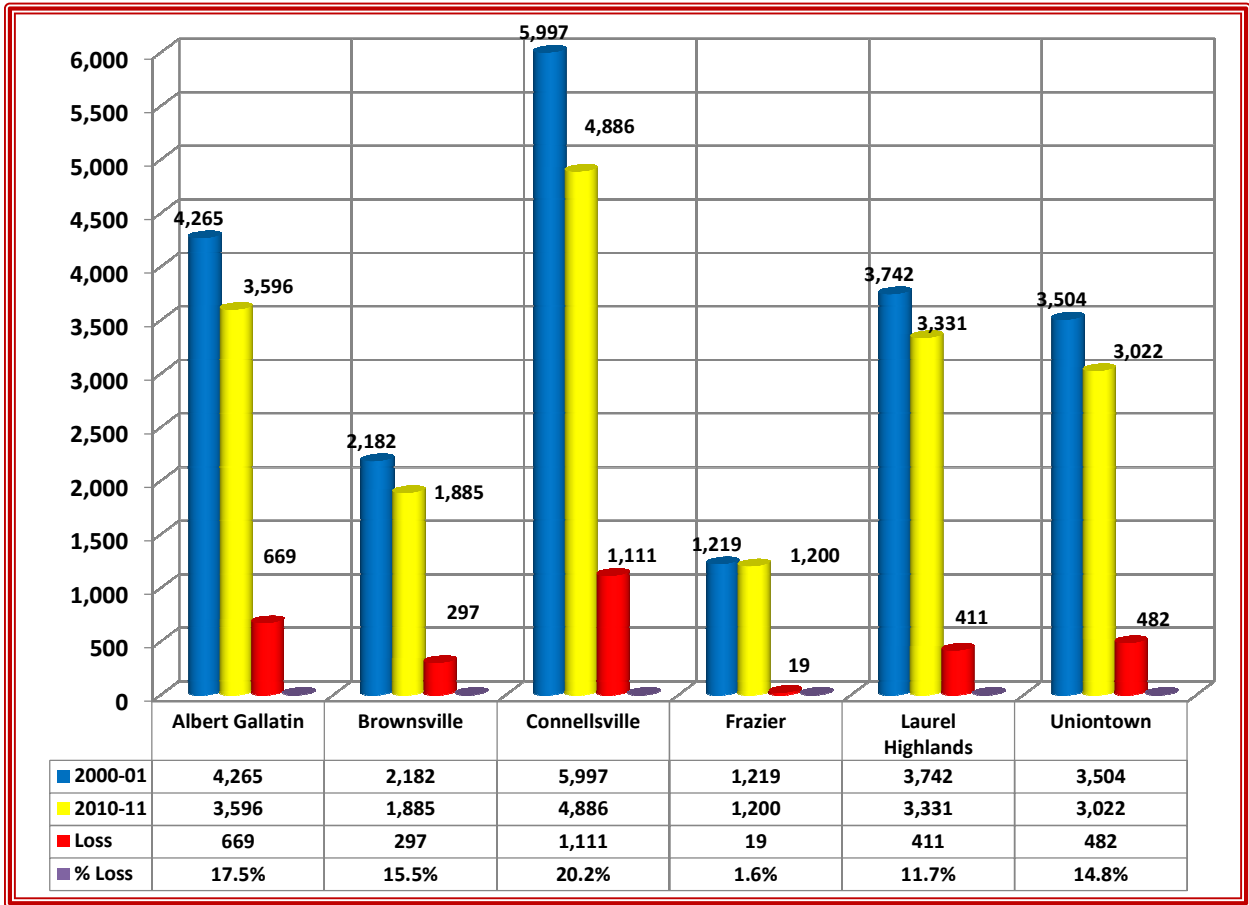
The Education Management Group, LLC

# COMBINED DISTRICT AVERAGE EXPENDITURES



The Education Management Group, LLC

### Enrollment Decreases and Percentages by District from 2000-2001 to 2010-2011







**The Education Management Group, LLC**

**Maximizing Your Education Dollars**