

2022

**BUENA REGIONAL,
ESTELL MANOR &
WEYMOUTH TOWNSHIP
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**TO CONSIDER THE EDUCATION OF PK-8
STUDENTS OF ESTELL MANOR AND
WEYMOUTH TOWNSHIP**

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SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Section I-A: Purpose of the Study

The Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center (SRI&ETTC) has been commissioned by the Buena Regional School District for the purpose of reporting on the feasibility of receiving PK-8 students from the Estell Manor and Weymouth Township School Districts. In addition, the Study shall explore the possibilities regarding Estell Manor and Weymouth Township to consolidate into one district as well as Estell Manor and Weymouth Township to consolidate and join the Buena Regional School District in an expanded PK-12 All-Purpose Regional District. The State’s revised law under Senate Bill S 3488, required the Department of Community Affairs to establish a grant program, Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) grants, to provide for reimbursement of costs associated with school consolidation and countywide school district studies that support the creation of meaningful and implementable regionalization plans. According to the criteria, K-12 regionalization and countywide school district studies will be given priority. This Study is funded through a LEAP Grant award through this revised law.

As a primary consideration for School Funding, N.J. Senate Bill P.L.2018, c.67, commonly referred to as “S-2,” continues to determine the funding formula for Public School State Aid pursuant to the School Funding Reform Act of 2008, (SFRA) for each New Jersey School district. The following state aid data reveals a pattern of categorical aid percentage reductions that may be sustained for each district included in this Study for future fiscal year budgets. For fiscal year 2022-23, Buena Regional School District was reduced (\$728,980) or 3.9% of their previous year’s allocation. Estell Manor lost (\$81,131) or a reduction of 4.2% and Weymouth Township’s state aid was reduced (\$334,358) or 29.53% over the previous year in State Aid. The legislative initiative through this funding Bill shall be replaced by Bill S 3488 with language which may anticipate greater reductions for small school districts throughout the State.

Senate Bill S 3488 P.L. 2021,c. 402, modifies certain procedures pertaining to school district regionalization; establishes a grant program for cost reimbursement of conducting regionalization feasibility studies and provides financial incentives for conversion to all-purpose regionalization or enlarging an existing limited-purpose regional. The Bill’s significance to the study is the amended language for participating districts and Boards of Education seeking to form a limited-purpose or all-purpose regional school district. An analysis of the potential impact of this Bill through changes in legislation shall be provided in the Consideration and Conclusion Sections of this Study.

Senate Bill S 3488, was supported by New Jersey’s Education Association, School Boards Association, Principals and Supervisors Association, Association of School Administrators, New Jersey School Business Officials and the Garden State Coalition of Schools. It was signed into law by the Governor on January 18, 2022.

With these circumstances in mind, it is in the best interest of the three districts identified in this Study to discuss a consolidation configuration that would potentially save money, better serve the students and communities involved through an analysis of specified unification efforts and scenarios, as well as evaluate the functional capacity of the three districts in various identified consolidation plans, to provide a thorough and efficient education and effectively serve the students from all identified municipalities.

The scenarios to be evaluated and included in the Study are as follows:

1. Estell Manor School District to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional School District.
2. Weymouth Township School District to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional School District.
3. Estell Manor School District and Weymouth Township School District to consolidate into one School District (Grades PK – 8).
4. Estell Manor School District and Weymouth Township School District to consolidate into and join the Buena Regional School (Grades PK – 12).
5. Any other potential consolidation options that may be considered.

Section I-B: Presentation of the Data

The Study presents data for the various scenarios through the major topics of 1) descriptions of the communities involved in the proposed regional district including selected demographic characteristics of enrollment and district and community demographics, enrollment patterns over time, birth rates and housing data, as well as the methodology for the projected historical demographic data; 2) a description of the current educational programs and configurations serving the communities including schools, grade levels, and selected significant characteristics of student populations; 3) staffing analysis including collective bargaining agreements; 4) school climate indicators; 5) student to teacher ratios and district state assessment; 6) financial analysis of impacted communities including debt burden between impacted districts; and 7) legal considerations as they relate to the scenarios based on statutory law passed by State legislatures.

Section I-C: Project Team Composition

Once commissioned by the Buena Regional Board of Education, the Southern Regional Institute and Educational Technology Training Center (SRI&ETTC) of Stockton University assembled a project team consisting of experienced K-12 and University educators. The members of the project team include:

- Robert Previti, Ed.D. – Retired Brigantine Superintendent and SRI&ETTC Educational Consultant.
- Mark Ritter – Retired NJDOE County Business Administrator and School Business Consultant.
- Xiangping Kong Ph.D. – Retired Director of Institutional Research, Stockton University.
- Anne Catena, Ed.D. – Retired Director of Professional Development Initiatives for the Program in Teacher Preparation, Princeton University.

Section I-D: Data Used in Current Study

Much of the data used in the study is available from the official website of the New Jersey Department of Education of the State of New Jersey and may be found at:

<http://www.state.nj.us/education>

<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/data/enr/>

www.njschooldata.org

It must be noted as a major consideration that the COVID-19 pandemic as well as the after crisis level interventions, has had a significant impact on the way the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) was able to measure school performance and student achievement for the 2019-2020, 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 School Performance Reports. Some data are not available at all and other data, while available, may not look the same as it did in prior years.

A Symbol / Status explanation for **Data Elements of Performance Reporting** is included in this document.

Impact of COVID-19 on data availability from the New Jersey Department of Education

As reported on the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) website, and certainly recognized by all involved in public education, the past three years have been unlike any others with regard to the manner in which public schools operated. Significant differences may have also included the manner in which students were assessed or the means in which assessment waivers were approved by the Governor’s Executive Orders as well as by Federal waivers. The NJDOE has stated that it is critical to use the available data in the reports, along with other information collected directly within districts and communities, to start conversations, identify gaps in information, and begin to find ways to address the impacts of COVID-19 and ensure all students receive the support that they need.

As a significant factor in gleaning knowledge through data analysis in this Study, one must acknowledge that in March 2020, all public schools in New Jersey, were required to close and cease in-person instruction and therefore alter the instructional day to remote synchronized/asynchronous virtual learning. These changes may have impacted districts, schools, student groups, and grade levels in disproportionate ways. Specifically, student/teacher contact time, the inequity of promptness and access to data and instruction, as well as the number of devices available in each school and within each household were not consistent throughout the 2019-2020, 2020-2021, and 2021-2022 school years throughout the State of New Jersey. Additionally, individual districts may have experienced other issues as a result of COVID-19, including significant teacher retirements, as well as remediation efforts for regressive loss of instruction for some student subgroups which may have adversely influenced student performance or data quality for the 2019-2020 through 2021-2022 school years.

This document will provide an overview of data known to be available, as well as missing or impacted as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting school closures, altered student /teacher interactions, federal waivers, state executive orders, and other state and national changes that may have affected data and student performance.

The New Jersey Department of Education strongly suggests, as well as those providing the data in this study, to use caution in comparing data in the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 School Performance reports to prior or future years. Reportable, partially reportable, and non-available data for 2020-2021, are identified in the following “***symbol explanation***” tables and described in the 2020-2021 note section of each table.

The following 2020-2021 “Symbol / Status” Explanations for data elements of Performance Reporting with supporting notes, will clarify the details for the Performance Reporting status.

- 1.) ✓ The data elements ***are available*** and there is no known systematic issue that would impact the data for the 2020-2021 school year.
- 2.) ! The data elements are ***fully or partially available*** but there may be some impact as a result of COVID-19. Review notes for more details. Use caution in comparing results for 2020-2021 to prior or future years.
- 3.) ✗ The data elements are ***not available*** or were not reported for the 2020-2021 school year.

Notes will appear directly in the 2020-2021 School Performance Reports Reference Guide.

njschooldata.org

<https://rc.doe.state.nj.us>

TABLE 1: 2020-2021 Data/Symbol Status Explanation - Academic Achievement

Section Of the Reports	Data Elements	Status for 2020-2021	2020-2021 Notes
Demographics	Enrollment and Demographics	☑	N/A
Student Growth	Median Student Growth Percentiles	☒	The New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) was cancelled in both spring 2020 and 2021. As a result, student growth percentiles were not calculated for 2019-2020 or 2020-2021 and this data is not available.
Academic Achievement	Statewide Assessment Participation and Proficiency – English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science	☒	The New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) was cancelled in both spring 2020 and 2021.
Academic Achievement	Dynamic Learning Map (DLM) Participation English Language Proficiency Test (ACCESS for ELLS) – Participation and Performance	!	The DLM and ACCESS for ELLS assessment were administered in spring 2021 in-person only, not remotely, and participation rates may have been lower than in previous years. As a result, 2020-2021 results may not be comparable to prior or future years.
Academic Achievement	Progress towards English Language Proficiency (ELP)	☒	Due to cancellation of the ACCESS for ELLs assessments in 2019-2020 and a federal accountability waiver, ELP data is not available for 2020-2021.
College and Career Readiness	PSAT, SAT, and ACT Participation and Performance	!	National administration of the SAT, PSAT, and ACT were cancelled from spring 2020 through fall 2021 and some test centers had limited testing capacity. As a result, 2020-2021 results may not be comparable to prior or future years.
College and Career Readiness	Dual Enrollment	☑	N/A

TABLE 1: 2020-2021 Data/Symbol/Status Explanation – Academic Achievement Continued

Section Of the Reports	Data Elements	Status for 2020-2021	2020-2021 Notes
College and Career Readiness	Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) Enrollment Performance	!	College Board introduced changes for the spring 2021 administration of the AP exams. Students may have taken the assessment in-person or instead taken the digital version and the College Board also offered three test sessions for each subject to allow for social distancing. The IB assessments were not available in 2020-2021.
College and Career Readiness	Career and Technical Education (CTE) Participants and Concentrators	☑	N/A
College and Career Readiness	Industry Valued Credentials	!	Due the COVID 19 pandemic, many high school students were not able to take the Technical Skills Assessment (TSA), which are end-of-program assessment for Career and Technical Education programs, in spring 2021.
College and Career Readiness	Seal of Biliteracy	!	Graduation assessment requirements were waived for any 12 th grade student who had not yet met the graduation assessment requirements but had met all credit, curriculum and attendance requirements for graduation. The Seal of Biliteracy requirement was also waived.
College and Career Readiness	Visual and Performing Arts, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies and History, World Languages, Computer Science Participation	☑	N/A

Section Of the Reports	Data Elements	Status for 2020-2021	2020-2021 Notes
Graduation and Post-Secondary	Graduation Rates/Graduation Pathways	!	<p>Graduation assessment requirements were waived for any 12th grade student who had not yet met the graduation assessment requirement, but had met all credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements for graduation. Additionally, the requirements to report on status in meeting annual ESSA targets were waived for 2020-2021.</p> <p>The pathway option of “requirements waived under Executive Order 214”, has been added for 2020-2021 to count these students.</p>
Graduation and Post-Secondary	Apprenticeship	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This is a new data element for the 2020-2021 reports.
Graduation and Post-Secondary	Dropout Rates	!	While dropout data is available for 2020-2021, it is unclear how the pandemic and changes to state and local policies may have affected dropout rates for the 2020-2021 school year.
Graduation and Post-Secondary	Postsecondary Enrollment	!	The National Student Clearinghouse has reported that undergraduate enrollment is down nationwide compared to the same time last year. As a result, caution should be used in comparing this year to prior or future years.

TABLE 2: 2020-2021 Data/Symbol/Status Explanation - Climate / Accountability

Section Of the Reports	Data Elements	Status for 2020-2021	2020-2021 Notes
Climate and Environment	Violence and Vandalism, HIB and Substance Offenses Police Notifications Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) Investigations Student Disciplinary Removals	!	Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, discipline data for 2020-2021 school year may not be comparable to prior or future years and NJDOE recommends caution in making comparisons.
Climate and Environment	School Day	!	The start and end times in this table may reflect standard hours for in-person instruction. These hours may have been adjusted due to remote or hybrid instruction schedules.
Climate and Environment	Device Ratio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Accountability	ESSA Status (Every Student Succeeds Act 2015) Schools Identified as Requiring Comprehensive or Targeted Support	!	The ESSA requirements to identify schools for Comprehensive and Targeting Support and Improvement were waived for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement during the 2019-2020 school year for support during the 2020-2021 school year retained the same status for the 2021-2022 school year and continue to receive support and interventions from the NJDOE. All current identified schools will be eligible to exit status at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

Accountability	ESSA Accountability Progress (2019-2020 and 2020-2021 data) Accountability Indicator Scores and Summative Ratings Accountability Summary by Student Group	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The requirement to calculate indicator scores, summative scores and progress toward long-term goals and interim progress was waived for both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. This data will not be included in the 2020-2021 reports.
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TABLE 3: 2020-2021 Data/Symbol/Status Explanation - Staffing

Section Of the Reports	Data Elements	Status for 2020-2021	2020-2021 Notes
Climate and Environment	Chronic Absenteeism and Days Absent	!	The requirements to report status in meeting annual ESSA targets for 2020-2021 was waived. As a result, NJDOE did not report state averages and whether state averages were met for 2020-2021.
Staff	Experience and Education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Staff	Student to Staff Ratios Student Counts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Staff	Demographics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Staff	Retention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Staff	Statewide Educator Equity Data (state report only)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	This information for ineffective teachers in this table is typically based on evaluation data from the prior school year, but certain components of education evaluation requirements were waived for the 2019-2020 school year, so data for ineffective teachers is not available.
Per Pupil Expenditures	Per Pupil Expenditures by Source	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A
Narrative	District Narrative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	N/A

March 2020 federal waiver: Approved by the US Department of Education on March 27, 2020

March 2021 federal waiver: Approved by the US Department of Education on March 26, 2021

Executive Order 214: signed by Governor Murphy on January 11, 2021

Executive Order 117: signed by Governor Murphy on April 7, 2020

Section I-E: Descriptions of Affected Communities and School Districts

Buena Regional School District

The Buena Regional School District is a comprehensive regional public school district serving students in pre-kindergarten through twelfth grade from Buena Borough and Buena Vistas, two municipalities in Atlantic County, New Jersey. Students are sent to the district's high school for grades 9-12 from both Estell Manor City and Weymouth Township as part of sending/receiving relationships with the respective school districts.

The district is classified by the New Jersey Department of Education as being in District Factor Group "A", the lowest of eight groupings. District Factor Groups organize districts statewide to allow comparison by common socioeconomic characteristics of local districts. From lowest socioeconomic status to highest, the categories are A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J.

In June 2009, the New Jersey Department of Education ruled that Newfield, a non-operating district seeking to cut costs for its tuition students, could end its relationship with Buena Regional School District and as of the 2011-12 school year could start sending incoming high school students in grades 7-9 to Delsea Regional High School, under a transition in which students at Buena's high school would remain in the District until they graduated.

The District's Board of Education has nine members who set policy and oversee the fiscal and educational operation of the District through its administration. As a Type II District, the Board's trustees are elected directly by voters to serve three year terms of office on a staggered basis, with three seats up for election each year held (since 2012) as part of the November general election. Seats on the Board of Education are allotted based on population, with six assigned to Buena Township and three to Buena Borough.

Total resident enrollment as of October 15, 2021 was 1,573. The District has five school buildings: Buena Regional High School, Buena Regional Middle School, Dr. JP Cleary Elementary School, Collings Lake Elementary School and John C. Milanese Elementary School.

The district was identified by S-2 legislation to lose an additional (\$728,980) in fiscal year 2023 state aid, which results in a -3.9% fiscal year reduction to \$17,619,400 from FY22, \$18,348,380.

Estell Manor School District

Estell Manor School District is a community public school district, comprised of one school, in Estell Manor, New Jersey now serving students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Estell Manor was incorporated as a city by an act of the New Jersey Legislature in March 1925 from portions of Weymouth Township. Estell Manor borders the municipalities of Corbin City, Egg Harbor Township, Hamilton Township, and Weymouth Townships in Atlantic County. The city is one of the south Jersey municipalities that are included within the New Jersey Pinelands National Reserve.

The Estell Manor Board of Education is an elected Type II Board comprised of 5 members. As a Type II school district, board members are elected directly by voters to serve three year terms of office on a staggered basis as part of the November general election. For ninth through twelfth grades, public school students attend Buena Regional High School, which serves students from Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township together with students from Weymouth Township who attend the school as part of a sending /receiving relationship with Buena Regional School District. In addition, Estell Manor students are eligible to attend the Atlantic County Institute of Technology or the Charter Tech High School for the Performing Arts.

The District is classified by the New Jersey Department of Education as being in District Factor Group (DFG) “DE”, the fifth highest of eight groupings. DFG grouping is organized statewide to allow comparison by common socioeconomic characteristics of local districts. From lowest to highest the categories are A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J.

The District’s Mission, Vision and Theme statement in the New Jersey Performance Report reads that the District, in partnership with the community, exists to provide their students with an innovative, nurturing and effective education. The District recognizes meeting the New Jersey Student Learning Standards (NJSLS) as a first step towards meeting these goals.

The Estell Manor School is also a member of the District Public School Choice Program with a Choice student population in excess of 30 students.

In comparison to Fiscal Year 2022, FY2023 State School Aid Summary, identified by S-2 legislation to lose Equalization Aid in the amount of (\$28,590) with an additional loss of School Choice Aid of (\$52,541), for total district aid of \$1,849,162. This represents an overall loss for Estell Manor of (\$81,131) or a reduction of 4.2% from FY22.

Weymouth Township School District

The Weymouth Township School District is a public school district that serves students in prekindergarten through eighth grade from Weymouth Township in Atlantic County, New Jersey.

The Weymouth Township Board of Education is an elected Type II board comprised of nine members. As a Type II school district, board members are elected directly by voters to serve three-year terms of office on a staggered basis, with three seats up for election each year held (since 2012) as part of the November general election. The district is classified by the New Jersey Department of Education as being in District Factor Group (DFG) “B”, the second lowest of eight groupings. DFG grouping is organized statewide to allow comparison by common socioeconomic characteristics of local districts. From lowest to highest the categories are A, B, CD, DE, FG, GH, I and J.

For ninth through twelfth grades, public school students attend Buena Regional High School, which serves students from Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township together with students from Estell Manor who attend the school as part of a sending /receiving relationship with Buena Regional School District. In addition, Weymouth Township students are eligible to attend the Atlantic County Institute of Technology or the Charter Tech High School for the Performing Arts.

According to the District’s Mission Statement, “The Weymouth Township School District, together with our community, exists to provide our students with an innovative, nurturing, and effective educational environment that fosters initiative, excellence, and emotional and physical well-being, and prepares our children to appreciate diversity, behave ethically and succeed as lifelong learners in a changing world, in full compliance with the New Jersey Core curriculum Content Standards”.

As a result of legislation S-2, the District’s overall financial situation has significantly experienced a loss of equalization state aid that has cost the district a decrease of (\$496,358) or 30.47% from Fiscal Year (FY) 2021. Additionally, FY 2023, reflects a further reduction in state school aid of (\$334,358) or 29.53% over the previous year for the greatest percentage loss in the County of Atlantic for the second consecutive year. It has to be expected that the district will continue to see reductions in state aid as the S-2 legislation continues to be phased in.

SECTION II: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Impacts on Enrollment and Student Composition, 2022-2026

Section II-A: Introduction

The Buena School District currently serves two municipalities – Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township. The District provides K-12 education programs in five separate schools: Collings Lakes Elementary School (Buena Vista), John C. Milanesi Elementary School (Buena Vista), Dr. JP Cleary Elementary School (Buena Borough), Buena Regional Middle School (Buena Vista), and Buena Regional High School (Buena Vista).

Estell Manor School District serves the city of Estell Manor and offers Pre-K-8 level programs in one school setting. The school sends its students to Buena Regional High School.

Like Estell Manor, Weymouth Township School District serves Weymouth Township and provides K-8 level programs in one school building. Students from this school attend Buena Regional High School.

Geographically, the three school districts are in close proximity to each other. To the south of Weymouth Township, Estell Manor is the largest of the four municipalities in area, though the least populous; Weymouth is adjacent to the southeast of Buena Vista Township; Buena Vista has the largest population; and Buena Borough is the smallest in area but the largest in terms of population density¹. The driving distance between any two points of the seven school campuses is from 0.4 mile to 17 miles².

¹ U.S. Census; ² Google Map coordinates

The demographic section of the feasibility study includes the following three tasks:

1. Review overall historical enrollment at Buena Regional, Estell Manor, and Weymouth Township; analyze most recent 5-year trend data by each school/level/grade.
2. Analyze recent population, ethnic and socio-economic changes at the county and municipal levels as potential factors that may affect enrollment in the school districts.
3. Provide a 5-year cohort projection (2017-2021) for students attending at each of the three school districts, by level/grade. The enrollment projections for each district in the next five years are based on the statistical model of “**simple moving averages.**”

Section II-B: Data Sources in Demographic Analysis

Much of the data used in the Study is readily available from the website of the New Jersey Department of Education at <http://www.state.nj.us/njded/data/enr/>. The enrollment data is from the October 15th counts submitted each year for school aid. The website has historical data through the 2021-2022 school year.

Economic and demographic data can be found at the NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development's website https://nj.gov/labor/lpa/LMI_index.html.

Data on municipal births can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/health/chs/>.

Section II-C: Enrollment Trends

Overview

In this section, enrollment tables are presented to illustrate the historical 5-year data at each of the three school districts from school years 2017-2021. Analyses include overall enrollment patterns by each school and grade level, comparative enrollment by grades K-5 and 6-8, and changes in minority enrollment proportions over the five years.

Although all three districts operate grades K-8, they vary somewhat in the past 5-year enrollment trend. Estell Manor and Weymouth Township districts only serve grades PK through grade 8. Estell's enrollment declined slightly while Weymouth increased its enrollment. Operating five school campuses, Buena Regional School District saw an overall decrease in enrollment across all grade levels from K-8 to 9-12 high school over the same period.

Characteristics of minority enrollment have also been examined. Minority enrollment proportions as compared to non-minority have significantly increased at the K-8 levels for Estell Manor and Weymouth Township from 2017 to 2021, but minority enrollment at Buena Regional has seen an overall decline for all grades at K-8 and high school. The following are detailed analyses of enrollment trends at each school district and by each grade level.

Enrollment Trends

Enrollment trend analyses in Tables 4, 5, and 6 are based on the NJ DOE database through the ASSA reporting system. Both Estell and Weymouth districts have reported K-8 level enrollment separately. Historical enrollment within Buena district is analyzed by each of the five schools and by each grade.

Collings Lakes Elementary School and John C. Milanesi Elementary School offer grades PK – 2 programs, but at Milanesi only recent three years’ PK enrollment data are available due to its expansion from 2019. Dr. JP Cleary Elementary School enrolls students of grades 3-5 only. The other two Buena Regional schools operate with grades 6-8 and 9-12.

In the Estell Manor School District, it appears that enrollment changes from 2017 to 2021 vary largely within the school and between different grades (see Table 4). Analysis of “ungraded” level data cannot be conducted due to the inconsistent data availability. For the average 5-year percent change, KG, grades 1, 4 and 5 have seen a decline, while grades 2 and 3 are on the uptick. Enrollment in Grades 6, 7 and 8 have all seen an increase, among which there has been a notable increase in grade 7 enrollment by an average of 12.1%. When combined into two levels of K-5 and 6-8, K-5 enrollment has slightly dropped by an average of -1.2%, while grades 6-8 have been up by 1.1%. Overall, the school district has not had much change in its total enrollment (average -0.4%) across the five years.

TABLE 4: Estell Manor School District 2017 - 2021 Enrollment

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2017-2021	Average 5-Year % Change
KG	21	20	22	18	17	-19.0%	-4.6%
Grade 1	20	20	22	21	17	-15.0%	-3.4%
Grade 2	20	21	21	22	21	5.0%	1.3%
Grade 3	15	20	20	20	21	40.0%	9.6%
Grade 4	23	16	20	21	21	-8.7%	-0.1%
Grade 5	24	21	18	20	20	-16.7%	-3.9%
Grade 6	21	25	22	17	23	9.5%	4.9%
Grade 7	14	23	26	22	19	35.7%	12.1%
Grade 8	26	15	23	26	21	-19.2%	1.2%
Ungraded	n/a	n/a	1	2	0	n/a	n/a
TOTAL K-8	184	181	195	189	180	-2.2%	-0.4%
K-5 Total*	123	118	123	122	117	-4.9%	-1.2%
6-8 Total*	61	63	71	65	63	3.3%	1.1%

**"Ungraded" is not included in the total*

Weymouth Township School District has had somewhat different enrollment trends than that at Estell Manor as indicated in Table 5. Broken down by different grades, most grade levels have seen a considerable increase, and only Grade 2 and Grade 7 have experienced a slight decline over the five years. Grade 3 has the largest increase by an average of 29.5%, while some other notable changes can be seen: 20.1% increase for Grade 5, 23.8% for Grade 6, and 18.8% for Grade 8. Overall, K-5 enrollment has slightly dropped by -0.6% but grades 6-8 have grown by more than

10.6%. Nevertheless, the enrollment trend at Weymouth Township should be examined with caution because of the generally smaller size of each grade level program.

