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# Small School District Consolidation in Texas: An Analysis of its Impact on Costs and Student Achievement

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*Historically, the number of school districts in the United States has decreased despite the obvious increase in the number of students. One cause of the reduction in school districts is that small rural school districts merge or consolidate with each other, resulting in fewer school districts. When school districts consolidate, all aspects of the school districts' operations are impacted. Each year lawmakers and rural school district officials face dwindling finances, and each year these decision makers question whether or not to consolidate small rural school districts.*

*Proponents tout the benefits of fiscal efficiency, a broadened curriculum and an increase in student achievement. Critics argue that the community suffers when schools close as the result of school district consolidation.*

*This investigation had dual focus areas. One area of investigation focused on the fiscal efficiency of consolidated school districts by comparing per pupil expenditures. The other investigation focused on student achievement levels by comparing passing rate percentages on the state assessment tests.*

*Expenditure and student achievement data were collected before and after consolidation. A paired samples t-test measured differences in efficiency, and the Lawshe-Baker Nomograph t-test measured differences in student achievement. The t-tests did reveal a statistical difference in expenditures and in student achievement. Per pupil expenditures increased while student achievement decreased for the absorbing district.*

*Keywords: online learning, graduate, pedagogy, statistics*