

Merger Feasibility Study Final Report

**Clymer and Panama
Central School Districts**

PROCESS

**Clymer
COMMUNITY**

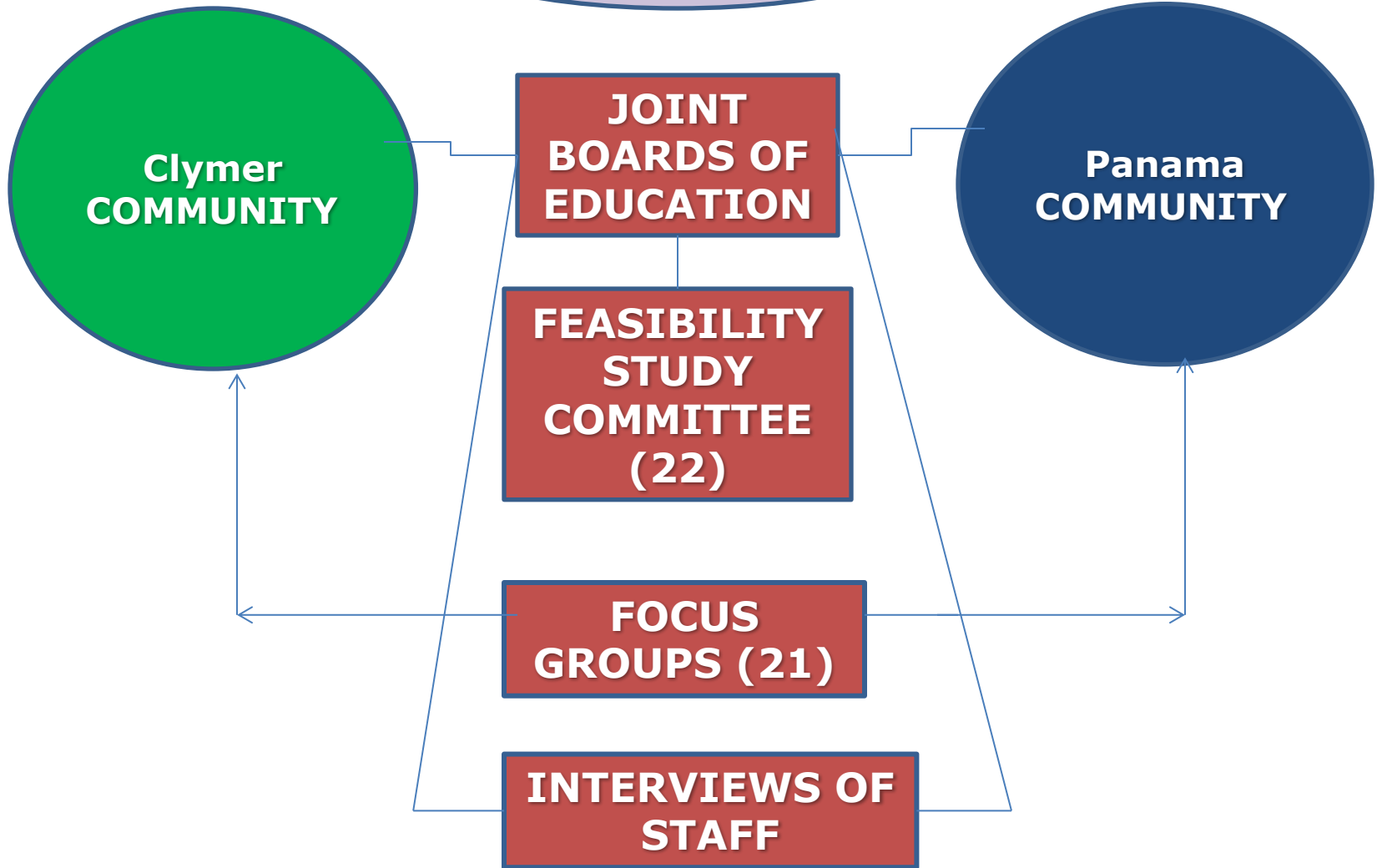
**JOINT
BOARDS OF
EDUCATION**

**Panama
COMMUNITY**

**FEASIBILITY
STUDY
COMMITTEE
(22)**

**FOCUS
GROUPS (21)**

**INTERVIEWS OF
STAFF**



Feasibility Study Committee Process

- 5 meetings
- Public invited to attend all meetings
- Tours of each building prior to meetings
#2 and #3
- Presentation of data
- Questions for Committee Members
- Notes from each meeting sent to
committee members
- Meeting notes posted on districts' websites

