



## Your VOTE. Your CHOICE.

Topic	What Voting YES Would Mean	What Voting NO Would Mean
Number of Towns in the District	<b>8 Towns join to form a new single regional district: the Southern Berkshire Hills Regional School District.</b>	<b>5 towns in Southern Berkshire Regional District, 3 towns in Berkshire Hills Regional District.</b>  Districts remain separate and continue to compete for students and teachers.
Number of Students in the District	<b>District (K-12): 1,680 combined 2022-23 1,280 projected by 2030</b>	<b>SBRSD: 568 (K-12) in 2023 403 projected by 2030 BHRSD: 1,112 (K-12) in 2023 877 projected by 2030</b>
Elementary and Middle Schools	<b>All existing elementary and middle schools remain as they are.</b>	All existing elementary and middle schools remain as they are.
New High School	Grades 9-12 are combined at a <b>new state-of-the-art high school</b> to be built in Great Barrington for approximately <b>620</b> students.	New high school will likely be built on the Great Barrington campus for approximately 485 BHRSD students. This will be too small to hold Mt. Everett students (at least in the near future). Opportunities for SBRSD students to “choice in” to Monument Mountain may be more limited.
CVTE/Chapter 74 (Vocational) Offerings	<p><b>Up to 6 robust Chapter 74 vocational programs</b> will be available in the new high school to students in all 8 towns to prepare them for careers that lead to living (plus) wage opportunities in the region post-graduation.</p> <p>Innovative pathways and electives will be combined, providing students access to additional career readiness courses and field experiences.</p> <p>Adult continuing education could be provided in after-school programming in the vocational areas.</p>	<p>A newly constructed high school (Monument) built by BHRSD will have up to 4-5 Chapter 74 vocational programs for 485 BHRSD students.</p> <p>Students in the SBRSD Towns will need to apply for seats in the new vocational programs. To the extent seats are available, each town will be required to pay approximately \$26,000 for tuition and transportation plus capital expenses for each student from their town who elects to attend one of the Chapter 74 programs offered.</p> <p>Mt. Everett will likely continue to offer non-Chapter 74 options, as they currently do. Both schools will continue to offer innovative pathways available to only their students.</p>

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Academic Offerings	<p><b>More courses available to all high school students in the 8 Towns.</b> By combining course offerings, all students can access Advanced Placement and electives (such as engineering and technology, music theory, orchestra, advanced language classes, and others) - currently offered only at one of the two high schools.</p> <p>Courses/programs currently offered at the elementary and middle grades will continue as they are currently (as no schools will be closed).</p>	<p>To the extent they can be sustained with current and future enrollment, the schools will continue their courses and programs of study, subject to ongoing review and adjustment based on class size and demand.</p>
Extracurriculars	<p>A larger high school population will (potentially) give students the opportunity to play at a higher level in MIAA divisions. In some limited roster sports (basketball) some students may not start or make team. However, alternative sports and intramural programs could be developed. Several cooperative teams will become district-hosted and additional sports could be added (such as cross-country skiing) and clubs (such as crew).</p> <p>Activities (for example, theater, band, orchestra, instrumental lessons) could be <b>expanded and made available for all students.</b> Clubs unique to one school could be expanded and made available to all students.</p>	<p><b>The ability to maintain robust rosters may prove challenging as enrollment declines.</b> Existing athletic teams will remain, with a number of cooperative teams shared with other school districts.</p> <p>In some cases, JV programs may not exist.</p> <p>Existing activities will be subject to sufficient participation and interest to sustain in face of declining enrollment.</p>
Student Support Services	<p>Resources (personnel) needed to support unique student needs (English Language Learners (ELL), special education, alternative education, and mental health services) <b>pooled to better ensure students receive the services and programs they need.</b></p>	<p>Student services (ELL, special education, alternative education, mental health services) will remain as is. <b>Meeting the unique and wide range of students' needs may prove challenging with limited enrollment and staffing.</b></p>
Teachers and Other Staff	<p><b>SBRSD teachers projected to receive pay increases that match the BHRSD pay scale,</b> improving ability to recruit and retain quality teachers.</p> <p>Additional support for teachers and other staff through cohesive professional development and training opportunities. Larger and richer faculty cohort and network of peers, mentors and allies with diverse backgrounds and perspectives.</p> <p>Faculty/staff reductions to occur primarily through attrition.</p>	<p>SBRSD teachers will likely remain on a pay scale that is lower than the BHRSD teachers. Recruitment and retention challenges are likely to increase in face of nationwide teacher shortage and housing costs in South County.</p> <p>Professional development will occur as it has, within the two existing districts with limited cohorts and resources.</p> <p>Ongoing risk of loss of positions may occur as student enrollment continues to decline and if towns are not able to shoulder the cost of paying faculty/staff to teach smaller numbers of students.</p>
School Committee Composition	<p>11-member school committee elected district-wide at biennial elections with residency requirements (Great Barrington-3; Sheffield-2; all other towns-1).</p>	<p>Two 10-member school committees elected district-wide at biennial elections with residency requirements. <b>Continued difficulty finding qualified people willing to serve in those seats.</b></p>

