

To the Chair and Committee of House Education Committee

Thank you for this opportunity to help the students and communities of Vermont.

we appreciate the opportunity to go through the more normal channels of the committee process, to effect amendment to Act 46.

H.15 is an opportunity to help unclog the logjam of communities across Vermont, that have working diligently to fulfill the goals of Act 46, but find themselves despite their due diligence unable to fit their situations into the constraints of the law as it currently stands.

H.15 opens the window wide enough to bring in enough oxygen to move these difficult situations across the finish line.

H.15 does NOT enable communities to "just say No", and do nothing. And, H.15 does not hurt districts that have already completed their work on Act 46. Their situations, either because of work done before Act 46, or because of the makeup of their districts were able to complete their work more easily and expeditiously, and they've received their incentives, which doesn't change with H.15.

While I don't know that we need to be as specifically prescriptive for specific towns as S.122 is, I can share a bit about the situation in our supervisory union.

For over a year, the A46 study committee has met and tried to find enough common ground to reach agreement - and /or, look at alternative ways to expand our district and find new partners that might create a mutually beneficial situation.

That aspect of Act 46 has worked, and brought people to the table to better in serving our children.

Currently, our A46 committee is in limbo, not knowing how to proceed.

There has not been a district wide vote and I believe H.15 could get the process back on track and with the flexibility of H15 create more and new possibility with more towns.

Our neighbor to the north Westminster has just offered an invitation for local schools to gather, en masse, and look to more creative ways to serve our children and meet the goals of Act 46.

My further hope is that we can expedite H.15 and get the focus of our work back on closing the Achievement Gap.

In passing the recent bill focused on Adverse Childhood Experiences, we have seen how prevalent trauma is in the families that struggle and how, the model offered by Vermont's Race to the Top, Early ed grant is directing services from the Dept of Health, Agency of Education and Dept for Children and Families to comprehensively address the realities of families living in trouble, and causing the barriers that preclude success in school and beyond.

With that work looming, I hope we can settle these governance issues and get back to focusing on the classrooms.

Thanks again for this opportunity.