I. INTRODUCTION-PRESENT STATE OF THE DISTRICT PROFILE

As a part of the Richmond School District Configuration Study process, NESDEC has been asked by the District to develop a Profile of the Present State of the District which includes pertinent demographic and enrollment data, as well as information regarding existing programs, standardized test results, curriculum initiatives and district goals which would be used to inform the District school configuration decision-making process.

In preparing the demographic component of the Richmond District Profile, NESDEC reviewed:

- Population and housing data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau
- Birth data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- Residential permitting information made available through HUD
- Existing home sales statistics made available by the Warren Group
- A Regional and Massachusetts Housing Market Analysis produced by the New England Economic Partnership
- Information on Berkshire County and the Town of Richmond provided by the Berkshire County Planning Commission
- Population Projections provided by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts
- NESDEC also interviewed Town government officials and local realtors regarding issues affecting the local housing market

In developing the educational and enrollment projection components of the District Profile, NESDEC:

- Received information from the School Administration regarding pertinent district instructional issues and District Goals
- Reviewed and analyzed recent district MCAS Test data
- Examined materials related to current curriculum initiatives
- Analyzed district enrollment data supplied by the district and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Based on the information gained from data analysis and interviews, NESDEC developed the following District Profile:

II. PROFILE OF THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DISTRICT

Richmond, Massachusetts

Richmond Massachusetts is located in Berkshire County, approximately 10 miles southwest of Pittsfield Massachusetts, 145 miles west of Boston and 45 miles southeast of Albany, New York. Richmond has a land area of 19 square miles. The community has easy access to State Route 41, and is in close proximity to U.S. Routes 7 and 20, as well as Interstate Route 90 (the Massachusetts Turnpike). Richmond also has easy access to the New York Thruway.

The town, which is governed by a Town Meeting form of government, was settled in 1756 and incorporated in 1765. According to historical records, the town was named in honor of Charles Lennox, the Duke of Richmond.

DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS

Population Trends

The Outlook for Population Growth

National and Regional Factors Affecting the Size and Nature of Population Growth

- On the national level, the “Baby Boomer” generation has begun turning 65 years of age at the rate of 10,000 per day and this is projected to continue for the next 14 years. The most recent New England Economic Partnership (NEEP) Conference economic outlook analysis reported that Massachusetts has an aging population that will continue to grow in number over the next several years.

- In November of 2013, the UMass Donahue Institute published a report entitled Long Term Projections for Massachusetts Regions and Municipalities. A section of the report provided combined population analyses for Franklin and Berkshire Counties and noted that:
• from 2005-2009, in Berkshire and Franklin Counties, out-migration exceeded in-migration by 6,840 people
• out migrants have been predominantly teens and young adults
• out-migration of youth and the importation of retirees points to “a Berkshire Region that is relatively old and getting older”

• In 2013, The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission reported the following:
  ▪ The Berkshire County population declined by 18,183 persons between 1970 and 2010 (an average loss of 454 per year).
  ▪ Since 1994, within Berkshire County, births averaged 1,288 per year, while deaths averaged 1,519 per year
  ▪ From 2005 to 2010, Berkshire County’s out-migration exceeded in-migration by an average of 285 persons per year
  ▪ The high level of out-migration among the child-rearing cohort (age 24 to 34) was viewed as particularly noteworthy
  ▪ Unless factors affecting current trends change, the county’s population will continue to decline over the next several years (Source: Berkshire County’s Changing Population: updated in 2013).

Data Related to the Richmond Population and Factors Affecting Local Population Growth

General Population
• In 2000, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the Town of Richmond had a population of 1,604. According to the Census Bureau’s 2010 Report, the population of Richmond decreased to 1,475.
• A population estimate released in December of 2013 by the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts projected that Richmond’s population would decline to 1,402 this year and then experience a further decline to 1,308 persons in 2020. By the year 2025, the Donahue Institute estimates that Richmond’s population will be 1,210.
Factors Affecting Richmond’s Population Growth

- **Births** – According to data provided by the Massachusetts Department of Health, the average number of births to residents of the Richmond declined during the period from 2000-2013. Between 2000 and 2006, births averaged 8 per year, while the average birth rate for 2007-2013 was 5 per year. At the time of this publication, the Department of Health had not published birth data for 2014.

- **Age Cohorts** – According to the U.S. Census Bureau 2010 Report, the School District’s under-18 age cohort totaled 244 people. This represented 16.5% of the District’s total population. The 2010 Report also stated that since 2000 the District’s 21-34 child-rearing age cohort decreased from 142 to 121 people, a 15% reduction. The Census Report also indicated that in 2010 the 50+ cohort, which includes the “Baby Boomer” population, totaled 806 or 55% percent of Richmond’s total population.

- A recent Long Range Planning Study conducted for the Town of Richmond by the Berkshire Planning Commission included a population analysis which noted that three key populations in Richmond differ from the regional average. Among the differences noted was the fact that the percentage of school-aged residents in Richmond is smaller than the regional median, while the number of Richmond residents who are middle-aged and elderly is greater than the regional median. According to The Berkshire Planning Commission, in Richmond “the number of deaths per year is almost double that of births.”

