

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Governance Team

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education find that the proposed unified union school district formed by two member districts of the **RUTLAND CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION (RCSU)** and one member district of the **RUTLAND SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION (RSWSU)** is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts,” and will the State Board therefore vote to approve the attached report of the RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee to create the **QUARRY VALLEY UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT**?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. That the State Board of Education finds that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by two member districts of the RCSU and one member district of the RSWSU is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).
2. That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the RCSU/RSWSU Study Committee to create the Quarry Valley Unified Union District.
3. That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new school district, if approved, to the RCSU for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2018, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing systems.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. § 706c; Act 46 of 2015; Act 153 of 2010, Secs. 2-4, as amended; Act 156 (2012), Sec. 15

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee was formed by all three school districts in the RCSU (the Proctor School District; the Rutland Town School District; and the West Rutland School District) and by three of the four school districts in the RSWSU (the Middletown Springs School District; the Poultney School District; and the Wells School District). The fourth district in the RSWSU (the Ira School District) participated informally.

The seven town school districts in the RCSU and RSWSU represent five distinct models of education governance:

- PK-12 operating (Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland)
- PK-8 operating / 9-12 tuitioning (Rutland Town)
- Pk-6 operating / 7-12 tuitioning (Middletown Springs)
- PK-6 operating / 7-12 designating (Wells)
- PK-12 tuitioning (Ira)

The combined average daily membership of all districts within the RCSU and RSWSU was 1,817.12 in FY2016.

The Study Committee, with the participation of the Ira School District, has presented a comprehensive proposal to merge the two supervisory unions and seven districts into a single supervisory union with four districts as follows: two new unified union school districts and two districts that would not change their current structure (the Rutland Town School District and the Ira School District).

If both of the Study Committee's proposals to create new unified union school districts are approved by the State Board and by the voters before July 1, 2017, then both of the new unified union school districts would be eligible for incentives and protections under Act 153, Secs. 2-5 pursuant to Act 156, Sec. 15 (as "side-by-side" mergers).

QUARRY VALLEY UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT

This Recommendation to the State Board concerns the Study Committee's proposal to create a new unified union school district (New Unified District) to be known as the Quarry Valley Unified Union District. The New Unified District would provide for the education of all resident PK-12 students by operating one or more schools for each grade.

The Study Committee identifies the following school districts as "necessary" to the proposal pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1): Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland.

The Study Committee does not identify any school districts as "advisable" to the proposal pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 701b(b)(2).

In FY2016, the combined average daily membership (ADM) of the three necessary districts was 987.52.

The New Unified District would be governed by a ten-member school board who would represent and be elected by the voters in each of the three towns in a number that is closely proportional to the town's relative population as follows: Poultney – 4; Proctor – 3 (each with a weighted vote of 0.67); and West Rutland – 3.

For the first four years of operation, students would attend school in their town of residence although the Unified Board could adjust student enrollment, with parental consent, based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the New Unified District. The Unified Board could adjust school attendance lines and school configurations throughout the District beginning on July 1, 2022.

A currently operating school building could not be closed during the first four years of operation unless approved by the voters of the town in which the building is located. Beginning on July 1, 2022, school closure would require both a unanimous vote of the Unified Board and voter approval in the host town.

If a school building is closed and would no longer be used for public education purposes, then the town in which the school building is located would have the right of first refusal and could purchase the property for \$1.00, provided that the town agreed to use the property for public and community purposes for a minimum of five years. The proposal includes provisions addressing use for these purposes for fewer than five years.

All votes on the budget and Board membership would be by Australian ballot.

The electorate of each potentially merging district will vote on March 7, 2017 whether to approve creation of the New Unified District. If the voters in each of the three necessary town school districts vote in favor of the proposal prior to July 1, 2017, and if the Wells Springs Unified Union School District is similarly approved, then the New Unified District will begin full operation as a unified union school district on July 1, 2018.

* * *

The RCSU/RSWSU Study Committee presents the proposal to form the Quarry Valley Unified Union District as part of a comprehensive proposal “to leave no districts isolated and also to give the new Supervisory Union sufficient student numbers to be efficient and effective.”

Although it would be premature for the State Board to act upon the self-study reports of the Rutland Town and Ira districts at this time, both studies are components of the Study Committee’s comprehensive proposal. The two self-study documents are appended to the document entitled “A Comprehensive Report.”

Similarly, although the two new unified union school districts (Quarry Valley and Wells Springs) would become members of a single supervisory union if the voters approve both proposals, it is premature for the State Board to determine the precise boundaries of that new supervisory union at this time.

The Study Committee’s appendices examine a number of factors, including relative investment per equalized pupil, historic enrollment patterns, student-to-administrator and student-to-teacher ratios over time, and a comparison of FY 2016 assessment results

in grades 3 through 11. The appendices also discuss the potential for increased educational opportunities and for changes in staffing, technology, financial accounting and budgeting, and other areas.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: By enacting Act 46, which incorporated the provisions of Act 153 (2010), the General Assembly declared the intention to move the State toward sustainable models of education governance designed to meet the goals set forth in Section 2 of the Act. It was primarily through the lens of those goals that the Secretary has considered whether the Study Committee's proposal is "in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts" pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c.

EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS:

The Study Committee identified a range of potential educational benefits of merger, including:

1. Potential establishment of intra-district school choice policies and/or magnet schools
2. Potential establishment of creative scheduling that would permit teachers to deliver instruction at multiple schools
3. Increased potential to offer distance and blended learning opportunities
4. Greater continuity for students moving from one town to another within the New Unified District
5. Better coordination and continuity of services including summer programming, intervention systems and programs, and nutrition and health services

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Study Committee identified a potential \$325,000 in immediate cost reductions related to the elimination of one superintendent and one curriculum coordinator position, building rental and utilities, financial audits, and other expenses. It also anticipated that there would be cost savings by increased buying and contracting power through the economies of scale, flexibility of staff assignments; and increased use of virtual learning techniques. *See also* Act 153, as amended, for cost implications to the State.

See the Appendices for a more detailed discussion of educational and fiscal elements of the proposal and *see* the Committee's Worksheet for an overview of those elements in the proposal that address the goals identified by Act 46, Section 2.

The Study Committee's proposal is aligned with the goals of the General Assembly as set forth in Act 46 of 2015 and with the policy underlying the union school district formation statutes as articulated in 16 V.S.A. § 701.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Donna Russo-Savage, Principal Assistant, School Governance
Brad James, Education Finance Manager

Executive Summary

Quarry Valley Unified Union School District

The comprehensive plan of the RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee includes the formation of the Quarry Valley Unified Union School District - the merger of Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland - into one PreK-12 District of 988 students and five school buildings.

All school districts are necessary for the establishment of the unified union school district which will provide Pre-K through grade twelve education to all students in the newly formed district.

The Unified Union School Board will comply with statutory requirements, recognizing existing collective bargaining agreements and commencing negotiations upon formation of the new district.

The Unified Union District shall assume ownership and operate existing school facilities and property through conveyance. Subsequent sale shall first be offered to the towns including the assumption or payment of outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by law, to the town in which it is located.

No school shall close during the first four years unless approved by the local electorate. Thereafter, closing will require unanimous consent of the school board and a majority vote of the town in which the school is located.

The School Board representation is proportional to the population in each town, totaling ten members: 4 from Poultney, 3 from West Rutland and 3 from Proctor (who share two votes or .67 weighted vote per member).

Transportation, attendance boundaries and school choice shall be determined by the School Board or the statutory public school secondary school choice program.

The proposal will be presented to the voters of each forming school district on March 7, 2017 along with candidates for the unified union school board.

This unique and statutorily contemplated merger allows greater educational opportunity, improved services and supports, as well as expanded efficiencies through shared governance.

The creation of the unified union school district will result in a visionary plan for the design and delivery of a continuum of educational programs and experiences through an integrated PreK-12 system. Students will have increased educational opportunities through expanded PreK partnerships for early education, transfers through school choice PreK-12, personalization, specialization, advanced coursework, dual enrollment and early college. Our student achievement data demonstrates growth and SBAC results which are aligned with the state

average. Diverse student needs will be equitably addressed through a continuum of services. All students will gain from enhanced educational opportunities via virtual tele-presence in our expanded technology infrastructure and high functioning fiber network.

To ensure improved outcomes and increased student learning opportunities, students in the Quarry Valley PK-12 district will experience a personalized education in a proficiency based school environment.

Employment of all teachers through the unified union district will enable us to draw upon a wide variety of expertise in meeting student needs. We envision creative scheduling, such as modified block, where teachers may travel to various schools to deliver instruction for one or more days per week. In addition, we anticipate course offerings in the evening and weekend for all secondary student in the Quarry Valley District.

Our three high schools may become specialized magnet schools. For example, students who wish to focus on a particular area such as the Arts, STEM and Global Studies may elect to attend one secondary school over another, depending on the school's specialization.

Advancements in technology including infrastructure improvements, expanded broadband capabilities enable improved outcomes and enhanced student learning opportunities. In our 21st century personalized learning environments, we believe virtual learning is fundamental. Our goal is to overcome the three most common barriers that prevent students from taking the courses they want or need in schools. These barriers are availability of courses, accessibility to courses and the flexibility of the education system. For example, are students interested in taking a course that is not available at their middle or high school? Through coordination across our schools, the Quarry Valley School District will ensure that the course will be available from another school that offers the course online in a synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid format.

To further exemplify, these virtual learning opportunities can be:

1. Remote or local with a full time distance learning instructor (i.e. during a shared time during the day or evening);
2. Blended to include some distance learning instruction and some in person instruction;
3. 100% virtual using VT approved middle and high school courses (including personalized courses);
4. Virtual/Hybrid instructional subject areas include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Computer Science
 - b. Advanced Placement
 - c. Dual Enrollment through CCV, Castleton, UVM, etc.
 - d. NCAA Approved
 - e. Honors or Advanced
 - f. Core Academics
 - g. Summer Learning Recovery

- h. World Languages
- i. Electives

We will continually search and adapt our online learning opportunities to reflect the goals and aspirations of the student body. In the past, this has involved creating custom classes (such as a computer science curriculum for Proctor High School). In the future, the capacity and infrastructure is in place to pull diverse learning opportunities from the surrounding area or globally, utilizing any platform.

A wide array of extra-curricular and co-curricular options will be available to students. Sports opportunities include VPA sanctioned sports programs for boys and girls in grades 7-12. Our athletes have earned numerous state championships, and we enthusiastically recognize team and individual athletic accomplishments. High school Academic Showdown, middle-level Destination Imagination, and elementary spelling bees are a few examples of academic competitions that our students participate in.

Regardless of their town of residence, all students who attend the Quarry Valley School District will have opportunities in supportive learning environments with: 1) students at the heart of our mission; 2) an inclusive and increasingly diverse student body; and 3) great academic outcomes including high dual enrollment and early college participation; high secondary graduation rates; high honors including strong AP (Advanced Placement) participation and success rates for students in grades 10-12; high rates of college aspiration and enrollment; continued enrollment at Stafford Technical Center and achievement of earned certifications; 4) innovative and research-based programs and practices including technology integration; partnerships with the Tarrant Foundation and UVM; student-led conferences; Young Writers' Project; Poetry Out Loud; student leadership opportunities at all grade levels; Personalized Learning Plans; internships and advisory programs; math and literacy intervention; enrichment programs; and virtual and blended coursework 7-12.

The Quarry Valley Unified Union School District will benefit from the efficient and cost-effective centralization of services including administration, bargaining, transportation, food service, enrichment, technology (infrastructure and integration), school safety and crisis prevention and intervention.

Without the formation of the Unified Union District, education spending per equalized pupil is projected to continue to climb. The three districts' current tax rates are similar and therefore, the merger will result in savings and stabilization of tax rates over time.

Our PreK-12 merger proposal is the culmination of months of study which has included school visits, curriculum and instruction presentations, financial analysis, student services discussions, and community forums. This work has been truly collaborative and provided a sound foundation for this proposal.

The study committee unanimously recommends approval of the proposed merger as it will provide efficiencies and enhanced opportunities for all students in partnership with families and community members. The Quarry Valley Unified Union School District shall serve all students in the three member towns collectively and equitably.

Type of Merger	
<i>Please refer to the related eligibility worksheets to determine baseline eligibility for each merger type.</i>	(column reserved for agency use)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accelerated Merger (Act 46, Section 6)	
<p>A Regional Education District (RED) or one of its variations (Act 153 (2010) and Act 156 (2012))</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RED (Act 153, Secs. 2-3, as amended by Act 156, Sec. 1 and Act 46, Sec. 16)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Side by Side Merger (Act 156, Sec. 15)</p> <p>Districts involved in the related merger:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Layered Merger (Union Elementary School District) (Act 156, Sec. 16)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Modified Unified Union School District (MUUSD) (Act 156, Sec. 17, as amended by Act 56 (2013), Sec. 3)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conventional Merger – merger into a preferred structure after deadline for an Accelerated Merger (Act 46, Section 7)	

Dates, ADM, and Name	
Date on which the proposal will be submitted to the voters of each district (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(11)): March 7, 2017	
Date on which the new district, if approved, will begin operating (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(12)): July 1, 2018	
Combined ADM of all “necessary” districts in the current fiscal year: 988	
Proposed name of new district: Quarry Valley Unified Union District	

Please complete the following tables with brief, specific statements of how the proposed union school district will comply with each of the listed items. Bulleted statements are acceptable.

The Proposed School District is in the Best Interest of the State, Students, and School Districts – as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706c		
<p><u>Goal #1:</u> The proposed union school district will provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities.</p> <p><i>Act 46, Sec. 2(1)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One vision, one mission, one strategic plan for continuous improvement • Single School Board to expand education for all students in the PREK-12 system • Expand learning pathways, specialized programs i.e. STEM, Computer Science • Systemic implementation of Personalized Learning Plans, Advanced Classes, Proficiency Based Education, Internships, Music and Arts • Enhanced extracurricular programs and expanded athletics • Shared special education programs for low incidence student needs 	
<p><u>Goal #2:</u> The proposed union school district will lead students to achieve or exceed the State's Education Quality Standards, adopted as rules by the State Board of Education at the direction of the General Assembly.</p> <p><i>Act 46, Sec. 2(2)</i></p>	<p>Both SU's received favorable reviews from the education quality review site based review in October 2016. Consequently, we pledge to continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality enabling all students to achieve or exceed the Education Quality Standards. • Ensure continuous improvement in student performance, instruction and leadership to enable students to attain rigorous standards in high-quality programs through Expanded high quality instruction and assessment through comprehensive curriculum, instruction and assessment program in a standards and proficiency based learning environment • Ensure educational services are provided in accordance with state and federal entitlements and nondiscrimination requirements through system wide student services and human resource management. • Maintain all student records safely and retain 9-12 transcripts and dropouts permanently and implement FERPA requirements regarding surveys, analyses and evaluations. • Expand personalize instructional practices to improve student learning guided by locally collected student data. • Enhance flexible and multiple pathways including technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college aligned with state expectations and standards. • Allow students to demonstrate proficiency by presenting multiple types of evidence via teacher or student designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects PREK-12. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and provide access for eligible students to career and technical education centers • Enhance personalized learning plans for students in grades 7-12 to increase the scope and rigor of learning opportunities and supports services necessary for college and career readiness • Our coordinated curriculum will ensure proficiency in all subject areas and transferable skills including the use of technology. All graduating students shall meet these requirements. • Special education services will be provided ensuring that graduation requirements are met with modifications and accommodations per individualized education plans. • Continuation of school choice at high school and initiation of district-wide school choice PK-8. • Expanded high fiber WAN internet service using E-Rate in support of student, faculty and community access to learning and communication • Leadership requirements for superintendent, principal and highly qualified staff shall continue. State board and school board class size policies are met. • Needs based professional development as well as mentoring new teachers and coaching experienced teachers shall be enacted. • Administrators and teachers shall be evaluated annually. • Tiered systems of support shall be enacted in support of student needs and participate in multi-disciplinary teams. • Maintain school facilities, provide access to digital and print instructional materials and provide safe and positive learning environment which we will strive to be free of hazing, harassment and bullying. • All students shall continue to participate in state and local comprehensive assessment system and publish reports annually. • Develop SU and district coordinated individualized improvement plan reflecting needs of individual schools. 	
<p><u>Goal #3:</u> The proposed union school district will maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with a goal of increasing the district-level ratio of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase financial efficiencies due to unified technology and various delivery systems, cooperative bulk purchasing, and personnel savings due to merger of two SU's to one • Share support staff and SU teacher master agreements which streamlines human resource administration, creating more efficiencies • Combined enrollment will support reasonable class sizes; improving and expanding curriculum and extracurricular programs • Facility and construction management will be coordinated at the Supervisory union level. • Negotiations, contracting, bidding and resource management shall be centralized at the supervisory union. 	

<p>students to full-time equivalent staff. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(3)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual learning and professional development opportunities will be enhanced and expanded. • Transportation will be streamlined across districts and to the Stafford Tech Center. 	
<p><u>Goal #4:</u> The proposed union school district will promote transparency and accountability. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote transparency and accountability • Policy discussion, continuous improvement updates, program planning and budget development shall be conducted openly in warned board meetings. • School audits, proposed and approved budgets shall be posted online and available to the public. • Board policies, procedures, strategic plans, curriculum information and assessment results shall be posted on the website. 	
<p><u>Goal #5:</u> The proposed union school district will deliver education at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(5)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings from SU merger and other efficiencies will result in approximately \$325,000. in savings. • Tax incentives will reduce the tax rate for the newly formed district. • Larger bulk and cooperative purchasing options including instructional materials, fuel and maintenance services will eventually result in savings. 	
<p><u>Regional Effects:</u></p> <p>What would be the regional effects of the proposed union school district, including: would the proposed union school district leave one or more other districts geographically isolated? <i>Act 46, Section 8(a)(2)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newly formed district will combine all PREK-12 regional districts into one district of nearly 1000 students. • The only other PREK-12 district in Southwest Vermont is Arlington School District, a PREK-12 district who was invited to join our study in 2016. However, due to distance, chose not to participate. • Therefore there are no PREK-12 districts in either SU in the region that are geographically isolated. 	