Feasibility Study Committee Members

Clymer		Panama
Carrie Champoe		John Owens
Jane Babcock		Jeffrey Ireland
Bethany Collins		John Brown
Julie White		Audra Smith
John Shifler		Thomas Golden
Mandi Johnson		Carolina Delahoy
Steve Linton		Steve Carlson
Melanie Battaglia		Tim Card
Mark Honey		Kathryn Curtis
Brody Howard		Cliff Jones
Dave Calvert		Wayne Smith

Focus Group Meetings

- 22 meetings scheduled; 21 held - students, staff, parents, community members, senior citizens, agri-business leaders, volunteer organizations, Amish leaders
- 284 people attended to provide perceptions and learn about the current status of each district
- Perception data resulted

Staff Interviews – 25T.

- 1 Superintendent – Bert Lictus (2x)**
- 2 Business Officials – Luann Laurito-Baghat, Amanda Kolstee**
- 1 Director of Technology – Brynne Hinsdale**
- 1 Director of Curriculum and Instruction – Emily Harvey (2x)**
- 3 Principals - Ed Bailey, Sonia DuBois, Fran Frey**
- 2 Athletic Directors – Scott Neckers, Chris Payne**
- 2 Mechanics - Brent Rhebergen, Steve Carlson (Transportation)**
- 1 Transportation Clerk - Jerry Irleand**
- 1 Superintendent of Building and Grounds – Mark Peters**
- 1 Head Mechanic – John Roth**
- 1 Cook Manager/Head Chef – Sue Waltrous**
- 1 Personal Touch Consortium Manager – Sandy Paden (Cafeteria)**
- 2 Teacher Association Presidents – Lynne Bemis, Loren Smith**
- 1 Teacher Association V.P. – Mark Powers**
- 2 Support Staff Association Presidents - Andrea Dunnewold, Donna Vistrand**
- 1 Support Staff Association Past President – Gina Newton**

Population

US Census 2000 & 2010 Data

Clymer CSD	Census 2000	Census 2010	Changes	Change %
Total Population	3103	3208	105	3.4%
Age 0-17	915	970	55	6%

Panama CSD	Census 2000	Census 2010	Changes	Changes %
Total Population	3699	3502	-197	-5%
Age 0-17	1058	824	-234	-22%

www.statisticalatlas.com/school-districts/new-york

Household Demographics

of Households

Clymer: 2,940

Panama: 3,473

Family Households w/Children < 18

Clymer: 852 (29%) Panama: 993 (28.6%)

Median Household Income

Clymer: \$45,300

Panama: \$45,000

Educational Attainment

Degree Status	Clymer	Panama
Higher Education Degree	27.2%	39.8%
High School Diploma	53.9%	50%
No H.S. Diploma	18.9%	10.2%

Student Enrollment

- Enrollment data obtained from districts
- Enrollments projected ten years into the future
- Live births from NYS Health Department averaged to make projected enrollments
- Cohort comparison model used

Student Enrollment

- Survival ratios for each grade level calculated
- A cohort survival ratio obtained
- Five years of enrollment history is used to develop four years of survival ratios
- The average of these four ratios for each grade level was used to project that grade's enrollment forward

Student Enrollment

<u>Year</u>	<u>Clymer</u>	<u>Panama</u>	<u>Combined</u>
16-17	449	476	925
17-18	444(-5)	463 (-13)	907 (-18)
18-19	441(-4)	472 (+9)	913 (+6)
19-20	441(0)	462 (-10)	903 (-10)
20-21	449 (+8)	461 (-1)	910 (+7)
21-22	445 (-4)	468 (+7)	913 (+3)
22-23	454 (+9)	471 (+3)	925 (+12)

Curriculum and Instruction

- Programming must be sufficient for students to succeed in the 21st century
- Level of rigor and learning demands continue to increase
- More similarities than differences in the two school districts

Curriculum and Instruction

Data Reviewed

- **Grade Configurations, School Schedules, Class Sizes**
- **Programs and Texts:** K—12 courses of study; K –6 textbooks; class sizes and course enrollments; college credits; alternative education enrollments; BOCES Career and Technical Education placements
- **Student Achievement Data:** NYS math and ELA assessment proficiency rates; Regents passing and mastery scores; attendance rates; disciplinary actions

