

**State Board of Education
January 17, 2012
Item G**

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Montpelier, Vermont**

TEAM: Commissioner's Office; Legal Team

ITEM 1: Shall the State Board of Education (SBE) approve the report of Mountain Towns RED study committee, as agreed upon January 6, 2012, on the condition that, if the component districts' electorates each vote to approve the RED, the RED will be regrouped into the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU)?

ITEM 2: If the Mountain Towns RED's component districts' electorates each vote to approve the RED, and the newly formed RED is thereby regrouped into BRSU, shall the remaining districts of the Windsor Southwest SU be regrouped with the districts of the Rutland-Windsor SU, with the additional caveat that the SU board of the newly-combined Windsor Southwest and Rutland-Windsor SU will require a 60% majority vote for the hiring of a superintendent and the approval of its SU budget?

RECOMMENDED ACTION: in the best interests of the students, the state and the school districts involved, the State Board of Education:

- 1) Vote to approve the report of Mountain Towns RED study committee, as agreed upon January 6, 2012, on the condition that, if the component districts' electorates each vote to approve the RED, the RED will be regrouped into the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union (BRSU)
- 2) Vote to approve that if the Mountain Towns RED's component districts' electorates each vote to approve the RED, and the newly formed RED is thereby regrouped into BRSU, shall the remaining districts of the Windsor Southwest SU be regrouped with the districts of the Rutland-Windsor SU, with the additional caveat that the SU board of the newly-combined Windsor Southwest and Rutland-Windsor SU will require a 60% majority vote for the hiring of a superintendent and the approval of its SU budget.

In approving this request the SBE also strongly expresses its opinion to the Legislature that it provide financial incentives for the study of supervisory union mergers, and incentives for the implementation of SU mergers, with retroactive application to the regrouping that will occur to the Rutland-Windsor and Windsor southwest SUs if and when the Mountain Towns RED is regrouped into the Bennington-Rutland SU.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. §261; SBE Rule 3000; Act 153 of 2009

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

This proposal results from the combination of two originally separate efforts: 1) the Mountain Towns RED Study Committee which determined that its members' academic interests were more closely aligned with the Bennington-Rutland SU, which, like the Mountain Towns, tuitions the largest portion of its high school students to Burr and Burton. 2) At the same time the Rutland-Windsor SU and the Windsor Southwest SU were exploring potential areas where joint activities could result in savings as provided in Act 153. With the possibility of the departure of the Mountain Towns from Windsor Southwest these discussions came to focus on a possible merger of the two SUs.

Superintendent Dan French and the Board of the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union have expressed a willingness to welcome the Mountain Towns RED.

Attachments:

- Mountain Towns (Landgrove, Londonderry, Peru, Weston) Regional Education District (RED) Planning Committee Report (1/15/2012)
- Report from Andrews Financial Services: *Structural Benefits & Economic Feasibility for the creation of Mountain Towns "Red", its consolidation in Bennington Rutland Supervisory Union, and a subsequent new Supervisory Union formed between Rutland Windsor and Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union* (12/28/2011)
- Rutland Windsor and Windsor Southwest Supervisory Unions Petition the Vermont State Board of Education to Create a New Supervisory Union (January, 2012)
- PowerPoint: Newly Formed Supervisory Union

COST IMPLICATIONS:

A study conducted by Norm Andrews at the request of the Department of Education found savings in the proposed Mountain Towns RED; in the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union, and in the Supervisory Union created through the consolidation of districts in the Rutland-Windsor Supervisory Union and the districts remaining in the Windsor Southwest Supervisory Union. These savings exceed \$700,000 per year. Mr. Andrews' study indicates that savings for the Mountain Towns RED are comparable to those calculated by the RED Study Committee.

The existence of significant savings will be accompanied by some transition costs in the early years. These costs have not yet been determined.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Armando Vilaseca; Vaughn Altemus; Mark Oettinger