CHAPTER SIX
CONSOLIDATION/CENTRALIZATION[1]

"I would like to recommend that the Commission seriously consider recommending to the State Legislature a proposal that would provide that the three central high school districts in Nassau County and the Amherst Central High School District in Erie County, and their component elementary districts, be centralized into single units of administration. This recommendation is consistent with a recommendation of the Educational Conference Board, which urges serious consideration of school reorganization.

"In 1958 the Commissioner of Education, in his Revised Master Plan for School Reorganization," recommended that the three central high school districts in Nassau County, and their component elementary districts, be centralized into a single unit K-12."[2]

The first mention of consolidation of the Valley Stream School Districts still in existence on the elementary level appeared in 1944 and 1945 in School District 30.

> The possibility of forming a Central District was thoroughly discussed.
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> After further discussion, the following preamble and resolution were offered by Trustee Newton, seconded by Trustee Palmer and unanimously carried; WHEREAS; This Board has discussed the possibility of the formation of a central school district to further such interest, be it
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> RESOLVED; That Mr. Ellis White be delegated to investigate the advantages and/or disadvantages of such central school district and submit his report to this Board, and be it further

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[1] "Merger has already drastically changed the face of New York public education. In 1812, New York had some 12,000 school districts. As of the early 1900s, many consisted of one-room school houses providing education only through eighth grade. As recently as 1947, the state still had 5,050 school districts. Today, there are 698 school districts plus 38 BOCES. Of those, there are 657 K-12 districts and 23 with other configurations." New York State School Boards Association publication Forecast Emerging Issues in public education, May 2005 at 3.

[2] Remarks of William X. Gimello, resident of school District 13, teacher in the Central High School District, and Executive Secretary of the Valley Stream Teachers Association, before the Fleischmann commission. Officially called. A Recommendation to the New York State Commission on Quality, Cost and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education, January 29, 1971.

RESOLVED; that Messrs Beresford and Willmann discuss this matter with Dr. Wilson, a member of the Building and Grounds Division of the New York State Department of Education, at the coming convention on October 22nd to 24th, 1944[3]

Mr. Harry Gross, district superintendent, was present to discuss with the Board the advantages and disadvantages of the different types of school organizations, namely Central Districts, Union Free School Districts and Superintendency Districts.

Mr. Gross went on to say that we should bear in mind that any contemplated change would result in numerous new situations and would necessitate a deal of research work and study. This work could be accomplished without the aid of outside help, thus saving a substantial fee.

Changing to a superintendency would result in a reduction in the number of clerks, treasurers, attendance supervisors; change medical and dental services and would eliminate the transportation of pupils."

About the only advantage to be gained by the elimination of district lines would be allocating pupils to the school nearest their homes."

Mr. Gross further stated that any amalgamation must be done by a special act of the legislature.[4]

The first mention of consolidation in District 24 occurred in the February 25, 1947 Board minutes. There was a letter dated February 19, 1947 from a Dudley C. Snyder, Principal of School 24. It stated that, "the Board of School 24 held their regular meeting February 18, 1947, and the President appointed a committee to look into the problems dealing with the consolidation of schools in Valley Stream. The Chairman of the Committee called a meeting for a discussion of the subject on Wednesday evening,

[3] School District 30 Board Minute Books, October 17, 1944.

[4] *Ibid.*, January 16, 1945. A split vote on May 15, 1945 in which Principal White was awarded $400.00 to complete consolidation study over the summer of 1945. See Public Education in Valley Stream, Volume XVI District Thirty Scrapbook, at 48 and 49

February 26th at 8 P.M. in the Franklin Avenue School. Chairman Betel stated that Trustee Ward and he would act as the committee."[5]

Four years later, at the December 14, 1951 District 13 Board meeting, the following was recorded:

> Chairman Hartman reported that the representatives of this district on the High School Board had proposed to that Board that, in order to qualify for additional State aid under the Seven Mill Law, applicable to debt service, the three local districts and the High School District merge into one Union Free School District.
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> Chairman Hartman further reported that the High School Board appeared to be receptive to the proposal and the Board agreed that a 30-year projection be made by each district of the following:
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> 1. Building needs
> 2. Indebtedness and debt service
> 3. Instructional service
> 4. Budget accounts (large items only)
>
> and a committee be formed, with Trustee Hartman as its chairman, to consist of one High School member of each district, the administrators of each local district and the High School District. This committee to meet with Mr. Gross from the State Education Department of Albany on Wednesday, November 19, 1951, in the Boardroom of the High School, for the purpose of discussing the consolidation.

A year earlier, in District 24, a "Mr. Collins moved and Mr. Gifford seconded that a committee be setup to study benefits of consolidation to the elementary and high schools and the consolidation of Kg-8 set up. This motion was approved."[6]

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[5] School District 13 Board Minute Books, February 25, 1947. The first mention of consolidation of the Central High School District occurred on September 21, 1928. "Mr. Biddulph spoke of the amalgamation of the three districts. A committee was set up to see Mr. Mepham regarding this matter." Other early Central High School consolidation talk mentioned in Board minutes includes the following: Minutes of Joint Boards of Education dated November 22, 1933 incorporated in High School minutes, "Consolidation would help lose outside tuition for High School." "Trustees Salt, Martin and O'Brien on committee to work with Gross for consolidation." Dated October 9, 1937.

A joint meeting of the Boards was called for December 20, 1951, "for the purpose of receiving the Hartman Committees report and for discussion of the proposal." The Consolidation Committee met on, December 26, 1951 and January 4, 1952.[7] A special meeting was called for February 7, 1952 where District 13 officially authorized, by resolution, the consolidation of the four Valley Stream School Districts into one Union Free School District. A seven-page draft proposing legislation providing for consolidation was drawn up. That same month, Trustee Savage, Chairman of the Consolidation Committee, went to Albany with approximately 30 people for a conference with representatives from the State Education Department. "After two days of discussing the buildings, transportation, educational and financial phases of consolidation, the group was informed that the State Education Department will prepare a resume which will be sent to the districts to be studied by the group."[8]

The following was recorded, at this time, in District 24:

> RESOLVED that the Board of Education of Union Free School Dist. No. 24, Town of Hempstead, hereby approves the proposed legislation providing for the consolidation of Union Free School Districts Nos. 13, 24 and 30 and Central High School District No.1. Unanimously passed. [9]

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[6] School District 24 Board Minute Books, March 21, 1950 at 119. At the January 15 and 22, 1952 District 24 board meeting, questions from the State Education Department on proposed consolidations of districts were discussed. It was decided to take a trip to Albany on February 13, 1952 to answer these questions.

