



Cabot School District

ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE PROPOSAL

Innovative, Independent, and Accountable

{ December 2017 }

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Executive Summary:

A Sustainable Future in Cabot

The Cabot School District proposes remaining an independent PK-12 school district and seeks reassignment to a larger supervisory union. Our proposal to remain independent is not intended to maintain the status quo. Rather, we view the Act 46 process as an impetus to secure our long-term future as an innovative institution delivering a quality educational experience for our students, emphasizing life skills thorough project based learning, teamwork, effective communication, and community engagement.

“Vermont recognizes the important role that a small school plays in the social and educational fabric of its community.”

– Act 46 (2015)

To meet and exceed the goals of Act 46 we are embracing advantages of our size, specifically, our distinct programs and experiences, and our flexible and personalized paths for high school students to be the college and career ready workforce Vermont needs.

Our self-assessment revealed stable PK-8 enrollment and opportunities for future growth.

We also identified a clear history of successful outcomes for our students, despite an alarming rate of poverty among our school aged population. Our plan includes:

- Enhancement of the High School Curriculum & Enabling a Flexible Faculty
- Emphasis on Career Technical Education, Early College, & Experiential Learning
- Joining a Larger Supervisory Union & Building Strong Regional Relationships
- Implementation of a Long-Term Facilities Improvement Plan
- Cooperation with “*Advantage Cabot*,” an Independent Enrichment & Boarding Program

Through this plan, Cabot School will remain the center of our community’s social, economic, and educational fabric; remaining independent will enable continued success and expansion of our distinct programs, including project based learning and experiential opportunities in the community, and leave accountability with the residents of our town. Strong relationships with our supervisory union and companion districts, as well as private educational support entities, will ensure we remain a strong, vibrant, and innovative institution that adds value to our community and region. Our study allows us to confidently conclude that this proposal represents the best means of meeting each goal of Act 46 and that Cabot School’s best days are ahead.

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Table of Contents:

Executive Summary	ii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction: Innovative, Independent, & Accountable	1
Chronology: Cabot’s Act 46 Process	9
Cabot’s Choice Vote	9
Early Efforts to Explore Sustainable Governance	9
The 706b Process & C-D-T Merger Proposal.....	10
Further Study of Options & Deliberative Process	12
Community Engagement.....	14
July 2017 Survey of Cabot Residents	14
Community Forums & October 2017 Survey	16
Comparison of Options Considered [Rule 3450.2]	16
Part I: Self-Assessment & Community Profile	19
Summary of Cabot School.....	19
ADM by Grade [Rule 3450.5(2)].....	22
Enrollment by Grade [Rule 3450.5(3)].....	22
Equalized & “Phantom Pupils” [Rule 3450.5(4)-(5)].....	24
Cabot Demographics and Rural Poverty.....	24
Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch [Rule 3450.5(6)]	24
Property Values, Family Income & Income Sensitivity [Rule 3450.5(13)]	24
Special Education Services.....	28
Students Receiving or Eligible for Special Education Services [Rule 3450.5(7)]	28
Students Receiving or Eligible for Section 504 Accommodations [Rule 3450.5(8)]	30
Regional High School Choice [Rule 3450.5(10)]	30
Equity & Variety of Educational Opportunities, and State Education Quality Standards [Rule 3450.8].....	30
Student Assessments [Rule 3450.8(1)]	32
Elementary School Curriculum [Rule 3450.8(2)]	32
Middle School Curriculum & Opportunities.....	33
High School Curriculum & Opportunities [Rule 3450.8(3)]	35

Cabot’s Portfolio of Non-Traditional Learning Experiences [Rule 3450.8(5)]..... 37

- Project Based Learning (PBL) 39
- Technology..... 41
- Siskin Ecological Adventures (Elementary School)..... 42
- Non-Traditional Elementary Experiences..... 43
- Cabot Leads (Middle School)..... 44
- Siskin Ecological Adventures (Middle School) 45
- Long Field Farm Program 46
- Vermont Rural Partnership Projects 47
- School Garden 47
- The Limes 48
- Highlights of the Non-Traditional High School Experience 48
- June Term 52
- Cabot Connects Mentoring..... 53
- Pre-Kindergarten Program 53
- Summer Camps & Access to Support Services..... 53
- Partnerships Make it all Come Together 54

College & Career Preparation [Rule 3450.8(6)] 55

- Participation Rates 56
- College Matriculation & Standardized Testing..... 57
- Graduation Rate..... 58

Cabot’s Graduate Survey [Rule 3450.18 & Rule 3450.10(5)(B)] 58

- Scope & Methodology 58
- Summary of Findings..... 59

Administration, Teachers, & Professional Development [Rules 3450.8(8)-(10)]..... 62

Operational Efficiencies, Accountability, & Costs [Rule 3450.9] 63

- Resource Sharing with other Districts & Economies of Scale [Rules 3450.9(1)-(3)] 63
- Student to School District Employee Ratios [Rule 3450.9(4)]..... 64
- Education Spending [Rule 3450.9(5), Rule 3450.9(6) & Rule 3450.9(7)] 64
- Impact of Small School Grants [Rule 3450.9(8) & Rule 3450.9(9)] 64
- Trends in Special Education Costs [Rule 3450.9(11)] 65

Part II: Cabot’s Role in the Region & Community 69

- Cabot’s Role in the Region [Rule 3450.10] 69
- Regional Districts Not Part of the Proposal [Rule 3450.10(1)] 69

Regional Relationships & Transportation [Rule 3450.10(2)]..... 70

 Current and Historic Relationships among Districts..... 70

 Distances and Quality of Roads between Districts 71

Cabot’s Conversations with other Districts [Rule 3450.10(3)-(4) & Rule 3450.2]..... 72

 Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union 73

 Washington Central Supervisory Union 74

 Montpelier 75

 Caledonia Cooperative District..... 76

Barriers to Merger with other Districts [Rule 3450.10(5)] 78

 Twinfield Union..... 79

 Danville 80

 Craftsbury 82

Cabot’s Role in the Community..... 83

Part III: Cabot’s Sustainable Future..... 87

 Generating College and Career Ready Graduates..... 87

 Targeted Enhancements of the High School Curriculum 88

 Additional Curricular Development 88

 A Flexible & Focused Faculty 91

 Striving for Increased Scale [Rule 3450.14]..... 91

 Advantage Cabot 92

 Marketing our Distinct Educational Experience..... 93

 Addressing Our Aging Infrastructure 94

 Regional Relationships, Local Accountability..... 95

 Partnerships with other Districts [Rule 3450.13] 95

 Reassignment to a Larger Supervisory Union [Rule 3450.17]..... 97

 An Engaged, Transparent, & Accountable School Board [Rule 3450.15] 98

Conclusion & Appendices: 101

The Cabot School District Board of Directors, Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Lisa Olson, Sharon O'Connor, and Rory Thibault, wish to recognize the hard work and effort of the Cabot community members and student body who contributed to or assisted in the preparation of this proposal:

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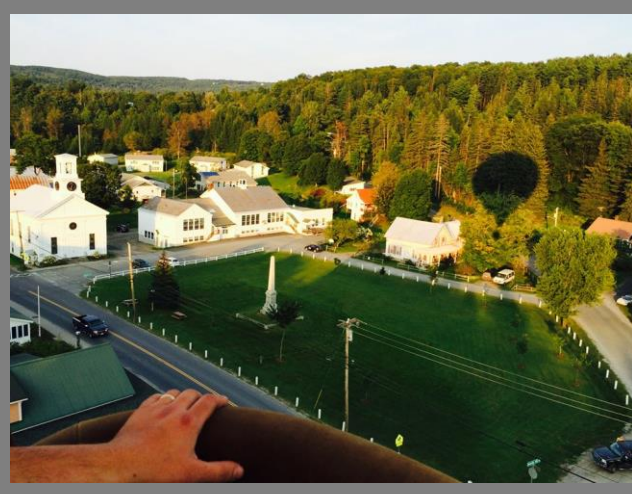
... and a special thanks to our Principal, Superintendent, and Supervisory Union staff who tirelessly assisted us along the way, spent many long nights with us at meetings, and continually offered valuable insight that strengthened this proposal.

Introduction:

Innovative, Independent, & Accountable

Cabot, like many small Vermont towns, has previously faced the questions presented by Act 46. For Cabot, Act 46 is more than just a question of whether to merge or not, it is inextricable from the question of whether we are willing to restructure and reduce the grades served by our school. After thoughtful deliberation and dialogue, we have concluded, proudly and confidently, that continuing as an independent school district is in the best interests of our students, our community, and our region, and that this is the best means by which we can meet and exceed the requirements of Act 46.

This conclusion was reached after years of research, community engagement, conversations with neighboring districts, studying and voting upon a preferred governance structure, and rigorous self-assessment. This process has led to many difficult discussions about opportunity, cost, and the accountability needed to ensure our school remains capable of serving students in all grades. Remaining an independent district still presents challenges; however, we have concluded that the losses, challenges, and uncertainties associated with entering a preferred structure would be more detrimental to our students, our community, and other districts in the region.



Our campus sustains a vibrant atmosphere of inquiry.

Our distinct opportunities provide an enriching student experience and lead our graduates to seek purposeful lives.

Our Path Forward: Innovative, Independent, and Accountable

We have identified immediate and long-term actions necessary to sustain the success of our school for future generations. Our application is premised on complementary lines of effort directed at producing the college and career ready graduates the Vermont workforce needs:

- Enhancement of the High School Curriculum: building upon the strength of project based learning (PBL), emphasizing experiential programming in the community, reintroducing design/technology curricular opportunities, and expanding upon our strong base of community partnerships will best prepare students for post-secondary education or employment.
- A Flexible & Focused Faculty: “right sizing” our direct teaching staff at the high school level and focusing upon professional development of our educators to encourage innovative programmatic and curricular offerings. Attracting and retaining the right personnel is critical to grow capabilities and maintain agility in programming.
- Joining a Larger Supervisory Union: joining a larger supervisory union (e.g. Washington Central) to enable the effective sharing of administrative costs among a greater number of communities, and to share programmatic opportunities, faculty, and staff to the greatest extent possible. Collaboration and coordination with neighboring schools presents compelling opportunities for the future. We recognize that the statewide plan is likely to shift or impact supervisory unions in our region; our priority is to maintain our current relationships with Central Vermont Career Center and remaining with a supervisory union that contracts Washington County Mental Health Services for special services – both minimizing the disruption of current programs.
- Advantage Cabot: cooperation with a private non-profit organization, *Advantage Cabot*, an independent enrichment and boarding program that will recruit primarily out of state students to attend and pay tuition to the Cabot School District. The Board supports development of this concept, and is reserving full endorsement pending an understanding of the Advantage Cabot financial management plan. If successful, this program would infuse funds into the Cabot School, and add students without subtracting them from other neighboring districts.
- Capital Improvements: development of a long-term capital improvement plan, in cooperation with the Town of Cabot and other community based entities, to ensure Cabot School facilities provide an environment for students to thrive socially and academically.
- Emphasizing Career Technical Education & Early College: continuing to encourage our students to explore their best path to graduation through career technical education, dual enrollment, and early college. This effort compliments our plan to expand community partnerships, externships, and experiential opportunities. We also intend to continue offering a predictable number of regional school choice slots, recognizing that a small school is not always the best fit for students’ educational interests or career aspirations.
- A Value Added to our Region: striving for increased scale through enhanced outreach to neighboring high school choice districts (and others) to ensure parent and student

awareness of the unique strengths and non-traditional components of the Cabot educational experience.

In preparing this application, a persistent problem was presented: how to quantify, support, and effectively communicate the intangible qualities that make the Cabot School a vibrant center of learning. We cannot place a dollar value on sense of community (embodied by, for example, three or four generations of residents turning out for a basketball game) or positive student experiences – measured beyond the quantity of classes offered or clubs available. We believe that a greater number of *opportunities* at a neighboring school is only as meaningful as the *availability* to our students. Cabot School has extremely high participation rates in sports teams, arts, and music programming – with most high schoolers playing multiple sports, playing an instrument too, and supporting their classmates in whatever spare time they have left. Every student has the opportunity to access our programs, one of the most positive aspects of our size.

Cabot School is about more than just its students, teachers, or administrators – it is integral part of our town and community. Our survey of Cabot Schools last ten graduating classes confirmed that Cabot produces well rounded and successful young adults – whether they are heading to an Ivy League university or to a local farm. We believe the success or failure of our school is best measured in the quality of the experience, not in the quantity of classes, with engagement and connection between residents and the school serving as a critical measure of accountability. We are confident that our student outcomes reflect strength, not weakness, in our size and approach.

Summation of Cabot’s Self-Assessment

One of the most striking discoveries of our self-study was fully appreciating the high level of poverty among families with school aged children. Cabot’s rate of poverty was, not surprisingly, higher than Washington County’s average, but the gap between mean and median income, as well as the gap between the overall poverty rate and the child poverty rate was striking.

The high rate of poverty among Cabot’s children (27%) and number of state placed students underscores the critical role our school plays in serving economically disadvantaged students. Time and again, we concluded that options entailing restructuring to a PK-8 school were more likely to *increase inequity* for these students, based upon transportation and access issues.

Enrollment Snapshot (FY 18)

- Equalized Pupils (FY 18)
 - 174.9 Total
 - 0.0 “Phantom Pupils”
- Enrollment (FY 18)
 - 138 in grades PK-8 (+5.3%)
 - 50 in grades 9-12 (-3.8%)
 - 5 Tuition Students
- 12.62 full time equivalent faculty members (excl. Pre-K)
- 12.92 to 1 Student-to-Teacher Ratio

Financial Snapshot (FY 18)

- \$17,635 per pupil spending (FY 18)
 - 5.0% increase v. FY 17
- \$3,085,410 education spending
 - 1.35% increase v. FY 17

Despite the challenges of rural poverty, the SAT scores, college matriculation rate, and success of our graduates match or exceed those of other larger schools in our region that serve less economically disadvantaged student bodies. Our survey of Cabot School’s last ten graduating classes provides great insight and empirical evidence of the success of our approach:

- 98.8% of respondents are either in school or currently employed. Of the respondents, 95.2% were accepted into a post-secondary education program, with a high level of achievement following. More than 90% of respondents are still enrolled or have successfully graduated.
- For the respondents who have finished post-secondary education or joined the workforce, 29.8% live in Cabot, with 57.4% living in Vermont (most within 20 miles of Cabot). More than 10% of respondents are currently living outside of the United States.
- Cabot graduates have attended virtually all Vermont public and private colleges, ranging from Middlebury College to Vermont Technical College to the New England Culinary Institute. Others have headed to the Ivy League, including Harvard, Yale, Brown, and Columbia, or abroad to the University of Oxford and Royal College of Art in England. Other students have chosen a path of service in United States Armed Forces, or with the United States Peace Corps.

We are immensely proud of the diversity of experiences and the reach of Cabot School graduates in the world. We may be a small school, but the success of our graduates in fields as diverse as combat medicine in the Marine Corps, small business, and the performing arts is confirmation that our educational culture is helping students thrive. We also recognize that the sustained success of graduates and the vitality of the high school program have been threatened by gradual reductions in staffing, and by extension, programming available. Correspondingly, containing costs has been a major goal of the school board in past budget cycles, which has resulted in significant deferred maintenance and compromises with respect to the breadth of curriculum available.

Like many small schools, Cabot is susceptible to sharp rises or declines in enrollment. For FY 18 we are pleased to report that Cabot is no longer carrying any “phantom pupils,” and our budget accurately reflects the students served. That said, Cabot’s budget and staff have been strained by increased special education service needs, the implementation of universal pre-kindergarten, and an influx of state placed students. Our community has welcomed all students with open arms, and we recognize the prime role our teachers, staff, and administration are playing every day in dealing with the effects of caregiver opiate addiction, family instability, trauma, and multi-generational poverty.

Our assessment of current positions concluded that tuitioning of high school students would result in elimination of several faculty positions, but would not meaningfully reduce the total staff positions, transportation costs, or maintenance costs of the school.

Our self-assessment revealed much to be proud of with our school, but it also served to underscore the challenges we face to deliver a high-quality education at a rate our taxpayers value. Our school owes much of its success and stability to the dedication of our staff, talent of our faculty, and diligence of our principal. The self-assessment validates that the success of the school has less to do with the quantity of courses offered, and much more to do with the quality of the experience.

The Decision to Submit an Alternative Governance Structure Proposal



This is our 3-point shot, for the win.

Presently, Cabot and Twinfield Union are part of the Washington Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU). Both are PK-12 schools. Cabot's other neighbors are currently part of three other supervisory unions, and except for Danville, do not operate unified or unified union PK-12 schools. Cabot is not structurally isolated, with two of our neighbors operating PK-12 schools, and a preferred structure merger with these districts was pursued under 16 V.S.A. § 706b. The proposed Cabot-Danville-Twinfield merger proposal was rejected by Cabot and Danville voters. Reaching a merger (preferred or otherwise)

with any other neighbor(s) would have required restructuring in some form and/or entering a union high school district (a non-preferred structure).

Through community forums and post-vote surveys, the School Board has concluded that many factors influenced the unsuccessful merger vote, and a preference among voters to maintain Cabot's high school program. Some key concerns of the failed merger were identified:

- Cabot's diluted voting power in a consolidated board (2/9 votes) would not ensure the adequate resourcing or prioritization of the Cabot School's remaining PK-8 program.
- The articles of agreement (by statute) could be rewritten to hasten restructuring or the eventual closure of the Cabot School. This concern was amplified by the need for a consolidated district to fund major improvements to the Cabot School campus.
- The closure of Cabot's high school not resulting in choice, but rather intra-district choice (two options versus many options).
- Loss of distinct Cabot relationships with outside entities, as well as the high school project based learning program and key faculty that enable its success.

- Economic and social impact upon the town of Cabot, to include the potential loss of property values, population, and businesses in the community.
- Transportation concerns and access to afterschool activities and sports teams, especially for low income families.
- Reduced accountability and oversight as a function of fewer Cabot board members relative to the number of schools, faculty, staff, and students entailed by a merger district.

These concerns guided our re-examination of all options available following the June 20, 2017 vote. We convened twelve times to explore the remaining options available before committing to making this application; established a working group to assist in gathering data, conducted two community surveys; and held two community forums during this process. Cabot engaged in outreach to all neighboring districts, and some regional districts, including: Twinfield Union, Danville, U32, Hazen Union, Craftsbury, Caledonia Cooperative, and Montpelier. Some discussions focused on the sharing of resources and programs, while others proposed exploration of merger. Extensive outreach to constituent groups within our town, including homeschool families and those that send their children to private or religious schools, was also conducted. Simply put, Act 46 has dominated community conversations for months.

We recognized that a direct merger with a single PK-12 district could provide for formation of a non-preferred structure, without the excessive dilution of voting power that would have occurred under the Cabot-Danville-Twinfield merger, however no viable partner emerged. Restructuring to a PK-8 school and seeking a preferred merger was also thoroughly considered and preliminary discussions were held with the Caledonia Cooperative district. Ultimately, these exploratory steps and input from the community did not support the formation of a new 706b committee. Impediments to entering a preferred merger included:

- Other districts electing to focus merger or compliance activity with other partners (e.g. Danville and Blue Mountain Union, and Craftsbury-OSSU AGS activity).
- Cabot's projected capital improvement costs and the anticipated impact upon the debt load of a newly consolidated district.
- The concern that the projected increase in per-pupil spending that would result from closing our high school would lead Cabot to being seen as a less attractive merger partner with neighboring districts, based upon our higher costs relative to other districts.

Conclusion: a Value Added to our Community & Region

Cabot School's best days are ahead. We will remain innovative, independent, and accountable.

Our path ahead is not without challenges, but this process has emphasized the many areas in which Cabot School is presently successful, the steps needed enhance the student experience, and the significant role that the school plays in the fabric of our town. Our plan has benefited from the passionate debate about quality of

education, the opportunities available and those lacking, and the cost of educating our students. Securing our long-term role as a valuable institution in our region means we will:

- Ensure Cabot's non-traditional academic opportunities are available to other students in our region, namely Cabot's PBL program.
- Continue robust support for part-time students, specifically home schooled students, seeking athletic, social, and traditional academic opportunities within a public school.
- Work diligently with schools within our future supervisory union and others in the region to identify opportunities to pool costs, share resources, jointly contract, and provide distinct programming opportunities accessible to the broadest number of students possible.

We will remain **innovative, independent, and accountable** – our size gives us agility, our commitment to a quality education gives us purpose, and our history of innovation and success gives us the confidence to sustain our school and be **an institution our residents are proud of.**



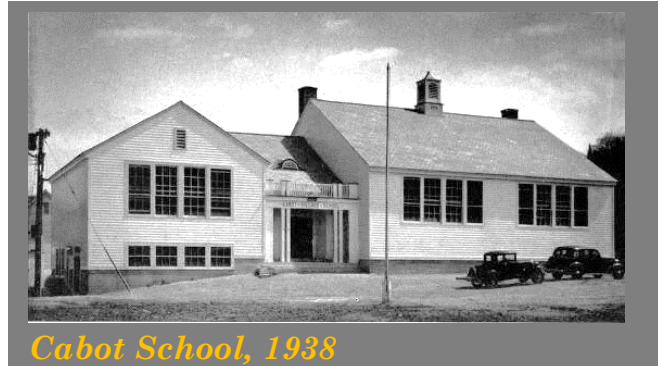
Cabot School's best days are ahead, well supported by the commitment of our educators, staff, administration, parents, students, and community to provide a high-quality education and experience.

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Chronology: *Cabot's Act 46 Process*

Today's Cabot School was formerly known as the Village School, a distinction necessary when other small school houses were maintained around the town. A two-year high school was formed in 1909, later becoming a four-year high school in 1918.

In 2020, our one-hundredth graduating class will move on, prepared to make a difference in our community and the world...



Act 46 is not the first time, but will hopefully be the last, that Cabot must consider the continuity of a PK-12 school structure. Cabot voters declined to join the nascent Twinfield Union School District in the late 1960's, chose to upgrade facilities and build the satellite buildings in the early 1970's (against the original wishes of the State), and in the late 1980's and early 1990's again declined to entertain restructuring. Undoubtedly, many of the same considerations at stake today were faced by prior generations, including economics and geography. We recognize that nostalgia and history are not a substitute for success or sustainability, but with history as a guide we believe that in crisis there is opportunity.

Cabot's Choice Vote

Prior to the enactment of Act 46 (2015), Cabot voters contemplated school structure and sustainability, and whether high school choice was a better option for Cabot. In September 2012, a petition circulated, garnering the 80 signatures required to place closure of the high school to a town vote. Cabot voters, by a margin of 322-147, decided to retain the high school, but this vote triggered a significant and almost continuous debate within the community about the future of the school. Act 46 has amplified the dialogue and debate on this matter (quite exhaustively).

Early Efforts to Explore Sustainable Governance

Starting with the 2014 school year, the Board's priorities became focused on pre-kindergarten programming under Act 166 (2014); flexible pathways under Act 77 (2013); the Cabot School's facility needs, and responsible budgeting. In January 2015, cuts were made to high school staff to limit the impact of tax increases. The Board remained cognizant of the balance required between educational quality and cost to taxpayers. In

early 2015, the Cabot School hosted Secretary of Education Rebecca Holcombe. The economics of small schools figured prominently into the dialogue, with our March 16, 2015 school board minutes noting:

“Secretary Holcombe’s visit was a success. She gave administrators many important things to think about, including the importance of summer school. Secretary Holcombe also stresses that the [Agency of Education] is not looking to close small schools, but they are looking to help the administrative level become more efficient.”

In 2015, the Board began to closely follow the legislation that would become Act 46, recognizing its potential implications for our school and our town. Informal discussions were first held with Danville and a joint board retreat was held with Twinfield in July 2015 – beginning the long arc of discussions and brainstorming that culminated with the June 20, 2017 vote.

By fall 2015, we recognized that the Agency of Education was still developing Act 46 guidance, but decided to secure funding and a preliminary examination of the potential benefits of merging for our students and our community. In these early days, informal discussions progressed with Danville and Twinfield, our structurally compatible neighbors. The Woodbury School Board also approached Cabot during this time, expressing interest in PK-6 collaboration, despite our schools being structurally incompatible for purposes of a preferred structure under Act 46.

The 706b Process & C-D-T Merger Proposal

Following six months of exploratory conversations (in parallel with Danville and Twinfield Union) the Board held a community forum in April 2016 to discuss progress. In May 2016, the Board formally voted to form a joint study committee under 16 V.S.A. § 706b with Danville and Twinfield Union. The committee was charged with reviewing and assessing the benefits and challenges of merging the three existing PK-12 school districts into a single unified union school district, governed by a single school board that would serve communities presently served by three autonomous school boards.

To facilitate these studies, the committee secured a consultant, Mr. Peter A. Clarke, from the Act 46 Project, a joint initiative of the Vermont School Boards Association, Vermont Superintendents Association, and Vermont School Board’s Insurance Trust. Cabot joined as an “advisable” district, and Board discussion focused on advancing with merger if determined to be truly beneficial for Cabot’s students.

From September 2016 through April 2017, the committee met bi-weekly in open session. The committee maintained a thorough record of its work and held multiple public forums in each community, resulting in development of the final report, recommended merger, and draft articles of agreement.

In the fall of 2016, the eleven members of the Cabot-Danville-Twinfield 706b Committee focused much of their research and discussions on the potential benefits of merger for the high school students across the three districts. In addition to highlighting the unique strengths of each school, early discussions confirmed that as a result of declining enrollments, all three schools had been increasingly challenged in recent years to continue to offer a high school program sufficient to meet the needs/desires of all students. This led to increasing numbers of high-school age students across the three districts opting to get their high school education elsewhere.

In October and November, the Committee reviewed a number of ways that high school programs in a merged district might be structured to increase the curricular opportunities (along with teaching staff and fellow students) available to students. Among these options was the establishment of “magnet campuses” focused on different curricular areas at each of the existing schools. Despite the potential these “magnet” options held for bringing the range of courses and teachers up near the level of several high schools in the area available through school choice, a majority of committee members had great reservations about the amount of busing and lost learning time required to implement them. Eventually, the committee narrowed the discussion to three options:

- Option 1: merge the three districts, with termination of Cabot’s high school program, with intra-district choice.
- Option 2: merge the three districts, with termination of Cabot’s traditional high school program and creation of a Project Based Learning Academy on the Cabot School campus, with intra-district choice.
- Option 3: dissolve the study committee, and remain unmerged.

Community forums were held to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of these options. On April 5, 2017, the Study Committee held a vote on these options, resulting in a 5-4-2 vote, with no option reaching a majority. Both Cabot representatives voted for Option 2. A re-vote was held with one Twinfield Union representative changing his vote to provide a final result of 6-3-2, advancing Option 1 to the voters. This meeting signaled a turning point in the process and triggered an awakening among Cabot voters to the significance and risks of the proposal.

In May 2016, the Study Committee’s report was finalized, and focus shifted to the articles of agreement. Cabot’s representatives worked hard to integrate provisions intended to shield Cabot School from future restructuring (further reduction of grades served) or closure of the school altogether by a consolidated board. The April 5, 2017 Study Committee vote emphasized the risks associated with the diluted voting power of Cabot under this preferred structure, or any other. Further concern for the durability of protections under the articles of agreement was raised by the consultant, specifically, the potential conflict of the articles with 16 V.S.A. § 572 (statutory authority of school boards) and the power of a consolidated board to change the agreement.

Ultimately, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706c, the Cabot School Board declined to support the proposed merger and detailed its reasoning in a unanimous resolution. Cabot voters decisively rejected the proposed merger by a vote of 357 to 163, as did Danville voters 239 to 112. Voters in Marshfield and Plainfield supported the merger proposal 160 to 103.

Further Study of Options & Deliberative Process

The debate over the proposed merger was spirited in Cabot. The opponents of the proposed merger developed a slogan of “not this merger.” With that in mind, the Board did not approach the post-vote process with the assumption that the electorate would oppose *all* merger proposals or reject proposed structural changes to the school. At the first post-vote meeting, held on June 26, 2017, it was proclaimed that “all options are on the table.” In the intervening period the Board effort has been supported by a Working Group, and together held 19 warned meetings prior to deciding to prepare this proposal.

Date	Action/Activity
June 20	Cabot-Danville-Twinfield Merger Vote Proposed merger fails in Cabot and Danville.
June 26	<u>School Board Meeting</u> : preliminary timeline for study and consideration of next steps developed.
July 10	Joint Meeting with Twinfield Union Discussion of the aftermath of the vote, and paths forward. Cabot notes consideration of options with OSSU districts, Caledonia Cooperative, or preparation of AGS. Twinfield notes outreach to WCSU and Northfield-Williamstown. Boards agree to prepare for follow on meeting (later cancelled, never held).
	<u>School Board Meeting</u> : review and approval of questions for the first community survey
July 17	<u>School Board Meeting</u> : discussion of non-negotiables under any new merger proposal with Twinfield Union. Board plans to re-engage Danville and follow up with OSSU. Plans for community forum are developed.
July 10-25	Community Survey I A comprehensive survey was conducted, and designed to understand the reasoning behind voters’ merger vote preference, and topics of key importance for future options.
July 31	<u>School Board Meeting</u> : the Board received updates on OSSU and Danville, received an initial presentation on the Advantage Cabot concept of a private organization facilitating boarding of tuition students to Cabot, and supporting enrichment programming. Board reviewed and discussed survey results.
	<i>(continued)</i>

Date	Action/Activity
August 7	<p>School Board Meeting: Board approves formal outreach to Craftsbury, OSSU, Hazen Union, Danville, U-32/WCSU, Montpelier, and Caledonia Cooperative to express Cabot’s interest in working together/collaborating and the possibility of meeting pre-requisites for a merger or AGS. Board decides to hold off on meeting with Twinfield Union Board.</p>
August 9	<p>Community Forum I Results of survey were discussed, and a facilitator identified key findings and considerations of community members in attendance. The Board presented the process and status of different options being explored. In attendance were Rep. David Sharpe, Chairman of the House Education Committee, Rep. Kitty Toll, and Peter Peltz, Member, State Board of Education.</p>
August 14	<p>School Board Meeting: Board discussed and reviewed the community forum. Board formally approved creation of working group and appointed initial members. Board members reported back on meeting with Caledonia Cooperative. Board discussed AOE feedback on Advantage Cabot concept. <i>(continued)</i></p> <hr/> <p>School Board Meeting: initial cost estimates for restructuring to PK-8 were discussed, and progress in informal discussions with Caledonia Cooperative District. Cabot invited to WCSU meeting. Advantage Cabot proposal discussed, to include dropping focus on other small schools.</p>
August 29	<p>Working Group Meeting: results of conversations with administrators and community members relayed to group, emphasizing needs in current program. AGS requirements were reviewed to assist in developing additional research.</p>
September 5	<p>Working Group Meeting: group received reports of outreach to subsets of Cabot community, e.g. home schoolers, families with children in private schools, and individuals supporting H.S. choice. Value of “marketing” the school was discussed.</p>
September 12	<p>Working Group Meeting: division and discussion of projects focused on non-traditional learning opportunities, career/college readiness, and community statistics.</p>
September 14	<p>School Board Meeting: Board updated on Caledonia Cooperative exploration of Cabot joining as fourth town. Report on working group progress, and discussion of AGS requirements under AOE guidance.</p>
September 26	<p>Working Group Meeting: discussion on marketing and challenge of drawing tuition students to Cabot, review of AP course offerings past and present, and overview of outstanding research projects. <i>(continued)</i></p>

Date	Action/Activity
September 28	<p>Joint Meeting with Danville Discussion on areas to collaborate based upon findings of complementary programming and a consistent educational vision. Cabot notes benefits of Danville and Cabot residing in the same SU.</p>
October 2	<p>School Board Meeting: Board discussed final updates to status of options and approved slides for community forum presentation.</p>
October 3	<p>Working Group Meeting: progress reported on all projects, and additional discussion on Montpelier’s international student recruitment program, and the Cabot Village Revitalization study. Information compiled and prepared for Board to rely upon, if AGS is pursued.</p>
October 5	<p>Community Forum II Presentation of the post-merger vote deliberative and study process. Presentation focused on benefits and detriments of the two remaining viable paths, Option 1 – restructure to PK-8 and seek merger with Caledonia Cooperative, and Option 2 – remain PK-12 and prepare AGS. Presentation included estimates of cost and tax rates consistent with available information. School Board Meeting: Board approved final community survey and planned for follow up.</p>
October 7-16	<p>Community Survey II This survey focused on the remaining viable choices, Option 1 – restructure to PK-8 and seek merger with Caledonia Cooperative (129 - 45% of respondents), Option 2 – remain PK-12 and prepare AGS (155 – 55% of respondents).</p>
October 16	<p>School Board Votes (5-0) to Prepare AGS Application Board members reviewed all survey result comments, and discussed benefits and detriments of plans presented. Board received report of Danville pursuing options with other partners. Board also aware of flawed projections with Caledonia Cooperative tax savings, and potential impact of Cabot joining.</p>
To the Present	<p>Innovative, Independent, and Accountable A decision having been reached, the School Board and Working Group continued the effort to prepare this plan. Long meetings, longer nights of writing and research, and continual engagement with the community have led to this final product – demonstrating our ability and plan to exceed the goals of Act 46.</p>

Community Engagement

July 2017 Survey of Cabot Residents

As a Board we felt it was critical to understand the results of the June 20th vote. Voter turnout reflected the high degree of interest and quality of debate in the community,

however, we suspected that there were diverse motivations for voters, more complicated than the “yes or no” vote would suggest. We designed and posted a community survey, electronically and by hard copy, to gain an understanding of community attitudes on the merger vote and the path forward.

Unfortunately, the 194 survey responses did not reveal a clear mandate on how to proceed. We were able to confirm some general trends and attitudes, and recognized a wide range of options that appealed to voters (e.g., school choice, a new merger, or remaining an independent PK-12 district). Some of the findings that helped shape our post-merger vote approach included:

- Among “yes” voters, 60% of respondents ranked the tax benefits outlined in the final 706b report as the greatest influence on their vote;
- Among “no” voters, the most influential factor (based upon weighting of the rank ordered responses) was concern over limited representation on a consolidated board, which appeared to overlap with concerns over the viability and survival of a strong PK-8 program under a merger scenario. “No” voters also indicated roughly equal interest in keeping the high school or pursuing school choice.
- More than 80% of total respondents viewed maintaining a strong PK-8 program at Cabot School as an essential goal.
- More than 70% of respondents agreed that “project-based learning opportunities should be continued for all students, regardless of whether Cabot operates a high school.”
- 50% of respondents agreed with the statement “I believe maintaining a Pre-K through 8th grade program at Cabot School is more important than maintaining a full PK-12 school.”
- More than 40% of respondents agreed that they would be willing to be pay more in property taxes for school choice at the high school level, while 45% were willing to pay more in property taxes for retaining a full high school program at Cabot.
- Respondents were asked to rank regional schools in order of educational quality. The weighted results, indexed against the top response, were: 1. St. Johnsbury Academy (1.0); 2. U32 (0.88); 3. Montpelier (0.86); 4. Lyndon Institute (0.77); 5. Danville (0.77); 6. Craftsbury (0.67); 7. Spaulding H.S. (0.47); 8. Twinfield Union (0.47); 9. Blue Mountain (0.45); and 10. Hazen Union (0.43).

Of the conclusions we were able to reach, the survey results reflected the Board’s own concerns from reduced membership on a board, the disparity in voting power on a consolidated board, and the threat of restructuring of grades beyond the high school. If nothing else, the survey gave us confidence that putting “all options back of the table” was necessary and that we would need to exercise due diligence in reviewing new merger

scenarios, voluntary restructuring and merger, or other collaborative options to meet the goals of Act 46. The complete survey results are included as an appendix to this proposal.

Community Forums & October 2017 Survey

In mid-August the Board held a community forum to discuss the survey results and to further solicit input on paths forward. The forum was well attended by community members, and we were fortunate to host Rep. David Sharpe, Chairman of the House Education Committee, Rep. Kitty Toll, our representative, and Peter Peltz, a member of the State Board of Education. We provided the community with an outline of our approach, including outreach to our neighboring districts, the progress on conversations with other districts, and our plan for reaching a decision (including the very tight deadlines, if a new 706b committee were to be formed). This meeting was also the first occasion where the concept of “Advantage Cabot” was discussed by community members – indicating to the Board that there was interest in this possibility and a group willing to organize the effort.

As we progressed closer to a decision point, the most viable options were narrowed to merger with the Caledonia Cooperative District or submission of an AGS proposal to retain our current structure. Our forum on October 5th provided a final opportunity for the public to provide feedback and assess the merits of these proposals. We were able to provide some basic financial modeling to add context to the choices, and we then initiated a second survey to gauge community support.

Ultimately, we received 284 responses out of approximately 600 surveys sent to households in Cabot, with 129 respondents supporting “Option 1” (Caledonia Cooperative and H.S. Choice) versus 155 for “Option 2” (maintain Cabot as an independent PK-12 district). On October 16th, by a 5-0 vote, we decided to prepare this proposal.

Comparison of Options Considered [Rule 3450.2]

	Preferred Structure	Extent of Study	Comments
Cabot-Danville-Twinfield	Yes	706b committee formed, put to vote	Would have resulted in a 3 x 3, with Caledonia Cooperative. Put to a vote and failed in Cabot and Danville.
Caledonia Cooperative-Cabot	Yes	Informal conversations; some economic study	Would have resulted in a 4 district RED, likely to have resulted in a 4 x 1 structure with Peacham.
Cabot-Craftsbury	No	Informal conversations	OSSU indicated inability/unwillingness to include Cabot in AGS plans; direct discussions with Craftsbury not initiated.
Cabot-Danville	No	Two joint board meetings	Cabot and Danville focused discussion on Cabot being a part of Caledonia Central

			Supervisory Union, with close cooperation and collaboration between the schools. Conceptually, could have merged to form a 3 x 2 x 1 structure with Caledonia Cooperative and Peacham. Danville preferred working with Blue Mountain Union.
Cabot-OSSU	No	Informal conversations	Cabot reached out to the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union to explore participation in their districts’ development of a joint AGS application. OSSU declined to include Cabot.
Caledonia Cooperative + Cabot-Danville + Peacham	Yes	Conceptual, no formal study	3 + 2 + 1; Board contemplated merger entailing Caledonia Cooperative (3) + Danville and Cabot (2) + Peacham (1).
Caledonia Cooperative + Cabot (PK-12)	Yes*	Conceptual, no formal study	Board considered possibility of forming a preferred structure with Caledonia Cooperative. *Idea did not progress because it would have left Danville and/or Twinfield isolated while Cabot maintained PK-12 structure, absent merger by other districts.
Cabot-Twinfield	No	One joint board meeting	Following the failed 706b vote, Cabot and Twinfield met once to discuss potential options. Merger was not supported, and further talks on collaboration did not take place.
Cabot-WCSU/U32	No	Informal conversations	Cabot proposed to WCSU collaboration between elementary schools, U32, and Cabot. Consideration of Cabot joining WCSU as standalone PK-12 district, or PK-8 with U32 designated as HS.
Cabot-Montpelier	No	Informal conversations	Cabot proposed collaboration between schools. No formal response or talks in response to Cabot’s letter.

Further discussion of our conversations with other districts and options considered is set forth in Part II, describing Cabot’s Role in the Community & Region. Cabot’s formal correspondence with other districts and meeting minutes are provided as appendices to this proposal. The 706b merger proposal is not appended to this proposal, however, it provides more detailed information on that process.

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Part I: *Self-Assessment & Community Profile*

Summary of Cabot School

Cabot School is a small, rural PK-12 school, located at the edge of Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom. Our school community currently consists of 188 students, taught by a strongly committed faculty with an impressive range of experiences and educational backgrounds.

“We use our size to our advantage, placing strong value on family and community relationships, connections to deeper learning opportunities, and academic studies that are grounded in real-world relevance.”

Cabot’s learners start their experience in our preschool program, which has earned Vermont’s Child Development Division’s highest rating of 5 stars. Our preschool places a strong emphasis on inquiry, play and nature-based learning, and it’s not uncommon to find our students outside in their forest classroom, a space which the students had a major role in crafting, and maintain with great respect and reverence for their natural environment. Preschool classes meet for two half-day sessions, with three-year olds attending in the morning and four-year olds in the afternoon. Recently, a strong community volunteer effort led to the creation of a new, natural “playscape” for our youngest students. Over 15 community members came out on a cold, rainy day, and when they finished, our youngest learners were greeted with a sandbox big enough for all, a mound-slide outfitted with a 10' tunnel, and a straw bale structure to climb.

Our elementary school has moved toward an engaging project-based learning model in grades 3-6, combined with a renewed focus on phonemic awareness and reading fluency in the primary grades. Over the last two years, students have designed ski resorts, explored our oceans, studied Native American culture, written and presented their own mysteries and developed marketing materials for National Parks, all in a high stake, public exhibition format.

Along the way, we have seen students make huge leaps in developing research skills, public speaking prowess, teamwork and the habits of heart and mind necessary for a firm educational foundation in today’s world.

Cabot’s elementary and middle school programs “loop” over two years, allowing students to develop strong and lasting relationships with teachers. The two-year experience has

shown tangible social and academic benefits, leading to positive home/school partnerships, teacher accountability for student growth, fewer classroom management problems, and increased academic productivity. Looping also promotes differentiation, a practice that creates learning opportunities that are tailored to the individual abilities of each student. The Middle School curriculum is built around best practices in middle level education. Hands-on projects promote learning as a rich process that emphasizes students becoming experts on a particular topic. The skills required to successfully complete a project span multiple disciplines: math, language arts, literature, social studies, music, etc. Students may engage in a “learning expedition” for many weeks, building connections in each subject area. A learning expedition culminates with an “exhibition” in which students demonstrate their learning, showcasing their work and achievement to an authentic audience.

Promoting youth leadership, team building, and environmental stewardship, Cabot’s program with Siskin Ecological Adventures fosters invaluable growth opportunities for young people. 7th and 8th graders participate in a series of adventure-based workshops that promote individual responsibility, build confidence, teach local environmental ecology, and provide students with technical outdoor skills. Students participate in outdoor orienteering activities and service learning projects, and investigate the health and sustainability of local ecosystems. The canoeing portion of our program helps young people learn to manage risks in a safe, exciting, and supportive environment. The Cabot/Siskin leadership curriculum culminates with a two-day paddle and overnight camping trip in the spring.

Our high school students are scholars, athletes, and leaders. They **mentor, support, and inspire** our youngest learners, and add immense value to our elementary program and sense of community.



At the high school level, our focus is creating competent and responsible citizens via rigorous learning opportunities that require student commitment to deep learning. While our transcripts show most students taking the same courses, teachers guide individual student paths within each course topic. Again, a focus on public, high-stakes exhibition and interdisciplinary learning is front and center, with a recent example being an entirely student-produced TEDx event on the world’s water issues (an event highlighted by the Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education). AP science and math options are offered annually.

Physical resources core to Cabot’s educational experience include the CSPAC (Cabot School Performing Arts Center) building, and a robust technology infrastructure, allowing 1:1 computers for grades 3-12. High School students have access to their computers 24/7, which reduces equity barriers and allows for collaborative work via the Google suite of educational apps. The CSPAC building is a community-rooted resource, providing a flexible black-box theater and performance space. While the building is home to Cabot’s music program, it has seen a variety of uses, allowing our students to present their work to authentic audiences, sometimes in the company of regionally-recognized performing artists. The building was completed in 2008, and is the product of an incredible amount of community volunteer labor and support.

Creating Real World Opportunities: An Essential Element of PBL

L: Students work with Vermont biologists to create an ecologically sound river access point on the Winooski.



R: A place based radio documentary series produced for WGDR captures our community’s memories and stories of the Beatles.



L: Humanities students craft a time-traveling news program that compares the French Revolution with the Chinese Cultural Revolution.



R: Middle school students launch an interactive museum on immigration during the early 20th century.



Creativity, critical thinking, & the confidence to succeed.

ADM by Grade [Rule 3450.5(2)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
PK (3)	-	13.00	-	-	-	-
PK (4)	-	12.00	12.00	9.00	10.90	11.55
K	-	12.00	10.00	11.00	11.00	15.00
1	-	9.10	12.00	12.00	11.72	15.15
2	-	12.10	12.00	11.00	16.10	13.00
3	-	13.00	10.00	12.19	16.04	14.65
4	-	8.00	9.10	19.00	12.72	7.14
5	-	12.12	18.00	12.01	8.23	10.00
6	-	16.00	12.19	10.32	8.00	14.00
7	-	13.00	7.37	10.00	10.00	11.00
8	-	8.44	9.08	13.05	10.00	16.62
9	-	9.00	13.00	12.00	17.00	13.59
10	-	12.95	9.00	15.20	15.56	14.55
11	-	9.00	15.00	16.00	15.00	11.36
12	-	11.00	14.00	11.00	12.00	8.05
Total	TBD (AOE)	170.71	162.74	173.77	174.27	175.66

Source: Town of Cabot Report, 2017

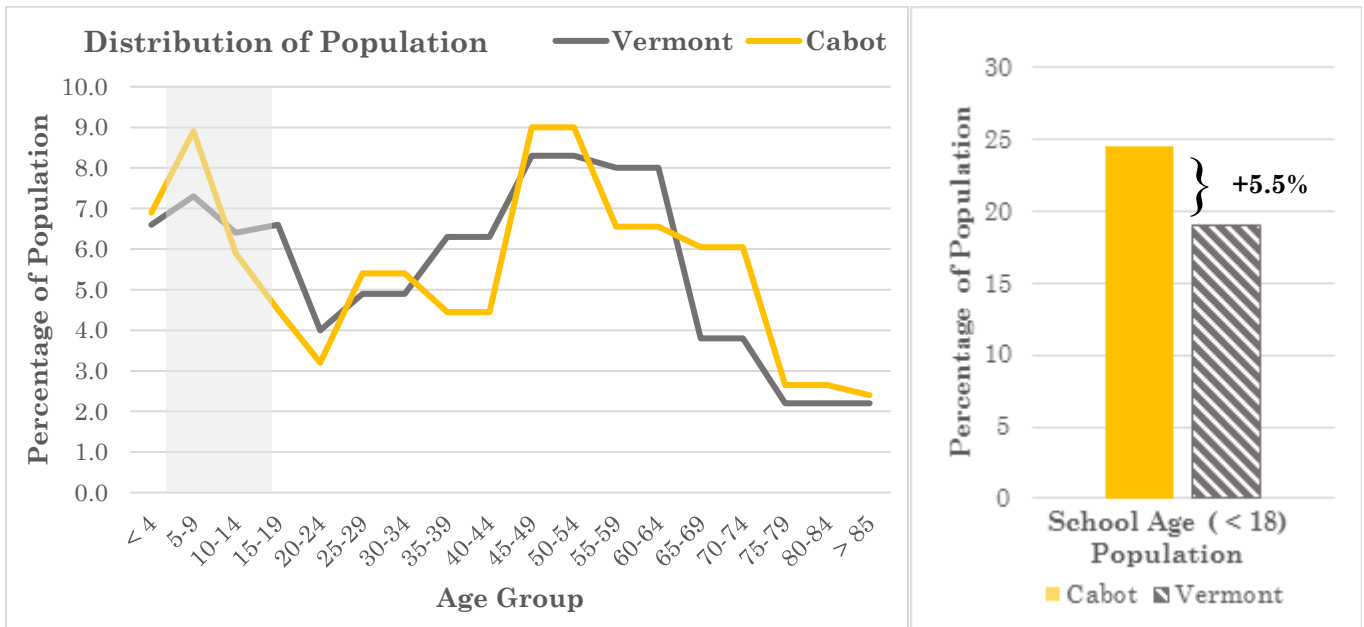
Enrollment by Grade [Rule 3450.5(3)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
PK (3)	11	13	-	-	-	-
PK (4)	13	12	12	9	11	12
K	12	12	10	11	11	14
1	12	9	12	12	12	14
2	10	12	13	11	16	13
3	13	14	10	12	16	14
4	14	8	9	19	13	8
5	8	12	18	12	9	10
6	14	16	13	10	8	16
7	16	14	9	10	13	11
8	15	9	9	16	10	17
9	12	9	16	13	15	17
10	9	15	13	13	16	14
11	15	14	15	17	16	15
12	14	14	13	13	16	11
Total	188	191	180	180	182	185

Source: Cabot Town Report, 2017

Cabot School is fortunate to have generally stable enrollment in its lower grades. The healthy pre-kindergarten and kindergarten enrollment figures are encouraging, and seem to corroborate the 2016 Census estimate showing that Cabot has an above average

proportion of its population at the school age. Overall, Cabot School’s enrollment represents some variability, but supports a forecast of stable enrollment in the near term rather than continued enrollment declines. Several classes, namely the current 9th and 10th grades, have historically been small – with smaller classes in the high school reducing the number of students subject to the multiplier utilized to calculate equalized pupil rates. In conjunction with the plan detailed in this proposal, we have confidence that Cabot’s enrollment numbers will grow, rather than decline, in the future.



Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, 2015 American Communities Survey, 2016 Census estimate

Based upon the 2016 Census estimate, Cabot has a slightly above average distribution of school aged children proportionate to our total population when compared to the entire state. However, like many neighboring communities there are school aged children that do not attend the Cabot School; a vibrant home school population exists in Cabot and our more rural neighboring towns. Other Cabot families send their children to the Christ Church School in Marshfield or the Orchard Valley Waldorf School in East Montpelier.

Act 46 played a role in a significant number of rising 9th grade students electing to pursue regional school choice placement by triggering uncertainty about the future of Cabot’s high school program (i.e., some students feared having to switch high schools prior to graduating). Some students elected regional school choice irrespective of the uncertainty. At one point, it appeared that the 9th grade class would be fewer than five students, however, new entrants to Cabot School returned the class to a more typical size (an influx of formerly home-schooled students and several tuition students).

The Act 46 Working Group’s exploration of why Cabot School attracted these students indicated that our emphasis on non-traditional opportunities and project based learning were major influences. Likewise, the small size of Cabot was appealing to students and families without experience in the public-school system.

Equalized & “Phantom Pupils” [Rule 3450.5(4)-(5)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13	FY10
Equalized Pupils	174.91	177.45	179.88	179.23	199.54	209.01	200.53
“Phantom” Pupils	0.00	3.80	7.94	15.40	2.15	0.00	0.00
Hold Harmless	174.91	181.25	187.82	194.63	201.69	209.01	200.53

Source: Town of Cabot Report, 2017

Cabot’s equalized pupil numbers have not varied drastically the past three years, absent the application of the hold harmless calculations. Coupled with stable or slightly increasing elementary enrollment, we believe that equalized pupil numbers will remain flat or grow slowly over the next 3-5 years. We do not currently have any “phantom pupils.”

Cabot Demographics and Rural Poverty

Students Eligible for Free or Reduced-Price Lunch [Rule 3450.5(6)]

Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
55%	57%	49%	52%	49%	52%

In comparison, for FY 17 Twinfield Union’s free and reduced price lunch rate was 51%, Danville’s was 38%, U32’s was 29%, Walden’s was 45%, and Hazen Union’s was 62%.

Property Values, Family Income & Income Sensitivity [Rule 3450.5(13)]

Few aspects of our self-assessment were more striking than the findings concerning Cabot’s poverty rate and its disproportionate concentration among families with school-aged children. An above average free and reduced lunch rate was widely known, but review of a broader set of statistics allowed for a better appreciation of just how many families are struggling in Cabot.

Cabot's median household income is lower than averages for Washington and Caledonia counties, and lower than Vermont as a whole:

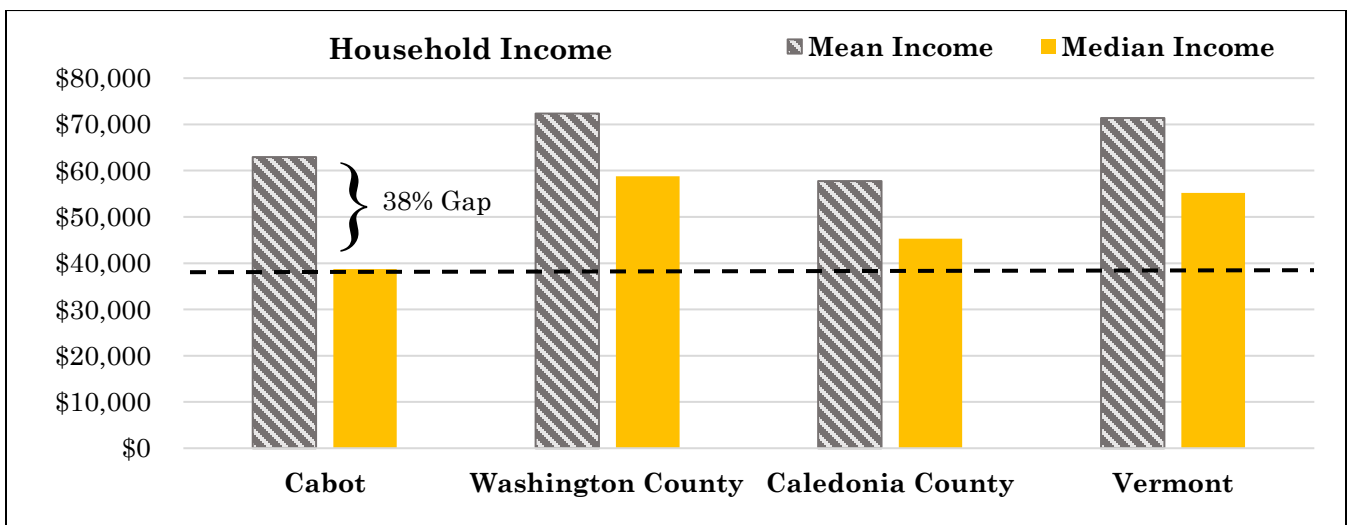
- 27% of children in Cabot are living below the poverty level, compared to 15% in Vermont, 18% in Caledonia County, and 12% in Washington County.

- The percentage of Cabot students eligible for free and reduced lunch is higher than Danville and U32 schools, comparable to Twinfield Union, but less than Hazen Union.
- A majority of Cabot households qualify for property tax reduction based on income:

	Cabot Homesteads			Washington County	Caledonia County	Vermont
	Total	Adj.	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage	Percentage
2016	441	320	72.6	43.7	49.3	46.5
2015	432	307	71.1	42.0	46.8	43.5
2014	447	318	71.1	42.2	47.6	43.6

Cabot’s percentage of homestead taxpayers subject to income sensitivity is significantly above the state and regional averages. Nearly three-quarters of homesteads receive tax relief under the existing law and formula. This is consistent with the data on household income, and poverty rate:

	Household Income			Poverty Rate		
	Mean	Median	Diff.	Total	Under 18	Diff.
Cabot	\$62,918	\$38,696	\$24,222	17%	27%	+10%
Washington County	\$72,347	\$58,788	\$13,559	10%	12%	+2%
Caledonia County	\$57,732	\$45,323	\$12,409	13%	18%	+5%
Vermont	\$71,392	\$55,176	\$16,216	12%	15%	+3%



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Communities Survey 2011-15

The significant gap between mean and median income in Cabot represents a greater spread of income inequality within our community versus our region and the state. The drastically higher childhood poverty rate in our community is concerning, and supports

the conclusion that Cabot’s families are struggling at a rate higher than our community overall. Concern for the welfare and opportunities available to our most economically disadvantaged students was a significant consideration for the Board when weighing a high school choice option, versus remaining an independent PK-12 district.

We believe our school is a major force in mitigating the worst impacts of poverty, and provides all students a path to success.

means. An opportunity is relatively meaningless absent corresponding availability to a student. Shifting the burden of transportation onto families of high school students would effectively increase the direct financial burden on some of the poorest members of our community – we believe this would add undue stress, decrease the likelihood of graduation, and reduce the ability of Cabot students to meaningfully participate in extracurricular activities.

