



WHY A NO VOTE IS A YES FOR EDUCATION

We are concerned:

There is a lack of transparency: The Two Rivers Supervisory Union (TRSU) budget was voted down by the board on Feb. 1 due to its lacking detail, including previously unseen budget items, and falsely presenting the budget as a decrease compared to the previous year. The budget presented to the TRSU on Feb. 22, was basically the same as the Feb. 1st, yet was passed by a vote of 9 to 6. The lack of transparency and direction is frustrating, and reflects how these budgets are being pushed through for approval to meet town meeting deadlines versus reflecting a plan of how to approach meeting the needs of students.

In addition, letters, memoranda and studies from Governor Scott and the Agency of Education have not been widely shared by the superintendent with school boards or the public. In order to make informed decisions, all stakeholders must have access to the information being used, or not, to decide our educational future.

It isn't clear who is responsible for what: Over the last 10 years, there have been many shifts in spending that has been absorbed back and forth between the schools and the various Supervisory Unions. Now with Act 46, the creation of the Green Mountain Unified School District (GMUSD), and the state placing additional demands, there is considerable confusion on everyone's part. The TRSU superintendent has not been able to adequately explain these confusions despite multiple requests by the public to do so.

The promise of Act 46 has not been met. The GMUSD and Two Rivers Supervisory Union TRSU budgets do not reflect the savings and increased educational opportunities promised by Act 46. In fact, the per pupil cost for students in the GMUSD (Cavendish, Chester, Andover and Baltimore) is increasing by 4.23% percent. However, the budget doesn't include any of the new educational programs that were promised. Instead, the Superintendent has told us that we cannot afford these new programs.

We need to slow this process down and work together as parents, community members, voters, teachers and staff to define what models are working now, and what changes can be made to maintain and improve services while potentially cutting costs. This process needs to be led by local stakeholders – the same people impacted by our schools' performance, budget and long range impact on our communities. People in our towns need time to heal from the Act 46 process and to come together again to build common goals for our children and our communities.

What Happens When a Budget Isn't Passed : Vermont law requires the school board to prepare a revised budget and set a new date for the vote. The date of an Australian ballot revote must be at least seven days following the warning notice with the informational meeting taking place at least five days after the notice. If the revised budget fails, this procedure is repeated until a budget is adopted.

Is Funding Available while the Budget is Pending? Yes. If the budget has not been adopted by the start of the school year ...the board must still operate the school. Categorical grants from the State will still be paid, e.g., special education, small school, and transportation aid. If a district has not adopted a budget within 30 days of the payment date, education spending payments due a district on September 10, December 10, and April 30 will be based on one-quarter of the base education amount times the number of the district's equalized pupils. Once a budget is adopted, the different will be made up in remaining payments. (16 VSA 4028(a)).