[7] School District 13 Board Minute Books, January 7, 1952.

[8] *Ibid.*, February 25, 1952. See also Public Education in Valley Stream supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 2,778.

[9] School District 24 Board Minute Books, February 4, 1952 at 223.

Motion made and carried unanimously "that a letter be written to Senator Hults and Assemblyman Milmoe in support of the bill authorizing the consolidation of School Districts 13, 24, 30 and Central High School District No.1.[10]

A letter from Central High School advising the Board that the New York State Assembly had passed the bill authorizing the consolidation of all school districts in Valley Stream and enclosing a copy of the bill.[11]

The following was recorded, at this time, in District 30:

Minutes of the Joint Board meeting of December 20th and 26th, 1951 and January 4th and 15th, 1952 in connection with consolidation, were reviewed and discussed to bring all Board members up to date.[12]

Pertinent data are being compiled by all three districts, for which the dates of February 18th and 19th have been set for a meeting in Albany with the State Education Department. A group consisting of Board members, administrators and laymen will be selected to attend this meeting.[13]

Special meeting to approve resolution. Unanimously passed,

RESOLVED that Senator John D. Bennett and Assemblyman Frank J. Becker, be urged to support the enactment of the bill entitled, "An Act to authorize the consolidation of Union Free School Districts, numbered thirteen, twenty-four and thirty of the town of Hempstead, Nassau County, and the creation of Union Free School District number— of the town of Hempstead, Nassau County, and that a certified copy of this resolution be forwarded to Senator Bennett and Assemblyman Becker.[14]

At a special board meeting called for February 28, 1952, Trustee Savage "explained the 7 Mills Law reviewed the background of the work and effort of the Board,

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[10] *Ibid.*, March 2, 1952 at 225.

[11] *Ibid.*, March 18, 1952.

[12] School District 30 Board Minute Books, January 16, 1952.

[13] *Ibid.*, January 16, 1952.

[14] *Ibid.*, February 10, 1952.

since the fall of 1951, to have the people of this district get the benefit of qualifying for additional State Aid under the 7 Mills Law."

He explained how the districts tried to qualify for the additional State Aid by consolidation but because of legal ramifications consolidation could not take effect before July 1, 1953. He further stressed how extremely important it was that the people of this district be given the opportunity to qualify for State Aid under the present 7 Mills Law, which expires on April 1, 1952.[15]

At the March 24, 1952 Board meeting of District 13, Trustee Savage reported "the bill to authorize the consolidation... has passed both houses and is before the Governor for executive action." Governor Dewey then signed the consolidation law.[16]

On August 11, 1952, Acting District Superintendent Miller journeyed to Albany concerning the consolidation question. "Chairman Rosenblatt and Trustee Hartman of District 13 were elected to serve as delegates to the Consolidation Committee replacing Trustee Carry and former Trustee Savage" on September 22, 1952. At this district 13 Board meeting a discussion of consolidation vs. centralization ensued. It was pointed out that, "in centralization, new legislation was required, more State Aid is made available and it becomes consolidation when old debts are paid off." At this time the following Board members in district 13 expressed a preference for centralization: Mr. Lamb, Mr.

[15] School District 13 Board Minute Books, February 25, 1952.

[16] *Ibid.* April 19, 1952. Valley Stream Mail and Gibson Herald Newspaper, Vol. XXVII No. 3 at 1. February 21, 1952. See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume II, District Thirteen Scrapbook at 261.

Hartman, Mr. Tilford and Mr. Rosenblatt. Trustee Narcisco "expressed [an] opinion that he preferred things to remain status quo."[17]

District 30 at the time fully supported consolidation while District 24 began to shift its position on the matter.

> Upon a motion of Collins and a second by Powers that the proposition of consolidation and centralization be laid over until the matter can be studied further. This motion carried. [18]
>
> The Board decided to hold a meeting with the lay committee on consolidation to be held in the William L. Buck school on Monday Nov. 10th at 7 P.M. [19]
>
> There was a general discussion of the proposed centralization plan but no action was taken.[20]

The Consolidation Committee met on October 5, 1952 and developed figures for consolidation and centralization. These figures were given to each Board member and a joint meeting of the boards was requested.[21] A special District 13 Board meeting was called for October 29, 1952 to vote on the issue. After much deliberation it was unanimously carried "that this Board does not desire to centralize with Districts 24, 30 and Central High School No. 1."

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[17] Mr. Narcisco was recently elected to the board of VSUFSD 13.

[18] School District 24 Board Minute Books, September 23, 1952.

[19] *Ibid.*, October 30, 1952 at 253.

[20] *Ibid.*, November 3, 1952.

[21] School District 13 Board Minute Books, October 6, 1952.

District 24 at this time unanimously passed the following resolution:[22]

> BE IT RESOLVED that, in the consideration, discussion and drafting of proposed special legislation for dissolution of the Central High School District No. 1, of the Town of Hempstead, and for centralization of Union Free School Districts Nos. 24, 30 and 13, Henry A. Spelman, as School Attorney for this district, present the following requirements of the Board of Education of this district, to-wit:
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> 1. The calling of an election for voting on the proposition of dissolution of the Central High School and for centralization of the three Union Free School Districts shall be authorized only upon petition of a least fifty (50) qualified electors in each of the three Union Free School Districts.
> 2. For purposes of such election, each such Union Free School District shall be treated as a separate voting unit and approval by a majority of the qualified electors in each district shall be required for adoption of the proposal.
> 3. Legislation for centralization of the three Union Free School Districts shall embody a provision that, for voting purposes, the present territorial district lines remain in tact and that voting by the electors in such districts for members of Boards of Education of the Central School District shall be as three separate units so as to assure representation for each such district on such Board of Education.
> 4. Provision for state aid in respect of building construction shall be made retroactive to and including the calendar year 1950.

