

Dear Education committee members,

We are writing to you about the value of small elementary schools in Vermont. We live in Brownsville, a town of about 1000 residents. Our in-town elementary school serves 80 students in grades K-6. We send middle and high school students out of town to surrounding schools.

A high quality elementary school is the reason we purchased our house in Brownsville. Our daughter Anna is attending kindergarten this year in Brownsville.

If the elementary school in Brownsville were to close, Brownsville would become a community of retired persons. Families would have little reason to stay in town. For a town to thrive it must have families residing in it.

Yes, larger schools can provide more opportunities, but at what cost? I don't want Anna riding a bus forty or more minutes to and from elementary school. Attending an out of town school would mean that many of her friends would be from out of town. As working parents we would have difficulty arranging play dates for Anna as her friends would live miles away.

At an out-of-town school Anna would lose the close caring connections that make her community elementary school so valuable. Parents and community members would be less likely to volunteer.

Brownsville is willing to pay for a small, local elementary school. What is killing us is the fact that for every dollar we raise to operate our school we have to come up with another forty or fifty cents that goes out of town. The tax situation is a problem and needs to be changed immediately.

Sincerely,

Robert Young and Sofia Bertocci

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