

**REPORT TO VERMONT STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION:
PROPOSED ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

**LAMOILLE SOUTH UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT
AND
STOWE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Submitted by
Lamoille South Unified Union and
Self-Selected Representatives

July 20, 2022

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Introduction: In the spring of 2021, the electorate from the town of Stowe voted to withdraw from the Lamoille South Unified Union School District (LSUU). Prior to the vote, the Agency of Education provided a legal opinion stating 16 V.S.A. Chapter 11, Section 724 prohibited the town from withdrawing from a State Board-created Unified Union School District. In accordance with that counsel, the Lamoille South Unified Union School Board has not discussed the matter in depth since the vote took place.

In the spring of 2022, the self-selected representatives (Richard Bland, Jim Brochhausen) presented to the State Board of Education and testified in support of new legislation clarifying the withdrawal process. The State Board, along with the Agency of Education, felt the legislation needed to be clarified prior to allowing the withdrawal. A new bill (H.727) was written with a special section dedicated to Stowe (Section 5) that was in response to the vote that took place in the spring of 2021. This referenced the alternative governance proposal that was presented in 2018 prior to the forced merger. The bill was signed by the Governor on June 6, 2022.

With the understanding that the Vermont Board of Education and Agency of Education are in agreement that Stowe and LSUU are both capable of individually meeting the goals of Act 46 this report focuses on:

- *Explaining how the current plan of withdrawal conforms to or differs from the 'alternative governance proposal' submitted in 2018.*
- *Providing a plan, with a timeline, detailing the actions they have been taken and will be taken in order to assume full responsibility on the chosen operational date.*

Proposed New Governance Structure: The governance structure being proposed represents **no change** from the Alternative Governance Structure presented to the Vermont State Board of Education in 2018.

The Lamoille South Unified Union (LSUU) school board, the board formed as a result of the forced merger, looks to create a structure similar to what was in place prior to the consolidation. The structure would separate Stowe School District (SSD) from Lamoille South Unified Union School District (Morristown, Elmore) with shared services provided by Lamoille South Supervisory Union (LSSU). The intent to establish this organizational structure was clearly communicated throughout the testimony and the informational meetings held prior to votes in Elmore and Morristown to allow Stowe to withdraw.

The Lamoille South Unified Union School District will oversee the Elmore School, Morristown Elementary, Peoples Academy Middle Level, and Peoples Academy. The Stowe School District will oversee operations of Stowe Elementary, Stowe Middle, and Stowe High School. The central office will consist of one superintendent that oversees all schools and reports directly to the board of the supervisory union. All special education, transportation, food service, curriculum oversight, strategic planning, and business operations will be under the umbrella of the supervisory union as was in place prior to the forced merger.



Operating Grades: Pre-K to 12
3 schools
848 students
2022

Operating Grades: Pre-K to 12
4 schools
919 students
2022

Future Collaboration and Focus: LSSU will be committed to serving all our students equitably and effectively, regardless of the district in which they attend school. Our governance boards will learn from each other as we continuously work to improve educational outcomes for LSSU students in the most cost-effective manner possible.

This combination of cooperation and agility will allow each district to marshal the requisite resources and design educational programming to meet the needs and aspirations of our students.

Equity, Opportunity, and Performance: Working together, LSUUUSD and Stowe School District will continue to strive for substantive equity and increase the variety of educational opportunities for our students. Examples of increased equity prior to the merger include the inclusion of full-day kindergarten for all students across all districts and significant access to technology. Recent focus on equity initiatives have included the creation of a district-wide equity subcommittee that established a policy supporting the effort to provide all students access to a high quality education along with a safe and welcoming environment. Recent ESSER / ARP funding has been used to increase emphasis on literacy and math intervention, social / emotional learning supports, and a substantial increase in access to Five Star early childhood programming offered in our own schools. These areas will continue to be a focus for the

supervisory union along with substantial professional development being offered to teachers in many areas, including planned work in mathematics and proficiency scale design and implementation.

