

UPDATED: 10/22/13 @ 2pm : 67 respondents as of 10/13/13 : 91 respondents as of 10/22/13

I took "Important" as Neutral since all are important to some degree. Hence, Important was scored as 0. Very important was scored as 1; not important was scored as -1. Hence, the average over all answers gives some indication of public leaning (negative meaning not important, on average, while positive means important). Closer to 1 and -1 are the extremes with 0 meaning no clear side.

I also looked at % who said very important versus % who said not important. This correlates closely above measure, but is slightly different and can gauge strength on each side.

Based on these, here are the different rankings. Column 1 is based on the average of scores; Column 2 is based only on % with "Very Important;" Column 3 is based on the difference between % "Very Important" and % "Not Important." Ranking from highest to lowest, with the top of the list being those people found most important according to each method.

COLUMN 1 (Average)	COLUMN 2 (% Very)	COLUMN 3 (% Very - % Not)
Educ. Outcomes; .80 (T)	Educational Opportun; 81.3%	Educational Opportun.; 80.2%
Educ. Opportunities; .80 (T)	Educational Outcomes; 80.0%	Educational Outcomes.; 80.0%
Community Impact; .67	Community Impact; 70.3%	Community Impact; 67.0%
School Configuration; .57	Transportation; 64.8%	Transportation; 57.1%
Transportation; .58	School Configuration; 58.9%	School Configuration; 56.7%
Long-term Finance; .48	In Absence of Merger; 55.0%	Long-term Finance; 47.3%
Impact Teachers; .45 (T)	Long-term Finance; 53.9%	Impact Teachers; 45.1% (T)
In Absence of Merger; .45 (T)	Impact Teachers; 50.6% (T)	In Absence Merger; 45.1% (T)
Extracurriculars; .37	New BOE Makeup; 46.2%	Extracurriculars; 37.4%
New BOE Makeup; .28	Extracurriculars; 42.9%	New BOE Makeup; 27.5%
Process; .18	Process; 35.6%	Process; 17.8%
Taxes; .03	Taxes; 28.9%	Taxes; 3.3%
Impact on Staff; -.15	Union Contract; 19.8% (T)	Impact on Staff; -15.4% (T)
Union Contract; -.16	Impact on Staff; 19.8% (T)	Union Contract; -15.4% (T)
Impact on Admin; -.24	Impact on Admin; 15.8%	Impact on Admin; -24.2%

HERE ARE THE COMMENTS LEFT:

1. Is it possible to combine districts but leave the schools as they are "as is"? Meaning combining the superintendents and administrative offices? Many districts have multiple high schools, middle schools, etc. Curious if this is a possibility?
 2. "Impact on students" -- including potentially long bus rides and distance from their home community -- should be first on this list.
 3. My main concerns are travel, the change from a small school to a much larger school and the social issues that arise from such. One of the main reasons (the main actually) we moved to Hamilton was the excellent school and its small size. Along with the ability for our son to walk to and from school if necessary. A merger would/will change all of those positives into negatives, be a true shame!
 4. "I am strongly against this merger because of the tremendous impact it will have on the quality of the education and sense of community for our Hamilton students and teachers. I have spoken with several Hamilton parents who share the concern that Dr Bowers and the board of education have basically already decided that this merger should happen and are not truly open to other options.
- I would like to hear the board and Dr. Bowers address this concern in these public meetings and be honest and transparent with us about how much say parents and community members actually have in this decision-making process."
5. I am particularly concerned about academic outcomes, especially for higher achieving students. Not to put to fine a point on it, the top Morrisville students and the top Hamilton students end up on very different academic trajectories. Will a blended school keep up the academic rigor, opportunities for AP courses, and such that allow our top students to attend top colleges? If the overall academic reputation/rigor changes downward (which looking merely at state testing scores, the overall emphasis will have to), what does this mean for our top students?
 6. "Clearly all of the above are important. But, you likely will only be able to hit on the

highlights. In my mind, those are:

- i. Cooperation/collaboration does not necessarily mean we must merge. Opportunities can be created through other means.
- ii. This does not benefit Hamilton. It does benefit Morrisville, but not Hamilton.
- iii. The voters have NO say in what happens after a ""yes"" vote (well, all six of them). If this goes through the new school board gets to do whatever they want. That's a BIG risk and one that I'm not comfortable taking.
- iv. There are no guarantees on state funding - yes they claim we will have benefits for 15 years, but haven't we all seen how poorly the government runs this state and the mess they are in? Do we really want to make life changing decisions based on a promise from the State of New York?"

