

2008

A Study Of The Perceptions Concerning School Consolidation And Shared Services Among Indiana Legislators, Chamber Of Commerce Presidents, And School Superintendents

Thomas P. Kopatich
Indiana State University

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VITA

Thomas P. Kopatich

EDUCATION

- | | |
|------|---|
| 2008 | Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana
Ph.D. in Educational Administration |
| 2003 | Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana
Ed.S. in Educational Administration |
| 1986 | Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana
M.S. in School Administration |
| 1982 | Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green, Kentucky
B.S. in Physical Education and Health |

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| 2002- | Metropolitan School District of Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Indiana
Assistant Superintendent of Instruction, Curriculum, and Personnel |
| 2001-2002 | Metropolitan School District of Mount Vernon, Mount Vernon, Indiana
Director of Buildings and Grounds |
| 1999-2001 | Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, Indiana
Assistant Principal |
| 1994-1999 | Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon, Indiana
Physical Education and Health Teacher |
| 1987-1994 | Gibson Southern High School, Fort Branch, Indiana
Health Teacher |
| 1982-1987 | Castle Junior High School, Newburgh, Indiana
Physical Education and Health Teacher |

A Study of the Perceptions Concerning School Consolidation and Shared Services
Among Indiana Legislators, Chamber of Commerce Presidents,
and School Superintendents

A Dissertation

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundations

Indiana State University

Terre Haute, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Thomas P. Kopatich

December 2008

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**School of Graduate Studies
Indiana State University
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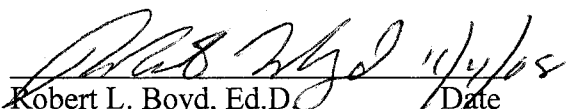
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Among Legislators, Chamber of Commerce Presidents, and School Superintendents

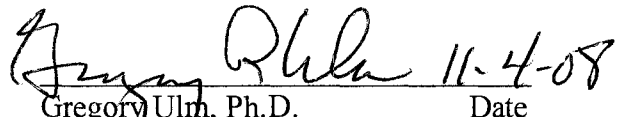
has been approved by the Examining Committee for the dissertation requirement for the


Doctor of Philosophy degree


in Educational Administration

December 2008


Robert L. Boyd, Ed.D. Date
CHAIR, Dissertation Committee


Gregory Ulm, Ph.D. Date
Member, Dissertation Committee


Keith Spurgeon, Ph.D. 11/4/08
Member, Dissertation Committee Date


Jay Catrell, Ph.D. 11/13/08
Dean, School of Graduate Studies Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding consolidation and shared services between multiple school corporations. This study focused on the areas of total consolidation, economic benefits of consolidation, student benefits of consolidation, total shared services, economic benefits of shared services, student benefits of shared services, as well as district enrollment and preferability between consolidation or shared services. A survey was sent to 150 legislators, 199 Chamber of Commerce presidents, and 293 school superintendents across the state of Indiana. The survey included 24 items with six possible responses asking the participants to select answers that best described how they felt individually about the areas listed above. These individual scores were recorded and placed in the participant's category and analyzed to get one group score for comparison.

The study found that there is significant difference in perception in all areas of consolidation and shared services between Chamber of Commerce presidents and superintendents. Chamber of Commerce presidents preferred consolidation over shared services than did superintendents as it relates to economics and student benefits. Superintendents' preferred shared services over consolidation than did Chamber of Commerce presidents as it relates to economics and student benefits. Legislators'

perceptions fell between the other two groups in all areas. Their perceptions were more positive for consolidation than shared services when dealing with economic issues but not as strong in the areas of student benefits. Overall, Chamber of Commerce presidents preferred consolidation while legislators and school superintendents preferred shared services.

The study also found that all three groups had a more negative perception toward a 2,000 enrollment district size. The research did not show if the enrollment number should be higher or lower than this 2,000 enrollment number. The negative perceptions from all three groups concerning the enrollment number 2,000 indicate to the researcher that a blanket 2,000 enrollment for districts may not be the answer.

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DEDICATION

With much love and honor, I dedicate this dissertation to my father, Charles Kopatich. Through his teaching, he taught me to value the importance of education and to never walk away from a challenge. He always stressed the idea of no regrets. He taught me to keep God first and family second, and everything else will fall into place. I am honored that the Lord allowed him to be part of my life, and I truly miss him.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Many states have already begun, or are in the process of considering, school consolidation initiatives. The state of Indiana, like many other states, possibly will be involved in the challenges of district consolidation during the next few years if the recommendations issued in 2007 by the Local Government Reform are adopted by the state legislature. One of the recommendations is to reorganize school districts to achieve a minimum student population of 2,000 (Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform, 2007). Trying to weigh the options of school finance while doing what is best for children will always bring tough decisions for state lawmakers and local stakeholders. The need to consolidate school districts or engage in collaboration between school districts can arise in any type of district. In urban locations, the decision usually will be triggered by dropping enrollments, poor academic results, and insufficient resources. For rural districts, the problems may include sparse populations, long student commutes, and limited resources that cannot support the broad curricular offerings available to larger corporations (Darden, 2005).

Federal demands, dictated by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), require schools to help all children, or groups of children, and show progress on standardized

tests, or schools will face sanctions. Some of the demands put forth by NCLB may cause tremendous financial burdens on school corporations. According to the research, issues such as the increased licensing of paraprofessionals, requirement of highly qualified teachers, and the restraints of adequate yearly progress may cause severe financial burdens on school districts. The increasing demands of the state and federal laws, state budgetary declines, student enrollment decreases, and school efficiency have brought the concept of school consolidation back to the forefront of the minds of many educators and politicians (Self, 2001).

State budget reductions facing many schools, as well as demands in increased accountability and efficiency, will have school leaders making difficult decisions in order to survive. Mooneyham (2005) found that when NCLB was enacted, Congress targeted perceived problems in urban schools without much forethought to the impact this law would have on rural schools. As the state of Indiana changes the curriculum program to the Core 40 requirements for graduation, some smaller districts will not be able to afford to deliver the curriculum that is mandated under this requirement. For example, a high school calculus teacher at a small rural school might have only five or six students per class. If the course is required for graduation, the school must offer it. Decisions must be made on what type of curriculum will be offered for the students. In smaller rural schools, areas such as the fine arts, advanced physical education, and foreign languages could be severely limited or eliminated. As smaller districts put money into the beginning levels of math, English, and science so it can meet the demands of adequate yearly progress, there will be no finances available for Advanced Placement (AP) classes.

Instead of schools working toward having all children succeed, the emphasis may change into making sure all lower achieving students meet the federal and state requirements.

In addition to NCLB, schools are facing other changes as well. In Indiana the funding philosophy has changed. Currently Indiana believes that the money should follow the child as they may move from district to district. Because of this philosophy, the Indiana school budget formula has changed drastically for some school corporations. If a student leaves a school corporation and goes to another corporation, the money that is received for that child will go with the child to the new school district. Even though many educators will not disagree with the concept of the money following the child, many will agree that declining school districts will need some type of provision to offset the impact of mobility. Before this regulation, the budget included a provision which allowed school districts with declining enrollment to at least receive no less money than the year before. This provision was called the minimum guarantee. It helped pay for yearly increases in areas such as utilities, salaries, insurance, as well as other areas. The logic behind the minimum guarantee was that even though student enrollment may decrease, the decline may not be enough to reduce staff or building usage. A growing school district could also challenge that the increase they received for the new student was not enough to pay for the cost needed to educate the child.

Another change in the funding philosophy affecting schools in Indiana is reflected in the transition to foundation calculation of the school funding formula. This funding mechanism is based on the belief that the amount spent on each child's education (the 'foundation funding' dollar amount) should be uniform across the state. Over the next several budget years, each school district's per-pupil funding will be transitioning, either

upward or downward, toward the foundation amount. School districts which receive lower funding per child than the foundation amount will be given additional dollars per pupil each year to move toward the target. On the other hand, districts that receive more local per-pupil funding than the State foundation amount will see an annual reduction in their dollars-per-pupil coming through the school funding formula as their revenue is decreased toward that foundation target. During the 2008 session of the Indiana General Assembly, HEA 1001 dealing with Indiana property tax reforms was passed. One of the areas of change included the state eliminating property tax levies for the school general funds. Taking over the school general fund, county welfare funds, and a few smaller funds will reduce the property tax levy approximately \$2.8 billion statewide by 2010 (DeBoer, 2008). To replace part of this reduction in property tax, the state sales tax increased on April 1, 2008, from 6% to 7%. The rest of the replacement of money will be gained by redirecting existing property tax relief spending (DeBoer).

Because of initiatives such as NCLB, changes in funding philosophy, and other budget constraints, some believe that this is the first time since the School Corporation Reorganization Act of 1959 that some type of school consolidation is needed. They believe that consolidation would in turn, help the Indiana education system move forward. During the School Corporation Reorganization Act of 1959, the number of school districts in Indiana was reduced from 900 to 400 over a period of a decade (Costerison, 2005). Since the 1960s, this number has further decreased to the current 293 school corporations (Indiana Department of Education [IDOE], 2006).

Merging school districts in the form of consolidation or having school districts share services and resources, may help solve a portion of the problems facing Indiana's

educational system. School corporations dealing with concerns such as mandated curriculum, financing, staffing, bus transportation, and class size must look objectively at some form of restructuring in order to run a more efficient and effective school system.

