

**Report  
of the  
Consolidation Fact Finding Committee**

*Involving:*

**West Lincoln-Broadwell Elem. School District 92**

**Chester-East Lincoln School District 61**

**New Holland-Middletown Elem. District 88**

**Lincoln Elementary District 27**

**Lincoln Comm. High School District 404**

**April 2008**

## **Executive Summary**

The Consolidation Fact Finding Committee was formed by the five school districts of the Lincoln area: West Lincoln-Broadwell School District 92, Chester-East Lincoln School District 61, New Holland-Middletown School District 88, Lincoln Elementary School District 27, and Lincoln Community High School District 404. The purpose of the Fact Finding Committee is described in its name: to discover and report on the facts surrounding school consolidation in Lincoln.

The Fact Finding Committee met 10 times over the course of five months. Committee meetings were usually held at Lincoln Community High School, but the Committee also met at and toured the facilities of West Lincoln-Broadwell, Chester-East Lincoln, and District 27. The Committee concluded its meeting schedule by the end of March 2008 and submitted this final report to the five school boards and the public in April 2008. The format of this final report consists of answers to questions consistently posed about consolidation. Most of the questions were developed by the Committee and some were submitted to the Committee by local citizens via an email link on the LCHS website.

This report outlines the Committee's findings in the following areas: The Consolidation Process, Finance, Curriculum/Staffing, Facilities/Ancillary Services, Impacts, and Lessons Learned from Site Visits. The five districts vary significantly across any number of different categories from student enrollment to financial ability to staffing arrangements. Some differences are a function of geography, some a function of demographics, and some a function of district choices.

The citizens and the school boards of the Lincoln area have at least four options they could pursue in response to recent consolidation studies:

- Combine one or more of the four elementary districts that feed into LCHS.
- Consolidate all five districts into a new unit district serving grades K-12.
- Form a hybrid district where one or more elementary districts combine with the high school depending on which districts approve the referendum.
- Retain the status quo.

If the Lincoln area chooses to reorganize its schools this Committee recommends that either of the first two options mentioned above (combination of elementary districts or consolidation into a new unit) be pursued. The Committee raised several concerns about pursuing the formation of a hybrid district. Perhaps when school districts across the state develop a bit more experience with the hybrid process that option could be re-examined.

If the community chooses to retain the status quo in school organization the Committee strongly recommends that some type of a formal, collaborative effort be established between all five of the school districts that would allow our area to tackle education issues in a cooperative manner. We see particular value in pursuing cooperative efforts in the following areas: transportation, curriculum, purchasing, school calendar, staffing, technology, and professional development.

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## **The Consolidation Process:**

### **What was this Consolidation Fact Finding Committee? Who was on it? What was it supposed to do?**

The Consolidation Fact Finding Committee was formed by the five school districts in the Lincoln area (West Lincoln-Broadwell School District 92, Chester-East Lincoln School District 61, New Holland-Middletown School District 88, Lincoln Elementary School District 27, and Lincoln Community High School District 404) following the submission of the Reorganization Feasibility Study completed by the Consulting & Resource Group. Citizens approached several school boards and voiced concerns that the community as a whole needed further information on the issue of school consolidation before they could make an informed decision. This Committee was formed to address those concerns.

The purpose of the Fact Finding Committee is described in its name: to discover and report on the facts surrounding school consolidation in Lincoln. The Committee will issue some recommendations, but it was not created to advocate for or against any school consolidation scenario.

The Fact Finding Committee was made up of both citizens and school board members appointed by their respective school districts. The members of the Committee and their representative school districts are listed below:

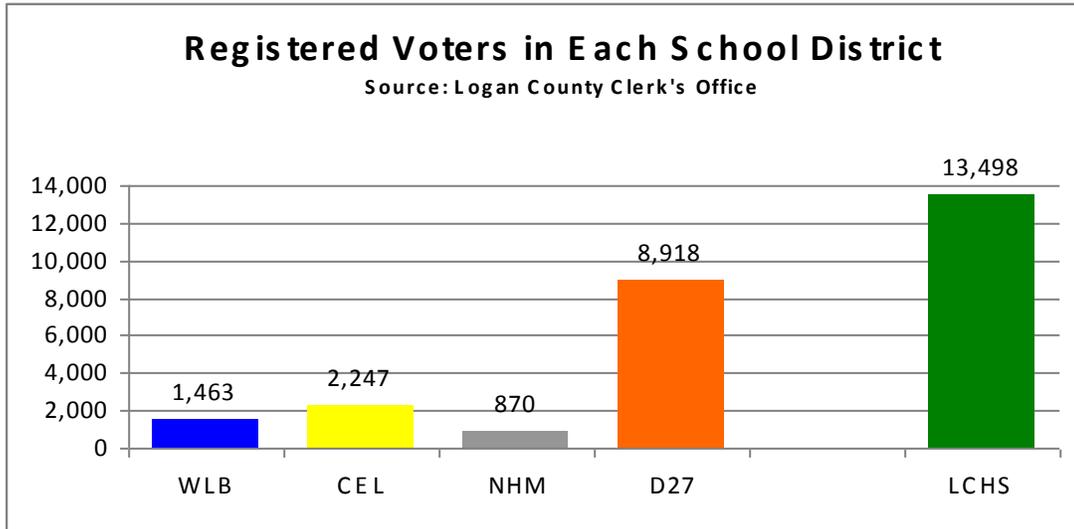
Crystal Alley – District 27 Board Member  
Mark Aughton - LCHS District 404 Board Member  
Terry Bell – West Lincoln-Broadwell District 92 Board Member  
Keith Birnbaum - Chester-East Lincoln District 61 Board member  
Mike Boyer – New Holland Middletown Citizen Member  
Jim Brown – CEL Board Member  
Gary LaForge – NHM Citizen Member  
Tom Martin – CEL Citizen Member  
Bob Pharis – LCHS Citizen Member  
Jim Rohrer – LCHS Citizen Member  
Stephen Rohrer – District 27 Board Member  
Ben Roland – CEL Citizen Member  
Keith Snyder – LCHS Board Member  
Sandy Tiffany – WLB Citizen Member  
Mark Tippett – District 27 Citizen Member  
Jim Wilmert – District 27 Citizen Member  
Dr. Bob Kidd – Retired Superintendent, Committee Advisor

### **What is the process for getting a consolidation question before the voters?**

There are two processes for placing a consolidation alternative before the voters.

Process #1 involves the school boards. Each affected school board may vote by a simple majority to place a specific consolidation alternative before the voters. Each possible consolidation alternative (including the Optional Elementary Unit District alternative) requires every school board affected by the consolidation to vote affirmatively to pass a resolution placing the question before the voters. If one affected board votes against the consolidation or simply refuses to take action, that alternative cannot go before the voters. Nothing prevents a school board that voted against a consolidation alternative resolution from changing its mind and later voting to place that alternative before the voters.

Process #2 involves the citizens of the affected school districts. Section 11E-35 of the School Code provides that a consolidation alternative may be placed before the voters if the lesser of 50 registered voters or 10% of the registered voters of each affected district sign a petition to that effect. As the chart below shows, each local district has more than 500 total registered voters, so a consolidation petition would require the signatures of 50 registered voters from each district.



Thus, school boards could pass a resolution or citizens may circulate a petition. One process or the other can be used to place a consolidation alternative before the voters. The processes cannot be combined. For example, if two school boards passed a resolution, getting the required signatures in the other three districts will not place the alternative on the ballot.

**What must be included on a school consolidation petition circulated by citizens?**

The body of the petition must include the items required under Section 11E-35 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/11E-35). These required items include:

- A request to submit the question to the voters at a regularly scheduled election.
- Description of the territory involved.
- Specification of the maximum tax rates for the new district.

- Details on how and when the school board for the new district will be elected.
- Designation of the Committee of Ten.

The signature pages must be attached to the petition. There is no template available from the Illinois State Board of Education or the Regional Superintendent, but signature pages must conform to the petition requirements of Section 28-3 of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/28-3). Some of those requirements include having the prayer of the petition at the top of each sheet, including the address of each signer, including a signed circulator's statement at the bottom of each sheet, including a notary public attesting to circulator statement, etc.

Copies of prior filed petitions would be available for examination at the offices of the State Board of Education and the Regional Superintendent. These prior petitions may provide an idea of what should be included as well as possible wording, but citizens interested in circulating petitions would be well advised to work with legal counsel on petition wording and legal requirements. Those costs, as well as any other costs associated with the petition filing and approval process would be the responsibility of the Committee of Ten.

### **What is a Committee of Ten? What are its functions? Who appoints it?**

The Committee of Ten consists of ten people who act as the “attorney in fact” or the ultimate guiding force and decision making body for either the resolution (if initiated by the school boards) or the petition (if initiated by citizens) as it moves through the public hearing, regulatory approval, and election processes. The Committee of Ten must be appointed and functioning prior to the filing of the resolution or petition with the Regional Superintendent.

If the school boards choose to initiate consolidation and all pass a resolution, those school boards will appoint the Committee of Ten to handle all matters involving that resolution. That school board-appointed Committee of Ten may consist of school board members or citizens from the affected districts.

If citizens choose to initiate consolidation and are passing petitions, the citizens behind the petition effort would either be on the Committee of Ten or recruit other citizens to serve on the Committee of Ten.

The affected districts do not have to be represented equally on the Committee of Ten. No more than ten people may be designated as the Committee of Ten, but the Committee may appoint any number of sub-committees to perform its work and to come up with the information needed on the petition.

Although it is not required to be included in a resolution or petition, most Committees of Ten develop a plan of what the new district may look like and how it might operate. In their role as a guiding force in the approval process, the Committee of Ten often make suggestions on curriculum, building usage, transportation plans, extra-curricular

activities, and so on. These plans can be presented at the public hearing or at any other public information hearings the Committee of Ten may elect to hold.

**Can the Committee of Ten commit the new district to anything?**

No. The Committee of Ten acts on all matters relating to the petition/resolution, but has no authority over the new district that may be formed by consolidation. The Committee of Ten can make recommendations or give its opinion on any other matter related to the operation of the new district during the petition/resolution and election process. For example, the Committee of Ten could say that for a new district to operate effectively and efficiently it should operate with certain staffing levels, with certain buildings remaining open, and with certain grades assigned to those continuing buildings. The only entity that can commit that new district to any course of action, however, is the elected school board for that new district. The new school board may follow the recommendations of the Committee of Ten, but it is not obligated to do so.

