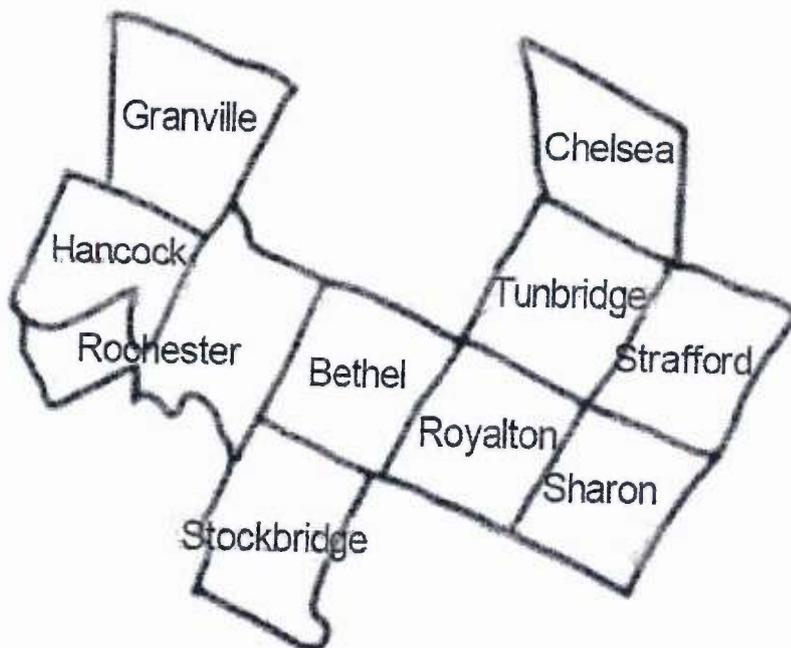


Name: Francis Russell

Title: Member, Rochester School Board; WRVSU PK-12 Operating Study Committee

Committee: House Education Committee

Date and Time of Testimony: February 8, 2017 10:00 AM



RESPONDING TO ACT 46

In the midst of all of this planning, Act 46 passed the 2015 legislature, driven by declining student population, increasing costs per student, and growing inequity in educational opportunities across the state.

Act 46 of 2015 became law in June, 2015. It calls for school districts in the state to come together to create somewhat greater scale in order to achieve the following goals:

Provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities

Lead students to achieve or exceed the State's Education Quality Standards

Maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with the goal of increasing the district-level ratio of students to full-time equivalent staff.

Promote transparency and accountability.

Deliver education at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value.

The assumption inherent in the bill is that issues of quality, inequity of student opportunity, and the ever-increasing cost-per-student can best be addressed over the long-run by the creation of somewhat larger school *districts*. The hope is that local regions will come together and figure out a viable pathway to achieve that objective. The bill includes incentives for districts to unify. It also includes the eventuality that the State Board can, in November, 2018, order unification, if regions have not developed their own approach to unification prior to that.

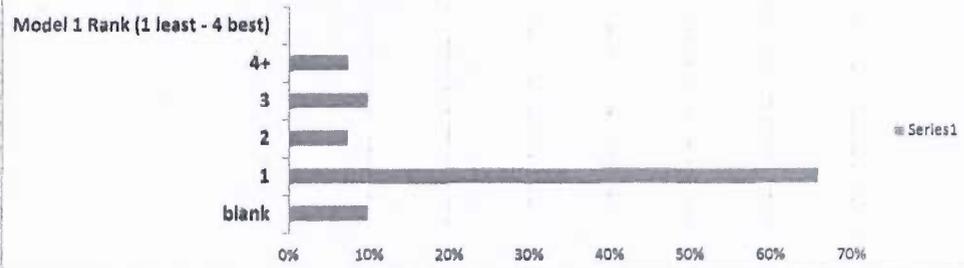
Total Questionnaires-	41	
Who are You?		% of Total
Taxpayer	36	88%
Live in Rochester	38	93%
Parent	25	61%
Teacher/School Staff	5	12%
Student	2	5%
Live in Another Town affected by this merger	0	0%
Other	2	5%



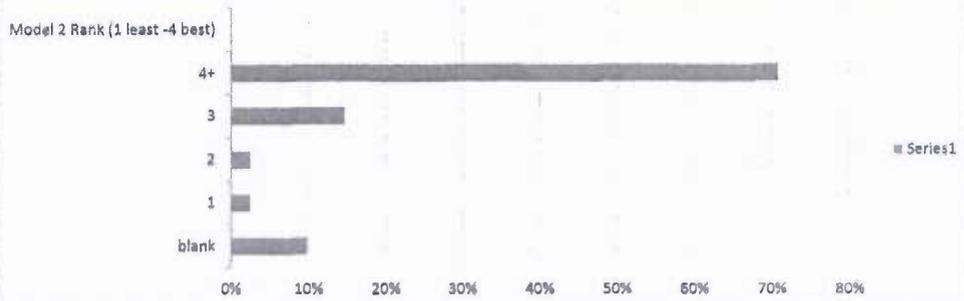
- Taxpayer
- Live in Rochester
- Parent
- Teacher/School Staff
- Student