We are mindful that many communities have developed successful systems that make high school choice work for their students, however, we also believe that in Cabot’s case students would be widely dispersed among schools in the region, limiting the ability of the cost-effective transportation solutions and placing the burden exclusively on parents or students themselves. Likewise, the transition from a community with a high school to one without is assessed to present many challenges, especially for current students.

	Median House Value	Median Rent
Cabot	\$164,800	\$838
Washington County	\$211,200	\$862
Caledonia County	\$162,400	\$739
Vermont	\$217,500	\$895

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Transportation is a major consideration set forth throughout several rules, notably Rule 3450.8(4). In our assessment, the prospective increase in opportunities for students at a larger school, especially extracurricular or enrichment experiences, could be less available for students from families with extremely limited financial

Cabot home values are comparable to those in Caledonia County, while the rental market is more expensive – on par with Washington County. The Board has insufficient data to extrapolate or reach conclusions concerning how many families with students rent or own a home. Housing stock available in Cabot has grown over time, with most growth occurring in owner occupied units. Cabot’s seasonal

stock of housing is well distributed through the town, with the most significant concentration near Joe’s Pond. Compared to the rest of Vermont, Cabot has an approximately 5% higher mix of seasonal units, and above average home ownership.

	Cabot Housing Stock				Vermont Total	
	1990	2000	2010	Percent	2010	Percent
Owner Occupied	305	381	492	63.8%	181,407	56.2%
Renter Occupied	58	71	78	10.1%	75,035	23.3%
Seasonal	84	158	158	20.5%	50,198	15.6%
Vacant	49	24	43	5.6%	15,899	4.9%
Total Units	496	634	771	-	322,539	-

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Contemporaneous to our community’s debate over how to best comply with Act 46, a Cabot Village Revitalization Plan was initiated. A \$20,000 Municipal Planning Grant from the Vermont Department of Housing and Community Development is being used to support the study and plan development, which is expected to be finalized in May 2018. This study represents the commitment of the Town of Cabot to expand economic opportunity, attract and retain workers and their families, and build upon the strong civic institutions and culture of Cabot. Part of Cabot’s allure to economic development is the livability of the community – with the school playing a prominent role.

We were unable to identify a comprehensive study of Vermont communities and the impact of high school choice on home values. Anecdotal evidence of the consequences of transitioning to high school choice were cited by many during community forums, with Concord being cited as a recent example (i.e. choice increasing demand for housing stock). In contrast, several community members brought to our attention studies from other states indicating the loss of a school (to be distinguished from the restructuring of grades served) as hastening long term rural decline and leading to declining real estate values.

As a Board, we cannot forecast the impact on home values under any modified structure for Cabot School. However, we are concerned that any impact on home values would need to be considered in light of geography. For example, St. Johnsbury is now surrounded, except for Danville, by towns that offer high school choice (including several with median home values lower than Cabot), and Cabot is approximately 30 minutes away from U32 and 35-40 minutes away from Montpelier High School (with both schools serving multiple towns with a wide gradient of housing prices and options). A review of Agency of Education statistics reveals that many high school choice towns appear to have low fiscal capacity – which otherwise would not be the case if choice positively impacted housing prices in all circumstances.

Ultimately, we believe that access to and availability of quality education is more influential upon family home buying decisions than whether a town operates a high school, is part of a unified union high school district, or tuitions students.

Special Education Services

Students Receiving or Eligible for Special Education Services [Rule 3450.5(7)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13	FY10
Cabot Students	27	33	32	29	30	31	29
% of Students	14.3%	18.8%	18.6%	16.3%	16.5%	16.7%	15.7%

The past few years have seen a significant increase in intensity of needs among our student population, while the overall number of students eligible for special education services has declined slightly. We have witnessed an alarming increase in our student population presenting with histories of major trauma or other extraordinary behavioral health stressors. In our current academic year these challenges have taxed our administration and staff resources, leading to our Superintendent preparing a report detailing the extent to which trauma is impacting instruction, school culture, and budget. The following is adapted from his report, provided as an appendix to this proposal:

- Some of the increase in the number of trauma-affected students are the result of an influx of State-Placed students in Cabot foster homes or conditional family placements that are not managed and monitored by the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Others are the result of emergent trauma responses by local students with early childhood trauma histories.
- The placement decisions for students made by DCF are made without consultation with the school. As a result, these placements have not considered the capacity of the school to manage the students, either in terms of costs or the provision of necessary services and supports.
- Cabot appears to have more than its fair share of trauma-impacted foster children. In FY 17, Cabot School ranked 4th state-wide in raw numbers of State-Placed students, with 7.23 students. As a percentage of ADM, Cabot ranked 2nd state-wide, at 4.5%.
- Notwithstanding the availability of State-Placed reimbursement (100%) and Special Education reimbursement under the current formula (54%-90%), Cabot School is still responsible for some unreimbursed expenses to address the needs of these students. Coincidentally, the arrival or emergence of these students and their needs did not align with our budgeting cycle, so we realized some of these unreimbursed costs as deficits in the school budget. In FY 17 the deficit approached \$90,000. The projected unbudgeted costs for FY 18 are \$60,000 as of late November 2017. These shortfalls are absorbed through programming reductions elsewhere in the master budget, which is difficult to accomplish with an already small operating budget.

Cabot school currently has 3.0 FTE Special Education teachers for a child count of ~30 students who attend Cabot (not including out-of-school placed students, who are case managed by the SU office). There are 5.0 FTE special education paraprofessional staff, with three assigned duties in K-6, and one each in middle school and high school. The majority of special education services are delivered in the classroom. We pride ourselves on an inclusive philosophy. We do not utilize paraprofessional staff for primary, direct instruction to special education students, rather they provide secondary support for instruction by working with higher-skilled small groups while teachers and special educators focus on the neediest students in the elementary school. This service delivery model has been in place for several years, and is reflective of recent recommendations for improving instruction that resulted from the recent District Management Group study.

The majority of students identified for special education fall into common disability categories such as Learning Disabled (LD) or Speech/Language Impaired (SLI), with a small subset of students with developmental disabilities (Autism, Learning Impairment). This grouping of students is amenable to the routine service delivery model of core instruction with specialized instruction, because these students are *available for instruction*. Availability for instruction simply means that the student, despite any learning challenge, is generally cooperative and willing to follow teacher direction as they work on improving their learning skills.

What has changed for us at Cabot School, especially in the past two years, is the overwhelming number of students who are *not available for instruction*, due to the effects of significant childhood trauma. The causes are well understood - most often exposure to adult drug or alcohol use and the resulting neglect, and/or physical/emotional/sexual abuse. Because the emotional ability of these students is so unpredictable, we have to meet their needs in one of two ways: either the provision of in-school behavioral intervention (1: 1 adult support) or placement in a therapeutic day treatment school that is equipped to provide a unique educational and therapeutic environment. The trend over the past two years has been to manage these students in-school until they reach high school age, at which point in-school support becomes less effective because of the age of the child and the demands of a more structured middle and high school.

Meeting the needs of trauma students is challenging because it takes a special skill set. It is not simply a matter of putting an adult next to them - these students need positive behavioral supports - a set of protocols and practices designed by trained behavioral analysts to meet the unique emotional profile of the child. These protocols, when implemented by a trained Behavioral Interventionist, can slowly but progressively teach the missing skill set that most students develop naturally over time - resiliency in the face of obstacles and disappointments that every child faces in their daily life.

As a Board, we recognize the immense challenge we face as a small district. As discussed in greater detail under trends in special education costs, there are exceptional impacts being felt in the current fiscal year and our overall budget picture. Because of the acute needs and clinical recommendations for 1-on-1 support we do not believe these are costs

that are readily or fully mitigated by school structure or district size – rather, these students require compassion, intervention, and support no matter where they learn.

Students Receiving or Eligible for Section 504 Accommodations [Rule 3450.5(8)]

Cabot School currently has 9 students (4.7%) eligible for Section 504 accommodations. This count includes students with medical disabilities (e.g., diabetes) as well as students with other mental health disorders (e.g., anxiety) who do not otherwise qualify for Special Education Services. This rate has held steady the past 5 years.

Regional High School Choice [Rule 3450.5(10)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
9-12 Students Enrolled in Other Districts	5	4	4	5	5	3

Districts with Cabot Students Enrolled: Montpelier, Twinfield, Spaulding, Danville

Percentage of Student Population: 2.6% of total student population

Demographics of Enrolled Students (F/RL, Sp.Ed., etc.): N/A

We assess that the possibility of Cabot’s high school program being terminated through the Act 46 process had an influence on the increase in requests for regional high school choice this year. The 9th grade class was particularly impacted – a common refrain heard was students and parents fearing a transition of high schools in the 10th or 11th grade, leading to disruption of social and peer group, academic pursuits, and sports.

Equity & Variety of Educational Opportunities, and State Education Quality Standards [Rule 3450.8]

Providing students with a full range of academic opportunities is always a challenge for small schools, and Cabot is about as small as high schools come. Our answer to this challenge is personalization through meaningful relationships, differentiated learning, and a project-based structure that places high value on real-world experiences and exhibition of learning.


Our focus is creating competent and responsible citizens via rigorous learning opportunities that require student commitment to deep learning and real-world implementation. While our number of available course titles appears limited, teachers guide individual student paths within each course topic. Off-site learning is integral, and classes travel frequently to study curriculum topics in the working and natural world.

In many courses, students participate in and design a wide array of projects that push them to engage in extensive inquiry and a process of iteration. For some students the challenge is academic. In a humanities project called “Let them Eat Cake,” students compared and contrasted the Cultural Revolution of China with the French Revolution in order to answer key questions about the social context of revolutionary movements. For others the challenge is personal: one student came to the valuable realization that, after researching and presenting about a career in the Marines, he wanted instead to be a field medic for the Navy and then pursue a nursing degree.

11th and 12th grade students have the option of attending the Central Vermont Career Center, with the opportunity of choosing from 14 programs offering technically-based pathways to graduation. Cabot students have participated in culinary arts, cosmetology, emergency services, building trades and automotive technology, among others. Access to the regional technical center is another way Cabot School is able to offer multiple pathways to graduation while maintaining our small community school structure.

June Term begins after Memorial Day with high school students choosing from a selection of expeditions that may include travel, ethnic activities, dance, visual arts, outdoor expeditions and many other activities that students and teachers propose. This is an intensive, elective credit-bearing term that students pursue with seriousness and enthusiasm. June Term further expands students’ comfort and flexibility with the world outside of school and challenges their skills in planning the logistics of a non-traditional school term, of which they act as the primary architects.

Three Advanced Placement classes are offered annually, in math, science, and art. Cabot students may also take advantage of Vermont’s statewide dual enrollment option and take 2 college courses free of charge. Vermont now also offers the opportunity to attend early college where students may concurrently complete their high school diploma and their first year of college at little to no cost.



The necessity for flexibility and responsiveness to students in small classes has led us to develop distinct programs and build high value relationships with innovative partners.

We assess a current ability to meet the goals of Act 46, however, we believe that our ability to exceed the goals would be enhanced by greater direct collaboration or partnerships with neighboring districts. Likewise, we anticipate transition to a larger supervisory union will provide additional resources and benefits of scale that are currently unavailable

through WNESU. The absence of direct partnerships with other districts has been mitigated by productive relationships with other entities such as Siskin Ecological Adventures and the Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education. Cabot School’s size provides immense flexibility to integrate innovative programming into the curriculum and, moreover, ensures that all students have access to these opportunities.

Student Assessments [Rule 3450.8(1)]

The student assessments requested under Rule 3450.8(1) are set forth in Appendix C to this proposal, utilizing the data prepared for the Cabot-Danville-Twinfield merger proposal.

Elementary School Curriculum [Rule 3450.8(2)]



Respect. Responsibility. Kindness. Engagement.

Our PK-8 program is a priority for Cabot residents. The foundation laid in these years lasts a lifetime – socially & educationally.

Currently, elementary classrooms operate as modified multi-age classrooms, with a teacher assigned to each grade level 1-6. Instructional periods and student mixes of each grade-pair varies depending on the subject area and the particular needs and abilities of the students. Paired-classroom configurations are dynamic and situational - teachers plan for certain configurations but flexibly adjust which students are in which classroom as the instructional and behavioral needs ebb and flow from lesson to lesson.

PBL is integrated into the curriculum, beginning with the 3rd grade. Our elementary program incorporates many of the innovative approaches that characterize our middle and high school programs. Cabot's distinct educational culture is consistent throughout the school, and starts with the pre-kindergarten program – our youngest learners spend time in their forest classroom, working their edible playscape outside of their classroom, and are exposed to experiences and trips in the community that build a solid foundation of learning.

	Art	Music	Phys. Ed.	Math	Science	Design/ Tech	Foreign Language
K-6	0:40 x 1	0:40 x 1	0:40 x 2	1:00 x 5	2:00 x 3	Grade 5-6: 0:45 x 1	Grades 5-6: 0:45 x 2
7-8	0:45 x 2	Band: 0:40 x 3 Lessons: 0:30 x 1 Jazz Band: 0:45 x 3	0:40 x 2	1:00 x 5	2:00 x 3	0:45 x 1	Grade 7: 0:45 x 4 Grade 8: 0:45 x 5

Foreign language (Spanish) is offered to students beginning in 5th grade. Elements of design technology are also integrated into the curriculum, beginning in 5th grade. Cabot’s elementary program incorporates age and grade level appropriate language arts, mathematics, and science programming into a model that incorporates PBL components, and experiences outside of the classroom.



Our rural setting enhances opportunities for our elementary students to learn in the field... or stream.

Middle School Curriculum & Opportunities

Cabot’s 7th and 8th grade program is innovative and represents the totality of Cabot’s educational vision in action. The program’s goal is to design and implement learning experiences in which students investigate, research, build, and present work that intersects with the real world. Immersion in projects that are personally engaging helps cultivate the skills and habits students need to do well in high school and beyond. From the first day of school, students begin establishing a strong sense of community through team-building and problem solving. They generate shared “norms” to help define classroom culture.

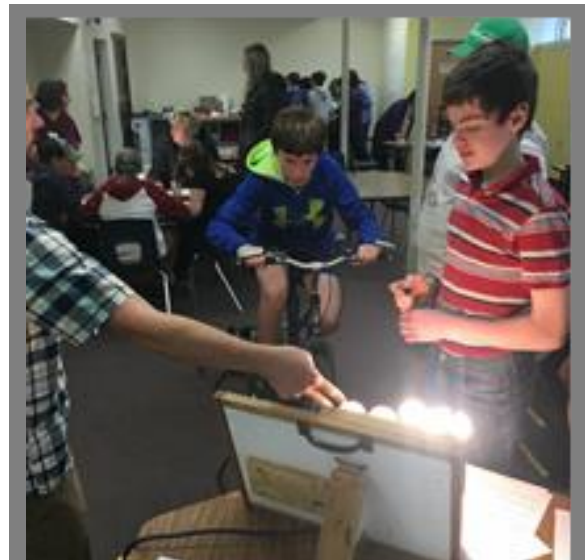
Student learning expeditions (projects) are anchored by science and social studies and integrate the arts, literacy, and mathematics as much as possible. Each project focuses on core state standards for content, skills, and work habits.

The curriculum is based on inter-disciplinary learning expeditions, built around a central theme.

Over the course of a learning expedition, students research, write papers, take quizzes, and complete various activities to ensure they are making progress. To construct and synthesize their learning, students create “artifacts”—tangible products that illustrate their knowledge and skills. Projects culminate with an “exhibition” in which students

showcase their work and achievement to an audience. Interdisciplinary projects include opportunities for fieldwork and service beyond the school walls. The goal is to cultivate opportunities that are engaging while helping students develop content knowledge and practical skills.

A central pillar of the student schedule is the daily “project block” of integrated science/social studies. Students also have a math lab, readers/writers workshop (literacy), Spanish, and alternating electives in gym, art, and music. Students are encouraged to participate in Cabot’s exceptional music and performing arts program. Students who do not enroll in the music block design and implement personal “choice projects” that they will present during the year. In the current fiscal year, a Design Tech block has been added (meeting once a week, on Fridays) that orients students to tool skills and shop safety. Projects support core learning expeditions where possible. Students will also have a weekly Science Lab, exploring core project concepts and preparing lab reports that display their findings. Further, 7th grade students participate in a weekly Financial Literacy, as well as a Grammar Lab twice a week. 8th graders participate in a Leadership course that integrates skills and concepts related to the Siskin outdoor leadership program, as well as a survey of U.S. government and civics.



Learning with the Vermont Energy Education Program.

Exploring our nation’s capital serves as a capstone for the 8th grade social studies + leadership curriculum. Washington, D.C. offers an unparalleled opportunity to view monuments and memorials that chronicle our nation’s past, helping students foster an appreciation and understanding of our national heritage. Students are enveloped by city culture, broadening their world-view and opening new horizons. For many of our students, the 8th grade trip to Washington, D.C. presents a once in a lifetime opportunity to explore

life beyond Vermont. The trip helps students develop independence, confidence, and a sense of citizenship.

The trip presents an invaluable field-based learning experience that enriches students' exploration of core themes, people, and events that helped shape our nation. Academically, the D.C. Trip introduces students to the structures and systems that serve as the foundation of our government. It also helps bring our study of the Constitution and the powers of American democracy to life. After working to raise thousands of dollars, students also play an important role in organizing the D.C. experience. They help craft an itinerary, oversee risk management and first aid, organize food and refreshments, and ensure that all pre-trip arrangements are completed.

In summation, Cabot's middle school program exemplifies the potential of a mature PBL curriculum. These students are continually presented with situations where they must analyze, assess, and act to solve problems. The curriculum brings alive core competencies through practical learning and unique opportunities in the community and beyond. Cabot's middle school program excels at building a foundation for greater independence and more in-depth inquiry within the high school program – the dynamism of these years provides the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and maturity that allows students to make informed decisions about their paths to graduation.

High School Curriculum & Opportunities [Rule 3450.8(3)]

For Cabot's High School students, each year begins and ends with intensive community-based experiences. Within the first weeks of school, 2-3 days are held at an off-site retreat, working in advisory groups to build teams and community, draft and revisit student-created policies, and visualize and map a successful school year. The retreat provides a strong, intentional transition from summer to school, and allows for relationships to be forged that carry through the year.

Correspondingly, June Term provides a culmination for the school year, the final two weeks of the academic year. It provides intensive, experiential programming that enables students to acquire proficiency based on Vermont's Transferable Skills for Graduation. Past June Term courses have included a Shakespeare intensive, backpacking and kayaking expeditions, the school band planning and executing a regional tour (playing venues including the Berklee College of Music), and recording an original radio drama and performing it at the Vermont State House. The absence of a greater number of elective courses during the regular year, is significantly offset by the creativity and flexibility that accompanies the June Term model.

A strength of the Cabot School approach is to build the maturity, communication skills, and confidence in students that allows for informed choices on opportunities and deep exploration of content areas. Building character and critical thinking through traditional course work and project based learning applications enables students to attain the skills

necessary to succeed in post-secondary education and careers. The Cabot High School Program of Studies is appended to this proposal, and details our current offerings.

Typical Course Progression
9th Grade American Studies or World Issues (alternating years) Earth Science and Physics Geometry Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Physical Education Habits of Work and Financial Literacy
10th Grade American Studies or World Issues (alternating years) Biology Algebra 2 Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Physical Education or Maker science elective Habits of Work and Civics
11th Grade Contemporary Issues and Literature (alternating theme every 2 years) Marine Biology or Chemistry (alternating years) Precalculus Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) AP Art Advanced Arts Elective AP Biology or AP Environmental Science (alternating years) <u>Dual enrollment options</u> <u>Work-based or internship options</u>
12th Grade Contemporary Issues and Literature (alternating theme every 2 years) Marine Biology or Chemistry (alternating years) AP Calculus or Senior Math Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) AP Art Advanced Arts Elective Maker science elective AP Biology or AP Environmental Science (alternating years) <u>Dual enrollment options</u> <u>Work-based or internship options</u>

Source: Cabot High School Program of Studies, 2017-2018

Cabot School currently offers two AP classes each year: AP Calculus, and AP Biology or AP Environmental Science (alternating years). Historically, AP English (2005-2010) and AP Chemistry (1999-2012, in alternating years with AP Biology) were offered by the Cabot School. For the period of 2014-2016, Cabot students took a total of 47 AP examinations, with 19 passing scores (grades of 3, 4, or 5). Though the total offerings may be limited, Cabot students are doing well generally, and exceptionally well in consideration of the economically disadvantaged profile of the student population:

	% of 12th Graders Passing at least one AP Examination	% of Students on Free/Reduced Price Lunch
Stowe High School	61%	15%
Cabot School	54%	53%
Montpelier High School	48%	21%
S. Burlington High School	43%	20%
Peoples Academy	32%	39%
U-32 High School	28%	31%
Hazen Union High School	15%	49%

Source: U.S. News and World Report Data (April 2017)

This underscores the value of Cabot’s educational approach – while there are fewer course offerings versus larger peers, graduate outcomes indicate that the quality of education delivered is mitigating the quantity of offerings. We believe success in AP classes positively impacts college matriculation, and likely enables some students to graduate on an accelerated timeline, thereby reducing the financial impact of post-secondary education and advancing graduates into the workforce sooner.

In conducting this assessment and engaging with community members and students, we have concluded that the addition of a design/technology faculty member to enable restoration of this program and increased experiential opportunities outside of the school will further strengthen our curriculum. Part III of this report details our plan with respect to these enhancements, which will complement the foundation provided by the current offerings.

Cabot’s Portfolio of Non-Traditional Learning Experiences [Rule 3450.8(5)]

Non-traditional learning experiences have been part of the Cabot School approach for generations – long before the concept of flexible pathways came to fruition. Our non-traditional experiences start with our pre-kindergarten program – our youngest learners spend part of every week outside in their “forest classroom,” or in their edible, natural playscape, and focus on the outdoors as a way of building the skills necessary to succeed in school. Our administration and teachers strive to provide unique and enriching opportunities each year – some programs, such as the middle school leadership curriculum, have effectively become rites of passage for a generation of our town’s children.

Our small size enables us to “think outside of the box,” and unlike our larger counterparts, we can ensure that all students enjoy these opportunities equally, and that they are accessible. A curriculum accentuated by non-traditional experiences is something that has taken time, energy, and dedication to build – from staff, educators, and the community. Integral to our approach is Project Based Learning. Our distinct educational culture and model is core of what makes Cabot School a successful institution, and we do not believe this same experience could easily be replicated in another setting.



The joy of learning, the **value of community and kindness**, and a connection to the outdoors are the building blocks of our non-traditional opportunities – starting in pre-K.

Cabot School’s Project Based Learning (PBL) model is anchored in curiosity, creativity and design, with daily practice that encourages and fosters deep and engaged multidisciplinary learning. Our students learn authentically, through an investigative process that asks real-world questions and tackles real-world problems. Our students develop critical thinking skills, problem solving skills and communication skills while working collaboratively, between grades, throughout the school campus and within the larger community. Through individualized learning plans and learning tools that are drawn upon to approach multiple problems, our students become expert learners, but most importantly expert thinkers. They develop 21st century skills, while establishing the habits and creating the necessary tools for lifelong learning.

Two of our educators, Peter Stratman and Brian Boyes are PBL experts with over 25 years of combined practical and theoretical experience. Together they lead workshops and teach courses on best practices and implementation of PBL, and have worked together (as Rowland Fellows) to develop Launchpad a website that helps teachers implement PBL in their classrooms. Our school Facebook page, maintained by middle school students and

community volunteers, is a resource for understanding the significance of Project Based Learning, and the methods by which it is implemented at our school on a day-to-day basis.

Over the past five years, the diversity of non-traditional learning opportunities for our students has flourished. Our educators are committed to implementing PBL across the grades, from the preschool through high school, each grade building upon the next. Our entire curriculum and mindset is non-traditional, as outlined in a selection of the student-driven opportunities below. Cabot also supports after school programs and summer programs that build upon the day-to-day work on campus and reflect the commitment of the community to provide authentic learning experiences for our children.

Project Based Learning (PBL)

During our study it became clear that PBL is a term many are familiar with, but the understanding of how it works was less complete. In describing PBL to our families, we have adapted a definition from the Buck Institute for Education:

In project based learning, students go through an extended process of inquiry in response to a complex question, problem, or challenge. While allowing for some degree of student “voice and choice,” rigorous projects are carefully planned, managed, and assessed to help students learn key academic content, practice 21st century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, curiosity and creativity, and create high-quality, authentic products and presentations.

Rigorous, meaningful and effective PBL:

- Is intended to teach significant content: Goals for student learning are explicitly derived from content standards and key concepts at the heart of academic disciplines.
- Requires inquiry as part of the process of learning and creating something new: Students ask questions, search for answers, and arrive at conclusions, leading them to construct something new: an idea, an interpretation, or a product.
- Requires critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and various forms of communication: To answer a driving question and create high-quality work, students need to do much more than remember information. They need to use higher-order thinking skills and learn to work as a team. They must listen to others and make their own ideas clear when speaking, be able to read a variety of material, write or otherwise express themselves in various modes, and make effective presentations. These skills, competencies and habits of mind are often known as 21st century skills, because they are prerequisite for success in the contemporary workplace.

- Is organized around an open-ended driving question: This focuses students’ work and deepens their learning by framing important issues, debates, challenges or problems.
- Creates a need to know and develops essential content and skills: PBL reverses the order in which information and concepts are traditionally presented. A traditional unit with a “project” add-on begins by presenting students with knowledge and concepts and then gives students the opportunity to apply them. Project Based Learning begins with the vision of an end product or presentation, which creates a context and reason to learn and understand the information and concepts.
- Allows some degree of student voice and choice: Students learn to work independently and take responsibility when they are asked to make choices. The opportunity to make choices and to express their learning also helps increase students’ educational engagement.
- Includes processes for revision and reflection: Students learn to give and receive feedback to improve the quality of the products they create. As they reflect on their learning, they consider not only what but also how they are learning.
- Involves a public audience: Students present their work to people beyond their classmates and teacher – in person or online. This “ups the stakes,” increasing student motivation to produce high-quality work and adding to the authenticity of the project.

Four decades of accumulated evidence point to the effectiveness of instructional strategies and procedures essential to standards-focused PBL, which builds deep content understanding, raises academic achievement, and encourages student motivation to learn. Research has demonstrated that PBL can be more effective than traditional instruction in increasing academic achievement on annual state- administered assessment tests, be more effective than traditional instruction for teaching mathematics, economics, science, social science, clinical medical skills and for careers in allied health occupations and teaching. Likewise, evidence supports PBL as more effective than traditional instruction for long-term retention, skill development and satisfaction of students and teachers.



Students are challenged by planning and executing every aspect of an exhibition of learning – preparing them to **think critically and collaboratively** from day one at college or on the job.

We believe Cabot’s experience in developing and integrating PBL into our curriculum has greatly enhanced student achievement, is a major factor in attracting students to our school (e.g. families moving to town and home-schooled students selecting Cabot), and reinforces the high-value relationships between educators and students. Other studies have demonstrated that PBL is more effective than traditional instruction for preparing students to integrate and explain concepts, and is especially effective in improving performance by lower-achieving students.

PBL is a cornerstone of our curricular approach and integral to our educational culture; both of which required years of development and built upon a Cabot tradition of personalized, inquiry based learning and experiences. PBL is not a solution to all challenges that face Cabot, in terms of scale or course catalogue, but we are confident that this model presents a breadth of opportunities for students to achieve. The ability to individualize and provide students with control over their inquiry and exploration of a core competency means the accumulation of knowledge necessarily entails development of other skills necessary to be a college or career ready: critical thinking, responsibility, and self-discipline – none of which are “courses” offered by neighboring schools with a thicker course catalogue.

Technology

While “computers” used to be a separate course, technology integration is a way of life in most classrooms. Secondary school students have 24/7 access to class projects and resources using “Haiku,” Cabot School’s online class portal and learning management system. They use a variety of technology tools to explore, research, collaborate, and

manage their work. Using Google Drive, they create and share spreadsheets, documents, and presentations and often work collaboratively online with students and teachers.

Haiku allows teachers to post and collect assignments digitally and easily share project resources on course web pages. All middle and high school students have access to 1:1 laptops and iPads for researching, writing, collaborating, and building projects. We maintain an active partnership with the University of Vermont’s Tarrant Institute, which provides comprehensive training and support for tech-rich learning experiences.

Technology itself is not a “non-traditional” learning experience, however, our integration of computers and web based platforms in the classroom facilitates and broadens the collaborative aspect of many PBL experiences. Access and effective utilization of technology ensures that our rural cohort of students are fluent in the systems, applications, and research methods that enable college and career success.

Siskin Ecological Adventures (Elementary School)



For nearly 15 years, Cabot School has maintained a strong partnership with Siskin Ecological Adventures, a community based organization committed to connecting kids to the natural world. This collaboration is an integral component of Cabot’s elementary experience in which students learn about local environmental ecology. Siskin educators are experts in helping young people connect with nature while developing confidence, communication skills, and a positive character. Siskin educators complement our elementary science program with inquiry-based, hands-on science and exploration of the natural world.



Learning about antlers!

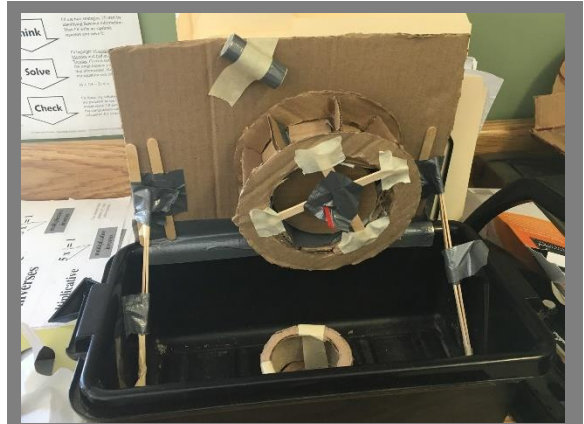
Every Thursday, Cabot School hosts Siskin educators who provide lessons combining an outdoor investigation and an indoor activity designed to cultivate curiosity, inquiry, perseverance, and evidence-based decision-making. An overarching goal of the program is to encourage students to “think like a scientist!” Students participate in a variety of investigations that explore the environment with a special emphasis on the flora and fauna in our own backyard.

Science investigations are built upon core science standards, but will also incorporate art, literacy, math, and history.

Non-Traditional Elementary Experiences

- Labor, Looms and Levers: an Interdisciplinary Unit about the Industrial Revolution (5th and 6th graders): The Industrial

Revolution can be a cog in the wheel of history or it can be an interactive, creative learning venture, in which students study and replicate the machines used by people during the time period. Examining the period can also provoke empowerment when students review the labor strikes of the era and compose original songs, commemorating people’s power to effect change through collaborative effort and commitment. These elements were presented to the community as an exhibition of learning along with a student curated photo essay that documented the working people and their struggle during the Industrial Revolution.



- Mystery Night (5th and 6th graders): Writing,

drama and the science of forensics were joined to create the Mystery Night project. Various community experts were brought into the classroom to run a series of workshops for students that included, the understanding and composition of mystery writing, theatrical performance, as well as the critical thinking skills and science behind modern day forensics. Students demonstrated their learning by holding a Mystery Night for their parents and the community, at which they read from their original mystery stories, provided evidence samples and asked the audience to solve an original, dramatically performed, mystery.



- Environmental Newscasts: Students researched environmental disasters and their drastic effect on the ecology of specific location. Each team chose a location for in-depth study and compiled research notebooks and wrote scripts, which they used to record presentations in a newscast format about their area of research. Students employed problem solving skills in using the interactive app Touchcast and came to ingenious out of the ordinary methods to present their learning.

- Town Clock Restoration (3rd and 4th Graders): For hands-on understanding during a study of Force and Motion, students fully utilized the century old Cabot town tower

clock while undergoing recent repair. Students were able to see and interact with the 128 pieces of the clock in various stages of repair and installation. Lead engineers of the clock repair project visited the classroom and demonstrated the mechanics of force and motion in timekeeping while helping students disassemble small clocks that had been donated by the community.

- Cultural Studies (1st and 2nd Graders): In Spring of 2017, Cabot School was fortunate to host Priyanga Shimada, a teacher from Tokyo, Japan. Her semester at Cabot culminated in May with the celebration of Kodomo no Hi (Children’s Day), a Japanese national holiday to honor children and their happiness. Outside the classroom, the traditional koi no bori (carp kites) painted by the children, and inside the classroom, students eagerly presented their work from the Japanese unit of study to their parents and caretakers: origami paper dolls, sumi ink name plaques, story books of Japanese fairy tales, and colorful maps were shown off with pride as were the Japanese words compiled in dictionaries and the flashcards used to study numbers and Japanese currency. This was an experience that generated huge enthusiasm among students, and emphasizes the great opportunities that are available – even in small elementary settings.



Cabot Leads (Middle School)

The Cabot Leads jobs program is an experience designed to empower students, promote individual responsibility, teach new skills, and provide innovative opportunities for personalized learning. Beginning this academic year, students will decide on a topic or focus of interest, which is then narrowed through exploratory activities, discussions with teachers and family, and school wide leadership opportunities.

Students will be selected for a job that meets their interests, talents, and the school’s needs. On average, students will work in their jobs 30 minutes to 1 hr. / week, with times that may require a greater commitment (e.g. planting in the spring and harvesting in the fall). Students will work under the supervision of an adult mentor on campus.

Each student applies for three selected jobs; writing a cover letter and interviewing for a position. Throughout the experience, students will create a portfolio of the experience with journal entries, photos, work samples, etc., these will be shared with an authentic audience.

Sample jobs include sports reporter/photographer, goat farming, gardens + grounds, bread oven baker, and graphic designer. Others focus on working with Cabot's youngest learners – reading to pre-kindergarten students, buddy reading with elementary students, and assisting in other classroom activities. Cabot Leads provides middle school students with the opportunity to be more involved in the local community or the campus, spending time on areas of interest, and ultimately building interpersonal skills through an evaluated learning process.

Siskin Ecological Adventures (Middle School)

It's hard to imagine deliberately dumping your canoe into a chilly fall pond, or willingly swimming across a raging rapid -- unless you're a Cabot 8th grader! Promoting youth leadership, team building, and environmental stewardship, Cabot's program with Siskin Ecological Adventures fosters invaluable growth opportunities for students. Inspired by programs like Eco and Earthwalk, Cabot School has established a deep collaboration with Siskin Ecological Adventures that focuses on hands-on, inquiry based science activities.

As part of the Siskin experience, 7th and 8th graders participate in a series of adventure-based workshops that promote individual responsibility, build confidence, teach local environmental ecology, and provide students with technical outdoor skills. This includes outdoor orienteering activities, service learning projects, investigations of the health and sustainability of local ecosystems.



The canoeing portion of our program helps students learn to manage risks in a safe, exciting, and supportive environment. The Cabot/Siskin leadership curriculum culminates with a two-day paddle and overnight camping trip in the spring. In 2017, we are piloting a weekly program with Siskin designed to explore and demonstrate how curiosity, inquiry, perseverance, and evidence-based decision-making are qualities possessed by scientists. Most lessons will combine an indoor lesson and an outdoor investigation. Throughout the series, students will work independently and in small groups.

Long Field Farm Program



Since 1998, Cabot School has worked in partnership with Long Field Farm, a family owned and operated goat dairy. Over the course of nineteen years we have developed a comprehensive farm-based program that allows students an in-depth opportunity for agricultural learning that connects the running of an agricultural business to their learning in the classroom. Activities range from small groups that build math and writing skills, to work participation, and class field trips. Long Field Farm also serves as a hands-on resource for high school students studying Business Ag during June Term.

Recently a long-term project involved fifth through eighth grade students, who went to the farm twice a week for six weeks, learning the multi-various aspects of running a dairy farm such as milking goats, caring for young stock, and marketing for cheese production. Chores were completed as a community service component. Additionally, one student participated weekly, for several months, on an individual basis.

Additional agricultural opportunities at Cabot School include field trips and activities at the following farms:

- Ben's Pumpkins - pumpkins, cattle, sheep and pigs;
- Burt's Orchard - apples, pears and pumpkins;
- Bothfeld Farm - turkey and dairy; and
- Churchill Farm - dairy and sugaring.

Many students are naturally enthused to learn within an agricultural context, making our community partnerships with local farms a huge value added to our programming. These opportunities strengthen student understanding, ties to the local working landscape, and their community.

Vermont Rural Partnership Projects



Every year Cabot students attend the Vermont Rural Partnership (VRP) autumn conference where they pitch a grant idea and receive feedback. Projects that have been sponsored through this program include: kite making with first and second graders, partnered with middle school students, the bread oven project, solar power exploration preschool through 12th grade, a natural playground for elementary students, preschool Oakiwear rain suits and bird study, and a school-wide maker's challenge -- culminating in the spring VRP conference held at Cabot last spring.

School Garden

Our School Gardens provide rich learning opportunities for our students. Gardens on campus help supply vegetables, herbs, berries and grapes our school cafeteria and the multiple cooking projects on campus, including our outdoor wood fired oven. We also have established water and pollinator gardens that are used as educational tools.



Recently, the vegetable garden was expanded through the work of students in the seventh and eighth grade Leadership Program in connection with their energy conservation project. The students measured and plotted the site, gathered quotes for lumber and then built and installed the raised beds. This project is also enthusiastically supported by the garden committee comprised of community volunteers.

The Limes



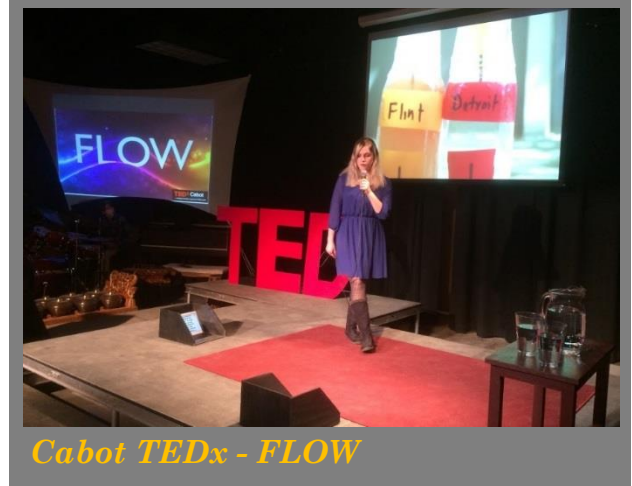
The Limes in action – a distinct Cabot experience.

Cabot High School’s soul funk band integrates students’ creative expression with technical mastery in “band based” learning. Members compose music and lyrics and run all the technical elements of lighting and sound, but they are also responsible for booking, promotion, marketing and merchandising. The Limes frequently open for professional bands and perform on tour in and out of state. They know what it takes to get a show on the road, because they do it: students run the whole gig. Because of Cabot’s small size, a high percentage of high school students are engaged some facet of the Limes.

Highlights of the Non-Traditional High School Experience

With the support of the Tarrant Institute, Vermont League of Innovative Schools, Up for Learning and Donors Choose, Cabot School has provided a wide diversity of non-traditional learning opportunities for students over the past three years – many under the guise of the PBL model. The following projects have been supported by these educational support entities, or community members, with many being formally presented to our town:

- FLOW: the Cabot junior and senior classes created an independently organized TEDx community event examining the future of water. Students researched, wrote scripts, designed visuals, and built props to create an evening that was both educational and entertaining. They were joined by the maker science class, which incorporated elements of circuitry, design, and basic programming to create interactive sound sculptures that investigated themes of water usage and conservation. The audience was encouraged to poke, prod, and explore each sound sculpture to create unique sonic tapestries.



- Our Time: Brian Boyes, an innovative Cabot music educator, worked with UP For Learning and a group of students from across Vermont to produce the original song and video called “Our Time.” This production ‘amplified’ student voices through music and film, with the objective of students creating an original song that uses their own words and feelings to capture what personalized learning means to them. The project was supported by the Vermont Agency of Education, the Vermont School Boards Association, UP For Learning, and The Bay and Paul Foundations. In Fall 2015, the video was used to support community dialogue around positive school transformation, personalized learning and Act 77.
- M3 2017 - Mindset, Metacognition, and Motivation: Students from Cabot High School, and the Cabot School counselor, attended trainings with the goal of dispelling the common myth that intelligence is fixed, and focused on strategies to reinforce the theme, “whether you think you can, or you can’t, you are right” (Henry Ford). These students also explored how the brain processes information (Dr. David Sousa’s information processing model). These students initiated a program with their high school classmates to adopt a “growth mindset,” and receive continuing support and coaching from the UP for Learning staff as they implement these training activities in Cabot.

The implementation of M3 processes represents a persistent pattern within Cabot High School – the experience and knowledge attained by a few are introduced not just to a homeroom class, or a single grade, rather all students benefit from the experience. Each educator and each student can influence and positively impact the experience, and opportunity that is not readily replicated in situations where size and scale are increased. While this endeavor is in its early stages, it is a student led, adult supported, program providing the opportunity for leadership and creative thinking with regard to debunking myths and stereotypes and challenging current practices in respectful and provocative ways.



- **Bio Soap:** In 2014-2016, Cabot’s Biology class used cold-process soap making to learn about biomolecules, their properties, and the biology of cells. Each group created their own unique recipe - hand-making, curing, and testing their soaps.

Throughout the process, students assumed the responsibility of graphic design, marketing, advertising, and assessing the local economy to develop and sell the product. Students were responsible for devising a campaign to defray the costs of molds, curing equipment, packing and shipping needs, oils and ingredients, and the scents used.

This project required multiple disciplines, critical thinking, an understanding of the science and process to make soap, and was more than a mere academic exercise. This was a unique experience that required the type of collaboration, cooperation, and planning required in modern workplaces.

- **Energy Efficient Lighting Design for *Lillian* the Musical:** Cabot School science teacher Michael Hendrix submitted a project proposal to Donors Choose to support the efforts of his AP Environmental Science class to design lighting for the Cabot and Twinfield Schools’ production of *Lillian: A Folk Opera*. Through Donors Choose, the class secured lighting and materials to examine energy use, electricity, and efficiency. They then created light sculptures as part of the *Lillian* set, reducing the actual energy consumption of the show. Extending the project beyond the high school, middle school students installed and operated the sculptures as the *Lillian* tech crew.

The project was one of three Teach for the Planet Innovation Challenge finalists, out of thousands of projects submitted. Cabot's project (and our community's support for it) edged out the other two challengers, both of which originated in densely populated urban areas. Cabot won by popular vote and received \$10,000 in Donors Choose funding for science equipment.

- **Bread Oven:** Several years ago, Cabot community members partnered with students to build an outdoor pavilion and bread oven. Currently, a local farmer, baker, and entrepreneur (the original proprietor of Woodbelly Pizza) devotes time to teaching students how to bake breads, gourmet pizza, and is truly building the connection between “farm to table.” More than just “fun,” this is an example of the benefit of student collaboration with community members – this non-traditional resource and experience enhances the skillset of students to be college ready, bound for NECI, or career ready in farm stands and artisanal kitchens here in Vermont.



A taste of how **community-school collaboration** can build connections and skills.

- **X-Day Activities**: Every Thursday afternoon students learn new skills through the X-day program offerings. A rotating program designed to allow students to pursue their interests outside of the traditional curriculum, programs are often supported by long term community volunteers – further strengthening the connection between students and the town. X-day offerings include a knitting program, outdoor cooking in the aforementioned wood-fired oven, mountain biking club, pathfinder club, yoga, biology, pick-up sports, local history and the paranormal, trail building, and a pickin’ party (traditional music).
- **Healthy Start**: Every year, since 2012, the school season starts with an overnight, high school camping trip, with hiking, poetry slams and music. This trip forms strong relationships and team building skills that resonate throughout the school year.
- **Travelers: A Time Traveling Mixtape Musical**: In a 2017 example of multidisciplinary learning at Cabot, students created an original full-length musical about time travel that explored concepts of individuality and self-actualization. All juniors and seniors took part in extensive historical research. Students wrote the script, created costumes, designed and constructed sets, played in the band, formed the tech crew for sound and lighting and composed the cast. Students were also responsible for marketing and promoting the event, which was performed to sold-out audiences. Displayed during the performance was an interactive system of gears designed and created by the students that created alternative timelines and showed the interconnectedness of events across time: each event powering the movement of the next.
- **Senior X**: This program allowed students to develop a personal interest or passion during their senior year, through a blend of authentic research, critical writing and experiential learning. Supported by two faculty advisors, a senior cohort and an internship mentor, students researched, acted on their learning, created multiple

products and artifacts of learning, developed a digital portfolio and gave an in-depth presentation in which they displayed and defended their work. Critical to the project was an engaged internship, that offered an opportunity to participate in the adult world, working toward meaningful outcomes for both the student and the organization that sponsored the internship. Re-establishment of this program is anticipated as part of the implementation of this proposal.

June Term



A multitude of options in June.

June Term allows students to engage in learning experiences that can't be accomplished during their normal school schedules, to have some choice in selecting what is most relevant to their lives, and to explore that topic in an in-depth, day-long format for up to three weeks. Programs have included: hiking the Long Trail, interning at Long Field Farm, touring and performing with the Limes, presenting a shadow puppet show at Nuyorican Poets Cafe on the Lower East Side of New York City, and collaborating on a Radio Lab with WGDR at Goddard College.

Cabot Connects Mentoring

Cabot Connects is a community-based mentoring program, with an office at Cabot School. Mentors serve as role models, active listeners and caring friends to children living in Cabot. Adults are matched with youth who share similar interests, such as reading, cooking, computers, sports, gaming, hiking, fishing, and gardening. Mentors and mentees meet 2-4 times per month, and also have the opportunity to attend monthly group activities with other mentoring pairs from the Cabot community. Our program seeks to connect youth and adults in the Cabot area for friendship and fun, and to build a stronger community through intergenerational ties.

Pre-Kindergarten Program

Our play-based preschool is deeply embedded in the natural world, blending Montessori, Waldorf and Reggio principles and practices to create an innovative hybrid pedagogy tailored to the needs and curiosity of Cabot's smallest students.

Much like German waldkitas, the children visit an outdoor Forest Classroom in all Vermont weather. Their Natural Edible Playscape was designed and implemented by preschool and kindergarten students working with a Playscape committee comprised of committed educators and community and parent volunteers. This unique space includes a sandbox, sunflower house, and slide



mound with tunnel. Newly implemented as an element of the playscape is the Herbal Tea Garden in which children identify, harvest and prepare herbs for daily tea time. Tea time is open to everyone on campus in need of brief respite.

Imaginative play incorporates natural elements, such as sticks, stones, and shells indoors and out. The classroom also features a traditional Naturalist Cabinet, donated by the Cabot Post Office and stocked by far flung members of the Friends of the Naturalist Cabinet, for hands-on winter exploration and learning.

Summer Camps & Access to Support Services

The Cabot Recreation Department, Greater Cabot Working Landscape Network and individual educators work together to form a comprehensive, non-conflicting summer camp schedule during the entirety of the summer months. The school is utilized as the base point for these activities and free breakfast and lunch is offered to all children in the community. The program offers week-long day camps and workshops. A few of the camps



Summer is a busy time on campus.

offered last summer include: *early childhood nature camp, maker’s camp, basketball camp, garden camp, herbal medicine camp, soccer camp, cedar woodworking camp, dance camp and theatre camp.* All Cabot students are encouraged to take advantage of supportive services throughout the school day. These services are individualized and utilized without stigma in the school community, viewed instead as opportunities for educational and personal growth to reach goals and overcome obstacles.

K-6 students have ready access to math and reading enrichment. Our intervention services find success through early detection and the ability to understand student’s various learning styles, working with their individual strengths to overcome their challenges. Students work in small groups and/or one-on-one with a specialist to set and reach goals. A unique program has been established by specialists that invites students to lunch with their specialist. Anticipated weekly by many students, these lunches foster the individual bonds and connections necessary to forge through difficult challenges with determined success.

Cabot, together with Twinfield Union School, offers a summer learning camp for students from grades 1-12 who would like extra support through the vacation. A camp for High School students was offered in 2017 to support career exploration with opportunities to visit local businesses. High School students have opportunities to check in with teachers for extra support on Thursday mornings.

Partnerships Make it all Come Together

The innovative programming and non-traditional learning opportunities at Cabot School are accomplished, in part, through community, state and national partnerships. Recent partners include:

- Tarrant Institute for Innovative Education
- Vermont League of Innovative Schools
- Up for Learning
- Rowland Foundation
- Greater Cabot Working Landscape Network

- Cabot Community Investment Fund, formerly known as UDAG
- Vermont Energy Education Program, VEEP
- Vermont Rural Partnership
- Donors Choose
- Community Partnership in Learning
- Bay and Paul Foundations
- Siskin Ecological Adventures
- WGDR - Goddard
- Cabot Connects Mentoring
- Cabot Community Theatre
- Cabot Community Engagement Group
- Yestermorrow Design/Build

Our commitment to working with others is a template for how we see shared programming and collaboration with neighboring districts in the future.

College & Career Preparation [Rule 3450.8(6)]

As a “Gear Up Cohort School,” Cabot high school students are provided the opportunity, funding and support to make informed inquiries into the world of work and to research post-secondary education options. With the assistance of the school counselor and the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) outreach counselor, students explore the ways in which their interests, personality traits, values, and abilities inform their selection of satisfying work. By examining the habits of successful people and investigating their own learning styles, students will become increasingly responsible for their own life decisions. Social and emotional learning topics may be addressed, and opportunities might include job shadows/internships.

Off-site learning opportunities include trips to college campuses, the college fair and other opportunities throughout the year. 10th and 11th grade students have the opportunity to take the PSAT, while 11th and 12th graders take the SAT, SAT subject tests, and/or the ACT as they choose.

Dual Enrollment programs have been well-utilized by Cabot students, with some students earning between 3 and 18 college credits—reducing the time it takes to get a college degree, reducing the costs associated with college, and challenging themselves through college-level curriculum. We appreciate that this may significantly increase the likelihood of college matriculation, but more importantly college completion – especially for students with less financial means available.

Many Vermont colleges and universities have developed an early admission program that allows high school seniors to take a full year of college-level classes while completing their high school degree, allowing for simultaneous completion of the 12th grade and the first year of college. In recent years, several Cabot students have taken advantage of this opportunity through Community College of Vermont’s Montpelier campus. Cabot also

enjoys geographic proximity to Northern Vermont College (formerly Lyndon State College and Johnson State College).

Finally, Cabot students are offered the full catalog of Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative (VTVLC) online courses at no charge. Courses are taught online by licensed Vermont educators, and offer increased flexibility and diversity of offerings. Online courses that are similar to courses offered at Cabot (i.e. Algebra 1, English 1, etc.) require administrator approval. Each of these options present significant opportunity to Cabot students, especially as they culminate their secondary education experience. The growth and strengthening of these opportunities in recent years has enhanced the diversity of paths students take to reach graduation, and has complemented Cabot’s strength and focus in individualized learning, including PBL opportunities. The Board believes that this array of opportunities is positively impacting the maturity and readiness of our students.

Participation Rates

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15
11th & 12th Graders in Career Tech. Ed. (CTE) Programs	5 (17.2%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.5%)	-
Work-Based Learning Access by CTE Students	1	2	0	-
Dual Enrollment Participation	3* (10.3%)	2 (7.1%)	0 (0.0%)	-
Early College Participation	1 (3.4%)	2 (7.1%)	2 (7.1%)	-

Note: Percentages are of total 11th and 12th grade students.
 * 5 (17.2%) if including summer session

Over the past three years Cabot 11th and 12th grade students have elected to participate in learning opportunities outside of our school walls. In the current school year, one student is attending Community College of Vermont (CCV), one student is working as an apprentice at a local automotive mechanic’s shop, and five students attend Central Vermont Career Center (CVCC) in Barre for part of the school day. At CVCC, these students are studying Emergency Services, Heating and Plumbing, Cosmology, Human Services, and Natural Resources.

Students are also choosing outside opportunities through dual enrollment at CCV (three students in Fall 2017, two in the Summer of 2017, three in the Fall and Spring of 2016-17, and two during the 2015-16 school year). During the 2016-17 school year two students participated in the early college program at Vermont Technical College and Lyndon State College; two students attended CVCC (natural resources and exploratory program); one student apprenticed at the local mechanic’s shop; and one student was an intern at the Vermont Public Interest Research Group (VPIRG). Finally, during the 2015-16 school year two students chose early college at CCV and Johnson State, and one participated in an automotive program at CVCC.

Cabot students have embraced flexible pathways to graduation, and the degree of participation by students in these options is strong. A major factor in desiring re-assignment to a larger supervisory union in Washington County is maintaining access to CVCC. Our working group compiled information on course offerings from the three regionally accessible career technical education centers (CVCC in Barre, Green Mountain Career and Technical Center in Hyde Park, and the St. Johnsbury Career Center). Each offers some unique opportunities, but our community and students are pleased with CVCC and we believe it provides excellent opportunities to our students.

We recognize the importance of career preparation and experiential opportunities for students (beginning with the Cabot Leads program, described under our non-traditional experiences available to students), and for FY 19 are proposing a budget to fund a position focused on connecting student with learning opportunities in the community. Real world experience and mentorship from community members in the workforce is an area we believe is integral to student success and is foundational to creating workforce ready students.

College Matriculation & Standardized Testing

Cabot’s college matriculation rate (measured in 2016) reflects positively upon the school as well – 71% of graduates matriculated in a 2-year or 4-year program, well above the state average, and on par with some of the state’s most elite public schools.

	% of Students on Free/Reduced Price Lunch	4 Year College	2 Year College	Total College
Cabot	60%	63%	8%	71%
Danville	38%	68%	7%	75%
Twinfield	51%	44%	4%	48%
U-32 (2015)	30%	56%	12%	68%
Montpelier	26%	72%	0%	72%
Hartford	24%	58%	9%	67%
Windsor	40%	40%	12%	52%
Woodstock	28%	70%	8%	78%
Vermont (2013)	44%	-	-	53%

Source: Cabot-Danville-Twinfield 706b Report (2016 Results)

These results are laudable, especially when factoring in the degree of poverty present in the community. We believe that the Cabot School’s educational approach and offerings are successfully preparing students to pursue post-secondary education.

	% of Students on Free/Reduced Price Lunch	SAT Reading	SAT Math	SAT Writing	SAT Total
Cabot	60%	578	535	512	1625
Danville	38%	475	515	461	1451
Twinfield	51%	520	519	515	1554
U-32 (2015)	30%	557	544	525	1626
Montpelier	26%	587	555	559	1587
Hartford	24%	509	517	483	1509
Woodstock	28%	563	556	537	1656
Vermont	44%	522	525	488	1554

Source: Cabot-Danville-Twinfield 706b Report (2016 Results)

Cabot students have historically performed well on the SAT. Data for 2016 reflects above average scores for Cabot Students compared to Vermont as a whole, and Cabot’s scores are comparable to large union high school districts with lower rates of economic distress. The presence of fewer course offerings at Cabot does not seem to correlate to college preparedness, as measured by SAT scores or by actual matriculation rates.

Graduation Rate

	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
Graduation Rate	93%	88%	87%	86%	75%

We decline to disaggregate by demographics as requested in the rules, based upon Cabot’s small class sizes and the ability to identify individual students based upon these graduating classes.

Cabot’s Graduate Survey [Rule 3450.18 & Rule 3450.10(5)(B)]

Scope & Methodology

The Act 46 Working Group, in conjunction with the generous time and support of Julia Hewitt, a long-time Cabot educator, reached out to graduates from the last ten Cabot High School classes. Out of a total of 174 graduates, 83 responded within the time period provided. Six substantive questions were asked:

1. Have you ever been accepted into a post-secondary program (i.e. work internship, certificate program, two-year technical degree, four-year college, etc.)?
2. If yes, what program, school or internship opportunity?
3. Did you graduate (from the post-secondary program)?