**What would be a potential timetable for placing a consolidation question on the November 2008 ballot? Other possibilities for 2009 and beyond?**

Because of all the timelines imposed by the School Code on the various steps of the approval process, a general rule of thumb is that consolidation petitions and/or resolutions must be submitted to the Regional Superintendent at least six months prior to the election date.

Approximate timelines for the November 4, 2008 General Election and the April 7, 2009 Consolidation Election follow. Please note: These timelines would have to be adjusted based on the actual dates of the filed petition, the published notices, and the public hearing.

**For the November 4, 2008 General Election:**

<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Action</u>
Week of May 12, 2008	Approximate last week to file a petition under Article 11E of the School Code and meet all other deadlines
May 19 – May 25, 2008	The Regional Office of Education (ROE) publishes the 1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing Notice
May 26 – June 1, 2008	ROE publishes 2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing Notice
June 2 – June 8, 2008	ROE publishes 3 <sup>rd</sup> Public Hearing Notice
Between June 17 – June 23, 2008 (No more than 15 days the date of the publication of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Notice)	Public Hearing

June 24 – July 7, 2008	Decision made by the ROE
July 8 – July 9, 2008	ROE submits Public Hearing document to the State Superintendent
July 10 – July 30, 2008	Decision made by State Superintendent
July 31 – September 31, 2008	Time period to contest the State Superintendent’s decision under the Administrative Review Law
September 4, 2008	Proposition submitted to the proper election authorities
November 4, 2008	General Election
<b>For the April 7, 2009 General Election:</b>	
<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Action</u>
Week of October 13, 2008	Approximate last week to file a petition under Article 11E of the School Code and meet all other deadlines
October 20 – October 26, 2008	The Regional Office of Education (ROE) publishes the 1 <sup>st</sup> Public Hearing Notice
October 27 – November 2, 2008	ROE publishes 2 <sup>nd</sup> Public Hearing Notice
November 3 – November 9, 2008	ROE publishes 3 <sup>rd</sup> Public Hearing Notice
Between November 18 – November 24, 2008 (No more than 15 days the date of the publication of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Notice)	Public Hearing
November 25 – December 8, 2008	Decision made by the ROE
December 9 – December 10, 2008	ROE submits Public Hearing document to the State Superintendent
December 11 – December 31, 2008	Decision made by State Superintendent
January 1 – February 4, 2009	Time period to contest the State Superintendent’s decision under the Administrative Review Law

February 5, 2009

Proposition submitted to the proper election authorities

April 7, 2009

Consolidated Election

**How/when would school board members be elected to a newly consolidated district?**

School board members for the new district may be elected at:

- 1) The same election in which the consolidation question is presented to the voters, or
- 2) At a subsequent election following the passage of the school consolidation question.

If the school board members are to be elected at the same election as the consolidation question that must be specified in the school consolidation petition/resolution.

Any school consolidation petition/resolution may also request that school board members for a new unit district be elected by school board districts rather than at large.

**What would the timeline be for implementing a new district?**

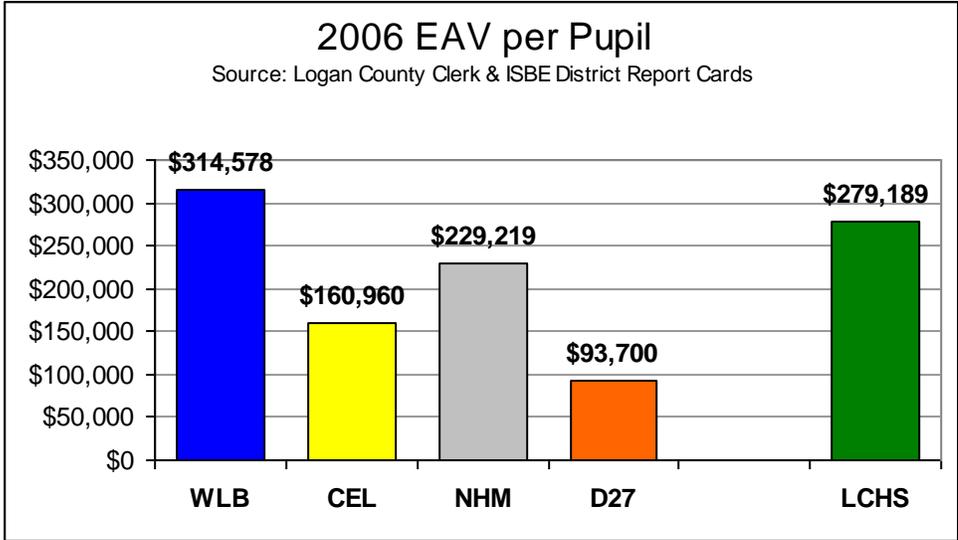
Section 11E-70 of the School Code (105 ILCS 5/11E-70) provides that any new district created out of the consolidation or combination of existing districts shall take effect on July 1<sup>st</sup> following the date that the school board election is held for the new district. Until that date the school boards of the districts as they existed prior to the consolidation shall continue to exercise their same powers and authorities over the territory involved in the consolidation.

**Finance:**

**What is the equalized assessed value (“EAV”) of each district?**

	<u>WLB</u>	<u>CEL</u>	<u>NHM</u>	<u>D27</u>	<u>LCHS</u>
2006 Total					
EAV	\$57,882,377	\$52,634,006	\$20,171,228	\$119,186,463	\$249,874,074

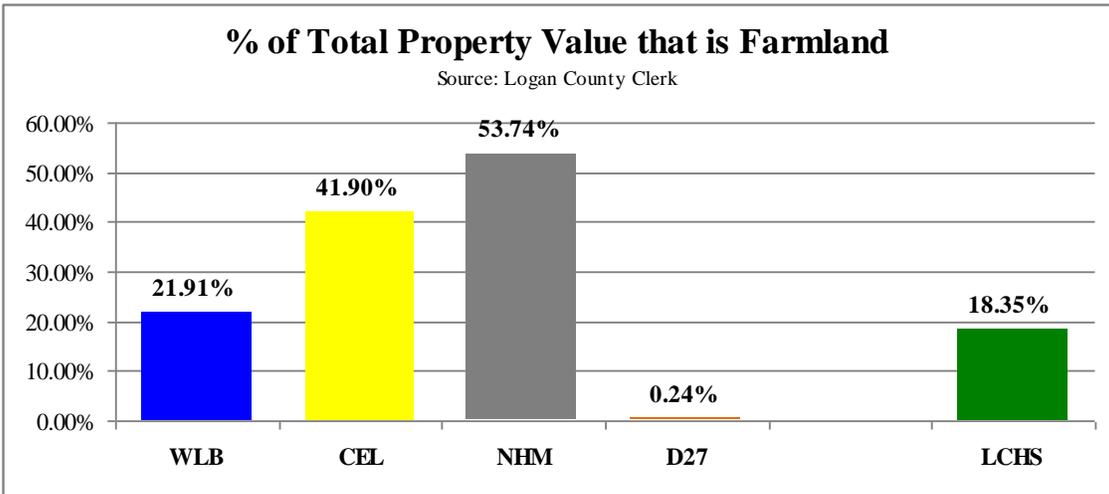
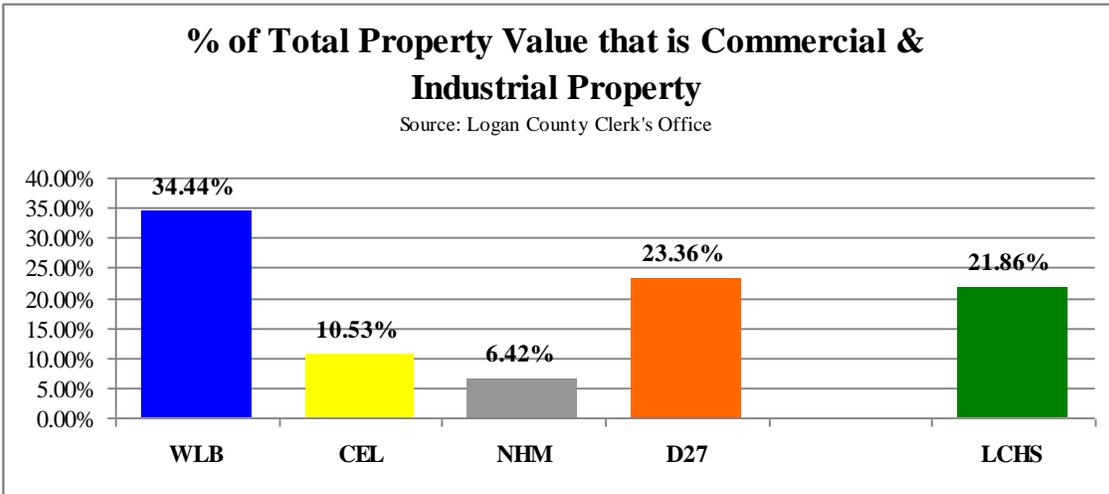
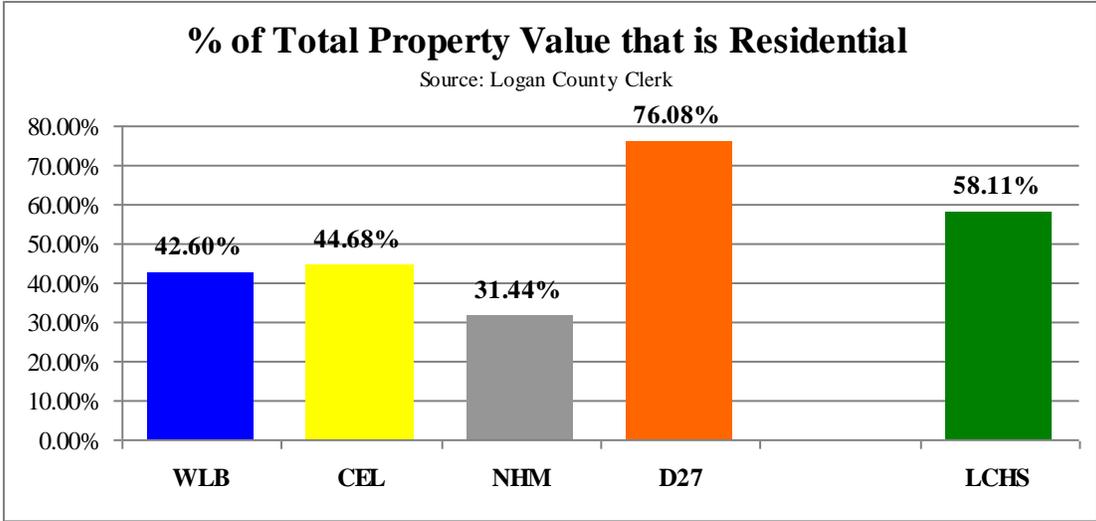
**What is the EAV/pupil for each district?**