Transparency, Accountability, and Value: Our communities have demonstrated an ongoing and unwavering commitment to providing students across our three towns and school district a high-quality education at a cost that they value as evidenced by:

- community support for the educational and operational initiatives the prior supervisory union facilitated in response to the six studies we have undertaken;
- the transparency and accountability that is built into the operational culture of our three-town school district as a result of community support for ongoing self-reflection and continuous improvement;
- student survey data indicating that our educational environment is safe, welcoming, and challenging;
- the high levels of community engagement throughout this process, including the successful merger vote between the communities of Elmore and Morristown;
- the unwavering financial support our citizenry has shown their schools by consistently passing district budget appropriations across LSSU and LSUU; and
- support by extensive and effective school-to-community communication strategies, grounded in district websites and social media in conjunction with continuing coverage of all district affairs by a local and vibrant press – *Stowe Reporter* and *News and Citizen*.

We recognize that there may come a time when the demographic or financial pictures change, demanding additional reconsideration of governance and operational structures. The realities we face are fluid and evolving. That is why our plan is designed to ensure a systemic commitment to board and district cooperation in service of the goals of Act 46. The change has already begun with us, but needs to become more deeply embedded in the educational ethos of the communities we serve. To this end, we commit ourselves to the task of stewarding throughout our citizenry a new understanding that every child that we serve in LSSU is our collective responsibility.

Fast Facts

	LSUU	Stowe	LSSU																																																						
Schools Operated	Elmore (grades 1-3) MES (grades K-4) PAML (grades 5-8) PA (grades 9-12)	SES (grades K-5) SMS (grades 6-8) SHS (grades 9-12)	Public and partnership preschool programs																																																						
Enrollment ^[1]	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2022</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2016</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PreK</td> <td style="text-align: center;">94</td> <td style="text-align: center;">83</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Elmore</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18</td> <td style="text-align: center;">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MES</td> <td style="text-align: center;">269</td> <td style="text-align: center;">276</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PAML</td> <td style="text-align: center;">266</td> <td style="text-align: center;">287</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PA</td> <td style="text-align: center;">272</td> <td style="text-align: center;">247</td> </tr> <tr> <td> K-12 Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;"> 825</td> <td style="text-align: center;"> 829</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PreK-12 Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">919</td> <td style="text-align: center;">912</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>2022</u>	<u>2016</u>	PreK	94	83	Elmore	18	19	MES	269	276	PAML	266	287	PA	272	247	 K-12 Total	 825	 829	PreK-12 Total	919	912	<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2022</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2016</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>PreK</td> <td style="text-align: center;">74</td> <td style="text-align: center;">56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SES</td> <td style="text-align: center;">335</td> <td style="text-align: center;">346</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SMS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">199</td> <td style="text-align: center;">177</td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHS</td> <td style="text-align: center;">240</td> <td style="text-align: center;">236</td> </tr> <tr> <td> K-12 Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;"> 774</td> <td style="text-align: center;"> 759</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PreK-12 Total</td> <td style="text-align: center;">848</td> <td style="text-align: center;">815</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>2022</u>	<u>2016</u>	PreK	74	56	SES	335	346	SMS	199	177	SHS	240	236	 K-12 Total	 774	 759	PreK-12 Total	848	815	<p>LSSU Totals:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2022</u></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><u>2016</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>K-12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,599</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,588</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PreK-12</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,767</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1,727</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<u>2022</u>	<u>2016</u>	K-12	1,599	1,588	PreK-12	1,767	1,727
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Resident Student ADM ^[2]	<p>2022: 99.05 (E) + 696.23 (M) + 773.88 (S) = 1569.17</p> <p>2016: 127.7 + 771.15 = 898.85</p>	<p>2022: 773.88</p> <p>2016: 761</p>																																																							
Total Budget	<p>2022: \$32,886,775</p> <p>2017: \$15,966,750</p>	<p>2017: \$12,363,600</p>																																																							
ES/EP	<p>2022-23: \$18,134</p> <p>2017: \$14,073</p>	<p>2022-23: \$18,134</p> <p>2017: \$14,566</p>																																																							
Board Configuration	7 members, including 2 residents from each town	5 members	6 members: 3 Stowe and 3 LSUU																																																						
Community Population	<p>2020: 886 + 5,434 = 6,320</p> <p>2010: 855 + 5,227 = 6,082</p>	<p>2022: 5,434</p> <p>2010: 4,314</p>																																																							

