



[School Committee member seeks revote on single campus endorsement](#)

By Madison Schofield, Staff Writer, The Greenfield Recorder Published: 11-12-2025

CHARLEMONT — Hawlemont School Committee member Ashley Sparks is seeking reconsideration of a vote taken last spring to endorse the Two Districts Eight Towns Sustainability Steering Committee’s recommendation that the Hawlemont and Mohawk Trail Regional school districts pursue merging into a single district campus.

Sparks joined the committee in July after it [voted in April to endorse the recommendation](#). She told her fellow committee members Monday that she believes merging the two districts and bringing all students to the Mohawk Trail Regional School site for learning is in the best interest of students and the towns. She requested that the board add further discussion and potentially a revote on the endorsement to a future meeting agenda.

“While it is true that the proposed single-campus plan offers the greatest cost savings to MTRSD overall, this is not the same as offering the greatest benefit to all member towns or students,” Sparks said.

She said Hawlemont students are doing well right now, and interfering with the status quo could hinder their success.

“Today, Hawlemont is thriving. Enrollment has increased by nearly 13% over the past three years, drawing both new residents and school choice students. Our combined average MCAS scores are second best out of the four schools in our two-district region, and our science scores were the highest of all... We must not erode this progress,” Sparks said. “We have an obligation to support a decision-making process that ensures all parties are well-represented and fully considered. The current single campus recommendation does not meet that standard.”

Sparks said she was concerned that the decision was made using numbers that were not truly representative of the district’s current situation. The study used a foundation enrollment formula, combining the numbers of the Mohawk Trail and Hawlemont districts.

“I am increasingly worried that the projected savings for our towns could disappear, capital costs and old building maintenance costs factored in,” Sparks said. “My concern grew further upon realizing that the ‘status quo’ figures used in the sustainability study are based on a merged district scenario, using the foundation enrollment formula, and not the formula our district currently operates under.”

Committee Chair Kenneth Bertsch said that he would ask Jake Eberwein, the project manager for education consultant BERK12, about the numbers, and added that as part of the next phase of the study, the committee and BERK12 would look at the specific town assessments.

The October update from BERK12, posted to 2districts8towns.org, noted that the consultant was subcontracting with Hanover Research to analyze potential social and economic impacts of school closures on member towns.

Bertsch said now is not a great time to reconsider the vote, as the districts are expecting to hear from the Massachusetts School Building Authority in December on whether the districts have been accepted into the queue for design and technical support for a renovation or new school, in order to build a new single-campus educational facility. However, he said the committee can discuss Spark's request further after they get more information about how the savings were calculated and if they are accepted into the MSBA process.

BERK12 has planned a series of public information sessions to update community members on what they have been working on since the recommendation, and what needs to be done so a new district agreement can be presented to voters. Meetings are as follows:

- Tuesday, Nov. 18, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at Buckland Shelburne Elementary
- Wednesday, Nov. 19, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at Hawlemont Elementary
- Thursday, Nov. 20, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at Mohawk Trail Regional School
- Wednesday, Dec. 3, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at Sanderson Academy
- Thursday, Dec. 4, 6:30-7:45 p.m. at Colrain Central School

Source: <https://recorder.com/2025/11/12/school-committee-member-seeks-revote-on-single-campus-endorsement/>