



What could we learn, together?

*Public inter-district socio-economically diverse schools
in Monroe County*

Concept Development Report



Contents

- ▶ Acknowledgements
- ▶ Project Overview
- ▶ Background and Research
- ▶ Concept Definition/Recommendations
- ▶ Future Considerations & Activities
- ▶ Conclusion

Acknowledgements

This report would not have been possible without the partnership and support of many participants. Special thanks to:

- ▶ the more than 50 community members - representing BOCES, school district superintendents, school staff members, union representatives, and boards of education members, among others - who participated out of a desire to create new opportunities for all students.
- ▶ Great Schools for All (GS4A), the initiator of the concept, research, and process.



HOW CHANGE GETS GOING

This report was developed by Causewave Community Partners. Causewave makes communities stronger by bringing voice to diverse public issues and needs and building capacity within nonprofit organizations. Learn more at www.causewave.org

Districts
participating
in planning
process



Project Overview

This project was undertaken to better define the concept of public inter-district schools for Monroe County, assess feasibility and gauge interest in participation by area school districts.

This report is the summary of work conducted by a team representing BOCES, local school districts, Great Schools for All, and other constituents. The process was facilitated by Causewave Community Partners. Work described herein began in July 2022.

The voice of the local community – parents, students, educators, business and community leaders, elected officials and others – is an important component of any assessment and will be solicited in a future phase.



Background and Research

Inter-district school concept

- ▶ Great Schools for All proposes the creation of public voluntary, socio-economically diverse, cross-district primary and secondary magnet schools in Monroe County, offering unique thematic programming that no single school district can afford to offer on its own, thereby benefitting both urban and suburban residents.
- ▶ Research has repeatedly shown that the benefits of the proposed concept accrue to all students, but also to the community as a whole. Given the demographic shifts occurring in our community, the need is clear for a future workforce that is not only prepared for college and career, but importantly, adept at navigating diverse environments. This skill set is not easily developed in homogenous environments.
- ▶ It is important to note that the school concept described herein is not a charter school, as described in the following recommendations.

Inter-district school concept

- ▶ This concept is based on decades of research that show unequivocally that socioeconomic and racial integration of schools can dramatically improve academic progress, problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, graduation rates and readiness for college or work, among all students.
 - ▶ Sociologist James Coleman's 1966 landmark report, "Equality of Educational Opportunity", found that the best predictor of student outcomes is the composition of the student body; students are more likely to succeed in racially and socioeconomically diverse classrooms.
 - ▶ Rucker Johnson's 2019 book, Children of the Dream: Why School Integration Works, resoundingly concludes that the school integration efforts of the 1970s and '80s led to much higher college admissions for African American students; and those exposed to court-ordered school integration for at least five years saw a 15 percent increase in lifetime earnings, an 11 percent drop in adult poverty, increased marital stability, and a 22 percent decline in the rate of incarceration.
 - ▶ More recent data from Raleigh/Wake County, NC— where more than 35 diverse magnet schools have been created over the years—indicate that gaps in graduation rates between white students and African-American and Latinx students were cut in half between 2009 and 2019. Rates for all racial/ethnic subgroups increased during those years, and far exceed comparable rates in their Rochester counterparts.

Inter-district school concept

- ▶ Research demonstrates academic, cognitive, civic, socio-emotional and economic benefits for all students attending diverse schools, including:
 - ▶ Students in mixed-income schools showed 30 percent more growth in test scores over their four years in high school than peers with similar socioeconomic backgrounds in schools with concentrated poverty.¹
 - ▶ Of students graduating from mixed-income high schools, 64 percent enroll at a four-year college, versus 38 percent of their peers at concentrated-poverty schools.²
 - ▶ The gap in SAT scores between black and white students continues to be larger in segregated districts, and one study showed that change from complete segregation to complete integration in a district could reduce as much as one quarter of the current SAT score disparity.¹
 - ▶ Students who attend racially diverse high schools are more likely to live in diverse neighborhoods five years after graduation.¹
 - ▶ According to one recent estimate, reducing socioeconomic segregation in our schools by half would produce a return on investment of 3-5 times the cost of the programs.¹

¹Source: The Century Foundation

["The Benefits of Socioeconomically and Racially Integrated Schools and Classrooms"](#)