Articles of Agreement – as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(3) - (10), (13)

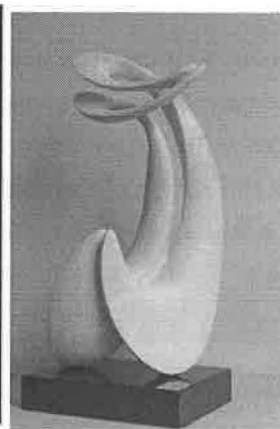
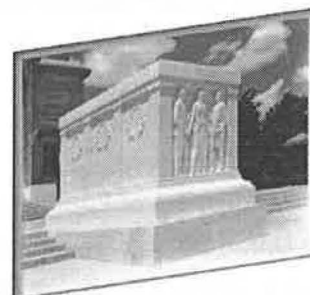
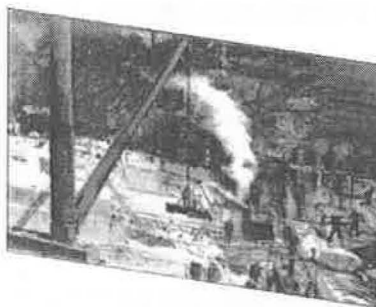
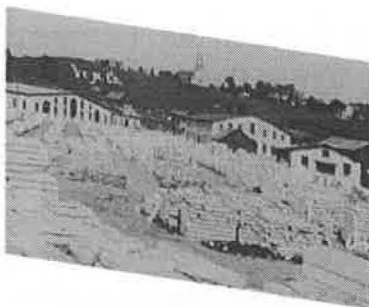
<p>(3) The grades to be operated by the proposed union school district</p> <p>The grades, if any, for which the proposed union school district shall pay tuition</p>	<p>The Study Committee recommends that the following Articles of Agreement be adopted by each necessary and/or advisable school district for the creation of a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 district to be named Quarry Valley Unified Union District, hereinafter referred to as the "Unified Union District".</p> <p>Article 2</p> <p>The Unified Union District will provide pre-kindergarten through grade twelve educations to all of the students by operating PK-12 for all of its students in the Unified Union School District.</p> <p>The proposed unified union school district shall not pay tuition for any grades.</p>	
<p>(4) The cost and general location of any proposed new schools to be constructed</p> <p>The cost and general description of any proposed renovations</p>	<p>Article 1</p> <p>The school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland are <i>necessary</i> for the establishment of the Unified Union District. The above referenced school districts are hereinafter referred to as the "forming districts". There are no additional school districts being recommended at this time.</p> <p>If all of the forming districts vote to approve the merger, the Unified Union District will commence full educational operations and services on July 1, 2018 under 16 VSA, chapter 11.</p> <p>Article 4</p> <p>No new school buildings are necessary to, or proposed for, the formation of the Unified Union District. The Unified Union District School Board will assume ownership and operate existing school facilities commencing July 1, 2018. No school closings are anticipated or proposed on July 1, 2018. (See Article 8C)</p>	
<p>(5) A plan for the first year of the proposed union school district's operation for:</p> <p>(A) the transportation of students</p>	<p>Article 3</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board will comply with 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3, regarding the recognition of the representatives of employees of the respective forming districts as the representatives of the employees of the Unified Union District and will commence negotiations pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 57 for teachers and 21 VSA Chapter 22 for other employees. In the absence of new collective bargaining agreements on July 1, 2018, the School Board will comply with</p>	

<p>(B) the assignment of staff</p> <p>(C) curriculum</p> <p>The plan must be consistent with existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other provisions of law, including 16 V.S.A. chapter 53, subchapter 3 (transition of employees)</p>	<p>the pre-existing master agreements pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3. The School Board shall honor all individual employment contracts that are in place for the forming school districts on June 30, 2018 until their respective termination dates.</p> <p>Article 5</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board shall determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. The new unified union board will evaluate transportation systems during the first year of district operation. (See 16 V.S.A. §§1221, 1222, 1224 (Student transportation) 16 V.S.A. §1551 (Technical center transport))</p> <p>Article 6</p> <p>The forming districts of the Unified Union District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise unify their operations on or before July 1, 2018.</p>	
<p>(6) The indebtedness of the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall assume.</p>	<p>A. Capital Debt</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall assume all capital debt as may exist on June 30, 2018, including both principal and interest, of the forming school districts that join the Unified Union District.</p> <p>B. Operating Fund Surpluses, Deficits and Reserve Funds</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall assume any and all operating deficits, surpluses, and fund balances of any of the forming districts that may exist at the close of business on June 30, 2018. In addition, reserve funds will be transferred to the Unified Union District on June 30, 2018 and will be applied for such established purposes unless otherwise determined through appropriate legal procedures.</p> <p>C. Restricted Funds</p> <p>The forming districts will transfer to the Unified Union District any pre-existing specific endowments or other restricted accounts, including student activity and related accounts that may exist on June 30, 2018. Any scholarship funds, trusts, endowments, or similar accounts held by, dedicated to, or benefitting individual school districts, students, employees, residents or buildings of such districts prior to June 30, 2018, including all such funds listed and attached hereto as Attachment 1, shall be used thereafter for the schools, personnel or students previously in those individual communities and districts in accordance with their provisions. (Attachment 1)</p>	

<p>(7) The specific pieces of real property owned by the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall acquire, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * their valuation * how the proposed union school district shall pay for them 	<p>Article 8 –</p> <p>A. Transfer of Property to Unified Union District</p> <p>No later than June 30, 2018, the forming districts will convey to the Unified Union District all of their school-related real and personal property, for One U.S. Dollar, and the Unified Union District will assume all capital debt associated therewith. The Unified Union District recognizes the long term financial investments and community relationships that each town has with its school building(s). The Unified Union District will encourage appropriate use of the building by the students and community according to the policies and procedures of the Unified Union District as overseen by the building administrator.</p> <p>B. Subsequent Sale of Real Property to Towns</p> <p>In the event that, and at such subsequent time as the Unified Union District School Board determines, at its discretion, and subject to compliance with the school closure provisions of Article 8C, that any of the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by one or more of the forming districts is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Unified Union District and its educational programs, the Unified Union District shall offer such real property, for the sum of One U.S. Dollar, and subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption or payment of all outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by Vermont law, to the town in which it is located.</p> <p>The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the town owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event a town elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the town shall compensate the Unified Union District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified Union District and prior to the sale to the town. In the event a town elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Unified Union District shall, pursuant to Vermont statutes, sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the Unified Union District School Board.</p> <p>C. Closure of Schools</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall not close any school within its boundaries during the first four years after the effective date of merger unless the electorate of the town in which the school is located consents to closure. Closing a school facility after July 1, 2022 takes a vote of the electorate in</p>	
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	the town in which the school is located, and a unanimous vote of the Unified Union District School Board.																	
(8) [repealed 2004 Acts & Resolves No.130, Sec. 15]																		
(9) Consistent with the proportional representation requirements of the Equal Protection Clause, the method of apportioning the representation that each proposed member town shall have on the proposed union school board * no more than 18 members total * each member town is entitled to at least one representative * see also 16 V.S.A. § 706k(c): one or more at-large directors * see also 16 V.S.A. § 707(c): weighted voting	<p>Article 9</p> <p>A forming town district's representation on the Unified Union District School Board will be closely proportional to the fraction that its population bears to the aggregate population of all forming school districts in the Unified Union District. Initial Unified Union District School Board composition is based upon the 2010 Federal Census, and shall be recalculated promptly following the release of each subsequent decennial census. At such time the Unified Union District School Board shall also evaluate and consider the advisability of implementing a system of at-large voting for school directors.</p> <p>The number of board members from each forming school district shall be determined by dividing the population of the town or village by one ninth of the total population of the aggregate population of the village and towns within the Unified Union District.</p> <p>The initial membership on the Unified Union District Board of School Directors will be as follows:</p> <p>Number of School Board Members by Town</p> <table><tr><td>Town</td><td colspan="2"></td><td>Board Members</td></tr><tr><td>Poultney</td><td>3432</td><td>(46%)</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Proctor</td><td>1741</td><td>(23%)</td><td>3*</td></tr><tr><td>West Rutland</td><td>2326</td><td>(31%)</td><td>3</td></tr></table> <p>*Each Board member will have .67 weighted vote which equals 2 total votes</p>	Town			Board Members	Poultney	3432	(46%)	4	Proctor	1741	(23%)	3*	West Rutland	2326	(31%)	3	
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(10) The term of office of directors initially elected, to be arranged so that one-third expire on the day of each	<p>Article 10</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board will be elected for <i>three-year terms</i>, except for those initially elected at the time of the formation of the Unified Union District. In the initial Unified Union District election, board member terms of office will be distributed as follows:</p>																	

annual meeting of the proposed union school district, beginning on the second annual meeting, or as near to that proportion as possible	Town/District	1 Year Term/ 2017-2018	2 Year Term/ 2017-2019	3 Year Term/ 2017-2020
	Poultney	2	1	1
	Proctor	1	1	1
	West Rutland	1	1	1
	Pursuant to the provisions of 16 VSA §706j (b), elected school board members shall be sworn in and assume the duties of their office. The term of office for school board members elected at the <i>March 7, 2017</i> election shall be one, two, or three years respectively (16 VSA §706j), from the date when the initial school board members will begin their term of office, and the date of the Unified Union District’s annual meeting in the spring of 2018, as established under 16 VSA §706j. Thereafter, terms of office shall begin and expire on the date of the Unified Union District’s annual meeting which will occur on Town Meeting Day..			
(13) Any other matters that the study committee considers pertinent, including whether votes on the union school district budget or public questions shall be by Australian ballot <i>(please list each matter separately)</i>	Article 17 During the first four years, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the School Board may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Unified Union District. After July 1, 2022 the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 as long as the state law remains in effect. (Reference Articles 5, 8c and 18) Article 18 The Unified Union District School Board shall provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget development. Structures to support and encourage public participation within the Unified Union District will be established by the Unified Union District Board of School Directors on or before June 30, 2018.			



QUARRY VALLEY
UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT
PROUD HISTORY
BRIGHT FUTURE

Articles of Agreement

Quarry Valley Unified Union District

Serving the schools of the communities of:
Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland

The Study Committee recommends that the following Articles of Agreement be adopted by each necessary and/or advisable school district for the creation of a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 district to be named **Quarry Valley Unified Union District**, hereinafter referred to as the "Unified Union District".

Article 1

The school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland are *necessary* for the establishment of the Unified Union District. The above referenced school districts are hereinafter referred to as the "forming districts". There are no additional school districts being recommended at this time.

If all of the forming districts vote to approve the merger, the Unified Union District will commence full educational operations and services on July 1, 2018 under 16 VSA, chapter 11; provided, however, that the votes approving creation of the Unified Union District shall not become effective unless and until the voters of the Middletown Springs and Wells School Districts vote to approve formation of the Wells Springs Unified Union School District, enabling the two unified union school districts to form a "Side-by-Side" structure within the same supervisory union.

Article 2

The Unified Union District will provide pre-kindergarten through grade twelve education to all of the students by operating PK-12 for all of its students in the Unified Union School District.

Article 3

The Unified Union District School Board will comply with 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3, regarding the recognition of the representatives of employees of the respective forming districts as the representatives of the employees of the Unified Union District and will commence negotiations pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 57 for teachers and 21 VSA Chapter 22 for other employees. In the absence of new collective bargaining agreements on July 1, 2018, the School Board will comply with the pre-existing master agreements pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3. The School Board

shall honor all individual employment contracts that are in place for the forming school districts on June 30, 2018 until their respective termination dates.

Article 4

No new school buildings are necessary to, or proposed for, the formation of the Unified Union District. The Unified Union District School Board will assume ownership and operate existing school facilities commencing July 1, 2018. No school closings are anticipated or proposed on July 1, 2018. (See Article 8C)

Article 5

The Unified Union District School Board shall determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. The new unified union board will evaluate transportation systems during the first year of district operation. (See 16 V.S.A. §§1221, 1222, 1224 (Student transportation) 16 V.S.A. §1551 (Technical center transport))

Article 6

The forming districts of the Unified Union District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise unify their operations on or before July 1, 2018.

Article 7

A. Capital Debt

The Unified Union District shall assume all capital debt as may exist on June 30, 2018, including both principal and interest, of the forming school districts that join the Unified Union District.

B. Operating Fund Surpluses, Deficits and Reserve Funds

The Unified Union District shall assume any and all operating deficits, surpluses, and fund balances of any of the forming districts that may exist at the close of business on June 30, 2018. In addition, reserve funds will be transferred to the Unified Union District on June 30, 2018 and will be applied for such established purposes unless otherwise determined through appropriate legal procedures.

C. Restricted Funds

The forming districts will transfer to the Unified Union District any pre-existing specific endowments or other restricted accounts, including student activity and related accounts that may exist on June 30, 2018. Any scholarship funds, trusts, endowments, or similar accounts held by, dedicated to, or benefitting individual school districts, students, employees, residents or buildings of such districts prior to June 30, 2018, including all such funds listed and attached hereto as Attachment 1, shall be used thereafter for the schools, personnel or students previously in those individual communities and districts in accordance with their provisions. (Attachment 1)

Article 8

A. Transfer of Property to Unified Union District

No later than June 30, 2018, the forming districts will convey to the Unified Union District all of their school-related real and personal property, for One U.S. Dollar, and the Unified Union District will assume all capital debt associated therewith. The Unified Union District recognizes the long term financial investments and community relationships that each town has with its school building(s). The Unified Union District will encourage appropriate use of the building by the students and community according to the policies and procedures of the Unified Union District as overseen by the building administrator.

B. Subsequent Sale of Real Property to Towns

In the event that, and at such subsequent time as the Unified Union District School Board determines, at its discretion, and subject to compliance with the school closure provisions of Article 8C, that any of the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by one or more of the forming districts is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Unified Union District and its educational programs, the Unified Union District shall offer such real property, for the sum of One U.S. Dollar, and subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption or payment of all outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by Vermont law, to the town in which it is located.

The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the town owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event a town elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the town shall compensate the Unified Union District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after

the formation of the Unified Union District and prior to the sale to the town. In the event a town elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Unified Union District shall, pursuant to Vermont statutes, sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the Unified Union District School Board.

C. Closure of Schools

The Unified Union District shall not close any school within its boundaries during the first four years after the effective date of merger unless the electorate of the town in which the school is located consents to closure. Closing a school facility after July 1, 2022 takes a vote of the electorate in the town in which the school is located, and a unanimous vote of the Unified Union District School Board.

Article 9

A forming town district's representation on the Unified Union District School Board will be closely proportional to the fraction that its population bears to the aggregate population of all forming school districts in the Unified Union District. Initial Unified Union District School Board composition is based upon the 2010 Federal Census, and shall be recalculated promptly following the release of each subsequent decennial census. At such time the Unified Union District School Board shall also evaluate and consider the advisability of implementing a system of at-large voting for school directors.

The number of board members from each forming school district shall be determined by dividing the population of the town or village by one ninth of the total population of the aggregate population of the village and towns within the Unified Union District.

The initial membership on the Unified Union District Board of School Directors will be as follows:

Number of School Board Members by Town

Town			Board Members
Poultney	3432	(46%)	4
Proctor	1741	(23%)	3*
West Rutland	2326	(31%)	3

**Each Board member will have .67 weighted vote which equals 2 total votes*

Article 10

The Unified Union District School Board will be elected for **three-year terms**, except for those initially elected at the time of the formation of the Unified Union District. In the initial Unified Union District election, board member terms of office will be distributed as follows:

Town/District	1 Year Term/ 2017-2018	2 Year Term/ 2017-2019	3 Year Term/ 2017-2020
Poultney	2	1	1
Proctor	1	1	1
West Rutland	1	1	1

Pursuant to the provisions of 16 VSA §706j (b), elected school board members shall be sworn in and assume the duties of their office. The term of office for school board members elected at the **March 7, 2017** election shall be one, two, or three years respectively (16 VSA §706j), from the date when the initial school board members will begin their term of office, and the date of the Unified Union District's annual meeting in the spring of 2018, as established under 16 VSA §706j. Thereafter, terms of office shall begin and expire on the date of the Unified Union District's annual meeting which will occur on Town Meeting Day.

Article 11

The proposal forming this Unified Union District will be presented to the voters of each forming school district on **March 7, 2017**. The candidates for the new Unified Union District School Board will be elected on the same date, as required by law. Nominations for the office of Unified Union District director representing any district/town shall be made by filing with the clerk of that school district/town proposed as a member of the union, a statement of nomination signed by at least 30 voters in that district or one percent of the legal voters in the district, whichever is less, and accepted in writing by the nominee. A statement shall be filed not less than thirty (30) nor more than forty (40) days prior to the date of the vote.

Article 12

Upon an affirmative vote of the electorates of the school districts, and upon compliance with 16 VSA §706g, the Unified Union District shall have and exercise all of the authority which is necessary in order for it to prepare for full educational operations beginning on July 1, 2018. The Unified Union District

shall, between the date of its organizational meeting under 16 VSA §706j and June 30, 2018, develop school district policies, adopt curriculum, educational programs, assessment measures and reporting procedures in order to fulfill the Education Quality Standards (State Board Rule 2000), prepare for and negotiate contractual agreements, set the school calendar for fiscal year 2019, prepare and present the budget for fiscal year 2019, prepare for Unified Union District Annual Meeting(s) and transact any other lawful business that comes before the Board, provided, however, that the exercise of such authority by the Unified Union District shall not be construed to limit or alter the authority and/or responsibilities of the School Districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland. The Unified Union District shall commence full educational operations on July 1, 2018.

Article 13

The Unified Union District School Board shall propose annual budgets in accordance with 16 VSA Chapter 11. The annual budget and Board Member votes shall be conducted by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 VSA Chapter 55.

Article 14

On July 1, 2018, when the Unified Union District becomes fully operational and begins to provide educational services to students, the school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland shall cease all educational operations and shall remain in existence for the sole purpose of completing any outstanding business not given to the Unified Union District under these articles and state law. Such business shall be completed as soon as practicable, but in no event any later than December 31, 2018.

Article 15

Cost-Benefit Analysis (See Appendix A)

Article 16

Information on school choice, school configurations and school enrollment plan (See Appendix B)

Article 17

During the first four years, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the School Board may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Unified Union District. After July 1, 2022 the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 as long as the state law remains in effect. (Reference Articles 5, 8c and 18)

Article 18

The Unified Union District School Board shall provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget development. Structures to support and encourage public participation within the Unified Union District will be established by the Unified Union District Board of School Directors on or before June 30, 2018.

Attachment 1 to Article 7 of Quarry Valley Unified Union District Articles of Agreement

List of Restricted Funds Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland, Poultney

Poultney Funds:

Adam N. Maslack Scholarship
B. Philips Hooper Award
Poultney Dental Fund
Scott Scholarship Fund
Irene Senet Trust Fund
Poultney Elementary Student Activity Fund
Poultney High School Student Activity Fund

Proctor Funds:

Winthrop Abbott Scholarship
Gordie Anderson Memorial Scholarship
Sarah Leary Scholarship
Frank Mainolfi Scholarship
Mary Marfuggi Scholarship
Robert Martel Scholarship
OMYA Scholarship
Evelyn Peterson Scholarship
Petofi Hungarian Society Scholarship
Madeline Sherman Scholarship
Shostak Scholarship (Zero balance currently)
Southmayd Scholarship
Jimmy T Memorial Scholarship
Paul Wager Scholarship Account
Buzzell-Gallus Athletic Award
PFP Student Scholarship Fund
Albina C. Boni
Florence Mead Fund
Middlebury Field Scholarship Fund
Mortimer Proctor Fund
Pentowski Fund
Proctor Funds - Redfield Proctor Funds, Mary Proctor Funds
PFP Personnel Assistance Fund
Technology Fund
Proctor Elementary School Student Activity Fund
Proctor High School Student Activity Fund

West Rutland Funds:

Harold Carl Anderson Memorial Scholarship
Wilbur Carl Nelson & Goldie Cohen Nelson Scholarship
F. Cohen Edison & Mr. and Mrs. David Cohen Scholarship
Stanley & Mary Pietryka Memorial Scholarship
2024 Buddies Scholarship
Alex Alexander Memorial
Technology Fund
West Rutland School Student Activity Fund

Dated: December 20, 2016

Attachment 1 to Article 7 of Quarry Valley Unified Union District Articles of Agreement

List of Restricted Funds Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland, Poultney

Poultney Funds:

Adam N. Maslack Scholarship
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2024 Buddies Scholarship
Alex Alexander Memorial
Technology Fund
West Rutland School Student Activity Fund

Dated: December 20, 2016

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Appendix A: Cost Benefit Analysis & Narrative Quarry Valley Unified Union District (Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland)

Efficiencies could be gained through the creation of a Unified Union District in the following areas:

Quality and Opportunity; Achievement of High Standards

The creation of a Unified Union District will result in one mission, one vision and one strategic plan for continual improvement based on the attainment of outcomes the community believes are important for young people. Moreover, a Unified Union District will provide a single School Board the opportunity to design a continuum of educational programs and experiences for all students through an integrated PreK-12 system.

