

MEMORANDUM

TO: Crown Point-Ticonderoga Merger Study Advisory Committee
FROM: Alan Pole and Jessica Cohen
RE: Meeting Notes-Meeting of March 6, 2013
DATE: March 8, 2013

Attendance:

Committee Members: Mike Cherubini, Joyce Cooper, John Donohue, Dave Iuliano, Anita Johnson, Tom Fish, Brian Kiely, Agatha Mace, Shana Macey, James Major, Peggy Patnode, Seanna Porter, Lynne Reale, Nancy Rich, Tara Spaulding, Tom Wranosky, and Michelle Young

Consultants: Alan Pole and Jessica Cohen

Superintendent Advisors: Shari Brannock and John McDonald

Observers: Bette Pertak, June Glebus, Morgan Sprague, Ralph Blowers, Cynthia Floor, Jon Landry, Kathy DeBrobander, John Bartlett, Victoria Russell, Brandy Harrington, Ursula Thompson, Sheri Granger, Beth Wright, Jennee Darragh, Michael Iturrino

Location: Ticonderoga High School Cafeteria

- 1. Welcome and housekeeping items:** Alan Pole welcomed everyone to the meeting and began by thanking Superintendent John McDonald for arranging for the dinner and for providing a tour of the Ticonderoga High School. He reviewed the purpose of the advisory committee.
- 2. Additions and corrections to the January 30, 2013 meeting notes:** There were no additions or corrections to the meeting notes.
- 3. Review of committee meeting dates, locations and procedures:** Alan reviewed the process that would be followed at each meeting of presentation to the committee and committee discussion followed by questions from the audience. The dates, topics, and locations for the meetings will be:

Date	Topic	Location
March 6	Instructional/Extracurricular Program	Ticonderoga
April 17	Facilities	Crown Point
May 29	Transportation	Ticonderoga

June 19	Staffing	Crown Point
July 24	Finances	Ticonderoga
August 21	Review Findings and Recommendations/React to Draft Final Report	Crown Point

4. Review of instructional and extracurricular programs: Jessica Cohen reviewed the grade configurations of the two districts; Crown Point has one building for Pre-K to Grade 12 and Ticonderoga has two buildings. The elementary program (Pre-K to Gr. 5) and the middle school program (Gr. 6 – 8) share one building but operate separately. The Gr. 9 – 12 program is located in the high school building.

Elementary Program. A review of the elementary program showed the following:

- Crown Point students have a slightly longer day (6 hours & 55 minutes) than do the Ticonderoga students (6 hours & 45 minutes)
- Class sizes in both districts are less than the statewide average.
- It appears that the academic program provided at the elementary level is similar in the two districts and will become more similar as both districts adopt the NYS common core curriculum. Currently, different textbook series are used in the two districts.
- Both districts use a 6-day cycle to provide the special area subjects of music, art, physical education, library and computer. In addition to these subjects, Crown Point also provides nutrition and health to 1st through 5th graders, Spanish to 3rd-5th graders, and technology to 5th graders.
- The NYS assessment scores were reviewed for the past four years and show similar results overall.

Committee members indicated that Ticonderoga does utilize a textbook series for Science and Social Studies from Macmillan/McGraw Hill. This will be added to the table on curriculum. It was also indicated that a nutrition course is taught by classroom teachers in Ticonderoga utilizing the Cornell Cooperative Education program.

Middle School Program

- Comparisons between the programs serving grades 5 – 8 in the two districts are somewhat confusing because of the different grade configurations. Middle school in Ticonderoga serves 5th through 8th graders. Crown Point does not have a middle school program—students in grades 5 and 6 are part of the elementary program. Students in grades 7 and 8 follow the high school schedule and program. For the purposes of the discussion, we are calling the program for 5th - 8th graders “middle school” in both districts.

- The length of the student day for 5th – 8th graders are similar in the two districts; in high school the student day at Ticonderoga is 8 minutes longer than in Crown Point.
- A review of the programs for 5th – 8th graders in the two districts shows many similarities in course offerings. Crown Point students in 5th and 6th grade are primarily in self-contained classrooms. It is not until 7th grade that student programs are departmentalized. Crown Point begins to offer Spanish in grade 6 but Ticonderoga does not offer it until grade 7. Ticonderoga offers AIS classes and study halls for its students while Crown Point does not offer separate classes for either.
- Based on the analysis of sections and section sizes, it appears that there would be approximately 13 fewer sections of middle school if the two districts merged.
- Special area subjects were considered separately for the middle school grades because of the different approaches used in scheduling in the two districts. Overall, the two districts offer about the same amount of music, art, physical education, health, technology, and family and consumer science during the middle school years. Crown Point offers these programs as a certain number of minutes per 6-day cycle throughout the year. With the exception of physical education that is offered every other day, Ticonderoga provides these courses in 10 or 20-week blocks during the year.
- The NYS assessment results were reviewed. Overall, the results for the two districts are similar.