²Source: Potter, National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) Professional Development Institute (PDI), 2014
[Socioeconomic Integration: A Tool to Boost Achievement](#)

Research background

- ▶ In 2021 Great Schools for All commissioned a report from the Orrick, Herrington and Sutcliffe global law firm, which specializes in conducting independent, objective research on education and integration issues.
- ▶ Great Schools for All sought an independent assessment of whether inter-district school proposals were realistic and feasible under NYS legislation. Orrick performed this evaluation pro bono.
- ▶ Orrick analyzed current local programs (BOCES, Urban-Suburban, and charter schools), existing integrated school programs across the country, and NYS law.
- ▶ The final report provided:
 - ▶ Suggestions on required steps to develop the concept and who must be engaged in process
 - ▶ Proposed legislation that could potentially become a template
 - ▶ Inventory of available sources of federal, state and local funding
- ▶ The Orrick report provided guidance and recommendations for the concept development but does not dictate the process.

Orrick's Bottom Line

Inter-district Schools concept:

- ❖ Socioeconomically and racially diverse
- ❖ Offer unique educational opportunities not otherwise available to students in Monroe County school districts



Orrick findings:

- ❖ There is a realistic, feasible and viable option
 - Supported by research and workable with some modifications to state law
- ❖ Likely to improve educational outcomes and long-term success among all students
 - Particularly those in geographical areas with high concentrations of poverty

Key Findings of Orrick Report

The creation of **voluntary, socio-economically diverse, cross-district** primary and secondary schools in Monroe County, offering thematic programming is viable and could have significant benefits for all students.

Research is also clear that all students in such diverse schools are likely to benefit from improved problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, ability to work collaboratively with those from different backgrounds, and preparation for the 21st-century workforce.

- ▶ **The BOCES platform** is the most appropriate, practical and feasible **foundation** on which to build a structure
 - ▶ BOCES statute supports collaboration between districts to run stand-alone programs,
 - ▶ BOCES has a governance structure with member representation, and
 - ▶ BOCES authorizes essential operational functions such as transportation – all important considerations for inter-district schools
- ▶ **Legislative adaptations** to the BOCES platform would be required
 - ▶ Broaden types of programs and services that can be provided to allow full curriculum schools with specialized offerings
 - ▶ Enable RCSD to fully participate in BOCES programming
 - ▶ NYS has several “one-off” schools enabled by new authorizing legislation, including the Tech Valley High School near Albany (since 2007), and the Syracuse Comprehensive Education and Workforce Training Center (STEAM focus, not open yet), that provide very helpful models for creating inter-district schools

