

# Rutland South Supervisory Union

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To the voters of Clarendon, Shrewsbury, Wallingford, and Tinmouth,

The Vermont Legislature recently passed Act 46 and has ordered town school districts to consolidate into Supervisory Districts (SDs) with at least 900 students. The SDs will have a single school board for pre-K through 12, with representation based on population, and a single tax rate. Our towns are already organized as Rutland South Supervisory Union with finance, transportation, special education, and curriculum managed by the superintendent and his staff. Each town has its own school board and representation on the supervisory union board. So why change?

The Legislature has provided carrots and sticks – more like whips. **The Carrots:** If we voluntarily reorganize as an SD, within the allotted time period, our tax rate is reduced by 10¢ the first year, 8¢ the second, 6¢ the third, and so on for five years. Tinmouth and Shrewsbury’s small school grants, totaling approximately \$170,000, instead of disappearing, will be paid to the SD as long as those schools stay open. **The Stick or Whip:** In 2018 the state will produce its own plan for school district consolidation for any districts that have not consolidated voluntarily. They will have no limits on their plan, we can have no idea at this point what it would be and we will have little or no control over the outcome. Rather than take our chances on Montpelier’s understanding our educational geography, and to receive the financial benefits of consolidation, our school boards have formed a Study Committee to attempt to find the best possible scenario for our schools before we are told what to do without any say in the process.

The Study Committee will try to come up with the best solution for the Rutland South towns. It will write a report for the State Board of Education on the outcome. The report will go to our local school boards and the Vermont Agency of Education for comments. Then the Vermont Board of Education will decide if that plan meets the Legislature’s desire for a larger district with a single board that will save money and improve educational outcomes. If the Vermont State Board approves the plan, it will go to the voters of each town for approval.

**Please be clear: This is NOT about consolidating schools. All four elementary schools and Mill River Union High School will continue to operate.** It is about consolidating school boards. There would be just one school board for pre-k through 12 instead of the existing six school boards.

The Study Committee meets on alternate Thursdays, starting September 10th, at Wallingford Elementary School at 7 PM. The public is welcome. If you have questions or concerns, please call your Study Committee members, whose contact information is listed below.

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