

Act 46 Fact Sheet for Sunderland

Act 46 is a new Vermont Law designed to encourage and support local decisions that:

- Provides greater equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities;
- Leads students to achieve or exceed the State's Education Quality Standards;
- Maximizes operational efficiencies by flexibly managing resources;
- Promotes transparency and accountability; and
- Provides educational services at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value.

The law provides tax and grants incentives to encourage mergers and has financial disincentives to control increases in per pupil spending. *Act 46 does not encourage or require closure of schools, restrict or change the amount or manner of districts paying student tuitions*

The law sets out three options:

- 1) **Accelerated Merger** - All school districts in a study become a supervisory district within one year.
- 2) **Conventional Merger** – May involve creating more than one unified school district under a supervisory union umbrella and allows for an additional year to decide.
- 3) **Petition to State Board to keep our current district**. The district must meet the State's Education Quality Standards. If the district is not approved then the district would be subject to the statewide plan. It would also include loss of tax incentives and small school grants.

Current Task – Review our options as a Board and community, gather information and decide on joining a Study Committee and appointing representatives.

Study Committee - A Study Committee is a temporary body of interested school districts that review new governance options, decide on a path and create Articles of Agreement to define the new organization. The committee is composed of at least one school board member and the balance can be community members.

The Process – A study report including Articles of Agreement are written based on a state template that defines 17 points including defining the new district, school buildings, board representation, employment contracts, assets, debt and other elements. This all happens with significant community involvement. The report is submitted to the State Board of Education for approval. They will evaluate the Agreement in light of the major tenets of the law and decide whether the Agreement does not cause a hardship for neighboring districts. Once approved, each community votes on whether to accept the Agreement forming a new unified district. The new district would have one board and one budget.

For more information about Act 46 and the status of Sunderland's process, please visit www.Sunderlandelementary.org and www.brsu.org or www.education.vermont.gov. Please share your thoughts and ask questions by emailing gwoodrow@brsu.org or calling the BRSU at 802 362-2452. We welcome everyone to be part of the conversation!