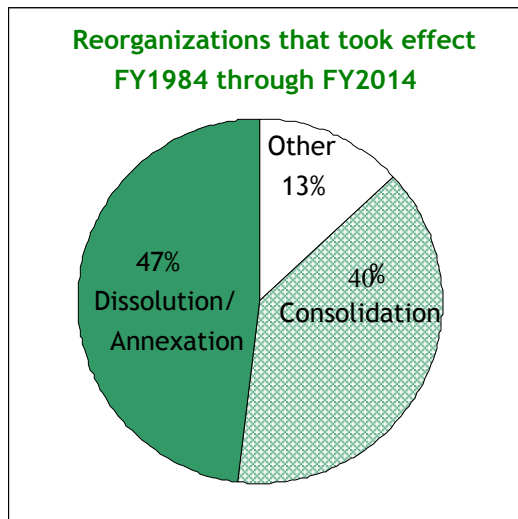


SCHOOL DISTRICT REORGANIZATION

School district reorganization has been around since 1899, with the first consolidation petition in 1903. Although different needs have driven reorganization in the past, the critical areas of concern today are the educational opportunities reorganization provides students and the fiscal viability of school districts to provide the highest quality educational opportunities.

In addition to the basic financial motivations for reorganization, research demonstrates that for high school students, school size can make a difference in both achievement and in the number of course offerings available to students. Each reorganization situation is unique. Many items will depend on the individual circumstances that surround the particular school districts involved.

From FY 1984 to FY 2014, the number of individual school districts has decreased from 1,008 to 861, a reduction of 14.6 percent.



TYPES OF REORGANIZATIONS:

Consolidation is the merger of two or more existing districts to create a new district. Consolidation includes two or more elementary districts, two or more high school districts, or two or more unit districts combining to form a larger, like-type district. Consolidation also includes dual district territory or dual district territory plus one or more unit districts combining to form a new unit district.

School District Conversion is the formation of a single new high school district and new elementary districts based upon the boundaries of dissolved unit districts. School District Conversion includes forming dual districts from two or more existing unit districts or from one or more existing high school districts and one or more existing unit districts.

Partial Elementary Unit Formation is the formation of a “hybrid” unit district that includes all territory for high school purposes but only a portion of the territory for elementary purposes. Partial Elementary Unit Formation includes the formation of a “hybrid” unit district from one or more high school districts and one or more unit districts, from a high school district and elementary feeder districts, or from unit districts.

Consolidation, School District Conversion, and Partial Elementary Unit Formation are governed by Article 11E of the School Code and require:

- ⇒ Petition filed by voter signatures or school boards
- ⇒ Local public hearing conducted by regional superintendent
- ⇒ Approval by State Superintendent
- ⇒ Successful referendum

Annexation is the incorporation of a portion (detachment) or all (dissolution) of one school district into another school district. Annexation

is governed by Article 7 of the School Code and requires:

- ⇒ Petition filed by voter signatures or school boards
- ⇒ Local public hearing conducted by regional board of school trustees
- ⇒ Regional board of school trustees approval
- ⇒ Successful referendum (for annexation of entire district)

Deactivation is the closing of a district’s elementary attendance center or high school attendance center and the sending of students in grades Kindergarten through 8 or 9 through 12 to one or more other districts once all districts agree. Deactivation is governed by Article 10, Section 22.22b of the School Code and requires:

- ⇒ Board resolution to deactivate
- ⇒ Successful referendum in deactivating district
- ⇒ Tuition agreement between the sending and receiving districts

Cooperative High School is the establishment of a jointly operated high school by two or more unit or high school districts, each with an enrollment of less than 600 students in grades 9 through 12, while retaining the individual districts. Cooperative High School formation is governed by Article 10, Section 22.22c of the School Code and requires:

- ⇒ Board resolution by all boards
- ⇒ Successful referendum in all districts
- ⇒ Cooperative agreement and governing board

STATE FINANCIAL INCENTIVES:

A major initiative for school district reorganization began when the General Assembly established financial incentives for newly consolidated districts. Since that time, these same incentives have been authorized for other types of reorganizations. Except for most detachment/annexation, all other types of

reorganization may qualify for some or all of these incentives.

GENERAL STATE AID DIFFERENCE:

This incentive is paid if the General State Aid Entitlement (GSA) for the newly reorganized district(s) for the first year of existence is less than the GSA would have been that same year on the basis of the previously existing districts.

SALARY DIFFERENCE:

Based on teachers employed in each newly reorganized district who were also employed in one of the previously existing districts, this incentive calculates the difference between what those teachers were paid in their original district for the last year of existence and what they would have been paid if placed on the highest salary schedule for the last year of existence of the districts forming the newly reorganized district.

DEFICIT FUND BALANCE:

This incentive calculates each previously existing district’s fund balances by combining the Education, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, and Working Cash funds. If any previously existing district has a combined deficit fund balance, the incentive pays the difference between the lowest deficit and the other deficits, with a positive combined fund balance being considered a deficit of \$0. For districts with a deficit, an additional calculation compares current year expenditures to prior 3-year average expenditures, with the incentive being reduced by the excess if the current year expenditures are greater than the prior 3-year average.