TABLE 5: Weymouth Township School District 2017-2021 Enrollment

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2017-2020	Average 5-year % Change
Pre-K	18	18	11	14	21	16.7%	9.6%
KG	12	20	18	9	12	0.0%	10.0%
Grade 1	15	11	20	15	11	-26.7%	0.9%
Grade 2	21	15	11	18	13	-38.1%	-4.8%
Grade 3	11	21	14	11	20	81.8%	29.5%
Grade 4	17	13	25	12	13	-23.5%	6.3%
Grade 5	13	17	10	23	14	7.7%	20.1%
Grade 6	15	15	18	12	25	66.7%	23.8%
Grade 7	14	15	13	16	12	-14.3%	-2.0%
Grade 8	12	16	14	13	21	75.0%	18.8%
Ungraded	5	4	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
TOTAL K-8	153	165	154	143	162	5.9%	1.8%
K-5 Total	107	115	109	102	104	-2.8%	-0.6%
6-8 Total	41	46	45	41	58	41.5%	10.6%

**"Ungraded" is not included in the total*

As the largest of three districts in this study, Buena Regional consists of all level programs from Pre-K to Grade 12. Enrollment changes are also mixed over the same five-year period (see Table 6). The Collings Lakes School enrollment in Pre-K through Grade 2 has increased by an average of 13.3%. This largest percent change within the district may be attributed to the expansion of Pre-K program beginning in 2019. By looking at two points in time, Collings Lakes’ enrollment was about 50% higher in 2021 than five years ago in 2017. At Milanesi, Pre-K to Grade 2 enrollment has declined by -4.9%. Cleary has also seen a decline by -1.7% in its Grades 3-5 enrollment. On average, K-5 enrollment across the three elementary schools has remained largely unchanged (0.1%). Both middle school and high school at Buena have been on a downward trend from 2017 to 2021, by an average of -5.3% and -3.3% respectively. Overall enrollment at Buena Regional School District has slightly decreased by an average -2.4% over the five years. In Academic Year (AY) 2021-2022, total enrollment was down to 1,573 from 1,739 in AY2017-2018, by 166 students (-9.5%) for the entire school district.

TABLE 6: Buena Regional School District 2017-2021 Enrollment

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change from 2017-2021	Average 5-year % Change
Pre-K			55	43	52	n/a	n/a
K	47	38	41	55	47	0.0%	2.1%
Grade 1	42	40	41	47	58	38.1%	8.9%
Grade 2	36	34	41	41	43	19.4%	5.0%
Ungraded	8	7	8	11	0	n/a	n/a
Collings Lakes Total	133	119	186	197	200	50.4%	13.3%
Pre-K	82	82	57	61	55	-32.9%	-8.3%
K	74	60	67	44	48	-35.1%	-8.1%
Grade 1	61	63	70	73	46	-24.6%	-4.6%
Grade 2	52	58	58	72	70	34.6%	8.2%
Ungraded	19	19	17	9	16	n/a	n/a
Milanesi Total	288	282	269	259	235	-18.4%	-4.9%
Grade 3	100	89	91	95	107	7.0%	2.1%
Grade 4	100	93	95	89	92	-8.0%	-1.9%
Grade 5	96	94	103	97	90	-6.3%	-1.4%
Ungraded	30	30	33	28	14	n/a	n/a
Dr. JP Cleary Total	326	306	322	309	303	-7.1%	-1.7%
Buena K-5 Total	747	707	777	765	738	-1.2%	-0.1%
Grade 6	145	101	103	107	104	-28.3%	-6.8%
Grade 7	116	132	104	109	120	3.4%	1.9%
Grade 8	127	112	137	101	101	-20.5%	-3.9%
Ungraded	33	30	20	19	12	n/a	n/a
Buena MS Total	421	375	364	336	337	-20.0%	-5.3%
Grade 9	134	138	118	146	114	-14.9%	-2.4%
Grade 10	137	120	140	114	141	2.9%	2.3%
Grade 11	144	138	118	130	105	-27.1%	-6.9%
Grade 12	132	141	136	121	120	-9.1%	-2.1%
Ungraded	24	28	21	24	18	n/a	n/a
Buena HS Total	571	565	533	535	498	-12.8%	-3.3%
Buena Regional Total	1739	1647	1674	1636	1573	-9.5%	-2.4%

In Table 7, enrollment data are compared among the three school districts, by two major grade levels—Grade K-5 and Grade 6-8. These two level totals do not include “ungraded” enrollment data which may or may not add up to the K-8 totals. On average, both K-5 and 6-8 levels have seen a slight decrease at all three school districts by -1.2%, -0.6%, and -0.1% respectively over

the five years. At Estell Manor and Weymouth Township, enrollment at grades 6-8 has slightly increased by an average of 1.1%, while at Weymouth Township the same grade enrollment has jumped by more than 10%. At Buena Regional, all three levels including high school have experienced a decline: -0.1% for K-5, -5.3% for 6-8, and -3.3% for high school. Overall, Buena Regional’s enrollment in K-12 was down by -2.4%.

TABLE 7: Comparative Enrollment by School and Level

School & Level	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	% Change 2017-2021	Average 5-year % Change
Estell Manor							
Grade K-5	123	118	123	122	117	-4.9%	-1.2%
Grade 6-8	61	63	71	65	63	3.3%	1.1%
Total K-8	184	181	195	189	180	-2.2%	-0.4%
Weymouth Township							
Grade K-5	107	115	109	102	104	-2.8%	-0.6%
Grade 6-8	41	46	45	41	58	41.5%	10.6%
Total K-8	153	165	154	143	162	5.9%	1.8%
Buena Regional							
Grade K-5	747	707	777	765	738	-1.2%	-0.1%
Grade 6-8	421	375	364	336	337	-20.0%	-5.3%
Total K-8	1168	1082	1141	1101	1075	-8.0%	-1.9%
HS	571	565	533	535	498	-12.8%	-3.3%
Total K-12	1739	1647	1674	1636	1573	-9.5%	-2.4%

Table 8 presents an enrollment trend by minority and its proportion from 2017 to 2021. Minority in this analysis is defined as a combination of these reported races: Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, and Hawaiian Native. Blacks and Hispanics are proportionally predominant among these racial groups across all three school districts. For convenience purposes, “Two or More Race” is also included in the minority proportion due to a very small number of students reported in the category.

Proportion of minority enrollment at Estell Manor was 6.0% in 2017 but increased to 11.1% in 2021, while the Weymouth Township school had higher proportion of minority students, which also increased from 21.6% in 2017 to 25.3% in 2021. Both schools have increased its minority enrollment over the five years. In contrast, Buena Regional schools appear to be on the downward trend in minority enrollment over the same period by an overall -12.4% compared with a considerable growth at 81.8% and 24.2% respectively at Estell Manor and Weymouth Township. There was a decline of -13.6% in minority enrollment at Buena Regional’s K-8 levels, and high school minority enrollment also dropped significantly by -9.5% from 2017 to 2021.

TABLE 8: Enrollment Characteristics by Race

	2017			2021			Minority % Change from 2017-2021
	Total Enrollment	Minority* Enrollment	Proportion of Minority	Total Enrollment	Minority* Enrollment	Proportion of Minority	
Estell Manor K-8	184	11	6.0%	180	20	11.1%	81.8%
Weymouth Twp. K-8	153	33	21.6%	162	41	25.3%	24.2%
Buena Regional K-8	1168	558	47.8%	1075	482	44.8%	-13.6%
HS	571	243	42.6%	498	220	44.2%	-9.5%
Total	1739	801	46.1%	1573	702	44.6%	-12.4%

Section II-D: Regional Demographic Indicators

Overall population in NJ grew by nearly 6% between censuses 2010 to 2020. While most NJ counties (15 out of 21) had seen a positive change in population (ranging from 1% to 14%), only four counties experienced a decline (-2% or -3%). Atlantic County and Hunterdon County remained unchanged (0%) during the same period of ten years. Two Atlantic County’s neighboring counties had seen a population decline by -2.1% and -1.8% respectively (see Table 9 below).

TABLE 9: Southern NJ Shore Counties: Population Change (2010 to 2020)

	Census 2010	Census 2020	# Change	% Change
New Jersey	8,791,894	9,288,994	497,100	5.7%
Atlantic County	274,534	274,549	-15	0.0%
Cape May County	97,265	95,263	-2,002	-2.1%
Cumberland County	156,898	154,152	-2,746	-1.8%

Demographic Trends

The components of future enrollment growth depend largely on overall population growth, the natural growth rate due to births, the net migration of younger households, and the availability of the housing stock. Births and in-migration greatly influence the age of the population while housing data gives an indication of demand for residency in a municipality, part of which is driven by the quality of the schools as well as the school tax rate.

Table 10 displays the census data on the three municipalities as compared with the overall change in Atlantic County population, which remained unchanged in 2020 Census. Of the 23 towns/boroughs in the County, **only five had experienced a population growth**. All other townships had seen a decline anywhere between -1% and -18%, including the four municipalities that the three school districts currently serve. Population in Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township declined by -2.2% and -7.1% respectively. Estell Manor City saw a decline by -3.9%, and Weymouth Township had similar change at -3.7%.

The negative changes in the population of the four municipalities **may have an important impact on school enrollment in the three districts**. The population sizes in Estell Manor City and Weymouth Township are much smaller than the two Buena municipalities, thus their potentially declining enrollment in K-8 may further affect the already negative growth in grades 9-12 at Buena if they continue to send students to attend high school.

TABLE 10: Population Change of the Municipalities in the Study (2010 to 2020)

	Census 2010	Census 2020	# Change	% Change
Atlantic County	274,549	274,534	-15	0.0%
Buena Borough	4,603	4,501	-102	-2.2%
Buena Vista Township	7,570	7,033	-537	-7.1%
Estell Manor City	1,735	1,668	-67	-3.9%
Weymouth Township	2,715	2,614	-101	-3.7%

Although overall population has declined for the four municipalities, proportions of minority have increased across three townships, as shown in Table 11. In 2020, there was a 4% increase in minority population (i.e., Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, Native Americans, Hawaiian Native, and Two or More Race) in Buena Borough from 2010 to 2020, compared with the significant state and county increases by 25% and 10.6% respectively. That same percentage change was down slightly by -1.2% in Buena Vista Township. The other two municipalities saw a considerable increase in minority population: from 76 in 2010 to 157 in 2020 (more than doubled) in Estell Manor City, and from 316 to 405 (a 28% increase) in Weymouth Township over the ten years.

TABLE 11: Population Characteristics by Race (2010-2020)

	2010				
	Total Population	White	Minority	Proportion of Minority	
New Jersey	8,791,894	5,214,878	3,577,016	40.7%	
Atlantic County	274,549	160,871	113,678	41.4%	
Buena Borough	4,603	2,685	1,918	41.7%	
Buena Vista Township	7,570	5,509	2,061	27.2%	
Estell Manor City	1,735	1,659	76	4.4%	
Weymouth Township	2,715	2,399	316	11.6%	
	2020				Minority % Change 2010-2020
	Total Population	White	Minority	Proportion of Minority	
New Jersey	9,288,994	4,816,381	4,472,613	48.1%	25.0%
Atlantic County	274,534	148,858	125,676	45.8%	10.6%
Buena Borough	4,501	2,507	1,994	44.3%	4.0%
Buena Vista Township	7,033	4,996	2,037	29.0%	-1.2%
Estell Manor City	1,668	1,511	157	9.4%	106.6%
Weymouth Township	2,614	2,209	405	15.5%	28.2%

Most recent data are available from 2016-2020 on births in the four municipalities as shown in Table 12. The 5-year changes are mixed in the trend of new births: Buena Borough had a moderate growth by 5.7% from 2016 to 2020 with an average yearly change of 4%; Buena Vista Township experienced a decline of nearly 14% with an average yearly change of nearly 3%; and Estell Manor and Weymouth Township each went in opposite directions, with the former seen in a decline by -14% between 2016 and 2020 and the latter more than doubled the number of births by 115% over the same period. The total number of births in all four municipalities increased by 3.7% from 2016 to 2020, while overall birth rate in Atlantic County was down slightly by -1.5%. Any positive or negative trend in recent five-year births may have direct impact on near future kindergarten level enrollment, as well as on other higher-level enrollment, based on the “cohort-survival rate” model. For instance, it is possible that, as indicated in Table 7, K-8 enrollment at Buena School District may continue to decline in the next several years as a result of the 5-year downward trend in births in Buena Vista Township. However, there seemed to be an upward trend in the number of births for the four municipalities combined, which may help stabilize K-8 enrollment across the three school districts as a whole.

TABLE 12: Births by Municipality 5-Year Trend (2016-2020)

Municipality/Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	5-Year Total	Average Yearly % Change	% Change from 2016-2020
Buena Borough	35	40	36	49	37	197	4.0%	5.7%
Buena Vista Twp.	72	60	59	69	62	322	-2.9%	-13.9%
Estell Manor City	14	7	13	18	12	64	10.2%	-14.3%
Weymouth Twp.	13	10	12	18	28	81	25.6%	115.4%
Total	134	117	120	154	139	664	2.1%	3.7%
Atlantic County	2,831	2,808	2,778	2,829	2,789	14,035	-0.4%	-1.5%

Section II-E:

Economic Factors: Housing and Labor Market Trends

It has been about 15 years since the subprime mortgage crisis began in 2007-2008. The housing market has been directly impacted in southern New Jersey. According to NJ Department of Labor (DOL) data on new housing units, the number of building permits in the three south Jersey shore counties has not returned to its peak in the year of 2007 right before the financial crisis. Like Cape May and Cumberland counties, Atlantic County has seen a continued decline in the construction of new housing units in recent five years as shown in the following two data tables.

The most recent five-years' data in Table 13 do not show a consistent trend in the number of authorized permits for each of the four municipalities and only a very small number of permits issued across the five years from 2017 to 2021, thus a percent change analysis may not be meaningful. Buena Borough saw no building units authorized during 2017 and 2018; there was none in 2019 for Estell; and 2018 was the only year when Weymouth was issued five permits but none in the other four years. Buena Vista Twp., the largest in population, has had only one or two new building permits in 2018, 2019 and 2021, and in the other two years, there were four units authorized in 2017 and 2020 respectively. However, none of the five years was comparable to the year of 2007 with a total of 19 units. When combining the data for the four municipalities across the five years, the overall trend in the number of permits seems uncertain but no single year's data was comparable to that in the year of 2007.

TABLE 13: Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits (2017-2021)

Municipality	2007	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Buena Borough	1	0	0	2	8	3
Buena Vista Twp.	19	4	1	1	4	2
Estell Manor City	7	2	3	0	4	1
Weymouth Twp.	3	0	5	0	0	0
All Four Municipalities	30	6	9	3	16	6
Atlantic County Totals	1,136	1,090	833	957	667	804

It is probably more meaningful to review additional historical data for a consistent trend. Table 14 below displays 20-year data in a combination of every five years from 2002-2006, 2007-2011, 2012-2016, and 2017-2021. For each of the municipalities, **the data clearly present an overall downward trend from the peak market** during the five years after the new millennium until the financial crisis around 2007-2008. In Buena Borough, the total number of building permits during 2012-2016 was only 2 but jumped up to total of 13 during the five years of 2017-2021. But that recent total was down considerably by -66%, compared with a total of 38 from the first five years (2002-2006). For each of the other municipalities, a similar declining trend occurred by a large margin (over -80%) between the period of 2002-2006 and recent five years of 2017-2021. In other words, these four towns have followed the same downward trend as most other towns in south Jersey shore counties in the past 20 years and have not been able to return to the peak time of new constructions in the early 2000s.

TABLE 14: Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits (20-Year Trend from 2002-2021)

Municipality	Total 2002-2006	Total 2007-2011	Total 2012-2016	Total 2017-2021	% Change from 1st 5-Year to Recent 5-Year
Buena Borough	38	16	2	13	-66%
Buena Vista Twp.	87	54	25	12	-86%
Estell Manor City	56	23	9	10	-82%
Weymouth Twp.	29	10	8	5	-83%
All Four Municipalities	210	103	44	40	-81%
Atlantic County Totals	10,275	3,344	3,440	4,351	-58%

Due to the declining trend in general populations and decreasing birth rates in these areas, significant changes in the housing market turnaround should not be expected in the next several years. **Thus, it is hard to imagine that student enrollment will increase in the three school districts.**

Another possible contributing factor to the declining enrollment is the local job market. Historically the unemployment rate in Atlantic County remains high compared to most other counties in NJ. As indicated in Table 15 below, the recent 10-year average jobless rate for Atlantic County was 9.6% as opposed to overall NJ 6.3%. Since 2012, Atlantic County’s rate has been high until 2019 when the jobless rate was the lowest at 4.8% in its recent history. When Covid-19 pandemic hit worldwide in 2020, the County’s jobless rate soared at 17.2%, the highest among all 23 NJ counties, but scaled down to 9.5% in 2021. Unemployment rates in the four municipalities have largely mirrored the same County’s trend in the past ten years but remain significantly higher than most of the other counties within the state.

TABLE 15: Local Unemployment Rate % (10-Year Trend)

Municipality	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	10-year Average (2012-2021)
Buena Borough	7.5	5.8	5.1	12.2	9.5	9.3
Buena Vista Township	7.8	7.3	5.7	13.7	10.7	10.4
Estell Manor City	7.9	6.4	5.1	12.4	9.5	9.5
Weymouth Township	6.5	6.1	4.1	12.3	8.5	8.5
Atlantic County, NJ	7.1	5.7	4.8	17.2	9.5	9.6
New Jersey	4.5	4.0	3.4	9.5	6.3	6.3

Section II-F: Enrollment Projections

Methodology

Enrollment projections are based on 10-year historical data from 2012 to 2021 as reported in ASSA to NJ DOE.

A **simple moving average (SMA)** method is used to project enrollments for the next five years. SMA is one of the common statistical techniques in business to forecast likely future sales and is useful for predicting long-term trends. This technique is often applied in other fields to get an overall idea of the trends in a dataset by calculating the moving average of a time series of historical data. Due to the nature of the enrollment data variability, SMA would be an appropriate method to conduct projection analyses, which can help smooth out any upward and/or downward trends. Because the most recent 5-year data (2017-2021) are more variable than the previous 5 years (2012-2016), the following projections, as shown in Tables 16, 17, 18 and 19, are based on 10-year trend data to smooth out the somewhat upward and downward data in order

to estimate a more accurate enrollment trend direction for the next 5 years. In addition to each grade level projection, three major levels (K-5, 6-8 and 9-12) are combined for the purposes of comparing the three school districts.

In Table 16, 5-year projections for each of the 12 grade levels are analyzed for the Buena Schools. The ten-year data trend shows a consistent decline in enrollment from 2012 to 2021 for most grade levels at Buena: recent average 5-year enrollment in K-5 dropped by -0.9%; grades 6-8 declined by -2.8%, and grades 9-12 declined by -4.1%. Based on these changes, the projected enrollment for the next five years from 2022 to 2026 continues to be on the downward trend: K-5 by -0.3%, grades 6-8 by -1.1%, and grades 9-12 also by -1.1%.

TABLE 16: Buena Regional School District Enrollment Projections

2017-2021 Trend Analysis					2022-2026 Enrollment Projections					
	2017	2021	% Change 2017-2021	Average 5-year % Change	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	% Change 2022- 2026
Pre-K	82	107	30.5%	3.4%	108	106	107	107	107	-0.9%
K	121	95	-21.5%	-3.2%	101	99	98	99	99	-2.1%
Grade 1	103	104	1.0%	0.9%	112	112	109	111	111	-1.0%
Grade 2	88	113	28.4%	3.0%	108	111	111	110	111	2.3%
Grade 3	100	107	7.0%	2.5%	98	100	101	99	100	2.4%
Grade 4	100	92	-8.0%	-1.6%	92	91	92	92	91	-0.6%
Grade 5	96	90	-6.3%	-7.5%	97	95	94	95	94	-2.3%
Total K-5	690	708	2.6%	-0.9%	715	713	712	713	713	-0.3%
Grade 6	145	104	-28.3%	-2.1%	105	105	105	105	105	0.2%
Grade 7	116	120	3.4%	-0.5%	111	113	115	113	114	2.4%
Grade 8	127	101	-20.5%	-2.8%	113	105	106	108	106	-5.8%
Total 6-8	388	325	-16.2%	-2.8%	329	324	326	326	325	-1.1%
Grade 9	134	114	-14.9%	-3.1%	126	129	123	126	126	-0.2%
Grade 10	137	141	2.9%	-0.1%	132	129	134	131	131	-0.2%
Grade 11	144	105	-27.1%	-5.5%	118	118	113	116	116	-1.7%
Grade 12	132	120	-9.1%	-4.6%	126	122	123	124	123	-2.3%
Total 9-12	547	480	-12.2%	-4.1%	501	497	493	497	496	-1.1%
Ungraded	114	60	-47.4%	-6.5%	83	78	74	78	77	-7.9%
Grand Total	1739	1573	-9.5%	-2.8%	1628	1612	1604	1615	1610	-1.1%

For Estell School, Table 17 presents projections of enrollment at each grade level and by combined two major levels—K-5 and grades 6-8. Average 5-year enrollment in K-5 remained much unchanged at -0.3% from 2017-2021 though grades 6-8 saw a slight increase of 3.9%, or a change by a few headcount students over the period because of the relatively small enrollment size in these three grade levels. The projections based on historical data indicate that there will be little or no growth in enrollment for most grade levels at Estell for the next five years: both K-5 and 6-8 grades as combined are expected to see a slight decrease by -0.8% and -2.1% respectively from 2022 to 2026.

TABLE 17: Estell Manor School District Enrollment Projections

2017-2021 Trend Analysis					2022 - 2026 Enrollment Projections					
	2017	2021	% Change 2017-2021	Average 5-year % Change	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	% Change 2022-2026
KG	21	17	-19.0%	-0.4%	19	18	18	18	18	-4.7%
Grade 1	20	17	-15.0%	-2.7%	20	19	19	19	19	-4.2%
Grade 2	20	21	5.0%	9.6%	21	21	21	21	21	0.1%
Grade 3	15	21	40.0%	0.7%	20	20	21	20	20	0.8%
Grade 4	23	21	-8.7%	0.8%	21	21	21	21	21	0.9%
Grade 5	24	20	-16.7%	-1.3%	19	20	20	20	20	1.9%
Total K-5	123	117	-4.9%	-0.3%	121	120	119	120	120	-0.8%
Grade 6	21	23	9.5%	13.9%	21	20	21	21	21	0.4%
Grade 7	14	19	35.7%	0.9%	22	21	21	21	21	-5.5%
Grade 8	26	21	-19.2%	18.1%	23	23	23	23	23	-1.2%
Total 6-8	61	63	3.3%	3.9%	66	65	65	65	65	-2.1%
School Total	184	180	-2.2%	1.0%	187	185	184	185	185	-1.3%

The scenario for Weymouth Township School is somewhat different from Buena Regional and Estell Manor. In Table 18, the historical data and projections suggest a mixed trend due to a much larger data variability across 10 years. In other words, enrollment at most grade levels has fluctuated since 2012. While in K-5, average 5-year change was -1.8% from 2017-2021, grades 6-8 seemed to experience a considerable increase by nearly 12%. However, previous 5-year enrollment change from 2012-2016 on average was up by nearly 15%. Nonetheless, projected enrollment data is expected to follow a similar trend for the next five years: K-5 enrollment is projected to decline slightly by -0.9% from 2022 to 2026, and grades 6-8 are expected to increase moderately by 4.3%.