According to Darden (2005),

The incentives for both collaboration and school district mergers include creating a more cost-effective and operationally efficient organization, providing a wider range of educational programs (e.g., offering courses that would be impractical with smaller student population), stabilizing future tax rates, constructing new buildings, or renovating current facilities with prudent use of cost savings gained by collaboration or merger incentive aid offered by some states, eliminating duplication of educational services. (p. 4)

Statement of the Problem

In the State of Indiana, there are 293 school districts that can levy taxes. A total of 16 of the 92 counties in the state of Indiana have one school district. The remaining counties have multiple school districts ranging from two school districts to 17 school districts. The most frequent number of school districts found in a county is three. The student enrollment in these districts range from 156 students to over 30,000 students, with over 50% of these districts falling below a student enrollment of 2,000 (IDOE, 2006). Over the past few years, consolidation or some form of merging of services with other corporations is being touted by some as a means to run more efficient and effective educational systems. The most recent move was in April 2007. The Indiana legislature passed the state budget bill (Indiana House Enrolled Act No. 1001 [HEA 1001], 2007) allocating \$100,000 to the IDOE for use by school corporations interested in studying the

feasibility of consolidation or sharing services with other corporations. According to Zaring, State Board of Education Administrator, four school corporations applied for the monies that were available from bill HEA1001 (J. Zaring, 2008, personal communication, November 2, 2005).

In light of all the changed funding to support public education and issues of school size related to efficiency and effectiveness, a better understanding of the opinions and values of legislators, business leaders, and educational professionals, concerning consolidation or sharing services between school corporations is necessary.

Purpose of this Study

If the structure of the educational system in the state of Indiana needs to once again be reorganized, it is important that the major stakeholders understand each other's beliefs regarding how this should be done. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions among Indiana legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding consolidation or sharing services between multiple school corporations.

Research Questions

1. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?
2. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?

Null Hypotheses

H₀1: There is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning.

H₀2: There is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study was to determine if the structure of the educational system in the state of Indiana needed to once again be reorganized, and to determine if the perceptions of the three major groups of stakeholders regarding how this reorganization should take place are congruent with each other. As the IDOE makes changes in the budget formula, schools will make changes in order to meet the demands of the NCLB, and school districts will need to look at different solutions to meet both financial and curriculum requirements. This change, like any other change, will cause emotions to run high and conflict to occur. It is essential that policy makers, business leaders, and school superintendents work together in order to do what is best for children as well as what is best financially for the state of Indiana. School superintendents in the past have been faced with mandates from the state that result in challenges with enrollment, budget, growth of facilities, and other problems. They have been able to solve many of the problems within their district. The state of Indiana is in a situation much like it was in the late 1950s. The school systems have implemented many

reductions within their own school districts, and now, they will be inclined to look at some form of consolidation or shared services with other districts.

Definition of Terms

Business Leaders are defined as the 199 local Chamber of Commerce presidents, for 2008.

Consolidation is defined as uniting two or more established school corporations through the dissolution of an established school corporation(s) and the alteration of existing boundaries to form a new corporation (Walsh, 1959, p. 452).

Policy Makers are defined as the 50 senators and the 100 representatives that are elected to represent the citizens of the state of Indiana.

Reorganization means the alteration of existing structure of governmental units (as bureaus or legislative committees) and the lines of control and authority between them usually to promote greater efficiency and responsibility (Webster's Dictionary, 1966, p. 1,923).

Shared Services means two or more school corporations working cooperatively to reduce expenditures by the joint purchasing of supplies, sharing of services/facilities/personnel, or by forming of trusts for the purpose of providing certain services or benefits to the member school corporations at reduced cost.

Superintendent is defined as the chief administrative officer designated by the officer or governing body to act in the officer's behalf in dealing with school employees (Rund, 2007, p. 584).

Limitations of Study

The following represents the limitations of this study:

1. The study was limited to public school superintendents in Indiana; the information gained cannot be applied to school superintendents in other states.
2. The study was limited to legislators in Indiana; the information gained cannot be applied to legislators in other states.
3. The study was limited to Chamber of Commerce presidents throughout the state of Indiana; the information gained cannot be applied to the Chamber of Commerce presidents in other states.
4. The study did not address the perceptions of another major stakeholder, parents.

Organization of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 included an introduction of the study, a statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the null hypothesis, the significance of the study, the definition of terms, and study limitations. Chapter 2 presents a review of the related literature. This chapter includes an introduction, history, and a review of the research on consolidation and shared services of school corporations nationally as well as in Indiana. Chapter 3 presents information about the statistical analysis, the study sample and the instrument used. Chapter 4 gives details of statistical findings that answer the hypotheses and the research questions in Chapter 1. Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings, conclusions, and discussions of the implications of those findings.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

According to research one of the toughest challenges that many states are facing is finding the solution of running the most effective and efficient educational system. In many states funding education is the highest budgetary priority that a state might face. There are many disputes over the most efficient way to run schools (Dayton & Dupree, 2004). The money that is provided to schools is based upon federal, state, and local decisions about taxes. As Henry (2003) states, "Local school districts raise most of the money through property taxes. These taxes are based on a property's assessed valuation, which in most states is usually less than the market value of the property" (p. 2). The elected political stakeholders have a constant concern with the increase of property taxes within their communities. Many are very reluctant to raise taxes in fear of negative feedback which could end their political careers.

Since educational spending is a large budgetary item, it is a major concern for politicians to monitor how spending occurs. The NCLB Act of 2001 placed higher demands on schools both academically and financially. This law, which demands schools improve all student achievement and promote higher standards, has caused many school systems to expand the curriculum by adding advanced classes. All teachers must be

highly qualified in order to teach in all areas throughout the curriculum. Teacher assistants that work under the Title I guidelines must also be highly qualified. Since the NCLB came into practice, many districts were forced to increase their budgets in order to obtain the qualified people needed to teach the children. If educational systems are going to meet the demands of NCLB as well as keep taxes from increasing, significant changes need to take place in the structure of the educational system. Falling enrollments, tight budgets, and funding adequacy are compelling factors for consolidation (Pappalardo, 2004). The search to find ways to increase student performance, improve curriculum, and still maintain or decrease expenses has once again forced the concept of reorganization or some form of consolidation to become a focus as a potential solution.

History

Beginning in the 1930s and lasting through the 1980s, many states consolidated their educational systems. School districts across the nation declined from approximately 120,000 to 15,000 (Patterson, 2006). During that time, the state of Indiana reduced its districts from 900 to 400 as part of the Reorganization Act of 1959. Today, there are a total of 293 districts within the state of Indiana (Patterson).

School administration is one area that states are examining as a way to consolidate or share services. The number of school districts in the United States has declined over 60% from 1960 to 1984. During this time school administration grew 500%, while the number of principals grew 79% and the number of teachers grew 57% (Eggers, Snell, Wavra, & Moore, 2005). In the area of personnel, different states have combined usage of administrators in order to cut down on non-instructional staff.

During the time span from 1985-1997, much research was done in the state of New York on evaluating cost savings through the concept of consolidation. The findings indicated that small districts with enrollments of 300 or less can save over 20% in operational costs by consolidation (Duncombe & Yinger, 2005). Duncombe and Yinger's research further shows that combining two districts of 900 students each could cut operational costs anywhere from 7% to 9%. As the enrollments of each combining school district increases, the operational cost saving decreases, and once the enrollment reaches 1,500 for each district, very little change in operational cost occurs (Duncombe and Yinger).

Consolidation

Consolidation is the uniting of two or more established school corporations through the dissolution of an established school corporation(s) and the alteration of existing boundaries to form a new corporation (Walsh, 1959). State and school leaders make many decisions throughout their careers but none that will provoke the passion from a community more than consolidation (Hughes, 2003). Despite the increased cost of health care, retirement contributions, and under-funded or unfunded mandates (Toler, 2004) which cause financial burdens on many corporations, communities have stood strong in opposition and defeated consolidation proposals because of the desire of a community to keep its own schools. Local taxpayers, who normally support plans for saving money, have often refused to endorse consolidation even though the consolidation was supposed to save tax dollars (Ornstein, 1992). As Row - Superintendent of Kingston School District in Arkansas stated, "When you end districts, you end communities" (as cited in Buchanan, 2004, p. 1).

In order to work through a successful attempt at consolidation, there is much planning and information gathering that is needed. Communicating to people is an important step in getting everyone to understand the reasoning for consolidation. Not getting factual information to the public and not getting the community's support are often the downfall of a consolidation project for the school leader. Open communication and early involvement with community members are keys if consolidation is going to take place (Kosar, 2002). Even though people might prefer that the school remain in their community, most would agree that having an efficient school, maximum opportunities for students, as well as saving dollars for the taxpayer would be the best situation. Policymakers must review and compare both the positive and negative factors that consolidation will bring.

One of the major factors that must be discussed is the optimal enrollment of a school district. What is this number? This magical enrollment number is being debated throughout the different states that are facing consolidation. When looking at pupil cost, Boyd and Ulm (2006) cite the National Rural Education Association who said that school district enrollment should be between 4,000 and 5,000 students. Some research has concluded that there is an opportunity to save on administration and instructional costs when moving from a small district of 500 or less to a district with 2,000 to 4,000 students (Andrews, Duncombe, & Yinger, 2002). Different studies suggest that elementary school enrollment should range from 300 to 400 students and 400 to 800 students for secondary schools. Secondary schools vary depending on the state qualifications that are required of students (Bard, Gardener, & Wieland, 2005). Former Arkansas Governor Huckabee (as cited in Buchanan, 2004) argued, "You just can't offer a broad, rigorous curriculum that

includes the arts, AP, and a broad array of foreign languages in a small high school” (p. 3). In Arkansas, districts containing less than 350 students were consolidated. This merging, set forth by the Governor, helped produce money that allowed for the raising of teacher pay, broadening the curriculum, and expanding preschool programs.