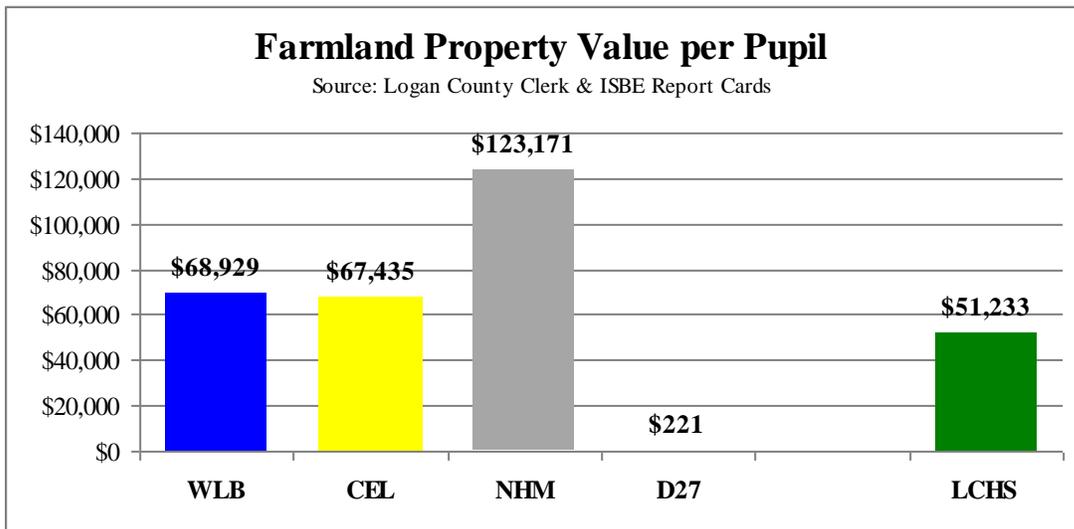
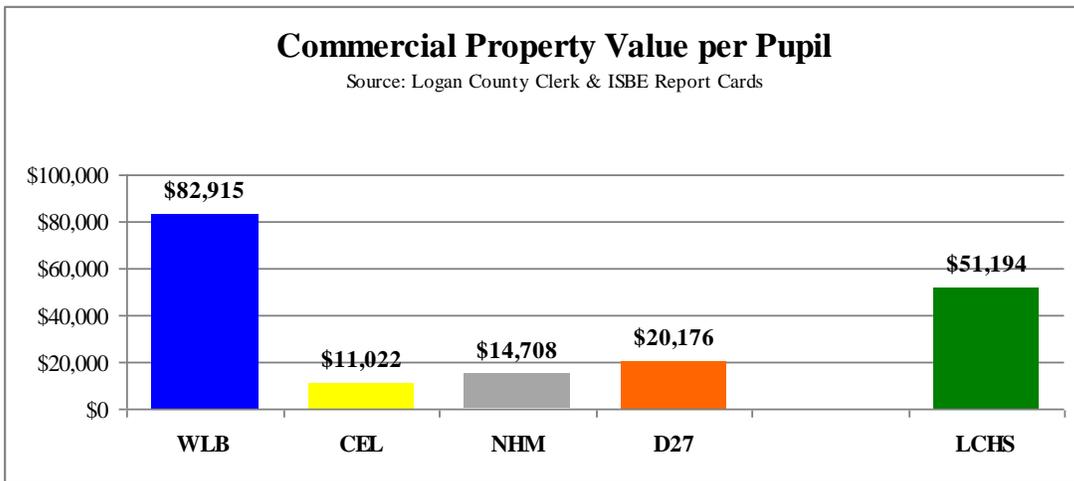
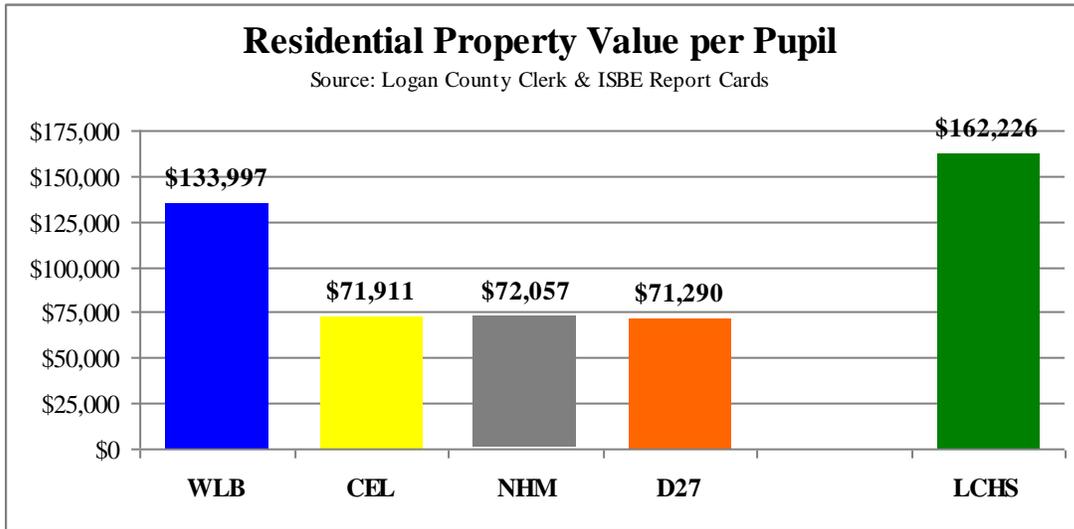
**What is the breakout of type of EAV (farmland, commercial, residential, etc.) for each district?**

	<u>WLB</u>	<u>CEL</u>	<u>NHM</u>	<u>D27</u>	<u>LCHS</u>
Farm	\$12,683,020	\$22,051,400	\$10,839,060	\$280,490	\$45,853,970
Residential	\$24,655,359	\$23,514,811	\$6,340,972	\$90,681,469	\$145,192,611
Commercial	\$15,256,420	\$3,604,190	\$1,294,290	\$25,663,506	\$45,818,406
Industrial	\$4,678,253	\$1,939,020	\$524	\$2,178,955	\$8,796,752
Mineral	\$136,370	\$4,890	\$49,260	\$0	\$190,520
Railroad	\$472,955	\$720,508	\$0	\$382,043	\$1,575,506
Other County EAV		\$799,187	\$1,647,122		\$2,446,309
<b>Total EAV</b>	<b>\$57,882,377</b>	<b>\$52,634,006</b>	<b>\$20,171,228</b>	<b>\$119,186,463</b>	<b>\$249,874,074</b>

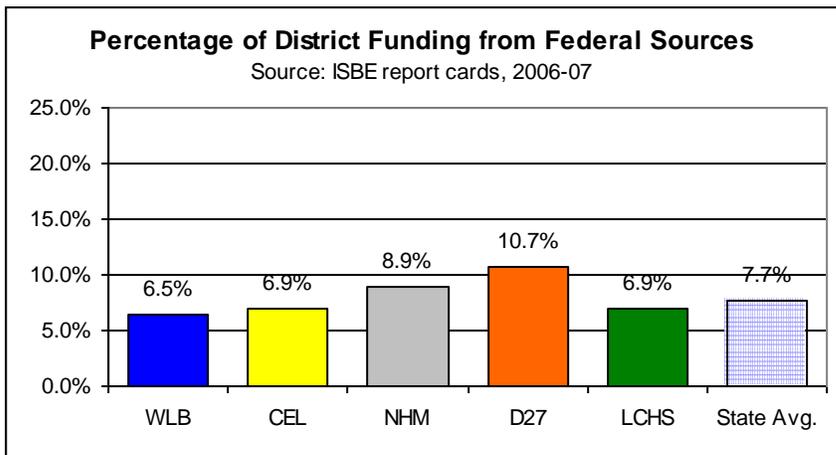
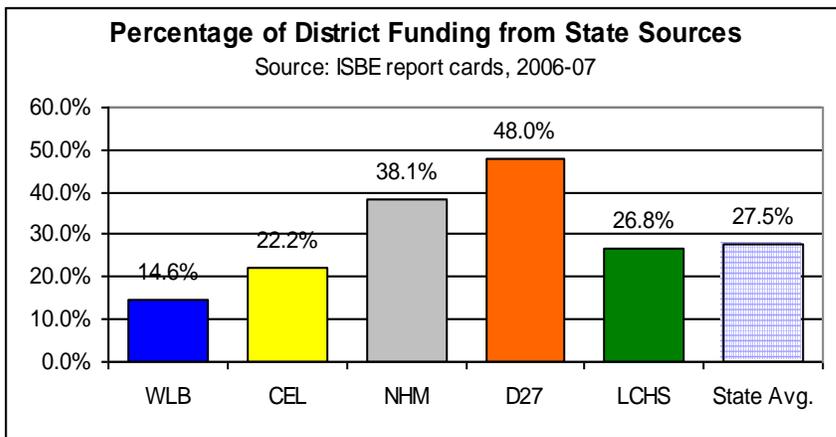
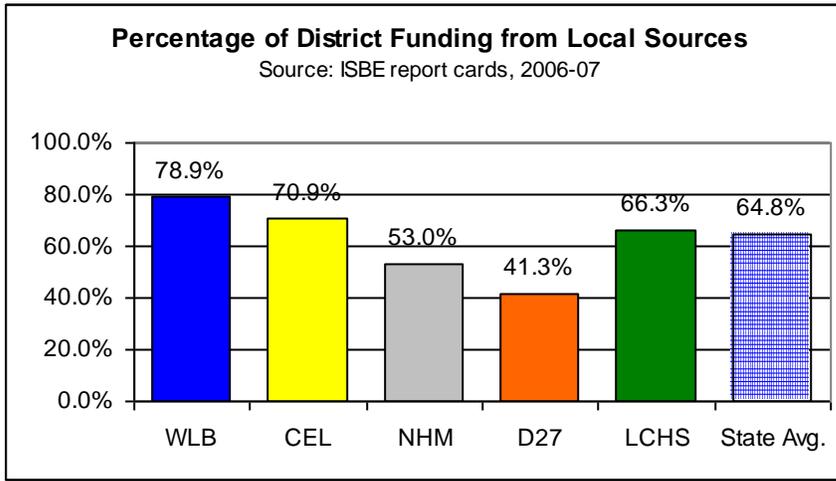
The percentages of the total EAV by district and by type of assessed value are as follows:



When the various types of EAV are averaged out per student significant differences are apparent across the districts:



**What are the percentages of revenue by type (state/local/federal) for each district?**



**If the five districts consolidated into a unit district, what would be a reasonable tax rate for the resulting new consolidated district?**

A review of the finances of the five school districts involved in the consolidation study was done to determine areas of both potential savings and increased costs.

