



Otto-Eldred School District

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Otto-Eldred and Smethport Area School Districts Establish Joint Committee to Explore Future Opportunities for Students and Communities

The Boards of Directors of both Otto Eldred and Smethport Area School Districts have approved the formation of a cooperative Enrollment and Feasibility Advisory Committee to study future opportunities, enrollment trends, and long-term planning considerations affecting both school communities.

The committee's purpose is to gather information, evaluate options, and provide recommendations that may help guide future decisions for both districts. Over a twelve-month period of time, the committee plans to provide nonbinding recommendations to both school boards.

Both districts believe that strong schools are essential to strong communities. As regional demographic and financial challenges continue to affect our rural communities, the districts believe it is important to thoughtfully study opportunities that may help sustain educational quality while remaining responsible stewards of taxpayer resources.

Smethport Superintendent, Brice Benson, and Otto-Eldred Superintendent, Matthew Splain, stated, "We share a commitment to three guiding principles: providing excellent opportunities for students, respecting our local communities and traditions, and being responsible stewards of taxpayer dollars," district leaders said in a joint statement. "This committee is being formed to help us better understand how those values can continue to guide our decisions in the years ahead."

Both superintendents emphasized that the committee is focused on learning and planning.

"This committee gives us an opportunity to gather facts, study trends, and explore possibilities. Our students deserve every opportunity to succeed, and our communities deserve a thoughtful, transparent process that is proactive."

"Good stewardship means looking ahead. Waiting until challenges become urgent can limit choices. By working together now, we can better understand the opportunities available to our students and communities and ensure future boards have the information they need to make sound decisions. Our goal is not to predetermine an outcome. Our goal is to understand the options."

The districts encourage students, families, staff, taxpayers, and community members to follow the committee's work and participate in future opportunities for public engagement.

Additional information regarding committee agendas, meeting schedules, and opportunities for public participation will be shared as it becomes available.