TABLE 18: Weymouth Township School District Enrollment Projections

2017-2021 Trend Analysis					2022 -2026 Enrollment Projections					
	2017	2021	% Change 2017-2021	Average 5-year % Change	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	% Change 2022-2026
Pre-K	18	21	16.7%	10.2%	15	17	18	17	17	11.1%
KG	12	12	0.0%	0.6%	13	11	12	12	12	-8.7%
Grade 1	15	11	-26.7%	-5.0%	15	14	13	14	14	-10.2%
Grade 2	21	13	-38.1%	6.1%	14	15	14	14	14	3.2%
Grade 3	11	20	81.8%	19.3%	15	15	17	16	16	6.3%
Grade 4	17	13	-23.5%	11.2%	17	14	15	15	14	-13.1%
Grade 5	13	14	7.7%	10.5%	16	18	16	16	17	5.6%
Total K-5	107	104	-2.8%	-1.8%	105	104	104	104	104	-0.9%
Grade 6	15	25	66.7%	29.0%	18	18	21	19	19	5.7%
Grade 7	14	12	-14.3%	3.8%	14	14	13	14	14	-0.8%
Grade 8	12	21	75.0%	12.2%	16	17	18	17	17	7.1%
Total 6-8	41	58	41.5%	11.9%	48	49	52	50	50	4.3%
School Total	153	162	5.9%	1.2%	153	153	156	154	154	0.7%

Demographic Summary

In the following Table 19, projections of enrollment at the combined two major levels (K-5 and Grades 6-8) are presented for each school district for comparison purposes. The projected changes in these two levels of enrollment are expected to have direct impact on grades 9-12 enrollment at Buena Regional if it continues to receive students from the other two districts to attend its high school. The only change in enrollment growth is seen at the 6-8 level of Weymouth Township School: a projected increase from 48 students in 2022 to 50 in 2026, or by 4.3%, though such size of growth at Weymouth Township itself may not significantly impact the overall high school enrollment at Buena Regional. Recall enrollment trend data in Tables 5 and 18 that the enrollment size at the Weymouth Township 6-8 level had been from 41 to 46 between 2017 and 2020, but there was a significant increase to 58 in school year 2021-2022. This seemingly unexpected change affected the statistical model that caused the projection a slight upward trend in the next five years. The other two school districts and K-5 at Weymouth Township will not see much change in the projected enrollment at either level but tend to decline slightly from 2022 to 2026.

These projections are analyzed based on historical trend data by using a statistical technique called “**simple moving average.**” Other factors may also impact future enrollment, including such economic changes as shifts in regional demographics, birth rates, migration/seasonality, and housing and labor markets.

As previously stated, ***the negative changes in the population*** of the four municipalities may have an important impact on school enrollment in the three districts. The population sizes in Estell Manor City and Weymouth Township are much smaller than the two Buena municipalities, thus their potentially declining enrollment in K-8 may further affect the already negative growth in grades 9-12 at Buena if they continue to send students to attend high school.

The most recent five-year data in the housing market by building permits, do not show a consistent trend in the number of authorized permits for each of the four municipalities and only a very small number of permits issued across the five years from 2017 to 2021.

Due to the declining trend in general populations and decreasing birth rates in these areas, significant changes in the housing market turnaround should not be expected in the next several years. **Student enrollment may not increase in the three school districts.**

The ten-year data trend shows a consistent decline in enrollment from 2012 to 2021 for most grade levels at Buena Regional School District.

The projections based on historical data indicate that there will be **little or no growth** in enrollment for most grade levels at Estell Manor School District for the next five years.

Weymouth School is somewhat different from Buena and Estell Manor. The historical data and projections suggest a mixed trend due to a much larger data variability across 10 years. In the next five years: K-5 enrollment is projected to decline slightly by -0.9% from 2022 to 2026, and grades 6-8 are expected to increase moderately by 4.3%.

However, births by municipalities, in the four identified areas, may trend upward which may help stabilize K -8 enrollment across the three districts in the future.

TABLE 19: Enrollment Projections Summary

School	Major Grade Level	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	% Change from 2022-2026
Buena Regional District	K-5	715	713	712	713	713	-0.3%
	6-8	329	324	326	326	325	-1.1%
	Total	1043	1037	1038	1039	1038	-0.5%
Estell Manor District	K-5	121	120	119	120	120	-0.8%
	6-8	66	65	65	65	65	-2.1%
	Total	187	185	184	185	185	-1.3%
Weymouth Township District	K-5	105	104	104	104	104	-0.9%
	6-8	48	49	52	50	50	4.3%
	Total	153	153	156	154	154	0.7%

SECTION III: ACADEMIC INFORMATION

Curriculum and Instruction

All district data provided in this section is from the 2020-21 school year unless otherwise noted. District data is downloaded from <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us> and from their school websites. Some curriculum and academic information were provided by district administration as designated.

Section III-A: Buena Regional School District

The grade PK-12 Buena Regional School District has five school buildings: Buena Regional High School, Buena Regional Middle School, Dr. JP Cleary Elementary School, Collings Lakes Elementary School and John C. Milanese Elementary School.

Students from Estell Manor and Weymouth Township attend Buena Regional High School.

Since 2014, approximately 5% of Buena Regional grade 9-12 students attend the Atlantic County Institute of Technology.

Buena Regional’s total student population listed in Table 20 for the 2020-2021 School Performance Report is 1,592 students. As reported, the percentage of Buena’s economically disadvantaged students is five times the stage average of 10.02%. Their students with disabilities population slightly exceeds the state average of 17%.

TABLE 20: Buena Regional School District Enrollment 2020-2021

Total District Students	Grades Offered	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	English Learners	Student to Teacher Ratio	Average Teacher Experience
1592	PK-12	55.1%	19.7%	3.1%	11:1	14.4 years

Table 21 indicates the percentages of Buena Regional students who graduated high school within four or five years. Both the four-year and five-year graduation rates fell short of the state averages by 3.1% and 4.7% respectively.

TABLE 21: Buena Regional: Are Students Graduating?

State Percentages	4 Year Graduation Cohort 2021	5 Year Graduation Cohort 2021
Below State 0-90.9%	87.5%	87.9%
Met State 91-94.9%		
Met Goal 95-100%		

Table 22 reports the percentage of students in the 2021 cohort who graduated, who are still enrolled ("Continuing Students"), or who dropped out of school or are no longer enrolled ("Non-Continuing Students") within four years of entering high school, both overall and by student group. This table is based on the state version of the graduation rate, which reflects all students who received a state-endorsed diploma.

Graduation assessment requirements for the 2021 cohort **were waived for any 12th grade student** who had not yet met the graduation assessment requirements, but had met all credit, curriculum, and attendance requirements for graduation. Additionally, the requirement to report on status in meeting annual ESSA targets was waived for 2020-2021. As a result, NJDOE annual targets and status in meeting those targets are not reported for Cohort 2020 4-year and Cohort 2019 5-year graduation rates. While dropout data is available for 2020-2021, it is unclear how the pandemic and changes to state and local policies may have affected dropout rates for the 2020-2021 school year.

Buena Regional High School’s 4-Year graduation rate exceeds the State Average in African American and female subgroup student populations.

TABLE 22: Buena Regional Cohort 2021: 4-Year Graduation Cohort Profile

Student Group 2021 Cohort	Graduates	Continuing Students	Non- Continuing Students	State Graduates	State Continuing Students	State Non- Continuing Students
Districtwide	87.5%	4.4%	8.1%	90.6%	4.7%	4.7%
White	86.4%	3.7%	9.9%	90.6%	3.0%	2.1%
Hispanic	89.3%	3.6%	7.1%	94.8%	6.8%	8.7%
African American	91.7%	4.2%	4.2%	84.5%	7.5%	7.9%
Asian, Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	*	*	*	84.6%	2.0%	1.0%
American Indian or Alaska Native	N	N	N	97.0%	5.4%	4.7%
Two or More Races	*	*	*	89.9%	4.1%	5.0%
Female	97.0%	0.0%	3.0%	90.9%	3.4%	3.6%
Male	78.3%	8.7%	13.0%	93.0%	5.9%	5.8%
Economically Disadvantaged	N	N	N	88.3%	N	N
Students with Disabilities	85.0%	3.8%	11.3%	N	7.0%	8.2%

As revealed in Table 23, Buena Regional Student Dual Enrollment, 2 Year College Enrollment and AP/IB Scores exceed the state average for New Jersey Schools.

Regarding Career and College Ready per <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us>, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many high school students were not able to take the Technical Skills Assessments (TSA), which are end-of-program assessments for Career and Technical Education programs, in spring 2021. This may have impacted the number of industry-valued credentials earned during the 2020-2021 school year.

TABLE 23: Buena Regional Are Students College and Career Ready?

College/Career Ready 2020-21	District	State
AP/IB Courses: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders enrolled in one or more Advanced Placement (AP) or International Baccalaureate (IB) course	32.3%	35.7%
Dual Enrollment: Percentage of 11th and 12th graders enrolled in one or more dual enrollment course, which is a course that allows high school students to enroll in college courses for credit prior to graduation	47.6%	22.3%
Industry-Valued Credentials: Percentage of 9th-12th graders who earned one or more industry-valued credential during the school year	0.0%	0.9%
College Enrollment: Percentage of 2021 graduates enrolled in college or university by fall of 2021	38.3% 2-year institution 61.7% 4-year institution	25.4%, 74.6%
AP/IB Scores: Students with one or more exams with a score of at least 3 on AP exams or 4 on IB exam	32%	17.9%

Student growth is a measure of how students are learning each year. Each student receives a Student Growth Percentile for English Language Arts (ELA) in Grades 4 through 8 and for Mathematics in grades 4 through 7 that explains their progress compared to students who had the same test scores in the previous years. Student growth is measured by median student growth percentile.

Table 24 shows student growth over the last four years compared to the state standard of 40-59.5 and to the statewide median. Due to the cancellation of statewide assessments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, student growth percentile was not calculated and was not reported for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.

Buena Regional met ELA Standards in 2018-19 and Math Standards in both the 2017-2018 and 2018-19 school years.

TABLE 24: Buena Regional Language Arts and Math Median Student Growth Percentile

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Math	2018-2019 Math	2019-2021 Math
Median Student Growth Percentile	32.0	40	NA	41.0	44	NA
Standard (40-59.5)	Not Met Standard	Met Standard		Met Standard	Met Standard	
Statewide: Median Student Growth Percentile	50	50	NA	50	50	NA

Table 25 indicates trends in the Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability over the last four years. Data includes the results of students taking both the statewide assessment (NJSLA for 2018-19 and PARCC for 2017-18) and the DLM alternate assessment. The Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability measures the percentage of students that met or exceeded expectations on the assessments (NJSLA/PARCC or DLM) with an adjustment made if the participation rate is below 95% to ensure reporting on at least 95% of students. NJSLA/PARCC results include only students in grades 3 through 10. Students enrolled for less than half a school year are excluded from performance results.

Buena Regional Students met 2018-19 ELA district annual targets. The 2017-2018 measures for ELA and all years’ measures for Mathematics fell short of target.

TABLE 25: Buena Regional Language Arts and Math Performance Trends

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Math	2018-2019 Math	2019-2021 Math
Participation Rate	93.8%	97.7%	NA	93.4%	97.5%	NA
Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	29.3%	33.3%	NA	23%	23.4%	NA
Annual Target	32.4%	35.0%	NA	29.7%	32.5%	NA
Met Annual Target?	Not Met	Met	NA	Not Met	Not Met	NA
Statewide Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	56.7%	57.9%	NA	45.0%	44.5%	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by grade level on the statewide assessment for English Language Arts for the past four years is shown in Table 26. 2018-19 data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment. Due to the cancellation of statewide assessments and a federal waiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-20 and 2020-21 statewide assessment results are not available.

TABLE 26: Buena Regional Language Arts Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

% Met/Exceed Expectations	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts
Grade 3	38%	33%	NA
Grade 4	25%	34%	NA
Grade 5	27%	26%	NA
Grade 6	17%	27%	NA
Grade 7	33%	31%	NA
Grade 8	33%	33%	NA
Grade 9	30%	28%	NA
Grade 10	35%	53%	NA
Grade 11	21%	NA	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by grade level on the statewide assessment in Mathematics for the past four years is shown in Table 27. 2018-19 data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment.

2018-19 results for Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II do not include students in grade 11, but 2017-18 results do include students in grade 11. Therefore, trend data for these assessments may not be comparable.

TABLE 27: Buena Regional Math Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

% Met/Exceed Expectations	2017-2018 Mathematics	2018-2019 Mathematics	2019-2021 Mathematics
Grade 3	43%	28%	NA
Grade 4	17%	23%	NA
Grade 5	23%	21%	NA
Grade 6	13%	22%	NA
Grade 7	30%	20%	NA
Grade 8	21%	30%	NA
Algebra I	23%	23%	NA
Geometry	14%	16%	NA
Algebra II	25%	30%	NA

Table 28 reports the number of Buena Regional Middle School students who were enrolled in Algebra I, II and Geometry and the number of students enrolled in “Other World Languages”. No grade 6-8 students were reported as enrolled in Spanish, French, Italian, Latin, German or Chinese World Language courses.

Also provided in Table 28 below are the percentages of middle school students enrolled in Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama and for comparison State participation percentages are included.

No Buena Regional Middle School students were reported as enrolled in Computer Science or Information Technology courses.

Students are counted more than once in Table 28 if they were enrolled in courses across multiple subject areas.

TABLE 28: Buena Regional Middle School Course Participation 2020-21

Grades 6-8	Algebra I & II and Geometry (Grade 8 only)	“Other World Languages” (Grades 7 & 8)	Visual Arts	Music	Dance	Drama
District	21 students	108 students	85.5%	18.1%	0	84.6%
State %	-	-	68.6%	60.7%	3.2%	6.7%

Climate and Environment

The NJ DOE Climate and Environment data, per <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/download>, states due to the COVID-19 pandemic, discipline data for the 2020-2021 school year may not be comparable to prior or future school years and NJDOE recommends caution in making comparisons.

Tables 29, 30, and 31 report data for the 2019-20 and the 2020-21 school years.

A single incident may be counted under multiple incident types. The Total Unique incidents row provides an unduplicated count of incidents.

TABLE 29: Buena Regional Violence, Vandalism, HIB, and Substance Offenses 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Incident Type	Number of Incidents 2019-20	Number of Incidents 2020-21
Violence	29	5
Weapons	1	1
Vandalism	1	0
Substances	4	3
Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB)	13	2
Total Unique Incidents	48	11

TABLE 30: Buena Regional HIB Investigations 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

HIB Nature (Protected Category)	Number of HIB Confirmed 2019-20	Total HIB Investigations 2019-20	Number of HIB Confirmed 2020-21	Total HIB Investigations 2020-21
Race	7	8	0	1
Religion	0	0	0	0
Ancestry	2	2	0	0
Gender	1	1	1	1
Sexual Orientation	3	4	2	2
Disability	0	0	0	0
Other	3	5	0	0
No Identified Nature	0	5	NA	2

TABLE 31: Buena Regional Percentage of Student Disciplinary Removals 2019-2020 and 2020-2021

Removal Type Pk-12	Percentage of Students 2019-20	Percentage of Students 2020-21
In-School Suspensions	*	*
Out-of-School Suspensions	2.4%	0.6%
Any Suspension	2.7%	0.7%
Removal to other education program	0%	0%
Expulsion	0%	0%
Arrest	0%	0%

Staff

Table 32 compares the percentage of 2020-2021 students, teachers, and administrators by gender and by racial and ethnic group. Note that 2019-20 is the first year that data was collected for non-binary/undesignated gender and, as a result, the 2020-21 data may not be a true representation of the student or staff population. Additionally, to protect student privacy percentages for 2020-21 may show a range, depending on the overall school population size.

TABLE 32: Buena Regional Student, Teacher and Administrator Demographics 2020-2021

Category 2020-2021	Students in District	Teachers in District	Administrators in District	Students in State	Teachers in State	Administrators in State
Female	49%	70-75%	40-60%	49%	77%	56%
Male	51%	25-30%	40-60%	51%	23%	44%
Non-Binary/ Undesignated	<1%	<5%	<20%	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	54.6%	91.9%	86.7%	40.5%	82.9%	76.8%
Hispanic	29.1%	4.7%	0%	31.2%	7.8%	7.6%
Black or African American	13.1%	2.7%	13.3%	15.0%	6.5%	14.0%
Asian	1.1%	0%	0%	10.4%	2.2%	1.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.1%	0%	0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian	0.9%	0.7%	0	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	0.9%	0%	0%	2.6%	0.2%	0.2%

The Student to Staff ratios in Table 33 are based on data submitted by the districts to NJ SMART and are not based on staff full-time equivalent.

Child Study Team members include school psychologists, school social workers, and learning disabilities teacher consultants. Note that the ratio below compares staff with Students with Disabilities instead of all students.

TABLE 33: Buena Regional Student to Staff Ratio 2020-2021

Ratio	2020-21 Buena Regional Ratio
Students to Teachers	11:1
Students to Administrators	106:1
Teachers to Administrators	10:1
Students to Librarians/Media Specialists	1592:1
Students to Nurses	318:1
Students to Counselors	227:1
Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members	52:1

The requirement to report status in meeting annual ESSA targets for 2020-2021 was waived. As a result, seen in Table 34, NJDOE did not report state averages and whether state averages were met for 2020-2021. The requirement to calculate indicator scores, summative scores, and progress toward long-term goals and interim progress was waived for both the 2019-2020 and

2020-2021 school years. This data was not included in the district’s reports. Due to the pandemic, absentee data may not be comparable from year to year.

TABLE 34: Buena Regional ESSA Accountability Progress 2017-2021

ESSA Accountability Indicator	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
ELA Proficiency	29.3%	33.3%	-	-
Math Proficiency	23.0%	23.4%	-	-
ELA Growth	32	40	-	-
Math Growth	41	44	-	-
4 Year Graduation Rate	83.0%	81.4%	86.6%	87.5%
5 Year Graduation Rate	89.8%	86.2%	82.0%	87.9%
Progress Toward English Language Proficiency	40.0%	37.0%	-	-
Chronic Absenteeism	19.1%	19.7%	-	5.4%

In Table 35, the ESSA requirement to identify schools for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement was waived for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement during the 2019-2020 school year for support during the 2020-2021 school year retained the same status for the 2021-2022 school year and continue to receive support and interventions from the NJDOE. **All currently identified schools will be eligible to exit status at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.**

TABLE 35: Buena Regional Schools Identified for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement

School Name	Status for 2022-23	Category of Identification	Student Group(s) Requiring Targeted Support 2022-2023
Buena Regional Middle School	Targeted Support and Improvement	Low Performing Student Group	Black or African American
Dr. J.P. Cleary Elementary School	Comprehensive Support and Improvement	Overall Low Performing	White; Hispanic; Economically Disadvantaged

Section III-B: Estell Manor School District

The grade PK-8 Estell Manor School District has one school building.

Students in grades 9-12 from Estell Manor attend Buena Regional High School. In addition, since 2014, approximately 2-3% of the high school students enrolled at the Atlantic County Institute of Technology come from Estell Manor.

Estell Manor’s total 2020-2021 student population listed in Table 36 below is 188 students. As reported, the district’s economically disadvantaged and students with disabilities populations exceeds the state average of 10.02% and 17% respectively. Notably the district reports no English Language Learners.

TABLE 36: Estell Manor School District Enrollment 2020-2021

Total District PK-8 Students	Grades Offered	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	English Learners	Student to Teacher Ratio	Average Teacher Experience
188	PK-8	17.9%	19.5%	0%	12:1	10.1 years

Student growth is a measure of how students are learning each year. Each student receives a Student Growth Percentile for English Language Arts (ELA) in Grades 4 through 8 and for Mathematics in grades 4 through 7 that explains their progress compared to students who had the same test scores in the previous years. Student growth is measured by 42 median student growth percentile.

Table 37 indicates student growth over the last four years compared to the state standard of 40-59.5 and to the statewide median. As previously mentioned, due to the cancellation of statewide assessments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, student growth percentile was not calculated and was not reported for the 2019- 20 and 2020-21 school years.

Estell Manor students met the ELA state standard in 2017-2018, and did not meet that standard in 2018-19. In Mathematics, the district met standard in 2017-18 and exceeded standard in 2018-19.

TABLE 37: Estell Manor Language Arts and Math Median Student Growth Percentile

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Math	2018-2019 Math	2019-2021 Math
Median Student Growth Percentile	54	39	NA	40	65.5	NA
Standard (40-59.5)	Met Standard	Not Met Standard	NA	Met Standard	Exceeds Standard	NA
Statewide: Median Student Growth Percentile	50	50	NA	50	50	NA

As previously documented, 2018-19 Performance Trend data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment. Due to the cancellation of statewide assessments and a federal waiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-20 and 2020-21 statewide assessment results are not available.

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations on each grade level exam on the state-wide assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics for the past four years is shown in Table 38. Annual ELA targets were met in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years. Students did not meet the Mathematics Annual targets in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.

TABLE 38: Estell Manor Language Arts and Math Performance Trends

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Mathematics	2018-2019 Mathematics	2019-2021 Mathematics
Participation Rate	100%	100%	NA	100%	100%	NA
Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	56.1%	54.2%	NA	43.9%	42.5%	NA
Annual Target	50.5%	52.1%	NA	56.7%	58%	NA
Met Annual Target?	Met	Met	NA	Not Met	Not Met	NA
Statewide Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	56.7%	57.9%	NA	45.0%	44.5%	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by grade level on the state-wide assessment for English Language Arts for the past four years is shown in Table 39. As stated above, 2018-19 data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment. Due to the cancellation of state-wide assessments and a federal waiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-20 and 2020-21 state-wide assessment results are not available.

TABLE 39: Estell Manor Language Arts Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

Meet/Exceeds Expectation by Grade	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts
Grade 3	40%	45%	-
Grade 4	55%	44%	NA
Grade 5	54%	64%	NA
Grade 6	76%	54%	NA
Grade 7	43%	68%	NA
Grade 8	63%	43%	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by grade level on the state-wide assessment for Mathematics for the past four years is shown in Table 40.

TABLE 40: Estell Manor Math Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

Meet/Exceeds Expectation by Grade	2017-2018 Mathematics	2018-2019 Mathematics	2019-2021 Mathematics
Grade 3	53%	65%	-
Grade 4	59%	31%	NA
Grade 5	21%	27%	NA
Grade 6	29%	38%	NA
Grade 7	36%	50%	NA
Grade 8	31%	NA	NA
Algebra I	93%	NA	NA

Table 41 reports the number of grade 6-8 students who were enrolled in Algebra I, II and Geometry and the number of students enrolled in “Other World Languages”. No grade 6-8 students were reported as enrolled in Spanish, French, Italian, Latin, German or Chinese World Language courses.

Also provided in Table 41 below are the percentages of middle school students enrolled in Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama and for comparison State participation percentages are included.

No Estell Manor students were reported as enrolled in Computer Science or Information Technology, nor Dance nor Drama courses.

Students are counted more than once in Table 41 if they were enrolled in courses across multiple subject areas.

TABLE 41: Estell Manor Middle School: Course Participation 2020-2021

Grades 6-8	Algebra I & II and Geometry	“Other World Languages”	Visual Arts	Music	Dance	Drama
District	9 students	66 students	100%	100%	0%	0%
State %	-	-	69.1%	63.2%	3.2%	6.7%

Climate and Environment

The NJ DOE Climate and Environment data, per <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/download>, states that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, discipline data for the 2020-2021 school year may not be

comparable to prior or future school years and NJDOE recommends caution in making comparisons.

Estell Manor reports no students involved in Violence, Vandalism, nor Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Investigations, nor Student Disciplinary Removals during the 2020-21 school year. Tables 42, 43, and 44 report data for the 2019-20 school year.

A single incident may be counted under multiple incident types. The Total Unique Incidents row provides an unduplicated count of incidents.

TABLE 42: Estell Manor Violence, Vandalism, HIB, and Substance Offenses 2019-2020

Incident Type	2019-2020 PK-8 Number of Incidents
Violence	0
Weapons	0
Vandalism	0
Substances	0
Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB)	1
Total Unique Incidents	1

TABLE 43: Estell Manor HIB Investigations 2019-2020

HIB Nature (Protected Category)	2019-2020 HIB Confirmed PK-8	2019-2020 Total HIB Investigations PK-8
Race	0	0
Religion	0	0
Ancestry	0	0
Gender	0	0
Sexual Orientation	0	0
Disability	0	0
Other	1	1
No Identified Nature	0	0

TABLE 44: Estell Manor Student Disciplinary Removals 2019-2020

Removal Type PK-8	2019-2020 Number of Students	2019-2020 Percentage of Students
In-School Suspensions	*	*
Out-of-School Suspensions	*	*
Any Suspension	*	*
Removal to other education program	0	0
Expulsion	0	0
Arrest	0	0

Staff

Table 45 compares the percentage of 2020-2021 students, teachers, and administrators by gender and by racial and ethnic group. Note that 2019-20 is the first year that data was collected for non-binary/undesignated gender and, as a result, the 2020-21 data may not be a true representation of the student or staff population. Additionally, to protect student privacy percentages for 2020-21 may show a range, depending on the overall school population size.