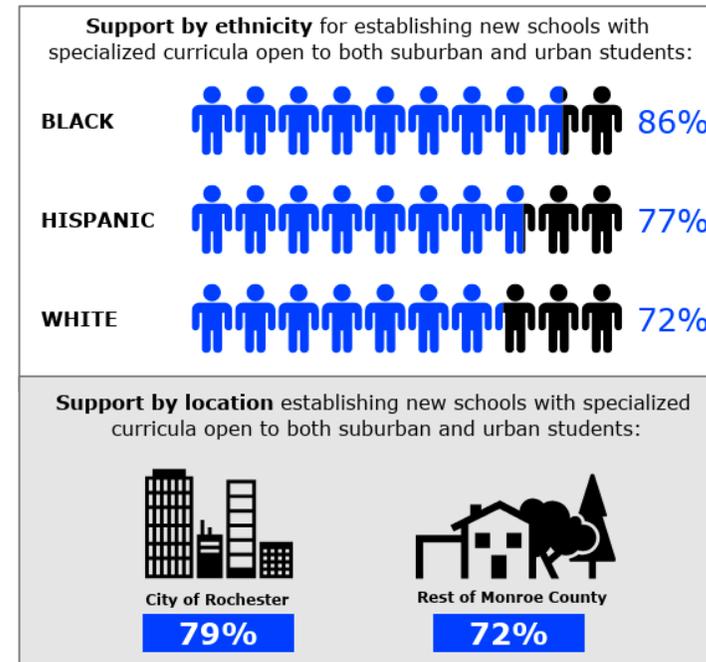
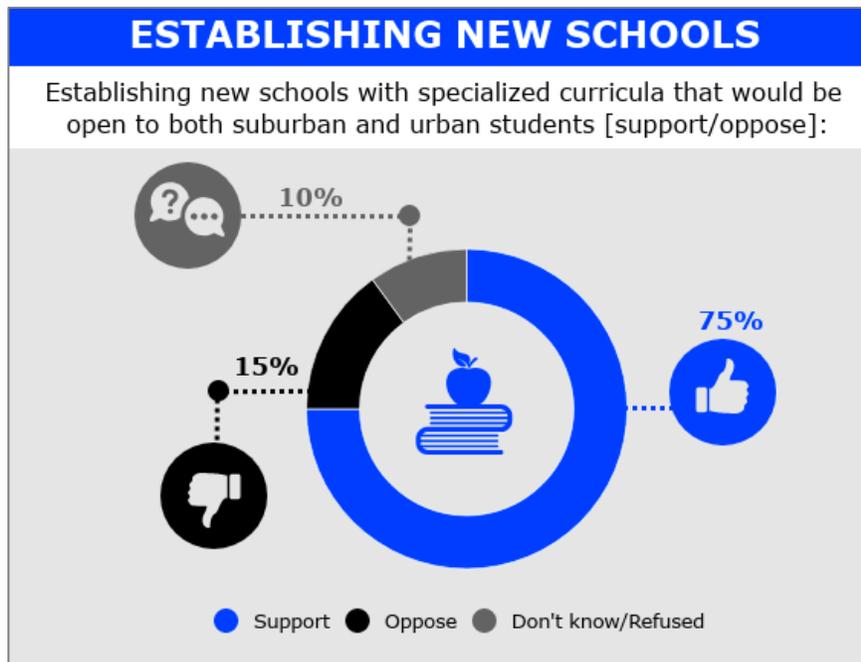
Key Findings of Orrick Report

The Orrick Report included several important findings that informed discussion around development of the plan:

- ▶ Establish **governance by representatives** from all districts served
- ▶ Create with **legislative support and funding sources** that would mitigate potential budgetary impacts on school districts
- ▶ Locate schools in areas that **minimize transportation challenges** and devise an effective system for transportation
- ▶ Provide **specialized content/theme** that responds to an unmet need in the community to encourage participation by families across the socio-economic spectrum
- ▶ Select students through a **randomized lottery** instead of selective admissions
- ▶ Build solid **community support with strong advocates**, with broad support and high levels of engagement across stakeholders

Support for inter-district schools

- ▶ A 2022 Siena College Research Institute poll of 707 Monroe County residents reflecting the demographic makeup of the county population indicates strong support for the establishment of magnet schools with specialized curricula that would draw students from both urban and suburban schools.
 - ▶ 75 percent of all respondents support the creation of such schools
 - ▶ Support was consistently strong across racial/ethnic groups and across both city and suburban residents



Source: Democrat & Chronicle
[Siena College poll highlights changing attitudes about race, racism](#)

Support for inter-district schools

- ▶ Increasingly, Rochester area parents think school integration and diversity is important, as shown in a survey of 600 Monroe County parents conducted by Global Strategy Group on behalf of The Children's Agenda released in August 2022.¹
 - ▶ When asked about the importance of their child's school working to integrate students from different racial and economic backgrounds, 88 percent of Rochester parents and 73 percent of suburban parents surveyed responded that this was "very" or "somewhat important" to them. Parents saying this is "very important" increased from February 2022.
 - ▶ There is also strong support for public Pre-K programs and magnet schools that cross district boundaries.

SUPPORT FOR SOLUTIONS		
	Rochester	Suburbs
Public Pre-K programs with no boundaries on where children live	88%	62%
Magnet schools that cross district boundaries	80%	67%

¹"Data were aggregated for every school district entirely or mostly within the geographic lines of Monroe County. Special care was taken to ensure the sample matched the target population as closely as possible across demographic variables including age, education status, geography, gender, party registration, and race/ethnicity."

