

Windsor Central Unified Union School District & Pittsfield School District

3:1 Joint Proposal

Pittsfield School District

The town of Pittsfield has been operating as a K-12 tuitioning school district since 1985.

The majority of our students attend WCUUSD schools, specifically Killington Elementary (FY18 anticipated: 27 students) and Woodstock Union Middle and High School (17 students). We also have students who attend Stockbridge Elementary (4), Bethel Elementary (1), Rutland High School (1), and Whitcomb Jr/Sr High School (1), and independent schools (7).

Over the past ten years Pittsfield has investigated many options to change our governance structure. The most exhaustive study specifically looked at designating elementary and/or secondary school for our students. At the annual school district meeting in 2008 money to fund the study was approved by the voters. A governance committee authorized by the school board worked with a private consultant and analyzed several options. A report was completed in December 2009 and made available to the voters. An informational meeting was held in late February. At the annual meeting in March, voters overwhelmingly chose to maintain K-12 school choice for our district.

Faced with what our voters felt was excellent educational opportunities but increasing financial burden, the school board looked toward changing administrative structure. The school board felt that our district could improve educational services (specifically special education services) and achieve economies of scale by joining the SU that contained the schools the majority of our students attended. In 2015 Pittsfield voters agreed to leave the Windsor Northwest Supervisory Union and join the Windsor Central Supervisory Union. Thankfully the state Board of Education and the WCSU board agreed, and a de facto side-by-side structure was created.

All towns involved in this current arrangement find it satisfactory, and Pittsfield's tax rate has declined from \$2.0156 in FY2015 to \$1.2989 in FY2018. Coordination of SPED services have

improved: parents have contacted the Pittsfield School Board to express their appreciation for the change and improvements.

Windsor Central Unified Union School District

The Windsor Central Unified Union School District contains the towns of Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock. Voted into existence in spring 2017, a board was formed in September 2017 and as one of its first acts voted unanimously to pursue a 3:1 side-by-side merger with Pittsfield. WCUUSD Board Chair Paige Hiller:

The WCSU has been in a successful partnership with Pittsfield for the last few years. We have been very happy with the relationship with Pittsfield, and as we approached Act 46 as a group, we had hoped that Pittsfield would vote to continue to be a part of our Supervisory Union. Both the WCSU and the newly formed Act 46 boards unanimously voted yes to the proposal (3:1) that was presented to us by the Chair of the Pittsfield School Board. We would be thrilled to have them continue with us, as they have been a great team player. As chair of both the WCSU and the newly formed Act 46 board, I see no downside to our continued partnership with Pittsfield but only see added benefits to having them join our newly formed supervisory union. I hope that the BOE will agree with us and support Pittsfield proposal.

After a thorough investigation of options under Act 46 and now Act 49, Pittsfield has determined that joining the WCUUSD in a 3:1, side by side structure will continue this mutually beneficial arrangement and meet Act 46 criteria.

Act 46 Criteria

1. Provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities:

Pittsfield has determined that continuing the ability of parents to choose the appropriate school for their students is the most effective way to provide access to quality educational opportunities.

2. Lead students to achieve or exceed the State's education quality standards:

Pittsfield has determined that maintaining school choice is the best way to assure that students have the opportunity to attend schools that they and their parents have determined will most effectively help them meet or exceed standards.

3. Maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources:

Pittsfield has demonstrated through reductions in administrative overhead at the SU level as well as a reduction in tax rates that being a part of the WCSU is maximizing operational efficiencies and retaining school choice governance structure will also provide Pittsfield with additional flexibility to manage our students' educational expenditures and access.

4. Promote transparency and accountability:

Pittsfield will be able to maintain our town's own school budget and accounting system as part of the proposed 3:1 governance structure, thereby assuring that local citizens have access to clear information about our town's expenditures. This information will be discussed at Town Meeting and the Annual School District Meeting, as well as at monthly School Board meetings, further allowing for accountability.

5. Deliver education at a cost that parents, voters and taxpayers value:

As stated above, Pittsfield has experienced a reduction in tax rates and increased efficiencies since joining the WCSU and maintaining choice. The Pittsfield School Board is confident, based on prior, lengthy discussions with townspeople, that joining with the WCUUSD has the support of parents, voters and taxpayers in Pittsfield.

For these reasons, Pittsfield requests that the AOE and SBE approve this proposal to join with the WCUUSD as a 3:1, side by side.