

I'm not a member of any school board, nor do I have the experience of many of the people speaking today. I'm just a parent of multiple children who are part of the public school system. My husband and I chose to build in Cabot, VT, because of their small teacher-to-student ratio and their excellent programs. The following year, they had to slash the elementary programs drastically because we couldn't meet the state's requirements for our neuro-diverse students. We've struggled for years to bring those programs back to Cabot. We are lucky; other schools have not been so lucky.

Small towns support agriculture, and agriculture is the backbone of Vermont. We are constantly hearing how Vermont has an aging population, and we need to convince our younger generations to stay or move back to Vermont. If we are neglecting our youngest people, and not providing them with top-notch educational systems, then we are not going to convince families to live here. We have the most amazing educators, and our students constantly take my breath away with their ingenuity, innovation, and enthusiasm. It is imperative that the state does everything it can to support these students and not condemn them to mediocrity simply because of improper funding to their schools. It is no longer "we should do better for them." It is "we MUST do better for them."

I am so proud to have moved back home to Vermont with my family. I will do everything I can to support our schools and our students. Please make sure you do the same.

Thank you,  
Erica Fucello