Bradford CSD / Campbell Savona CSD Merger Feasibility Study

Revised as of 10/30/2026

Additional questions?

The Schmitt Leadership Group can be reached at:

Email: bradcsmergerstudy@schmittleadershipgroup.com

Or contact:

Dr. Brian Schmitt, Co-Founder
brian@schmittleadershipgroup.com
(585) 281-6251 (phone or text)

Mr. Robert Breidenstein, Lead Consultant
bob@schmittleadershipgroup.com
(716) 220-2815 (phone or text)

Questions generated from the October 28th Public Forum:

What is Campbell-Savona's per thousand tax rate?

$12.55

Can you elaborate on the impact of a merger on reserves and how they are used?

A centralization offers the opportunity to evaluate the existing district reserves and to create new reserves using reorganization aid. Transportation reserve is used to pay for busses with cash and avoid. Use new forms of aid to help fund reserves for years beyond the expiration of reorganization aid.

Explain what you mean by fully insured and what consortium would the new district be in?

Fully insured means having the premiums cover the full cost of insurance used and helps control costs. Last year, district overspent budgeted money for insurance and the insurance company won't lose money year over year and could result in rate increases. Taylor law protects existing contracts. Part of transition planning post-merger is bringing the contracts together.

Getting large sum of money is great but what mechanisms are put into place for when merger aid is gone?

Be responsible in budgeting practices. When faced with future retirements, district leaders evaluate replacement or not. Opportunities for more in house programming vs. BOCES. Part of the transition plan is to have these conversations and how to utilize reserves for future protection.

What it the typical leveling of contracts look like?

Look at regional average to evaluate and ensure the new district is competitive with benefits and salaries. The study is evaluating the total cost of bringing equal pay and benefits between the districts.

Why merger and not annexation?

The conversation should be together, not only on contracts but who do you want to represent as your new BOE

Is there a benefit to being a larger district on health insurance?

Won't grow enough to have a impact. That is why the districts buy health insurance in a consortium.

What is deadline for email input?

Up until mid-December.

Are their conflicts with the facilities being in separate counties?

School Resource Officer contract will need to be evaluated but by adding another county could expand opportunities for resources to more.

Questions generated from the October 8th Public Forum:

Regarding uptick in graduation, what is the correlation with the percentage of proficiency rate in State testing?

We have seen a lot of growth at the elementary level.

What is the correlation between the secondary level?

We've seen improvements in Regents exams as well. A lot of students were getting Regents but not the Advanced Regents diploma. In talking with students, there is a correlation between the uptick in graduation and the student perspective was that they felt they had direct access to teachers and the small classroom environment helped students to be more successful. Students reported what helps them to be successful was the time they have to be available with teachers and the team approach that allows students to form study groups. Students reported having a really great experience with extracurricular programs due to the new merged athletics. Students used technology to continue to connect.

Do both districts cover the $85 cost for ACE courses?

Families have to pay for the cost of the courses in Bradford. More students enrolled in ACE creates a greater cost for the students. C-S picks up the costs for the districts.

How many students does Bradford have?

230. 265-270 11 years ago when Superintendent Marshall arrived. More home schooled students in the area.

Questions generated from the October 1st Public Forum:

One of the reasons the districts are merging is due to reductions in state aid. How will overall aid be impacted if the districts merge?

The reorganized district would receive approximately $30,000,000.00 of reorganization aid over 15 years. Additional aid percentages for debt service, building aid, and transportation aid will increase. The study will share the projected aid impact of a merger.

Will the report share the cost to run each facility? Will the report share recommendations for the future purpose for each building?

The study will evaluate the overall costs of district operations and will share stakeholder perceptions on the future purpose of each building. The final decision is for the new BOE and district leadership.

Can you do renovation by replacement without adjusting the state aid ratio? **No.**

If we have 95% and they have 95%, does the aid stay the same after merger? **Yes.**

Bradford has a parcel across the street, will you recommend any improvements to the parcel or would you recommend selling it at fair market value would that impact the state aid negatively?

Because it is vacant acreage, there are many opportunities for the space. The future of the parcel is a local decision for the new BOE and Superintendent.

Will any improvement generate state aid? **No. There are specific criteria that must be met to generate aid.**

Can you talk briefly about the electric bus situation? Are districts improving their infrastructure now to be prepared for the mandate?

Both districts currently are not prepared for the full implementation of the electric bus mandate and recognize the need to improve infrastructure.

If the merger occurs, will the majority of this aid have to go to transportation? **No.**

Questions generated from the September 17th Public Forum:

One of the reasons the districts are merging is due to reductions in state aid. How will overall aid be impacted if the districts merge?

A Campbell Savona / Bradford merger is estimated to generate approximately $60 million in state incentive aid over 15 years, with roughly half of that aid provided in the first five years. Additional financial incentives for debt service recalculation, enhanced building aid and capital project support are provided in a reorganized district. State Aid calculations are based on student enrollment counts.

Will the debt service aid remain if the districts merge?

