

FRANKLIN NORTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION

Superintendent of Schools' Office

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Date: 1/25/2019

Dear Speaker Johnson, Representative Webb, Representative Fegard, Representative Gamache, Representative Savage, Senator Ashe, Senator Baruth, Senator Brock, and Senator Parent;

I have been asked by the Franklin School District and the Sheldon School District to write on their behalf regarding the upcoming possible vote to extend the deadline for the implementation of the State Board of Education mandated mergers. These two school boards are very much in favor of an extension to the implementation deadline from 7/1/2019 to 7/1/2020.

Both Town School Districts are litigants in an appeal of the State Board decision. Both towns have been outspoken in their hope that the State Board would accept the Franklin Northwest SU Alternative Governance Proposal. Both districts have significant concerns about the implementation of this Act 46 & 49. As their superintendent, I am supportive of their participation in the appeal as the best avenue to resolve their legal disagreements with the the State Board's decision.

Although a delay of the operational deadline for involuntary mergers will be a challenge for any schools in our position, the current state of implementation is already immensely difficult. Sheldon is not only under orders to merge with another existing K-8 operating school district, it is being reassigned to a different Supervisory Union. That is a complex process with little precedent to guide those trying to implement that transition. At the same time, we have already had a month long postponement of our organizational meeting which has hampered the New Unified District's ability to move forward with amending the default articles of agreement, developing a merged budget, and other important tasks required before the district becomes operational in July. In short, the quick timeline for the implementation of this significant change in governance has been very difficult.

As someone who has experienced a successful voluntary merger with more than a year to complete the transition, I know that time was an important part of that success. A delay in implementation would allow the boards to resolve their legal appeal. If that appeal prevails, school officials would have a clear course of action. If unsuccessful, we would have longer to plan for an effective transition. No matter the outcome, we want to ensure that our children, families and community continue to be well served.

Thank you for your attention and continued support of our students and communities.

Sincerely,



Julie Regimbal, Superintendent

Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union