

Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District/Peacham School District
3x1 Proposal
September 26, 2017

Introduction:

The Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District and Peacham School District propose to create a 3x1 Side-by-Side Supervisory Union Structure under legislation recently passed by the Vermont legislature. (Act 49 sec.3)

The Caledonia Cooperative District is a recently merged/unified union school district made up of the previously independent school districts of Barnet, Walden, Waterford. Barnet and Walden were previously members of the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union; Waterford was previously a member of the Essex-Caledonia Supervisory Union

This new unified union was approved by the State Board of Education on April 17, 2017 and subsequently by the voters of all three districts/municipalities on May 23, 2017. Under Act 49, the newly approved Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District meets the requirements for a “merged district” under the law, having resulted from the merger of “at least three existing districts”. In addition, as a PreK-8 operating district, its operation structure is different from the “existing district” (Peacham) with whom it proposes to join to create a 3x1 side-by-side supervisory union structure.

Note: It is important to note at the outset that the vote to merge Barnet, Walden, and Waterford into the Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District was contingent upon the new district receiving state tax incentives. With the rejection by voters of the Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield merger proposal, Caledonia Cooperative no longer has the option to join a 2X2 Regional Education District. However, the Articles of Agreement specified that should the legislature create additional options for an incentivized merger in their most recent legislative session, the merger could go ahead. A 3x1 option having been approved by the legislature is currently the only vehicle in this region for the Caledonia Cooperative merger to be finalized and move forward.

Peacham is an existing PreK-6 operating district in the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union along with the Barnet, Walden, and Danville school district. Peacham meets the requirement for an “existing district” under Act 49 of being a structurally isolated school district. All of its adjoining school districts have “different operating and/or tuitioning models: PreK-12 and PreK-8. The nearest “PreK-6 operating school district” does not adjoin to Peacham and is located in Stannard, Vermont. However, it should be noted that Stannard’s governance structure further isolates Peacham as it is a member of union elementary school with Greensboro.

Having met the structural requirements under Act 49, this proposal will focus on the three remaining educational goals/criteria for creating a 3x1 supervisory structure, namely that:

1. **Section 1 (page 3):** The existing district (Peacham) has a detailed action plan to continue to improve its performance in connection with each of the goals set forth in Act 46.
2. **Section 2 (page 26) :** A 3x1 side-by-side supervisory union structure is better suited to them than a governance structure described in the 2015 Acts and Resolves No. 46, Sec 6 and will meet the educational and operational goals set forth in Act 46.
3. **Section 3 (page 32):** The Proposed Actions that the 3x1 will take together to insure the continuous improvement of their educational programs and achieve the goals of Act 46

Section 1: Peacham School District Self-Study and Action Plan

I. Background Information

The Peacham Act 46 Self-Study Committee was formed by the Peacham School Board in March 2016 and for 15 months has considered the options available to the Town of Peacham, as related to potential school configurations that might meet the goals of Act 46, Vermont's school governance law.

The district's self-study made the educational goals of Act 46 the central focus of their work, findings, and recommendations.

At the heart of the law are five key goals which the committee saw as essential guides to their work:

- *To provide substantive equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities statewide.*
- *To lead students to achieve or exceed the State's Educational Quality Standards.*
- *To maximize operational efficiencies through increased flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with the goal of increasing the district-level ratio of students to full-time equivalent staff*
- *To promote transparency and accountability.*
- *To achieve these goals at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value.*

Historically the Peacham School District is a PK-12 system that has operated a school for PK-6 and provided Tuition for students in Grades 7-12.

In considering the goals of Act 46 the committee considered three essential questions:

1. What is the best operating structure to meet the goals of Act 46?
2. Would a change in operating structure better enable the town of Peacham to better meet the goals of Act 46?
3. Who might we work with and in what capacity to better meet the goals of the law?

These three "operational/governance" questions were examined within the educational context of one overriding question, "How would unification benefit our children?" Specifically:

How would a new, unified district governance structure provide better, more equitable instructional opportunities and better support students to achieve or exceed the State's Educational Quality Standards and promote greater operation efficiency, transparency and accountability for our parents, voters, and taxpayers.

For this purpose, the School Board outlined 4 options for Peacham to consider.

Option #1: PK-6 District

Form a PK-6 district with like communities that operate PK-6 schools. Tuition students for grades 7-12.

Option #2: PK-8 Merger

Join a PK-8 district with Barnet, Waterford and Walden. Give up middle school choice for grades 7 and 8. Keep high school choice for grades 9-12.

Option #3: Independent PK-12 district within an SU

Remain an independent PK-12 district in a new supervisory union operating a school for PK-6 and paying tuition for students in grades 7-12.

Option #4: Tuition All Students

Close Peacham Elementary School and tuition all students PK-12.

In February 2017, the Peacham School District Board unanimously accepted the Peacham Act 46 Self-Study Committee report and its recommendation to remain an independent school district - Option 3 of the four options studied. The study, which answered each essential question, determined that our current operating structure is the best path to meet the goals of the law. At Town Meeting 2017 the Town of Peacham accepted the report of the board including its decision to remain as an independent school district.

II. Educational Vision

Introduction:

Peacham's Act 46 Study began by thoroughly reviewing and considering the district's existing mission and educational values. This educational vision was produced by a committee of parents and Peacham residents, led Peacham's then Elementary School principal Judy Ross and was submitted to the Peacham Elementary School Board of Directors in 2015. It updated Peacham Elementary School's previous school values document. The revised document reflects many of the community values expressed during town-wide community focus groups and the all-day, facilitated open dialogue on the future of Peacham Elementary School conducted in 2013.

Mission Statement

The Peacham Elementary School is a community of learners and teachers dedicated to developing the ability of each individual to think and communicate clearly, to explore the world, to make responsible decisions, and to have concern for the common good.

Visions for Education in Peacham:

There is deep passion about education in Peacham and widespread agreement about its intrinsic value to our community. Peacham has invested in the education of its citizens since 1795, when the Caledonia County Grammar School was established. At annual Town Meetings, the Peacham community has regularly supported a vision of excellence for their children by passing school budget requests. (Both the FY2015 and FY2016 school budget votes passed on voice votes, FY2016 unanimously.) At its core, the Peacham Elementary School today is a place where learning is rooted in community, grounded by local resources and brought to life through excellent academic practices. The resources unique to Peacham offer a wealth of opportunity that connect our students and their families with a wider world, engaged by curiosity and a passion for discovery.

The Peacham Elementary School is an intimate environment, where everyone is known by name. Students learn from each other as well as from the adults, teachers, and community members whose mission it is to guide and inspire students' learning experiences through applied best practices and respectful communications. Due to its long-held philosophy of valuing and challenging each unique learner, PES has a history of providing a student-centered approach to developing and delivering units and lessons. PES staff modifies instruction to engage and challenge each student as an individual. Students' strengths are leveraged to address their challenges.

Every student is challenged to realize his or her full academic, social, creative, and physical potential. Students are proactive participants in acquiring a broad foundational education to ensure their future success engaged in their local and global communities.

Graduates of the Peacham Elementary School are prepared to be thoughtful, capable individuals with demonstrated mastery of core academic standards and positive character traits that will be a solid foundation for success in whatever life paths they choose. They will confidently apply creative and effective problem-solving skills, approach new experiences with self-knowledge and empathy, and continue to build on their connections with the cultural and historical landscape of Peacham, their home.

Vision and Belief Statements

Learning Styles

We believe that students shall be provided learning opportunities that address their individual needs, learning styles and unique abilities in a positive way. We further believe that the school shall set high standards and personalized goals, encourage healthy risk-taking and provide positive recognition for achievement.