Curriculum and Instruction Data Reviewed

- **Graduation Data:** rates, types of diplomas awarded, graduate plans, post-graduation outcomes; dropouts
- **Special Education and Student Placement Data:** Classification rates by disability; special education placements; BOCES special education placements; 504 classification numbers; out-of-district placements; home instruction numbers
- **Extra Curricular Activities and Athletics:** Offerings and participation
- **Technology:** equipment, platforms, networks

Curriculum and Instruction Findings

- School schedules are almost identical
- Elementary textbooks are almost identical
- Differences in special education classification rates and processes exist
- Achievement levels differ at the elementary level, and each secondary school has different strengths
- Both districts offer JCC classes but no Advanced Placement courses
- Student athletics are already merged in 8 team sports
- Increased number of extra-curricular activities possible if merged

Curriculum and Instruction

Conclusions

- Increased enrollment needed to ensure availability and stability of electives and advanced programming needed for 21st Century students
- Each district offers unique programs that could be available to more students if districts merged
- A shared Director of Curriculum and Instruction has allowed common curriculum planning and shared professional development

Curriculum and Instruction

Conclusions

Merger would increase educational opportunities and programs for students in both districts

- Honors and advanced learning
- Music, art, electives
- Technology and CTE programs
- Athletics, extra-curricular activities

while increasing staff efficiencies at all levels

Curriculum and Instruction

Conclusions

Merging teaching staffs could

- Bring out the best in both
- Provide a larger pool of talent to make the needed changes in curriculum and instruction
- Improve data driven instruction
- Use economies of scale to provide for programs that do not exist, such as honors classes and AP classes

Fiscal Condition of the Districts

- 2 major factors impacting the need for a study:
 - Limited ability to increase taxes
 - Reduction in state aid for last several years (Foundation Aid)
 - Limited increases in new state aid (Foundation Aid)
 - Contractual obligations spiraling higher
- Comments from the public:
 - “No tax increases.”
 - “We won’t pay Panama’s penalty.”

Local Support for Schools

- Both districts' residents have supported their local schools by passing their budgets and capital projects, and their transportation initiatives for the past 10 years.

Budget Projections

Panama Penalty Eliminated by NYSED

District	2017	2018	2019	2019 Merged
Clymer	Actual	Approved Budget	Projection	Projection
Revenues	\$9,506,945	\$10,450,597	\$10,448,137	\$24,615,620
Expenditures	\$10,318,081	\$11,287,390	\$11,775,145	\$26,114,195
+/-	-\$811,136	-\$836,793	-\$1,327,008	-1,498,575
Panama	Actual	Approved Budget	Projection	Fund Balance \$3,394,358
Revenues	\$13,390,800	\$13,137,146	\$13,285,645	
Expenditures	\$12,741,856	\$13,739,877	\$14,333,566	
+/-	+\$648,944	-\$602,731	-\$1,047,919	