In Kansas, out of the 303 school districts, 50 have fewer than 200 students. The state legislature considered several bills over the last eight years that would have reduced the number of districts to 105 (one per county), but none of the bills passed through legislation (Buchanan, 2005). In several states financial incentives have been offered for consolidation to take place among school districts. For example, in Nebraska, incentive packages would pay \$1,000 to \$3,500 dollars (to the new district) per student to districts with fewer than 390 students that agree to consolidate with larger districts (Buchanan).

Different states have pushed reducing of the number of districts but not the number of schools. For example, in Texas the push was to keep school campuses in local communities even if school boards and administrative offices were consolidated to make districts more efficient (Stutz & Hoppe, 2005). Justice Hecht (as cited in Stutz & Hoppe) wrote in the majority opinion that “the large number of districts, with their redundant staffing, facilities, and administration, make it impossible to reduce costs through economics of scale. Bigger is not always better, but multitude of small districts is undeniably inefficient” (p. 3). Some believe that the inefficiency is the distribution of education funding across far too many costly administrative units. A consolidated district would require fewer administrators or specialized instructors than is required when the same enrollment level is disjointed across separate districts (Dodson & Garrett, 2004). The belief seems to be that schools should consolidate some district-level administration

and achieve efficiencies in management, and send more money to the classroom (Bowman, 2001). One suggestion to save administration cost is to make superintendents state employees. Huckabee (as cited in Sadler, 2005) contended that “if superintendents were state employees, the administrators would be paid from a salary schedule. Their pay would be based on the number of students they oversee”. According to the American Federation of Teachers, in 2004, superintendent salaries were as much as four times higher than the average teacher salary of \$37,000 a year (Sadler).

Researchers do agree schools must provide the best educational opportunities for children. The preparation that schools must give students is no longer the education just to succeed locally but to be able to compete globally. With today’s technology, schools have the responsibility to educate children in such a way that they will be able to compete with any student from any country for jobs available worldwide. Buckton (as cited in Stover, 2002), government relations director for the Iowa Association of School Boards stated,

Our position is that consolidation shouldn’t be decided by a funding squeeze, but it is the advancement of educational opportunity that should force reorganization. Local folks should be looking at how they can get more educational opportunities for their children. (p. 3)

Researchers that are pro-consolidation believe that consolidation is thought to create more effective schools by providing a well rounded curriculum that is taught by highly qualified personnel (Jehlen, 2001). At the high school and middle school levels, a larger, more diverse faculty can provide a greater variety of programs. With a larger staff of teachers in each subject area, the curriculum can be taught by teachers in their

specialty fields. For example, an English teacher that specializes in literature and another who may specialize in journalism may be able to teach in their respected courses. In a smaller school, a teacher may have to teach both areas where he may not feel as comfortable (Jehlen).

Larger schools may also be able to offer more advanced classes such as calculus, physics, and foreign languages because of the availability of teachers as well as the number of students wishing to take the classes. This educational background for students will help prepare them for college courses.

In larger elementary schools, having more than one section of each grade level can provide many more teaching tools for the faculty (Self, 2001). Each grade level allows teachers to work together and gain ideas from each other. Professional development shared between teachers will lead to an enhanced curriculum for students. By having more than one section per grade, administration can have more choices to lessening discipline problems. For example, teachers will be able to split up troubled children in certain situations because of multiple sections.

Opponents to consolidation may agree with the above advantages but would view that even though some positive outcomes are gained, the drawbacks to consolidation are more harmful. Efforts to raise standards for all students to comply with the federal NCLB Act may be hampered by school consolidation. According to Strange (as cited in Pappalardo, 2004), policy director for Rural School and Community Trust, low achievers do worse when schools become larger.

Opponents of consolidation also take issue with transportation. In South Dakota, transportation has become an enormous problem in many consolidated districts. Some

students, even small children, spend more than 90 minutes traveling each way (Jehlen, 2001). In Norwalk Iowa, only students who live more than two miles from school receive free transportation. Anyone wanting to take a shorter ride on the bus must now pay one dollar per ride (Stover, 2003).

The National Rural Education Association (NREA) is against the thought of consolidation (Mooneyham, 2005). Besides the belief that schools should stay in their own community because they are the focus point of each community, Mooneyham reports that the NREA makes the following statements:

1. The educational and financial results of state-mandated school district consolidations do not meet legislated expectations.
2. There is no 'ideal' size for schools or districts.
3. "Size" does not guarantee success. Effective schools come in all sizes.
4. Smaller districts have higher achievement and better social outcomes.
5. The larger a district becomes, the more resources are devoted to secondary or nonessential activities.
6. Local school officials should be wary of merging several smaller elementary schools, at least if the goal is improved performance.
7. After a school closure, out migration, population decline, and neighborhood deterioration are set in motion, and support for public education diminishes.
8. There is no solid foundation for the belief that eliminating school districts will improve education, enhance cost effectiveness, or promote quality.
9. Students from low-income areas have better achievement in small schools.

10. School closure or consolidation often has a negative impact on rural communities.
11. Small rural schools tend to have lower dropout rates.
12. Students in small rural schools often perform better academically and socially, and they have a more positive attitude toward school.
13. Interpersonal relations among parents, students, teachers, and administrators are more positive in small rural schools. (p. 3)

In the state of Indiana, school district enrollment varies from 156 students to 37,057 students. Table 2.1 shows the variation of enrollment in the public schools throughout the state of Indiana. Over 15% of Indiana school districts have enrollment under 1,000 students. Some researchers will argue that once a school district falls below the enrollment of 1,500 students, schools will not be able to meet the educational and financial demands as well as they should. As reflected in Table 2.1, in the state of Indiana 103 school districts, 35%, fall under this enrollment. Declining enrollments, demands on curriculum requirements, and reduction of the educational budget has caused Indiana state government to work with its department of education to make a push toward restructuring the school system.

In April 2007, the Indiana General Assembly passed legislation (IHEA 1001, 2007) that among other things, provided up to \$25,000 to school corporations which agree to study the feasibility of consolidation or some type of shared services with another corporation. A total of \$100,000 was appropriated in both Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 for the local school district feasibility studies. School districts that are interested

must show how consolidation or shared services is expected to enhance educational curriculum for students and when this consolidation or sharing of services will be completed. When looking at the concept of school districts sharing services and personnel to eliminate duplication, many districts are looking at areas such as administrators, teachers, health care professionals, student transportation, curriculum, special education, and purchasing (Patterson, 2006).

Table 2.1

2006-07 Indiana School District Enrollment Size

Enrollments	Number of Districts
0 – 1,000	46
1,001 – 1,500	57
1,501 – 2,000	48
2,001 – 2,500	31
2,501 – 3000	15
Over 3,001	96

The Indiana school curriculum has changed over the past few years. The school system has adopted what is known as Core 40 curriculum. Core 40 provides students a strong academic base that will prepare them for opportunity after high school. In the fall of 2011, a graduating student that wishes to enroll in an Indiana college must have completed the Core 40 curriculum or a curriculum equivalent to be accepted. This curriculum provides high school credits in core subjects of English/language arts,

mathematics, science, social studies, physical education/health and wellness, as well as electives in the fine arts, career/technical, and world languages. Besides the basic Core 40 curriculum, the students may select the Core 40 with Academic Honors or the Core 40 with Technical Honors programs. In both of these curriculums, the student must complete all requirements of the Core 40 and enroll for additional credits in certain areas while keeping a grade point average of a 'B' or higher (Appendix A). Students may decide not to take the Core 40 curriculum, but they must complete a formal opt-out process. This process requires parental consent to allow a child to graduate with less than a Core 40.

With the requirements of the Core 40 curriculum, a school district must employ a staff that will be able to accommodate all of the students' needs. High schools that have a larger enrollment, thus larger staff, can financially staff the instructors more efficiently because of class size enrollment. Larger schools will absorb class enrollments in classes that will in turn lower the cost of educating each child. The cost to educate a classroom of 20 students will cost the same as a classroom of eight to 10 students. In some instances, smaller rural schools and districts may be marginally more expensive to operate. Per-pupil annual costs in smaller schools are, on the average, between 10% to 20% higher than equivalent annual costs of larger schools (Strange & Malhoit, 2005).

Indiana law allows two broad statutory methods in order for reorganization of school corporations to be completed. Indiana Code 20-23-4-38(b) creates a county-wide committee for the reorganization of all schools within a certain county. If at any time more reorganization needs to take place, this committee is dismissed, and the authority to propose further reorganization is given to the local school boards and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The new proposal must be taken to the Indiana State

Board of Education for their approval. Once approved by the board of education, the proposal can be put in to place by one of two avenues. Consolidation will happen if a petition is signed by 55% of the registered voters in the reorganized school district or if the proposal is approved in special election (Boyd & Ulm, 2006).

One of the major considerations of this reorganization code is the make-up of the governing body of the new consolidation school corporation. The number of board members can be as few as three but normally are five to seven. Boyd and Ulm (2006) list several options describing how to form the governing body. Those options include:

- A. Elect all members on an at-large basis with members able to live anywhere in the district and all voters in the district voting on all candidates.
- B. Divide the district into two or more residence districts with one or more members selected from each residence district and with the option of having one or more members selected at large. In a residence district, the member must live in a particular geographic area but is elected by all voters in the school district.
- C. Divide the district into three or more residence districts. If there are three members, one member must reside in each district. If there are five members, no more than two members may reside in each district. (The statute says that two members may not reside in one district but this is a mathematical impossibility so IDOE interprets it to mean that no more than two member may reside in one district.) If there are seven members, at least two are elected from each residence district.