The Committee is certain that savings in the Transportation fund can be achieved by eliminating duplicate bus routes that now exist between LCHS and the elementary districts. A thorough transportation study would have to be undertaken to more accurately determine cost savings, but for the purposes of this document the Committee has estimated those savings to be \$165,765 annually.

Likewise, some savings can be attained in administrative costs, but not nearly as much as is widely believed. The common perception is that consolidation of the five school districts will eliminate a number of administrative positions, most notably superintendents, and that this will save “lots of money.” In reality, that turns out not to be true. With the exception of Lincoln Elementary Schools, every other district in the study is a single-building district. At best, a current superintendent position would be replaced with a building principal, with only modest cost savings available in time (School District Reorganization law requires that all current administrative contracts be honored). Though it might be possible to implement dual-building principalships to attain greater cost savings, the experience in Lincoln Elementary Schools where this is done currently has revealed additional challenges. In addition, the creation of a larger, more diverse, and more complex school district might require the creation of administrative positions that do not exist in any of the districts at this time – for example: Business Manager, Curriculum Coordinator, Transportation Coordinator, etc. For the purposes of this analysis the Committee has estimated the administrative cost savings of consolidation to be \$150,000.

Cost increases due to consolidation are certain and unavoidable in two areas: certified staff salaries and employee insurance benefits. According to the Consulting & Resource Group, in every previous school district consolidation in Illinois the new salary schedule established for certified staff was always the highest schedule among the school districts involved. In short, salaries always moved up to the highest level, never down.

Among the five school districts involved in the study, LCHS has the highest salary schedule. For this study, the salaries of certified staff of the four elementary districts were adjusted, as accurately as possible with the data available, to place them on the current LCHS salary schedule. In addition, because by law all current bargaining units are dissolved at the time of consolidation, a 3% increase in the LCHS salary schedule was assumed as a reasonable salary increase that would be negotiated with the new bargaining unit formed after consolidation to represent certified staff. The cost of placing all certified staff in the four feeder districts on to the LCHS salary schedule is estimated to be \$479,200.

There does not appear to be a marked difference between the districts in the salaries and wages paid to non-certified staff. Even so, it is reasonable to assume that adjustments on the

order of those made for certified staff would be negotiated with the any new bargaining units representing those staff. Such an adjustment is not included in this study.

The other area of substantial cost increase at the time of consolidation is due to the costs of providing insurance benefits to employees. For this study the Committee assumed the LCHS insurance package would be the most likely one to be adopted following a consolidation of the five districts. The additional costs of adopting the LCHS plan for all employees in a newly consolidated district are calculated to be \$281,240.

The net of the potential savings and the cost increases is an annual increase of \$445,275.

To estimate the tax rates for a new consolidated school district, a detailed calculation was made in each fund (Education, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, Special Education, Working Cash, Bonds and Interest, Retirement, Social Security, Tort, Safety) to determine the amount necessary to maintain operations at their current levels – a total of \$10,920,994 for all current districts. The net operating increase of \$445,275 was then added to the appropriate funds to establish the new, minimum levels for each fund.

Bonds and Interest were excluded from the calculation of the new tax rates because by law the residents of a district with bonded indebtedness will continue to be solely responsible for the repayment of that debt after consolidation.

The calculated tax rates and resulting tax extension for each fund in a new consolidated district are shown in the following table: (Tax rates are per \$100 of Equalized Assessed Valuation)

Education	\$3.42074	\$ 8,286,880
OBM	\$0.54725	\$ 1,325,746
Transportation	\$0.15257	\$ 369,602
Special Education	\$0.04000	\$ 96,913
Working Cash	\$0.05000	\$ 121,127
Bonds & Interest		
Retirement	\$0.10409	\$ 252,161
Social Security	\$0.08676	\$ 210,179
Tort	\$0.13000	\$ 314,919
Lease	\$0.07210	\$ 174,670
Health, Life Safety	\$0.08837	\$ 214,072
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4.69187</b>	<b>\$11,366,269</b>

As shown, the estimated final tax rate in a new consolidated district, without Bonds & Interest, would be \$4.69187 per \$100 of EAV.

The table below gives a comparison of:

- The current tax rates per district without Bonds & Interest,
- The current tax rate per district including the LCHS rate,

- The current tax rate for Bond & Interest for each district,
- The current total tax rate for each district including its own rate for Bonds & Interest,
- The rate for each district in a new consolidated school district, and
- The difference between the current tax rate in each district and the tax rate in a new consolidated school district.

	<b>Current Rate w/o Bonds</b>	<b>Current Rate with LCHS</b>	<b>Current Bond Rate</b>	<b>Current Total Rate w/ Bonds</b>	<b>New Rate with Bonds</b>	<b>Rate Difference</b>
D27	\$2.56439	\$4.51657	\$0.38658	\$4.98863	\$5.16393	\$0.17530
CEL	\$2.60273	\$4.55491	\$0.25620	\$4.81111	\$5.03355	\$0.13696
NHM	\$2.95360	\$4.90578	\$0.00000	\$4.90578	\$4.77735	\$-0.21391
WLB	\$2.16614	\$4.11832	\$0.09490	\$4.21322	\$4.87225	\$0.57355
LCHS	\$1.95218		\$0.08548			

The difference in the tax rate ranges from a decrease of approximately 21 cents per \$100 of EAV for residents of the New Holland-Middletown district to an increase of approximately 57 cents per \$100 of EAV for residents of the West Lincoln-Broadwell district.

For purposes of comparison, the rate difference for a piece of residential property with a taxable value of \$50,000 would translate into an:

- Annual increase of \$87.65 in District 27;
- Annual increase of \$68.48 in Chester-East Lincoln District 61;
- Annual decrease of \$106.96 in New Holland-Middletown District 88; and
- Annual increase of \$286.78 in West Lincoln-Broadwell District 92

**PLEASE NOTE:** The net cost difference that translates into the estimated rates above only includes cost savings in the areas mentioned above (transportation duplication and administrative costs) in the amounts mentioned above (\$165,765 for transportation and \$150,000 for administrative costs). A new school board could get much more aggressive in cost reductions by reconfiguring programs, realigning staff, or even closing one or two existing school buildings. This analysis assumes current operational levels with the exception of the items mentioned above.

The net cost difference also does not include any consolidation incentive funds that could be received from the State of Illinois. The incentives were not included for a couple of reasons. First, the new district would be dependent on the State of Illinois to provide those payments. And, second, incentives are provided for a limited time only (four years maximum). The Committee believed that incentive payments would be best used for one-time costs at the formation of a new district (for example, new textbooks, enhanced technology, etc.).

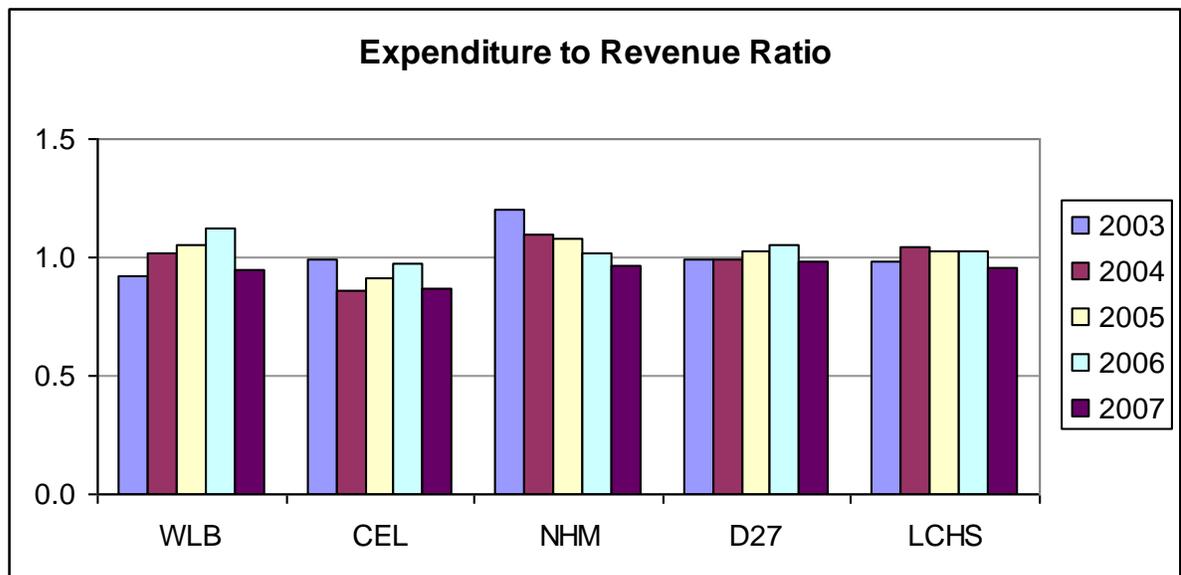
**What are the assets of each district?**

The chart below depicts the capital assets of each district:

	<u>WLB</u>	<u>CEL</u>	<u>NHM</u>	<u>D27</u>	<u>LCHS</u>
Land	\$15,000	\$19,100	\$5,000	\$92,931	\$45,510
Buildings	\$1,858,345	\$1,912,050	\$2,453,407	\$14,532,408	\$7,735,392
Improvements other than Buildings	\$187,626	\$87,755	\$4,415	\$151,842	\$666,199
Equipment other than Transportation/Food Services	\$416,636	\$522,539	\$647,865	\$866,646	\$2,482,556
Construction in Progress	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Transportation Equipment	\$486,970	\$700,559	\$46,877	\$5,436	\$112,835
Food Services Equipment	\$12,956	\$0	\$2,955	\$179,972	\$109,149
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,977,533</b>	<b>\$3,242,003</b>	<b>\$3,160,519</b>	<b>\$15,829,235</b>	<b>\$11,151,641</b>