\$4,000 per CERTIFIED STAFF:

This incentive pays \$4,000 multiplied by the headcount of the full-time, certified staff members employed by each reorganized district.

**Reorganization Incentives
FY 1986 - FY 2014
(\$ in millions)**

General State Aid Difference.....	\$11.4
Salary Difference.....	\$28.1
Deficit Fund Balance.....	\$29.4
\$4,000 per Certified.....	\$93.8
Total Paid.....	\$162.7

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q. Does the state mandate reorganizations?

A. No. School district reorganization is a strictly voluntary matter of local choice.

Q. Why do school districts choose to reorganize?

A. School districts reorganize primarily to improve their ability to develop and implement quality programs for students, offset student enrollment declines, and provide a more cost-efficient and stable school district.

Q. Will school districts and citizens have any input during the process?

A. Yes. There will be local public hearings conducted by the regional superintendent or regional board of school trustees, depending on the type of reorganization. Any resident of any district involved may testify at these hearings.

Q. Will my taxes be affected?

A. Possibly. In a consolidation, conversion, or partial elementary unit formation, new tax rates will be included in the petition for the new school district(s). In an annexation, taxpayers will pay the tax rates of the annexing district.

Q. Who is responsible for the expenses associated with the reorganization?

A. Petitioners must pay the expense of publishing the notice and the expense of the transcript of any public hearing. While school boards may pay the costs associated with the preparation of the petition and with the dispersing of information about the reorganization, no public funds may be used to urge anyone to vote for or against the proposition.

Q. Will each district involved be represented on the new school board?

A. In a consolidation, conversion, or partial elementary unit formation, the requirements to elect a new school board are set forth in the petition. In an annexation, the annexing board will remain in effect until the next scheduled school board election.

Q. Who may file a reorganization petition?

A. Generally, a petition may be filed by all affected school boards or with a certain number of voter signatures from each district involved. Details on the number of voter signatures required to file a petition can be found in the article of the School Code that details the specific reorganization option or in the State Board of Education brochure on the option.

Q. When may reorganization issues be put on the ballot?

A. Reorganization questions can be placed on the ballot at a regular scheduled election. In accordance with Article 2A of the Election Code (10 ILCS 5/2A), regular scheduled elections are held in March and November of even-numbered years and in April of odd-numbered years. A regular scheduled election is also held in February of odd-numbered years, but in order for a public question, like a reorganization referendum, to be put on the ballot, some precincts within the school district would have to be open to vote on candidates.

Q. Do voters of each affected school district have to approve the reorganization question at the referendum?

A. Generally, yes. In the deactivation of a school facility, the voters of the deactivating district must approve the question by a simple majority, but the voters of the receiving district do not vote on the deactivation. In all other reorganization options, voters of each affected school district must approve the referendum question by a majority of those voting.

Q. What is a Committee of Ten?

A. The Committee of Ten is a committee of ten individuals designated in the petition to act on behalf of all the petitioners. These individuals may be school board members, people who work in the school system, or any other resident voter of the affected districts, as long as the individual qualifies as a petitioner and signs the petition.

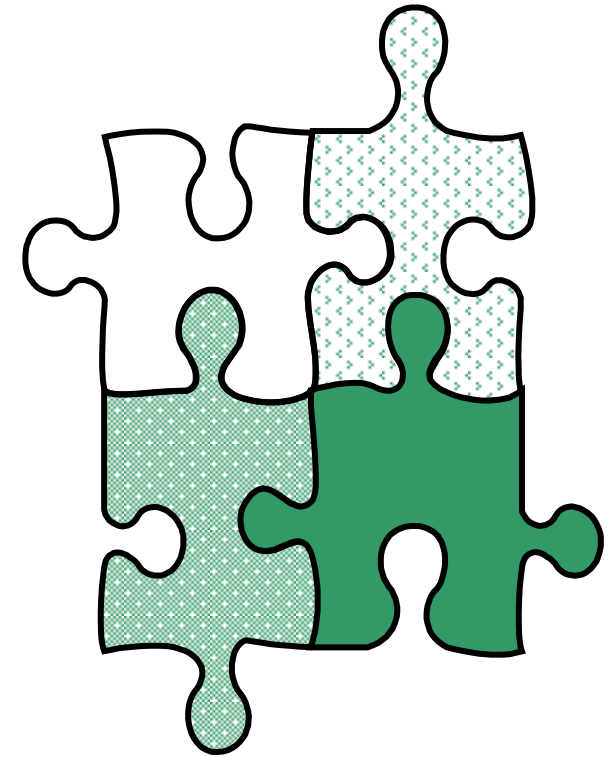
Brochures are available detailing each of the above mentioned reorganization options. These brochures are not to be used in place of the School Code but as an informational tool. For specific information regarding consolidation, conversion, or partial elementary unit formation, refer to Article 11E; for annexations, refer to Article 7; for deactivation, refer to Article 10, Section 22.22b; for a cooperative high school, refer to Article 10, Section 22.22c.

For additional information and assistance, please contact the School Business Services Division of the Illinois State Board of Education at 217/785-8779. Information is also available on the ISBE web page at: www.isbe.net/sfms/html/reorg_school.htm

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School District Reorganization

At a Glance



Illinois State Board of Education

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Chairman

Tony Smith, Ph.D.
State Superintendent of Education