

Bristol Town Administrator

From: Admin <admin@lincolnvermont.org>
Sent: Wednesday, February 24, 2021 4:26 PM
To: Bristol Town Administrator
Subject: Lincoln letter to MAUSD re: school closing proposal
Attachments: Sig Page Bristol.pdf; Selectboards -5- Letter 2-24-21 Final Ltr only.pdf

Hi Valerie,

I apologize for interrupting you while you were in a meeting. I have attached our letter to the MAUSD Board for perusal by the Bristol Selectboard. We hope that Bristol shares our concern about MAUSD Supt. Patrick Reen's proposal for re-purposing community schools in the district. We feel strongly that, if implemented, the change would result in an irreversible, devastating negative impact on our region's economic viability and desirability as a place to live, raise children and enjoy Vermont's vaunted quality of life. Please ask your selectboard to give this letter serious consideration and hopefully their endorsement.

Thanks.

(If all or some of your selectboard members sign, please send the signature page back to me so we can submit the letter to MAUSD with all signatures at once. Thanks.)

Bill Finger
Select Board Chair
Town of Lincoln
62 Quaker Street
Lincoln, Vermont 05443
admin@lincolnvermont.org
(802) 453-2980

**TOWN OF LINCOLN
62 QUAKER STREET
LINCOLN, VERMONT 05443**

SELECTBOARD

February 24, 2021

Dawn Griswold, Chair & Patrick Reen, Superintendent
Mount Abraham Unified School District
72 Munsill Ave. - Suite 601
Bristol, VT 05443

Dear Ms. Griswold, Mr. Reen and Board members,

Five vibrant, attractive and important communities, Bristol, New Haven, Lincoln, Monkton and Starksboro, stand to be profoundly affected by Superintendent Reen's December 7, 2020 recommendation to "re-purpose" three community school buildings and consolidate teaching facilities into two communities. The effect will be to separate many children from their own communities and families in the guise of reducing costs and adverse property tax impacts. Instead of building on proven assets by raising the bar and finding ways to improve education and achievement, we are being asked to lower the bar, stifling curiosity and high achievement. We were promised, before voting to consolidate, that cost savings and lower taxes would be achieved by streamlining bureaucracy and reducing administrative costs. The December 7th recommendation ignores, entirely, administrative costs.

We believe the Superintendent's proposal is contrary to the principal set forth in **Act 46: "Vermont recognizes the important role that a small school plays in the social and educational fabric of its community. It is not the State's intent to close its small schools, but rather to ensure that those schools have the opportunity to enjoy the expanded educational opportunities and economies of scale that are available to schools within larger, more flexible governance model"**

Having consolidated our local school districts into one larger district we have ceded our elected governance authority to a single school board whose members are elected based solely on town population. Those members have, in turn, ceded an inordinate amount of power to a district superintendent who is not chosen by voters. Here we find ourselves dismayed and bewildered by a proposal that will, if implemented, erode and ultimately destroy the foundation and fabric of our communities built slowly over the last two and one-half centuries.

Our Selectboards are our last locally elected governing bodies. We hold a high responsibility to defend our communities against proposals that, while perhaps well-intentioned, are ill-conceived and un-

democratic. We must insist and demand that the MAUSD board receive and fully-consider new and innovative proposals from our communities. All proposals, including Supt. Reen's, should be and must be independently evaluated on the same objective plane and criteria.

Therefore, we, the duly elected members of the Selectboards join in demanding that the MAUSD Superintendent and Board responsibly guide our local school systems and facilities creatively into the future. The future of our communities depends on the future of our schools and the future of our schools depends on the vitality of our communities.

We, the undersigned elected members of Selectboards in the MAUSD hereby agree and subscribe to the principles set forth in this letter.

Sincerely,



William H. Finger, Chair
Lincoln Selectboard

We, the undersigned elected members of the Town of Bristol Selectboard hereby agree and subscribe to the principles set forth in this letter.