Would you Vote for Any Model Presented?		
Yes	30	73%
No	3	7%
Blank/Maybe	8	20%

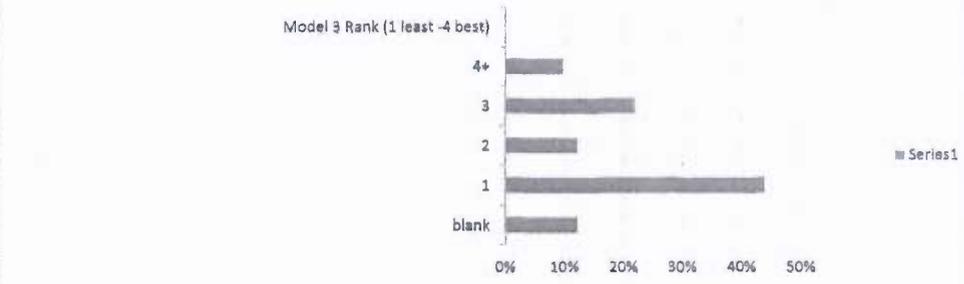
Model 1 Rank (1 least - 4 best)		
4+	3	7%
3	4	10%
2	3	7%
1	27	66%
blank	4	10%



Model 2 Rank (1 least - 4 best)		
4+	29	71%
3	6	15%
2	1	2%
1	1	2%
blank	4	10%



Model 3 Rank (1 least - 4 best)		
4+	4	10%
3	9	22%
2	5	12%
1	18	44%
blank	5	12%



OTHER suggestions?

#2 but swap so HS in R and MS in B

#2 but swap so HS in R and MS in B

1 HS district in Bethel, Centrally Located, expand building if needed

Be advisable, look at k-6 or K-8

Board merger could happen day on and school merger come in later years

Innovate. School in summer. See sheet

K-6 or K-8 Choice HS

K-8 Choice, K-8 soro HS

MS Bethel, HS Rochester

New union HS centrally located. State pays for it

Outdoor program for MS

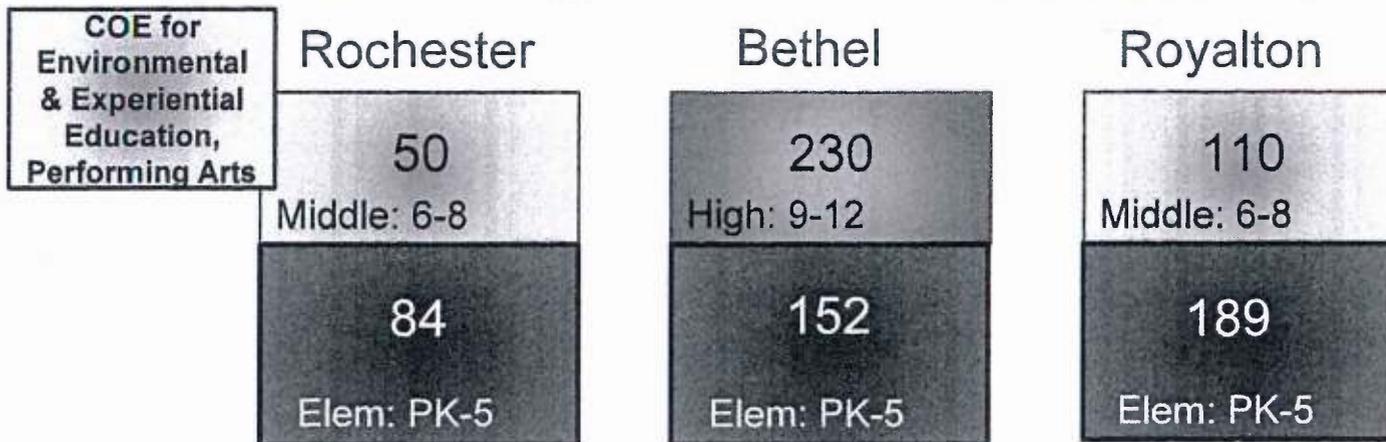
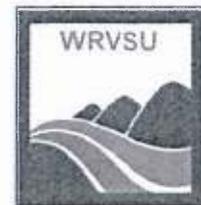
PK-6 Rochester 7-12 Choice

PK-6 Rochester 7-12 Choice

SO RO HS K-8 Each town

MODEL X

One District High and Two District Middle Schools



- Critical Mass Achieved for Model HS Program with expanded Course Offerings, expansion of athletics, increased co-curricular offerings
- Centrally Located HS for newly formed three town District
- Two Designated Sites for true (Tarrant Foundation-supported) 6-8 Middle School Programs, with “magnet foci” campuses-
Rochester: Environmental/Experiential Ed (Student owned land in the GMNF); Performing Arts (theater, music); Arts; Shop
SoRo: Music, EEE (White River access), Environmental/Law-related, Engineering
- Intra-Enrollment possible within district for Bethel MS students
- No Loss of Transition Incentives
- Continued provision of accessible MS “educational opportunities” for “QuinTown corridor” towns (Hancock, Granville, Rochester, Stockbridge, Pittsfield)
- More equitable Transportation burden; facilitation of transportation to RTCC
- No “unintended consequences” for QuinTown enrollments at Rochester Elementary
- Providing assurance that Rochester MS/HS building WILL continue to be used for educational purposes.
- With Rochester MS/HS building housing MS, still capacity for COE for EEE and Performing Arts.

OUTDOOR & EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION CENTER IN ROCHESTER



Mission:

To create a lifelong passion for our natural environment by providing students with rigorous, place-based learning opportunities while accessing Rochester's unique resources within the Green Mountain National Forest and along the White River Valley



3
Tracks

Field Science

- Fisheries and wildlife biology
- Forestry
- Botany
- Ecology
- GIS

Education/Philosophy

- Nature writing
- Wilderness philosophy
- Vermont environmental culture
- Conservation & management

Recreation/Tourism/Business

- Site planning
- Financial management
- Grant-writing
- Activities (Rope, rock, orienteering, etc)

"Education is not preparation for life; it is life itself." John Dewey