



February 9, 2024

Dear Lamoille North Families and Staff,



As you are aware, we are in the midst of what has become a very complicated budget cycle. This year, we are operating under a new budget formula created by our Legislators, commonly referred to as Act 127. This Act represents years of work and stakeholder engagement to ensure that all students in Vermont have the underlying funding necessary to support their education equitably. You can read about the Act [HERE](#).

The gist of the Act introduced a different approach to how we count our students. In the past, we used what was called “Equalized Pupils”, as the way we counted our students, which accounted for some of the needs of our students but not nearly enough to account for rural districts that do not have multiple resources within a manageable distance. In an attempt to make more equitable services and resources available to **all** students, the Legislation came up with Act 127, which now accounts for sparsity, among other things, while still paying attention to poverty. At the beginning of our budget cycle, we determined we were well positioned to gain students with the new weighting formula and able to continue to provide our students with the resources and services they need and deserve. Under Act 127, we have had the promise of a cap of 5% growth on district tax rates as long as we kept our budgets to less than 10% growth on per student spending. We were able to accomplish this easily.

Yesterday, we received information from the Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, Emilie Kornheiser, that might change Act 127. She issued the following [statement](#).

Kornheiser will be proposing a Bill to address this issue and you can read the draft [HERE](#). This bill proposes to replace the 5% cap with a tax rate transition mechanism. According to Kornheiser, the Bill will be voted on the House floor next week. We are not certain what that means in terms of process and timing, but the intent is to move the Bill as quickly as possible.

Chair Kornheiser puts forth that they will be pushing for a quick vote on both replacing the 5% cap **and** giving districts the opportunity to re-warn, amend and delay voting on budgets.

There are important things to consider. First, we have not been given any legal guidance on statutory changes as of this writing, and we do not believe we have the authority to act on changing, amending or delaying a vote at this point; and, **our budgets are responsible, sound, and driven by student need.**

As a result of the conversations that are happening in the Legislature and the timing of those conversations, there is a tremendous amount of conjecture and “noise” around us about what might happen, to include rising tax rates and disappointing CLA’s. We are able to confidently look at how Lamoille North budgets have been developed and reaffirm that they are sound, responsible and centered on what we need to run a school system that serves our students. We indefinitely postponed building and renovation projects and most repairs and have focused on the resources our students need to access support for their education, engagement and

wellbeing. We are not seeking millions in capital improvements that we see other districts in the state proposing. We are proposing a budget that supports the basic entitlements to education that all of our students deserve.

Our Boards did an excellent job of balancing the opportunities presented under Act 127 to broaden and enrich services to our students without overburdening the statewide education budget and our local communities. They were thoughtful, methodical, and they met with all stakeholders via meetings, where public comment was heard, and for numerous budget presentations. Our Boards have proposed sound, reasonable budgets. And, as we have seen, we cannot predict how our property taxes will behave, but we can influence how our school budgets are developed. Please view our Annual Report [HERE](#).

Monday night, February 12, 2024, the business manager will be presenting the most up-to-date Act 127 information at a joint meeting of the Lamoille North School Boards (LNSU/LNMUUSD/Cambridge). The meeting will be held at Green Mountain Technology & Career Center in the CEC at 6:00 pm or you can join us online or by phone:

meet.google.com/xxf-optw-hfn

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We will update you with any further budget information as it becomes available.

Very truly yours,

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