Opportunities with increased scale enable the new district to retain and possibly expand a variety of educational programs and learning pathways. Each school and community has unique resources and assets which may provide an opportunity for the creation of specialized programs, such as magnet schools, within a larger system.

One PreK-12 Unified Union District may allow students to transfer to another school within the regional district without having to pay tuition, and the opportunity to stay at their current school assignment if moving to another town within the Unified Union District. Under the current structure, students are not able to do so without paying tuition (other than 9-12 who participate in the statewide secondary open school choice program).

The goal is for our learners to experience increased opportunities in a unified district. On the early end of the educational continuum, Pre-K student services, partnerships and family relationships can be better coordinated within a single district. A single structure allows for systemic personalized learning plan (PLP) planning and increased personalized learning opportunities through the economy of scale. It also increases the potential to sustain specialty classes such as advanced placement classes, internships, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), and visual and performing arts including a district string and symphony orchestra. Other academic opportunities will abound (i.e. National Honor Society, Destination Imagination, Spelling Team, Math League and Mathathon, Upward Bound, Governor's Institutes).

We will be expanding shared special education programs for students with special needs such as those on the Autism Spectrum and those with emotional challenges so their needs can be met within the

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

public school setting. Anticipating that English language learner enrollment is on the rise, a single district permits shared teachers for specialized instruction.

A unified system ensures that all students have access to existing services that may not be currently equitably available, such as a vast array of extra-curricular choices including athletics, clubs, string/symphony orchestra, band, rock band, jazz band, choral groups, drama club, multiple school- and community-based art shows and performances, etc.

Finally, by forming a Unified Union District, the professional learning community (PLC) of school leaders and teachers will become more diverse, allowing for a greater, richer exchange and sharing of resources, ideas and successes. The collaborative efforts of high performing PLCs produce high performing learners.

All students will have access to a rich array of high-quality learning opportunities within an aligned PK-12 education system. All students will benefit from increased stability in available educational opportunities: (1) due to combined enrollment which supports maintenance of reasonable school and class sizes; (2) due to possibilities for program improvement/expansion; and (3) through preventing loss of programs.

Efficiencies, Flexibility and Taxpayer Value

With full implementation, there is an estimated initial savings of \$325,000 as detailed below:

Position*/Service	Estimated FY 19 Initial Savings
Superintendent (retirement)	\$130,000
Curriculum Coordinator (previously retired)	\$100,000
Student Support Personnel (retirement)	\$35,000
Building Rental and Utilities	\$35,000
SU Copier Leases	\$2,600
SU Audit	\$6,600
Future Attorney Fees	\$15,800
Total Estimate	\$325,000

*** includes total compensation**

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the three most common barriers that prevent students from taking the courses they want or need in schools. These barriers are availability of courses, accessibility to courses and the flexibility of the education system. For example, are students interested in taking a course that is not available at their middle or high school? Through coordination across our schools, the Quarry Valley School District will ensure that the course will be available from another school that offers the course online in a synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid format.

To further exemplify, these virtual learning opportunities can be:

1. Remote or local with a full time distance learning instructor (i.e. during a shared time during the day or evening);
2. Blended to include some distance learning instruction and some in person instruction;
3. 100% virtual using VT approved middle and high school courses (including personalized courses);
4. Virtual/Hybrid instructional subject areas include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Computer Science
 - b. Advanced Placement
 - c. Dual Enrollment through CCV, Castleton, UVM, etc.
 - d. NCAA Approved
 - e. Honors or Advanced
 - f. Core Academics
 - g. Summer Learning Recovery
 - h. World Languages
 - i. Electives

We will continually search and adapt our online learning opportunities to reflect the goals and aspirations of the student body. In the past, this has involved creating custom classes (such as a computer science curriculum for Proctor High School). In the future, the capacity and infrastructure is in place to pull diverse learning opportunities from the surrounding area or globally, utilizing any platform.

Employment of all teachers through the unified union district will enable us to draw upon a wide variety of expertise in meeting student needs. We also envision creative scheduling, such as modified block, where teachers may travel to various schools to deliver instruction for one or more days per week. In addition, we envision evening and weekend opportunities for secondary students which would be open to all high school students in the Quarry Valley District.

Our three high schools may become specialized magnet schools. For example, students who wish to focus on a particular area such as the Arts, STEM and Global Studies may elect to attend one secondary school over another, depending on the school's specialization.

A wide array of extra-curricular and co-curricular options will be available to students. Sports opportunities include VPA sanctioned sports programs for boys and girls in grades 7-12. Our athletes have earned numerous state championships, and we enthusiastically recognize team and individual

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

In addition, the Unified Union District will receive a \$130,000 merger incentive grant to support transition during the 2017-18 school year. Efficiencies can be increased, and the sharing of resources across schools will be facilitated with much more flexibility.

Transparency and Accountability

A single financial accounting system will simplify both revenue and expenditure reporting. Each community will have a voice in the education of all students, PreK-12 in Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland. The Unified Union District Board structure provides for representation from each community, ensuring that a broad spectrum of perspectives is represented in the governance of education systems. The Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Schools have a long history of providing rich opportunities which yield strong, positive student outcomes for all students who attend our schools.

It is anticipated that the supervisory union will be comprised of four districts including the Quarry Valley Unified Union, the Middletown Springs/Wells Unified Union District, the Rutland Town School District and the Ira School District. The SU Board will be comprised of ten (10) members, including three (3) representatives from the Quarry Valley Unified Union District Board, three (3) representatives from the Wells Springs Unified Union District Board, three (3) representatives from the Rutland Town School Board and one (1) representative from the Ira School Board (non-operating). This representation, as required by state statute, promotes effective and efficient operations of the supervisory union. Note that the supervisory union can request the State Board of Education to waive the 3 member / 1 member requirement and request a different SU Board member configuration (16 VSA 261(d)). Within the expanded supervisory union, all services will be centralized as required by Act 153 and 156. In addition, technology and curriculum, instruction and assessment for students in the elementary grades will be aligned in the SU through cooperative work between and among the professionals, which is underway.

Students

We are proud of our student accomplishments. Our student outcomes meet or exceed the state average PK-12 as measured by local assessments, state assessments, and college entrance aptitude tests. In addition, 95-100% of our students graduate from high school a large proportion (60-75%) pursue higher education at two or four year colleges. These statistics are well above the state average.

To ensure improved outcomes and increased student learning opportunities, students in the Quarry Valley PK-12 district will experience a personalized education.

Advancements in technology including infrastructure improvements, expanded broadband capabilities enable improved outcomes and enhanced student learning opportunities. In our 21st century personalized learning environments, we believe virtual learning is fundamental. Our goal is to overcome

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athletic accomplishments. High school Academic Showdown, middle-level Destination Imagination, and elementary spelling bees are a few examples of academic competitions that our students participate in.

In summary, regardless of town of residence, all students who attend school in the Quarry Valley School District will have opportunities in supportive learning environments with: 1) students at the heart of our mission; 2) an inclusive and increasingly diverse student body; and 3) great academic outcomes including high dual enrollment and early college participation; high secondary graduation rates; high honors including strong AP (Advanced Placement) participation and success rates for students in grades 10-12; high rates of college aspiration and enrollment; continued enrollment at Stafford Technical Center and achievement of earned certifications; 4) innovative and research-based programs and practices including technology integration; partnerships with the Tarrant Foundation and UVM; student-led conferences; Young Writers' Project; Poetry Out Loud; student leadership opportunities at all grade levels; Personalized Learning Plans; internships and advisory programs; math and literacy intervention; enrichment programs; and virtual and blended coursework 7-12.

Teacher Quality

We have great teachers. In the Unified Union District, all teachers will be Highly Qualified. Our district teachers include those who are AP (Advanced Placement) trained, Vermont Mathematics Institute graduates, Nationally Board Certified, leaders in educational organizations, representatives on the SU Curriculum Council and school leadership teams and mentors to new teachers. Our teachers are highly trained as 54 % of Poultney, 60% of Proctor and 71 % of West Rutland teachers have their Master's Degree or higher.

In a unified union district structure, all teachers will be employed by the Unified Union District, allowing the Superintendent flexibility to adjust staffing assignments based on student needs, changing demographics and staff expertise. Teachers could be reassigned to where the needs are across all schools within the unified district; currently, reassignments are limited to the district of hire, unless a shared service agreement is crafted. Such an arrangement takes more administrative time to create, implement, coordinate and oversee.

Part-time employees may find increased employment opportunities within the Unified Union District, which will improve recruitment and retention efforts. We are not expecting to close schools or to reduce instructional staff under the Unified Union District (the primary efficiency savings will be in central office administration and further service consolidation), but the Unified Union District will provide greater opportunity to equalize class sizes across the system for specific grade levels and to expand educational opportunities.

Non-Teacher Staffing

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

The Unified Union District will allow for greater flexibility in the allocation of non-teaching positions. Personnel can be reassigned where the greatest needs are across all schools within the Unified Union District. Currently reassignments are limited to the district of hire (unless done through a shared service agreement). Efficiencies will result in central office staffing reductions after the transition period, which will provide seamless leadership for staff, students and families, and will eliminate redundancies in a variety of ways, including researching and implementing new laws, regulations, and other requirements.

Technology

Within a Unified Union District there will be one technology delivery system and IT Department to update and maintain resources across the system (e.g. payroll and accounting, help desk ticketing, human resources, student information, security, and student performance data). Communications will be improved with a single web page platform / structure across the system and a unified email / chat / document-sharing platform.

There will be fewer vendors and increased buying power for internet service, software applications and technology hardware. Likewise, similar hardware leads to repair efficiencies where like parts can be stocked or knowledge in certain model repair can be streamlined.

There will be only one E-rate application (to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access at remarkable discounts) instead of two, and a single supervisory union will manage resources that could be redirected to provide greater access to customized and personalized learning opportunities for students, for example, through personal mobile devices.

Specialization of Information Technology staff (e.g. - supervision, network administration, technicians, technology integration, and application specialists) can be applied to every building, where these human resources before were scarce or unavailable.

One system will allow for greater efficiencies and greater focus can be given to 21st Century personalized learning environments with more technology tools, knowledgeable staff, and enhanced training opportunities, which will result in enhanced student learning.

Student Data Collection and Reporting

A single PreK-12 student data system would allow for richer empirical data, improvement in strategic planning, improved instruction, specialized interventions, and personalization. A single PreK-12 reporting system improves parental involvement and communication about student progress, promoting transparency and accountability. A single district will reduce redundancies with state reporting requirements. In a single unified district, there will be the ability to track cohorts from Pre-K through graduation. A single Unified Union District will allow educators to monitor growth and progress

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

for Pre-K-12 learners and provide early intervention when needed. The student achievement data tracking systems will be enhanced, to ensure that all students will achieve at high levels as defined in the State's Education Quality Standards. Our districts can currently track PreK-12 student achievement data in each district, but student data is FERPA protected in each district and cannot be shared. The Unified Union District will be able to disaggregate data, allowing for informed decision-making around programming, progress monitoring and professional development needs.

Student Services

For purposes of special education and student support services, becoming a single school district increases the flexibility to allocate resources and design programs. Examples include the ability to develop autism and behavioral programming PreK-12, and for Extended Year Services (summer programming) to include larger groups of students together. (Currently, each school district runs parallel special education programs or transports students to alternative programs.)

Students will also benefit from continuity of staff between schools, improving the implementation of programs and curriculum which align with the Education Quality Standards. Continuity of intervention systems and programs across a PreK-12 system will be realized without the barriers of district boundaries. Under one Local Educational Agency (LEA) there will be greater continuity of procedures, processes, programs, service providers, families, students and staff. For example, through the collective expertise of our teachers, common curriculum will be implemented in alignment with proficiencies and localized outcome expectations utilizing our technology tools.

Common professional development will enhance the PreK-12 system by building increased expertise and specialization. Efficiencies will be gained through system-wide programming specializing in specific populations. This is particularly beneficial to low-incidence populations, since we do not have the scale to develop this kind of programming with small stand-alone populations.

Financially, there will be a decreased impact to the budget as a percentage of the whole as students with highly specialized needs (and the inherent costs associated with providing for those students) move in and out of the system.

Financial Accounting and Budgeting

In a Unified Union District, budgets and tax rates will be combined: one budget and tax rate will reflect increased efficiencies and student opportunities. This will reduce the number of state, federal, and IRS reports and intergovernmental accounting transactions. A single district reduces the number of independent audits, reducing labor and audit expenses. It also lowers the possibility of exceeding the excess spending tax penalty threshold. A unified union district eliminates the need for equalized pupil hold harmless protection (and 'phantom' students). The formation of the single Unified Union District

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

will streamline accounting systems, and increase transparency and accountability of programs and services within a single budget.

Improved Utilization of Buildings and Sports Facilities

The facility use request process would be less complicated for community members and organizations: through a centralized application process, community members would complete one application with more options (school facilities and grounds) within the Unified Union District to choose from.

Centralized Contracting and Administration

Unified teacher and support staff agreements would result in a reduction of legal expenses and time necessary for negotiations after the initial transition to the new SU. Unified labor contracts - one for professionals and one for support staff - would provide consistency in wages and working conditions for the same positions across our communities.

A larger school district will allow for increased purchasing power and a stronger negotiating position through economies of scale. A Unified Union District will be able to reduce from two School Spring (electronic advertising/ job application system) and Kelly (substitute staff system) accounts to one, resulting in cost savings. A new Unified Union District will eliminate duplicate systems in two SUs (i.e. student achievement data, financial management and student information systems) which will result in cost savings, reduced complexity, and improved information and analysis opportunity. The combination of administration of human resources including payroll, health and dental, and state and federal reporting will provide additional efficiencies and savings. There is currently a great deal of duplication of effort within individual districts.

Transportation

The Unified Union District's Board will have the authority to determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. A single district has a greater economy of scale, and more efficient routing of buses could be provided, such as shared transportation for students to Stafford Technical Center.

Food Service

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

A single child nutrition service will have the scope and scale to allow negotiating a single affordable vendor and will be more efficient in meeting the demands of state and federal guidelines. There is a greater economy of scale if the service is contracted to an outside provider.

Enrichment

A Unified Union District would have the ability to provide enrichment programs that may not be currently available such as 21st century after school and summer program for elementary, middle and high school students and enriching experiences throughout the school day and year, include Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Dinoman!, author's visits, Science Olympiad, National Walk-to-School Day, Nationwide Hour of Code, Environmental Education Center, exchange and interactive international experiences.

Supports for Healthy Students

A Unified Union District would have the ability to provide supports for healthy students that may not be currently available, such as: outstanding food services system; nutrition supports for students; on-site clinical counseling services; Tooth Tutor; Tapestry afterschool and summer program; Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Fire Departments; the Rutland County Police Department; and community-based pre-school providers.

Parent and Community Support and Involvement

Parents support our students with academic, music and athletic boosters; PTO and community dinners and events; alumni association; parent community service; American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart; food drives; and polar splash teams to name a few.

Choice as an Indicator of Quality

Our schools have a history of strong academic success, excellent parental involvement, community service by students and strong support from their respective communities.

For those students who wish to exercise choice (9-12), Vermont law provides for public high school choice throughout the state. In a merged district, students in grades 9-12 would have choice of any public high school in Vermont, subject to the limits set by local Boards. Poultney, West Rutland and Proctor currently have up to 10% of their enrollment as identified slots for students to transfer in or out of public high school. All students in Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland have opportunities to attend other public high schools throughout Vermont. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 so long as the state law remains in effect.

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During the first four years of the new district, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence. After the first four years of the new Unified Union District, school choice PK-12 among the schools in the district will be expanded with the option to attend any school in the district regardless of the town in which they reside, upon consent of the parent. After July 1, 2022, the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District.

As the benefits of the historical partnerships with neighboring schools illustrate in many areas from professional development, to support services, technology, technical assistance, and administrative services, part of each school's continued quality is reliant upon outside supports. Within a larger district and with the operating guidelines as outlined herein, each school may continue to access these contributions to quality in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, the enlarged district will expand the pool of students eligible to attend each school, increasing the likelihood that the school will remain cost effective on a per pupil basis. And lastly, the continued operation of the schools may continue to be advantaged by the stability of a larger operational structure, which is less susceptible to the impacts of fluctuations in enrollments, costs, and tax rate variation.

Efficiencies, Flexibility and Taxpayer Value

While tax rates are calculated based upon per pupil spending, school budgets for districts that operate schools are limited in the extent to which they can responsibly increase or decrease budgets on a per student basis. When comparing the budgets of our PreK-12 districts there is a common misconception that each student costs a certain amount to educate for a year, and the savings (or increase in costs) from educating a student within the district could be calculated by comparing tuition rates. However, operating school district budgets don't work that way; they work more like a household budget might. So, for example, imagine a household with four bedrooms and family of five. We can think of the household budget as all the expenses for maintaining the house, utilities, food, and so forth. If one family member moves out, into a dorm for example, a few of the household expenses would be reduced, but not by 1/5, as the basic costs of maintaining the four-bedroom household will be the same. Ultimately, the cost per family member, now in a household of 4, would go up in this scenario. Similarly, if another child arrives, and now there are six family members in the household, the total household expenses may go up a bit, for food and utilities perhaps, but as long as there is room and no significant additions are needed, the cost per family member goes down. This is how school budgets in districts that operate schools work. Many of the costs are fixed or semi-fixed. Reductions in some budget areas can be accomplished when student enrollment declines, and sometimes more when enrollment declines past certain thresholds. When enrollment declines and expenditures cannot be decreased to match, spending per pupil increases. Similarly, increases in expenditures are driven by increases in student needs and enrollments beyond certain thresholds. But if the district has the capacity to welcome more students within the current financial and operating structures, the total cost per student will go down. This is an important strategy for increasing efficiency. In Vermont's education funding formula, the costs

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

per student drive homestead tax rates, so increased efficiency translates to lower homestead property tax rates.

The following illustration demonstrates how changes in enrollment in operating schools affect spending per pupil and costs. In the illustration below, the major expenses for the Sample Vermont School, which has five classrooms, are generally consistent, and an increase or decrease in pupils that does not change the number of classrooms needed, translates only to minor increases or decreases for things like books and supplies. With no changes in expenditures, decreases in enrollment yield increases in spending per pupil. With no changes in expenditures, increases in enrollment lower spending per pupil.

