

# **OSMOND-WAUSA: Feasibility Study**

**By Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association (NRCSA)**

# INTRODUCTIONS

- **JACK MOLES**
  - **Executive Director for Nebraska Rural Community Schools Association (NRCSA)**
  - **23 years as Nebraska Superintendent of Schools**
  - **11 years Nemaha Valley/11 years Johnson County Central**
    - **Put together “what if” discussions with neighbors**
    - **Nemaha Valley & Tecumseh commissioned a feasibility study two years prior to actual merger**
- **JEFF BUNDY–Office Manager for NRCSA**
  - **Worked on the Nemaha Valley/Tecumseh feasibility study with Dr. Matt Blomstedt**

# WHY A FEASIBILITY STUDY?

- Two Boards have been considering different options as they look to the future
- One of the options that may be considered is merger of the two districts
- A feasibility study by an unbiased outside source can provide the Osmond and Wausa school boards with an in-depth review of information to evaluate while determining whether a merger is in the best interest of both school districts, their students, and the respective communities.
- The purpose of this study is **NOT** to make recommendations.
  - Decisions need to be local decisions

# GOALS

## from sub-committees of two Board of Education

- Increased opportunities for all students, especially for middle level age group.
  - Maintain and ensure current levels of academic opportunities in the two schools
  - Develop a separate and expanded curriculum for grades 6-8
- Provide for more efficient use of existing staff
- Provide for sustainability of curricular offerings or expansion of curricular offerings in light of loss of student numbers in both districts.
- Establish a better position in light of state school finance policies.

# Overview

## Topics covered in the feasibility study

### **District comparisons**

**Enrollment trends/projections**

**School finance**

**Negotiations comparability**

**Financial implications**

### **Current facility sites**

**Comparison of curriculums**

**Staffing**

**Transportation**

**Extra-curricular activities**

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# DISTRICT COMPARISONS

- Very similar in many ways
  - Area of districts
  - Enrollment
  - Budgets
  - Valuations
  - Negotiated agreements

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# ENROLLMENT TRENDS/PROJECTIONS

- Current PK-12 enrollment
  - Osmond-186
  - Wausa-214

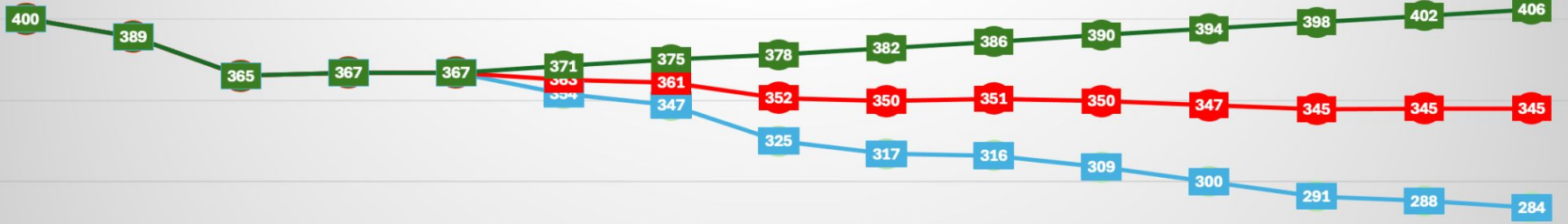
# ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

- Used two models
  - Enrollment trend projection
    - Optimistic
    - Pessimistic
    - Moderate
  - Cohort Survival Model

# ENROLLMENT TREND PROJECTION

- **OPTIMISTIC**
  - **1% annual enrollment growth**
  - **Based on US Census**
- **PESSIMISTIC**
  - **Stagnant enrollment**
  - **Based on last known kindergarten enrollment**
- **MODERATE**
  - **Average of Optimistic and Pessimistic**

# Combined District



2020-21 2021-22 2022-23 2023-24 2024-25 2025-26 2026-27 2027-28 2028-29 2029-30 2030-31 2031-32 2032-33 2033-34 2034-35

