

Unique Opportunity

Educating all students is a responsibility shared by school systems, families, communities, business and government. When community stakeholders work in a purposeful partnership, we can meet all of the conditions for improved student learning.

The proposed school, formed by merging the North Shore Regional Vocational School District and the Essex Agricultural School District (presently a state facility) will provide diverse technical and agricultural career training options to students in addition to serving the community in unique ways.

The construction of a merged agricultural and vocational school that serves over 25 communities will be an efficient and effective use of taxpayer's dollars. It will help provide communities with easier access to needed services. It will maximize efficiency of public and private community resources for education and human services and job creation. Our approach is to build the school as part of a broader community planning effort.

The merged vocational high school, through its *Health Sciences Academy*, could become a "regional senior center" providing area seniors with care during the day, through the health technology, culinary arts and cosmetology programs.

The merged vocational high school through its *Environmental Technology* Program could become a regional site for the training of adults in the field of hazardous material removal and cleanup. Presently, high school seniors in a HAZMAT training program receive a 40-hour program of study that results in initial certification in this field. Additional levels of certification training in HAZMAT could be added for adult education, training for local fire departments, and other municipal and state agencies.

The merged vocational school through its *Environmental Technology* programs could become a regional site for local planning boards, conservation boards, and water commissions to use our state of the art facilities in GIS, GPS, and mapmaking to generate accurate maps of ponds, wetlands, vernal pools, hydrants, green space, and other vital items necessary for appropriate planning of land use and development.

An educated workforce is critical to increasing productivity and fostering innovation. In fact, knowledge based jobs (those requiring vocational or post secondary training) are expected to grow to 33 percent of the total employment market by 2006. Areas with a more educated workforce will capitalize on this growth.

Amelia O'Malley
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