As a point of comparison Estell Manor’s students are 93% white, while the Buena Regional student population is 55% white, 29% Hispanic and 13% Black or African American. Teacher data indicates similar “white” percentages between Estell Manor at 94%, and Buena Regional at 92%. In addition, the percent of “white” administrators is comparable: 100% in Estell Manor and 87% in Buena Regional.

TABLE 45: Estell Manor Student, Teacher and Administrator Demographics 2020-2021

Category 2020-2021	Students in District	Teachers in District	Administrators in District	Students in State	Teachers in State	Administrators in State
Female	50-55%	>80%	*	49%	77%	56%
Male	45-50%	≤20%	*	51%	23%	44%
Non-Binary/ Undesignated	≤5%	≤20%	*	<1%	<1%	<1%
White	93.2%	93.8%	100.0%	40.5%	82.9%	76.8%
Hispanic	4.2%	0.0%	0.0%	31.2%	7.8%	7.6%
Black or African American	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%	15.0%	6.5%	14.0%
Asian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	10.4%	2.2%	1.2%
American Indian/Alaska Native	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	1.1%	6.3%	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%	0.2%

The Student to Staff ratios in Table 46 are based on data submitted by the districts to NJ SMART and are not based on staff full-time equivalent.

Child Study Team members include school psychologists, school social workers, and learning disabilities teacher consultants. Note that the child study team ratio compares Students with Disabilities instead of all students.

TABLE 46: Estell Manor Student to Staff Ratio 2020-2021

Ratio	2020-2021 Estell Manor Ratio
Student to teacher	12:1
Student to Admin	63:1
Teacher to Admin	5:1
Students to Librarians/Media Specialists	N
Students to Nurses	190:1
Students to Counselors	190:1
Students with Disabilities to child study team members	19:1

Requirements to report status in meeting annual ESSA targets for 2020-2021 was waived. As a result, NJDOE did not report state averages nor whether state averages were met for 2020-2021. The requirement to calculate indicator scores, summative scores, and progress toward long-term goals and interim progress was waived for both the 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 school years. This data was not included in district’s reports. Due to the pandemic, absentee data may not be comparable from year to year.

The ESSA requirement to identify schools for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement was waived for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. **The Estell Manor School is not identified as requiring comprehensive or targeted support.**

TABLE 47: Estell Manor ESSA Accountability Progress 2017-2021

ESSA Accountability Indicator	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
ELA Proficiency	56.1%	54.2%	-	-
Math Proficiency	43.9%	42.5%	-	-
ELA Growth	54	39	-	-
Math Growth	40	66	-	-
Progress Toward English Language Proficiency	-	-	-	-
Chronic Absenteeism	13%	10.3%	-	20.5%

Section III-C: Weymouth Township School District

The grade PK-8 Weymouth Township School District has one school building which is recognized as a National Blue Ribbon School for 2021 for overall academic excellence.

Students in grades 9-12 from Weymouth Township attend Buena Regional High School. In addition, since 2014 approximately 2-3% of Weymouth students attend the Atlantic County Institute of Technology.

Weymouth Township’s total student population listed in Table 48 for the 2020-2021 School Performance Report is 148 students. As reported, Weymouth’s percentage of economically disadvantaged students is triple that of the state average, 10.02%. Weymouth’s students with disabilities population also exceeds the state average of 17%. Notably the district reports no English Language Learners.

TABLE 48: Weymouth Township School District Enrollment 2020-2021

Total District Students	Grades Offered	Economically Disadvantaged	Students with Disabilities	English Learners	Student to Teacher Ratio	Average Teacher Experience
148	PK-8	33.8%	22.3%	0%	9:1	15.4 years

Student growth is a measure of how students are learning each year. Each student receives a Student Growth Percentile for English Language Arts (ELA) in Grades 4 through 8 and for Mathematics in grades 4 through 7 that explains their progress compared to students who had the same test scores in the previous years. Student growth is measured by 42 median student growth percentile.

Table 49 indicates student growth over the last four years compared to the state standard of 40-59.5 and to the state-wide median. As previously mentioned, due to the cancellation of state-wide assessments as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, student growth percentile was not calculated and was not reported for the 2019-20 and 2020-21 school years.

Weymouth Township students met the ELA state standard in 2017-18, and exceeded that standard in 2018-19. In Math the district exceeded standard during 2017-18 and 2018-19.

TABLE 49: Weymouth Township Language Arts and Math Median Student Growth Percentile

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Math	2018-2019 Math	2019-2021 Math
Median Student Growth Percentile	59	67	NA	76	74.5	NA
Standard (40-59.5)	Met Standard	Exceeds Standard		Exceeds Standard	Exceeds Standard	
Statewide: Median Student Growth Percentile	50	50	NA	50	50	NA

As previously documented, 2018-19 Performance Trend data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment. Due to the cancellation of statewide assessments and a federal waiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-20 and 2020-21 statewide assessment results are not available.

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations on each grade level exam on the state-wide assessment for English Language Arts and Mathematics for the past four years is shown in Table 50. Annual ELA and Math targets were met in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 school years.

TABLE 50: Weymouth Township Language Arts and Math Performance Trends

Performance Measure	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts	2017-2018 Math	2018-2019 Math	2019-2021 Math
Participation Rate	100%	100%	NA	100%	100%	NA
Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	48.3%	56.0%	NA	49.5%	53.0%	NA
Annual Target	43.4%	45.4%	NA	45.4%	47.4%	NA
Met Annual Target?	Met	Met	NA	Met	Met	NA
Statewide Proficiency Rate for Federal Accountability	56.7%	57.9%	NA	45.0%	44.5%	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by each grade level on the state-wide assessment for English Language Arts for the past four years is shown in Table 51. As stated above, 2018-19 data is from the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA) and 2017-18 data is from the PARCC assessment. Due to the cancellation of state-wide assessments and a federal waiver as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2019-20 and 2020-21 state-wide assessment results are not available.

TABLE 51: Weymouth Township Language Arts Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

Meet/Exceeds Expectation	2017-2018 English Language Arts	2018-2019 English Language Arts	2019-2021 English Language Arts
Grade 3	45%	57%	NA
Grade 4	30%	46%	NA
Grade 5	62%	42%	NA
Grade 6	53%	56%	NA
Grade 7	35%	68%	NA
Grade 8	83%	63%	NA

The percentage of students who met or exceeded expectations by each grade level on the state-wide assessment for Mathematics for the past four years is shown in Table 52.

TABLE 52: Weymouth Township Math Assessment Performance Trends by Grade

Meet/Exceeds Expectation	2017-2018 Mathematics	2018-2019 Mathematics	2019-2021 Mathematics
Grade 3	18%	24%	
Grade 4	30%	38%	NA
Grade 5	69%	63%	NA
Grade 6	59%	81%	NA
Grade 7	41%	58%	NA
Grade 8	NA	56%	NA

Table 53 reports the number of Weymouth Township grade 6-8 students who were enrolled in Algebra I, II and Geometry and the number of students enrolled in “Other World Languages”.

No grade 6-8 students were reported as enrolled in any World Language course including Spanish, French, Italian, Latin, German or Chinese. For comparison, note that both Buena Regional and Estell Manor students participate in World Language courses in these grades.

Also provided in Table 53 below are the percentages of middle school students enrolled in Visual Arts, Music, Dance and Drama and for comparison State participation percentages are included.

No Weymouth Township students were reported as enrolled in Computer Science or Information Technology, nor Dance nor Drama courses.

Students are counted more than once in Table 53 if they were enrolled in courses across multiple subject areas.

TABLE 53: Weymouth Township Middle School Course Participation 2020-2021

Grades 6-8	Algebra I & II and Geometry	Any World Languages	Visual Arts	Music	Dance	Drama
District	2 students	0 students	100%	100%	0%	0%
State %	-	-	69.1%	63.2%	3.2%	6.7%

Climate and Environment

The NJ DOE Climate and Environment data, per <https://rc.doe.state.nj.us/download>, states due to the COVID-19 pandemic, discipline data for the 2020-2021 school year may not be comparable to prior or future school years and NJDOE recommends caution in making comparisons.

Table 54 reports data for the 2020-21 school year. Weymouth Township reports 4 students involved in Violence, Vandalism, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying Investigations, and Substance Offenses during the 2018-19 school year and zero students in 2019-20.

A single incident may be counted under multiple incident types. The Total Unique Incidents row provides an unduplicated count of incidents.

TABLE 54: Weymouth Township Violence, Vandalism, HIB, and Substance Offenses 2020-2021

Incident Type	2020-21 Number of PK-8 Incidents
Violence	0
Weapons	0
Vandalism	0
Substances	0
Harassment, Intimidation, Bullying (HIB)	1
Total Unique Incidents	1

Table 55 reports data for the 2020-21 school year. No HIB incidents were reported in 2019-20.

TABLE 55: Weymouth Township HIB Investigations 2020-2021

HIB Nature (Protected Category)	2020-21 HIB Confirmed	2020-21 Total HIB Investigations
Race	0	0
Religion	0	0
Ancestry	0	0
Gender	1	1
Sexual Orientation	0	0
Disability	0	0
Other	0	0
No Identified Nature	N	N

In Table 56, zero Weymouth Township Student Disciplinary Removals were reported for the 2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20 and the 2020-21 school years.

TABLE 56: Weymouth Township Student Disciplinary Removals 2017-2021

Removal Type	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
In-School Suspensions	0	0
Out-of-School Suspensions	0	0
Any Suspension	0	0
Removal to other education program	0	0
Expulsion	0	0
Arrest	0	0

Staff

Table 57 compares the percentage of 2020-2021 students, teachers, and administrators by gender and by racial and ethnic group. Note that 2019-20 is the first year that data was collected for non-binary/undesignated gender and, as a result, the 2020-21 data may not be a true representation of the student or staff population. Additionally, to protect student privacy percentages for 2020-21 may show a range, depending on the overall school population size.

Weymouth student population is 73% white, 12% Hispanic and 9% Black or African American. As a point of comparison Estell Manor’s students are 93% white. The Buena Regional student population is 55% white, 29% Hispanic and 13% Black or African American.

Teacher data indicates similar “white” percentages between Weymouth and Estell Manor at 94%, and Buena Regional at 92%. In addition, the percent of “white” administrators is comparable: 100% in Weymouth and Estell Manor, with 87% in Buena Regional.

TABLE 57: Weymouth Township Student, Teacher and Administrator Demographics 2020-2021

Category 2020-2021	Students in District	Teachers in District	Administrators in District	Students in State	Teachers in State	Administrators in State
Female	40-45%	60-80%	*	49.0%	77.0%	56.0%
Male	55-60%	20-40%	*	51.0%	23.0%	44.0%
Non-Binary/Undesignated Gender	≤5%	≤20%	*	≤1%	≤1%	≤1%
White	73.0%	94.1%	100.0%	40.5%	82.9%	76.8%
Hispanic	12.2%	0.0%	0.0%	31.2%	7.8%	7.6%
Black or African American	8.8%	5.9%	0.0%	15.0%	6.5%	14.0%
Asian	2.7%	0.0%	0.0%	10.4%	2.2%	1.2%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%
Two or More Races	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.6%	0.2%	0.2%

The Student to Staff ratios in Table 58 are based on data submitted by the districts to NJ SMART and are not based on staff full-time equivalent.

Child Study Team members include school psychologists, school social workers, and learning disabilities teacher consultants. Note that the ratio below compares staff with Students with Disabilities instead of all students.

As point of comparison the 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members varies widely among the three districts, 52:1 in Buena, 19:1 in Estell Manor and 33:1 in Weymouth Township.

TABLE 58: Weymouth Township Student to Staff 2020-2021 Ratio

Ratio	Weymouth 2020-2021 Ratio
Students to Teachers	9:1
Students to Administrators	37:1
Teachers to Administrators	4:1
Students to Librarians/Media Specialists	N
Students to Nurses	148:1
Students to Counselors	N
Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members	33:1

Table 59 indicates that the ESSA requirement to identify schools for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement was waived for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement during the 2019-2020 school year for support during the 2020-2021 school year retained the same status for the 2021-2022 school year and continue to receive support and interventions from the NJDOE. All currently identified schools will be eligible to exit status at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.

The Weymouth Township School is not identified as requiring comprehensive or targeted support.

Due to the pandemic, absentee data may not be comparable from year to year.

TABLE 59: Weymouth Township ESSA Accountability Progress 2017-2020

ESSA Accountability Indicator	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
ELA Proficiency	48.3%	56.6%	-	-
Math Proficiency	49.5%	53.0%	-	-
ELA Growth	59	67	-	-
Math Growth	76	75	-	-
Progress Toward English Language Proficiency	-	-	-	-
Chronic Absenteeism	12.1%	6.1%	-	23%

Summary of Student Growth Trends, Progress on State Assessments and Participation

When comparing state assessment performance trends, in the absence of what should be the most recent growth measure but are absent due to approved State waivers, the particular Targets for achieving or meeting expectations are unique to each district based upon a growth model of annual expectations from baseline performance.

Standardized Assessments are point in time measures, and in the absence of the most recent instructional standard assessment measure, should provide limited value to the reader of a district's performance of what students, grade level appropriate, have learned throughout the last school year.

As can be viewed in the data Tables listed for Performance Trends, Annual Target preliminary data checks include the criteria that 95% of all students enrolled in the school participated in the assessment, including limited English and special education students. All Districts met that 95% participation criteria since 2018-19.

Based on the analysis of data from each district regarding student growth trends, progress on state assessments and participation, there are no impediments regarding any of the considered scenarios in this Study.

The ESSA requirement to identify schools for Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement was waived for both the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. Any school that was identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement during the 2019-2020 school year for support during the 2020-2021 school year retained the same status for the 2021-2022 school year and continue to receive support and interventions from the NJDOE. All currently identified schools will be eligible to exit status at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. However, Buena Regional Schools were identified for Comprehensive Support and Improvement as well as Targeted Support and Improvement. **This status is significant when interpreting the statute for non-operating school districts and shall be further articulated within the text of this Study.**

The Estell School District or the Weymouth Township School District are not identified as requiring comprehensive or targeted support.

Summary Climate and Environment: Student Data Safety System

Based on the data and information presented and analyzed in this Study, there appears to be no substantial learning environment factors related to educational climate factors regarding aberrant behavior, disharmony or incidents that substantiate disciplinary actions that would impede establishment of alternative educational relationships between the Buena Regional, Estell Manor and/or the Weymouth Township School Districts for the purpose of educating students in any scenario listed in this Study.

Staff

There are some differences in the racial/ethnic percentages of the three districts' student populations. The Buena Regional student population is 55% white, 29% Hispanic and 13% Black

or African American. Weymouth Township student population is 73% white, 12% Hispanic and 9% Black or African American. As a point of comparison Estell Manor’s students are 93% white. It should be noted that the Buena Regional Middle School is identified for Targeted Support and Improvement for the Black or African American Low Performing Student Group.

Teacher data indicates similar “white” percentages between Weymouth Township and Estell Manor at 94%, and Buena Regional at 92%. In addition, the percent of “white” administrators is comparable: 100% in Weymouth and Estell Manor, with 87% in Buena Regional.

As point of comparison the 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members varies widely among the three districts, 52:1 in Buena, 19:1 in Estell Manor and 33:1 in Weymouth Township.

Section III-D: Curricular and Co-Curricular District Comparisons

The curricula reviewed for this analysis were provided by Courtney McNeely, Assistant Superintendent within the Buena Regional School District who indicated they are in the middle of a curriculum revision cycle, and Helene Fullmer, Curriculum & Instruction within the Weymouth Township School District. The Estell Manor Curriculum is available at <https://www.estellmanorschool.com/domain/48>.

No data was provided regarding the pre-Kindergarten curriculum for any of the three districts.

Buena Regional English Language Arts and Mathematic curriculum documents were prepared in 2021-22. The NJ Center for Elementary Learning “Courses” identify Math Common Core Standards and NJ Model Curriculum but not the NJ Student Learning Standards-Math (NJSLS-M). The elementary science curriculum documents are provided by Mystery Science, <https://mysteryscience.com/> and the grade 6-8 documents are from STEMscopes. Both claim to be aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards but contain no reference to the NJSLS-S. Social Studies elementary curriculum documents duplicate information found on the Savvas myWorld Interactive website, (<https://www.savvas.com/>) and indicate corresponding NJSLS-SS. See Table 60 for details.

Estell Manor curriculum documents indicate that they were prepared by the district between 2015 and 2017 for each of the content areas, see Table 60 for detail. Studies Weekly used in grades 6-8 Social Studies indicate “Standards-aligned” but do not reference the NJSLS-SS, see (<https://www.studiesweekly.com/social-studies/>).

Weymouth Township curriculum documents were prepared by the district between 2014 and 2021 see Table 60 for detail. The elementary science documents are from STEMscopes and the

grade 6-8 science documents contain presentations from the NJ Center of Teaching and Learning (njctl.org). Both reference the Next Generation Science Standards but do not include the New Jersey Student Learning Standards for Science (NJSLS-S).

All curriculum documents that were written by personnel in the three school districts include student objectives, essential questions, enduring understandings, NJSLS (including Social and Emotional Learning, Technology and Career Readiness), vocabulary, and assessments. They also indicate support and resources for differentiation and multi lingual learners.

Curricula resources are identified in the following Table 60 for English Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science and Social Studies.

TABLE 60: Curricular Comparisons

Grade K-5	Buena Regional Curriculum Resources (Standard Alignment in district 2021-22 ELA & Math)	Estell Manor Resources (Standard Alignment 2017 ELA & Math, 2016 Science, and 2015 Social Studies)	Weymouth Twp, Resources (2014-21 ELA, 2019 Math, 2017 Science, 2018 Social Studies)
English Language Arts	Launch Mentor Texts, Annenberg Learning, Reader’s Workshop & Notebooks, Writer’s Workshop. Lucy Calkins focus.	Journeys by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt (HMH), Scholastic & Harcourt Brace levelled books, Pearson ReadyGen, The Short Books (Series 1), Handwriting Without Tears, Starfall.com, ABCYa.com, Reading Eggs, Newsela.com, online stories and Novels	Readers Workshop, leveled readers, Razzkids.com,
Mathematics	My Math levelled readers, NJ Center for Teaching and Learning Resources, Freckle, Star Math, EdCite, Achieve the Core, Marilyn Burns Literature	GoMath, Do The Math, Linkit, Grade 5 Rubric Adopted from HMH, Khan Academy, varied online resources. Marilyn Burns Literature	Envision 2.0 Workbooks, Levelled readers, board and card games.
Science	Mystery Science, (see https://mysteryscience.com/)	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Science Dimensions, Teacherstryscience.org/kids, Exploratorium.edu, (Many ELA curriculum units include Science resources and assignments)	STEMscopes online, FOSS kits.

Social Studies	myWorld Interactive see (https://www.savvas.com/), Levelled Readers	Scholastic Studies Weekly, online resources	TCI text and online interactives, Levelled Readers
Grades 6-8	Buena Regional Curriculum Resources	Estell Manor	Weymouth Twp.
English Language Arts	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Collections Grades 6-8 (2017), Fiction and Nonfiction literature & novels, Newsela, Brainpop, Freckle	Literature by Holt McDougal (2012), Fiction and Nonfiction novels & articles, Newsela,	Reading and Writing Workshop, Fiction and Nonfiction novels
Mathematics	Big Ideas Interactives & Online Materials, Sumdog.com, BrainPop, Khan Academy, Math Dictionary for Kids	Text not identified in curriculum documents, Go Math, Rubric Adopted from HMH, Khan Academy, Math Literature, Marilyn Burns Literature	Big Ideas Textbook (2014), Math games
Science	STEMscopes online	ScienceFusion by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt	NJ Center for Teaching and Learning
Social Studies	My World Interactive / World History Early Ages (Pearson, 2019), United States History (Holt, 2007), Civics Today: Citizenship, Economics and You (Glencoe, 2008), Next Gen Personal Finance, Newsela, Discovery Education, Flocabulary, YouTube, Google Earth	Scholastic Studies Weekly, Discovery Education, National Geographic, PBS.org	TCI text and online interactives, Levelled Readers

Regardless of the scenario, a comparison of the curriculum resources reveals little overlap and/or duplication among the three districts as revealed in Table 60.

- Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop are used by both Buena and Weymouth in the elementary grades for ELA.
 - Only Weymouth Township uses Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop in grades 6-8.
- Regarding elementary math, a reference to Marilyn Burns literature is made in Buena and Estell Manor curriculum documents.
- In grades 6-8 math, both Buena Regional and Weymouth Township use Big Ideas Interactives or the Big Ideas textbook (2014).
- STEMscopes online is used for Buena Regional science in grades 6-8 and for Weymouth Township for grades K-5.

- There is some duplication among the three districts using Khan Academy, Newsela and/or Discovery Education online.

Curriculum Disadvantages and Advantages of Each Scenario under Review

Scenario 1 Estell Manor to close and send all students grade PK-8 to Buena Regional School District.

Potential Disadvantages

- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since no overlap exists among curriculum documents.
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be significant professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.
- It is likely that additional curriculum resources in all content areas would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- Curriculum documents in Estell Manor would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas.
- Support for Students with Disabilities will need to be considered as the ratio of students to Child Study Team Members varies, 52:1 in Buena and 19:1 in Estell Manor.
- As noted later in this report, the Buena Regional and Estell Manor districts scored low in the NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum evaluation regarding Instructional Program, 59% and 51%, respectively.

Potential Advantages

- The Buena Regional ELA and Math curriculum documents are current.
- Teachers in both districts use online resources from the Khan Academy, Discovery Education and Marilyn Burns literature.
- It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to accommodate the additional Estell Manor student population of 188.
- Estell Manor middle school students will have the opportunity to attend drama classes offered in Buena Regional.

Scenario 2 - Weymouth Township School District to close and send all students grade PK-8 to Buena Regional School District.

Potential Disadvantages

- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since some curriculum resources are used in both districts and some are not.
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.
- It is likely that additional curriculum resources would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- Curriculum documents from Weymouth would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas.

Potential Advantages

- Elementary teachers and students from both districts are using Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop in ELA.
- Grade 6-8 teachers and students from both districts are using Big Ideas Interactive curriculum.
- In science, the elementary teachers and students in Weymouth are using STEMscopes online curriculum and in Buena, STEMscopes are used in grades 6-8.
- The Buena Regional ELA and Math curriculum documents are current.
- It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to accommodate the additional Weymouth Township student population of 148.
- It is possible that existing Child Study Team staffing will not need to be increased substantially as the 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members is 52:1 in Buena, and 33:1 in Weymouth Township.
- Weymouth Township middle school students will have the opportunity to attend drama classes offered in Buena Regional.

Scenario 3 - Estell Manor and Weymouth Township School Districts to consolidate into one school district (Grades PK-8)

Potential Disadvantages

- In grades K-8, there are no common curricula resources between the two districts.
- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since no overlap exists among curriculum documents. Curriculum documents currently used in both districts would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be significant professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.
- It is likely that additional curriculum resources in all content areas would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- The 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members varies widely, 19:1 in Estell Manor and 33:1 in Weymouth Township and may require additional staffing.
- Regardless of the scenario, a comparison of the curriculum resources reveals little overlap and/or duplication among the three districts.

