

## Preface

This report represents the consensus of the consultant team employed by the East Central and Northeast Community School Districts to conduct a comparative study of facilities, enrollment, transportation, academic program, activity program, organizational structure, staffing and financial implications. The principal foci of the report are the financial status of the two districts and those aspects of facilities, the impact of the current and future student numbers on both the academic and activity programs; and professional school personnel. Specifically the consultants were charged with the responsibility in investigate the possibility of the two districts reorganizing to provide a comprehensive and better educational experience for the students of the two districts.

Information for the study was gathered from documents provided by administrators from the districts involved, from conferences with those administrators, from site visits and conversations with district leadership teams of both districts and crossed-referenced from information gathered from public information from the Iowa Department of Education and the Iowa Association of School Boards. This information was viewed against what the consultants perceived to be the best thinking of contemporary educational theorists, practitioners and researchers, but the conclusions reached are solely those of the consultants.

Information was not sought by the consultants from community residents, nor from individual educators in any of the districts involved. From the beginning the consultants sought to address two central questions, namely, (1) “Do the schools in question now offer the experiences required for an effective education, and can it do so in the future?” and (2) “Which facilities would provide the best learning environment and the richest educational experiences for the students of both districts?” Hence, information and opinions which did not contribute directly to those issues were intentionally avoided, thus ensuring, to the extent humanly possible, absolute objectivity. Though it may be argued that other considerations should be weighed, the consultants believe that, while schools may indeed be for many things, they are primarily for educating children. In the final analysis, it is important to know which schools do that well.

Our project was expedited by the exceptional cooperation we received from the administrators and leadership teams in each of the districts involved in this study. We owe them our gratitude.

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