

BRENDA BUZZELL

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Barre Town is in an established a supervisory union with Barre City, sharing Spaulding High School. Our schools have aligned curriculums and share many services such as curriculum specialists, technology specialists, business managers as well as supporting a preschool program that we <sup>expanded</sup> began with support from the VT Community Preschool Collaborative. This proposal will **not** be a boost to Barre Town educationally, although this may allow us to control class size ratios if we determine to house our students in our two elementary schools by grade levels.

Our Barre Town budget with an increase of 2.79% passed by a large majority and we have enjoyed the support of our taxpayers in these years of economic challenges. We remain conservative in our spending, yet offer many successful programs to our both our general and special education student populations. We own our buses, manage our own transportation system, and operate our schools less per pupil than the state average. Barre Town taxpayers support our efforts to operate our school efficiently and were adamant a few years ago as we examined consolidating busing services with Barre City School that they wanted to keep their transportation system intact. This transportation system is a huge asset that we would bring if we are mandated to dissolve our supervisory union and form a new school district. **This and many other financial issues need to be well thought out as schools are to be combined into new operating districts.**

I feel that any design team should seek ideas from individual community teams and procedures should be put into place so that one existing district does not lose assets that belong to the people of a town. This proposal, Act\_\_ should include these community opinions and incentives for communities to join into larger districts. This should not be a mandate that harms any community but a well thought out system that will benefit children and benefit the taxpayer.

I would like to point out that although we will see a decrease in superintendents and their salaries, eliminating local school boards who receive no or minimal stipends will not necessarily benefit overall finances, nor will busing children long distances to place more children in a classroom. In fact children who may have to travel a longer distance may not see educational gains. Buildings will still have to be heated, maintained and school administrators will still need to be present. We also know that as new educational in the future are enacted these effect school spending.

In conclusion, I do **not** feel there will be much of an impact to Barre Town's educational system, but instead a headache to blend our assets from a supervisory union into one school district.

Overall for Vermonters, I wonder if instead of referring to this bill as a means to lowering taxes, it might be better described as an educational opportunity. I urge this committee and the commissioner to place the educational benefits with well planned procedures outlining guidelines and incentives before moving this legislation.

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Barre Town Middle and Elementary School, School Board Chair