Potential Advantages

- **It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to serve a combined student population of 336.**

TABLE 61: Comparison of Academic and After School Activities Offered

Academic and After School Activities	Buena Regional PK-8	Estell Manor PK-8	Weymouth Township PK-8
Technology Access	1:1 Chromebooks in grades 3-12, PK-2 >> 1:1 have touch tablets with keyboards	1:1 Chromebooks.	1:1 Chromebooks.
Computer labs, Smart Boards	All classrooms have SMARTBoards, teacher computers, and each teacher has a laptop to transport to and from school in grade pk-12.	Most classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards.	Every classroom is equipped with an interactive display board and may have other technology such as document cameras. The technology lab is equipped with 3D printers and other supplies for STEAM activities.
Library/Media Specialist	One media specialist in district.	School library but no staffing.	School library but no staffing
I and RS Services	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support for ELL	2 ESL certified teachers in district.	Currently no ELL students.	No current ELL students but through child study team if needed
Art Classes	K-5 >> Six-day cycle as a special. Grades 6-8 as an elective for all students.	Once per week as a special.	Once per week as a special
Music Classes	K-5 have a music special on a six-day cycle. Grades 6-8 have band and choir as an elective course.	Once per week as a special.	Once per week as a special.
Band and Chorus	Grades K-5 have a music special on a six-day cycle. Grades 6-8 have band and choir as an elective course.	Grade 6-8 choir only.	Chorus.
Full day preschool	Yes	Yes	Yes
Before school child care	K-5 with the local YMCA	Yes	Yes, activities include homework help, arts

			and crafts, yoga, organized outdoor games.
After school child care	K-5 with the local YMCA	Yes After school tutoring.	Yes, activities include homework help, arts and crafts, yoga, organized outdoor games.
Breakfast	All students every day	All students every day	All students every day
Clubs	Grades 6-8 >> Art, Band Booster, Choir, Drama, National Junior Honor Society, Newspaper, Yearbook.	Yearbook, Student Council, Drama, Safety Patrol, Honor Society, Journalism, Book Club. Health and wellness initiative using Greenhouse vegetables through cafeteria and Yoga classes.	Safety Patrol, Student Council, Choir, Computer, Art and STEAM.
Sports	Grades 6-8 >> Baseball, basketball, soccer, cross country, field hockey, softball, wrestling.	Softball, basketball, cross country, lower grades intramural.	None at school. Students can participate in County programming.
Student Council	Grades 6-8	Yes	Grades 6-8
School Safety services	Security in every building in the district in 2021-22, (total of 5 guards) and a safety specialist Dr. J.P. Cleary Club: School Safety Patrol	School Safety Specialist	School Safety Specialist
Summer programs	BOOST summer programs (typically run with federal grant money which may end in 2022).	4-week summer enrichment camp.	All students may attend: 4-6 weeks
Transportation services	Full service	Greater Egg Harbor Regional Transportation Consortium	Greater Egg Harbor Regional Transportation Consortium

Section III-E: School Calendar and Instructional Day

The New Jersey Department of Education regulations set forth that a day in session shall be a day on which the schools are open and students, under the guidance and direction of a teacher, are engaged in the teaching process. All district calendars in Table 62 reflect the minimum amount of 180 Instructional days compliant by New Jersey Statute within a calendar year.

TABLE 62: School Calendars 2021-2022

District	Staff In-Service	First Day for Students	Last Day of School	Total Number of Student/Teacher Days	Total Number of Teacher Days
Buena Regional	September 1	September 7	June 16	180	184
Estell Manor	September 1 & 2	September 7	June 16	180	183
Weymouth Township	September 1 & 2	September 7	June 17	180	186

The school day start and end times in Table 63 may reflect standard hours for in-person instruction. These hours may have been adjusted due to remote or hybrid instruction schedules.

Note that in Table 63, the Length of School Day and the length of the Full Time Instructional Day are comparable in all schools except Buena Regional Middle School. The length of full-time instruction in Buena Regional Middle School is 30-45 minutes longer than Estell Manor and Weymouth Schools.

The School Day Start for Weymouth Township School is 40-60 minutes earlier than Estell Manor and Buena Regional elementary schools. The Weymouth Township School Day End Time is 35-55 minutes earlier than Estell Manor and Buena Regional elementary schools. **This could impact transportation services.**

TABLE 63: Instructional Day

District	Typical School Day Start Time	Typical End Time	Length of School Day	Full Time Instructional Day	Shared Time Instructional Time
Estell Manor Elementary School	9:10 am	3:30 pm	6 hrs. 20 min	5 hrs. 28 min	N
B.R. Milanesi Elem. School (grades PK-2)	9:30 am	3:45 pm	6 hrs. 15 min.	5 hrs. 15 min.	N
B.R. Collings Elem. School (Grades K-2)	9:30 am	3:45 pm	6 hrs. 15 min.	5 hrs. 15 min.	N
B.R. Cleary Elem. School (Grades 3-5)	9:10 am	3:25 pm	6 hrs. 15 min.	5 hrs. 10 min.	N
B.R. Middle School (Grades 6-8)	8:05 am	2:50 pm	6 hrs. 45 min.	6 hrs. 0 min.	N
B.R. High School (Grades 9-12)	7:45 am	2:25 pm	6 hrs. 30 min.	5 hrs. 20 min.	
Weymouth Township Elementary School	8:30 am	2:50 pm	6 hrs. 20 min	5 hrs. 20 min.	N

Summary – School Calendar and Instructional School Day

School Calendars and Instructional School Days as presented in Tables 62 and 63 above should not be significant inhibitors for the potential to advance an enhanced learning environment and educational advantages for students in participating school districts for any scenario listed in this Study.

Any consideration for change of instructional relationships among districts must consider the academic school day and teacher contracts as that time relates to staff time obligation to district as well as student teacher contact time as a criterion for instruction.

It is recommended that all stakeholders should discuss the details as an important criterion for entering into any of the identified relationship scenarios as that discussion may relate to the operation of a typical school day. **Adjustments to slightly different school calendars, starting time, and end of school day, as well as transportation tiering schedules depending on any scenario implementation, should be discussed with all stakeholders well in advance of actual implementation of any new school or grade level configuration.**

Section III-F: New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC)

The New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) is the Department of Education's monitoring and district self-evaluation system for public school districts. The system shifts the monitoring and evaluation focus from compliance to assistance, capacity-building and improvement. It is a single comprehensive accountability system that consolidates and incorporates the monitoring requirements of applicable state laws and programs and complements federally required improvements. The system focuses on monitoring and evaluating school districts in five key components that, based on research, have been identified to be key factors in effective school districts. These components are Instruction & Program, Fiscal, Governance, Operations, and Personnel.

The District Performance Review (DPR) Reports note the percentage of district compliance within each of the five domains of accountability. New Jersey school districts need to score 80% in each of the five areas to “pass” those components. The highest possible score in a given area is 100%.

As listed in Table 64, the percentages of compliance achieved by each district reflects outstanding achievement in four of the five areas of compliance.

The Buena Regional and Estell Manor districts scored low in Instructional Program, 59% and 51%, respectively. Instructional and Program percentage scores are primarily determined by student performance indicators on the State’s standardized testing. A score below 80% requires an improvement plan with corrective action, and signals the need for growth. Both districts will need to undergo future reviews yearly until they reach proficiency in all areas.

TABLE 64: NJQSAC

NJQSAC Area	Buena Regional 2019-2020	Estell Manor March 2019	Weymouth Township 2020-2021
Instruction and Program	59%	51%	86%
Fiscal Management	100%	94%	96%
Governance	100%	100%	100%
Operations	100%	90%	100%
Personnel	96%	100%	100%

Section III-G: Summary Student Growth and Learning Environment

Summary of Student Growth Trends, Progress on State Assessments and Participation

Performance reporting for State assessments is based primarily on Growth Models for each school district. In the absence of 2019-2021 data, the Study could only present Performance Reports for each District for 2017-2018 and 2018-2019.

When comparing state assessment performance trends, in the absence of what should be the most recent growth measure but are nonexistent due to approved State and Federal waivers, the particular Targets for achieving or meeting expectations are unique to each district based upon a growth model of annual expectations from baseline performance.

The data Tables listed in each district's section, reflect growth model target achievement, or lack thereof, for each school district included in the Study from 2018 and 2019. Standardized Assessments are point in time measures, and in the absence of the most recent instructional standard assessment measure, should provide limited value to the reader of a district's performance of what students, grade level appropriate, have learned throughout the last school year.

As can be viewed in the data Tables listed for Performance Trends, Annual Target preliminary data checks include the criteria, that 95% of all students enrolled in the school participated in the ELA assessment, including limited English and special education students. If this was not achieved, the school has not Met Target for ELA participation. All Districts met that participation criteria.

Based on the analysis of data from each district regarding student growth trends, progress on state assessments and participation, there are no significant impediments regarding any of the listed scenarios.

Summary Climate and Environment: Student Data Safety System

Based on the data and information presented and analyzed in this Study, there appears to be no substantial learning environment factors, educational climate factors regarding aberrant behavior, disharmony or incidents that substantiate disciplinary actions, assessment or curricular offerings that would impede establishment of alternative educational relationships between the Buena Regional, Estell Manor or the Weymouth Township School Districts for the purpose of educating students in any scenario listed in this Study.

SECTION IV: FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Section IV-A: Introduction and Methodology

The Finance Section will list the status quo costs of Estell Manor and Weymouth Township and the projected savings/costs for scenarios one and two. Tuition costs/revenues for each of the districts will be projected for the first two scenarios. Grade 9-12 students from Estell Manor and Weymouth Township are currently sent to the Buena Regional School District and are not affected by this study and they are not considered except as noted in Scenario 4. The report will also project an estimated budget for a regional school district between Estell Manor and Weymouth Township (scenario 3) as well as an estimated budget for a regional school district involving Estell Manor, Weymouth Township and the two Buena Regional constituents (scenario 4.) Finally, the projected tax impact on the taxpayers of the districts affected under each scenario will be listed.

The data used for the Finance section includes the FY 2022-2023 budget documents, cost per pupil records and Application for State School Aid (ASSA) from October 15, 2021 from Estell Manor, Buena Regional and Weymouth Townships along with other data specifically requested from each district. Data was collected via electronic communications, site visits and telephone calls with Bob Delengowski, former interim School Business Administrator, Rose Millar, current School Business Administrator and Michelle Cappelluti, Interim Superintendent for Estell Manor, Jud Moore Business Administrator, Helene Fullmer, Instructional Supervisor and Al Lewis, Superintendent for Weymouth Township and Pat Yacovelli, Business Administrator, Courtney McNeely, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and David Cappuccio, Superintendent for Buena Regional.

It must be emphasized that all costs in the Finance Section of this report uses FY 2022-23 **budgeted costs that are verifiable**. It is virtually impossible in today's volatile economic and school finance environment to project future costs in a reasonable manner.

Section IV-B: Revenues

Financial Assumptions:

Tax Levy – Amounts past 2022-23 are subject to a cap of a 2% increase per state law (with limited exceptions) with the final amount set to be determined each year by each Board of Education.

State Aid – Figures presented are the total amount of state aid each district was awarded for

2022-23. This Study assumes that State Aid does not change. However, it is imperative to note that each district has been negatively affected by S2 legislation which redistributes state aid to all districts in NJ. **Regardless of which scenario is selected (if any), all three districts are scheduled to receive smaller amounts of state aid in future budgets.** In addition, Estell Manor and Buena Regional have had declining enrollment which will also have a negative effect on State Aid. They will therefore face budget difficult choices in future years regardless of whether any of the proposed scenarios are pursued both in terms of tax rate and having to make budget cuts. Weymouth has had a slight increase in population but it is not likely to have a major impact on the receipt of State Aid and it is expected that this district will also face difficult budgets in upcoming years.

Federal Aid – As a result of the COVID pandemic, each district has received significant amounts of federal COVID related aid. Specifically, Weymouth Township and Estell Manor have significant amounts budgeted in 2022-23. **This aid is not expected to be continued in future years and will create another revenue decrease exacerbating the problem noted above.**

School Choice Aid – Estell Manor receives a large amount of school choice aid (\$224,117) which will no longer be received in all scenarios involving Estell Manor. **In scenario 3 and 4, the decision to pursue school choice aid would be made by the new regional school district. Its impact on costs for each district is impossible to predict.**

Other Budgeted Revenues – Each of the three districts supports its annual budget with a combination of free balance (surplus) and withdrawals from reserve funds. These appropriations vary from year to year and can significantly impact future budgets. As noted earlier, this report is a “**snapshot in time**” and makes the assumption that similar amounts would be budgeted in succeeding years. In reality, actual figures are likely to end up different from those currently projected.

Maintenance of Programs/Class Sizes - Weymouth Township and Buena Regional offer 3- and 4-year-old Pre-K to all students. Estell Manor has been sending PK students to Weymouth Township in previous years but will offer one PK class in district in 2022-23 while still continuing to send a small number of these students to Weymouth Township. Class sizes are roughly equivalent in all three districts and are not likely to change under any of the scenarios. However, Estell Manor 5th grade students change teachers (typical middle school model) while Weymouth Township and Buena Regional students do not change classes until 6th grade.

Absorption of Estell Manor and/or Weymouth staff – Per State Law, should scenario 1 and/or 2 be adopted, each tenured Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township teacher will be entitled to a position in the Buena Regional School District. Non-tenured teachers who do not receive a position are entitled to claim unemployment for up to 26 weeks. Since this study does not project eliminating any classroom teachers, this would apply to special area teachers. It is projected that existing Buena Regional staff may be able to accommodate them so no costs are projected.

Section IV-C: Appropriations

Debt

Estell Manor has approximately \$860,000 remaining in bonded debt which will be paid off in the 2030-31 school year. Weymouth Township has approximately \$1.4 million remaining from a 2014 bond issue. The payments will be finished in the 2033-34 school year.

Buena Regional has three outstanding bond issues with approximately \$38.6M in debt principal remaining with payments extending through the 2040-41 school year. **Remaining debt for any of the districts would have to be discussed and resolved if options 3 or 4 are pursued.**

Facilities

Scenarios 1 and 2 – Buena Regional does not have classroom space to accommodate students from either Estell Manor or Weymouth Township. Because of this **the assumption was made for this Study that the existing buildings in Weymouth Township and Estell Manor would continue to be used with most staff becoming Buena Regional employees.**

Scenario 3 – The school buildings for Estell Manor and Weymouth Township are quite close geographically and both would need to be used in a proposed regional district. The new district could consider realigning (with possible additional savings) where students would attend a school based on grade level (PK-3, 4-8 for example) rather than geography. However, this may be limited by the need for accessible bathrooms for PreK/Kindergarten students.

Scenario 4 – As noted earlier, **Buena Regional cannot accommodate grade PK-5 students from Estell Manor and or Weymouth Township in its existing school buildings.** It is believed that grades 6-8 could be accommodated. However, the Estell Manor and Weymouth Township school buildings could be used in a regional district. This would create a similar scenario as presented in scenario 3. However, since there is a significant distance between existing Buena Regional Schools and those of Estell Manor and Weymouth Township, **it is unlikely that Estell Manor and Weymouth Township students would travel to Buena Regional schools, nor is the contrasting position likely.**

Transportation

Scenario 1 and 2 - This study takes that position that it is unlikely that Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township students would travel to Buena Regional Schools. However, **if that were to happen, there would be a significant increase in transportation costs due to the distance between Estell Manor, Weymouth Township and the Buena Regional Schools.** In addition, it must be noted that students would be on the bus for a much longer period of time.

Scenario 3 – If no realignment were to occur, transportation costs would not change. However, **if realignment were to occur, new routes would have to be bid.** Under today’s economic vacillating and unsettled fuel and automotive industry, **this would likely cause significant cost increases for transportation.**

Scenario 4 – The same issues noted for Scenarios 1 and 2 would exist. If the decision was made to bus Buena Regional students to Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township (or vice versa) there would be a significant additional cost due to the need to bid new bus routes.

Regionalization Issues

Referendum to approve and budget estimate – In the event that regionalization of the districts is pursued, a referendum must be conducted, and the referendum must be approved by both districts (scenario 3) or all four potential constituents (scenario 4) to form the new regional district. For the purpose of this Study, the consultants have estimated a budget for the regional district considering the areas that will afford savings of magnitude. Additional costs would be incurred with the formation of the regional district on a one-time basis are described below. Statutes that reference **the requirements for regionalization** shall be included in the summary report of this document.

Apportionment of Costs and Tax Impact – Statute allows costs of a regionalized school district to be apportioned using student enrollment, equalized tax valuation or some combination of the above. It is noted that the existing Buena Regional district currently utilizes a 100% equalized tax evaluation method. For the purposes of this study, estimates for scenarios 3 and 4 were made using 100% equalized valuation and 100% student enrollment. Should either regionalization option be adopted, the method can be negotiated between the districts, including a method that utilizes a combination of the two methods.

Staffing – It is anticipated that few changes would be made in classroom related staffing either in reducing or adding staff. Most savings projected are due to economy of scale reductions in district wide positions between the three districts (for example: there would be one superintendent, not two or three which currently exists.) In preparing this report, savings were computed by eliminating “excess” salaries from existing positions. The consultants do not project which individuals would be retained as this would be a component of discussions between the districts.

Salary Guide Reconciliation – The salary guides for each district differ. With a regionalized district all staff would eventually be on the same salary scale which would have to be negotiated for all represented staff. Under S3488, the districts may have up to 3 years to create a common salary guide. **Until such time, the guide of the district with the larger number of teachers is used.** The

data provided to the consultants indicates that there is an extremely small number of more teachers in Estell Manor than in Weymouth Township. Hence, the Estell Manor guide was used for the reconciliation. Should it be determined that Weymouth Township has more teachers, its guide would have to be used. This would create a significant problem in that the Weymouth Township guide is much lower than the Estell Manor Guide. If Scenario 4 is adopted, teachers from Estell Manor and Weymouth Township would move to the Buena Regional salary guide at the appropriate level.

Tuition – Currently, Estell Manor and Weymouth Township send 9-12 grade students to Buena Regional and pay tuition. Buena Regional receives this tuition as a revenue source. **In a regional district (scenario 4) these costs/revenues would cease to exist and the costs of educating the 9-12 students would be included in the percentage breakdown in Table 79.**

Other Significant Issues Regarding Non-Operating Status / Regionalization

Continuing Costs – There is a misconception that a district that closes its schools and sends all of its students to another district ceases to exist (Scenarios 1 and 2.) This is not accurate. Should Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township send all of their students to Buena Regional, there will still be a need for a Board of Education and a skeletal business office staff as the district is required to raise funds to pay for tuition, transportation, business office staffing and other expenses. In addition, Estell Manor/Weymouth Township will retain ownership of the school buildings to be used. This Study takes the position that each district will continue to be responsible for all custodial/maintenance costs, significantly lowering “savings” that normally accompany becoming a non-operating district. The statutes referencing non-operating schools are stated in the report summary.

Should the districts regionalize, both/all three districts would cease to exist and the regional school district would be formed as noted above.

Buena Regional Issues

In scenarios 1-2 Buena Regional would have an increase in Tuition Revenues that would be offset by the district absorbing Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township staff members. This Study assumes that each district will accept all of the Estell Manor and/or Weymouth Township classroom teachers. We have also assumed that Buena Regional would be required to add many, but not all of Estell Manor’s and Weymouth Township’s “auxiliary” staff (special education, special areas, media, nurses etc.) Tenured staff from Estell Manor and Weymouth Township would have rights identified in the statute for any grade level or school that would be agreed in the scenario.

Section IV-D: Financial Impact on Each District FY 2022-2023

Data used for the results below are contained in the tables listed below:

TABLE 65: Scenario 1 - Changes in the Estell Manor Budget

Estell Manor Original Budget 2022-2023	Amount
Regular Ed Programs	\$ 1,203,063
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	402,447
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	19,680
Out of District Tuition	888,323
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	183,389
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	144,260
Child Study Team	78,154
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	96,467
General Administration	147,726
School Administration	79,922
Business Office and Administrative Technology	145,440
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	377,015
Student Transportation Services	466,236
Employee Benefits	688,796
Interest Earned on Maintenance Reserve	20
Capital Outlay	14,891
Charter School Transfer	102,512
Total Current Expense Budget	\$ 5,038,341

TABLE 66: Scenario 1 - Changes in Estell Manor if it becomes a Non-Operating District Sending PK-8 to Buena Regional Using Budgeted Figures FY 2022-2023

Reduction in Appropriations	\$ Amount	Notes
Regular Ed Programs	1,203,063	
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	402,447	
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	19,680	
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	183,389	
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	144,260	
Child Study Team	78,154	
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	96,467	
General Administration	147,726	
School Administration	79,922	
Business Office and Administrative Technology	45,440	PT SBA remains
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	-	Buena has no space, building would need to be used
Student Transportation Services	-	
Employee Benefits	575,000	Assumes some full-time custodial/maintenance staff remains
Equipment	-	
Subtotal – Reduction in Appropriations	2,975,548	
Less:		
Increase in Regular Pk-8 Ed. Tuition	2,270,600	
Loss of School Choice Aid	224,117	
Increase in Transportation Costs	-	Students likely to remain in same building
	2,494,717	
Final Net Overall Reduction (Increase) in Appropriations	\$ 480,831	

TABLE 67: Scenario 2 - Changes in the Weymouth Township Budget

Weymouth Original Budget 2022-2023	\$ Amount
Regular Ed Programs	790,908
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	180,831
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	10,405
Out of District Tuition	1,075,528
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	107,980
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	108,531
Child Study Team	154,480
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	63,923
General Administration	99,450
School Administration	74,653
Business Office and Administrative Technology	89,462
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	433,308
Student Transportation Services	330,103
Employee Benefits	536,163
Food Services	7,000
Interest Earned on Maintenance Reserve	75
Capital Outlay	2,112
Charter School Transfer	63,053
Total Current Expense Budget	\$ 4,127,965

TABLE 68: Scenario 2 - Changes in Weymouth Township if it Becomes a Non-Operating District Sending PK-8 to Buena Regional Using Budgeted Figures FY 2022-2023

Reduction in Appropriations	\$ Amount	Notes
Regular Ed Programs	790,908	
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	108,831	
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	10,405	
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	107,980	
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	108,531	
Child Study Team	154,480	
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	63,923	
General Administration	99,450	
School Administration	74,653	
Business Office and Administrative Technology	25,000	Estimate PT SBA remains
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	-	Buena has no space, building would need to be used
Student Transportation Services	-	
Employee Benefits	476,000	Assumes some full-time custodial/maintenance staff remains
Food Services	7,000	
Subtotal – Reduction in Appropriations	2,099,161	
Less:		
Increase in Regular Pk-8 Ed. Tuition	2,312,200	
Increase in Unemployment Compensation	19,006	Maximum benefit \$731 per week for 26 weeks x 1 FTE
	2,331,206	
Final Net Overall Reduction (Increase) in Appropriations	\$ (232,045)	

TABLE 69: Scenario 1 - Changes in Buena Regional Revenue General Fund if Estell Manor Tuitions all of their PK-8 Students to Buena Regional FY 2022-2023

Revenue		Buena Regional	Notes																				
Increase in Tuition Revenue			Assumes Buena Regional adds to grade levels as follows:																				
Pre-K, K students – 28 @ \$13,700		383,600	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>PK</td> <td>1</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>K</td> <td>1</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>6-8</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>Total</td> <td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	PK	1	4	1	K	1	5	1	1	1	6-8	3	2	1	Total	10	3	1		
PK	1	4		1																			
K	1	5		1																			
1	1	6-8		3																			
2	1	Total	10																				
3	1																						
Grade 1-5 students – 83 @ \$14,000		1,162,000																					
Grade 6-8 students – 50 @ 14,500		725,000																					
Subtotal – Gross Increase in Tuition Revenue		2,270,600																					
Tuition Cost for Estell Manor	\$ 2,270,600																						
Less: Increase in Appropriations																							
Increase in Salary and Benefit Costs for Absorbing Estell Manor Classroom Teachers		900,000	Staff increases estimated at \$60K salary and \$30K benefits																				
Increase in supply and textbooks costs for the above new 196 tuition students		9,800	Supply increases estimated at \$50 per students																				
Increase due to absorbing school administrative CST, Media, Nurse, etc. due to Estell Manor School needing to be used		1,245,000	Utilizes Estell Manor existing costs less estimated “savings” due to scale																				
Final Net Overall Increase in Revenue		\$ 115,800																					

TABLE 70: Scenario 2 - Changes in Buena Regional Revenue General Fund if Weymouth Township Tuitions all of their PK-8 Students to Buena Regional FY 2022-2023

