

## Regional High School Proposals Unveiled



Reported by: Evan White

Email: [ewhite@13wham.com](mailto:ewhite@13wham.com)

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Canandaigua, N.Y. - With districts reeling from losses in state aid and in some cases, declining enrollment, taxpayers in Ontario County have something new to consider: a regional high school.

The nonpartisan Center For Governmental Research (CGR) was commissioned by Wayne-Finger Lakes BOCES to study regional high school models.

"We are not making a recommendation about whether A. Regional high schools are feasible, or B. Would raise student outcomes or decrease costs. This is about regional models, what would it look like," explained Kirstin Pryor, Senior Research Associate with CGR.

Two models were explained, and cost savings were detailed for the first of them.

More than 100 residents and educators listened and asked questions at a Tuesday forum at Finger Lakes Community College.

Model One would create a regional high school with five branches: Ontario West (Honeoye), Ontario East (Geneva), Ontario Central (Marcus Whitman), Ontario North Central (Canandaigua) and Ontario North West (Victor).

Model One reduces the teaching staff by 60 teachers, saving \$4.2 million that would be realized not only by the districts, but also in a reduced rate paid by property taxpayers.

Model Two is made up of six schools: Ontario Southwest (Naples), Ontario West (Honeoye), Ontario East (Geneva), Ontario Central (Canandaigua), Ontario Southeast (Marcus Whitman) and Ontario North West (Victor).

When staff cuts are factored in, tens of millions in projected savings could be realized by cash strapped districts.

Parents following the presentation who spoke with 13WHAM News shared mixed feelings. All said they expect changes given the dire financial situations of their districts, but they want to know more about CGR's research and what is feasible.

"Shifting is probably going to have to happen but I want it reflecting investing in our kids instead of looking at what is the lowest cost way of doing things," said Jim Mitchell, a Bloomfield parent.

A final report from CGR is expected in March. CGR Will hold a second forum at Hobart and William Smith Colleges Thursday at 7 p.m.

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