



SEPTEMBER UPDATE ON MOHAWK TRAIL/HAWLEMONT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SUSTAINABILITY STUDY

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Ramping Up Phase III

At its meeting on September 24, 2025, the 2 District 8 Town (2D8T) Steering Committee reviewed plans for moving forward with the [Plan of Action](#) adopted in April 2025. The Plan sets out the aspirational vision of a centralized PK-12 school located on the campus of the Mohawk Trail Regional School (now Grades 7-12) and serving all students in the current Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont Districts. Much of the work over the coming months will focus on addressing the questions and concerns raised by constituent groups in areas such as transportation, education programming, staffing, building re-use, and potential economic/social/financial impacts on District towns.

Over the past month, Superintendent Sheryl Stanton and School Committee Chairs Ken Bertsch (Hawlemont) and Martha Thurber (Mohawk Trail) began meeting with District town Select Boards to update them on the project, solicit their feedback on next steps, and encourage them to begin thinking about how the centralization plan might affect their communities, particularly with respect to the re-use/re-purposing of school buildings. Meetings with Select Boards in Ashfield, Buckland, Colrain, and Heath occurred in September. Future meetings are scheduled in Shelburne (October 6), Hawley (October 7), Charlemont (October 20), and Plainfield (October 21).

On September 23, 2025, members of the Steering Committee and BERK12 met with representatives of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) as part of that agency's consideration of the Statement of Interest submitted by the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont School Committees in March 2025. Securing reimbursement from the MSBA for a significant portion of the costs needed to create suitable spaces for younger elementary students on the MTRS campus will be critical to the successful implementation of the centralization/consolidation plan. During the visit, it was learned that the Mohawk Trail/Hawlemont proposal is one of only 17 (of 126 submissions) still under review for possible acceptance into the "eligibility" phase of the MSBA process. MSBA also asked questions about the MTRSD/HRSD Statement of Interest and visited each of the five MTRSD/HRSD school buildings. Additional MSBA feedback from the meeting is expected in early October, and a decision by the MSBA to advance the MTRSD/HRSD application (or not) is expected in mid-December.

"Educational Visioning" is a key part of the next phase of the 2D8T project. The goal is to develop a detailed, thoughtful plan for creating the best possible educational, social, and emotional experiences for all students in the newly combined District. To this end, educators and community members are being sought to volunteer to serve on one of two "Action Groups," which will focus separately on programming goals and ideas for the elementary grades (PK-5) and the middle/high school grades (6-12). Ideas will then be presented to the broader

community for feedback at public meetings in the winter of 2026. Anyone interested in participating in this work should contact Judy Rush (rushjudyr@gmail.com) or Brendan Sheran (bsheran@pittsfield.net).

In the fall and early winter, additional analyses will include exploring transportation options that might minimize travel times to the new centralized campus, particularly for younger students; refining staffing needs consistent with the educational visioning work; and ongoing financial analysis to clarify the possible impact on towns and taxpayers as the MSBA process moves forward and potential renovation/construction costs become better defined.

Finally, Lead Consultant Jake Eberwein and Hawlemont School Committee/2D8T Steering Committee Co-Chair Ken Bertsch met with the Rowe Select Board on September 22 to begin discussing whether and to what extent the Town of Rowe might be interested in participating in the sustainability work. These discussions will continue. Rowe voters may be asked to approve initial funding for Rowe's participation at a Special Town Meeting later this fall.

The Steering Committee will hold its next meeting on November 6, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. at the Mohawk Trail Regional School. The public is always encouraged to attend. And, as always, project updates, reports, and resources are available at 2districts8towns.org.