

Barre Act 46 Merger Proposal



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Barre Act 46 Web Page

<http://bsuvt.org/joomla/index.php/act-46>

The charge of the Barre Act 46 Merger Study Committee has been to pursue whether it is advisable to form a Phase 2 (RED) Regional Education District

After a thorough review of the educational, operational, fiscal, and cultural opportunities and challenges that could result due to unifying the current supervisory union under the leadership of a single school board, Barre's joint 706 Study Team voted unanimously to put Articles of Agreement to form a new unified union school district before the voters of Barre City and Barre Town for their consideration.

(Executive Summary of the Barre Act 46 Final Report)

The Merger Proposal

The Barre Supervisory Union Act 46 Study Committee recommends the following Articles of Agreement for the creation of a Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12 unified union school district, to be named the Barre Unified Union School District. The forming districts are the Barre City School District, Barre Town School District, and the Spaulding Union High School District. As Barre City and Barre Town are the only members of the Spaulding Union High School District, an affirmative vote in both town districts shall bring it into the merged district.

(Pre-ambule to the proposed Articles of Agreement)

The Merger Proposal

Article 1: Necessary Forming School Districts

The School Districts of Barre City, Barre Town, and the Spaulding Union High School District are necessary for the establishment of the Barre Unified Union School District. The above referenced school districts are hereinafter referred to as the “forming districts”.

Article 2: Additional Districts

No additional districts are included in the proposed Barre Unified Union School District at this time.

Article 3: Grades to Operate

The Barre Unified Union School District will operate grades Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12, including the Central Vermont Career Center.

(From the Proposed Articles of Agreement)

Neighboring Districts:

During the course of the Barre Supervisory Union's 706b study, the Committee did not have discussions with any neighboring districts. The reasons for this include:

- The Barre Supervisory Union is already the largest PreK-12 educational system in central Vermont, and meets the requirements of a preferred structure under Act 46.
- The long history between Barre City and Barre Town as educational partners including the formation of a union high school district in 1987 to share the governance Spaulding Union High School and the Central Vermont Career Center.
- The fact that both communities are already a part of a single supervisory union with no additional districts.
- The fact that the union's closest neighbors were and are already engaged in 706b studies designed to meet the goals of Act 46:

Given those historical geographic realities, the Committee concluded that there were no potential additional partners available with whom to engage in a dialogue concerning a potential merger.

Summary Committee Findings/Recommendations:

The Committee believes that unification will result in even greater educational opportunities for all Barre children, create real efficiencies in educational delivery, and result in significant and ongoing savings, particularly in the long-term growth in educational spending, for the taxpayers of both communities.

Summary Committee Findings/Recommendations:

Among the benefits identified in the Committee's study:

- Barre City and Barre Town already share a high school. Unification would further the development of a single PreK-12 educational vision for all students and the important work of strengthening and aligning the educational programs.
- Operational efficiency should result by utilizing already existing resources to provide for an increase in the quality and equity of educational opportunities for Barre students without increasing the level of taxpayer support needed to achieve those same goals.
- Unification would allow the Superintendent and the district's full administrative team to focus more on leading and developing the district's educational programs than the day to day administrative work of preparing, coordinating, and serving the policy and administrative needs of multiple school boards (e.g. 4 budgets, multiple board meetings, etc.).
- A single, unified board could prioritize the ongoing capital needs of the entire district (technology infrastructure, building repairs, future school renovations).
- Continuing and increasing coordination of Special Education services, PreK-12, would effectively address the specific needs of students with disabilities.

Summary Committee Findings/Recommendations:

Among the challenges identified in the report is the important work of creating a new, unified sense of community identity and culture within the new Barre Unified Union School District (Goal 3, page 12). But, the Committee views this challenge within the long history of growing cooperation between the two communities and sees unification as the next important and logical step forward of both communities working together for the benefit of all.