

100
YEARS



The Feasibility Study Process

Rowan School Regionalization Institute

Somerset Hills-Bedminster Regional Feasibility Study
October 29, 2025



Institute Team Members

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Objectives

1. Identify the legal requirements for a feasibility study.
2. Outline a scope of work and our study model.
3. Address some FAQs as well as your questions.



Legal Requirements



School District Regionalization Law (P.L. 2021, c.402; also known as S3488)

- Your grant has been authorized through the Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP). It is a broader grant than the School Regionalization Efficiency Program (SREP) grant associated with P.L. 2021, c.402, as it applies to counties, municipalities, school districts, commissions, authorities, and fire districts.
- LEAP grants provide reimbursement for costs associated with school consolidation / regionalization plans
- Our study process is based on the SREP guidelines, which provide greater detail about studies dealing with school districts
- The NJDOE shall reimburse participating districts for any costs incurred in holding an election to establish or enlarge a limited purpose or all purpose regional district.



School District Regionalization Law (P.L. 2021, c.402; also known as S3488)

Boards of education shall demonstrate that the proposed regionalization:

- Does not, and is not foreseeably likely to, increase or exacerbate the segregation of students by racial, socioeconomic, disability, or ELL status;
- Will lead to the establishment of a limited purpose or all purpose regional district to the maximum extent practicable;
- Consolidates school districts that are in close geographic proximity of each other;
- Possesses the potential to advance an enhanced learning environment for participating districts and for improved efficiency and cost savings;
- Coordinates curriculum across schools and grades; and
- Reflects a documented commitment from the participating districts to make good faith efforts to implement the recommendations of the feasibility study.



School District Regionalization Law (P.L. 2021, c.402; also known as S3488)

The feasibility study shall include, but need not be limited to, options to address issues related to:

- Potential enrichment of educational programs for students;
- Kindergarten through 12 curriculum coordination improvement;
- Current and projected staffing needs and costs, analysis of the differences in the salaries and terms and conditions of employment in contracts among the various districts;
- 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;
- Student seat time, distance traveled, and potential increased or reduced transportation costs;
- State aid and tax revenue projections, cost sharing and methods of apportionment, potential cost savings or increases, allocation of existing school debt, facility utilization; and
- Calculation and methods of apportionment for determining membership on the regional district board of education.