- D. Divide the district into two or more electoral districts with member(s) elected from each district and not less than one less of a majority elected at large. In an electoral district, the member must live in a particular geographic area and only those voters in that area vote in that member's election.
- E. Select a majority of the members on an at-large basis and select the remainder from electoral districts.
- F. Divide the district into two or more electoral districts and elect members only from those districts. (p. 121)

The second statutory method that allows reorganization is the 2006 government modernization act. This act allows school districts to reorganize without the approval from the superintendent of public instruction. In this situation a school corporation develops a plan to reorganize with other school corporations. If the school corporation(s) agrees with the option to reorganize, then a committee is formed to develop a reorganization plan that is agreeable to all corporations involved. This plan must be approved by each school corporation's school board. After the plan is approved by each school board, it then must be approved by a majority vote in each of the school districts that wish to be reorganized (Boyd & Ulm, 2006).

Shared Services

Research shows that reorganizing and sharing of services instead of total consolidation of schools is more favorable to the public because of being able to keep schools in their own communities (Darden, 2005). Darden states that a shared service agreement usually takes one of the following forms by:

Establishing cooperative agreements with other districts to share equipment, facilities, and personnel, reducing costs through cooperative purchasing of goods and services, sharing personnel with other districts and sharing courses through distance learning, or forming consortiums in transportation to improve efficiency and eliminate duplicative services. School districts can collaborate with many different types of partners, including municipal governments, colleges and universities, and corporations. (p. 5)

Through technology many small schools are providing curriculum by sharing teachers. One example is in the state of South Dakota where according to South Dakota Education Association President Roberts (as cited in Jehlen, 2001), “an experienced calculus teacher is leading a class in another school by video, along with her own students” (p. 2).

In California, five elementary schools from three different school districts have become partners in sharing training for teachers and adopting a single literature series in order to unite and push literacy (Darden, 2005). Another option that is being used in New Jersey is the sharing of the school superintendent. When smaller school district superintendents are needed, superintendents from surrounding larger corporations are being hired to share. Schools Superintendent Bazzel (as cited in Bruno, 2006) heads both the Salem County’s Alloway and Upper Pittsgrove townships. “One of the biggest challenges is having two boards, with a total of 18 board members to answer to,” (p. 1). The downfall to this option would be stretching of the superintendent across two separate school districts. Certain community and school activities that the superintendent would normally attend may not be feasible. Both school boards would need to be understanding

and organized in order for the superintendent to meet all of the needs. In certain times, such as bargaining for example, the superintendent may be so overwhelmed with negotiation needs that all of the other needs of both districts might be left unmet.

In Texas the two largest districts found in Houston and Dallas developed a five year partnership in 2002 to increase their buying power for health insurance and reduce duplicative administration by grouping their assets to produce employee health benefits (Eggers et al., 2005). Unlike a consolidation, school district collaboration of services allows each district to retain its strengths and identity while benefiting from resources, services, and strengths of surrounding school districts or programs. (Darden, 2005).

In the state of Indiana, there are programs such as educational service centers, special education planning districts, vocational centers, and trust plans that are state wide and can be used by all school districts. In order to obtain different educational programs and services that might not be available or would not be cost effective for an individual corporation, educational service centers were developed throughout the state of Indiana. Through the work of legislation Indiana Code 511 IAC 4-4-2 which authorizes the establishment of educational service centers and Indiana Code 20-26-10-3 which authorizes two or more local school corporations to engage in joint programs for joint purchases and/or for joint employment of personnel were created. The nine education service centers, listed in Table 2.2 were developed and determined by geographical areas (by county) as membership units and are eligible to organize and operate (Rund, 2007).

According to Turney, Executive Director of ESC1, each educational service center is composed of a Governing Board which is comprised of superintendents from member corporations. From this governing board an Executive Board is formed which

contains an odd number of members ranging from five to 11 members. The charge of the Executive Board is to provide oversight for the month-to-month general operation of the Educational Service Center. The governing board of the Educational Service Center meets twice each year. In the spring, the Governing Board meets to approve a 'Planned Services' document which outlines identified services and cooperative ventures planned by the Center for the coming year (Fiscal Year is July 1 – June 30 annually). This plan allows the participating school corporation to cooperate and share certain programs and services which they may together implement. These services may include, but are not limited to, instructional materials, technology services, insurance, multi-media services, professional development, purchasing and financial management. The other meeting of the Governing Board is in the fall when the Board receives an Annual Report of Finances along with a snapshot of the result of services provided, usage of services, and savings derived by the Service Center as well as individual member-schools for the previous year. Both of these reports, after board approval, are submitted to the Indiana Department of Education and the State Board of Education.

These educational centers are funded by monies appropriated by the Indiana General Assembly through an establish formula and by each participating school corporation paying a stipulated sum per student, based upon the K-12 Average Daily Membership count. The per-student stipend will be determined by the governing board of the education service center with the minimum of three dollars established by legislation.

According to Turney the rest of the center's income is received through grants, workshops, professional development training fees, and other extra services that are

Table 2.2

Indiana Educational Service Center Districts

ESC 1	ESC 2	ESC 3	ESC 4	ESC 5	ESC 6	ESC 7	ESC 8	ESC 9
Crawford	Clark	Brown	Bartholomew	Benton	Jasper	Elkhart	Adams	Marion
Davies	Dearborn	Clay	Decatur	Boone	Lake	Fulton	Allen	
DuBois	Floyd	Greene	Delaware	Carroll	LaPorte	Kosciusko	Blackford	
Gibson	Harrison	Hendricks	Fayette	Cass	Newton	Marshall	DeKalb	
Knox	Jackson	Monroe	Franklin	Clinton	Porter	Pulaski	Grant	
Lawrence	Jefferson	Morgan	Hancock	Fountain		St. Joseph	Huntington	
Martin	Jennings	Owen	Henry	Hamilton		Starks	Jay	
Organe	Ohio	Parke	Johnson	Howard			LaGrange	
Perry	Ripley	Putnam	Madison	Miami			Noble	
Pike	Scott	Sullivan	Randolph	Montgomery			Steuben	
Posey	Switzerland	Vermillion	Rush	Tippecanoe			Wabash	
Spencer	Washington	Vigo	Shelby	Tipton			Wells	
Vanderburg			Union	Warren			Whitley	
Warrick			Wayne	White				

provided by the center. Over 92% or 271 of the 293 school corporations of the public school districts are using the educational service centers in order to cut costs.

The second area where many school systems share educational services is in the area of special education. Indiana law allows each school district to decide the instructional system as well as the structure of the governance that is set-up to provide the educational services to children with all types of disabilities (Plucker, Spradlin, Zapf, and Chien, 2007). All 293 public school corporations across the state of Indiana have selected one of three types of services. The first type is known as a Single School Corporation planning district. In this type of service one school district has sufficient resources to provide all the services for students with disabilities within its own school district. There are 18 of these corporations across the state according to the 2007-08 directory prepared by the Department of Education funded project known as the Indiana Special Education Administrators' Services (ISEAS).

The next two types of special education planning districts are generically referred to as cooperatives, which refer to two or more corporations that operate under a written agreement. The first type is known as Joint Service and Supply cooperatives. Indiana Code 20-26-10-3 states that,

Two or more school corporations acting through their respective governing bodies may engage in a joint program under written agreement executed by all participating school corporations. The agreement shall, among other things, provide for the organization, administration, support, funding, and termination of the program. (Rund, 2007, p. 509)

In this type of service one school district, usually the largest corporation, is established as the fiscal agent for the planning district. In this joint service all schools within a chosen geographic area may jointly employ professional personnel, supplies, and equipment. The expense of these services and purchases are determined by their “proportionate use in the schools of participating corporations” (Rund, p. 510). There are 37 joint service and supply cooperatives across the state of Indiana according to the ISEAS directory.

The second type of cooperative service that is developed to meet the needs of children with disabilities is known as an Interlocal. Interlocal planning districts are set up much like the Joint Service and Supply cooperatives with similar governance structures and delivery systems. The major difference between the two is that an Interlocal is a legal entity in and of itself. The Interlocal, for all intents and purposes, becomes a school district within itself with one exception – no taxing authority. The primary reason for planning districts to utilize this governance model appears to be for the purpose of eliminating the fiscal and administrative burden placed on a single corporation. This type of planning district is able to be formed through Indiana Code 36-1-7-3(5) which states that “a separate legal entity, the nature, organization, composition, and powers of which must be provided, or a joint board composed of representatives of the entities that are parties to agreement must be represented” (Rund, 2007, p. 930).

Although this type of cooperative does not have capabilities of raising taxes like school corporations, their governing body is usually the superintendents of the member school corporations which the cooperative provides personnel and services for their students with disabilities. According to Zaring, State Board of Education Administrator, “School corporations may enter into cooperative agreements with other entities through

the Interlocal Cooperation Agreement process under IC 36-1-7 or through a cooperative agreement under IC 36-1.5-5” (J. Zaring, 2008, personal communication, November 2, 2005). According to the ISEAS directory there are 13 Interlocals throughout Indiana plus one planning district organized under the Special School Act, which functions as an Interlocal.

Vocational education is another area in which many school systems share services that bring an enriched curriculum to the children. Due to the cost of staffing and equipment, many high schools can only provide some of the basic areas in career and technical programs. These programs may include business courses, agriculture courses, and family and consumer science courses. By combining services, students have the capability of expanding their experiences and knowledge in the vocational area.