Learning Environment

We believe that students are best served by learning in a safe, nurturing environment, which emphasizes cooperation, respect and responsibility for themselves and others, and which values diverse ideas, attitudes and cultures.

Academic

We believe that students shall demonstrate proficiency in academics and the arts through problem solving, communications and analytical thinking skills. Teaching shall include diverse, creative, hand-on activities and experiential learning.

Lifelong Learners

We believe that through the school, community and family, students shall be taught the skills, knowledge and habits that inspire within them a love of learning.

Citizenship

We believe that students shall become responsible, involved citizens of their school, community, the natural environment and wider world. We further believe that the school, family and community are responsible for instilling skills, knowledge, attitudes and information relevant to producing accomplished citizens.

III. Peacham Self-Study

A. Strengthening Equity in Student Opportunity and Achievement/Performance:

***“Leading Students to Achieve or Exceed the State’s Educational Quality Standards”
(Act 46 Goal #2)***

In approaching the goal of improving academic performance and providing substantive equity in the quality and variety of educational opportunities for all students, the Peacham examined the goal of achieving educational excellence in two ways:

- a. **Performance** – How students are actually performing academically across the district.
- b. **Programmatic Opportunity** – The equity in quality and variety of program opportunities afforded students in other Vermont elementary schools and the elementary schools in our current supervisory union.

Student Performance PreK-12

Introduction:

The study reviewed Peacham’s current instructional practices along with historical and current student performance data PK-6. (*See below*) While annual cohort numbers are small and may present a variable picture that is hard to draw conclusions from, it is possible to look at long-range trends of data over time. Looking to the future, continuously monitoring and working to enhance our elementary students’ academic performance remains a critical goal of our district.

Current Instructional Practice:

The principal and teachers maintain high expectations for excellence for themselves and all of their students. All members of the Professional Community (staff, teachers and administrators) work collaboratively to enrich their professional practices, put new strategies to work, and continually refine their work. In this way, the Professional Community holds its members accountable while fostering an excitement about learning on both the personal and professional levels.

Teachers are responsible for:

- Delivering a well-articulated, rigorous, and relevant curriculum that meets or exceeds Vermont Education Quality Standards with support from the CCSU and other district resources. They will seek learning opportunities within and far beyond Peacham’s boundaries;
- Evaluating student progress using assessments that students understand, participate in, and which enrich their learning;
- Reaching out effectively to parents and residents regarding curriculum, expectations, priorities, calendar, activities, and events;

- Making use of community resources to enhance and deepen educational experiences.

Among the instructional/student support strategies central to Peacham’s current educational program are:

- **Project-Based Learning:** Students engage in project-based learning, building curiosity, creativity, problem-solving skills based on individual interests. Projects must be engaging, hands-on, multidisciplinary, and experience-based. They are designed for active, applied learning in real-world settings.
- **Differentiated Instruction:** Teachers use assessment data and evidence of individual student progress to implement differentiated instruction to meet students where they are, thereby providing learning options and sufficient levels of challenge for each child. Teachers match tasks, activities, and assessments with their students’ interests, abilities, and learning preferences. Teachers educate students about different learning styles, helping them understand how they learn best.
- **Multi-age Learning:** Teachers and administrators identify and create opportunities for multi-age learning both within the school and the broader Peacham community. Examples include appropriate multi-age classrooms, reading buddies, big pal/little pal, and mentoring.
- **Multi-Tiered System of Supports:** All students’ math and ELA needs are equitably assessed and addressed through specific intervention and remediation plans based on regular monitoring of individual student progress towards mastery of CCSS goals. Staff will be assigned to address student needs based on their own strengths to optimize student growth.
- **Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:** PBIS instruction and data collection paired with Responsive Classroom practices create and sustain a safe, positive school environment.
- **Integrated Music and Visual Arts:** This curriculum-wide expectation is supported by experienced artists and artisans who share their expertise and skills through formal and informal programming, which can take place inside and outside of regular school hours. Opportunities to share creative success are organized, celebrated and promoted by the school administration and teachers.
- **Individual Personal Learning Plans:** Plans are developed that challenge and support each child’s growth.

Educational Leadership:

The Principal is responsible for:

- Consistently evaluating teachers to hold them accountable to excellent standards of teaching that enable personal growth for all students, provide timely

- supportive feedback to improve their practice, and support teachers' individual strengths and independent work to achieve academic success in the classroom;
- Providing needs-based professional development to help teachers determine appropriate yearly professional goals to enhance their teaching practices (principal assesses teachers; teachers engage in self-reflection);
- Enlisting staff to develop collaborative and creative professional day-to-day practices that demonstrate current best practices and enhance effective teamwork, characterized by rigor, curiosity and passion for learning;
- Building respectful trustworthy relationships with all stakeholders based on open communication and empathy;
- Regularly inviting the community to participate in the life of the school.

School Social Climate

The Peacham Elementary School encourages collaboration and respect for individual contributions that build on each other, making the whole more meaningful than the sum of each part. Our school nurtures curiosity, discovery and confidence. Our school community celebrates innovation, encourages creativity, and inspires excellence. A sustainable, positive school climate nurtures development and learning in students so they are prepared for transition beyond sixth grade. PES encourages students to engage independently with their neighbors and community members outside of school in ways that are safe, productive and satisfying. In the Peacham Elementary School, this climate is characterized by trust, collaboration, accountability, respect and the joy of learning. The Peacham Elementary School welcomes all families equally and fosters respect for diversity, including differences in socioeconomic or cultural backgrounds and in learning styles and abilities.

The Peacham Elementary School Social Climate includes the following:

- Clearly articulated norms, values and expectations support people feeling socially, emotionally and physically safe;
- People are engaged and respected; all members of the school community approach each day prepared to work together for the benefit of the children;
- Students, families and educators work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision. Teachers, staff and administrators know every student and make an effort to meet her or his family. Parents and caregivers visit the school regularly to understand the resources and contribute to its vitality;
- Educators model and nurture attitudes that emphasize the benefits and satisfaction gained from learning;
- Parents or guardians address concerns regarding the school as they arise through the appropriate channels as described in the Peacham School Handbook. Parents speak first with the teacher, then the principal, in an effort to resolve differences.

If problems persist, parents or guardians consult with the superintendent and finally the school board.

- Peacham Elementary School staff, parents, and community members contribute actively to the operations of the school and the care of the physical environment, investing in and caring for this valued community resource.

K-6 School Assessment Results – 2016-2017

Note: For additional Assessment information referenced in this report, see Appendix A.

Below is an assessment of student performance in Peacham (those parts assessed) incorporating all relevant data (star math/reader, F&P, SBAC and POA). Percentages indicate percent of students who are proficient or exceeding standards on Primary Observation Assessment (POA), Fountas and Pinnell Literacy Assessment (F&P) and Smarter Balance Assessment Consortium (SBAC) and student above the 50th Percentile for STAR Reading and STAR Math. Also included is a short description of each assessment.

STAR Math and Reading – This tool is designed as a screening assessment to alert users of potential areas of weakness and also those of strength for individuals and cohorts. The tool assesses the Common Core State Standards. This tool is also used as a progress monitoring tool and given bi-weekly for students who are receiving intervention strategies. It is a 32 multiple choice questions on-line assessment.

Fountas and Pinnell (F&P) – This is a literacy assessment that is designed for students in grades K-8. It is given 1:1 to students and administered by classroom teachers and interventionists. The assessment measures comprehension, rate, fluency and vocabulary. This assessment is given three times yearly to all students in grades K-5 and three times yearly only to those who are below the 50th percentile ranking on the STAR assessment in grades 6-8.