4. If you have a job, who do you currently work for? What is your job title? If you work for yourself, what is your business/trade?

5. Where do you live now?

6. Optional: Is there anything else you want to say about how your Cabot School experience shaped your life?

“The community at Cabot is a wonderful thing. It teaches students to be more caring and kind. This was the place I learned to be independent.”

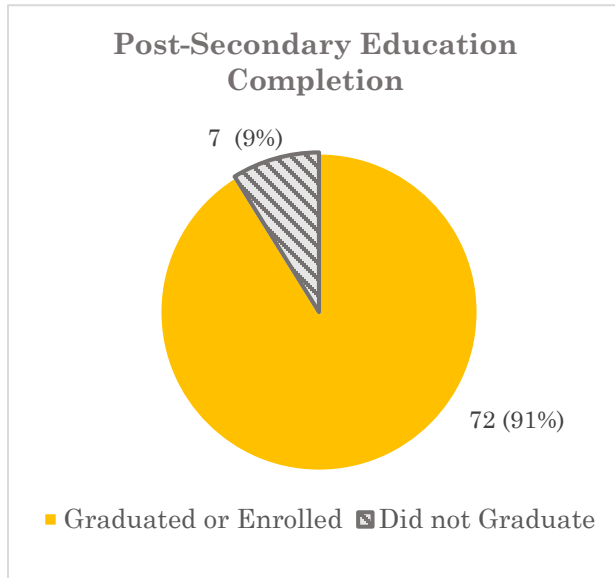
As a Board, we believe the question of whether our existing structure provides “substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities” is best measured by the outcomes of our students. Active post-secondary education, employment, and student satisfaction with their experience were

identified as key measures of whether a Cabot School education, particularly the high school, is leading to quantifiable success. We hoped that this exploration would provide insight into whether our inability to offer the same quantity of classes as larger schools was in some way inhibiting or limiting our graduates, and if so, whether we could address these concerns.

Summary of Findings

The results of the survey were overwhelmingly positive, especially in terms of the personalized comments and responses offered by graduates. We approach these results with some caution, and recognize that the response rate of 48% may overrepresent a cohort of graduates more enthusiastic about their school experience, versus those who did not respond. Nevertheless, we are confident that the responses provided are genuine, constitute a sizeable portion of the graduate population, and support a conclusion that what we lack in course catalogue is more than made up for in the experiences, non-traditional learning opportunities, and supportive faculty and staff that shape these formative years.

Currently, 82 out of 83 respondents are either in a post-graduate program or employed. The survey findings are summarized below:



Post-Secondary Education Statistics		
Accepted into a Post-Secondary Program	79/83	95.2%
Graduated or Actively Enrolled	72/79	91.2%
Graduated	43/79	54.4%
Enrolled	36/79	45.6%
Did not Graduate	7/79	8.8%

Post-Secondary Program Types		
Four-Year Degree	68/79	86.0%
Two-Year Degree	10/79	7.9%
Internship / Apprenticeship	1/79	1.3%
Did not Apply	4/83	4.8%

All four students who did not apply for or participate in a post-graduate program are currently employed. Of the 36 respondents who are currently in school, nearly 70% are working a job in addition to their studies.

Where Cabot Graduates who have Finished their Education Live Now		
In Cabot		14 / 47 (29.8%)
Within 20 Miles of Cabot		7 (Cumulative, 21/47 - 44.7%)
In Vermont		6 (Cumulative, 27/47 - 57.6%)
In New England		2 (Cumulative, 29/47 - 61.7%)
United States		12 (Cumulative, 41/47 - 87.2%)
Outside United States		6 / 47 (12.7%)

Respondents living outside the United States are in Canada, Europe and Africa. We were pleased to see data supporting something we all see: students who have decided to return to make Cabot or our region their home following their post-secondary educational program pursuits. We believe the sense of community and connection to a sense of place fostered by Cabot’s educational culture is helping to retain a career ready workforce in Vermont. It is heartening to see past graduates bringing their children to pre-kindergarten and starting the cycle of Cabot School’s role in our town’s families anew.

The positive experiences of recent graduates shared during this process was informative to us. At several community forums, individuals noted that they specifically returned to Cabot because of the school and their belief that it provides the best educational experience in our region. The responses garnered from the graduate survey, casting a wider net, also affirmed the value of the overall experience offered by our school. We identified some of the more poignant comments from respondents:

Selected Responses

I am now a Fleet Marine Force Corpsman as a part of the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force....

I have worked in Emergency Rooms, foreign territory battalion aid stations, and gotten more experience in medicine [than] I ever thought possible. This is all due to **Cabot school preparing me for the real world. I was taught to think critically, make tough decisions, and work for anything I wanted to achieve**, before leaving high school....

The teachers and other staff are invested not only in your education, but molding you into an adult that is capable of pursuing any dream you might have. I have treated hundreds if not thousands of casualties and saved many lives. It is because of Cabot School's superb job of preparing me for the real world that those men still live to fight another day. - Semper Fidelis

Cabot school provided me with amazing experiences such as trips to Belize and France and even outdoor activities including skiing and canoeing. **I have been able to take everything I've learned from Cabot and incorporated it into my everyday life.** I will never regret attending Cabot School and wouldn't change a thing.

My rich experience at Cabot School more than prepared me for college and the professional world beyond, and I only hope that more young people in Cabot can continue to have the unique high school experience I was so privileged to enjoy.

From the perspective of a transfer student:

I was befriended by rednecks, hippies, high-achievers, and divas. A small school is also a tight school where diversity is unavoidable; it was easy to move between social groups without being ensnared by cliquishness. By my senior year, I was so much a part of Cabot school that my friends and I could hardly believe that I had been an awkward newcomer just a year earlier. **I wasn't just attending a high school; I had become, incredibly quickly, a member of a very unique community.**

Cabot High School provided me with the most positive and unique school experience possible. **It enhanced my creativity, set me up for success in my secondary education, and gave me years of cherished memories and friendship.** I would not be where I am today without Cabot High School being my educational backbone. If you participate in the opportunities that Cabot provides, you will graduate with everything you need to succeed.

The dedicated teachers and staff at Cabot encouraged my personal and academic growth, which ensured that I never “slipped through the cracks,” as I may have at a

larger high school. Cabot students have a personal connection with every educator, and **this close-knit community combined with an emphasis on rigorous academics gave me a strong foundation for further study.**

Because Cabot School is a safe, small, loving, and most of all supportive environment, it gave me chance to really figure out who I was before entering into the “real world”. Elementary and high school is far less about gaining knowledge about subjects and learning information and far more about just growing up. Cabot School isn’t just a school, it’s a community and a support system. I found that by attending Cabot School I know have a solid foundation to grow from. I was able to start college and do very well at it, (made the dean’s list first semester) but then make the decision that college wasn’t for me and that I needed to be working instead. **I was able to advocate for myself**, to do what I needed to get a job. I have exciting dreams about my future and **I know that I will always have the support from the Cabot community** to make it happen.

There is an **atmosphere of kindness and respect** in any given Cabot classroom that I used to take for granted. I feel like that atmosphere comes from our community. Cabot is so lucky to have a school right in town where families can be assured that each day their children are learning and growing in classrooms filled with other students who are just as kind, accepting and respectful as their own children. **The Cabot community is cohesive and even though it's small, it has a big personality with so much heart.**

Administration, Teachers, & Professional Development [Rules 3450.8(8)-(10)]

An integral theme of the graduate survey was the influential role our educators play in the Cabot School experience.

	Faculty/Administrator Turnover		
	Teachers	Principal	Superintendent
FY 17	6 (+1 Sp. Ed.)	-	1
FY 16	1 (+ 1 Sp. Ed.)	-	-
FY 15	5	1	-

Uncertainty generated by Act 46 contributed to last year’s significant turnover. We have been fortunate to hire equally qualified and enthusiastic educators, and we hope that retention of these skilled educators will be assured with implementation of this plan.

All teachers receive 6 credits at the UVM rate for professional development, and many have done so. 48% of Cabot educators have earned their Masters Degree, with most Bachelor holders actively accumulating credits. Internally, Cabot’s seasoned PBL educators devote time to curriculum development and mentoring less experienced educators, providing additional skills and opportunities for professional development.

Operational Efficiencies, Accountability, & Costs [Rule 3450.9]

Our self-assessment with respect to the third goal of Act 46 revealed some challenges, and some positive takeaways. The economics of small schools are well discussed, but not as well understood as they ought to be. For example, our growth in per-pupil spending is not as drastic when factoring out “phantom pupils” – with none this year. Our self-assessment revealed that despite adjusting staffing levels, a drastic increase in special education costs has more than consumed any savings over the past two-years. The recent sharp increase of students at Cabot School with trauma histories has required significant intervention – to the point that special education costs have doubled in two years and make up more than 30% of our budget. This reality has forced tough choices in budgeting, and, unfortunately, obscures our efforts to be efficient and to carefully manage the budget. We believe our current staffing is near optimal, with room for targeted *increases*, based upon reasonable student-teacher ratios compared to our neighbors and state averages. As the 706b report noted, one of the most productive areas to address and manage costs is through joining a larger supervisory union and sharing administrative and staff costs among a broader set of communities. In summation, we are aware of our of limitations as a small district, but believe these challenges to be outweighed by the flexibility and strength of our program – we are confident that stability and the ability to focus on efficiency upon implementation of this plan will allow us to deliver education at a cost taxpayers value.

Resource Sharing with other Districts & Economies of Scale [Rules 3450.9(1)-(3)]

As one school of a small, two school, Supervisory Union, we share some management and administrative functions with Twinfield. Most notably, the Negotiations Committee has a history of working together effectively in managing staff and educator salaries and benefits. Other shared services include contracting and administrative, e.g. website hosting, technology platforms, etc. As a small district, partnered with another relatively small district, we both access and value the services that may be provided directly by WNESU or that may be contracted at that level. As detailed later in this proposal, we believe that participation in a larger supervisory union would be beneficial and offer more situations where shared services and the corresponding economies of scale could be realized --we do not foresee remaining an independent district as an impediment to these types of arrangements in the future.

Student to School District Employee Ratios [Rule 3450.9(4)]

	Cabot School (FY 17)		Wash. Northeast SU (FY 17)	
	Count	Ratio	Count	Ratio
Student to Teacher	12.62	12.52 to 1	56.22	8.88 to 1
Student to Administrator	1	176 to 1	-	-
Student to Staff	24.32	6.50 to 1	102.46	4.87 to 1
Student to Adult	36.94	4.72 to 1	158.66	3.15 to 1

Source: Agency of Education

Education Spending [Rule 3450.9(5), Rule 3450.9(6) & Rule 3450.9(7)]

	Education Spending	Spending per Equalized Pupil		
		Base	Excl. “Phantom Pupils”	Difference
FY 18	\$3,085,410	\$17,635	\$17,635	\$0
FY 17	\$3,044,389	\$16,797	\$17,156	\$359
FY 16	\$3,014,278	\$16,049	\$16,757	\$708
FY 15	\$2,912,432	\$14,964	\$16,249	\$1,285
FY 14	\$2,819,200	\$13,978	\$14,128	\$150
FY 13	\$2,793,387	\$13,365	\$13,364	\$0

Source: C-D-T 706b Proposal; Agency of Education; Cabot School Budget, FY 18

Impact of Small School Grants [Rule 3450.9(8) & Rule 3450.9(9)]

	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
Small School Grant (SSG)	\$151,407	\$147,836	\$148,533	\$125,997	\$91,512	\$69,971
Spending per Equalized Pupil	\$17,635	\$16,797	\$16,049	\$14,964	\$13,978	\$13,365
Spending, excl. SSG	\$18,500	\$17,612	\$16,839	\$15,611	\$14,431	\$13,699

On a per pupil basis, the small school grant makes a significant impact in the funding of our school. In FY 17, the small school grant accounted for approximately 4.8% of our budget (valued at about \$850-900 per pupil). Although final rules have not been promulgated for these grants in FY 20 and beyond, we believe the revised statutory standards under 16 V.S.A. § 4015 are attainable for Cabot in the future. We recognize that we are not isolated, and therefore must demonstrate “the academic excellence and operational efficiency of the school,” through “measurable success in providing a variety of high-quality educational opportunities that meet or exceed the educational quality standards adopted by the State Board”, and believe that “the percentage of students from economically deprived backgrounds ... and [their] measurable success in achieving positive outcomes” would currently weigh in favor of continuation of this funding mechanism.

Trends in Special Education Costs [Rule 3450.9(11)]

	Projected FY 18	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
Cabot Special Ed. Spending	\$1,107,826	\$805,754	\$654,388	\$658,829	\$630,602	\$534,969
% of Total Budget	31%	22%	18%	18%	17%	15%
Non-Reimbursed Spending	*	*	*	*	*	*

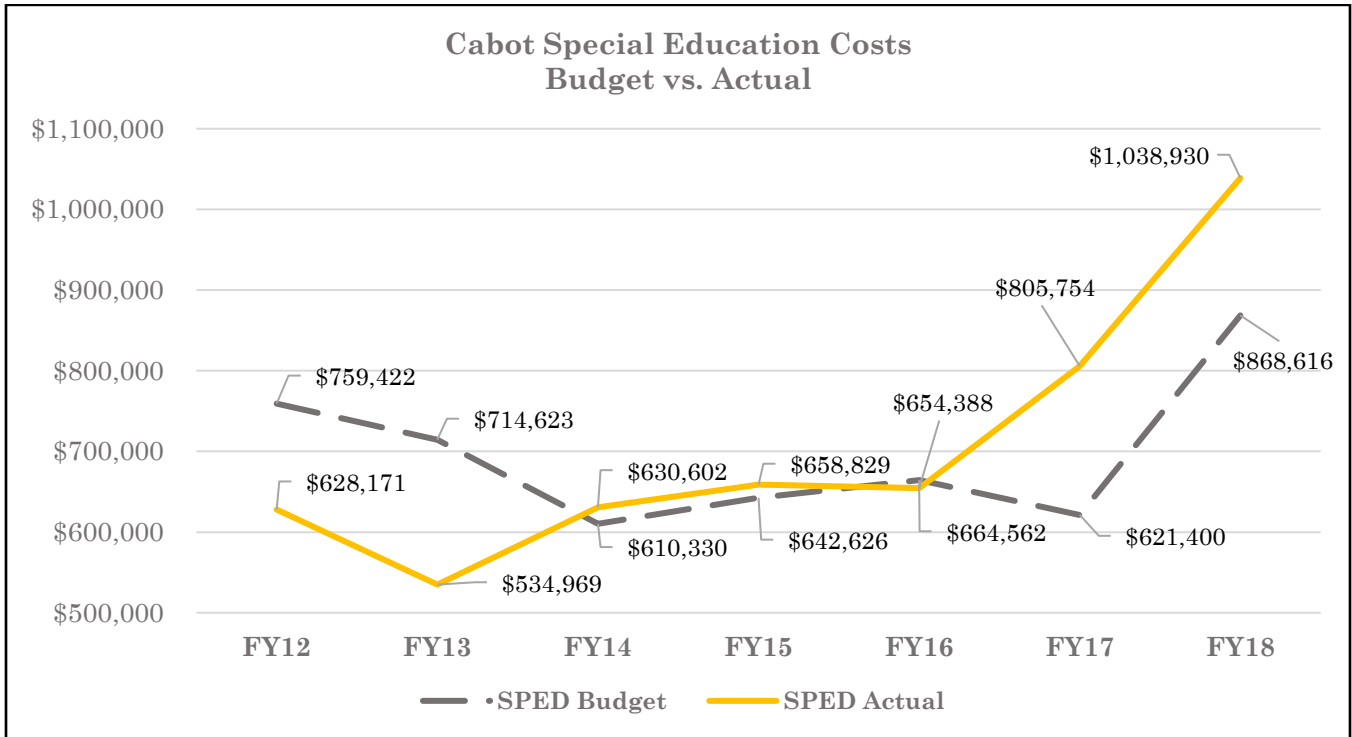
	Current (FY 18)	FY 17	FY 16	FY 15	FY 14	FY 13
WNESU Special Ed. Spending	*	*	*	*	*	*
% of Total Budget	*	*	*	*	*	*

* Unavailable from SU at time of printing. Addendum to proposal to follow.

As discussed under the Special Education Services summary, the recent and significant influx of students with trauma histories has pushed our support structures and budget to a near breaking point.

- Actual Special Education costs for the period of FY 12 through FY 16 tracked closely to budget, generally falling below the budgeted amount. In FY 17 and FY 18 (projected), a rapid increase in caseload for trauma-affected students resulted in budget overruns approaching \$200,000 (pre-reimbursement figures) for each year.
- Eleven special education students with significant trauma histories account for \$600K in additional costs over and above regular and special education expenditures for supporting these students at Cabot School in FY 18 (projected).
- Starting in FY 17 and continuing this year, for reasons noted above (the influx of high-cost trauma students), the two-year average for special education costs jumped to over \$950,000 a year, a 65% increase for the period. Without the increase experienced FY 17 (i.e. if these students had not arrived or otherwise needed extra services to meet their trauma profile), special education costs would have decreased by more than \$20,000.
- The projected cost for these students is approaching \$600,000 for FY 18, about 18% of the overall school budget. This figure represents the additional cost of educating just 6% of the overall student population.

- Cabot appears to have an exceptionally high rate of trauma-impacted foster children. In FY 17, Cabot School ranked 4th state-wide in raw numbers of State-Placed students, with 7.23 students. As a percentage of ADM, Cabot ranked 2nd state-wide, at 4.5%.



The town of Cabot currently has several foster homes that are deemed by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to be “stable placements” for children in crisis. Some of these homes are licensed to take as many as four children. A number of these foster families have been willing to take very high-needs (e.g. trauma-affected) children that other homes will not take, or that have already passed through one or more foster homes on their way to Cabot. DCF case managers have reportedly informed Family Court judges that “placement in Cabot is a good idea because the school does such a good job with these children.” These factors appear to have combined to make Cabot School a “magnet” for the placement of trauma-affected children, with four new children coming into the school in late-August alone.

These new students, when added to seven other trauma-students already on the case load (eleven students in total), are have led to significant financial strain on the school. As a Board, we assess that these costs would not be eliminated merely by merger – and while a larger tax base may partially defray the costs associated with these students, such a move would not change the total spending by Vermont taxpayers. Concentration of this current crisis in our elementary grades and the financial reality of 1-to-1 behavioral interventionist requirements mean the answer here is not merger or consolidation within another structure.

These alarming costs assist us in demonstrating that Cabot’s per-pupil expenditures are not solely a function of or inherent to our small size, rather, exceptional costs over the past two years have had an outsized influence on our budget and total educational expenditures.

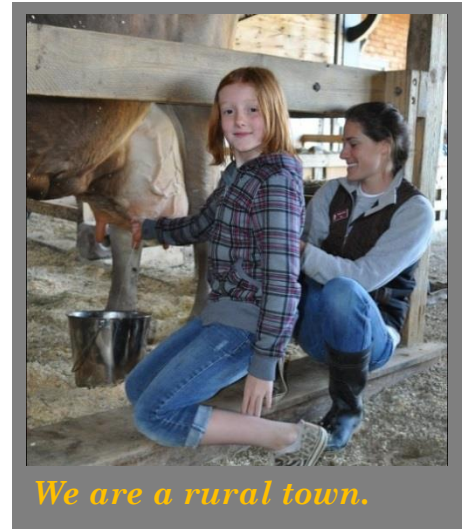
As a Board, we are hopeful that our Superintendent’s research and presentation of this issue to legislators, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Human Services, and others will facilitate a change in how these costs are accounted and managed. The fact that these increased costs have challenged our community with imposition of substantial penalties for overspending while making our school district appear inefficient is an unfair situation, and distorts the reality of our current financial status.

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Part II: *Cabot's Role in the Community & Region*

Cabot's Role in the Region [Rule 3450.10]

Cabot's geography does not afford close alignment with a single larger community in the region. Some Cabot residents are oriented toward the greater Barre-Montpelier area, some are closely connected to Hardwick, and still others are oriented toward Danville and St. Johnsbury (principally those living along Route 2 and the East Cabot corridor). Cabot is not a satellite of any of these larger communities, and in many respects has more in common with the Northeast Kingdom than the Capitol region. The lack of clear regional alignment afforded Cabot the opportunity to look in many directions to comply with Act 46 and to craft this proposal, but it also limited the extent to which Cabot was a consideration in other communities.



In the future, the Board's aim is to ensure the Cabot School District becomes increasingly relevant to our neighboring districts. Cabot's size, educational model, and programs of emphasis may provide the best educational environment and experience for some students in our region – much as some Cabot students benefit from regional school choice and the ability to attend a larger school such as U32 or Montpelier High School.

Regional Districts Not Part of the Proposal [Rule 3450.10(1)]

The Cabot Board's strong preference was to identify a partner, or partners, to jointly submit an application. The absence of a specific partner does not foreclose future efforts to collaborate, and with respect to collaboration Cabot has enjoyed significant interest from our neighboring districts. Our School Board believes that completion of the Act 46 process and finalization of the statewide plan will provide the degree of certainty and stability necessary for other districts to shift from an inward focus to an outward one.

- To the north, the Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union (OSSU) includes neighbors, Woodbury and Hardwick, which operate grades PK-6 at the town level, and with Greensboro, form Hazen Union, serving grades 7-12. Wolcott (PK-6), Craftsbury (PK-12), and Stannard (PK-6, in partnership Greensboro at Lakeview School) complete the OSSU. The OSSU districts are submitting a joint AGS application to the State. The

OSSU Board declined to include Cabot within its proposal, based upon the already complex nature of their supervisory union.

- To the south, Twinfield operates a PK-12 school and is our current sister school within the Washington Northeast Supervisory Union (WNESU). Twinfield voters supported merger, albeit with low turnout, during the June 20, 2017 vote. Cabot and Twinfield have historically shared some resources, namely support staff and some transportation services through WNESU. Our relationship with Twinfield is covered in other sections within our self-assessment.
- To our east, Danville operates a PK-12 school within the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU), which also includes Peacham (PK-6), Walden (PK-8), and Barnet (PK-8). Barnet, Walden, and Waterford formed the “Caledonia Cooperative” district earlier this year, and later received State Board of Education approval to form a 3+1 preferred structure with Peacham. Our Board carefully considered restructuring to a PK-8 district to seek merger with the Caledonia Cooperative district. Discussions with Danville, in terms of collaboration, were held on two occasions.
- To our west, the Washington Central Supervisory Union (WCSU) includes five towns (Berlin, Calais, East Montpelier, Middlesex, and Worcester) that operate PK-6 schools, with their grade 7-12 students served by U32. These districts previously formed and then dissolved a 706b committee to explore merger, and are submitting a joint AGS application proposing the maintenance of their separate elementary boards and a unified union high school board.
- Other districts of note: Montpelier-Roxbury (PK-12), Blue Mountain (PK-12), Barre Town and Barre City (PK-8 and Spaulding HS), and St. Johnsbury (including St. Johnsbury Academy). While significant portions of our community maintain connections to these towns, there has not been a traditional overlap of educational programs or relationships, with the exception of Cabot’s relationship with the Central Vermont Career Center (“Barre Tech Center”). However, each of these districts are relevant to our overall region and influence the Act 46 process around us.

Regional Relationships & Transportation [Rule 3450.10(2)]

Current and Historic Relationships among Districts

Of the districts noted, Cabot has an existing relationship with Twinfield Union School based upon both schools being part of WNESU. Cabot and Twinfield have historically shared some resources, namely support staff and some transportation services. Specifically, through the Supervisory Union, these schools have shared janitorial staff, utilize common transportation to the Central Vermont Career Center, shared curriculum and special services coordinators, and participate in a joint negotiations committee. We have not traditionally shared many programmatic opportunities or engaged in the type of curricular synchronization that would readily permit the sharing of educators. The

absence of demonstrable historic cooperation and the perception of different educational cultures is a possible barrier to merger, as discussed in greater detail elsewhere.

Cabot’s relationships with other school districts have been limited by the legal and financial constraints that accompany alignment within different supervisory unions. There are no formal transportation agreements with any neighboring schools (except as noted with Twinfield for Career Center travel).



Distances and Quality of Roads between Districts

Cabot’s closest neighbors with high schools are Twinfield Union (9.5 miles), Danville (12.7 miles), and Hazen Union (10.9 miles). Twinfield Union School is accessible from Cabot village via State Route 215 and U.S. Route 2, both are state maintained. Danville School is accessible by paved road via State Route 215, State Route 15, and U.S. Route 2. Use of Danville Hill Road reduces the distance and time of travel, but is at times treacherous in winter and mud season. Hazen Union is accessible via South Walden Road and State Route 15. Twinfield Union is less accessible to students living on the northern end of Cabot, and more so to those along U.S. Route 2 (e.g. East Cabot). Danville is not as accessible to students living on the western edge of Cabot (e.g. Ducharme Road, Coits Pond Road, etc.), and Hazen Union is not as accessible to students in East Cabot.

SU	District / Towns Served	Grades Served	ADM PK-6	ADM 7-12	ADM Total	Distance (miles)+
WNESU	Twinfield Union	PK-12	171.9	161.59	333.49	9.5
CSSU	Caledonia Cooperative					N/A
CSSU	Walden^	PK-8	61.05	65.61	129.00	6.8
CSSU	Waterford^	PK-8	100.14	104.11	205.63	25.1
CSSU	Barnet^	PK-8	153.70	126.50	282.50	20.5
CSSU	Danville	PK-12	192.50	124.00	316.81	12.7
CSSU	Peacham	PK-6	50.00	45.00	95.00	17.1
OSSU	Craftsbury	PK-12	72.1	67.91	140.01	22.0
OSSU	Hazen Union	7-12				10.9
OSSU	Greensboro*	PK-6	55.00	53.00	108.00	15.9
OSSU	Hardwick	PK-6	222.80	220.88	445.36	10.6
OSSU	Woodbury	PK-6	47.76	42.73	90.49	6.8
OSSU	Stannard*	PK-6	22.00	19.02	41.02	15.9
OSSU	Wolcott	PK-6	129.01	125.48	254.92	16.4
WCSU	U32	7-12				17.8
WCSU	Berlin	PK-6	187.90	173.94	367.59	22.4
WCSU	Calais	PK-6	111.20	111.35	227.21	13.4
WCSU	E. Montpelier	PK-6	184.51	198.06	382.57	15.9
WCSU	Middlesex	PK-6	169.86	118.02	287.90	26.7
WCSU	Worcester	PK-6	67.75	64.12	132.28	16.7
M-RSU	Montpelier^	PK-12	555.35	425.63	984.41	21.7
M-RSU	Roxbury^	PK-4	38.00	35.40	73.40	39.0
BSU	Spaulding H.S.	9-12				21.2
BSU	Barre City	PK-8	629.49	491.54	1124.39	21.6
BSU	Barre Town	PK-8	590.33	531.00	1122.30	20.9

*Greensboro and Stannard students attend Lakeview Union Elementary School (with its own school board).

^Towns not operating, or projected to cease operating, an independent school board for any grades served.

+Utilizing paved roads and fastest routes to the extent possible (source: Google Maps).

Cabot’s Conversations with other Districts [Rule 3450.10(3)-(4) & Rule 3450.2]

Act 46 ostensibly presents a question of structure, but for Cabot, our choice to remain independent is not based upon an unwillingness to cooperate and collaborate within our region. Instead, it is a reality of structural incompatibility with many neighbors, the consequences for Cabot (based on size alone) entailed by participation within a preferred structure, and the inability to ensure preservation of core attributes of the school under any merger scenario.

As a Board, we are disappointed that Act 46 and Act 49 did not do more to reshape the law or greater incentivize collaborative relationships, absent school districts merging and operating under a consolidated governance structure. The actual or perceived barriers to shared utilization of teachers or support staff limited the extent to which conversations with other districts progressed. We found that there was high interest in the concept of collaboration, but reticence to develop the mechanisms for that type of collaboration. We

identified several areas in which we believe cooperation and sharing of resources could positively impact the region:

- Access by regional students to Cabot’s PBL, arts and music programs, and participation in June term projects.
- Development of a sustainability curriculum, based on or partially utilizing a PBL model, encompassing the rotation of specialty classes and opportunities with neighboring schools.
- Sharing of part-time equivalent faculty, e.g. to expand access to foreign language instruction, and specialized or rotational course offerings such as AP English. Alternatively, rotation of full time faculty between schools as a means of professional development and delivery of more specialized courses on a rotational basis.
- Sharing of part-time equivalent instructional interventionists, with a view that splitting administrative and benefit costs between districts would provide savings.

Our ideas on collaboration did not bear fruit under the time constraints of preparing this application. However, we believe each of these ideas may be explored as we join a larger supervisory union that offers more situations where this type of collaboration may be implemented. Independent of this proposal, we encourage the Agency of Education, State Board of Education, and legislature to explore statutory and regulatory changes that would streamline these types of relationships, especially among schools remaining in non-preferred structures following implementation of the statewide plan.

Conversations with Twinfield Union, Danville, and Craftsbury have been consolidated in the next section, discussing barriers to merger (the three PK-12 districts in our region).

Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union

Early in the post-706b vote process, pursuit of options with OSSU and schools in the district was viewed with high interest. Our Board chair attended a meeting of the OSSU Executive Board and carried on informal conversations for several weeks, culminating in our Board sending a letter to the OSSU Executive Board in August. Our letter provided a framework for discussions and exploration of options, stating in pertinent part:

“We are seeking to collaborate with multiple partners and explore merger (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46’s requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities. ...

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational experience of students in Cabot and within your communities.

Even without joining your supervisory union or directly participating your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where less than full time equivalent teachers or staff have been utilized.”

OSSU is also home to Hazen Union Middle and High School. Although structurally incompatible for merger, we assessed that Hazen Union could also offer opportunities and benefits to Cabot students through shared programs, and shared educators. Likewise, our initial assessment concluded that Cabot’s educational vision has elements consistent with the direction of Hazen Union – providing a basis for collaboration or partnership. Community members repeatedly brought to our attention the Forestry program at Hazen Union (operated in conjunction with GMTCC), and the relevance to many Cabot students. Our letter to Hazen Union, also sent in August, stated:

“We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational experience of students in both of our communities. Even without a merger or direct participation in your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where our districts have traditionally utilized less than full time equivalent teachers or staff.”

Ultimately, our conversations with OSSU and its districts were limited. The decision of OSSU to submit a joint AGS proposal was accompanied by a decision not to include Cabot in the process. We appreciate the complex arrangement of the districts in OSSU and recognize that the addition of Cabot would have added further challenges, especially in light of the Rule 3450.11 requirement for the fewest number of districts practicable within a supervisory union.

Notwithstanding the legal and financial hurdles to cross-supervisory union sharing of programs and resources, OSSU representatives indicated a willingness to explore collaborative opportunities and cooperation following the implementation of the statewide plan. We view our neighbors to the north as potentially valuable partners and, as part of our sustainable future, anticipate revisiting opportunities with OSSU following implementation of the statewide plan.

Washington Central Supervisory Union

Cabot shares a fair amount in common with the three smaller communities within WCSU: Calais, Middlesex, and Worcester. All three are rural and maintain small schools. Community connections, especially with Calais, are notable based upon geography, shared youth sports teams (e.g. baseball). Our first post-706b vote Board meeting had a member of the Calais School Board and a member of the U32 school board in attendance. While

not committing to any course of action, both made positive public comments about the prospect of working together through the Act 46 process. We formally followed up by sending a letter to the U32 school board, stating:

“We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of joining the Washington Central Supervisory Union in developing an alternative governance structure, to include exploration of merging with another district as part of such plan, or participating as a restructured K-6 school that joins the U32 Board or as a K-8 school that designates U32 for our grade 9-12 students. Even without merger or direct participation in such planning, we see value in discussing options for shared programming or resources through contract or by partnership – specifically, with respect to the utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.”

Merger into a unified high school district would not have resulted in a preferred structure, but based upon the positive community view of U32 we believed it was prudent to explore any potential for Cabot to access or join in the high school program. Our preliminary conversations did not proceed toward an actionable plan for merger or collaboration – instead, much like OSSU, WCSU has focused internally in building a plan for Act 46 compliance.

Part III of this proposal discusses our position with respect to re-assignment to a larger supervisory union, and we believe WCSU offers some advantages for Cabot. Joining WCSU as a standalone PK-12 district could enable close cooperation between Cabot and the three small elementary schools, as well as U32.

Montpelier

Based upon the favorable view of Montpelier’s high school expressed in our community survey, in August we sent a letter to initiate conversations of how our districts could work together. We recognize that Montpelier is in the process of implementing a merger with the Roxbury School District, but nevertheless felt it was prudent to explore any potential avenues of collaboration – especially given the community’s support for integrating a small outlying district. In our letter, we stated:

“We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of partnering with Montpelier to share programming, resources, and educational opportunities as part of an alternative governance structure, or more feasibly, by contract. We are specifically interested in assessing any benefit that could come from the shared utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.”

Unfortunately, we did not receive a formal response or invitation to discuss these matters further. Accordingly, our focus shifted to other districts in the region.

Caledonia Cooperative District

The final options for compliance with Act 46 under consideration by our Board were submission of this proposal or restructuring to a PK-8 district and seeking merger with the Caledonia Cooperative district. We formally initiated discussions with Caledonia Cooperative via a letter, stating:

“We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of working with your provisional unified school district to explore Cabot’s addition as a fourth member if Cabot were to restructure its school to serve only grades K-8, or the possibility of utilizing the new 3 x 2 x 1 preferred structure authorized by Act 49 (based upon Walden-Waterford-Barnet, Cabot-Danville, and Peacham). We also believe it is worthwhile to explore how Cabot School District could benefit your districts through the sharing of resources, program options, or the development of the relationships and high school curriculum necessary to benefit students from your communities. We also believe there are opportunities for our K-8 programs to identify areas of mutual benefit – including shared utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.”

Members of our board had the opportunity to attend meetings with Caledonia Cooperative, and reported positive discussions concerning Cabot’s inclusion within the district. Cabot was seen as a potential value added for Walden in particular, which is geographically separated from Waterford and Barnet’s schools.

We identified the following benefits to merger with Caledonia Cooperative:

- Education costs would be shared by taxpayers across four towns;
- Fewer classrooms would be needed in Cabot;
- Merger incentives from State of Vermont; and
- More course options and teachers available for Cabot high school students in larger schools and larger/different peer group for HS students.

We also identified the following drawbacks:

- Less access to extracurricular opportunities due to transportation, competition for spots;
- Challenge to retain teachers now shared between HS and other grades;
- Reduced Cabot voice on educational decisions for preK-8 on unified district school board;

- No Cabot voice on curricula/cost of chosen high schools; and
- Financial and social impacts with HS closed

From a budget standpoint, the FY 18 Cabot Homestead Tax rate is \$1.7619, and it was projected that Cabot’s addition to the Caledonia Cooperative District would result in a Homestead Tax rate of \$1.7715 for FY 19 (including merger incentives from the State of Vermont). Cabot’s addition to the district would have increased the projected FY 19 Homestead tax rate for Caledonia Cooperative, based upon their current composition.

At the October community forum in Cabot, a comparison of the financial models for merging with Caledonia Cooperative (referred to as “Option 1”) versus strengthening the high school, as proposed in this submission (referred to as “Option 2”) was presented:

Option & Assumptions	Projected Homestead Tax Rate		Projected Taxes for a \$100k Homestead*	
FY 18 Cabot School Budget	\$1.7619	-	\$1,761	-
Option 1 (Merge & Tuition Students)				
FY 19	\$1.7715	+0.5%	\$1,771	+ \$10
FY 23	\$1.9949	+13.0%	\$1,994	+ \$233
Option 2 (Maintain H.S. and Add 2.2 FTE Educators)				
FY 19	\$1.9336	+9.7%	\$1,933	+ \$172
FY 19 (with +2 tuition students and +6 equalized pupils)	\$1.7758	+0.7%	\$1,775	+ \$14
FY 19 (with +2 tuition students and +6 equalized pupils, and \$150k for facilities)	\$1.9391	+10.0%	\$1,939	+ \$178

*In 2016, 333 Cabot households received property tax reductions by paying according to their household income. These reductions totaled \$526,038, averaging \$1,580 per household.

Our community survey was conducted after the forum, with a mailing to all households in Cabot. A small majority favored proceeding with the route presented in this proposal (Option 2). We recognize a significant cohort of Cabot voters exists that is best described as “choice minded.” The Act 46 Working Group conducted outreach to individuals strongly advocating for school choice and we appreciated the candid feedback with respect to taxes, the quality (or perceived lack thereof) of school programming, and benefits of school choice for grades 9-12.

As a Board, the analysis of our members varied, but the final vote was 5-0 to prepare this proposal versus attempting a fast-tracked 706b proposal to merge with Caledonia Cooperative. Concerns over merger included the risk of a merger vote failing in one or both districts, the challenges of transitioning to a choice model in light of our poverty rate and corresponding concerns about transportation and access to expanded opportunities, the

impact on the PK-8 program with the loss of the high school, the permanence of closing the high school, and the decreased representation on a consolidated board and increase in oversight responsibilities (two representatives for Cabot, with duties overseeing four schools).

We are grateful for the cooperation and constructive dialogue provided by representatives of Caledonia Cooperative during our study and deliberative process. We hope that Cabot School will find a constructive role in future collaboration and cooperation with this district, particularly with respect to the Walden School. As a close neighbor, with similar demographics and geographical constraints, we believe our PK-8 programs can and should seek cooperation in the future – to the extent allowed under current law.

Barriers to Merger with other Districts [Rule 3450.10(5)]

General barriers to any merger exist, with potentially negative consequences arising under any merger scenario. Several concerns have influenced community opinion and Board deliberation on mergers:

- Diluted voting power and representation of Cabot on a consolidated board. Our town’s population is an inherent limitation on the potential voting power of Cabot under almost all merger scenarios. Only a merger with a similar sized district (e.g. Craftsbury) and participation in a preferred structure such as a 2 x 2 x 1 would result in Cabot maintaining at least 50% voting power. In contrast, under the Cabot-Danville-Twinfield proposal, Cabot would have held 2/9 board positions (22%).
- A one-on-one merger with any other neighboring PK-12 district would not unto itself result in a sufficient number of students to constitute a preferred structure, absent the integration or involvement of other districts. The rules concerning “structural isolation” outlined in Act 49 (2017) complicate scenarios of “existing districts” joining a 2 x 2 x 1 or other combination where Cabot is a merger member. Likewise, based upon the lack of merger activity by our neighboring PK-12 districts, there was no basis for Cabot to join a preferred structure as the x 1 “existing district.”
- As discussed in greater depth in Part III, Cabot’s facilities need significant improvements soon (whether continuing as a PK-12 school, or under some other configuration). We anticipate the need to utilize community based funding mechanisms (e.g. Cabot Community Investment Fund) or to issue bonds to cover some of the major repairs. We assess that anticipated addition of debt to a merged district by Cabot served as an impediment to further merger discussions, and we are concerned that a merged district’s electorate would balk at approving funds – jeopardizing the viability of the school altogether.
- Finally, the Board notes that under virtually all merger discussions (including the 706b proposal), closure and termination of Cabot’s high school program was predicate – whether by voluntary restructuring or by integration into a larger PK-12 district. The

previously noted limitations on articles of agreement, and consideration of reduced voting power, lead us to conclude that Cabot would be unable to control its own destiny with respect to grades served, and would have fewer representatives with an increased set of responsibilities spread across a larger district – contrary to the Act 46 goals concerning transparency and accountability.

Twinfield Union

Although a part of the same Supervisory Union, Cabot and Twinfield do not have an extensive history of close cooperation in educational or extracurricular programming. The 706b process revealed distinct educational cultures within the schools, and the community survey revealed less affinity for Twinfield relative to other schools in the region. Community perception, whether accurate or not, has repeatedly assumed a default position of imposed merger between Cabot and Twinfield under the statewide plan. Direct merger with Twinfield has been a concern raised by voters during debate over the 706b proposal (e.g. vote “yes” or merger will be with Twinfield alone, and without Danville) and views on Cabot’s subsequent steps to comply with Act 46 (e.g. restructure to PK-8 to ensure choices broader than Twinfield).

Reviewing the 706b report, Twinfield presents some notable trends from a direct merger standpoint:

- Significant reduction in enrollment among the primary school population, versus generally stable enrollment in Cabot.
- Disparity in outcomes as reported in the 706b report. Specifically, the rate of college matriculation, SAT scores, and overall graduation rate were of concern. The slightly greater breadth of classes offered by Twinfield does not appear to directly correlate to quantifiably better outcomes for students.
- Twinfield’s representatives prioritized costs during the 706b negotiation process. Sharing the costs of renovating the Cabot School with one other district (versus two) would have a greater impact on Twinfield’s tax rate and debt load than the 706b merger proposal. We are also concerned that gaining support for a bond in a merged district would be difficult – potentially resulting in neglect of Cabot facilities to the extent that it could eventually force closure of the school itself.

A direct merger with Twinfield would likely yield Cabot about 1/3 of the representatives on a consolidated school board. Twinfield representatives to the 706b committee all favored termination of Cabot’s High School, and only one representative supported a Project Based Learning program remaining on the Cabot campus for high school students. While the 706b representatives and the Twinfield school board are not comprised of the same individuals, we are concerned over the degree to which Cabot’s priorities and desires for school structure and programming would prevail under a consolidated board.

Unfortunately, the April 5, 2017 vote by the 706b committee to advance “Option 1” and close all components of Cabot’s high school created a wave of negative sentiment toward the 706b proposal in Cabot. This meeting was a turning point for many voters, set in motion the change to make Cabot a “necessary” district, and likely contributed to the high voter turnout as voters realized the profound changes presented and prospective impact on the viability of the town. On June 20th, 45.3% of Cabot's registered voters turned out to reject the C-D-T merger proposal by a 2-to-1 margin. Of the more than 1,200 votes cast that day across the four towns (Cabot, Marshfield, Danville and Plainfield), nearly half (520) were from Cabot.

Following the failed merger vote, the Cabot and Twinfield School Boards met to discuss potential for further collaboration of some kind. Subsequently, we chose to focus on opportunities with Danville and Caledonia Cooperative, rather than further exploration of a new merger or joint proposal under these rules with Twinfield.

Structural barriers to merger with Twinfield exist, namely because Cabot and Twinfield would not yield sufficient numbers to constitute a preferred structure alone and would need other side-by-side partners. Reaching a preferred structure would require complementary actions by neighboring districts in the region, which did not occur (e.g. merger or restructuring by districts within the Washington Central, Orleans Southwest, or Barre Supervisory Unions, or interest from the 3 + 1 structure formed by Caledonia Cooperative and Peacham).

A negative perception of the Cabot-Twinfield Act 46 process is a reality among many Cabot residents and is a significant, and perhaps decisive, barrier to merger. Given that a Cabot-Twinfield merger would likely lead to the closure of Cabot’s High School (and possibly other grades at Cabot in the years to come) there is great concern about the impact of such a merger for our students, and for the broader Cabot community. Educationally there is concern about the loss of quality staff and programs at Cabot, coupled with uncertainty about what our students would gain in the process. From a community perspective, there is concern about diminished interest on the part of young families in moving to, or staying in, Cabot if large sections of the PK-12 program are housed elsewhere.

Ultimately, from Cabot’s perspective now is not the time to study or propose (or to impose) a merger with Twinfield.

Danville

Throughout the Act 46 process, Danville has been a natural and logical partner to explore options. Geography and a similar educational culture have been repeatedly recognized as strong starting points for scenarios encompassing merger or collaboration. However, Danville is positioned as a school with stable enrollment, with a healthy number of tuition students attending, and has not faced the same pressure as Cabot from a financial

standpoint in recent years. We initiated post-706b vote discussions with Danville via a letter sent in early August, noting various options:

“We would like to restart discussions with your Board, specifically re-examining the possibility of cooperation between Cabot and Danville. We see several possible opportunities to work together, including making use of the newly-authorized 3 x 2 x 1 “preferred structure” provided under Act 49. Such an arrangement could potentially include Walden-Waterford-Barnet, Cabot-Danville, and Peacham in this preferred structure, and in so doing could provide our communities with the tax incentives available under Act 46.

We also see potential cooperation under some form of an alternative governance structure (potentially submitted to the state as a joint application), with possibilities ranging from the formation of a union high school district, implementing a “strengthened supervisory union” model and remaining independent districts, or remaining independent and merely identifying programmatic partnerships that emphasize the sharing of teachers and resources. Even without merger or alternative governance discussions we see value in exploring contractual options to enhance curriculum or share resources – specifically, with respect to the utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.”

Pursuant to Rule 3450.7, we note our two warned joint board meetings where options for cooperation and collaboration were discussed at length following the failure of the 706b merger proposal. Both meetings were positive, focusing on collaboration more than merger. However, Danville ultimately focused their conversations with Blue Mountain Union and the St. Johnsbury Academy – contemplating merger with the former, and collaboration with the latter. Based upon the 706b process, we anticipated that a Cabot-Danville merger would entail closure of our high school – but, we note that two of Danville’s representatives voted to disband the 706b committee altogether, rather than proceed to a vote. Likewise, Danville voted decisively against that proposed merger, raising concern of whether any merger option would be successful.

At our final joint meeting, it was noted that there was enthusiasm among our respective administrators for working together based upon their assessment that our programs were complementary to one another rather than duplicative – offering the possibility of meaningful shared programming. As a Board, we noted that the possibility of collaboration would be in large part contingent upon being part of the same supervisory union. For Cabot, the benefit of collaboration with Danville and joining the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union (CCSU) would need to be weighed against the disruption of existing SU services delivered in conjunction with Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS) and the change of serving career center (Central Vermont Career Center versus St. Johnsbury). A complete analysis of this was not conducted, based upon Danville’s declination to pursue a joint AGS proposal or continue discussion of collaborative

opportunities. We also did not receive a sufficiently affirmative indication of Danville’s support for Cabot’s addition to CCSU to examine that possibility or process further.

Structural and financial barriers to merger with Danville also exist, namely because Cabot and Danville would not yield sufficient numbers to constitute a preferred structure alone and would need other side-by-side partners. Reaching a preferred structure would require complementary actions by neighboring districts in the region, most feasibly interest from the 3 + 1 structure formed by Caledonia Cooperative and Peacham, to form a 3 x 2 x 1 comprised. The disparity between Cabot’s present per pupil expenditures and debt load are also seen as impediments based upon Danville’s current financial situation and absence of debt. Under a direct merger scenario, we anticipate Cabot would retain approximately 40% of voting power on a consolidated board – likely enough representation to mitigate concerns of involuntary restructuring of grades, although based upon the 706b process we believe closure of Cabot high school would be predicate to a proposed merger.

Finally, our community survey revealed a generally positive perception of Danville School and there are some future opportunities for collaboration. However, geographically and socially, the Danville community appears more oriented to St. Johnsbury than Cabot or Washington County, generally. In the absence of legal and financial challenges associated with cross-supervisory union collaboration, we believe Danville would be a logical partner to form a close and cooperative relationship. With respect to merger, we believe the anticipated costs of renovating the Cabot School campus as one of the leading financial impediments to merger with Danville. As with the OSSU schools to the north, we remain open to collaborative opportunities in the future following implementation of the statewide plan.

Craftsbury

Craftsbury is similar to Cabot in terms of scale and role in the community. We began our post-706b assessment process open to a non-incentivized merger with Craftsbury (potentially incentivized, if other districts joined to form a preferred structure, e.g. 2 x 2 x 1), recognizing similar educational goals and the potential for collaboration and cost sharing as small districts, while maintaining near parity on a consolidated school board. We recognized the success of Craftsbury in delivering quality education despite small scale, and the impact of renovating their facilities. However, impediments to merger were identified including distance, potential competition for students from sending districts, the debt load of Craftsbury, and the lack of a significant existing relationship between the schools or communities. Our focus in conceptualizing opportunities with Craftsbury, revolved around shared programming, shared use of educators, and consolidation of services possible under a joint AGS proposal or Cabot’s addition to OSSU:

“With the implementation of Act 49 (2017) and State’s promulgation of rules for alternative governance structures, we see increased opportunities to creatively meet the goals of Act 46 and ways in which our district could enhance opportunities for others. We are seeking to collaborate with multiple

partners and explore merger (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46’s requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities. ...

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational experience of students in both of our communities. Even without a merger or direct participation in your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where our districts have traditionally utilized less than full time equivalent teachers or staff.”

Without an existing relationship or the benefit of geographic proximity to press cooperation in the future, we do not foresee close collaboration between our districts in the future, absent a concerted effort by both communities. Nevertheless, we remain open to discussions in the future, but recognize the limitations and other more readily accessible partners for both schools.

Cabot’s Role in the Community

Our size and the structural options available under Act 46 and Act 49 make it virtually impossible for Cabot to control its own destiny in terms of the school’s structure. The 706b process demonstrated that outside of our community it is easy to view our high school as a liability, rather than an asset. In our assessment, any merger, unless limited to a 1-to-1 merger a similarly sized district, would leave the fate of grades served in Cabot to others.

“Of all civic institutions in a village ... the school serves the broadest constituency. Not only do schools meet the educational needs of a community ... the local school also provides social, cultural, and recreational opportunities.

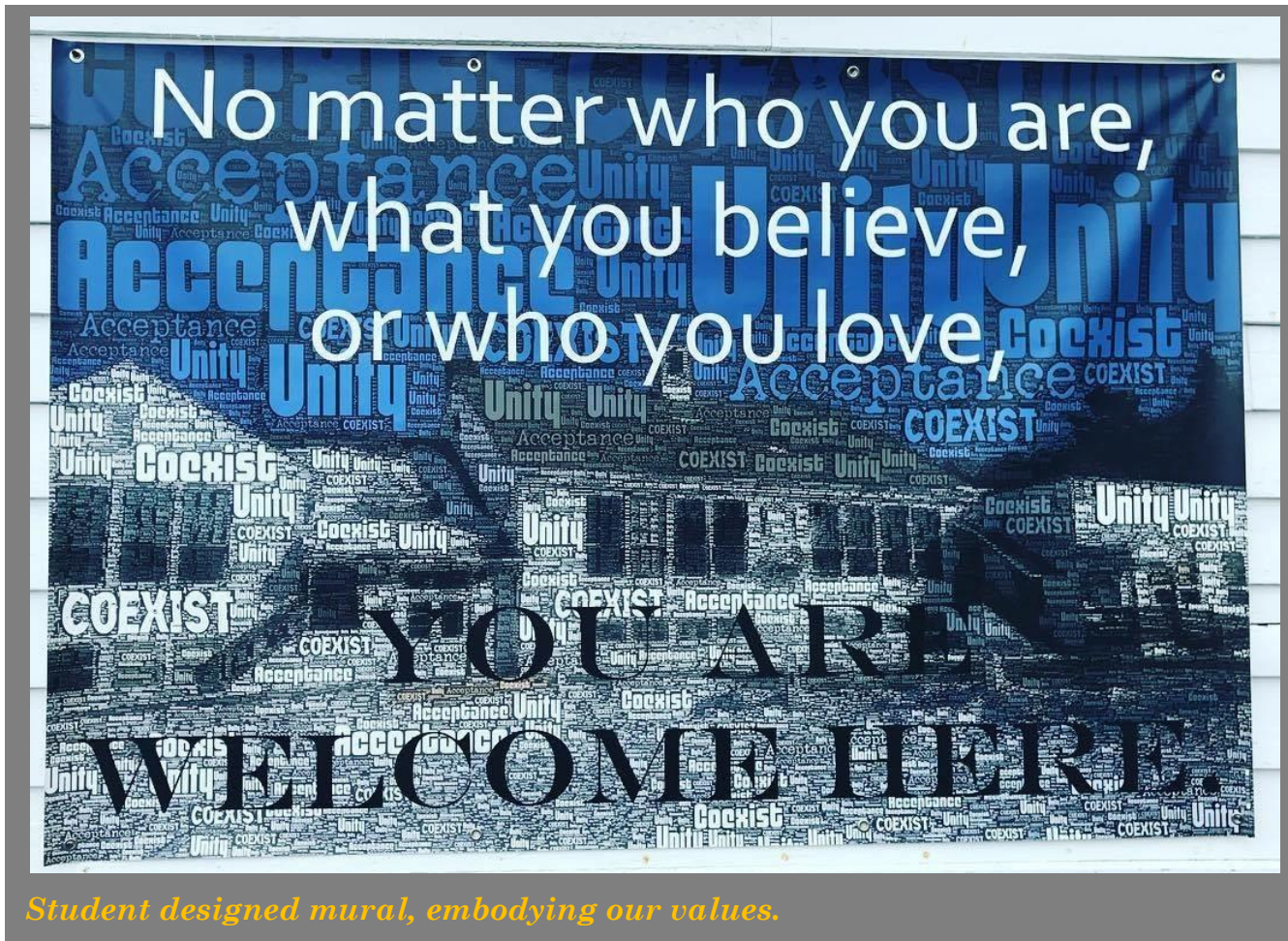
It is a place where generations come together and where community identity is forged.”

Lyson, Thomas A., What Does a School Mean to a Community? Assessing the Social and Economic Benefits of Schools to Rural Villages in New York, Journal of Research in Rural Education (Issue 3 - Winter 2002) p. 132.

The termination of Cabot’s high school program would end competitive high school sports events on our community fields; it would also lead to the end of the student led and organized concerts, exhibitions of learning, and the constant activity at the CSPAC building that has come to characterize not just the school, but the entire town. Our high school is small, but it has an outsized impact on the vitality of the community – basketball and soccer games attract up to four generations from some families, and it provides

cultural experiences to our rural community in performing and visual arts that would not be replaced.

As the introduction to this proposal lamented – how do we value these experiences? Dollars and cents do not capture the impact of the student-community connection that is built through sports, arts, and events. As a Board, we feel strongly that the connection between our student body and the community adds value to both – the leadership, maturity, good citizenship, and desire of graduates to return to rural Vermont is driven by the sense of place and connection that comes from these activities. We do not see the



Student designed mural, embodying our values.

degradation of civic life in Cabot as speculative, rather, the loss of the high school will profoundly diminish the character of our town, reduce the traffic and extent of activities in Cabot village, and lead to permanent changes.

In the latter stages of the Act 46 process, discussion on the value of Cabot School to the town and our community has filled living rooms, village shops, and digital front porch. Many love the school; graduates, parents of graduates, current students, and current parents have all voiced confidence in the school and cite it as the prime reason they live in Cabot. However, there are others who do not share that same enthusiasm – not all

students or parents have had an ideal experience with the school, and for others, the cost of the school is not equivalent to its benefit.

As a Board, we have been careful not to let enthusiasm for the concept of a complete PK-12 school override the realities of budgeting, programming, and opportunity for students. Irrespective of opinions on the school, this process has resulted in the re-energizing of our community and triggered a recognition that the school's success is closely linked to the support of the town. In our plan for a sustainable future, fostering the relationship of student connections to the community is integral to success.