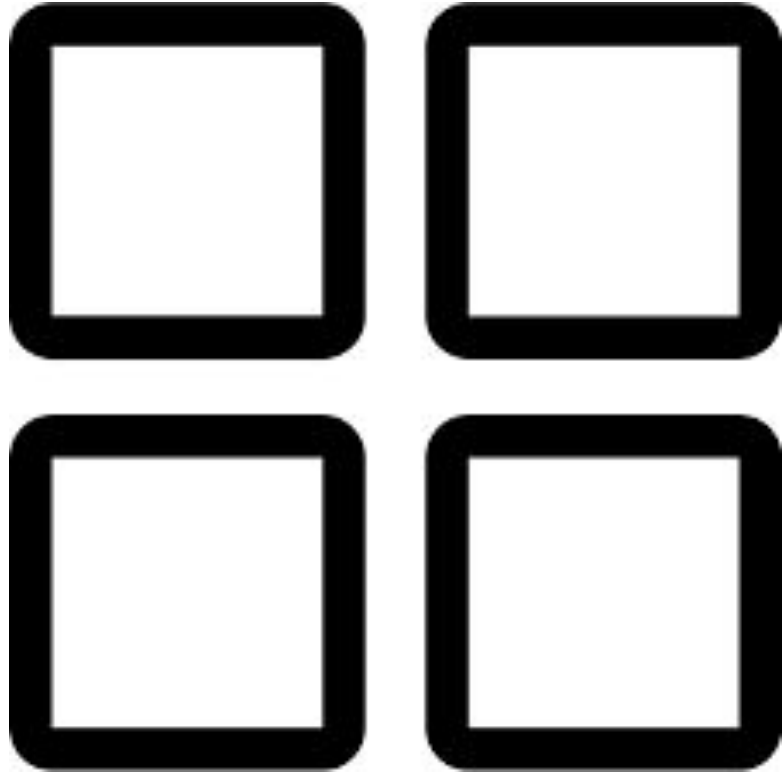


Scope of Work



Scope of Work and Deliverables

- P. Provide information and assistance leading to BOE approval to conduct the study.
 - 1. Develop an outline of the proposed study with key stakeholders from each participating district.
 - 2. Gather data relevant to the study from public sources, district records, and stakeholder meetings as needed.
 - 3. Produce analyses in the areas of governance/law, education/program, demography/facilities, and finance/operations.
 - 4. Make recommendations based on the analyses, review a draft with the steering committee, and produce a final document.
 - 5. Present findings publicly and assist in planning next steps.



Study Model



Framework of the Study Report

- ❖ Table of Contents
- ❖ Executive Summary
- ❖ Introduction
 - Study Purpose
 - Consolidation Options
 - Consultant Backgrounds
- ❖ Four Domains
 - Governance & Law
 - Education & Program
 - Demography & Facilities
 - Finance & Operations
- ❖ Findings & Recommendations



Domain 1: Governance & Law

- School District Profiles - district boundary map; district configurations, **existing send-receive relationships, contiguous districts with small enrollment**, schools, school choice status; mission, vision, core values, strategic plans
- Statutory Review and Transition Features
- Election Process and Board Composition - number of board members, current apportionment, **projected apportionment**; number of districts necessary to pass a regionalization referendum, frequency of voting on regionalization referenda
- State Monitoring Status
- **Stakeholder Input** - Steering Committee, student, parent, staff, and board member survey data; interviews and/or focus groups
- Potential Political Issues
- Governance and Legal Impact



Domain 2: Education & Program

- Curriculum and Instruction - **subject and course offerings by grade level** (curriculum philosophies, core course materials/text series); time spent per day/week by subject, universal screeners; **average class sizes by grade level**; instructional time during the school day; student access to technology and specialized technology programs; professional development; **potential enrichment in instructional programs; potential improvements in curriculum coordination**
- Performance Measures - federal accountability status; state assessment results (NJSLA, student growth, SAT, AP, etc. – aggregated and disaggregated); graduation and postsecondary enrollment; school climate (absenteeism, discipline); potential improvements in performance measures
- Preschool Education - description, PEA status, sections, universe; potential improvements in preschool education
- Special Education - numbers, demographics, classifications, program configurations, in district vs out of district; potential improvements in special education
- Support Programs - MTSS, multilingual, gifted, other unique programs; potential improvements in support programs
- Extracurricular Programs - names and levels of student clubs, activities, and athletics; potential improvements in extracurricular programs
- School and District Staffing - **school staff numbers, positions**, district comparisons, experience and retention, salaries and ratios; district staff – **administrative structure**, titles, responsibilities, district comparison; shared personnel; **projected staffing needs**
- Educational and Programmatic Impact



