

May 16, 2018

Dear SBE members,

Thank you for taking public comment into account in making your decisions regarding SSG metrics, and thank you Mr. Mathis for offering to speak with offering to speak further during a break.

I was unable to stay for that, but I did wish to address some specifics further. I write in the hope that some of you may read your emails during a lunch break before the afternoon deliberations.

- Regarding the issue of missing data, since the State does not have educational quality data, perhaps it could be made incumbent on the schools applying for an SSG to demonstrate that they meet the VEQS, item by item.
- Regarding the issue of suppressed data of test scores due to small cohorts, to avoid making a school too small to be eligible to apply for an SSG, merged year and/or class data should be used. But less emphasis on test scores seems appropriate as well, as this is not how the law defines excellence.
- Regarding participation in a merger study and submission of a merger report. Our town participated in a 706b committee and has studied consolidation for three years, yet I am not sure if we have complied with a "bona fide" merger study, nor submitted the appropriate report. Clarity for what bona fide means and openness to the wide variety of types of studies seems appropriate here.
- Regarding geographic isolation metrics, as I said in my remarks, I live in a place with an actual 15-minute school-to-school distance, and the actual drive time for actual students ranges between 18-52 minutes each way, in optimum weather. This is largely due to the fact that the bus makes stops, and this has a considerable impact on drive time. This is to say nothing of road conditions and safety issues for smaller bodies. I urge you not to increase this metric to 30-minute s-to-s, as this will increase travel times to what many will consider unacceptable, approaching two hours per day.

If I could have stayed I would have tried to convey these specifics about the metrics.

Thanks again for the opportunity to express concerns,

Pamela Fraser