A prime example of this is the Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center in Indiana’s vocational district 46. This Center is located in Evansville, Indiana and all school corporations in this district have the option to send students to participate in the programs. Vocational district 46 includes the counties of Gibson, Posey, Spencer, Vanderburgh, and Warrick. The philosophy of the development of this technical center was to link the center and its business and community partners. A 54 member task force consisting of students, parents, educators, business and community leaders worked together at designing this technical facility. “Fifty-four dedicated individuals came together for the common purpose of designing the best career and technical facility to ensure educational and economic success for both students and community at large,” states Yeager, former director of Practical Arts, Vocation and Adult Education for the

Evansville Vanderburgh School Corporation (Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center, 2002, p. 4).

The curriculum that is offered at the technical center consists of 13 trade and industry courses as well as health careers education, agribusiness, business and marketing programs, radio broadcasting, early childhood education and services, culinary arts, family and consumer science, and interdisciplinary cooperative education programs. Trade and industry courses include building trades, electrical trades, heating/air-conditioning, machine shop, plastic/maintenance technology, welding technology, electrical/mechanical/appliance repair technology, computer service/CISCO technology, architectural drafting/CADD, technical drafting/CADD, graphic communications, automotive service technology, and automotive collision technology (Southern Indiana Career and Technical Center).

New areas of curriculum for students are being looked at constantly based on economic and employment outlook. Many of the above classes provide students to receive dual credit with the area colleges.

In the 2007-08 school year approximately 540 students in Evansville plus another 265 students in four surrounding counties participated in courses as part of the area vocational district. School corporations not in Vanderburgh County that have students attending this center must pay student tuition. The participating school corporations receive the additional pupil count monies for the transferring student. This provides a minimal cost per student for an enriched curriculum. Transportation must be provided by the outside corporation or student. By sharing these services, the participating corporations enhance the opportunities for students who would not otherwise be able to

participate in such a rich curriculum. This is just one example of vocational shared service that is being done throughout the state of Indiana.

With the increase of healthcare costs over the last several years, many school systems have been looking at or starting to participate in a multi-school insurance Trust. The advantage of a larger group may find greater leverage in the marketplace. A single contract can also provide the greater selection of benefit options. Ancillary benefits such as life, disability, vision, and dental can also be provided Central Indiana School Employees' Insurance Trust (Sutton & Associates, 2008).

Many Trusts begin with at least two or three school corporations uniting together in order to get the best possible savings for the group. After the Trust is formed, other schools may apply for membership by meeting the criteria set by the group. Each Trust is organized on rules established by the participating school corporations. The governing board consists of representatives from each member school corporation. Usually, there are at least two representatives, one teacher, and one administrator that are selected. This board is in charge of recommending an insurance vendor. Many times, a consultant is hired to work with the board in its selection. The consultant is paid either by equal amounts or enrollment percentage by each participating school corporations. Other committees may also be formed to provide the board with information.

Once a vendor is selected and the employee fee is negotiated and defined, each school corporation will pay that established amount to the vendor. Each school corporation will negotiate within its own corporation the amount paid by the employee and the amount paid by the school corporation.

By having a larger group with one contract, the joining school corporations generally will have more purchasing power. Insurers may be willing to negotiate lower rates and other benefits. In turn, the lower rates will allow the Trust to offer more attractive benefit options to their employees (Sutton & Associates, 2008). This is just one example of an Insurance Trust. Different Trusts may be constructed differently than the above example. The whole concept in having Trust plans is to develop a larger employee group which in turn will give more purchasing power and less cost for school corporations.

With the cost of education on the rise and the drop in student enrollment, more school districts will be faced with looking for ways to meet the demands of both education and finances. Among the options available to schools to handle these challenges, schools will be looking more closely at ways to decrease expenses through consolidation or shared services. The success, or failure, of these options will depend largely on the attitude of local superintendents, legislators, and community members.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine the perceptions of Indiana legislators, business leaders, and school superintendents concerning consolidation and shared services among Indiana public school districts. These stakeholders share the responsibility for providing an educational system that gives the greatest opportunity for children to be successful in their lifetime while at the same time meeting the responsibility they have to provide accountability for the taxpayers. It is anticipated that this study may lead to conclusions that are significant for deciding the direction the state of Indiana should take in regards to consolidation or some aspect of shared services of the educational system. The study collected data to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents, regarding school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?

2. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents, regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?

The two research questions required the comparison of the means of the three independent groups. The first group was composed of Indiana senators and House of Representatives. The second group was composed of Chamber of Commerce presidents who reside in cities and towns throughout the state of Indiana. The third group was composed of public school superintendents throughout the state of Indiana. The groups were compared using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Null Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning.

Participants

For the purpose of this study, 150 Indiana legislators included 50 members of the Indiana Senate and 100 members of the House of Representatives. The business leaders were defined as the 199 Chamber of Commerce presidents, who reside in cities and towns throughout the state of Indiana. The school superintendents were defined as the 293 public school superintendents throughout the state of Indiana. The school superintendents did not include private, charter, or parochial school superintendents. All

members of the three groups had the opportunity to participate in the survey. The fourth major stakeholder group, parents, was left out of this study intentionally. The emotional involvement that parents and communities bring is understandable and important, yet the biases of parents restrict objectivity in dealing with change when it concerns their children. It would be very important that the participants in this study communicate with parents at the beginning of conversations dealing with consolidation and/or shared services.

Research Instrument

A survey instrument was developed by the researcher with questions concerning consolidation and shared services and can be found in Appendix B. This instrument was composed of 11 corresponding questions in respect to consolidation and shared services. It also had two individual questions dealing with school district size and the participant's preference of consolidation or shared services. The statements were rated using a six point Likert-type rating scale. The Likert-type scale is a rating scale of one through six, with one being *strongly agree*, two being *agree*, three being *somewhat agree*, four being *somewhat disagree*, five being *disagree*, and six being *strongly disagree*.

The survey instrument was validated in three ways. The first validation occurred through the research of existing literature that developed initial items for the survey. The second validation test was determined by the following six people: two Indiana Senators, two Indiana House of Representatives, the President of the Indiana Chamber of Commerce and the Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Public School Superintendents (IAPSS). Following the completion of the survey, the participants gave suggestions to the researcher to help ensure the statements reflect the purpose of the

study. The final validation came from the doctoral committee and their review of the instrument.

To enhance the interpretability of participants' responses, most items were rescored so that higher scores indicated a more positive perception of either consolidation or shared services. For example, item 1, 'Consolidation will enhance student curriculum' was reversed scored so that a response of '1' *strongly agree* was recoded as a '6'. Of the first 11 questions that measured consolidation, all but questions 3 and 5 were recoded. The same recoding procedure was used for shared services questions, excluding questions 14 and 16.

Subscores were calculated after items had been recoded. Subscales included:

1) total perception toward consolidation, 2) perceived economic benefits of consolidation, 3) perceived benefit to students of consolidation, 4) total perception toward shared services, 5) perceived economic benefits of shared services, and 6) perceived benefit to students of shared services. The total consolidation score was calculated by adding items 1-11 and represented respondents' general perception toward consolidation. Total shared services score was calculated by adding items 12-22 and represented respondents' general perception toward shared services. Subscales for the economic benefits of consolidation (items 4, 6, 9, 10, 11) and shared services (items 15, 17, 20, 21, 22) were summed next. Finally, the perceived benefits to students of consolidation (items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8) and shared services (items 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 19) subscales were calculated by adding their respective items.

The individual questions dealing with district enrollment (item 23), and whether consolidation was preferred over shared services (item 24), were not recoded. Since these

two questions were not grouped with other questions, there was no reason to recode. The scores ranged from 1 = *strongly agree* to 6 = *strongly disagree*. The higher the mean score the more negative perception was toward that variable.

Procedures

The survey used for this study was mailed using the United States Postal Service to the 150 legislators, 199 Chamber of Commerce presidents, and 293 school superintendents. The researcher obtained the list of names and addresses of all participants through three main sources. The legislators were obtained through the office of Senator Deig at 7130 Carson School Road, Mount Vernon, IN. 47620. The chamber presidents were obtained through the office of Indiana Chamber President Brinegar at 115 West Washington Street, Suite 850S, Indianapolis, IN 46204. The superintendents were obtained through the office of IAPSS President Ellis at One North Capitol, 1215 Indianapolis, IN 46204. All participants were sent a cover letter (Appendix C) introducing the researcher, the nature of the study, and a request for their participation. After two weeks, a postcard (Appendix D) was mailed to those participants who did not respond requesting the return of the survey (Dillman, 1978). After an additional two weeks, the data received was downloaded for analysis.

Data Analyses

Analysis of the data was accomplished through the use of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. This software is licensed to Indiana State University for use by students and faculty of the university. Descriptive statistics were used to separate the three stakeholder groups into their respective categories of legislator, Chamber of Commerce president, or superintendent and to allow the researcher to compare the means

of each group. It also provided information concerning individual items by each respondent group. Inferential statistics were performed to test the researcher's hypotheses. A series of Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) with post hoc comparisons allowed the researcher to compare the three groups on consolidation and shared services.

Summary

The purpose of this quantitative study was to determine if differences exist in the perceptions among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents based on their rating of selected statements concerning consolidation and shared services. All stakeholders in these groups were asked to participate by taking a survey designed for the study. Analysis of data from the survey determined if differences between groups exist.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding consolidation and shared services between multiple school corporations. This quantitative study examined whether there were differences between legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents in terms of total consolidation, perceived student and economic benefits of consolidation, total shared services, perceived student and economic benefits of shared services, consolidation preferred over shared services, and district size.

