





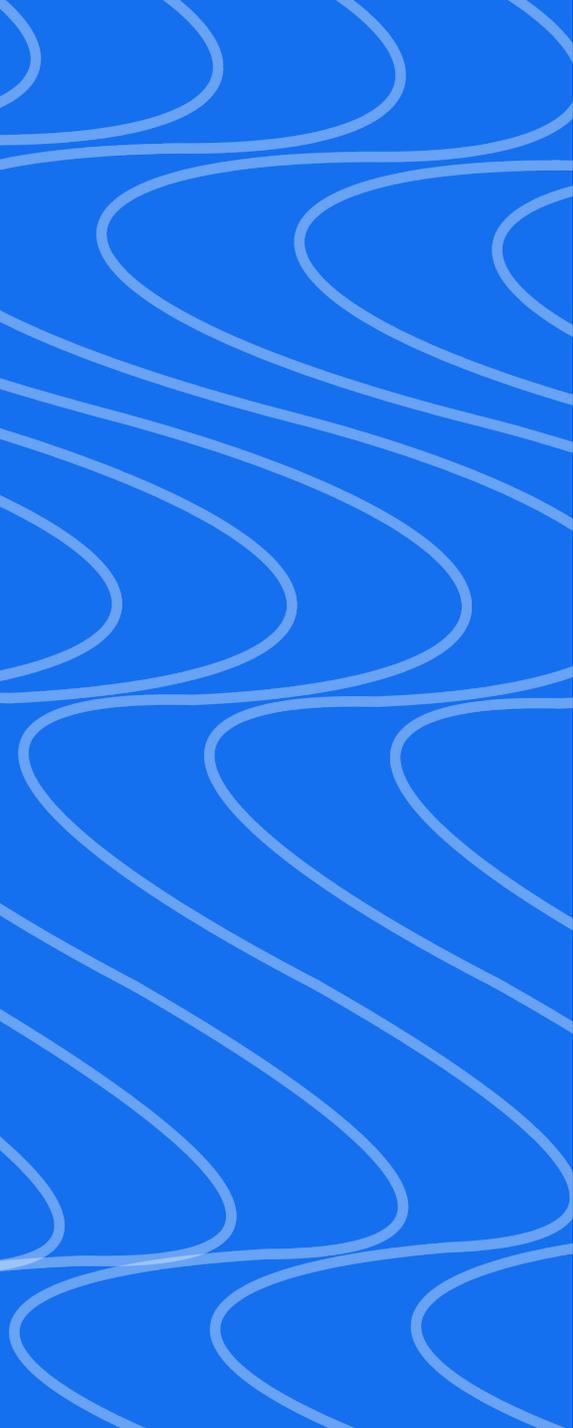
HIGH BRIDGE
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

We're Building
a Better World
One Student
At A Time.

NO WALKING
ON SCHOOL
GROUNDS

Handicapped
Parking

Handicapped
Parking



Purpose/Overview/Board

Information session to engage the community and be transparent in our actions.

The Board of Education seeks to maintain high educational standards while managing financial pressures.

Comprised of 7 elected unpaid members - all residents of the community.

Some decisions involve confidential information that can't be publicly disclosed.

Over a decade of exploring shared services, mergers and regionalization to improve academics and manage costs.

Current partnerships. Future opportunities.

Overview of Shared Services

1

Snow Plowing Agreement

The district has a snow plowing agreement with the Borough for effective winter weather management.

This partnership ensures timely snow removal and safety for students and staff.

4

IT Services ESC

The district collaborates with ESC for IT services, streamlining technology support.

This relationship improves service delivery while reducing operational costs.

2

Electricity Savings

Through the ECAS program, the district secures a 10% reduction in electricity costs.

These savings play a crucial role in maintaining the district's budget.

5

Shared Staff Roles

Shared staff roles, such as instructional coaches and a Business Administrator, optimize resources.

This strategy enhances educational programs while ensuring efficient staffing.

3

Cooperative Purchasing

The district engages in cooperative purchasing to enhance buying power for essential supplies.

This approach results in significant cost savings across various categories.



