



Study Committee Worksheet for All Phases of Voluntary Merger

Please submit this to the Agency with the Study Committee Report

Current Supervisory Union or Unions (list each)	Potentially Merging Districts Pursuant to 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(1)-(2) (list each)	Is the District:	
		Necessary	Advisable
Washington West Supervisory Union			
	Duxbury Town School District		X
	Fayston Town School District		X
	Moretown Town School District		X
	Waitsfield Town School District		X
	Warren Town School District		X
	Waterbury Town School District		X
	Harwood Union High School (U-19)		X(but not voting)

	Waterbury-Duxbury Union (U-45)		X (but not
			voting)

Type of Merger		
<i>Please refer to the related eligibility worksheets to determine baseline eligibility for each merger type.</i>		(column reserved for agency use)
X Accelerated Merger (Act 46, Section 6)		
A Regional Education District (RED) or one of its variations (Act 153 (2010) and Act 156 (2012)) RED (Act 153, Secs. 2-3, as amended by Act 156 , Sec. 1 and Act 46, Sec. 16) Side by Side Merger (Act 156 , Sec. 15) Districts involved in the related merger: Layered Merger (Union Elementary School District) (Act 156, Sec. 16) X Modified Unified Union School District (MUUSD) (Act 156, Sec. 17, as amended by Act 56 (2013), Sec. 3)		
Conventional Merger – merger into a preferred structure after deadline for an Accelerated Merger 7)		(Act 46, Section 7)

Dates, ADM, and Name	
Date on which the proposal will be submitted to the voters of each district (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(11)): June 7, 2016	
Date on which the new district, if approved, will begin operating (16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(12)): July 1, 2017	
Combined ADM of all “necessary” districts in the current fiscal year: 1,914	
Proposed name of new district: HARWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT	

Please complete the following tables with brief, specific statements of how the proposed union school district will comply with the each of the listed items. Bulleted statements are acceptable.

The Proposed School District is in the Best Interest of the State, Students, and School Districts - as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706c

<p><u>Goal #1:</u> The proposed union school district will provide substantial equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities.</p> <p>Act 46, Sec. 2(1)</p>	<p>Existing Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seven different school boards govern six different districts/unions and the supervisory union · Five elementary school districts offer inconsistent educational options to students (i.e. differences in preschool programming and foreign language curricula) · Students attend one of two middle schools · Inconsistent formative educational experiences become apparent during transition to Harwood Union High School. HUHS cannot design a separate program for students based on each student’s town and school of origin. · Current organizational structure isolates schools and boards, which leads to lack of awareness of any differences which might exist <p>Desired state with a unified union school district:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Alignment of elementary and middle school curricula and programs · Equity for students preK-8 · Learning experiences that address student’s unique interests · Learning assessed using common tools <p>Improved Student Learning Opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Common curriculum and assessments · Greater flexibility to share students, staff and resources · Opportunity for PreK-8 school choice · Programs shared between and among schools · Possible grade reconfiguration within buildings to address shrinking student population 	
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	<p>and create more robust peer groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unique learning opportunities shared between and among schools• Share teachers and resources among schools• Common mission and vision	
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<p><u>Goal #2:</u> The proposed union school district will lead students to achieve or exceed the State’s Education Quality Standards, adopted as rules by the State Board of Education at the direction of the General Assembly.</p> <p>Act 46, Sec. 2(2)</p>	<p>The elimination of organizational redundancies found in the current governance structure would allow more time and resources to be directed to improving student outcomes.</p> <p>Improved Student Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Streamline professional development of all staff by using our teachers as trainers, coaches, and interventionists in a more consistent and cost-effective manner · More effective use of human and material resources aligned with the Education Quality Standards · Alignment of curriculum, expectations, and assessment preK-12 · Consistent philosophy, expectations, and access to technology as a valuable learning tool for faculty, staff, and students · Centralized purchasing and the sharing of resources will create equity of learning experiences and save money 	
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<p><u>Goal #3:</u> The proposed union school district will maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with a goal of increasing the district-level ratio of students to full-time equivalent staff.</p> <p>Act 46, Sec. 2(3)</p>	<p>Improved Student Outcomes and Efficiency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Coordinate bulk purchasing of materials and equipment · Share teachers and support staff among schools · Centralize data collection for state and federal reporting · Eliminate duplication inherent within seven entities such as audits, state reports, annual town reports, school board expenses, the use of current space · Increased fiscal stability with one budget preventing the unpredictable spikes in tax rates that result from erratic swings in student enrollment, maintenance needs, special education, etc., which are presently measured and borne by individual schools · One budget created for all of the schools and central office, voted on by all taxpayers of member towns · Combining middle-school student populations may create space to relocate central offices from rented space to the district-owned Harwood facility · Merging two middle schools, each with declining enrollment, into one facility would streamline operations, create class sizes in line with quality standards, and expand educational options while saving money · Declining student populations in several elementary schools creates small class sizes and cohort groups. Sharing students or reconfiguring schools would create class sizes consistent with the quality standards, would require fewer teachers, and would save money. · Cost shifting instead of new taxation, could expand high school curriculum and possibly fund new extracurricular initiatives 	
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Goal #4: The proposed union school district will promote transparency and accountability.

