

Study Conducted for the Town of West Tisbury
Relating to the Cost Analysis of Operating
the Up Island Regional School District

Study conducted by:
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P.O. Box 131
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Introduction

At the November 2005 Special Town Meeting, the voters of the Town of West Tisbury appropriated funds to be used by the Finance Committee (authorized by the Board of Selectmen) for the purpose of engaging an independent consultant to analyze the cost of operating the Up Island Regional School District at one site and to project the costs of educating only the West Tisbury students at the single site.

Harkins, Kelley and Associates was retained to provide a cost analysis of operating the Up Island Regional School District at one site (project 1) and to project the costs of educating only the West Tisbury students at another single site (project 2) as described in your request for proposals. Charlene Harkins Heintz, one of the principals of Harkins, Kelley and Associates, and James Halley, Superintendent of the North Kingstown Public Schools in Rhode Island served as the consultants on this project.

A variety of documents were provided by the Town for review and analysis. These documents included financial statements, enrollment data, staffing assignments, building plans and the negotiated agreement with the Education Association. An on-site visit was conducted to review the West Tisbury facility and to talk with the principal.

A preliminary report was prepared and presented on Monday, March 27, 2006. Included in this report were two spreadsheets. One spreadsheet projects the number of students expected to be enrolled at the West Tisbury School over the next five years based on the prior four year enrollment experience. The second spreadsheets identified areas of potential savings. Both of these spreadsheets are preliminary in nature and will be adjusted based on further analysis of both population trends and financial implications. A copy of this report is attached.

Following is a review of the requirements of each project.

Project 1 – Analyze the Costs of Operating the Up Island Regional School District at One Site

At present, the Up Island Regional School District (UIRSD) operates from two sites:

- The Chilmark site which accommodates approximately fifty-five students in grades K – 5. The site is organized into three classrooms – K/1, 2/3 and 4/5.
- The West Tisbury site which accommodates approximately 300 students in grades K – 8.

The consultant will analyze the costs of operating the single site under each of the following assumptions:

1. All students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site.
2. None of the students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site.
3. All students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site except for one each from West Tisbury, Chilmark, Aquinnah and School Choice.
4. All students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site except for two each from West Tisbury, Chilmark, Aquinnah and School Choice.
5. All students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site except for three each from West Tisbury, Chilmark, Aquinnah and School Choice.
6. All students currently enrolled at the Chilmark site move to the West Tisbury site except for four each from West Tisbury, Chilmark, Aquinnah and School Choice.

Project 2 - Project the costs of educating only the West Tisbury students at the single site.

The following assumptions will be made in projecting the costs:

1. A section will consist of no more than twenty-three students.
2. Each section will be staffed by one teacher and an aide.

Your study should consider the following costs: special education, utilities, custodial services, administration, supplies, transportation, debt service and any other costs you deem relevant to the study. We ask that you project the costs for the fiscal years 2005, 2006 and 2007. Further, we ask that you consider two scenarios: with and without school choice students.

Information Sources

The Finance Committee will provide you with the certified assessment and census data on which your study will be based.

It is expected that, with regards to project 2, you will need to meet with the Principal of the West Tisbury School in order to obtain detailed, relevant information.

Following are the conclusions of our study.

Project 1 – Analyze the Costs of Operating the Up Island Regional School District at One Site

Assuming that the Chilmark site is not used to deliver instruction to students in the Up Island Regional School District the operational savings are the same in each of the scenarios described in Project 1. In each of the scenarios two teachers would be required at each elementary grade at the West Tisbury site. The Middle School Grades would continue to operate in the current configuration. The following projections demonstrate the need for two sections at each grade in order to meet contractual and community constraints.

Enrollment Projections Based on Four Year Historical Average (October 1, 2006)

West Tisbury School Enrollments with current population distribution

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
K	31	31	26	23	24	24	24	24	24	24	24
1	38	30	28	33	23	25	25	25	25	25	25
2	29	40	32	29	35	24	26	26	26	26	26
3	39	31	38	31	30	35	24	26	26	26	26
4	42	37	34	41	31	31	36	25	27	27	27
5	50	42	35	30	42	30	30	35	24	26	26
6	58	60	49	38	34	48	34	34	40	28	30
7	45	55	52	47	32	31	44	31	31	36	25
8	60	48	52	53	48	32	31	44	31	31	37
SPED	0										
	392	374	346	325	299	280	274	271	255	250	247

Enrollment Projections Based on Four Year Historical Average (October 1, 2006)

Chilmark School Enrollments with current population distribution

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
K	10	10	3	10	6	6	6	6	6	6	6
1	9	15	9	6	11	8	8	8	8	8	8
2	10	7	13	8	8	11	8	8	8	8	8
3	11	11	7	14	6	8	10	8	8	8	8
4	8	9	7	8	12	5	7	9	7	7	7
5	10	7	6	7	8	11	5	6	8	6	6
SPED											
	58	59	45	53	51	49	44	45	45	43	43