Demographic Characteristics

On July 14, 2008, the research survey was mailed to 150 legislators, 199 local Chamber of Commerce presidents, and 293 school superintendents. A total of 327 or 51% were returned by September 1, 2008. The response rate from each group was 47 of 150 or 31.3% were legislators, 66 of 199 or 33.2% were Chamber of Commerce presidents, and 214 of 293 or 73% were school superintendents. There were three participants excluded from the study because of insufficient amount of data (skipped multiple items on consolidation and shared services scales).

Survey

The survey consisted of 24 total questions. The first 11 questions focused on issues regarding consolidation while 12 through 22 focused on issues regarding shared services. Questions 23 and 24 were individual questions that dealt with district size and consolidation being preferred over shared services. Data was recoded so that higher scores were associated with more positive perception of consolidation or shared services.

Perceptions of Consolidation

H₀₁ stated there is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding the perceived effects of school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning. H₀₁ was tested using one-way ANOVAs to compare each of the three groups across the three dependent variables of total consolidation, economic benefits of consolidation and the benefits of consolidation on student learning. Using a one-way ANOVA to examine the category of total consolidation indicated a significant difference between the three groups regarding total consolidation, $F(2,323) = 21.61, p < .001$. Significant differences between the three groups were also found for the economic benefits of consolidation, $F(2, 316) = 44.33, p < .001$ and student benefits of consolidation, $F(2,316) = 6.13, p = .002$. Results are presented in Table 4.1 and indicate that there were significant differences between the three groups across all three dependent variable areas.

While the one-way ANOVA indicate a significant difference between the three groups, it does not specify which groups significantly differ from other groups. In order to identify specific differences between the three groups, post hoc tests using the

Bonferroni technique were performed. They revealed that superintendents' total consolidation scores ($M = 29.83$, $SD = 8.62$) were significantly lower than business leaders' scores ($M = 37.90$, $SD = 11.43$) and legislators' scores ($M = 35.74$, $SD = 10.50$, $p < .001$). There was no significant difference between the total consolidation scores of business leaders and legislators ($p = .72$). These data indicate that business leaders and legislators have a more positive perception on the variable of total consolidation than superintendents.

Table 4.1

One-way ANOVA to Compare Three Groups Across Three Consolidation Variables

Dependent Variable	Legislators		Business Leaders		Superintendents		df	F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Total Consolidation	35.74	10.50	37.90	11.43	29.83	8.62	2,323	21.61	<.001
Economic Benefits of Consolidation Score	16.91	5.57	18.56	5.66	12.51	4.47	2,316	44.33	<.001
Student Benefits of Consolidation Score	19.02	5.57	19.72	6.26	17.30	4.89	2,316	6.13	0.002

Post hoc tests revealed that superintendents' economic benefits of consolidation scores ($M = 12.51$, $SD = 4.47$) were significantly lower than business leaders' scores ($M = 18.56$, $SD = 5.66$) and legislators' scores ($M = 16.91$, $SD = 5.57$, $p < .001$). There was no significant difference between the economic benefits of consolidation scores of business leaders and legislators ($p = .26$). These data indicate on the variable of economic benefits

of consolidation score, business leaders and legislators have a more positive perception than superintendents.

Post hoc tests revealed that superintendents' student benefits of consolidation scores ($M=17.30$, $SD = 4.89$) were significantly lower than business leaders' scores ($M=19.72$, $SD = 6.26$, $p = .004$.) There was no significant difference between of superintendents and legislators ($M = 19.02$, $SD = 5.57$, $p = .15$). There was also no significant difference between scores of legislators and business leaders $p = 1.00$. These data indicate that on the variable of student benefits of consolidation scores, business leaders have a more positive perception than superintendents. Legislators' scores fall between the two groups with no significant difference to either. These results are presented in Table 4.2

Table 4.2

Post Hoc Comparisons of Groups Across Consolidation Variables

Dependent Variable	Stakeholder Group (a)	Stakeholder Group (b)	Mean Difference (a-b)	<i>p</i>
Total Consolidation	Legislator	Business Leader	-2.160	.715
	Legislator	Superintendent	5.900	<.001
	Business Leader	Superintendent	8.060	<.001
Economic Benefits of Consolidation Score	Legislator	Business Leader	-1.650	.262
	Legislator	Superintendent	4.390	<.001
	Business Leader	Superintendent	6.040	<.001
Student Benefits of Consolidation Score	Legislator	Business Leader	-.700	1.000
	Legislator	Superintendent	1.730	.149
	Business Leader	Superintendent	2.430	.004

Perceptions of Shared Services

H₀₂ stated there is no significant difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning. H₀₂ was tested using one-way ANOVAs to compare each of the three groups across three shared service variables: total shared services, economic benefits of shared services and student learning associated with shared services. Table 4.3 reflects the results of these analyses revealed significant differences for all three variables: total shared services, $F(2, 322) = 15.05$, $p < .001$, economic benefits of shared services score, $F(2, 315) = 16.79$, $p < .001$, student benefits of shared services score, $F(2, 317) = 10.00$, $p < .001$.

Table 4.3

One-way ANOVA Comparing Three Groups Across Shared Services Variables

Dependent Variable	Legislators		Business Leaders		Superintendents		df	F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Total Shared Services	41.09	8.78	42.11	6.87	36.78	7.71	2,322	15.05	<.001
Economic Benefits of Shared Services Score	19.46	4.53	19.66	4.05	16.64	4.27	2,315	16.79	<.001
Student Benefits of Shared Services Score	21.93	4.73	22.55	4.00	20.14	4.06	2,317	10.00	<.001

However, while the one-way ANOVA indicates there is a significant difference it does not specify which groups significantly differ from other groups. Post hoc tests using

the Bonferroni technique revealed that superintendents' total shared services scores ($M = 16.64$, $SD = 4.27$) were significantly lower than business leaders' scores ($M = 19.66$, $SD = 4.05$), $p < .001$, and legislators' scores ($M = 19.46$, $SD = 4.53$), $p = .002$. There was no significant difference between the total shared services score, of business leaders and legislators ($p = 1.00$). These data indicate that business leaders and legislators have a more positive perception on the variable of total shared services than superintendents.

Post hoc tests revealed that superintendents' economic benefits of shared services scores ($M = 16.64$, $SD = 4.27$) were significantly lower than business leaders scores ($M = 19.66$, $SD = 4.05$) and legislators scores ($M = 19.46$, $SD = 4.53$), $p < .001$. There was no significant difference between the economic benefits of shared services score of business leaders and legislators ($p = 1.00$). These data indicate that on the variable of economic benefits of shared services score, business leaders and legislators have a more positive perception than superintendents.

Post hoc tests revealed that superintendents' student benefits of shared services scores ($M = 20.14$, $SD = 4.06$) were significantly lower than business leaders' scores ($M = 22.55$, $SD = 4.00$), $p < .001$. There was no significant difference between superintendents and legislators ($M = 21.93$, $SD = 4.73$, $p = .032$). There was also no significant difference between scores of legislators and business leaders $p = 1.00$. These data indicate that on the variable of student benefits of shared services score, business leaders have a more positive perception than superintendents. Legislators' scores fall between the two groups with no significant difference to either. These results are presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4

Post Hoc Comparisons of Groups Across Shared Services Variables

Dependent Variable	Stakeholder Group (a)	Stakeholder Group (b)	Mean Difference (a-b)	<i>p</i>
Total Shared Services	Legislator	Business Leader	-1.020	1.000
	Legislator	Superintendent	4.310	.002
	Business Leader	Superintendent	5.330	<.001
Economic Benefits of Shared Services Score	Legislator	Business Leader	-.199	1.000
	Legislator	Superintendent	2.820	<.001
	Business Leader	Superintendent	3.020	<.001
Student Benefits of Shared Services Scores	Legislator	Business Leader	-.618	1.000
	Legislator	Superintendent	1.790	.032
	Business Leader	Superintendent	2.410	<.001

Individual questions dealing with district enrollment (question 23) and whether consolidation was preferred over shared services (question 24) were also examined using the one-way ANOVA to compare the three different groups of respondents. These two questions each stood alone and were not recoded. Item scores were 1 = *strongly agree*, 2 = *agree*, 3 = *somewhat agree*, 4 = *somewhat disagree*, 5 = *disagree*, and 6 = *strongly disagree*. The higher the mean score reflects a more negative perception toward that variable.

ANOVA results indicated a significant difference between the three groups on question 23 regarding the minimum number of students being 2,000, $F(2, 322) = 16.15$, $p < .001$. Question 24, results revealed a significant difference on respondents' views over

whether consolidation is preferred over shared services, $F(2, 322) = 18.53$, $p < .001$, and is reflected in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5

One-way ANOVA to Compare Three Groups Across Two Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	Legislators		Business Leaders		Superintendents		df	F	p
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Minimum number of students should be 2,000	4.13	1.31	4.00	1.64	4.92	1.18	2,322	16.15	<.001
Consolidation is Preferred Over Shared Services	4.47	1.24	3.65	1.86	4.88	1.32	2,322	18.53	<.001

In order to understand the differences between the three groups' responses to questions 23, post hoc tests using the Bonferroni technique were performed.

Superintendents' responses ($M = 4.92$, $SD = 1.18$), were significantly more negative than business leaders' scores ($M = 4.00$, $SD = 1.64$), and legislators' scores ($M = 4.13$, $SD = 1.31$, $p < .001$). Business leaders and legislators did not differ in their responses to the minimum number of students, ($p = 1.00$). These data indicate that on question 23, which asked respondents whether the minimum number of students' in a district should be 2,000, superintendents more strongly disagreed than business leaders and legislators.