Support for inter-district schools

- ▶ In 2021 Great Schools for All partnered with the student-led Roc2 Change group, with students representing most public and private high schools in Monroe County. More than 300 students participated in a Roc2 Change survey on diverse magnet schools. Among the findings:
 - ▶ 83 percent value a culturally, racially and socioeconomically diverse student body
 - ▶ 89 percent value a talented and diverse faculty and staff
 - ▶ 90 percent said that attending a diverse school would better prepare them for college or work
 - ▶ 84 percent said they were at least open to the idea of enrolling in a diverse magnet school outside their home district if it offered a unique academic program not otherwise available, with relatively few (16 percent) saying they were opposed to the idea
- ▶ A 2016 professional survey of 300 city and 300 suburban Monroe County parents of current school children found strong support for diverse schools offering unique curricular offerings not otherwise available, and consensus about the importance of diversity in the educational process.
 - ▶ 87% of all parents indicated they would consider one or more of the proposed schools described in the survey
 - ▶ 83% of Rochester parents and 70% of suburban indicated they would consider sending their child to a diverse school outside their home district on a voluntary basis

Support for inter-district schools

- ▶ The Commission on Racial and Structural Equality (RASE) is an intergovernmental collaboration between the County of Monroe and the City of Rochester appointed in 2020. In acknowledgement of national and local calls for systemic and institutional change, RASE was established to review, identify and recommend changes to local laws, policies and practices that will eliminate inequities across our county and city. Recommendations included:
 - ▶ Create a county-wide magnet school with a focus on multicultural and multilingual education for English speakers and English Language Learners alongside one another in a dual language immersion model.
 - ▶ Establish a County/City policy for developing inter-district, integrated magnet schools for children and students from the city and suburbs.
 - ▶ The City and the County to work together to close the county-wide school integration gap. A school integration policy would be the first step toward racial equity and accountability.



Concept Definition/
Recommendations

Concept Definition Process

- ▶ The goal of this process was to develop enough detail around the concept to assess its viability. During the process questions were raised that fell into nine topic areas. These questions were considered by three task groups to arrive at the recommendations that follow.

Task Group 1

- **Governance and oversight**, including the role of BOCES and participating districts
- **Staffing and sharing of resources** across districts

Task Group 2

- **Number and location** of initial pilot school(s)
- **Student selection** process
- **Themes** – consideration set of viable topics
- **Grade level(s)** determination

Task Group 3

- **Financing** to ensure equitable funding for participating districts
- **Transportation** issues
- **Legislation** needed to make the concept into a workable reality

Recommendations

The following pages include the recommendations developed by the members of the Task Groups.

The members realize that most, if not all, will need further development and may need to change as the project evolves, especially once community input is added to the process.

Recommendations were based upon a desire to develop a program that achieves the goal of creating new educational opportunities for all students, in an environment that features socioeconomic diversity. Recommendations prioritized those features that advance the program as quickly as possible; would most likely be supported by the widest array of stakeholders; and reflect the emerging learnings of other programs around the state.

This report focuses on the creation of an initial inter-district pilot school, with the potential for adding additional schools as feasible in the future.

Task Group 1

Co-Chairs:

Jo Anne Antonacci - BOCES 2 District Superintendent
Chris Dailey - Gates-Chili Superintendent

Members

Carrie Andrews – NYSUT Regional Staff Director
Tom Gillette - GS4A
Aaron Johnson - West Irondequoit Superintendent
Casey Kosiorek – Hilton Superintendent
Megan Norris - ACT Rochester Executive Director
Anthony Plonczynski-Figueroa – NYSUT Regional
Political Organizer
Don Pryor - GS4A
Lynda Quick – Wheatland-Chili Superintendent
Amy Thomas - Monroe County School Board
Association Executive Director

This task group was charged with developing recommendations on the following topics:

- ▶ Governance/Oversight
 - ▶ Governance Structure
 - ▶ Oversight
 - ▶ Sustainable Funding

- ▶ Staffing and Resource Sharing

Governance/Oversight Recommendations

Governance Structure

- ❖ An inter-district school pilot should leverage the BOCES cooperative model with necessary modifications, bringing districts together to meet a defined need and provide enhanced opportunities for students. Key modifications, such as enabling full RCSD participation, will need to be further defined in subsequent phases of this planning process.
- ❖ As in the current BOCES model, students would remain enrolled in, and receive diplomas from, their home district while attending the inter-district school.
- ❖ The pilot school should be governed by BOCES 1 and BOCES 2 collaboratively, with management and oversight responsibilities shared. Given the challenges and delays that would accompany the creation of a separate governing board, the existing BOCES boards will govern the school, with the thoughtful integration of input from all participating school districts (see “oversight”).

