



## 8 Town Regional School District Planning Board

### September 2022 Update

Our update this month is about the **educational visioning** that we are spearheading as we continue to develop the merger model recommended by our 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.**

We will invite faculty/staff from both districts, as well as other key stakeholders, including students, community members, employers, and parents, to participate in educational visioning. We feel it is important that this work include a range of perspectives and voices.

The goal of the educational visioning will be to:

- consider **options** for how a combined 8-town district would **deliver educational programming**;
- create opportunities for the **two districts to learn more about each other**; and
- build a **shared sense of ownership** in creating an educational vision for an 8-town region.

The work will be organized by the following grade spans: (i) elementary grades (prekindergarten- Grade 4); (ii) middle grades (Grades 5 – 8); (iii) high school (Grades 9-12); and (iv) Career Vocational Technical Education and Career Pathways (CVTE).

Because the model under consideration would involve no change to grades pK-8 , the aim of the elementary and middle grades working groups will be to better understand and explore how the schools, grade level teams, and teachers are approaching teaching and learning now. In doing so, similarities, differences, and possibilities will be considered.

The high school and CVTE groups will focus on building an educational vision for a shared/new high school, looking at programs and courses, instructional approaches, and student experiences that would engage and challenge all students.

The RSDPB views educational visioning as an important part of providing an opportunity for the two districts (the 8 towns) to design and build together a new district with common purpose. **Neither district would be absorbed into the other; rather, the goal would be to create a new district with a new identity that would be the source of 8 town community pride.** The work of each group will be guided by a steering committee that will research and evaluate possibilities, culminating in a convening that will include a broad representation of school and community stakeholders.

In addition to our educational visioning work, the RSDPB continues its deeper dive into transportation and other issues requiring further research, work on a possible 8 town regional school district agreement, community outreach, and advocacy to our state representatives for financial and other support. We encourage those interested to attend our board and subcommittee meetings and visit our website at [www.8towns.org](http://www.8towns.org). We welcome your thoughts, and we encourage your active participation in this important initiative.

**GET THE FACTS. BE INFORMED. YOU DECIDE.**