

Sprague, Suzanne

From: Jody Normandeau <jodydvt@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2018 3:31 PM
To: Huling, Krista
Cc: Mathis, William; Carroll, John; Beck, Callahan; O'Keefe, John; Olsen, Oliver; Peltz, Peter; Perrin, Mark; Solimano, Connor; Weinberger, Stacy; Sprague, Suzanne
Subject: Testimony 6/27/18

Members of the Vermont Board of Education:

As you will be discussing and possibly voting on Small Schools Grants' metrics tomorrow I would like to summarize some comments from the public.

*Small Rural schools are valuable to the fabric of Vermont - People looking to move to Vermont want rural, not another city of asphalt *Small Schools work - Vermont's strength is in it's rural communities and schools.

*Small schools are better for low-income students - they learn more, drop out less. Small Schools Grants are important for the success of children of poverty.

If these grants are withheld from small rural schools, the State will be contributing to the potential failure of children of poverty and therefore making it less likely to eliminate the achievement gap.

*Small schools do a lot more than educate their students - they feed them, take care of their emotional and psychological needs, sometimes cloth them etc. Small schools are a family away from home.

*Local schools are the center of our communities

* Community involvement is important for a school's success *The further removed a school is from a community the less involvement from family and community you will get in schools.

*Where is the proof that the mergers that have already happened are either creating savings or better educational result?

*Families move to town for the school. They usually research communities and schools before making their decision.

*Schools and economic development go hand in hand.

*When community schools close, communities fail as people will not move there.

*When community schools fail, property values go down.

*In merging school districts, new boards start closing schools, as most Articles of Agreement do not have an article assuring that communities must vote before their school is closed. This is already being seen today.

*Act 60 supported Small Schools by including Small Schools Grants *If the Board eliminates Small Schools Grants to rural schools they may be in violation of The Brigham decision.

It is my hope that you will send this back to the administration and the legislature and tell them that this is not something you feel comfortable doing, as individuals and the Board. I would hope that any Board of Education would be working with school boards and schools to improve public education, not kill it. If we all work together, (and I mean ALL, not just a select few) we can further improve our education system and make it something that we all can be proud of. I hope we can all roll up our sleeves and do the good work. Vermont could be a leader again, not a follower of Washington politics.

Thank you and I sincerely hope you DO NO HARM.

Jody Normandeau
Dummerston

Jody Normandeau
jodydvt@gmail.com