

Pownal Elementary School District
Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union
246 South Stream Road
Bennington, VT 05201
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SELF-EVALUATION AND PROPOSAL FOR ALTERNATIVE STRUCTURE

Dear Agency of Education:

Pursuant to Act 46 §9, please let this letter serve as Pownal School District's self-evaluation and proposal for alternative structure.

The Vermont Agency of Education provided information on or about July 31, 2017 that states in part,

The Legislature acknowledges that the "preferred structure" may not be "possible or the best model (emphasis added)" to achieve the five goals in every region of the State. In these situations, it stated that a multi-district SU can meet the Goals, "particularly if" the SU manifests specific characteristics, including having "the smallest number of members school districts practicable" (an "alternative structure").

In acknowledgement to the fact that "preferred structures" may not be the "best model," Pownal Elementary School District (hereinafter referred to as "PESD") outlines the following in order to show that PESD does currently meet the five (5) education goals and fiscal goals as referred to in Act 46 §2 (2015) and requests an alternative structure as follows:

1. The Legislature determined that a school district is most able to meet the five goals in a sustainable matter if it:
 - **Is responsible for the education of its resident students in prek through grade 12.**

PESD is a school district that educates its students from prek through 6th grade. Our students then attend Mount Anthony Union Middle School from 7-8th grades and Mount Anthony Union High School from 9-12th grades. All school districts in Bennington County (with the exception of North Bennington Grade School) operate under the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union. Because of

our unique governing structure, PESD already shares educational responsibilities for their prek – grade 12 students which include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Prek -12 grade oversight for all districts;
- Unified Teacher Contract since 1986;
- Unified Support Contract;
- Unified oil purchase;
- Unified testing for all schools;

- Busing contracts for all districts;
- Supplies contracts for all districts;
- Book contract purchases for all districts;
- Food service contract for all districts;
- Computer support for all districts;
- Copier contract support for all districts;
- Teacher training for all districts;
- Special Education support for all districts (including teachers and other support staff being shared between districts);
- Audits;
- Core curriculum being set for all districts prek – 12th grade;
- Core support for all districts (budgets, building maintenance, RFPs and contracts)
- Administrative review and yearly evaluations.

In addition to the above-referenced shared educational responsibilities it should be noted that,

1. The districts are currently working on contracts for teachers to be assigned across schools; and
2. Pownal has always agreed to students having school choice.

- **Is its own supervisory district (i.e., a single-district supervisory union)**

As stated above, PESD currently operates under the umbrella of the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union currently sharing approximately more than **80%** of our services.

- **Has an ADM of at least 900 students.**

Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union has approximately **3,000** students.

- **Is organized and operating according to one of the four most common operating/tuitioning structures.**

Pursuant to Act 46, §5, we propose to operate under (c) which states:

(c) Alternative structure: supervisory union with member districts. An Education District as envisioned in subsection (b) of this section may not be possible or the best model to achieve Vermont's education goals in all regions of the State. In such situations, a supervisory union composed of multiple member districts, each with its separate school board, can meet the State's goals, particularly if:

(1) the member districts consider themselves to be collectively responsible for the education of all prekindergarten through grade 12 students residing in the supervisory union;

- We consider ourselves responsible for the education of all prek through 12th grades students pursuant to the shared list of services as referenced above.

(2) the supervisory union operates in a manner that maximizes efficiencies through economies of scale and the flexible management, transfer, and sharing of nonfinancial resources among the member districts;

- We operate in a manner that maximizes efficiencies as referenced in our shared contracts and services mentioned above.

As stated in the Act 46 Committees' Proposal to the State Board of Education dated September 20, 2017 on page 4 of 27, the merger was expected to produce only "\$100,000 in immediate, annual savings in *administrative costs* (emphasis added)." It goes on to state "It does not expect merger to produce more significant savings in the near term due to the many services that have already been centralized at the SU-level and the high percentage of district assets already shared through membership in Union District #14."

Given the fact that the savings would be minimal, at best, PESD maintains that our current alternative structure works for the State of Vermont and the residents of our district.