Pessimistic Moderate Optimistic

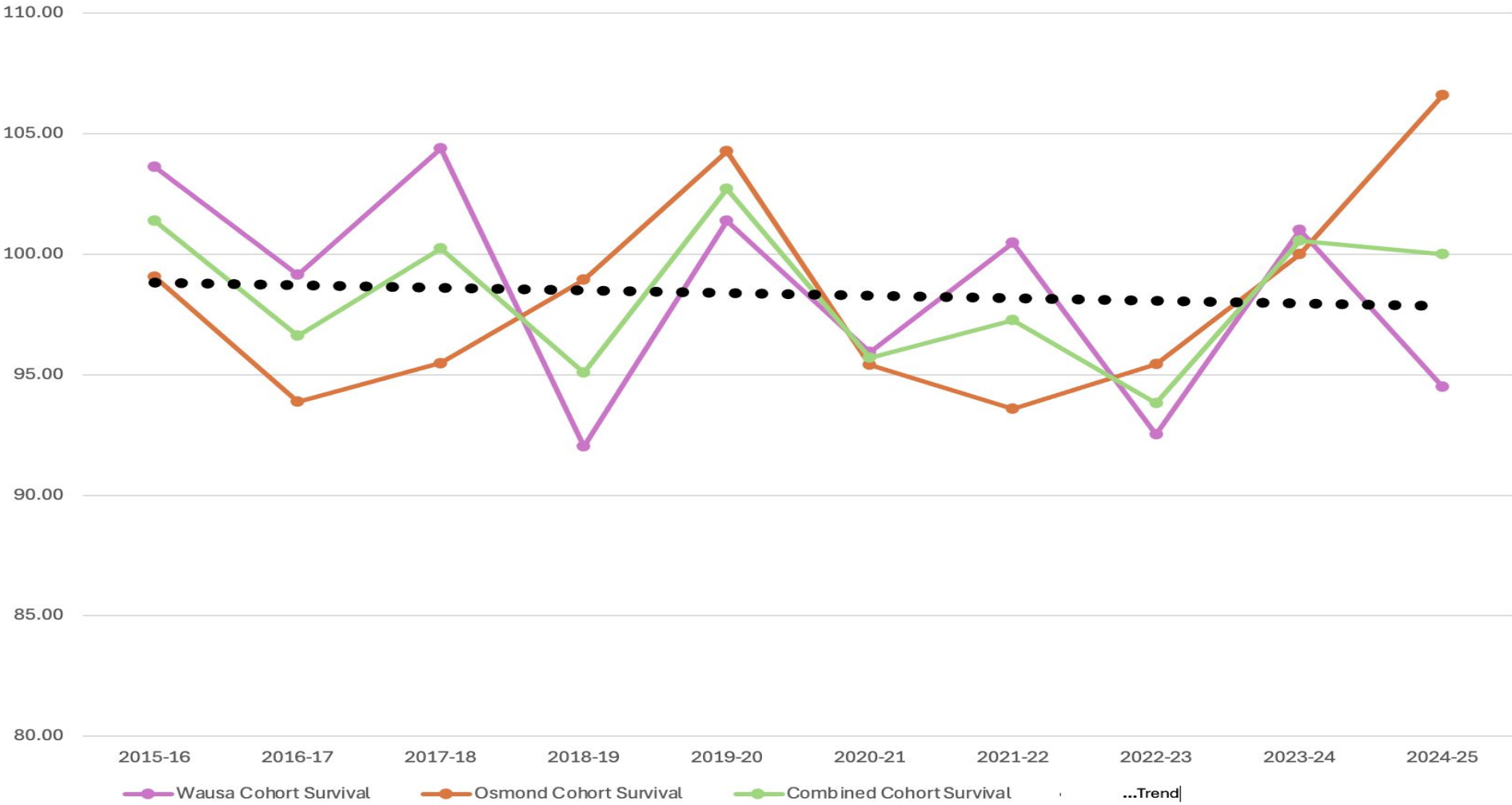
# COHORT SURVIVAL MODEL

- technique that predicts future student numbers by analyzing the historical trend of how many students from a specific grade level "survive" (progress to the next grade) each year
- Expressed as a percentage
- cohort survival rate is the ratio of the number of students enrolling in a grade this year to the number of students that were in the earlier grade the previous year.

