

Thank you for your time today.

I am Liz Adams from Putney in Windham Southeast. My children went to Putney Central School, and now my granddaughter attends it. It is a pre-K through 8 school.

While we have not yet voted on a merger plan, I believe it will fail if-or-when it is put to a vote due to proportional representation. This proposal is tearing our supervisory union apart – a union that has collaborated well over the years. This merger proposal does not support small schools because it destroys the uniqueness of each small town's school. People with children choose to move to a town for its small school's culture. We do want to meet the goals of Act 46, but need a flexible alternative structure to do so in a way that will retain the character of each of our schools, provide equitable educational opportunities for all children in our SU and use collaboration to save money. However, the way forward with an alternative structure is a muddled mess because while it is included in the law, no one at the State level has developed clear criteria to guide us as to what are acceptable alternative structures. {S122 is a too narrowly focused bill that does not get to the root of the problem in large areas of our rural state.}

In the merger proposal for Windham Southeast, Putney stands to lose much of what helps kids thrive. In addition to threats to the environmental learning in the school forest, we would likely lose our outstanding phys-ed teacher due to a probable reduction in his hours (as envisioned by the evidenced-based model) He is an amazing and much loved teacher who inspires kids and goes above and beyond what phys ed usually encompasses. He has been nationally recognized for the biking program that he organized. He participates in recess every day for both the middle school kids and the K-5 recess club. He also leads after-school biking, and he goes above and beyond all of this by incorporating what kids are learning in class into phys ed whenever possible. He also teaches about the human body as appropriate to each grade. Just recently, though a version of heads-shoulders-knees and toes, he has been teaching 3rd graders the names of major muscle groups thereby extending their knowledge of the human body, how it works and increasing their vocabulary.