  *The report concludes that “no matter the data sources, there is still a trend in Richmond’s overall population size that is a trend of decline”.*

- **Residential Construction**
  - Government officials, realtors, The Berkshire Planning Commission, and HUD indicate that there has been little new home construction in Richmond (two new home permits in the past five years – HUD).
  - Local government officials and realtors report that there are no major subdivisions approved or in the approval pipeline.
• **Existing Home Sales**
  - According to The Warren Group, existing single-family home sales have rebounded slightly since the housing downturn of 2007-2011. Between 2007 and 2011, single family sales averaged 14 per year. In 2013 and 2014 (through November), single-family sales totaled 18 and 17. The annual average during the housing boom of 2000-2006 was 24 single-family sales per year.
  - Local realtors report that in The Richmond District and its surrounding area has not seen much change in the overall volume of housing sales. There is generally a high entry-level price. Very few homes on the market are priced at less than $300,000. A significant portion of the market in Richmond and surrounding communities is a second home market.
  - Realtors, The Berkshire Planning Commission and The UMass Donahue Institute all have indicated that in-migrants are often in the over-55 age group. Realtors and The Berkshire Planning Commission also indicate that the lack of expanding job availability in the region is a factor that affects the volume of home sales.

**THE SCHOOL DISTRICT – RICHMOND CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL**

• **General Description**
  - According to the DESE database, The Richmond Consolidated School had an October 1, 2014 K-8 student enrollment of 145. A breakdown of the K-8 enrollment numbers indicates the following:
    - Richmond residents – 66 students
    - School Choice enrollees from other communities - 76 students
    - Tuitioned-in students – 9 students (mostly from Hancock)
  - Approximately 44 Richmond high school aged students are “tuitioned-out” to the Berkshire Hills (35 students), Lenox (3 students) and Pittsfield (6 students) School Districts.
  - Richmond has an elected School Committee that governs the Richmond PK-8 Consolidated School.

• **Enrollment History**
According to data obtained from both the District and the DESE database, between 2004 and 2014 the PK-8 enrollment of the Richmond District declined by 37 students (195 in October 2004 vs. 158 in October 2014).

Of the 158 PK-8 total enrollment, 117 students are registered in Grades PK-5, while 41 are attending Grades 6-8.

The 2014-2015 grade level tallies of choiced-in students were:
- PK – 8 students
- K – 13 students
- Grade 1 – 8 students
- Grade 2 – 6 students
- Grade 3 – 13 students
- Grade 4 – 3 students
- Grade 5 – 6 students
- Grade 6 – 4 students
- Grade 7 – 5 students
- Grade 8 – 7 students

School Choice Sending Communities:
- Cheshire – 1
- Dalton – 1
- Great Barrington – 1
- Hancock – 3
- Lee – 4
- Lenox – 1
- Pittsfield – 44 (1 Special Ed)
- Stockbridge – 2
- West Stockbridge - 9

Enrollment Projections
- NESDEC projects that between 2014-15 and 2019-20 the Richmond Consolidated School enrollments will stabilize with minor fluctuations (one or two student) occurring from year to year. The forecast assumes that:
Richmond and Hancock enrollment numbers will remain constant

The District will be able to recruit enough School Choice students from other communities to maintain enrollment as in the recent past

**NESDEC typically recommends that districts keep a close watch on changes in variables such as annual births, building permits and existing home sales. These factors play a key role in defining the assumptions upon which enrollment projections are based. If any of these assumptions need to be altered in the future, so too will the projections.**

- **Test Results**

  - 2014 MCAS – Information received from the Massachusetts Department of Education and the District based on school-wide data indicated that the Richmond Consolidated School was designated by DESE as a Level I School for the second consecutive year. Level I has been designated by the DESE as the top-performing category. Particularly impressive was the fact that the school was ranked among the top 3 in the state for performance in Elementary English Language Arts and Elementary Mathematics (#1 in Grade 5 Math and #3 in Grade 3 Math).

- **Improvement Initiatives (2014-2015)**

  - Domain 1: Literacy in All Content Areas – Goals
    - Students will know and use reading, writing, listening, speaking and thinking strategies to learn across all content areas. They will be able to demonstrate, communicate and transfer their learning to new situations.
    - Students will demonstrate understanding of Mathematics literacy, fluency with Algebraic thinking (both abstract and procedural), and will implement strategic and proficient problem solving.
    - Students will be able to comprehend digital text and media, and communicate and transfer that learning to new situations, both verbally and in writing.
  
  - Domain 2: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment – Goal
Students will be proficient within a standards-based curriculum and data-driven system that includes aligned curriculum and rigorous instruction that is responsive to the needs of all students. District staff will use assessment data to inform curriculum development and instructional practice in order to promote student learning.

- **Domain 3: School Climate**
  - Students will learn in a physically and emotionally supportive environment conducive to student growth and achievement.

- **Domain 4: Safety and Emergency Planning**
  - Richmond Consolidated School will develop, plan, and practice emergency planning procedures to support the safety of students and staff.

- **Domain 5: Family, School and Community Connections**
  - Richmond Consolidated School will share responsibility with families, business partners, school committee members and the community to foster and maintain positive mutual collaboration in order to support student learning and career/college readiness.

**Middle School Course Offerings (Grades 6-8)**

- English Language Arts – 5x
- Mathematics – 5x
- Science – 5x
- Social Studies – 5x
- Physical Education – 2x
- Spanish – 4x
- Technology – 2x
- STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering and Math – 2x
- CAP – Creative Arts Program – 1x
- Band – Concert 2X – Jazz 2x
- Chorus – 1 x
- Art – 2x
- CARES class – 2x
- Enrichment classes 2x
- Health Grades 6 and 8 – 1x

**Co-curricular Programs**

- The Richmond Consolidated School offers numerous co-curricular activities and programs throughout the year, including:
  - Creative Arts Programs – involve all grade levels PK-8
  - After school clubs, Music activities, Art program
  - Basketball program - K-4, 5-8
  - 4 Annual field trips – Washington or Philadelphia, Nature’s Classroom, Boston Museum of Science, Plymouth Plantation
  - STEAM program
  - Several other activities including projects and workshops at the Berkshire Museum, community concerts, assemblies, local author visits, and Middle School dances.