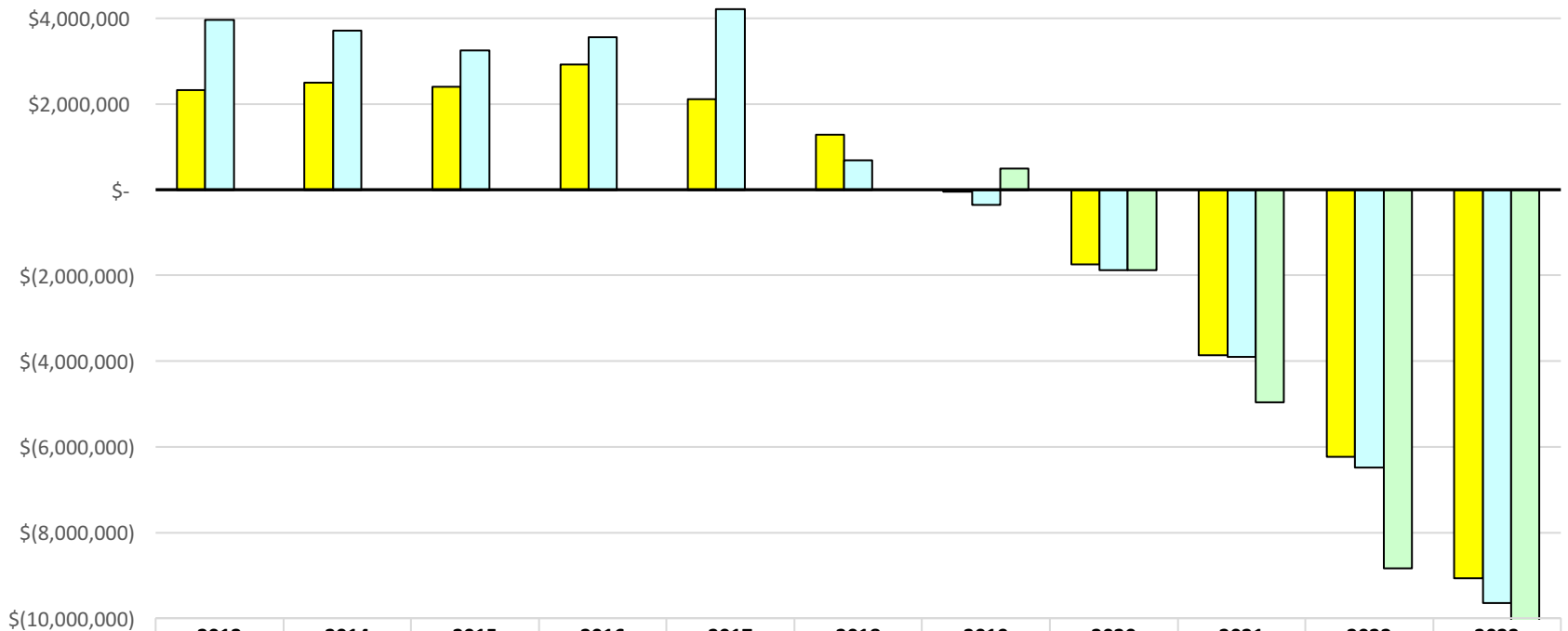
Budget Projections

Panama Pays the Penalty by 6/18

District	2017	2018	2019	2019 Merged
Clymer	Actual	Approved Budget	Projection	Projection
Revenues	\$9,506,945	\$10,450,597	\$10,448,137	\$24,615,620
Expenditures	\$10,318,081	\$11,287,390	\$11,775,145	26,114,196
+/-	-\$811,136	-\$836,793	-\$1,327,008	(1,498,575)
Panama	Actual	Approved Budget	Projection	Fund Balance \$475,947
Revenues	\$13,390,800	\$10,218,735	\$13,285,645	
Expenditures	\$12,741,856	\$13,739,877	\$14,333,566	
+/-	+\$648,944	(3,521,142)	(1,047,919)	

Fund Balance Past and Future Assuming NO Changes in Expenditures

YEAR END CUMULATIVE FUND BALANCE (State Aid Growth 1.4%)



	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
■ Clymer	2,321,749	2,506,793	2,410,430	2,929,942	2,118,806	1,282,013	(41,786)	(1,750,216)	(3,865,208)	(6,233,421)	(9,059,623)
■ Panama	3,968,875	3,712,582	3,246,965	3,564,707	4,213,651	692,509	(350,104)	(1,877,489)	(3,904,564)	(6,477,058)	(9,650,969)
■ Merged	0	0	0	0	0	0	484,463	(1,878,485)	(4,958,153)	(8,834,423)	(14,223,35)

Revenues and Expenditures

State Aid per Enrolled Child

Panama penalty eliminated

District	2017Actual	2018 Budget	2019 Estimated	% of Increase
Clymer	\$22,980	\$25,422	\$26,641	15.9%
Panama	\$26,769	\$29,676	\$30,368	13.4%

Projected True Tax Rates

Year	Clymer True Tax Rate	Panama True Tax Rate	Merged District True Tax Rate	Incentive Aid Used
2017	\$13.55	\$18.24	\$0	0%
2018	\$13.80	\$18.02	\$0	0%
2019	\$13.69	\$18.13	\$13.65	51%
2020	\$14.13	\$18.24	\$13.99	51%
2021	\$14.29	\$18.35	\$14.52	40%
2022	\$14.46	\$18.45	\$14.69	40%

Clymer State Aid Adjusted by GEA 2011-2018

Clymer	Gap Elimina- tion Aid (GEA)	Total State Aid	% Change Total Aid	5-Year Avg.	5-Year Average without GEA
2018		5,953,011	3.92%	4.03%	1.80%
2017		5,728,497	0.91%	3.18%	0.52%
2016	-6,411	5,676,745	2.06%	0.75%	-1.01%
2015	-124,693	5,562,066	5.33%		
2014	-309,042	5,280,535	6.60%		
2013	-552,386	4,953,662	0.23%		
2012	-658,407	4,942,158	-9.69%		
2011	-488,205	5,472,269			