Governance/Oversight Recommendations

Oversight

- ❖ An influential advisory committee with clear connections to the BOCES boards should be created, and include representatives from participating districts and other relevant constituencies. This advisory board should provide recommendations to the BOCES boards and advice on school operations based upon the expertise represented on the committee.
- ❖ The Executive Director/Principal of the inter-district school should report to the BOCES superintendents. The ED/Principal would facilitate the advisory committee and act as the liaison between the committee, participating districts and BOCES superintendents and boards.
- ❖ At launch, it is expected that each participating district should have representation on the advisory committee. As the number of participating districts grows in subsequent years, seats on this committee may represent groups of districts or geographic “territories” to manage the size of the committee.
- ❖ The process for selection should be transparent, with a focus on equity. Additional constituencies that will provide input and feedback via the committee include teachers, students and parents. Representatives from local colleges or universities may be considered. Depending on the theme chosen, industry leaders/business partners should also be included on the advisory committee or provide input through existing BOCES industry boards.

Governance/Oversight Recommendations

Sustainable Funding

- ❖ With NYS as the primary funder of this effort, it will be important that governance is effective, representative of – and engaging for – the community.
 - ❖ Accountability, transparency and constant communication will be determinants of success.
 - ❖ Maintaining the interest of parents, students, teachers, and the community would support continued funding.
 - ❖ Identification of potential business partners and grant funding opportunities would be important at startup and for ongoing operations.
- ❖ In addition to state and federal sources, startup funding may also be available and should be sought from charitable foundations and even corporate sources. This will build community ownership of the pilot school and its success.
- ❖ It will be imperative that all key stakeholders in the proposed model work together to develop and present a unified Legislative agenda to effectively advocate for local, state, and federal resources.

Staffing/Resource Sharing Recommendations

Staffing

- ❖ Faculty and staff of the inter-district pilot school should be employees of Monroe BOCES One or Monroe 2-Orleans BOCES, in order to maintain consistency of employment, code of conduct, regulations, etc. for all school staff. Terms and conditions of employment will be collectively bargained by appropriate bargaining unit representatives.
- ❖ A traditional recruiting and open hiring process should be employed, and positions at the school will be made as attractive as possible to secure highly qualified applicants, including highly experienced staff and teachers.
- ❖ Organization structure and job descriptions should be defined after the school theme is finalized.
- ❖ Administrative positions will be critical at the outset, with connection to or affinity for the specific theme, to help drive the recruiting/hiring process. The Executive Director/Principal must be the school's champion to attract the right talent and ensure success.
- ❖ School leadership must value a diverse staff to serve the targeted student body.

Task Group 2

Co-Chairs:

Kathy Graupman – Greece Superintendent
Mary Grow - East Irondequoit Superintendent

Members

Cheryl Dobbertin - East Irondequoit Director of
Secondary Education
Mark Hare - GS4A
Pat McCue – University of Rochester Assistant
Professor
Clay Osborne - GS4A
Brett Provenzano – Fairport Superintendent
Kristen Turgeon – GS4A
Rick Worner – GS4A

This task group was charged with developing recommendations on the following topics:

- ▶ Facilities/Grade levels
 - ▶ Scope
 - ▶ Facilities

- ▶ Student Selection

- ▶ Themes
 - ▶ Potential Themes
 - ▶ Extra-curriculars

Facilities/Grade level Recommendations

Scope

- ❖ The inter-district school pilot will begin with one school, to manage scope, address unanticipated challenges and establish a successful model. The goal of this effort is to create educational opportunities for as many students as possible, so the vision is to open additional schools in subsequent years as feasible.
- ❖ The pilot school will include grades 6 and 9 in the first year, adding grades 7 and 10 in year 2, and additional grades as enrolled students move up. High school is the most achievable option due to lower barriers to attracting students such as increased parental desire for school choice and increased interest in specialized curriculum. Funding streams including grants and corporate support would also be more accessible for a high school, especially with a strong connection to career preparation. However, as the pilot school finds success and others are added to the program, discussions will continue on how to add elementary schools to the program, allowing the incorporation of students at earlier grades, before connections to other schools are formed.
- ❖ Features of the school experience (e.g. start time, food, extra curriculars, architecture, siting, etc.) will be designed to maximize attractiveness to students and/or parents, based on community input. However, school day alignment with other districts will be important to enable partnering with districts for sports teams and other extra curricular activities that are impractical to add to a new school in its first year.