Cost Savings from Shared Services

Significant Reduction in Electricity
Costs

10%

This agreement results in a 10% savings on
electricity expenses.

Lower Rates for IT Services

Reduced

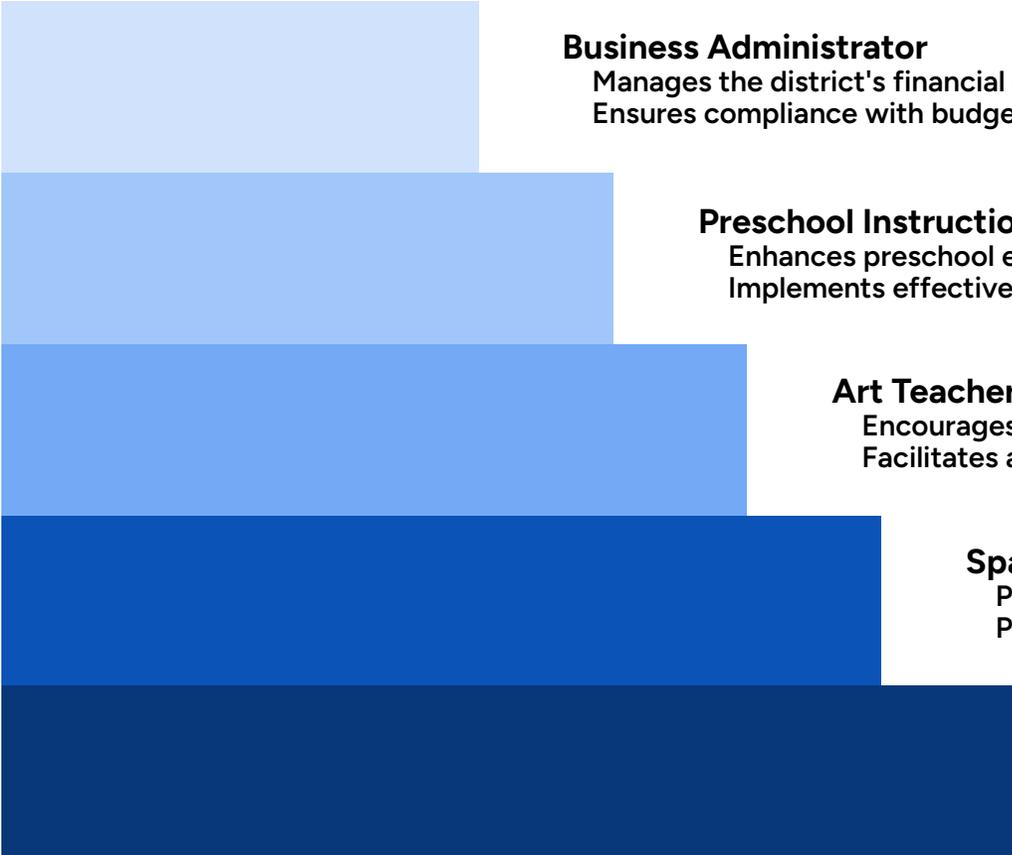
Cooperative purchasing has successfully
lowered IT service rates.

Financial Benefits from
Cooperative Purchasing

Savings

Shared services through cooperative purchasing
of teaching resources provide additional
financial advantages.

Roles of Shared Staff



Business Administrator

Manages the district's financial resources.
Ensures compliance with budgetary regulations.

Preschool Instructional Coach

Enhances preschool education by supporting teachers.
Implements effective teaching strategies.

Art Teacher

Encourages creativity in students.
Facilitates art projects and activities.

Spanish Teacher

Provides language instruction to students.
Promotes cultural awareness through language.

Dual Role: Superintendent/Principal

Oversees both administrative and educational operations.
Guides the overall direction of the schools.

Preschool Expansion Aid Benefits

01

No Taxpayer Expense

The preschool program is entirely funded by the state, ensuring no costs for local taxpayers.

This funding model allows families to access quality education without financial burden.

02

Grant Allocation

Funds from the Preschool Expansion Aid can be utilized to support other educational expenses.