Enrollment in Operating Schools

Spending and per Pupil Costs - Sample Vermont School:

Sample Vermont School - A

100 Students

\$1,000,000 Budget

\$10,000 per student

Class 1 20 Students	Class 2 20 Students	Class 3 20 Students	Class 4 20 Students	Class 5 20 Students
-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

Sample Vermont School - B

Increased Enrollment

105 Students

\$1,005,000

\$9,571 per student

Class 1 21 Students	Class 2 21 Students	Class 3 21 Students	Class 4 21 Students	Class 5 21 Students
-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------	-------------------------------

Sample Vermont School - C

Decreased Enrollment

95 Students

\$995,000 Budget

\$10,474 per student

Class 1 19 Students	Class 2 19 Students	Class 3 19 Students	Class 4 19 Students	Class 5 19 Students
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Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

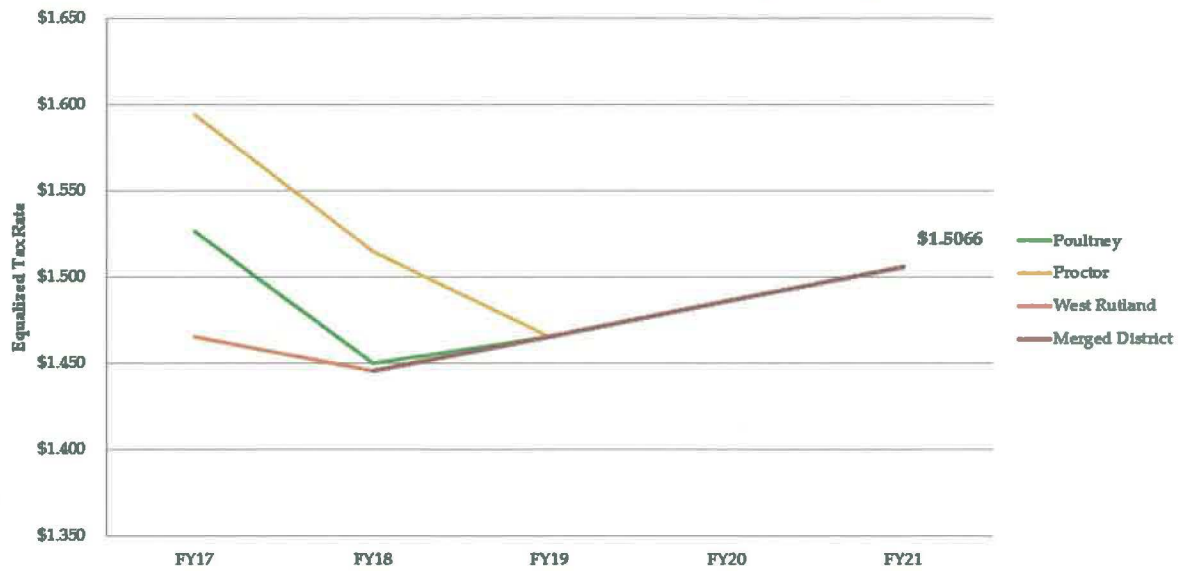
Tax Rates

Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Schools have been considering issues of sustainability of the current education delivery structure for many years. Our study concludes that without formation of the Unified Union District, increases in Education Spending per Equalized Pupil are projected to continue to climb. (Education Spending per Equalized Pupils or ES/EP figures are a good proxy for homestead tax rates, as ES/EPs are a major factor in tax rates, ES/EPs are based upon local decisions and circumstances, and the formula for calculating ES/EP has been consistent over time.)

Increases in ES/EP can be attributed to varying combinations of increases in expenditures, decreases in revenue and decreases in numbers of equalized pupils. These variables have a more pronounced effect in smaller organizations as compared to larger ones. The translation of ES/EP to local homestead tax rates, in all cases, is further compounded by other education funding formula variables, such as statewide rates and the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). As we look to the future, past trends suggest the steep inclines will continue unless action is taken to address the factors contributing to the increases. Factors which can be influenced through the proposed change in governance are primarily related to expenditures and enrollment. To inform thinking about future trends in expenditures (education spending) and enrollment, data have been summarized by the Agency of Education in the District Data Profile tool.* The charts below estimate equalized tax rates using this tool.

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

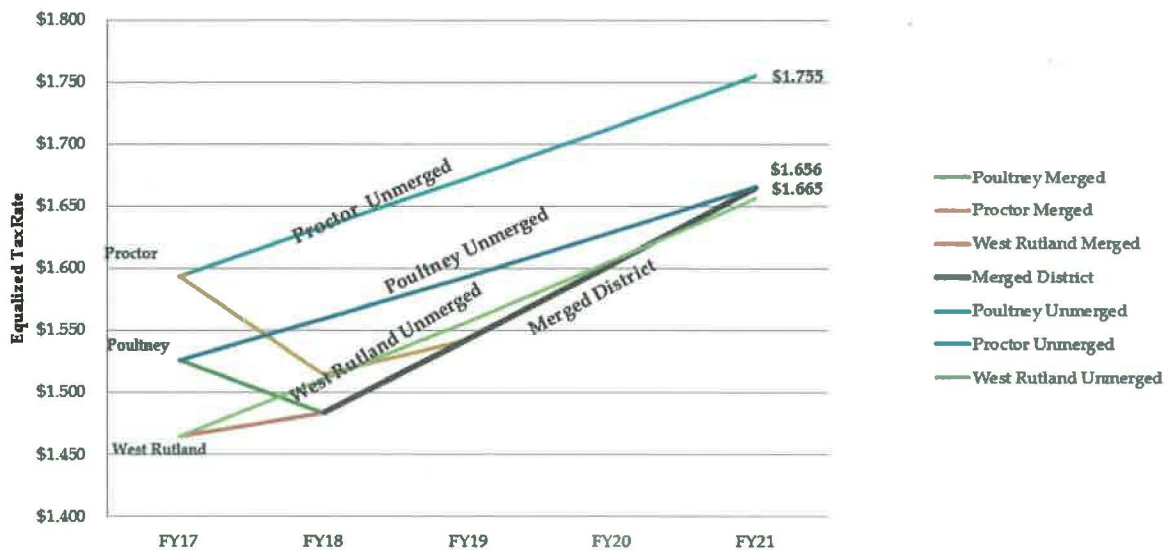
Equalized Tax Rates with No Increases in Education Spending



Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Estimated Equalized Tax Rates in Merged District with No Increase in Education Spending					
	FY 17 ETR	FY 18 ETR	FY 19 ETR	FY 20 ETR	FY21 ETR
Poultney	1.5261	1.4498	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066
Proctor	1.5941	1.5144	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066
West Rutland	1.4649	1.4455	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066

**Equalized Tax Rates with
Annual Increase in Education Spending by District**

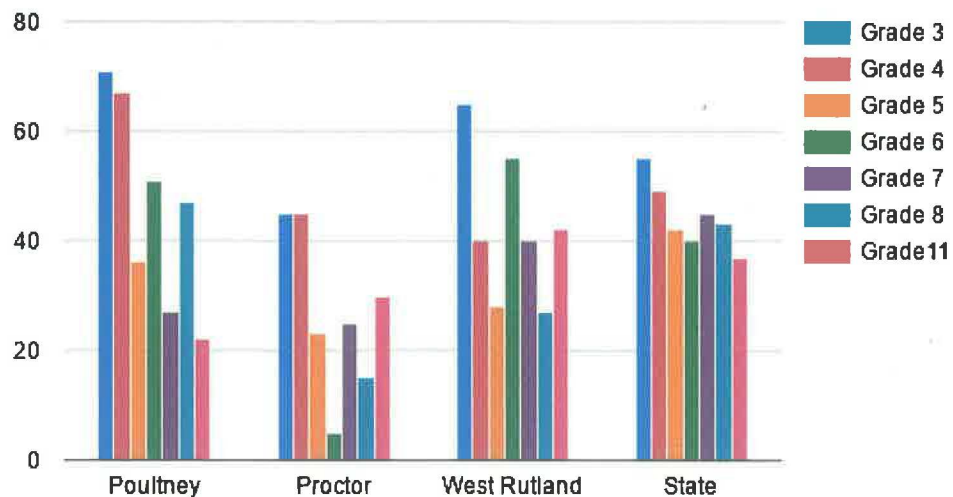


Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Estimated Equalized Tax Rates in Merged and Unmerged District w/ Increases in Education Spending by District					
	FY17 ETR	FY18 ETR	FY19 ETR	FY20 ETR	FY21 ETR
Poultney Merged	\$ 1.526	\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Proctor Merged	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.514	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
West Rutland Merged	\$ 1.465	\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Merged District		\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Poultney Unmerged	\$ 1.526	\$ 1.560	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.629	\$ 1.665
Proctor Unmerged	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.633	\$ 1.673	\$ 1.713	\$ 1.755
West Rutland Unmerged	\$ 1.465	\$ 1.510	\$ 1.557	\$ 1.606	\$ 1.656

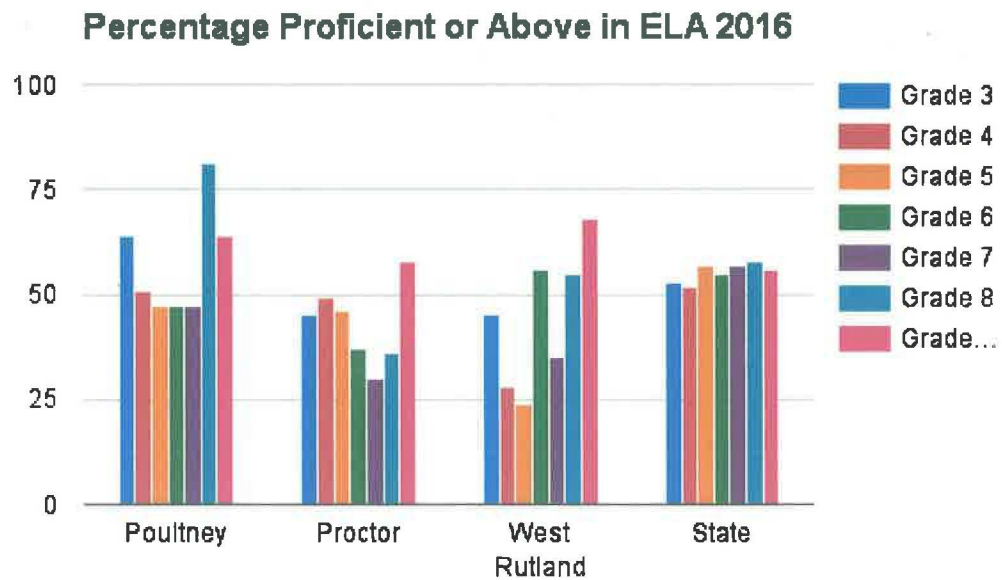
Student Achievement Results SBAC 2016

Percentage Proficient or Above in Math 2016



Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

MATH - Percentage Proficient or Above - 2016				
	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland	State
Grade 3	71	45	65	55
Grade 4	67	45	40	49
Grade 5	36	23	28	42
Grade 6	51	5	55	40
Grade 7	27	25	40	45
Grade 8	47	15	27	43
Grade11	22	30	42	37



***Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland
Articles of Agreement***

ELA - Percentage Proficient or Above - 2016				
	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland	State
Grade 3	64	45	45	53
Grade 4	51	49	28	52
Grade 5	47	46	24	57
Grade 6	47	37	56	55
Grade 7	47	30	35	57
Grade 8	81	36	55	58
Grade11	64	58	68	56

Appendix B: Quarry Valley Unified Union District Summary Data

	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland
Grades Served:	PK-12	PK-12	PK-12
FY 16 ADM:	391	273	324
FY 16 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,549.	\$15,464.	\$14,211.
FY 16 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 11.2 : 1 HS: 9.4 : 1	ES: 10.1 : 1 HS: 7.7 : 1	9.5 : 1
FY 16 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 202 : 1 HS: 102 : 1	ES: 151 : 1 HS: 123 : 1	178.95 : 1
FY 15 ADM:	414	281	335
FY 15 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,147.	\$14,945.	\$13,913.
FY 15 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 12.4 : 1 HS: 8.4 : 1	ES: 12.9 : 1 HS: 9.6 : 1	9.4 : 1
FY 15 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 236 : 1 HS: 105 : 1	ES: 148 : 1 HS: 134 : 1	176 : 1
FY 14 ADM:	411	289	326
FY 14 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,258.	\$14,139.	\$14,022.
FY 14 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 12.2 : 1 HS: 8.6 : 1	ES: 9.9 : 1 HS: 8.1 : 1	9.6 : 1
FY 14 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 219 : 1 HS: 115 : 1	ES: 160 : 1 HS: 135 : 1	173.5 : 1
Small Schools Grant	None	None	None
District Population (latest decennial census)	3432	1741	2326

School Choice

For first four years that the Quarry Valley Unified Union District is fully operational and providing educational services, students will attend school according to their town of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the Board of School Directors may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Regional Education School District.

After July 1, 2022, the Board of School Directors will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Union School District. The Board of School Directors shall adopt a school policy providing a process for parents or guardians to request that their child attend another school within the Unified Union School District.

School Configuration

The current school configuration in our district is as follows:

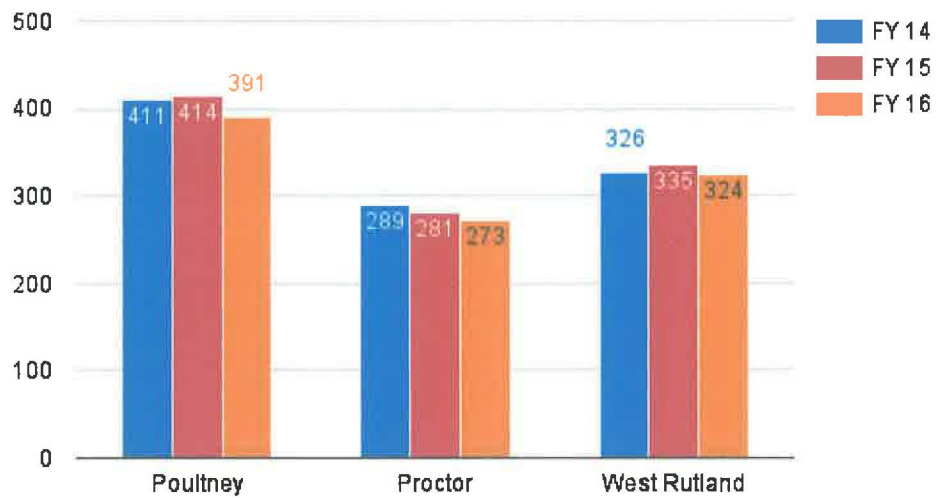
Poultney School District PK-12	391 students
(Poultney Elementary- PK-6)	
(Poultney HS- 7-12)	
Proctor School District PK-12	273 students
(Proctor Elementary- PK-6 - 153)	
(Proctor HS- 9-12 - 120)	
West Rutland School District PK-12	<u>324 students</u>

Total- 988 students

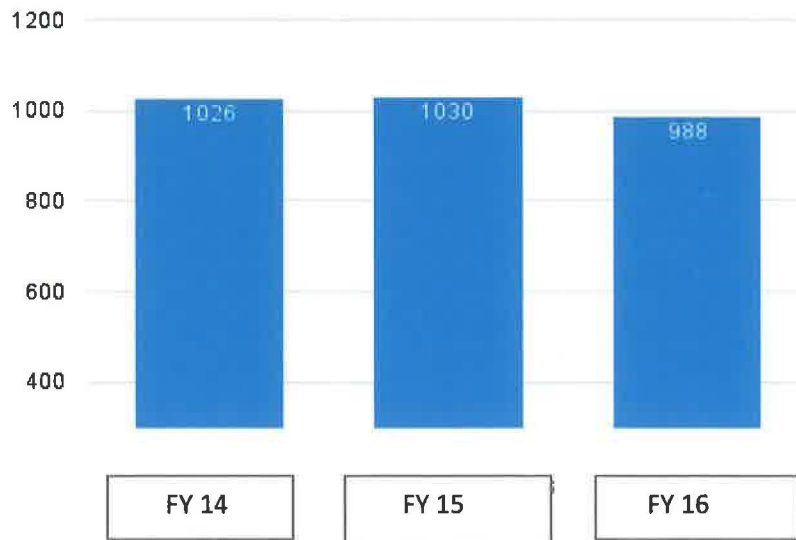
School Closure:

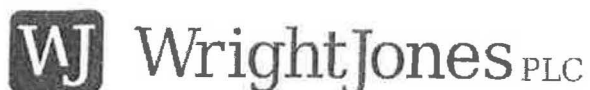
The Regional Education District shall not close any schools within its boundaries during the first four years it is fully operational and providing educational services per Act 153 of 2010. After that, a unanimous vote of the full membership of the Board of Directors and the consent of the town via majority vote shall be required to approve the closure of a school.

Enrollment Over Time



Combined District Enrollment Over Time





January 9, 2017

Christopher B. Leopold
leopold@wrightjoneslaw.com

Debra Taylor, Superintendent
Rutland Central Supervisory Union
16 Evelyn Street
Rutland, VT 05701

Joan Paustian, Superintendent
Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
168 York Street
Rutland, VT 05764

Re: Proposed Quarry Valley Unified School District Board Membership

Dear Debra and Joan:

I am writing regarding the proposal by the Rutland Central Supervisory Union/Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union Act 46 Study Committee ("Study Committee") on behalf of the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland school districts to form a unified union school district. Specifically, you have asked us to review the board membership structure for the proposed unified union school district and the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution.

Members of the Study Committee, formed under 16 VSA §706, have drafted Articles of Agreement for the formation of a unified union school district to be named Quarry Valley Unified School District ("Quarry Valley") pursuant to Act 46. Article 9 of the Articles of Agreement establishes the number of board members from each town in the proposed unified union. The proposed school board follows the statutory requirement that each proposed member district in a unified union be afforded at least one representative. Consistent with statute, the proposed board may not exceed 18 members, each member district shall be entitled to at least one representative, and representation shall be proportional to population. 16 VSA §706b(9). The ten (10) member school board includes representation for the three school districts with the following membership on the School Board: Poultney – 4, Proctor – 3, and West Rutland – 3. Each Proctor Board member will have a weighted vote of .67 which equals two total votes for Proctor. Board composition will be recalculated after each decennial census to ensure that a town's representation on the Board remains proportional to its population. Further, the School Board is authorized to reapportion its composition, including increasing and decreasing the number of school directors, following each decennial census.

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires that each resident be given equal weight in representation. *Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 US 533, 569 (1964). The Supreme Court has held generally that congressional apportionment plans with a population deviation of less than 10% is a minor deviation. *Brown v. Thomson*, 463 US 835, 842 (1983). Despite stricter

Debra Taylor, Superintendent
Joan Paustian, Superintendent
January 9, 2017
Page 2

adherence to a 10% maximum deviation rule in *congressional* redistricting cases, the Court has shown *more* flexibility in regard to state and local forms of government. Mathematical exactness is not a requirement to the extent that it acts as a "straitjacket" preventing citizens from "devising mechanisms of local government suitable for local needs and efficient in solving local problems." *Avery v. Midland*, 390 US 474, 485 (1968).

While there is minor variation in the population represented per board member for the proposed Quarry Valley Unified School District board of school directors, it appears this minor variation preserves the member district boundaries for the election of board members. It is our conclusion that this representation plan for the town school districts will reasonably meet the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Based upon the above, we conclude there is a reasonable legal basis to determine that a court reviewing the proposed board representation proposal would reasonably determine that the board of school directors representation plan, as identified in Article 9, satisfies the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher B. Leopold

c: Donna Russo-Savage, Agency of Education

450-3, 8647

AGENCY OF EDUCATION

Barre, Vermont

TEAM: School Governance Team

ITEM: Will the State Board of Education find that the proposed unified union school district formed by two member districts of the **RUTLAND CENTRAL SUPERVISORY UNION** (RCSU) and one member district of the **RUTLAND SOUTHWEST SUPERVISORY UNION** (RSWSU) is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts,” and will the State Board therefore vote to approve the attached report of the RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee to create the **QUARRY VALLEY UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT**?

RECOMMENDED ACTION:

1. That the State Board of Education finds that the proposed formation of a new unified union school district by two member districts of the RCSU and one member district of the RSWSU is “in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts” pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c(b).
2. That the State Board of Education votes to approve the attached report of the RCSU/RSWSU Study Committee to create the Quarry Valley Unified Union District.
3. That the State Board of Education votes to approve the temporary assignment of the new school district, if approved, to the RCSU for the purpose of receiving administrative and other transitional assistance. Assignment would be for the interim period beginning on the date on which the unified union school district becomes a legal entity pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706g and ending on July 1, 2018, and would not modify the governing structure of the existing systems.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 16 V.S.A. § 706c; Act 46 of 2015; Act 153 of 2010, Secs. 2-4, as amended; Act 156 (2012), Sec. 15

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee was formed by all three school districts in the RCSU (the Proctor School District; the Rutland Town School District; and the West Rutland School District) and by three of the four school districts in the RSWSU (the Middletown Springs School District; the Poultney School District; and the Wells School District). The fourth district in the RSWSU (the Ira School District) participated informally.