Panama State Aid Adjusted by GEA 2011-2018

Panama	Gap Elimina- tion Aid (GEA)	Total State Aid	% Change Total Aid	5- Year Avg	5-Year Avg without GEA
2018		9,356,349	1.46%	4.22%	1.43%
2017		9,221,494	6.10%	4.43%	1.06%
2016	-207,073	8,691,022	5.80%	0.56%	-1.10%
2015	-597,419	8,214,327	4.14%		
2014	-776,024	7,887,516	2.09%		
2013	-1,078,547	7,725,675	2.35%		
2012	-1,272,118	7,547,961	10.70%		
2011	-911,308	8,452,800			

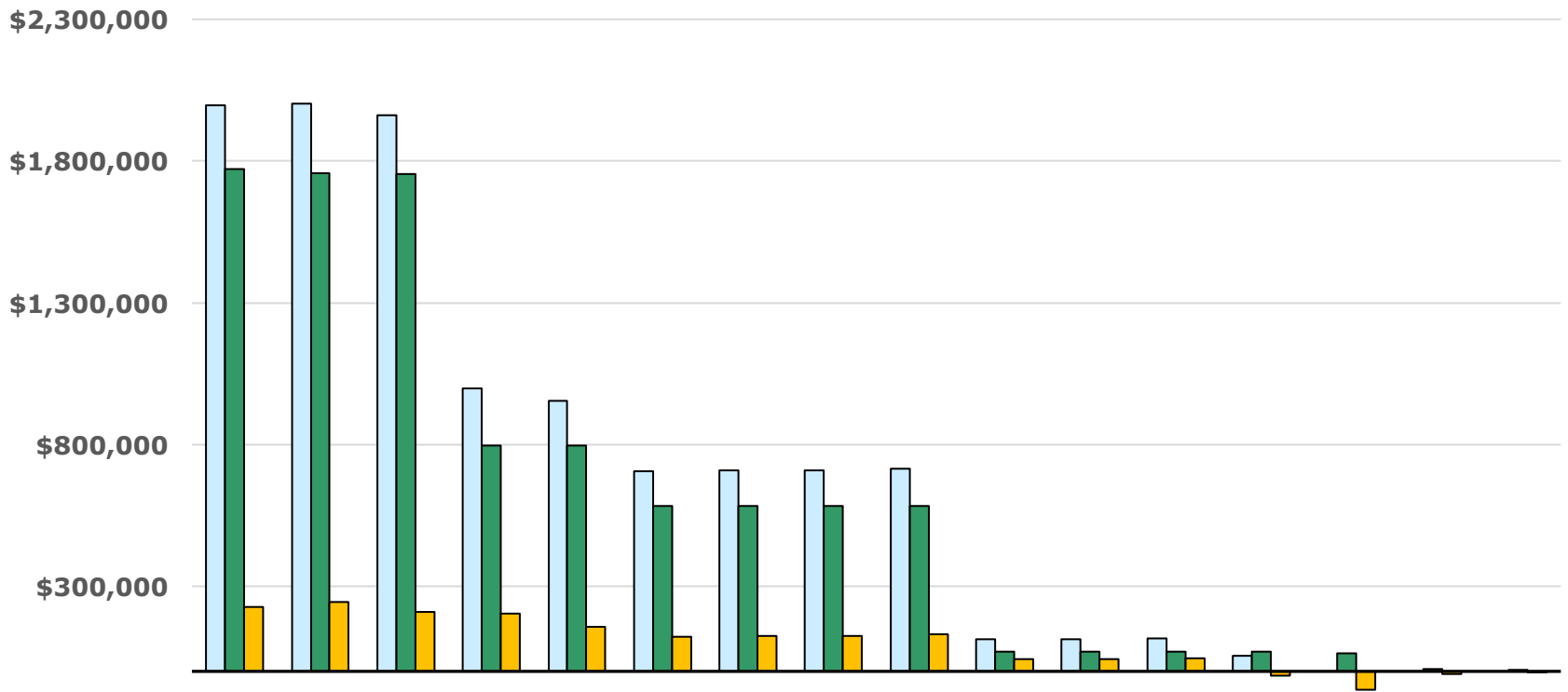
NYS Incentive Aid for the Merged District

- **Incentive Operating Aid: \$16.4M over 14 years**
 - Over first 5 years - 40% of 16.4M (\$1,732,116 per year)**
 - Amount decreases by 4% per year for next 9 years**

NYS recommends using this aid to reduce taxes, improve programming, and create capital reserves (savings)

- **Capital Building Incentive Aid: available for first 10 years at 95% of expenses**