**Are the districts spending more than they are taking in?**

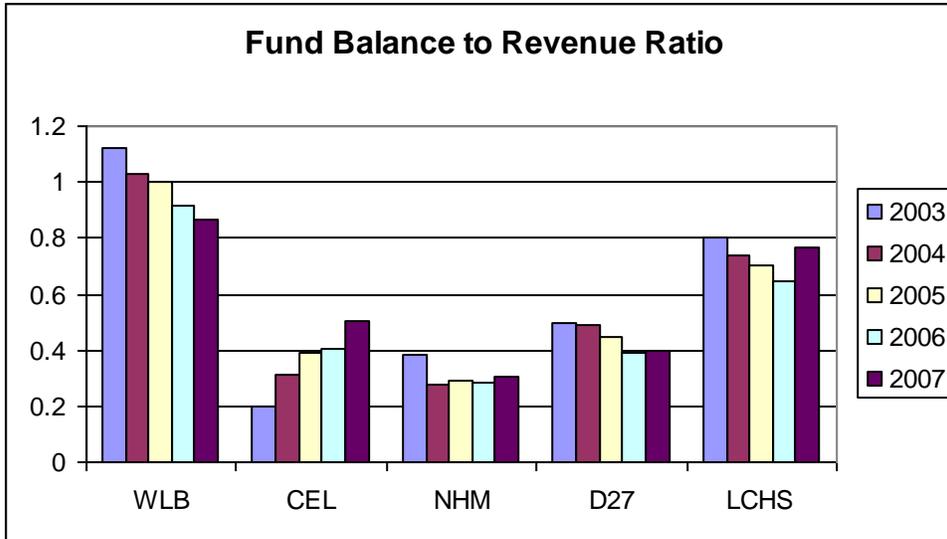
One way to answer this question is to examine the ratio of each district’s expenditures to their revenue. If a district spends less than it takes in, its expenditure to revenue ratio will be less than 1.0. If a district spends more than it takes in, its ratio will be greater than 1.0. The expenditure to revenue ratio for each of the districts for the past five years is as follows:



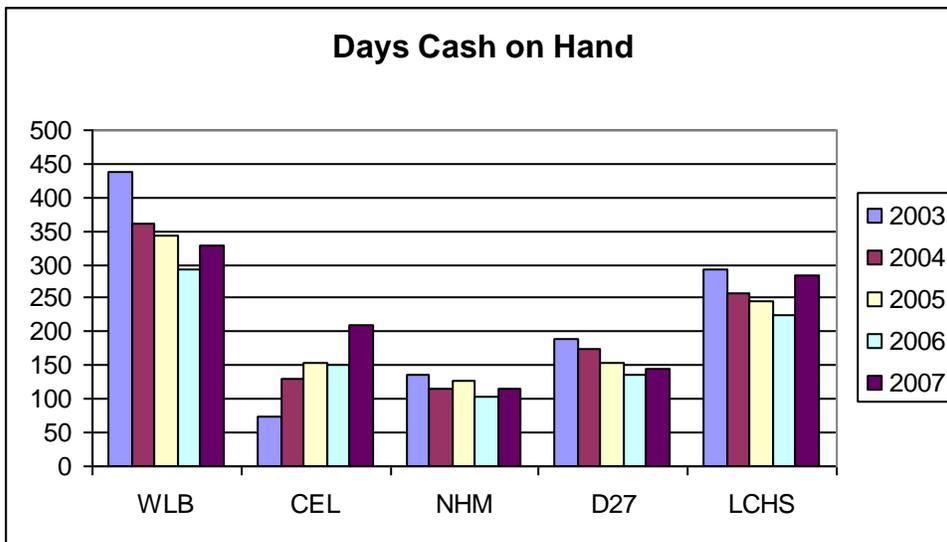
**How much money do the districts have on hand?**

Rather than answer this question with raw numbers the Committee looked at ways to make real comparisons across the districts. The first of these is a ratio that compares each district’s fund balance with its revenue. If we were talking about individuals, this ratio would compare

a person's savings account balance with that person's annual income. In the case of school districts, if a district's fund balance (the amount of cash it has on hand at the end of each fiscal year) exceeds its revenues for the year its ratio would be greater than 1.0. For the five area school districts the fund balance to revenue ratios for the last five years are as follows:



The second way to answer the question is to look at the number of days of cash each district has on hand. This figure is derived by taking each district's average expenditures per day and dividing that into that district's cash on hand. If this calculation were applied to individuals, it would be figured by taking that person's average bills for each day compared to the balance of that person's savings account. If a school district has more than 365 days of cash on hand, it has more than enough money to pay a year's worth of bills. The days of cash on hand for each of the five districts are as follows:



## Curriculum/Staffing:

### **How will music, art, and physical education be affected by consolidation?**

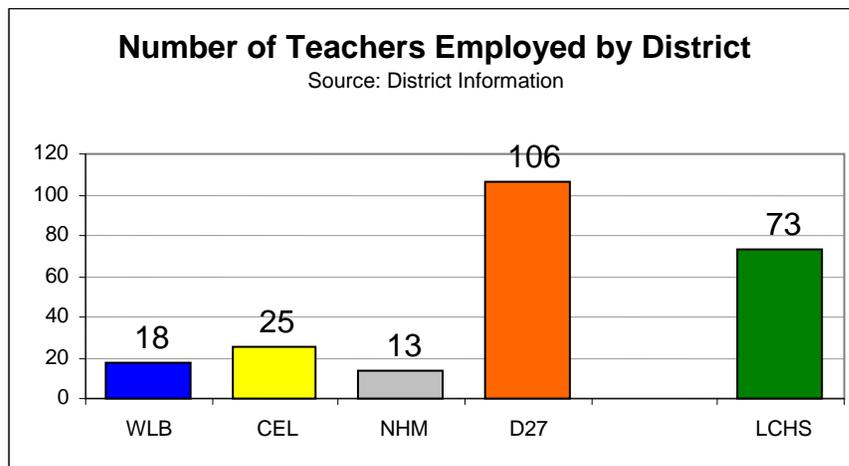
If consolidation is pursued and is approved by the voters of the affected districts, decisions on the curriculum content and the amount of time allotted for music, art, and P.E. will rest with the elected school board of the newly consolidated district. The Committee of Ten can make recommendations about these areas during a consolidation process, but the ultimate decision rests with the new school board acting within the constraints of the School Code (State law requires daily P.E. except where a district has sought a waiver for facility or personnel limitations. State law contains no mandates regarding time for music or art.).

The time currently spent in each of these areas varies by district. In grades K-6, for example, all students receive daily P.E. except in District 27 (because of space limitations those students receive specialist taught P.E. once a week). In music, grades K-4 receive instruction once per week at Chester-East, West Lincoln-Broadwell, and New Holland-Middletown and once every other week in District 27. The current curricular offerings are the result of district choice, available space, and available staff.

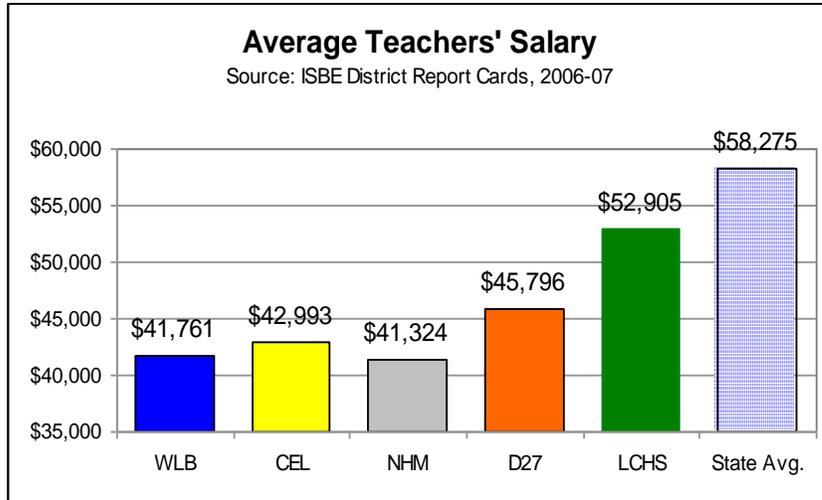
### **What is the enrollment for each grade in each elementary district?**

Please see the projected enrollment chart below in the Facilities and Ancillary Services Section.

### **How many certified staff are employed by each district?**



### **What is the average teacher's salary for each district?**

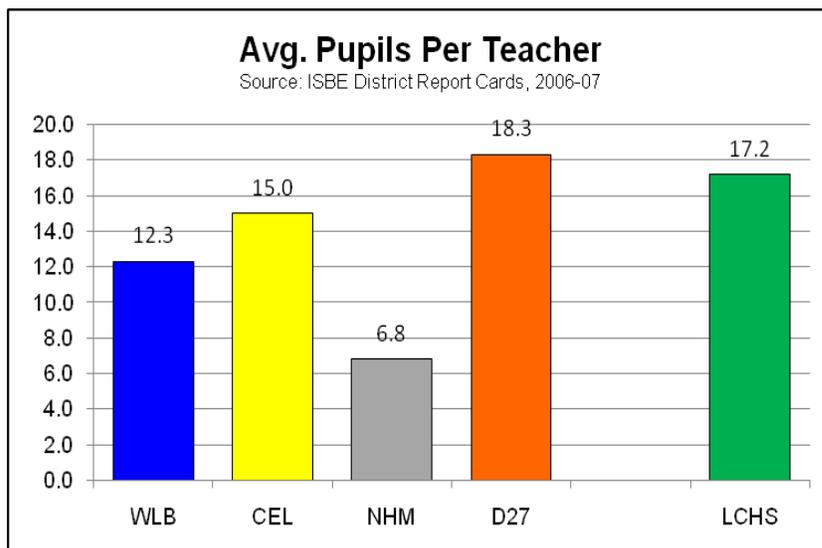


**What is the comparison of salary schedules at certain specified steps and degree lanes?**

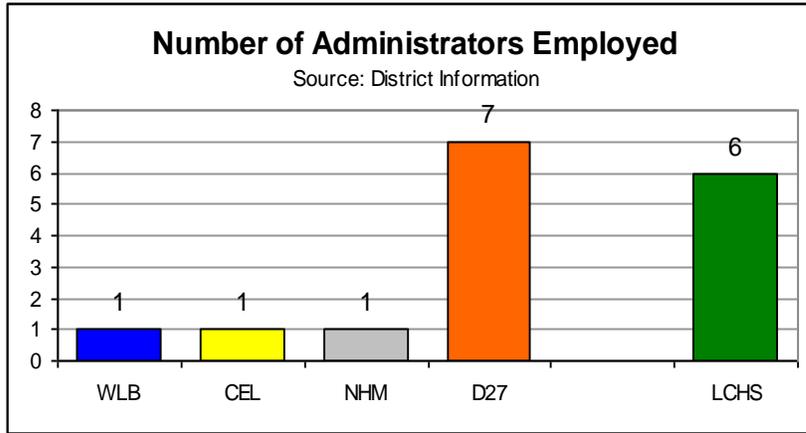
	BA Step 1	BA+8 Step 3	BA+16 Step 5	MA Step 7	MA+8 Step 9	Top Salary schedule
WLB	\$25,700	\$28,013	\$30,326	\$33,410	\$35,723	\$51,914
CEL	\$26,092	\$28,300	\$30,508	\$33,436	\$35,644	\$48,268
NHM*						
D27	\$29,527	\$32,775	\$36,023	\$40,747	\$43,995	\$57,987
LCHS	\$30,775	\$34,391	\$38,007	\$43,392	\$47,008	\$61,549

\* Did not receive information from NHM.