7. Against the Merger

8. I know there is no crystal ball, but it seems like a lot of the economic benefits of a merger would be realized in the first few years, but that ongoing benefits might not be there. Transportation costs could be huge. I would like to see this balance addressed.
9. "Please answer directly and honestly if there will be a tax savings. We obviously will not need as much administration as we currently have. Please be specific in breaking down what administration positions will need to stay and what positions will be cut. The administration cuts will be a large benefit to the tax payers and the hope of many would be reinstating badly needed aid positions."
10. Please address the cuts that will be made to staff and teachers. I will be happy to see cuts for the several administrators we currently employ but would not like to see teachers cut
11. "I really think the focus needs to be on the educational benefits of merging vs not merging. All other topics should take second fiddle. I have yet to see an educational Where does special education land in all of this - both with and without the merger."
12. How do we know the funding promised by the State will materialize and be maintained, if the merger goes through? Isn't this subject to budget constraints and politics?
13. "I would like to see much better communication on this issue. The various websites are a mess of files and it's hard to know where to start. And for the average citizen, this stuff

needs to be distilled to a summary: what are the most significant gains, losses and unknowns?

Bowers' blog linked to reports-merger.pdf, which I thought and hoped would be a summary document. Instead it was some totally generic document that said nothing specific about this merger. Totally useless.

On the other site, the hamilton merger study site, there are about 10,000 pdf documents and it's a little overwhelming to wade through these and make sense of the issues. I do plan to look closely at this stuff before the vote, but I can't imagine the average voter would.

Some citizens have taken it upon themselves to circulate via email and next door hamilton their own summaries from meetings. I think it would help if Bowers wrote an executive summary that laid out the main issues, with references to supporting documents for those who have the time to read it!"

14. The issues need to focus on the children and the quality of their education and the future ability to provide that education.

-----BELOW ADDED (10/22/13)-----

15. I would like to see some numbers regarding the dire financial situation of the current district. I often hear this referenced but haven't seen any evidence of this.

16. Has anyone looked at the actual or preceived educational standards that exist in both districts now. What has been outcome of students from both school over the past decade? How are the expectations of students, parents, and teaches similar/different in the two districts.? Are the administrators committed to this merger, or will they cut and run as soon as the bigger offer comes. Are they willing to take a financial risk with the rest of us that are going to be here?

17. I have confidence in Hamilton's leadership and teachers. I am most concerned about losing the vision that the current admin and teachers have about effective curriculum. For example: Investigations Math, the way reading & writing is taught at elementary, and project based learning are all excellent curriculum decisions. So far, (my son is in 6th grade - I don't know much about HS) the only weak area in Hamilton is teaching spelling or, if it was taught, there needs to be a plan to address a student who is not learning.

18. "My children have come from a larger district that had much larger class sizes. Since coming to Hamilton, their grades have soared, thanks to the smaller classes. How big would classes be, on average, if there was a merger?

Also a recent study showed Hamilton has 15th out of 53 schools in a tri-county area. Morrisville-Eaton was No. 47. I have serious concerns about Hamilton schools not being as quality if a merger takes place. For example, if there are twice as many students, would the technology initiative that provides iPads to the secondary students, etc., continue?"

19. "Availability of gifted programs, foreign language programs (including tutoring/teaching by Colgate students), music programs, etc. -- will there be more of this opportunities if the merger goes through, or will things stay the same, or will there be fewer of them?

Also, consideration of how the increased commuting time/distance will affect participation in after school events especially for children too young to drive themselves."

20. "Environmental impact: how many more gallons of diesel would the proposed transportation plan require, and how many tons of carbon dioxide would that add to the carbon footprint of a combined district? The numbers can be calculated based on the numbers of miles in the Merger Study, the mpg average for school buses in the transportation reports of HCS, and the EPA emission averages for diesel: <http://www.epa.gov/otaq/climate/documents/420f11041.pdf>.

Since there is no plan to close any school buildings, these effects would not be offset by reductions in heating fuel. In an age of global warming we should pay attention to the environmental consequences of a school district merger."