

CABOT SCHOOL
ACT 46 SCHOOL MERGER STUDIES FORUM FEEDBACK
CABOT SCHOOL, TWINFIELD UNION SCHOOL, DANVILLE SCHOOL
MARCH 21, 2016
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Below is the feedback collected from the participants of the Forum:

IMPORTANT SKILLS/EXPERIENCES (What Students Need)

- Solid foundation, social skills, “Big Huskie-Little Huskie”, independence skills, world skills, basic skills (reading, writing, math), life-long relationships, time management, community.
- Strong background in math, history, science & English. Broad social/peer experience. College prep opportunities such as AP classes, language, social studies. Extra-curricular activities and choices to foster personal growth and prepare for the future. Sense of place.
- Sense of future path. Self-esteem, financial literacy, job readiness, college readiness, general knowledge of history. Citizen participation, community, personal learning plan, STEM, curiosity, relationships, peer mentoring, learn how to learn, music and art.
- Understanding of your community in the broader world, communication/persuasion skills, critical thinking skills, a working understanding of major social issues, appreciation for the arts.
- Opportunity and exposure, communication (social skills), skill set on their specific area they want to pursue, self-starters.
- A strong base of education that focuses on what the student plans to do in the future. Experience in all subjects, achieving at least the minimum in each category and then stemming off to what the student is interested in.
- They should have learned how to learn, experiential learning has been good for that. Learn to respect their classmates and teachers. Keep an open mind. Curiosity about their community.
- High quality education. Opportunities for individual exploration. Strong sense of community, social cohesion, sense of responsibility for community and classmates. Connections to local mentors and community. Great collaborative and critical thinking skills.

WHAT STOOD OUT

- Side-by-side district sounds like a great idea. It gives flexibility and economics of scale.
- More sports, more class options, scheduling opportunities.
- The possibilities of different classes and pathways for students.
- Greater opportunity for high schoolers, especially with Danville.
- Side-by-side structure of schools remain but less overhead costs. Some flexibility between schools.
- Concern and wanting to do what's best for kids.
- Increased opportunities for high school students.
- Recognition of realities of Act 46.
- Concept of side-by-side is difficult to understand. Such as the idea of changed representation
- I like the idea of side-by-side district with the possibility of high school students being able to take courses at more than one school, but keeping Cabot high school in Cabot.
- There are many options. Great.
- International Baccalaureate – Yes !
- Act 77 – Yes – Education beyond our buildings: we have some of this already, early college access to course work, some work based education, some computer based education, some tech opportunities.
- Each kid with 12th grade IEP? But how do we do this for every kid?

QUESTIONS

- How much impact will voters have over which option we go with?
 - The voters of the town will vote on the proposal by the planning committee (called a 706 Committee)
- Is there opportunity for students to choose where they go?
 - That decision hasn't been made. The planning (706) Committee will propose "Articles of Agreement" that will address this issue.
- Student voice in decision?
 - The Cabot School Board representatives have been regular participants in the Act 46 discussions this year.
- What is the financial aspect?
 - An affirmative merger vote would give tax incentives over the next 4 years and allow the district to continue to get the \$148,000 Small Schools Grant as well as the hold harmless count of students.
 - The goal is to improve opportunities for students while controlling costs.

- How would a merger with Twinfield reduce the over-head costs?
 - Savings of over-head costs would be more likely with a larger district that would include Danville and a Kindergarten – 8th grade district.
- Impact of economics? Savings of administrative costs? Impact on taxes?
 - A larger district would allow for shared educational and operational resources that could save money in the long run. Under some proposals there would be administrative savings. The actual impact on taxes would depend on the final proposal.
- School control/School Board representatives?
 - Representation would be proportional. Articles of Agreement would determine the specifics. For example: if there were a new K – 12 district that included Cabot, Twinfield and Danville, representation might be Cabot 2 reps, Marshfield 2, Plainfield 2 and Danville 4.
- Will our students be “The Other” in Twinfield or Danville?
 - There would be planning to make all students feel welcome if Cabot students attend school on another campus or vice versa if students from another school were to come to Cabot.
- Integration of students?
 - Same as above.
- When will we address the losses: Own school board, control of curriculum, individual attention, access to sports for all?
 - There will be multiple opportunities for discussion of all aspects of possible changes.
- With July 1, 2017 deadline do we still benefit from incentives?
 - There would need to be an affirmative vote to merge by July 1, 2017 in order to benefit from the incentives, including maintenance of the Small Schools Grant, tax incentives and hold harmless on student count.
- With merger agreement do schools keep options for “Regional” School Choice?
 - Yes. Regardless of whether or not there is automatic choice among the Cabot/Twinfield/Danville, the law that allows for limited choice throughout the State will continue.
- With merger how do kids have opportunities for Choice within the District?
 - Articles of Agreement will be proposed that will address this issue.

CONCERNS

- Danville seems like a great school. I have serious concerns about the educational quality at Twinfield.

- Bus rides, losing the community aspect in class/school. Moving all students to new spaces. Adding time to school day. Combining the different school cultures.
- Chemistry of combined high school students.
- Cabot students really stand out as being very respectful and positive as they go outside of our community. I worry that we might lose that as we merge with other schools.
- I think that putting elementary students on a bus to another community is not a great idea.
- Loss of community institutions/sensibility
- Quality of individualized attention.
- Concerned about super long bus rides – Rt 2 Yikes – my son was in a Cabot School bus accident – not wanting a repeat.
- How would loss of part of school affect property taxes?
- Side-by-side; are administrative changes enough – I think not.
- Please prioritize increased number of teachers over overall savings...i.e...turn decreased number of administration jobs into teaching jobs, beyond automatic staffing benefits from merging.
- Concerns about three campus options in Magnet school structure?