Primary Observation Assessment (POA) – This is a comprehensive literacy assessment given three times yearly to all students in grades K-2 to measure comprehension, rate, fluency, letter identification, concepts about print, writing vocabulary, sight words and letter sound identification. The majority of this assessment is administered 1:1 by classroom teachers and interventionist.

Primary Numbers Observation Assessment (PNOA) – This is a comprehensive mathematics assessment given two to three times yearly to all students in grades K-2 to measure mathematical competency. The assessment measures students' ability to sequence, use symbols, groupings and place value, to estimate, and understand equality. The majority of this assessment is administered 1:1 by classroom teachers and interventionist.

Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) – This is a State mandated assessment given once yearly to all students in grades 3-8. The assessment is computer generated and takes each student between 6-8 hours to complete. The new Common Core State standards are being assessed with this tool. It contains some multiple-choice questions and several short answer/longer constructed response questions that are composed on the computer.

***Percentages for each student per class: Due to the small numbers in each individual grade level it is important to keep the following in mind when viewing results→**

Kindergarten- 6/7 students→ 1 student = 17% / 14% □ 1st Grade- 7/8 students→ 1 student = 14% / 13% □ 2nd Grade- 9/10 students→ 1 student = 11% / 10% □

3rd Grade- 5/6 students→ 1 student = 20% / 17% □ 4th Grade- 7 students→ 1 student = 14% □ 5th Grade- 4/5 students→ 1 student = 25% / 20% □ 6th Grade- 8 students→ 1 student = 13%

STAR/F&P/SBAC Results (Fall, Winter, Spring)

Grade	Star Reading			STAR Math			F&P			SBAC		
	F	W	S	F	W	S	F	W	S	2016-17		
										ELA	Math	
Kindergarten							100%	86%				
1st Grade			57%	83%	80%	75%	50%	67%	75%			
2nd Grade	56%	63%	44%	67%	83%	44%	67%	63%	100%			
3rd Grade	40%	40%	50%	40%	60%	67%	40%	80%	33%	50%	50%	
4th Grade	86%	100%	86%	86%	83%	100%	100%	100%	100%	71%	71%	
5th Grade	60%	50%	75%	60%	75%	75%	100%	100%	75%	100%	75%	
6th Grade	57%	63%	50%	63%	100%	88%	50%	50%	63%	50%	50%	

POA Results (Percent at or above grade level)

Codes: TL = Text Level; 10 W = 10 min write; SD= Sentence Dictation; WT = Word Test; LI= Letter ID; PD= Paragraph Dictation; CP= Concepts of Print

Class	Fall							Winter							Spring						
	TL	10 W	SD	WT	LI	PD	CP	TL	10 W	SD	WT	LI	PD	CP	TL	10 W	SD	WT	LI	PD	CP
Kind er	N/A	67%	83%	83%	100%	N/A	100%	100%	83%	83%	83%	83%	N/A	100%	86%	86%	86%	86%	86%	NA	100%
1st Grad e	50%	83%	100%	83%	83%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	83%	83%	100%	N/A	83%	100%	71%	88%	100%	75%		
2nd Grad e	67%					67%		100%					88%		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	67%	100%

PNOA Results

FS =Forward sequences; BS =Backward Sequences; SN =Symbolic Notation; GPV =Groupings & Place Value; EM =Estimation and Magnitude; Op =Operations; Eq =Equality; PN = Properties of a Number

<u>CLASS</u>	<u>FALL</u>								<u>SPRING</u>							
	<u>FS</u>	<u>BS</u>	<u>SN</u>	<u>GPV</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Op</u>	<u>Eq</u>	<u>PN</u>	<u>FS</u>	<u>BS</u>	<u>SN</u>	<u>GPV</u>	<u>EM</u>	<u>Op</u>	<u>Eq</u>	<u>PN</u>
Kindergarten	Baseline data was collected in the fall								86%	86%	86%	57%	86%	N/A	N/A	N/A
1st Grade	67%	33%	50%	0%	NA	50%	NA	NA	63%	38%	63%	13%	13%	25%	38%	NA
2nd Grade	33%	NA	100%	0%	NA	44%	NA	NA	78%	33%	22%	0%	11%	11%	11%	78%

Individual Student Goals Results

<u>Class</u>	<u>First Trimester</u>	<u>Last Trimester</u>
Kindergarten	100%	100%
First Grade	100%	100%
Second Grade	100%	100%
Third Grade	80%	60%
Fourth Grade	83%	100%
Fifth Grade	75%	100%
Sixth Grade	88%	100%
<u>Average Total =</u>	<u>89%</u>	<u>94%</u>

School Analysis: 2016-2017 Performance Data

This year-end data review brought up a few celebrations along with some focus areas for the upcoming school year. Students have made significant progress in reading and worked really hard to meet their individual reading goals. The F&P and POA data demonstrate a reliable source of student growth. We will continue to use the STAR data as a screening tool and will rely on more in-depth assessments such as these. Our data also points to some needs for specific cohorts of students, writing at all grade-levels, and math at the 1-2 level.

An increase in intervention and special education services will allow for more individualized and focused instruction for students in the mentioned cohorts of need. Looking ahead, the school has re-worked its schedule to allow every grade level to have a separate math instruction block (we believe that the lack of this instructional opportunity last year created gaps for our students in first and second grades which was evident in the end of year assessments).

Based on our review of our students' most recent performance data, the following actions are already planned for the 2017-2018 school year to improve our school's core instructional practices:

- We are creating more time during core instruction blocks for students to receive direct instruction in smaller groups in both math and literacy.
- The use of guided reading groups will be a priority during literacy blocks.
- Teachers will incorporate reading and writing into their science and global citizenship blocks and these will take place daily.
- Teachers will include math skills in their science instruction on a daily basis.
- Revised school-wide expectations around writing and written assignments will be established
- We will focus some of our "soft" skill building on lessons that build stamina and perseverance. Are students able to really demonstrate all that they know? (Many students were just a couple of points away from being proficient on the SBAC on their scaled scores)

Findings:

The 2008-2017 performance data we reviewed PK-6 indicates that Peacham students perform well in relation to their peers locally and throughout Vermont. In general, Peacham students regularly score at or above state and district averages, but scores do fluctuate from year to year and grade level to grade level given the small cohort at the heart of any comparative performance. Rather, as evidenced in the school's most recent annual report on student performance, Peacham will continue to rely on a broad range of assessments and take advantage of its small size to individuate student performance through individual goal setting, tailored instruction, and instructional innovation in order to maximize every student's academic potential.

Note: Currently the Peacham School District has no ability to review student performance data beyond 6th grade, as this data is included in school scores, which are not differentiated by town of residence.

B. Enhancing Programmatic Opportunity (And Performance!):

“Providing Substantive Enhancement in the Quality and Variety of Educational Opportunities”

Learning Opportunities PreK-6:

The Peacham Elementary School district has always operated under the principle of continuous improvement. Curriculum, instruction, and assessment of student progress towards mastery of content and skill standards are based on nationally accepted sets of learning expectations. Our educational program is designed to support Peacham students to progress towards mastery of Vermont’s Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities in Education. PES teachers, administrators and staff recognize that each child’s development is unique and work together to support continuous growth throughout the year.

PES curriculum content is developed making use of all available resources to ensure high achievement in literacy, problem-solving, mathematics, scientific inquiry and practice, global citizenship, physical and health education, and artistic expression. In addition, PES places strong emphasis on personal growth, confidence, responsibility and team building.

