



8 Town Regional School District Planning Board

July/August 2022 Update

As earlier reported, on April 26th, 2022 the 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board (“RSDPB”) took an important step by voting to further research and develop the merger model recommended by its research team – namely, **merging the Berkshire Hills Regional School District and the Southern Berkshire Regional School District into a single preK-12 district, maintaining all existing elementary and middle schools as they are, but creating a new merged 9-12 high school to be built on the Great Barrington campus.** Since that vote, the RSDPB has:

- engaged an outside transportation consultant to study in more detail the transportation options of a proposed merged district, with particular focus on travel times and cost;
- engaged the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS) to outline possible options for a new 8 town regional school district agreement; and
- begun laying the groundwork for educational visioning for elementary, middle, and high school, including identifying Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) programs that could be offered at a new, merged high school.

In addition, the RSDPB has been heavily engaged in additional community outreach, including:

- meeting with the selectboards/ finance committees of all 8 member towns to present the RSDPB’s work and plans and to respond to questions;
- two remote, interactive “Community Talks” held in June; and
- in-person presentations at the Sheffield Senior Center and the Great Barrington Rotary.

We had good, productive conversations at all of these meetings. We heard a lot of support, a lot of concern, and a fair amount of misinformation.

Much more community outreach is planned, including:

- meetings with district staff and faculty during the pre-opening days in late August, meetings generously arranged by the Superintendents of both districts;
- an in-person meeting at the Great Barrington (Claire Teague) Senior Center; and
- student-led discussion forums, with the first scheduled at the Southern Berkshire Health Coalition under the auspices of Railroad Street Youth Project (RSYP).

We are working on a video presentation that will be available on community television, YouTube, and other media. We continue to supplement our “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQs) on our website – www.8towns.org. On that website, you can also find all of our consultants’ reports and presentations. We welcome your thoughts and we encourage your active participation in this important initiative.

GET THE FACTS. BE INFORMED. YOU DECIDE.