Panama Building Debt, Building Aid and Local Share



-\$200,000

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032
Debt P&I	1,996	2,001	1,962	998,5	953,0	706,5	708,6	709,6	715,1	114,6	114,5	115,8	56,16			
Building Aid	1,770	1,758	1,753	795,4	795,4	584,4	584,4	584,4	584,4	70,45	70,45	70,45	70,45	64,72	9,352	4,676
Local Share	225,8	243,3	208,5	203,1	157,6	122,0	124,1	125,1	130,6	44,23	44,11	45,36	(14,2	(64,7	(9,35	(4,67

Student Transportation

- Both districts transport their own students
- Both districts run a single run (K-12)
- Clymer is 82.49 sq. miles
- Panama is 60 sq. miles
- New district would be 140.49 sq. miles

Student Transportation

New district would be the largest in the county by **2.63** miles

- Cassadaga Valley - 137.86 sq. miles
- Chautauqua Lake - 103.58 sq. miles
- Sherman - 103.25 sq. miles

Student Transportation

Clymer

Number of Bus Runs

8 buses in the AM 8 buses in the PM

Longest time on bus- 70 min.

Average time on bus – 29 min.

Panama

Number of Bus Runs

11 buses in the AM 11 buses in the PM

Longest time on bus - 55 min.

Average time on bus – 27 min.

Technology

Similarities

Network Operating system, Email system, Student Information System, BOCES funding and services, AV repair, Staffing

Differences

Phone systems, Security cameras

- Both districts have PC's and Macs.
- Both districts are moving toward every student having their own I-pad.
- Both districts offer limited DL classes.
- Both districts are moving in the same direction through sharing and similar philosophies.

Food Service

Clymer

Free lunch – 213 Reduced - 23

Avg. daily participation – 277 (56%)

Lunch costs: K-8=\$1.90 9-12=\$2.00

Operating deficit - \$2,203

Panama

Free lunch – 193 Reduced – 14

Avg. daily participation – 160 (34%)

Lunch costs: K-5=\$2.15 6-12=\$2.30

Operating profit - \$641

Data Reviewed: Facilities

- Building tours, noting general conditions of facilities
- Architectural drawings of current and prior renovations
- 5 year facilities plans and projected plans
- State aid incentives and building aid ratios, present and for new district
- Athletic/physical education facilities – indoor and outdoor
- Art and music facilities

Facilities - Clymer

Size of Property: 28.71 acres

Building:

- Original Building: 1935 - 28,550 sq. ft.
- Addition: 1949 - 18,270 sq. ft. - classrooms
- Addition 1960 - 17,400 sq. ft. – classrooms and gym
- Addition 1969 - 13,620 sq. ft. - classrooms
- Addition 2000 - 5,000 sq. ft. - maintenance/boiler house
- Addition 2003 - 45,996 sq. ft. – classrooms, gym with stage; septic system

Total square footage: 128,836 square feet

Facilities - Clymer

Bus Garage Area: 10,000 sq. ft.

- Built in 1949 - 6,600 sq. ft.
- Addition in 2003 - 3,400 sq. ft.

General Equipment building: 1973-850 sq. ft.

Facilities - Panama

Size of Property: 67 acres total, with 43 usable acreages.

Building:

Original Building	1953	Basement	13,523 sq. ft.
		1 st Floor	27,768 sq. ft.
		2 nd Floor	27,768 sq. ft.
Addition	1968	1 st Floor	27,318 sq. ft.
		2 nd Floor	21,462 sq. ft.
Addition	1989	Basement	10,075 sq. ft.
		1 st Floor	9,794 sq. ft.
		2 nd Floor	9,794 sq. ft.
Addition	2001	2 nd Floor	23,328 sq. ft.
		Bus Garage	15,445 sq. ft.
Addition	2010	1 st Floor	16,419 sq. ft.

Total Square Footage of each floor:

Basement Floor	23,598 sq. ft.
1st Floor	115,783 sq. ft.
2 nd Floor	88,918 sq. ft.

Total Square Footage of Building: 228,299 sq. ft.

Bus Garage: Built in 2001 - 15,445 sq. ft.

Facilities - Panama

Total Square Footage of each floor:

Basement Floor 23,598 sq. ft.

1st Floor 115,783 sq. ft.

2nd Floor 88,918 sq. ft.

Total Square Footage of Building: 228,299 sq. ft.

Bus Garage: Built in 2001 - 15,445 sq. ft.

