

Cynthia Lamore, Chair Stamford Elementary School Board of Directors  
Stamford, VT 05352

February 26, 2026

Good Afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify at this Education Committee meeting. I appreciate your time in allowing small towns like Stamford to be heard on the proposed boundaries and governance modernization. Senator Seth Bongartz draft map and explanation of legislative action are very well thought out and offer a planned framework to modernize district governance. Sen. Bongartz initiative for legislative action in year one fixes geographic boundaries and I would like to speak to that issue as the map changes the boundaries of Stamford and Readsboro, VT.

The best configuration for Stamford and Readsboro Geographically, Socio Economically and with Transportation safety and timeliness is to have our towns remain part of the proposed Windham South Supervisory Union and to retain school choice for students at all applicable grade levels.

Our town's socio-economic base is reliant on Massachusetts for employment, health care, groceries, shopping and places of worship. With parents mostly working in Massachusetts they are able to easily attend after school programs and sporting events to offer support and encouragement. Should we be placed in the Southwest Area Supervisory Union (Bennington area) would make family participation in school functions severely challenging, perhaps even removing the chance of seeing their students excel outside the classroom. Student access to extracurricular opportunities is an essential part of a well-rounded education.

And most importantly, the extended travel time for students to participate in after school sports and various programs could be jeopardized because of the time and distance to travel back home. The new configurations should enhance student opportunities, not limit or remove them because of lengthy, dangerous travel. Students need the opportunities that have always been a part of their high school experience, especially those who are better at sports than academics.

The Town of Stamford has been deemed geographically isolated in three different instances:

- 1) Title 16, chapter 37, subchapter 2, section 1531, paragraph (c)
- 2) Consultant study in 2012
- 3) Study under Education Secretary Dan French in 2018

These citations prove our unique situation and reinforce our need to continue School Choice. Our current school choice offers a safe, fifteen-minute transportation route and a renowned CTE experience. Many of our CTE graduates have continued on to have very successful college careers as well as skilled technical and trade jobs.

- Improving governance should be mindful of the current structure of education and special education. Placing Stamford and Readsboro in Southwest Supervisory Union could inhibit delivery of special education services for our students as specialists must travel further over mountainous roads or looping down through Massachusetts, adding time to schedules and taking time from student needs.

- Enabling higher, quality education is happening now in Stamford. Our test scores in Math and Reading have grown over the last year with a recent score of 13 on the state report card. We have also reduced some need for special services for some of our students.

- Another factor of utmost importance for our towns is preserving local voice. A move to a new SU will take precious time to establish contacts, connections and be heard. Our current governance in the Windham Southwest SU has been making strides under the guidance of our new Superintendent Bill Baczyk. We have all worked together to reorganize, modernize systems and work with the staff to achieve efficiency. We know the people we are working with and they are a vital part of our community voice.

- Stamford and Readsboro are in talks to voluntarily merge in response to restructuring needs. At the annual town meeting in March, Readsboro School Board is asking the community to vote to authorize school closure of their Pre-K-6 elementary school and become a non-operational district. We will work together to support the Town of Readsboro in merging and welcoming their students and community in to the new school system.

In closing I would like to reinforce the need to allow Stamford and Readsboro to remain part of the new Windham Southwest SU district as we are working diligently to meet the needs of change within the state while striving to deliver a quality education that is grown with community involvement and team work within all facets of our current education system.

Thank you for this opportunity and the remarkable work that this committee continues to perform to build the best education system for Vermont's children.

Respectfully Submitted,

Cindy Lamore, Chair

Stamford School Board of Directors