[1] Vermont Agency of Education Dashboard: Enrollment 2022 School Year; Vermont Agency of Education Student Enrollment Report 2015-2016 School Year

[2] Vermont Agency of Education Average Daily Membership (ADM) Report for 2015-2016 (ADM-17) by Resident District

**Plan and Timeline for Governance Change:
Lamoille South Unified Union School District; Stowe School District;
Lamoille South Supervisory Union***

June 2022	<p>LSUU Board Reps and Self-Selected Representatives Prepare plan and timeline for board review and approval.</p> <p>Special Meeting with the LSUU Board (June 21st) to review and approve plan and timeline. Location: Morristown Elementary 5:30PM</p> <p>Informational Meeting held for the Public (June 28th) Location: Stowe Elementary 5:30PM</p>
July 2022	<p>Submit Initial Materials and Proposal to State Board of Education (July 6th)</p> <p>Presentation to the State Board of Education (July 20th)</p> <p>State Board of Education approves Stowe withdrawal, creates Stowe Town School District, and creates Supervisory Union structure.</p> <p>Discussion at LSUU Board Retreat around reorganization efficiencies and ways to maintain high levels of collaboration across the Supervisory Union.</p> <p>Superintendent Ryan Heraty will notify the Secretary of State of the restructuring and election calendar proposed for the new SSD Board of Directors.</p>
August 2022	<p>Certification of new district and governance structure received from the State of Vermont.</p>
September / October 2022	<p>The LSUU School Board will finalize recommendations for the amended LSUU Articles of Agreement.</p>
November 8, 2022	<p>Election will be held for three (3) new board members for the Stowe School District (SSD).</p> <p>Morristown / Elmore will vote to approve the amended articles of agreement that will be in place starting July 1, 2023. Changes may include a reduction in board seats from 7 to 5.</p>
November 15, 2022	<p>An organizational meeting will be held by the new Stowe School District Board of Directors to elect a chair, establish a calendar for future meetings and conduct initial business.</p>
December 2022 - January 2023	<p>Newly elected/ existing boards will meet to facilitate the following:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiation of the proposed financial terms of withdrawal by the board of the new school district (SSD) and the board of the union district (LSUUSD) in order to comply with the requirements of the former 16 V.S.A. Sec 724(c). - Appointment of the representatives that will serve on the Lamoille South Supervisory Union (LSSU) Board. - Conduct any other business to ensure the proper operation of the two independent school districts on July 1, 2023. - Preparation of the FY24 Budget for SSD and LSUUSD. - Negotiation of employee bargaining contracts for Stowe School District in accordance with H.727, Act 176, Section 11. - Other tasks as identified to ensure the new supervisory union and member districts will be prepared for operations on July 1, 2023.
February 2023	Public informational meetings on proposed school budgets and financial terms of withdrawal and reorganization.
March 2023	<p>Town Meeting Day Vote on LSUUSD and SSD budgets.</p> <p>Election of three (3) new LSUUSD Board Members and ballot item for two (2) additional SSD Board Members if decided by new SSD board.</p> <p>Vote to approve financial terms of agreement for withdrawal.</p>
April - May 2023	LSUUSD, SSD, and LSSU Boards meet to conduct any business necessary to ensure the proper operation of the districts and supervisory union on July 1, 2023.
June 30, 2023	<p>LSUUSD final day as operating governance with Stowe included.</p> <p>Transfer of property to the new forming districts.</p> <p>LSUU remains operating to address audits and outstanding miscellaneous issues until 12/31/2023.</p>
July 1, 2023	LSUUSD, SSD, and LSSU begin full educational operations.

*As we did when merging, we will operate LSSU and LSUU boards simultaneously until the commencement of operations on July 1, 2023.