This helps maintain a balanced budget while enhancing overall school resources.

03

Free Full-Day Programs

Local parents can enroll their children in a free full-day preschool program.

This initiative offers crucial support for families, making early education accessible.



State Aid History (2017-2026)

Year	State Aid Amount	Increase/Decrease	Percentage
2017-2018	\$1,488,722.00	-\$136,235.00	-8.38%
2018-2019	\$1,437,321.00	-\$51,401.00	-3.45%
2019-2020	\$1,416,733.00	-\$20,588.00	-1.43%
2020-2021	\$1,372,045.00	-\$44,688.00	-3.15%
2021-2022	\$1,408,435.00	\$36,390.00	2.65%
2022-2023	\$1,098,420.00	-\$310,015.00	-22.01%
2023-2024	\$750,671.00	-\$347,749.00	-31.66%
2024-2025	\$660,713.00	-\$89,958.00	-11.98%
2025-2026	\$682,899.00	\$22,186.00	3.3%

”

Restoring state aid is crucial for ensuring that every child has access to quality education and resources. High Bridge has lost over 50% (over 700k) of it's State Aid in the last several years.

State Aid Restoration

This statement underscores the vital role of state funding in maintaining educational standards.

It reflects the commitment of local leaders to advocate for necessary financial support.

Impact of 1996 Referendum Debt Payoff - Based on 2025-2026 Budget*

	General Fund Budget	Total Ratables	Average House	School Tax Rate	Total Per Average House
With Debt Service	7,296,930.00	493,154,500.00	339,452.00	1.5752	\$5,347.05
W/O Debt Service	7,296,930.00	493,154,500.00	339,452.00	1.4800	\$5,023.89
Average Homeowner Annual Reduction from Debt Service Payoff Estimate*					\$323.16*

Special Education Program

In-District Cost Savings

- Educating special education students in-district costs about \$1.52 million annually. Currently 20.2% of our students are classified.
- This is significantly less than the estimated \$2.7 million estimate for out-of-district Middle School placements. This 2.7M does not include transportation costs.
- Keeping students in-district saves taxpayers over a million of dollars each year, depending on the number of Special Education students.
- In-district programs provide tailored support that meets individual student needs.
- The program has also attracted families to the area, enhancing community stability.