Facilities/Grade level Recommendations

Facilities

- ❖ The inter-district pilot school will be located centrally to minimize transportation challenges for both RCSD and suburban districts, and accessibility to public transportation and major highways is optimal. Repurposing a currently unused school building will be targeted to positively impact both capital investment and time. Potential locations within RCSD will be evaluated based on current NYSED facilities requirements, focusing on secondary level buildings to support curricular needs and accommodate future growth.
- ❖ Leasing of a portion of a secondary building from RCSD may be assessed, but co-location with another school (such as a charter) may present challenges.
- ❖ Co-location with another educational institution such as RIT or MCC may be attractive to parents, students and staff, and offer unique educational advantages. However, significant capital expenses and time requirements may be associated with co-location due to state regulations, so this will not be explored further at this time.
- ❖ Once the core theme has been finalized, proximity to potential employers may be considered to enable curriculum-based, hands-on experiences for students and facilitate community engagement in the school.

Student selection Recommendations

Enrollment

- ❖ Target enrollment for the pilot school will be 175 – 200 students per grade level to support 5 core subject area teachers and 2 – 3 teachers for the specialized theme curriculum. This leads to a student body / recruiting need of 350 - 400 in the first year, and 1,225 to 1,400 once all grades have been built out. A detailed fiscal cost/benefit analysis will be required to determine appropriate staffing and necessary funding. Potential facilities must also be evaluated for their ability to support this size student body.
- ❖ Student selection will be lottery based to offer unique opportunities for students in a fair manner. Weighing lottery selection by a geographic identifier (zip code, home district or another) will ensure a balance of students from participating districts. Experts with experience in student selection at other inter-district schools will be consulted.
- ❖ The school will be socioeconomically and racially diverse with no more than 50% of students who qualify for free or reduced meals. Since the student body of many suburban districts approach or exceed this measure today, the lottery will be designed to ensure that RCSD is appropriately represented in the school population.
- ❖ Special needs students, as well as ENL learners, will be included, with specific details defined in a future phase.
- ❖ Students will receive a diploma from their home district as BOCES students do today.

Theme Recommendations

Potential themes with unmet need

- ❖ Specific theme(s) of the pilot school should be determined in concert with parents, students and other appropriate community stakeholders. Possibilities for a specialized curriculum include, but are not limited to:

- ❖ construction trades (HVAC, plumbing, electrical)
- ❖ education
- ❖ healthcare
- ❖ language immersion
- ❖ media literacy
- ❖ optics
- ❖ performing arts
- ❖ technology

A social justice-centered curriculum is worth consideration and could be paired with an industry such as healthcare or education, or incorporated into multiple other themes.

- ❖ The specialized curriculum selected will be an opportunity not currently available in districts, and will not be targeted to or appropriate only for high-achieving students.
- ❖ A needs assessment among parents, students, and other community members should be conducted to better understand and quantify the level of interest in specific topic areas and school features such as non-traditional school scheduling, hybrid learning options, embedded work experiences and others.
- ❖ In addition to parental and student interest, the needs of employers in our community will be considered in selection of the theme. In addition to the proposed needs assessment, data will be gathered through outreach to the Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce, industry specific associations and major employers. Understanding of workforce needs in the business community, paired with demonstrated interest on the part of parents and students, may increase support from potential public and private funders.

Theme Recommendations

Extra-curriculars

- ❖ Lack of extra-curricular opportunities would be a major impediment to student recruitment. A plan must be in place for either offering extra curriculars or including students in opportunities at their home districts. Non-traditional features of the pilot school, if added, may impact the ability of students to participate in extracurriculars at home districts.
- ❖ Participation in extra-curriculars solely at a student's home district would be difficult for students. We recognize that school is the center of life for teens and they want to fully belong to their own school. To offer the best student experience, upon opening the pilot school will offer a core set of extra curriculars that are attractive, manageable and affordable. In subsequent years, additional extra-curriculars may be added, as practical.
- ❖ If the pilot school theme lends itself to specific extracurricular activities (music theatre for a performing arts school or a robotics team for a technology school, for example), they will be recommended for inclusion at launch.
- ❖ Students will be eligible to participate in extra-curriculars in their home district for opportunities not supported at the pilot school. This may not align with some current policies across districts and, pending research into current NYSED guidelines, may need to be stipulated in new legislation necessary for creating the pilot school.