Building Aid Ratios

- Clymer – 83.8%
- Panama – 85.6%
- New district – 95%

<u>Operation/Maintenance Costs</u>	Clymer	Panama
Operation of Plant	\$372,011	\$476,540
Staff		
Equipment		
Contracts/others		
Utilities		
Materials and supplies		
BOCES		
Maintenance	\$358,782	\$399,546
Non-Instructional Staff		
Contractual		
Material and supplies		
Operation and Maintenance Sub Total	\$730,793	\$876,086

Comparison of Facilities

	Clymer	Panama
Total Sq. Ft.	128,836	228,299
Cost per Sq. Ft.	\$5.67	\$3.84

Classrooms in a New District

Classrooms in the Proposed Merged District

Classrooms for Core Instruction	Total Student Population	No. of classrooms required
K-6 Average 16 per Classroom	487	30
7-12 Average 18 per classroom	438	24
Total Classrooms needed	925	54

Possible Future Uses of Existing Buildings

- Community Center
- Office space for government agencies or professionals, including the public library
- Private school use: elementary, secondary or higher education (Amish, JCC, Edinboro College)
- Medical facilities or offices
- Agricultural resources center
- Adult living spaces

Contracts

Panama and Clymer Teachers' contracts end on June 30, 2019 and June 30, 2018, respectively

The teachers' contracts are generally similar in structure and major provisions as follows:

Teachers' Contracts

Highlights from each district's teacher contract

- In 2017-18, Clymer Step 1 teacher starts at \$4,000 less than Panama's at the Bachelor level, and \$4,625 less at the Master's level.
- Clymer pays \$10 dollars more per graduate credit hour. For example, Clymer pays \$2,100 for 30 graduate hours, compared to Panama's \$1,800 for 30 graduate hours. The graduate hours pay is added to the teacher's base salary that year.
- Clymer has a longevity step at year 20 and year 25. The Bachelor schedule shows an increase at step 20 of \$9,000 and at step 25 of \$5,000.
- Panama has a salary schedule to step 25.

Clymer and Panama steps between 20 and 25:

- Clymer step 20 is at \$80,000, Panama step 20 is at \$76,943
- Clymer Step 25 is at \$85,000, Panama step 25 is at \$90,000

Teachers' Contracts

The Clymer and Panama top steps in comparison to those in Chautauqua County and Erie County are shown below.

- Average top step at Erie 2 Chautauqua Cattaraugus BOCES is \$85,068
- Average top step in Chautauqua County is \$83,571
- Average top step in Erie County is \$89,087

This information was obtained from the Labor Relations Office at E2CC BOCES

Retirees' Health Benefits

Retiree's Health cost paid by district:

Clymer – 2016-17 -\$259,278- 46
retirees

2017-18 -\$289,107- 46 retirees

Panama – 2016-17 -\$77,919- 10
retirees

2017-18 -\$112,175-6 retirees and 4
possible plus \$35,000 one time deposit.

Superintendent's Contract

Contract ended in June 2017 and was renewed

A new district must pay off remaining years of a superintendent's contract if that person is not hired for the merged district.

Business Officials' and Principals' Contracts

- Contract provisions are similar
- Benefits and salaries are similar in both districts.
- Currently only one full time business official.
- 2016-17 year Panama had one principal K-12

Bargaining Units

Clymer

Panama

Teachers	Clymer Ed. Association NYSUT	Panama Faculty Association
Instructional Support	Clymer Ed. Support Personnel NYSUT	CSEA/Local 1000AFSCME AFL_CIO
Teacher Assistants	Included in Clymer Ed. Support Personnel-NYSUT	CSEA/Local 1000AFSCME AFL_CIO
Teacher Aides/Clerks /Cafeteria/Food/Bus Drivers/Custodial	Included in Clymer Ed. Support Personnel-NYSUT	CSEA/Local 1000AFSCME AFL_CIO
School Nurse	Clymer Ed. Association NYSUT	Individual Contracts Thru 2016
Secretarial/Account Clerks/	Individual Contracts	Individual Contracts
Business Official /Directors/Principal	Individual Contracts	Individual Contracts

Proposed Merged Staffing

- Staff reductions are inevitable with or without a merger.
- Recommended class size limits – NO MORE THAN:
 - K-1: 16 - 18 students
 - 2-5: 16 - 20 students
 - 6-12: 20 students and no LESS than 6-8 students (electives)

Proposed Merged Staffing

- Current Teaching Staff Levels:
 - Clymer – 50.4 positions (ALL staff)
 - Panama – 55.1 positions (ALL staff)
 - **Merged – 91.5 positions**

Current Support Staff Levels:

- Clymer – 46 positions (ALL staff)
- Panama – 47 positions (ALL staff)
- **Merged – 93 positions**

Proposed Merged Administrative Staffing

- Administrators-
 - Clymer – 6.7 FTE
 - Panama – 7.5 FTE
 - **Merged – 10 FTE**
- **Estimated savings: \$1,346,800**

How Much to Level Up?