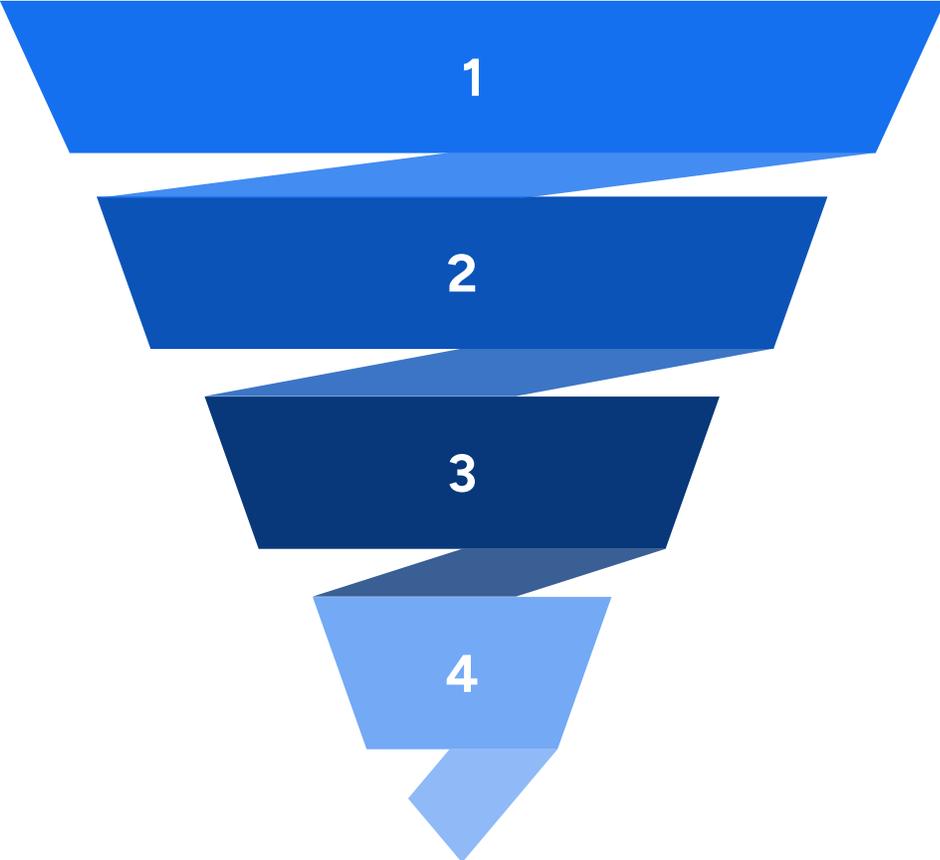
VS

Out-of-District Expense Risks

- Sending special education students to another district can lead to high costs due to tuition and transportation.
- Students may face long bus rides, which can exceed an hour, affecting their daily routines and well-being.
- Out-of-district placements may not provide the same tailored programs that in-district options offer.
- There is a risk of students being placed in programs that do not meet their specific needs.
- Future costs are not in our control.

Middle School Cost Analysis

- 01** **Current Costs**
The estimated annual cost to maintain the middle school is \$3.7 million.
- 02** **Tuition Estimates**
Sending middle school students to another district would cost an estimated \$5.7 million.
- 03** **Special Education Expenses**
The cost to educate special education students in the district is approximately \$1.52 million.
- 04** **Transportation Costs**
Transportation for students sent to another district is estimated at \$240,000 per year.



Transportation Costs and Challenges

01

Bussing Costs

The cost of bussing children to another school is expensive. These are costs that High Bridge, as a walking district, does not incur today.

02

Sports Transportation

Transportation for sports activities adds to the overall budget.

These expenses must be included in our financial planning.

03

Aid-in-Lieu Expenses

Aid-in-lieu costs occur for students attending schools outside the district.

These expenses impact the transportation budget and need careful management.

04

Future Transportation Challenges

Increased transportation needs may arise if students are sent to other districts.

Longer bus rides and additional costs could create significant challenges ahead.

Tax Rate Trends (2020-2026)

Year	School Tax Rate	Percentage Increase	Cost per month	Average home value
2020-2021	2.1065	2.75	\$7.07	\$227,737.00
2021-2022	2.1289	1.87	\$7.57	\$229,605.00
2022-2023	2.1212	1.92	\$3.94	\$232,656.00
2023-2024	1.9400	1.91	\$9.72	\$260,417.00
2024-2025	1.5549	1.95	\$12.84	\$334,815.00
2025-2026	1.5752	2.48	\$11.76	\$339,452.00

Local Control vs. Regionalization

Local Control

- Local control allows residents to elect their own Board of Education.
- This ensures community members have a direct influence on educational policies.
- It promotes accountability and responsiveness to local needs.
- Residents can actively shape the educational experience of their children.
- 90% Student participation in extracurriculars.
- Input to class sizes.
- Special Education handled in house saves High Bridge millions of dollars.

VS

Regionalization

- Regionalization may reduce local representation in decision-making processes that may not be aligned with local priorities.
- Fewer board seats for High Bridge could limit its influence on educational policies.
- This shift might overlook the unique needs of the community.
- Uncertainty over Middle School future.
- Not always a savings/potentially increased costs.
- Special education needs may not always be met in house resulting in incremental costs.

Local Control vs. Send/Receive Relationships

Local Control

- Local control allows residents to elect their own Board of Education.
- This ensures community members have a direct influence on educational policies.
- It promotes accountability and responsiveness to local needs.
- Residents can actively shape the educational experience of their children.
- 90% Student participation in extracurriculars.
- Input to class sizes.
- Special Education handled in house saves High Bridge millions of dollars.

VS

Send/Receive

- The tuition amount and costs per student is out of our control..
- Unwinding a send receive relationship is very costly.
- Uncertainty over Middle School future.
- No input to programs/activities..
- Special education needs may not always be met in house resulting in incremental costs.
- Children may end up in a district that is not a Voorhees sending district.