Yes, and aid will be increased to the higher percentage of the two districts. The final report will identify aid levels and debt service for both districts.

Will the report share the cost to run each facility? Will the report share recommendations for the future purpose for each building?

The study will not break down costs by individual facility and will share stakeholder perspectives for the purpose of each building in the future. It is the responsibility of the newly formed district's BOE and leadership team to determine the future utilization of all buildings and the programs within each respective facility.

Can you do renovation by replacement without adjusting the state aid ratio?

Provided the footprint and total square footage of the buildings are not changed, renovations may be aided in accordance with state requirements. However, if the districts choose to build a new facility, the state aid ratio could be impacted.

Do additions to transportation facilities impact state aid ratios?
Typically, additions and renovations to non-instructional facilities (e.g.-bus garage) do not have an impact on Building Aid Unit (BAU) calculations. Prior to considering any additions, the district would be advised to consult with its financial consultants, aid specialists, architect and engineering partners.

If we have 95% and they have 95%, does the aid stay the same after merger?
Reorganization Building Aid (construction) is calculated at a minimum of 95% and possibly 98% for approved projects within the first ten (10) years following a merger. Maximum Cost Allowance (MCA) guidelines from NYSED would still apply relative to capital improvement projects.

What is the overall amount of aid that comes if the districts merge?
Approximately $60 million over 15 years, plus additional building aid and improved aid for debt services. The final report will confirm all reorganization aid levels.

Bradford has a parcel across the street, will you recommend any improvements to the parcel or would you recommend selling it at fair market value would that impact the state aid negatively? Because it is vacant acreage, there are many opportunities for the space. Will any improvement generate state aid?
The study will not recommend specific improvements, uses, or actions for individual parcels or properties. Improvements to property that is not contiguous with existing school property would most likely be ineligible for state aid.

If the merger occurs, will the majority of this aid have to be allocated for transportation?
No. Transportation will continue to be aided and there will be an opportunity to address the bus garage facility issues within each district.

Have people shared ideas about what to do with the facilities?
Yes and people are encouraged to continue to do so.

Who will determine who the next superintendent is?
The newly seated Board of Education will determine and hire the Superintendent.

What impact will a merger have on existing and prior contractual agreements with employees?
Contracts are legal obligations incurred by each respective district and in a merged district those obligations remain in effect until any successor agreements are affirmed by the respective parties (e.g. labor and management).

How many Board of Education members would a new district have and what would their term of office be?
By statute a new district could have 5, 7 or 9 Board of Education members. The study will engage stakeholders and report preferences. The number of board members, term of office and transition recommendation would be shared in the full study report.

Could sports teams be added after a merger?
Adding sports teams or co-curricular clubs is a local decision. Reorganization Incentive Aid would provide the community with additional resources and opportunities to make program decisions.

Would the new district need to add buses or transportation staff?
The study will evaluate transportation routes, staffing levels and fleet operations.

Frequently Asked Questions:

What is a Feasibility Study?
A Feasibility Study (FS) is an integral part of a comprehensive process designed to assess whether the consolidation of *two* school districts is advisable. This study primarily focuses on analyzing numerical data, factual information, and financial aspects to determine if a partnership between the districts is financially viable.

Who will complete the Feasibility Study, and when will it start?
The Feasibility Study will be conducted by an independent, neutral third party selected through a Request for Proposal Process. The contractor was jointly selected by both school districts and possessed educational expertise in areas such as optimization studies, small city school districts, financial planning, contractual negotiation, pupil services, instructional planning, and relevant educational metrics.

How long will the Feasibility Study take to complete?
The Feasibility Study is expected to take approximately six (6) to eight (8) months to gather, compile, and compare data from both districts. Once complete, the report will be submitted to the New York State Education Department for review before it is released to the community. Following this, community support will be solicited in both districts prior to a formal vote. This will be done through petitioning or an informal straw vote. If there is enough community support, a formal vote would take place in the both School Districts, potentially in Spring / Summer of 2027.

What will the Feasibility Study (FS) entail?
The FS will include on-site and remote meetings, data analysis, public forums, and presentations throughout the process. **A Q&A document and other FS artifacts will be maintained on a GST BOCES website: https://www.gstboces.org/page/merger-studies**

Targeted public forums will also be convened to explore educational topics, including but not limited to financial, facility, staffing, pupil service, instruction, special education, transportation, food service and co-curricular needs.

Will there be an opportunity for community input in the Feasibility Study?
Yes, the proposal for services will include opportunities for community input through in-person, remote, and community engagement sessions with the contractor, allowing for the collection of additional information and data.

What are the potential benefits of the merger for students?
A merger could enhance educational opportunities by pooling resources from both districts. This could lead to expanded academic programs, broader course offerings, and increased extracurricular opportunities. Students may gain access to programs that are difficult for small districts to sustain independently.

Would students have access to new programs?
Yes. A merged district would likely be able to offer additional electives, specialized courses, and extracurricular activities. Smaller districts often face challenges maintaining courses with low enrollment, while larger districts can sustain more varied programming.

