

Debra Stoleroff 4/22/15

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Testimony to Senate Committee on Education  
4.22.15

My name is Debra Stoleroff. I am a resident of Plainfield and the Director of the Renaissance Program at Twinfield Union School. Twinfield is a Pre-K to 12 school of 400 students. Renaissance is one of the two oldest programs in the state to personalize education for high school students. I do not represent anyone's opinions but my own in this matter.

I have grave concerns about the School Governance bill.

When analyzed, one notes this bill does not necessarily guarantee saved money for taxpayers. The incentives may hamper equity as provided by Act 60. It ~~impedes~~<sup>harms</sup> local democracy by ceding control to unelected officials, administrators, and distant school boards. Most importantly, to me, as an educator, this bill will undermine and distract my school from the much more important implementation of groundbreaking Act 77 and the EQS. It will turn to waste the inordinate time, energy and money we've already spent towards fulfilling the 2013 law.

WNESU is a small SU of two districts -- Twinfield and Cabot -- both recognized for our capacity to be flexible and innovative. Our SU meets almost all of the 'preferred' criteria -- we are Pre-K-12, already share resources, special educators and have a joint contract. But, because our ADM is less than 900 students we may be forced to fit into a configuration that does not geographically work for us.

Before passing a bill that could bog schools down for years therefore undermining the great work implementing Act 77 and student access to high quality, innovative, educational opportunities already in our communities, I urge the Vermont legislature to take the time to analyze how some Vermont schools are already able (without consolidating) to exceed expectations in meeting our students' personalized educational needs. Use that information to write a governance bill that supports, not sabotages Act 77; that enables all our schools and communities to do 'the great work'; the work of providing quality education for all. In general, small, not large enables systemic flexibility. Write a bill that enhances our capacity to be flexible and transparent.

Along with my written testimony I am submitting a copy of the Global Best Practices Assessment used by Vermont's League of Innovative Schools. I urge all legislators to consider using the dimensions educational experts use to assess schools before voting for this bill.

Note: The New England Consortium of Secondary School's Global Best Practices Assessment can be found at: [http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/global\\_best\\_practices.pdf](http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/global_best_practices.pdf)