

July 15, 2018

To: Heather Bouchey, Interim Secretary of Education
Krista Huling, Chair, State Board of Education
Members of the Vermont State Board of Education

From: Craftsbury School Board

Re: Response to the June 1, 2018 Proposed Statewide Plan for School Governance, No. 46, Sec. 10 (a)

Thank you for this opportunity to respond to your proposals. We agree with the Proposal as stated on page 145, that it is not practicable for Craftsbury to merge at this time.

We do not agree with the suggested merger proposals as stated on page 144-45. We believe that OSSU is well on its way to meet the goals of Act 46 for "opportunity, equity and efficiency" and we are working to create the "flexibility" within the OSSU to facilitate and accomplish those goals. We present the follow reasons:

1. Travel time for School Boards to meet would be doubled and tripled for all of the townships (except Wolcott) in the proposed mergers. The increased bus travel time for students is well-documented. Inclimate winter weather would be expensive, dangerous and difficult for all concerned. OSSU Central is approximately equal distance for all the districts within OSSU.
2. Act 46 and the previous efforts of RED and MUD have brought us closer. We have created a basis upon which to build a most innovative, interesting and exciting future using our shared local resources. (which are numerous and well-known.)
3. It has taken hours and years to arrive where we are. Relationships matter. To now carve up OSSU when we are so close to finding common goals and solutions would force all of us to start over in new governing configurations. This would not be efficient, productive or effective. It would delay success.
4. County lines do not define communities. We recognize that straddling four counties may present challenges in some areas, but the cultural ties that we share within OSSU offer Craftsbury the best road forward. We are historically, socially and economically connected and interdependent. The trust, cooperation, common values and understanding have grown over two centuries and influence all aspects of life, including education. We are well-suited to achieve the goals of Act 46.
5. Equity of opportunity for struggling students is best accomplished in small schools with community support. This is well-documented in national studies. With the present opioid crisis and the pervasive poverty levels in OSSU, Craftsbury wants to continue the work that has been initiated within OSSU.

We respectfully request to remain a part of OSSU and urge you allow us to continue what we have begun. Metrix alone cannot measure the intrinsic value of communities that know and trust one another. We believe this is in the best interest of our students.

Thank you for your time and the work you do for the children of our state.

Sincerely,

Craftsbury Town School District Board