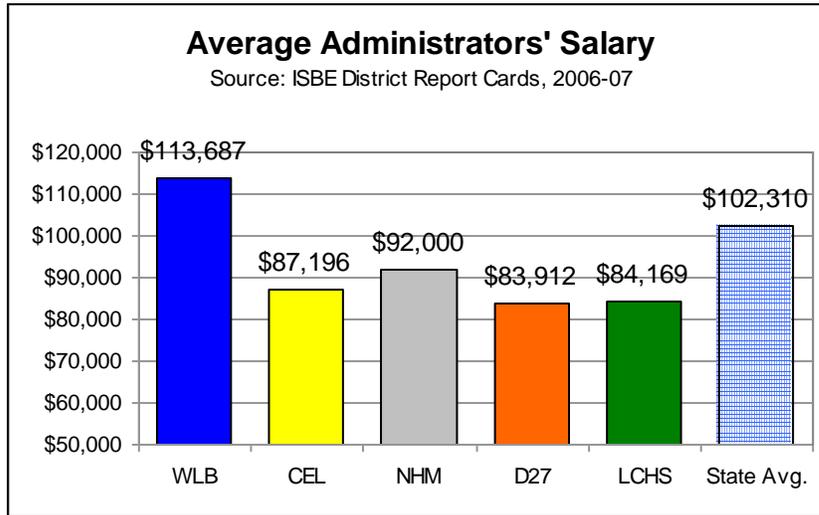
**What is the pupil/teacher ratio for each district?**



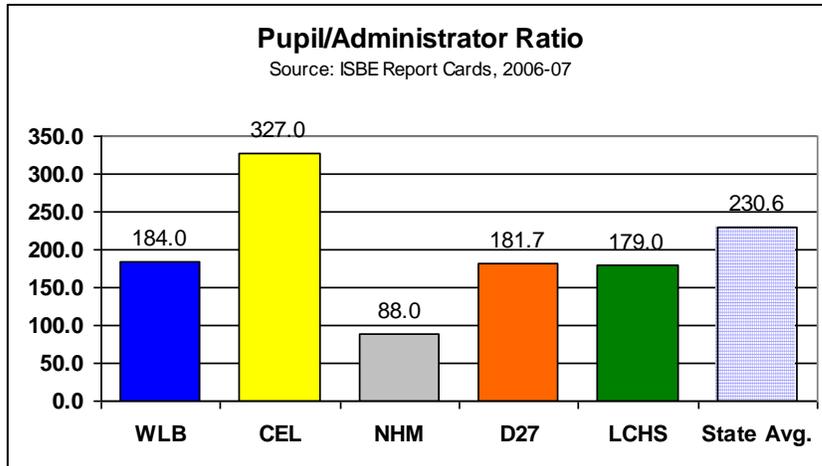
**How many administrators are employed by each district?**



**What is the average administrator's salary for each district?**

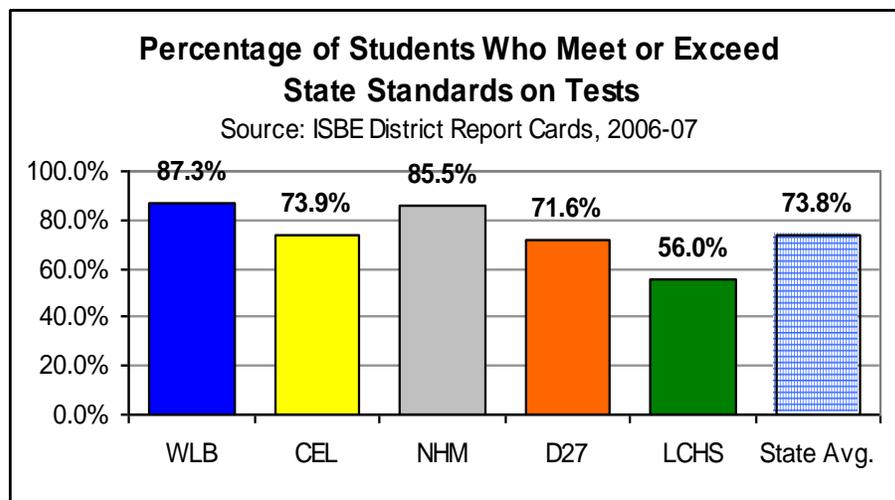


**What is the pupil/administrator ratio for each district?**



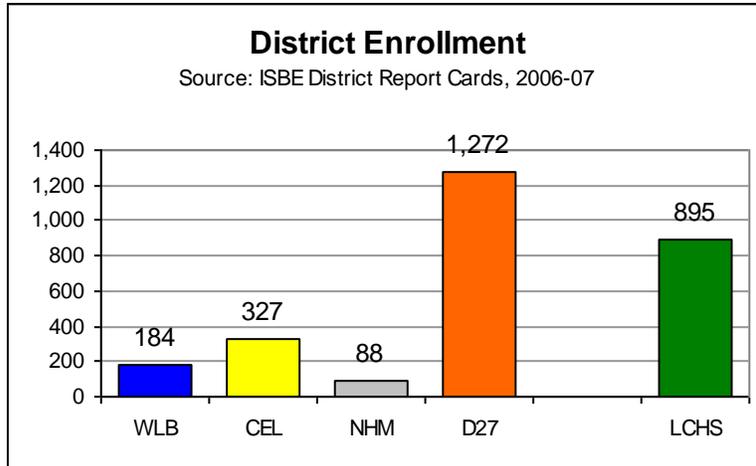
**What are the most recent test score results for each district?**

The chart below shows the percentage of students who met or exceeded State of Illinois standards on the most recent State tests.

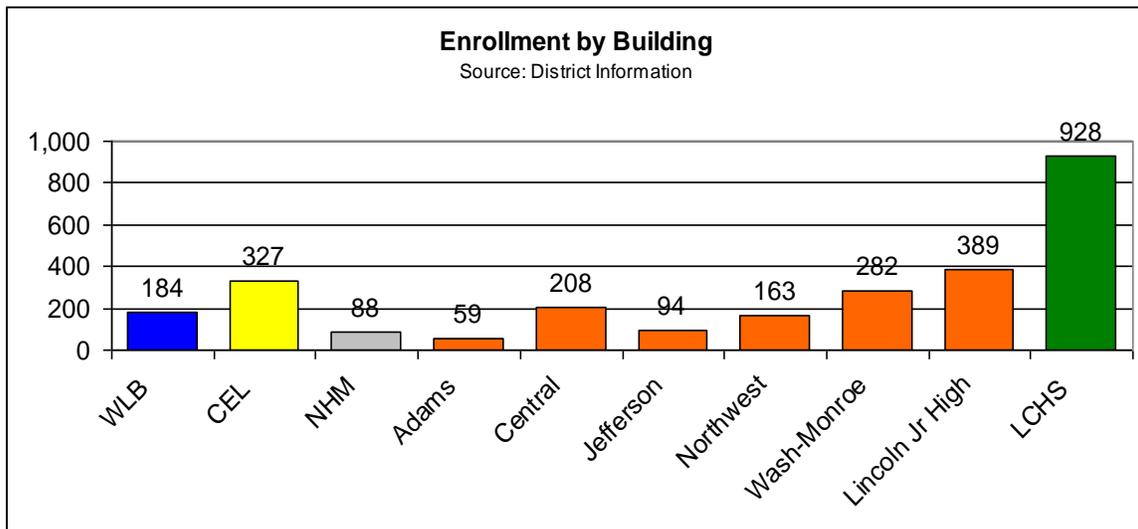


**Facilities/Ancillary Services:**

**What is the enrollment of each school district?**



**What is the enrollment within each school building?**



**What are the projected enrollments for the next 5 years? Next 10 years?**

The only enrollment projection the Committee was able to discover was from LCHS. Each year Supt. Dean Langdon projects future high school enrollments based on the size of elementary classes in the schools that feed into LCHS. The chart below shows the latest projection done by LCHS:

	<u>K</u>	<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>	<u>5th</u>	<u>6th</u>	<u>7th</u>	<u>8th</u>	<u>9th</u>	<u>10th</u>	<u>11th</u>	<u>12th</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>	<u>2018</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2008</u>	
Adams	24	19	16											59
Central	25	22	23	45	51	42								208
Jefferson	25	20	27	18				2	2					94
Northwest	35	24	21	24	33	26								163
Washington-Monroe	45	47	48	49	47	45		1						282
Lincoln Jr. High							123	148	118					389
Chester-East Lincoln	28	30	36	33	37	39	24	26	36					289
New Holland-Middletown	6	10	8	9	13	12	5	6	12					81
West Lincoln Broadwell	16	15	29	15	15	17	16	29	29					181
Carroll Catholic	10	9	14	11	10	6	14	9	13					96
Zion Lutheran	7	14	15	14	19	20	9	11	14					123
<b>Lincoln High School</b>										290	236	207	195	928
<b>TOTAL ENROLLMENTS BY GRADUATION CLASS:</b>	221	210	237	218	225	207	191	232	224	290	236	207	195	
Projected High School Enrollments By Graduation Year:				886	890	887	841	855	854	937	982	957	928	