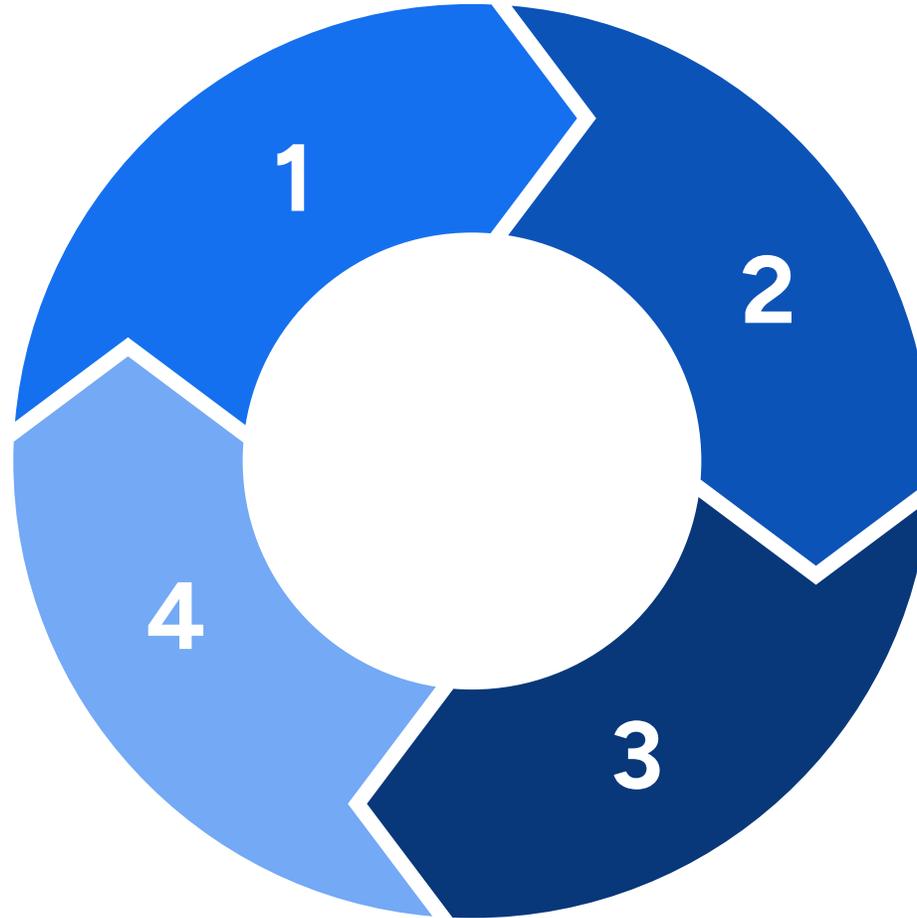
Community Impact of School Closures

Community Engagement

School closures can decrease community involvement in educational activities. Our Schools have been central to many community groups..

School Closure Costs

Closing a school often incurs significant costs that may not result in expected savings.