Enrollment Projections Based on Four Year Historical Average (October 1, 2006)

Combined School Enrollments with current population distribution

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
K	41	41	29	33	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
1	47	45	37	39	34	33	33	33	33	33	33
2	39	47	45	37	43	35	34	34	34	34	34
3	50	42	45	45	36	43	35	34	34	34	34
4	50	46	41	49	43	35	42	34	33	33	33
5	60	49	41	37	50	41	34	40	33	32	32
6	58	60	49	38	34	48	39	32	39	31	30
7	45	55	52	47	32	31	43	35	29	35	28
8	60	48	52	53	48	32	31	44	36	30	35
SPED	0										
	450	433	391	378	350	328	321	317	300	291	289

Based on the enrollment projections above it appears that there is the capability of serving between 16 and 26 additional students in Kindergarten, 15 to 25 students in first grade, 16 to 25 students in second grade, 5 to 15 students in third grade, 9 to 19 students in fourth grade and 10 to 20 students in fifth grade. This number of between 68 and 128 students far exceeds the population of 51 students currently enrolled at the Chilmark School. It should also be noted that the population of elementary students is declining and that West Tisbury served 112 more students in 2001 than are projected for 2006.

With both the Chilmark and West Tisbury populations there is still excess capacity at each grade level. There is the capability of serving between 10 and 20 additional students in Kindergarten, 7 to 17 students in first grade, 5 to 15 students in second grade, 0 to 7 students in third grade, 5 to 15 students in fourth grade and 0 to 9 students in fifth grade. A capability exists to serve from 27 to 83 additional students in the West Tisbury School even after the consolidation. In addition the enrollment will continue to decline.

A review of the negotiated agreement shows the following language in Article XVII on Class Size. "The Committee and the Association recognize the desirability of achieving optimum teaching/learning conditions by assuring workable class size, with the maximum of twenty-five (25) students. In the event that class size in K-3 exceeds 20 and in Grades 4-12 exceeds 22 prior to the opening of school, the building principal, school committee and the staff affected of the individual school shall meet to address the needs of those student affected and discuss possible options within budgetary and space restraints." The requirements of this study for a maximum class size of 23 exceed this contractual obligation.

Adequate space and staffing exists at the West Tisbury site to accommodate all Up Island students at this time and into the foreseeable future using the current resources that are available at West Tisbury. Therefore, all operational expenses related to the Chilmark site can be eliminated upon implementation of the single site at West Tisbury without negative impact to either students or staff, assuming that the staff reductions required can be implemented through attrition.

The savings in operating at a single site are as follows. These savings would continue into the future and would be savings for the entire Up Island Regional School District and would be apportioned to each town in accordance to student population. Assuming a local tax assessment in excess of \$7 million for the entire school district these savings are significant.

Potential Savings in Operating the UIRSD at the West Tisbury School Site

Item Budget Code Number	Descriptor	Potential Savings	
2001	CH Principals office	\$115,271.00	
2021	CH Library Service	\$4,750.00	
2076	CH Copier	\$1,750.00	
2081	CH Furniture	\$300.00	
2091	CH Health	\$12,757.00	
2106	CH Custodial	\$49,962.00	
2111	CH Utilities	\$13,600.00	
2116	CH Heating	\$14,300.00	
	CH General		
2121	Maintenance	\$65,975.00	
2126	CH Fixed Costs	\$14,550.00	
		\$293,215.00	
2003	Health Benefits	\$99,705.00	
2006	Kindergarten Salaries	\$90,450.00	
2009	Teacher Salaries	\$122,073.00	
	Special Teacher		
2011	Salaries	\$114,408.00	
2016	Assistants Salaries	\$40,596.00	
2023	Audio Visual	\$0.00	
2031	Misc. Salaries	\$13,200.00	
	Special Education		
2035	Department	\$124,153.00	*subject to review of IEP services
2041	Misc. Expenses	\$2,230.00	
2042	Enrichment	\$6,000.00	
2046	Supplies and Materials	\$0.00	
2051	Textbooks	\$0.00	
2056	Field Trips	\$0.00	
	Conferences and		
2060	Workshops	\$0.00	
2066	Kindergarten	\$2,000.00	
	Instructional		
2071	Computers	\$0.00	
2088	Guidance	\$13,963.00	
2101	Food Services		
	Total Savings	\$921,993.00	

*It would seem that the current staffing at West Tisbury to serve students with Special Needs would be adequate to serve the students from Chilmark. However, a review of individual Educational Programs (IEPs) would need to be conducted to insure that all required services are provided.

We have not estimated any transportation savings because this would involve an analysis of the bus routes. Currently, because all middle school students from each town are enrolled at West Tisbury, it is doubtful that there would be an increase in transportation costs and likely that there would be a decrease since all students would be transported to one site.