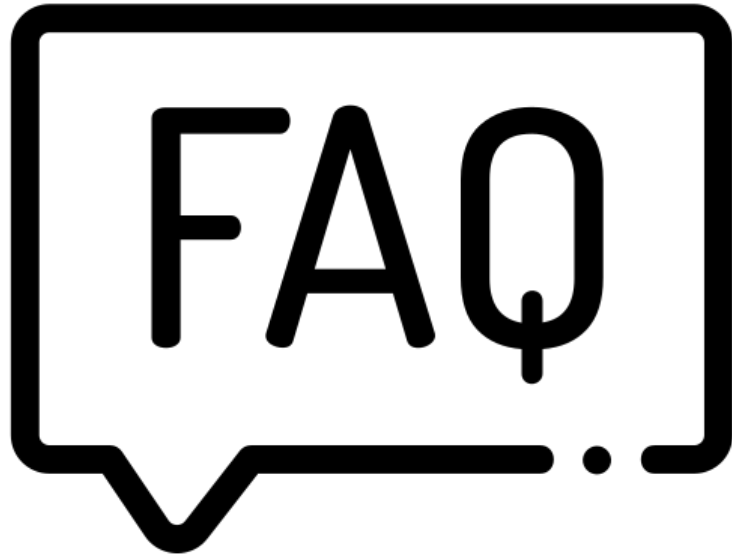
Domain 3: Demography & Facilities

- Municipal Profiles - overview of community populations, economics, distinguishing characteristics, general context, etc.; birth data
- Housing Starts - current and approved developments, affordable housing data/impact
- Enrollment History - enrollment trends over time; impact of choice and charter enrollments (if any)
- **Enrollment Projections** - cohort survival method, housing method (if needed)
- **Disaggregated Enrollments** - projected changes due to regionalization
- **Facility Utilization** - classroom use and availability; unique facility resources
- Demographic and Facilities Impact



Domain 4: Finance & Operations

- Operating Expenses - budgetary costs per pupil and peer ranks
- Borrowing Margin, Debt Allocation, and Reserves - borrowing margins; debt service schedules; reserve accounts (maintenance, capital, emergency, etc.)
- Collective Bargaining Agreements - **current main CBA provisions**, potential costs to move staff to another guide; health benefits plans – how many, type of each plan
- Contracted Services and Tuition - **transportation schedules with student seat time and distance traveled; potential increased or reduced transportation costs** - contracts, routes, cost, destinations, number of students, efficiency report; other contracted services (food, custodial, maintenance, etc.); tuition history and costs if send/receive relationships exist
- Shared Services - existing shared services contracts (service name/type, cost, participating districts); potential new or enhanced shared services
- State Aid - **state aid projections** and trends, impact of other aid categories (if applicable)
- Local Tax Levies and Potential Cost Savings - **potential savings and/or increases; cost sharing methods of apportionment including analysis of equalized valuations and enrollments; local tax rate projections and trends;** alternative transitional methods of apportionment (if appropriate)
- Financial and Operational Impact



Frequently Asked Questions



Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Study Process

Q: How long does a feasibility study take?

A: Most can be accomplished within 10-12 months of grant approval, depending on their complexity.

Q: What is the cost to the participating school districts?

A: There are no financial costs to the districts: they are all reimbursed through the state grant. The lead district will pay invoices to Rowan University for work accomplished. Otherwise, the commitment from the districts is the time from stakeholders to gather data and provide input to the process.

Q: What is the value of being a lead district or a partner to the study?

A: The lead district and its partners make decisions about what the study investigates and provides feedback on the draft product. We encourage partners to create a steering committee including the superintendents, business administrators, and representatives from the boards of education. The committee can also plan informational open houses, focus groups, surveys, and/or other means of sharing information and gathering public input.

Q: How does the study consider unique aspects of the participating districts?

A: We work with the steering committee to identify the range of options to be studied as well as lines of inquiry that go beyond our standard study model.



Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about the Study Process

Q: What happens after the study is finished?

A: We come back to the districts and present the findings at a public meeting. The districts would then consider which recommendations to pursue, potentially through a referendum vote. We will remain available to offer assistance with planning next steps.

Q: Is regionalization required after a study is completed?

A: No, the requirement is for the participants to make “a good faith effort” to implement the study recommendations, which may include new collaborations and/or expanding current shared services.

Q: How many studies are being conducted?

A: We have submitted initial drafts of three studies, and are engaged in four other studies.



Resources

Presentation Slides

Study Outline Template

Delsea Regional Feasibility Study

Belvidere Cluster Feasibility Study



Questions? Discussion?

Rowan School Regionalization Institute