

Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union

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James R. Culkeen
Superintendent

Laura Boudreau
Assistant Superintendent

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Dear Chair Carroll,

I am writing on behalf of the Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union (SVSU), Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union (BVSU), Arlington School District, Sandgate School District and Superintendent Bazyk to request the State Board of Education consider a transition plan for the BVSU to dissolve into the SVSU on July 1, 2022, in light of the unprecedented issues we are facing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The SVSU spent SY20 consolidating our new preK-6 school district that was merged under ACT 46. In February of 2020, we began meeting with officials from the BVSU to complete the SU assignment for SY21. In March, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a pause in the work of consolidation until we were able to meet again in late May. During those meetings that went into June, Superintendent Bazyk and I realized that we could not accomplish the goals of a SU assignment and be prepared to reopen the schools for fall. Therefore, we created a transition plan in which half of the assignment could occur in SY21 and the assignment would be completed in SY22. The transition is in progress, as the SVSU has assumed the responsibility for BVSU payroll; however, further merger activities have been affected by the impact of the pandemic and the immediacy of planning for reopening.

The incredible onus of planning for reopening our schools has reaffirmed this need for a request for an extension of the assignment. Both the BVSU and SVSU staffs' time are consumed with the task at hand. Neither Superintendent Bazyk nor I know what our work force will consist of this fall or what the school year will bring relative to the trajectory of the virus. It is not feasibly possible to do more than what is outlined in the transition plan given all of these variables.

Superintendent Bazyk and I would be able to attend a meeting to provide more information and discuss issues. Thank you for taking the time to consider this request in the best interest of the staffs and students of the SVSU and BVSU.

James Culkeen, SVSU Superintendent
Dick Franz, SVSU Board Chair
Nicol Whalen, BVSU Chair
Todd Wilkins, ASD Board Chair
Jeanne Zoppel, SSD Board Chair
William Bazyk, BVSU Superintendent