

Subject: Public Comment for Dec. 17 Senate Education Committee WRVSVU visit

Sent: Monday, December 15, 2025 11:35 AM

Dear Senate Committee on Education,

Thank you for visiting our supervisory union; I appreciate the effort to collect more information from our schools and communities on this crucially important issue.

I am writing to express my strong support for the recommendations of the Act 73 Redistricting Task Force, including Cooperative Education Service Areas (CESAs), Strategic Voluntary Mergers, and Comprehensive Regional High Schools. In making this recommendation, the Task Force carefully examined the research and models of what has worked for other rural states, thoughtfully reflected on how the educational system currently works in Vermont, and actively affirmed the public input of over 5,000 Vermonters. The Task Force correctly concluded that forced consolidation is unlikely to provide cost savings or increase the quality of education, and proposed an alternate solution. This is exactly what they should have done. I elect my representatives to deeply understand issues and propose workable solutions, not to follow mandates which have been poorly thought through.

As a former Vermont State Teacher of the Year, and now a national educational consultant with decades of experience with schools, both urban and rural, across the country, I cannot caution you more strongly against returning to a proposal of forced consolidation. Doing so will not only diminish the quality of education in the state, it will also gradually erode Vermont towns and dramatically change what it means to live here and to be a Vermonter. At the core of being a Vermonter is the ability to exert local control and the very real responsibilities that come with that power. This understanding that we can control, and are responsible for, the quality of our lives starts in our schools and extends through every aspect of living in Vermont from town government to providing for our neighbors. It drives us to examine, reflect, act and care. I know you will do the same, and urge you to support the responsible and clear-sighted recommendations of the Act 73 Redistricting Task Force.

Sincerely,

Diana Leddy

Vermont State Teacher of the Year, 2009

Strafford, Vermont