

Ethan Bowen, School Board Chair  
White River Valley Supervisory Union  
Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District

November 4, 2022

Daniel French, Secretary, Vermont Agency of Education,  
Vermont State Board of Education

RE: Proposed Merger of Lincoln School District with the White River Valley Supervisory Union

This letter signifies my opposition to the Lincoln School District's (LSD) request that the Board of Education assigns LSD to the White River Valley Supervisory Union (WRVSU). The reasons for my opposition are as follows.

We in the WRVSU have worked incredibly hard to pull together what was not a happy group of districts, burned and bruised as we all were from the Act 46 merger process. We were quite literally a mess, a divisive mess.

Through careful hiring of an excellent superintendent and principals across the districts, a concerted effort to pull our troubled district mergers together, and refocusing our finances and academics, our SU now measures up against any in the state for equity in education and a good working environment.

But that success remains a very delicate balancing act. We have continued to adjust our SU staff's workload so they may serve all the districts and still they are stretched as tight as possible. We are just now feeling confident enough in our SU staff and culture to share educational resources and expertise across the SU, solidifying our hard-won gains and fulfilling one of the Act 46 goals.

To add Lincoln into our SU would be nothing short of disastrous. I feel you are weighing the possible benefits of a few students of Lincoln against all the emerging student growth we are seeing in our current districts. As others will express in more detail than I can, geographically, financially, and most importantly educationally this is a bad move that would clearly destabilize our hard-won success. Please don't penalize us for doing our job!

We've worked hard to get this far. It will be tragic if we jeopardize the organizational benefits the current White River Valley Supervisory Union has provided our students, educational teams, and taxpayers by an ill-conceived marriage that few want and many find deeply flawed.

Sincerely, Ethan Bowen, Chair, Rochester-Stockbridge Unified District