Task Group 3

Chair:

Dan White – BOCES One District Superintendent

Members

John Abbott – East Irondequoit Deputy Superintendent

Holli Budd – Retired CEO, Farash Foundation

Scott Covell – BOCES One Assistant Superintendent

Carmine Peluso – RCSD Superintendent

Karen Pryor – GS4A

This task group was charged with developing recommendations on the following topics:

- ▶ Financing
 - ▶ Funding model
 - ▶ Support

- ▶ Legislation

- ▶ Transportation

Financing Recommendations

Funding Model

- ❖ The funding model for the proposed inter-district school should be similar or in concert with a BOCES funding model that allows for formula-based State Aid (BOCES aid formula or similar) for all participating school districts, including RCSD. This would be a need-based formula based on equity, wealth, and student need.
- ❖ This formula should be flexible enough and authorized in such a way as to accommodate a BOCES as a lead agency, an LEA (school district) or multiple LEAs, and broad enough to incorporate the possibility for expansion to additional schools in the future, as feasible.
- ❖ This formula would provide direct reimbursement to participating districts for tuition paid for each student, similar to a current BOCES model. This would require the assignment of an aid ratio to RCSD, similar to what the component districts of each BOCES have. Examples of this already exist in previous legislation for Tech Valley HS and Recovery HS.

Financing Recommendations

District Support

- ❖ As per the financing recommendations previously defined, it is suggested that the sending districts pay a per-student tuition based upon the overall program/school costs that is eligible for State Aid. The tuition would encompass staffing, administration, capital and equipment, supplies, curriculum, and all other costs. This tuition would be eligible for a reimbursement formula for each district, similar to a BOCES model.
- ❖ The model should also consider incorporating in-kind support from districts that could off-set tuition (i.e. staff, facilities).

Initial State Support

- ❖ Line item State Aid should support program planning and implementation for each school. These monies should be used for program development and tuition offset for participating school districts for the first 5 years from initial start up of a school. These monies will taper and end after five years.

Additional Funding

- ❖ Additional philanthropic, grant-based, and legislative monies will be sought to support the inter-district school start up. There is the possibility of Federal or State grant funding to further a regional school concept. It is likely that available funding would focus on a regional high school.

Legislation Recommendations

Authorization

- ❖ In the event that one or both area BOCES acts as the lead agency, legislation should allow for one or both area BOCES to be authorized to provide direct educational programming (K-12) beyond the current BOCES authorizations of special education, alternative education and CTE. This would allow for school districts to receive and apply credit for all participating students and allow for the sending school district to award a diploma based upon that credit.
- ❖ If there are multiple lead agencies (LEAs or BOCES) with governance responsibilities, legislation should delineate a governance structure that meets all necessary regulatory and statutory requirements for the purposes of this entity only, and not to amend or effect the governance structures or regulatory or statutory authority of participating LEAs or BOCES.
- ❖ Legislation should incorporate RCSD as a full participant in the program and be broad enough to allow for the possibility for additional schools to be developed in the future, as feasible.

Transportation Recommendations

Transportation and Aid

- ❖ Existing transportation modes should be utilized, and perhaps expanded on, for students attending the inter-district school. Review of the use of public transportation providers is recommended.
- ❖ Sending school districts should be allowed to utilize the existing Transportation Aid formulas available to them for direct student transportation, contract transportation or piggybacking on existing contracts. Transportation aid should be available as per current regulation for public schools and not be limited to a 15-mile restriction.
- ❖ Participating districts should explore a transportation sharing model that utilizes the existing aid structures.

A photograph of a chemistry laboratory. In the foreground, a young man with dark hair and a grey hoodie is wearing green safety goggles and looking intently at a piece of laboratory equipment. To his right, a young woman with long dark hair is wearing clear safety goggles and looking towards the camera with a slight smile. They are surrounded by other students in the background, some also wearing safety goggles. The lab bench is cluttered with various pieces of glassware, including test tubes in a rack, beakers, and flasks, some containing colored liquids. A hand holding a yellow pencil is visible in the lower right foreground, pointing towards the lab equipment. The overall atmosphere is one of focused learning and scientific inquiry.