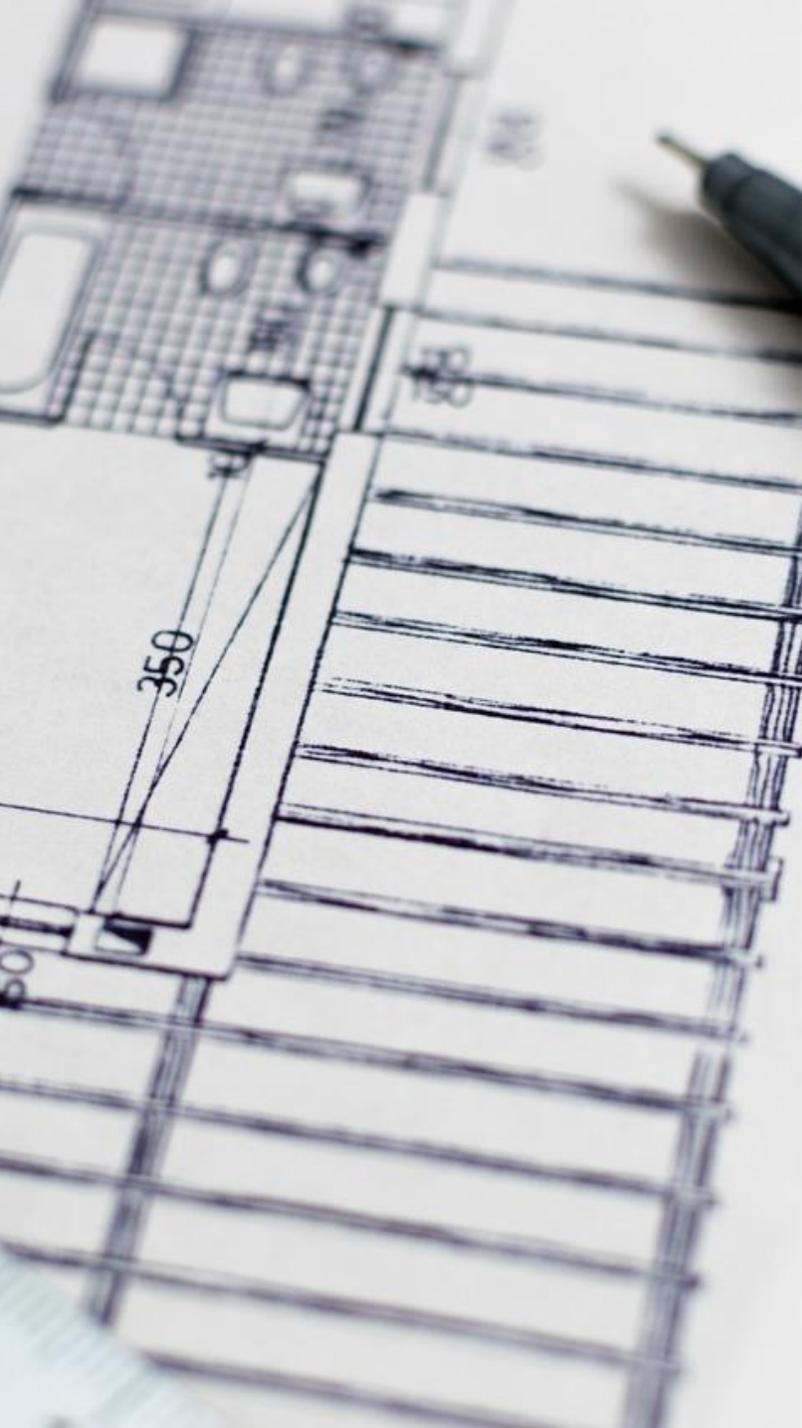


Property Values

Active neighborhood schools positively influence property values.

Student Opportunities

Larger school environments may limit individual student participation in extracurricular activities.



Middle School Building - What Happens to it?

01

Repurposing Options

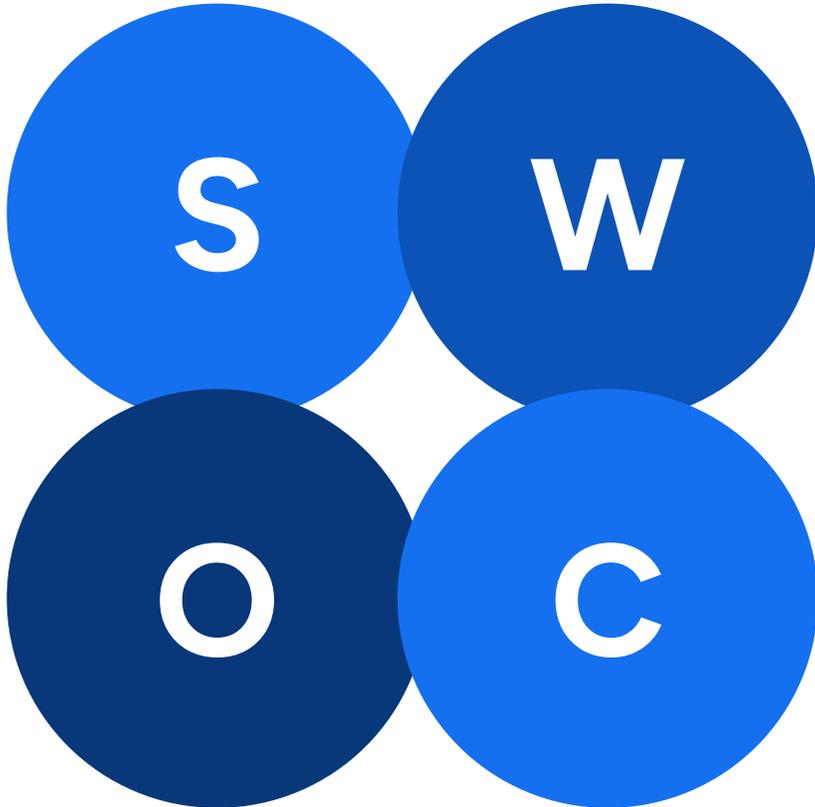
Selling the middle school building could generate one time revenue for the district.

