

October 16, 2019

Merger Feasibility Study Community Presentation – Upper Dauphin Area Middle School

Frequently Asked Questions Developed October 14, 2019

WHY IS THE PROCESS BEING RUSHED?

Deliberations surrounding the proposed merger grew out of discussions occurring as part of the sports cooperative between the districts. Since that time, the school districts have been utilizing the guidance documents, including timelines, provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, PDE. The following events have occurred since Fall, 2018:

- Fall, 2018 – the sports cooperative was approved, and the Boards gave the superintendents direction to explore a merger.
- November 2018 – Superintendents first met with the Pennsylvania Department of Education, PDE. Guidance Documents obtained from PDE were posted on the districts' websites.
- March 2019 – Superintendents had a follow-up meeting with PDE. PDE agreed to grant districts \$50,000 towards the cost of a Feasibility Study.
- April 2019 – the Boards met and engaged the Pennsylvania Economy League, PEL, to perform the study.
- April through August 2019 – Members of the PEL researched their specialties and began to collate the information into a research document.
- September - November 2019 – Phase I of the study was completed. Phase I of the study addressed the following: 1. assessment of the condition of current facilities; realignment of grade structure, educational facilities location, and facility use including assessment of student capacity versus projected enrollments by building; 2. analysis of the impact of consolidation upon educational programs: elementary, middle, and high schools; and 3. Examination of historical and projected financial condition of the districts, including an analysis of the tax rate impact. The PEL prepared a power point and presented that to the Boards, October 7, 2019; the UDA Community, October 14, 2019; and will present to the Millersburg Area Community, October 21, 2019; with the intent that a joint Board meeting take place November 11, 2019, at 6:30 PM in the Millersburg Area High School Auditorium to authorize the completion of Phase II of the study.

- December 2019 – March 2020 – If authorized November 11, 2019, Phase II of the study will commence. The anticipated completion of the final report is March or April of 2020. At a joint Board meeting thereafter, the Boards may vote to accept the findings and merge, or the Boards may elect to pursue other options.

WHEN WILL THE PHASE I REPORT BE RELEASED?

There is no Phase I report – rather there is a body of research from which the Phase I power point was made. The Feasibility Study will not be complete, and a full report issued, until Phase II is complete. Therefore, to address the desire for information, the Superintendents have asked the PEL to provide the background research for the Phase I power point.

HOW LONG WILL STUDENTS BE ON THE BUS?

Busing will be addressed in Phase II. To get an accurate estimate, district personnel will need to input all students' addresses into a transportation software program, establish bus stops, and analyze the routes for efficiencies. Please note that the districts must choose the most direct and cost-effective routes to insure state reimbursement.

WILL COMMUNITY FOCUS GROUPS BE FORMED?

Focus Groups will be established as part of Phase II of the Study.

WHAT ARE THE CURRICULAR GOALS OF THE MERGER?

From PEL, September 2019, power point presentation:

Expected Outcomes for Student Development

- *Elementary*
Skills-focused; learn to read; read to learn
- Commonalities from which to build:
 - o *Focus on improving math instruction*
 - o *Add time for core content areas*
 - o *Support math and literacy*
- *Middle School*
Educating the “whole student” - mental, physical, emotional, social
- Commonalities from which to build:
 - o *Core content offerings and sequence*
 - o *Work with the “whole” student*
 - o *Many related arts offerings*
- *High School*
Career and college readiness

- Commonalities from which to build:
 - o *College, Career, and Community ready*
 - o *On-line options and dual enrollment*
 - o *Off-school-site opportunities*
- *Special Education Curriculum*
Builds skills and strategies to address cognitive, physical, and emotional needs; promotes self-advocacy skills
- *All Students - 1:1 Technology accessible to all students*

At the elementary level, a K-5 configuration would support an early learning center, PreK through 2, in the Upper Dauphin Area Elementary School, and an upper elementary school in the Upper Dauphin Area Middle School, grades 3 through 5. Utilizing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports, all students would be assured greater individualized instruction in math and literacy. There would be integrated, appropriate instruction for students with special needs.

At the middle school level, in the Millersburg Area Middle/High School, the 6-8 configuration would support instruction through utilization of core teams. There would be a complement of teachers in related arts. All students would be assured greater individualized instruction in math and literacy through a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. There would be integrated, appropriate instruction for students with special needs.

At the high school level, in the Upper Dauphin Area High School, we would integrate Millersburg Area's Career Pathways with UDA's emphasis on personalized learning. There would be a complement of teachers in related arts. Students would be expected to demonstrate College and Career readiness throughout their high school career.

In a merged district, we expect to see continued emphasis to make students College and Career ready through personalized learning, to create schools of character through the Discovery Process, K-12, and to assure student safety through a thorough crisis plan in conjunction with the Joint School Safety Task Force.