The next mention of consolidation came up at the April 25, 1955 District 13 Board meeting under visitor's questions. The minutes state, "The question of consolidation came up for discussion and it was recommended that the survey, prepared a year or so ago, be studied and the advantages and disadvantages be explored upon the establishment of the tax rate." On January 16, 1956 the following resolution was unanimously carried, "That District Principal Dever be instructed to get all possible information as to [the] possibility of reorganization of this District [13] and adjoining districts, which might be beneficial."

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[22] *Ibid.*, January 12, 1953.

"At special meeting on December 14, 1956, the President of District 13 appointed three board members and lay members "to a committee to study comparative educational and financial costs under a Central District or a Consolidated District, as opposed to the present set up. Also for studying the advantages and disadvantages of an increase of the Board to nine (9) members." This Organization Study Committee reported back to the Board on January 15, 1957. The minutes state:

> 1. It is recommended that the Board propose to the Joint Meeting of Boards that the Steering Committee be asked to make a study of the possible advantages of forming either one or two central school districts to replace the four districts now operating in Valley Stream.
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> The committee has noted the following possible advantages:
>
> a) Board members with responsibility for secondary and elementary schools would be directly elected by the voters;
> b) Uniform policies could be established for the entire area, overcoming some of the problems previously experienced in coordinating actions of the separate boards;
> c) Additional State aid, based on average daily attendance, is available to central school districts, probably amounting in this case to $99,000; and
> d) Additional State Aid for buildings might be available if the high schools need to expand.
>
> 2. It is recommended that the question of expanding the District #13 to nine members be deferred until the possibility of forming one or two central school districts has been studied.

At two separate joint meetings of the boards, District 13's "request of Steering Committee to conduct study to determine possible advantages of forming either one or two Central School Districts to replace the four districts now operating in Valley Stream" was tabled and then died owing to no motion of seconding.[23]

[23] *Ibid.*, March 8, 1957 and November 19, 1957.

In 1958, School District 30 received a letter opposing centralization of the Nassau Schools. Their stance was that "The Board has taken no public stand against such proposal because they have felt that the proposal has little support, and that the Board has no sympathy for the idea."[24]

Consolidation was bandied around for a while. Districts 24 and 30 planned to meet with a representative from the Commissioners office "for advice on centralization" at the 1958 School Boards Convention.[25] It was on the agenda of the January 20, 1959 Joint Boards Meeting,[26] and District 13 passed the following resolution at their January 27, 1959 meeting:

> That this Board recommended pursuing the study of consolidation by the 'Joint Meeting of the Boards.'

A Centralization Study Committee was even set up at the July 7, 1959 District 13 Board meeting, with Trustee Paul Fromer and James Smollen as members. This committee with administration and lay members met for two days with State Education Department representatives in Albany. A detailed report was given at the December 1, 1959 Joint meeting of the Boards.[27] While these discussions were proceeding, Trustee

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[24] School District 30 Board Minute Books, March 19, 1958.

[25] School District 13 Board Minute Books, October 15, 1958.

[26] *Ibid.*, January 27, 1959. See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume XXVA VSCHSD Newsletter, Your High Schools, December 1960 Vol. V, No. 2 at 1 and 3 – Volume VA District 13 School News, October 1959 Vol. VII, No. 1 at 2 - October 1960, Vol. VIII, No. 1 p.2 and December 1960, Vol. VIII, No. 2 at 2 Volume XIV District Thirty Newsletter The Friendly Schools October 1959 Vol. IV, No. 1 at 2.

[27] *Ibid.*, November 2, 1959.

Smollen reported at the July 26, 1960 Board meeting that the "commissioner is favorable to the direct election of the High School Board provided that:

1. In no way would it interfere with centralization.
2. The representation is district-wide and not proportionate by area.

At the end of 1960 and beginning of 1961 School District 30 again went on record concerning centralization:

> Trustee Bell moved the affirmation of the caucus by District #30 at the Joint meeting of the Boards of Education on November 29, 1960, in favor of preparing a draft for the necessary permissive legislation for centralization, including financial gains as spelled out by the State Education Department.[28]
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> Trustee Bell moved the affirmation of the section taken by the District #30 Board of Education at the Joint meeting of the Boards of Education on January 17, 1961, accepting the majority report of the Centralization Committee and directing Judge Lowe to cease further work on preparation of a draft for the necessary permissive legislation for centralization.[29]
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> The Board discussed the matter of centralization at length, Trustee Bell stated copies of the Centralization report were available for anyone in the district interested in reading it and anyone could bring questions to the Board. Trustee Bell suggested that information on the Centralization Report be prepared for distribution to the District.[30]

At the District 13 Board meeting on January 24, 1961, trustee Smollen reported that at the last Joint meeting of the Boards, "districts 24 and 30 voted against centralization and District 13 strongly indicated that it wished this matter to be placed

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[28] School District 30 Board Minute Books, December 20, 1960.

[29] *Ibid.,* January 24, 1961.

[30] *Ibid,,* January 24, 1961. See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume XIV District Thirty Newsletter The Friendly Schools January 1961 Vol. V, No. 2 at 1 and 4 and March 1961 Vol. V, No. 3 at 2.

before the voters for decision." After discussion, the attorney was directed "to prepare enabling legislation for forming the four (4) school districts in Valley Stream into a Central School District."