Historically, Peacham Elementary School has offered expanded learning opportunities that include subjects and themes beyond what is covered in some neighboring schools, specifically:

- Second language programs have been a regular part of the curriculum since the 1980s. Both French and Spanish have been offered over the years.
- A nationally recognized Place-based Learning program, Vermont Rural Partnerships, was developed in the 1990s. Strong community connections exist to this day, providing opportunities for student leadership and voice while enriching the school.
- Expanded Art and Music offerings effectively support the core curriculum and offer learning opportunities for a variety of learners. This program goes beyond music practice to offer introductory music composition and theory.
- A certified Tech Integrationist mentors students and staff and connects the Peacham Elementary School with a wider learning community. PES students in grades K-6 have either an individual laptop or access to our common lab.
- PES Music, Art, Tech/Library, and classroom staff, are members of the Vermont Creative Schools Initiative: A Collaborative Project of Catamount Arts and Community Engagement Lab.
- Students have the option to learn orchestral wind and brass instruments as of grade 3. All students have the opportunity to learn percussion instruments, the traditional recorder and with the donation of ukuleles from the PTF Group,

all students and some as young as 2nd grade have the opportunity to begin learning to use string instruments as well.

- The school has a long history of bringing Artists in Residence annually to the school.
- PES integrates computer coding and robotics into its instructional program. A partnership with the Peacham Library leverages kits and expertise beyond the school walls for a variety of learners.
- PES is a VT Agency of Agriculture Farm-to-School grantee. Our Science and Social Studies instruction includes embedded components of plant science, the economics of food production and marketing, and an understanding of nutritional choices. Our partnership with a local organic farmer supplies us with material and instructional support managing our school gardens and supplying our in-house food service.
- At least two health/physical education classes are scheduled for all students each week. These classes address all Health Core Concept Areas of the 2008 Health Education GLEs and are delivered by a certified Health Educator and a Physical Education teacher.
- The outdoor environment is used regularly for learning with a Nature Trail for natural science education, an ice rink for P.E., hills and trails for sledding, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing.
- A wide variety of after school sports activities are offered in cooperation with other schools in the area to enable students to access a variety of sports and teams regionally.
- The Peacham PTF raises funds to support a robust and long-standing partnership established in the 1980's, with the Burke Mountain Ski School and St. Johnsbury Academy field house to support school-wide ski and swim lessons that enable every PES student to learn the fundamentals of these sports.
- The Peacham School's Extended Learning Opportunity program regularly features community members who share their skills and wisdom with students, teaching lessons on a variety of topics — such as coding, programming, art, yoga, dance, and robotics — during and after the school day.
- Strong collaborations exist for science enrichment with the Fairbanks Museum of Science, the Peacham Observatory and the Montshire Museum.

Looking ahead, for the 2017-2018 academic school year, Peacham will be:

- Expanding Spanish integration school-wide where students will be exposed to parts of the Spanish language and culture every day.
- Adding an instructional class in technology to our master schedule (e.g. web design, coding, etc.).
- Providing leadership opportunities through our Vermont Rural Partnership membership, our Buddy Program, PTF activities, and by the nature of how our small school operates.

- Inaugurating peer learning walks for teachers this year where they give each other feedback through a non-evaluative approach meant to improve teaching capacity
- Providing all students with an academic intervention everyday either as an extension/challenge for the learning or as a way to remediate skill deficits.

Findings:

It is the conclusion of our self-study that historically and currently, Peacham elementary school provides enhanced opportunities for students, beyond the requirements of the Education Quality Standards outlined by the state of Vermont for grades PK-6. Concerning student learning opportunities, the Peacham School district currently exceeds the requirements of Act 46 for grades PK-6.

Learning Opportunities Grades 7-12:

For grades 7-12 the town of Peacham offers an expansive array of opportunities by paying tuition to a school of choice for all students in these grades. *(See Appendix for a history of the education choices made students and families over the past 14 years)* This illustrates that Peacham families historically take advantage of choice to access the wide variety of public and private schools available regionally.

The community wide survey *(See Appendix)* completed by the committee gathered additional data related to school choice and found that the ability to choose a school for students in the upper grades was valued. Approx. 72% of respondents felt that retaining school choice at grades 7 and 8 was “extremely important” or “important”. The survey noted that parents appreciated being able to choose a school that offered opportunities specific to their child’s individual needs. For example, a small public school like Danville [grades 7-12] where their children could be a part of a close-knit community, participate in a wide variety of activities from sports to theatre and not be required to transition again at grade 9.

A further analysis of the comments in the survey supported the fact that school choice at this level offers an expansive array of opportunities to students. Additionally, the Peacham school supports parents during their children’s transition by facilitating visits to schools for 6th grade students, via Parent Conferences helping families make the best choice for their child’s learning needs, and through communications with the receiving schools.

The study also considered equity of access and noted that several schools provide buses for Peacham students and that as a small community car-pooling is arranged. We did not find examples of a lack of busing limiting equity of choice for students.

Findings:

The study concluded that choice for schooling has historically served Peacham Students well by providing the ability to match a student to the school best able to meet their learning needs. Additionally, the survey showed that the community values the ability to offer school choice beyond the elementary school years. The committee did not discover any negative equity implications for school choice at this time in Peacham.

Action Plan - Strengthening Equity in Student Opportunity and Achievement/Performance

Performance, Quality, and Opportunity:

1. The current faculty and administration will actively use the Peacham Elementary School Values 2015 document.
2. The document will be distributed to parents annually.
3. The document be revisited and revised every 5 years by the school board via a community wide strategic planning process. This will next take place in 2020.
4. A tracking system for Peacham student performance beyond 6th grade will be developed.
5. The Peacham School will maximize its ability to take advantage of our small size. Consequently, the school board will support making the most of the opportunity our small size affords when it comes to every aspect of student learning such as the following :
 - ❖ Flexible multiage [not multi-grade] learning environments
 - ❖ Flexible mixed groupings of students for learning experiences including students of multiple age levels
 - ❖ Personalized learning plans
 - ❖ Differentiation across age level boundaries
 - ❖ Creative community based / place based learning experiences
 - ❖ Rotating curriculum over multiyear spans specifically for science and social studies
 - ❖ Supporting varied and enhanced community connections
6. For the 2017-2018 school year, the school will implement the program enhancements noted on page 13 of this report.

Equity:

1. The Peacham School district will clarify a supportive school transition policy. This will include annually:
 - ❖ presentations from receiving schools at a parent evening
 - ❖ visits for 6th grade students to the schools they are considering for 7th grade

- ❖ parent conferences with a specific transition focus
- ❖ follow up during the 7th grade year by the administration, to assess the success of the transition for Peacham students
- ❖ ongoing communications between the Peacham School and the receiving schools for families of students for whom the transition is problematic.

2. The Peacham School district will monitor equity of access to schools 7-12 annually to ensure the ability of families to access all schools of choice.

C. Promoting Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability (Act 46, Goals 3 & 4)
Student Enrollment (For additional demographic and spending data, see Appendix B)

The committee gathered census data for 0 – 12 year olds and reviewed the last several years of data. (See Appendix) The current preschool is oversubscribed requiring a change from operating a PreK-K classroom to operating a PreK as a standalone classroom. An enhanced period of stability for the school will, we feel, maintain this trend if not lead to increased enrollment in the future. The committee also noted the increasing number of families with Peacham preschoolers who have Peacham roots, whose parents attended the Peacham School and chose to return to Peacham to raise families. Anecdotally many of them voiced a desire for their children to have the same small school experience they themselves had benefitted from followed by the ability to choose schooling for the older grades.

