

# Cabot School Forum: Act 46 Options

October 5, 2017

# Goals for Tonight's Forum

1. Review Act 46 Process
2. Share information, answer questions about two potential options for Cabot School
3. Discuss next steps

# Our Act 46 Process in Cabot

- July-Sept: Research on other options for Cabot School to meet the goals of Act 46
- October: Share information with community ( Cabot Chronicle, this forum, and mailing to all residents)
- Oct. 5-16: Solicit and review community input (mailed survey)
- Oct. 16: School Board decides on one option to pursue

## Two Options for Cabot School:

1. Close Cabot High School, and then merge with Walden, Waterford, and Barnet
2. Keep Cabot High School open, and continue as a stand-alone, preK-12 school district

## Option 1 (Close high school): Impact on students

- Students in grades preK-8 would continue to be educated in Cabot
- Cabot high school students would be tuitioned to the public or private high school of their choice (transportation would be up to families)

## Option 1: Potential benefits:

- Education costs would be shared by taxpayers across 4 towns
- Fewer classrooms would be needed in Cabot
- Merger incentives from State of Vermont
- More course options and teachers available for Cabot high school students in larger schools
- Larger/different peer group for HS students

# Option 1: Potential Drawbacks

- Less access to extracurricular opportunities due to transportation, competition for spots
- Challenge to retain teachers now shared between HS and other grades
- Reduced Cabot voice on educational decisions for preK-8 on unified district school board
- No Cabot voice on curricula/cost of chosen high schools
- Financial and social impacts with HS closed

## Option 1: Governance

- Decisions in the unified “Caledonia Cooperative District” would be made by an eight- or twelve - member board, of which Cabot would have  $\frac{1}{4}$  the members
- Costs of educating all the students in the four-town district would be shared by taxpayers across the district (one single tax rate)



## Option 1: Steps to get there

1. Cabot residents may vote to close Cabot High School and become a prek-8, HS-tuitioning district
2. Residents of the Caledonia Cooperative District may then vote to add Cabot to their district  
(vote on #1 can be made conditional to a positive vote on #2)

## Option 1: Potential Costs

- Current Cabot Local Homestead Tax rate is \$1.7619 for the 2017/18 school year
- Local Cabot Homestead Tax rate as part of the unified Caledonia Cooperative District (including merger incentives from the State of Vermont) is projected to be \$1.7715 for the 2018/19 school year

## Option 2 (Keep Cabot High School): Impact on students

- PreK-8 and high school students would continue to be educated in Cabot
- High school program would be strengthened by additional staff and collaborations with other schools (Danville, for one)

## Option 2: Potential benefits

- Continuation of existing Cabot HS programs and staff
- Access to extracurricular opportunities
- Increased HS opportunities from added staff, collaborations w/ other schools
- Social/economic benefits for Cabot community

## Option 2: Potential Drawbacks

- Cost of educating Cabot students is not shared by taxpayers of a four-town district
- Not eligible for State incentives given to merging districts (continuation of the \$147K Small Schools Grant is uncertain)
- Maintaining the number of classrooms needed for a preK-12 campus (more renovation costs?)

## Option 2: Governance

- Continued 5-member Cabot School Board within a larger Supervisory Union
- Cabot would retain control over the education of our students

## Option 2: Steps to get there

1. Develop “Alternative Governance Proposal” to submit to Vermont State Board of Education
2. AGS Proposal describes how Cabot would meet the requirements of Act 46 without merging. (Due December 26, 2017)
3. VT State Board of Education will decide if Cabot’s proposal is included in the statewide education plan by November 30, 2018

## Option 2: Potential Cost

- Current Cabot Local Homestead Tax rate for the 2017-18 school year is \$1.7619
- Strengthening Cabot High School would likely require adding back 2.26 positions\*
  - \* Bringing the current 0.62 teaching positions in English and Social Studies back to full-time
  - \* Adding positions in design-technology and community connections/personalized learning



## Option 2: Potential Cost

- Adding the 2.26 staff to strengthen Cabot High School would potentially increase the Local Cabot Homestead Tax rate by 9% over this year's level ( from \$1.7619 to \$1.9336)
- If Cabot School gained, at the same time, 2 tuition students and increased its number of Equalized Pupils by 6, the potential increase in the Homestead Tax rate would be 1% over this year's level

# Cost Comparison: Property tax bills on a House/2 acres valued at \$100,000

Option	Projected Homestead Tax Rate *	Projected tax bill for 100K homestead
Current (17-18) Cabot School budget	\$1.7619	\$1,761
Option 1 ( merge and tuition high school students) in 2018-19 year	\$ 1.7715 (+0.5%) (tax rate reduction incentives in place)	\$1,771 (+ \$10)
Option 1 (merge and tuition high school students in 2022-23 year)	\$1.9949 (+13%) (after tax rate reductions have expired)	\$1,994 (+ \$233)
Option 2 (keep high school, add 2.2 staff in 2018-19 year)	\$1.9336 (+9.7%)	\$1,933 (+ \$172)
Option 2 (keep high school, add 2.2 staff , 2 tuitions and 6 Equalized pupils)	\$1.7758 (+0.7%)	\$1,775 (+ \$14)
Option 2 (keep high school, add 2.2 staff, 2 tuitions, 6 eq. pupils, and \$150K for facilities in 2018-19 year)	\$1.9391 (+10%)	\$1,939 (+ \$178)

# Property Tax reductions based on income

- In 2016, 333 Cabot households received property tax reductions by paying according to their household income
- These reductions totaled \$526,038, averaging \$1,580 per household

# Next steps:

- October 6: Surveys with information about the two options mailed to Cabot residents.
- October 16: School Board reviews survey responses mailed back to Cabot School.
- October 16: School Board selects one option to move forward on.

Questions: