

TOWN: East Montpelier
 FACILITATOR: Andy, Zach, and Amelia
 NOTE TAKER: Alicia
 HOW MANY PEOPLE IN GROUP: 15 community members

	QUESTION	NOTES
1	<p>What kinds of benefits or opportunities could come with multi-town school communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In thinking about large classes (Grade 1 - 22 students), having multiple, smaller classes is exciting. ● Potential for more offerings and multi-curricular is exciting. ● Larger schools will have less threat for the potential to be shut down. ● Socially, for the students, having more children and opportunities to connect and make friendships. ● Better equitable use of resources - rather than having 6 kids in a class in one building and 22 in another, there could be better use of resources. ● Delivery of special education services could be better, more equitably distributed. ● Fewer part-time positions. This may lead to higher retention of teachers. ● The message this year (combining into a school that serves both communities), as opposed to last year (felt more like the focus on closing some, keeping others), is a very important distinction. ● Teaching teams at each grade level. ● More opportunities for teachers with larger class sizes to give layer 2 interventions to students. ●
2	<p>What concerns or worries do you have when you think about possible school closures?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unsure if this will actually save any money for our schools. There hasn't been enough data to show this. The board needs to be clear about this and whether there will be savings. ● Sixth graders at U-32 is a worry. Is there infrastructure work that needs to be done to make sure that 12-year-olds

		<p>won't be with 18-year-olds?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What economic analysis has the board done on the economy on the towns that might lose their elementary schools? • Concerns about U-32 and sixth-grade. Can U-32 absorb a sixth-grade class? What would this look like? How would you get another core to fit, and where would it be? • If the towns vote not to close the schools, would sixth grade still go to U-32? • What about talks with Montpelier? • Would really want to see a built-out plan with what sixth grade looks like at U-32 before ever considering this scenario.
3	What feels most challenging about creating multi-town elementary schools?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does paying taxes matter with merging with other towns get factored in? • Social services and community outreach - this will have to reach farther geographically than they do now.
4	If a closure of a school facility happens and a multi-town school were to replace a town's school, what should we emphasize in building new school communities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a new school identity and culture. • Emphasis should be on the students - making sure all kids are included. • Thinking about the important traditions in each community and ensuring these continue. • Naming will be a challenge - school sports, identity. • Making sure that the schools that are existing (East Montpelier and Rumney) don't dominate in the identity process. • Sports teams - recreation clubs vs. school sports teams. Pay vs. no pay.
5	How can we help our new multi-town school communities grow, connect, and thrive?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community events that bring everyone in. • Sporting events. • Meet and greets with families. • Opportunities to bring kids together before the end of the school year.
6	What would help families and community members feel real	See above.

	ownership and pride in a new multi-town school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collective effort in creating a new school identity. ● It is important for each school to recognize the celebrations the schools have and not lose these. ● As much staff carry-over as possible for staff and students.
7	What would help students feel comfortable, welcome, and at home in a new multi-town school?	See above.
8	What will make 6th-grade students feel welcome and ready to move to the U-32 middle school?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If this decision happens, it needs to happen soon. We cannot wait until spring to tell our fifth graders that they are going to U-32. ● There needs to be a buffer year before this happens. ● Worry that this will get voted down just because of the sixth grade. This is producing a high amount of anxiety. ● It is hard enough having children go in seventh grade - to rush this now does not feel good. ● There is not enough of a build-out plan right now for this to happen next year. ● What does "True Middle School" mean? This was proposed in the handout. ● If there were a buffer year, it would force the Calais kids to have two transitions in two years. ● Communication with students is super important - keeping them up to speed. ● Would sixth grade have a recess if at U-32? ● Would sixth graders ride the same bus as high schoolers? ● Our sixth graders are still very innocent - exposing them to older kids at a younger age is scary. ● What about providing older big buddies for these students?
9	What could the district do to address concerns and make this transition easier for everyone?	See above.

10	Are there any other things that you'd like to share as we move through this process?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Bring back world language at the elementary school.● We need to bring students into this conversation. When and how should this happen?● Make sure that we're reaching out to elementary students as well as those at U-32.● Kids are really resilient. We need to make sure that we're really looking out for the best interests of the kids and pay attention to how much of what we're hearing is about the needs of adults.
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Feedback:

This process felt better than in small groups - being able to listen to everyone was helpful.