Enrollment as of October 2016 was 56 students (PK-6). That number increased by June 2017 to 59 students (PK-6). Anticipated enrollment as of the start of the 2017-2018 school year is 63 confirmed students as of July 17, 2017. (see figure 1) The census data indicated that Peacham School is maintaining enrollment and is not currently in a position of declining enrollment for the foreseeable future.

Peacham School – 2017-2108 Enrollment (12.6/1 student teacher average)

Grade	Student Enrollment	Instructional Staff
Pre-School Classroom	11	1 teacher/1 para
K/1 Classroom	14 (7 per grade level)	1 teacher
2/3 Classroom	16 (11 in 2 nd / 5 in 3 rd)	1 teacher
3/4 Classroom	11 (5 in 3 rd / 6 in 4 th)	1 teacher
5/6 Classroom	11 (7 in 5 th / Figure4 in 6 th)	1 teacher
Total	63	5 teachers/ 1 para

Figure 1.

Findings: Operational Efficiency

Working in conjunction with other members of the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union, Peacham has seen the benefit of working closely with member districts to find the most cost-effective ways to deliver educational services to its students. In the past few years, Peacham has worked hard to align its program delivery models with the evolving demographics of its student body to deliver a quality educational program in an operationally efficient manner comparable with other cost-effective districts in the state. In addition, it has supported the restructuring of SU functions to deliver a quality education at an affordable cost point.

While spending per equalized pupil has been rising in Peacham, citizens and taxpayers continue to support their school and see it as an essential contributor to a vibrant town life. They also appreciate the ongoing search by their board to deliver a quality education to every student at the most efficient cost possible.

Action Plan - Promoting Efficiency, Transparency, and Accountability

Cost/Efficiency:

1. The Peacham School Board will work with the Peacham Community to ensure affordable child care options are available in the town of Peacham for parents of young children. The recent establishment of a 3 star childcare facility in South Peacham is a positive move in this direction.
2. The Peacham School Board will work with the Peacham Community Housing board to ensure affordable rental housing is available in the community of Peacham, which will attract young families to town.
3. The Peacham School Board will monitor and seek to increase staff to student ratios while maintaining multiage classrooms with no more than 2 grade level spans such as –PK/K, 1/2, 3/4 and 5/6.

Transparency/Accountability:

1. The administration will maintain a current census of Peacham students for 0-18 year olds.
2. The administration will maintain an annual listing of student choices for grades 7-12
3. The Peacham School will continue to produce an annual school report card available on Town Meeting day, which it has annually since 1996
4. The Peacham School Board will develop and conduct a written exit survey of any family who leaves Peacham School to fully understand the reasons behind leaving the school.

D. Providing a Quality Education at a Cost that Parents, Voters, and Taxpayers Value (Act 46, Goal 5)

Communication:

The Peacham Elementary School takes advantage of its small size to encourage parents, guardians, and others in the community to engage with the school for the benefit of the children. Effective and successful communication is established so that all members of the Peacham community are connected with the School and understand its mission. Clear, consistent, respectful and meaningful exchanges are a priority to sustain vital and dynamic involvement with the School and support formal and informal learning. All communications are acknowledged in a timely manner:

- The principal distributes information regarding school policies, calendar, administrative issues and curriculum goals. This information is easily accessible and current through the School's weekly newsletter and website.
- The principal organizes a public forum at the beginning of the school year to outline a vision for the year ahead, introduce teachers and staff, welcome students and families and address any questions or concerns.
- Teachers communicate weekly lessons and homework to students and families through written newsletters distributed in print or online.
- Parents, guardians, teachers, staff and administrators engage in informal exchanges regarding immediate questions and concerns.
- The Peacham Elementary School community creates regular events for students to practice appropriate written, verbal and listening skills as a commitment to building their ability to communicate effectively. Daily morning meeting is an example of a forum to celebrate accomplishment and honor school spirit before an audience.
- Additional public meetings arranged by the principal can be organized throughout the year.
- The school board, administration, staff and community work transparently in the best interests of all students.

Culture and Community:

The Peacham Elementary School provides a sense of place that stays with graduates and grounds them in a caring and involved community. The school board, superintendent, principal, teachers and staff engage with families and neighbors throughout Peacham to build trust, invite involvement, respond respectfully and create opportunities that highlight the values and points of pride in the Peacham community. The School building serves as a welcoming facility that provides a center for people of all ages to gather throughout the year.

Peacham provides multiple community resources that are rich learning environments and are leveraged by the school to amplify and enhance learning. Peacham’s community assets include:

- Northeast Kingdom Astronomy Foundation/Northern Skies Observatory
- Peacham Library
- Peacham Historical Association and cultural heritage sites (roller barn, historic homes)
- Peacham Walking Trail Network, Town Forest
- Peacham Cafe
- Community Garden
- Skating rink
- Local artists, artisans and musicians
- Local residents with expertise in world languages, music and traditions
- Residents with expertise in vocational trades and professional fields
- Working farms and resident farmers
- Established community events (Fall Foliage Festival, Mud and Muck Auction, Memorial Day, holiday celebrations, Green Up Day, Peacham Acoustic Music Festival)
- Community meals and other volunteer opportunities
- Town Meeting, municipal offices and Post Office

Community/Citizen Engagement:

Peacham has always valued a strong connection between its residents and their local elementary school. It should be noted that citizens have consistently supported Peacham schools over the years by unanimously approving their district’s budgets year in and year out – itself a clear statement concerning the “value” that Peacham residents hold for their school.

From the beginning of our merger study process, residents expressed the concern that “regionalization” might distance their community from their school’s governance structure. Of particular concern was the challenge of creating an equitable and responsive “regional” governance body administering multiple, geographically separated schools with their own unique cultures, histories and community traditions. A survey of Peacham residents (*See Appendix*) showed overwhelmingly strong data related to the desire of Peacham citizens to retain a substantive voice in school decision-making. Historically Peacham has valued voice in decision making in the education of youth. It is significant to note that in 1795 the Peacham community chose to be the site of Caledonia county’s first grammar school rather than the site of the county court house. This interest and involvement in education continues to this day. Over ninety percent (90%) of survey respondents felt it was either “extremely important” or “important” to have a level of equity of voice in education decision-making. Peacham residents take seriously their annual participation in the school

portion of town meeting. In 2015 the town voted to enlarge the school board to 5 members from 3 and volunteers were found for this task. Additionally, the school board requested at town meeting the formation of the local Act 46 committee and 9 volunteers stepped up to take on this task.

Furthermore, the study found that maintaining Peacham's historical engagement with its local school to be further magnified by the fact of Peacham's structural isolation. Among the available merger options that maintained our district's current operational structure would entail trying to build vibrant school cultures between communities that were geographically isolated from one another with no shared history of collaboration or community engagement.

Finally, community members expressed their wish to retain the ability to actively participate in decision-making concerning education for the future. This level of concern and involvement in education has historically served Peacham students well, has added value to their ability to access opportunities and develop as future citizens and has provided oversight of responsible school budgets annually for many years.

Findings:

Based on these strong local values, the committee found that the best way to meet the goal of "providing a quality education at a cost that parents, voters, and taxpayers value" was for the Peacham School board to work to retain an independent school district or enter a governance relationship with some level of equity related to voice in decision-making. The committee did not feel it was in the best interests of Peacham students for community members to abdicate their current control over educational decision-making by entering into a situation with a marginalized rather than equitable voice.