For question 24, post hoc tests revealed that superintendents had significantly higher levels of disagreement with the statement that consolidation is preferred over shared services ($M = 4.88$, $SD = 1.32$), than business leaders' scores ($M = 3.65$, $SD = 1.86$, $p < .001$). There also was a significant difference between the scores of legislators ($M =$

4.47, $SD = 1.24$) and business leaders ($p = .01$). There was no significant difference between the scores of legislators and superintendents ($p = .25$). These data indicate that business leaders have a more positive perception of consolidation than legislators and superintendents. These results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Post Hoc Comparison of Groups Across Two Dependent Variables

Dependent Variable	Stakeholder Group (a)	Stakeholder Group (b)	Mean Difference (a-b)	<i>p</i>
Minimum number of students 2,000	Legislator	Business Leader	.130	1.000
	Legislator	Superintendent	-.785	<.001
	Business Leader	Superintendent	-.916	<.001
Consolidation is Preferred over Shared Services	Legislator	Business Leader	.815	.011
	Legislator	Superintendent	-.412	.245
	Business Leader	Superintendent	-1.230	<.001

Summary

Statistical analyses were used to test null H_{01} and H_{02} . Based on the results, both H_{01} and H_{02} were rejected. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni technique provided specific information on where differences between groups lie. In this study there was a significant difference between business leaders and school superintendents across the board. Business leaders had a more positive perception toward consolidation and shared services than superintendents. They also preferred consolidation over shared services whereas superintendents were more positive toward shared services. Legislators were in agreement with business leaders in most areas concerning consolidation and shared

services. Legislators tended to move toward superintendents when student issues were involved. When comparing consolidation preferred over shared services, legislators' viewpoints were similar to the superintendents' viewpoints.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter is divided into five sections, introduction, conclusions, general discussions, recommendations, and summary. The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding consolidation and shared services between multiple school corporations. Based upon this purpose, the following two research questions were developed as a basis for this study:

1. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding school consolidation as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?
2. Is there a difference in the perception among legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents regarding shared services as it pertains to district enrollment, economics, and student learning?

The first research question required the comparison of means of the three independent groups across three dependent variables of total consolidation, economic benefits of consolidation, and student benefits of consolidation. The groups were explored using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

The second research question required the comparison of means of the three independent groups across three dependent variables of total shared services, economic benefits of shared services, and student benefits of shared services. The groups were explored using Analysis of Variances (ANOVA).

Two other variables, district enrollment and consolidation preferred over shared services were also explored using the Analysis of Variances (ANOVA). These questions were studied individually because they pertained to both research questions.

Results indicate that there was a significant difference in all dependent variables between the three groups, but it did not specify which groups significantly differ from other groups. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni technique were performed in order to identify specific differences between the three groups.

The conclusions presented in this chapter were developed based on data collected utilizing surveys developed by the researcher. The three stakeholder groups were surveyed with a self-rating instrument. A total of 31.3% legislators, 33.2% Chamber of Commerce presidents, and 73% superintendents participated in this study. Informed by the literature review in Chapter 2 and the analysis of the data in Chapter 4, the following conclusions are presented.

Conclusions

Chamber of Commerce presidents had a more positive perception of the attributes related to consolidation than the other groups. They believed that through consolidation the Indiana educational system could benefit economically as well as provide a more positive experience for the students. Superintendents viewed consolidation less positive than the Chamber presidents. They did not believe that consolidation would bring as much of a benefit economically or be a positive experience for the students. According to Table 4.1, the mean score of the legislators fell between the other two groups. Their score, much like the Chamber of Commerce presidents' score, leaned more positively toward the areas of total consolidation and economic benefits. When comparing the three group's scores on student benefits, the legislators did not show a significant difference to either of the two other groups.

Chamber of Commerce presidents had a more positive perception in the attributes related to shared services than the other groups. They believed that through shared services, the Indiana educational system could benefit economically and provide a more positive experience for the students. Superintendents viewed shared services less positively than the Chamber presidents. They did not believe that shared services would bring as great a benefit economically or would be a positive experience for the students. According to Table 4.3, the mean score of the legislators fell between the other two groups. They tended to believe more positively in the total shared services and economic benefits. When it came to student benefits, legislators did not show a significant difference to either group. Their score, much like Chamber of Commerce presidents' score, leaned more positively toward the areas of total shared services and economic

benefits. When comparing the three group's scores on student benefits, the legislators did not show a significant difference to either of the two other groups.

Question 23, which asked if a school district size should be minimum 2,000 students, all three groups had a negative perception with this statement. Even though all three groups disagreed with this statement, superintendents were significantly more negative than the other two groups. There were no significant differences between the legislators and Chamber presidents.

Question 24, which asked if consolidation was preferred over shared services, the data shown in Table 4.5, the data indicated that Chamber of Commerce Presidents have a more positive perception of consolidation than legislators and superintendents. This individual question data gave the same results as the data given earlier when comparing each group over the areas of consolidation and shared services.

According to Table 4.5, superintendents and legislators are more positive toward shared services. This individual question data gave the same results as the data given earlier when comparing each group over the areas of consolidation and shared services.

General Discussion

The researcher plotted each participant location on a map of Indiana to make sure all areas of the state were represented. Even though each group had a large number of participants to complete the survey, the superintendents 73% return rate causes the researcher to conclude that these issues are much more of a concern to the superintendents than to either of the other groups. Not only would this seem logical since consolidation could lead to a superintendent being terminated, but superintendents also believe that schools are a vital function of keeping a community's identity. In many rural

areas, the school district is the largest employer for that area. Toler (2004) found that despite the increased cost of health care, retirement contributions, and under-funded or unfunded mandates which cause financial burdens on many school corporations, communities have stood strong in opposition and defeated consolidation proposals because of the desire of a community to keep its own schools. As cited earlier in Buchanan (2005), "When you end districts, you end communities" (p. 1). Part of a superintendent's job is to be sensitive to these local community desires.

The data in this dissertation indicates that there is a significant difference between the groups of Chamber of Commerce presidents and superintendents in all areas of consolidation and shared services. This researcher's judgment believes that possibly the differences lie in the philosophies of these two groups of stakeholders. Probably Chamber of Commerce presidents and superintendents would both agree that running the most efficient and effective organization is a must. Both groups believe in making the best product for the least amount of money. The difference in their philosophies on how to accomplish this goal is what seems to separate the two groups.

In the business world, the product can be structured and duplicated for mass production. If there is a flaw in the end product, it can be discarded before it goes out to society and replaced by a "perfect" duplicate. In making a product in the business world, most variables are controlled by the business. If the business economy slows down, and the product does not need to be produced at the maximum rate, then the business can slow down production and lay-off employees to meet the demands that are needed.

In the educational world, the "end product" is the student. The educational system is structured to give opportunities for all students. If the "end product" the student, is

flawed the school cannot simply discard it and make a new one. The expectation is for the student, even those that are flawed, to be able to learn to have a healthy and successful life. It is considered the responsibility of the schools to educate all students, even the “flawed” ones. In making this “product” in the educational world, many variables cannot be controlled by the educational system. Even though students have different beliefs, intelligence levels, economical restraints, or advantages, the expectation is to make all students fit one mode and be able to function effectively in society. If the education economy is slowed down, it is not an option to quit producing the product, or to produce fewer or cheaper products. Lay-offs of employees may happen, but the demands of the product are still relevant. It is the judgment of this researcher that these different philosophies are what causes the business world and educational world to view consolidation and shared services differently.

Legislators are in the middle being pulled to make decisions that will affect both Chamber of Commerce presidents and superintendents. This is where the political realm of consolidation and shared services takes place. Legislators must balance what is best overall for students, while also keeping in mind the responsibility for the taxpayer. In my judgment, that is why legislators are more positive toward consolidation than superintendents in all areas but especially in the economic areas. This researcher’s judgment is that legislators’ philosophy is much like the business leaders’ philosophy. Legislators tend to believe that if reductions need to be made, these hard decisions need to take place. Since in the educational field the product cannot be reduced, then other areas must face the reduction. One way to reduce is through district consolidation. There are 293 school districts in the state of Indiana, with over 50% of those districts falling

below a student enrollment of 2,000. The researcher believes because of this fact, the Indiana legislature passed the state budget bill HEA1001-2007 allocating \$100,000 to the Indiana Department of Education for use by school corporations interested in studying the feasibility of consolidation or shared services with other corporations.

This researcher believes that the next step for our legislature would be to mandate the study of feasibility of consolidation and/or shared services with other corporations to certain districts across the state instead of being done on a voluntary basis. For example, the 10% to 15% lower enrollment districts would be mandated to do the study. The researcher does agree with the research stated by Buchanan (2005) that school districts enrollment can become so low that the educational and financial demands cannot be met as efficiently as possible. As former Arkansas Governor Huckabee (as cited in Buchanan, 2005) stated, "You just can't offer a broad, rigorous curriculum that includes the arts, Advance Placements, and a broad array of foreign languages in a small school" (p. 3). In Arkansas, districts less than 350 students were consolidated. This merging, set forth by the Governor, helped produce money that allowed for the raising of teacher pay, broadening the curriculum, and expanding preschool programs.

If the legislators are considering consolidation as a way to save financially, maybe other considerations should be examined first. Over the past 20 years the legislature has given an increase each year to education. Maybe the budget process needs to be examined to give schools greater flexibility within the budget. This may cause more difficulty for school boards, but at least they will have control over those decisions. Another area that could be considered is financial incentives for consolidating schools. For example, in Nebraska, incentive packages would pay up to \$3,500 per students to

districts with fewer than 390 students that agreed to consolidate with larger districts (Buchanan, 2005). These types of incentives may help influence larger school districts to work with smaller districts in order to take advantage of the financial increase they would receive.