Nothing further appeared under consolidation in District 13 Board minutes until August 13, 1968 when a letter was received from the High School "requesting that 'Centralization' be placed on the agenda for consideration at the first Joint Board meeting in the school year 1968-69." In May of 1978, the District 30 Board of Education received "a letter dated 5/5/78 from the Forest Road PTA asking the Board to study the possibility of centralizing the three elementary school districts in Valley Stream." This letter was referred to by the Valley Stream Joint Council of PTA's.[31]

Sewanhaka Central High School District indicated in a letter read at the August 28, 1984 District 13 board meeting that it was looking into a five district consolidation in its area. A letter from the president of the Merrick U.F.S.D. on November 27, 1984 solicited, "membership to attend an orientation meeting for the purpose of creating a task force to study direct election of members of the Central High School District." They subsequently indicated that there was "not sufficient interest to pursue this topic."[32]

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[31] *Ibid.*, May 23, 1978.

[32] See also Public Education in Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook at 3,759 for Bellmore-Merrick Consolidation talk in 2005. Selection of Board members is discussed at 3,789 in Bellmore-Merrick.

On January 29, 1971 William X. Gimello, Executive Secretary of the Valley Stream Teachers Association, presented a paper in support of centralization to the New York State Commission on the Quailty, Cost and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education. He concluded his presentation with "research information and statistical tables" which support the benefits of consolidation for "the four Central High School Districts and their component elementary districts."[33] His findings were also presented to the Valley Stream PTA Executive Council.[34]

In the late 1980's, Valley Stream School District 24 passed a resolution in support of consolidation. Then in December of 1992, the Valley Stream Central High School District was named by the New York State Education Department as a candidate for reorganization. The district met one of six established criteria – a 50% student enrollment decline since 1970.[35]

The following motion to support a study of consolidation was crafted and introduced at the June 23, 1992 District 13 Board meeting by Trustee Stris. It passed by a 4 to 2 vote:[36]

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[33] Mr. Gimello, William X. A Recommendation to the State Commission on Quality, Cost and Financing of Elementary and Secondary Education January 29, 1971 (Fleischmann Commission).

[34] Long Island Press, Newspaper, February 5, 1972 "4 Districts To Merger"?

[35] District 30 Board Minute Books, December 21, 1992 at 2 – Lists the "five indicators."

[36] The two negative votes came from Trustees Dinkoff and Strumeyer. Newsday Newspaper, June 9, 2004 at A46 for article on people seeking "to eject district's [Bellmore-Merrick] eight-member board as unconstitutional." See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook at 3,789 for legal decision.

WHEREAS, The New York State Commissioner of Education, Thomas Sobol, and Governor Mario Cuomo have suggested that school districts in New York State look into the possibility of consolidation; and

WHEREAS, such a study (The Study of the Effect of Forming a Central School District of Central High School District 1, Union Free School District 13, Union Free School District 24 and Union Free School District 30) has not been undertaken in Valley Stream since October 31, 1986; and

WHEREAS, Valley Stream Union Free School District 13 residents pay 41.175 percent of the taxes collected in the Valley Stream High School District and have only 33 1/3 percent representation on that Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, in a centralized high school district the taxpayers have indirect representation to the high school board; and

WHEREAS, this indirect representation may not be in violation of the "one man, one vote" ruling of the Supreme Court, but may be in conflict with the spirit of the court's ruling, and[37]

WHEREAS, Governor Mario Cuomo has promised financial incentives to those districts which undertake a consolidation study; and

WHEREAS, the need for four superintendents, four attorneys, four district clerks and four treasurers in this time of fiscal restraint should be studied; and

WHEREAS, Trustees Horwell, Connelly, Delfino and Quinn, when standing for election, stated that they would be willing to support a study of consolidation; and

WHEREAS, the need/effectiveness of 19 Board members within the Valley Stream Boards of Education should be studied; and

WHEREAS, a common school district of grades K-12 consisting of approximately 7,000 students would be educationally manageable; and

WHEREAS, educational factors should be the primary driving force in any consolidation study; therefore be it

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[37] See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volumes VI, VII, & VIII on Central High School District 1. Note the U.S. Supreme Court Case entitled Sailor v. Board of Education, 387 U.S. 105 (1967).

> RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of Valley Stream Union Free School District 13 agree to study the possibility of consolidation with the Valley Stream School Districts; and be it further
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> RESOLVED, that the Valley Stream Union Free School District 13 supports a study of consolidation at the next meeting of the Valley Stream Joint Boards of Education.

On August 15, 1995, the Joint Boards of Education of the Valley Stream Districts, with Superintendent Dr. Charles Fowler of the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) present, voted to fund the Centralization study through BOCES. The State funded the part of the study that looked into forming one school district in Valley Stream (K to 12) and the district totally funded the part of the study that looked into forming two school districts. (A newly formed school district in the southern part of Valley Stream would encompass present day Districts 30 and 24, and the present day part of northern Valley Stream would include only District 13.)

In April of 1996, school District 24 could not reach consensus on the part of the study that discussed forming two school districts in Valley Stream.[38]

> Motion by Mr. Iadevaio, seconded by Mrs. Carbonaro, that we consider the consolidation of two K-12 districts. Results of voting 3 Ayes, 2 Nays, 1 Abstention.[39]

In August of 1996, school District 24 voted to support the full consolidation and shared services study. Part of their resolution stated:

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[38] See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume I District Thirteen History, Chapter Twelve – Joint Boards of Education pp. 11and 14.

[39] School District 24 Board Minute Books, April 25, 1996.

Whereas, these two parts (consolidation into K-12 district and shared services) of the study are eligible to be aided through State funds at a cost of $1000,000.00 and

Whereas, the Boards of Education of Valley Stream Districts 13, 24, 30 and Central High School District are desirous of a third part (formation of two K-12 districts) of a study to be completed and such part is not currently eligible for aid, it has been decided that the Valley Stream Schools will share equally in the cost of the third section of the study, and, whereas, the cost of this section will total $10,000.00.[40]

In 1996, "The VSUFSD #30 School District Board of Education is agreeing to participate in this study with the understanding that the requirement to conduct votes at the conclusion of the study shall be waived by the State Education Department."[41]

The official report was entitled:

Report of the
Feasibility Study
for
Reorganizing the
Valley Stream School Districts
Prepared for
the Joint Boards of the
Valley Stream School Districts
and the
BOCES and District Organization Unit
State Education Department

The consultant, Interactive Inc.[42] led by Dale Mann, presented the final report on June 9, 1997 at the Joint Boards meeting held at Memorial Junior High School.[43] The

[40] *Ibid.*, August 22, 1996.