It should be noted that 11 West Tisbury students currently attend the Chilmark School and that 10 Chilmark students in grades K- 5 attend West Tisbury. The elementary students from Aquinnah are divided between the schools with 13 attending West Tisbury and 4 attending Chilmark. (See Choice Chart below)

Project 2 - Project the costs of educating only the West Tisbury students at the single site.

The following analysis assumes that the middle school program for the three towns in the UIRSD would continue to operate at the West Tisbury site.

If a decision was made to educate only the West Tisbury students at a single site, there would be a savings of three to four teaching spaces (\$210,000 to \$280,000) assuming that the same number of West Tisbury students opted to attend either the Chilmark School or other tuition or private placements. There could also be a proportionate reduction (24 to 32%) in elementary specialist staffing and assistant teachers.

These savings would be offset by the reduction of income that West Tisbury receives in tuitions from other schools. Currently tuitions received by UIRSD from other districts are \$155,000 for 31 students, 28 of whom attend West Tisbury. If the School Choice program were discontinued, it is doubtful that any of these students would choose to attend West Tisbury at a full tuition rate of over \$17,000. The 31 students mentioned above are not included in the 221 students who would remain at the West Tisbury site. West Tisbury also sends 9 students to other districts through Tuitioned Out of School Choice for a cost of \$45,000.

The 221 students also do not include either the 32 Chilmark students or 6 Aquinnah students who attend the Chilmark School in grades K – 5. The figure also does not include the 10 Chilmark students who are currently at West Tisbury through intra-district choice or the 11 West Tisbury students at Chilmark through intra-district choice.

If the 11 returned to West Tisbury the enrollment in each grade would increase to the following numbers: Kindergarten – 19, first – 24, second – 24, third – 23, fourth – 26, and fifth – 37. In this case, the savings would be reduced to one or two teaching spaces (\$70,000 to \$140,000) plus a comparable proportion of specialists and assistants teachers (8 to 16%). An increase of one student in grade three would put these saving at the lower end of the range.

While the option of educating only the West Tisbury students at the single site might seem reasonable, there would be a significant degradation of the quality of the West Tisbury program in terms of average class size and services to students. In addition, the margins in the student populations are so close to contractual and community limits that any savings could be eliminated by the addition of a handful of students.

We would not recommend this course of action.

The following chart illustrates the numbers of students who would be served in this scenario. The West Tisbury numbers are highlighted and would be increased by students in grades six through eight from the other towns.

Choice

Aquinnah	West Tisbury	Chilmark	Charter	Tuition	Private	Total	
K		3	1	1	0	0	5
1	1	1	0	1	0	1	3
2	4	2	0	0	0	0	6
3	2	0	0	0	1	0	3
4	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
5	1	1	1	0	0	0	3
6	3	0	0	0	1	0	4
7	5	0	0	0	0	0	5
8	3	0	0	0	0	0	3
SPED							0
Total		24	5	3	2	1	35
Chilmark							0
K		0	4	0	0	0	4
1	1	1	7	0	0	0	8
2	4	4	3	1	1	0	9
3	1	1	6	2	0	1	10
4	2	2	9	1	0	0	12
5	2	2	3	1	0	0	6
6	7	0	0	1	0	0	8
7	3	0	0	4	0	1	8
8	6	0	0	0	1	0	7
SPED							0
Total		26	32	10	2	2	72
West Tisbury							0
K		18	1	5	0	3	27
1	20	20	4	3	0	1	28
2	24	24	1	3	1	1	30
3	23	23	0	3	1	1	28
4	25	25	1	5	1	1	33
5	37	37	4	3	0	0	44
6	20	20	0	4	4	0	28
7	21	21	0	2	0	4	27
8	33	33	0	3	2	2	40
SPED							0
Total		221	11	31	9	13	285
District							
Total		271	48	44	13	16	392

Following are some additional considerations which might contribute to a smoother transition should a decision be made to pursue either of the Projects.

1. A transition plan should be developed to insure that the movement of students does not have a negative impact on their educational or social well-being.
2. A communication plan should be developed to insure that parents and families are assured of the continued quality of the educational program.
3. An assessment of the personnel impact of any consolidation should be completed and a plan developed to reduce any impact on personnel through attrition to the greatest extent possible.
4. An assessment for reutilization/disposal of the Chilmark site should be developed to identify and plan for options.

In looking at the West Tisbury School several areas for further investigation have been identified.

1. The number of students who have been identified as having special needs seems to be very high. There should be an assessment of procedures and programs with the objective of attempting to serve these students within existing programs prior to identification.
2. It is unclear if there is a comprehensive professional development program that results in job embedded professional development to improve capacity of the all staff to maximize support for learning for all students and establish a climate of continuous improvement.
3. The use of specialists in developing systems that increase the capacity of the entire staff should be investigated.