Legislators, on the other hand, sided closer to superintendents when it came to student benefits of consolidation and shared services. The concern of closing schools in communities is a nightmare for politicians. State leaders make many decisions throughout their careers but none that will provoke the passion from a community more than consolidation (Hughes, 2003). Legislators must weigh the advantages and disadvantages that consolidation or shared services can bring to the students concerning curriculum and extra-curricular activities.

As part of this research participants were asked if the minimum number of students in any given school district should be 2000. This question was asked because of the recommendation that is being considered in the Indiana Commission on Local Government Reform report in 2007. The data indicates that all three groups at least somewhat disagree with the blanket minimum number of students in any given school district being 2,000. In this disagreement, the researcher assumes that some people may believe that the enrollment number of 2,000 is too low, and some may believe it is too high. This number will vary depending on other variables to each and every district. These changes may not always gain direct financial savings but may help provide the opportunity for students to receive a more rigorous curriculum. Another variable that must be considered is declining enrollment. If two corporations both with declining

enrollments decide to consolidate, they may still be faced with reducing faculty, curriculum, and schools if the enrollment continues to decline.

When considering shared services, one might ask, do Chamber of Commerce presidents and legislators actually know what is taking place in the Indiana schools at this time? Research indicates over 92% of school districts in the state of Indiana are already connected to educational services centers that help relieve cost in many areas of purchasing. Of the 8% not using these services, many are school districts that are so large they would not receive an extra benefit for joining the educational center. Schools throughout the state are working with one another to enhance curriculum through sharing programs such as vocational, special education, and sharing facilities for educational and extracurricular events. This discrepancy between what legislators and chamber presidents believe is happening regarding shared services and what is actually happening in schools indicate that it is very important that the superintendents work hard to educate the community on what is being done in their schools concerning shared services. One recommendation for the future of shared services might be to evaluate programs that could be put into place statewide that help reduce costs in areas such as insurance, employment benefits, and purchasing.

Recommendations for Further Research

This study provided information from three of the major stakeholders in the state of Indiana to compare perceptions in the areas of consolidation and shared services. Based on the findings of this study, the researcher would make the following recommendations for further study:

1. Indiana should consider mandating state budget bill HEA1001-2007 to the school districts that have the lowest 15% enrollment. Data should then gathered to better understand if there are economic benefits, benefits for students, or benefits for both.
2. The perceptions of parents regarding school consolidation and shared services should be considered for further study.
3. A more involved qualitative study involving legislators and Chamber of Commerce presidents and their knowledge of what is actually taking place in the schools concerning consolidation and shared services should be considered.
4. A study of actual consolidations to find out what the motivating factors were should be considered.
5. An examination of school consolidations that failed should be considered to find out the reasons for failure.
6. A study examining allowing educational service centers to consider allowing larger school districts to join at no cost should be considered. Allowing these large schools to join at no cost would allow the combined purchasing power to benefit all schools.
7. Study the impact of allowing schools more flexibility regarding spending should be considered.
8. Further study on financial incentives that could be offered for consolidation to take place among school districts should be considered.

Summary

Before making any decisions concerning consolidation and/or shared services, everyone must know what is going on in our schools today. Making a successful attempt at changing school districts within a community is very difficult because of the emotions that it brings with the change. Communication to people and getting everyone to understand the reasoning is extremely important. Open communication and early involvement with community members are keys if consolidation is going to take place (Kosar, 2002). Open lines of communication must begin at the level of legislators, business leaders, and superintendents. The lack of factual information to the public is one of the key reasons change does not happen. It is a must that legislators, business leaders, and superintendents work together in order to present these facts as a unit to the fourth stakeholder group, parents, in order to be successful. Having an efficient school with maximum opportunities for students as well as saving dollars for the taxpayer would be the best situation.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Core 40

Indiana Core 40 for Class of 2009

A student may complete the Core 40 by:

1. Taking 28-30 credits from this list:

Language Arts 8 credits

Math 6-8 credits of Algebra I, Geometry, Algebra II, Pre Calculus, Calculus

Science 6 credits to include: 2 Bio I, 2 Chemistry or Physics, 2 additional from

Chemistry, Physics, Earth/Space Science, Biology II, Chemistry II

Social Studies 6 credits as follows: 2 US History, 1 Government, 1 Economics, 1 World History or World Geography, 1 additional from above or other Social Studies courses

Physical Education 1 credit

Health/Safety 1 credit

2 Choosing 8 credits in courses from the list above or the list below

Foreign Language

Fine Arts

Computers

Career Area-at least six credits in a logical sequence from a technical career area

3 Choosing 2 to 4 more credits from any other courses offered

Indiana Core 40 Diploma for Class of 2010 and Beyond

Required

*Language Arts (English 9, English 10, English 11, English 12) 8 credits

US HISTORY 2 credits

GOVERNMENT 1 credit

WORLD HISTORY/CIVILIZATION OR GEOGRAPHY/HISTORY OF THE WORLD
2 credits

**MATH Algebra, Geometry, Algebra II or higher 6 credits

**SCIENCE Biology I, Chemistry I or Physics or Integrated Chemistry-Physics or any
other Core 40 science course 6 credits

***Health and Wellness 1 credit

Physical Education 2 credits

*Students must successfully complete the following coursework to meet MVHS
Language Arts graduation requirements: English 12 (2 semesters), or English 12 (1
semester) and Contemporary Lit (1 semester) or Advanced English (2 semesters)

**All students must earn either two (2) math credits or two (2) credits in Physics during
their junior year or senior year

***The Health and Wellness credit may be waived if a student's program includes three (3) credits from the following Family and Consumer Science courses: Child Development, Human Development, Interpersonal Relations, Nutrition and Wellness, or Adult Roles and Responsibilities)

MVHS requires 2 credits of Technology Competency listed on PP 7 of Curriculum Guide

APPENDIX B

Survey

In this survey there are eleven corresponding questions in respect to consolidation and shared services. It also has two individual questions dealing with school district size and the participant's preference of consolidation or shared services. Please check one box per question.

CONSOLIDATION: For this survey, consolidation means uniting two or more established school corporations through the dissolution of an established school corporation(s) and the alteration of existing boundaries to form a new school corporation (Walsh, 1959). This may or may not include school closings.

1. Consolidation will enhance student curriculum.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
2. Consolidation will provide students with more extracurricular opportunities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
3. Consolidation will lead to increased class size.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
4. Consolidation will result in more money being spent in the classroom.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
5. Consolidation will result in students spending additional time traveling to and from school.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
6. Consolidation will have a positive impact on local communities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. Consolidation will enhance student achievement.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
8. Consolidation will provide students with more athletic opportunities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. Consolidation will result in less money being spent on administration.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
10. Consolidation will cause school spending to become more efficient.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree
11. Consolidation will have a positive impact on School Board governance.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

SHARED SERVICES: For this survey, shared services mean two or more school corporations working cooperatively to reduce expenditures by the joint purchasing of supplies, sharing of services/facilities/personnel, or the forming of trusts for the purpose of providing certain services or benefits to the member school corporations at a reduced cost.

12. Shared services will enhance student curriculum.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

13. Shared services will provide students with more extracurricular opportunities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

14. Shared services will lead to increased class size.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

15. Shared services will result in more money being spent in the classroom.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

16. Shared services will result in students spending additional time traveling to and from school.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

17. Shared services will have a positive impact on local communities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

18. Shared services will enhance student achievement.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

19. Shared services will provide students with more athletic opportunities.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

20. Shared services will result in less money being spent on administration.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

21. Shared services will cause school spending to become more efficient.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

22. Shared services will have a positive impact on School Board governance.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

Individual Questions:

23. The minimum number of students in any given school district should be 2000.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

24. Consolidation is preferred over shared services as a method of providing a more efficient and effective educational system.
☐ Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Somewhat Agree ☐ Somewhat Disagree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree

APPENDIX C

Cover Letter to Participants

7-14-08

Good Afternoon,

I am a doctoral student at Indiana State University and an Assistant Superintendent of schools at the Metropolitan School District of Mt. Vernon. I am conducting this study under the guidance of Dr. Robert Boyd from the Educational Leadership, Administration, and Foundation Department at Indiana State University. You are invited to participate in a research study about perceptions regarding consolidation and shared services among school corporations.

Legislators, Chamber of Commerce presidents, and school superintendents across the state of Indiana have been selected to participate in this study. Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your responses will be confidential and only group data will be reported. Each group listed above will have a different color survey for sorting purposes. The survey will also have an identification number for mailing purposes, so I can check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned. Your name will never be placed on the survey. Once the data is gathered for this study, the check-off list will be shredded. The information you provide will help us better understand perceptions of consolidation and shared services among stakeholders within the state of Indiana.

By completing the survey, you are voluntarily agreeing to participate. This survey will take approximately five minutes to complete. Do not write your name on the survey. Individuals from the Institutional Review Board may inspect these records. Should the data be published, no individual information will be disclosed. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you may contact the Indiana State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) by phone at (812)237-8217, or by e-mail at irb@indstate.edu.

If you would like to have a copy of the survey results, please notify the researcher using the e-mail listed below. If you have any questions about the study, please contact one of the following:

Tom Kopatich
Kopatichtp@msdmv.k12.in.us
1000 W 4th Street
Mt. Vernon, IN 47620
(812) 838-5772
IRB Number: 9003
Approval Date: 7-10-08

Dr. Robert Boyd
Indiana State University
Terre Haute, IN 47809
(812) 237-3804