The seven town school districts in the RCSU and RSWSU represent five distinct models of education governance:

- PK-12 operating (Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland)
- PK-8 operating / 9-12 tuitioning (Rutland Town)
- Pk-6 operating / 7-12 tuitioning (Middletown Springs)
- PK-6 operating / 7-12 designating (Wells)
- PK-12 tuitioning (Ira)

The combined average daily membership of all districts within the RCSU and RSWSU was 1,817.12 in FY2016.

The Study Committee, with the participation of the Ira School District, has presented a comprehensive proposal to merge the two supervisory unions and seven districts into a single supervisory union with four districts as follows: two new unified union school districts and two districts that would not change their current structure (the Rutland Town School District and the Ira School District).

If both of the Study Committee's proposals to create new unified union school districts are approved by the State Board and by the voters before July 1, 2017, then both of the new unified union school districts would be eligible for incentives and protections under Act 153, Secs. 2-5 pursuant to Act 156, Sec. 15 (as "side-by-side" mergers).

QUARRY VALLEY UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT

This Recommendation to the State Board concerns the Study Committee's proposal to create a new unified union school district (New Unified District) to be known as the Quarry Valley Unified Union District. The New Unified District would provide for the education of all resident PK-12 students by operating one or more schools for each grade.

The Study Committee identifies the following school districts as "necessary" to the proposal pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1): Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland.

The Study Committee does not identify any school districts as "advisable" to the proposal pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 701b(b)(2).

In FY2016, the combined average daily membership (ADM) of the three necessary districts was 987.52.

The New Unified District would be governed by a ten-member school board who would represent and be elected by the voters in each of the three towns in a number that is closely proportional to the town's relative population as follows: Poultney – 4; Proctor – 3 (each with a weighted vote of 0.67); and West Rutland – 3.

For the first four years of operation, students would attend school in their town of residence although the Unified Board could adjust student enrollment, with parental consent, based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the New Unified District. The Unified Board could adjust school attendance lines and school configurations throughout the District beginning on July 1, 2022.

A currently operating school building could not be closed during the first four years of operation unless approved by the voters of the town in which the building is located. Beginning on July 1, 2022, school closure would require both a unanimous vote of the Unified Board and voter approval in the host town.

If a school building is closed and would no longer be used for public education purposes, then the town in which the school building is located would have the right of first refusal and could purchase the property for \$1.00, provided that the town agreed to use the property for public and community purposes for a minimum of five years. The proposal includes provisions addressing use for these purposes for fewer than five years.

All votes on the budget and Board membership would be by Australian ballot.

The electorate of each potentially merging district will vote on March 7, 2017 whether to approve creation of the New Unified District. If the voters in each of the three necessary town school districts vote in favor of the proposal prior to July 1, 2017, and if the Wells Springs Unified Union School District is similarly approved, then the New Unified District will begin full operation as a unified union school district on July 1, 2018.

* * *

The RCSU/RSWSU Study Committee presents the proposal to form the Quarry Valley Unified Union District as part of a comprehensive proposal “to leave no districts isolated and also to give the new Supervisory Union sufficient student numbers to be efficient and effective.”

Although it would be premature for the State Board to act upon the self-study reports of the Rutland Town and Ira districts at this time, both studies are components of the Study Committee’s comprehensive proposal. The two self-study documents are appended to the document entitled “A Comprehensive Report.”

Similarly, although the two new unified union school districts (Quarry Valley and Wells Springs) would become members of a single supervisory union if the voters approve both proposals, it is premature for the State Board to determine the precise boundaries of that new supervisory union at this time.

The Study Committee’s appendices examine a number of factors, including relative investment per equalized pupil, historic enrollment patterns, student-to-administrator and student-to-teacher ratios over time, and a comparison of FY 2016 assessment results

in grades 3 through 11. The appendices also discuss the potential for increased educational opportunities and for changes in staffing, technology, financial accounting and budgeting, and other areas.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS: By enacting Act 46, which incorporated the provisions of Act 153 (2010), the General Assembly declared the intention to move the State toward sustainable models of education governance designed to meet the goals set forth in Section 2 of the Act. It was primarily through the lens of those goals that the Secretary has considered whether the Study Committee's proposal is "in the best interests of the State, the students, and the school districts" pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c.

EDUCATION IMPLICATIONS:

The Study Committee identified a range of potential educational benefits of merger, including:

1. Potential establishment of intra-district school choice policies and/or magnet schools
2. Potential establishment of creative scheduling that would permit teachers to deliver instruction at multiple schools
3. Increased potential to offer distance and blended learning opportunities
4. Greater continuity for students moving from one town to another within the New Unified District
5. Better coordination and continuity of services including summer programming, intervention systems and programs, and nutrition and health services

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS:

The Study Committee identified a potential \$325,000 in immediate cost reductions related to the elimination of one superintendent and one curriculum coordinator position, building rental and utilities, financial audits, and other expenses. It also anticipated that there would be cost savings by increased buying and contracting power through the economies of scale, flexibility of staff assignments; and increased use of virtual learning techniques. *See also* Act 153, as amended, for cost implications to the State.

See the Appendices for a more detailed discussion of educational and fiscal elements of the proposal and *see* the Committee's Worksheet for an overview of those elements in the proposal that address the goals identified by Act 46, Section 2.

The Study Committee's proposal is aligned with the goals of the General Assembly as set forth in Act 46 of 2015 and with the policy underlying the union school district formation statutes as articulated in 16 V.S.A. § 701.

STAFF AVAILABLE: Donna Russo-Savage, Principal Assistant, School Governance
Brad James, Education Finance Manager

Executive Summary

Quarry Valley Unified Union School District

The comprehensive plan of the RCSU/RSWSU Act 46 Study Committee includes the formation of the Quarry Valley Unified Union School District - the merger of Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland - into one PreK-12 District of 988 students and five school buildings.

All school districts are necessary for the establishment of the unified union school district which will provide Pre-K through grade twelve education to all students in the newly formed district.

The Unified Union School Board will comply with statutory requirements, recognizing existing collective bargaining agreements and commencing negotiations upon formation of the new district.

The Unified Union District shall assume ownership and operate existing school facilities and property through conveyance. Subsequent sale shall first be offered to the towns including the assumption or payment of outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by law, to the town in which it is located.

No school shall close during the first four years unless approved by the local electorate. Thereafter, closing will require unanimous consent of the school board and a majority vote of the town in which the school is located.

The School Board representation is proportional to the population in each town, totaling ten members: 4 from Poultney, 3 from West Rutland and 3 from Proctor (who share two votes or .67 weighted vote per member).

Transportation, attendance boundaries and school choice shall be determined by the School Board or the statutory public school secondary school choice program.

The proposal will be presented to the voters of each forming school district on March 7, 2017 along with candidates for the unified union school board.

This unique and statutorily contemplated merger allows greater educational opportunity, improved services and supports, as well as expanded efficiencies through shared governance.

The creation of the unified union school district will result in a visionary plan for the design and delivery of a continuum of educational programs and experiences through an integrated PreK-12 system. Students will have increased educational opportunities through expanded PreK partnerships for early education, transfers through school choice PreK-12, personalization, specialization, advanced coursework, dual enrollment and early college. Our student achievement data demonstrates growth and SBAC results which are aligned with the state

average. Diverse student needs will be equitably addressed through a continuum of services. All students will gain from enhanced educational opportunities via virtual tele-presence in our expanded technology infrastructure and high functioning fiber network.

To ensure improved outcomes and increased student learning opportunities, students in the Quarry Valley PK-12 district will experience a personalized education in a proficiency based school environment.

Employment of all teachers through the unified union district will enable us to draw upon a wide variety of expertise in meeting student needs. We envision creative scheduling, such as modified block, where teachers may travel to various schools to deliver instruction for one or more days per week. In addition, we anticipate course offerings in the evening and weekend for all secondary student in the Quarry Valley District.

Our three high schools may become specialized magnet schools. For example, students who wish to focus on a particular area such as the Arts, STEM and Global Studies may elect to attend one secondary school over another, depending on the school's specialization.

Advancements in technology including infrastructure improvements, expanded broadband capabilities enable improved outcomes and enhanced student learning opportunities. In our 21st century personalized learning environments, we believe virtual learning is fundamental. Our goal is to overcome the three most common barriers that prevent students from taking the courses they want or need in schools. These barriers are availability of courses, accessibility to courses and the flexibility of the education system. For example, are students interested in taking a course that is not available at their middle or high school? Through coordination across our schools, the Quarry Valley School District will ensure that the course will be available from another school that offers the course online in a synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid format.

To further exemplify, these virtual learning opportunities can be:

1. Remote or local with a full time distance learning instructor (i.e. during a shared time during the day or evening);
2. Blended to include some distance learning instruction and some in person instruction;
3. 100% virtual using VT approved middle and high school courses (including personalized courses);
4. Virtual/Hybrid instructional subject areas include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Computer Science
 - b. Advanced Placement
 - c. Dual Enrollment through CCV, Castleton, UVM, etc.
 - d. NCAA Approved
 - e. Honors or Advanced
 - f. Core Academics
 - g. Summer Learning Recovery

- h. World Languages
- i. Electives

We will continually search and adapt our online learning opportunities to reflect the goals and aspirations of the student body. In the past, this has involved creating custom classes (such as a computer science curriculum for Proctor High School). In the future, the capacity and infrastructure is in place to pull diverse learning opportunities from the surrounding area or globally, utilizing any platform.

A wide array of extra-curricular and co-curricular options will be available to students. Sports opportunities include VPA sanctioned sports programs for boys and girls in grades 7-12. Our athletes have earned numerous state championships, and we enthusiastically recognize team and individual athletic accomplishments. High school Academic Showdown, middle-level Destination Imagination, and elementary spelling bees are a few examples of academic competitions that our students participate in.

Regardless of their town of residence, all students who attend the Quarry Valley School District will have opportunities in supportive learning environments with: 1) students at the heart of our mission; 2) an inclusive and increasingly diverse student body; and 3) great academic outcomes including high dual enrollment and early college participation; high secondary graduation rates; high honors including strong AP (Advanced Placement) participation and success rates for students in grades 10-12; high rates of college aspiration and enrollment; continued enrollment at Stafford Technical Center and achievement of earned certifications; 4) innovative and research-based programs and practices including technology integration; partnerships with the Tarrant Foundation and UVM; student-led conferences; Young Writers' Project; Poetry Out Loud; student leadership opportunities at all grade levels; Personalized Learning Plans; internships and advisory programs; math and literacy intervention; enrichment programs; and virtual and blended coursework 7-12.

The Quarry Valley Unified Union School District will benefit from the efficient and cost-effective centralization of services including administration, bargaining, transportation, food service, enrichment, technology (infrastructure and integration), school safety and crisis prevention and intervention.

Without the formation of the Unified Union District, education spending per equalized pupil is projected to continue to climb. The three districts' current tax rates are similar and therefore, the merger will result in savings and stabilization of tax rates over time.

Our PreK-12 merger proposal is the culmination of months of study which has included school visits, curriculum and instruction presentations, financial analysis, student services discussions, and community forums. This work has been truly collaborative and provided a sound foundation for this proposal.

The study committee unanimously recommends approval of the proposed merger as it will provide efficiencies and enhanced opportunities for all students in partnership with families and community members. The Quarry Valley Unified Union School District shall serve all students in the three member towns collectively and equitably.

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Barre, VT 05641 (p) 802-479-1030 | (f) 802-479-1835

Type of Merger	
<i>Please refer to the related eligibility worksheets to determine baseline eligibility for each merger type.</i>	(column reserved for agency use)
<input type="checkbox"/> Accelerated Merger (Act 46, Section 6)	
<p>A Regional Education District (RED) or one of its variations (Act 153 (2010) and Act 156 (2012))</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> RED (Act 153, Secs. 2-3, as amended by Act 156, Sec. 1 and Act 46, Sec. 16)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Side by Side Merger (Act 156, Sec. 15)</p> <p>Districts involved in the related merger:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Layered Merger (Union Elementary School District) (Act 156, Sec. 16)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Modified Unified Union School District (MUUSD) (Act 156, Sec. 17, as amended by Act 56 (2013), Sec. 3)</p>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Conventional Merger – merger into a preferred structure after deadline for an Accelerated Merger (Act 46, Section 7)	

Dates, ADM, and Name	
Date on which the proposal will be submitted to the voters of each district (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(11)): March 7, 2017	
Date on which the new district, if approved, will begin operating (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(12)): July 1, 2018	
Combined ADM of all “necessary” districts in the current fiscal year: 988	
Proposed name of new district: Quarry Valley Unified Union District	

Please complete the following tables with brief, specific statements of how the proposed union school district will comply with the each of the listed items. Bulleted statements are acceptable.

The Proposed School District is in the Best Interest of the State, Students, and School Districts – as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706c		
<p><u>Goal #1:</u> The proposed union school district will provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities.</p> <p><i>Act 46, Sec. 2(1)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One vision, one mission, one strategic plan for continuous improvement • Single School Board to expand education for all students in the PREK-12 system • Expand learning pathways, specialized programs i.e. STEM, Computer Science • Systemic implementation of Personalized Learning Plans, Advanced Classes, Proficiency Based Education, Internships, Music and Arts • Enhanced extracurricular programs and expanded athletics • Shared special education programs for low incidence student needs 	
<p><u>Goal #2:</u> The proposed union school district will lead students to achieve or exceed the State's Education Quality Standards, adopted as rules by the State Board of Education at the direction of the General Assembly.</p> <p><i>Act 46, Sec. 2(2)</i></p>	<p>Both SU's received favorable reviews from the education quality review site based review in October 2016. Consequently, we pledge to continue to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational opportunities that are substantially equal in quality enabling all students to achieve or exceed the Education Quality Standards. • Ensure continuous improvement in student performance, instruction and leadership to enable students to attain rigorous standards in high-quality programs through Expanded high quality instruction and assessment through comprehensive curriculum, instruction and assessment program in a standards and proficiency based learning environment • Ensure educational services are provided in accordance with state and federal entitlements and nondiscrimination requirements through system wide student services and human resource management. • Maintain all student records safely and retain 9-12 transcripts and dropouts permanently and implement FERPA requirements regarding surveys, analyses and evaluations. • Expand personalize instructional practices to improve student learning guided by locally collected student data. • Enhance flexible and multiple pathways including technical education, virtual learning, work-based learning, service learning, dual enrollment and early college aligned with state expectations and standards. • Allow students to demonstrate proficiency by presenting multiple types of evidence via teacher or student designed assessments, portfolios, performances, exhibitions and projects PREK-12. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate and provide access for eligible students to career and technical education centers • Enhance personalized learning plans for students in grades 7-12 to increase the scope and rigor of learning opportunities and supports services necessary for college and career readiness • Our coordinated curriculum will ensure proficiency in all subject areas and transferable skills including the use of technology. All graduating students shall meet these requirements. • Special education services will be provided ensuring that graduation requirements are met with modifications and accommodations per individualized education plans. • Continuation of school choice at high school and initiation of district-wide school choice PK-8. • Expanded high fiber WAN internet service using E-Rate in support of student, faculty and community access to learning and communication • Leadership requirements for superintendent, principal and highly qualified staff shall continue. State board and school board class size policies are met. • Needs based professional development as well as mentoring new teachers and coaching experienced teachers shall be enacted. • Administrators and teachers shall be evaluated annually. • Tiered systems of support shall be enacted in support of student needs and participate in multi-disciplinary teams. • Maintain school facilities, provide access to digital and print instructional materials and provide safe and positive learning environment which we will strive to be free of hazing, harassment and bullying. • All students shall continue to participate in state and local comprehensive assessment system and publish reports annually. • Develop SU and district coordinated individualized improvement plan reflecting needs of individual schools. 	
<p><u>Goal #3:</u> The proposed union school district will maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with a goal of increasing the district-level ratio of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase financial efficiencies due to unified technology and various delivery systems, cooperative bulk purchasing, and personnel savings due to merger of two SU's to one • Share support staff and SU teacher master agreements which streamlines human resource administration, creating more efficiencies • Combined enrollment will support reasonable class sizes; improving and expanding curriculum and extracurricular programs • Facility and construction management will be coordinated at the Supervisory union level. • Negotiations, contracting, bidding and resource management shall be centralized at the supervisory union. 	

<p>students to full-time equivalent staff. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(3)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual learning and professional development opportunities will be enhanced and expanded. • Transportation will be streamlined across districts and to the Stafford Tech Center. 	
<p><u>Goal #4:</u> The proposed union school district will promote transparency and accountability. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(4)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote transparency and accountability • Policy discussion, continuous improvement updates, program planning and budget development shall be conducted openly in warned board meetings. • School audits, proposed and approved budgets shall be posted online and available to the public. • Board policies, procedures, strategic plans, curriculum information and assessment results shall be posted on the website. 	
<p><u>Goal #5:</u> The proposed union school district will deliver education at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value. <i>Act 46, Sec. 2(5)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Savings from SU merger and other efficiencies will result in approximately \$325,000. in savings. • Tax incentives will reduce the tax rate for the newly formed district. • Larger bulk and cooperative purchasing options including instructional materials, fuel and maintenance services will eventually result in savings. 	
<p><u>Regional Effects:</u></p> <p>What would be the regional effects of the proposed union school district, including: would the proposed union school district leave one or more other districts geographically isolated? <i>Act 46, Section 8(a)(2)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newly formed district will combine all PREK-12 regional districts into one district of nearly 1000 students. • The only other PREK-12 district in Southwest Vermont is Arlington School District, a PREK-12 district who was invited to join our study in 2016. However, due to distance, chose not to participate. • Therefore there are no PREK-12 districts in either SU in the region that are geographically isolated. 	