(3) the supervisory union has the smallest number of member school districts practicable, achieved wherever possible by the merger of districts with similar operating and tuitioning patterns; and

- We have the smallest number of member school districts, one school district per town for Woodford, Shaftsbury and Pownal. Bennington has an elementary district and the Middle School and High School.

(4) the combined average daily membership of all member districts is not less than 1,100.

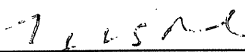
- Our combined average daily memberships of all districts is approximately 3,000.

Through extensive meetings with other districts as a member of the Act 46 Study Committee, PESD proposes the state approve an Alternative Structure under Act 46 §9. The Act 46 Study Committee suggests that a MUUSD be formed (Act 46 Study Committee Proposal page 2 of 5) if “the voters in Bennington ID and in either two or three of the four remaining elementary school districts vote in favor of the proposal...” PESD supports an alternative structure rather than a merger and feels the “NMED would continue to provide for the education of resident PK-6 students (either by operating a school or paying tuition), elect representatives to its elementary school board, and adopt its own elementary school budget.” (Page 3 through 5 of the Act 46 Study Committee Proposal)

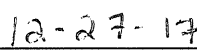
We would like to close stating that the current structure of our SU allows for constructive, collaborative discussions among all schools that allow for a variety of solutions facing our educators. As an example, Pownal Elementary School has received (for the 2nd year in a row) the PBIS School Improvement Award which is earned by having increased test scores and decreased behavioral referrals. Pownal has reached their educational goals for the last two years and has similar goals for this year. Because of this, Donna Leep, the Assistant Superintendent of the SU, told our Board that Pownal Elementary School is used as the example for the other elementary schools in the district. In addition, we have implemented safety measures which are being used as a model throughout the district. Without the hard work from our staff at the school, the corresponding support from our individual school board, and the support of our residents, this type of innovation would be lost to the entire SU. Thank you for your consideration.

The Pownal School Board voted and approved this proposal on December 20, 2017.

Sincerely,
The Pownal School Board



Tammy Sohl – Board Clerk
Pownal School District



Date



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Agency of Education

November 2017

Todd Phillips, Principal
Pownal Elementary School
94 School House Road
Pownal, VT 05261

Dear Principal Phillips,

I am pleased to inform you that Pownal Elementary School achieved the "VTPBIS Exemplar School" status for the 2016-17 school year. This recognition is the result of a significant commitment on the part of you and your staff to implement Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports with fidelity. As Secretary, I recognize the importance of a school culture and climate that contributes to continuous school effectiveness. Your implementation of this multi-tiered system of supports for behavior is an important action toward success for all learners. I thank and congratulate you and your school community for your focused implementation efforts.

In order to achieve the "VTPBIS Exemplar School" status, your school has:

- Implemented Universal PBIS with fidelity, measured as at least 70% on the Tiered Fidelity Inventory and sustained this measurement for 2 consecutive years;
- Used behavior data within a problem-solving framework to improve student outcomes;
- Completed the annual Self-Assessment Survey to inform implementation planning; and
- Demonstrated evidence that sustained implementation has had positive effects on learners' academic and behavioral performance.

Your school was recognized during the Annual Vermont PBIS Leadership Forum on October 9th and highlighted in the 2016-17 VTPBIS Annual Report which can be found on the VTPBIS website at www.pbisvermont.org. I encourage you to celebrate your achievement with the leadership team, PBIS School Coordinators Jen Dence and Karen Theoret, PBIS SU/SD Coordinators Wendy Pierce and Linda Boudreau, your students, staff and community. Again, congratulations for a job well done!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rebecca Holcombe".

Rebecca Holcombe, Ed.D.

Secretary of Education

cc: James R. Culkeen, Superintendent, Southwest Vermont SU
Jen Dence, PBIS School Coordinator
Karen Theoret, PBIS School Coordinator
Wendy Pierce, PBIS SU/SD Coordinator
Linda Boudreau, PBIS SU/SD Coordinator



