

School *Regionalization*

MARCH 2024

FEASIBILITY STUDY STEERING
COMMITTEE

DELSEA, ELK,
FRANKLIN, &
NEWFIELD
BOARDS OF
EDUCATION

The topic of School Regionalization/Consolidation is not new to the communities of Elk, Franklin, and Newfield. The opportunity to provide our students with a comprehensive, seamless Pre-K through 12 education in one regional district may be easier to achieve given recent legislative changes. One district, one calendar, one superintendent, one curriculum, one business office, and one Board for all.

Meetings with representatives from the School Boards of Delsea, Elk, Franklin, and Newfield were held as early as May 2021 in efforts to explore the interest in seeking further information. Over the past 18 months the Boards of Education of the four school districts have delved more deeply into the topic using the newest school regionalization law, S3488 as a guide.

The law was passed in 2022 and offers funding for feasibility studies as well as implementation costs up to \$400,000. In May 2022, Delsea took the lead (with the full knowledge and cooperation of all districts involved) on writing a grant proposal under the School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP). The NJ Department of Community Affairs provides program funds to awarded proposals to conduct a feasibility study to investigate the impact of potential regionalization.

Since being awarded the grant, committees of each Board have been working with the Rowan University School Regionalization Institute, whose experts are conducting research for the study. A draft of said compiled research is expected in the very near future. Upon receipt of that draft, committees of each Board will review and comment. Upon full review and approval by the Regionalization Feasibility Committee as a whole, the final draft will then be presented to all four full Boards during one public meeting, providing a platform for the public to hear the details and ask questions. The Committee is hopeful this forum will prove to minimize misinformation throughout the communities.

The *anticipated* timeline for this process is as follows:

- Receipt of the draft study to the Regionalization Feasibility Steering Committee - early April
- Preliminary draft review completed - within two weeks of receipt
- Public presentation of finalized study - late April/early May
- Full Boards vote to place the question on a ballot for approval - May
- Question placed on a ballot during a special election for community approval - September

****If approved, a year of a transition period would be needed. 2025-26 would be the first school year of the fully regionalized district.****

Unlike the past, a single community that votes no to regionalization can not prevent the other communities from moving forward with their decision to do so. This is a significant departure from prior attempts to

consolidate and clears the way for individual communities to move in the direction they choose.

Much more information will be provided in order for all stakeholders to feel fully informed. We look forward to working with our community members as we look for ways to enhance the educational journey for the children in each of our communities.

**The School Regionalization Feasibility Committee of Delsea, Elk, Franklin, and Newfield
Boards of Education**