

**Winooski High School Student Statements for the VT Senate
Education Committee
April 25, 2025**

Natalie: My name is Natalie and I am a junior at Winooski. In elementary school, I went to South Burlington, but when I came to Winooski in 5th grade, I immediately felt at home. I thought “ooh wow, there are a lot of people like me” and it made me feel comfortable and safe for the first time in school. The proposed governor’s plan suggests that we move from 119 districts to 5 districts. The current plan in the Senate suggests maybe 20 districts of 4,000 students each. Winooski would no longer exist; instead it would be part of one giant district. If this happened, we would lose everything about what makes Winooski special and unique. We would lose the feeling of safety and belonging that I feel every day when I walk into school, surrounded by people who look like me, understand me, and support me. The Winooski District is unique in Vermont and I want to do everything that I can to save it.

Afia: My name is Afia, and I am a junior. The proposed Governor's plan requires a minimum class size of 25. I can't begin to tell you how bad this is. Only once was I in a class this big: it was overstimulating, it was loud, and I did not receive individual attention from the teacher. In contrast, at Winooski, we often have small class sizes. This allows for teachers to connect with each and every student, makes our classroom discussions feel comfortable and safe, and it is easier to build a trusting and safe classroom community. The proposed minimum class sizes would be absolutely detrimental to kids like me. The proposed class size minimum from the House of 18 students for grades 5-12 is definitely an improvement, but we still must consider how larger classes impact all of our students.

Albina: I am an immigrant from Nepal. I came to Winooski when I was in first grade. As a Multilingual Learner, I relied heavily on my trained ML teachers, small class sizes, and district MLL liaisons for support. One thing that deeply concerns me about the education plans being discussed is that

the weights for students like me are not enough. Multilingual students deserve to feel supported in school and schools need the funding to make this happen. No matter what plan moves forward, I want adequate funding for all multilingual students like me. They are the heart of what makes Winooski special and any plan moving forward must give proper funding to students like me.

Eliza: Hello, my name is Eliza Willis and I am a junior at Winooski High School. The original proposed plan from the state mandates that classes have a minimum of 25 students. This requirement would impact all of my current classes, especially those unique to my school such as Culture and Community where I am working to implement a composting project. It would also limit my ability to take demanding courses like AP World History where my class size is pretty small. In a state like Vermont where we have small schools, requirements for class sizes would impact students like me who want to enroll in rigorous classes. *The proposed plan from the House allows AP courses and others to be excluded from the proposed 18 student-minimum for grades 5-12. This is a good thing.* Please consider how this is affecting your students. Thank you for your time.

Hue: My name is Hue and I am a tenth grader. The two things that concern me deeply about the proposed changes are the minimum class sizes and the reduction of MLL funding. First, small class sizes have benefitted me. It allows me to form close relationships with my teacher and these relationships are essential to my learning. In big classes, you just are not able to do this and then, your learning suffers. Second, I am an immigrant and I came here knowing zero English. The ML program at our school has made me who I am today. I am scared that if we cut funding to ML students like me, we will be leaving kids like me behind. In any plan moving forward, please ensure that students like me get enough funding. Do not let Winooski lose funding.

Gabby: My name is Gabby and I am a 9th grader at Winooski High School. When I started learning about the plan, I was confused: There are so many

changes and I kept asking, who does this benefit? It seems way worse for students, way worse for teachers, parents would not want this for kids, and the real thing is, it doesn't even promise to save money. I love my school and I love my small classes so that my teachers can make sure I am learning something. This plan just does not make any sense to me. Winooski is an actual community, not just a place you go to. We cannot lose this!