



## Community and Staff Forum Response Summary

### Overview

The following is a summary of community and staff feedback collected during three “Future-Ready Forums” in the Pine Plains Central School District. Two were held on Wednesday, November 12<sup>th</sup> from 3:45-5:45 and 6:30-8:30 in the cafeteria of Stissing Mountain Jr./Sr. High School. The third was held on Wednesday, November 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30 in the cafeteria of Cold Spring Early Learning Center. Participants were invited to share their feedback via Google Forms provided at each table. This summary highlights thematic connections within the feedback and categorizes the responses to each question into related groups.

### Question 1: What current strengths of the District do we need to preserve as we consider "Right Sizing" the district?

#### Educational Excellence Framework

- Small class sizes enabling individualized attention and quality instruction
- Comprehensive special education services to support the student population through dedicated spaces, specialized staff, and mandated programs
- Academic Intervention Services (AIS) providing targeted small-group instruction in dedicated, distraction-free environments, particularly in the early grades

#### Age-Appropriate Learning Environments

- Developmentally suitable spaces for elementary students
- Transportation systems that protect younger students from exposure to older student behaviors
- Grade-level appropriate equipment, bathrooms, and playground facilities

#### Community Identity and Culture

- Small-town character reflected in student-staff relationships and community-centered schools
- Distinct school cultures aligned with developmental needs of respective grade levels
- Local employment opportunities and commitment to avoiding layoffs when possible



**Question 2: What current weaknesses of the District could be positively impacted if we were to realign our structure?**

**Transportation System Inefficiencies**

- Excessive ride times for some students across the district
- Driver shortages affecting service reliability and requiring multiple trips on identical routes
- Complex routing patterns increasing operational costs and community traffic

**Operational Redundancies**

- Multi-building maintenance costs straining district resources
- Service delivery challenges requiring specialists to travel between locations
- Communication gaps between buildings affecting curriculum alignment and program consistency

**Question 3: In looking at all of our school buildings, how do you think the District could best lower its cost?**

**Building Consolidation Considerations**

- Seymour Smith's \$25 million repair and infrastructure needs are excessive
- Cold Spring has lower operational costs and expansion potential
- Consolidation into Cold Spring and Stissing Mountain preserves age-appropriate learning environments for our youngest students

**Alternative Efficiency Measures**

- Renewable energy implementation to offset operational expenses
- Enhanced agricultural tax exemption enforcement to increase revenue
- Administrative staff reduction rather than classroom teacher cuts
- Building lease arrangements rather than sales to maintain future flexibility



# Pine Plains Central School District

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**Question 4: The District is 140 square miles and must maintain a bus fleet to serve it. What bussing concerns should we address during the "Right Sizing" process?**

## **Age-Appropriate Safety Protocols**

- Eliminate mixed-age transportation preventing elementary students from riding with high school students
- Maintain ride times to under one hour to support student well-being and family schedules
- Implement enhanced supervision through bus monitors and behavioral management systems

## **Fleet Optimization**

- Consolidate routes while preserving safety and developmental appropriateness
- Address driver shortage through improved working conditions and scheduling
- Evaluate electric bus feasibility for long rural routes

**Question 5: Are there any concerns or other ideas about the "Future-Readiness" of the District for us to consider?**

## **Legal Compliance Requirements**

- Formation of a state-recommended Facilities Committee inclusive of community members
- Special education compliance ensuring adequate facilities for IEP services
- Compliance with grade band-specific physical education requirements
- Review adult and student restroom facility regulations

## **Community Engagement Protocol**

- Enhanced public outreach through physical mailers and multiple communication channels
- Stakeholder committee formation including teachers, staff, parents, and community members
- Multiple expert consultations before finalizing restructuring decisions
- Transparent timeline communication with adequate transition support



### **Educational Program Protection**

- Small-group instruction preservation through adequate classroom and support spaces
- Specialized program continuity maintaining agriculture, Winner's Circle, athletics, and enrichment offerings
- Compliance with all IEP mandates and accommodations

### **Transition Support Systems**

- Comprehensive staff support needs including relocation compensation and clear procedural communication
- Student transition planning addressing social, emotional, and academic adjustment needs
- Community communication strategy providing regular updates and feedback opportunities throughout implementation

### **Quality Assurance Measures**

- Gradual implementation timeline preventing overwhelming changes for students and staff
- Continuous program evaluation ensuring educational quality maintenance during transitions
- Contingency planning for enrollment fluctuations and unexpected challenges

### **Long-term Strategic Considerations**

- Enrollment growth planning in the event of Hudson Valley expansion and/or population shifts
- Infrastructure investment needs including air conditioning and facility upgrades
- Program expansion capabilities supporting new graduation pathways and specialized courses
- Flexibility for potential facility reopening based on future enrollment changes