[41] District 30 Board Minute Books June 24, 1996 at 9.

[42] See also Public Education In Valley Stream, supra note 2, Volume XXVB VSCHSD Newsletter, The Observer January/February 1996 Vol. 30, No. 1 at 2 and September/October 1996 Vol. 30, No. 6 p. 7, March 1997 Vol. 31, No. 2 p.3 "Consultant Presents Initial Findings"

cost of the study was a little over $100,000. The report was accepted by school District 13 on June 24, 1997. Enclosed are a few pages from the report, which are self-explanatory.

The Valley Stream Joint Boards of Education, on October 21, 1997, voted three to one to take the Interactive Study, refine same, and present it to the voters of each elementary district for their vote. Only School District 30 voted "no" and thus the proposal could not go forward.[44]

At the October 27, 1997 Board of Education meeting of District 30 the following resolution passed unanimously:

> The Board of Education ratified its position taken at the Joint meeting of the Boards of Education of the Valley Stream Union Free School Districts 13, 24, 30 and Central High School District No. 1 on October 21, 1997 to wit:
>
> Upon a motion by Trustee Galgano, seconded by Trustee Egan, it is hereby resolved that the Board of Education shall not submit the issue of consolidation to a referendum of the voters of the district.

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[43] *Ibid.*, Volume XXVB VSCHSD Newsletter, The Observer, June/July 1997 Vol. 31, No. 5 at 3.

[44] *Ibid.*, Volume XXV VSCHSD Newsletter, The Observer, December 1997 Vol. 31, No. 8, September/October 1997 Vol. 31, No. 6 at 2, December 1997 Vol. 31, No. 8 at 2 and Volume II District Thirteen Scrapbook, at 1,345, 1,346; and 2,846 to 2,850.

Following is a copy of the Valley Stream District 30 position paper concerning consolidation, dated October 15, 1997, and the minutes of the October 21, 1997 Joint Boards meeting.[45]

Valley Stream District #30
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS
Position of the Board of Education
Concerning Consolidation
October 15, 1997

The consolidation of any school system with another is a traumatic experience for communities, children, faculty and staff. While there have been very few consolidations among the 700-plus districts in New York State, the debate continues as to why New York and Long Island needed so many small school districts with their own layers of administration and board oversight.

Valley Stream has been one of the many communities that have talked about consolidation for decades. That talk has often been centered on the financial incentives of consolidation, and, at times, the educational advantages of such a move. Many have advanced the theory that consolidation would bring a windfall to the community by consolidating services and administration.

The Joint Boards of Education in Districts 13, 24 and 30 decided that the long debated topic should be studied with monies provided through a state grant. The study

[45] Consolidation was also discussed at the October 13, 1998, December 3, 1998 and April 26, 1999 meetings of the Joint Boards of Education.

would not obligate the districts to anything, but would merely put the issue on the table and provide factual data for further debate.

While financial incentives were a consideration in the decision to move ahead with the study, District 30's Board of Education embarked upon the study primarily to investigate the educational advantages that consolidation could bring to the district's students. Improving the continuity of program from the middle grades into the high school setting was a main objective of the Board. The Board wanted to answer the question: Would our students have greater and richer opportunities in a large consolidated school district with a middle school philosophy? Secondary to that question: Can we achieve greater opportunity while saving taxpayer money?

The Board was anxious to investigate avenues to provide more for District 30 students. The promise of expanded programs and more opportunity led the Board to eagerly participate in the study process, despite reservations regarding other non-student issues.

The District hired a blue chip educational consultant, Interactive, Inc., to look at the feasibility of consolidation and to answer a whole range of questions – including the fiscal and educational impact of consolidation. In a final report released in August, the two main questions of District 30's Board were answered along with a wide spectrum of other educational and financial issues. After carefully studying the results of the report

and looking at what consolidation would cost children and taxpayers, District 30's Board of Education has unanimously voted to maintain its independence.

This summary of the issues will help to explain why.

The Fiscal Issue

It is a seemingly simple and logical conclusion for the average person to deduce that consolidating four districts into one would save the average taxpayer money. The reasoning seems sound; fewer superintendents, fewer administrators, more economies of scale and greater efficiencies.

Though the conclusion seems logical, the facts lead to a very different and inescapable conclusion. The facts show that consolidating four districts into one would actually cost District 30 taxpayers more money, even with the millions of dollars in incentive aid promised by the state over 15 years. This reality is the direct result of a tax structure that would force District 30 to share its tax base with its neighbors upon consolidation, thus helping to finance program improvements in neighboring districts.

If the four school districts were to consolidate, it would cost the average District 30 taxpayer $200 to $300 more per year at maximum state aid. The most disturbing part of the increase is that it would pay for little or no substantive upgrade in student services.

District 30 has the unique advantage among its peers of claiming the lion's share of tax revenue from the Green Acres Mall, a commercial property that is looking to expand in the next several years. This tax revenue resource has allowed District 30 to keep taxes moderate while providing a full range of instructional services to students that generally outstrip the breath of services offered by neighboring districts. By authorizing consolidation, the District 30 Board of Education would essentially be sharing its rich tax base with neighboring districts at a significant cost to its taxpayers. This is an unacceptable scenario; the Board cannot make a decision that hurts District 30 taxpayers while helping neighboring districts.

In addition, there are so many uncertainties concerning finance. One uncertainty is the level of state aid that the district would receive, while another variable is the condition of the current facilities. For example, the consolidation would create a new district of 8,000- plus students with 14 schools. Some of these facilities would probably need to be upgraded and repaired in the near future. This would require an additional burden be placed upon the taxpayers of District 30.

The Educational Issue

Obviously, consolidation would not even be a consolidation unless all school districts were "leveled up" educationally. This means that no school district would lose programs and all would offer equal educational opportunities. Currently, that is not happening.

