

# GRAND ISLE SUPERVISORY UNION

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802-372-6921 • P.O. BOX 54, GRAND ISLE, VT 05458 • WWW.GISU.ORG

21 September 2022

Dear Chair Olsen

On September 1, 2022 the email referenced at the end of the letter was sent to the contact us page of the Grand Isle Supervisory Union website regarding the Lincoln School. Please be advised that Lincoln has also sent a letter to the GISU board chair regarding this issue. The GISU Chair has placed the Lincoln request on the next regular GISU Board meeting agenda from the time the letter was received. That meeting is scheduled for September 27, 2022 at 6:30 p.m. While as a superintendent I can not speak for the GISU Board I can provide my professional perspective which I will also share at that meeting:

The Grand Isle Supervisory Union is located more than 50 miles and two counties away from Lincoln. The estimated travel time between Lincoln and GISU is estimated to be at least 1 hour and 15 minutes each way. Considering the potential weather conditions in the Islands and the Mountains of Lincoln it would not be unreasonable to expect that the travel time would easily be well over 2.5 hours round trip.

The fact that Lincoln is located two counties away from Grand Isle County likely makes it so all of the support services available to the families in Lincoln are very different. This would likely mean the GISU would need to double the number of support agencies we interact with. It is likely these support services headquarters are located more than a 2.5 hour round trip drive from the GISU.

While the Champlain Island Unified Union School District operates K-6 schools within the the GISU it is unlikely that many of the 7-12 schools attended by Lincoln students are schools that CIUUSD or GISU students currently attend; again this will require a significant increase to the number of school systems the GISU would need to interact with. Again, the schools Lincoln Families choose to attend are likely more than 2.5 hour round trip drive from the GISU.

Aside from the geographical limitations, the GISU has spent considerable time, energy, and resources developing a shared curriculum over the past 4 years. This work was done collaboratively between the three school districts that make up the GISU. Lincoln not participating in this development and would likely require them to make significant changes to their current curriculum to adapt to the GISU common curriculum.

The current staffing for the GISU is right sized to meet the needs of the students in three districts, in one county. It could be easy to anticipate that adding an additional, very small district, which is located in another county more than an hour away, would require a significant increase in personnel to support the additional district. Furthermore it is likely that the increase in staffing would be disproportionately high in relation to the number of students in the Lincoln School District. The disproportionate staffing would also likely result in significantly

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higher SU assessment to the Lincoln School district and a potential result would be increased taxes in the town of Lincoln.

Finally, the State Board of Education should be aware that the Grand Isle Supervisory Union has been identified by the Vermont Agency of Education as a high risk subgrant recipient and is subject to special conditions and monitoring. While the GISU has worked very hard, and has made progress, towards not being identified as high risk the complexity of adding an additional district with complications identified above would no doubt complicate the GISU operations. A concern the SBE should have is how would assigning Lincoln to GISU affect this designation?

This is just a surface level review of challenges. Based on these concerns and an inability to see any significant positive implications for the Grand Isle Supervisory Union, or the students of Vermont it will be my intention to recommend to the GISU board that they do move forward with Lincoln's request.

I can be reached at [mclark@gisu.org](mailto:mclark@gisu.org) or by phone 802 372-6921 ext 2001.

Sincerely,

*Michael J. Clark*

Michael J. Clark  
Grand Isle Supervisory Union  
Superintendent.

From: **Olsen, Oliver** <[Oliver.Olsen@vermont.gov](mailto:Oliver.Olsen@vermont.gov)>

Date: Thu, Sep 1, 2022 at 3:33 PM

Subject: Fw: Lincoln response regarding SU assignment

To: ryan.heraty <[ryan.heraty@lsuu.org](mailto:ryan.heraty@lsuu.org)>, pchamberlin@ocsu.org <[pchamberlin@ocsu.org](mailto:pchamberlin@ocsu.org)>, dbaker@ossu.org <[dbaker@ossu.org](mailto:dbaker@ossu.org)>, randall.gawel <[randall.gawel@oesu.org](mailto:randall.gawel@oesu.org)>, libbyb <[libbyb@mpsvt.org](mailto:libbyb@mpsvt.org)>, Matthew Fedders - Superintendent <[mfedders@cvsu.org](mailto:mfedders@cvsu.org)>, contactus@gisu.org <[contactus@gisu.org](mailto:contactus@gisu.org)>, William Anton <[wanton@windhamcentral.org](mailto:wanton@windhamcentral.org)>

Cc: Samuelson, Jennifer <[Jennifer.Samuelson@vermont.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Samuelson@vermont.gov)>, Kolbe, Tammy <[Tammy.Kolbe@vermont.gov](mailto:Tammy.Kolbe@vermont.gov)>, Russo-Savage, Donna <[Donna.RussoSavage@vermont.gov](mailto:Donna.RussoSavage@vermont.gov)>, Simmons, Emily <[Emily.Simmons@vermont.gov](mailto:Emily.Simmons@vermont.gov)>, French, Daniel <[Daniel.French@vermont.gov](mailto:Daniel.French@vermont.gov)>

Greetings,

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The State Board of Education (SBE) is considering how to best address the assignment of the newly created Lincoln School District (LSD) to a supervisory union (or designate LSD as a supervisory district).

The SBE has received correspondence from LSD (attached) that identifies each of your SUs as potential options, so it would be helpful for the SBE to hear from your respective SUs about your ability and willingness to potentially absorb LSD as a member district.

If you can submit written comments to the SBE by September 16, 2022, I would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Oliver Olsen  
Chair, State Board of Education