

Editorial: Want fewer school districts? Now's your chance to speak up.

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(Photo: Delaware Department of Education website)
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We constantly hear from readers who think Delaware should consolidate school districts.

Many taxpayers believe we are paying too many six-figure salaries to superintendents and other administrators. They say it doesn't make sense to split a state with fewer than a million people into 19 different districts, each with their own bureaucracies.

If you believe that school redistricting needs to happen, now is the time to speak up.

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A task force created by the General Assembly is exploring different ways the state could draw district lines. Public meetings are scheduled up and down the state over the next few months.

The next full committee meeting is planned for 6:30 p.m. Sept. 18 at Woodbridge High School in Bridgeville. Subcommittees studying the structure, finances, teachers and staff and academics of redistricting will hold their own open meetings.

A schedule can be [found on the General Assembly's website.](#)

SUBMIT YOUR THOUGHTS HERE: [Redistrict task force proposal form](#)

If you can't attend, comments can be submitted online or by email at schoolconsolidationtaskforce@gmail.com.

Task force organizers are looking for ideas: Should there be one district in each county? A single statewide district? One district for Wilmington?

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"We'll consider everything," said Rep. Earl Jaques, D-Glasgow, and a task force leader. "We have no preconceived notions of what this should look like."

Once the committee has some proposals, it will study them to see whether they make academic and financial sense.

Several previous studies have found consolidation wouldn't yield big savings. One of the reasons for this is "leveling up" of salaries — some districts pay teachers more than others, and consolidation would likely mean increasing salaries for many educators.

If the task force determines that redistricting won't save money, it should provide a thorough explanation to taxpayers, including a full breakdown of what costs would be incurred. The many residents who want redistricting deserve it.

Even if eliminating districts doesn't make sense, state leaders should look at consolidating some administrative functions across districts, like purchasing, transportation and building maintenance. This is exactly the sort of efficient system a small state like Delaware ought to be able to build.

Of course, the task force can do little on its own. The General Assembly must act if any redistricting idea is to become a reality.

That will happen only if constituents tell their lawmakers they support redistricting. And that starts with making sure this task force gets a robust response from the public.

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