Articles of Agreement – as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(3) - (10), (13)

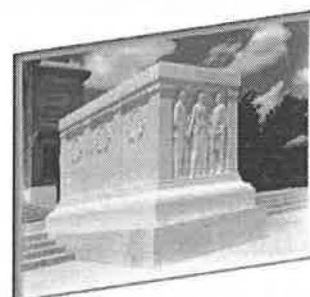
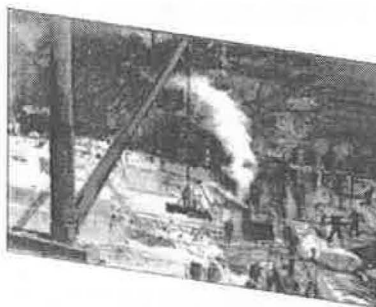
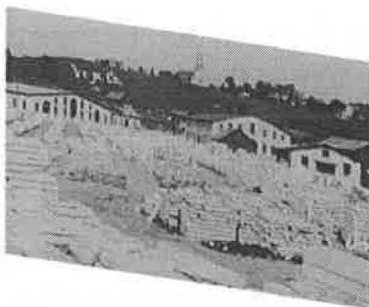
<p>(3) The grades to be operated by the proposed union school district</p> <p>The grades, if any, for which the proposed union school district shall pay tuition</p>	<p>The Study Committee recommends that the following Articles of Agreement be adopted by each necessary and/or advisable school district for the creation of a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 district to be named Quarry Valley Unified Union District, hereinafter referred to as the "Unified Union District".</p> <p>Article 2</p> <p>The Unified Union District will provide pre-kindergarten through grade twelve educations to all of the students by operating PK-12 for all of its students in the Unified Union School District.</p> <p>The proposed unified union school district shall not pay tuition for any grades.</p>	
<p>(4) The cost and general location of any proposed new schools to be constructed</p> <p>The cost and general description of any proposed renovations</p>	<p>Article 1</p> <p>The school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland are <i>necessary</i> for the establishment of the Unified Union District. The above referenced school districts are hereinafter referred to as the "forming districts". There are no additional school districts being recommended at this time.</p> <p>If all of the forming districts vote to approve the merger, the Unified Union District will commence full educational operations and services on July 1, 2018 under 16 VSA, chapter 11.</p> <p>Article 4</p> <p>No new school buildings are necessary to, or proposed for, the formation of the Unified Union District. The Unified Union District School Board will assume ownership and operate existing school facilities commencing July 1, 2018. No school closings are anticipated or proposed on July 1, 2018. (See Article 8C)</p>	
<p>(5) A plan for the first year of the proposed union school district's operation for:</p> <p>(A) the transportation of students</p>	<p>Article 3</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board will comply with 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3, regarding the recognition of the representatives of employees of the respective forming districts as the representatives of the employees of the Unified Union District and will commence negotiations pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 57 for teachers and 21 VSA Chapter 22 for other employees. In the absence of new collective bargaining agreements on July 1, 2018, the School Board will comply with</p>	

<p>(B) the assignment of staff</p> <p>(C) curriculum</p> <p>The plan must be consistent with existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other provisions of law, including 16 V.S.A. chapter 53, subchapter 3 (transition of employees)</p>	<p>the pre-existing master agreements pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3. The School Board shall honor all individual employment contracts that are in place for the forming school districts on June 30, 2018 until their respective termination dates.</p> <p>Article 5</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board shall determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. The new unified union board will evaluate transportation systems during the first year of district operation. (See 16 V.S.A. §§1221, 1222, 1224 (Student transportation) 16 V.S.A. §1551 (Technical center transport))</p> <p>Article 6</p> <p>The forming districts of the Unified Union District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise unify their operations on or before July 1, 2018.</p>	
<p>(6) The indebtedness of the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall assume.</p>	<p>A. Capital Debt</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall assume all capital debt as may exist on June 30, 2018, including both principal and interest, of the forming school districts that join the Unified Union District.</p> <p>B. Operating Fund Surpluses, Deficits and Reserve Funds</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall assume any and all operating deficits, surpluses, and fund balances of any of the forming districts that may exist at the close of business on June 30, 2018. In addition, reserve funds will be transferred to the Unified Union District on June 30, 2018 and will be applied for such established purposes unless otherwise determined through appropriate legal procedures.</p> <p>C. Restricted Funds</p> <p>The forming districts will transfer to the Unified Union District any pre-existing specific endowments or other restricted accounts, including student activity and related accounts that may exist on June 30, 2018. Any scholarship funds, trusts, endowments, or similar accounts held by, dedicated to, or benefitting individual school districts, students, employees, residents or buildings of such districts prior to June 30, 2018, including all such funds listed and attached hereto as Attachment 1, shall be used thereafter for the schools, personnel or students previously in those individual communities and districts in accordance with their provisions. (Attachment 1)</p>	

<p>(7) The specific pieces of real property owned by the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall acquire, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * their valuation * how the proposed union school district shall pay for them 	<p>Article 8 –</p> <p>A. Transfer of Property to Unified Union District</p> <p>No later than June 30, 2018, the forming districts will convey to the Unified Union District all of their school-related real and personal property, for One U.S. Dollar, and the Unified Union District will assume all capital debt associated therewith. The Unified Union District recognizes the long term financial investments and community relationships that each town has with its school building(s). The Unified Union District will encourage appropriate use of the building by the students and community according to the policies and procedures of the Unified Union District as overseen by the building administrator.</p> <p>B. Subsequent Sale of Real Property to Towns</p> <p>In the event that, and at such subsequent time as the Unified Union District School Board determines, at its discretion, and subject to compliance with the school closure provisions of Article 8C, that any of the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by one or more of the forming districts is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Unified Union District and its educational programs, the Unified Union District shall offer such real property, for the sum of One U.S. Dollar, and subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption or payment of all outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by Vermont law, to the town in which it is located.</p> <p>The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the town owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event a town elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the town shall compensate the Unified Union District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after the formation of the Unified Union District and prior to the sale to the town. In the event a town elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Unified Union District shall, pursuant to Vermont statutes, sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the Unified Union District School Board.</p> <p>C. Closure of Schools</p> <p>The Unified Union District shall not close any school within its boundaries during the first four years after the effective date of merger unless the electorate of the town in which the school is located consents to closure. Closing a school facility after July 1, 2022 takes a vote of the electorate in</p>	
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	the town in which the school is located, and a unanimous vote of the Unified Union District School Board.																	
(8) [repealed 2004 Acts & Resolves No.130, Sec. 15]																		
(9) Consistent with the proportional representation requirements of the Equal Protection Clause, the method of apportioning the representation that each proposed member town shall have on the proposed union school board * no more than 18 members total * each member town is entitled to at least one representative * see also 16 V.S.A. § 706k(c): one or more at-large directors * see also 16 V.S.A. § 707(c): weighted voting	<p>Article 9</p> <p>A forming town district’s representation on the Unified Union District School Board will be closely proportional to the fraction that its population bears to the aggregate population of all forming school districts in the Unified Union District. Initial Unified Union District School Board composition is based upon the 2010 Federal Census, and shall be recalculated promptly following the release of each subsequent decennial census. At such time the Unified Union District School Board shall also evaluate and consider the advisability of implementing a system of at-large voting for school directors.</p> <p>The number of board members from each forming school district shall be determined by dividing the population of the town or village by one ninth of the total population of the aggregate population of the village and towns within the Unified Union District.</p> <p>The initial membership on the Unified Union District Board of School Directors will be as follows:</p> <p>Number of School Board Members by Town</p> <table><tr><td>Town</td><td colspan="2"></td><td>Board Members</td></tr><tr><td>Poultney</td><td>3432</td><td>(46%)</td><td>4</td></tr><tr><td>Proctor</td><td>1741</td><td>(23%)</td><td>3*</td></tr><tr><td>West Rutland</td><td>2326</td><td>(31%)</td><td>3</td></tr></table> <p>*Each Board member will have .67 weighted vote which equals 2 total votes</p>	Town			Board Members	Poultney	3432	(46%)	4	Proctor	1741	(23%)	3*	West Rutland	2326	(31%)	3	
Town			Board Members															
Poultney	3432	(46%)	4															
Proctor	1741	(23%)	3*															
West Rutland	2326	(31%)	3															
(10) The term of office of directors initially elected, to be arranged so that one-third expire on the day of each	<p>Article 10</p> <p>The Unified Union District School Board will be elected for <i>three-year terms</i>, except for those initially elected at the time of the formation of the Unified Union District. In the initial Unified Union District election, board member terms of office will be distributed as follows:</p>																	

annual meeting of the proposed union school district, beginning on the second annual meeting, or as near to that proportion as possible	Town/District	1 Year Term/ 2017-2018	2 Year Term/ 2017-2019	3 Year Term/ 2017-2020
	Poultney	2	1	1
	Proctor	1	1	1
	West Rutland	1	1	1
	Pursuant to the provisions of 16 VSA §706j (b), elected school board members shall be sworn in and assume the duties of their office. The term of office for school board members elected at the <i>March 7, 2017</i> election shall be one, two, or three years respectively (16 VSA §706j), from the date when the initial school board members will begin their term of office, and the date of the Unified Union District’s annual meeting in the spring of 2018, as established under 16 VSA §706j. Thereafter, terms of office shall begin and expire on the date of the Unified Union District’s annual meeting which will occur on Town Meeting Day..			
(13) Any other matters that the study committee considers pertinent, including whether votes on the union school district budget or public questions shall be by Australian ballot <i>(please list each matter separately)</i>	Article 17 During the first four years, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the School Board may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Unified Union District. After July 1, 2022 the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 as long as the state law remains in effect. (Reference Articles 5, 8c and 18) Article 18 The Unified Union District School Board shall provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget development. Structures to support and encourage public participation within the Unified Union District will be established by the Unified Union District Board of School Directors on or before June 30, 2018.			



QUARRY VALLEY
UNIFIED UNION DISTRICT
PROUD HISTORY
BRIGHT FUTURE

Articles of Agreement **Quarry Valley Unified Union District**

Serving the schools of the communities of:
Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland

The Study Committee recommends that the following Articles of Agreement be adopted by each necessary and/or advisable school district for the creation of a Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 district to be named **Quarry Valley Unified Union District**, hereinafter referred to as the "Unified Union District".

Article 1

The school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland are *necessary* for the establishment of the Unified Union District. The above referenced school districts are hereinafter referred to as the "forming districts". There are no additional school districts being recommended at this time.

If all of the forming districts vote to approve the merger, the Unified Union District will commence full educational operations and services on July 1, 2018 under 16 VSA, chapter 11; provided, however, that the votes approving creation of the Unified Union District shall not become effective unless and until the voters of the Middletown Springs and Wells School Districts vote to approve formation of the Wells Springs Unified Union School District, enabling the two unified union school districts to form a "Side-by-Side" structure within the same supervisory union.

Article 2

The Unified Union District will provide pre-kindergarten through grade twelve education to all of the students by operating PK-12 for all of its students in the Unified Union School District.

Article 3

The Unified Union District School Board will comply with 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3, regarding the recognition of the representatives of employees of the respective forming districts as the representatives of the employees of the Unified Union District and will commence negotiations pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 57 for teachers and 21 VSA Chapter 22 for other employees. In the absence of new collective bargaining agreements on July 1, 2018, the School Board will comply with the pre-existing master agreements pursuant to 16 VSA Chapter 53, subchapter 3. The School Board

shall honor all individual employment contracts that are in place for the forming school districts on June 30, 2018 until their respective termination dates.

Article 4

No new school buildings are necessary to, or proposed for, the formation of the Unified Union District. The Unified Union District School Board will assume ownership and operate existing school facilities commencing July 1, 2018. No school closings are anticipated or proposed on July 1, 2018. (See Article 8C)

Article 5

The Unified Union District School Board shall determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. The new unified union board will evaluate transportation systems during the first year of district operation. (See 16 V.S.A. §§1221, 1222, 1224 (Student transportation) 16 V.S.A. §1551 (Technical center transport))

Article 6

The forming districts of the Unified Union District recognize the benefits to be gained from establishing district-wide curricula as well as their obligation to do so, and to otherwise unify their operations on or before July 1, 2018.

Article 7

A. Capital Debt

The Unified Union District shall assume all capital debt as may exist on June 30, 2018, including both principal and interest, of the forming school districts that join the Unified Union District.

B. Operating Fund Surpluses, Deficits and Reserve Funds

The Unified Union District shall assume any and all operating deficits, surpluses, and fund balances of any of the forming districts that may exist at the close of business on June 30, 2018. In addition, reserve funds will be transferred to the Unified Union District on June 30, 2018 and will be applied for such established purposes unless otherwise determined through appropriate legal procedures.

C. Restricted Funds

The forming districts will transfer to the Unified Union District any pre-existing specific endowments or other restricted accounts, including student activity and related accounts that may exist on June 30, 2018. Any scholarship funds, trusts, endowments, or similar accounts held by, dedicated to, or benefitting individual school districts, students, employees, residents or buildings of such districts prior to June 30, 2018, including all such funds listed and attached hereto as Attachment 1, shall be used thereafter for the schools, personnel or students previously in those individual communities and districts in accordance with their provisions. (Attachment 1)

Article 8

A. Transfer of Property to Unified Union District

No later than June 30, 2018, the forming districts will convey to the Unified Union District all of their school-related real and personal property, for One U.S. Dollar, and the Unified Union District will assume all capital debt associated therewith. The Unified Union District recognizes the long term financial investments and community relationships that each town has with its school building(s). The Unified Union District will encourage appropriate use of the building by the students and community according to the policies and procedures of the Unified Union District as overseen by the building administrator.

B. Subsequent Sale of Real Property to Towns

In the event that, and at such subsequent time as the Unified Union District School Board determines, at its discretion, and subject to compliance with the school closure provisions of Article 8C, that any of the real property, including land and buildings, conveyed to it by one or more of the forming districts is or are unnecessary to the continued operation of the Unified Union District and its educational programs, the Unified Union District shall offer such real property, for the sum of One U.S. Dollar, and subject to all encumbrances of record, the assumption or payment of all outstanding bonds and notes and the repayment of any school construction aid or grants as required by Vermont law, to the town in which it is located.

The conveyance of any of the above school properties shall be conditioned upon the town owning and utilizing the real property for community and public purposes for a minimum of five years. In the event a town elects to sell the real property prior to five years of ownership, the town shall compensate the Unified Union District for all capital improvements and renovations completed after

the formation of the Unified Union District and prior to the sale to the town. In the event a town elects not to acquire ownership of such real property, the Unified Union District shall, pursuant to Vermont statutes, sell the property upon such terms and conditions as established by the Unified Union District School Board.

C. Closure of Schools

The Unified Union District shall not close any school within its boundaries during the first four years after the effective date of merger unless the electorate of the town in which the school is located consents to closure. Closing a school facility after July 1, 2022 takes a vote of the electorate in the town in which the school is located, and a unanimous vote of the Unified Union District School Board.

Article 9

A forming town district's representation on the Unified Union District School Board will be closely proportional to the fraction that its population bears to the aggregate population of all forming school districts in the Unified Union District. Initial Unified Union District School Board composition is based upon the 2010 Federal Census, and shall be recalculated promptly following the release of each subsequent decennial census. At such time the Unified Union District School Board shall also evaluate and consider the advisability of implementing a system of at-large voting for school directors.

The number of board members from each forming school district shall be determined by dividing the population of the town or village by one ninth of the total population of the aggregate population of the village and towns within the Unified Union District.

The initial membership on the Unified Union District Board of School Directors will be as follows:

Number of School Board Members by Town

Town			Board Members
Poultney	3432	(46%)	4
Proctor	1741	(23%)	3*
West Rutland	2326	(31%)	3

**Each Board member will have .67 weighted vote which equals 2 total votes*

Article 10

The Unified Union District School Board will be elected for **three-year terms**, except for those initially elected at the time of the formation of the Unified Union District. In the initial Unified Union District election, board member terms of office will be distributed as follows:

Town/District	1 Year Term/ 2017-2018	2 Year Term/ 2017-2019	3 Year Term/ 2017-2020
Poultney	2	1	1
Proctor	1	1	1
West Rutland	1	1	1

Pursuant to the provisions of 16 VSA §706j (b), elected school board members shall be sworn in and assume the duties of their office. The term of office for school board members elected at the **March 7, 2017** election shall be one, two, or three years respectively (16 VSA §706j), from the date when the initial school board members will begin their term of office, and the date of the Unified Union District's annual meeting in the spring of 2018, as established under 16 VSA §706j. Thereafter, terms of office shall begin and expire on the date of the Unified Union District's annual meeting which will occur on Town Meeting Day.

Article 11

The proposal forming this Unified Union District will be presented to the voters of each forming school district on **March 7, 2017**. The candidates for the new Unified Union District School Board will be elected on the same date, as required by law. Nominations for the office of Unified Union District director representing any district/town shall be made by filing with the clerk of that school district/town proposed as a member of the union, a statement of nomination signed by at least 30 voters in that district or one percent of the legal voters in the district, whichever is less, and accepted in writing by the nominee. A statement shall be filed not less than thirty (30) nor more than forty (40) days prior to the date of the vote.

Article 12

Upon an affirmative vote of the electorates of the school districts, and upon compliance with 16 VSA §706g, the Unified Union District shall have and exercise all of the authority which is necessary in order for it to prepare for full educational operations beginning on July 1, 2018. The Unified Union District

shall, between the date of its organizational meeting under 16 VSA §706j and June 30, 2018, develop school district policies, adopt curriculum, educational programs, assessment measures and reporting procedures in order to fulfill the Education Quality Standards (State Board Rule 2000), prepare for and negotiate contractual agreements, set the school calendar for fiscal year 2019, prepare and present the budget for fiscal year 2019, prepare for Unified Union District Annual Meeting(s) and transact any other lawful business that comes before the Board, provided, however, that the exercise of such authority by the Unified Union District shall not be construed to limit or alter the authority and/or responsibilities of the School Districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland. The Unified Union District shall commence full educational operations on July 1, 2018.

Article 13

The Unified Union District School Board shall propose annual budgets in accordance with 16 VSA Chapter 11. The annual budget and Board Member votes shall be conducted by Australian ballot pursuant to 17 VSA Chapter 55.

Article 14

On July 1, 2018, when the Unified Union District becomes fully operational and begins to provide educational services to students, the school districts of Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland shall cease all educational operations and shall remain in existence for the sole purpose of completing any outstanding business not given to the Unified Union District under these articles and state law. Such business shall be completed as soon as practicable, but in no event any later than December 31, 2018.

Article 15

Cost-Benefit Analysis (See Appendix A)

Article 16

Information on school choice, school configurations and school enrollment plan (See Appendix B)

Article 17

During the first four years, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the School Board may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Unified Union District. After July 1, 2022 the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 as long as the state law remains in effect. (Reference Articles 5, 8c and 18)

Article 18

The Unified Union District School Board shall provide opportunity for local input on policy and budget development. Structures to support and encourage public participation within the Unified Union District will be established by the Unified Union District Board of School Directors on or before June 30, 2018.

Attachment 1 to Article 7 of Quarry Valley Unified Union District Articles of Agreement

List of Restricted Funds Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland, Poultney

Poultney Funds:

Adam N. Maslack Scholarship
B. Philips Hooper Award
Poultney Dental Fund
Scott Scholarship Fund
Irene Senet Trust Fund
Poultney Elementary Student Activity Fund
Poultney High School Student Activity Fund

Proctor Funds:

Winthrop Abbott Scholarship
Gordie Anderson Memorial Scholarship
Sarah Leary Scholarship
Frank Mainolfi Scholarship
Mary Marfuggi Scholarship
Robert Martel Scholarship
OMYA Scholarship
Evelyn Peterson Scholarship
Petofi Hungarian Society Scholarship
Madeline Sherman Scholarship
Shostak Scholarship (Zero balance currently)
Southmayd Scholarship
Jimmy T Memorial Scholarship
Paul Wager Scholarship Account
Buzzell-Gallus Athletic Award
PFP Student Scholarship Fund
Albina C. Boni
Florence Mead Fund
Middlebury Field Scholarship Fund
Mortimer Proctor Fund
Pentowski Fund
Proctor Funds - Redfield Proctor Funds, Mary Proctor Funds
PFP Personnel Assistance Fund
Technology Fund
Proctor Elementary School Student Activity Fund
Proctor High School Student Activity Fund

West Rutland Funds:

Harold Carl Anderson Memorial Scholarship
Wilbur Carl Nelson & Goldie Cohen Nelson Scholarship
F. Cohen Edison & Mr. and Mrs. David Cohen Scholarship
Stanley & Mary Pietryka Memorial Scholarship
2024 Buddies Scholarship
Alex Alexander Memorial
Technology Fund
West Rutland School Student Activity Fund

Dated: December 20, 2016

Attachment 1 to Article 7 of Quarry Valley Unified Union District Articles of Agreement

List of Restricted Funds Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland, Poultney

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Stanley & Mary Pietryka Memorial Scholarship
2024 Buddies Scholarship
Alex Alexander Memorial
Technology Fund
West Rutland School Student Activity Fund

Dated: December 20, 2016

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Appendix A: Cost Benefit Analysis & Narrative Quarry Valley Unified Union District (Poultney, Proctor, West Rutland)

Efficiencies could be gained through the creation of a Unified Union District in the following areas:

Quality and Opportunity; Achievement of High Standards

The creation of a Unified Union District will result in one mission, one vision and one strategic plan for continual improvement based on the attainment of outcomes the community believes are important for young people. Moreover, a Unified Union District will provide a single School Board the opportunity to design a continuum of educational programs and experiences for all students through an integrated PreK-12 system.

