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Testimony Vermont State Board of Education

Re: Addison County Supervisory Union Assignments (Lincoln/Ripton)

September 28, 2022

I want to thank the Vermont State Board of Education for allowing us to present our concerns on the possibility of Lincoln School District joining the member districts of WRVSU. I have had the pleasure of serving as the Superintendent of Schools of WRVSU over the past two school years. During this time, we have endured three different decoupling votes of merged Districts, along with a complete restructuring of our WRVSU administrative offices due to significant financial difficulties after the merging of two prior supervisory unions. I share this because it is my belief that we are finally in a position to deliver on the many promises made to the stakeholders of the ten towns that make up the White River Valley Supervisory Union. I am equally concerned that the addition of a seventh district and eleventh town that is 50 minutes from my closest school will result in further disruption to our supervisory union.

We have worked diligently as a supervisory union to coordinate our efforts in delivering on a comprehensive MTSS, Proficiency Based Learning/Pathways, and increasing learner agency and student voice/choice while navigating an unprecedented pandemic. This work is resulting in a revised WRVSU curriculum that we are partnering with the Agency of Education to develop, a newly created WRVSU Portrait of a Graduate, WRVSU standards based report cards across all of our elementary schools, and coordinated professional development across all ten of our WRVSU schools. I share this because we are a "WE" system. Although we are already a supervisory union of ten towns that runs east to west across what we know to be difficult travel in our great State, all current schools neighbor each other by no more than 20 minutes of travel time. The closest WRVSU school to Lincoln, Rochester, is approximately 50 minutes travel time on a good day. Given the distance, increasing efficiency through the sharing of faculty/staff beyond our current footprint to include Lincoln, is also a major concern.

I ask that the State Board of Education also take into account that we estimate that the additional staffing needed to support WRVSU coordinated programs like transportation, food service, special education, curriculum, instruction, assessment, fiscal services, human resources, and oversight will result in a conservative estimate of \$450,325 dollars to the WRVSU budgeted expenses. Why so much you might ask? It is because we are not positioned to share resources like other much closer organizations are to Lincoln. Lincoln is 6.3 miles from the MAUUSD offices and 42.4 miles from WRVSU. That difference in travel is 13 minutes vs. an hour and four

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minutes. I share this because there is a reason why Lincoln has a long standing relationship with the member towns of MAUUSD. The increased expenses for the WRVSU budgets will result in increased assessments for all of our member WRVSU districts except for one. Resulting in increased tax rates for the current member districts of WRVSU.

In closing, I want to appreciate all of you for your service to the State Board of Education and for the difficult decision that you have to make regarding the assignment of Lincoln School District . I am confident that the decision made will be in the best interest of students.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Kinnarney

WRVSU, Superintendent of Schools