



Town of Arlington, Vermont
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(802) 379-9916

August 10, 2026

From:
Arlington Select Board

To:
Arlington School District Board of Directors
Attn: Todd Wilkins, Chair
c/o Southwest Vermont Supervisory Union

Re: Act 170 Merger Study Group Placement, Group 3 vs. Group 4

Dear Chair Wilkins and Members of the Board:

The Arlington Select Board recognizes the significance of the decisions that lie ahead as the Act 170 merger study process begins. These discussions will shape not only the future of public education in Arlington, but also our community's long-term vitality, economic health, and ability to attract and retain families. The Select Board believes the responsibility for determining Arlington's participation in the merger study process rests with the Arlington School District Board. Accordingly, we are not taking a formal position on which merger study group the district should ultimately join. Rather, we respectfully encourage the School Board to undertake a thoughtful, transparent, and inclusive process that carefully considers the views of all Arlington residents before making its decision.

We urge the Board to actively engage parents, students, educators, taxpayers, business owners, and community members, and to weigh the perspectives of the community as a whole. Ultimately, we hope the Board's decision reflects the informed desires of the majority of Arlington's constituents while remaining focused on what is in the best long-term interests of Arlington's students.

During the past several months, members of the community have shared a variety of perspectives with the Select Board regarding the merits of Group 3. We offer the following observations—not as conclusions, but as examples of the considerations that many residents have asked the School Board to evaluate:

- **Regional Alignment.** Many Arlington families already look toward the Manchester region for employment, healthcare, recreation, commerce, and educational opportunities. Group 3 reflects many of these existing community relationships.
- **Expanded Educational Opportunities.** A Group 3 study provides an opportunity to explore partnerships that may offer students broader academic programming, extracurricular activities, athletics, career and technical opportunities, and specialized educational resources.
- **Long-Term Community Sustainability.** Educational quality plays an important role in attracting families and supporting property values. A regional partnership that strengthens educational opportunities can also strengthen Arlington's long-term economic future.
- **A Meaningful Evaluation of Alternatives.** Beginning the study process with Group 3 ensures Arlington fully examines a different regional model rather than simply continuing along an existing

path. Regardless of the eventual outcome, residents deserve the benefit of a comprehensive comparison of all viable options.

The Select Board also recognizes that this discussion is deeply personal for many members of our community. Schools represent far more than buildings—they embody generations of memories, traditions, and community identity. Feelings of pride, loyalty, hope, uncertainty, and even resistance to change are natural and should be respected throughout this process.

At the same time, decisions of this magnitude require looking beyond emotion alone. They require thoughtful consideration of the broader picture and a willingness to evaluate what will provide Arlington students with the strongest educational experience for decades to come. Academic excellence, social development, extracurricular opportunities, geographic realities, transportation, financial sustainability, and socioeconomic considerations must all be carefully balanced.

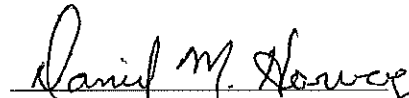
This decision is not simply about where Arlington has been—it is about where Arlington's children will have the greatest opportunity to succeed in the future.

We appreciate the School Board's commitment to conducting this important work and encourage you to continue engaging the public openly throughout the process. Whatever decision is ultimately reached should be informed by robust community participation, careful analysis, and a steadfast commitment to the long-term success of Arlington's students and community.

The Arlington Select Board stands ready to assist in fostering public dialogue and supporting community engagement as this process moves forward.

Sincerely,

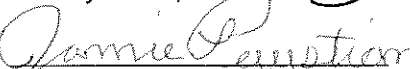
Arlington Select Board



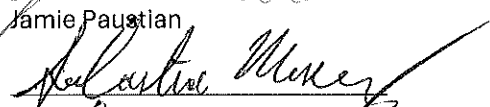
Dan Harvey, *Chair*



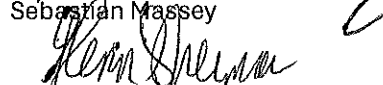
Matt Bykowski, *Vice-chair*



Jamie Paustian



Sebastian Massey



Glenn Sherman