

AGENCY OF EDUCATION
Barre, Vermont

TEAM: AOE School Governance Team

ACTION ITEM: Will the State Board of Education vote to approve the temporary assignment of each of six supervisory districts, if created, to the supervisory union the supervisory district would replace? Temporary assignment would be for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance from the supervisory union and would in no way modify the governing structure of the existing system. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the supervisory district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on the date it becomes fully operational pursuant to the terms of its voter-approved Articles of Agreement. In addition, if a supervisory district is created, will the State Board urge the superintendent to plan for the Organization Meeting and otherwise guide transitional activities?

RECOMMENDED ACTION: That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of each of six supervisory districts, if created, to the supervisory union the supervisory district would replace. Temporary assignment would be for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance from the supervisory union and would in no way modify the governing structure of the existing system. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the supervisory district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on the date it becomes fully operational pursuant to the terms of its voter-approved Articles of Agreement. In addition, if a supervisory district is created, the superintendent is urged to plan for the Organization Meeting and otherwise guide transitional activities. The supervisory unions are:

1. Addison Central Supervisory Union
2. Addison Northwest Supervisory Union
3. Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union
4. Franklin Central Supervisory Union
5. Lamoille North Supervisory Union
6. Rutland South Supervisory Union

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. §§ 261, 706h

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: At its December 2015 and January 2016 meetings, the State Board of Education approved six merger proposals that, if subsequently approved by the voters of the potentially merging districts, would each result in a unified union school district that is its own supervisory district. In each case, the

supervisory district would have the identical borders as the currently existing supervisory union. Those supervisory unions are the Addison Central Supervisory Union; the Addison Northwest Supervisory Union; the Addison-Rutland Supervisory Union; the Franklin Central Supervisory Union; the Lamoille North Supervisory Union; and the Rutland South Supervisory Union.

Current law provides that a unified union school district (Unified District) becomes a legal entity on the day on which the Secretary of Education records a certification of voter approval with the Secretary of State. 16 V.S.A. § 706g. Several weeks later, the new board members of the Unified District are sworn in at an Organization Meeting and assume office. 16 V.S.A. § 706j. The Unified District becomes operational, however, on a date established in the voter-approved Articles of Agreement. The operational date could be a few months or even more than a year after the day on which the Unified District becomes a legal entity (the Interim Period). The merging districts and the supervisory union dissolve on the date on which the Unified District becomes operational, or on some slightly later date specified in the Articles of Agreement.

During the Interim Period, the board of the Unified District “may conduct business for the limited purpose of preparing for the transition to unified union district administration while [the merging districts] continue to operate schools.” 16 V.S.A. § 722. Current law does not address administrative support for the new board while performing its transitional duties during the Interim Period or who is responsible for planning the Organization Meeting.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: For any of the six merger proposals referenced in this action item that receive final voter approval resulting in the creation of a Unified District, the corresponding supervisory union will provide administrative services to the Unified District during the Interim Period to assist transition to the new governance model. In addition, the pertinent superintendent is urged to plan for the Organization Meeting and to otherwise guide transitional activities.

COST IMPLICATIONS: There are no cost implications.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Donna Russo-Savage, Principal Assistant to the Secretary