02

Potential Conversions

Apartments?
Nursing home?
Private Offices?
Unknown at this time.
Zoning considerations.

Regionalization Challenges and Opportunities



Strengths

- Additional educational opportunities/classes may be available.
- Expands students social circles.
- More extracurricular activities.

Opportunities

- Regionalization could provide access to additional state funding for larger districts.
- However, it may also mean losing specific financial support currently available to High Bridge, including preschool.

Weaknesses

- A larger school environment may intensify competition for extracurricular activities.
- Students who are less competitive might find it harder to secure participation opportunities.
- Regionalization may limit the community's ability to influence educational decisions.
- Could reduce local engagement in school governance.

Challenges

- Adopting a regionalized system could lead to higher transportation expenses for families.
- Students may experience longer commutes, potentially affecting their school attendance and well-being.
- Special education children could be sent out of district, which is very costly.



State Regionalization Funding Conditions

01

K-12 Mergers

The state supports K-12 mergers to improve resource distribution and educational programs.

This strategy aims to create more robust and sustainable school systems.

Previously, districts were not reimbursed for studies if they did not implement the plans. Studies are expensive

02

Population Thresholds

Mergers are required to meet specific student population thresholds for state funding eligibility.

These thresholds are intended to ensure that merged districts can adequately serve their students.

03

Regionalization Outcomes

Previous regionalization efforts in Hunterdon County often failed to produce tax savings.

In some cases, these initiatives resulted in higher costs for certain districts.

Districts in Warren county went through a study and opted not to regionalize.

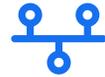
Feasibility Study Grant Application



Grant Application Overview

We are applying for a grant with North Hunterdon Voorhees to conduct a feasibility study.

This study will evaluate educational opportunities in our district.



Study Timeline

The feasibility study will take approximately two years to complete.

During this time, we will gather data to inform future decisions.



Non-Binding Recommendations

The recommendations from the study will not be binding, allowing for greater planning flexibility.

If the grant is approved, we will not need to wait for reimbursement during the study period.



Community Engagement in Decision-Making

01

Attend Meetings

Join the School Board meetings to hear discussions firsthand.

Your presence shows support and interest in the educational decisions being made.

02

Provide Input

Share your thoughts and suggestions during public comment periods.

Your feedback is valuable and helps shape the direction of our schools.

03

Stay Informed

Keep up with school news and updates through newsletters and the district website.

Being informed allows you to engage meaningfully in discussions.

04

Engage with Board

Reach out to Board members with questions or concerns you may have.

Building a relationship with the Board fosters open communication and collaboration.

Conclusion

Community Engagement

Community involvement is essential for shaping the future of High Bridge schools.

We invite all residents to share their insights and participate in discussions.

The Board will continue to communicate and provide transparency

Educational Opportunities

Enhancing educational programs is a priority for our district.

Strong local schools contribute to both student success and community well-being.

Financial Sustainability

The Board is dedicated to making sound financial decisions that support student learning.

We will continuously evaluate our financial strategies to ensure long-term viability.

We continue to evaluate sharing and full or partial merger opportunities.