During this process we have taken notice of many public comments and submissions concerning Cabot School's role, especially the high school, in our community and the potential effects of a merger that restructured grades served. We believe these points represent more than *fear of change*, and recognize that some consequences are more likely or more remote than others:

- Loss of the sense of community engagement that now exists when families get together around high school functions and team sports. For many this is the setting where new residents get to know their new neighbors, visit with friends, and network;
- Disruption to families and community cohesion resulting from time lost on longer transportation times to school and after school programs, making it particularly difficult for working families, especially those headed by single parents or the economically disadvantaged;
- Expectation that loss of the high school will negatively affect business activity in the village and, over time, could lead to the loss of the retail establishments in Cabot Village;
- Dispersal of Cabot students among many different schools, negatively impacting the number of graduates who return to Cabot;
- Concern that a share of possible savings from consolidation on the tax rate would be offset by the added expense to individual families, through transportation costs and increased time spent commuting to school or activities, decreasing the ability of many to participate in town functions;
- Prospect of a gradual erosion of Cabot real estate values as families with school age children who might otherwise be attracted to Cabot instead gravitate to towns with high schools, and as existing Cabot families, whose livelihood is not tied to a farm or a business, relocate to avoid the long drive to school and after school activities; and
- The decline of the number of younger families living in the town saps the community of much needed vitality. There will be fewer volunteers to keep non-school community groups active.

Several community members provided the Board with references and studies demonstrating the impact of school closures and consolidations in other states (e.g. rural New York, Nebraska, and Minnesota). Some studies indicate decreases in property values ranging from as much as 5-25% within a 5 to 10-year time period in towns losing a school compared to similar communities that did not, and paint a sad picture of what becomes of these communities.¹

We recognize that many Vermont communities thrive without a PK-12 school, and do not presume to know the negative, or potentially positive, consequences for our community if our school were to be restructured. What we do know is that this process has emphasized the importance of the connection between our residents and the school – the renewed energy and interest in success for the school will hopefully be one of the most lasting consequences of the Act 46 process for Cabot. Cabot School is a bright star in the constellation of Cabot community, and we hope that this proposal will ensure that it never goes dim.

¹ See, e.g. Lyson, Thomas A., *What Does a School Mean to a Community? Assessing the Social and Economic Benefits of Schools to Rural Villages in New York*, *Journal of Research in Rural Education* (Issue 3 - Winter 2002); Surface, Jeanne L., *Losing a Way of Life: The Closing of a Country School in Rural Nebraska*, (2016) Publications of the Rural Futures Institute - University of Nebraska at Omaha; Sederberg, Charles, *Economic Role of School Districts in Rural Communities*, *Journal of Rural Education*, vol 4, No. 3, (1987).

Part III: *Cabot's Sustainable Future*

As an independent district, we will ensure our distinct programs continue to produce the college and career ready workforce Vermont needs.

Our sustainable future is premised upon targeted investment and improvements to our curriculum and infrastructure. Each Vermont school may lay claim to being “unique,” but we believe that we offer a distinct educational approach and environment. Maintaining that distinctiveness, responsible for our

successful student outcomes, without becoming a cost-prohibitive district is our greatest challenge – however, it is one that we believe will be met through targeted investments in our programming, infrastructure, and our participation in a larger supervisory union.

In this plan, we are adopting a growth mindset. As Governor Scott recently noted, Vermont can and should be an educational destination for young families in New England. We believe Cabot can play a prime role in that effort – our distinctiveness is an advantage when it comes to attracting families to rural Vermont. Confidence in our current model and plan for continued success will provide the means to attract students, locally and regionally, in the future. Our plan is not intentionally contrarian – we recognize we are operating in a time when Act 46 is incentivizing merger and dire warnings on education budgets are plentiful – but, critical investments are needed to ensure we continue to provide quality and become a destination for young families.

In accordance with Rule 3450.16, the following sections detail the steps that will continue to improve our performance in connection with the goals of §9(a)(3)(C) of Act 46.

Generating College and Career Ready Graduates

Providing a robust and quality educational experience to all students is a priority for all within the Cabot School District. Much of the focus of the school’s current challenges and perceived shortcomings has focused on high school programming. Cabot’s size offers us the flexibility to personalize learning and produce college and career ready students for Vermont’s workforce. During our community engagement, we have taken criticism of the existing program to heart, and believe that meaningfully expanding non-traditional curricular opportunities, in a phased manner to control and assess costs, will complete our vision of flexible pathways. These efforts will complement broader trends for early college or dual enrollment, and students’ access to the Central Vermont Career Center.

Targeted Enhancements of the High School Curriculum

In the current budget year, funding was allocated to allow for faculty time to be devoted to expanding PBL opportunities throughout the school. Moving forward, continued integration of this model will add flexibility to the student experience. Embracing PBL has encouraged increased enrollment from home schooled families, and will increasingly be developed in the school’s lower grades. Integration throughout the curriculum ensures that high school students are prepared to utilize this model effectively, and play a leading role in determining the context and methodology of their studies.

- The Board also supports the return of a capstone program for graduates – in various iterations referred to historically as the IOTA program and, more recently, SeniorX. This is a guided culmination of high school studies for students, that will oftentimes be interdisciplinary and entail a community presentation. This model of supported self-study promotes development of self-discipline, confidence in public speaking, and project management in students – meaningful skills in all college and career pursuits. Numerous Cabot graduates can point to projects or internships completed in high school as part of their “IOTA project” which have led to highly successful careers and businesses. For example, Burt’s Orchard in Cabot is the result of research done by Greg Burt as a high school senior to determine if apples could be grown successfully on a commercial scale in this part of Vermont. A successful capstone program requires a significant amount of organization and support from school staff as well as community members, but its positive impact for many Cabot graduates indicates it is an investment that can yield huge results.

Additional Curricular Development

Feedback from our community engagement and outreach efforts supports several internally focused changes to the status quo of programs and staffing in the near term:

- First, reintroducing design/technology curricular opportunities and hiring a faculty member to support such a position. Cabot’s current student body clearly desires increased opportunities relating to agriculture, engineering, and trades. This is reflective our community’s agricultural strengths, and continued present-day emphasis on the working landscape, trades, as well as fine and applied arts. This position may be hired at a less than FTE level of staffing, with the potential to grow as demand for courses increases.
- Second, hiring or identifying a current faculty member to oversee the expansion and administration of experiential learning opportunities in the community. This position would be responsible for managing the placement and supervision of students in the community, building skills and experience in support of their educational goals. Concurrently, and complementary to this effort, this faculty member would oversee and advise on capstone projects by graduating students – building upon the historically successful IOTA and SeniorX models.

- Third, returning the social studies and language arts positions to full time equivalent or adding adjunct educators to offer specialized classes within the respective disciplines, amounting to more educator time and opportunities for students. Our initial preference is to increase the breadth of opportunities available to students, without incurring the administrative and benefits costs associated with a new hire at less than full time equivalent.

For FY 19, the Board intends to budget for and emphasize the expansion of experiential programming in the community. This may be achieved through bringing a currently less than FTE position to 1.0 FTE, limiting the impact of benefit costs incident to this additional opportunity (at least until additional hiring is supported by enrollment numbers). In the longer term:

- As enrollment allows, expanding the high school foreign language program to include an additional language. We also believe that a second foreign language educator or program would enable the expansion of foreign language into elementary grades (e.g. 5th and 6th grade) and boost opportunities for the middle school. This is a prime situation where we hope to collaborate or work with another district to share an educator and the costs associated with an expanded program.
- Our Working Group provided community feedback on desired programs or tracks within Cabot’s high school. A recurring theme was the broad concept of “sustainability” – with applications in agriculture, the environment and sciences, energy, engineering, and social policy. As Vermont deals with the consequences of climate change and increased demands on resources, this is a logical area to explore. Likewise, as a rural community with many families that homestead or emphasize self-sufficiency this is an area of interest, and when coupled with a PBL model could provide unique opportunities to students. This is also an area that is prime for collaboration with other districts – we note Danville’s efforts and emphasis on similar themes within their curriculum and believe a regional approach to a broad topic could be beneficial to many students.

Timeline	Effort	Actions
Present (FY 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increase Project Based Learning Opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promote continued integration of Project Based Learning (PBL) efforts into the curriculum at all levels. The Board, in FY 18, approved faculty time and resources to making curricular improvements.
Near Term (FY 19 & FY 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add Design/Tech Faculty & Program ▪ Add Experiential Learning Coordinator ▪ Restore Core Competency Positions to FTE ▪ Add Elementary Social Worker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hire a Design/Technology educator at 1.0 FTE (or less, if sufficient) ▪ Develop and implement new curricular opportunities for students, namely at the high school level. ▪ Internally source or hire an educator to coordinate, supervise, and guide student experiential opportunities in the community. ▪ Develop assessment measures and build strategic relationships with employers and partners to develop a career ready workforce. ▪ Concurrently manage and advise on capstone programs. ▪ Restore language arts and social studies positions to FTE, or add part time positions to add specialized offerings. ▪ Expand offerings in core competencies, emphasizing 9th and 10th grade preparation for flexible paths to graduation. ▪ Hire a part-time social worker or counselor to help address acute needs in the student population.
Long Term (FY 23 & Beyond)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Foreign Language Program ▪ Develop “Sustainability” Curriculum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add second language offering to high school students, and expand foreign language classes to elementary grades. ▪ Prime opportunity for a shared position with another district. ▪ Support a curriculum that enables a focus on this area of national, regional, and local relevance. ▪ Another prime opportunity to share resources with other districts.

Within the Cabot Community, we are cognizant that some families desire a more traditional curricular approach and agree that students will benefit from expanded offerings in the core competencies, such as social studies. While the addition of these programs will incur additional costs, we believe such to be an investment that will attract and retain students. Our estimate for adding 2.2 FTE educators would increase our total educational spending by 9.7%, however, that cost would be wholly offset by an additional two tuition students and six equalized pupils. We do not assess these estimates to be unreasonable or unattainable.

We are cognizant that a disproportionate student-to-faculty ratio is contrary to the State’s goals with respect to containing education costs. This may, at times, be a difficult balancing act – however, we believe that long term stability and growth in enrollment requires immediate investment to enhance our programs. Our strong foundation, measured in a positive educational culture, dynamic educators, dedicated staff, and an outstanding administrator, is ready to take Cabot from successful to exceptional – and will increase our scale.

A Flexible & Focused Faculty

Our graduate survey is an impressive testimonial of the difference our educators make. A school is much more than FTE positions, four walls, and a budget – it encapsulates a culture of learning, an ethic of compassion, and a commitment to each student. Our educators are the reason we are successful as an institution. Ensuring that we attract and retain a flexible and focused faculty is essential. We must “right size” our direct teaching staff at the high school level and foster the professional development opportunities of staff and educators to encourage innovative programmatic and curricular offerings. Attracting and retaining the right personnel is critical to growing capabilities and maintaining agility in programming to meet the needs of all students.

Striving for Increased Scale [Rule 3450.14]

Put simply, we believe Cabot offers the type of distinct educational experience, community support, and dynamic approach that is capable of attracting and retaining families.

“Investing in a cradle-to-career system is critical to making Vermont an education destination and to growing our economy, reducing the demand for social services and creating greater opportunities for all Vermonters.”

– Governor Phil Scott

If nothing else, Act 46 has shown us that the time to be bold, innovative, and to think outside of the box is now. Over time we have developed the type of distinct educational opportunities that stand out – we were blazing the trail to flexible pathways before Act 77, and now we see an opportunity to be a leader in re-thinking how a small school can be

successful, sustainable, and a place that makes parents want to move from the Boston or New York suburbs.

Advantage Cabot

After the “no” vote on June 20, 2017, many in Cabot took a pause from thinking about the school and got on with their summer. However, a small group of residents got together to think about how they could assist Cabot School’s effort to be sustainable in the long term – this so called “A-Team” created the concept of “Advantage Cabot.”

Advantage Cabot has developed an independent boarding program targeting out-of-state high school students who will attend Cabot School and be housed with local host families. Advantage Cabot is collaborating with the Board and administration to develop and deliver enrichment programs, academic and extracurricular, available to all high school students attending Cabot School. Workforce development, especially in the technical fields, will be a focus of the Advantage Cabot program, with the goal of linking students with Cabot’s vibrant working landscape and small business owners. Advantage Cabot’s goal is to support and enhance Cabot School and bring significant investment into the community at no cost to the taxpayer. Advantage Cabot intends to generate knowledge products that will be available to other communities interested in exploring this model of school stabilization, resource generation, curricular enhancement and workforce development.

The promise of this model is three-fold: (1) adding students to our high school and increasing scale, without it being a zero-sum game of siphoning off students from another neighboring district; (2) adding revenue to the school without additional strain on Vermont taxpayers, effectively encouraging an infusion of funds from outside of the state; and (3) supporting the Cabot community through returns to host families, and the visits of students’ families to the area.

The benefits of a successful Advantage Cabot program include:

- Stabilization and growth of the high school student population;
- Full utilization of existing Cabot School facilities;
- A new source of revenue not dependent on local property taxes for Cabot School operations and improvements;
- Expanded educational, recreational, technical and career opportunities for Cabot High School students; and
- Positioning the Cabot School as a catalyst for economic development in the community – a true asset to more than families and students.

Advantage Cabot students will pay tuition to the Cabot School District and will pay other fees for boarding and administration to Advantage Cabot. Advantage Cabot is currently registered as a non-profit organization in the State of Vermont and is actively pursuing Federal tax-exempt status. At the time of this writing two philanthropic proposals have been submitted, to the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation and the Vermont Community Foundation, for startup support. Advantage Cabot has also been invited to submit a concept proposal to the J. Warren & Lois McClure Foundation in 2018 in support of the Foundation mission of building “equitable access to the education and training pathways that lead to Vermont’s promising jobs”. Finally, Advantage Cabot will be seeking start-up funding support from the Cabot Community Investment Fund via a community ballot initiative in March of 2018.

Advantage Cabot has set a goal of enrolling its first two students in the 2018-19 (FY 19) school year, and plans to begin the build out of the program to enroll an additional four students every year through the 2024-2025 (FY 25) school year to reach a total of 20 students. The maximum projected enrollment by year ten (FY 29) is 32 students, with a maximum of 8 students per high-school class to enhance graduating high school class numbers by an average of 30%.

An infusion of students and funding on this scale will add an estimated \$350,000 of revenue to the budget in FY 23, with other financial support for enrichment programs (open to all high school students) available as well. Boarding fees will also introduce funds into the community, benefiting host families and the local economy. Ultimately, we assess that building and administering Advantage Cabot will not burden taxpayers; rather, it holds promise to favorably impact local homestead tax rates in the long term.

In late November, we signaled our support for Advantage Cabot through a board resolution. Since then we have continued to work with Advantage Cabot to reach common understanding, formalize our relationship, and develop the legal and financial framework of our cooperation. With a common purpose of supporting high quality education in Cabot we are confident that Advantage Cabot will be a valuable partner in meeting and exceeding the goals of Act 46.

Marketing our Distinct Educational Experience

During our study, especially the outreach conducted by the Working Group, it became clear that some members of our own community are unaware of the opportunities and non-traditional experiences that enrich our curriculum, and of the achievements of many of our current students. Several efforts have already been launched, including a new school website and enabling official Facebook and Instagram pages. A group of community members is also working to develop literature and information about what Cabot can offer to students in nearby high school choice towns, and plans to hold an open house. We believe that increased regional awareness and appreciation for Cabot’s distinct educational model and student experience will lead to more students selecting Cabot – bringing with them tuition dollars, but more importantly increasing our student peer

group, add further voices and diverse experiences to our classrooms, and increase our community’s relevance to the region. We believe Cabot can and will be the type of educational destination Gov. Scott has spoken of.

Addressing Our Aging Infrastructure

Cabot School’s layout is unique; it operates as a true “campus” and is not a single, inter-connected structure. Cabot’s middle and high school are located in the main building (built in 1938 and renovated and expanded several times since), along with administration offices and the school library. The cafeteria and gymnasium are connected as the largest building on campus, with three additional buildings housing the elementary school classrooms, along with a separate arts and design/tech building, and finally, the CSPAC building.

A survey of Cabot School’s current facilities was prepared by an architectural firm in July 2011 and updated in January 2015. The past few years, the industriousness and dedication of our maintenance professionals has mitigated some of the most significant concerns outlined in these reports – particularly with respect to the campus’ elementary buildings. Likewise, the Town of Cabot has taken steps to mitigate a leaking water main that for years has been causing maintenance concerns for these buildings.

The most dire maintenance needs on the Cabot campus involve the gymnasium. The roof is in poor condition, exacerbated by the design flaw of a shallow pitch and insufficient insulation to avoid ice and water damage in winter. The gymnasium also needs new air handler units, renovations to the locker rooms and bathrooms, and other general maintenance. As a Board, our focus has been on Act 46 for the past months, but part of that conversation nearly always returns to the funds needed to renovate the gymnasium. We are committed to addressing our facility needs, and are exploring multiple paths to improve our infrastructure for the long term:

- Ongoing review of projects that may be resolved using existing personnel and resources, with an emphasis on larger projects that may be completed when school is out of session;
- Exploration of budgeting in a single year, up to \$150,000 for critical repairs, most notably to the gymnasium and its facilities;



Ready for an upgrade.

- Review of funding opportunities from the Cabot Community Investment Fund (CCIF, formerly UDAG), to defray the costs of repairs to taxpayers; and
- Exploration of joint funding/bonding initiatives with the Town of Cabot, based upon the community access and utilization of the gymnasium facility.

Our review of the infrastructure priorities and funding mechanisms is likely to figure prominently into the FY 19 budget cycle, with the fate of this proposal apt to influence the community's view on the scope and necessity of some improvements (e.g. outbuildings other than the gymnasium). Fundamentally, we recognize that a safe, sanitary, and attractive campus is a necessity, and in turn inspires confidence in what goes on inside the (many) four walls of our classrooms. Addressing our deferred maintenance and infrastructure challenges is a priority, and will require the same hard work, thought, and flexibility we have embraced in the Act 46 process.

Regional Relationships, Local Accountability

Partnerships with other Districts [Rule 3450.13]

Most of our neighboring communities have genuinely struggled with how to best proceed under Act 46. As a Board, we are disappointed we were unable to reach formal agreements with other districts about the manners in which we can collectively improve education in our region. So long as uncertainty over the statewide plan and supervisory union assignments exists, we believe there will be reluctance of other districts to commit to collaboration and partnerships.

Our outreach and conversations with other districts reveal our interest in delivering a greater breadth of opportunities to students – especially in subjects where a small school may find it difficult to support a full-time position, or retain well qualified personnel (e.g. foreign language instruction). We also believe the opportunity to share literacy and mathematics interventionists exists, as well as other specialized services for students with unique needs.

From a regional standpoint, we believe our distinct, inquiry-based, arts-infused, and experientially-focused model of education is valuable. The significant number of home-schooled students who have joined the Cabot School in recent years indicates that our scale and educational model appeals to some families in our community, and we assume other families in the region could benefit from what we offer – ultimately bringing more students into the public educational system, and increasing scale.

Our distinct inquiry based, arts infused, and experientially focused model of education is a value added to our region.

We look forward to working in our region to improve opportunities for all students.



We are looking forward to the day when we can transition from discussing the future to implementing this proposal fully. While the end of the Act 46 process will bring relief and shorter board meetings, it will also bring on the stability and certainty needed to forge the types of regional and district-to-district relationships contemplated under the term “flexible structures.” We believe that all of our neighbors have something to offer us (and us to them), and are excited to bring ideas of collaboration to reality – our desire to be part of a larger supervisory union is based largely on our desire to have multiple partners to work with. How we may work with Woodbury Elementary will be different from our future relationship with Twinfield Union, or U32.

As our curricular development proposes, we believe we can sustain a quality experience at Cabot, but even greater benefit will result from cooperation with other districts – exposing our students to peers in other schools through shared programming will help address some of the concerns over the size of Cabot, and allow access to a greater breadth of opportunities without sacrificing the distinct character and existence of our school. The future in our region is bright – much as geography can be an impediment, it can also be an advantage for Cabot: notwithstanding the hurdles of supervisory union boundaries, we can look in all directions to find a variety of educational models, cultures, and programs to enhance our students’ experience.

Finally, Rule 3450.13(1) contemplates the impact of “inequities and/or disparities” among districts or demographic subgroups. The above average rate of poverty and economic stress in our town sets us apart from some neighbors. We believe that our ability to provide a high quality educational experience and measurable success for students from economically deprived backgrounds would not be easily replicated, especially if our students are split between multiple schools through choice or some form of intra-district choice. As the provisional criteria for future small school grant funding suggests, there is value in small schools that can bring success and stability to students struggling with poverty, trauma, or other disadvantaged backgrounds.

Reassignment to a Larger Supervisory Union [Rule 3450.17]

Throughout the Act 46 process it has been assumed and indicated that WNESU was too small to persist and that Twinfield Union and Cabot would find their way to new supervisory unions.

At this time, we are fortunate to have a strong superintendent and a skilled professional staff backing him. The wisdom, compassion, and dedication offered by our SU staff has been integral to our ability to navigate the structural question presented by Act 46 and the operational challenges of the school year. With only two schools to focus upon, our current SU is responsive and well attuned to our needs. Likewise, it is also less efficient from a cost standpoint versus SUs that administer and support a larger population of students with a comparable staffing level.

We believe re-assignment to a supervisory union based in Washington County with existing relationships with CVCC and WCMHS is the best option for Cabot. We believe one of the following would be best positioned to receive and integrate Cabot into its union:

- Washington Central Supervisory Union (WCSU): with a total of six schools, five of which are elementary schools (including several in small communities like Cabot), we believe the quantity of sister districts with which to build relationships and develop resource sharing mechanisms would be beneficial. Likewise, the ability to develop curriculum and high school opportunities in conjunction with U32, one of the larger schools in the region, would likely benefit our school. Likewise, we see some of our distinct programming, if made more available to U32 students, as a logical starting point to expand non-traditional learning opportunities.

Under this arrangement, Cabot would be a PK-12 district aligned with five PK-6 school boards, and a unified union high school board, assuming approval of the WCSU AGS proposal. Cabot's integration into WCSU may be a less complicated process versus other supervisory unions with districts implementing mergers, or changing the composition of members. Finally, geographic proximity may favor this re-assignment (at least among options in Washington County) – to the extent the “convenience” referenced under Rule 3450.17 is a factor, measured by Calais, E. Montpelier, and Doty Memorial Elementary Schools and U32 being located within 20 miles of our campus.

- Barre Supervisory Union (BSU): with a large student population, but only three schools in two districts (not considering CVCC), Cabot's addition to this supervisory union would not drastically increase the total number of students served and would maintain a relatively low number of districts under supervision. However, Cabot is geographically separated from Barre by an approximately 30-35 minute drive and the supervisory union has not previously been responsible for education of students outside of the Barre City-Barre Town community, which shares a high school.

Distance notwithstanding, many of the opportunities presented by joining a larger supervisory union discussed with respect to WCSU would be realized with BSU as well. Coordination of the curriculum or opening of opportunities at Spaulding High School to Cabot students could present new opportunities for students (e.g. JROTC, specialized history seminars, or AP US or European History). Likewise, Cabot’s emphasis on project based learning and opportunities in the Arts may appeal to some students enrolled in Barre. BSU may also make sense because of the existing transportation support for students enrolled in CVCC).

WCSU and BSU are different from our other neighboring supervisory unions – they are anchored by comparatively large high schools versus Hazen Union, Danville, or Twinfield. As this proposal should make clear, we are not convinced that “bigger is better,” however, we recognize that a larger program necessarily entails more areas to focus cooperative or collaborative efforts.

In assessing the question of Cabot’s reassignment, we note the corresponding impact on Twinfield of any decision made. Whether transitioning both Cabot and Twinfield, as independent PK-12 districts, into the same supervisory union or splitting us between different unions is the best fit for the region is beyond the scope of our expertise. We anticipate new relationships to form and services to change following reassignment, however, severing our districts from one another would require changes in shared staffing, transportation, and other administrative/contract matters.

If not assigned to one of these supervisory unions, or a successor entity, we would anticipate re-assignment to either Orleans Southwest or Caledonia Central. We believe both to be viable options, presenting different advantages and challenges. In summary, we approach the concept of supervisory union re-assignment with an open mind – especially given the goal of supervisory unions containing “smallest number of member districts practicable.” Our geography allows us to look in all directions, and hope to engage in conversations with the Agency of Education and State Board of Education in the coming year to identify the best placement for the Cabot School District.

An Engaged, Transparent, & Accountable School Board [Rule 3450.15]

The Act 46 process has instilled a high degree of interest and activism in our school. While some in the community have agreed with the Board’s path, others have not. Irrespective of viewpoint, the value of five members embedded in our community cannot be overstated – the accessibility and different social circles have given many the opportunity to privately raise concerns, offer advice, or question decision making. Our size will limit our representation, unless proportional voting rules are adopted, of our membership on any school board in a merger situation.

For example, if Cabot were to merge with the Caledonia Cooperative district, 2/8 seats would be held by Cabot – those representatives would be jointly responsible for oversight of four separate schools. We are concerned that the work load placed on two members

would reduce the ability to effectively address school challenges, reduce access to the board within our town, and lead to a less responsive and less able governing body.

To us, transparency and accountability is about more than dollars and cents. Accountability entails a school board that is engaged with teachers, staff, administrators, parents, and students – good governance starts with good access, good information, and good relationships. Act 46 presents an inherent friction – we do not envy the newly minted consolidated school boards, most with fewer overall members, and the charge of attending to more with less.

Sustaining our school’s distinct programs will require innovation and difficult financial decisions – our connection, responsiveness, and accountability to the community is integral to the success of Cabot School.

As a Board, we recognize that our path ahead requires hard work, the confidence of our community, and the diligence of everyone involved in order to succeed. We are committed to ensuring we build carefully tailored budgets, eliminating any opportunity for waste and maximizing efficiencies wherever possible, and remain fully engaged with our constituents. As part of our vision for accountability, we are recommending that in FY 23 the Cabot School Board complete a new self-evaluation based upon the criteria presented under Act 46/Act 49, and the Rules noted in this proposal. Continued self-assessment and review of sustainability is essential – especially under circumstances where Cabot could be the smallest independent PK-12 district remaining in the State of Vermont. We owe it to our residents and our students to ensure that we are in fact sustainable, and remain capable of providing the best education possible.

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Conclusion & Appendices: *Supporting our Process & Plan*

The Cabot School Board, students, faculty, staff, administration, and community have risen to the challenge presented by Act 46. This long process has been a focal point of constructive dialogue, debate, polite disagreement, and critical thinking about how to best educate our students. We have considered many options that would fundamentally change our school – with every option considered, including the path presented here, presenting unknowns and variables.

We sincerely hope that members of our community, leaders within the Agency of Education, and the State Board of Education can reflect positively upon the effort to creatively and effectively address the concerns of equity, cost, and opportunity facing Cabot School – and appreciate that these challenges will not override the resolve to provide a high-quality education and experience to all students. Cabot School’s best days remain ahead, and we look forward to conversations with the Agency of Education and State Board of Education to ensure this plan is brought to fruition.

Simply put, Cabot School, as a whole, is greater than the sum of its parts. We conclude with a comment provided by one of our graduates. It embodies why we are working so hard to preserve and strengthen our school:

“Cabot School gave me a sense of home, community, and family. Cabot School taught me life skills that I have continued to use like organization, respect, responsibility, hard work, selflessness and more. The Cabot community has an amazing sense of support that cannot be found in other places.”

Respectfully Submitted,

Cabot School Board of Directors

Chris Tormey, Chair

Jackie Folsom, Vice-Chair

Lisa Olson

Sharon O’Connor

Rory Thibault

Appendices

- APPENDIX A: Results of July 2017 Community Survey
- APPENDIX B: Results of October 2017 Community Survey
- APPENDIX C: SBAC and Assessment Data
- APPENDIX D: Selected Materials Reflecting Conversations with other Districts
- APPENDIX E: Cabot High School Program of Studies, 2017-2018
- APPENDIX F: Summary of Career Technical Education Programs by SU
- APPENDIX G: Cabot Graduate Survey
- APPENDIX H: Superintendent’s Trauma Report, November 2017

Cabot School District

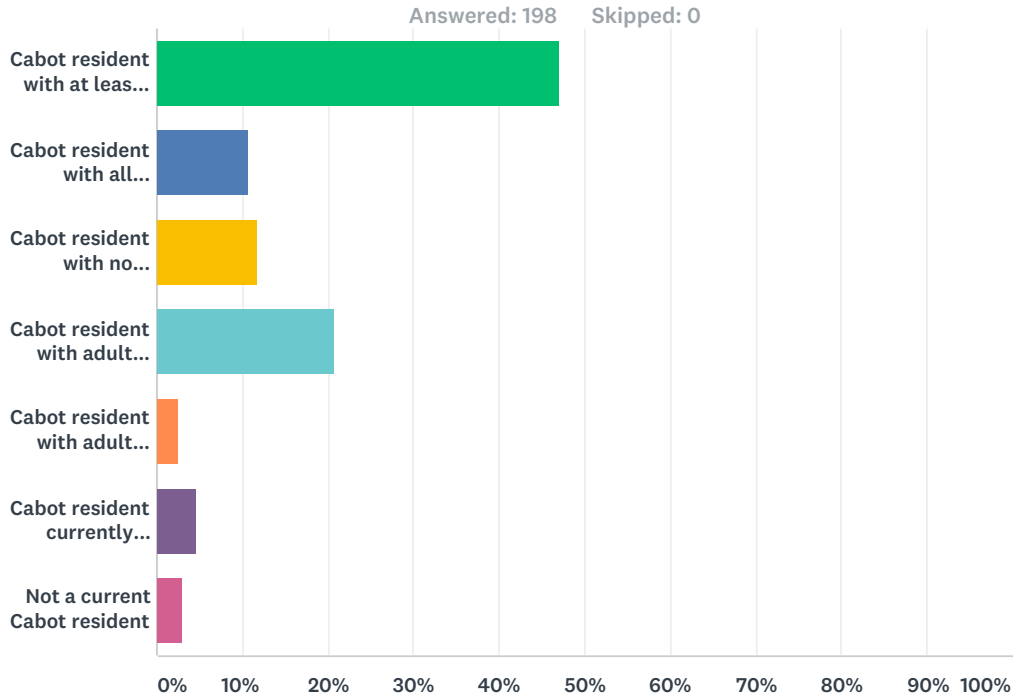
ALTERNATIVE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE PROPOSAL

Appendices

Appendix A

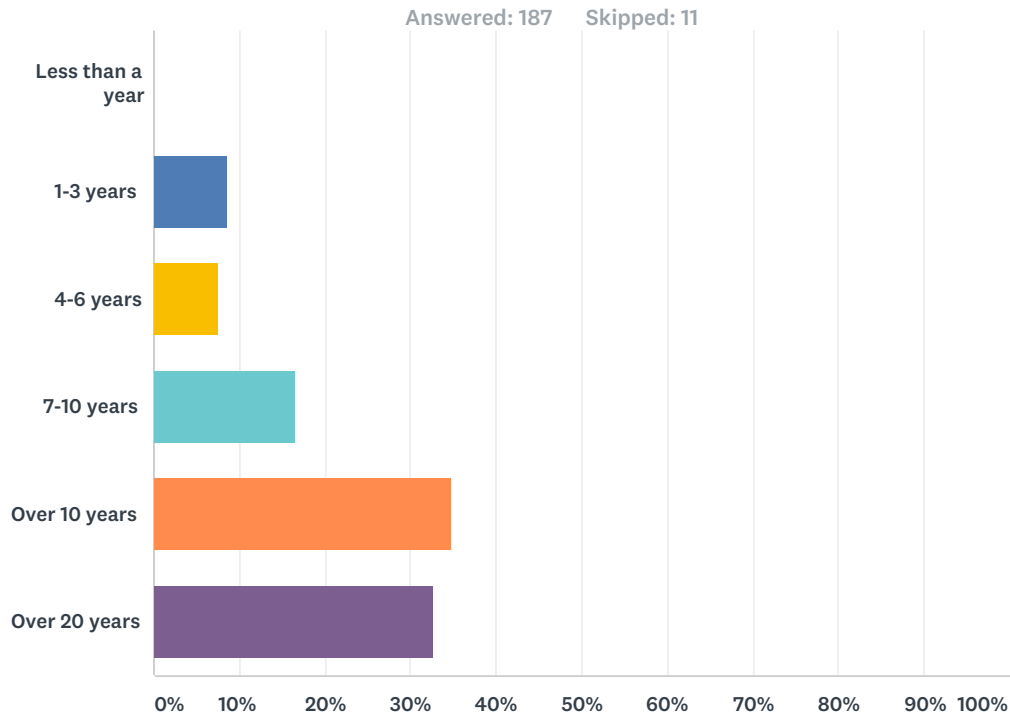
Results of July 2017 Community Survey

Q1 Which best describes your relationship to the school?



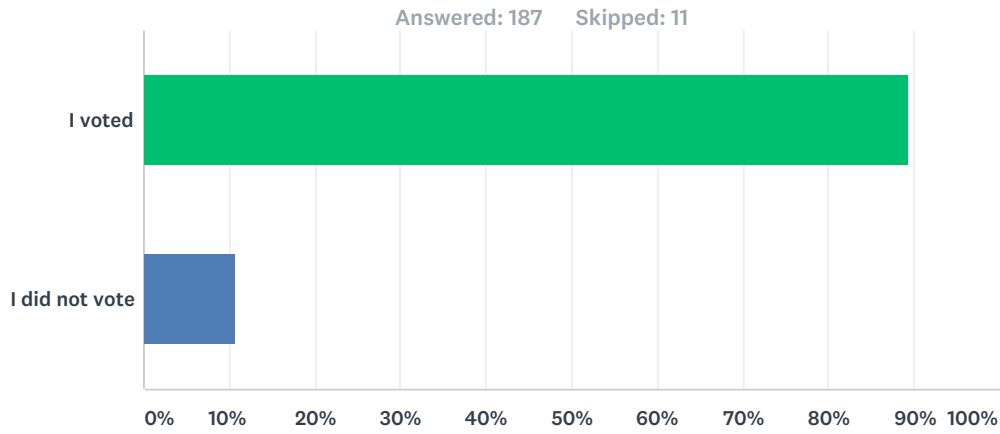
Answer Choices	Responses
Cabot resident with at least one child currently attending Cabot School	46.97% 93
Cabot resident with all children currently homeschooling or attending other schools	10.61% 21
Cabot resident with no children, or who moved to Cabot after children were no longer school age	11.62% 23
Cabot resident with adult children who have attended Cabot School	20.71% 41
Cabot resident with adult children who have attended other schools while living in Cabot	2.53% 5
Cabot resident currently attending college	4.55% 9
Not a current Cabot resident	3.03% 6
Total	198

Q2 How long have you lived in Cabot?



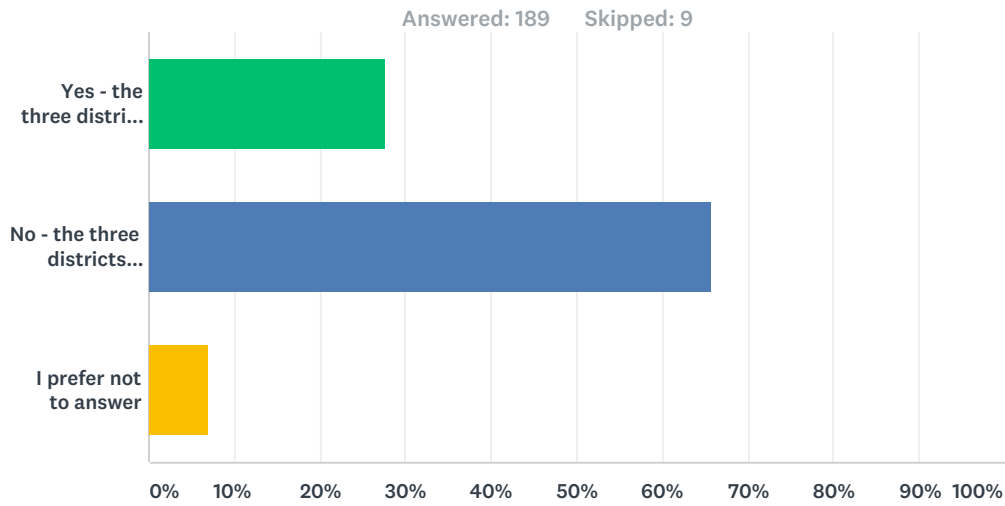
Answer Choices	Responses
Less than a year	0.00% 0
1-3 years	8.56% 16
4-6 years	7.49% 14
7-10 years	16.58% 31
Over 10 years	34.76% 65
Over 20 years	32.62% 61
Total	187

Q3 Did you vote on the June 20th merger proposal?



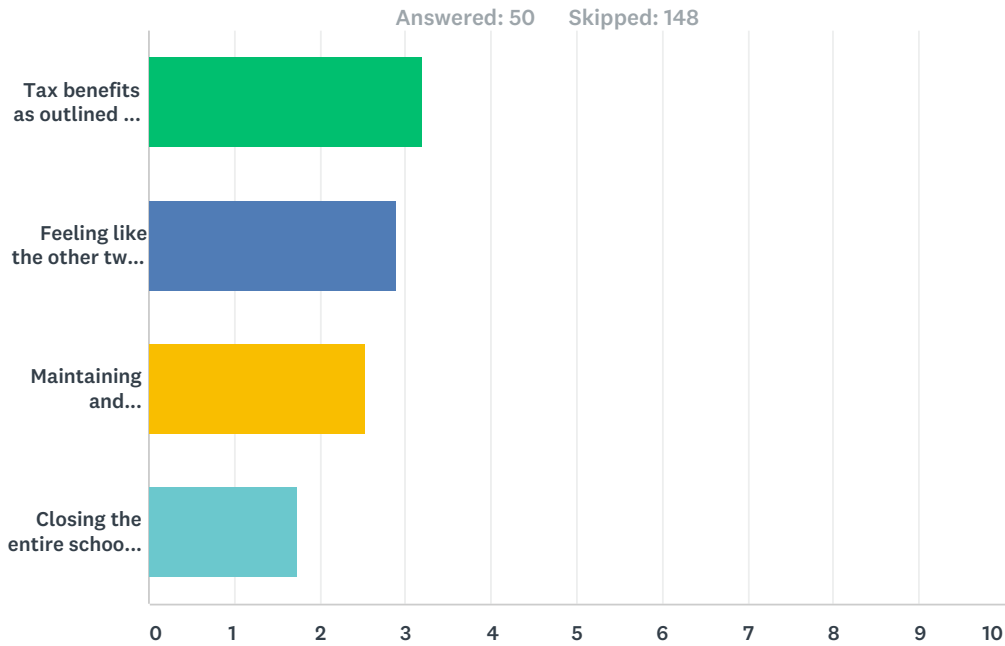
Answer Choices	Responses
I voted	89.30% 167
I did not vote	10.70% 20
Total	187

Q4 Would you mind sharing your vote on the June 20th Cabot/Danville/Twinfield merger (or what would it have been)?



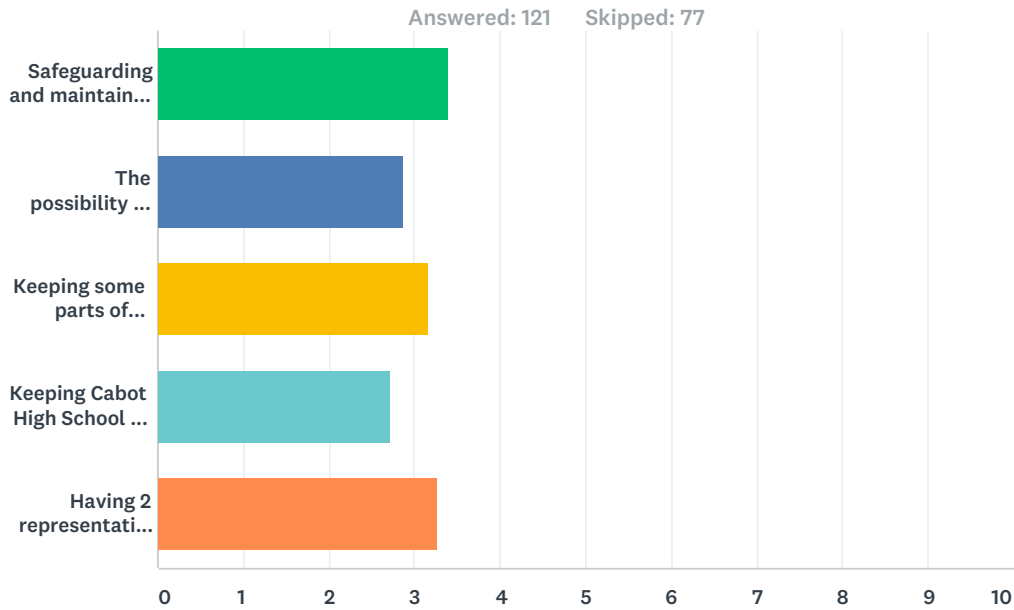
Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes - the three districts should merge	27.51%	52
No - the three districts should not merge	65.61%	124
I prefer not to answer	6.88%	13
Total		189

Q5 Please rank how much the following factors influenced your YES vote, with 1 being the greatest influencing factor and 4 the least.



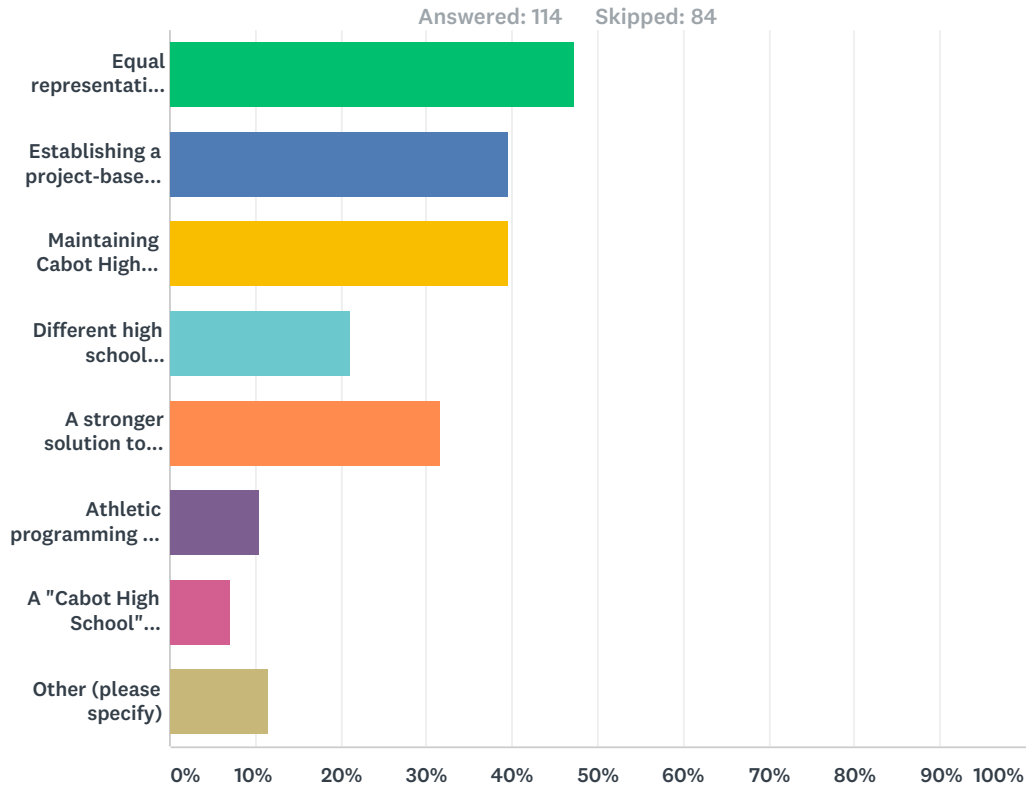
	1	2	3	4	Total	Score
Tax benefits as outlined in the final report.	48.89% 22	28.89% 13	15.56% 7	6.67% 3	45	3.20
Feeling like the other two schools were sound options for high school.	35.71% 15	28.57% 12	23.81% 10	11.90% 5	42	2.88
Maintaining and strengthening focus on our PK-8 program.	17.02% 8	29.79% 14	42.55% 20	10.64% 5	47	2.53
Closing the entire school in the future.	11.11% 5	13.33% 6	13.33% 6	62.22% 28	45	1.73

Q6 Please rank how much the following factors influenced your NO vote, with 1 being the greatest influencing factor, and 5 the least.



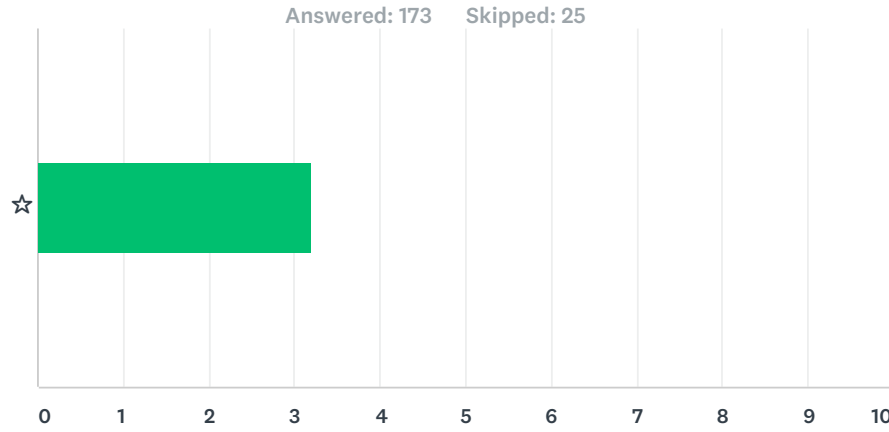
	1	2	3	4	5	Total	Score
Safeguarding and maintaining our K-8 program.	30.34% 27	20.22% 18	22.47% 20	11.24% 10	15.73% 14	89	3.38
The possibility of school choice for high school students.	18.63% 19	19.61% 20	16.67% 17	20.59% 21	24.51% 25	102	2.87
Keeping some parts of Cabot's high school programming.	17.17% 17	22.22% 22	28.28% 28	23.23% 23	9.09% 9	99	3.15
Keeping Cabot High School as is.	26.32% 30	9.65% 11	7.02% 8	22.81% 26	34.21% 39	114	2.71
Having 2 representatives on a 9 person board.	20.56% 22	26.17% 28	26.17% 28	13.08% 14	14.02% 15	107	3.26

Q7 Which of two the following factors would have led to you voting YES on a merger? (select only two!)



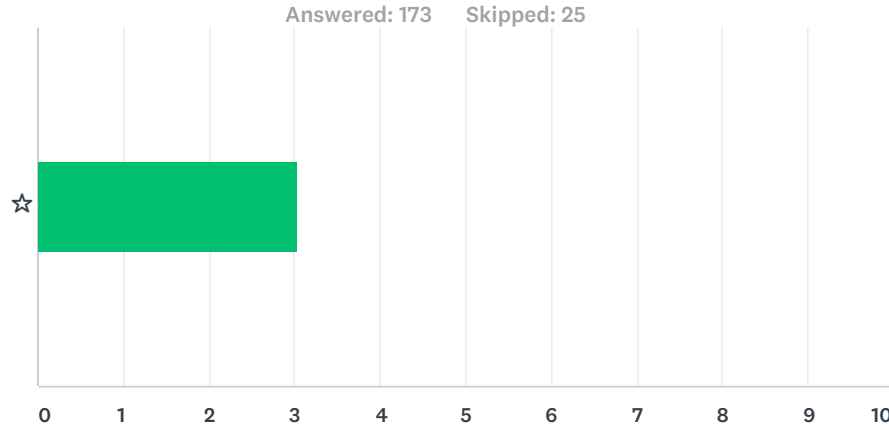
Answer Choices	Responses
Equal representation on the board.	47.37% 54
Establishing a project-based program at Cabot as an option for all high school students in the district.	39.47% 45
Maintaining Cabot High School in its current state.	39.47% 45
Different high school partners.	21.05% 24
A stronger solution to Cabot's building issues that eliminated the fear of the other towns closing the PK-8 in lieu of repairing the facilities.	31.58% 36
Athletic programming in Cabot.	10.53% 12
A "Cabot High School" specific graduation ceremony and diploma.	7.02% 8
Other (please specify)	11.40% 13
Total Respondents: 114	

Q8 Cabot should maintain a high school program in some form.



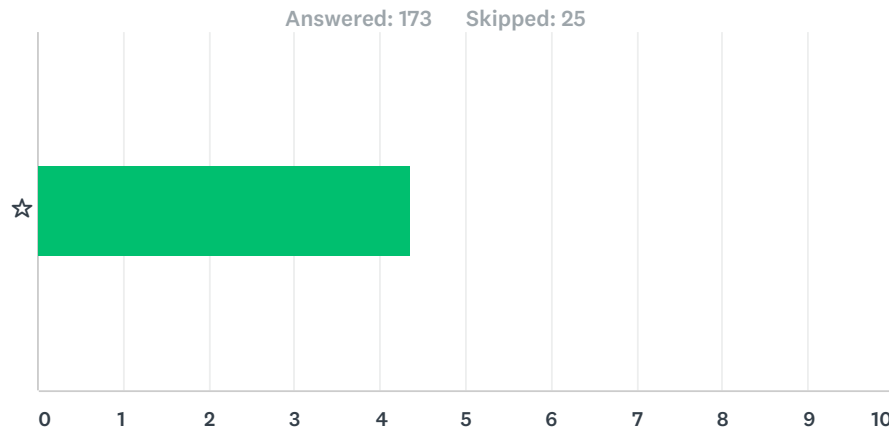
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	24.86% 43	13.29% 23	13.29% 23	13.29% 23	35.26% 61	173	3.21

Q9 This does not need to be a full high school, but can be a smaller program in coordination with larger, more comprehensive high schools.



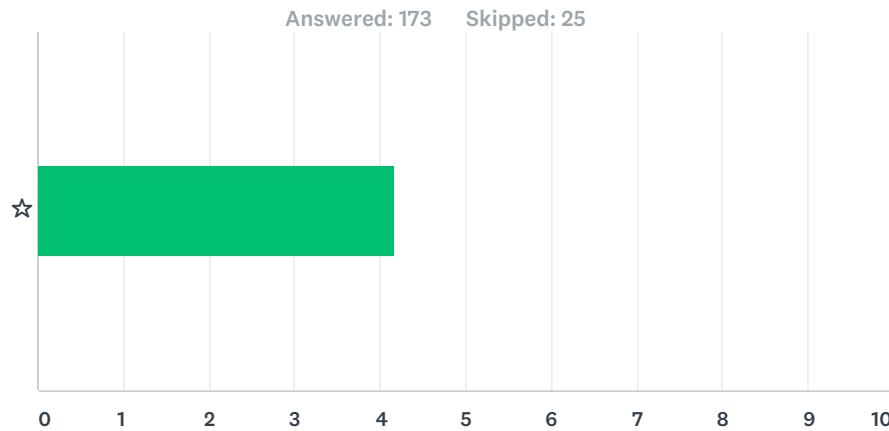
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	N/A - Cabot does not need to maintain any high school programming.	Total	Weighted Average
☆	10.40% 18	18.50% 32	18.50% 32	24.28% 42	8.67% 15	19.65% 34	173	3.03

Q10 Keeping and maintaining a strong PK-8 program at Cabot School is an essential goal.



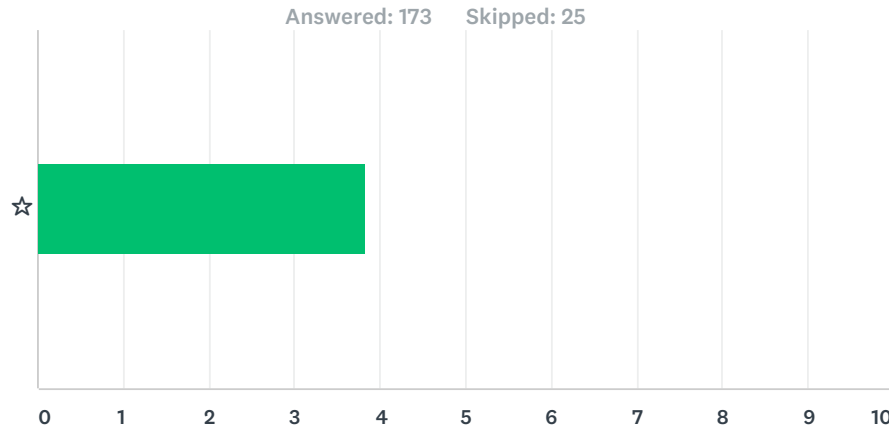
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	1.73% 3	2.89% 5	12.72% 22	22.54% 39	60.12% 104	173	4.36

Q11 I feel that I understand the curriculum model and educational experiences provided by project-based learning.



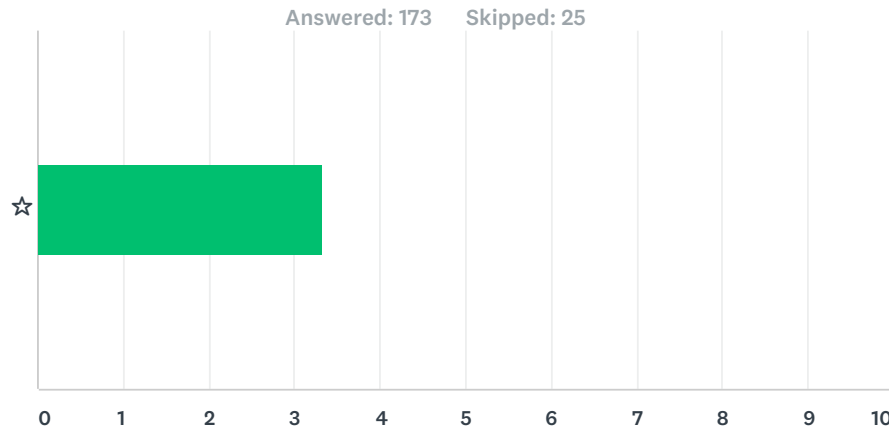
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	3.47% 6	2.31% 4	12.72% 22	36.99% 64	44.51% 77	173	4.17

Q12 Project-based learning opportunities should be continued for all students, regardless of whether Cabot operates a high school.



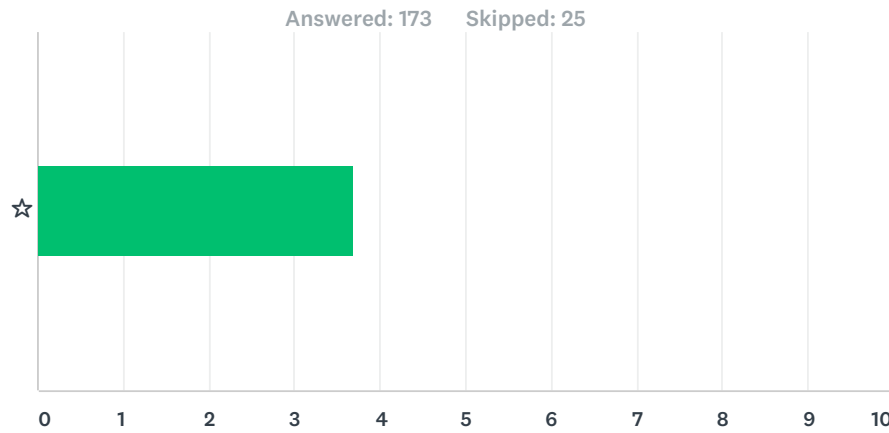
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	6.36% 11	6.94% 12	20.81% 36	29.48% 51	36.42% 63	173	3.83

Q13 I believe maintaining a Pre-K through 8th grade program at Cabot School is more important than maintaining a full PK-12 school.