Revenue		Buena Regional	Notes																				
Increase in Tuition Revenue			Assumes Buena Regional adds to grade levels as follows:																				
Pre-K, K students – 36 @ \$13,700		493,200	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>PK</td> <td>2</td> <td>4</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>K</td> <td>1</td> <td>5</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>1</td> <td>6-8</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>1</td> <td>Total</td> <td>11</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>1</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	PK	2	4	1	K	1	5	1	1	1	6-8	3	2	1	Total	11	3	1		
PK	2	4		1																			
K	1	5		1																			
1	1	6-8		3																			
2	1	Total		11																			
3	1																						
Grade 1-5 students – 74 @ \$14,000		1,036,000																					
Grade 6-8 students – 54 @ 14,500		783,000																					
Subtotal – Gross Increase in Tuition Revenue		2,312,200																					
Tuition Cost for Weymouth	\$ 2,312,200																						
Less: Increase in Appropriations																							
Increase in Salary and Benefit Costs for Absorbing Weymouth Classroom Teachers		990,000	Staff increases estimated at \$60K salary and \$30K benefits																				
Increase in supply and textbooks costs for the above new 164 tuition students		8,200	Supply increases estimated at \$50 per students																				
Increase due to absorbing school administrative CST, Media, Nurse, etc. due to Weymouth School needing to be used		820,000	Utilizes Weymouth existing costs less estimated “savings” due to scale																				
Final Net Overall Increase in Revenue		494,000																					

TABLE 71: Scenario 3 - Estimated Regional Budget - Approximate Savings in Appropriations if Regionalization by Estell Manor and Weymouth Township is Adopted Using Budgeted Figures FY 2022-2023

	Combined Budgets Before Savings 2022-2023		Weymouth Township	Estell Manor
Reduction in Appropriations				
Regular Ed Programs	1,993,971		790,908	1,203,063
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	583,278		180,831	402,447
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	30,085		10,405	19,680
Out of District Tuition	1,893,851	See Note 1	1,075,528	888,323
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	291,369		107,980	183,389
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	252,791		108,531	144,260
Child Study Team	232,634		154,480	78,154
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	160,390		63,923	96,467
General Administration	247,176		99,450	147,726
School Administration	154,575		74,653	79,922
Business Office and Administrative Technology	234,902		89,462	145,440
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	810,323		433,308	377,015
Student Transportation Services	796,339		330,103	466,236
Employee Benefits	1,224,959		536,163	688,796
Food Services	7,000		7,000	-
Equipment	-		-	-
Interest on Reserves	95		75	20
Capital Outlay	17,003		2,112	14,891
Charter Schools	165,565		63,053	102,512
Subtotal	\$ 9,096,306		\$ 4,127,965	\$ 5,038,341
Less:				
Estimated Savings from Regionalization (listed below)	\$ (420,000)			
Additional Cost to Bring Weymouth Teachers onto Estell Manor Guide	72,899			
Estimated Regional Budget	\$ 8,749,205			
Net Savings	347,101			

Note 1 – Less \$70,000 received by Weymouth from Estell Manor

TABLE 72: Scenario 3 - Estimated Regional Budget Revenue – Combined Budgets Before Savings

	Combined Budgets Before Savings 2022-2023			
REVENUE	Amount		Weymouth Twp	Estell Manor
Local Tax Levy	4,731,526	See Note 2	2,490,608	2,588,019
Tuition	-	See Note 3	70,000	
Transportation Fees	2,000		2,000	-
Miscellaneous	1,000		1,000	-
Interest on Reserves	215		175	40
State Aid	2,662,225		798,063	1,864,162
Semi	-		-	-
Budgeted Fund Balance	1,302,239		716,119	586,120
Withdraw from Reserves	50,000		50,000	-
Note – Less \$70,000 received by Weymouth from Estell				
Estimated Regional Budget	\$ 8,749,205		\$ 4,127,965	\$ 5,038,341
		% Fund Balance	17.35%	11.63%
		% State Aid	19%	37%

Note 2 – Adjusted for savings from regionalization and salary guide reconciliation

Note 3 – Less \$70,000 receive by Weymouth from Estell

TABLE 73: Scenario 3 - Estimated Savings from Regionalization

	# Positions Eliminated	\$ Amount Saved (Salary/Benefits)	Notes
Superintendent Office		180,000	Supt. From one district, support staff
Business Office		100,000	SBA from one district
Technology		20,000	Reduction of Outside Services
CST/Curriculum		100,000	One less director but additional support
Maintenance/custodial		-	Both schools would remain open and fully staffed
Transportation		-	Management responsibilities absorbed with existing staff
Savings from combining costs		20,000	Audit, insurance, legal
		420,000	

TABLE 74: Scenario 4 - Estimated Regional Budget - Approximate Savings in Appropriations if Regionalization by Estell Manor, Weymouth Township and Buena Regional is Adopted Using Budgeted Figures FY 2022-2023

	Combined Budgets Before Savings 2022-2023		Weymouth Township	Estell Manor	Buena Regional
Reduction in Appropriations					
Regular Ed Programs	11,055,906		790,908	1,203,063	9,061,935
Special Ed, Basic Skills, Bilingual	3,934,080		180,831	402,447	3,350,802
Cocurricular, Extracurricular, Summer School	979,229		10,405	19,680	949,144
Out of District Tuition	3,203,009	See Note 1	1,075,528	888,323	2,530,157
Attendance & Social Work, Health, Ed. Media, Guidance	1,837,969		107,980	183,389	1,546,600
Speech, OT/PT and Extraordinary Services	1,642,569		108,531	144,260	1,389,778
Child Study Team	900,704		154,480	78,154	668,070
Improvement of Instruction & Instr. Staff Training Services	563,079		63,923	96,467	402,689
General Administration	1,100,939		99,450	147,726	853,763
School Administration	1,554,459		74,653	79,922	1,399,884
Business Office and Administrative Technology	1,041,357		89,462	145,440	806,455
Operation & Maintenance of Plant Services	4,500,559		433,308	377,015	3,690,236
Student Transportation Services	3,697,264		330,103	466,236	2,900,925
Employee Benefits	7,373,494		536,163	688,796	6,148,535
Food Services	7,000		7,000	-	-
Equipment	226,408		-	-	226,408
Interest on Reserves	1,595		75	20	1,500
Capital Outlay	607,101		2,112	14,891	590,098
Charter Schools	556,062		63,053	102,512	390,497
Subtotal	44,782,783		4,127,965	5,038,341	36,907,476
Less:					
Estimated Savings from Regionalization (listed below)	(770,000)				
Estimated Increase in Transportation Costs	50,000			"Savings"	
Additional Cost to bring Weymouth/Estell Manor Teachers onto Buena Regional Guide	109,022			610,978	
Estimated Regional Budget	44,171,805				

Note 1 – Less \$1,220,999 in HS Tuition paid to Estell and Weymouth and \$70,000 paid by Estell to Weymouth

TABLE 75: Scenario 4 - Estimated Regional Budget Revenue – Combined Budgets Before Savings

	Combined Budgets Before Savings 2022-2023				
REVENUE	Amount		Weymouth Township	Estell Manor	Buena Regional
Local Tax Levy	18,834,043	See Note 2	2,490,608	2,588,019	14,366,394
Tuition	45,000	See Note 3	70,000		1,266,499
Transportation Fees	2,000		2,000	-	
Miscellaneous	426,000		1,000	-	425,000
Interest on Reserves	1,715		175	40	1,500
State Aid	20,481,625		798,063	1,864,162	17,819,400
Semi	82,458		-		82,458
Budgeted Fund Balance	3,948,464		716,119	586,120	2,646,225
Withdraw from Reserves	350,000		50,000	-	300,000
Estimated Regional Budget	\$ 44,171,805		\$4,127,965	\$ 5,038,341	\$36,907,476
		% Fund Balance	17.35%	11.63%	7.17%
		% State Aid	19%	37%	48%

Note 2 – Adjusted for savings from regionalization savings and transportation and salary guide adjustment costs

Note 3 – Less \$1,220,999 in HS Tuition Received by Buena from Estell and Weymouth and \$70,000 received by Weymouth from Estell Manor

TABLE 76: Scenario 4 - Estimated Savings from Regionalization

	\$ Amount Saved (Salary/Benefits)	Notes
Superintendent Office	300,000	Supt. From two districts, creates one support position
Business Office	200,000	SBA's from two districts, creates one support position
Technology	40,000	Reduction of Outside Services
CST/Curriculum	200,000	Two less directors but add'l support
Maintenance/custodial	-	All schools would remain open
Transportation	-	No savings, possible increase depending on how schools are aligned
Savings from combining costs	30,000	Audit, insurance, legal
Total Estimated Savings	\$770,000	

TABLE 77: Tax Impact Calculations for All Scenarios

SCENARIO 1							
	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Estell Manor	2,588,019	157,346,350	(480,831)	2,107,188	(0.00306)	180,565	(552)
Buena Borough	4,385,326	289,643,701	(35,348)	4,349,978	(0.00012)	172,100	(21)
Buena Vista Twp (See Note 1 below)	9,981,068	659,233,473	(80,452)	9,900,616	(0.00012)	264,800	(31)
SCENARIO 2							
	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Weymouth Twp	2,490,608	162,884,300	232,045	2,722,653	0.00142	192,443	274
Buena Borough	4,385,326	289,643,701	(150,793)	4,234,533	(0.00052)	172,100	(90)
Buena Vista Twp (See Note 1 below)	9,981,068	659,233,473	(343,207)	9,637,861	(0.00052)	254,800	(133)
SCENARIO 3a							
100% assessed valuation	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Estell Manor	2,588,019	157,346,350	(263,169)	2,324,850	0.000167	180,565	(302)
Weymouth Twp	2,490,608	162,884,300	(83,932)	2,406,676	(0.00052)	192,443	(99)
Total			(347,101)	4,731,526			
SCENARIO 3b							
100% enrollment	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Estell Manor	2,588,019	157,346,350	(265,532)	2,322,487	(0.00169)	180,565	(305)
Weymouth Twp	2,490,608	162,884,300	(81,569)	2,409,039	(0.00050)	192,443	(96)
Total			(347,101)	4,731,526			
SCENARIO 4a							
100% assessed valuation	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Estell Manor	2,588,019	157,346,350	(107,154)	2,480,865	(0.00068)	180,565	(123)
Weymouth Twp	2,490,608	162,884,300	77,573	2,568,181	0.00048	192,443	92
Buena Boro	4,385,326	289,643,701	(790,083)	3,595,243	(0.000273)	172,100	(469)
Buena Vista	9,981,068	659,233,473	208,686	10,189,754	0.00032	254,800	81
Total			(610,978)	18,834,043			

TABLE 77: Tax Impact Calculations for All Scenarios (continued)

SCENARIO 4b							
100% enrollment	Original Tax Levy 2022-23	Net Valuation 2022	Increase (Decrease) in Taxes	Projected Tax Levy	Projected Tax (savings) increase	Average Home	Average Home Increase/ (Decrease) in Taxes
Estell Manor	2,588,019	157,346,350	(893,060)	1,694,959	(0.00568)	180,565	(1,025)
Weymouth Twp	2,490,608	162,884,300	(732,483)	1,758,125	(0.00450)	192,443	(865)
Buena Boro	4,385,326	289,643,701	2,826,144	7,211,470	0.00976	172,100	1,679
Buena Vista	9,981,068	659,233,473	(1,811,576)	8,169,490	(0.00275)	254,800	(700)
Total				18,834,043			

Note 1 – Allocation of savings uses existing current percentage of taxes in Buena Regional (100% equalized valuation)

Buena Boro 30.5248887%

Buena Vista Twp 69.4751113%

TABLE 78(A): Estell Manor Salary Guide 2022-2023

Estell Manor Salary Guide 2022-2023	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30
STEP						
1	58,000	59,000	59,500	61,000	61,500	62,000
2	58,500	59,500	60,000	61,500	62,000	62,500
3	59,744	60,744	61,244	62,744	63,244	63,744
4	60,344	61,344	61,844	63,344	63,844	64,344
5	60,944	61,994	62,444	63,944	64,444	64,944
6	61,544	62,544	63,044	64,544	65,044	65,544
7	62,144	63,144	63,644	65,144	65,644	66,144
8	63,044	64,044	64,544	66,044	66,544	67,044
9	64,194	65,194	65,694	67,194	67,694	68,194
10	66,414	67,414	67,914	69,414	69,914	70,414
11	69,966	70,966	71,466	72,966	73,466	73,966
12	74,110	75,110	75,610	77,110	77,610	78,110
13	78,310	79,310	79,810	81,310	81,810	82,310
14	82,560	83,560	84,060	85,560	86,060	86,560
15	88,092	89,092	89,592	91,092	91,592	92,092

TABLE 78(B): Buena Regional Salary Guide 2022-2023

Buena Regional Salary Guide 2022-2023	BA	BA+30	MA	MA+30
STEP				
1	56,501	57,631	58,761	61,021
2	57,751	58,906	60,061	62,371
3	59,001	60,181	61,361	63,721
4	60,251	61,546	62,661	65,071
5	61,501	62,731	63,961	66,421
6	62,751	64,006	65,261	67,771
7	64,001	65,281	66,561	69,121
8	65,251	66,556	67,861	70,471
9	66,501	67,831	69,161	71,821
10	70,101	71,503	72,905	75,709
11	74,101	75,583	77,065	80,029
12	78,101	79,663	81,225	84,349
13	82,101	83,743	85,385	88,669
14	86,101	87,823	89,545	92,989
15	90,101	91,903	93,705	97,309

TABLE 78 (C): Weymouth Township Salary Guide 2022-2023

Weymouth Salary Guide 2022-23	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30
STEP						
1	52,578	53,623	54,667	56,756	57,801	58,845
2	53,078	54,123	55,167	57,256	58,301	59,345
3	53,578	54,623	55,667	57,756	58,801	59,845
4	54,678	55,723	56,767	58,856	59,901	60,945
5	55,778	56,823	57,867	59,956	61,001	62,045
6	56,878	57,923	58,967	61,056	62,101	63,145
7	57,798	59,023	60,067	62,156	63,201	64,245
8	59,178	60,223	61,267	63,356	64,401	65,445
9	60,378	61,423	62,467	64,556	65,601	66,645
MAX	61,578	62,623	63,667	65,756	66,801	67,845
F	62,552	63,597	64,641	66,730	67,775	68,819
E	NA	NA	NA	NA	74,569	75,613
D	75,147	76,192	77,236	79,325	80,370	81,414
C	NA	NA	NA	79,701	80,238	80,840
B	79,745	81,138	81,834	83,923	84,968	86,012
A	86,874	87,919	99,964=3	91,052	92,097	93,141

TABLE 78 (D): Estell Manor Scattergram 2022-2023

Estell Manor Scattergram 2022-23	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	
STEP							
1							
2				0.827			
3							
4	1						
5							
6						1	
7							
8					1		
9							
10	1						
11	1		1				
12							
13				1			
14							
15	1		2	3	1	3	
	4	0	3	4.827	2	4	17.827

TABLE 78 (E): Weymouth Township Scattergram 2022-2023

Weymouth Twp Scattergram 2022-23	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	
STEP							
1	2.4			1			
2	2						
3	0.4	1					
4	1						
5	1						
6						1	
7				1			
8							
9				1			
MAX	1						
F							
E					1		
D	1					1	
C							
B		2					
A							
	8.8	3	0	3	1	2	17.8

TABLE 78 (F): Estell Manor Cost of Contract

Estell Manor Cost of Contract	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	
STEP							
1				50,861			
2							
3							
4	60,344						
5							
6						65,544	
7					66,544		
8							
9							
10	66,414						
11	69,966		71,466				
12							
13				81,310			
14							
15	89,854		186,799	279,197	91,592	278,118	
Total	286,578		258,265	411,367	158,136	343,662	1,458,008

Note – Longevity payments calculated and included in certain steps

TABLE 78 (G): Weymouth Township Cost of Contract

Weymouth Cost of Contract	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	
STEP							
1	126,187			56,756			
2	106,156						
3	21,431	54,623					
4	54,678						
5	55,778						
6						63,145	
7				62,156			
8							
9				64,556			
MAX	61,576						
F							
E						74,569	
D	75,147						
C						80,840	
B		162,276					
A							
	500,955	216,899		183,468	74,569	143,985	1,119,876

TABLE 78 (H): Estell Manor – Cost of Contract Using Buena Regional Guide

Estell Manor	BA	BA+30	MA	MA+30		
STEP						
1						
2			49,670			
3						
4	60,251					
5						
6				67,771		
7						
8			67,861			
9						
10	70,101					
11	74,101	75,583				
12						
13			85,385			
14						
15	90,101	183,806	374,820	291,927		
Total	294,554	259,389	577,736	359,698	1,491,377	

Note – Teachers at the BA+15 or MA+15 levels are placed at the BA or MA level since they have not achieved sufficient credits to reach the next level.

TABLE 78 (I): Difference if Estell Manor Teachers were on Buena Regional Guide

	BA	BA+30	MA	MA+30	Total	
Total	7,976	1,124	8,233	16,036	33,369	
Total Increase for both guides					109,022	

Note – Buena Regional does not have longevity in its guide. Because of this, a small number of teachers would have a lower salary on the Buena guide. However, the cost was deemed to be not material.

TABLE 78 (J): Weymouth Township Cost of Contract Using Buena Regional Guide

Weymouth Twp	BA	BA+30	MA	MA+30		
STEP						
1	135,602		58,761			
2	115,502					
3	82,601					
4	60,251					
5	61,501					
6				67,771		
7			66,561			
8						
9			69,161			
MAX	70,101					
F						
E			77,065			
D	82,101					
C				84,349		
B	164,202					
Total	771,862		271,548	152,120		1,195,530

Note – Teachers at the BA+15 or MA+15 levels are placed at the BA or MA level since they have not achieved sufficient credits to reach the next level.

Note – Weymouth Township teachers on Lettered steps were put at the Buena guide level closest to current salary

TABLE 78 (K): Difference if Weymouth Township Teachers were on Buena Regional Guide

	BA	BA+30	MA	MA+30	Total	
Total	54,007		13,511	8,135	75,653	

TABLE 78 (L): Weymouth Township Cost of Contract Using Estell Manor Guide

	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	
STEP							
1	139,200			61,000			
2	117,000						
3	23,898	60,744					
4	60,344						
5	60,944						
6						65,544	
7				65,144			
8							
9				67,194			
MAX	66,414						
F							
E					77,610		
D	78,310						
C						82,310	
B		167,210					
A							
	546,110	227,864		193,338	77,610	147,854	1,192,776

Note – Weymouth Township teachers on lettered steps were put at the Buena guide level closest to current salary.

TABLE 78 (M): Difference if Weymouth Township Teachers were on Estell Manor Guide

	BA	BA+15	BA+30	MA	MA+15	MA+30	Total
Total	45,154	10,965		9,870	3,041	3,869	72,889

Note – Weymouth Township teachers on lettered steps were put at the Estell Manor guide level closet to current salary.

Note – Calculations for Weymouth Township teachers that might be eligible for longevity were not done since necessary data was not reported.

TABLE 79: Percentage of Responsibility for each District in a Regional Scenario

SCENARIO 3				
District	Eq. Value of Municipality	Total District Enrollment Pk-8	Percent Share Based on Equalized Value	Percent Share Based on Enrollment
Estell Manor	\$ 157,346,350	161.00	49.14%	49.09%
Weymouth Twp	\$ 162,884,300	167.00	50.86%	50.91%
Proposed Regional	\$ 320,230,650	328.00	100.00%	100.00%
Estell Manor			2,324,850	2,322,487
Weymouth Twp			2,406,676	2,409,039
Proposed Regional Tax Levy			4,731,526	

SCENARIO 4				
District	Eq. Value of Municipality	Total District Enrollment Pk-8	Percent Share Based on Equalized Value	Percent Share Based on Enrollment
Estell Manor	\$ 157,346,350	161.00	13.17%	9.00%
Weymouth Twp	\$ 162,884,300	167.00	13.64%	9.33%
Buena Boro	\$ 228,024,700	685.00	19.09%	38.29%
Buena Vista Twp	\$ 646,274,918	776.00	54.10%	43.38%
Proposed Regional	\$1,194,530,268	1,789.00	100.00%	100.00%
Estell Manor			2,480,865	1,694,959
Weymouth Twp			2,568,181	1,758,125
Buena Boro			3,595,243	7,211,470
Buena Vista Twp			10,189,754	8,169,490
Proposed Regional Tax Levy			18,834,043	18,834,044

Section IV-E: Summary of Revenue and Tax Implications of the Scenarios

Scenario 1 - Estell Manor to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional

Estell Manor

- a. As indicated in Table 66 Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$480,831 if it becomes a non-operating (tuition paying) school district. The gross reduction of \$2,975,548 is more than the increases in regular education tuition and loss of school choice aid totaling \$2,494,717 so the net cost would create an increase in school taxes.
- b. The net tax decrease of \$480,831 would save approximately \$552 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. This does not affect the debt service portion of the budget.

Buena Regional

- a. As indicated in Table 69, Buena Regional would have a net overall increase in Revenue of \$115,800 resulting in a tax reduction of the same amount.
- b. The tax reduction of \$115,800 would save approximately \$21 per year for residents of Buena Borough at the average assessed home of \$172,100 and \$31 per year for the residents of Buena Vista Township at the average assessed home value of \$254,800.

Scenario 2 - Weymouth Township to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional

Weymouth Township

- a. As indicated in Table 68 Weymouth Township would have a net overall increase of \$232,045 if it becomes a non-operating (tuition paying) school district. The gross reduction of \$2,099,161 is less than the increases in regular education tuition and unemployment compensation totaling \$2,331,206 so the net cost would create an increase in school taxes.
- b. The net tax increase of \$232,045 would add approximately \$274 per year for the average assessed home of \$192,443. This does not affect the debt service portion of the budget.

Buena Regional

- a. As indicated in Table 70, Buena Regional would have a net overall increase in Revenue of \$494,000 resulting in a tax reduction of the same amount.
- b. The tax reduction of \$494,000 would save approximately \$90 per year for residents of Buena Borough at the average assessed home of \$172,100 and \$133 per year for the residents of Buena Vista Township at the average assessed home value of \$254,800.

Scenarios 3 and 4 – Regionalization – Estell Manor/Weymouth Township (PK – 8) and Estell Manor, Weymouth Township, Buena Regional (PK – 12)

Examples of proposed budgets are contained in Tables 71–73 for Scenario 3 and Tables 74-76 for Scenario 4. It is important to note that numerous assumptions had to be made and actual savings can easily increase or decrease over time. In addition, it must be noted that there would be significant costs associated with creating a regional school district including but not limited to election costs, negotiations to reach contracts with each new bargaining unit, work to create district policy and curriculum, transportation, coordination of software and hardware, rebranding of the new district among a myriad of other costs.

The estimated effect of these proposed budgets on taxes is noted in Table 77 with scenarios 3a and 4a representing calculations based on 100% assessed valuation and scenarios 3b and 4b representing 100% enrollment. Though not provided, calculations can be done with a blend of enrollment and assessed valuation to change the tax impact on each constituent district. It should be noted though that enrollment is generally more volatile than assessed valuation and can cause significant swings from year to year. The consultants also utilized existing revenues for use of surplus and reserve withdrawals with full knowledge that these vary from year to year.

As noted earlier, Senate Legislation under S2 previously mandated that the salaries of certificated staff would be governed by the contract of the largest constituent district until such time as a new negotiated agreement is completed for limited purpose or full purpose Regionalization. In Scenario 3 the largest district (narrowly) is Estell Manor, in Scenario 4 the largest district is Buena Regional.

As a major change introduced in Senate Bill 3488, the constituent districts **will not be immediately required to adopt the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment** from the largest constituent district upon formation as presently required by N.J.S.A. 18A: 6-31.4.

Instead, the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment for each respective district's employees will continue to apply until three years pass or a new collective bargaining agreement is reached. The regional district that may include Estell Manor, Weymouth Township, and Buena Regional will have three years to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement for the regional district before being forced to place Estell Manor and Weymouth Township employees on Buena Regional's salary guide and terms and conditions of employment.

Bill S 3488 also provides that in the event a district's salary guide and terms and conditions are set to expire upon formation of the regional district, the affected district may:

adopt the existing salary guide and term and conditions for up to one year or until a new collective bargaining agreement is reached, whichever occurs first; or adopt the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment of the largest comparable constituent district. N.J.S.A.18A:13-47.9

For Scenario 3 Tables 78 (L), (M) contain the data that would determine the additional cost incurred if the guide from the largest district, Estell Manor was used. For Scenario 4, Tables 78 (H), (I), (J), and (K) contain the data to determine the additional cost incurred if the Buena Regional guide was used and not renegotiated.