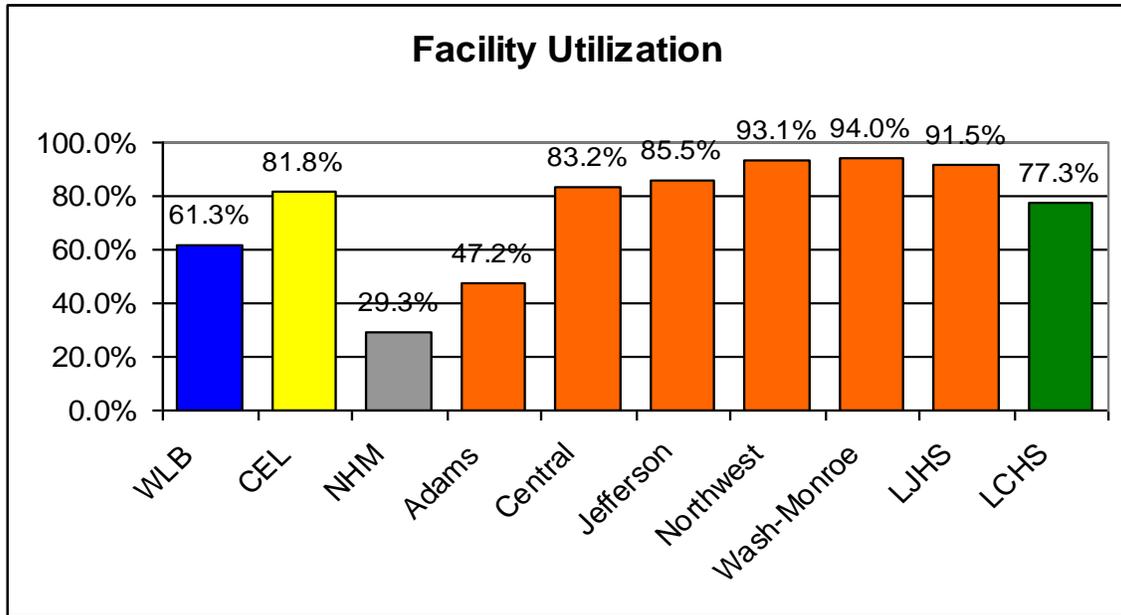
Source for Elementary Class Size: 6 day enrollment figures from Regional Superintendent

**What is the current functional capacity of each building? What will be the functional capacity after any planned construction projects? How many classrooms are in each building? What is the building utilization of each district (functional capacity/enrollment)?**

The following chart shows the number of classrooms, the enrollment, the functional capacity, and the utilization (equal to the enrollment divided by the functional capacity) for each building:

	<b># of Classrooms</b>	<b>Enrollment</b>	<b>Functional Capacity</b>	<b>Utilization</b>
<b>WLB</b>	16	184	300*	61.3%
<b>CEL</b>	26	327	400	81.8%
<b>NHM</b>	17	88	300	29.3%
<b>Adams</b>	9	59	125	47.2%
<b>Central</b>	18	208	250	83.2%
<b>Jefferson</b>	9	94	110	85.5%
<b>Northwest</b>	13	163	175	93.1%
<b>Wash-Monroe</b>	16	282	300	94.0%
<b>Lincoln Jr High</b>	24	389	425	91.5%
<b>LCHS</b>	70	928	1,200	77.3%

\* Following construction



\* Note: The WLB utilization percentage was calculated using post-construction numbers.

**For non-special ed bus routes:**

- What are the numbers of buses operated?
- How many students are transported by each district?
- How many routes are operated?
- What is the average number of students who ride each bus?

The questions above are answered in the following chart:

	WLB	CEL	NHM	D27*	LCHS
<b># Buses</b>	5	8	2	5	12
<b># Vans</b>	1	1	0	1	4
<b>Students Transported</b>	195	269	72	43	175
<b>Routes</b>	4	6	2	6	7
<b>Students/Route</b>	49	45	36		25

\* All District 27 routes are for special education students.

## **Impacts:**

The Fact Finding Committee was unable to uncover any conclusive findings regarding impacts to students and the community. Most studies are very subjective and not necessarily fact driven. Studies were found to both advocate and discount the idea of school reorganization, consolidation, and closings. These studies do however attempt to address economical development and student performance in these situations. Therefore, we recommend those interested in this type of information look to online resources to form their own opinion on the following:

- **What does the most recent research available say about the impact of the closing of a neighborhood or community school?**
- **It has been stated that consolidation of all the Lincoln area districts may assist the efforts of economic development officials to attract new business to Lincoln. What is the evidence for and against this statement?**
- **What does research say about how grade level configurations of a building affect learning and performance?**
- **If the goal is to improve the education of our children, are there other ways to achieve that goal rather than consolidation?**

## **Lessons Learned During District Visits:**

### West Lincoln-Broadwell

- Enrollment of approximately 185 students.
- Percentage of low income students is 8%; it is usually under 10%.
- Mobility rate of 7.4%.
- Pupil to teacher ratio of approximately 12.3 to 1. They like to keep classes small.
- Average teachers' salary of \$41,761. Teachers are unionized; support staff are not.
- WLB is a tax capped district. For general state aid purposes they receive dollars under the alternate school aid formula.
- District is funded:  
80% from local sources;  
14% from state sources; and  
6% from federal sources.
- District only receives approximately \$60,000/year in state aid.
- Property wealth (EAV) per pupil is \$271,610
- Property tax rate is consistently in the \$2.25 range.
- District has over \$2 million in the bank. It could go a year without receiving any tax revenue and still be able to operate.
- District uses an A/B block schedule for its middle school students (grades 6-8). They feel that schedule affords wider curriculum choices.
- 88% of students meet or exceed state standards in all subjects.

- 24 other districts in the State of Illinois are WLB's size and have the same performance levels.
- All teachers have Palm Pilots and wireless laptops. WLB feels what they do cannot be done on a grander scale without significant expense.
- District is involved in the Response to Intervention Initiative. They hire subs so the classroom teachers can perform assessments on students.
- Last year they graduated an 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of 26. That was large for them. When that class started in kindergarten it was 14 children.
- The planned new construction will expand the capacity of the building to approximately 300 students. The construction is funded through the issuance of 20-year Working Cash bonds.

### Chester-East Lincoln

- Total enrollment (as of 11/29/07) = 294 in-district and 2 out-of-district. Enrollment has declined by 13.5% over the past five years.
- Average class size = 17 students per homeroom. The range in homeroom size is from 10 to 24.
- There are two sections for each grade level except for 6<sup>th</sup> grade (which has only one section of 24 students).
- Building capacity is approximately 400 students.
- Low income rate = 21.4% currently; 23.2% for 2006-07; 24.1% for 2005-06.
- Mobility rate = 5.7% for 2006-07; 13.6% for 2005-06; 10.8% for 2004-05.
- Special education population is 60 (58 in-district and 2 out-of-district). This represents 15.6% of the student population. District employs 4 special ed teachers.
- Staff size: 1 administrator; 25 certified teachers, and 22 support staff. Teachers are unionized, support staff are not.
- Annual budget is approximately \$3,000,000.
- Projected fund balances as of 6/30/2008:
 

Education Fund	\$814,077
Building (Oper. & Main.) Fund	\$81,650
Transportation Fund	\$312,919
- District is funded:
  - 70.9% from local sources;
  - 22.2% from state sources; and
  - 6.9% from federal sources.
- Most recent tax rates:
 

Education Fund	\$1.90
Building Fund	\$0.25
Transportation Fund	<u>\$0.12</u>
	\$2.27
- Range of teachers' salaries for 2008:
 

Step 1 (BA degree)	\$26,092
Step 16 (MA+16 years)	\$58,608

- Teachers' contract calls for longevity payments beyond Step 16. Currently 5 teachers (20%) qualify for and receive longevity payments. Contract is up at the end of the 2008-09 school year.
- District owns and operates its own buses.
- Curriculum: Core courses are taught at all grade levels. In addition, the following are offered –
  - P.E. – taught every day to all grade levels.
  - Art – taught once a week to grades K-6; every day for one semester for grades 7-8.
  - Music – taught once a week to grades K-4; option to join band or chorus in grades 5-8.
  - Keyboarding – 9-week course in grade 8. There are two computer labs available for all grade levels.
  - Career Education – 9-week course in grade 8.
  - Title I services available for any K-8 student.
  - Accelerated Reader used within school reading curriculum.
  - Extracurriculars include: athletics, speech, student council, and cheerleading.

### District 27

- Operates six schools:
  - Adams – pre-K-2, enrollment: 111
  - Central – K-5, enrollment: 212
  - Jefferson – K-3, enrollment: 96
  - Northwest – K-5, enrollment: 161
  - Washington-Monroe – K-5, enrollment: 283
  - Lincoln Junior High School – 6-8, enrollment: 394
- Staff size: 7 administrators; 106 certified teachers; 75 support staff. Teachers and support staff are unionized.
- Annual budget of approximately \$10.2 million.
- District is funded:
  - 41.2% from local sources;
  - 48.0% from state sources; and
  - 10.8% from federal sources.
- Property value (EAV) per pupil is \$87,047.
- Instructional expense per pupil = \$4,610
- Operational expense per pupil = \$7,481
- Historically, the tax rate has been around \$3.00. For 2007, it is projected to be \$2.9324.
- Percentage of low income students is 54.9%.
- Mobility rate of 15.5%.
- Pupil to teacher ratio district-wide = 18.3/1.
- Average teacher's salary = \$45,796.
- Average administrator's salary = \$83,912
- All schools have made Average Yearly Progress. All sub-groups have made Average Yearly Progress.
- Several District 27 schools have been honored by the State Board of Education:

- Northwest – was named a Spotlight School, the highest award available for schools performing well with over 50% low income population
- Central and Lincoln Junior High – were named as Illinois Honor Roll schools
- Washington Monroe – 3 years in a row of Academic Improvement

New Holland-Middletown:

The Committee’s request to meet at and tour the New Holland-Middletown school facility was denied by the District 88 Board of Education through Superintendent Terry Scandrett.

Lincoln Community High School

- Enrollment of 928 students (as of the 6<sup>th</sup> day of classes this school year).
- LCHS projects out enrollment based on the 6<sup>th</sup> day enrollment numbers from feeder schools. The current projections by graduation year are as follows:
  - Class of 2009 957
  - Class of 2010 982
  - Class of 2011 937
  - Class of 2012 854
  - Class of 2013 855
  - Class of 2014 841
  - Class of 2015 887
  - Class of 2016 890
  - Class of 2017 886
- Staff size: 6 administrators; 73 certified teachers; 58 support staff. Teachers are unionized; support staff are not.
- Budget for 2006-07 = \$14.5 million (includes approximately \$4.8 million in building renovations).
- District is funded:
  - 55% from local property taxes;
  - 29% from state sources;
  - 5% from federal sources; and
  - 11% from other sources.
- LCHS:
  - Contracts with Logan County Health Dept. to provide school nursing services;
  - Contracts with Logan Mason Mental Health to provide mental health services;
  - Contracts with Abraham Lincoln Memorial Hospital to provide athletic trainer services;
  - Provides school lunches for WLB, New Holland-Middletown, and Zion Lutheran;
  - Provides tutoring and private instruction for hospitalized students;
  - Provides special education services to Hartsburg, Olympia, and Mt. Pulaski school districts;
  - Has cooperative agreements with the Lincolnland Technical Education Center, Salt Creek Academy, and Tri-County Special Education Association;
  - Has a foundation that provides support and scholarships for LCHS students.

