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Schools

Could Sussex County Merge Into One School District?

Some lawmakers in Sussex say school district consolidation is overdue.



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Reply



SUSSEX COUNTY, NJ — Could Sussex County become the first county in the state to have just one school district? If some lawmakers get their way, the county-wide school

district could be a reality.

The Newton Town Council first proposed the idea at an Aug. 14 meeting, unanimously passing a "Consolidated Sussex County School System." That resolution calls for all 25 school districts and their 21,000 students to merge into a single school district. To put that into perspective, Newark Public Schools educate over 35,000 students.

The idea is still in its early stages, and the proposal is non-binding. Newton Mayor Wayne Levante is currently seeking a study by the New Jersey Legislature to see how viable the plan is. (For more information on this and other neighborhood stories, [subscribe to Patch](#) to receive daily newsletters and breaking news alerts.)

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Citing declining enrollment, increasing costs-per-student and high property taxes, the resolution [pitches](#) the consolidated district as a cost saving measure. Sussex County currently has a median annual property tax of \$6,722; Sparta residents pay the most at \$11,411, and Walpack Township residents pay \$1,822.






Sussex is the fifth least populous county in the state with 144,909 residents as of 2014. (The most populous county, Bergen, has 933,572 residents and the least populous, Salem, has just 64,715.)

The resolution supports one county superintendent and one county business office, with all schools answering to that county office. It was unclear if jobs would be lost, created, or if the number of education-related positions would stay the same across the county.

[So far](#), the resolution has the support of Newton and the Sussex Borough Council, nj.com reports. Sussex Borough does not currently have its own school district.

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