

BRATTLEBORO TOWN SCHOOL BOARD
53 Green Street
Brattleboro, VT 05301

December 22, 2017 -

Vermont Agency of Education -
Secretary Rebecca Holcombe -
Vermont State Board of Education -
219 North Main Street, Suite 402 -
Barre, VT 05641 -

Dear Secretary Holcombe and Vermont State Board of Education: -

Since the creation of an Act 46 Study Committee in November 2015, members of WSESU school boards have been collaborating on a path to compliance with the law. With input from local school boards, the public, and State education officials, the Committee drafted comprehensive *Articles of Agreement*, which were unanimously approved by the Committee on September 11, 2017 and subsequently approved by the Vermont Agency of Education on September 20, 2017. -

The process by which the *Articles* were developed involved an extensive look into the unique personalities of each member community. We learned of the strengths and challenges of our neighbors, and discussed ways in which we could complement and enhance each other's local educational opportunities. The conversations quickly evolved from a focus on how to improve each of our individual schools, to how to create an inclusive educational district that best served ALL children. We learned that each individual school played an important role in the development of this inclusive district. -

The process of creating the *Articles* has undoubtedly helped to strengthen the communication and understanding across districts within WSESU. The foundation of collaboration that has been started by this process is one we hope to continue to build upon. -

Following the November 7, 2017, vote against the *Articles*, there is still community concern about the loss of local school boards, and some of the articles. We have also taken seriously our remaining obligation to comply with the law. -

There are invested community members diligently working to create an alternative path to compliance. The primary intent of this work is directed towards creating a compliance path that maintains each district's individual school board. Members of all boards have participated in these discussions. -

After careful consideration of all paths to compliance with Act 46, the vote remains split three in favor and two against the Study Committees' *Articles of Agreement*. However, the majority believe the *Articles* developed by the WSESU Act 46 Study Committee provide the best solution for meeting the goals and objectives of the law. Additionally, we wish to continue to build on the momentum gained over the last two years towards achieving a region-wide collaborative approach to the education of the children in our region. -

For these reasons, when district lines are redrawn, we ask the Secretary of Education and the State Board of Education to implement as many of the previously approved *Articles of Agreement* as is practicable. -

Brattleboro Town School Board -

Jill Stahl Tyler, Board Chair (aye) -
Kim Price, Board Vice-Chair (aye) -
Spoon Agave, Clerk (aye) -
Robin Morgan (aye) -
David Schoales (nay) -

