

Don McLean

To:
Vermont House of Representatives
Committee on Education

February 5, 2019

I am writing to let the Committee know that there is a lot of support in Guilford for the move to delay the forced merger. Although a few years removed from my time on the Guilford Town School Board (2 years as Chair) I've continued to be involved in the process, and have attended a number of Guilford Board meetings. The timeline mandated by the November 30 State Board of Education's final ruling on merger for the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union has caused a lot of confusion among the local school boards as they rush to have budgets ready to warn for March 5 District Meeting, and, in fact, the Guilford board was so uncertain about the issue that they decided not to warn a budget.

A major remaining issue for our SU is the situation regarding the Vernon Town School District. (I testified specifically on that issue in September to the State Board.) As it currently stands, Vernon, which has been a partner with the other 4 towns in our Supervisory Union for some 60 years, a highly successful relationship, is now facing orphan status due to their policy of school choice for secondary grades. I believe there is a path to including Vernon — and they very much want to say allied with contiguous neighbor, Guilford, and the other towns in our current SU — if we have a bit more time to work that out.

Keeping Vernon in the fold is important for many of us in Windham - 1, which is our legislative district consisting of Vernon & Guilford.

These are some specific reasons I hope the delay may be enacted, in addition to the more general ones you've been hearing about.

Thank you for communicating my position to the other Committee members.

Best,

Don McLean