Testimony: To House Committee on Education, Vermont Legislature April 4th 2017 Margaret Maclean, Peacham Vermont

1. MAP

- The map illustrates the number of communities who have MOVED BEYOND MERGER to consider their final governance structure a Supervisory Union
- Approx. 50 districts will make Alternative Structure proposals

2. GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

- There are NO MORE preferred structures
- Every merger moving forward will result in the creation of a Supervisory Union
- Approx. 30 Supervisory Unions will be operating after Act 46
- Geographically more than ½ the state
- In offering narrowly engineered and controlled pathways [S122] the legislature is micro managing
- The question you need to ask is "How can Supervisory Unions effectively meet the goals of the law?" just as preferred structures have

3. ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURES = SUPERVISORY UNIONS

- Alternative Structures are not alternative they are Supervisory Unions
- The sub merger process [side by side] does not include a component related to how neighboring merged and unmerged districts will work together within the Supervisory Union they will form
- This is the governance structure to focus on but currently there is no expectation, no grants, no consultants and no time to accomplish this task

4. NEXT STEPS

- Local places are developing viable paths to meet the goals of the law, they are re envisioning Supervisory Unions
- School Board Members are more experienced than legislators at this
- Alternative structure applications should take place openly and transparently, NOT BEHIND CLOSED DOORS
- The same process and standards should be used for approving Supervisory Unions that was used for approving preferred structures

5. FLEXIBILITY

- The pathways in S122 are too narrow
- Ignoring Supervisory Unions and focusing on sub mergers, does the system a disservice
- The committee needs to accept reality and shift the focus to the Supervisory Unions that will result
- Trust communities to develop plans to present to the State Board
- Support partnership and transparency
- In a single minded quest to cram more kids into fewer districts at any cost, the state is ignoring the outcome, a system with a mix of preferred districts and supervisory unions
- Your eyes are not on the prize how educational improvement will be achieved
- Without flexibility Act 46 will result in Governance structure trumping educational performance

^{*}Map prepared by Melanie Henderson a volunteer from South Hero with input from towns around Vermont

Communities Considering Alternatives to Consolidation

