

Testimony – 10/30/21

My name is Mark Clough I am chair of the Peacham School Board, Vice Chair of Caledonia Central Supervisory Union and on the Vermont School Boards Association Board.

WE in Peacham have a long history of education with a K-12 Academy until the 70's and the oldest library in the State. We are currently operating a PreK-6 elementary school recognizing the resources required in these times need to be provided by larger institutions for the later grades. So we have chosen to provide a strong base for developing learning skills in a good public school for the student's primary futures and then tuitioning out for the 7-12 grades.

We are in a very rural area of the Sate, far away from many services and we want to maintain a public school. We want to maintain the school both for the fabric of our community and for the wellbeing of the students. We get hit with the Excess Spending threshold each year despite actively trying to grow our student census, of which we have had some luck. But we are getting penalized for our rurality and smaller school size. Our Town is 650 population strong with 62 students in our K-6 and other 60 being tuitioned out 7-12 grades. Our population density is low but the school has been very important to the Town and we have excellent leadership that is creating high test scores and we believe comprehensive learning skills.

I would ask that you not discount the rurality and population density weighting factors and keep in mind all the small towns in this state and the challenges we face in continuing to provide good public education for our younger population.