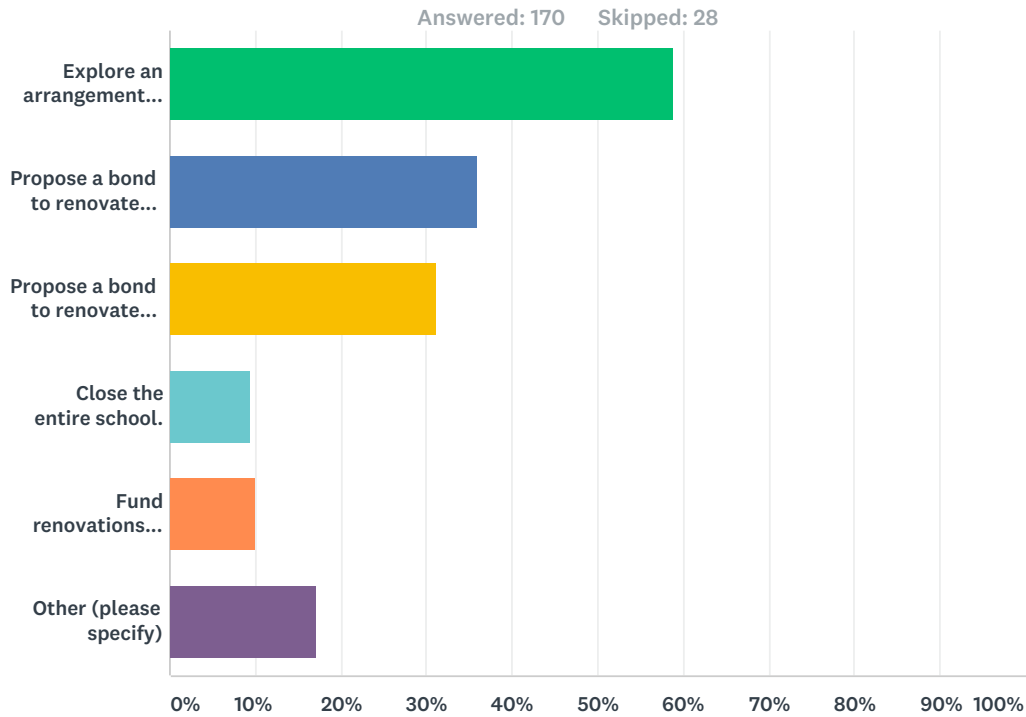
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	9.83% 17	24.28% 42	17.34% 30	20.23% 35	28.32% 49	173	3.33

Q14 Cabot students need more options than the current high school can provide.



	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total	Weighted Average
☆	6.94% 12	13.29% 23	20.81% 36	21.39% 37	37.57% 65	173	3.69

Q15 Regardless of Act 46 outcomes, our campus needs repair and renovation. Which of the following methods do you find to be acceptable to address this need?



Answer Choices	Responses
Explore an arrangement that shares gym renovations with the town, developing it into a community center.	58.82% 100
Propose a bond to renovate based on a PK-8 school.	35.88% 61
Propose a bond to renovate based on a PK-12 school.	31.18% 53
Close the entire school.	9.41% 16
Fund renovations through increased school taxes.	10.00% 17
Other (please specify)	17.06% 29
Total Respondents: 170	

Q19 What else does the board need to know?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 115

#	Responses	Date
1	My scores reflect my overall thinking of the whole experience, not just academics per se.	7/25/2017 10:16 PM
2	I know next to nothing about other schools' curricula and options, but I don't believe that any local schools begin to compare to Cabot in regards to providing a supportive environment for nurturing education and personal growth.	7/25/2017 10:14 PM
3	That many of us know these questions were written to prompt the answers you are looking for. Stop taking advantage of those with lesser wits.	7/24/2017 9:43 PM
4	The school is an irreplaceable asset to our community. Education is primary, but economic, social, etc., factors are important as well. Build it into something great!	7/24/2017 8:43 PM
5	This town may not realize how academically unique and strong its school is-I hope this is a chance to reassess and have a rebirth of sorts. To flourish this town needs to be a place young families want to move and maybe even move back to.	7/24/2017 6:57 PM
6	These are very approximate thoughts--I have slightly negative feelings towards Spaulding, Hazen, and Twinfield, slightly positive towards Lyndon, St. J, and Montpelier, and I'm neutral or I don't know much about the others.	7/24/2017 5:52 PM
7	Whatever happens at the high school level, there should be options for kids who do poorly with project based learning, as PBL is as harmful for some students as it is helpful for others.	7/24/2017 1:04 PM
8	I've been in education for 42 years as a teacher, supervisory union coach and principal. I want the best education for my grandchildren that reside in Cabot without forcing me and my spouse out of town due to the high cost of both State and Cabot taxes.	7/22/2017 3:52 PM
9	Allowing school choice at all levels is very important to us. Freedom of choice in the kind of education children get is essential. The USA is holding on to outdated models. Separation of State and Church has its merits, but reality is not as black and white. See how other nations deal with that and the good results they have, for instance. We pay a lot of taxes on this so it's fair to have a choice in where it is spent.	7/20/2017 5:19 PM
10	The Board needs to consider travel time in calculating educational impact.	7/20/2017 2:52 PM
11	Why are you pulling the wool over everyone's eyes - be honest. Have equal representation on the Board - stop stacking the deck	7/20/2017 8:51 AM
12	I need estimate(s) for the cost of required facility improvements and projections of the associated tax burden before deciding what options we can afford as a community. Maintaining a school in Cabot is critical (hopefully a high school, but definitely K-8). I believe the school funding and resource requirement model is broken at the state level, and Act 46 is just pushing the problem down to the local level. Merging is not the solution it is claimed to be for school quality or cost and other "small school" options must be explored for rural areas.	7/19/2017 5:18 PM
13	Work with the public to develop a better way of educating our children and a better way to fund our school. Raising taxes while cutting programs every year is clearly not working. We can do better. The board needs to start working collaboratively with residents.	7/19/2017 9:50 AM
14	Start listening to all parents and residents. Tax payers can't be taxed more. Our kids need better opportunities.	7/19/2017 9:43 AM
15	Rethink how you make decisions. You were elected to represent us all.	7/19/2017 9:38 AM
16	We all want to keep Cabot School and our community. Let's work together to make it happen.	7/18/2017 9:35 PM
17	There is a lot of talk about loss of local control, but school choice is the only way to give local parents control.	7/17/2017 7:27 PM
18	how to be fiscally responsible	7/16/2017 9:14 PM
19	The merger as originally proposed would have narrowed Cabot student options rather than sufficiently expand them because it eliminated the well established project based option at Cabot School. Perhaps full HS choice is the way to go if cost is the driving factor given out facilities.	7/15/2017 5:39 PM

20	Equal say on any merged board	7/15/2017 1:19 PM
21	The interdependence of Cabot School and this community is so special that it must be taken into consideration as one of the biggest assets and must be preserved.	7/15/2017 10:51 AM
22	The board needs to reach out and listen to residents, their needs, concerns, and desires for how the school should operate and be funded.	7/13/2017 7:21 PM
23	Our town will be greatly impacted shall the high school close. This should never be an option.	7/13/2017 6:40 PM
24	This school is rediculously expensive; dollar value for town is unjustifiable. There needs to be a change. Students are resilient and adaptable, they will adjust and (except for the first year because of emotional ties) eventually embrace their new learning environment/school.	7/13/2017 5:43 PM
25	The survey didn't necessarily provide the flexibility to address some questions thoroughly. I'd like to say that I think having high school choice would attract new people to Cabot, and provide the greatest set of options for Cabot's youth and would attract new people to the community, which is important in a town with an aging population and on a downward trajectory, population-wise. That said, a project-based learning academy, in the context of a more limited set of 'choice' options could be attractive as well. I remain concerned that the small number of students makes it impractical to continue to operate the high school in its current configuration.	7/13/2017 1:57 PM
26	The above ranking question is very difficult. Kids are different so for one kid St J could be a 1 and for another a 5. And in terms of Hazen a student could be in the forestry program and have a great experience and another in the regular school program and have a very negative experience. So I guess that I will answer the question for how my child might experience the school. Actually, I cannot rate all the schools - it will only let me rate a few and then starts erasing the answers that I have already filled in!	7/13/2017 1:46 PM
27	I think the board needs to think about what options would pass in a town vote. Higher taxes is very unpopular. A realistic option would be full high school choice while keeping K-8. Part of the campus could be freed up for a private Cabot Academy which would become one of the choices.	7/13/2017 1:26 PM
28	Come up with a plan before DOE forces you to do something you wont like.	7/13/2017 12:27 PM
29	I believe we often think of expanded opportunities as academic and associate to what money can buy for our students. I believe that true education is learning how to learn and become accountable both as a learner and community member. It's also about inner growth, self knowledge. Our community offers this in abundance and it can't be replaced.	7/13/2017 12:07 PM
30	The board needs to know that public input should have been requested 2 - 3 years ago and we would not be in this situation. Please submit you resignations.	7/13/2017 11:03 AM
31	this is just been going on too long. Let's move forward and allow our kids to grow with more options and close the school	7/13/2017 10:15 AM
32	Although I see good things happening at Cabot High School, the fact that there are so few students greatly limits class offerings. I would suggest the PK-8 programs continue while the High School closes, with Cabot becoming a HS Choice Town. The PK-8 classes would then be able to move into the main building (which would address the PK-8 building issues. The structures in which they are currently housed are long past their sell-by dates). Maintaining the PK-8 program would allow the town to retain its strong sense of community, while High School Choice would make Cabot a more attractive place to live (and raising property values, as a result).	7/13/2017 10:03 AM
33	During the prior Merger process and vote, your job was to present the facts NOT to tell voters to reject the merger. You crossed the line. Members of the board have also made statements about the other schools, Danville and TUS, that are based upon rumor and innuendo and do not reflect well upOon our community.	7/13/2017 9:08 AM
34	I feel it is deceptive to consider merging with Craftsbury. They are and have always been a rival school in sports. You feel if we merge with them then you can keep your High School. The Town will stand up when the tax increases keep coming, Its a matter of time	7/13/2017 8:33 AM
35	It's highly unlikely that school choice will increase taxes. Most school choice towns are desirable in terms of real estate. Look to Walden. Their taxes are far less then Cabot. Houses tend to turn right over when listed for sale.	7/13/2017 5:09 AM
36	You need to choose the best thing for the kids education not keeping your own memories of Cabot and how it USED to be a good school.	7/12/2017 9:54 PM

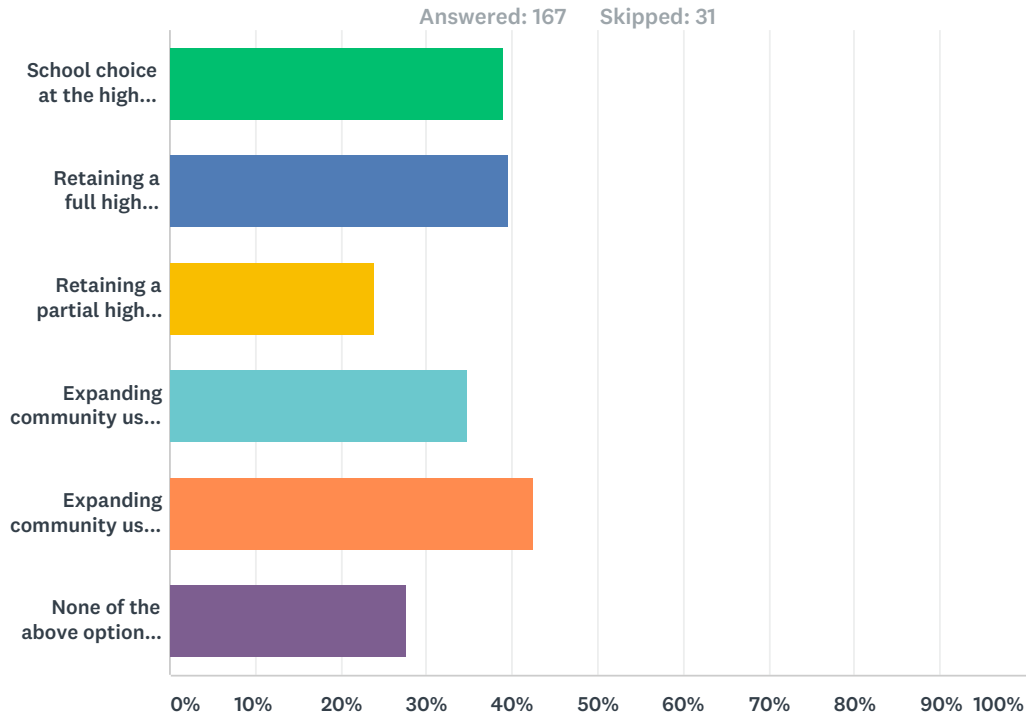
37	The high school is no longer financially viable given the tax base of Cabot. However, the town can not succeed without a school, so at a minimum, ensuring a future with a PK-8 school is critical.	7/12/2017 9:51 PM
38	Combining resources is inevitable the way education across our country is headed. Giving our Cabot high school students REAL school choice helps keep all area schools in competition and therefore ensures high quality education for each child. Schools that are not producing results will either improve to remain viable options for our children or they will weed themselves out.	7/12/2017 9:37 PM
39	Cabot School has been neglected by the current board, the programming has suffered, the facility has suffered, the children have suffered, and the tax payers have suffered. This board has done a very bad job meeting the needs of our town.	7/12/2017 9:35 PM
40	The board needs to engage the public in their decision making beyond school board meetings. Stop being defensive and listen to all residents.	7/12/2017 9:29 PM
41	PBL is not valued by all parents or residents, the board needs to stop pushing it down everyone's throats.	7/12/2017 9:24 PM
42	The board needs to listen to residents, listen to parents, and stop being so arrogant in thinking they can just impose their own opinions on everyone else.	7/12/2017 9:18 PM
43	The community deserves the opportunity to give more input.	7/12/2017 9:08 PM
44	That we wish the Board strength and courage in the decisions ahead.	7/12/2017 6:43 PM
45	Just close the school!	7/12/2017 6:38 PM
46	In my view, the high costs of the high school, coupled with the largely mediocre curriculum, mostly mediocre teachers, and lack of diversity in course offerings and pedagogical perspectives has been a historical weakness. I am looking forward to the day when the high school is closed. It's been a very long time coming, too long.	7/12/2017 6:31 PM
47	You are making BAD assumptions to start. That the project base learning has value beyond what is demonstrated. Your sample sizes are too small. You have a bad demographic curve and enrollment reality. If things were so great, why are there no students?? It defies common sense. We would love to have a viable and effective school as part of the community. Understand the importance. And have NEVER voted against a "normal" school funding request before. But we are quickly becoming STRIDENT non supporters out of frustration. The situation isn't economically viable / tenable. We were given at least an option with both State sanction and support and some relief. Instead a lot of FEAR and ridiculous "could happen" scenarios got thrown around to convolute the economics with fears of "nefarious agendas". It's insulting to those that are just concerned and trying to be thoughtfully supportive but also fiscally responsible.	7/12/2017 5:36 PM
48	get a plan.....get it done.....the condition of the physical plant and the cost of repairs should be honest	7/12/2017 4:25 PM
49	Thanks and praises to you all! Love the idea of a fitness center and funding that would provide. It would be great to offer kids/young adults recreation options, particularly in the winter. We would prefer it, but if my child can't attend Cabot for high school, I'd like the option of school choice and we would look to either Montpelier HS or to U32 if there was availability.	7/12/2017 4:01 PM
50	As a parent of students who have attended both small community schools and large combined schools I feel confident in saying that children thrive and learn better in smaller environments. To close the Cabot school would be detrimental to our community and our children.	7/12/2017 12:58 PM
51	Cabot has a proud record of success among its alumni. The board should attempt to track graduates in the last ten years. Present these success stories to legislators and the public. The purpose of a school is to equip students for life. Of course, there must be options for those students who would thrive in an alternative setting. If the goal was only to save money, the solution would be to close all schools. "There is hardly anything in the world that some man cannot make a little worse and sell a little cheaper, and the people who consider price only are this man's lawful prey." - John Ruskin	7/12/2017 10:38 AM

52	As a Cabot School alum, with younger siblings going into high school I believe that it is very important to try and keep the high school open. I heard rumor of an option where the town gets choice at the high school level, but one of the options for students to choose is a PBL academy type deal. I LOVE this idea! PBL doesn't work for everyone, so those people can choose what school will. But students who learn best with PBL, and in a small accepting environment (such as CHS) can choose that option. I guess I don't know the full details of how this all works, and what the board can and can't choose to do. But to me this option makes the most sense when it comes to benefiting the students, and making the students happy with their high school experience.	7/12/2017 9:55 AM
53	You're doing a good job, and I know that you're working to do the best for our kids. Please know that your work is appreciated! In terms of a possible HS closure...please consider the upheaval this creates for families in terms of commuting, after school care (or lack there of), and the costs families will incur if they have to drive their kids all over the region just to get to school and attend school activities. Forcing kids to attend school out of their own town automatically puts low-income kids at a disadvantage, as they will not have equal access to extra-curriculars. I LOVE the idea of building a new school facility that includes a community center. Fitness center, commercial kitchen, you name it.... if we had a place better suited to these kinds of community activities, people would come!	7/12/2017 9:14 AM
54	Thank you for asking.	7/12/2017 8:52 AM
55	I am going to be selling and moving out of Cabot. This decision is not only for personal reasons but also due to the fact that we moved out here because of the lower taxes and great school system. Taxes have increased for my household by \$600+ in the last 5 1/2 years. Taxes are no longer affordable and if anything, seems they are going to continue to increase by a substantial amount every year. Second reason is due to the school. When we moved here we felt Cabot was a great community with a great school. Over the years we've come to realize the Town of Cabot has severely neglected their duty to take care of the school and the community seems more into complaining and blaming everyone than finding a solution. If you neglect minor repairs they become big repairs and we are now beyond the point of big repairs. Very sad to say the least.	7/12/2017 8:17 AM
56	The maintenance of a high-quality PreK-8 program here in Cabot is, I believe, a non-negotiable thing for the community. Our sense of community, property values, community infrastructure and socio-economic diversity are all tied to having a great small school at the heart of the Village. Clearly, something needs to be done about our high school to enhance stability and maintain opportunity for our students. I am grateful for the work of the School Board, and school leadership as well as the efforts of community volunteers in continuing -and building upon- a century of great education in Cabot!	7/12/2017 8:13 AM
57	High school students have various interests- academic, athletic, and social- and today, when a college degree is essential for a good job, the best thing we can do is offer our students the most opportunities to explore their interests before having to choose and pay for college. That's why I believe high school choice is the best complement to a strong, PBL elementary school.	7/12/2017 6:51 AM
58	transportation	7/12/2017 6:24 AM
59	Cabot School is vital to our community. High School sports provide a free or low cost opportunity for residents. I know many older people come to games who don't have kids or grandkids playing. Also, our high school students have many more choices across various disciplines than many other high school students. Our kids can play sports, be in the band, travel to other countries (regardless of the ability to pay). I have talked to people at another school and only honors students could travel. Our students receive quality academic instruction from teachers who know them and their home situations. Our students have a chance to discover who they are, what skills and talents they have and what they enjoy doing. They are also supported if they want to explore something that is not offered at school.	7/12/2017 5:09 AM
60	If you allow school choice you will see where parents will send their kids. Then you can see what is worth investing in. We have a great town and facilities but if the enrollment is low we need to repurpose or create a hybrid school/ private college.	7/12/2017 12:01 AM
61	Every child has different individual needs and limiting options in any form does not then allow needs to be met. When towns lose their schools then towns lose all around! We just need to make sure whatever we offer prepares kids for being successful after high school no matter what their path may be.	7/11/2017 11:35 PM

62	Maintaining Pre-K-8 is extremely important for our community, current and future students, and viability as a town. The PBL work our 9-12 does is incredible and should be cherished and seen as an asset for other communities' students. School Choice for HS could be a viable option with a better guarantee of maintaining our Pre-K-8.	7/11/2017 11:30 PM
63	Please destroy the 'house' classrooms. Make a works class k-8 school and spend the money for a proper structure if needed. Send the HS out of town, done done done. Cut back the staff to a reasonable student to teacher ratio. Pay the remaining teachers a good above average rate and expect them to work without a massive group of support staff.	7/11/2017 11:17 PM
64	size of student body. tax rate. student engagement. student teacher relationships.	7/11/2017 11:00 PM
65	Do something to ensure a merger by November 20, 2017!!!!	7/11/2017 10:59 PM
66	The board has an obligation to the tax payers of Cabot to achieve a merger by Nov 20th.	7/11/2017 10:52 PM
67	As a Cabot graduate, prek-12, I felt supported and like I had every opportunity I wanted to be a part of or could have had at a larger neighboring school.	7/11/2017 10:34 PM
68	My adult children are eager to support the school in any way they can and would participate in fundraising efforts.	7/11/2017 10:30 PM
69	Taxes are already high enough to cause hardship for many residents. Our children's education is extremely important but at what point is it fair to say that it outweighs the needs of seniors, or low income and fixed income residents? If we can provide the best education possible in a more cost effective way by consolidation, everybody wins. Maybe the "sense of community" shouldn't weigh so heavily on the existence of a physical building but in the residents themselves. I am a fan of PBL and think it is the future of education. I think it should be a required part of any proposal for those children that benefit from it. But that does not mean it has to be physically located in Cabot. Kids deserve every opportunity for new experiences and a small school like Cabot High School just can't provide that kind of diversity in curriculum. Thank you for your hard work. Please keep all of us in mind, on both sides of the argument, when you are contemplating your decisions.	7/11/2017 10:03 PM
70	This survey seems to be tainted. The questions seem broad; and, on many of the "strongly agree" through "strongly disagree", checking one star causes all to be checked.	7/11/2017 10:01 PM
71	Is it possible to increase the k-8 by including Woodbury students? Can we find out more about our neighboring schools and offer school choice?	7/11/2017 9:52 PM
72	This survey is having issues with some questions filling in all 5 answers.	7/11/2017 9:37 PM
73	Stop dragging this on.	7/11/2017 9:30 PM
74	I voted for the merger but then regretted it and wished I had voted no. Not because I want the school to stay intact, but because I learned after I voted that a no vote could also suggest that the merger that was presented didn't go far enough. I would like total free choice, and the ability to take our tuition dollars to any town or district we like. If the town and school is so sure that they have a strong high school program, why are they so fearful of that option? Are they worried that given the choice, nobody would attend? Maybe it's the fact that any high school freshman who can leave, has - either due to lottery, personal wealth to pay exorbitant public school tuition, or divorced parents with a parent living in another district.	7/11/2017 9:25 PM
75	Keep Cabot School alive!	7/11/2017 9:23 PM
76	think larger than our small town	7/11/2017 8:08 PM
77	The costs of running our school are too excessive; something MUST happen or we will start to have people leaving town due to the cost of taxes.	7/11/2017 7:19 PM
78	On the survey the lowest star lit up represents my choice. For instance when I selected the neutral all the stars above it lit up and I couldn't just make neutral light up.	7/11/2017 7:06 PM
79	I believe we need school choice and the ability for Cabot high school students to attend high schools with more opportunities.	7/11/2017 7:02 PM
80	This survey was riddled with problems. On many of the questions, checking one box would result in all boxes being checked. If property taxes are going to increase with school choice, why are taxes in Walden more affordable than Cabot. The state is watching us. Will you take the blame we lose everything?	7/11/2017 7:00 PM

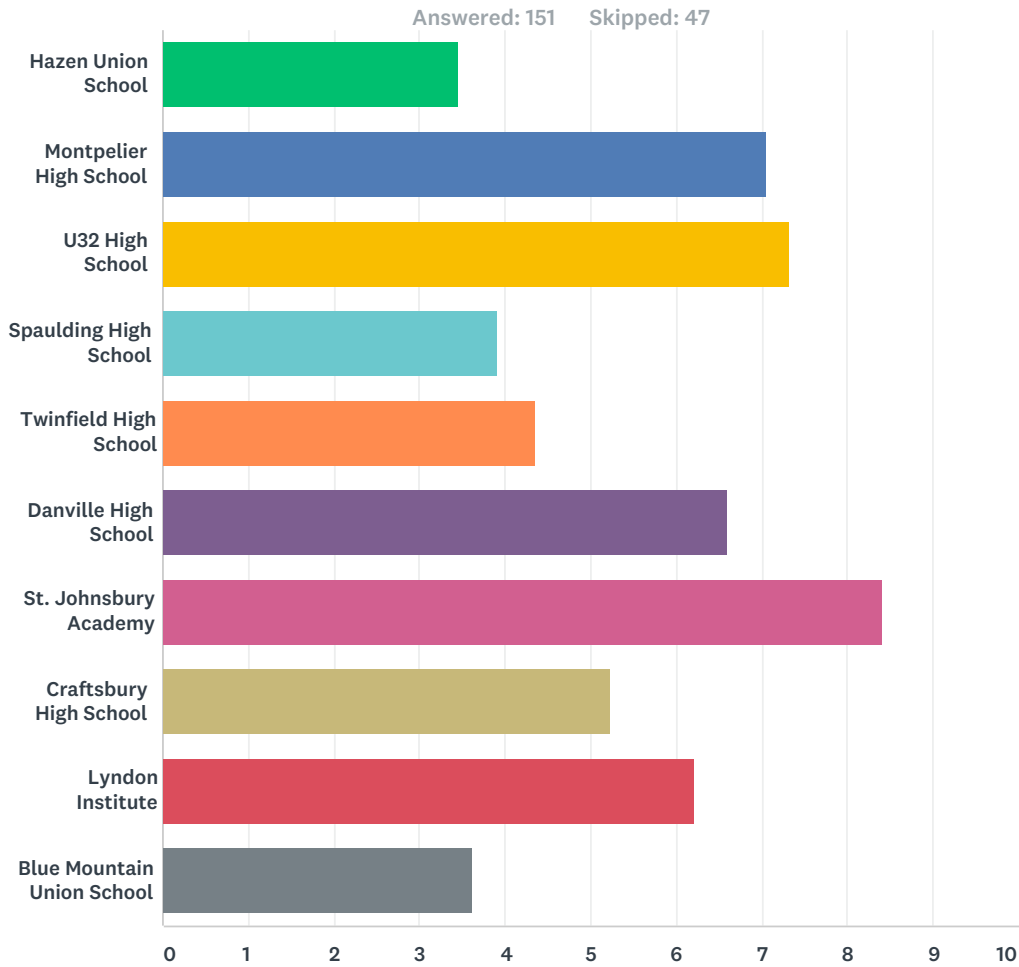
81	it is obvious the town is behind keeping our school here. this is the 2nd vote that voters have supported the school.	7/11/2017 6:10 PM
82	On the previous question, the list of options was definitely not comprehensive.	7/11/2017 6:01 PM
83	Please consider closing Cabot on our own terms (Walden model). The model that is operating presently is unsustainable. Our high school program continues to shrink and get worse with declining enrollment. Let's focus our efforts and maintain the excellent Prek-8 program we have now.	7/11/2017 5:49 PM

Q16 Under which of the following circumstances would you be willing to pay higher property taxes? (select all that apply.)



Answer Choices	Responses
School choice at the high school level	38.92% 65
Retaining a full high school program at Cabot	39.52% 66
Retaining a partial high school program at Cabot	23.95% 40
Expanding community uses of renovated facilities (playground, gymnasium, kitchen, etc.)	34.73% 58
Expanding community uses of renovated facilities that lead to potential future revenue from businesses (commercial kitchen, fitness center, etc.)	42.51% 71
None of the above options justify higher taxes. (if you select this option, do not select any others)	27.54% 46
Total Respondents: 167	

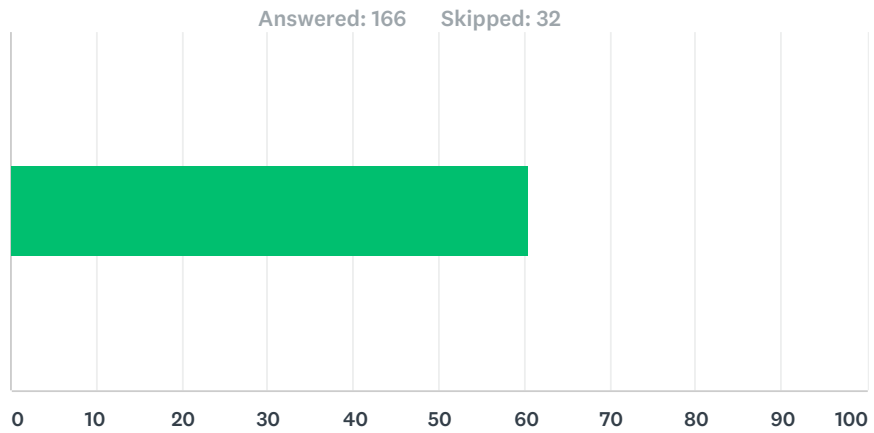
Q17 If Cabot did not maintain a high school, please rank the following schools in order of the educational quality you believe they would provide for our high school students (1 is the highest, 10 the lowest).



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	Score
Hazen Union School	2.63% 3	1.75% 2	0.88% 1	7.89% 9	5.26% 6	6.14% 7	17.54% 20	17.54% 20	15.79% 18	24.56% 28	114	3.46
Montpelier High School	14.63% 18	17.07% 21	19.51% 24	13.82% 17	9.76% 12	5.69% 7	11.38% 14	4.88% 6	1.63% 2	1.63% 2	123	7.05
U32 High School	16.53% 20	18.18% 22	22.31% 27	16.53% 20	5.79% 7	7.44% 9	4.13% 5	4.96% 6	2.48% 3	1.65% 2	121	7.33
Spaulding High School	1.75% 2	1.75% 2	3.51% 4	7.02% 8	11.40% 13	10.53% 12	14.91% 17	14.04% 16	23.68% 27	11.40% 13	114	3.92
Twinfield High School	3.97% 5	7.14% 9	7.14% 9	6.35% 8	7.94% 10	11.11% 14	8.73% 11	15.08% 19	14.29% 18	18.25% 23	126	4.36

Danville High School	12.10% 15	12.10% 15	11.29% 14	15.32% 19	20.16% 25	11.29% 14	9.68% 12	3.23% 4	2.42% 3	2.42% 3	124	6.60
St. Johnsbury Academy	42.96% 58	20.00% 27	17.04% 23	4.44% 6	4.44% 6	4.44% 6	1.48% 2	1.48% 2	0.74% 1	2.96% 4	135	8.41
Craftsbury High School	5.17% 6	6.90% 8	6.03% 7	12.07% 14	18.10% 21	15.52% 18	6.90% 8	12.93% 15	8.62% 10	7.76% 9	116	5.24
Lyndon Institute	4.84% 6	21.77% 27	8.87% 11	12.10% 15	16.13% 20	9.68% 12	8.87% 11	7.26% 9	8.87% 11	1.61% 2	124	6.22
Blue Mountain Union School	0.88% 1	1.75% 2	4.39% 5	5.26% 6	4.39% 5	14.91% 17	15.79% 18	15.79% 18	15.79% 18	21.05% 24	114	3.61

Q18 How confident are you in your knowledge of our neighboring schools?

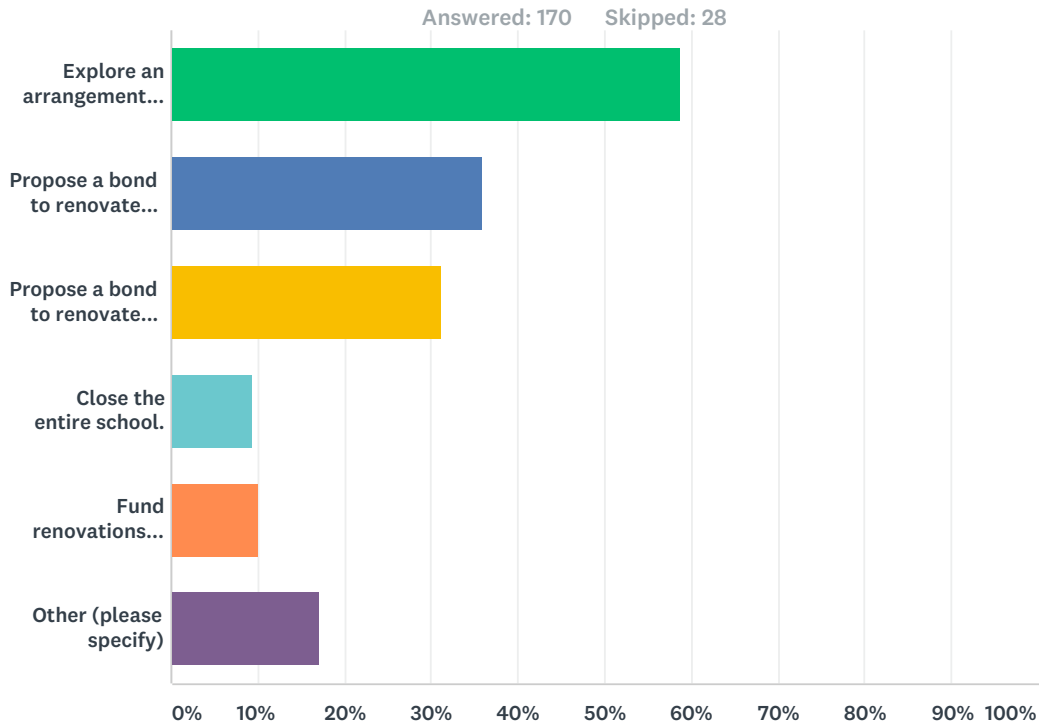


Answer Choices	Average Number	Total Number	Responses
	61	10,043	166
Total Respondents: 166			

Q19 What else does the board need to know?

Answered: 83 Skipped: 115

Q15 Regardless of Act 46 outcomes, our campus needs repair and renovation. Which of the following methods do you find to be acceptable to address this need?



Answer Choices	Responses
Explore an arrangement that shares gym renovations with the town, developing it into a community center.	58.82% 100
Propose a bond to renovate based on a PK-8 school.	35.88% 61
Propose a bond to renovate based on a PK-12 school.	31.18% 53
Close the entire school.	9.41% 16
Fund renovations through increased school taxes.	10.00% 17
Other (please specify)	17.06% 29
Total Respondents: 170	

#	Other (please specify)	Date
1	I support grassroots efforts from the community in solutions and repair. I think it's been a successful model in the past and brings folks a sense of where they fit into the school community. And it's good for the younger people to see they can contribute.	7/24/2017 6:50 PM
2	I went to school from Preschool to Graduation and NEVER saw it in the manner it is now. Things that need to be improved should be done as necessary, not wait until the list exceeds a normal update requiring additional taxes or loans.	7/24/2017 2:14 PM
3	The school in facility planning should have accounted for facility repairs reducing the required repair outlays	7/20/2017 5:34 PM
4	Reduce size, apply for grants, generate other income by sharing space with other organizations and businesses, merge school library with town library.	7/20/2017 5:08 PM
5	Reevaluate the entire way we operate.	7/19/2017 9:36 AM

6	Do town wide fundraisers. Earlier in survey answers were checking all boxes not just one.	7/18/2017 9:30 PM
7	close the high school and consolidate the other buildings	7/16/2017 9:11 PM
8	Also explore other possible funding sources.	7/15/2017 10:40 AM
9	No tax increases work with residents to determine a better way of maintaining our school facilities.	7/13/2017 7:19 PM
10	some community volunteer help	7/13/2017 1:35 PM
11	Fundraising and community donations and involvement, anything that does not raise taxes.	7/13/2017 1:20 PM
12	The school Distrcit and school board have failed tax payers for the last 20 plus years neglecting the maintenance and repair of the campus buildigs. Look at Danville as it has first class education and buildings are safe and CLEAN!!!!	7/13/2017 10:59 AM
13	Close the school, but keep the gym for town purposes, and rec department	7/12/2017 9:50 PM
14	Find another way other than raising taxes.	7/12/2017 9:27 PM
15	Reevaluate how the school is spending money, raising taxes should be the last option. The board has acted like Cabot Residents are cash cows.	7/12/2017 9:22 PM
16	Revisit the school's budget model and get creative. There should be no need to raise taxes to address our school needs. There are things that can be modified with the school's spending profile.	7/12/2017 9:16 PM
17	This is impossible to answer with information at hand.	7/12/2017 5:30 PM
18	Explore fundraising, grants and donation options	7/12/2017 12:53 PM
19	Explore grant availability for charter schools, remote learning, and innovations that might allow a more effective use of te physical plant. See this 2000 report: https://www.oecd.org/edu/innovation-education/2033741.pdf " Unfortunately, most communities in this country continue to use these resources at a rate that is about equal to 30 percent of the available daylight hours. While it is true there are major shifts occurring in student demographics, curriculums, and testing standards, the fact remains that school buildings in this country by and large are substantially under-utilized. The degree of this under-utilization tends to be lower in rural areas where small towns have historically used their facilities for a wide variety of community services."	7/12/2017 10:15 AM
20	I would like to explore the option of having our own townspeople renovate the gym ourselves. We have the skills and equipment to do whatever needs to be done. I strongly disagree with spending tons of money to fix something we can do ourselves. We can't afford to hire out. I would be more than willing to help.	7/12/2017 8:50 AM
21	Explore options with UDAG funding/financing - the gym (particularly) serves as an important piece of infrastructure for the entire community.	7/12/2017 8:04 AM
22	Get creative and do a complete overhaul on your funding model.	7/11/2017 10:57 PM
23	Fundraising	7/11/2017 10:37 PM
24	Alumni fundraising	7/11/2017 10:26 PM
25	I'm confused as to why we are worrying about the gym. Why are we not worrying about the condition of the satellite buildings? Or the the historic main building?	7/11/2017 9:40 PM
26	Explore closing some buildings since overall enrollment has decreased;	7/11/2017 7:16 PM
27	Need more info	7/11/2017 6:41 PM
28	Utilize community expertise to have some renovations done by donation of time and materials, in order to reduce costs of having to find funds for the entire project..	7/11/2017 6:01 PM
29	It's unclear what our tax situation will be, with the merger or other options not clear. I think it is unlikely that our voters will be in complete control of this. We need to see what the financial picture is once the state has acted.	7/11/2017 5:59 PM

Appendix B

Results of October 2017 Community Survey

Comments from Cabot School Survey
Option #1 – Close the Highschool and offer choice

I think we no longer have the resources, (financial and sufficient community support) to maintain a HS that can meet the needs of all our students. Especially given the lack of support from state for small schools. We should instead focus our resources on building our elementary program back up to the excellent school it once was.

Focus on a strong k-8 program and adequate physical facilities. There should be discussion on renovating the gym and having it be a shared school/town facility that serves as a community center as well. Think beyond patching the roof of this inadequate, outdated facility.

We need change – hard to imagine Option #1 will be worse than the status quo.

We cannot afford all the building upkeep, so use HS for middle school. What happened with continuing talks with Danville?

Sorry, I just think it is time – the expenses for the upkeep of the current “campus” will be too HIGH and not enough students.

I don't feel your figures are at all accurate! How can you say an increase of 1% your budget requests have always been larger than that without even adding staff. Even using your figures for contract negotiations, you are offering 2.9% to support staff and a 1.5% to teachers for the next 2 years. This is 83% of our budget how can you say a 1% increase. You need to relook your numbers they don't make any sense.

If you could have added staff and students to make programs better why didn't you already do it? It seems with the current contract negotiations your increase will be a lot more than the 1% you have listed, without adding new staff.

Close the high school and any Cabot High School kid can go to any high school they choose.

Close the HS make elementary strong! Allow students to tuition to any school in VT.

We will be facing this issue over and over (and have been for years.) It is time to make the hard decision.

The time has come. Failure is not in the closing of the high school but in the continued postponement of what needs to be done – closing the high school. Please use (honest) logic and not emotions in this decision.

I don't feel the \$ amounts are accurate. Very misleading to the community and with dropping enrollment and a prayer every year for new students; time are changing.

I want lower taxes – tired of throwing money out for nothing. Close High School!

MERGE while the opportunity is there to do it smoothly – going to happen sooner or later anyway. Kind of reminds me of small farms in the 60s that tried to hang in there and where are they now – please do the right thing while the chance to move is offered as a smooth transition.

Closing the high school is the best approach to dealing with a school that has an incompetent administration and substandard teachers.

School choice would have positive role for the greater Cabot economic well being of the town - \$\$\$. Not shown – FY23 projected cost of maintaining HS.

Adding 2 staff does not go far enough to improve a school with such limited curricular and extracurricular choices.

Very unprofessional survey! Confusing to read and easily hacked by dishonest people. Should have been put to a real vote.

I think the high school is already struggling to meet the needs of different levels of students and keeping them engaged. I don't expect tax payers to step up to make needed investments.

I cannot imagine Cabot residents voting on a budget that will allow the school to make significant improvements. Also there is no guarantee the school will receive the small schools grant. The worst case scenario would be for the HS to remain open and continue to limp along with an inadequate budget and too few students. This would be truly unfair.

Comparing FY23 with FY19 did not seem fair. I am strongly OPPOSED to Option #2.

No magical thinking required. What's the history of Cabot's consolidation with other schools? Is there much a history? If not, why not? Cabot can barely afford the staff it has now, how might 2 more be added? Does Cabot have a marketing strategy for attracting 6 more pupils? How have facility costs been factored into each option? Will an option #2 budget be presented that produces a 1% tax increase or a 9% increase?

Merger is the best long-term choice for our students and the taxpayer.

Between the school and town, taxes are going up the people cannot keep up with them. Think of the taxpayer see how many taxes are delinquent now. The teachers get a raise every year plus benefits. Our pay doesn't go up especially the older ones.

Are you considering the cost of infrastructure improvements needed? Too bad you took the Twinfield merger off – or the Danville (I understand they voted NO to the merger). Makes more sense.

I feel that we have too many "seasoned teachers that have been working at this school for so many years that we cannot afford their salary and benefits. I am afraid that we have no choice but to close the school. Our students are not getting the education that they deserve. It is just simply too expensive per student.

Close Cabot High School and allow to tuition our high school students to school of their choice. I think this needs to be done now. The Board is had years to get this done. It's time to act for everyone's benefit.

Although I love the idea of our town having a K-12 school, I feel that K-8 will have better resources if 9-12 is not there. I also feel that our high school deserves a wider social experience with more student population and better teacher options, though the onese we have our great, there is not as much diversity.

If moving forward with VISION is a concern, I would suggest early retirement for Mr. Tormey. He has been the agenda for at least 10 years – a progressive direction is the only thing that will be acceptable.

If you go with U32 thy will bring a bus to Cabot to pu children. (as written)

I find this difficult. I see so many + and – for each option. I chose #1 because it seems more definite – less risky.

Your chart is misleading the way you lined up the numbers and projecting out to 2023 is not possible to be accurate.

We live on the Route 2 side of Cabot and have 3 kids – we already don't feel like part of the Cabot community so th argument of loosing the town doesn't apply to us.

Comments from Cabot School Survey
Residents choosing Option 2 – Keep Cabot High School open with improvements

We can always go to Option One – Choice – in the future. Why not try Option 2 while we have that option!

Better to maintain local control than (maybe) save a tiny amount of tax money.

Just do whatever you need to do to keep the High School OPEN and OUR school board. Not a board where we would have minority representation. Thank you.

Although it may be impossible to get the number of tuition students needed to hold the Cabot budget down to the projected level, the comparison between the two budgets is also flawed. It does not factor in the transportation burden on students who cannot attend a local high school in Cabot.

Someone must pay those travel expenses. Furthermore, the time spent commuting is lost from study or extracurricular activities. Act 46 is discriminatory, based on false per capital costs, not educational quality.

Thank you for your hard work and continued dedication to Cabot School.

We can do it!

It might be a good idea to do a survey regarding what parents want for programs and additional classes.

Cut road budget by \$100,000! They don't need to grade our road 10 times a year!

Do not believe choice would ever be throttled – no local voice, do not think it would help sustain town economics/growth if we lost the H.S. Also believe k-12 districts produce some of the best outcomes for communities like ours. Not sure our elementary would survive other configurations under Act 46 besides being a k-12.

Would homeschool rather than send my child off to another school if there was not a Cabot High School.

I support keeping our high school open. 1) We must succeed in attracting more students to PBL; 2) Regain a strong teaching staff; 3) have academic exchanges with other high schools in areas like advanced math, science, biology, environ. Studies; 4) make legislature aware of the negative effect on school systems of the homestead exemption option for the wealthy – they take it regardless of need!; 5) suggest to state ed board that they try to reduce their 180 staff to reduce overall ed. Costs

I'm interested in the Academy option.

I am not convinced that Option #1 would maintain a thriving elementary and believe that our taxes will be high again when incentives run out. We have so much community/parent support and inspired teachers and principal that I want to see what can be created over the next few years. I believe that having a HS in town is best for a majority of the students in Cabot.

Cabot High School is a vital part of this community. Please continue your great and hard work!

We have had kids and grandkids attending Cabot school continuously for 49 years. We strongly believe that keeping our kids in Cabot close to home is best during these high school years when they are making so many important life-changing choices.

Thank you and other school bd members for the countless hours you must have spent trying to figure this all out! I'm sure, eventually, the High School will have to close – but for now, put me down for keeping it open!

Adding staff will only cost more you are trying to lower the cost. 12th grader can be a teacher to 5th and 6th graders as a class to better there skills in remebbering; have a day care program, kids can run

it to raise money, learning skills and revenue. Don't be greedy. It will all fall apart; must find way to save money or lower the cost to run it. Go solar power, LED bulb, heat with wood hip or solar heat, grow food kids can help fund razors, bottle drive, bus off property, make cuts there there NO more pay raises.

Closing the school would be detrimental to the entire town!

I think the project-based learning is a great idea. While I support going to college, I think a lot of what could be learned is wasted because kids don't have real life experience to tie in what they learn. The good teachers should be supported by what a fulltime position supplies. I think a lot of parents and kids are interested in hands on apprentice style learning and this may draw more students in. I think there is a large economic benefit, as well as a social benefit to having school and extracurricular here.

Being a dairy farmer we are tied to this community and thought of driving our children to another school doesn't seem possible.

I would have fallen through the cracks at a larger school. Cabot gave me so many opportunities and I want my children to have the same chance.

Initially #2 but not all is clear, for example, when #2 does \$1.7758 (1%) + \$1.9336 (9%) mean? Does it mean 1\$ and 9% for Year 2 (which would mean the math is wrong?) or does it mean the \$ amounts will be higher (if so then those higher \$ amounts should or been entered)?

This Act 46 has been an attempt to force towns/schools into what the state wants, by constraining the rights of "we the people" to really choose freely. And Act 46 goals are being ignored!

Closing high school but keeping K-8 has no cost savings.

Option #1 is filled with uncertainty and will not clearly enhance or serve the remaining k-8 program. Without a strong school, we will not be a strong town. Saving \$200 on taxes is shortsighted in the face of keeping Cabot a viable town.

Option #2 provides greater autonomy for our school and allows Cabot HS to remain open. The savings estimated for Option #1 are short-sighted. If the HS is allowed to continue possibly by sharing resources with another k-12 and changed into a private academy, the savings are likely to be far greater. Money is such an overrated reason to make a decision though. Option #2 is the best choice for our children and for Cabot overall! Choose Option #2!!!

Imagine no high school students on our beautiful rec field – in our gym – on our campus – in our town – that would be a tragedy in my opinion. All we need are some more kids. HS DOABLE!!

Local control, educational quality that the School Board and taxpayers can have a say/stake in, extracurricular opportunities, fewer transportation challenges, and the viability of a small town are all reasons to keep Cabot School preK-12.

I believe this is the best option because: 1) we keep local control of the quality of our students' education and the finances involved, 2) our children received an excellent education at Cabot and were involved in 3 seasons of sports, band, yearbook, etc, and had many varied extracurricular activities to help them develop in a well rounded way.

The closure of our high school would be a profound loss to this community. I have not had a child in school for a number of years, but I am proud to watch the athletic, musical and academic endeavors of our community's children. Without our high school, I would rather live in a place like Montpelier, where I would be in walking distance to conveniences and cultural events. The esteemed history of our school, the success of our graduates, the life-long bonds with fellow students and teachers and the heart-felt, personalized graduations are essential to the well-being of our community.

Both options are an improvement over the previous vote choice.

Would like to explore this in more detail (keeping the high school)

Incentive tax of \$150 K over 5 years not sufficient considering risk of loss of community sense.

I feel it is important to note that a major benefit to Cabot residents is transportation. By closing our school, parents face the hardship of organizing transportation for children. This will be burdensome for families who do not have reliable vehicles or cannot schedule trips back and forth due to work schedules.

Keep Cabot School Property; don't give up ownership!

Whatever you do, do NOT give away the school property!

Let's not give up on efforts to keep HS open! I'd hate to see the closing of the high school lead to the closing of lower grades!

Thoughts: Not an easy decision! I feel the school is the heart of the community, bringing "life" and connectedness; The "Cabot Academy" idea seems very interesting and plausible. Thanks for all your time and effort!

Other comments about the Cabot School Survey

To Cabot School Board: In regards to your letter to the people of Cabot. Yes to closing the High School, as there are parents who work in all the cities around us there would be no trouble in getting the kid to school. Smaller kids would be on the busses too long and there for we should keep the elementary in town. Next when is the school board going to keep the buildings in shape. The roof on the gym has been going down hill for years and yet no one has even thought about coating it with a substance that would save it. A few years ago the roof had a leak in the back room yet no thought about a gallon of roof repair and we lost the whole room, many hundreds of dollars. Many years ago I gave the board answers to repair and strength the roof and your people said they would contact me for ideas on saving the building. I have done hundred of building in my 50 plus years in the industry. Could have saved the people of Cabot Hundreds of thousands over what you are planning. I would like to see the board start doing what should be done to keep the building in shape! I have building that roof were put on in 1966 and still do not leak. For the sake of the people of cabot please get your act together. (This was accompanied by a vote for Option #1)

Neither Option One nor Option Two is viable for all too many residential taxpayers with one primary residence in the Town of Cabot. Relief for these taxpayers should be the paramount concern for the Cabot School Board and the State of Vermont over and above any income sensitivity benefits already provided to meet these primary residential taxpayers by the State of Vermont.

Two other options should be explored:

1. Privatization: Those Cabot residents who desire to maintain this K-12 school, who have sufficient assets and a desire to maintain the status quo, should band together creating an endowment for the annual and for the long term continued operation of the Cabot School. The goal should be to minimize or eliminate the property tax on primary residential property taxpayers in the Town of Cabot.
2. Top Down from Montpelier Approach: If privatization is not possible, here in Cabot, as envisioned in point one just above, then the State of Vermont should create a top down organization replaces local control (state wide) by employing teachers, administrators, support personnel, and other ancillary personnel as State of Vermont employees, other tha traditional contractors like electricians, plumbers, etc. The number of personnel (statewide) and the number of physical plants (statewide) should be reduced to reflect the needs of what is affordable and doable for those same primary residential property taxpayers on a statewide basis. Clearly, my point number two here goes well beyond the aegis of Act 46 and its amendments. However, these out of control costs, at the local level, make operating the Cabot School a significant burden for all too many Cabot primary residential taxpayers, ill effecting the viability of any so called economic development ideas that are sprouting locally or statewide. (There was no vote attached to this)

Shame on me for not taking a more active role, however to make a well informed decision/position, I would want to understand what the impact of the upgrades and improvements needed and long overdue on our school facilities would do to Cabot's tax rate versus the merge and potential elimination of buildings. The repair maintenance could easily exceed any perceived savings advantage to option 2. (There was no vote attached to this comment.)

There was also a page detailing the Options with all the information, and no title was highlighted or circled to indicate a vote in support of either option, although “School costs not shared beyond Cabot” and “Continued upkeep of preK-12 facility (current campus size)” was circled and starred. It was determined this was not in support of either option.

Cabot School Board

I respect your efforts in trying to select an option for the high school children, their parents, and one the State of Vt will approve. For a number of reasons I voted to close the high school.

1. The students, not the parents, will benefit with a choice of HS and the fear that the accepting Hss would be large is hard to support. DHS, TFHS and Hazen are nearby and in reality – small schools. The children in the lower grades play them some in baseball and others in soccer.
2. It is a big monetary gamble with taxpayer money to believe the number of tuition students will increase when all or many Hss are trying to increase their enrollments. It's pretty late to run a sales pitch to some schools.
3. In passing future budgets voters will be influenced by your choices today. To miss the maximum funds from the state will have a lasting year or nay impact on thie choices.
4. If I recall correctly, 55% of the responders stated they would approve of improvements to various building in the Cabot educational complex. Yet a very small percentage was willing to come up with the cash.
5. To increase the staff to shore up an already lean program is adding patches to a warn inner tube.
6. I added the 9% of ?? and concluded Cabot's cost would be greater than a budget of free choice.

Appendix C

SBAC & Assessment Data

SMARTER BALANCED TEST RESULTS

2016 Smarter Balanced Test Results – Cabot/Danville/Twinfield					
English - % Proficient and Above					
Grade		Cabot	Twinfield	Danville	Vermont
3	All	25%	74%	64%	54%
4	All	43%	48%	26%	54%
5	All	47%	64%	43%	58%
6	All	15%	48%	70%	56%
7	All	71%	65%	64%	57%
8	All	67%	66%	72%	58%
11	All	64%	50%	68%	57%

2016 Smarter Balanced Test Results – Cabot/Twinfield/Danville					
Math - % Proficient and Above					
Grade		Cabot	Twinfield	Danville	Vermont
3	All	13%	65%	72%	56%
4	All	43%	59%	47%	50%
5	All	27%	18%	34%	43%
6	All	15%	37%	47%	41%
7	All	71%	27%	56%	46%
8	All	33%	24%	48%	44%
11	All	36%	22%	47%	38%

Percentage of Students in Each School who are categorized as receiving:

- Free and Reduced Lunch**
 Cabot – 60%; Twinfield – 51%; Danville 38 %;
- Support Services**
 Cabot –18%; Twinfield –12%; Danville 17 % pre-k - 12

Vermont Smarter Balanced Testing Scores: 2015/2016
Disaggregated Statewide Results
Percentage of Students Proficient or Above

Grade		2015 English Vermont	2016 English Vermont		2015 Math Vermont	2016 Math Vermont
3	All	51%	54%		51%	56%
	Not Free & R	64%	65%		64%	67%
	Free and R	45%	39%		35%	41%
	Special Ed	12%	14%		15%	18%
4	All	51%	54%		44%	50%
	Not Free & R	62%	66%		56%	62%
	Free and R	35%	37%		29%	32%
	Special Ed	11%	13%		10%	14%
5	All	56%	58%		41%	43%
	Not Free & R	69%	68%		52%	53%
	Free and R	39%	42%		25%	28%
	Special Ed	11%	14%		6%	10%
6	All	53%	56%		47%	41%
	Not Free & R	65%	67%		48%	51%
	Free and R	35%	39%		21%	25%

	Special Ed	7%	11%		3%	5%
7	All	55%	58%		43%	46%
	Not Free & R	66%	69%		53%	56%
	Free and R	36%	39%		26%	28%
	Special Ed	8%	9%		3%	6%
8	All	53%	59%		40%	44%
	Not Free & R	63%	68%		49%	54%
	Free and R	36%	41%		24%	26%
	Special Ed	8%	11%		3%	4%
11	All	57%	57%		37%	37%
	Not Free & R	65%	65%		44%	45%
	Free and R	39%	38%		20%	19%
	Special Ed	10%	10%		2%	1%

Appendix D

Selected Materials Reflecting
Conversations with other Districts

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**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, June 26, 2017**

PRESENT: Jackie Folsom, Lisa Olson, Randilee Raynor, Sharon O'Connor **Administrators:** Mark Tucker, Special Services Coordinator; David Schilling, Cabot Principal **Absent:** Chris Tormey, Nancy Thomas

Call to Order: Jackie Folsom, Vice Chair– called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Public Comment: December 26, 2017 is the final date for submission of the Alternative Governance structures.

Consent Agenda:

- a. Approve June 19, 2017 Minutes – Jackie moved to approve the minutes of June 19th as written. Sharon seconded the motion. Minutes of June 19th approved as written.

Reports

- a. Principal Report – David Schilling
 - Since we met recently there is no news to report.

