

Act 46 and Fayston

Act 46

- Act 46 became law on June 2, 2015.

Study Committee and Articles of Agreement

- In response to the new legislation and as required by law, the Washington West Supervisory Union (WWSU) convened a Study Committee
- There have been joint Study Committee and Executive Committee meetings two evenings a month since September 2015
- Fayston's Study Committee representative is Jill Ellis and Executive Committee representative is Doug Mosle
- After extensive discussion and negotiation the Study Committee created Articles of Agreement that have been submitted to State Board of Education for approval, as required by the statute
- Once approved by the State Board of Education, each town will have the opportunity to vote, on June 7, 2016 to create a Unified District, which will be governed by the approved Articles of Agreement

Creation of Accelerated Merger, Modified Unified Union School District or Temporary Status Quo:

- If all towns: Warren, Fayston, Waitsfield, Moretown, Waterbury and Duxbury vote to approve the merger then we will be eligible for an Accelerated Merger
- If a majority of towns vote to approve the merger, but one or two towns vote against the merger, then those towns voting in favor will form a Modified Unified Union School District (MUUSD)
- The Non-Member Districts (NMD) will remain outside of any newly formed Unified District and will not have access to any of the tax relief and incentives applied to the MUUSD
- If the majority of towns do not vote to approve the merger then all towns will remain their own town district, will not receive any of the tax relief and incentives, and will be forced by the state to merge into a unified district as of July 1, 2019 in a manner not of our choosing.

Newly created Unified District Board of Directors and Local Representation:

- With an Accelerated Merger, there will be one Unified District Board of Directors for the entire Unified District
- Fayston will have two elected representatives on the Unified District Board of Directors
- With a MUUSD:
 - There will WWSU Governing Board comprised of MUUSD board members and representatives appointed by Non-Member District (NMD)
 - NMD members will have voting authority for all general Modified Unified District actions but will recuse themselves from voting upon programmatic, budgetary, personnel, or building matters of the Modified Union which correlate to grades operated by the NMD
 - NMD will continue to have their own board as it relates to the grades operated by the NMD
- The members of the new Unified District Board of Directors will be elected on June 7, 2016
- There will be one school budget for the Unified District

Local Control:

- Each operating school building within the Unified District is encouraged to have an advisory group
- The Fayston advisory group will advocate for the interests and needs of the Fayston School and residents to the Unified District Board
- Fayston will retain their Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) and its 501(c) 3 status
- All money raised by the Fayston PTO will be earmarked for the Fayston Elementary School
- At the time of merger, all money remaining in the Fayston Maintenance Reserve Fund will be earmarked and used only for the Fayston Elementary School

School Choice and Protection:

- The Unified District will not close any schools during the first 4 years it is fully operational, unless the electorate of the town in which the school is located consents to closure
- An affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Unified Board of Directors shall be required to close a school after the 4 year period
- In the event of a school closure, students living in the town in which a school was closed will be afforded the option to attend a Unified District school closest to the place of residence
- There will be school choice within the new district

- Issues such as capacities of receiving and sending schools and family unity will be taken into consideration

Impact on Education:

- The Unified District Board of Directors will unify our educational system from Pre-K to Grade 12, this means that we will all share a vested interest in the children regardless of home town or school
- The Unified District will be able to advocate and manage the budget in a cohesive manner, using efficiencies to manage tax growth and improve educational delivery

If Fayston Votes No to Merger on June 7, 2016:

- Fayston will not receive any of the tax relief and incentives, and will be forced to merge by the state into a Unified District as of July 1, 2019 in a manner not of our choosing.
- Fayston will pay for tax relief and incentives that other districts are receiving
- It will become more challenging to develop a level-funded or level-service budget without making program cuts

Additional Questions, Concerns and Ideas for Fayston:

- Towns with a larger population will always have more representation on the Unified Board than Fayston:
 - In an Accelerated Merger the Unified District Board of Directors will have a total of 14 representatives of which 2 will be representing Fayston
 - As required by statute, the weighted vote reflects proportionality and is based on results of the 2010 census and will be recalculated following the release of each decennial census
 - The Unified District Board of Directors will unify our educational system from Pre-K to Grade 12, this means that we will all share a vested interest in the children regardless of home town or school
- How will the interests of Fayston children and community be served with a larger Unified Board?
 - Each operating school building within the Unified District is encouraged to create an advisory group
 - Fayston community members can attend Fayston advisory group meetings as well as the Unified District meetings to engage in dialogue and communicate their priorities for the children and community
 - Write or call the Fayston representatives on the Unified District Board of Directors with thoughts and concerns
- Voting “yes” for the merger translates to the Fayston Elementary School closing after the initial 4 years have passed
 - School choice will provide parents and children with the opportunity to attend the school they would prefer without town barriers

- Fayston School has the potential to attract children from other communities
- The new Unified District will take on an expensive bond that the Warren residents will vote on prior to the merger vote:
 - The Articles of Agreement cannot prohibit a participating school district from voting on a bond prior to the approval of the Unified Union
 - The Articles of Agreement does limit the amount of debt the Unified Union will assume of any participating school district if issued after April 1, 2016 to \$2,550,000
 - If the new Unified Union assumes \$2,550,000 of Warren debt it will bring the cost per pupil for Warren on par with the cost per pupil of Fayston, Waitsfield and Waterbury/Duxbury

Snapshot of Act 46 Tax Relief and Incentives

Tax Relief and Incentives	Accelerated Merger	MUUSD	No Voluntary Merger
Equalized homestead tax reduction	\$.10/\$.08/\$.06/\$.04/\$.02 First 5 years of operation	\$.08/\$.06/\$.04/\$.02 First 4 years of operation	No reduction
Homestead Tax Rate Growth Limited to 5%	First 5 years of operation	First 4 years of operation	No limit
Small Schools Grant	Remains in place	Remains in place	Phased out by 2020
Hold Harmless Provision	3.5% Hold-Harmless Protection	3.5% Hold-Harmless Protection	Eliminated after July 1, 2020
Transition Facilitation Grant \$130,000	Yes	Yes	None