Will students with disabilities continue receiving services?
Yes. Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) remain legally binding regardless of district structure. Federal and state laws ensure that special education services continue to be delivered.

Could the merger improve long-term student success?
Research suggests small schools excel at student engagement and graduation rates, while larger districts often provide broader academic opportunities and college preparation resources. A merger could allow students to benefit from both strengths.

What are the financial incentives for merging?
A Campbell Savona / Bradford merger is estimated to generate approximately $60 million in state incentive aid over 15 years, with roughly half of that aid provided in the first five years. Additional financial incentives for debt service recalculation, enhanced building aid and capital project support are provided in a reorganized district.

What happens to the incentive aid after year 15?
The incentive aid decreases gradually after the first five years and fully phases out after year fifteen. Districts would have:

- 5 years of full funding to invest and plan
- 10 additional years of gradual phase-down
- Time to implement efficiencies and sustainable financial planning

Will there be any change to the STAR Exemptions?
No. The STAR exemption is based on the individual homeowner's eligibility, which depends on income and whether the property is their primary residence. A merger should not affect this qualification. After reviewing a sample tax bill from the recently merged Rockland CSD, the property still displayed its Basic STAR exemption.

Will annexation impact Title I awards?
No. Title I awards are allocated per building. Under current federal guidelines, the merger would not reduce any anticipated Title I funding.

Would the money go to Bradford or Campbell Savona specifically?
No. The funding goes to the newly merged district, not to either existing district individually.

Would building projects receive additional state aid?
Yes. If a merger occurs:
Qualifying capital projects would receive at least 95% building aid (possibly 98%)

Could the state change its funding promises later?

While no funding can be absolutely guaranteed, the merger plan must be approved by the New York State Education Department (SED) and the Commissioner of Education before implementation.

What happens if Bradford and Campbell Savona do nothing?
Preliminary projections suggest the district could face significant budget gaps simply to maintain current programs and staffing levels. This could lead to a reduction in staffing and programs in the near future.

What programs could be impacted without new revenue?
Because mandated services must be maintained, reductions would likely occur in:

- electives
- arts and music programs
- athletics
- clubs and extracurricular activities
- enrichment programs
- staffing

These areas are typically the first affected when districts must reduce spending.

Could the merger improve compensation?
Yes. Incentive aid could potentially be used to:

- address teacher, paraprofessional, support staff pay disparities
- improve recruitment and retention
- support professional growth, training

How will transportation work?
Transportation planning would be part of the merger study. While the merged district would be geographically larger, it would still be smaller than other existing districts. Transportation routes, safety considerations, and scheduling efficiencies would all be evaluated during the study.

Is Bradford or Campbell Savona prepared for the EV bus mandate?
No. The EV bus mandate would pose a significant financial strain on both districts as they are currently unable to implement the requirements due to substantial fiscal challenges. Both districts have applied for a NYS EV Waiver.

What curricular needs will a reorganized district have?
The reorganized district will use a transition period to review all curriculum resources and evaluate best practices. This process will focus on identifying the most effective instructional materials and teaching methods for each school and grade level, with input from all stakeholders.

How would the merged district be governed?
A new combined Board of Education would be created to represent the communities of the merged district. Representation and board structure would be determined as part of the merger plan.

What is the timeline for a potential merger?
The process typically includes:

- Community engagement and information sessions
- Selection of a merger study consultant
- Completion of a feasibility study (6–9 months)
- Community discussion of findings (1-2 months)
- Public vote in both districts (approximately 9-12 months from onset of process)

If approved, merged districts typically begin operating on July 1 of the implementation year.

At this juncture, July 1, 2028, is theoretically possible.

Do merger proposals usually pass?
Historically, under the old process, consolidations were a high bar to achieve. However, the process was revised and resources increased to incentivize the merger process and improve approval rates.

Could Campbell Savona or Bradford merge with other districts?
Other nearby districts have been considered. However:

- incentive aid caps reduce the financial benefit of some mergers
- tax rates and district characteristics also affect feasibility

Bradford and Campbell Savona currently appear to offer the most viable partnership under existing formulas.

Could Campbell Savona or Bradford tuition students to another district?
Tuition agreements are a local decision, and some districts do use tuition agreements individually (students with disabilities) and for secondary education 7-12 or 9-12 programming). In those cases, students typically receive their diploma from the district they attend, not their home district.

How can community members share their thoughts?
Community members are encouraged to participate in:

- Town hall discussions
- Board of Education meetings
- Consultant Outreach opportunities

Community voice will play a critical role in determining whether this concept moves forward.

The Schmitt Leadership Group can be reached at:

Email: bradcsmergerstudy@schmittleadershipgroup.com

Or contact:

Dr. Brian Schmitt, Co-Founder
brian@schmittleadershipgroup.com
(585) 281-6251 (phone or text)

Mr. Robert Breidenstein, Lead Consultant
bob@schmittleadershipgroup.com
(716) 220-2815 (phone or text)