

Incentives for Voluntary District Consolidation

The task force did not undertake a formal study of consolidation of school districts but does recommend incentives for local school districts and communities to improve the efficient and effective delivery of educational services and opportunities to students. The task force supports the right of districts and communities to collaborate and examine consolidation, deconsolidation, sharing of services, or any organizational framework that improves district ability to meet the educational needs of students and the expectations of the local community.

23. Consolidating districts should receive general state aid at the level of the district receiving the most aid prior to consolidation for four years after consolidating. If general state aid is less for the consolidated districts in the first year than it would have been that same year for separate districts, the General Assembly should make supplementary state aid payments equal to the difference for the first four years.
24. For a four-year period following consolidation, consolidating districts should receive state grants to compensate for any difference in teacher salaries, so that salaries for all teachers are increased to the same level. If there is a difference between the sum of the salaries earned during the previous year by teachers in the new district and the sum of salaries that would have been paid according to the salary schedule of the previously existing districts, using the highest salary, the state should make supplementary payments equal to the difference for the first four years of the reorganized district.
25. If needed, consolidating districts should receive a one-time grant to cover some portion of the negative fund balance that any district brings into the consolidation. A single supplemental aid payment should be made to the reorganized district equal to the difference between the largest and smallest deficit. A district with a positive fund balance should be considered to have a deficit of zero.
26. A consolidated district should receive a “hold harmless” on the district report card rating for a period of three years following consolidation, with individual schools receiving report card ratings as usual.
27. South Carolina should develop mechanisms to assist in consolidating operations and/or facilities among districts without consolidating districts.