Board Discussion

- a. E-mail Addresses
 - It is recommended that Cabot School Board members get and maintain Cabot School e-mail addresses rather than using personal e-mail for board business.
 - David Schilling will work with board members to set up accounts.
- b. Act 46 Next Steps
 - Jackie shared a hand out with the board which included the background of the Act 46 study between Cabot, Twinfield and Danville as well as themes from Act 46 discussions.
 - The school boards of Cabot, Danville and Twinfield voted to join a committee to explore whether the three districts can come together in a way that will benefit the students and residents of all three communities.
 - Key themes among all three communities: Cost – people hope for cost savings, worried that costs will increase. Students will have more options – more academic options of high school students, including a variety of learning opportunities that work for students with different learning styles, expand extracurricular options, broader social network and diversity of peer group. Concern about change and the unknown – would opportunities really increase, how would offerings be distinctive enough to offer students diverse options, could this stabilize the system over time, allowing our high schools to be viable, impact of statewide policy on budgets and other district issues. Concern about the loss of town identity and voice – what would the impact be on our

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civic life, right now there is competition and misperceptions across schools, how could decisions be made moving forward. Transportation – distances, and visualization of the distance, costs, implications for the length of the school day.

- Themes related to specific options

Option 1

Benefits	Trade - Offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keeps PreK – 8 in all schools• Helps keep Danville and Twinfield Stay Afloat• Increase in student options• Could be the cheapest option	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cabot loses its High School• Difficult for students to switch each semester• Transportation

Option 2

Benefits	Trade-Offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep High School students at Cabot• Increase in student opportunities (Social, academic, sports)• Creates Increased Project Based Learning Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transportation – possible cost increase• Loss of local control and lack of savings (including debt, bond)• Concern about student relationships with primary adults

Option 3

Benefits	Trade- Offs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintains Current Structures for the time being and provides more time to come up with solutions.• Maintains local control, local school boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't address enrollment issues.• Could potentially lead to even less local control.• Limits student opportunities through narrower curriculum and smaller student populations.

- Recommendations: Incorporate feedback from student discussions into the committees decision- making, articulate a clear vision for each of the high schools in the new districts, provide detailed information so community members can make an informed decision, share the themes from the community conversations widely, and be explicit about how these themes informed the committee's decision-making process and/or the specifics of whatever option they recommend, the structure of the conversations worked well and should be replicated for future community conversations about Act 46 (as well as other public topics that may arise)
- Alternative Path to Act 46 Merger
 - June 26 – July 30 (5 weeks) Decide on Path

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- August 1 – September 30 Draft Alternative Structure Plan
- October 1 Alternative Plan to State Agency of Education for Feedback
- October 15 – November 15 Present Alternative Structure to State Board of Education
- December 26 State Board decision on Alternative Plan
- Board will meet July 10th and July 17th from 6:00-8:00pm to discuss further Act 46 work.

Board Action

a. Set up Cabot School Email addresses for Board members – Sharon moved to approve the set-up of Cabot School email addresses for Cabot School Board. Lisa seconded the motion. Motion approved.

Executive Session: The board went into executive session at 7:28pm. The board returned from executive session at 7:40 p.m.

- Action Taken: The board voted to rescind the offer of employment for Theodore Casparian

Adjournment The board adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Amanda LeBlanc, Transcriber

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**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 10, 2017**

PRESENT: Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Randilee Raynor, Patrick Healy, Scott Harris, Jill Wilson, Jon Groveman, Lauren Cleary, Robert Eagan; **Administrators :** Mark Tucker, Superintendent, David Schilling, Cabot Principal, Mark Mooney, Twinfield Principal; **Student Representatives:** Taylor Abbott, Cameron Mueller-Harder; **Absent:** Chris Tormey

Call to Order: Jackie Folsom, Vice Chair – called the meeting to order at 6:00pm

Public Comment

None

Joint conversation with Twinfield Union School Board regarding possible merger ideas

- Jackie explained that Cabot is looking at a couple of options
 - Keep high school in Cabot as a PBL school or private academy , or become a PK-8 school
 - Chris Tormey has spoken with Orleans South Supervisory Union to discuss merger options with Craftsbury.
- Danville has been in contact with Blue Mountain to discuss merger options.
- Scott Harris informed the group that Twinfield Union School Board has reached out to Williamstown/Northfield, Barre and Washington Central Supervisory Union to begin discussions on possible merger options.
- The Cabot School Board will be conducting a survey of the community to understand why the merger was voted down and what direction the community would like to see Cabot School take.
- Danville School Board will be analyzing why the merger was voted down as well.
- The Cabot and Twinfield Union School boards agreed to continue conversations on possible new merger ideas.
- Mark Tucker asked what the group thought of Cabot School and Twinfield Union School joining as a PreK - 12 structure on one side with Barnet, Walden, and Waterford.
- We need to show state board our due diligence in working on an alternate structure or merge proposal, or do nothing and let the state decide. There will be default articles of agreements for those that the state ends up matching.
- The results of the community survey will allow the boards to decide what is and is not really needed from each other and in continued conversations with other districts, and identify all negotiables / non-negotiables in order to move forward.

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- A joint meeting of the Twinfield and Cabot Boards will be held August 14 in Cabot at 6:00pm, with an independent meeting facilitator.
- Prior to that meeting board members are asked to submit all topics related to the feasibility of a merger with Cabot and TUS as partners in the merger to Mark Tucker.

Executive Session - The Board went into executive session at 7:05pm to discuss a personnel issue. The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:10pm. No action was taken

Consent Agenda

- Approve June 26, 2017 Minutes. Randilee moved to approve the minutes as written, Sharon seconded the motion. Minutes approved as written

Reports

a. Principal Report – Dave Schilling

- None

b. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker

- The Administrative Leadership Retreat was held last week. Work was done on time on protocols for meetings, creating goals for next year, continuing to focus on proficiencies and general student support systems. The new members of the central office team, Monica Morrissey, Curriculum Director and Julia Pritchard, Special Services Director, are off to a great start.

Board Discussion

- Jackie noted that there are two candidates interested in the open board seat.

a. Survey Update

- The group reviewed the draft community survey
- This survey is through Survey Monkey, and paper copies will be available at the Cabot Library and Town Clerk's Office.
- The deadline for survey feedback will be July 25.
- Survey results will be reviewed on a July 31 meeting.
- A Community Forum will be scheduled in August at Cabot School to discuss survey results.
- A joint meeting of Twinfield and Cabot School Boards will be held on August 14, 2017 at Cabot School.

Board Action

- None

Adjournment : The meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted – Sylvia Charron

APPROVED

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 17, 2017**

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Randilee Raynor, Lisa Olson,; **Administration:** Mark Tucker, Superintendent, David Schilling, Principal; **Student Representatives:** Cameron Mueller-Harder;

Call to Order: Jackie Folsom, Vice Chair called meeting to order 6:05 p.m.

Public Comment

A community member hopes to see Cabot pursue other schools for merger opportunities.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve July 10, 2017 Minutes – Tabled for the next meeting

Reports

- a. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker

- No Report

- b. Principal Report – David Schilling

- Custodians are working to get campus ready for the next school year
- David is organizing volunteers to paint interior spaces during the second week of August
- The search for a high school math teacher is continuing
- The Act 46 community survey has yielded 163 electronic responses to date.

- c. Student Report – Cameron Mueller-Harder

- Cameron presented a check for \$1,000 from the Cabot Community Theater in gratitude for their use of CSPAC. Chris instructed Mark to have the business office apply it against CSPAC debt

Board Discussion

- a. Open Board Seat

- Chris thanked Randilee for her service on the board
- The board reviewed two candidates to fill the seat that will be vacated by Randile on July 31.

- b. Act 46-Discuss negotiable/non-negotiable items for August 14 meeting with Twinfield & Danville Boards

- The perspective of a merger is the concern that Cabot would end up with less than equal representation in a merged district. Preliminary survey responses indicate that representation was an issue that may have caused a no vote in Cabot.
- Chris will contact the Danville Board Chair to determine if there is interest from them to continue discussion with Cabot and Twinfield.

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- OSSU Executive Board wants to talk again after their next meeting.

c. Tentative Public Forum-Finalize Plans

- There will be a public forum on August 9 to update the community on work that has been occurring during the summer, discuss merger options and survey results.
- Mark Tucker has been in contact with an independent facilitator for the forum, Ken Templeton. Mark distributed a draft agenda created by Ken for the Board to review.
- After discussion of the draft agenda, the board decided to finalize it and the presentation after reviewing the survey results on July 31.
- The forum will be advertised in Cabot Chronicle and Front Porch Forum, School Website

Board Action

a. Approve Open Board Seat

- Jackie moved to appoint Rory Thibault as board member to begin in August, Lisa seconded the motion. Motion approved

Future Meetings

July 31 to discuss survey results

August 9 Cabot Public Forum

August 14 Joint Meeting with Twinfield Board, purpose to be determined

August 21 Tentative Cabot Board meeting

Executive Session

Adjournment : 7:45pm

Respectfully Submitted

Sylvia Charron

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**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, July 31, 2017**

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Sharon O'Connor, Rory Thibault, Lisa Olson, Jackie Folsom

Administrators: Mark Tucker, Superintendent; David Schilling, Principal Cabot

Student Representatives: Taylor Abbott; Cameron Mueller-Harder

Call to Order Chris Tormey, chair called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve July 10, 2017 Minutes – Sharon moved to approve the minutes of July 10 as written, Lisa seconded the motion. Minutes of July 10 approved as written.
- b. Sharon moved to approve the minutes of July 17 following amendments (Cabot Players to Cabot Community Theater, Joint meeting with Twinfield August 14 agenda to be determined) Lisa seconded the motion. Minutes of July 17 approved.

Reports

- a. Student Report – Cameron Mueller-Harder, Taylor Abbott
 - Summer Soccer for the Varsity girls is underway. The team scrimmaged Lyndonville and tied as well as winning their scrimmage against Hazen.
 - The summer basketball team won their scrimmage against U-32.
 - Taylor has helped out this summer at Soccer and Basketball Camp.
 - Cameron helped out at theater camp and two plays were performed.
- b. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker
 - Mark shared with the board that a successful candidate has been found for the available High School Math position. Richard Halada has been teaching for 28 years and is looking forward to working at Cabot. He has lived in the community for the past 2 years.
 - Robin Miller has been hired for the Fiscal Services Bookkeeper position, she is a great addition. Central office is now fully staffed.
 - Hiring Recommendation: Mark Tucker recommended Richard Halada for the position of High School Math Teacher.
- c. Principal Report – Dave Schilling
 - Summer repairs are underway and the entryway is getting a make-over.
 - The curtain drain project for satellite building may be more complicated than originally thought; additional excavation around the building will need to be done. (Jackie suggested talking with the Town about drainage options for water from Danville Hill) David will see if Pete Ackermann can attend the Cabot Selectboard Meeting.

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- There are some great new hires at Cabot and there is a wonderful write up in the Cabot Chronicle about them.
- Siskin programming on Thursdays for all students.
- The summer camps have been a great success this year and may have even helped a little with recruiting.

Board Discussion

a. Act 46 Updates

- Vermont Academy Proposal –
- The Board heard a presentation from Mike Rushman and Fran Voight on the potential for forming a "Vermont Academy" - a Regional Education District comprised of a yet to be determined number of towns that currently operate PK-12 schools. The basic premise of the idea is to allow continued independent operation of the individual schools while addressing the need to increase enrollment at each school through establishment of a tuition-based program aimed at attracting out of state students who would live in the towns where they attend school. Tuition garnered from each student would be split between a tuition payment to the school, a room and board payment to the host family, and a contribution to an "enrichment" pool that would be used to increase course and extra-curricular opportunities for all students at the school. It was left to the Cabot Board to decide if they want to reach out to other similarly-structured schools to explore this idea. The Board took no action on next steps but added this idea to the list of possible approaches to meeting the goals of Act 46.
- Other Updates – Chris had been in contact with Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union to discuss the possibility of a merger. The chair of the executive council at Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union said they will discuss possible course sharing at their next meeting.
- Chris spoke with Bruce Melendy from Danville, they are currently looking into options for students with St. Johnsbury Academy, possibility of collaborating with Blue Mountain Union as well as the possibility of an alternate structure stand-alone district.

b. Review Community Survey Results

- The board reviewed and discussed the responses to the Act 46 survey that was sent out to community members. A link to the results will be posted on the school website and Front Porch Forum.
- Some of the highlights are as follows:

c. Forum Preparation

- The public forum will take place on August 9th in CSPAC at 6:00pm. Ken Templeton will be the facilitator.
- The results from the recent survey will be shared.
- Fifteen minutes of the forum will include information about all other options pursued and why they are not a possibility for merger options.
- Also briefly share some new possible options such as The Vermont Academy.
- Ask public for their questions or comments on next steps.

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Board Action

Hiring Recommendation – Sharon made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s hiring recommendation. Lisa seconded the motion. Motion approved

Executive Session: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:10pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Amanda LeBlanc, Transcriber

APPROVED

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 07, 2017**

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Rory Thibault, Lisa Olson, Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor
Administrators: Mark Tucker, Superintendent; David Schilling, Cabot Principal; Christina Kimball, Business Manager
Student Representatives: Cameron Mueller-Harder
Absent: Taylor Abbott

Call to Order Chris Tormey, chair called the meeting to order at 6:05pm.

Public Comment: Karen Larsen thanked the board for their hard work on Act 46/49 and offered the help and support of community members who are willing to join a work committee or group, under the direction of the Board, to research information and data for Act 46 options/possibilities.

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve July 31, 2017 Minutes – Lisa moved to approve the minutes of July 31st following amendments (add Cameron Mueller-Harder to attendance and a minor rewording of the item about Danville and Blue Mountain). Sharon seconded the motion. Minutes approved following amendments.

Reports

- a. Student Report – Cameron Mueller- Harder
 - Reported on summer camp activities
- b. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker
 - The appeal by the Vermont Labor Relations Board has been filed with the Vermont Supreme Court.
 - The leadership team was in Killington last week attending the Vermont Leadership retreat.
 - New teacher orientation will be held at Cabot on August 25th. The first day of in-service will be held at Twinfield on August 28th
 - WNESU, Twinfield and Cabot's websites will be moved to a new system and websites will be redesigned.
- c. Principal Report – Dave Schilling
 - The VSAC Gear-up grant for Cabot School has increased from \$6,800.00 to \$17,000.00. The additional funds will help in many ways. These include: extra funding for college visits, funding for June Term, increased work with the Siskin Center.
 - Dave shared a hand out with the board about meeting norms.

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- Dave updated the board on the installation of a curtain drain and possible excavation. The scope of the project is less than initially thought, and it will not cost as much as expected.

Board Discussion

a. FY17 Year End Financial Report – Christina Kimball

- Christina reviewed the financial report for Cabot as of June 30, 2017. In March, Christina came to the board with the financial report and a projected deficit of around \$100,000.00. There have been several changes that have taken place since that time, including additional reimbursements for state-placed students. Maintenance on the cafeteria roof did not happen as planned, for a savings of around \$33,000; however, this adds to the deferred maintenance load at the school. Christina also noted that the school staff and administration had worked hard to stay under budget as much as possible, given the concerns about unbudgeted special education expenses that were raised in September 2016. and the current unaudited end-of-year report is a deficit of \$10,732.62.

b. Act 46 Update

- Planning for forum on August 9th – Chris prepared slides for the upcoming forum and reviewed them with board. The forum agenda/goals will be as follows: Review results of recent survey, review goals and timeline for Act 46 (handout), Update on potential options for complying with Act 46, answer questions and gather input on the options and outline the process to reach a decision.
- Overtures to other districts – Letters will be sent to Craftsbury, OSSU, Hazen and Forestry Program, Danville, U-32, Montpelier, and Caledonia Cooperative to express Cabot's interest in working together/collaborating and the possibility of meeting pre-requisites for a merger or AGS.
- The Board has decided that for the time being, there will be no discussion of a merger with TUS. There may be a possibility of some other type of collaboration in the future, and these possibilities will be discussed at a later meeting. Therefore, the previously-planned joint meeting with the TUS Board on August 14th will not occur. At the next board meeting the Cabot Board will discuss ways that Cabot and Twinfield could collaborate and plan a meeting for a future date.
- Vermont Academy Proposal – will present at the forum and information and Chris said he would share the proposal with Representative David Sharpe in advance of his expected attendance at the Cabot Community forum on August 9th.
- Potential new committees/working groups – The board briefly discussed forming a working group or committee to help with research and the gathering of information for possible options to comply with act 46. This group would be comprised of community members. Board members will discuss this at the public forum on Wednesday.

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Board Action: None

Executive Session: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 9:30pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Amanda LeBlanc, Transcriber

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CABOT SCHOOL BOARD

MEETING MINUTES

Monday, August 14, 2017

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Rory Thibault, Lisa Olson, Sharon O'Connor, Jack Folsom

Administrators: Mark Tucker, Superintendent; David Schilling, Principal **Student**

Representatives: Cameron Mueller-Harder Taylor Abbott

Call to Order Chris Tormey, chair called the meeting to order at 6:02pm.

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve August 7, 2017 Minutes – Jackie moved to approve the minutes of August 7, 2017. Chris seconded the motion. Minutes of August 7 approved.

Reports

- a. Student Report –Cameron Mueller-Harder
- The first day of school will soon be here.
 - Cameron is hard at work on college applications.
- b. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker
- Mark and Dave met with the Agency of Education to make sure that all licensures are and background checks are set for the upcoming school year.
- c. Principal Report – Dave Schilling
- Dave along with several great volunteers have been hard at work painting.
 - Dave is wrapping up work on his Principal Licensure.
 - This year the consolidated federal program grant is considerably less than in past years.

Board Discussion

- a. Act 46 Update
- Review August 19, 2017 Community Forum, Discuss Next Steps –The forum was well attended by community members. Also in attendance were David Sharpe, Head of the House Education Committee, Representative Kitty Toll and Peter Peltz, a member of the State Board of Education
 - Review discussion with Caledonia Cooperative 706 Committee – Jackie and Chris met with the Caledonia Cooperative 706 Committee. There is interest in collaborating with Cabot.
 - Discuss VT Academy Status – Mark sent a copy of the Vermont Academy Proposal to Donna Russo-Savage for feedback. As proposed right now the Vermont Academy cannot work under VT Law. The board discussed reworking the current plan as well as

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preparing alternate questions to ask Donna Russo-Savage. “Where can we start to make this happen?”

- Create/refine discussion topics for other potential community partners – letters are being sent out to potential partners in other communities for collaboration.
- Act 46 Working Group scope and assignments: Karen Larsen, Billie O’Connor, Angela Ogle, Roz Daniels, Fran Voit, Suzie Socks all volunteered to be part of the working group. Chris and Rory volunteered to be part of the working group as well. Sharon also suggested that when some board members are unable to attend others can fill in. The working group will report back to the Board at each meeting. The working group will meet on alternate weeks from the school board.

b. Review of rules for using email for Board communication

- When an email is sent to all board members, they cannot reply to all or it is considered a meeting.

Board Action: None

Executive Session : None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 8:15pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Amanda LeBlanc, Transcriber

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**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, August 28, 2017**

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Rory Thibault, Sharon O'Connor, Jackie Folsom, Lisa Olson

Administrators: David Schilling, Principal

Call to Order Chris Tormey, chair called the meeting to order at 6:01pm.

Public Comment: None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve August 14, 2017 Minutes – Jackie moved to approve the minutes of August 14. Sharon O'Connor seconded the motion. Minutes of August 14 approved.

Reports

- a. Student Report – none
-
- b. Superintendent Report – none
-
- c. Principal Report – Dave Schilling
- Today was the first day of in-service. Staff met collaboratively today and will meet briefly tomorrow. Following tomorrow's brief meeting teachers will be working in their classrooms.
 - Fall sports are underway. The girls have had a scrimmage and a boys scrimmage is coming up soon.

Board Discussion

- a. Discussion with Danville School Board: Potential for collaboration or Merger
- The Cabot board met with the Danville School Board to discuss further merger or collaboration options.
 - Bruce Melendy from the Danville School Board said that in his opinion it is clear that Cabot voters do not wish to close the high school and it would not benefit Danville's time to discuss any option that would do so.
 - The boards will meet again in mid-September to discuss how programming at both schools could be adjusted to meet needs and provide more opportunities for all students.
- b. Act 46 Update
- Working Group First Meeting: review – Rory and Chris reviewed notes from the first work group meeting. The work group will gather AGS information and research what it takes to complete and submit and AGS application. Karen Larson was elected chair and

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she has since been working on preparing a task list as well as expectations for group members.

- Caledonia Central Supervisory Union merger discussion process – Chris reported cost-per-pupil figures if Cabot were to tuition its high school students. These numbers are based on an average cost-per-student of all area high schools that might be selected by Cabot families if Cabot had High School choice. Actual costs will depend on which school each family chooses.
- Invitation from Washington Central Supervisory Union - the Cabot and Twinfield School Board Chairs have been invited to attend a Washington Central Supervisory Union School Board meeting. Chris and Patrick will attend the meeting on Wednesday, August 30.
- The board reviewed Donna Russo-Savages responses to questions about the Vermont Academy proposal.
- Vermont Academy proposal – Jack Daniels shared a revised proposal prepared by the “A-Team” with the Board’s Working Group. The A-Team includes Jack Daniels, Fran Voigt, Mike Rushman, Karen Larson and Susan Alexander. The revised plan drops the inclusion of other town high schools, and calls for the creation of a 501(c)(3) in Cabot to manage the housing and enrichment elements of the Academy, now tentatively being called Cabot Academy. The cost per tuition/boarding students would be around \$45,000.00. The allocation of student fees for Cabot Academy would include: Administration \$5,000.00, Room and Board \$10,000.00, Enrichment Program \$15,000.00, Cabot School tuition \$15,000.00.
- Webinar on AGS applications – The Agency of Education held a webinar about completing AGS applications. Chris will forward information from the webinar to all board members.

Board Action: None

Executive Session: None

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at 7:55pm.

Respectfully Submitted

Amanda LeBlanc, Transcriber

APPROVED

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, September 14, 2017**

PRESENT: Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson; **Administrators:** David Schilling, Principal; **Student Representatives:** Cameron Mueller-Harder; **Absent:** Mark Tucker, Superintendent, Rory Thibault, Taylor Abbott

Call to Order: Chris Tormey, Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve August 28, 2017 Minutes – Chris moved to approve the minutes as written Jackie seconded, minutes approved.
- b. Approve September 7, 2017 Minutes – under Call to Order correct spelling of Jackie's name. Chris moved to approve the minutes with amendment, Jackie seconded, minutes approved.

Reports

- a. Student Report – Cameron Mueller-Harder
 - Strong start to beginning of school, students are excited to be back
 - The annual Siskin Retreat was great
- b. Superintendent Report – Mark Tucker
 - None
- d. Principal Report – David Schilling
 - There are three new teachers in the elementary grades. There is positive energy in all elementary classrooms
 - Cabot School Open House on September 13 was very well attended.

Board Discussion

- a. Act 46 Update
 - Chris outlined what the Cabot School Act 46 Working Group has been working on defining what a strong Alternative Governance Structure proposal would look like; the use of endowments; and how to enhance programs for the school.
 - The September 18 meeting between Cabot and Danville was cancelled due to meeting schedule conflicts. The re-scheduled date will be September 28 in Danville.
 - The Walden, Waterford, Barnett school board will be meeting to discuss financial benefits of working with Cabot.

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- AGS – have begun working on a chart of needs in the alternate governance proposal.
- A Public Forum will be held on October 5 to bring the community an overview of AGS Proposal.

b. Bank Resolution

- Board signatures needed for the student activities account.

Board Action

a. Bank resolution

- Signed by board members.

b. Executive Session for Personnel Issue

- No Action Taken

Executive Session - Chris moved to go into executive session for a personnel issue, Sharon seconded, the board moved into executive session at 7:05 p.m. The Board returned from Executive Session at 7:20 p.m.

Future Meetings

- September 28, 2017 –Act 46 Working Group in Danville
- September 28, 2017 - Cabot School Board Meeting
- October 2, 2017 – Cabot School Board Meeting
- October 5, 2017 – Act 46 Community Forum

Adjournment : The Board Adjourned at 7:21 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Sylvia Charron, Transcriber

APPROVED

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 16, 2017**

PRESENT: Board Members: Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Rory Thibault.
Administration: Dave Schilling, Principal; Mark Tucker, Superintendent; Student Reps: Taylor Abbott, Cameron Muller Harder.

Call to Order: Chris Tormey, Chair 6:00pm

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 2, 2017 Minutes – Approved as written

Board Discussion

- a. Danville Interest
 - Chris heard from Danville Board Chair who reported that Blue Mountain has expressed a strong interest in merging (as opposed to collaborating) with Danville. This news has slowed Danville's discussion regarding collaborating with Cabot.
- b. Review results of Act 46 Survey
 - 284 responses (out of 600 mailed) – 129 Option 1 (Caledonia Cooperative and HS Choice); 155 Option 2 (Maintain Cabot as PK-12)
 - Lots of comments on both sides, most were helpful. Some indication that a few folks still do not understand the charge to the Board.
 - Some criticism of some of the data – too little, or not accurate.
 - Some of the comments indicate a misunderstanding about ongoing facility challenges.
 - Members spent some time reviewing comments from the surveys that arrived on Monday. Comments from an earlier review had already been consolidated last Friday.

Board Action: Act on Act 46 Directions:

Discussion

- L.O. - keep the HS open now, because once you close it, it would be difficult to reopen. You can always close it later if that's what the community wants.
- R.T. - Did Caledonia Cooperative understand the effect of the error in the projected costs. That doesn't necessarily mean that Option #2 is best. Cost is a factor; local control is valued. Best way to control costs is to keep control with a local Board. The Town is able to rise to the challenge. Option 32 is best.
- J.F. – Thanked the community for their work. 50/50 split on the community feedback continues to be a challenge. Tonight is not a vote about the Cabot Academy. Option #1: Still no guarantee

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that they can keep their elementary school. Capital costs are a challenge when partnering with three towns that have no debt. The projections that were the basis of the successful Cal Coop proposal, and now that the savings are less, is Cabot at risk? The \$.08 incentive will be eaten up by tax increases anyway. Transportation for families in a Choice scenario will lead to inequities. Option #2: Immediate \$.20 tax increase. Will our AGS be accepted? Will the Town step up and help – a great school is made by a great town, Majority of the Town supported the Board in June. Keep the HS.

- S.O. – Agreed with other comments. Feels that Act 46 has hurt our kids overall. Feels that this issue has energized the Town. If we try to maintain the HS and it works – great. If we go Choice, not the end of the world, but overall thinks the HS should stay open. Town can always revisit the Choice Town option in the future, but could not go the other way.
- C.T. – Have to deal with the unhappy half of the Town, no matter which way we go. Challenged by a “Lean HS” but if we go with Option #2 we are saying we will pay to make the school better, but not pay to send them to another school that is already good. Lots of energy and potential to be successful. Keep the HS. But let’s not fool ourselves – this will be hard.

Action

- Chris moved for the Board to support Option #2. Seconded by Jackie. Approved unanimously. The Cabot Board has voted to support an Alternative Governance Structure proposal to keep Cabot as PK-12 school with its own Board.
- Chris noted that there is a lot of “heavy lifting” to be done as a result of this vote. Need to convince the community to get behind this decision. Have to rebuild the HS faculty. Need to attract more students.
- Board may not know for several months after submission of their plan whether the plan will be approved. Board will have the benefit of feedback from the Agency of Education before the State Board decides. The arguments presented in the plan will be strengthened by a positive vote on the school budget in March.
- Chris opened the floor again to a number of “what-if” questions from the public in attendance.

Executive Session

- Chris made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Labor Relations Agreements, where the premature release of details of the discussion would adversely affect the Board in its negotiations. Jackie seconded. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:17pm.
- The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:18pm. No action was taken.

Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned at 8:20.

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Tucker, Minute Taker

APPROVED

CABOT SCHOOL BOARD MINUTES
Monday, November 6, 2017
Cabot School Library

Present: Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Rory Thibault, Chris Tormey, Cameron Muller Harder and Taylor Abbott **Administration:** Mark Tucker, Superintendent, Dave Schilling, Principal and Christina Kimball, Business Manger

Call to order: Jackie Folsom called the meeting to order at 6:03 pm

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 5, 2017 Minutes
- b. Approve October 16, 2017 Minutes
- c. Approve October 24, 2017 Minutes

Sharon made a motion to approve minutes as amended, Rory seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Presentation

M3 Presentation by Cabot High School Students

Reports

- a. Student Report – Cameron reported that the first Limes concert of the year is taking place this Friday. She also reported on the Scholars Bowl in which a number of Cabot HS students participated. VT won against New Hampshire. Soccer season has ended.
- b. Principal Report – A student that had been attending Cabot has been charged with attempted murder. Dave met with the high school and middle school to discuss the situation. New food service director is doing a fantastic job. Continue to struggle with behavior and climate in the elementary. There has been progress made. Continue to find solutions.
- c. Superintendent Report – All staff training on trauma in March of last year. Want to follow up with the same trainer; we have been approved for this year. Sent model policy for transgender, 1st reading will be at the next meeting. Mediation scheduled for tomorrow here at Cabot. First school closing last week. First draft of budget on Nov 20.

Board Discussion

- a. Financial Report – Christina Kimball – Budgeting season is in full swing. One of the challenges right now are the lack of a formal contract with teachers and support staff.
- b. AGS Proposal and Discussion of Preferred Supervisory Union
 - Rory gave an overview of the progress on the AGS proposal
 - One questions to decide is which Supervisory Union(s) should Cabot ask to join? Rory has had conversations with Board members in Washington Central that are welcoming.
 - Students have volunteered to work on gathering participation statistics for extra-curricular activities at the school.

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- There is a survey underway to gather reflections from Cabot graduates about their experiences after graduation and how well Cabot prepared them for work/tertiary education opportunities. This will be helpful for “marketing” the AGS to the State Board.
- There is a sense that the AGS proposal has to address both quality and affordability. Whether Cabot can meet both tests is a big question.
- The “Cabot Academy” concept has been rebranded as “Advantage Cabot.” Karen Larsen outlined the thinking of her group about Cabot Advantage. She advocates for including this proposal as part of the AGS proposal, stated her opinion that it is needed to “strengthen the overall AGS.”
- There is a public forum scheduled for Nov 15 to present the Advantage Cabot idea to the community.
- Chris asked to schedule a meeting on 11/13 to give the Board an opportunity to discuss Advantage Cabot before the community forum.
- The regularly scheduled Board meeting on 11/20 will be a retreat at Chris Tormey’s home.

Executive Session – Chris made a motion and Rory seconded to go into Executive Session. Approved – entered Executive Session at 7:59pm.

- a. Employee Sick Bank Request
- b. Discuss Employee Contract

Board Action

- a. Act on Sick Bank Request – The Board exited Executive Session at 8:16. Chris moved and Sharon seconded to open the employee sick bank. Motion approved unanimously.

Future Agenda Items:

None

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:17pm

APPROVED

CABOT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 13, 2017
Cabot School Library

SPECIAL MEETING

Present: Chris Tormey, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Jackie Folsom, and Rory Thibault **Administration:** Mark Tucker, Dave Schilling

Call to order: Chris Tormey called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

Consent Agenda: Approve November 6, 2017 Minutes

Jackie moved to approve as written, Chris seconded. Approved as written.

Chris asked to add an agenda item related to a resident request to do an open house for the purpose of attracting new students. Item added.

Public Comment

None

Board Discussion: Discuss "Advantage Cabot" (AC) proposal

- Karen Larsen presented on Advantage Cabot. A copy of her slide set was shared with the Board and attendees.
 - Concept: A boarding program for out-of-State students who would attend Cabot HS. Students will be housed with local families.
 - Goals: Aim is to stabilize and grow Cabot HS. New opportunities, strengthen the community, improve the chances of the AGS proposal being accepted by the State Board. This would be a program to benefit ALL Cabot students. Bring significant financial resources into the community without an investment of tax dollars by the community
 - Staffing (for this group – not added to school budget): Director, Marketing Coordinator, Board of Directors (Advantage Cabot is a 501c3 organization) with a blend of local and regional members
 - Collaboration with School Board and Administration: Regular communications with Board, school Principal. Collaborative marketing opportunities to 'grow' Cabot School.
 - Scaling up: Web Presence; Vermont 501c3 status (done); Federal EIN (done); Federal Tax exemption status (pending); Build AC Board; Ballot initiative in March 2018; If approved, hire a Director in March 2018; Enroll 2 pilot students Sep 2018; enroll 4 additional students Sept 2019.
 - Financing: Scaled request from CCIF (formerly UDAG) – petition and ballot initiative with multi-year benchmarks; Pursuit of complementary financing from Foundations, Private Philanthropy, and Federal Funding.
 - Some discussion ensued about different money amounts requested before and now. Response was that the numbers are evolving, and downward. Emphasis that whatever AC does is not intended to negatively impact school budget.
 - Jackie stated that there are limits embedded in rules about how much can be distributed from UDAG funds that the community adopted in 1992.
 - Current UDAG plan may restrict use of money to capital expenditures and not for salaries, etc.
 - Tuition breakdown: \$45,500 annual per student
 - \$17,000 tuition to school
 - \$12,000 to enrichment programs for all students in school
 - \$9,000 to screened/selected host families

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- \$7500 for AC administrative and operating costs
- Request of the School Board: Inclusion of AC concept into the AGS proposal; Support of complimentary innovation to continue to improve Cabot School
- Questions:
 - Is AC prepared to move ahead regardless of the status of the AGS proposal at the State Board? Yes.
 - Why is the target number of students lower than earlier projections? The numbers (2 next year, and 4 in 2019) reflect minimum numbers to make a go of this proposal – will take more students if available.
 - Does AC presume that their initial funding will be a mix of CCIF and other funds, or just CCIF money? A mix is likely, but exact sources are not determined. Expect that most third parties will expect CCIF to be contributing in order to put up their money.
- Jackie reported a misconception coming from some community members that they can support the AC proposal and get a “free high school” without also supporting the school budget that will be presented in March at the same time.
- There was an extensive discussion about the challenges the Board is facing in presenting a budget that will build the kind of high school structure that the AC folks would be able to market. There is consensus that the current offerings in the high school are not adequate to attract outside students as AC has envisioned.
- Chris proposed that the Board is not quite ready to act on this proposal at this time. Board will not see an initial budget for FY19 until next week, and need to do that to have a comfort level with their ability to support this. Chris suggested that first meeting in December is a good time to come back together with the AC group.
- Rory is concerned with the completion of the AGS proposal in late December, especially if AC is to be included in the AGS proposal.

Board Action: Act on Advantage Cabot Proposal

Motion from Rory: “Be it resolved that the Cabot School Board supports the concept of Advantage Cabot and their effort to develop an independent educational enrichment and boarding program, subject to full endorsement upon presentation of their financial plan to the Board.” Seconded by Lisa. Motion is passed 4-1.

Additional Agenda Item

Suggestion by Lily Talbert to form a small group to start a marketing effort to attract students in the area who have Choice and could enroll at Cabot. Concept and timing discussed. Idea is to bring the students to Cabot as opposed to going out to sending schools to market. Will aim for a concert event before Christmas break.

Future Agenda Items:

- Initial budget presentation
- Review AGS proposal

Adjournment: 8:20PM

Future Meetings:

1. **W NESU Board Meeting:**
November 16, 2017, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Twinfield Union School Library
2. **Cabot Board Meeting:**
November 20, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Chris Tormey’s home

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Mr. Louis Bushey (Barnet School Board)
Caledonia Cooperative School Board (Provisional)
163 Kid Row
Barnet, VT 05821

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Mr. Bushey,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

With the implementation of Act 49 (2017) and State's promulgation of rules for alternative governance structures, we see increased opportunities to creatively meet the goals of Act 46 and ways in which our district could enhance opportunities for others. We are seeking to collaborate with multiple partners and explore merger (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46's requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities.

As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, college matriculation rates.

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of working with your provisional unified school district to explore Cabot's

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addition as a fourth member if Cabot were to restructure its school to serve only grades K-8, or the possibility of utilizing the new 3 x 2 x 1 preferred structure authorized by Act 49 (based upon Walden-Waterford-Barnet, Cabot-Danville, and Peacham). We also believe it is worthwhile to explore how Cabot School District could benefit your districts through the sharing of resources, program options, or the development of the relationships and high school curriculum necessary to benefit students from your communities. We also believe there are opportunities for our K-8 programs to identify areas of mutual benefit – including shared utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

CC:

Walden School Board
135 Cahoon Farm Rd
West Danville, VT 05873

Waterford School Board
276 Duck Pond Road
Waterford, VT 05819

Barnet School Board
163 Kid Row
Barnet, VT 05821

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

U-32 Middle & High School Board
930 Gallison Hill Road
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Board Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

With the implementation of Act 49 (2017) and State's promulgation of rules for alternative governance structures, we see increased opportunities to creatively meet the goals of Act 46 and ways in which our district could enhance opportunities for others. We are seeking to collaborate with multiple partners and explore merger (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46's requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities.

As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, college matriculation rates.

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of joining the Washington Central Supervisory Union in developing an alternative governance structure, to include exploration of merging with another district

as part of such plan, or participating as a restructured K-6 school that joins the U32 Board or as a K-8 school that designates U32 for our grade 9-12 students. Even without merger or direct participation in such planning, we see value in discussing options for shared programming or resources through contract or by partnership – specifically, with respect to the utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

The Cabot School Board

Chris Tormey, chair (ctormey@cabotschool.org)

Jackie Folsom, vice-chair

Sharon O'Connor

Lisa Olson

Rory Thibault

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Executive Committee
Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union
156 Daniels Road
PO Box 333
Hardwick, VT 05843

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Committee Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

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As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, college matriculation rates.

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational experience of students in Cabot and within your communities. Even without joining your supervisory union or directly participating your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where less than full time equivalent teachers or staff have been utilized.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

The Cabot School Board

Chris Tormey, chair (ctormey@cabotschool.org)

Jackie Folsom, vice-chair

Sharon O'Connor

Lisa Olson

Rory Thibault

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Montpelier School Board
5 High School Drive, Unit 1
Montpelier, VT 05602

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Board Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

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As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, college matriculation rates.

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of partnering with Montpelier to share programing, resources, and educational opportunities as part of an alternative governance structure, or more feasibly, by

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contract. We are specifically interested in assessing any benefit that could come from the shared utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

The Cabot School Board

Chris Tormey, chair (ctormey@cabotschool.org)

Jackie Folsom, vice-chair

Sharon O'Connor

Lisa Olson

Rory Thibault

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Hazen Union School Board
126 Hazen Union Dr.
Hardwick, VT 05843

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Board Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

With the implementation of Act 49 (2017) and State's promulgation of rules for alternative governance structures, we see increased opportunities to creatively meet the goals of Act 46 and ways in which our district could enhance opportunities for others. We are seeking to collaborate with multiple partners and explore merger (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46's requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities.

As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, college matriculation rates.

We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational

experience of students in both of our communities. Even without a merger or direct participation your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where our districts have traditionally utilized less than full time equivalent teachers or staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

The Cabot School Board of Directors:

Chris Tormey, chair ctormey@cabotschool.org

Jackie Folsom

Sharon O'Connor

Lisa Olson

Rory Thibault

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Danville School Board
148 Peacham Rd
Danville, VT 05828

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Danville Board Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We have noted the scope of your discussions with Blue Mountain. Our board would like to begin informal discussions (or send a representative to your next meeting) to discuss ways in which our two schools might work together to improve opportunities for our students and meet the requirements of Act 46.

With the passage of Act 49 this spring along with the clearer rules for alternative governance structures recently set out by the Vermont Agency of Education, we see some increased opportunities for creatively meeting the goals of Act 46 and ways in which our district could enhance opportunities for others. We are seeking to collaborate with other school districts and also explore potential mergers (incentivized and unincentivized), as well as other contractual or programmatic arrangements to meet or exceed Act 46's requirements, especially in terms of educational opportunities.

As a small rural school district, Cabot faces many challenges, including the need for capital improvements to our campus, low (but stable) average daily membership numbers, and the ability to maintain the quality of our curriculum. Despite these challenges, we see strength in our implementation of project-based learning at all grade levels, art and music programs, strong teachers and staff, parental and community involvement, and student performance in terms of graduation rates, SAT scores, and college matriculation rates.

We would like to restart discussions with your Board, specifically re-examining the possibility of cooperation between Cabot and Danville. We see several possible opportunities to work together, including making use of the newly-authorized 3 x 2 x 1

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“preferred structure” provided under Act 49. Such an arrangement could potentially include Walden-Waterford-Barnet, Cabot-Danville, and Peacham in this preferred structure, and in so doing could provide our communities with the tax incentives available under Act 46.

We also see potential cooperation under some form of an alternative governance structure (potentially submitted to the state as a joint application), with possibilities ranging from the formation of a union high school district, implementing a “strengthened supervisory union” model and remaining independent districts, or remaining independent and merely identifying programmatic partnerships that emphasize the sharing of teachers and resources. Even without merger or alternative governance discussions we see value in exploring contractual options to enhance curriculum or share resources – specifically, with respect to the utilization of less than full time equivalent teachers and staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions, and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail ways in which our two neighboring school districts might work together in the future. Thanks very much.

Sincerely,

The Cabot School Board
Chris Tormey, chair (ctormey@cabotschool.org)
Jackie Folsom, vice- chair
Sharon O’Connor
Lisa Olson
Rory Thibault

Cabot School

August 8, 2017

Craftsbury School Board
P.O. Box 73
Craftsbury Common, VT 05827

Re: Act 46 and our Communities

Dear Board Members,

In late June, Cabot and Danville voters rejected a proposed merger between the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield School Districts. As part of a side-by-side merger with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet, this would have resulted in a preferred structure under Act 46 (2015). With the rejection of this proposal, Cabot is assessing all options for compliance with Act 46, ranging from merger into a preferred structure, restructuring grades served by the Cabot School, or joining an alternative governance plan. We would like to begin informal discussions or send a representative to your next meeting to discuss the Cabot School District's paths forward.

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We hope to engage in discussion with your Board, specifically concerning the feasibility of shared programmatic opportunities to mutually enhance the educational

experience of students in both of our communities. Even without a merger or direct participation your alternative governance structure planning we see value in exploring how our districts may be able to partner in the near and long term to expand opportunities for our students, especially in areas where our districts have traditionally utilized less than full time equivalent teachers or staff.

As a Board, we are approaching Act 46 compliance with an open mind, but also with a sense of urgency. We see change and opportunity in all directions and would be pleased to discuss in greater detail working together in the future. Thank you.

Warm regards,

Cabot School Board

Chris Tormey, Chair (ctormey@cabotschool.org)

Jackie Folsom, Vice-Chair

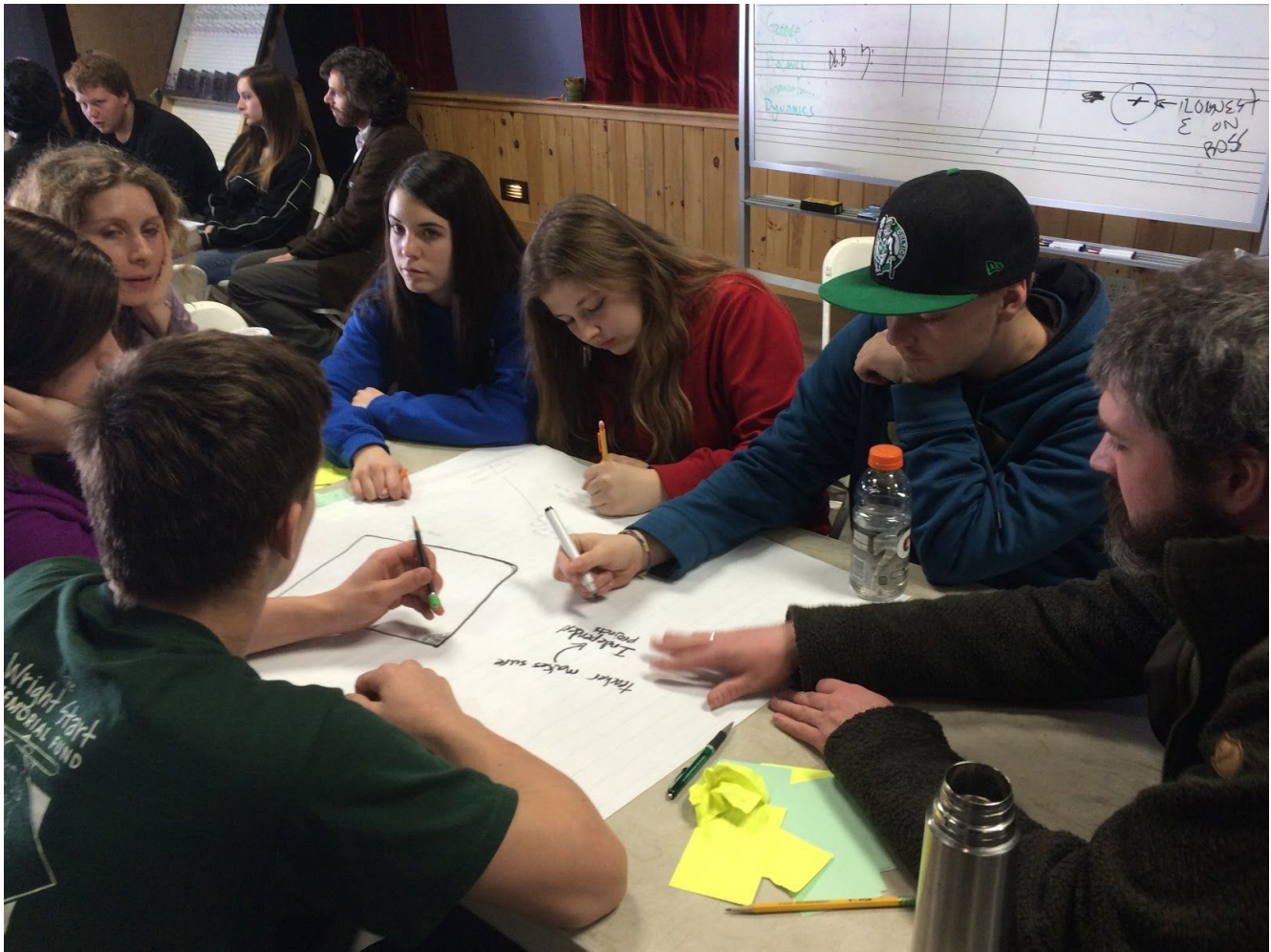
Sharon O'Connor

Lisa Olson

Rory Thibault

Appendix E

Cabot High School Program of Studies 2017-2018



Cabot High School

2017-18 Program of Studies

Providing students with a full range of academic opportunities is always a challenge for small schools, and Cabot is about as small as high schools come. Our answer to this challenge is personalization through meaningful relationships, differentiated learning, and a project-based structure that places high value on real-world experiences and exhibition of learning.

Our focus is creating competent and responsible citizens via rigorous learning opportunities that require student commitment to deep learning and real world implementation. While our number of available course titles appears limited, teachers guide individual student paths within each course topic. Off-site learning is integral and classes travel frequently to study curriculum topics in the working and natural world.

In many courses, students participate in and design a wide array of projects that push them to engage in extensive inquiry and a process of iteration. For some students the challenge is academic. In a humanities project called “Let them Eat Cake,” students compared and contrasted the Cultural Revolution of China with the French Revolution in order to answer key questions about the social context of revolutionary movements. For others the challenge is personal: one student came to the valuable realization that, after researching and presenting about a career in the Marines, he wanted instead to be a field medic for the Navy and then pursue a nursing degree.

11th and 12th grade students have the option of attending the Barre Technical Center, with the opportunity of choosing from 14 programs offering technically-based pathways to graduation. Cabot students have participated in culinary arts, cosmetology, emergency services, building trades and automotive technology, among others. Access to the regional technical center is another way Cabot School is able to offer multiple pathways to graduation while maintaining our small community school structure.

June Term begins after Memorial Day with high school students choosing from a selection of expeditions that may include travel, ethnic activities, dance, visual arts, outdoor expeditions and many other activities that students and teachers propose. This is an intensive, elective credit-bearing term that students pursue with seriousness and enthusiasm. June Term further expands students’ comfort and flexibility with the world outside of school and challenges their skills in planning the logistics of a non-traditional school term, of which they act as the primary architects.

Two Advanced Placement classes in math and science are offered annually. Cabot students may also take advantage of Vermont’s statewide dual enrollment option and take 2 college courses free of charge. Vermont now also offers the opportunity to attend early college where students may concurrently complete their high school diploma and their first year of college at little to no cost.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

HUMANITIES	3
GLOBAL STUDIES, Grades 11 & 12	
ENGLISH 9 & 10	
CIVICS, Grade 10	
FINANCIAL LITERACY, Grade 9	
CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, Grades 11 & 12	
ENGLISH 11 & 12	
SCIENCES	6
EARTH SCIENCE, Grade 9	
PHYSICS, Grade 9	
BIOLOGY, Grade 10	
AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, Grades 11 & 12	
MARINE BIOLOGY, Grades 11 and 12	
MAKER SCIENCE, Grades 10-12	
CHEMISTRY, Grades 11-12	
AP BIOLOGY, Grades 11-12	
MATHEMATICS.....	10
GEOMETRY	
ALGEBRA II	
PRECALCULUS	
AP CALCULUS	
WORLD LANGUAGE.....	13
ESPAÑOL 8-9	
ESPAÑOL 10/11	
ESPAÑOL 11/12	
ARTS.....	17
STUDIO ART 1	
STUDIO ART 2	
AP ART	
CREATIVE MUSIC ENSEMBLE	
INTRO TO GUITAR	
WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE	
DANCE	
SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE	
PHYSICAL EDUCATION.....	23
PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR LIFE	
SPORTS OPTION	
COLLEGE, CAREER and EXTENDED LEARNING.....	24
COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION - GEAR UP	
DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS (a.k.a. free college courses!)	
EARLY COLLEGE	
VTVLC ONLINE CLASSES	
HEALTHY START and JUNE TERM	

TYPICAL COURSE PROGRESSION

<p>9th Grade American Studies or World Issues (alternating years) Earth Science and Physics Geometry Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Physical Education Habits of Work and Financial Literacy June Term</p>	<p>10th Grade American Studies or World Issues (alternating years) Biology Algebra 2 Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Physical Education or Maker science elective Habits of Work and Civics June Term</p>
<p>11th Grade Contemporary Issues and Literature (alternating theme every 2 years) Marine Biology or Chemistry (alternating years) Precalculus Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Advanced Arts Elective AP Biology or Environmental Science (alternating years) Dual enrollment options Work-based or internship options June Term</p>	<p>12th Grade Contemporary Issues and Literature (alternating theme every 2 years) Marine Biology or Chemistry (alternating years) AP Calculus or Senior Math Spanish Arts Elective (studio art, music, dance) Advanced Arts Elective Maker science elective AP Biology or Environmental Science (alternating years) Dual enrollment options Work-based or internship options June Term</p>

HUMANITIES

GLOBAL STUDIES, Grades 9 & 10

American Studies consists of two related classes: **English 9/10** and **Global Studies**. While these courses are scheduled independently, they relate to intersecting themes.

ENGLISH 9/10

English 9/10 is designed to help develop skills needed to become more effective readers, writers, critical thinkers and communicators, equipped to fulfill our responsibilities as members of a global community. In engaging with literature of historical and modern cultures, we'll explore essential questions that relate to the focus of the Grades 9/10 Global Studies course.

We'll learn strategies to help express our ideas in meaningful, logical, and convincing ways and become more effective writers, ever aware of our purpose and audience. Models of effective writing

will guide our work as we'll develop a deeper understanding of English grammatical structures and vocabulary and apply this to our own communication, both spoken and written. As we study literature, we'll consider the ways in which narratives are similar across cultures and time periods and explore the truths they can communicate.

GLOBAL STUDIES, Social Studies Grades 9 & 10

Together we will investigate and develop our own understanding of influential political, economical, and social events of the past and present. As we consider world geography and history we'll develop our own sense of identity, culture, and community to determine our responsibility, as global citizens, to work for social justice. To achieve these goals we will explore thematic ideas that will connect across a number of countries and cultures.

Together we will explore the Middle East, India, Europe, the Americas, and Asia to discover the cultural connections and difference that these geographical regions share. We'll investigate their history and how it relates to their present roles in the world. Together we'll focus on a number of common themes and essential questions, as we examine each of these regions.

FINANCIAL LITERACY, Social Studies Grade 9

In this course, we will develop the knowledge and general understanding of key aspects of personal finance necessary to be successful now and throughout your adult lives by developing the skills needed to make sound financial decisions. Topics will include planning your career, payroll and taxes, banking, credit, financing your first car, insurance, renting an apartment, budgeting, purchasing, and basic economics while reflecting real-world situations as closely as possible. Financial literacy is a key aspect of your role as a citizen, student, family member, consumer, and active participant in a global economy.

CIVICS, Social Studies Grade 10

Together we will investigate the participation side of American citizenship in our society and the relationship of the government and the people. We will learn about our individual rights and responsibilities as United States citizens. We will apply what we learn in class to the current events that surround us today. We will explore a number of themes throughout the course that will include principles of democracy, civic skills, and government structure.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES, Social Studies Grades 11 & 12

In contemporary issues we will examine a number of geographical regions of the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and the Middle East. Using the lenses of history, sociology, political science, and economics we will study the contemporary themes that exist in these regions. Our goal will be to discover and understand the issues that have shaped these regions of the world.

We will work together to become well-informed global citizens. We will look at the past so that we may better understand the events that shape the world we live in today. We will explore and analyze many forms of media so that we may find reliable and accurate information, allowing us the opportunity to develop our own belief and stance of the issues that we face everyday.

English 11 & 12

In this course, we'll read a variety of poetry, plays, novels, and essays by world authors and develop a strong foundation for the kinds of reading and writing you'll encounter in college and careers and an opportunity to practice and develop critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. By examining various genres through literary, historical, social, political, and artistic lenses, you will develop your skills as a proficient reader and writer. As you investigate major themes in the literary traditions of various cultures, you will increase your understanding of diverse perspectives and consider the following essential questions: How can common threads found in classic and contemporary literature help us more deeply understand ourselves, each other, and the world? What are the characteristics of effective writing? How does an authentic audience affect our writing?

SCIENCES

EARTH SCIENCE, Grade 9

9th grade science is divided into two-halves of the first year: Semester One focuses on Geology and Earth Science, while Semester Two concentrates on Physics and Newtonian Laws.

Earth Science examines the unique and complex relationships between Earth systems and their role in maintaining a habitable planet. Beginning with plate tectonics, students will actively explore Earth processes through active engagement, engineering, problem solving, and design. Through the lens of history and culture, students will also learn how humankind has used knowledge of the natural world to develop economic systems, gather resources, and develop politically. In the process, they will integrate basic geology and climate science with larger, worldwide, contemporary issues.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will understand that:

- Our dynamic Earth system influences life, culture, and environment across the world.
- The complex relationships between Earth systems maintain and recycle themselves over time.
- Human use and misuse of resources alters the Earth system in many ways.
- Astronomy and space science provide important clues to the origin and future of our planet.

PHYSICS, Grade 9

9th grade science is divided into two-halves of the first year: Semester One focuses on Geology and Earth Science, while Semester Two concentrates on Physics and Newtonian Laws.

Physics is an introductory course aimed at uniting experiential learning with explorations of the fundamental nature of the universe. Beginning with Newton's Laws, gravitation, and simple machines, students will apply their knowledge in a variety of challenges that reinforce content with hands-on activity and the engineering of systems. These challenges serve as practice with concepts, and will ultimately culminate in a final presentation of learning uniting content with performance.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will understand that:

- The laws of the universe are predictable and apply to many aspects of our daily lives.
- Basic laws of the universe have influenced our creation and use of technology, industry, and culture.
- Newtonian mechanics provide a framework for understanding the universe that can be used on Earth and in space.
- We can use our understanding of the laws of the universe to create a better world for the future of humanity.