Opportunities with increased scale enable the new district to retain and possibly expand a variety of educational programs and learning pathways. Each school and community has unique resources and assets which may provide an opportunity for the creation of specialized programs, such as magnet schools, within a larger system.

One PreK-12 Unified Union District may allow students to transfer to another school within the regional district without having to pay tuition, and the opportunity to stay at their current school assignment if moving to another town within the Unified Union District. Under the current structure, students are not able to do so without paying tuition (other than 9-12 who participate in the statewide secondary open school choice program).

The goal is for our learners to experience increased opportunities in a unified district. On the early end of the educational continuum, Pre-K student services, partnerships and family relationships can be better coordinated within a single district. A single structure allows for systemic personalized learning plan (PLP) planning and increased personalized learning opportunities through the economy of scale. It also increases the potential to sustain specialty classes such as advanced placement classes, internships, Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM), and visual and performing arts including a district string and symphony orchestra. Other academic opportunities will abound (i.e. National Honor Society, Destination Imagination, Spelling Team, Math League and Mathathon, Upward Bound, Governor's Institutes).

We will be expanding shared special education programs for students with special needs such as those on the Autism Spectrum and those with emotional challenges so their needs can be met within the

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public school setting. Anticipating that English language learner enrollment is on the rise, a single district permits shared teachers for specialized instruction.

A unified system ensures that all students have access to existing services that may not be currently equitably available, such as a vast array of extra-curricular choices including athletics, clubs, string/symphony orchestra, band, rock band, jazz band, choral groups, drama club, multiple school- and community-based art shows and performances, etc.

Finally, by forming a Unified Union District, the professional learning community (PLC) of school leaders and teachers will become more diverse, allowing for a greater, richer exchange and sharing of resources, ideas and successes. The collaborative efforts of high performing PLCs produce high performing learners.

All students will have access to a rich array of high-quality learning opportunities within an aligned PK-12 education system. All students will benefit from increased stability in available educational opportunities: (1) due to combined enrollment which supports maintenance of reasonable school and class sizes; (2) due to possibilities for program improvement/expansion; and (3) through preventing loss of programs.

Efficiencies, Flexibility and Taxpayer Value

With full implementation, there is an estimated initial savings of \$325,000 as detailed below:

Position*/Service	Estimated FY 19 Initial Savings
Superintendent (retirement)	\$130,000
Curriculum Coordinator (previously retired)	\$100,000
Student Support Personnel (retirement)	\$35,000
Building Rental and Utilities	\$35,000
SU Copier Leases	\$2,600
SU Audit	\$6,600
Future Attorney Fees	\$15,800
Total Estimate	\$325,000

*** includes total compensation**

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the three most common barriers that prevent students from taking the courses they want or need in schools. These barriers are availability of courses, accessibility to courses and the flexibility of the education system. For example, are students interested in taking a course that is not available at their middle or high school? Through coordination across our schools, the Quarry Valley School District will ensure that the course will be available from another school that offers the course online in a synchronous, asynchronous or hybrid format.

To further exemplify, these virtual learning opportunities can be:

1. Remote or local with a full time distance learning instructor (i.e. during a shared time during the day or evening);
2. Blended to include some distance learning instruction and some in person instruction;
3. 100% virtual using VT approved middle and high school courses (including personalized courses);
4. Virtual/Hybrid instructional subject areas include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Computer Science
 - b. Advanced Placement
 - c. Dual Enrollment through CCV, Castleton, UVM, etc.
 - d. NCAA Approved
 - e. Honors or Advanced
 - f. Core Academics
 - g. Summer Learning Recovery
 - h. World Languages
 - i. Electives

We will continually search and adapt our online learning opportunities to reflect the goals and aspirations of the student body. In the past, this has involved creating custom classes (such as a computer science curriculum for Proctor High School). In the future, the capacity and infrastructure is in place to pull diverse learning opportunities from the surrounding area or globally, utilizing any platform.

Employment of all teachers through the unified union district will enable us to draw upon a wide variety of expertise in meeting student needs. We also envision creative scheduling, such as modified block, where teachers may travel to various schools to deliver instruction for one or more days per week. In addition, we envision evening and weekend opportunities for secondary students which would be open to all high school students in the Quarry Valley District.

Our three high schools may become specialized magnet schools. For example, students who wish to focus on a particular area such as the Arts, STEM and Global Studies may elect to attend one secondary school over another, depending on the school's specialization.

A wide array of extra-curricular and co-curricular options will be available to students. Sports opportunities include VPA sanctioned sports programs for boys and girls in grades 7-12. Our athletes have earned numerous state championships, and we enthusiastically recognize team and individual

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In addition, the Unified Union District will receive a \$130,000 merger incentive grant to support transition during the 2017-18 school year. Efficiencies can be increased, and the sharing of resources across schools will be facilitated with much more flexibility.

Transparency and Accountability

A single financial accounting system will simplify both revenue and expenditure reporting. Each community will have a voice in the education of all students, PreK-12 in Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland. The Unified Union District Board structure provides for representation from each community, ensuring that a broad spectrum of perspectives is represented in the governance of education systems. The Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Schools have a long history of providing rich opportunities which yield strong, positive student outcomes for all students who attend our schools.

It is anticipated that the supervisory union will be comprised of four districts including the Quarry Valley Unified Union, the Middletown Springs/Wells Unified Union District, the Rutland Town School District and the Ira School District. The SU Board will be comprised of ten (10) members, including three (3) representatives from the Quarry Valley Unified Union District Board, three (3) representatives from the Wells Springs Unified Union District Board, three (3) representatives from the Rutland Town School Board and one (1) representative from the Ira School Board (non-operating). This representation, as required by state statute, promotes effective and efficient operations of the supervisory union. Note that the supervisory union can request the State Board of Education to waive the 3 member / 1 member requirement and request a different SU Board member configuration (16 VSA 261(d)). Within the expanded supervisory union, all services will be centralized as required by Act 153 and 156. In addition, technology and curriculum, instruction and assessment for students in the elementary grades will be aligned in the SU through cooperative work between and among the professionals, which is underway.

Students

We are proud of our student accomplishments. Our student outcomes meet or exceed the state average PK-12 as measured by local assessments, state assessments, and college entrance aptitude tests. In addition, 95-100% of our students graduate from high school a large proportion (60-75%) pursue higher education at two or four year colleges. These statistics are well above the state average.

To ensure improved outcomes and increased student learning opportunities, students in the Quarry Valley PK-12 district will experience a personalized education.

Advancements in technology including infrastructure improvements, expanded broadband capabilities enable improved outcomes and enhanced student learning opportunities. In our 21st century personalized learning environments, we believe virtual learning is fundamental. Our goal is to overcome

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athletic accomplishments. High school Academic Showdown, middle-level Destination Imagination, and elementary spelling bees are a few examples of academic competitions that our students participate in.

In summary, regardless of town of residence, all students who attend school in the Quarry Valley School District will have opportunities in supportive learning environments with: 1) students at the heart of our mission; 2) an inclusive and increasingly diverse student body; and 3) great academic outcomes including high dual enrollment and early college participation; high secondary graduation rates; high honors including strong AP (Advanced Placement) participation and success rates for students in grades 10-12; high rates of college aspiration and enrollment; continued enrollment at Stafford Technical Center and achievement of earned certifications; 4) innovative and research-based programs and practices including technology integration; partnerships with the Tarrant Foundation and UVM; student-led conferences; Young Writers' Project; Poetry Out Loud; student leadership opportunities at all grade levels; Personalized Learning Plans; internships and advisory programs; math and literacy intervention; enrichment programs; and virtual and blended coursework 7-12.

Teacher Quality

We have great teachers. In the Unified Union District, all teachers will be Highly Qualified. Our district teachers include those who are AP (Advanced Placement) trained, Vermont Mathematics Institute graduates, Nationally Board Certified, leaders in educational organizations, representatives on the SU Curriculum Council and school leadership teams and mentors to new teachers. Our teachers are highly trained as 54 % of Poultney, 60% of Proctor and 71 % of West Rutland teachers have their Master's Degree or higher.

In a unified union district structure, all teachers will be employed by the Unified Union District, allowing the Superintendent flexibility to adjust staffing assignments based on student needs, changing demographics and staff expertise. Teachers could be reassigned to where the needs are across all schools within the unified district; currently, reassignments are limited to the district of hire, unless a shared service agreement is crafted. Such an arrangement takes more administrative time to create, implement, coordinate and oversee.

Part-time employees may find increased employment opportunities within the Unified Union District, which will improve recruitment and retention efforts. We are not expecting to close schools or to reduce instructional staff under the Unified Union District (the primary efficiency savings will be in central office administration and further service consolidation), but the Unified Union District will provide greater opportunity to equalize class sizes across the system for specific grade levels and to expand educational opportunities.

Non-Teacher Staffing

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The Unified Union District will allow for greater flexibility in the allocation of non-teaching positions. Personnel can be reassigned where the greatest needs are across all schools within the Unified Union District. Currently reassignments are limited to the district of hire (unless done through a shared service agreement). Efficiencies will result in central office staffing reductions after the transition period, which will provide seamless leadership for staff, students and families, and will eliminate redundancies in a variety of ways, including researching and implementing new laws, regulations, and other requirements.

Technology

Within a Unified Union District there will be one technology delivery system and IT Department to update and maintain resources across the system (e.g. payroll and accounting, help desk ticketing, human resources, student information, security, and student performance data). Communications will be improved with a single web page platform / structure across the system and a unified email / chat / document-sharing platform.

There will be fewer vendors and increased buying power for internet service, software applications and technology hardware. Likewise, similar hardware leads to repair efficiencies where like parts can be stocked or knowledge in certain model repair can be streamlined.

There will be only one E-rate application (to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access at remarkable discounts) instead of two, and a single supervisory union will manage resources that could be redirected to provide greater access to customized and personalized learning opportunities for students, for example, through personal mobile devices.

Specialization of Information Technology staff (e.g. - supervision, network administration, technicians, technology integration, and application specialists) can be applied to every building, where these human resources before were scarce or unavailable.

One system will allow for greater efficiencies and greater focus can be given to 21st Century personalized learning environments with more technology tools, knowledgeable staff, and enhanced training opportunities, which will result in enhanced student learning.

Student Data Collection and Reporting

A single PreK-12 student data system would allow for richer empirical data, improvement in strategic planning, improved instruction, specialized interventions, and personalization. A single PreK-12 reporting system improves parental involvement and communication about student progress, promoting transparency and accountability. A single district will reduce redundancies with state reporting requirements. In a single unified district, there will be the ability to track cohorts from Pre-K through graduation. A single Unified Union District will allow educators to monitor growth and progress

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for Pre-K-12 learners and provide early intervention when needed. The student achievement data tracking systems will be enhanced, to ensure that all students will achieve at high levels as defined in the State's Education Quality Standards. Our districts can currently track PreK-12 student achievement data in each district, but student data is FERPA protected in each district and cannot be shared. The Unified Union District will be able to disaggregate data, allowing for informed decision-making around programming, progress monitoring and professional development needs.

Student Services

For purposes of special education and student support services, becoming a single school district increases the flexibility to allocate resources and design programs. Examples include the ability to develop autism and behavioral programming PreK-12, and for Extended Year Services (summer programming) to include larger groups of students together. (Currently, each school district runs parallel special education programs or transports students to alternative programs.)

Students will also benefit from continuity of staff between schools, improving the implementation of programs and curriculum which align with the Education Quality Standards. Continuity of intervention systems and programs across a PreK-12 system will be realized without the barriers of district boundaries. Under one Local Educational Agency (LEA) there will be greater continuity of procedures, processes, programs, service providers, families, students and staff. For example, through the collective expertise of our teachers, common curriculum will be implemented in alignment with proficiencies and localized outcome expectations utilizing our technology tools.

Common professional development will enhance the PreK-12 system by building increased expertise and specialization. Efficiencies will be gained through system-wide programming specializing in specific populations. This is particularly beneficial to low-incidence populations, since we do not have the scale to develop this kind of programming with small stand-alone populations.

Financially, there will be a decreased impact to the budget as a percentage of the whole as students with highly specialized needs (and the inherent costs associated with providing for those students) move in and out of the system.

Financial Accounting and Budgeting

In a Unified Union District, budgets and tax rates will be combined: one budget and tax rate will reflect increased efficiencies and student opportunities. This will reduce the number of state, federal, and IRS reports and intergovernmental accounting transactions. A single district reduces the number of independent audits, reducing labor and audit expenses. It also lowers the possibility of exceeding the excess spending tax penalty threshold. A unified union district eliminates the need for equalized pupil hold harmless protection (and 'phantom' students). The formation of the single Unified Union District

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will streamline accounting systems, and increase transparency and accountability of programs and services within a single budget.

Improved Utilization of Buildings and Sports Facilities

The facility use request process would be less complicated for community members and organizations: through a centralized application process, community members would complete one application with more options (school facilities and grounds) within the Unified Union District to choose from.

Centralized Contracting and Administration

Unified teacher and support staff agreements would result in a reduction of legal expenses and time necessary for negotiations after the initial transition to the new SU. Unified labor contracts - one for professionals and one for support staff - would provide consistency in wages and working conditions for the same positions across our communities.

A larger school district will allow for increased purchasing power and a stronger negotiating position through economies of scale. A Unified Union District will be able to reduce from two School Spring (electronic advertising/ job application system) and Kelly (substitute staff system) accounts to one, resulting in cost savings. A new Unified Union District will eliminate duplicate systems in two SUs (i.e. student achievement data, financial management and student information systems) which will result in cost savings, reduced complexity, and improved information and analysis opportunity. The combination of administration of human resources including payroll, health and dental, and state and federal reporting will provide additional efficiencies and savings. There is currently a great deal of duplication of effort within individual districts.

Transportation

The Unified Union District's Board will have the authority to determine, in accordance with state and federal law, the transportation services to be provided to students in the Unified Union District. A single district has a greater economy of scale, and more efficient routing of buses could be provided, such as shared transportation for students to Stafford Technical Center.

Food Service

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A single child nutrition service will have the scope and scale to allow negotiating a single affordable vendor and will be more efficient in meeting the demands of state and federal guidelines. There is a greater economy of scale if the service is contracted to an outside provider.

Enrichment

A Unified Union District would have the ability to provide enrichment programs that may not be currently available such as 21st century after school and summer program for elementary, middle and high school students and enriching experiences throughout the school day and year, include Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Dinoman!, author's visits, Science Olympiad, National Walk-to-School Day, Nationwide Hour of Code, Environmental Education Center, exchange and interactive international experiences.

Supports for Healthy Students

A Unified Union District would have the ability to provide supports for healthy students that may not be currently available, such as: outstanding food services system; nutrition supports for students; on-site clinical counseling services; Tooth Tutor; Tapestry afterschool and summer program; Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Fire Departments; the Rutland County Police Department; and community-based pre-school providers.

Parent and Community Support and Involvement

Parents support our students with academic, music and athletic boosters; PTO and community dinners and events; alumni association; parent community service; American Heart Association Jump Rope for Heart; food drives; and polar splash teams to name a few.

Choice as an Indicator of Quality

Our schools have a history of strong academic success, excellent parental involvement, community service by students and strong support from their respective communities.

For those students who wish to exercise choice (9-12), Vermont law provides for public high school choice throughout the state. In a merged district, students in grades 9-12 would have choice of any public high school in Vermont, subject to the limits set by local Boards. Poultney, West Rutland and Proctor currently have up to 10% of their enrollment as identified slots for students to transfer in or out of public high school. All students in Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland have opportunities to attend other public high schools throughout Vermont. Statewide Secondary Public School Choice (16 V.S.A. § 822a) will continue to be available to students in grades 9-12 so long as the state law remains in effect.

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During the first four years of the new district, students will attend elementary school, middle school, and high school according to their town/district of residence. After the first four years of the new Unified Union District, school choice PK-12 among the schools in the district will be expanded with the option to attend any school in the district regardless of the town in which they reside, upon consent of the parent. After July 1, 2022, the School Board will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Unified Union District.

As the benefits of the historical partnerships with neighboring schools illustrate in many areas from professional development, to support services, technology, technical assistance, and administrative services, part of each school's continued quality is reliant upon outside supports. Within a larger district and with the operating guidelines as outlined herein, each school may continue to access these contributions to quality in a cost-effective manner. Additionally, the enlarged district will expand the pool of students eligible to attend each school, increasing the likelihood that the school will remain cost effective on a per pupil basis. And lastly, the continued operation of the schools may continue to be advantaged by the stability of a larger operational structure, which is less susceptible to the impacts of fluctuations in enrollments, costs, and tax rate variation.

Efficiencies, Flexibility and Taxpayer Value

While tax rates are calculated based upon per pupil spending, school budgets for districts that operate schools are limited in the extent to which they can responsibly increase or decrease budgets on a per student basis. When comparing the budgets of our PreK-12 districts there is a common misconception that each student costs a certain amount to educate for a year, and the savings (or increase in costs) from educating a student within the district could be calculated by comparing tuition rates. However, operating school district budgets don't work that way; they work more like a household budget might. So, for example, imagine a household with four bedrooms and family of five. We can think of the household budget as all the expenses for maintaining the house, utilities, food, and so forth. If one family member moves out, into a dorm for example, a few of the household expenses would be reduced, but not by 1/5, as the basic costs of maintaining the four-bedroom household will be the same. Ultimately, the cost per family member, now in a household of 4, would go up in this scenario. Similarly, if another child arrives, and now there are six family members in the household, the total household expenses may go up a bit, for food and utilities perhaps, but as long as there is room and no significant additions are needed, the cost per family member goes down. This is how school budgets in districts that operate schools work. Many of the costs are fixed or semi-fixed. Reductions in some budget areas can be accomplished when student enrollment declines, and sometimes more when enrollment declines past certain thresholds. When enrollment declines and expenditures cannot be decreased to match, spending per pupil increases. Similarly, increases in expenditures are driven by increases in student needs and enrollments beyond certain thresholds. But if the district has the capacity to welcome more students within the current financial and operating structures, the total cost per student will go down. This is an important strategy for increasing efficiency. In Vermont's education funding formula, the costs

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per student drive homestead tax rates, so increased efficiency translates to lower homestead property tax rates.

The following illustration demonstrates how changes in enrollment in operating schools affect spending per pupil and costs. In the illustration below, the major expenses for the Sample Vermont School, which has five classrooms, are generally consistent, and an increase or decrease in pupils that does not change the number of classrooms needed, translates only to minor increases or decreases for things like books and supplies. With no changes in expenditures, decreases in enrollment yield increases in spending per pupil. With no changes in expenditures, increases in enrollment lower spending per pupil.