Action Plan - Providing a Quality Education at a Cost that Parents, Voters, and Taxpayers Value

During the course of its deliberations on Act 46, the Peacham School board reached out to the community to insure the transparency of its process and to ensure community input into its decision-making process. Community outreach and communication are essential to providing a quality education that parents, voters, and taxpayers value. Specifically, the Board:

1. Formed a community Act 46 committee made up of a majority of community members over Board members.
2. Posted numerous e-mail blasts outlining the goals and status of Act 46 and its effect on Peacham.
3. Included an agenda item at most Board meetings to give updates and information.
4. Communicated regularly with the Peacham Collaborator's Town Committee which represents other Town interests, in order to keep the group apprised.

5. Produced an E-mail blast asking for letter writing/e-mail campaign when changes in legislation were being presented in the VT Legislature.
6. Presented at Town Meetings an extensive overview of Act 46 and the Board's current thinking and communications with potential partners concerning any changes in governance.
7. Ongoing attendance by Peacham board representative at Caledonia Cooperative planning sessions.

Moving forward, the school board and superintendent will continue to foster high levels of community engagement by strengthening governance practices that foster:

- Transparent decision-making that follows open meeting law;
- Accountability for stewardship of the community's vision for education and current best practices;
- Careful, fair and thorough assessment processes (principal assesses staff; superintendent assesses principal; CCSU Board assesses superintendent; school board has overarching responsibility);
- Clear, comprehensive reporting on the school's mission, resources and performance delivered to the community on a regular basis, at least annually
- Maintenance of a fiscally sound approach to managing economic and physical resources in the school facility.

Section 2: 3x1 Self-Study – Suitability

History of Merger Efforts for Proposed 3x1

A. Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union:

As noted earlier in this report, the communities of Barnet, Walden, and Waterford engaged in a two-year process that resulted in an approved merger – The Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District. The voters approval of this merger, however, was contingent, as stated in the new district’s Articles of Agreement, on the new unified union being eligible for tax incentives under the law.

As originally proposed, the Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union hoped that it would be a part of a 2x2 Regional Education District (RED) under the provisions of Act 153 with the communities of Cabot, Danville, and Twinfield. But their merger proposal, while approved by the State Board of Education, failed to be approved by their voters.

With the addition by the legislature (Act 49) of a 3x1 supervisory union structure as an incentivized governance structure in the last legislative session, proposing a 3x1 supervisory union structure presents a way for the new unified district to meet the final hurdle in its merger process as the most suitable governance alternative currently available to the districts and communities that make up the Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union. (See Appendix: Caledonia Unified Union Final Report)

B. Peacham

As noted earlier in this report, the Peacham School Board identified four potential merger options for meeting the goals of Act 46. The district then engaged in an exploratory study to address these options that involved exploring merger options with potential partners, as well as, a community-wide dialogue concerning the educational mission and direction of its elementary school program. A summary of each option and the study’s findings follows:

Option #1: PK-6 District

Form a PK-6 district with like communities that operate PK-6 schools. Provide tuition for all students for grades 7-12. The school board made every effort to explore this option for consideration for the future. The Board reached out to the Greensboro and Stannard communities, our nearest partners with similar operating configurations and held joint meetings. The board formed an exploratory committee and with the help of the superintendent secured a \$5,000 exploratory grant to consider this option. This group was unable to move forward due to the difference in operating structure of the Greensboro community. While Stannard operates as Peacham does with a PK-6 school and choice for

grades 7-12, Greensboro does not. Greensboro operates PK-6 but is part of a Union School District for grades 7-12. This difference in operating structure limits Greensboro's ability to form an Act 46 706b merger with Peacham and Stannard. Both the Greensboro and Stannard districts are now pursuing remaining independent school districts and not merging due to this complication. Peacham is also geographically isolated from Greensboro, approx. 25 miles distant, which would limit ease of collaboration and impact the effectiveness of a merger.

Finding: A PK-6 merger with these partners was not possible for the Peacham School District.

Option #2: PK-8 Merger

Join a PK-8 district with Barnet, Waterford and Walden. Give up middle school choice for grades 7 and 8. Keep high school choice for grades 9-12.

The school board actively pursued this option by becoming members in the exploratory committee formed in March 2016. In fall 2016 the towns of Barnet, Waterford and Walden voted to form a 706B committee to bring this merger option to a vote. Peacham chose not to join this committee at this time and instead sent a community representative to monitor the development of the work of the committee. The committee found the following information significant when considering this option:

- **Scale School Size**— Peacham School is of a different scale to the other schools involved in this merger. Peacham operates a significantly smaller school of approx. 56 students while the other schools involved are double or triple in size. The scale of our school offers opportunities large schools cannot implement due to their size. Our scale allows for personalized learning opportunities, flexibility such as flexible student groupings across age bands in multiage learning environments and creativity such as our extensive community involvement. These opportunities are not as easily facilitated in larger schools. A merged district could standardize opportunities across the district and impact Peacham's ability to maximize the advantages of our small size.
- **Scale Town Size** – The town of Peacham is of a different scale to the other towns involved in this merger. Peacham has a smaller population than these towns. This would marginalize Peacham's voice in future decision-making due to the requirement for proportional representation.
- **Committee Comment** - The committee emphasized that smaller schools and communities face different challenges and opportunities than larger schools and towns and given a decision to merge a merger with like sized partners would be optimal for Peacham. The PK-8 merger was not a merger of like size partners.
- **Voice in decision-making** – A review of the PK-8 draft merger report indicated Peacham would have *16% representation* in district decision-making. The other towns would have the following: *Barnet 37%, Walden 20% Waterford 27%*. This compromises a strongly held value of the Peacham community.

- **Opportunities for grades 7-8 grade students** - This merger would require Peacham to relinquish school choice for grades 7 and 8. Data shows Peacham students take wide advantage of school choice. A review of the report of the K-8 merger was unable to clarify to the committee the specific learning opportunities that would be afforded Peacham students by the merger beyond what are currently available. The committee concluded that opportunities for Peacham students in grades 7-8 would not necessarily be enhanced as a result of this merger and that the restriction in school choice would diminish opportunities Peacham students currently take advantage of, a primary goal of Act 46.
- **7/8 District Choice for students in grades 7-8** – There was some discussion of within district choice between the merged districts by the 706b committee; the report delegates to the merged board the development of policies for offering intra-district choice. The cost implications and equity issues surrounding public school choice were not discussed or considered by the committee and consequently remain an unknown outcome from this merger.
- **Busing for students in grades 7/8** - In a merged district, as 7/8 grade students are bussed to the district schools it is assumed bussing would be offered for Peacham grade 7/8 students to their district school of choice - Waterford, Barnet or Walden. Due to the geography of Peacham the length of bus rides could be an issue. Currently the Peacham bus route is approximately 1 hour this would be a factor in offering 7/8-grade bussing and the length of bus rides could be a problem in addition to the costs involved.
- **Opportunities for grades PK-6 students** – A review of the merger committee draft report notes references to Magnet and Laboratory Schools and an interest in making each school unique. At this point in time this is hypothetical, with the specifics left to the newly merged board. Consequently, there was concern amongst the committee that opportunity for Peacham students PK-6, could be impacted by merger, as key issues related to cost and equity of access have not been resolved. Under our current governance structure, we are able to maintain the individuality and uniqueness of programming of our school, merger would only enhance this if choice became available at the PK-6 level. Logistically this is extremely complex if busses are to transport students from their homes in 4 different towns to one of 4 other towns to attend school. Complex bussing is time consuming and cost prohibitive in rural communities such as ours and ultimately not practical. Magnet and Laboratory schools can be a great way to enhance learning opportunities but research shows they are primarily successful in urban/suburban areas. Moving to Magnet or Laboratory schools would be a move away from community based schooling, something Peacham has historically valued for its younger children. Concerns cited by magnet school research include - longer travel times, narrowing of curriculum and separation of children from community friends.
- **Cost implications** – At this time we have tax projections but no concrete data regarding tax implications. Financial projections, which are based on level funding, show temporary decreases in taxes while state tax incentives are in place. It is important to remember that they are projections based on no spending increases.