Act 46, Sec. 2(4)

Transparency and Accountability:

- Single budget
- Equity of education for all students
- Reduced number of audits
- Central office expenses are made more easily accessible, and thereby transparent, as part of the single school district budget rather than being separately voted on by SU board and spread across six budgets according to per pupil assessment
- Policy and budget forums held in every town
- Single school board to contact if issues arise with more consistent response across district
- Local control becomes redefined from an individual school board that governs one school to a unified union school board that governs seven schools and is responsible for all preK-12 students.
- Merger would eliminate numerous boards, replacing them with a single board accountable for the operation of the schools within the supervisory district, enhancing transparency and accountability

Goal #5: The proposed union school district will deliver education at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value.

Act 46, Sec. 2(5)

Quality and Efficiency:

- The unified union will provide a high quality and equitable education to all students by sharing resources, faculty and staff, and creating class sizes consistent with quality standards
- The initial estimated savings for the unified union total \$65,810. Tax incentives will give relief to taxpayers in the short term. Tax incentives provide time for the unified district to explore and implement lasting operational efficiencies. Cost savings could include the following:
 1. Sharing of custodians, para-educators, and other employees between and among schools.
 2. Elimination of redundant maintenance-equipment purchases through resource sharing.
 3. Consolidation of lunch programs.
 4. Students may attend schools geographically closest to their residences, rather than traveling to more distant schools because of political boundaries among towns. Bus routes could be streamlined and transportation costs reduced.
 5. Single contracts for similar employees.
 6. Coordinated oversight of all schools for maintenance, health and safety issues, and emergency responses.
 7. Staff-student ratios more easily managed in response to variable and declining enrollment.
 8. Combining two middle school sites into one.
 9. Moving the central office into the Harwood facility.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· 10. Sharing of operating software and licensing will result in cost savings.· 11. Having one board will result in fewer meetings, which will allow administrative staff to focus more time on student outcomes.	
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<p><u>Regional Effects:</u></p> <p>What would be the regional effects of the proposed union school district, including: would the proposed union school district leave one or more other districts geographically isolated?</p> <p>Act 46, Section 8(a)(2)</p>	<p>The Washington West Supervisory Union is located in the ski belt of Vermont. It includes Duxbury (member U-45), Fayston, Moretown, Waitsfield, Warren, Waterbury (member U-45) and Harwood Union High School. The closest non-WWSU districts are separated by The Green Mountain and Northfield ranges, and are currently members of other supervisory unions. All districts within the defined geographic region are included in WWSU. Any member district not merging would remain part of SU, and would therefore not be faced with geographic isolation moving forward.</p>	

Articles of Agreement - as required by 16 V.S.A. § 706b(b)(3) - (10), (13)