Osmond Community Schools		
Grade	2020-21	2021-22
Kdg	6	13
Grade 1	15	9
Cohort Survival from Kindergarten to First Grade	150%	

Wausa Public Schools		
Grade	2020-21	2021-22
Kdg	12	15
Grade 1	16	12
Cohort Survival from Kindergarten to First Grade	100%	

# Cohort Survival Percentage by Year



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# SCHOOL FINANCE

- **Neither district receives Equalization Aid**
  - **Since 2013-14**
- **Foundation Aid and increased reimbursement of SPED has increased state funding**
- **Valuations have increased substantially**
  - **Osmond rose from \$452,176,084 to \$547,838,962**
  - **Wausa rose from \$405,057,688 to \$495,294,919**
  - **COMBINED VALUATION: \$1,043,133,881**

# LEVIES

- **Osmond; \$0.7331**
- **Wausa: \$0.8507**
  - **Includes \$0.0518 Bond Levy**
- **State Aid Array**
  - **High: \$1.0152**
  - **Low: \$0.3628**
  - **Average: \$0.780216**

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COMPARABILITY**

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# NEGOTIATIONS COMPARABILITY

- Osmond and Wausa negotiated agreements are very similar
- Does not appear there would be a reason to “level up” one teaching staff
- Merged district would require a new comparability array
- Both districts have Step 1 base salaries above the average of a possible new array

# TEACHER SALARIES

	<b>OSMOND SCHEDULE</b>	<b>WAUSA SCHEDULE</b>
<b>OSMOND TEACHERS</b>	<b>\$1,433,664</b>	<b>\$1,425,606</b>
		<b>(-\$8,058)</b>
<b>WAUSA TEACHERS</b>	<b>\$1,238,736</b>	<b>\$1,246,560</b>
		<b>\$7,824</b>

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**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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# FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- **Mergers have financial implications, both positive and negative**

**Personnel**

**Technology**

**Uniforms**

**Textbooks**

**Transportation**

**School Identifications**

**Attorneys**

**Auditor**

**Memberships**

**Contracted Services**

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## **CURRENT FACILITY SITES**

**Comparison of curriculums**

**Staffing**

**Transportation**

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# CURRENT FACILITIES

- **Neither site could house all students**
- **Presented four different scenarios**
  
- **#1: 7-12 at one site/PK-6 at another site**
- **#2: 9-12 at one site/6-8 at another/PK-5 at both sites**
- **#3: 9-12 at one site/7-8 at another/PK-3 at one site/4-6 at another**
- **#4: Build school between Osmond & Wausa with all grade levels at that site**

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**COMPARISON OF  
CURRICULUMS**

**Staffing**

**Transportation**

**Extra-curricular activities**

# COMPARISON OF CURRICULUMS

- **Compared offerings with each other AND with State Aid Array**
- **HIGH SCHOOL: very comparable with each other & with schools in "new" array**
- **JUNIOR HIGH: comparable with each other, not as comparable and not as many "elective" offerings as other schools in "new" array**
- **Textbook series**
  - a. **The two districts use different textbook series except for Elementary Math**

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**STAFFING**

**Transportation**

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# STAFFING

- **In grades 7-12, a combined district would compare favorably with other schools in “new” array**
- **Decisions on staffing needs would be made partially based on where grade levels were placed**

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**Extra-curricular activities**

# TRANSPORTATION

- **In each of the four scenarios presented, “shuttle routes” would almost assuredly be necessary**
  - a. **HS at one site, MS at the other site, elementary at both sites would require the least number of students on “shuttle routes”**
  - b. **7-12 at one site, PK-6 at other site would require largest number of students on “shuttle routes”**
    - i. **Other similar options to this scenario have similar transportation impacts**
- **Could also need to consider “sports shuttles”**

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**EXTRA-CURRICULAR  
ACTIVITIES**



# EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- **Both districts have seen the need to work with other districts in order to provide opportunities for their students**
  - a. **At both the HS and JH levels**
  - b. **A merged district likely decreases need for co-ops**
- **Most NSAA activities would see change in classification**
- **With more combined students, it could be possible to add activities at both HS and JH levels**

# OPPORTUNITIES

- **Expanded curricular offerings**
- **More stability in extra-curricular activities**
- **Expanded extra-curricular offerings**
- **More efficient use of teaching staff**
- **Increased teacher collaboration**

# CHALLENGES

- **Community and parental buy-in**
- **Determination of “best” placement of grade levels**
- **Possibility of increased transportation costs**

# FINDINGS

- **Expressed goals of Board sub-committees could possibly be met**
- **NRCSA does not take the stand of recommending to merge or not to merge**
- **Decisions need to be made at the local level**

# NEXT STEPS

- **The feasibility study will be posted on both district websites tomorrow.**
- **Both Boards of Education will have discussion on the feasibility study at their February meetings.**