



Reimagining Vermont Public Education

Testimony on school redistricting from Mountain Views Supervisory Union, serving seven communities with over 1,000 students.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

JANUARY 2024

Four Essential Questions

Educational Equity

Does our work create more equitable educational experiences for all students?

Evidence-Based

Is the work supported by reliable research and data?

Student Impact

Does it expand opportunities and produce measurable positive impacts on learning?

Purpose

Who are we serving in the creation of these redistricting maps?



The Proposed Redistricting Maps

Secretary Saunders' Vision

Maps based on VSBA Regions with identified Comprehensive High Schools, ranging from 4,000 to 12,000 students.

- Maintains current SU/SD structures
- Contains at least one comprehensive high school
- Balances property wealth

Critical Gap

No evidence these maps address equity of educational experiences or improve student outcomes.

The Problem with "Larger is Better"



Arbitrary Scale

Student populations not based on evidence of effectiveness



Lost Connection

Direct relationship between communities and superintendents severed



Unproven Savings

Limited evidence of fiscal reductions at proposed scale

"Even when there exists kinship between communities, the process feels like a loss for families and citizens. Community members expect access to 'their' Superintendent."



The Cost Efficiency Myth

Responsibilities Remain

- State and Federal policy adherence
- Legislative mandate compliance
- Collective bargaining commitments
- Vibrant learning community creation

Names Change, Work Doesn't

Whether serving 2,000 or 11,936 students, the tasks remain. Titles may shift from Superintendent to Assistant Superintendent, but the work continues.

KEY INSIGHT

Supervisory
Unions
serve
adults.
Supervisory
Districts
serve
students.

This statement comes from lived experience moving a Supervisory Union to a merged District across seven communities.



The Power of Unified Districts

Mountain Views' transformation through merger created measurable benefits:



Unified Operations

Single contract, curriculum, strategic plan, and instructional practices across all schools



Unified Leadership

Board empowers Superintendent as Instructional Leader with coherent vision



Unified Results

Impressive growth in student outcomes and improved faculty retention

 Unified = Opportunity, Efficiency, and Effectiveness

Key Values for Redistricting

From the Redistricting Task Force Legislative Report:



Regional Cooperation

Stronger partnerships between districts



Evidence & Data

Decisions based on reliable information



Equitable Access

High-quality education for all



Community Voices

Meaningful attention to local input



Rural Solutions

Reflecting Vermont's unique geography



A Framework for Success

1

Transparent Process

Clear data and authentic community involvement required

2

Address Cost Drivers

Policies targeting health care, special education, and aging facilities

3

Phased Transitions

Mergers tied to local identities and shared goals

4

Evidence-Based Improvements

Intentional combinations that strengthen public education

The Time is Now



Our Students Can't Wait

Rather than rushing to meet arbitrary deadlines, take time to create a pathway achieving true educational equity and economic efficiency.

Our goals are shared, our commitment is true, and the time is now.

"Voluntary, strategic mergers emphasize educational benefit, community priorities, and fiscal sustainability."