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To: House Ways and Means Committee  
From: Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D., Secretary of Education  
Date: March 14, 2017  
Re: Update on Act 46 merger votes on Town Meeting Day and Budgets

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Town meeting day votes involved:

- 10 proposals
- 53 separate votes (because 2 votes are by districts that are already multi-town PK-12 districts – Mtn Town RED and Millers Run UUSD)
- 57 towns
- 57 districts (which are not identical to the towns – the number is coincidentally the same)
- 11 SUs
- 4 proposals involve districts from more than one SU
- If approved, there could be at least 2 fewer SUs

The results of these votes include, if the votes are not changed on reconsideration (votes final on April 6):

Approved:

- Voters in 38 towns
- 7 supervisory unions
- 37 school districts
- Approved creation of 6 new unified districts

Rutland Central / Rutland SW (2 proposals):

- Voters in 3 additional districts approved 1 additional new unified district
- This merger will not go forward because it was contingent on a successful merger of 2 neighboring districts where the vote failed

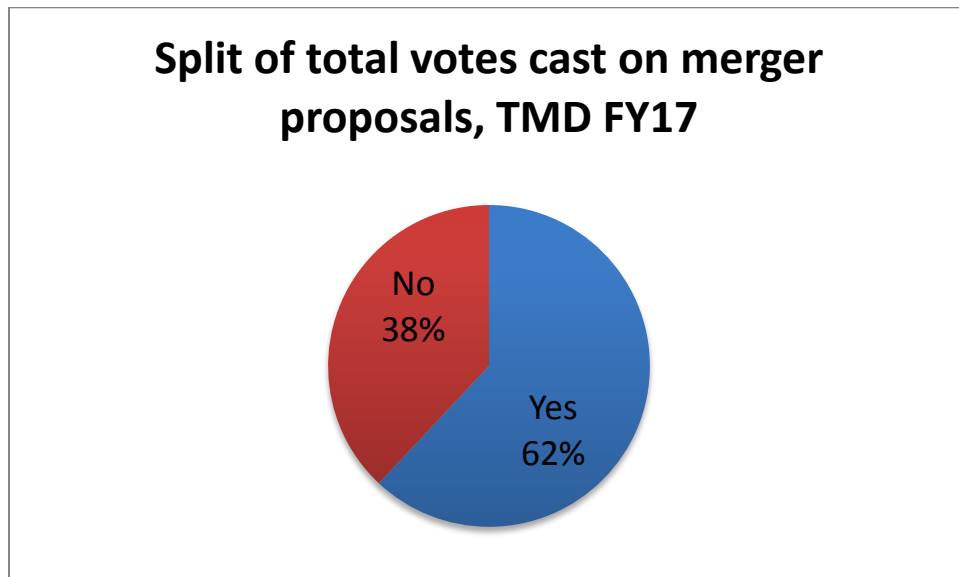
Not approved:

- Dover / Wardsboro / Marlboro
- Windham Northeast SU (Athens / Grafton / Rockingham / Westminster)

**Summary to date:**

The cumulative merger votes since July 1, 2015 associated with Act 46<sup>1</sup>, and assuming the Town Meeting Day votes are not changed on reconsideration, involve:

- Voters in 96 towns
- 21 supervisory unions
- 104 school districts
- Approved creation of 20 new unified districts (16 unified union school districts and 4 modified unified union school districts)
- 57% of all students live, or will soon live, in a unified district (includes existing SDs)

**Upcoming SBE Meetings**

March State Board of Education Meeting: 3 proposals

April State Board of Education Meeting: Anticipate approximately 4 proposals

**Upcoming Votes**

April 11:

- Votes on 3 separate proposals (White River Valley SU)
- 7 towns
- 7 districts
- 1 SU

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<sup>1</sup> This excludes Chittenden East, which voted to merge prior to the passage of Act 46.

May 2 (likely):

- Votes on 3 separate proposals
- 8 towns total
- 8 districts
- 3 SUs

**Update on Budgets**

With about 94% of budgets received (205 out of 219), budgeted expenditures are down about 1.76%, offsetting revenues are down about 19.62%, and initial education spending is up about 3.25%. This is very close to what was estimated in the December 1 letter from the tax commissioner. Note that education spending per equalized pupil is still increasing: statewide, the number of students is still declining proportionally faster than the number of staff and teachers.

**Percent Increases, FY2017 Preliminary Budgets**

**3/10/2017**

Number of budgets expected **219**  
 Percentage of budgets received 93.6%

FY2017 total budgets	1,680,560,707
percent of total FY17 budget \$\$	90.4%
FY2017 education spending	1,304,310,830
percent of total FY17 education spending \$\$	91.0%

27-Feb-17	205 # reporting		Same in		Same in	
	FY2018	FY18 vs FY17	FY2017	FY17 vs FY16	FY2016	
<b>Expenditures</b>	1,492,532,708	<b>-1.76%</b>	1,519,206,722	2.10%	1,487,993,980	
<b>Offsetting Revenues</b>	267,373,955	<b>-19.62%</b>	332,618,524	4.71%	317,649,780	
<b>Initial Ed Spending</b>	1,225,158,753	<b>3.25%</b>	1,186,588,198	1.39%	1,170,344,200	
<b>EqPup</b>	79,652.61	91.0% of tot EP	81,153.25	91.2% of tot EP	81,312.90	91.2% of tot EP
<b>ES / EP</b>	15,381.28	5.20%	14,621.57	1.59%	14,393.09	