

Thank you and the Board of Education for your dedication and commitment to achieving the best possible outcome in the Lincoln School District's merger quest. As a member of the MRVSU education community, I believe an LSD/WRVSU merger is deeply flawed and should be rejected.

Sincerely,

Bill Edgerton, Board Member  
WRVSU

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Bill Edgerton, Board Member  
White River Valley Supervisory Union  
Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District

October 29, 2022

Daniel French, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education,  
Vermont State Board of Education

RE: Proposed Merger of Lincoln School District with the White River Valley Supervisory Union

This letter opposes the Lincoln School District's (LSD) request that the Board of Education assigns LSD to the White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU.) The reasons for my opposition are three-fold:

1. The merger is inconsistent with Act 46's goal to "maximize operational efficiencies,"
2. The merger is inconsistent with Act 46's goal to "provide educational opportunities delivered at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value."
3. The merger is inconsistent with Act 46's goal to
  - a. "provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities," and
  - b. "lead students to achieve or exceed the State's Education Quality Standards."

Operational efficiencies will be lost.

Vermont established Act 46 to "maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with a goal of increasing the district-level ratio of student to full-time equivalent staff." (Act 46, Goal #3.) Recent correspondence from WRVSU administrators, board members, and stakeholders to AOE and BOE have documented the costs of such a merger – in shared resources, synergy, labor relations, supervisory and managerial oversight, administrative support, and morale. Forcibly adding a seventh school district (and district board) 45 minutes from the nearest WRVSU elementary school and over an hour away from the WRVSU central office can never be cost-effective.

The cost to Lincoln and WRVSU taxpayers will increase.

Given these operational inefficiencies, it is doubtful that the merger will “provide educational opportunities that are delivered at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value.” (Act 46, Goal #5.) Most likely, taxpayers will not support the additional educational costs necessary to achieve a quality education—a core imperative of Act 46 and the people of Vermont.

Student learning will likely suffer.

Without the benefits afforded by a viable Act 46 organizational structure, achieving Act 46, Goals #1 and #2) – to “provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities” and “lead students to achieve or exceed the State’s Education Quality Standards,” – enormous challenges under the best of circumstances will be unattainable. Providing the necessary collaborative teaching, supervisory and administrative support, and accountability is crucial to make MTSS a reality. It’s doubtful that it can be done from afar.

Act 46 has made a significant difference here at WRV SU – in educational outcomes, more decisive and effective leadership, increased faculty teamwork and synergy, higher community morale and support, and real and ongoing cost savings. We’ve worked hard to get this far. It will be tragic if we jeopardize the organizational benefits the current White River Valley Supervisory Union has provided our students, educational teams, and taxpayers by an ill-conceived marriage that few want and many find deeply flawed.

Sincerely,

Bill Edgerton

cc:

Kathy Galluzzo, Chair, WRV SU Board

Sarah Root, Vice Chair, WRV SU Board

Ethan Bowen, Chair, Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District Board

Amy Wildt, Vice Chair, Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District Board

Jamie Kinnarney, Superintendent, WRV SU