



JANUARY UPDATE

Sustainability Study reaches key milestone

January 28, 2025. The Sustainability Study, commissioned jointly by the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Schools Committees, reached a key milestone in late January. Over the past several months, the project's consulting team, BERK12, has completed an in-depth financial and educational analysis of the five options selected as "necessary" or "most promising" by the Sustainability Project Steering Committee back in November. Lead BERK12 consultant Jake Eberwein presented his group's findings to the Steering Committee on January 23 ([the full presentation is available here](#)), and discussed the results with a joint session of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont School Committees on January 27.

As the next step in the process, the Steering Committee has planned a series of meetings to share the results of this work with community members in the eight towns served by the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Regional School Districts. Each meeting will include a presentation followed by an opportunity for discussion of the findings and the pros and cons of each option. Community members, parents, students, school staff, and elected officials are encouraged to attend.

Meeting dates/times are:

- February 25, Buckland-Shelburne Elementary, 6:30-8 pm
- March 6, all virtual meeting, Google Meet, 6:30-8 pm
- March 11, Sanderson Academy, 5:30-7:00 pm
- March 19, Hawlemont Regional School, 6:30-8 pm
- March 20, Mohawk Trail Regional School, 6:30-8 pm
- March 26, Colrain Central School, 6:30-8 pm

(The March 6 meeting is virtual, and all other meetings are in person with a virtual option.)

In addition to the community meetings, Superintendent Sheryl Stanton, MTRSD school committee chair Martha Thurber, and HRSD vice chair Kenneth Bertsch will be providing updates at select board meetings throughout the districts' towns in March.

Findings from the research team show that significant fiscal savings and efficiencies can be achieved through some form of consolidation. Additionally, educational opportunities (academic, co-curricular, social) for students and professional experiences for educators could be enhanced through consolidation efforts that combine grade cohorts into fewer buildings or a single building. While some consolidation models can be achieved in existing buildings, the larger scale options that involve consolidation of schools will require facilities investments that are likely only achievable in partnership with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA).

Community members are encouraged to learn more about the Sustainability Study by visiting www.2districts8towns.org. The website includes reports that have been written by BERK12, presentations to the Steering Committee and other groups, and the project work plan. Recent additions to the website include Frequently Asked Questions and a series of informational briefs on topics such as class size, best practices, and moving grade six to middle school.

Zoom links and a registration link for the community meetings are posted on the website. For more information, contact Project Manager Jake Eberwein, jakeeberwein@gmail.com.