

Draft Default Articles of Agreement ***Concerns Raised and Responsive Draft Articles***

Act 49 of 2017 requires the State Board of Education to issue Default Articles of Agreement with its Final Statewide Plan, which is due on or before November 30, 2018. The Default Articles will govern the activity of each new unified school district that the State Board creates under the Plan, unless and until the voters of the new district vote to amend the Default Articles, either before or after the new district becomes fully operational on July 1, 2019.

The Agency prepared a first draft of potential Default Articles of agreement to help the State Board begin its deliberations on these issues. This first draft attempts to respond to the concerns raised by school boards in their Act 46, Section 9 Proposals and by communications received from the general public, while ensuring that the voters can address each issue in a different manner if they choose to amend the articles in the future.

The table below outlines some of the ways in which this first draft of the Default Articles addresses expressed concerns.

	Summary of Concern	Default Article(s) (8.20.18 version) Addressing Issue
1	<p>Small towns will lose their “voice” and be outvoted on a larger, unified school board</p> <p>A single large town will dominate the school board</p>	<p>draft Article 10 and 11 (“Hybrid Model”):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each town within the new unified district would have two seats on the unified board to be filled only by its residents • Only residents of the town could nominate candidates for the town’s two seats • Voters of unified district would vote on candidates for all seats • Article could not be amended for initial members of board • Representation on board beginning on or after annual meeting, Spring 2020: Voters of new unified district could amend model of proportionality and number of seats if they voted to do so; unified board could not amend it
2	<p>Small schools will be closed</p>	<p>draft Article 4(A):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>2019-2020</u> and <u>2020-2021</u> school years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A school building could not be closed unless voters in the town in which the building is located vote to approve the closure ○ An <i>existing union</i> school building could not be closed unless approved by voters of new unified district ○ Article 4(A) could be amended only if approved by voters in each town, independently <p>draft Article 4(B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>2021-2022 school year and after</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A school building could not be closed unless approved by the voters of entire new unified district ○ Only voters of new unified district could amend Article 4(B); unified board could not amend it <p>Moving all grades to another school or schools would be considered “closure” and so would be subject to these protections even if the building were used for another school-related purpose</p>

3	Small schools will be effectively closed by restructuring grade configurations and moving small school's grades to another building	<p>draft Article 3(B):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>2019-2020</u> and <u>2020-2021</u> school years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Grades operated in each school building could not be changed from what they were in 2018-2019 ○ Article could be amended only if approved by voters in each town, independently <p>In 2021-2022 and after, unified board would have authority under existing law to make grade reconfiguration decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless and until Articles were amended to include new article that addressed this <p>See also paragraph at end of Issue #2 above</p>
4	School Board will reconfigure grades offered in each building	See Issue # 3 above
5	Unified School Board will require very young students to travel to a school building in a different town	<p>draft Article 3(A):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In <u>2019-2020</u> and <u>2020-2021</u> school years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Students would attend school they attended (or would have attended) in 2018-2019 ○ Board would have authority to grant parent's request for different placement ○ Article could be amended only if approved by voters in each town, independently <p>In 2021-2022 and after, unified board would have authority under existing law to make enrollment decisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unless and until Articles were amended to include new article that addressed this
6	Local school building will be closed and town will lose its community center	<p>draft Article 6(B) – town school buildings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For <u>all time into the future</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Town in which building is located would be given right of first refusal and could buy closed building for \$1 ○ Only voters of new unified district could amend Article; unified board could not amend it ○ Article 4 regarding school closure applies (See Issue #2 above) <p>draft Article 6(C) – <i>existing union</i> school district building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For <u>all time into the future</u>: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Unified board could sell as would under current law ○ Only voters of new unified district could amend Article; unified board could not amend it ○ Article 4 regarding school closure applies (See Issue #2 above)
7	Financial resources will be directed to larger or city school buildings at the expense of smaller school buildings	See Issue #1 above