

Small School Grant Metrics - Geographic isolation

The 2011 GI metrics document took considerable AOE staff time to create and the metrics included were based on 2 measures distance and time traveled. Current AOE staff has discounted the validity of the 2011 document but up until this time they have not produced a document that is equal or superior to that document in terms of research and data. The AOE has had since last summer to consider the issue of GI, I would have expected in that time something could have been produced based on research and data. For example a review of state policies nationally on GI and time travelled by students would have given the board comparisons from elsewhere to consider.

It is not enough to discount the work of previous staffers without putting in the work to produce something as good or better. Yet here you are at the last minute without something better. In light of that the least you can do is seriously consider the use of the 2011 metrics to determine GI. Though many including myself consider them flawed they at least have a methodology and use 2 data points time -15 minutes and distance -10 miles. They do not include time traveled from home to school before time traveled to the next nearest school, nor were the calculations made in a school bus. A definition of capacity was not included so they only present partial information on which to make a GI determination but the 2011 document is a document with some level of credibility, at this time it seems to be all you have.

Small School Grant Metric - Merger

(IV) The district's participation in a merger study and submission of a merger report to the State Board pursuant to chapter 11 of this title **or otherwise.**

Proposed Metric - Submission of merger (not standalone) report to SBE = 2 Points

Peacham formed a joint committee with 2 neighboring towns to explore merger. Peacham did not join the 706b committee, it realized that the merger with would require a change in operating structure, something our community would not consider. Peacham formed a local merger study committee. The committee fully explored 4 merger options. We remained volunteer members of the 706b process of our neighbors and attend every meeting they held in addition to our own study committee meetings. The committee developed a 40 page report and website www.peachamact46.org. The report was voted on and accepted by the school board and at town meeting. Under Act 49 it became possible to remain a standalone district but help our neighbors receive incentives and merge as their proposed side-by-side option had fallen through. Without our help they would not receive tax incentives, which they had promised to their communities. Peacham was willing to help them. A 3x1 merger document was developed utilizing the work of the local committee. This was presented and approved by the SBE board in October creating the 3x1 structure.

This multistep 2-year process, which took 1000's of volunteer hours, does not count for any points on the metrics you are considering today. This is so blatantly discriminatory and punitive it is laughable. Peacham and many other towns have done everything required.

These metrics are a system designed for failure. If I didn't already know it, I would think these metrics were specifically designed to increase fiscal pressure with the intention of closing rural schools.

Margaret MacLean