BIOLOGY, Grade 10

Biology will focus heavily on the role that biological systems play in our everyday lives, specifically from the lenses of food production, agriculture, and economy. Students will engage and explore biology across many different themes, using soapmaking and microbiology the platforms for understanding this discipline in a systems-based approach. Because the scale of the biological world lends itself well to exploration, depth, and inquiry, this class will be intensely student-driven and interest-based.

Complementing the student-driven approach will be additional hands-on skill training in areas of microbiology, bacterial culturing, biochemistry, molecular dynamics, biomolecules, natural selection, epidemiology, and cellular processes.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will understand that:

- I can describe the interrelatedness of biological systems and the role that these systems play in maintaining life on Earth.
- I can model and manipulate biological principles through meaningful experimental design, problem solving, and creative expression.
- Biomolecular interactions make everyday life possible.
- Microbiology influences our ecosystem, food production, and local economy.

AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE, Grades 11 & 12

(alternating years, offered 2018-19)

The Advanced Placement (AP) Environmental Science course is the equivalent of a one semester introductory college course in environmental science. Throughout the year, students will investigate the complex relationships between geology, biology, environmental studies, environmental science, chemistry, and geography. The AP Course Description and AP Exam have been prepared by environmental scientists and educators who serve as members of the AP Environmental Science Development Committee. In both breadth and level of detail, the content of the course reflects what is found in many introductory college courses in environmental science. The exam is representative of such a course and is therefore considered appropriate for the measurement of skills and knowledge in the field of environmental science.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will be able to:

- Identify the scientific, social scientific and humanistic aspects of environmental issues.
- Identify, locate, evaluate, synthesize and present current research and information on environmental issues.
- Define environmental problems from the perspectives of both environmental science and resource management.
- Evaluate proposed solutions to environmental problems from the perspectives of both environmental science and resource management.
- Use the methodologies of the natural and social sciences to formulate testable hypotheses concerning environmental problems and issues.
- Collect, organize, analyze, interpret and present quantitative and qualitative data.
- Use current, technological tools in the collection, organization, analysis and interpretation of data.

AP BIOLOGY, Grades 11 & 12

(alternating years, offered 2017-18)

AP Biology is an introductory college-level biology course. Students cultivate their understanding of biology through inquiry-based investigations as they explore the following topics: evolution, cellular processes—energy and communication, genetics, information transfer, ecology, and interactions.

MARINE BIOLOGY, Grades 11 and 12

(alternating years, offered 2018-19)

What are human impacts on the ocean? How does the ocean impact our life in Vermont? These are just a couple of questions that will be addressed in this course. This course will focus on the comparison between our New England coast and the Caribbean sea. In addition we will explore the ways marine organisms and humans interact with each other and within their physical environment. During the first semester, we will focus on the New England coast, studying marine organisms, types of ecosystems, and the ways in which humans have interacted with the ocean over the years. In the second semester, we will focus on the Caribbean sea and its impact on Latin American countries.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- I will have an awareness of how the ocean has shaped other cultures around the world.
- I will understand how the health of the ocean impacts my day to day life.
- I will understand what I need to do as a global citizen to help reduce negative impacts on the ocean.
- I will communicate clearly and effectively in a variety of situations in preparation for college and careers.

PROFICIENCIES

1. Evaluate the evidence supporting claims that changes in environmental conditions may result in increases in the number of individuals of some species, the emergence of new species over time, the extinction of other species.
2. Use evidence to support and revise explanations about factors affecting biodiversity and populations in ecosystems of different scales.
3. Design, evaluate, and refine a solution for reducing the impacts of human activities on the environment.
4. Create a model to illustrate the relationships among Earth systems and how those relationships are being modified due to human activity.
5. Use evidence to support claims for the cycling of matter and flow of energy among organisms in an ecosystem.
6. Ask questions, define problems, and propose solutions.
7. Develop and use models to explain complex processes or systems, to predict future outcomes.
8. Plan and carry out investigations using the scientific method and propose future steps
9. Analyze, interpret data, use mathematics and/or computational thinking.
10. Engage in scientific argument by evaluating evidence, constructing explanations, and communicating information effectively.

CHEMISTRY, Grades 11/12

(alternating years, offered 2017-18)

Chemistry includes measurement, significant digits in calculations, the periodic table, atomic theory, electron notations, nuclear chemistry, chemical nomenclature and equations, stoichiometry, the states of matter, the gas laws, acids and pH, and titration. Through laboratory activities, students develop scientific problem-solving skills, and use mathematics to interpret their observations.

This course is offered during the 2017-18 school year, and the full description is under development with a change in staffing.

MAKER SCIENCE, Grades 10-12

This new course, under development during the summer of 2016, will focus on the intersection of high and low tech engineering, materials science and fabrication, circuitry and coding, and much more. 3D printing, Arduino robotics and coding, GPS and drone technology and much more will be featured in this skills-based class. This course is being developed from student feedback requesting more hands-on STEM opportunities, and is funded in part through a VSAC Gear-Up grant.

Cabot Science Universal Areas of Proficiency

Patterns in Nature

Observed patterns in nature guide organization and classification, and prompt questions about relationships and causes underlying them.

Stability & Change

For both designed and natural systems, conditions that affect stability and factors that control rates of change are critical elements to consider and understand.

System Models

A system is an organized group of related objects or components; models can be used for understanding and predicting the behavior of systems.

Energy & Matter

Flows, Cycles, and Conservation – Tracking energy and matter flows, into, out of, and within systems helps one understand their system's behavior.

Structure & Function

The way an object is shaped or structured determines many of its properties and functions.

Scientific Thinking

Define the variables; develop hypotheses that explain facts based on observations; establish a research design and interpret research findings.

MATHEMATICS

GEOMETRY

This course is a study of Euclidian geometry, with an emphasis on problem solving involving planes and solid figures. Topics include reasoning and proof, perpendicular and parallel lines, congruent triangles, properties of triangles, quadrilaterals, transformations, similarity, right triangle trigonometry, circles, polygons, surface area and volume.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will:

- Understand how geometry relates to our lives and the world around us.
- Understand how we can use geometric reasoning, measurement, and mathematical problem solving to communicate and solve a variety of problems.
- Understand similarity and proportional reasoning.
- Understand transformations including translations, reflections, and rotations.
- Understand and apply theorems about polygons and circles.
- Use coordinates to prove simple geometric theorems algebraically.
- Prove geometric theorems.

PROFICIENCIES

- I can understand geometric concepts and vocabulary, recognize patterns, and solve geometric problems.
- I can solve real-life and mathematical problems involving angle measure.
- I can solve real-life and mathematical problems involving 2-D shapes. (perimeter, circumference, area)
- I can solve real-life and mathematical problems involving 3-D shapes. (surface area and volume)
- I can classify polygons into categories based on their properties.
- I can understand and apply the Pythagorean Theorem and trigonometric ratios to solve problems involving right triangles.

ALGEBRA II

In this course, the basic concepts from Algebra I are enriched. Topics include graphing, analyzing, and interpreting functions including polynomial, rational, exponential, and logarithmic functions; systems of linear equations and inequalities; matrices; conic sections; exponents and radicals. Calculators and computer software will be used when appropriate to enhance instruction.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will understand:

- Algebra relates to our lives and the world around us.
- The concepts in Algebra II can be used to communicate and solve problems in a variety of real world situations.
- The interconnectedness between and among tables, graphs, and equations, as related to linear functions.

- The interconnectedness between and among tables, graphs, and equations, as related to quadratic functions.

PROFICIENCIES

I can create, interpret, use, and analyze expressions, equations and inequalities.

I can graph functions and inequalities.

I can use equations, inequalities and functions to model and interpret situations.

I can reason quantitatively and use units to solve problems.

I can evaluate and simplify expressions.

I can solve equations and inequalities with one variable and be able to explain your reasoning

I can understand what a function is and can graph linear functions and inequalities. (standard form, slope-intercept form, horizontal, and vertical lines)

PRECALCULUS

This course is a preparation for calculus. Topics for the first semester include linear, polynomial, rational, exponential and logarithmic functions. Second semester is a course in trigonometry. This includes trigonometric functions, right triangle trigonometry, radian measure, inverse functions, and trigonometric equations. Graphing calculators (TI-83 or TI-84) are required and used throughout the course as a tool for investigation.

Enduring Understandings

After successfully completing this course, I will:

- Understand how do the mathematics in precalculus relate to life and the world around us.
- Be able to construct and compare linear, quadratic, trigonometric and exponential models and solve problems.
- Be able to use polynomial, exponential, and trigonometric functions to solve problems and model various relationships as they relate to students' professional lives.
- Construct and compare linear, quadratic, and exponential models and solve problems.

Learning Outcomes Addressed

I can understand the concept of a function and use function notation.

I can interpret functions that arise in applications in terms of the context.

I can analyze functions using different representations.

I can build a function that models a relationship between two quantities.

I can build new functions from existing functions.

I can interpret expressions for functions in terms of the situation they model.

I can extend the domain of trigonometric functions using the unit circle.

I can model periodic phenomena with trigonometric functions.

I can derive and apply trigonometric identities.

AP CALCULUS

This demanding course is designed to provide a rewarding, stimulating and challenging program of studies for the student of high mathematical ability and interest. The curriculum is aligned with the Advanced Placement (AP) program and topics include limits, continuity, differentiation, integration and applications. Students are highly encouraged to take the AP Exam in

the spring.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

After successfully completing this course, I will:

- Understand how calculus, one of the greatest achievements of the human intellect, can be used to illuminate questions in mathematics, the physical sciences, engineering, and the social and biological sciences.
- Integrate algebra and geometry with functional analysis to solve a variety of problems in the study of the calculus as defined in the College Board approved course syllabus.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- I can work with functions represented in a variety of ways: graphical, numerical, analytical, or verbal, and understand the connections among these representations.
- I can understand the meaning of the derivative in terms of a rate of change and local linear approximation, and should be able to use derivatives to solve a variety of problems.
- I can understand the meaning of the definite integral both as a limit of Riemann sums and as the net accumulation of change, and should be able to use integrals to solve a variety of problems.
- I can understand the relationship between the derivative and the definite integral as expressed in both parts of the Fundamental Theorem of Calculus.
- I can model a written description of a physical situation with a function, a differential equation, or an integral.
- I can use technology to help solve problems, experiment, interpret results, and support conclusions.
- I can appreciate calculus as a coherent body of knowledge and as a human accomplishment.

WORLD LANGUAGE

ESPAÑOL 8-9

Language is the most useful tool we have for making sense of the world. We use it to understand ourselves and to understand others. For most of us, however, language is such an integral and routine part of our existence that we don't stop to ask ourselves: *What am I saying and why do I say it that way?* Through the study of Spanish this year, we will examine how sharing a common language shapes our sense of community and cultural identity. We will also, of course, continue to learn the concrete skills needed to communicate *en español*. As a class, we will practice these new skills through a variety of interactive, playful and multi-sensory activities.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Learning Spanish gives me access to new cultures and communities.
- My knowledge of English will help me to learn Spanish.
- There are specific habits and strategies that will help me be successful as a language learner.
- Different languages express ideas differently. I cannot always translate my thoughts word for word from English to Spanish.

PROFICIENCIES

This course provides students the support and structure necessary to work towards the WNESU World Language graduation proficiencies.

Students must show proficiency in the following five areas to successfully complete the course and graduate:

VT Global Citizenship - WORLD LANGUAGES Standard 6A

“Students show skill development in various forms of non-native language communication.”

Indicators:

Oral - Interpersonal

Participate in a basic conversation in Spanish in the present tense.

Oral - Presentational

Narrate a story and/or present information about a practiced topic in Spanish.

Writing - Presentational

Write a cohesive paragraph about practiced topics in Spanish.

Reading - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of level-appropriate written texts in Spanish.

Listening - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of level-appropriate spoken language in Spanish.

ESPAÑOL 10/11

In this advanced-beginner level course, we will continue to learn and practice Spanish ‘survival skills’. How can I find my way around a new place? How can I order food? How can I describe myself and tell people what I like to do? How can I ask questions? How can I write an email? Acquisition of essential language skills will be the focus of this course, though students will also choose and study vocabulary relevant to their own unique lives and interests. As a class, we will practice our new language skills through a variety of interactive, multi-sensory and playful activities. We will also learn about *latino* culture through the study of cuisine, music and current event events. Throughout the year students will have multiple opportunities to apply their knowledge creatively in small projects, hands-on activities, and direct interaction with native Spanish speakers.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Different languages have different grammatical structures. I cannot always translate my thoughts word for word from English to Spanish.
- The Spanish-speaking world is diverse and complex.
- Learning Spanish gives me access to new cultures and communities.

PROFICIENCIES

To successfully complete this course students must show proficiency in the following content specific areas:

VT Global Citizenship - WORLD LANGUAGES Standards

6A “Students show skill development in various forms of non-native language communication.”

Indicators:

Oral - Interpersonal

Participate in a basic conversation in Spanish in the past tense.

Oral - Presentational

Narrate a story and/or present information about a practiced topic in Spanish.

Writing - Presentational

Write a cohesive paragraph about practiced topics in Spanish in past tense.

Reading - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of level-appropriate written texts in Spanish.

Listening - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of level-appropriate spoken language in Spanish.

6B “Students demonstrate understanding of customs, beliefs, cultural differences, and traditions worldwide.”

Indicators:

- Make inferences and ask questions about a culture based on cultural practices and symbols;
- Identify cultural issues in presented material.

ESPAÑOL 11/12

Students enrolled in this course have a strong linguistic foundation and are ready, for the first time, to speak and write about complex, global issues *en español*. This year we will embark on a study of Latin American culture and traditions through experiential learning, cross-curricular work, and deep, critical thinking. We will begin by studying the region’s indigenous past and present through ancient myths and legends. We will then move on to exploring the devastating effects of Spanish colonization and modern-day global capitalism through the work of Mexican visual artists *José Orozco* and *Diego Rivera*. Finally, we will discover vibrant latin music and dance traditions, the shining legacy of a hideous past - three centuries of West African slave trade. Students can expect to significantly stretch their language skills in this course and to gain a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural forces shaping one of the most dynamic regions in the world today.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Learning Spanish gives me access to new cultures and communities.
- When groups of people migrate they bring their culture. There are common spiritual, musical, dance, linguistic, and culinary traditions throughout a diaspora.
- Stepping out of my culture can feel exciting or it can feel uncomfortable. Sometimes discomfort means that I’m discovering what my habitual, cultural patterns are.

- Europe and the United States have sought to profit from Latin America’s considerable natural resources through economic and military dominance. Painful history can lead to present-day mistrust and anger.
- The visual arts can be a tool for revolution.

PROFICIENCIES

To successfully complete this course students must show proficiency in the following content specific areas:

VT Global Citizenship - WORLD LANGUAGES Standard 6A

“Students show skill development in various forms of non-native language communication.”

Indicators:

Oral - Interpersonal

Demonstrate the ability to use different time frames appropriately through participation in a conversation in Spanish.

Oral - Presentational

Narrate a story and/or present detailed information about a practiced topic in Spanish.

Writing - Presentational

Write a cohesive paper or story in Spanish in past tense.

Reading - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of authentic written texts (texts written for native-speakers) in Spanish.

Listening - Interpretive

Understand the main idea and some details of authentic spoken language (spoken language intended for a native audience) in Spanish.

6B “Students demonstrate understanding of customs, beliefs, cultural differences, and traditions worldwide.”

Indicators:

- Make inferences and ask questions about a culture based on cultural practices and symbols;
- Identify cultural issues in presented material.

6C “Students access new information through using a non-native language and experiencing its culture by...”

Indicators:

- Using target language for learning another academic discipline by identifying and discussing national social, health, and cultural issues (e.g., immigration and decolonization in target country).
- Interpreting literature and art works from a variety of viewpoints (e.g., historical, aesthetic, cultural, technical, political).

ARTS

STUDIO ART 1

In this course, the students will learn to think like artists. Emphasis will be placed on the process of solving artistic problems and also on the equally important task of posing the initial questions that lead to artistic inquiry. We will dedicate the first half of the year to working on fundamental vocabulary, concepts, and skills specific to the visual arts. Students will transition towards more conceptual projects that are theme based. The goal of this class is to provide students with the tools to develop as artists by understanding the language of the arts and the cycle of the artistic process.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

Creativity and innovative thinking are essential life skills that can be developed.

- Artists and designers experiment with forms, structures, materials, concepts, media and art making approaches.
- Through art-making, people make meaning by investigating and developing awareness of perceptions, knowledge, and experiences.
- Visual imagery influences understanding of and responses to the world.

PROFICIENCIES *National Core Art Standards (Proficient)*

The students will show evidence of these abilities:

Creating

- Use multiple approaches to begin creative endeavors.
- Shape an artistic investigation of an aspect of present-day life using a contemporary practice of art or design.
- Apply relevant criteria from traditional and contemporary cultural contexts to examine, reflect on, and plan revisions for works of art and design in progress.

Presenting

- Analyze, select, and curate artifacts and/or artworks for presentation and preservation.

Responding

- Hypothesize ways in which art influences perception and understanding of human experiences.
- Analyze how one's understanding of the world is affected by experiencing visual imagery.
- Interpret an artwork or collection of works, supported by relevant and sufficient evidence found in the world and its various contexts.

Connecting

- Document the process of developing ideas from early stages to fully elaborated ideas.

STUDIO ART 2

Students will continue to apply the fundamental language, concepts and skills of visual art that were covered during Studio Art 1. We will focus on learning and applying skills to give and receive constructive feedback, which will help students refine their craftsmanship and conceptual thinking. Along with creating a breadth of artworks exploring various visual art media, students will create a series of artworks that explore a singular theme of personal significance. Students will document their process from beginning to end on a digital platform and share some of their artwork in a public exhibition.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Artists and designers shape artist investigations, following or breaking with traditions in pursuit of creative art making goals.
- Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising and refining work over time.
- People develop ideas and understanding of society, culture, and history through their interactions and analysis of art.

PROFICIENCIES *National Core Art Standards (Accomplished)*

Creating

- Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artistic practices to plan works of art and design.
- Through experimentation, practice and persistence, demonstrate acquisition of skills and knowledge in a chosen art form.
- Demonstrate awareness of ethical implications of making and distributing creative work.

Engage in constructive critique with peers, then reflect on re-engage, revise and refine works of art and design in response to personal artistic vision.

Presenting

- Analyze, select, and critique personal artwork for a collection or portfolio presentation.
- Evaluate select, and apply methods or processes appropriate to display artwork in a specific place.

Responding

- Evaluate the effectiveness of an image or images to influence ideas, feelings and behaviors of specific audiences.

Connecting

- Utilize inquiry methods of observation, research and experimentation to explore unfamiliar subjects through art making.
- Compare uses of art in a variety of societal, cultural and historical contexts and make connections to uses of art in contemporary and local contexts.

AP ART

Students in AP art will choose to complete one of three portfolio options; the 2D portfolio, the 3D portfolio, or the drawing and painting portfolio. Students in AP Art must have permission to take this course from the art teacher. Each portfolio has a specific criteria that is established by the College Board and will be used by a jury of national art educators to judge student work. Students will synthesize the AP criteria with their own personal artistic vision. A portfolio consists of 15-20 high quality original artworks. This course is designed for serious art students who are committed to developing a strong body of work that can be used for college applications. It requires a significant time commitment outside of the regularly scheduled day.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- Artists and designers develop excellence through practice and constructive critique, reflecting on, revising and refining work over time.
- There is a difference between plagiarism and appropriation.
- People evaluate art based on various criteria.
- A series created by an individual artist is the exploration of a theme over multiple works of art.

PROFICIENCIES *National Core Art Standards (Advanced)*

Creating

- Choose from a range of materials and methods of traditional and contemporary artist practices, following or breaking established conventions, to plan the making of multiple works of art and design based on a theme, idea or concept.
- Experiment, plan and make multiple works of art and design that explore a personally meaningful theme, idea, or concept.
- Reflect on, re-engage, revise, and refine works of art or design considering relevant traditional and contemporary criteria as well as personal artistic vision.

Presenting

- Critique, justify, and present choices in the process of analyzing, selecting curating and presenting artwork for a specific exhibit or event.

Responding

- Determine the commonalities within a group of artists or visual images attributed to a particular type of art, timeframe, or culture.
- Construct evaluations of a work of art or collection of works based on differing sets of criteria.

Connecting

- Synthesize knowledge of social, cultural, historical, and personal life with art making approaches to create meaningful works of art or design.

CREATIVE MUSIC ENSEMBLE

TWO SEMESTERS

The Cabot High School Creative Music Ensemble studies and performs classical and contemporary music from around the world. Over the course of four years, students progressively develop skills and knowledge in applied music, technique on a primary instrument, global approaches to music theory (Western Classical, American Jazz, Classical Indian, Arabic, Javanese, West African), social, cultural and historical context of a variety of musical eras, genres and traditions, music composition, improvisation, and elements of music performance and production. Students perform regularly throughout the year and have the option to audition for several Winooski Valley Music Festivals, the VT All State Music Festival and the New England Music Festival. This course is open to students who have at least 2 years of experience playing an instrument or by permission of the instructor.

During the 2016-2017 school year special attention will be given to the music of Latin America. (specifically traditional and contemporary bossa nova, salsa and samba).

PROFICIENCIES (*National Core Arts Standards*)

- Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.□
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.□
- Perceive and analyze artistic work
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context to deepen understanding

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

To express their musical ideas, musicians analyze, evaluate, and refine their performance over time through openness to new ideas, persistence, and the application of appropriate criteria.

Musicians judge performance based on criteria that vary across time, place, and cultures.

Understanding connections to varied contexts and daily life enhances musicians' creating, performing, and responding.

INTRO TO GUITAR

FALL SEMESTER

PROFICIENCIES (*National Core Arts Standards*)

- Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work
- Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.
- Refine and complete artistic work.
- Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS and SKILLS

- First position major, minor, + dominant chords.
- Basic strumming + finger picking techniques.
- Rudimentary music reading skills.
- Popular song forms.
- Use of recording technology to compose + arrange music.

WORLD MUSIC ENSEMBLE

SPRING SEMESTER

Through this performance-based course we will study and learn how to play music from Indonesia, West Africa, Brazil, Latin America (specifically the Caribbean) and the Middle East. Although the primary focus will be on playing and developing an appreciation for the musical diversity of the world, special attention will also be given to the cultural politics surrounding the concept of world music in our ever increasing globalized world. The goal of this course is not to master or map the world of music, but to cultivate an informed, critical, and sensitive understanding of music in the world.

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

- The musical output of a culture is often a unique reflection of many factors including its history, and cosmology.
- The aesthetics of a musical culture are relative and just as people can learn how to be bilingual, with practice we can become fluent in the musical tradition of other cultures.

PROFICIENCIES

- Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural and historical context to deepen understanding.
- Perceive and analyze artistic work.
- Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.
- Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.
- Develop and refine artistic work for presentation.
- Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.

DANCE

“To dance is to be out of yourself. Larger, more beautiful, more powerful. This is power. It is glory on earth and it is yours for the taking” ~Agnes De Milles

In this open-level modern dance class we will explore different approaches for creating art through movement. Students will be spinning, jumping, tossing themselves upside down and falling to the floor! They will also perform nuanced technique exercises throughout the year in order to achieve proper alignment, posture and technique. Periodically students will also have opportunities to explore improvisation and choreography.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- I can learn about my body's strengths and limitations through dance.
- My body can move in many different ways.
- The practice of dance increases my flexibility, balance, strength and coordination.
- I can change the timing and energy of my movement to communicate different feelings.

PROFICIENCIES

This course provides students the support and structure necessary as they work towards the achievement of VT Visual and Performing Arts Proficiencies, Physical Education proficiencies and certain VT Transferable Skills.

VT Visual and Performing Arts Proficiencies

Creation, Performance, Expression

Students create, perform, and express ideas through the art discipline.

Reflection and Critique

Students describe, analyze, interpret, and evaluate art (dance, music, theatre, and visual arts).

Approach to work

Students approach artistic problem-solving using multiple solutions and the creative process.

Disciplinary Literacy

Students show literacy in the arts through understanding and demonstrating concepts, skills, terminology, and processes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

PHYSICAL FITNESS FOR LIFE

The goal of physical education is to prepare for lifelong fitness and nutrition. In Cabot's program, students participate in traditional games and activities, as well as create a personal fitness plan. The class alternates activity and fitness plan days, and students design and adjust their plans as they are exposed to different activities such as kettlebell, Pilates, yoga, exercise machines, and various weight lifting equipment.

DRIVING QUESTION

How can we best develop a lifelong interest in personal health and fitness?

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Know a variety of stretches for different body parts.
- Develop a cardiovascular plan from the different possibilities available.
- Assess and develop their own strength plans, working the symbiotic opposing muscles in their arms, legs and core.
- Be able to implement safety precautions for each activity.
- Understand how to combine routines to work for their whole body.

SPORTS OPTION

Recognizing that serious participation on a sports team requires a great deal of physical fitness and preparation, Cabot School will allow a student to earn 1 semester of physical education credit for participation in a seasonal sport either at Cabot School or through a VPA-approved member-to-member agreement with another school. Traditionally, students participate in physical education in 9th grade and choose this option in their 10th grade year. To receive credit, a student must remain in academic good standing throughout the season, attend all practices as specified by the coach, and receive the approval of their coach and athletic director.

COLLEGE, CAREER and EXTENDED LEARNING

COLLEGE AND CAREER EXPLORATION - GEAR UP

As a Gear Up Cohort School, Cabot high school students are provided the opportunity, funding and support to make informed inquiries into the world of work and to research post-secondary education options. With the assistance of the school counselor and the VSAC outreach counselor, students explore the ways in which their interests, personality traits, values, and abilities inform their selection of satisfying work. By examining the habits of successful people and investigating their own learning styles, students will become increasingly responsible for their own life decisions. Social and emotional learning topics may be addressed, and opportunities might include job shadows/internships. Off-site learning opportunities will include trips to college campuses, the college fair and other opportunities throughout the year. Sophomores and juniors will have the opportunity to take the PSAT, while juniors and seniors will take the SAT, SAT subject tests, and/or the ACT as they choose. Parents will be offered opportunities to meet with the counselor and engage in conversations about their students' opportunities and options.

DUAL ENROLLMENT PROGRAMS (a.k.a. free college courses!)

Dual Enrollment programs are designed for high school students who are academically prepared to earn college credit while still in high school. Successful high school students have earned anywhere from 3 to 18 college credits—reducing the time it takes to get a college degree, reducing the costs associated with college, and challenging themselves through college-level curriculum.

The Vermont Dual Enrollment Program allows students to take two courses at any participating Vermont college tuition free. The free credits earned during college also count toward our high school graduation requirements. Full details about the dual enrollment program can be found at www.vtdualenrollment.org.

In addition to the Vermont Dual Enrollment Program, Introduction to College Studies, offered at all 12 Community College of Vermont academic centers, is a 26-hour course designed to help students develop strategies for college success. With support from VSAC and GEAR-UP, this course is offered tuition free to all Vermont high school students and is the ideal course for high school sophomores to prepare for college courses in their junior and senior years. Introduction to College Studies does not require the use of a dual enrollment voucher.

EARLY COLLEGE

Many Vermont colleges and universities have developed an early admission program that allows high school seniors to take a full year of college-level classes while completing their high school degree. The Early College Program simultaneously serves as a student's senior year of high school and a full year of college credit. Students may take a year-long course of study in any discipline. This program is funded through the Vermont Agency of Education, and is tuition-free for students. The cost of books, lodging (if applicable) and course and lab fees is the responsibility of the individual student. More information can be found at <http://education.vermont.gov/flexible-pathways/early-college>, but to be honest, a Google search of "Vermont Early College" will turn up more accurate and immediate results.

VTVLC ONLINE CLASSES

Cabot High School students are offered the full catalog of Vermont Virtual Learning Collaborative online courses at no charge. Courses are taught online by licensed Vermont educators, and offer increased flexibility and diversity of offerings. The course catalog and more information is available at www.vtvlc.org. Online courses that are similar to courses offered at Cabot (i.e. Algebra 1, English 1, etc.) require our principal's approval. **Students interested in an online course should enroll directly at vtvlc.org, create a student and parent account, and complete the VTVLC orientation. Our school counselor cannot access information about or approve your class until those steps are complete!**

HEALTHY START and JUNE TERM

Cabot High School begins and ends each year with intensive community-based experiences. We spend the first 2-3 days of school together at an off-site retreat location, working in advisory groups to build teams and community, draft and revisit student-created policies, and visualize and map a successful school year. The retreat provides a strong, intentional transition from summer to school, and allows for relationships to be forged that carry through the year.

June Term encompasses our last two weeks of school. It provides intensive, experiential programming that enables students to acquire proficiency based on Vermont's Transferable Skills for Graduation. Past June Term courses have included a Shakespeare intensive, backpacking and kayaking expeditions, our school band planning and executing a regional tour, playing venues including the Berklee College of Music, and recording an original radio drama and performing it at the Vermont State House. While we are unable to offer a great number of elective courses during the regular year, June Term allows for student choice and deep exploration of content areas. One student group's film about the experience, viewable at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HGg13CNeb4I> was the winner of the 2014 Rowland Foundation "My School Builds Character" film contest. All entries can be viewed at bit.ly/cabotcharacter14.

Appendix F

Summary of Career Technical Education Programs by SU

COMPARISONS – TECH CENTER COURSE OFFERINGS

10-25-2017

	LAMOILLE GREEN MT. TECH CTR	BARRE CENTRAL VT CAREER CTR	ST. JAY ACADEMY CAREER & TECH EDUCATION CTR
10th GRADE PRE-TECH	x		
AG. & FORESTRY FOUNDATIONS		x	x
- 9 th & 10 @ Hazen	x		
ALLIED HEALTH			
- LNA	x		
- EMR	x		
- CPR	x	x	
- FIRST AID	x	x	
- PERSONNEL CARE ATTENDANT	x		
AUTO TECH	x	x	x
BUILDING TRADES		x	
BUSINESS ADMIN	x		x
CAREER AWARENESS			x
COMPUTER NETWORKING	x		
CONSTRUCTION TECH & ARCHITECTURE	x		x
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION	x	x	
COSMETOLOGY		x	
CULINARY ARTS	x	x	x
- BAKING ARTS		x	
DIGITAL MEDIA ARTS		x	
ELECTRICAL TECH	x	x	
EMERGENCY SERVICES		x	
EXPLORATORY TECH		x	
FORESTRY & LAND MGT	x		
HEATING, VENTILATION, AIR	x		
HOSPITALITY & TOURISM			x
HUMAN SERVICES		x	x
- CHILD DEVELOPMENT			x
MEDIA ART & DESIGN	x		
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY			x
MEDICAL PROFESSIONS		x (new- 17/18)	
NATURAL RESOURCES &			x
PLUMBING & HEATING		x	
POWER SPORT TECH			
- ATVs	x		
- MOTORCYCLES	x		
SUSTAINABLE AG & FOOD SYSTEMS	x		x
TRANSPORTATION DISTRIBUTION & LOGISTICS			x

Appendix G

Cabot Graduate Survey

Cabot High School Graduates' Survey 2007-2017

Number of Graduates 2007 to 2017 - 174

Graduates Responding: 83*

Questions:

1. Your Name (all results are anonymously compiled)
2. Have you ever been accepted into a post-secondary program (i.e. work internship, certificate program, two-year technical degree, four year college, etc.)?
3. If yes, what program, school or internship opportunity?
4. Did you graduate (from the post-secondary program)?
5. If you have a job, who do you currently work for? What is your job title? If you work for yourself, what is your business/trade?
6. Where do you live now?
7. Optional: Is there anything else you want to say about how your Cabot School experience shaped your life? Note: you may write as little or as much as you like. There is no limit.**

Data:

Current status – School and Employment

- Either in school or employed – 82/83 – 98.8%
- Unemployed and not in school – 1/83 – 1.2%

Post-Secondary Education Statistics

- Accepted into a post-secondary program – 79/83 – 95.18%
- Graduated/still in school – 72/79 – 91.2%
 - Graduated – 43/79 – 54.4%
 - Still in school – 36/79 – 45.6%
- Did not graduate – 7/79 – 8.8%

Secondary Education Program Type? (79 total)

- Four-year degree granting – 68/79 – 86%
- Two-year certificate granting – 10/79 – 7.9%
- Post-secondary Internship – 1/79 – 1.3%

Not accepted/did not apply into a program – 4/83 - 4.8%

Aggregate Data

- Both in school and employed – 25/36 – 69.4%
- Not accepted/did not apply into a program and currently employed – 4/4 - 100%
- No longer in school and currently employed – 46/47 – 97.9%
 - Self-employed – 3/46 – 6.5%
 - Organizational employment – 43/46 – 93.5%

Where do those who have finished their education live? (47 total)

- Cabot – 14/47 – 29.8%
- Within 20 miles of Cabot – 21/47 – 44.7%
- In Vermont – 27/47 – 57.4%
- New England- 29/47 – 61.7%
- United States – 41/47 – 87.2%
- International – 6/47 – 12.7%
 - Canada
 - United Kingdom
 - Italy
 - Germany
 - Ghana

In the last ten years, Cabot graduates have attended:

Vermont Institutions:

- Johnson State College
- Lyndon State College
- University of Vermont
- Champlain College
- St. Michael's College
- Norwich University
- Middlebury College
- Community College of Vermont
- Vermont Technical College
- Vermont College of Fine Arts
- Castleton University
- New England Culinary Institute

US/Domestic Institutions

- Smith College
- Harvard University
- Brown University
- Clark University

- Columbia University
- Yale University
- Bard College
- University of Ohio
- Florida Institute of Technology
- Universal Technical Institute
- Mount Holyoke College
- University of New England
- George Washington University
- State University of New York (SUNY)
- Gordon College of Business
- St. Lawrence University
- Cornell College
- Southern Virginia University
- University of Maine
- Paul Smith's College
- Montana State University
- Eastern Wyoming University
- Liberty University
- Brio Academy of Cosmetology
- Kapiolani Community College
- Pace University
- College of St. Rose
- New England EMS Institute
- Bentley University
- Branford Hall
- Plymouth University
- United States Armed Forces (Army, Air Force, Marines, Coast Guard, Navy)
- United State Peace Corps (Philippines)

International Institutions

- University of Oxford, England
- Royal College of Art, London
- King's College, Halifax
- Architectural Association, London
- Stuttgart University, Germany
- Fulbright – Malaysia

***Survey Statistics:**

Respondents – 83 (out of 174 possible)

Confidence level: 95%

Margin of error: 8%

****Unedited narratives compiled below**

I graduated Cabot High School in 2014, one in a class of fifteen students. I'm currently in my third year at Smith College, a prestigious women's liberal arts college in Northampton, Massachusetts. I spent this past summer in Seattle, interning for Google. I've been fairly vocal about my support for Cabot, both in this debate and in the one a few years ago, when some members of the community were advocating to shut down the high school because they felt the quality of a Cabot education was significantly lower than that of larger schools.

To this day, three years after I graduated from Cabot, I can't fully express how important Cabot was for my development as a student and as a person. I had more opportunities at tiny Cabot to learn and act and work in the real world than any of my peers at Smith—who for the most part all attended vast public or private high schools. At Cabot, the opportunity exists every day and in every class to take learning to the next level. In band class, instead of spending hours learning a single piece of music to play in a small recital for our parents, we learned and memorized sheets of historically and culturally significant music, and then took our whole band on tour to play for artists in New York City. We spent days in class learning about how to plan a band tour: how to budget, how to work efficiently as a team and how to play to everyone's strengths in a large group.

These kinds of lessons were taught in every class. In humanities we'd work all semester on huge group projects, combining visual art, interviews, long writing pieces and hours of research, and they would culminate in a display of our work, open to community members to whom we would defend our work. In science classes, we would apply concepts we learned in physics to build Rube Goldberg machines, or we would apply biochemistry to create soap (and then exercise our creative and logistical muscles to advertise and sell that soap to the community).

Here at Smith, I find these lessons that Cabot taught me to be invaluable. Every day I'm surrounded by amazing passionate people, who are all going to be at the top of their fields someday—and yet, even with their impressive histories of AP classes and private schools, I find myself just as well equipped, if not better, to think creatively about problems, to facilitate discussions, and to give feedback that is kind, specific and helpful. The Cabot community fosters intellectual curiosity, provides real-world experiences, and most importantly, values kindness and acceptance as pillars of a successful community. My peers at Smith have worked very hard to forget their high school experiences, but I look back on mine with nothing but happiness. I'm unbelievably thankful that I had the opportunity and ability to attend Cabot School. I work very hard to give back to the Cabot community: to prove that even if the school is small and doesn't do things the traditional way, it's still capable of graduating students like me and my high school classmates, who are all accomplishing everything and more that other students can.

•

Being a very liberal state, it's rare to have school staff encourage and support a student enlisting. I can say that the Cabot school staff 100% supported my choice to serve the nation. I am now a Fleet Marine Force Corpsman as a part of the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force. We provide security and 24/7 response capabilities to any CBRNE or High yield explosive threat to the United States. I have worked in Emergency Rooms, foreign territory battalion aid stations, and gotten more experience in medicine I ever thought possible. This is all due to Cabot school preparing me for the real world. I was taught to think critically, make tough decisions, and work for anything I wanted to achieve, before leaving high school. Merging with Twinfield or Danville would be detrimental to what makes Cabot school so special. The teachers and other staff are invested not only in your education, but molding you into an adult that is capable of pursuing any dream you might have. I have treated hundreds if not thousands of casualties and saved many lives. It is because of Cabot schools superb job of preparing me for the real world that those men still live to fight another day.

Semper Fidelis

•

I feel incredibly lucky to have been able to attend Cabot School. I met the best friends of my life there, I was able to succeed in college, and I have very fond memories of my time there. It is a really unique and special opportunity to go to a school that small. One thing that I think should be emphasized more on is online class opportunities. I have been taking many online classes in college and I think if it could be effectively adapted, it could present many more opportunities for high school students. Thank you for working so hard on this and I hope it can work out for my nephew who would attend Cabot School in several years, if it is still operating the same way.

•

Cabot School definitely prepared me to be innovative and focused on pursuing meaningful work. At my university, our motto is, "Challenge convention, Change our world." I think Cabot school is similarly forward thinking, and I'm grateful for the experiences I had there.

•

Cabot gave me a very unique perspective of the world when I entered college. It helped me to understand what work beyond college is like.

•

Although Cabot is small, it provides many exceptional opportunities to students that students at others school don't have the chance to experience.

•

The Cabot School educational experience is certainly a unique one. Not many people can say they went on tour in New York with their high school band, or travelled to the beautiful country of Belize to learn about marine biology. Whenever I mention these trips to fellow college students, they are astonished when I tell them that I didn't go to a large city school, but a small town school with a graduating class of 15. Some of the other unique events include spelunking in upstate New York, white water kayaking, hiking in The White Mountains, Scottish highland dancing, and more; the list truly goes on and on. Looking at these events from a purely educational standpoint, you may not immediately see the value of them, but I assure you, the value is present. These events may not prepare you for a tough math test, but rather for life, and the multiple potholes along the road. Not only are individuals challenged to face their fears and overcome obstacles, but to work together with others toward a common goal. Increasingly often,

I am seeing the importance of these skills in everyday life, and am thankful for the early lessons I learned at Cabot School.

•

Cabot School, like any good school, also prepares its students for a post-secondary education or program. As a senior in college, I can truthfully say that the Cabot School education has more than adequately prepared me for the future. I have been able to successfully face the many challenges of college while maintaining a Dean's list status (GPA of 3.3 or above) for every semester of my college career. Further, this education has enabled me to not only do well in school, but to pursue an undergraduate research appointment at the University. This additional responsibility is a huge commitment, requiring lots of time and work. Through this opportunity, I have earned an undergraduate honors thesis, which I plan to publish in a peer-reviewed journal before I graduate. Further, my public speaking and performing experience gained in high school has assisted me in presenting this research all around coastal New England. These opportunities have led to an upcoming Graduate School Assistantship program, which I plan to start in the Fall of 2018. The assembly of a great education is similar to building a house; it starts with a solid foundation. My foundation was Cabot School.

•

A great thing about Cabot is that it prepares students for careers other than college. Many schools wrongly force students toward a college education, and while I believe that college is a priceless experience, college is certainly not for everyone. Some minds work well in a college framework, while others work better following a different structure. Cabot provides various opportunities for its students to get involved in technical programs or trade schools. Many of the classes applicable to these students focus on developing the necessary skills to succeed in any technical program. Having a base set of skills before starting a program is invaluable, and has allowed Cabot graduates to succeed in these technical careers.

•

Probably one of the most wonderful things about Cabot School is the people. I am unbelievably thankful for the amazing lifelong relationships that I made at Cabot. These special, individualized relationships are lacking at many of the bigger schools that some would send their children to. Not many other students would say that they would enjoy going to a rock concert with their old math and science teacher, or have the school harpist play at their wedding. They wouldn't have teachers that made annual Christmas cookies for EVERY student, or joined alongside their band teacher's professional band. They wouldn't have had the entire faculty cheering them on in a championship soccer game, and likely wouldn't have returned to participate in an alumni game. They probably wouldn't be writing this letter. The relationships made at Cabot are unique, and quite honestly some of the strongest relationships I've made during my life. For this reason more than others, I wouldn't trade my Cabot School education for an education at any other school.

•

I felt prepared for college and like I had the tools I needed to get there. The support was endless at Cabot, and I will forever be thankful to the relationships I had with the teachers. They knew who I was and what I wanted to accomplish as a student and in life. I still live in Cabot, and as I start a family I am confident in the education I received and will be happy to have my children attend school where I attended pre-k-12th grade.

•

Cabot prepared me fairly well for college. They highly encouraged me to pursue early college, an opportunity that put me a year ahead of my 2017 classmates (I'll graduate college in 2020). I appreciate that Cabot told me about the early college program, as I have met some Vermont students who hadn't even heard of it. I am also currently playing basketball in college, which requires really good time management skills. I have already developed these skills from a combination of my parents and the schools PBL program. I loved the small school atmosphere and love getting to share my unique experience in high school with my new friends in college.

•

Gave me a solid foundation for my future academic career

•

Cabot High School provided me with the most positive and unique school experience possible. It enhanced my creativity, set me up for success in my secondary education, and gave me years of cherished memories and friendship. I would not be where I am today without Cabot High School being my educational backbone. If you participate in the opportunities that Cabot provides, you will graduate with everything you need to succeed.

•

Cabot gave me the flexibility to try our various leadership roles, which have inspired and informed my work and successes in college. The Senior X program and other English classes prepared my writing skills and have given me the opportunity to be recommended and hired as a writing tutor by my school. Being able to explore my interests, be challenged, and have the personal experience of a small school like Cabot prepared me and pushed me to reach for excellence. All have paid off in college, I have seen many doors open for me and I have been more than prepared in many instances to tackle the challenges of college and work life.

•

Cabot's close knit community gave me the opportunity and the confidence to take on leadership roles and develop myself as a student and a person. Due to Cabot's small size there are many limitations in the opportunities students are offered within the school. However, I was able to take advantage of opportunities outside of the school such as studying abroad and taking classes at CCV which combined with the power of a small community behind me, has allowed me to succeed in my post-secondary education.

•

The community at Cabot is a wonderful thing. It teaches students to be more caring and kind. This was the place I learned to be independent. The teachers taught me to think for myself and to keep pushing through challenges. I still look back on my time at Cabot fondly and am even still occasionally turn to some of its faculty when I need advice on life or just to share a story. The atmosphere at Cabot was very welcoming, especially to new/transfer students!! Cabot was a great little school and I'd hate to see it shut down. The small atmosphere let me really get to know teachers, and that gave me the skills to be able to communicate with professors on a personal level. This enabled me to learn what the professor wanted me to, but also allowed me to learn what I wanted to learn so I got the most out of each and every class.

•

I loved going to Cabot School. Going to small school helped shape who I am, and while there are pros and cons to both large and small schools, I'd much rather not be just a number.

Being in a small school had many benefits for my future and impacted who I am as a person today. Because I went to Cabot, I was able to play on a Varsity basketball team for 4 years. I was able to travel to Belize and many of my friends went to Belize and France. My classes were small and I felt like I received personalized teacher instruction because of this. While at Cabot, I felt like I was part of a community that supported and accepted who I was and guided me throughout my mistakes and successes.

•

I couldn't have asked for more caring teachers to pour into my life. They were not just educationally invested, but also insuring that I was involved and connected. The small school gave me a solid foundation to be successful in all my adventures from Arkansas to Alaska to Wyoming; they taught me to reach for the stars but plan for the world.

•

Transitioning from Cabot to UVM was big change, but I easily adapted to a much larger school. Coming from Cabot, I appreciated so many things that other students didn't (being so close to grocery store, shopping areas, restaurants, etc.) I had also experienced a completely different lifestyle and upbringing than most of my classmates. Cabot is a tight-knit community where we all know and help one another. Cabot school provided me with amazing experiences such as trips to Belize and France and even outdoor activities including skiing and canoeing. I have been able to take everything I've learned from Cabot and incorporated it into my everyday life. I will never regret attending Cabot School and wouldn't change a thing.

•

Without Cabot School I would not be able to read or write. Literally, Jane Youngbaer (then special educator) had to start from square 1 to teach me how to read as I had no understanding by the time I reached 3rd grade. Lots of local low-income students rely on a local school to take the extra time and care so that they have the same learning opportunities as others in Vermont and nationally. All students should have a similar access to education, and if they're forced to travel a long distance that will put them at a deficit from peers that do not have to undergo the stress of commuting; the commute required of Cabot school would then decrease the amount of time students had to study or participate in extracurricular activities, and all of this time deficit would put them well below their peers. It commuting when I comes time to apply to secondary education opportunities, resulting in a potentially less educated population and no one wants that. There are a lot of strengths to the Cabot School program and I feel lucky to have been able to get my education in the Cabot school system. While no school is perfect, I feel that I had many opportunities for learning both in and out of the classroom. There are many strengths, including the French and marine biology programs where I was able to travel abroad and be immersed in another culture, AP class offerings that helped prepare me for post-graduate study, great music and arts programs, and the caring and friendly relationships students built with teachers; everyone was looking out for one another. I look back on my experience at Cabot with fond memories and I feel it has helped shape me as a person and get me to where I am today.

•

The ability to work closely with teachers is one of the many great things that Cabot has to offer. In my opinion, if individuals claim that they did not receive a good education at Cabot it was not the school's fault but their lack of ambition to apply themselves. No matter the school you attend you have to have the willingness to learn in order to succeed and get anywhere in life. Many individuals have graduated from Cabot that are succeeding in life.

•

Cabot gave me many opportunities to give back to my community. I'm still finding ways to do that on my own.

•

I think there were a few very important things that Cabot offered me. First a familiarity and personal relationship with teachers that is unparalleled in most public school settings. Knowing teachers on a first name basis and having accessible people – not just teachers – to help me learn. An amazing amount of travel that still impresses people to this day. When people find out I studied marine biology and went to Belize in H.S they are often shocked. When people find out that both my freshman and senior year I was in a band that recorded albums and traveled the U.S they are often envious. I think the community support of Cabot not just at sporting events but at music concerts, art showings, theatre productions and science projects were hugely important to my upbringing. I always felt encouraged to pursue what I was most interested in and I think that's a rare thing in the education system these days. I still talk about the little place I grew up and the big things we achieved there.

•

I've said much about this in person and through writing. I trust that my support of the school is no secret to the Board. I am forever thankful for my time at Cabot. In short:

- I received a world class education with respect to Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Art, French, History, Social Studies, English, and Math.
- The critical thinking skills and intellectual foundation I received at Cabot most find – if they are lucky – at college.
- I still lean on mentors who first taught me at Cabot High.
- I moved to back to Cabot because I wanted my children to receive the same education that I did.
- I learned not only about the world, but about my community's place in it.
- I chose to study accounting after an independent study on the stock market at Cabot School.

•

There were so many wonderful teachers that impacted my life but the 2 who I feel shaped me the most was Mrs. Hull my 1st&2nd grade teacher and my 6th grade teacher Mr. Lewis. Mrs. Hull thought me to see the world for all of its beauty and to grow to be a kind and caring person. She would always go the extra mile and during the summer allow me to come visit and we would read and enjoy a Popsicle on the really hot days. Mr. Lewis taught me to love my country and care about what happens to it and to always show thanks to those who serve to protect us. They have forever stayed close to my heart when I think of my younger years of growing up and helped shape me in ways that I now try to instill in my daughter.

•

The teachers were amazing and really cared about the students. I felt like I got a great education for entering college. There were definitely pros and cons to it being such a small school but overall I can't say one outweighed the other.

•

I graduated from Cabot School in 2009. My experience at the Cabot School was one of support and community. I left feeling prepared when leaving Cabot to engage in competitive higher educational and work environments throughout the larger world. I have a lot of deep respect and appreciation for the education that I received during those years.

•

I loved the small class size. I am friends with some of my teachers to this day.

•

Despite having left Vermont after high school, I am constantly reminded of how fortunate I am to have spent 10 years in the Cabot School system. The school is the center of the Cabot community and the hands-on, quality education I received is truly one-of-a-kind. Our dedicated teachers cared deeply about us and not only supported us in the classroom, but also cheered for us on the soccer field, basketball court, in musical performances, at apple pie festivals, etc. The school fosters a tight-knit community where students are able to grow as learners and develop as young adults. My rich experience at Cabot School more than prepared me for college and the professional world beyond, and I only hope that more young people in Cabot can continue to have the unique high school experience I was so privileged to enjoy.

•

Cabot school was there for me at a critical point in my life. In 2008, in the process of a major life change and facing my first year (as a junior) at a public school, I was admittedly more than a bit nervous. I was going to come in as a weird, socially awkward, culturally ignorant kid who had somehow lived most of his life in Cabot and never met any of his classmates. It wasn't going to be easy. But I hadn't counted on the exceptionally welcoming community thriving at Cabot School. Students, coaches, and teachers all welcomed and accepted me and my siblings more or less immediately; Peter Stratman found a place for me on the soccer team regardless of the fact that I didn't know a throw in from a corner kick. Bill Tobin spent hours after class helping me catch up on my woefully neglected math skills. My English teachers provided discussion and encouraged me to start thinking critically rather than just telling me what was right and what was wrong. And students from all backgrounds were ready to hang out with the new weirdo who hadn't been part of their school lives since kindergarten; I was befriended by rednecks, hippies, high-achievers, and divas. A small school is also a tight school where diversity is unavoidable; it was easy to move between social groups without being ensnared by cliquishness. By my senior year, I was so much a part of Cabot school that my friends and I could hardly believe that I had been an awkward newcomer just a year earlier. I wasn't just attending a high school; I had become, incredibly quickly, a member of a very unique community. High school was a trying part of my life in many ways (as it is for so many) but Cabot made it infinitely easier than it could've been.

•

Attending a small school allowed me to connect with my teachers easily. I felt I was offered more opportunities for growth as a student given this.

•

Cabot gave me a sense of home, community, and family. I was able to travel see the world all while learning and going to school. Cabot taught me life skills that I have continued to use like organization, respect, responsibility, hard work, selflessness and more. The Cabot community has an amazing sense of support that cannot be found in other places.

•

As a 2009 graduate, I can attest that Cabot School affords its students incredible opportunities in a unique environment. With a respectable curriculum designed to prepare students for the real world, I was given countless opportunities to pursue my interests. This prepared me for college, and set me on a path for success early on. The dedicated teachers and staff at Cabot encouraged my personal and academic growth, which ensured that I never “slipped through the cracks,” as I

may have at a larger high school. Cabot students have a personal connection with every educator, and this close-knit community combined with an emphasis on rigorous academics gave me a strong foundation for further study. I am currently pursuing my Master's of Philosophy degree in Development Studies at the University of Oxford, and the inspiration and support of Cabot continues to influence my life. It would be a shame to lose such an important community anchor and resource.

•

The small school environment at Cabot really allowed me to thrive. I feel that Cabot prepared me better for college than many of my other college peers.

•

I don't think I can pinpoint a specific way that my Cabot School experience has shaped my life because I don't know where I would be if I had had a different high school experience. Sometimes when my friends from other states talk about their high school experiences I feel like I missed out on things that larger schools have to offer like more options in the cafeteria or more options for what classes you can take, but then I remember the experience that I had at Cabot and I wouldn't trade it for the world. I got the benefit of being able to make real connections with my teachers thanks to the small class sizes, and travel to Belize and experience the culture there. I got to play sports and be a part of The Limes, traveling out of the state to perform for people outside the Cabot community. Overall my experience was a good one, and for that I am thankful.

•

Cabot School is a wonderful learning environment, a small school provided me with the individual help I needed. My son just started school at Cabot, I'm overly impressed with him much he's learned in being there such a short time.

•

I think that Cabot prepared me for post-secondary education at Norwich.

•

Because Cabot School is a safe, small, loving, and most of all supportive environment, it gave me chance to really figure out who I was before entering into the "real world". Elementary and high school is far less about gaining knowledge about subjects and learning information and far more about just growing up. Cabot School isn't just a school, it's a community and a support system. I found that by attending Cabot School I know have a solid foundation to grow from. I was able to start college and do very well at it, (made the dean's list first semester) but then make the decision that college wasn't for me and that I needed to be working instead. I was able to advocate for myself, to do what I needed to get a job. I have exciting dreams about my future and I know that I will always have the support from the Cabot community to make it happen.

•

A lot of people underestimate the benefits, power and sense of belonging of a small community, I ask that you don't.

•

I am more familiar with hands on classroom activities and self-directed projects because of my time at Cabot.

•

I was an exchange student at Cabot High School for one year. After my graduation from Cabot School I went back to Germany. The year I spent in Cabot was one of my best years. Everyone

was nice and helpful. Wouldn't want to miss the community. Cabot School has made me into the person I am now.

•

Cabot School is a very important chapter of my life, and every minute, hour, and year I spent there will be cherished. Not once have I ever regretted my time there, and I hope that other students will be as fortunate as I am to experience all of it. Thank you, Cabot staff and students.

•

Attending Cabot High School at the time I did, we started to make the switch to being a more technological school. At first I was reluctant to start working less out of old textbooks. But what was put in place of that was the one-on-one support, structured group activities, opportunities to travel, explore and learn AND knowing the true meaning and feeling of giving back to the earth and our community. At the time, around 15, 16 and 17- I didn't think much of it. And I never thought of going to college. But once again Cabot School offered more support in the form of a VSAC counselor that made sure I knew my options. Coming from a very poor family with no support, it meant a lot that Cabot was cheering for a bright future for me. I applied to Castleton State College in 2013 and attended that fall. I applied to the Coast Guard and unfortunately was denied. I was able to reach out to my old VSAC. Counselor and she helped me once again and I went back to school at Lyndon State College (Now known as Northern Vermont University). Where I also started playing on the Women's NCAA Basketball team. I first tried majoring in Physical Therapy then made the dramatic switch to Illustration/Animation. And NOW I am switching to Graphic Design. To sum it all up. I was naive in high school. Once I started going to college I felt confident in asking questions and also found I knew a lot of answers to questions in my first year thanks to Cabot. My high school teachers, I can say gleefully, are still my friends, my elders and my mentors I feel I can always turn to. The community included helped shape me into a confident individual. Thank you.