2017			
Clymer Salary Schedule	Panama Salary Schedule	New Money needed to level up to Panama	New Money needed to level up to Clymer
\$1,474,100	\$1,509,183	\$ 111,364	\$ 31,447

\$142,811

The Essential Question

Will...

Creating a new school district via the merger process in NYS provide

- **enhanced or maintained educational opportunities,**

and at the same time

- **increase long term efficiencies and lower costs for the taxpayers of both Clymer CSD and Panama CSD?**

Recommendations

1. Merge to create a new district with three conditions to meet:

1. That the new board use 51% of incentive aid for two years to level taxes, and then 40%
2. That the Panama penalty be paid prior to the date that the new district begins operations
3. That the newly merged district attempts within 5 years to merge with another contiguous district

Recommendations

2. Strong effort by district leaders to create a community of trust, respect and understanding between the two communities. Reassure that community traditions can continue and be strengthened by a larger community.

Recommendations

3. Monitor enrollment figures from year to year.
4. New board of education establish a policy providing guidance on the number of students to be enrolled in a secondary course.
5. Review of all secondary courses by the Director of C&I and one representative from each school for each subject area.

Recommendations

6. Keep both bus garages open, with a mechanic in each one. Hire one transportation supervisor for the new district.
7. Create transportation policies for safe and efficient transportation, with no child on a bus for more than 60 minutes.

Recommendations

8. If no merger, purchase transportation routing software and share a transportation supervisor.

9. In a new district, have an in-house food service program with meal prices to cover program cost.

Recommendations

10. Other positions:

.5 Athletic Director

1.0 School Psychologist

2.0 Guidance Counselors (1)

1.0 Social Worker at elementary level (+1)

1.0 Transportation Director (-1)

1.0 Cafeteria Manager (-1)

1.0 Head of Buildings and Grounds (-1)

Recommendations

10. 1 Superintendent

1 Director of Curriculum & Instruc.

1 Director of Technology

2 Principals (-2)

1 Asst. Principal/CSE Chair (+1)

1 Business Official (-1)

Recommendations

11. New superintendent's priority to review staffing levels in clerical, custodial, mechanics, buildings and grounds, food service, transportation. All can be gradually decreased.
- Reduce
 - District Treasurer by 1
 - District Clerk by 1
 - Superintendent's Secretary by 1

Recommendations

12. Expand use of BOCES services to generate BOCES aid, and continue to share services with other districts. Use BOCES Central Business Office (CBO)
13. Begin collective bargaining as soon as the new district is formed.
14. Level up teachers' salaries.

Recommendations

15. New board of education to offer a one-time retirement incentive to those eligible.

16. Strongly consider eliminating paying yearly for post-graduate hours earned to the Masters level, since degree is now required for permanent certification.

Recommendations

17. Negotiate contracts to include an 8 period day in secondary school. Attempt to align schedule with other districts to allow more distance learning opportunities.
18. Move forward with the technology plan in place now.
19. Update and install new security system where needed.

Recommendations

20. New board of education to create policies dealing with the monitoring of security systems in the new district.

Assign staff in the administrative offices to monitor the system.

Recommendations

21. Allocate incentive aid as follows:

51% to reduce taxes in years 1 and 2; 40% in year 3

30% to improve^s student programs and address contract costs in yrs. 1&2; 40% in year 3

19% to reserve funds in years 1 and 2; 20% in year 3

Recommendations

22. Create a capital reserve fund for the operating incentive aid to cover the local share of capital projects (5%) and savings for future needs.

23. Assess building needs of current buildings thoroughly and deliberately to address health and safety needs.

Recommendations

- 24. Have a nine-member board of education, with representation from various towns and villages if possible.
- 25. Recommended building use for phase 1 of merger to be followed by a financially sound future plan for housing students: (next slide)

Recommendation

26. Phase 1:

Clymer building houses Pre-K-5 and 9-12

Panama building houses Pre-K-5 and 6 – 8

Phase 2:

- New Board of Education determines a single building to house K-12, using an existing building
- or a new site
- If there is another merger in the next few years, a new site would be an option

Recommendation

27. If there is no merger, consider tuitioning secondary students to a neighboring district.

Questions from Members of the Boards of Education