

## Does a Yes Vote Mean Nothing Changes?

The proposal would include greater elementary and middle school choice enrollment opportunities between existing FNWSU schools and maintain the current high school tuition options for Sheldon, while clarifying and expanding SU authority to share resources and create efficiencies across the member districts.

## What Happens to the Vote Results?

Community vote results will be included in the proposal to not merge that will be delivered to the State Board of Education. The results will give the State further insight into the needs and wants of the FNWSU community.

Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union

100 Robin Hood Drive, Swanton, Vermont 05488

**Also on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>, MVU ballot vote for Capital Reserve Fund language update in Franklin, Highgate, and Swanton - 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM**

# Act 46/49 School Board Merger Advisory Vote

## Information Meetings:

10/17 – Franklin Central (6:30pm)

10/24 – Highgate Elem. (7:00pm)

10/30 – Sheldon Elem. (7:00pm)

11/2 - Swanton Central (7:00pm)

## Vote Date: Tues. Nov. 7, 2017

Town Meeting style floor discussion and votes in Franklin, Highgate, and Sheldon at 7:00 PM

Australian Ballot Vote in Swanton, 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM

Additional information can be found at [www.fnwsu.org](http://www.fnwsu.org) and on school web sites

## Why Have an Advisory Vote?

The FNWSU (SU) Board wants your input on their Act 46/49 school board merger recommendation before it's presented to the State Board of Education in January.

## What is the FNWSU Board Recommendation?

The SU Board recommends enhancing our existing school board structure to meet/exceed the goals of Act 46/49, as opposed to merging all district school boards into one board.

## What is Act 46/49 and What Does It Mean for FNWSU Districts?

Act 46/49 is a Vermont law with two primary goals to provide:

- educational opportunity and equity, as well as
- fiscal efficiency and transparency.

The law encourages school board mergers, with the belief that merging will create more opportunities to meet these goals. The State Board of Education has the ultimate authority in deciding whether district boards will be forced to merge.

In Franklin Northwest, a merger would eliminate the Franklin, Highgate, and Swanton (PK-6) school boards. The three elementary and MVU boards would be merged together.

Sheldon operates two more grades (grades 7 & 8) and would remain as they are now but could be merged with other PK-8 schools outside the FNWSU.

## Why this FNWSU Recommendation?

The recommendation comes after extensive study and is based on the belief that the current system best meets the needs of all the students and voters in the FNWSU. Some important data:

- *At 2015 Act 46 public meetings, maintaining local school board control was given high priority by citizens.*
- *FNWSU cost-per-pupil among the lowest in the State.*
- *Franklin one of the highest performing elementary schools in Vermont.*
- *Merging boards would reduce per pupil costs in Swanton and Highgate but increase somewhat for MVU and dramatically in Franklin.*
- *Our supervisory union educates 2,000 students (scale exceeds Act 46 requirements).*
- *Student enrollments remain reasonably stable (not experiencing steep declines found throughout VT).*
- *Do not receive "small schools grant" (grants will be eliminated if districts don't merge).*
- *Won't lose State "phantom pupil" revenue like many other rural schools (not receiving this revenue now).*
- *Increase MS/HS school enrollment with Chinese students to expand diversity and increase tuition revenue.*
- *Consistent curriculum exists across all schools.*
- *Sharing many resources now.*
- *Worry that merging boards might adversely impact local school culture and identity.*

## What is the Advisory Vote?

The vote asks whether you support the FNWSU Board recommendation.

*"Should the (NAME) Town School District, with other member boards of the Franklin Northwest Supervisory Union, propose to the Vermont State Board of Education, to maintain/enhance the operation of the Franklin, Highgate, MVU, Sheldon, and Swanton School Boards (which is an enhanced Alternative Governance Structure (AGS) as defined in the Act 46/49 law)?"*

## What does a "Yes" Vote Mean?

A yes vote supports the recommendation of the FNWSU Board. It means keeping the current school board structure in place.

## What does a "No" Vote Mean?

A no vote means you do not support the recommendation of the FNWSU Board. A no votes indicates to the State Board that you want to consider school board merger options, either within the FNWSU or possibly with districts in another supervisory union.

## Where Can I Access the Entire Act 46 Proposal?

[www.fnwsu.org/act46](http://www.fnwsu.org/act46)