I loved my Cabot School experience, the social aspect, the relationships between students and teachers and the school climate of general respect and acceptance I feel is not just rare among schools – I've literally never seen it anywhere else. I've had the opportunity to work in a few elementary schools in VT now: Cabot School, of course, when I had the chance to aide in an elementary classroom; Danville School; and now Edmund's Elementary. Being around these kids from different towns and watching how they interact the value of Cabot School becomes immediately obvious. There is an atmosphere of kindness and respect in any given Cabot classroom that I used to take for granted. I feel like that atmosphere comes from our community. Cabot is so lucky to have a school right in town where families can be assured that each day their children are learning and growing in classrooms filled with other students who are just as kind, accepting and respectful as their own children. The Cabot community is cohesive and even though it's small, it has a big personality with so much heart. Working in Burlington I've seen kids who are being forced due to circumstances to grow up before they're ready, and children who are angry and violent, these are kids who have never experienced a school that felt safe to them. When I feel disheartened with the school system, I think of Cabot and remember there is a place where good education is taking place. It is so so important that Cabot School remain available to children from Cabot to keep its unique atmosphere fostering the kindness and gentleness this world needs.

Appendix H

Superintendent's Trauma Report,
November 2017

The Cost of Trauma

in a Small Rural School

- ◆ **Executive Summary**
- ◆ **Welcome to Cabot School**
- ◆ **The Funding Challenges**
- ◆ **The Impact of DCF Placements**
- ◆ **Culture and Learning in a Trauma-Impacted Environment**
- ◆ **What Can Be Done?**

Written for:

**Ms. Rebecca Holcombe, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Education**

**Mr. Al Gobeille, Secretary
Vermont Agency of Human Services**

**Representative Kitty Beattie Toll,
Caledonia-Washington**

**Representative David Sharpe,
Addison-4
Chair, House Committee on Education**

**Senator Philip Baruth,
Chittenden District
Chair, Senate Committee on Education**

**Senator Anne Cummings
Washington District**

**Mark Tucker, M.A., Superintendent
Washington Northeast Supervisory Union
November 2017**

◆ Executive Summary

This analysis looks at the experience of one small, rural school – Cabot School. Cabot is one of two schools in Washington Northeast Supervisory Union.

The purpose of this analysis is to identify and explicate how an increase in numbers of trauma-affected students over the past two years has impacted the funding, culture, and instruction of this school.

Some of the key findings include:

- Actual Special Education costs for the period FY12-FY16 tracked closely to budget, generally falling below the budgeted amount. In FY17 and FY18 (projected), a rapid increase in caseload for trauma-affected students resulted in budget overruns approaching \$200,000 (pre-reimbursement figures) each year.
- Eleven special education students with significant trauma histories account for \$600K in additional costs over and above regular and special education expenditures for supporting these students at Cabot School in FY18 (projected).
- Some of the increase in numbers of trauma-affected students are the result of emergent trauma responses by local students with early childhood trauma histories. The behaviors became unmanageable within the standard means of school support, necessitating alternative placements for these students. Middle- and high-school programs are less flexible by design than programs in elementary school, which conflicts with these students' need for flexibility in schedule and workload. Alternative schools are designed to provide this flexibility.
- Some of the increase in the number of trauma-affected students are the result of an influx of DCF-placed students in Cabot foster homes or conditional family placements that are not managed and monitored by DCF.
- The placement decisions for students made by DCF are made without consultation with the school, possibly in violation of ESSA rules for Educational Stability. As a result, these placements do not consider the capacity of the school to manage the students, either in terms of costs or the provision of necessary services and supports.
- Cabot appears to have more than its fair share of trauma-impacted foster children. In FY17, Cabot School ranked 4th state-wide in raw numbers of State-Placed students, with 7.23 students. As a percentage of ADM, Cabot ranked 2nd state-wide, at 4.5%.
- Notwithstanding the availability of State-Placed reimbursement (100%) and Special Education reimbursement under the current formula (54%-90%), Cabot School is still responsible for some unreimbursed expenses for addressing the needs of these students. Coincidentally, the arrival or emergence of these students and their needs did not align with our budgeting cycle, so we experience some of these unreimbursed costs as deficits in the school budget. In FY17, the deficit approached \$90,000. The projected unbudgeted costs for FY18 (at the moment) are \$60,000. These shortfalls have to be absorbed through programming reductions elsewhere in the master budget, which is difficult to accomplish in a small school already operating on a shoestring budget, or treated as a budget deficit and added to next year's budget.

◆ Welcome to Cabot School

Cabot is a small, largely agricultural community in Washington County with 1547 residents (2010 census). Cabot is the founding manufacturing home of Cabot Cooperative Creamery, makers of world famous Cabot Cheese. Cabot Village has a traditional Vermont Town Green at its center with a village grocery store, a village hardware store, a Post Office, and a small local auto repair garage adjoining and across from the Green. The school abuts the Green on the other side.

Cabot operates a PK-12 school. The Cabot School enrollment in FY 17 (2016-17 school year) was 191 students. FY18 enrollment (at this writing), is 188 students. Currently, elementary classrooms operate as modified multi-age classrooms, with a teacher assigned to each grade level 1-6. Instructional periods and student mixes of each grade-pair varies depending on the subject area and the particular needs and abilities of the students. Paired-classroom configurations are dynamic and situational – teachers plan for certain configurations but flexibly adjust which students are in which classroom as the instructional and behavioral needs ebb and flow from lesson to lesson. Middle school students (7-8) learn in a blended Project-based Learning environment, with core instruction delivered in a thematic, as opposed to a subject-by-subject, construct. High School operates in a more traditional manner, with core-subject-oriented classes. The exception is Humanities, which combines HS grades in 9th and 10th grade; this is a consequence of operating with part-time teaching staff for English and Social Studies/History.

Cabot School prides itself on its student-oriented approach to instruction across all grade levels. An early adopter of, and current leader in, Project-based Learning (it starts in 3rd grade) and experiential learning opportunities, Cabot School was “doing” Act 77 before there was an Act 77. The School is the heart of the community; many residents venture outside of their homes only for shopping and events at the school. A Presentation of Learning (PBL) rehearsal in early afternoon will draw a hundred people ahead of the formal evening presentation. Other events around town are scheduled in consideration of school sports events.

Special Education at Cabot

Cabot school currently has 3.0 FTE Special Education teachers for a child count of 30 students who attend Cabot (does not count out-of-school placed students, who are case managed by the SU office). There are 5.0 FTE special education paraprofessional staff, with three assigned duties in K-6, and one each in middle school and high school. The majority of special education services are delivered in the classroom. Cabot prides itself on its inclusive philosophy.

Cabot School does not utilize paraprofessional staff for primary, direct instruction to special education students. Paraprofessionals in the classroom provide secondary support for instruction by working with higher-skilled small groups while teachers and special educators focus on the neediest students in the elementary school. This service delivery model has been in place for several years, and is reflective of recent recommendations for improving instruction that resulted from the recent District Management Group study.

The majority of students identified for special education fall into common disability categories such as Learning Disabled (LD) or Speech/Language Impaired (SLI), with a small subset of students with developmental disabilities (Autism, Learning Impairment). This grouping of students is amenable to the routine service delivery model of core instruction with specialized instruction, because these students are *available for instruction*. Availability for instruction simply means that the student, despite any learning challenge, is generally cooperative and willing to follow teacher direction as they work on improving their learning skills.

Trauma Students at Cabot School

What has changed for us at Cabot School, especially in the past two years, is the overwhelming number of students who are *not* available for instruction, due to the effects of significant childhood trauma. A detailed explanation of the effects of childhood trauma is beyond the scope of this paper. The causes are well understood – most often exposure to adult drug or alcohol use and the resulting neglect, and/or physical/emotional/sexual abuse. For purposes here, it is enough to understand that each student experiencing the effects of trauma represents his or her own unique set of emotional sensitivities, trigger points, and behavioral responses when triggered. External presentation – so-called acting out – by these students has long been viewed as a “behavior” problem. These reactions by the child can be triggered by very routine events that would bother other children – ending a favored activity, the teacher saying ‘no’ to a request, being asked to line up for lunch, or (especially) any of the hundreds of stimulations that come from peers that most kids shake off. These children are emotionally fragile, and when triggered their brain goes into a fight-or-flight response that is uncontrollable (by them) and primitive in its outward manifestation. As for the effect of trauma on learning, we are only now recognizing childhood trauma for what it really is – a specific (though technically unlabeled) type of learning disability resulting from the inability of the child’s brain to store and retain new learning that occurs when the child is in an elevated emotional state.

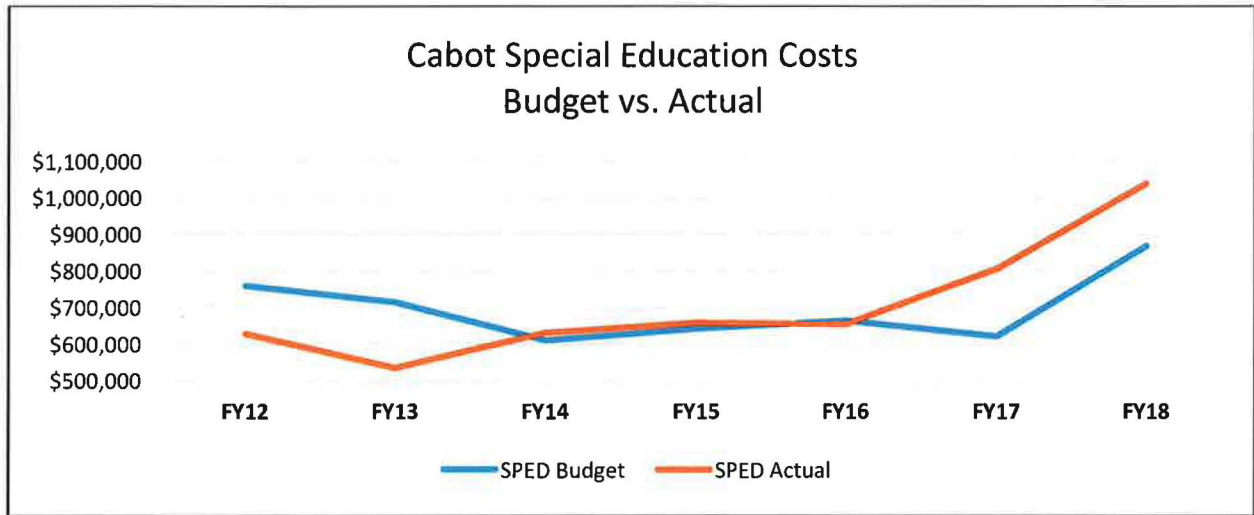
Trauma-affected students represent a dual challenge for teachers – 1) how to understand the child and his/her unique experiences and trigger points, to best avoid triggering the student; and 2) how to reach the child with regular and special instruction during those periods when they are available for learning. One such student in a classroom is a handful; three or four is a crisis in the making, because they typically are not all escalated or all calm at the same time. The classroom teacher with a group of these fragile students feels like they spend their day bouncing from one escalation to another, all the while wondering how they will ever get back to teaching the rest of the class.

It is not the case that these are “bad kids;” indeed, the unfamiliar observer would be hard pressed to identify one of these trauma-affected students from among their classmates when the child is not escalated and acting out. The same observer would also be surprised at how quickly the same calm, smiling child can transform into a student with raging emotions and, sometimes, harmful behaviors towards self and others. Because the emotional lability of these students is so unpredictable, we have to meet their needs in one of two ways; 1) the provision of in-school behavioral intervention (1:1 adult support) or placement in a therapeutic day treatment school that is equipped to provide a unique educational and therapeutic environment. The trend over the past two years has been to manage these students in-school until they reach high school age, at which point in-school support becomes less effective because of the age of the child and the demands of a more structured middle- or high-school. These students often move to an alternative therapeutic school. This is a pattern, not a hard and fast rule, but the students who are the subject of this paper fit this pattern at this time.

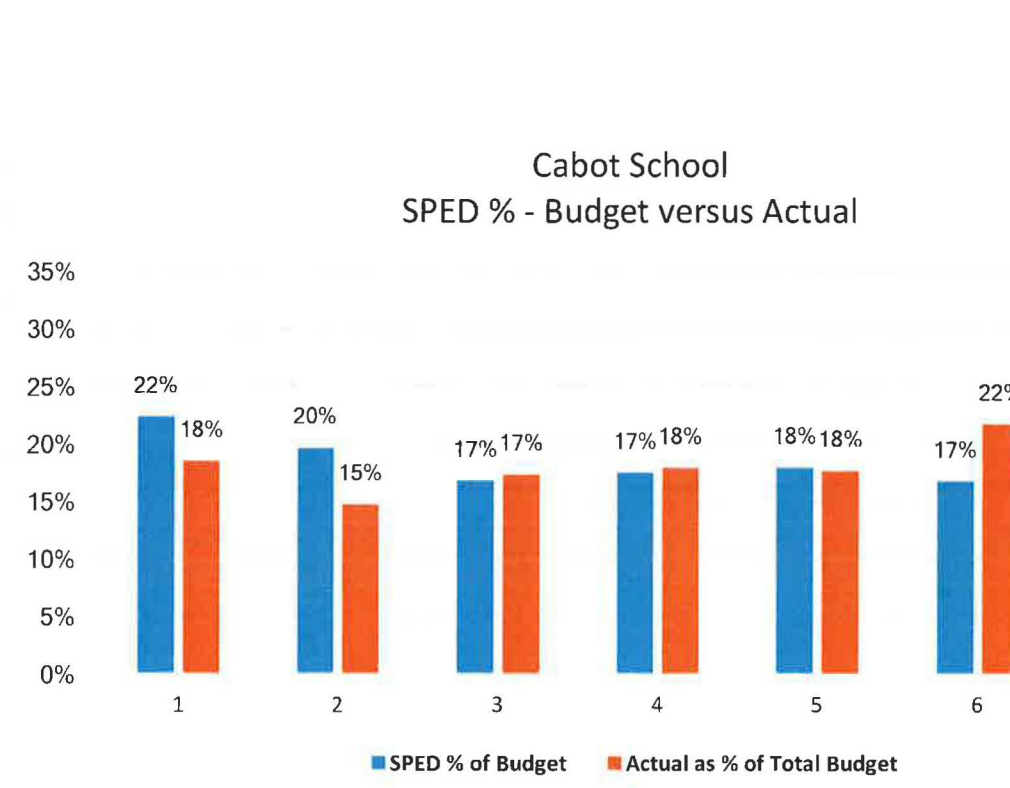
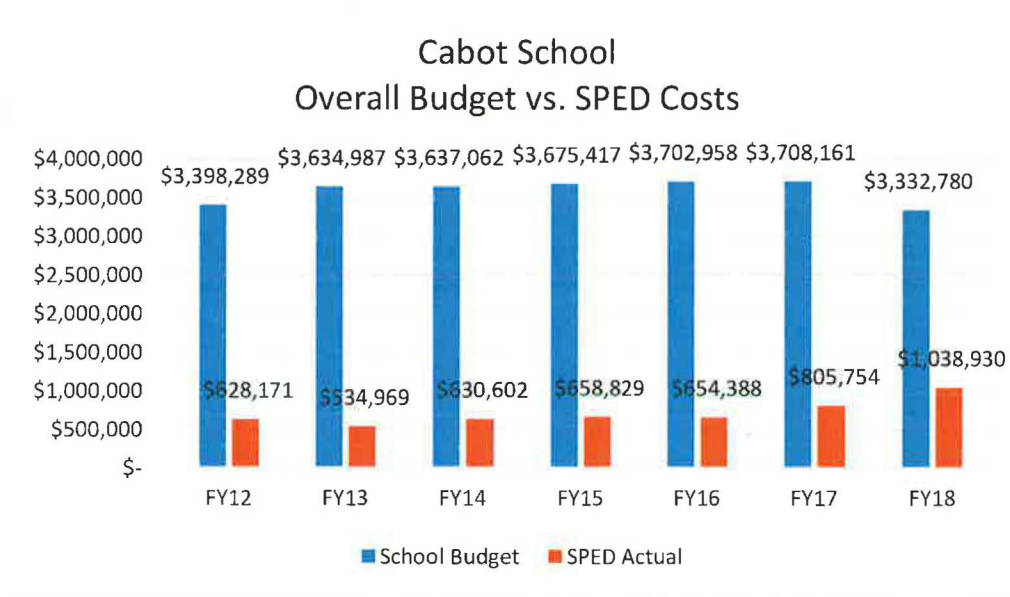
Meeting the needs of trauma students is challenging because it takes a special skill set to work with them. It is not simply a matter of putting an adult next to them – these students need positive behavioral supports – a set of protocols and practices designed by trained behavioral analysts to meet the unique emotional profile of the child. These protocols, when implemented by a trained Behavioral Interventionist, can slowly but progressively teach the missing skill set that most students develop naturally over time – resiliency in the face of obstacles and disappointments that every child faces in their daily life. The most cost-effective method for providing these services in-school is to contract with a mental health agency (Washington County Mental Health). This approach allows us to assign staff when the child is with us, and remove those services when the child no longer needs them or, as often happens with this population, when the child moves to another home and school district.

◆ Funding Challenges

Special Education costs at Cabot School had stayed relatively flat from FY12-FY16, averaging around \$621,000/year over the five-year period. Then, starting in FY17 and continuing this year, for reasons noted above (the influx of high-cost trauma students), the two-year average for special education costs jumped to over \$950,00/year, a 65% increase for the period. Without the increase we experienced in FY17 (i.e. if these students had not arrived or otherwise needed extra services to meet their trauma profile), special education costs in Cabot would have decreased by more than \$20,000. Note that these cost increases reflect special education costs over and above those that are normally associated with students requiring special education services. In other words, these cost increases can be directly associated with the cost of treating trauma in the school. The chart on the following page illustrates the six-year trends in special education expenditures, pointing both to an overall increase *and* to the fact that these expenditures have exceeded our ability to anticipate them during the budgeting process in each of the past two years.



Another way to look at the budget-versus-experience curve is think of it in terms of the overall school budget, which shows approximate level funding with an increasing percentage going to meet the needs of Trauma students in the past two fiscal years:



(Note: the \$375K decrease in the overall school budget from FY17-FY18 reflects the transfer of a number of costs and revenues to the SU budget, including Paraprofessionals, State-placed expenses and reimbursements, etc.)

Two important points bear calling out: 1) in FY17, our actual special education costs, which we had projected in the fall (due to an unanticipated influx of new students over the summer) to be 17% of the overall school budget, were actually 22% (a local budget deficit borne by Town taxpayers of nearly \$89K, after accounting for Special Ed reimbursements), and; 2) despite increasing our budget for FY 18 (to a projected share of the overall budget of 26%), we are now projecting to miss THAT mark by as much as 5%, due to the unanticipated increase of six additional trauma students (2 local and 4 state-placed) that surfaced after the FY18 budget was passed by voters in May (on the third try). After reimbursements, this will result in a \$60K deficit in the current fiscal year. And we are only in November – that number could increase if we get more DCF placements in our foster homes, homes that are currently *not* at their approved capacity.

At this point, it should be clear that for the past two school years Cabot School has been struggling to stay ahead of an ever-increasing influx of new trauma students, in addition to dealing with trauma students who have been in the school for a while but have reached the point where the programs at a small, rural middle/high school cannot accommodate their learning and behavioral challenges. The financial strains for this small town are coming at the same time that we are being told to “level-fund” or worse, to “cut spending to match targeted staff-to-student ratios.” We are not insensitive to the importance of these two cost containment philosophies, but at the same time, we can’t imagine how to do either and still keep all of our students safe and learning.

◆ The Impact of DCF Placements

The town of Cabot currently has several foster homes that are deemed by DCF to be “stable placements” for children in crisis. Some of these homes are licensed to take as many as four children. A number of these foster families have been willing to take very high-needs (read, trauma-affected) children that other homes will not take, or that have already passed through one or more foster homes on their way to Cabot. DCF case managers have reportedly told Family Court judges that “A placement in Cabot is a good idea because the school does such a good job with them.” These factors appear to have combined to make Cabot School a “magnet” for the placement of trauma-affected children, with four new children coming into the school in late-August alone. These new students, when added to seven other trauma-students already on the case load (eleven students in total), are the basis of the financial impact analysis in the previous section.

Numbers reported by the Agency of Education reinforce the impression that Cabot carries more than its fair share of State-Placed students. The most recent data (FY17) shows the following:

State-Placed Students by Count - FY17

District Name	Elem	SEC	State-Placed	FY17 Total	SP/ADM FY17
St. Albans Town	549.03	477.04	13.85	1039.92	1.3%
Rutland City	942.57	942.81	8.09	1893.47	0.4%
Fairfax	391.95	325.69	7.75	725.39	1.1%
Cabot	87.67	66.51	7.23	161.41	4.5%
Burlington	2131.99	1521.87	7.00	3660.86	0.2%

State-Placed Students as % of ADM- FY17

District Name	Elem	SEC	State-Placed	FY17 Total	SP/ADM FY17
Isle La Motte	25	26.03	4.00	55.03	7.3%
Cabot	87.67	66.51	7.23	161.41	4.5%
Wardsboro	45.5	58	3.00	106.50	2.8%
Mt. Holly	83	55.24	3.90	142.14	2.7%
Lowell	71.78	67.21	3.92	142.91	2.7%

This raises some uncomfortable but necessary questions. I think it is fair to ask if there are factors at play in this and other small communities in Vermont that encourage DCF to seek, support, and then over-populate foster homes in economically deprived areas of the State. Is it conceivable that some families might have more than one motivation for becoming a foster family? I don't doubt they all have a fundamental belief that they (the host family) can provide a safe and caring home. But in economically depressed, rural areas in the State, are the stipends paid by DCF an attractive financial incentive compared to the salaries from available local employment? And finally, is there a fundamental disconnect between the mission of DCF (foster placement) and schools (free and appropriate education for all student)?

It is certainly the case, at least in Cabot, that the local DCF office does not work with the school before placing new foster students. The school is always the last to know when there are new students arriving. ESSA rules implemented in 2016 mandated a process for assuring Educational Stability in which children who are moved from one home to another in a different town are not automatically moved to a new school placement. The process requires a Best Interest Determination made collaboratively between schools and DCF. So far as I can tell, this process was not followed for any of the new students placed at Cabot School in the current school year, or if it was, it left out a key partner in the process – Cabot School. Indeed, at least one of these students just “showed up” on the first day of school, not registered. Upon arrival, the foster-parent reported that the DCF caseworker had told her, “Oh, just bring him to school, it'll be okay.” As the legal guardian for children in State custody, it is DCF's responsibility to enroll students in school.

When children arrive at the door of the school, our first instinct is to take them in and sort out the details later, but when these children are products of a trauma environment, we don't know what we are getting, and when the child's needs exceed the staffing capacity of the school, we are left to deal with the consequences of the child's behavior while we scramble to figure out how to support the child. This was certainly the case at the beginning of the current school year, with the arrival of six new students, all with intensive behavioral needs, four of whom were on an IEP, two of whom were not but probably should have been. (These last two are not reflected in the financial analysis in the previous section. If we find them eligible for special education – likely – *and* also in need of intensive supports – probably – this will further skew the special education cost projections for the current year.)

From my conversations with DCF management, it appears that they feel they are meeting their obligations under the law in making these foster placements – and I suppose they are. When we take these students into our schools, we do everything we can to meet our obligations under the law. Somewhere in between these two positions of self-assurance lies a fundamental problem – many of these children that I have been talking about are in DCF custody because of terrible things that happened to them in the care of their families, and they are suffering the consequences of this trauma. These children have moderate-to-severe mental health issues stemming from the trauma, but once they are placed in a foster home, it apparently becomes the school's responsibility to deal with the costs and impacts of the mental health needs of these students.

Not all of my trauma-impacted children are in foster homes; some are in conditional custody with a familial placement, and some grew up in Cabot. They all present with the same range of mental health issues and costs as the State-Placed students. The reimbursement rates for these students range from 100% of the cost (for State-Placed students) to something less than that if they are local students. But no matter how one slices this cost-pie, in the end the money to support the mental health needs of all of these students comes out of the Education Fund. In my small community of Cabot, the projected cost for these students this year is approaching \$600,000, about 18% of the overall school budget. This figure represents the additional cost of educating just 6% of the overall student population. Even though our student-to-staff ratio closely approximates the desired 5:1 ratio, we can't get out from under these extra expenditures. This is why we can't level-fund a school budget in Cabot.

◆ Culture and Learning in a Trauma-Impacted Environment

This rapid increase in trauma students from within and without the community begs the question, "Is there such a thing as too much?" The short answer is "yes." Today, Special Education is not what it was when I started practicing in the field. The needs are radically changed. When viewed through a spreadsheet, one might ask, "is it reasonable that a school of 188 students can sustain an overall special education population of 30 students (16% of enrollment) with three special education teachers?" In the traditional model of special education support, where students had learning challenges but were otherwise "available" for learning, the answer is 'yes.' But when you start to delve further into the needs of the current population, you find that eleven (37%) of the thirty identified special education students suffer from the effects of childhood trauma; of that number, five are so complex that their best placement is in an alternative school. The other six students are currently at Cabot School; four of them are assigned behavioral intervention staff 1:1; the remaining two need that support and we are awaiting the availability of appropriate staffing from Washington County Mental Health.

All of these students require a level of support far exceeding the typical special education student. The students who are either in an alternative placement or already have an assigned behavioral interventionist receive the support that makes them available for learning much of the time. The ones without support (because we can't hire support) are struggling in the current school environment. It would be wrong to say they are not learning, because they have good days as well as bad, but they are not in an optimal frame of mind to receive the intensive level of instruction that comes at them on a daily basis. One of these students gets a lot of support from a substitute paraprofessional who comes in most days of the week to work in his classroom. The other student gets the majority of his emotional and social support from the school Principal, who spends more of his time directly involved with student behavior for this and two other non-special-education, trauma-impacted students, than he does with the day-to-day operation of the entire school.

Committing the building Principal to act as a behavior interventionist in this small, one-administrator school, all day every day, is an unrecoverable and unsustainable cost for this school. It is also the only option available for us right now, as we continue to deal with high needs students who would not otherwise be safe in the school building without significant adult intervention. We have no other option – we can't suspend or expel these students – and we don't want to even if we could. Neither can we leave them uncovered and take the risk that one of them will hurt another student or an adult – and some of them threaten to do so and past history that convinces us they just might act on a threat.

Everyone has a challenge, everyone is frustrated – DCF says they don't have enough foster homes, but they also think it is the school's problem to deal with this degree of mental health challenge, with no responsibility for considering the impact on the school climate when they place the child. We have a strong and supportive partnership with Washington County Mental Health, but they cannot staff the demand for behavioral support services coming at them from us and all of the other schools in their

catchment area. At the end of the day, the rubber meets the road in the school, but we have the same challenges when it comes to finding appropriate adult support for these students. If we hire an adult staff member and put them under contract, they belong to us for the remainder of the current school year, even if we don't need to keep them around, because there is no termination provision in the Collective Bargaining Agreement, and no willingness by VT-NEA to consider such a provision. Damned if we do, damned if we don't.

The Impact On Learning

Back in the classroom, the kids and teachers are struggling. I won't get into particulars that would inadvertently allow a reader to guess who I am talking about. Suffice it to say that all of the new trauma-impacted students who arrived this year are in elementary school, and their arrival has disrupted the school climate in ways that would have been unimaginable in past years.

There is a snowball effect on all of the children in our elementary classrooms when we are spending so much time dealing with the behavior of just a few children. Here I am mostly concerned about those children that are coming to school with inadequate adult support. We have defined Positive Behavior Support Plans for all of our students who need one, but by definition, a Positive Behavior Support Plan, if it is to succeed, demands the flexibility of an adult to intervene "in the moment" when a child's behavior is overly disruptive. A typical plan would include scheduled breaks for the child who does not have the resiliency to sit in the room for an entire period without a break. A typical plan would also include a protocol for exiting a child from the classroom so that s/he can have an opportunity to deescalate in a safe, quiet environment before returning to class. This adult support obligation cannot be fulfilled by the classroom teacher, and must be provided by a second adult who has the presence and the flexibility to deal with the child in crisis. Ideally, this adult will be trained to recognize when a child might be escalating, before there is a serious disruptive event. It is disadvantageous for these children to have continued disruptive events in front of their peers; it harms the disruptive child's ability to build positive peer relationships, and it harms the rest of the children in the classroom because it robs them of classroom instruction time when the teacher is left to deal with the disruptive behaviors. Finally, and just as important, the day-to-day stress of dealing with these behaviors is having a negative impact on the health of our teaching staff.

We are concerned on a daily basis with the possibility that we might lose one or two of our elementary teachers due to the stress of trying to teach in an environment where certain students are consistently at risk of erupting in a violent response to one of their peers. Recently, we had a newly hired special education teacher quit without warning or notice, claiming stress-induced migraines caused by her interactions with these students. We have longtime, experienced staff questioning their commitment to working in this environment; last year's influx of difficult students was perceived as an anomaly, but two years in a row now feels like a pattern. And as already mentioned, I have a Principal in name-only, as he spends his days doing the work that we can't hire enough behavior interventionists to handle. The teachers are stressed; the administrators don't sleep at night. It's not a sustainable situation. We need some relief.

◆ What Can Be Done?

Nothing in what I have said above should be perceived as me or anyone at Cabot School speaking out against these students. I am not asking that these students “go away” and I am quietly proud that some think of this school as “always doing the right thing for these students.” But that said, I struggle with these and other questions every day:

- What about the other schools in the area, in the State, who work under the same legal and moral precepts that we do? Why were some of these students moved from placements in, e.g., Barre, a District with larger schools and greater resources than Cabot, without anyone asking if this was in the best interest of the children?
- Is it fair and proper for DCF to assume that a small, rural school is somehow better equipped to handle big problems than a larger school with more administrators and support staff and financial resources? What does this say about the “other” schools?
- Why does Cabot, with its relatively tiny three-million-dollar budget do a better job with these children than other, larger schools with greater capacity and ability to absorb an influx of high needs students like we have experienced in the past two years?
- How is it sustainable for this small community to continue to absorb more and more trauma-affected students from outside its borders, at the same time that it struggles to deal with its own home-grown trauma-affected students?
- How do we meet the financial challenges of reducing school costs laid before us by the Agency and the Legislature AND absorb this mental health cost shift in our local school budget?
- What will we do in Cabot when we burn out the staff and lose otherwise competent teaching and support staff because they believe they can no longer serve all students in the manner they deserve?

What can be done? This is a complex issue that is beyond the ability of local and SU school administrators to solve on our own. To start, it would help if those who look in at us from the outside could look beyond per-pupil costs, as if every child costs the same to educate as any other, and begin to recognize the impact and cost differential for these most challenging and fragile students. Please, start there.

I have more questions than answers, but I argue that an honest assessment of these questions by responsible persons in the Agency of Education, Agency of Human Services, and the Legislature could begin to solve some of these challenges. Here are a few things to consider:

Acknowledge the problem

Cabot School’s “trauma challenge” represents a \$600K load on the Education Fund over and above usual special education costs. This is a phenomenal amount of money to have to spend on eleven students – more than \$54,000/student, over and above regular education and usual special education costs combined. The Legislature needs to be made aware of the extent of this challenge, and it needs to stop looking at education spending as if this money is spread evenly across all of our students. Yes, the Cabot School budget is high. Yes, we would like to spend less money. No, we can’t so long as we are facing costs like these. And given the trend of the past two years, we expect this to get worse before it gets better.

Placement decisions by DCF have to be done in collaboration with the school

No child should show up unannounced at a new school. Child placement is not a one-off decision – DCF has to find a good home for these kids, but part of that calculus for them ought to include some sensitivity to the school environment. There are rules in place for ensuring this happens, but it appears these rules are not being followed. Currently we are being left out of the Best Interest Determination process, and we should not be held liable for meeting the needs of these students when they show up at our door, unannounced. School is the place where most of the social/emotional learning occurs, and the effort

required to provide this education for *all* of the students is complicated exponentially with the introduction of each new trauma-impacted student into the milieu. This is especially true in a small school with one classroom per grade level; there is no ability to balance the load of trauma versus non-trauma children across multiple classrooms. In Cabot, where grade pairs (1-2, 3-4, 5-6) interchange and interact across and between two small classrooms, the introduction of just one especially difficult student in a class effectively impacts two grades at the same time. *At a certain point, this means that some placements may not be appropriate because the school has reached its saturation point and does not have the capacity to deal with the child when s/he arrives. Cabot School finds itself at this point today.* Absent our participation in a Best Interest Determination for each child that DCF considers placing in a home in Cabot, we have no way to voice these concerns prior to the arrival of a student.

Mental health costs should not be paid from the Education Fund

Public schools are not, by design, day treatment facilities. My teachers are trained to teach reading, writing, and arithmetic. Few if any have any secondary skill-base in mental health counseling. As a result, the schools spend valuable Education Fund dollars to acquire outside mental health services. Across all of the eleven trauma students in this analysis, the average additional cost is more than \$54K/year. This is money spent on mental health services, not instruction. Why does it come from the Education Fund?

Adjust the Special Ed Reimbursement formula to fully fund Trauma costs

Budget deficits resulting from unanticipated trauma support costs are killing us. Try as we might to anticipate the needs of our students, current and incoming, we don't have a crystal ball. Last school year (FY17), we had to provide additional services for four students (2 local and 2 that moved in unexpectedly) with significant trauma histories. The unreimbursed total for these four students was \$72,000. This year (FY18), we are currently looking at unreimbursed costs of \$60,000 for students with significant trauma histories. When faced with budget deficits such as these, a small school like Cabot has few options. We can try to cut costs in other budget areas, but we have few options. The so-called discretionary cost pool (budget minus staffing costs) is only around \$660,000 in the current year. There is not a lot of "fat" in the budget. In addition, we have the healthcare recapture to deal with - \$29,000 that we budgeted but will not receive¹. Today we are looking at nearly \$90,000 (15%) out of a \$660,000 discretionary pool and there are no obvious sources.

If we can't get Mental Health to pay for these services, then additional reimbursement for the unanticipated and unbudgeted costs for students with a trauma history is warranted under the current funding formula. All trauma-impacted students should automatically become eligible for extraordinary reimbursement because of their status. Only one of the eight trauma students affecting the Cabot Budget is currently eligible for Extraordinary Reimbursement under the current reimbursement model.

I am happy to answer any questions the reader may have about any of the issues I have raised in this paper.



Mark Tucker, M.A.
Superintendent, Washington Northeast Supervisory Union

¹ The healthcare recapture is especially problematic for us, because we had already budgeted for lower healthcare costs in the second half of the year in the budget that was passed by the voters. The recapture represents a double taxation for our schools.

Brackin, Stephanie

From: Gaidys, Maureen
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 5:00 PM
To: Russo-Savage, Donna
Subject: FW: Cabot School Alternative Structure Proposal - "Advantage Cabot"

FYI – not sure if you saw this, but think that you should.

I would think we are just collecting these, and not necessarily responding to them all... ?

Maureen

Maureen Gaidys
Executive Assistant
Vermont Agency of Education – Secretary's Office
219 North Main Street, Suite 402
Barre, VT 05641
802-479-1060 (phone) 802-479-1835 (fax)

My email address has changed: maureen.gaidys@vermont.gov

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: Due to the nature of the Secretary's duties to the State of Vermont and its citizens, there are occasions when the Secretary needs to cancel and/or postpone meetings or events in order to attend to pressing state matters. Please keep this in mind when planning for events.

From: Jessica Miller [mailto:jessica.miller20@aol.com]
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2018 1:16 PM
To: Holcombe, Rebecca <Rebecca.Holcombe@vermont.gov>
Subject: re: Cabot School Alternative Structure Proposal - "Advantage Cabot"

Dear Rebecca,

I am sharing this with you for your information.

Every year, just before town meeting, the Cabot School Board would send newsletters to Cabot residents extolling the virtues of the school's latest academic programs. With its excessive budgets of escalating salaries, additional teachers for a declining student body, multiple professional services and after-school programs, the Cabot School has never come close to achieving an impressive educational resume.

This "Advantage Cabot", or as I like to call it, Disadvantage Cabot proposal is nothing more than the Cabot School's latest, desperate and ill-conceived attempt to, not only circumvent Act 46, but to convince the community that an "independent educational enrichment and boarding program" is the best alternative to a school merger. According to this proposal, Advantage Cabot's goal is to recruit 32 out-of-town students for an individual, annual tuition of \$45,500, which totals \$1,456,000. First of all, how do 32 more students, outside or otherwise, added to the existing

enrollment of under 200 satisfy the Act 46's third educational and fiscal goal of requiring an average daily membership of 900? Why would a parent who could afford almost \$50,000 tuition send his or her child to a remote, rural school with such a poor record unless that parent was looking for an out-of-the-way place for his or her problem child? As of yet, there are no reported out-of-state students lined up to get into the school. There are no reported families willing to board them. And how does money given to a hypothetical host family represent "significant resources to the community? There have been no "philanthropic donations" as promised in this proposal. And nobody as ever explained how Advantage Cabot plans to achieve the academic excellence it is proposing.

Karen Larsen, of the AC group, said, "Advantage Cabot made its media debut in September, 2017". However, at that time, AC's initial request was for a \$250,000 UDAG (CCIF) grant and a \$250,000 UDAG loan. Why was this request dramatically reduced to a \$25,000 UDAG grant? If this alternative structure is rejected by the State will the school return this grant money? Is it possible that this request was reduced because this year's school budget includes a request for a \$200,000 UDAG grant for a gym roof replacement (the 3rd one, by the way)? How does AC's business plan and budget fit into this year's school budget? Are there AC related costs hidden in this year's budget? Will the taxpayers be paying for an expanded infrastructure for a school with an indefinite future? And how can this AC proposal claim it will bring "investment into the community at no cost to the taxpayer?

It should also be noted that with discrimination and bullying running rampant throughout all public schools, wouldn't a two-tier, class-based educational system exacerbate this problem? What happens to those local students who become undeserving of the 1st class attention promised to those high-paying out-of-towners? One has to wonder why the school needed an influx of rich kids to inspire "an enrichment program of academic and extra-curricular activities with new internship and work study opportunities?

The town owns the school property at a value of \$3,764,960. If the school were to go private, as it appears to be heading, presumably it would have to buy the school property from the town. After all of the years of taxpayer money used toward the operation and maintenance of the Cabot School, shouldn't these taxpayers have a say in the use of that property? And shouldn't the proceeds of that sale be used toward lowering future property taxes?

The Board of Education's final approval of all alternative structure proposals will be in November of this year. If the State does not approve these plans, the default next step is the State dictating to the community what their school configuration will be. Cabot voters will be voting on the AC alternative structure in March, before any such approval. This fait accompli voting is used to lock in financial commitments before a project is actualized or approved. Do we want outside and local students exploited for what appears to be a private, commercial enterprise, with seed money coming from the town's UDAG fund and local taxpayer money? If a public school is a good school, it doesn't need false advertising, gold-plated programs and lots of money thrown its way. No new fresh coat of paint is going to cover up the fact that the Cabot School has never provided a high quality education. This AC proposal is a grandiose scheme designed to enrich those promoting it and prevent a school from relinquishing its power to control and bankrupt the Cabot community.

Jessica Miller
Cabot,VT

To: Rebecca Holcombe
From: Dale Newton - Cabot Resident, Parent, Business Owner, Voter, Taxpayer
Re: Cabot School, Act 46 Merger Failure and Current Alternative Governance Request
Date: December 4, 2017

I write to urge you and the Board to reject the Cabot School Board's request for an alternative governance structure.

I was the only Cabot citizen to attend the majority of the Act 46 Committee meetings for the Cabot/Danville/Twinfield proposed merger that was voted down this past year. I also attended many of the separate meetings at Danville and Twinfield. We built our home/farm/B&B (www.fruitlands.net) here in Cabot in 1976. We raised our children here. I spent the last 25 years of my English teaching career at Twinfield. My parents home was, until a year ago, in Danville. As you can see, I had many reasons to be interested and involved in the merger proposal.

I have included my letter of support for the proposal. I ask you to read it instead of my reviewing all of the reasons here for which I strongly supported that opportunity.

The Twinfield and Danville Boards presented the plan to their voters in a professional and objective manner. I remember the chairman of the Danville Board stating that, "We are not here to tell you how to vote. We are here to give you the facts as best as we understand them." The message from the Twinfield Board was the same.

The Cabot Board, however, took a public stand by letter and in public meetings that the plan must be defeated. Statements were made that the "Danville and Twinfield were not acceptable choices or communities." Cabot Board members stated in one of the last Committee meetings that they had "heard" that there was a lot of bullying at Twinfield. I wish you could have seen the reaction from the Twinfield principal. Over and over one Committee meeting would conclude with seeming agreements, Peter would go home to work on the next draft, and the next meeting would begin with Cabot's Chairman demanding to revisit the "unfair" nature of past agreements and conversations. Cabot's intractable marriage to "PBL" was controlling. Even after the other schools put in writing that project-base learning could be and would be an integral part of the new structures, nothing was going to change. It was pointed out to Cabot that if there were to be a third high-school campus and a continuation of the PBL program at Cabot, because of a lottery system, perhaps only 6-8 Cabot students would be chosen and remain at Cabot for some time period. Then we had statements in the press (see VT Digger) that Cabot was the #1 high school in Vermont according to US News & World Report CHECK THAT FACT!

From my perspective it was the fact that the Cabot Board would never accept the governance structure that would have given Cabot one less seat on the new board. They wanted the same voting number for each town. It is my understanding that it is Vermont law or policy that dictates the ratio. Cabot was the smallest school population. There was no choice in that.

I had so many conversations with the WNESU Superintendent at that time. I did so because of my roots at Twinfield and also to check my understandings of the process and the facts. It was clear that she was fearful and somewhat chagrined by the positions of the Cabot Board. Of course, she was not in a position at the time to state that publicly. It was clear that she did not see how Cabot could continue past 2018 without a merger.

Cabot left nearly 2 million dollars of incentives and savings on the table. It endangered its SSG money. I have also included a PDF of the 2014 Cabot Board proposal to do a 7 million dollar rebuild of the campus. At that time we were told that the satellite buildings were not suitable for habitation. MOLD. Now? The Board spent months this past year floating the idea that the Town should take over the gym and take on the million plus that it is going to take to rebuild that facility. Yes, the Town. Is that not an “interesting” way of making the cost-per-pupil figure more favorable?

The most important part of my letter to you is to help you understand the hubris that permeates this Board. I can't tell you how many times during the merger meetings that Cabot Board members spent time vilifying the State for its efforts to reign in costs and to restructure our small schools with plummeting enrolments. At the same time they would tell us not to worry about rising costs because so many of us pay our property-tax assessments based upon income. I pointed out time and time again the hypocrisy of that stance. Where do they think the money comes from when an individual tax payer gets help from the State? Do they not understand that under current funding structures, every tax payer in the state funds in some way the decisions of every school board in the state? They want your money but not your standards or guidance.

The Cabot peK-8 grades always seem to get lost along the way. My understanding is that during the last round of testing, some lower grade levels were found to be in the lowest 4%. Attention must be paid to those levels. Moving the lower grades into the high-school building would allow the closing and condemning of the buildings that just three years ago were said to be in need of demolition. The current situation is that the programs and offerings in 9-12 do not represent a viable 21st Century education. Far from being the #1 high school in Vermont, the Cabot Board is now representing to the voters that we must spend large sums of money and hire more staff to bring our high-school program up to state standards. What? How can that be true now just months after we were told to reject an incredible opportunity to join with Danville and Twinfield because those schools and communities did not meet our standards nor were they acceptable partners? It is mind boggling.

When we built our home our taxes were \$600/yr. Now they are \$700/month. If the Cabot Board is allowed to continue its current course, we will be facing, perhaps, a 20% increase. For what? What argument can be made that the student population is going to rise? What rational person is going to believe that this committee that has recently been formed is going to attract international students to Cabot with St. J. Academy 18 miles away and with 175 years of tradition and growth? It is absurd. The final absurdity is how

many times in the past years we have even had Board members send their own children to St. J. Academy while sitting on the Board. The good-for-your-child-but-not-mine message has been loud and clear over the years. In my post-retirement position at Burke Mt. running the school program for grades 1-12 school children throughout the NEK, I often get to see which Cabot parents have enrolled their students in alternative schools. In addition, this year Cabot had 10 slots for choice. All were taken. Look at the size of this year's 9th-grade class.

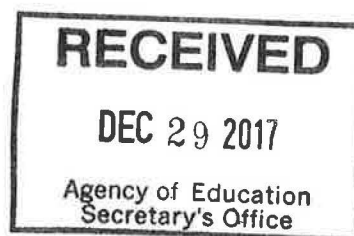
The argument that you now hear the most is that somehow Cabot property values will plummet if there is not a high school in Cabot. The facts do not defend that position. You mean that towns like Peacham, Waterford, Barnet, Wheelock, Calais et al have low property values or desirability? Nonsense. I have studied the Vermont map and counted the small number of towns that have their own single high schools. There is no evidence that towns that tuition, that have choice or that have joined into combined districts have "gutted" towns. In fact the evidence may argue just the opposite. There are, at a minimum, just too many variables.

Again, I urge you to reject any request for "alternative governance." We are lost without intervention.

Dale Newton
506 Thistle Hill Road
Marshfield, VT 05658
802-426-3889
www.fruitlands.net

On 12/26/2017 09:09 PM, PPMPV wrote:

Dear Secretary Holcombe,



Enclosed is a copy of a Hardwick Gazette piece (Wednesday December 20, 2017) by Will Walters entitled: Cabot School Budget Progressing. I am also enclosing a copy of a handout sheet that I received at a public meeting (within this past month), here in Cabot, pushing for the adoption of Advantage Cabot. I have several comments for you to consider relative to the Cabot School and the statewide overabundance of physical plants, teachers, ancillary personnel, administrators, and school transportation infrastructure.

1. The Cabot School Gym was constructed during the early 1970s. This is the third time in the course of my residency here (going on 44 years) that the gym roof has been either significantly repaired or replaced. Four times if the original construction is also taken into account. Why ?

2. Advantage Cabot: The lead-up costs and the operating costs that are required to bolster the Cabot School so that it can accommodate these out of state students should be covered by the individuals who desire Advantage Cabot, until this program becomes self sustaining financially and maintains a track record of financial stability for a minimum of five years. Those are the people who should be taking this kind of financial risk. That financial risk should not be shouldered by Cabot taxpayers. Already a water line bond has been approved to increase the capacity of the Danville Hill water line. I suspect but I do not know if this infrastructure improvement is at least in part slated to go to the Cabot School as it might expand via schemes like Advantage Cabot ?

3. School Districts in Vermont have become bus companies. Parents should be financially and/or physically responsible for getting their progeny to and from school. The State of Vermont should pay the transportation costs for parents who are not able to shoulder those costs. Either parents get their kids to school and back on their own or they should pay someone to do it for them. The present underlying state statute does not require school districts to provide transportation. The State of Vermont should mandate that it is the parents' responsibility to assure that their kids get to school and back. The school districts in Vermont should not bear that burden. This statute should be amended to reflect what I am saying to you.

4. If an 11.93 per cent budget increase over the current year is indicative of where education costs are going in Cabot, then the remedy is not Advantage Cabot. The remedy is a very small school that accommodates younger children

from kindergarten through the 6th grade.

5. An 11.93 per cent increase in costs over the current year is unacceptable to me as a Cabot property taxpayer. Janet Ancel's trial balloon to shift the tax burden from primary residential property taxpayers to an income tax makes sense to me in terms of ways and means. However, that act will not assuage Phil Scott's concern of a spending crisis in education here in Vermont. Both ways and means and appropriations (at the state and the local level) now must be addressed in a manner that makes this 11.93 per cent cost increase a thing of the past.

Other than for Fred Tuttle (that was in the primary election), I voted in the past for one or two other Republican candidates for state office; I always vote in national, state, and local elections by absentee ballot. Phil Scott was number three. In my opinion, one of the primary reasons for our present educational malaise is the local reliance on the voice vote from the floor method of voting for budgets, public questions, and elected officials. Significant numbers of local voters were and still are disenfranchised by the voice vote from the floor method. During 2016 Cabot voted to change that electoral method for town and school district budgets to the Australian Ballot method with its absentee ballots. I realize that Act 46 already did that for school district budgets prior to the October 2016 Cabot town and school district vote. That reliance appears to be changing statewide but it is changing too slowly. The other primary driver that has gotten us to where we now are, in the spending for education realm, is the illusion that we can not spend too much money for primary and secondary education. This has more to do with transcendence through procreation than it does with actually providing adequate funding for basic primary and secondary public education. It is essentially non-rational and as such it is beyond your aegis.



Richard Scheiber

P.O. Box 277

Cabot, Vermont 05647 December 27, 2017

Advantage Cabot

An independent educational enrichment and boarding program

Concept:

An independent boarding program targeting out-of-state students who will attend Cabot School and be housed with local host families. Advantage Cabot will provide an enrichment program of academic and extra-curricular activities -including new internship and work-study opportunities- that will be available to all students attending Cabot School. Advantage Cabot will support and enhance Cabot School and bring significant new investment into the community at no cost to the taxpayer.

Benefits:

- Stabilize and grow the student population of Cabot High School
- Make full use of existing Cabot School facilities
- Provide a new source of revenue not dependent on local property taxes for Cabot School operations and capital improvements
- Expand educational, recreational, technical and career opportunities for Cabot High School students
- Turn the Cabot School into a catalyst for economic development in the community
- Maintain and enhance local property values

Funding:

Each Advantage Cabot student will pay \$45,500 annually for tuition and room and board. Those resources will be allocated as follows:

- \$17,000 to Cabot School (the same amount a student from a Vermont “tuition town” would pay)
- \$12,000 for enrichment programs offered by Advantage Cabot to all high school students
- \$9,000 for room and board to the host family; and
- \$7,500 for administrative and operating costs.

Financing

- Scaled grant and loan request from CCIF; tied to success benchmarks (ballot initiative)
- Complementary financing; foundation support, private philanthropy, federal funding
- Zero impact on tax rate

Economic impact over the initial 10 years:

- \$3.8 million in tuition paid to Cabot School
- \$2.7 million in enrichment programs provided to all Cabot School students
- \$2 million in room and board fees paid to local host families
- \$1.5 million in administration and operating costs

The Cabot School is as a powerful educational, cultural, social and economic center of our community. By coming together and supporting Advantage Cabot, the voters of Cabot can ensure that Cabot School will thrive and prosper for many years to come.

Gets Top Rating

by Will Walters

PLAINFIELD — Emergency preparedness ratings for towns determine how much assistance a town can receive from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the state. Now, Plainfield has the highest rating a town can achieve.

The town's Emergency Relief and Assistance Fund rating of 17.5 means after a federal disaster declaration FEMA will pay 75 percent of the cost of the damage, said Emily Harris, northeast coordinator of Vermont Emergency Management. The remaining 25 percent is split between the town and the state. With the highest rating, the state will pay 17.5 percent of the cost of damage, leaving the town to pay 7.5 percent.

If a town has done nothing to prepare for a disaster, it will receive a 7.5 percent reimbursement from the state and be responsible for the remaining 17.5 percent. If a town

has made some preparations, it will receive 12.5 percent from the state and be responsible for the remaining 12.5 percent.

Harris said having a Local Emergency Operations Plan (LEOP) qualifies a town to receive hazard mitigation funding. She said she is available to help with updating local plans, and the updating period starts on Town Meeting Day. It must be completed by May 1, 2018.

One of the plan's requirements is that it identify a town's three points of contact for the state to reach in a disaster. Plainfield's three contacts in order of priority are: Fire Chief Pat Martin, Emergency Management Director Michael Billingsley, and select board member Alexandra Thayer.

Harris said the next training session for the Incident Command System (ICS)-402 certification is April 19, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., at the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission in Montpelier.

See PREPAREDNESS, 3



The Cabot Christmas Market

Weihnach

by Will Walters

CABOT — Saturday's nachtsmarkt, or Christmas market, was a huge success. Bobby Searles of Harryware, one organizer of the

It was the first annual Market and Weihnachts take place between Harryware and the Cabot Villa along with the Cabot Co Association's (CCA) artists at the Willey building.

"It was the best year I at a local market," said Talbert, who sells maple

The CCA used the upstairs room in town hall for set out their wares and while vendors set up outside the street between the stores.

The Holiday Market is seasonal event to promote interest, along with the ning Apple Pie Festival and Maplefest in spring. a sense of community is lying goal of these evening residents together to

See BUDGET, 3

Cabot School Budget Development Progressing

by Will Walters

CABOT — A second draft of the school budget shows an increase of 11.93 percent over the current year, but the budget is far from final and several revisions are expected before the school board passes the version that will go to the voters.

Business Manager Christina Kimball said this draft includes reinstating the high school faculty to full-time and adding a design technology position. Several unknown factors are keeping the board open to changes because the projected revenue is volatile at present. The number of equalized pupils, the town's common level of appraisal of the grand list and expected state revenue are unknown variables. Also, the revenue from the state will not be known until the legislature meets in January and passes a budget.

The second draft will include a bond payment for a new roof on the gymnasium, but the cost of the roof depends on bids coming in for the project. Superintendent Mark Tucker said several bids have been received, but there are more expected and the board will need to see all of them before it can develop the size of the bond and a repayment schedule.

Kimball said facilities projects under consideration are updates to the locker rooms, flooring in the middle school and Library, and air handler controls.

Chair Chris Tormey handed out a draft of the Alternate Governance Structure, version 3.2, which the board is working on to comply with Act 46. A copy of the draft is available on the school district's website, cabotschool.org.

In Marshfield, Mentoring Thr

By Will Walters

She said big grants have increased the mentoring program

their own initiative. See

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hundreds had over the summer,
he had seen on TV a report about
a shelter in Colchester that was

Preparedness

Continued From Page Two

Harris said if five or more people request an ICS-402 training, she can come out and deliver it on-site and that the ICS-100 training is offered both as an 8-hour in-person class, or online. A two-day, all-day Basic Public Information Officer training will be offered on February 15, 2018 and February 16, 2018 at the Williston Fire Station.

ICS (Incident Command System

expenses and there is no expense
that's the important thing."

He said it was important to get it in for the holidays.

) training is required for at least one select board member who will be expected by FEMA to be in command of directing disaster efforts in their town. The board is looking at having an emergency management coordinator who works under the direction of the emergency director and setting up a command center. A command center is not required, but the state strongly recommends towns have a designated center for disaster contact and coordination. The coordinator, like the director,

is a volunteer position.

Billingsley said he will take an emergency management director training on February 17, 2018 in Montpelier, and suggested that select board members Ross Sneyd and Betsy Ziegler take the ICS-402 training for select board members, so one trained person is available if Thayer cannot be reached.

Harris presented the board with an flow diagram on communications between the towns and the state in a disaster.

Budget

Continued From Page Two

Tucker reported that the shared school bus driver/custodian, who is shared with Twinfield Union School, has been hired. He said he met with state Secretary of Education Rebecca Holcombe and the director of the department of children and families to review the special education report he submitted.

Principal Dave Schilling said the Cabot LEADS program has started with 49 students participating. The


grades 5 to 8 students have had a mentor and a job assigned to them.

Karen Larsen, of the Advantage: Cabot, expressed her thanks that the project is included in the Alternate Governance Structure (AGS) plan that will be finalized and sent to the Agency of Education for approval.

Tucker circulated a summary memo from the district's attorney, Pietro Lynn, which outlines areas of future discussion with the Advantage: Cabot board regarding liability for students recruited by

Advantage: Cabot to attend Cabot High School. The board agreed that this discussion would be on the agenda for the December 18 meeting.

Advantage: Cabot is a proposed non-profit corporation whose purpose is to seek students interested in attending Cabot school and boarding them with local families through the school year. A public forum on the progress of the organization was postponed due to weather last week and a new date has not been set.



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filled with lots of good
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How Sweet It Is

to be able to say "thanks"
many good customers for
business and support
It's been a real treat serving
Happy Holidays!