Enrollment in Operating Schools

Spending and per Pupil Costs - Sample Vermont School:

Sample Vermont School - A

100 Students

\$1,000,000 Budget

\$10,000 per student

Class 1 20 Students	Class 2 20 Students	Class 3 20 Students	Class 4 20 Students	Class 5 20 Students
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Sample Vermont School - B

Increased Enrollment

105 Students

\$1,005,000

\$9,571 per student

Class 1 21 Students	Class 2 21 Students	Class 3 21 Students	Class 4 21 Students	Class 5 21 Students
--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------	--------------------------------------

Sample Vermont School - C

Decreased Enrollment

95 Students

\$995,000 Budget

\$10,474 per student

Class 1 19 Students	Class 2 19 Students	Class 3 19 Students	Class 4 19 Students	Class 5 19 Students
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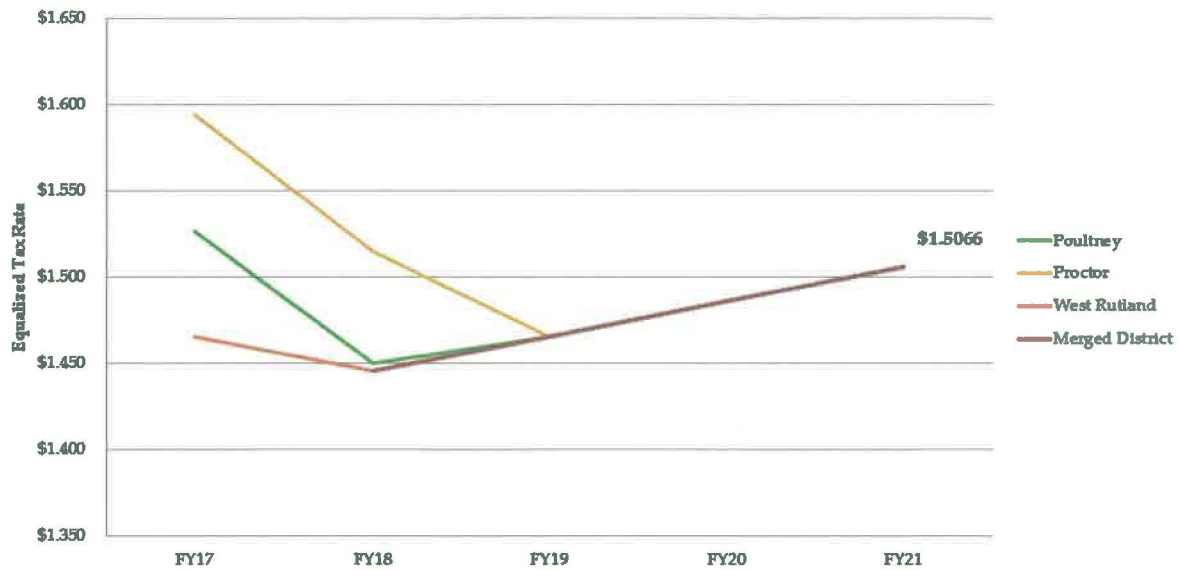
Tax Rates

Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Schools have been considering issues of sustainability of the current education delivery structure for many years. Our study concludes that without formation of the Unified Union District, increases in Education Spending per Equalized Pupil are projected to continue to climb. (Education Spending per Equalized Pupils or ES/EP figures are a good proxy for homestead tax rates, as ES/EPs are a major factor in tax rates, ES/EPs are based upon local decisions and circumstances, and the formula for calculating ES/EP has been consistent over time.)

Increases in ES/EP can be attributed to varying combinations of increases in expenditures, decreases in revenue and decreases in numbers of equalized pupils. These variables have a more pronounced effect in smaller organizations as compared to larger ones. The translation of ES/EP to local homestead tax rates, in all cases, is further compounded by other education funding formula variables, such as statewide rates and the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA). As we look to the future, past trends suggest the steep inclines will continue unless action is taken to address the factors contributing to the increases. Factors which can be influenced through the proposed change in governance are primarily related to expenditures and enrollment. To inform thinking about future trends in expenditures (education spending) and enrollment, data have been summarized by the Agency of Education in the District Data Profile tool.* The charts below estimate equalized tax rates using this tool.

Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

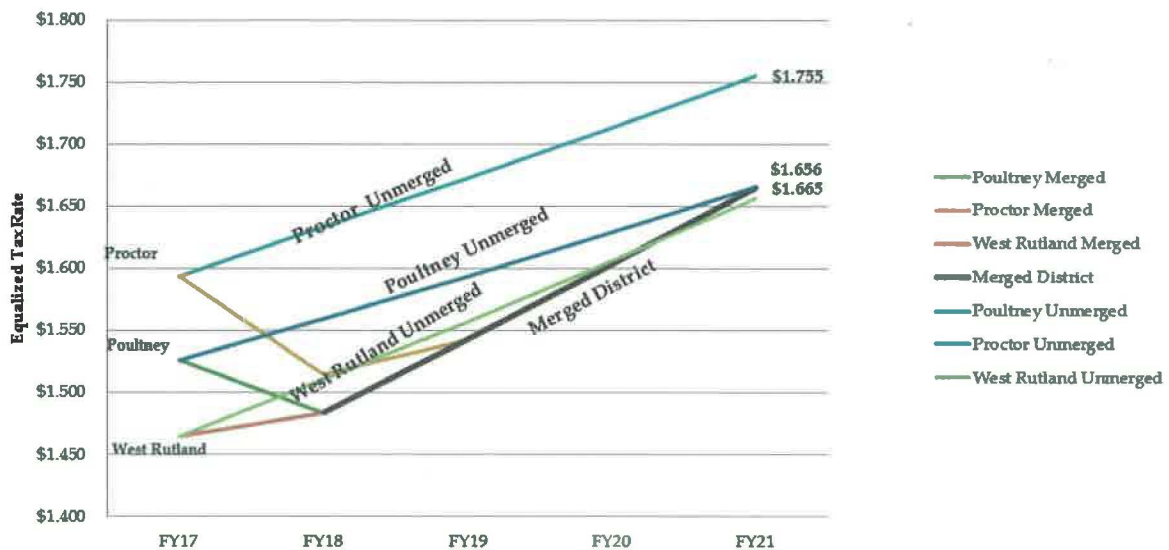
Equalized Tax Rates with No Increases in Education Spending



Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Estimated Equalized Tax Rates in Merged District with No Increase in Education Spending					
	FY 17 ETR	FY 18 ETR	FY 19 ETR	FY 20 ETR	FY21 ETR
Poultney	1.5261	1.4498	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066
Proctor	1.5941	1.5144	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066
West Rutland	1.4649	1.4455	1.4655	1.4855	1.5066

**Equalized Tax Rates with
Annual Increase in Education Spending by District**

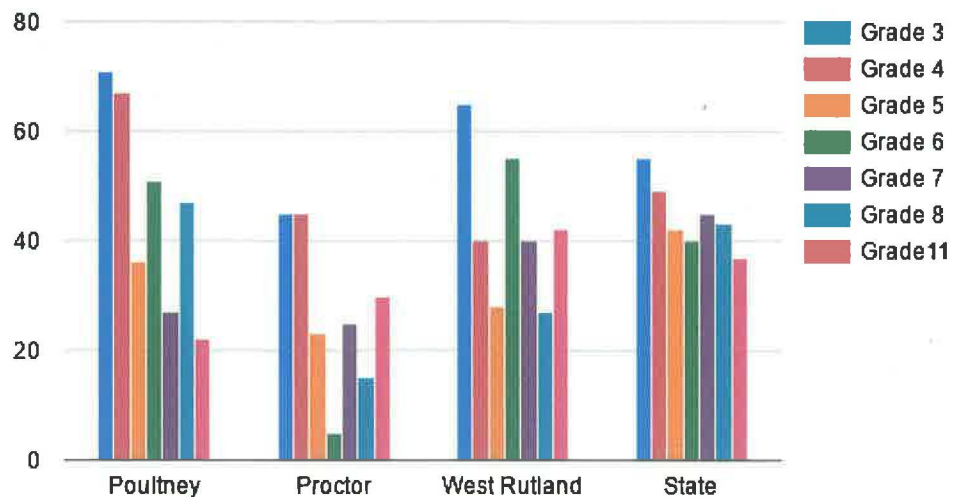


Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

Estimated Equalized Tax Rates in Merged and Unmerged District w/ Increases in Education Spending by District					
	FY17 ETR	FY18 ETR	FY19 ETR	FY20 ETR	FY21 ETR
Poultney Merged	\$ 1.526	\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Proctor Merged	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.514	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
West Rutland Merged	\$ 1.465	\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Merged District		\$ 1.484	\$ 1.543	\$ 1.604	\$ 1.665
Poultney Unmerged	\$ 1.526	\$ 1.560	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.629	\$ 1.665
Proctor Unmerged	\$ 1.594	\$ 1.633	\$ 1.673	\$ 1.713	\$ 1.755
West Rutland Unmerged	\$ 1.465	\$ 1.510	\$ 1.557	\$ 1.606	\$ 1.656

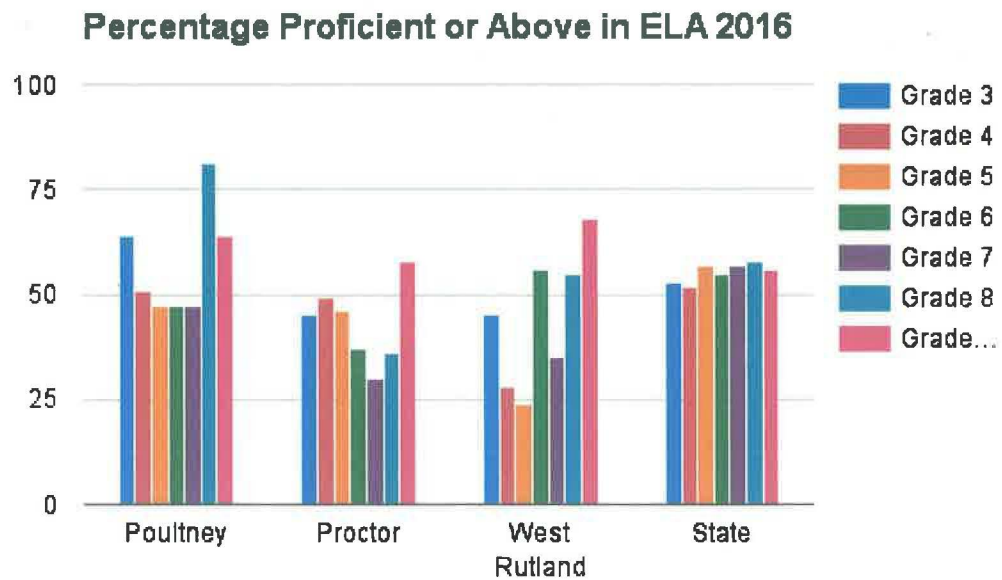
Student Achievement Results SBAC 2016

Percentage Proficient or Above in Math 2016



Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland Articles of Agreement

MATH - Percentage Proficient or Above - 2016				
	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland	State
Grade 3	71	45	65	55
Grade 4	67	45	40	49
Grade 5	36	23	28	42
Grade 6	51	5	55	40
Grade 7	27	25	40	45
Grade 8	47	15	27	43
Grade11	22	30	42	37



***Appendix A to the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland
Articles of Agreement***

ELA - Percentage Proficient or Above - 2016				
	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland	State
Grade 3	64	45	45	53
Grade 4	51	49	28	52
Grade 5	47	46	24	57
Grade 6	47	37	56	55
Grade 7	47	30	35	57
Grade 8	81	36	55	58
Grade11	64	58	68	56

Appendix B: Quarry Valley Unified Union District Summary Data

	Poultney	Proctor	West Rutland
Grades Served:	PK-12	PK-12	PK-12
FY 16 ADM:	391	273	324
FY 16 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,549.	\$15,464.	\$14,211.
FY 16 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 11.2 : 1 HS: 9.4 : 1	ES: 10.1 : 1 HS: 7.7 : 1	9.5 : 1
FY 16 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 202 : 1 HS: 102 : 1	ES: 151 : 1 HS: 123 : 1	178.95 : 1
FY 15 ADM:	414	281	335
FY 15 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,147.	\$14,945.	\$13,913.
FY 15 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 12.4 : 1 HS: 8.4 : 1	ES: 12.9 : 1 HS: 9.6 : 1	9.4 : 1
FY 15 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 236 : 1 HS: 105 : 1	ES: 148 : 1 HS: 134 : 1	176 : 1
FY 14 ADM:	411	289	326
FY 14 Education Spending Per Equalized Pupil (ES/EP):	\$14,258.	\$14,139.	\$14,022.
FY 14 Student to Teacher Ratio:	ES: 12.2 : 1 HS: 8.6 : 1	ES: 9.9 : 1 HS: 8.1 : 1	9.6 : 1
FY 14 Student to Administrator Ratio:	ES: 219 : 1 HS: 115 : 1	ES: 160 : 1 HS: 135 : 1	173.5 : 1
Small Schools Grant	None	None	None
District Population (latest decennial census)	3432	1741	2326

School Choice

For first four years that the Quarry Valley Unified Union District is fully operational and providing educational services, students will attend school according to their town of residence; provided however, with parental consent, the Board of School Directors may adjust student enrollment based upon individual student circumstances and needs of the Regional Education School District.

After July 1, 2022, the Board of School Directors will have the authority to adjust school attendance boundary lines and school configurations within the Union School District. The Board of School Directors shall adopt a school policy providing a process for parents or guardians to request that their child attend another school within the Unified Union School District.

School Configuration

The current school configuration in our district is as follows:

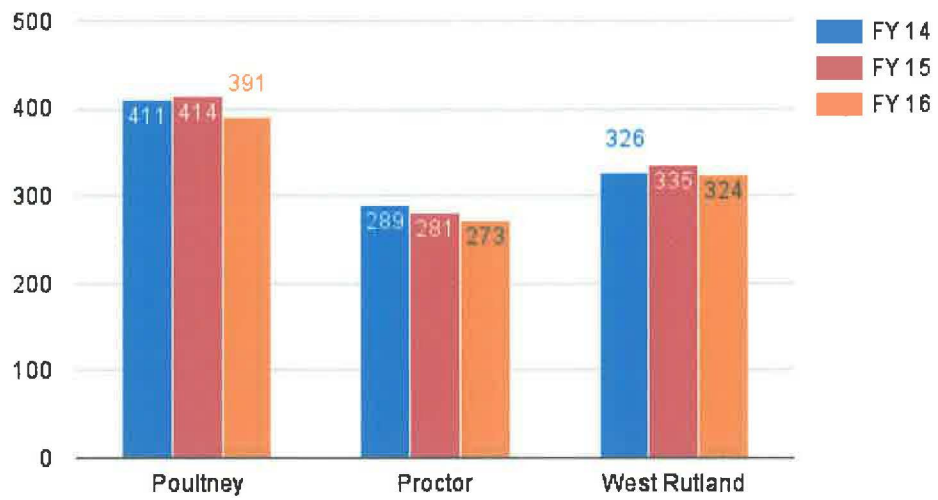
Poultney School District PK-12	391 students
(Poultney Elementary- PK-6)	
(Poultney HS- 7-12)	
Proctor School District PK-12	273 students
(Proctor Elementary- PK-6 - 153)	
(Proctor HS- 9-12 - 120)	
West Rutland School District PK-12	<u>324 students</u>

Total- 988 students

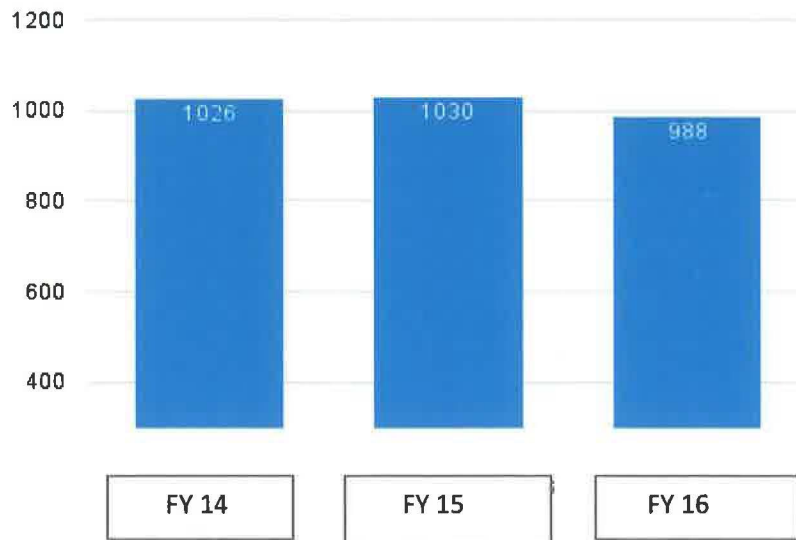
School Closure:

The Regional Education District shall not close any schools within its boundaries during the first four years it is fully operational and providing educational services per Act 153 of 2010. After that, a unanimous vote of the full membership of the Board of Directors and the consent of the town via majority vote shall be required to approve the closure of a school.

Enrollment Over Time



Combined District Enrollment Over Time





January 9, 2017

Christopher B. Leopold
leopold@wrightjoneslaw.com

Debra Taylor, Superintendent
Rutland Central Supervisory Union
16 Evelyn Street
Rutland, VT 05701

Joan Paustian, Superintendent
Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union
168 York Street
Rutland, VT 05764

Re: Proposed Quarry Valley Unified School District Board Membership

Dear Debra and Joan:

I am writing regarding the proposal by the Rutland Central Supervisory Union/Rutland Southwest Supervisory Union Act 46 Study Committee ("Study Committee") on behalf of the Poultney, Proctor and West Rutland school districts to form a unified union school district. Specifically, you have asked us to review the board membership structure for the proposed unified union school district and the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution.

Members of the Study Committee, formed under 16 VSA §706, have drafted Articles of Agreement for the formation of a unified union school district to be named Quarry Valley Unified School District ("Quarry Valley") pursuant to Act 46. Article 9 of the Articles of Agreement establishes the number of board members from each town in the proposed unified union. The proposed school board follows the statutory requirement that each proposed member district in a unified union be afforded at least one representative. Consistent with statute, the proposed board may not exceed 18 members, each member district shall be entitled to at least one representative, and representation shall be proportional to population. 16 VSA §706b(9). The ten (10) member school board includes representation for the three school districts with the following membership on the School Board: Poultney – 4, Proctor – 3, and West Rutland – 3. Each Proctor Board member will have a weighted vote of .67 which equals two total votes for Proctor. Board composition will be recalculated after each decennial census to ensure that a town's representation on the Board remains proportional to its population. Further, the School Board is authorized to reapportion its composition, including increasing and decreasing the number of school directors, following each decennial census.

The Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment requires that each resident be given equal weight in representation. *Reynolds v. Sims*, 377 US 533, 569 (1964). The Supreme Court has held generally that congressional apportionment plans with a population deviation of less than 10% is a minor deviation. *Brown v. Thomson*, 463 US 835, 842 (1983). Despite stricter

Debra Taylor, Superintendent
Joan Paustian, Superintendent
January 9, 2017
Page 2

adherence to a 10% maximum deviation rule in *congressional* redistricting cases, the Court has shown *more* flexibility in regard to state and local forms of government. Mathematical exactness is not a requirement to the extent that it acts as a "straitjacket" preventing citizens from "devising mechanisms of local government suitable for local needs and efficient in solving local problems." *Avery v. Midland*, 390 US 474, 485 (1968).

While there is minor variation in the population represented per board member for the proposed Quarry Valley Unified School District board of school directors, it appears this minor variation preserves the member district boundaries for the election of board members. It is our conclusion that this representation plan for the town school districts will reasonably meet the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Based upon the above, we conclude there is a reasonable legal basis to determine that a court reviewing the proposed board representation proposal would reasonably determine that the board of school directors representation plan, as identified in Article 9, satisfies the requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher B. Leopold

c: Donna Russo-Savage, Agency of Education

450-3, 8647