The Interactive study confirmed that District 30's educational program sets the standard in many areas. In fact, the other two elementary districts would reap many more benefits than District 30 in the "leveling" process. In many areas, District 30 is already providing services well in excess of neighboring districts. Therefore, "leveling Up" really means staying the same in nearly every instructional area for District 30. While consolidation may mean improving the continuity of instruction from middle school to high school, this possibility benefit is far outweighed by the financial impact.

The tradition of outstanding education in District 30 would also be seriously disrupted with consolidation. Most notably would be the bussing of students to a middle school. Currently, the district operates as neighborhood K-6 schools to which all students can simply walk. Consolidation would mandate a significant change in this neighborhood school tradition.

To further buttress this point, the Interactive study cited parental misgiving over the formation of a larger district. In fact, the small, neighborhood school system was one of the main elements that brought them to Valley Stream 30, according to the research.

The Issue of Governance

This is the area that presents the greatest potential risk to District 30 taxpayers who have enjoyed local control of their schools for so long.

There can be no debate about the stability of governance within the four school districts. District 30 has always maintained credible, stable and consistent leadership on its Board of Education, with most of its current members serving well in excess of a decade. It has helped maintain the outstanding level of education in its schools. This community of leadership has been the product of a strong foundation of community support and has helped build credibility and trust from year to year. The Board has a record of successfully working together in a unified fashion and keeping its primary focus on education.

The record of neighboring districts has generally not been as successful in this area. This is a significant cause of concern to the District 30 Board of Education. Here's why:

If consolidation were approved, governance of the larger school district would be turned over to a completely new board elected by the entire Valley Stream community. This board may or may not have the leadership qualities and educational focus of the present District 30 Board. This could be very dangerous to the children because the new board could make decisions strictly based on fiscal criteria.

For example, instead of "leveling up" all school districts to the District 30 standard, the new board would have the legal right to level educational programs down. The new board would have no obligation to maintain the current educational programs of

District 30 and the district could actually end up with an inferior educational program compared to present offering. This also would be unacceptable, yet the community would have little recourse after the new board is elected. The risk of giving up local control is not outweighed by any potential benefits. This combined with the fiscal issue adds great weight to the decision not to consolidate.

What about Four Districts into Two?

The Interactive study shows that this scenario may produce minimal savings for District 30 taxpayers. The creation of a North and South district has not been endorsed by the state, however, and still presents risks to District 30 taxpayers and students.

- The first and most significant risk is governance-or the loss of local control. There is no guarantee that the new board will maintain the current array of student programs. Students could end up receiving fewer educational services as a result of consolidation, and would almost certainly not receive any additional services.
- The second risk is financially based. Should the District 30 Board offer to share a rich tax base that almost certainly will be expanding over the next several years? The Board believes this would be irresponsible to the community that has elected its members.
- The third risk is reliance on state aid to make this consolidation financially viable. The tax savings projected under this scenario would only be achieved through a wealth of state incentives that would have to be paid out over the next 15 years. With the vagaries of the state's own fiscal condition, such a promise of aid over

such a long time may very well be risky to District 30 taxpayers, who currently do not rely on the state to moderate taxes.

Conclusion

When all is considered from the perspective of a District 30 taxpayer and student, consolidation is simply not a viable option. It is *too costly and far too risky.* The District 30 Board must view the issue only from the standpoint of its constituency.

Clearly, if the Board were looking from the perspective of neighboring Districts who would stand to gain financially and educationally from consolidation, it would have reached a far different conclusion. But the District 30 Board was elected to represent the interest of District 30 students and taxpayers. Giving away revenue and putting student programs at risk is the inevitable result of consolidation in any scenario. Thus, the interests of District 30 students and taxpayers would be compromised under consolidation.

This is not a decision that has been taken lightly by the Board, nor does it represent an isolationist policy. It is, however, the only rational and responsible decision that could be made given the facts presented by the exhaustive Interactive study. The Board maintains its commitment to embark on cooperative programs that are mutually beneficial to all districts both financially and educationally. It will

continue to aggressively look for ways to accomplish this goal in future years while maintaining its independence.

THE JOINT MEETING OF THE BOARDS OF EDUCATION OF VALLEY STREAM UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICTS THIRTEEN, TWENTY-FOUR, THIRTY AND VALLEY STREAM CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT, HELD ON OCTOBER 21, 1997, IN THE CAFETERIA, LOCATED IN MEMORIAL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL.

ATTENDANCE

District	Trustees Present	Trustees Absent	Others Present	Others Absent
#13	Al Chase	Frank Chiachiere	Martin Brook	
	Valerie Clerico*		(Supt. of Schools)	
	Harris Dinkoff		Meredith Brosnan	
	William Stris*		(Ass't Superintendent)	
	Cathy Subbiondo		Florence Frazer	
	Nancy Viggiano		(Attorney)	
#24	Henrietta Carbonaro	Michael Belfiore	Russell Birdsall	
	Paul DePace*	Joseph Conrad	(Supt. of Schools)	
	Anthony Iadevaio*		George Shebitz	
	Frank Nuara			
	Eleanor Sciglibaglio*			
#30	Leanore Egan*		Lawrence McGoldrick	
	Richard Eisenberg		(Supt. of Schools)	
	Thomas Galgano*		Davis Kutcher	
	William Gauger		(Ass't Superintendent)	
	Andrew Walters*		Albert D'Agustino	
			(Attorney)	
CHSD			Gregory Guercio	Joseph Singleton
			(Attorney)	(Interim Ass't Supt.)

Public Attendance – Approximately 30 members of the public were in attendance.
* High School Board Members

Convening of Boards
The meeting was called to order by Trustee Nuara (District 24) at 7:42 p.m.

Determination of Quorum
Districts Thirteen, Twenty-Four, Thirty and Central High School District declared quorums present.

Approval of Minutes
On a motion by Trustee Carbonaro (District 24), seconded by Trustee Gauger (District 30) and carried, the minutes of June 9, 1997 meeting were approved.

