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**WebQuest Title:** *Isolation or Consolidation? Should Schools Keep Primary, Middle, and Secondary Schools Separate?*

**Description:** This activity will allow you to continue working with our Economics unit. The activity will reach the Topic of Economic Decision Making and Skills, and Content Statement “12. The choices people make have both present and future consequences. The evaluation of choices is relative and may differ across individuals and societies.”

To better understand the tough choices school systems make, you are to put yourself in the shoes of a school board member. Should you vote to keep your school system isolated by grade levels, or should you vote to consolidate your schools (either a building for K-12, or two buildings K-6/7-12). Also consider isolation and consolidation among school systems with numerous elementary schools and middle schools. Should there be fewer elementary schools or middle schools? Conduct research using the resources provided, create a pros and cons list. When you notice a pro or con mentioned more than once throughout the given resources, place a check mark next to it on your list. For example, if a pro of consolidating is “students in one building”, and you notice the same pro listed on two different websites, place a check next to that pro on your list. If you notice it as a pro and on another website it’s a con, make sure to record it on both sides of your chart.

At the end of your research, you should have a final chart filled with information on the pros and cons of consolidating schools. Make a decision as to whether you would vote to keep schools isolated, or to consolidate them. Complete a quick-write (at least 10 sentences) stating your opinion and why. Think about how your decision is going to affect the school presently and in the future. What pros and cons will occur as a result of your decision?

**Task:**

* T-chart containing pros and cons of consolidating school building within a school district
* Quick-write answering the questions:
  + Would you keep schools isolated or consolidated? Why?
  + What are the pros and cons of your decision?
  + What issues do you think parents will direct your way about the debatable issue?
  + Do you think parents would side with you or against you?
  + What benefits and consequences would play a part with your teachers?
  + What benefits and consequences would play a part with your students?
  + Does the cost of your plan cost more or less than the opposing plan?
  + If you chose to consolidate, how would you? Buildings K-12; buildings K-6 & 7-12; multiple elementary buildings consolidated (along with fewer middle schools/high schools)
  + Add comments/ideas about the issue that were not addressed in the above questions.

**Resources:**

<http://news.cincinnati.com/article/20111225/NEWS0102/312250017/Middle-school-model-re-thought>

The above website talks about how a Cincinnati school is deciding to consolidate their middle school in with their high school, creating a 7-12 building. The school district lists pros and cons of their decision, as well as examples of their thought process when making the decision.

<http://www.findlaycityschools.org/consolidation/ElementaryConsolidationConsiderations.pdf>

The above website discusses the Findlay City Schools district and their debate on consolidation or not. They offer many different “plans” for their consolidation, and also offer pros and cons to consolidating. They examine the impact various school consolidations would have on their teachers and students.

<http://cpr.maxwell.syr.edu/efap/Publications/Does_School_Consolidation_Nov_05.pdf>

This website discusses the impact consolidation has on the costs of a school system. The argument researched and documented is, “Does School District Consolidation Cut Costs?”. It goes into details about costs for parents, costs of transportation, costs of teachers, etc., when consolidating.

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2011/11/02/philadelphia-school-district-to-unveil-building-consolidation-and-closure-plan/>

This website talks about a Philadelphia school district that chose to consolidate buildings within their district. The website contains the school board’s reasoning behind their decision, as well as parent reactions to the news.

<http://www.annarbor.com/news/michigan-could-save-millions-by-consolidating-school-districts-study-shows/>

This websites offers the insight of Michigan school systems that will save millions of dollars if they do away with separate schools systems and do one countywide school system. The issue of costs, room, society opinions are brought up.

\*\*Additional resources can be approved by the teacher. Resources used without approval will result in a deduction of points/grade.\*\*

**Process:**

1) Create a T-chart. Label the left column “pros” and the right column “cons”. Give your

T-chart the same title as the WebQuest title.

2) Read through the websites/resources below and record the “pros” and “cons” of

consolidating schools.

3) When you notice a pro or con mentioned more than once throughout the given resources, place a check mark next to it on your list. For example, if a pro of consolidating is “students in one building”, and you notice the same pro listed on two different websites, place a check next to that pro on your list. These check marks will help you determine which concepts are highly addressed with this issue/debate.

4) If you notice a comment as a pro and on another website it’s a con, make sure to record it on both sides of your chart.

5) Pick a side! Would you vote to keep schools isolated or consolidate them? Why?

6) Complete a quick-write answering the questions below.

* Would you keep schools isolated or consolidated? Why?
* What are the pros and cons of your decision?
* What issues do you think parents will direct your way about the debatable issue?
* Do you think parents would side with you or against you?
* What benefits and consequences would play a part with your teachers?
* What benefits and consequences would play a part with your students?
* Does the cost of your plan cost more or less than the opposing plan?
* If you chose to consolidate, how would you? Buildings K-12; buildings K-6 & 7-12; multiple elementary buildings consolidated (along with fewer middle schools/high schools)
* Add comments/ideas about the issue that were not addressed in the above questions.

**Learning Advice:**

(Teacher-use before students complete WebQuest)

When creating the website, create a homepage with the standards/objectives and project summary. Off to the side offer students links to various components of the project, such as: a link for “T-Chart format” (provide an example of what the T-chart should look like OR have a word document attachment they can download and type directly into), a link for “Task” (this will ensure they understand what they’re aiming for as a final product), a link for “resources” (list of websites they will use to help research), and a link for “process” (a page of directions…possibly a word document check sheet they can print off and check off as they complete each task).

**Conclusion:**

At the end of this WebQuest, I really want the students to have an understanding for how decisions make an impact on the present and the future with benefits and consequences. In order to make an important decision, government, managers, teachers, parents, etc., all have to evaluate every angle of their decision, making sure to choose the one with the “least impactful consequences”. I also want students to understand that even one major consequence (such as district funding) would play a major role/consequence compared to a bunch of minor consequences (longer lunch lines, enemies in same school, more busses needed, etc.). It’s not about the quantity of benefits or consequences, but about the quality. I like that it supports fairness and respect in the classroom as students learn that their decisions impact others, just like the school systems. Who knows, they may even find that they’re researching their own school district and learning about their own learning environment!