

Act 166 and Head Start

This year Barre City Supervisory Union opted not to renew a 20 year collaboration with Capstone Head Start as a result of Act 166. Head Start provides a minimum of 3 ½ hour sessions, this did not allow enough time for the school to add a second session and still run their regular morning and afternoon bus routes. This year they are offering two hour long sessions am and pm in order to increase the number of preschool students. This high needs community has now reduced the number of hours of service and eliminated the wrap-around services to the neediest children in their care.

Swanton has ended a 10 plus year collaboration with Champlain Valley Head Start. This year the collaboration is providing wrap around services and 3 ¾ hours per day 5 days per week of preschool to 15 children. The school is still determining what they will provide next year, but is discussing providing preschool for 45 children with two days per week being a double session (different classes am and pm) and three days per week being a single session.

Champlain Valley is also seeing a 10-15 year collaboration end in St. Albans in an effort to decrease the number of hours of service in order to increase the number of children in the preschool. St. Albans and Swanton represent the neediest communities in Franklin County and Head Start serves those children and families with the greatest need within those communities.

A secondary side effect that Head Start is seeing as a result of Act 166 is a decrease in special education services provided to children on Individual Education Plans. Capstone Head Start has recently been provided notice from Barre City Supervisory Union that children that we serve in their service area that have traditionally been provided with special education services will no longer be due to their interpretation of Act 166. Barre Supervisory Union is split into two districts: Barre City and Barre Town. Our center is located in Barre City and those children who drive the 4 miles from Barre Town will no longer be receiving special education services from the school as of next year.

Thank you for your time and attention,

Christy Swenson-Robertson, MS/CCC-SLP
Associate Director
Capstone Community Action Head Start