Future Considerations & Activities

Future Considerations

The concept definition process has developed sound recommendations that support the viability of a public inter-district socio-economically diverse pilot school for Monroe County students.

However, the concept will require further development, and changes are likely based on emerging learning, especially during the community input phase.

Future considerations and activities have been defined by the task groups to carry into the next phase of the project.

Future Considerations

The following issues will be addressed in a future phase of the concept development process:

Oversight:

- ▶ A selection process for advisory board members will need to be fully defined. The board structure should encourage accountability and share responsibility for success among all districts, including appropriate representation for RCSD.
- ▶ Additional definition of how responsibility for the inter-district school will be shared between Monroe One BOCES and BOCES 2 will be required. Information received from the Albany Tech school will be considered.
- ▶ The potential role of Higher Ed institutions in governance and/or operational models may be considered.

Resource sharing:

- ▶ Once the pilot school's theme is finalized, sharing of resources from existing schools will be evaluated to determine the best solution for the school and participating districts.
- ▶ Some support staff from participating districts may be able to be shared, depending on size of the pilot school. This will be more fully explored.
- ▶ Equitable staff seniority policies will be determined for the inter-district school, taking into consideration the various policies of participating districts.

Future Considerations

The following issues will be addressed in a future phase of the concept development process:

Facilities:

- ▶ Co-location with an existing RCSD secondary building may be an option for the inter-district school pilot. This may be fiscally prudent, but could compromise identity and culture building as well as incur conflict between student populations, so must be carefully considered.
- ▶ Existing unused secondary facilities may also be considered. Any facility must be evaluated against current NYSED standards and accommodate the target student body and future growth.

Student selection:

- ▶ A specific method for student balancing among participating districts will be defined. Experts on student selection who have done this elsewhere will be consulted.

Future Considerations

The following issues will be addressed in a future phase of the concept development process:

Themes:

- ▶ The final identification of pilot school theme(s) will be determined in collaboration with community stakeholders.
- ▶ Appropriate facilities and resources, as well as some non-traditional features, may be required to attract students. Once the theme is determined these will be further explored.
- ▶ Interest of the business community in specific themes will be evaluated to determine potential partnerships.

Extra-curriculars:

- ▶ Lack of extra-curricular opportunities would be a major impediment to student recruitment. A thorough plan, in accordance with NYSED regulations concerning participating in home district activities, will be developed.

Future Considerations

The following issues will be addressed in a future phase of the concept development process:

Financing:

- ▶ Further exploration of additional funding sources, such as philanthropy, grants and legislative funds, may be necessary to supplement federal/state grants that may be available for inter-district program startup.

Transportation:

- ▶ A cooperative transportation model, utilizing district resources and RTS, should be investigated.

Future Activities

In order for the inter-district school concept to move forward, additional activities will be necessary in a future phase of the concept development process:

- ▶ Continued dialogue at the individual district level between superintendents and school boards will evaluate the benefits of participation for students in the district as well as associated costs.
- ▶ Communication with union representatives regarding collective bargaining implications and labor relations will be ongoing.
- ▶ Constituents and the public will be educated through strategic communications clearly conveying the concept and engaged with a community needs assessment soliciting ideas and input.
- ▶ Collaboration with legislative and/or State Education staff members to craft legislation enabling the concept will bring the inter-district school one step closer to reality.

Conclusion

If there is one thing we have learned over the past three years, it is that the future of our community holds a great many uncertainties. Some things, however, are inarguable.

- Our community, like our nation, is becoming more diverse.
- Our population, like that of our nation, is aging, with a shrinking workforce.
- Many of our schools lack the diversity that will help prepare all students for success, and supply our communities with the workforce it needs to thrive.

This report has been developed through the efforts of community members dedicated to ensuring all students have equitable opportunities to succeed. It offers an innovative, workable, research-backed vision, in the form of exciting new educational opportunities for all students.

But visions are only dreams until they devolve into work, and there is much left to do. This work will require shared commitment from parents, students, educators, school boards, community leaders and elected officials. But if we all put our shoulders to this wheel, the benefits will be felt for generations to come. What could we learn, together?