At this time, we have not seen any estimations of savings resulting from this merger that would result from economies of scale. The future tax impact of merger is essentially a guessing game. The taxes that would result from this merger would be the result of the spending supported by the merged board and voted on by the merged towns via an Australian ballot. Currently they are unknown.

- **Opportunities and Costs** -The development of opportunities throughout the newly merged district could impact spending in a myriad of ways. As the smallest school in the newly merged district this would impact Peacham School, particularly as a result of proportional representation. Based on current conversations the outcome of these issues of cost and opportunity are a gamble with potential winners and losers. We would not be joining a clear scenario with a known outcome.
- **School Closure** - The time could come when the merged district would feel it was beneficial financially to the district as a whole to close Peacham School and redistribute the students to the other district schools. In fact, to realize many of the aspirations of the PK-8 merger committee it would make sense for the new district to close the smallest school, Peacham, absorb the students into the other district schools and utilize the saved resources to enhance programming district wide. Without tightly written articles of agreement backed up by a Peacham town, not a merged district vote, this would be a scenario over which the town of Peacham would have limited voice. The current language being considered by the merger committee provides for operation of the all schools for 4 years and *“Thereafter, an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors shall be required to close a school.”* This vote would be confirmed by a district wide vote not a specific town vote. It does not provide sufficient protection to the town of Peacham for the continuation of a community school in Peacham. At this time, it is insufficient for Peacham to consider this merger option.
- **Articles of Agreement** -A review of the current articles of agreement, developed by the PK-8 merger committee, suggest they do not sufficiently answer issues related to Peacham. To participate in a PK-8 merger Peacham would require the consideration of a number of specific articles of agreement to ensure:
 - Peacham maintains an elementary school into the future and not be closed, except by a unanimous vote of the district board and a confirming vote of the residents of the town of Peacham.
 - Peacham School remains a PK-6 school and not be altered to offer different grade levels except by a unanimous vote of the district board and a confirming vote of the residents of the town of Peacham.
 - No reduction of opportunities for Peacham students and require the continued support by the district of specific learning opportunities for Peacham students PK-6 as outlined in the “Peacham Elementary School Values 2015” document, except by a unanimous vote of the board.
 - Maintaining staffing at Peacham School, with classroom faculty teaching no more than 2 grade level spans e.g. PK/K, 1/2, 3/4, 5/6 except by a unanimous vote of the district board.
 - Grandfathering school choice for Peacham students in grade 7 and 8, whose

families request an out of district placement, except by a unanimous vote of the district board and a confirming vote of the residents of the town of Peacham.

- An article requiring that the articles of agreement developed by the committee cannot be changed except by a unanimous vote of the board.
- All articles requiring a vote by the town for their confirmation would additionally need to be set forth as a separate subsection of the warning for the vote on establishment of the New Union School District.

Findings:

The loss of 7/8 grade school choice and the aforementioned review of the currently drafted Articles of Agreement of the proposed Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District are insufficient in meeting the educational needs of our district to support a decision by the Peacham School Board to join this merger. After consideration, the Peacham Act 46 Study committee unanimously recommended that Peacham not pursue a K-8 merger.

Option #3: Tuition All Students

Close Peacham Elementary School and tuition all students PK-12.

Due to the current size of the Peacham school district, we also studied the implications of closing Peacham School and paying tuition for all students PK-12. As we currently already do this for grades 7–12, it was felt worthy of study by the board and the Peacham Study Committee. A study of this alternative provided information that serves as a useful comparison with the other range of options.

In considering this option we felt that the Peacham School provided the best option for the education of our community's young children locally. We felt that the investment made in the Peacham School by the community has historically been strong and that providing the quality of education Peacham currently provides to its youngest students is a solid educational and community investment and asset.

We feel it was not appropriate to have the community's youngest students on long school bus journeys or car pool rides which would result from the closure of Peacham School. We felt that without close monitoring this could impact equity. While we did not find current equity issues at grades 7-12 that is likely the result of strong ties established in the community and during the PK-6 years at the Peacham School. This enables families to draw on these ties to ensure equity of access beyond grade 6. Beginning choice at preschool would not have this foundation to build on and could raise equity concerns.

A review of the financial implications concluded, that the closure of the school, would be a financial wash and not result in tax savings for community members. Additionally, it would

allow community members no ability to control costs in the future.

Findings:

The study committee recommended that the school board not pursue this option of school closure at this time.

Option #4: Independent PK-12 district within an SU (3x1 Option)

Remain a standalone PK-12 district in a new supervisory union as an Alternative Structure. Tuition students for grades 7-12.

A review of all the data related to the goals of the law suggests that, at this time, this option comes closest to meeting the goals of Act 46.

- This option allows Peacham to continue to operate a school in the community, which provides enhanced learning opportunities for students in grades PK-6 that currently go beyond those required by the state of Vermont for as long as the town of Peacham chooses to do so.
- This option allows Peacham to retain our current operating structure and not relinquish school choice for grades 7 or 8, which affords Peacham students a wide range of learning opportunities for these grades and beyond.
- This option allows the Peacham community full voice in decision-making regarding schooling, including the ability to monitor and curb costs.
- This option retains a local school board and the ability of the community to make changes in the future independently of neighboring communities.
- This option allows Peacham to collaborate effectively with our neighbors in a supervisory union and to continue to work to meet the goals of the law collaboratively working with our neighbors as equal partners.

The study committee recommends that the Peacham School Board, in conjunction with the new Caledonia Cooperative Unified Union School District, pursue a 3x1 governance structure and finds that it is the most suitable option under the law for meeting the goals of Act 46.

Section 3: Achieving the Goals of Act 46 as a 3x1

Part A: History of Cooperation in Caledonia Central

Over the past few years, the administrative team that oversees the delivery of educational services for Caledonia Central has worked closely with the Supervisory Union Board and the boards of all member schools to foster initiatives aimed at enhancing educational opportunity and student performance for every student attending school in CCSU, as well as finding new ways to deliver a quality education in the most efficient manner possible.

In support of enhancing educational opportunity and student performance, the member districts of our SU have worked together to:

1. Set short and long-term **educational goals** for our SU. This process involves sharing individual school performance data among all of the boards that make up Caledonia Central. To this end, reports go out three times of year to reflect growth, regression, or stagnation in student performance. The boards use this information to assess and revise their goals. CCSU goals are created based on SU data.
2. Consolidate **special education** personnel and services at the central office level. All special education personnel including special education para educators are now SU employees led by a district level director of special education services who is working to ensure the responsive delivery of academic and social emotional support for every student.
3. Implement a unified/coordinated **curriculum** with clearly defined goals throughout Caledonia central supervisory union
4. Adopt and deliver a **multi-tiered system of support (MTSS model)** throughout the Caledonia Central Supervisory Union, along with the necessary data infrastructure, data warehouse, and district level data teams to support the system and insure a regular review of student performance data.
5. Hire a **Math/ Science Instructional Coordinator** to promote continuous improvement in math and science instruction through a coordinated approach to curriculum and instructional review, revision, and implementation, as well as providing coaching for professional staff.
6. Hire a **Literacy/Humanities Instructional Coordinator** to support continuous improvement in student literacy throughout the supervisory union's humanities curriculum through a coordinated approach to curriculum and instructional review, revision, and implementation, as well as providing coaching for professional staff. *Note: This position is still in the process of being filled.*

Operationally, our supervisory union has worked together in recent years to

1. Restructure **Maintenance services**. The new model consists of two supervisors who work collaboratively together overseeing all SU maintenance needs for all four schools within the district.