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School Closures	Extensive process for consideration of any future school closure, including feasibility study, a 2/3 vote of the school committee (with residents from 6 of the 8 towns having to vote in favor), and ratification by the voters in at least 6 of the 8 towns.	Less extensive process for consideration of any school closure.
Costs	<p><b>Efficiencies and economies of scale</b> will result in savings projected at <b>\$1.2 to \$1.8 million annually</b>. Savings can be used to limit future annual assessment increases or to invest in educational enhancements.</p> <p>Annual increases in operating cost assessments to individual member towns will be controlled through a safety valve/cap that will ensure that no town has an increase in any year greater than 2% more than the overall assessment increase for that year.</p> <p><b>A regionalization incentive of 6%</b> (an additional \$6 million on an assumed construction cost of \$100 million) from the State available to lower the cost of the new high school.</p>	<p>Each district will continue to develop annual operating budgets based on current regional agreements that increase annually, without the benefit of efficiencies and economies of scale possible with an 8 Town district, making the challenges of declining enrollment more difficult to manage.</p> <p>BHRSD will likely pay more for a new high school without the 6% regionalization incentive.</p> <p>SBRSD Towns will likely pay more to send their students to Chapter 74 programs at the new high school (projected at about \$26,000 per student).</p>
Transportation	<p>Will combine both BHRSD and SBRSD fleets with <b>no substantial increase in overall cost</b>.</p> <p>Elementary and middle school students would have bus rides that are substantially the same, with some students slightly longer and some students slightly shorter. Two tier system for all students so <b>elementary students from 5 SBRSD towns would no longer have to ride bus with high school students</b>.</p> <p>Travel times for high school students will be longer for some and shorter for others.</p> <p>With a modest investment in additional equipment (largely paid by regional transportation aid from the state of around 80%), may be able to reduce <b>maximum time on bus from current 60 minutes to 45 minutes one way</b>.</p>	<p>Transportation will remain as is, with some ride times in SBRSD of 60 minutes one way.</p> <p><b>SBRSD will remain a one tier system</b> (all grades ride the buses together, with elementary school children riding the bus with high schoolers), while BHRSD will remain a two-tier system (elementary students ride the bus together, middle/high school students ride the bus together).</p> <p>Maximum time on bus for certain students (including elementary) in SBRSD likely to continue at 60 minutes.</p>
Choice	<p>Students will attend the school that is geographically closest to their home. For students in a school currently, they will be <b>allowed to remain in that school if they choose through the end of middle school</b>.</p> <p>Choice between schools in the district will be allowed as seats are available.</p>	<p>Students will continue to choice across the two districts, with more students seeking to choice into the BHRSD from SBRSD towns. It's anticipated that a newly constructed high school will likely attract additional migration from SBRSD to BHRSD to the extent seats in the new high school are available.</p>

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Collaboration	Ability to work together as a unified district to support and enhance existing programs, invest in new programs, align standards and best practices, create a larger, more diverse teacher/staff population, enhance professional learning, and secure external grant funding and partnerships.	Operating separately, districts will continue to compete for students, staff, and resources. Although the schools are similar in many ways, collaborative efforts, if they occur, will likely be short-lived, of limited scope, and/or lacking in meaningful impact, as they have been in the past.
Our Future	<p>Following affirmative vote by the 8 towns, existing districts will continue to operate during a <b>transition period</b>. A Transition School Committee (initially appointed but then elected at November 2024 biennial elections) will work on designing and planning the new high school, and, together with the existing school committees, on planning for the operation of the new district, including selecting new superintendent. <b>The new district would likely become operational July 1, 2026.</b></p> <p><b>Together, we would be better positioned to meet the educational needs of our students.</b></p>	<p><b>The opportunity to build a new high school together will be lost.</b> It is unlikely that another regionalization study of the size and scope of the current one – close to 4 years of sustained work by experts and community volunteers and significant financial support by the State, the towns, and others - will again be attempted in the foreseeable future.</p> <p><b>The current districts will have to search for other ways to overcome the educational and financial challenges of maintaining current offerings in the face of low and continuing declines in enrollment.</b></p>



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