



Verona

Sherrill City S.D.

Westmoreland S.D.

Westmoreland

Lenox

Canastota S.D.

Oneida City S.D.

Canastota

Wampsville

Oneida

Sherrill

Vernon

Vernon

Clinton

Clinton S.D.

Kirkland

Lincoln

Stockbridge

Stockbridge Valley S.D.

Munpsville

Augustus

Fenner

Smithfield

Marshall

Oriskany Falls

Madison S.D.

Waterville
Waterville S.D.

S.D.

Morrisville Eaton S.D.

Morrisville

Madison

Sangerfield

Nelson

Eaton

Madison

Madison County

Brookfield S.D.

Hamilton

Hamilton S.D.

Brook
Brookfield

Georgetown

Georgetown So Otselic S.D.

Lebanon

Hamilton

Chepango County

Sherburne Earlville S.D.

Press Release

From: Michael R. Drahos, Morrisville-Eaton Superintendent of Schools

Re: Merger Feasibility Study/Budget Update

Date: February 9, 2011

Recently our district announced it was seeking a grant for a possible merger study. For the past couple of months the administration and Board of Education have researched different scenarios regarding school reorganization. I have also contacted the State Education Department to check on the status of the grant funding, and the likely timeline of a study. On Friday, February 4th the Board formalized its decision to seek that grant with the Hamilton Central School District.

The primary rationale for moving in this direction was based on the fact that a merger with a district, other than Hamilton, would have clearly resulted in a tax increase on the residents of this district. In these economic times, that is simply not something our Board believes to be in our community's best interest. Preliminary indications are that a merger with Hamilton will very likely result in a tax decrease for both communities. A merger with Hamilton would allow us to build on the many ways we currently share instructional practices. It has the potential to expand both academic and extra-curricular opportunities for our students as well. These are the types of things a study will clarify. Such a study will take over a year and one half to complete. During this time there will be many opportunities for community input and involvement. The process will be slow, thorough, and public.

This was neither a light, nor easy decision. Over the last several years we have worked closely with both Madison Central and Stockbridge Valley. Our district residents have positive working and social connections with people from those communities. We consider ourselves very similar in many ways. However, given the dire economic position that we are in, and our educational mission, it was clear that we should move ahead with the Hamilton Central School District for this grant and study. Regardless of the study there continue to be many opportunities for all four school districts to continue to work together in an effort to share costs and services.

On another note, Governor Cuomo's proposed budget cuts our state aid significantly. While we had anticipated this, the actual hit was even a little worse than we had anticipated. As I have met with staff and community groups I stated that we anticipated having to cut an additional six teaching positions. It now appears that number will be seven. We will continue to look for ways to share the cost of our sports program with neighboring districts. If that is not possible, then we will need to reduce the opportunities for our student athletes. We have notified BOCES that we will not participate in their summer school program, which will save the district over \$25,000. Other cuts and cost savings continue to be looked at as we now develop a budget based on the governor's actual plan.

As we move forward, I am willing to attend and speak to any community or neighborhood group that would like to know more about the financial challenges facing our district, and the impact it is having on our educational program. The Board of Education and I certainly invite residents to attend our Board meetings. Our next meeting is Wednesday, February 16th at 7:00 pm in the high school Library. We will keep you updated with press releases, on our website (www.m-ecs.org), and in the district's newsletter, the *Glances*.