2. Reorganize the delivery of **Food services**. Workers are now SU employees. All positions were restructured to create an SU food service director that oversees the food service programs in all the districts. This is resulted in cost efficiencies, reduction in hours of personnel, and reduction in food costs.
3. Restructure the **Finance Department** at the SU. After a review of personnel and operations, the department was restructured eliminating one and a half positions by purchasing software to increase operational efficiency and financial management across the supervisory union.
4. Restructure the delivery of **curriculum and instruction support services** at Central Office. Previously there was a curriculum coordinator, a math science coach and a literacy coach. The positions have been restructured eliminating the curriculum coordinator, and hiring a math science instructional coordinator and a literacy humanities instructional coordinator. These two positions oversee all the curriculum coordination within the SU and provide a much stronger focus on the content areas. In addition, this restructuring of the delivery of instructional leadership has resulted in \$107,000.00 in ongoing personnel savings per year moving forward
5. Centralize **Transportation services**.
6. Centralize the coordination and disbursement of **Title I/Title 2a grants** through a title I district coordinator.
7. Centralize the delivery of **Technical Support Services** and the purchase of technology equipment for every school in the SU.
8. Consolidated contracted services – garbage collection, plowing , and maintenance.

Part B: Strengthening SU Cooperation to Meet the Goals of Act 46

Core Findings:

In reviewing SU operations, and in particular the way that member districts work together to insure a quality educational program for every child who attends school in CCSU, the committee found that much of the progress we have made over the years has been the result of Central Office leadership engaging member boards to consider the implementation of common initiatives across the SU, rather than a robust strategic discussion/conversation among all of the boards for the express purpose of assessing student need, setting goals, and coordinating implementation. It is not that these discussions do not happen. They do. But as a result of our self-study, we believe that strategic processes at the SU level need to be strengthened and enhanced if we are to fully address the educational and operational promise of our new governance structure. Currently, for example, it takes multiple presentations before local boards to review and revise SU initiatives in order to get everyone moving together in the same direction. This not a good use of either administrator or board time. We can do better.

Action Plan:

Specifically, we propose to:

- A. Initiate a more robust process of ongoing strategic, board-level discussions across our SU designed to:
 1. Continue the practice of having all SU and district board members meet jointly to assess demographic trends and student performance data in order to build a more comprehensive understanding of the emerging needs of the students and schools in our SU.
 2. Directly engage all board members in creating short and long-term SU action plans and aligning district budgets to ensure the realization of those plans by initiating the practice of reviewing district budgets together:
 - to build greater awareness of opportunities for enhanced cooperation,
 - to ensure greater equity of opportunity between our educational offerings, and
 - to support a common commitment to implementing best practice across our schools while at the same time promoting innovation within each or our schools and sharing what we have learned concerning what really works.
 3. Mutually develop multi-year capital plans that also address pressing short-term needs.
 4. Continue the practice of undertaking joint, annual program reviews in order to

facilitate the management of staffing and programming in light of changing student demographics.

- B. Develop a more coordinated approach to the implementation of Act 77 including the implementation Personal Learning Plans, proficiency-based report cards with the goal of articulating common expectations across our schools.
- C. Develop new strategies for acquiring and reviewing student performance data from high schools in our region that are educating our students in order to better assess their preparation and long-term academic success.
- D. Continue work on the providing equitable and effective delivery of student support systems.
- E. Initiate a joint school climate survey across all the schools in the district.
- F. Plan and deliver coordinated professional development opportunities that encourage teachers and administrators across our SU to work together to address shared instructional challenges.

Finally, in our discussions with one another, we identified the importance of creating a new and stronger sense of regional **identity and affiliation** among the families and citizens of the newly aligned districts that will make up our new Supervisory Union. To that end we propose to:

- A. Strengthen and expand the sense of shared mission and identity among the communities and families we serve by enhancing our web presence and developing SU-wide communication strategies that focus on the work we are all doing together to create great schools and celebrate student achievement.
- B. Initiating SU functions that provide opportunities for students, families, and communities to come together to share and celebrate student achievement. (e.g. joint music concerts, art shows, open houses, science fairs, etc.)
- C. Explore ways to encourage PTA/booster groups to coordinate activities and programs.
- D. Schedule community forums on issues of concern to all our parents and citizens to foster community input and dialogue throughout our SU.

We believe that, taken together, these steps will enable us to not only enhance the governance of our supervisory union but ensure greater educational opportunity for all our students by fostering mutual understanding, a shared commitment to achieving shared goals, and real opportunities to work together in their interest.

Appendices

Appendix A: Student Assessment Results (2008-2016)

SBAC Results:

2014-2015:

ELA(English): At or above grade level: 52% (Danville: 58%, Walden: 46%, Barnet: 48%)

Math: At or above grade level: 48% (Danville: 43%, Walden: 36%, Barnet: 31%)

2015-2016:

ELA(English): Average of 4 grades at or above grade level: 52% (Average of 6 grades: Danville: 55%, Walden: 47%, Barnet: 48%, Waterford: 49%)

Math: Average of 4 grades at or above grade level: 45% (Average of 6 grades: Danville: 44%, Walden: 37%, Barnet: 30%, Waterford: 52%)

NECAP:

All Students Average Proficient and Above:

	Math	English/Reading
2008:	68%	72%
2009:	76%	72%
2010:	58%	63%
2011:	65%	48%
2012:	76%	76%
2013:	73%	72%

School-wide STAR Assessment Results:

2014-2015:

Reading average (of all six grades): At or above grade level: Fall: 53%, Winter:65%, Spring: 76%

Math average (of all six grades): At or above grade level: Fall: 66%, Winter:83%, Spring: 77%

2015-2016

Reading average (of all six grades): At or above grade level: Fall: 53%, Spring: 58%

Math average (of all six grades): At or above grade level: Fall: 64%, Spring: 63%

Appendix B: Peacham School – Core Demographic and Spending Data

	FY 13	FY 14	FY 15	FY 16	FY 17	FY 18
Enrollment Pk-6	50	49	48	49	56 59 by June	63
ADM	107	95	92	90	88	n/a
Education Spending	\$1,268,833	\$1,459,992	\$1,517,507	\$1,505,547	1,586,503	\$1,707,486
Ed. Spend/ Equal Pupil	\$12,310	\$14,679	\$15,810	\$16,255	\$18,112	\$18,667

Peacham Student Census Data (January 2016)

Age 0 = 4

Age 1 = 4

Age 2 = 5

Age 3 = 9 (4 of the 9 eligible children are enrolled in Pre-School at Peacham School]

Age 4 = 6

Kindergarten = 6

1 st Grade = 6

2nd Grade = 9

3rd Grade = 5

4th Grade = 7

5th Grade = 5

6th Grade = 8

Total School enrollment 56 (September 2017)

Pre-K and K = 16 students

Grades 1 and 2 = 15 students

Grades 3 and 4 = 12 students

Grades 5 and 6 = 13 students

Based on this data and a review of the last several years of data the committee concludes that Peacham School is maintaining enrollment and is not currently in decline.