

## **Statement of Marty Strange**

### **Vermonters for Schools and Community**

#### **Supplemental Statement to Testimony Give February 12, 2015**

#### **House Education Committee, Vermont General Assembly**

At the hearing before the House Education Committee on February 12, 2015, I said I would supply two sets of data I described then verbally.

Item 1. A table summarizing a study from Nebraska of how curricular offerings and student enrollment in courses varies with high school enrollment size. As I said during the hearing, I do not think these data are directly applicable to Vermont. While Nebraska high schools are small relative to the rest of the nation, they are not as small as Vermont's. I offered this data because it demonstrates that it can be objectively verified how course offerings vary with school size, and how participation in the curricula varies with school size. A similar study, using school size intervals appropriate to Vermont, would be very useful in the current environment.

Item 2. A portion of the Comparative School District Data for Cost-Effectiveness, FY2014, from the Vermont Agency on Education website. I point your attention to the block showing data for the 33 K-12 districts in the state. This table shows cost per Full-time Equivalent Student (not equalized student count, so there are no "phantom students" here). For the 33 districts, the average cost is \$12,511. Of the seven districts with more than 1,000 students, three have per pupil costs above the cohort average. Of the 26 districts with fewer than 1,000 students, 13 have per pupil costs above average and 13 have per pupil cost below average. If the largest district, Burlington, spent the average for this cohort instead of the \$14,216 it actually spent, total cost of education in the state would have been \$5.7 million less than it was, an amount greater than the amount the committee bill would save by eliminating the small school grant for all but the "geographically necessary" small schools. The point here is not that Burlington

spends too much (although voters there did defeat its budget last year). The point is that high spending is not universal among small schools and it is not exclusive to small schools.

The entire report can be accessed at:

[http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Data\\_School\\_Comparison\\_Data\\_for\\_Cost\\_Effectiveness\\_FY2014.pdf](http://education.vermont.gov/documents/EDU-Data_School_Comparison_Data_for_Cost_Effectiveness_FY2014.pdf).