For Scenario 3, moving Weymouth Township staff to the Estell Manor guide is projected to be \$72,899. For Scenario 4, moving Estell Manor staff to the Buena Regional guide is estimated to be \$33,369 and moving the Weymouth Township staff \$75,563 for a total of \$109,022. These figures appear in Tables 78(F) and 78(I) as additional costs related to regionalization. It is assumed for the purpose of this calculation that all certificated staff represented by the NJEA affiliates in Estell Manor and Weymouth Township would be retained. In addition the calculation was done for certificated staff only. Salaries of non-certificated staff do not differ much between the districts and were judged to not be material.

Scenario 3

Estell Manor - Estell/Weymouth Township (PK – 8)

- a. As indicated in Table 77 Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$263,169 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$265,532.

- b. The net tax decrease of \$263,169 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$302 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$265,532 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$305 for the same house.

Weymouth Township

- a. As indicated in Table 77, Weymouth Township would have a net overall decrease of \$83,932 if it formed a regional school district with Estell Manor and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$81,569.
- b. The net tax decrease of \$83,932 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$99 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$81,569 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$96 for the same house.

Scenario 4

Estell Manor

- a. As indicated in Table 77, Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$107,154 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$893,060.
- b. The net tax decrease of \$107,154 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$123 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$893,060 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$1,025 for the same house.

Weymouth Township

- a. As indicated in Table 77, Weymouth Township would have a net overall increase of \$77,573 if it formed a regional school district with Estell Manor, Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$732,483.
- b. The net tax increase of \$77,573 for 100% assessed valuation would add approximately \$92 per year for the average assessed home of \$192,443. The net tax decrease of \$732,483 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$865 for the same house.

Buena Borough

- a. As indicated in Tables 77, Buena Borough would have a net overall decrease of \$790,083 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Estell Manor and Buena

Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall increase of \$2,826,144.

- b. The net tax decrease of \$790,083 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$469 per year for the average assessed home of \$172,100. The net tax increase of \$2,826,144 for 100% enrollment was added approximately \$1,679 for the same house.

Buena Vista Township

- a. As indicated in Table 77, Buena Vista Township would have a net overall increase of \$208,686 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Estell Manor and Buena Borough and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$1,811,578.
- b. The net tax increase of \$208,686 for 100% assessed valuation would add approximately \$81 per year for the average assessed home of \$254,800. The net tax decrease of \$1,811,578 for 100% enrollment was saved approximately \$700 for the same house.

Section IV-F: Issues for Consideration

The Review Team sends an acknowledgement to the participating districts for their commitment and transparency to make a good faith effort to conduct and consider the implementation of the feasibility study's review of consolidation options to promote efficiency, cost effective operations, and quality of education for all children.

The intent of this Study was to provide boards of education, school district administrations, and the community-at-large, with data sets to evaluate whether they consider the findings to provide equitable educational programs, actual financial benefits or consequences, curricular, demographic, and statutory implications as they may perceive that positively affect each school district listed in the stated scenarios. Issues of consideration by the board of education, administration, and the community at large when changing the established operations of a school district become multifaceted depending on the scenario that is being pursued as well as the extenuating circumstances that may occur outside of the administrative and individual district boards' of education control. In essence, statutory and positional decisions by the Executive County Superintendent of their respective county, as well as the Commissioner of Education could mandate actions that were not realized by the district or community in making what seems to be an educational or financially prudent decision. Some of the topics for discussion and

consequential considerations are listed below and are not assembled as advantages or disadvantages by the Study Team.

The following topics are identified to assist in discussion that may affect the action or commitment as to whether each district's judgment is in the best interest of students, constituent personnel, and the community within their municipality.

- Potential loss of home rule if the district is giving up your school and district identity
- Apportionment of school board seats among municipalities for regionalized schools
- In the case of either Estell Manor or Weymouth Township, possible loss of even non-operating status if the district becomes non-operating under New Jersey Statute.
- Closing or changing the function of neighborhood schools
- Loss of employment for those not offered or entitled to positions within the new regional district.
- Representation on new regional board of education
- Transportation necessity and cost for some students who presently do not qualify for transportation
- Adoption of new curriculum, practices, schedules, and social situations for students, staff and parents
- Balancing the tax apportionment of the included districts
- Merging existing negotiated agreements, health benefits, tuition, leaves, salaries, and contract language
- Tuition in high school disappears for regional students in Buena Regional High School.
- Possible loss or adjustment of certain state and federal aid that was allocated as a unique district
- 3 methods of cost apportionment; which is the best for each constituent district? (Equalized property valuation, enrollment, or any combination of the two factors)
- Remaining principal and interest incurred by any prospective member of a new regional school system for the obligation of all municipalities in the new district. NJSA 18A: 13-50 and NJSA 18A: 13 -45.

- Cost reapportionment may influence each community’s acceptance of regionalization if the factor of additional expense affects one or more of the districts forming the new regional.
- Adoption of new textbooks, workbooks, and additional materials to create an equity index for the merger as a major consideration since curricular purchase cycles and the use of instructional materials suited to the nature of the learner in each district may not be in agreement and of an additional expense factor not considered in the scenarios presented in the Study.
- Existing contracts agreements could be more generous to merging school district personnel when the new regional is formed.
- There may not be subsections of existing contracts within each district that presently identify personnel by title, duty or salary guide that must be considered
- The merging districts may not have the same bylaws, regulations, and policies that they presently operate under through their respective Board approvals. Contract relationships between School Boards and or other agencies are primary examples of adopting new or revised policy and regulation changes.
- Teaching schedules, student teacher contact time, duty assignments, instructional period length and practices may differ within each contract and district.
- Voter approval in each district, not the aggregate vote, is mandated for the new regional effort to be realized within each voting district.
- Support services, such as cafeteria, custodial, and maintenance, bus drivers, part time employees, school aides, as well as shared service agreements may affect personnel in the newly formed regional. These employees may be protected by the labor contract they presently operate under within their present district of employment.
- Contract language, and the manner in which employment is offered, whether implicit in contract guides or annual renewal (those appointed to a fixed term), may affect the tenure obligation of custodial and maintenance employees of a district in the mandate or reassignment and positional appointment in the newly formed regional.
- Though certified tenured teachers shall have employment rights within the newly formed regional, Reduction In Force (RIF), for reasons stated in the statute, of economy, based on the number of pupils, or of change in administrative or supervisory organization or as listed, for other good cause may be possible. Though they have the statutory and administrative code seniority rights as well as the right to be placed and remain on a recall list in perpetuity this may be within the decisions of the newly formed regional.

- If RIF occurs within the newly formed regional, custodians subject to RIF, who have tenure, also receive seniority rights if a RIF occurs.
- Secretaries are subject to RIF as well even though secretaries are granted statutory tenure. There are no seniority rights afforded to secretaries by either statute or administrative code. Some Boards, through labor contracts, have granted secretaries seniority rights. The contracts of each district must be evaluated for the rights given by each existing Board of Education.
- In the event that a regionalized limited purpose or all-purpose school district is realized, NJ Senate Bill S3348 amends the Bill, commonly referred to as S-2, to provide financial state aid relief to those districts subject to additional state aid reductions through the 2028-2029 school year. The Bill establishes an eight-year phase out of adjustment aid cuts if they are implementing a regionalization plan.
- In the event of a limited-purpose or full-purpose regionalized school district, Bill S-3488 also allows for the terms and conditions of employment of the largest school district to be implemented in full after three years following the regional formation or until a successor agreement is negotiated, whichever occurs first. Terms and conditions may be negotiated. Present law under S-2, requires that the constituent district that employs the largest number of teaching staff members prior to regionalization, determines the terms and conditions of employment in the new regional school. The Bill is an aggressive encouragement for school districts to move towards PreK–12 regionalization and allows for a negotiated successor agreement.
- As previously stated, in the event that regionalization of the three districts is pursued, a referendum must be conducted, and the referendum must be approved by all districts to form the regional district. For the purpose of this Study, the consultants have estimated a budget for the regional district considering the areas that will afford savings of magnitude. Under the LEAP Grant, funding for the special election was made possible.
- As to the “Apportionment of Costs” and tax impact, statute allows costs of a regionalized school district to be apportioned using student enrollment, equalized tax valuation or some combination of the above. For the purposes of this Study, estimates were made using 100% equalized valuation and 100% student enrollment. Should the regionalization option be adopted, the method can be negotiated between the districts. For the purpose of this study, the estimated budget was apportioned at 100% of the two methods listed for comparison. The percentage combination of equalized tax valuation and enrollment could be a discussion point for consideration.

- Under Senate Bill 3488, the Commissioner may now allow newly created regional districts up to ten years to phase in changes in tax levies resulting from the reapportionment of costs in newly formed regional districts. N.J.S.A. 18A: 13-34.3(a).

SECTION V: SUMMARY

Mandated Grant Requirements

As mandated requirements listed in the qualifications of Bill S3488, a Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) funded grant from the Department of Community Affairs (DCA), the Study Team has been advised that the eligibility criteria enumerated in the subsections of P.L. 2021, c.402, to conduct the comprehensive review set forth in the statute has been approved for funding under the criteria N.J.S.A. 18A:13-47.3.

- The board of education of each constituent district addressed the criteria that a proposed regionalization feasibility study must contain as identified in S3488.
- Copies of the resolutions adopted by all participating boards of education or governing bodies, as applicable, certifying a commitment to participate in a feasibility study were achieved and recorded by each board of education participating in the Study.
- An application proposing a feasibility study that would include an analysis of the inclusion of non-participating districts in a proposed regional district was submitted. The application states that the feasibility study will present findings and recommendations related both to the consolidation of participating districts into a regional district and alternative findings and recommendations contingent upon the inclusion of the non-participating districts. Buena Regional School District is the lead agency for the Feasibility Study.
- A detailed narrative describing the proposed regionalization plan or plans to be studied, as well as potential areas for educational and fiscal improvement is included in the scenario evaluations by demography, financial implications, as well as curricular and legal implications for the participating districts. The feasibility study includes, facility utilization, cost sharing and methods of apportionment, including but not limited to, equalized valuation, and pupil enrollment. A combination of the two as well

as whether such apportionment should take effect immediately or on a phase-in or transitional basis over a certain number was not projected in this Study.

- The study examined the allocation of existing school debt and proceeds from the sale of unutilized, underutilized, or legal consequences of facility usage and ownership.
- Projected enrollment trends, including the impact on the demographic breakdown of the student population, including race, ethnicity, and national origin, and projected changes in class size were highlighted and are included in the data and summaries.
- It has been shared with all district administrations as a constant but gentle reminder that, as a condition of adopting the newly formed regionalized school district, voter approval is needed in each district and not the aggregate votes of the municipalities. Final approval of a newly formed regional is within the purview of the Commissioner of Education.

Section: 18A:13-47.4: Application review; feasibility study reimbursement.

According to the statute for study reimbursement, 4. a. the division shall review all applications submitted pursuant to section 3 of P.L. 2021, c. 402, (c.18A:13-47.3) and shall only approve applications that meet the eligibility criteria set forth in subsection b. of section 3 of P.L.2021, c.402 (C.18A:13-47.3) and that are certified by the commissioner pursuant to subsection c. of section 3 of P.L.2021, c.402 (C.18A:13-47.3). Boards of education or governing bodies whose applications are denied approval for a grant shall be provided a notice describing the reasons for the denial and the applicant shall be afforded an opportunity for a hearing before an administrative law judge to contest the decision, which shall conform with the provisions applicable to such contested cases in this State as set forth in statute and regulation. b. The division may grant preliminary approval of an application submitted by the boards of education or governing bodies of two or more school districts pursuant to section 3 of P.L.2021, c.402 (C.18A:13-47.3) if the division determines that the application contains sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the proposed regionalization complies with the criteria enumerated in subsection b. of section 3 of P.L.2021, c.402 (C.18A:13-47.3) and is proposing to:

- (1) form a countywide school district; or
- (2) form an all-purpose regional district by expanding an existing limited purpose regional district through consolidation with some or all of the constituent school districts of the existing limited purpose regional district.

The division shall establish guidelines governing preliminary approval of applications submitted pursuant to this subsection. A participating district that is part of an application that receives preliminary approval under this subsection and that has a State aid differential that is positive may elect to receive State school aid pursuant to the schedule established in paragraph (4) of subsection c. of section 4 of P.L. 2018,c.67(C.18A:7F-68).

c. Boards of education or governing bodies receiving application approval pursuant to this section shall be reimbursed for any eligible costs of the feasibility study up to an amount or percentage to be annually determined by the division, with 50 percent of the grant award to be distributed upon the division's final approval of the grant application and the remaining 50 percent of the grant award to be distributed upon the division's acceptance of the completed feasibility study. Boards of education or governing bodies receiving application approval pursuant to subsection a. of this section, which have conducted within two years prior to the enactment of P.L.2021, c.402 (C.18A:13-47.1 et al.) a feasibility study for which no prior reimbursement was made, shall be eligible for reimbursement up to an amount or percentage to be determined by the division of any costs associated with conducting the study upon execution of the regionalization outlined in the boards' or governing bodies' application. The division shall also annually determine the costs that are eligible and ineligible for reimbursement under this section. (P.L. 2021, c.402, S3488)

The division shall establish guidelines governing preliminary approval of applications submitted pursuant to this subsection. A participating district that is part of an application that receives preliminary approval under this subsection and that has a State aid differential that is positive may elect to receive State school aid pursuant to the schedule established in paragraph (4) of subsection c. of section 4 of P.L. 2018,c.67 (C.18A:7F-68).

The Potential Merger Scenarios

This Study's considerations and recommendations shall be evaluated using criteria as those standards are measured for school districts submitting proposals for regionalization. All three districts; Buena Regional, Estell Manor, and Weymouth Township have agreed to participate in this study to evaluate the feasibility of exploring multiple instructional scenarios to compare a cost/benefit analysis, both short and long term, while analyzing data sets that may provide evidence to better serve the students and communities. In reviewing the stated scenarios, through data analysis of existing educational practices, performance indicators, statistical data relating to district student population projections, social implications for students, staff and communities at large, as well as financial implications for all given scenarios, the data may provide clarity as to the advantages and disadvantages to all participants.

The Study provides the reader with considerations and recommendations that shall evaluate parity or enriched curricular opportunities, gender, socio-economic, and racial equity, as well as facility, contractual, financial implications, and legal statutes, as benchmark considerations for the feasibility and general sustainability for any or all of the scenarios presented.

Section V-A: Summary of Educational Advantages and Disadvantages

Scenario 1 - Estell Manor to close and send all students grade PK-8 to Buena Regional School District.

Potential Advantages

- The Buena Regional ELA and Math curriculum documents are current.
- Teachers in both districts use online resources from the Khan Academy, Discovery Education and Marilyn Burns literature.
- It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to accommodate the additional Estell Manor student population of 188.
- Estell Manor middle school students will have the opportunity to attend drama classes offered in Buena Regional.

Potential Disadvantages

- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since no overlap exists among curriculum documents.
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be significant professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.
- It is likely that additional curriculum resources in all content areas would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- Curriculum documents in Estell Manor would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas.

- Support for Students with Disabilities will need to be considered as the ratio of students to Child Study Team Members varies, 52:1 in Buena and 19:1 in Estell Manor.
- As noted later in this report, the Buena Regional and Estell Manor districts scored low in the NJ Quality Single Accountability Continuum evaluation regarding Instructional Program, 59% and 51%, respectively.

Scenario 2 – Weymouth Township School Districts to close and send all students grade PK-8 to Buena Regional School District.

Potential Advantages

- Elementary teachers and students from both districts are using Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop in ELA.
- Grade 6-8 teachers and students from both districts are using Big Ideas Interactive curriculum.
- In science, the elementary teachers and students in Weymouth Township are using STEMscopes online curriculum and in Buena, STEMscopes are used in grades 6-8.
- The Buena Regional ELA and Math curriculum documents are current.
- It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to accommodate the additional Weymouth Township student population of 148.
- It is possible that existing Child Study Team staffing will not need to be increased substantially as the 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members is 52:1 in Buena, and 33:1 in Weymouth Township.
- Weymouth Township middle school students will have the opportunity to attend drama classes offered in Buena Regional

Potential Disadvantages

- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since some curriculum resources are used in both districts and some are not.
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.

- It is likely that additional curriculum resources would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- Curriculum documents from Weymouth Township would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas.

Scenario 3 - Estell Manor and Weymouth Township School District to consolidate into one school district (Grades PK-8)

Potential Advantages

- It is possible that PK-8 teacher staffing may not need to be increased significantly to serve a combined student population of 336.

Potential Disadvantages

- In grades K-8, there are no common curricula resources between the two districts.
- Teachers and administrators will need to agree upon a common curriculum for PK-8 since no overlap exists among curriculum documents. Curriculum documents currently used in both districts would need to be updated and aligned with the New Jersey Student Learning Standards in all content areas
- Should districts choose to merge elements of each curriculum, there would be significant professional development resources and time needed to revise/update curriculum documents, lesson plans, and to prepare teachers.
- It is likely that additional curriculum resources in all content areas would need to be purchased to serve all students. Curriculum resources that would not be used in the consolidation of the districts would need to be re-allocated.
- The 2020-21 ratio of Students with Disabilities to Child Study Team Members varies widely, 19:1 in Estell Manor and 33:1 in Weymouth and may require additional staffing.

Section V-B: Summary of Demographic Advantages and Disadvantages

- As has been previously identified in this report, projections of enrollment at the combined two major levels (K-5 and Grades 6-8) were presented for each school district for comparison purposes. The projected changes in these two levels of enrollment are expected to have direct impact on grades 9-12 enrollment at Buena Regional if it continues to receive students from the other two districts to attend its high school. The only change in enrollment growth is seen at the 6-8 level of Weymouth Township School: a projected increase from 48 students in 2022 to 50 in 2026, or by 4.3%, though such size of growth at Weymouth Township itself may not significantly impact the overall high school enrollment at Buena Regional.
- Enrollment size at the Weymouth Township 6-8 level had been from 41 to 46 between 2017 and 2020, but there was a significant increase to 58 in school year 2021-2022. This seemingly unexpected change affected the statistical model that caused the projection a slight upward trend in the next five years. The other two school districts and K-5 at Weymouth Township will not see much change in the projected enrollment at either level but tend to decline slightly from 2022 to 2026.
- Other factors may also impact future enrollment, including such economic changes as shifts in regional demographics, birth rates, migration/seasonality, and housing and labor markets.
- As previously stated, *the negative changes in the population* of the four municipalities may have an important impact on school enrollment in the three districts. The population sizes in Estell Manor City and Weymouth Township are much smaller than the two Buena municipalities, thus their potentially declining enrollment in K-8 may further affect the already negative growth in grades 9-12 at Buena Regional if they continue to send students to attend high school.
- The most recent five-year data in the housing market by building permits, do not show a consistent trend in the number of authorized permits for each of the four municipalities and only a very small number of permits issued across the five years from 2017 to 2021.
- Due to the declining trend in general populations and decreasing birth rates in these areas, significant changes in the housing market turnaround should not be expected in the next several years. **Student enrollment may not increase in the three school districts.**

- For each of the 12 grade levels analyzed for the Buena Regional Schools, the ten-year data trend shows a consistent decline in enrollment from 2012 to 2021 for most grade levels at Buena Regional School District.
- The projections based on historical data indicate that there will be **little or no growth** in enrollment for most grade levels at Estell Manor School District for the next five years.
- Weymouth Township School is somewhat different from Buena Regional and Estell Manor. The historical data and projections suggest a mixed trend due to a much larger data variability across 10 years. In the next five years: K-5 enrollment is projected to decline slightly by -0.9% from 2022 to 2026, and grades 6-8 are expected to increase moderately by 4.3%.
- Births by municipalities, in the four identified areas, may trend upward which may help stabilize K -8 enrollment across the three districts in the future.

Section V-C: Summary of Financial Advantages and Disadvantages

Scenario 1 - Estell Manor to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional

Estell Manor

- As indicated in the previous financial tables and narrative, Estell Manor will have a net overall decrease of \$480,831 if it becomes a non-operating (tuition paying) school district. The net tax decrease of \$480,831 would save approximately \$552 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565.

Buena Regional

- Buena Regional would have a net overall increase in Revenue of \$115,800 resulting in a tax reduction of the same amount. The tax reduction of \$115,800 would save approximately \$21 per year for residents of Buena Borough at the average assessed home of \$172,100 and \$31 per year for the residents of Buena Vista Township at the average assessed home value of \$254,800.

Scenario 2 – Weymouth Township to close and send all students grades PK – 8 to Buena Regional

Weymouth Township

- As indicated in the previous financial tables and narrative, Weymouth Township will have a net overall increase of \$232,045 if it becomes a non-operating (tuition paying) school district. The net cost would create **an increase in school taxes**. The net tax increase of \$232,045 would add approximately \$274 per year for the average assessed home of \$192,443.

Buena Regional

- Buena Regional would have a net overall increase in Revenue of \$494,000 resulting in a tax reduction of the same amount. The tax reduction of \$494,000 would save approximately \$90 per year for residents of Buena Borough at the average assessed home of \$172,100 and \$133 per year for the residents of Buena Vista Township at the average assessed home value of \$254,800.

Scenario 3 and 4 – Regionalization

Estell/Weymouth Township (PK – 8)

Estell, Weymouth Township, Buena Regional (PK – 12)

- It is important to note that numerous assumptions had to be made and actual savings can easily increase or decrease over time. In addition, **it must be noted that there would be significant costs associated with creating a regional school district including but not limited to election costs, negotiations to reach contracts with each new bargaining unit, work to create district policy and curriculum, transportation, coordination of software and hardware, rebranding of the new district among a myriad of other costs**. The estimated effect of this proposed budget on taxes with scenarios 3a and 4a representing calculations based on 100% assessed valuation and scenarios 3b and 4b representing 100% enrollment.
- Though not provided, calculations can be done with a blend of enrollment and assessed valuation to change the tax impact on each constituent district. It should be noted though that **enrollment is generally more volatile than assessed valuation and can cause significant swings from year to year**. The consultants also utilized existing revenues for use of surplus and reserve withdrawals with full knowledge that these vary from year to year.

- As noted earlier, Senate Legislation (S2) mandates that the salaries of certificated staff would be governed by the contract of the largest constituent district until such time as a new negotiated agreement is completed. In this case, the largest district is Buena Regional. Under (S3488) however, a major change concerning terms and conditions of employment may govern the process. The Bill provides constituent districts, Estell Manor and Weymouth Township, with the provision **to not immediately adopt** the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment from the largest constituent district (Buena Regional) upon formation as presently required by *N.J.S.A. 18A:6-31.4*. Instead, the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment for each respective district’s employees will continue to apply until three years pass or a new collective bargaining agreement is reached, whichever occurs first. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-47.5* Estell Manor and Weymouth Township school district employees will have three years to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement for the regional district before being forced to place their employees on Buena Regional’s salary guide and terms and conditions of employment.

The Bill also provides in the event a district’s salary guide and terms and conditions are set to expire upon the formation of the regional district, the affected districts may choose the following options. First, adopt the existing salary guide and terms and conditions for up to one year or until a new collective bargaining agreement is reached, whichever occurs first. Secondly, adopt the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment of the largest comparable constituent district. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-47.9*

Table 78 contains the data that would reflect the additional cost that would be incurred if the districts of Estell Manor and Weymouth Township would be placed on the Buena Regional salary guide.

- For Scenario 3, moving Weymouth Township staff to the Estell Manor guide is projected to be \$72,899. For Scenario 4, moving Estell Manor staff to the Buena Regional guide is estimated to be \$33,369 and moving the Weymouth Township staff \$75,563 for a total of \$109,022. These figures appear in Tables 78 (F) and 78 (I) as additional costs related to regionalization.
- It is assumed for the purpose of this calculation that all certificated staff represented by the NJEA affiliates in Estell Manor and Weymouth Township, would be retained. In addition, the calculation was completed for certificated staff only. Salaries of non-certificated staff do not differ much between the districts and were judged to not be material.

Scenario 3 - Estell/Weymouth Township (PK – 8)

Estell Manor

- As indicated in previous tables and narrative, Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$263,169 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$265,532.
- The net tax decrease of \$263,169 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$302 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$265,532 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$305 for the same household.

Weymouth Township

- As indicated in Tables 74 and 76, Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$83,932 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$81,569.
- The net tax decrease of \$83,932 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$99 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$81,569 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$96 for the same house.

