

Benefits:

- ⇒ Unification creates a structure to improve the educational quality of all students — It would provide structures designed to support clearly articulated goals & objectives, all aimed at positive results. It would further support the great work already happening in our schools and provide even more opportunities for all learners to have the highest quality education possible.
- ⇒ Equity & Quality — We can better prepare students for success when they merge at Mt Abraham. Unification will eliminate inequities across the elementary schools & mobilizing school personnel to schools in need (as appropriate).
- ⇒ Efficiency & Sustainability — Operational efficiencies could prevent duplication of duties in managerial and administrative staff. These increased efficiencies would allow the new unified board and administrative office to focus on learning opportunities and student outcomes.
- ⇒ Transparency & Accountability— A single budget will provide taxpayers with a clearer picture of how the money is being spent across the 5 town schools. One clear, articulated action plan for the new district will allow for deeper analysis and measured progress towards attaining goals.

VOTE~NOVEMBER 8, 2016

Please contact your local town offices for voting hours and polling locations.

**ANESU
72 Munsill Avenue, Suite 601
Bristol, VT 05443**

BETTER TOGETHER!



Our Schools, Our Children, Our Choice.

Dear 5 Town Residents,
As you head to the polls to VOTE on the unification of Addison Northeast Supervisory Union Schools, please consider all the potential benefits for our children, schools, taxpayers and communities. PLEASE read the enclosed information carefully, visit ANESU.org or contact the ACT 46 Study Committee to make an informed decision on November 8, 2016.

Sincerely,
ANeSU ACT 46 Study Committee
Contact us at: unification@anesu.org
See the unification report at
www.anesu.org or tiny.cc/unification-report

What is our current school governance structure?

Addison Northeast Supervisory Union (ANeSU) includes elementary school districts for five towns (Bristol, Lincoln, Monkton, New Haven, and Starksboro) and the Mt Abraham Union School District (our shared middle/high school). In addition, the ANeSU Board oversees all shared services in the Supervisory Union including transportation, food services, special education and information technology.

What would a unified school governance structure look like?

A single board would replace the current seven boards. A town's voters would elect their board members with proportional representation on the board based on population. This is how Mt. Abe board members are elected now.

What would be the impact on education tax rates?

The school districts would move from individual education tax rates to ONE blended tax rate, adjusted locally for Common Level of Appraisal. If voters approve unification, education tax rates would be adjusted for a credit of 8 cents the first year of a shared budget, starting July 1, 2018. In subsequent years, tax rates would be credited 6 cents the second year, four cents in year three, and 2 cents in year four.

What will happen to the programs at my school?

The programs at the individual schools are expected to remain the same or improve. A district-wide educational curriculum will ensure similar preparation for middle/high school and allows for greater equity amongst all students.

Will my school be closed?

No. The Articles of Agreement state schools cannot be closed for the first four years of operation and can only be closed after that time period if both the unified school board and a majority of the voters in the affected town vote to close the school (Article 14).

Could the schools share services?

Yes. For example, there will be opportunities to have one contract for buildings and grounds maintenance services. Schools could share personnel in order to optimize the use of their skills and staff will experience greater job security. Sharing staff can create new opportunities for students.

What about the cost per pupil?

The cost per pupil is the most defining figure for the State of Vermont's education funding formula. Roughly, the cost per pupil is the schools budget divided by the weighted number of students. A drop in a few students can affect the cost per pupil drastically. If we become a Supervisory District, the number of students is much greater, therefore, a drop in enrollment does not affect the cost per pupil as much. The cost per pupil would be the same for each school and would be more stable from year to year.

Will we save money as a Supervisory District?

Modest immediate savings will happen with fewer audits, less staff time managing multiple budgets, a reduction in stipends, liability insurance and administrative overhead. The current projection is a saving of \$140,000 per year. We will have the ability to keep current funding mechanisms that will otherwise disappear under Act 46, such as the small schools grants. In addition we will have access to a transition grant of \$150,000 from the State of Vermont to assist with unification.

Will we still be able to get grants or contribute to programs for our school and use school buildings?

Yes. Article 7(d) directs the new SD board to encourage and continue use of each building by students and community and to develop policies to allow continuation of school-based fundraising.

Will there be more meetings to discuss the Report and Articles before the voting?

Yes. There will be at least one meeting in every town to discuss the Act 46 Study Committee Report and Articles.

How will we vote on the Supervisory District budget?

Voting for the Supervisory District budget will be done by Australian Ballot, like all towns currently do for Mt Abraham. This will be a change for the communities of Lincoln and Starksboro, who currently vote their elementary school budget from the floor at Town Meeting. In a unified district, we all need to vote by the same method.

How will the relationship between the school and the community be affected?

While it is hard to predict the future, the new Supervisory District board has been directed in Article 15 to create structures to support and encourage public participation and local input. Community connections to local schools are highly valued. Each community feels that schools are the heart of the community and values and supports equitable and quality public education for their children.

What will happen if we do not approve unification?

Act 46 provides for local school boards and voters to create somewhat larger school districts. If we are unable to develop a plan that is supported by the 5 town voters and the State Board, the State Board of Education will determine how our schools will be governed, in which case we would lose any of the tax and financial incentives. Acting now promotes local control.