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**BENNINGTON-RUTLAND SUPERVISORY UNION**

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*METTAWEE SCHOOL DISTRICT •• TACONIC AND GREEN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT •• WINHALL SCHOOL DISTRICT*

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January 19, 2022

Dear Members of the House Education Committee:

The Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU) respectfully requests that the legislature not delay the implementation of Act 173. You have heard a lot of testimony on this topic, so I will keep my comments brief.

1. Act 173 is not a new piece of legislation and school districts have had sufficient time to prepare for its financial and programmatic implementation. It has already been delayed once.
2. With the transition to the census-block grant funding model on July 1, 2022, districts are currently building budgets using the new funding formula associated with the Act. BRSU's three district school boards have already approved budgets to be voted on in March. To delay implementation will be confusing to taxpayers as we try to explain the rationale for deficit spending in the special education budget.
3. We aren't ready, but no one is, and we will still not be ready a year from now. However, we know the best practices required and will continue to work toward realizing the educational expectations in the years to come.
4. The Agency of Education has not provided the required technical assistance outlined in Act 173. However, the District Management Group (DMG) recommendations for best practice are well articulated and several of the state's professional associations have provided professional learning opportunities. We will continue to learn and develop our systems and instructional practices in the years ahead. I do not believe a delay will change this or make us more prepared a year from now. Educational change is always a long, slow process.

I understand some of my colleagues are concerned about the financial impact of the transition to the census-block special education funding model. As a high-spending district, I understand this concern and we have attempted to reduce our spending over the past few years. A recommendation to address this might be to use pandemic relief funds to support districts who will have an immediate hardship for a period of time. Should you choose to delay implementation of Act 173, I encourage you to consider the same relief for districts who have developed their FY23 budgets and will be adversely impacted financially by the delay.

We find ourselves at a difficult point in time in education and I understand you are weighing important factors when considering a delay. I encourage you to stay with the timeline established.

Respectfully submitted,

Randi Lowe, EdD, Superintendent  
Sue Wilborn, Business Manager