Presentation of Plaques
Mr. Gabe Parish of Ormonde Civic Association presented a plaque to Trustee William Stris (District 13) and a plaque to Trustee William Gauger (District 30) in recognition of the many years of service to the students and taxpayers in the Valley Stream Community.

Question and Answer Period
Trustee Nuara opened the floor to questions and comments from the audience. The areas of discussion included support of District 30's position, the feasibility of consolidating Districts 13 and 24, and the time line for funding a Central High School District Superintendent.

Vote by Joint Boards
On a motion by Trustee Stris (CHSD and District 13), seconded by Trustee Viggiano (District 13), that the Joint Boards support preparation of a proposal to be presented to the public for consolidation of the districts. The vote was as follows:

Valley Stream Thirteen	-	Yes
Valley Stream Twenty-Four	-	Yes
Valley Stream Thirty	-	No
Valley Stream CHSD	-	Yes

It was declared by Trustee Nuara (District 24) that in order to proceed, the requirement is unanimous agreement; therefore, no further action will be taken.

Executive Session Requested
On a motion by Trustee Nuara (District 24), seconded by Trustee Gauger (District 30) and carried, the Joint Boards went into Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. to discuss RN negotiations. Board Trustees, Superintendents and Attorneys were asked to be present.

On motion by Trustee Carbonaro (District 24), seconded by Trustee Dinkoff (District 13) and carried, the Joint Boards moved back into open session at 9:30 p.m.

Adjournment
On a motion by Trustee Iadevaio (District 24), seconded by Trustee Stris (District 13) and carried, the meeting was adjourned at 9:31 p.m.

Angela M. Nicholson,
Acting Secretary to Join Meeting of the Boards

A Single District

- 8200 students
  - Ten K-5 schools
  - Two middle schools (6-8)
  - Two high schools
- 550 teachers
- 36 central office staff
- Budget: $99 million (est.)

Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization
One Consolidated District

School	Current Classroom Use K-6	Rooms needed for class size of 25 **	Rooms needed for class size of 30 **
Howell	26	28	22
Shaw Ave.	29	28	24
Wheeler	25	24	20
Willow Rd.	22	19	18
Total K-5	205	204	173

** Elementary classrooms are K-5, not current K-6

Interactive, Inc.

Middle School, High School Facilities Utilization

School	Classrooms available	Rooms needed at class size of 25 or less
Memorial M. S. Cap: 1806, Proj: 1000	69	69 (average class size of 14.5)
South M. S. Cap: 1817, Proj: 1155	65	65 (average class size of 17.8)
Central H. S. Cap: 1805, Proj: 1355	62	62 (average class size of 19.4)
North H. S. Cap: 1743, Proj: 1202	62	62 (average class size of 21.9)

Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization

One Consolidated District (K-6)

School	Current Classroom Use K-6	Rooms needed for class size of 25 **	Rooms needed for class size of 30 **
Brooklyn Ave.	13	19	18
Buck	15	21	19
Carbonaro	19	22	20
Clear Stream	19	21	20
Dever	22	26	19
Forest	15	15	15

** This chart shows utilization if elementary remains K-6.

Interactive, Inc.

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Interactive, Inc.

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Wheeler	25	30	28
Willow Rd.	22	22	20
Total K-6	205	240	212

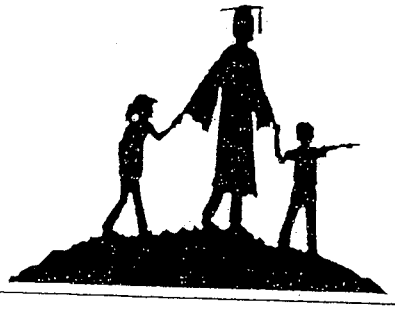
**This chart shows utilization if elementary remains K-6.

Interactive, Inc.

One Consolidated District

Central Administration Positions

► Superintendent, *Deputy Superintendent*	$255,000
► Business Administrator, *Assistant*	$185,000
► *Asst. Supt. for Elementary Schools*	$110,000
► *Asst. Supt. for Secondary Schools*	$110,000
► Director of Personnel	$100,000
► 5 Curriculum Coordinators	$375,000
► Director of Special Education	$ 90,000
► *Technology Coordinator*	$ 85,000
► 21 Clerical/Support Staff	$828,000
► Supervisor: buildings, grounds	$ 60,000



Two Districts

South

- 4500 students
  - Six K-5 schools
  - One middle school
  - One high school
- 21 central office staff
- Budget: $53.7 million (est.)

North

- 3700 students
  - Four K-5 schools
  - One middle school
  - One high school
- 21 central office staff
- Budget: $43.4 million (est.)

Interactive, Inc.

Two Districts

Central Administration Positions

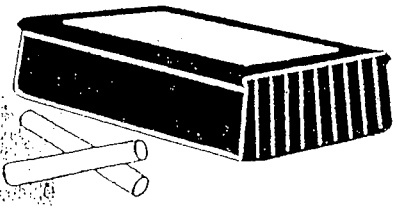
► Superintendent	$135,000
► Assistant Superintendent	$115,000
► Business Administrator	$115,000
► Director of Personnel	$100,000
► 3 Curriculum Coordinators	$225,000
► Director of Special Education	$ 90,000
► 12 Clerical/Support Staff	$478,000
► Supervisor: buildings, grounds	$ 60,000

Note: Assumes both South and North would have the above staffing.

Interactive, Inc.