Scenario 4 Estell Manor/Weymouth Township to Consolidate / Join Buena Regional School District (PK–12)

Estell Manor

- As indicated in previous tables and narrative, Estell Manor would have a net overall decrease of \$107,154 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$893,060. The net tax decrease of \$107,154 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$123 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$893,060 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$1,025 for the same household.

Weymouth Township

- As indicated in previous tables and narrative, Weymouth Township would have a net overall increase of \$77,573 if it formed a regional school district with Estell Manor, Buena Borough and Buena Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used.

If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$732,483. The net tax increase of \$77,573 for 100% assessed valuation would add approximately \$92 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$732,483 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$865 for the same household.

Buena Borough

- As indicated in previous tables and narrative, Buena Borough would have a net overall decrease of \$790,083 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Estell Manor and Buena Vista Township and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall increase of \$2,826,144. The net tax decrease of \$790,083 for 100% assessed valuation would save approximately \$469 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax increase of \$2,826,144 for 100% enrollment would add approximately \$1,679 for the same house.

Buena Vista Township

- As indicated in previous tables and narrative, Buena Vista Township would have a net overall increase of \$208,686 if it formed a regional school district with Weymouth Township, Estell Manor and Buena Borough and the 100% assessed valuation formula was used. If the 100% enrollment formula was used, there would be an overall decrease of \$1,811,578. The net tax increase of \$208,686 for 100% assessed valuation would add approximately \$81 per year for the average assessed home of \$180,565. The net tax decrease of \$1,811,578 for 100% enrollment would save approximately \$700 for the same house.

SECTION VI: CONCLUSIONS

As has been described in the Purpose of this Study, the document examined in detail, the possibilities regarding Estell Manor and Weymouth Township to consolidate into one district as well as Estell Manor and Weymouth Township to consolidate and join the Buena Regional School District in an expanded PK-12 all-purpose regional district. The impartial purpose of the curricular, demographic, and financial analysis was presented to assist in the decision-making process as to whether educational opportunities, that are currently provided, may be better served for the students of the participating municipalities, in a fiscally prudent and effectively governed manner. The decisions regarding whether it is prudent to move forward with any changes in the operating status of the represented districts remains in the interpretive perception of each individual board of education, administration, and community stakeholders. The data sets were provided to assist in the judgement and final action that shall affect each municipality.

To further assist the districts in their decision making, the various statutory and legal considerations for non-operating districts, all-purpose and limited-purpose regionals, special election criteria, dissolution of local districts, employee rights, as well as apportionment of regional boards are described in this section of the report as well. Though the statutes clearly describe directives and mandates, regardless of intentions or board decisions, **all regionalization applications are subject to approval of the Commissioner of Education.**

Consideration for School Districts as a Non-Operating School District upon Closure

The legal implications of Scenario 1, or 2, would render either the Estell Manor School District or the Weymouth Township District to function under New Jersey Law as a Non-Operating School District as the statute criteria is imbedded in N.J.S.A. 18A: 8-43 as well as 18A:8-44.

A “non-operating school district” is defined under New Jersey Law as “a school district that is not operating schools.” N.J.S.A. 18A:8-43. The New Jersey Legislature has mandated the elimination of non-operating school districts, through merger, “the executive county superintendent of schools shall eliminate any non-operating school district and merge that district with the district with which it participates in a sending-receiving relationship.

Section N.J.S.A. 18A: 8-44 (b) - Elimination of Non-operating District through Merger

- a. Except as otherwise provided in subsection

- b. b. of this section, the executive county superintendent of schools shall eliminate any non-operating district and **merge that district with the district with which it participates in a sending-receiving relationship.**

More than One District Relationship

- c. If a non-operating district is in a sending-receiving relationship with more than one district or is in a sending-receiving relationship **with a district in need of improvement pursuant to the "No Child Left Behind Act of 2001,"** Pub.L.107-110, then the executive county superintendent shall determine with which district the non-operating district shall be merged. The determination shall be based on the district that is able to accommodate the merger with the least disruption to its finances and educational operations. In making the determination the executive county superintendent (ECS) shall examine, but need not be limited to, the following factors: current sending-receiving relationships; the quality and effectiveness of educational programming and district operations; proximity of school districts; transportation costs; school building capacity; and special education needs.
- d. **Buena Regional School District is Identified under Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as a district in need of Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement through 2023 by the State Department of Education.** Therefore, the portion of the Statute for the Executive County Superintendent’s authority applies to any merger agreement, if Buena Regional is involved in the regionalization plan, between the Study’s districts. Since both Estell Manor and Weymouth Township presently have a secondary send/receive relationship with Buena Regional, **it seems unlikely that the ECS would merge either district with a different school district outside of those presented within the scope of this Study.** Neither Estell Manor nor Weymouth Township School Districts are identified in needs improvement or targeted support status districts. Therefore, the regionalization scenario #3, between Estell Manor and Weymouth Township would not be affected by the Needs Improvement subsection of the Statute.

If the Estell Manor or Weymouth Township School District is approved as a non-operating school district, the property of the school district would remain with the school district, unless Estell Manor or Weymouth Township were thereafter eliminated through merger. N.J.S.A. 18A: 8-49, “upon the elimination of a non-operating district the municipal governing body of the municipality in which the former non-operating district is located shall take title to and control of all school grounds and buildings, unless the deed on the school grounds and building directs otherwise, and furnishings and equipment therein, situated in the municipality.”

Legal Responsibility of the School Districts in a New Sending Receiving Relationship. N.J.S.A. 18A: 28-6.1 Tenure under the discontinuance of school.

Section: N.J.S.A. 18A:28-6.1: Tenure upon discontinuance of school

According to the statute, whenever, heretofore or hereafter, any board of education in any school district in this state shall discontinue any high school, junior high school, elementary school or any one or more of the grades from kindergarten through grade 12 in the district and shall, by agreement with another board of education, send the pupils in such schools or grades to such other district, **all teaching staff members who are assigned for a majority of their time in such school, grade or grades and who have tenure of office at the time such schools or grades are discontinued shall be employed by the board of education of such other district in the same or nearest equivalent position**; provided that any such teaching staff member may elect to remain in the employ of the former district in any position to which he may be entitled by virtue of his tenure and seniority rights by giving notice of said election to the boards of education in each of the school districts at least three months prior to the date on which such school, grade, or grades are to be discontinued.

Teaching staff members so employed in such other district shall have their rights to tenure, seniority, pension and accumulated leave of absence, accorded under the laws of this state, recognized and preserved by the board of education of that district. Any periods of prior employment in such sending district shall count toward the acquisition of tenure in the other district to the same extent as if all such prior employment had been in such other district. L.1967, c.271.

Board of Education based on Non-Operating Status

If the status of the Estell Manor or Weymouth Township School District were approved as a non-operating school district, either district would maintain a Board of Education, which would still provide fiscal oversight and adopt a yearly budget, as well as set meeting dates for the Board. The expenses of the district would remain the responsibility of the Board as well as the fiscal responsibility to raise funds to meet the financial obligations of the non-operating district.

Expenses may include, a shared time Business Administrator and staff, both fiscal and maintenance, to support the non-operating district's tuition, transportation, and other ancillary expenses as well as facility maintenance if the Board of Education continued ownership of the existing building and district site.

As has been previously referenced, in the event that the Estell Manor and Weymouth Township School Districts would become non-operating school districts according to New Jersey Legislative

Statute, the merger options are succinctly expressed. The statute reads, that the County Superintendent of Schools “must” merge the non-operating district with the district they “presently” participate in a sending/receiving relationship as articulated in N.J.S.A. 18A: 8-44. The district they presently participate in a sending/receiving relationship is the Buena Regional School District, for their 9 -12 grade secondary students.

The statute creates exceptions provided in subsection b., for districts with multiple send/ receive relationships. Both Estell Manor and Weymouth Township meet the criteria defined in the statute and do not have multiple sending/receiving educational relationships. The statute additionally states, that the County Superintendent of Schools may make a determination that shall be based on the district that is able to accommodate the merger with the least disruption to its financial and educational operations. Multiple factors such as the quality of educational program, district operations, transportation costs, school building capacity and special education may be examined in the considerations. Most of these considerations are included in this Study.

For the record, there are presently still 17 non-operating school districts in New Jersey, most of which have sending/receiving relationships with multiple school districts. The previously eliminated 13 non-operating school districts were merged with the districts in which they already had a sending-receiving relationship.

Since non-operating school districts have become an anomaly and are usually sustained and permitted by the Department due to unresolved financial complications, their approval is subject to the Department’s review of the district’s argument for such status.

In Estell Manor’s and Weymouth Township School districts present condition of declining enrollment, considerable loss of state aid, with an anticipation of greater loss of aid for future fiscal years, the districts could make a valid argument for a change in their operating status.

The possibility shall always exist, that if Estell Manor and or Weymouth Township School District were approved as non-operating districts, the Department of Education, through their authority, could eliminate that status as well as it has previously proceeded with 13 other districts prior to 2010.

The designation of non-operating school district for either Estell Manor or Weymouth Township Schools would mean the property would remain with the school district Board of Education. The Board would continue to provide fiscal oversight and adopt a yearly budget for the cost of a Business Administrator and legal services as well as transportation and other costs that are implicit in non-operating districts.

In the event the Department eliminated the non-operating status of either the Estell Manor or Weymouth Township School District, the property of the eliminated district would be placed into the municipality in which the former district is located, either Estell Manor Township or

Weymouth Township, whichever or if both are so designated. The content and equipment would also revert to the municipality.

Regional School Districts Shall Be of Two Types

The Scenarios, within this Study, shall address regional school districts within the statutes that define them appropriate for Scenarios 3 and 4. N.J.S.A. 18A:13-2 of New Jersey Statutes, identifies the two types of regional school districts that may be formed, restructured, or created under the statute.

- a.) “All purpose regional districts” organized for all the school purposes of the municipalities included within such regional districts;
- b.) “Limited purpose regional districts” organized to provide and operate in the territory comprised within such districts one or more of the following: elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, vocational schools, special schools, health facilities or particular educational services or facilities.

Additional Purpose Referendums New Jersey Revised *Statutes N.J.S.A. 18A:13-33*

Buena Regional presently operates as an all-purpose regional school district. If advisable after consideration of the data sets provided in this Study under Scenario #4, that it is determined to be in the best interest of all school districts to potentially expand the regional, then the directive within the statute becomes necessary through referendum.

The statute reads, if the boards of education of a regional district, and each of each local district, proposing to join therewith to enlarge said regional district, and the commissioner or his/her representative, shall, after consultation, study and investigation, determine by resolution so to add to the purpose or purposes of the regional district, the authorization of the adoption of such purpose or purposes shall be included by resolution in the proposal to enlarge said regional district and shall be so submitted to the voters of the regional district and of each proposed new constituent district at the election to be held in relation to the enlargement of said regional district.

In an advisable scenario for such an enlargement of the regional, as identified in N.J.S.A. 18A:13-33, the board of education of the regional district and of each such local district shall by resolution frame and adopt a proposal to that effect and shall call for, and conduct, upon the same day, a special school election in such regional district and in each such local school district, and shall submit thereat the question whether or not said proposal shall be approved briefly describing the contents of said resolution and stating the date of its adoption. And they may submit also at

special election as part of such proposal any other provision which may be submitted at such a special election under the provisions of this chapter, but no such special election shall be held on any day before April 15 or after December 1 of any calendar year. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-43*.

As part of the enlargement proceedings, every all-purpose regional district the constituent municipalities of the regional district shall be construed to be the constituent districts of the regional district after the dissolution pursuant to this chapter of the constituent districts which formed the regional district under *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-3*.

Scenario 4

Buena Regional, Estell Manor, and Weymouth Township Public Schools to Consolidate and join the Buena Regional School District.

Scenario #4, in essence, is the enlargement purpose for the new or expanded all-purpose regionalization summary of the participating school district's feasibility study options. An operational axiom for regionalizing or merging school districts, from the Department, would be **that neither the sending nor receiving districts would be fiscally harmed** by the merger status. Additionally, regionalization **shall not increase or exacerbate the segregation of students enrolled in the districts from which a school district is seeking to consolidate or as applicable,** in the school districts from which a school district is seeking to withdrawal by racial, socio-economic, disability or English Language Learner status. Estimated regional budget tax impact calculations for Scenario #4, have varying significance for each district based on the 100% equalized valuation or 100% enrollment calculation presented in the financial tables.

Current law provides three methods to determine the apportionment of the tax levy among the municipalities identified in the Study. Two have been identified and used for fiscal projections identified in the financial tables. A combination of apportionment based on equalized valuation and enrollment is the third option for tax levy allotment and is not contained or configured in the data sets provided. The data sets shall provide significant factor influence on the decision making of each municipality as well as the considerations for permission to expand the regional from the Department of Education.

As previously referenced, Senate Bill S 3488 modifies certain procedures pertaining to school district regionalization; establishes grant programs such as this, for cost reimbursement of conducting regionalization feasibility studies and provides financial incentives for regionalization. Its significance to this Study is for funding as well as the amended language for participating districts and boards of education seeking to form a limited-purpose or all-purpose school district.

Among the other considerations imbedded in Senate Bill S 3488, is that it allows constituent districts that are expanding or creating a new all-purpose regional, to use a transitional method of apportionment for up to ten years. The newly formed regional, following its creation, through the year 2028-2029, would receive state school aid that the newly created regional school district would receive as a regional school district; or the sum of the amount of State school aid received by each district constituting the newly formed regional school district prior to the creation of the regional school. State school aid reductions, under the present S2 state aid funding formula, by a period of four additional years beyond what is provided for the current State aid reduction timeline is implicit in the Bill as well.

The Bill passed the Senate 30-0 in December 2021, as well as the Assembly on January 10, 2022, with a vote in both houses of 77-0-0. The Bill shall replace Senate Bill S2, as it amends various parts of the statutory law and supplemental Chapter 13 of Title 18A of the New Jersey Statutes. The Governor signed the Bill into Law on January 18, 2022.

Regionalizing the Estell Manor, Weymouth Township and Buena Regional School Districts

According to the New Jersey Office of Legislative Services (OLS) Bill 3488 modifies the procedures pertaining to school district regionalization; has established grant program for cost reimbursement of conducting feasibility studies; and shall provide financial incentives for the formation of K-12 regional and countywide school districts.

The goal of the Bill is to encourage the formation of K-12 regional and countywide school districts.

The regionalization plan implicit in the law shall include options to address issues related to:

- Facility utilization
- Cost sharing and methods of apportionment including equalized valuation and pupil enrollment
- The allocation of existing school debt and proceeds from the sale of utilized or underutilized facilities
- Projected enrollment trends including breakdown by race, ethnicity, and projected class size
- An analysis of the differences in salaries and terms and conditions of employment and contracts among various groups
- State aid and tax revenue projections
- Potential cost savings or increases from regionalization

- Student seat time and distance traveled as well as potential increase in transportation cost
- K -12 curriculum coordination improvements
- Potential enrichment of educational programs for student
- Calculation and method of apportionment for determining membership of the regional district board of education among the constituent districts
- As a purposeful restatement, in the event that a regionalized limited purpose or all-purpose school district is realized, NJ Senate Bill S3348 amends the Bill, commonly referred to as S-2, to provide financial state aid relief to those districts subject to additional state aid reductions through the 2028-2029 school year. The Bill establishes an eight-year phase out of adjustment aid cuts if they are implementing a regionalization plan.
- In the event that of a limited purpose or full purpose regionalized school district, Bill S-3488 also allows for the terms and conditions of employment of the largest school district to be implemented in full after three years following the regional formation or until a successor agreement is negotiated, whichever occurs first. Terms and conditions may be negotiated. Present law under S-2, requires that the constituent district that employees the largest number of teaching staff members prior to regionalization, determines the terms and conditions of employment in the new regional school.
- Misinterpretations that may confuse the issues inherent in having to merge various collective negotiation agreements from the previously existing districts and what happens in the intervening years before new agreements can be negotiated is clarified in the Bill's language. This negotiated contract information may also be appropriate for districts becoming non-operating districts upon a merger of their students and staff.
- As written in the Bill, the salary guides and terms and conditions of employment, whether established through a collective negotiations agreement or past practice, of the largest constituent school district shall apply in full after three years following the formation of the regional district or until a successor agreement is negotiated with the majority representative of the new district, whichever occurs first. The salary guide and terms and conditions of employment that will apply pursuant to the provisions of this subsection shall be based upon the terms and conditions of the largest constituent district made up of only the identical grade levels. In the event that there is no constituent district made up of only the identical grade levels, the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment that will apply shall be based upon the terms and conditions of employment of the largest constituent district containing the identical grade levels. This subsection of the Bill clarifies that the salary guide and terms and conditions of employment of the largest constituent school district -- determined by number of teaching staff members,

whether established through a collective bargaining agreement or past practice, remains in place after three years or until a successor agreement is negotiated, whichever occurs first. This change, under the new Bill, may delay increase in costs for some school districts and permit them planning time for personnel expenditures.

- As listed in subsection 10 of the Bill concerning Tenure/Seniority the Bill reads: **Whenever a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district is formed or enlarged, the tenure and seniority rights of all employees from the affected, constituent, replaced, displaced, or dissolved districts, except for employees who are superintendents without prior underlying tenure and seniority rights, will be recognized and preserved by the newly formed or expanded limited purpose or all-purpose regional district.** Additionally, all periods of employment in any of the school districts would count toward acquisition of tenure and seniority in the newly formed or enlarged limited purpose or all-purpose regional district. All statutory and contractual rights to accumulated sick leave, leave of absence, and pension of an employee that have been acquired through employment in any of the districts would also be recognized by the newly formed or enlarged limited purpose or all-purpose regional district. Under the bill, whenever a limited purpose or all-purpose regional district is formed or enlarged, any employee not covered by statutory seniority rights will be placed on a seniority list in accordance with the employee’s years of employment in any of the constituent districts for the purposes of employment.
- All statutory and contractual rights to accumulated sick leave, leave of absence, and pension of an employee that have been acquired through employment in any of the districts shall be recognized by the newly formed or enlarged limited purpose or all-purpose regional district.
- State Aid: as written in the Bill, notwithstanding the provisions in section 32 P.L. 1996, or any other law, rule or regulation to the contrary, a school district that is a regional school district created following the approval of a grant application pursuant to section 4 , pending before the legislation of this Bill, shall, from the first full school year following the creation of the regional school district through the 2028-2029 school year, receive State school aid in an amount that is greater of the amount of State school aid that the newly created regional school district would receive as a regional school district; or the sum of the amount of State school aid received by each school district constituting the newly created regional school district prior to the creation of such regional school district.
- Any decrease in State aid pursuant to subsection b. or c. of this Bill **shall first be deducted from a school districts or county vocational school district’s allotment of adjustment aid.**

Certification and Determination of the Results of Referendum to Create Regional District

The secretary of each local district, so proposed to be included in the proposed regional district, shall certify to the county superintendent of the county, in which such district is situate, within 5 days after such election, the results of the election held therein for the creation of a regional district, showing the number of votes cast for, and the number cast against, the adoption of the proposal to create such a regional district submitted therein, in each municipality in his district and each county superintendent of a county, in which any such municipality or municipalities are situate, shall canvass the vote cast in each such municipality and if such county superintendent or superintendents shall determine from such certificates that a majority of the votes cast for and against the proposal submitted at said election were cast for its adoption in a consolidated district or in each such municipality other than a constituent of a consolidated district, he or they shall immediately certify to the board of education of each such local district, the result of such vote as so determined and the regional school district shall be created and any other provisions included in such proposal in accordance with the provisions of this chapter shall become effective on the twentieth day following the day of such election. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-35*

Apportionment of Membership of Board of newly created Regional District

Except as otherwise provided in section 1 of P.L. 2017, c. 45 (C. 18A:13-34a), the executive county superintendent or executive county superintendents of any county or counties, in which such newly created regional district is situate, shall calculate and apportion the membership of the board of education of such newly created regional district in accordance with the provisions of *N.J.S.A.18A:13-8* and if such regional district is an all-purpose regional district such membership shall be apportioned among **the municipalities included within the districts according to the number of their inhabitants**, as apportionment is made among constituent districts forming a limited purpose regional district, and the members shall be elected or appointed in accordance with such apportionment. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-36*

Enlargement of Regional Districts; new Board Members; Reapportionment

Except as otherwise provided in section 3 of P.L. 2017, c. 45 (C.1), the executive county superintendent of the county in which any new constituent district of an enlarged regional district shall be situate shall, not later than 30 days after the election for the enlargement thereof, appoint one member of the enlarged board of education of the regional district from among the

qualified citizens of each such new constituent district and the members so appointed shall serve until the first Monday succeeding the first annual April school election of the enlarged regional district and their successors shall be elected at said election. In the case of a regional district in which the annual school election is in November, the members so appointed shall serve until the first week in January next succeeding the first annual November school election of the enlarged regional district and their successors shall be elected at that election. If by reason of the enlargement of the district it becomes necessary to reapportion the membership of the enlarged board of education the executive county superintendent or superintendents of the county or counties in which the constituent local districts of the enlarged district are situate shall reapportion the membership of the enlarged board of education in accordance with the provisions of sections *N.J.S.A.18A:13-8 and 18A:13-36*, and at the same time shall designate the number of members to be elected from each constituent school district at the succeeding annual school election to be held therein upon the expiration of the terms of office of the members of the regional board then in office, in such manner that the representation of the constituent districts shall be established in accordance with such reapportionment at the earliest possible time but the members then in office shall continue in office for the terms for which they were elected or appointed notwithstanding such reapportionment. *N.J.S.A. 18A:13-46*

Dissolution of Local Districts; original Boards to function until taking over of schools

Whenever any local district has joined or shall join in:

- a. Creating or enlarging an all-purpose regional district, or
- b. The formation of a limited purpose regional district and thereafter has joined or shall join in the formation of another regional district for all other school purposes, all existing districts forming such regional district or any existing district so united with such last named regional district shall be dissolved when the board of education of such regional district shall take charge and control of the educational facilities of the schools of such existing district or districts and thereafter each municipality included within such regional district shall become a constituent district of such regional district.

The board of education of each district to be dissolved shall continue in office with power to conduct the schools of the district until such date as the board of education of such regional district shall take charge and control of the educational facilities of the schools of such regional district, on which date their terms of office shall terminate.

No election shall be held for members of any district to be so dissolved in or after any year in which the members of the board of the regional district are elected. *N.J.S.A.18A:13-48*

It should be noted that the dissolution of local districts shall only be dissolved after the regional district board has taken charge and control of the educational facilities in the constituent district. All boards shall remain within their office and shall conduct business empowered to them through their appointment or election, depending on Type I or Type II Board appointments and serve until the election of the first elected members of the newly created regional district.

Principals, teachers and employees transferred

All principals, teachers, and employees in the employ of any dissolving local district shall be transferred to and continue in their respective employments in the employ of the regional school district and ***their rights to tenure***, pension, and accumulated leave of absence accorded under the laws of the state shall not be affected by their transfer to the employ of the regional school district. *N.J.S.A.18A:13-49*

SECTION VII: RECOMMENDATIONS

Seek input from all community stakeholders regarding the Study and the social, curricular, and financial implications as they relate to each district as well as the formation of a new or expanded regional.

Boards of Education should meet with district central office administrators to discuss the financial, social, and curricular implications, based on state aid projections under new impending legislation, district operating expenses, as well as data sets provided to assist in the decision making as whether to implement or not implement any scenario stated in this Study.

Consult with the Executive County Superintendent of Schools, the full descriptive feasibility study, non-operating district statute, the possible composition of newly formed limited-purpose or all-purpose expanded regionalized school districts as well as a discussion on the status of non-operating school districts through merger.

Clarify with the community-at-large and each Board of Education that the formation of a newly formed regional school district is subject to the voter approval of each community district and not the aggregate majority vote. As has been stated, all regionalization applications are subject to approval of the Commissioner of Education.

Review the financial implications of each scenario closely. Regional considerations are not easily granted, when or if, districts are fiscally harmed in the merger.

Develop a discussion with district legal counsel to prepare appropriate petitions and legal exhaustion of remedies for all scenarios the Boards of Education and administrations are considering to alternative programs for their student.

Any and all appropriate statutory references and linear steps in the process pertaining to any dissolution of a district or regionalization initiative should be clearly articulated with board solicitors as well as in consultation with the Executive County Superintendent of Schools.