<p>(3) The grades to be operated by the proposed union school district</p> <p>The grades, if any, for which the proposed union school district shall pay tuition</p>	<p>The Unified Union District will provide a pre-kindergarten through grade 12 education to all students.</p> <p>Excepting Pre-K tuition pursuant to Act 166, no grades require the unified district to pay tuition.</p>	
<p>(4) The cost and general location of any proposed new schools to be constructed</p> <p>The cost and general description of any proposed renovations</p>	<p>No new schools will be constructed.</p> <p>Renovations are planned for Hardwood Union High School. Renovations for health and safety issues will also be required at Warren Elementary School. As of this writing, the scope of work and resulting costs are being determined. The Articles of Agreement cap related new debt to be accepted by the Unified District at \$2.55M, an amount deemed sufficient to address immediate health and safety issues Article 5(D). See appendix for VSBIT reports, RFP, and Warren School Evaluation Cost Matrix.</p>	
<p>(5) A plan for the first year of the proposed union school district's operation for:</p> <p>(A) the transportation of students</p> <p>(B) the assignment of staff</p> <p>(C) curriculum</p> <p>The plan must be consistent with existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other provisions of law, including 16 V.S.A. chapter 53, subchapter 3 (transition of employees)</p>	<p>Transportation of students, assignment of staff, and administration of curricula are already administered on behalf of the proposed member districts and will not require a transition period under merger.</p> <p>The Unified District shall honor all existing contracts, collective bargaining agreements, and other legal obligations of the proposed member districts, and all provisions of law.</p>	

<p>(6) The indebtedness of the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall assume.</p>	<p>The estimated indebtedness of proposed member districts as of the date the Unified District would assume it is \$3,480,152. See Appendix B2 for details. Should Warren Elementary successfully bond for renovations the district may assume an additional \$2,550,000 in debt.</p>	
<p>(7) The specific pieces of real property owned by the proposed merging districts that the proposed union school district shall acquire, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * their valuation * how the proposed union school district shall pay for them 	<p>The specific pieces of real property of proposed member districts and their approximate valuations based upon 10/14/14 insurance valuations \$65,641,719. See Appendix B1 specifics.</p> <p>Conveyed: \$1.00</p>	
<p>(8) [repealed 2004 Acts and Resolves No. 130, Sec. 15]</p>		
<p>(9) Consistent with the proportional representation requirements of the Equal Protection Clause, the method of apportioning the representation that each proposed member town shall have on the proposed union school board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * no more than 18 members total * each member town is entitled to at least one representative * see also 16 V.S.A. § 706k(c): one or more at-large directors * see also 16 V.S.A. § 707(c): weighted voting 	<p>The Unified Union school board will consist of 14 members representing the member towns.</p> <p>Each municipality within the Unified District shall be guaranteed at least one resident representative, with a minimum of two each initially.</p> <p>The number of representatives in excess of one from each municipality shall be determined on the basis of relative population within the Unified District.</p> <p>To the extent such allocation is insufficient to satisfy the proportional representation requirements of the Equal Protection Clause of the Constitution of the United States, votes shall be weighted as necessary to achieve more precise proportionality. See Article 7.</p>	

<p>(10) The term of office of directors initially elected, to be arranged so that one-third expire on the day of each annual meeting of the proposed union school district, beginning on the second annual meeting, or as near to that proportion as possible</p>	<p>The terms of office for the directors elected at the June 7, 2016, election shall be two, three, or four years, respectively, less the months between the date of the organizational meeting of the school district, when the initial Directors will begin their terms of office and the date of the annual meeting of districts established by 16 V.S.A. 796j. Thereafter, terms of office shall begin and expire on the date of the Unified District's annual meeting. See article 8 for details.</p>	
<p>(13) Any other matters that the study committee considers pertinent, including whether votes on the union school district budget or public questions shall be by Australian ballot</p> <p>(please list each matter separately)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Unification will allow for school choice · Structures for local school councils to be created · School closure procedures · Bond issues, elections, and public questions to be by Australian ballot 	