



Stamford, VT – Clarksburg, MA Interstate Agreement Proposal

**Testimony to the Vermont House and Senate regarding the focus,
status, and goals of the School District's Act 46 proposal**

February 7, 2018

Who We Are:

- Cynthia Lamore, Chair, Stamford School Directors
- Kimberly Roberts-Morandi, Chair, Vermont Interstate Sub-Committee
- Jon Lev, Superintendent, North Berkshire School Union

Stamford Act 46 History

- 3 plans submitted over course of Act 46 history
 - Side by side
 - Merged district through current Supervisory Union
 - Interstate
 - Grew out of opportunity presented by Clarksburg to explore an innovative approach
 - Commitment of both towns and respective state and local legislators
 - Overwhelmingly supportive vote from Stamford to pursue this course of action
 - Sub-committee identified and working for 13 months
 - Multiple methods of communication with town residents

Why an Interstate Agreement

- Act 46 requirements:
 - “...provides opportunities for school districts to unify existing disparate governance structures into sustainable systems of education delivery that are designed to meet identified State goals while recognizing and reflecting local priorities.”
 - “...voluntarily merge into the most common governance models.
 - Accelerated Mergers (Phase 1);
 - REDs or RED variations (Phase 2);
 - and Conventional Mergers (Phase 3).”
- Stamford-Clarksburg interstate agreement proposal meets the requirements

Meeting the Requirements and Creating Economies of Scale

- Sustainable systems of education delivery
 - Provides a single, streamlined system
 - High performing academic district we are seeking to merge with; both systems have history of academically proficient students who excel in their high school studies
 - History of strong town support of school system and budget; engaging in sustaining activities
 - 93% of curriculum currently aligned across ELA, math; students responsible for MA standards for graduation
 - Reciprocal licensure
 - Professional development enhancement and supporting innovation
 - Cost-saving investigation occurring and will be a part of the financed study
- Recognizing and Reflecting Local Priorities
 - High quality education for students, preK-12; preparation for a competitive high school experience
 - Building-based administration and programming
 - Enhanced options in arts, language, physical education, social/emotional supports, health, after-school
 - Students remain with a cohort preK-12
 - Sustainable budgets
 - Voice in the process
 - Seek always to gain and not lose what both districts currently have
- Our overarching, driving question: how do we justify blending students with those they have no prior relationships with, extending learning great distances, and across roads that have a history of closing when a viable alternative exists less than 4 miles away?

Stamford – Clarksburg Community Ties Beyond Education

- Familial links/friends/home ownership
- Employment centered around the same region
- Health care
- Houses of worship
- Shopping
- Library resources beyond the two community buildings
- Clubs, athletics, the arts, outdoor activities
- Support networks and resources
- Children's programming
- Close cultural, financial, and geographical alignment

Vermont-Proposed Merger



Geographic Reality and Impacts



Where We Are in the Process

- Stamford town vote to proceed with exploration; March Town Meeting update scheduled; Clarksburg to look toward May Town Meeting
- Sub-Committee commitments from both towns; meetings scheduled and process to be negotiated
- Legislative bodies and representatives on both sides identified and information has been shared
- Massachusetts legislative process identified and state/local officials are aware and have issued a letter indicating such
- MA financial commitment already received
- Early work around budget study has begun
- Legal representation engaged in Massachusetts; Vermont seeking support for this
- And we are here...

What We Are Asking for Today

- Support by accepting the Act 46 proposal
- Matching funds for a study (MA financial commitment already received) to examine feasibility, configuration of governance, documentation required for agreement, timeline; legal costs
- Continuation of small schools grant
- Commitment to see this process through following town votes, as required by law, in support of the efforts
 - Support
 - Understanding and recognizing this approach as equity in educational opportunities
 - Finances
 - Special legislation
 - Belief in the need to provide our students with this most beneficial option



Thank you.

Questions?

Reflections?

Contact information for us on following slide.

Contacting Us

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