- Test scores: Scores have been above Average Yearly Progress, but trend lines indicate AYP may not be attained in 2008. In response the district will:
  - Identify struggling readers at the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level and provide additional support during the freshman year;
  - Increase 9<sup>th</sup> grade expectations by leveling up average English to accelerated; and
  - Use Curriculum Mapping to identify gaps and overlaps in the curriculum.
- Building issues: Have recently completed new bleachers, tuck pointing, lighting upgrades, new boilers, new domestic water supply, remodeled restrooms, and security vestibules at each entrance. Coming soon: new cabinet unit ventilators with AC, new doors, new lockers, new ceilings, and new floor tile. District's long-term objective is to have a fully functioning school for the next 30 years.
- Budget matters: The good news is – EAV has shown steady growth; tax rates have held steady; and the district has healthy fund balances. Uncertain news – state funding status.

### **Options/Recommendations:**

Following consideration of this Committee's work, the citizens and boards of education of the five area school districts have at least the four following options to consider.

#### **Combine elementary districts**

Four different elementary school districts feed into Lincoln Community High School. Two or more of those districts could reorganize in the following variety of ways:

- Deactivation – Deactivation is the closure of a district's school and the sending of students in grades K-8 to one or more other districts. Deactivation requires: 1) a resolution of the board of education to deactivate; 2) approval by a majority of the voters in the deactivating district; and 3) a tuition agreement between all the affected districts.
- Dissolution/Annexation – Dissolution/Annexation is the incorporation of all or some portion of one school district into another school district. This process requires: 1) a petition filed by voter signatures or a resolution of the dissolving board; 2) a local public hearing before the Regional Board of School Trustees; 3) approval by the Regional Board of School Trustees; and 4) if the dissolution/annexation involves an entire district, approval by a majority of voters in each affected district.
- Consolidation – Consolidation would involve the merger of two or more entire elementary districts. As described elsewhere in this document, consolidation requires: 1) a petition by voter signature or a resolution by the impacted boards of education; 2) a local public hearing conducted by the Regional Superintendent; 3) approval by the State Superintendent; and 4) approval by a simple majority of the citizens voting on a referendum.

### **Form a unit district**

Under this option, all five districts could join together to form a new K-12 unit district. The process for establishing a new unit district would be the consolidation process. The first step would be the circulation of a citizen petition or the passage of a board resolution involving each of the five districts. If sufficient numbers of citizen signatures were gathered on a legal petition or if all five boards of education passed a consolidation resolution, the next step would be a public hearing conducted by the Regional Superintendent, followed by a decision of the State Superintendent. The question would then be placed on the ballot in all five districts. In order to pass, the question must pass by a majority vote in all five districts.

In the hybrid district option below, the consolidation would take effect in whichever districts passed the question. In the formation of a new unit district, however, a majority would be required in each district. Thus, this process is sometimes referred to as the “all or nothing” option.

### **Form a hybrid district**

The consultants that conducted the recent feasibility study recommended that the five districts pursue reorganization with the use of a hybrid process. This process is similar to the formation of a new unit district via consolidation, but it differs in the passage requirements.

Under a hybrid process, citizen petitions or board resolutions are still required from each district, a public hearing and approval is still required by the Regional Superintendent, and approval is still required by the State Superintendent. When it comes to passage, however, a hybrid district is formed if the voters in two or more districts approve the question by a majority vote.

In our case, a hybrid district would require citizen petitions or board resolutions from West Lincoln-Broadwell, Chester-East Lincoln, New Holland-Middletown, Lincoln Elementary District 27, and Lincoln Community High School. If, for example, the hybrid question was placed on the ballot and at the referendum it only passed in Lincoln Elementary District 27 and Lincoln Community High School, the territory that now constitutes D27 and LCHS would be operated as a new hybrid unit district. The territory in WLB, CEL, and NHM would continue to operate as elementary districts and would continue to send their graduates to LCHS.

With all due respect to the feasibility study consultants, the Committee has the following concerns with the hybrid process:

**1. The hybrid process has not been used elsewhere in this state with similar districts.**

In February of this year a high school district and a unit district merged in Livingston County. In that case, the students of the high school district (Cornell) had been attending the high school in the unit district (Flanagan) for over 20 years, so the consolidation was simply a ratification of a current practice. Without much of a track record involving elementary and high school districts, there are few, if any, legal precedents to follow and not much learning that can be gained from previous attempts.

2. **A hybrid district would be nearly impossible to plan for financially and logistically because of the possible variations in outcomes.** A hybrid consolidation petition/resolution must set forth the maximum tax rates for the new district. If the question involved two alternatives (i.e., all five districts going together or not), the tax rates could be set with some certainty. When multiple outcomes are possible, setting the tax rates becomes a guessing game. If WLB and LCHS were to merge, you could probably set a lower tax rate than if, say, D27, CEL, and LCHS were to merge. How do you set a reasonable rate when the outcomes are so numerous?
3. **A hybrid process makes it nearly impossible for the voters to understand what they are voting for.** A hybrid referendum will present voters with two options: are you in favor of your district being included in a new hybrid district or are you against it? If you live in NHM and are in favor of, for example, NHM and LCHS joining together, you should vote yes. If, though, you are also comfortable with WLB being included, but not D27, how should you vote on the referendum?
4. **If established, there is potential for lack of representation on a new hybrid unit school board.** The members of the board of education of a hybrid district have to reside within the territory of the district; they are not required to reside within the territory of the prior elementary district represented in the unit. Let's say, for example, that a hybrid referendum was held and the question passed in D27 and LCHS. A hybrid unit board would govern the operation of the K-12 grades (K-8 in the old D27 territory and 9-12 in the LCHS territory). When that new hybrid unit board is elected, it is conceivable that all seven members could reside within the LCHS territory, but outside the old D27 territory. Three new board members from CEL territory, three from WLB territory, and 1 from NHM territory would all reside in LCHS territory (thus meeting the legal requirement for board membership), but would then be making decisions on the K-8 classes of children in the old D27 territory.

**If reorganization is pursued by either the citizens or school boards of the area this Committee recommends that it be in the form of either combining elementary districts or forming a new unit district (the so-called "all or nothing" method). Until the hybrid process develops a longer track record or until the concerns mentioned above can be satisfactorily resolved, this Committee does not recommend that Lincoln pursue a hybrid reorganization.**

### **Pursue no reorganization**

If no reorganization is pursued, the status quo will remain.

**It is this Committee's strong recommendation that if the citizens and school boards of the Lincoln area determine that reorganization is not in the best interests of the students and the community at this time, that some type of a formal, collaborative effort be established between all five of the school districts that would allow our area to tackle education issues in a cooperative manner. We see particular value in pursuing cooperative efforts in the following areas:**

- **Transportation** – There currently is no coordination between the districts on pupil transportation for non-special needs students. If a family in a rural area has an elementary student and a high school student who both ride the bus, an elementary bus will drive down the road to pick up the elementary student and a high school bus will drive down the road to pick up the high school student. Coordination of field trips across the districts could reap financial as well as curriculum benefits. This duplication of services has a cost to districts and taxpayers in terms fuel, equipment, and personnel as well as a cost to the environment in terms of vehicle emissions. Families may have concerns about a wide span of ages for students riding the same bus, so the collaborative effort will need to focus on both cost savings and parental concerns.
- **Curriculum** – The collaboration group could be responsible for devising a strategy to align curriculum to benefit students entering high school. This strategy would align all feeder districts with the high school’s curriculum in order to provide the greatest opportunity for all students to succeed once they enter high school. There is some concern now that a lack of coordination leads to lost instructional time at the high school level (time which could be spent building on the foundation of the elementary grades is instead spent adapting students to the high school curriculum). Some areas of the curriculum have a more formal process for coordination than others, but there is no consistent approach across the districts and the curriculum areas to align the elementary district needs with the needs of the high school.
- **Purchasing** – The group could explore the development of a collaborative purchasing strategy. Such a strategy could result in beneficial cost savings in the area of acquisitions by leveraging the combined purchasing power of all the districts. For example, if curriculum was better aligned for all students entering high school, it is likely that the same textbook series would be used in multiple districts. Significant savings could be realized in purchasing text books for multiple districts versus each district purchasing text books individually. The cost savings realized could then be used for other crucial needs.
- **School Calendar** – It is typical for the families of our community to have children in both an elementary district and the high school district during the school year. While the elementary districts try to coordinate their school calendars with the high school district (the feeder districts that purchase school meals from the high school are required to have the same calendar as District 404), a more formal coordination effort regarding the school calendars could provide fewer conflicts with calendars for these families and benefit the student learning experience. Additionally, coordination of calendars could assist collaboration efforts in professional development opportunities.
- **Staffing** – Some specialist staff positions (as they currently exist or as districts may wish to explore) in some of the Lincoln districts may only be needed on a part-time basis. Some examples of these specialist positions include: Technology Coordinators, music, art, PE, foreign language, and vocational education instructors. Sharing staffing resources could benefit districts in several ways. It may help with recruiting

(for example, if two part-time positions in hard to fill areas in two separate districts amount to a full-time equivalent position, cooperation between those districts will make it easier to attract an instructor to the area). It may also produce cost savings (sometimes the actual need is part-time, but the only way to fill a position is with a full-time employee).

- **Technology** – The same philosophy on coordinating curriculum, collaborating on a purchasing strategy and sharing staffing resources applies to technology. If multiple districts were to collaborate on technology platforms and purchases, the students could benefit academically and the districts could benefit financially by leveraging large technology purchase costs and technical resources. Professional development would also be enhanced as a result of sharing expertise in the technology arena.
- **Professional Development** – If all of the areas above could be better coordinated across all five districts the opportunity to collaborate on professional development for staff would also be present. The Regional Office of Education does provide some coordinated professional development for teachers, but the districts could explore more focused training not only for teachers, but for support personnel as well.

Once this collaboration group is formed and silos begin to come down, we are certain that additional areas will be identified for the attention of this group and, ultimately, for the benefit of the school children and the taxpayers of the five district area.