Questions were asked by the committee to clarify the meaning of “AIS.” AIS is the acronym for Academic Intervention Services, a program required by New York State Commissioners Regulations to assist students who are below certain scores on the New York State assessments. School districts may provide AIS in a variety of ways from reviewing student progress regularly to individual tutoring or small group “lab” classes.

High School program:

- High school course offerings were reviewed including the opportunities for students to take AP courses or courses that result in college credit. While there are some differences between the offerings in both districts, the differences do not seem to be significant. Both districts offer a variety of opportunities for electives that gain either AP or college credit.
- An analysis of section sizes was presented for all courses at the high school level. Based on this analysis it appears that there would be few opportunities for reduction of sections in English, social studies, math, and science. Most of the

- reductions at the high school level would be in physical education (8 sections), study halls (9 sections) or AIS (16 sections).
- Students in both districts participate in BOCES Career and Technical Education courses. Crown Point sends 39% of its 11th and 12th graders (16 of 41 students) to BOCES for CTE and Ticonderoga sends 13% (18 of 138) of its 11th and 12th graders. The average in the area is about 24% of 11th and 12th graders.
 - An analysis of Regents examination results for three years was discussed. Similar to the 3rd – 8th grade assessments, the results are similar overall. The majority of all the students who graduate from the two districts receive Regents diplomas. There are some differences between the two districts in the percentages of students receiving Advanced Regents Diplomas. Ticonderoga had a higher percentage of students dropping out of school than Crown Point during the past year.
 - Participation in athletics in both districts is strong. Crown Point does not currently offer football, bowling, X-country, or track. Ticonderoga does not offer boys' soccer or cheerleading. In a merger, there would be more opportunities for students to engage in the additional sports. However, there would also be more competition for participation. Similarly, both districts offer many of the same opportunities for participation in other extra-curricular programs.
 - The special education philosophies in the two districts appear to be similar. The teaching models used are primarily resource room and consultant teacher. Ticonderoga has one primary 8-1-1 classroom that was brought back from BOCES last year. Crown Point does not have any self-contained classrooms. Both districts send some students to BOCES for special education. The rates of classification for students with disabilities are higher than the state average but are similar to each other.

The committee asked for clarification on what “AP” means. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are upper level academic courses designed by the College Board to provide a college level curriculum to be taught by specially trained high school teachers. A common national assessment is used at the end of the course and, if students score at high enough levels, some colleges may provide advanced standing or credit for students. Another question asked related to how and where the college credit courses are taught. Both districts provide college credit courses offered by North Country Community College, SUNY, and/or Paul Smith's. College courses are taught by specially trained high school teachers and are taught in the high schools.

Clarification was also provided for the meaning of SADD (Students Against Destructive Decisions) and FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America). Both of these terms are found on the table listing extra-curricular activities.

5. Summary of presentation: The following “takeaways” were shared with the committee:

- Overall there are more similarities than differences in the academic programs and results of the two school districts.
- Combining the two school districts into one may potentially result in the reduction of about 60 existing class sections. This will offer the possibility of more electives, staff reductions, or a combination of both.
- All of the courses, sports, and clubs that exist in Crown Point would become available to Ticonderoga students; and all of the courses, sports and clubs that exist in Ticonderoga would become available to Crown Point students.

6. Committee Discussion. The Advisory Committee members spent time talking in small groups about the instructional and curricular programs. Questions were raised about the impact of merger on athletic conference placement for the new district and whether or not that would impact students’ participation. It was pointed out that Ticonderoga has a local graduation requirement that all seniors need to do a senior project in order to be able to graduate. Discussion also focused on the relatively high level of poverty in the school districts as measured by the free and reduced lunch percentages in the district. The 2011-12 data on free and reduced price lunch participation indicates that 47% for Crown Point students and 48% of Ticonderoga students participate. There was also discussion on the percentage of students classified with disabilities in both districts.

7. Next meeting: The next advisory committee meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 17, 2013 at Crown Point. A light dinner will be available for committee members beginning at 5:00 p.m. A tour of the school will begin at 5:45 for anyone who is interested. The meeting of the Merger Advisory Committee will begin at 6:30 p.m.

We believe this covers the essence of the discussions at our meeting on March 6. If you have questions with these notes, please feel free to contact us. We will also review these notes as the first agenda item at our next meeting.

Looking forward to seeing you again on 4.17.13 in Crown Point!

C: Shari Brannock
John McDonald
Craig King
Suzanne Spear
Jay O’Connor
Sean Maguire