Reorganization Summary
4 Into 2 Districts

► $ 861,132	instructional enhancements (South only)
► $ 878,000	middle schools initiative
► $ 690,060	transportation costs (net)
► $ 14,271	VS 24 food service start-up
► $ 100,000	contractual and start-up costs
► $ (211,205)	expenditure reductions from central office consolidation



Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization

Two District Consolidation: North District

School	Current classroom use K-6	Rooms needed if class size of 25	Rooms needed if class size of 30
Dever	22	21	16
Howell	26	28	22
Wheeler	25	24	20
Willow Rd.	22	19	18
Total K-5	95	92	76
Memorial Middle School	69	69 (average class size of 14.5)	
North High School	62	62 (average class size of 19.4)	

Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization

Two District Consolidation: South District

School	Current classroom use K-6	Rooms needed if class size of 25	Rooms needed if class size of 30
Brooklyn Av.	13	14	12
Buck	15	18	15
Carbonaro	19	19	16
Clear Stream	19	18	17
Forest Rd.	15	13	13
Shaw Ave.	29	28	24
Total K-5	110	112	97
South Middle School	65	65 (average size of 17.8)	
Central High School	62	62 (average size of 21.9)	

Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization if Elementary is K-6
Two District Consolidation: North District

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Forest Rd.	15	15	15
Shaw Ave.	29	33	28
Total K-6	110	131	120
South Middle School	65		
Central High School	62		

Interactive, Inc.

High School Students (9-12) by Ethnicity, 4 Into 2 Districts

	North		South	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Asian	70	6.4%	113	8.8%
Hispanic	90	8.3%	141	11.0%
Black	59	5.4%	51	4.0%
Caucasian	867	79.8%	977	76.2%

Middle School Students (6-8) by Ethnicity, 4 Into 2 Districts

	North		South	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Asian	46	5.7%	83	8.5%
Hispanic	55	6.8%	90	9.2%
Black	45	5.5%	49	5.0%
Caucasian	666	82.0%	751	77.2%

Interactive, Inc.

Elementary Students (K-5) by Ethnicity, 4 Into 2 Districts

	North		South	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Asian	111	6.0%	185	9.0%
Hispanic	110	6.0%	245	12.0%
Black	93	5.0%	155	7.6%
Caucasian	1534	83.0%	1465	71.5%

Interactive, Inc.

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Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization

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Middle School Students (6-8) by Ethnicity, 4 Into 2 Districts

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Interactive, Inc.

Facilities Utilization if Elementary is K-6
Two District Consolidation: South District

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Interactive, Inc.

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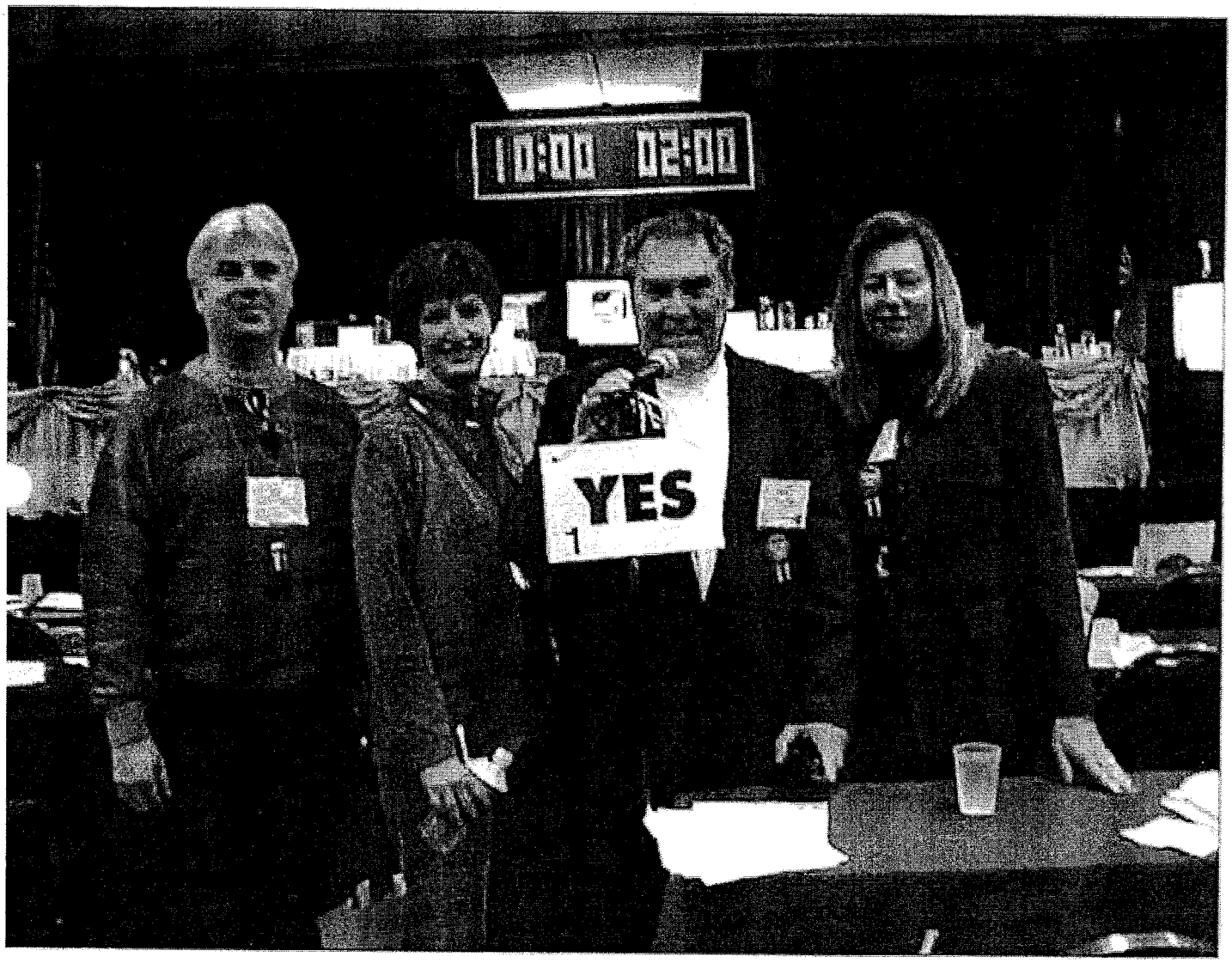
Interactive, Inc.

NYSSB October 2000
Rochester, NY



October 21, 2000
New York State School Boards Association Convention in Rochester NY
(On the Convention Floor)

L. to R. Trustees Al Chase, Cathy Subbiondo, Bill Stris (VSCHSD Voting Delegate) and Valerie Clerico (VSUFSD Voting Delegate)