

July Newsletter

Northshire Merger Study Committee

FAQ for July

What is a Regional Education District, or RED?

A Regional Education District, or RED, is one of the governance structures that this committee is considering as a possibility for merger. In 2010, the Vermont Legislature passed Act 153 which was intended to stimulate “voluntary mergers” of school districts with tax incentives into REDs. A RED is a special type of unified school district. If districts meet the basic requirements and merge to become a RED, the new district would have one school board, one budget, and one tax rate. In 2012, Londonderry, Landgrove, Peru, and Weston merged into the Mountain Towns RED. A RED operates within a supervisory union alongside other districts -- the Mountain Towns Red is part of the Bennington-Rutland Supervisory Union.

A RED under Act 153 is, for all intents and purposes, identical to the “alternative” governance structure stated in Act 46. Unlike Act 153, Act 46 puts more pressure on districts to merge and to contain spending.

For more information on Regional Education Districts, [click on the following link](#).



Update on recent work from committee chair Jon Wilson

During our July meetings the group focused on tackling some of the tasks laid out by the Agency of Education in its [study committee worksheet](#). The group spent a large portion of its time developing goal statements that address Act 46’s policy objectives. After reviewing examples of other merger studies around the state, the committee worked in small groups and drafted language that stated how a merger would provide “equity of educational opportunities,” translate to adequate or improved educational outcomes, increase operational efficiencies, promote transparency and accountability, and contain costs. The study committee also worked hard to understand the different concerns and considerations unique to each member district while also brainstorming how it will effectively engage the community in the months to come.

In August, the committee will work to answer these crucial questions:

- Is merging into a RED and consequently operating in a Supervisory Union (SU) alongside other districts most beneficial for taxpayers and students? Or is it most beneficial if we merge into a Supervisory District, where we do not coexist with other districts in a SU?
- How should the study committee’s member districts be proportionally represented in a new unified school district school board?
- How big should the new school board be?
- How can we effectively engage our communities and communicate this complex work in a manner that is easy to understand?

Please come join us during our meetings to help us tackle these vital issues.

Check out our website:

<https://sites.google.com/site/northshiremergerstudy>

Future Meeting Dates - Locations TBD

Wed., Aug. 3 - 6-9pm
Sat., Aug. 6 - 10am-5pm
Tues., Aug. 16 - 6-9pm
Wed., Aug. 24 - 6-9pm

Would you like to receive emailed updates on the committee’s work?
If so, email jon.wilson@brsu.org