

*Understanding Act 46:
Options for Orleans Central SU*

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Act 46: Why this Law?

- ▶ Understand the context –
 - ▶ Statewide:
 - ▶ High expectations for our schools to meet the needs of today's students – Education Quality Standards, Universal PreK, Act 77
 - ▶ Increasing poverty and addiction rates
 - ▶ Growing inequity in student opportunity and outcomes
 - ▶ Significant cost pressures
 - ▶ High leadership turnover
 - ▶ Local:
 - ▶ What are the challenges facing our districts and schools? How are these challenges impeding our ability to meet student needs?

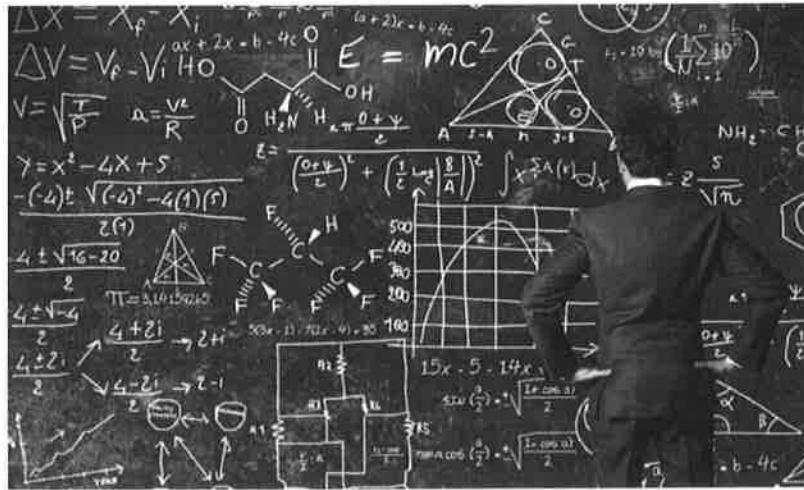
What Do We Want for All Our Children?



What Do Our Communities Value?



What Challenges Do We Face?



Orleans Central Supervisory Union

- ▶ Enrollment has remained more or less steady, with spikes and valleys in some years
- ▶ Over \$500,000 in small schools grants
- ▶ Study committee report identified significant disparities in course offerings between member school districts
- ▶ Tax rates in member districts have been increasing over time (FY 11 – FY 15):

Albany – 27.1%

Barton – 10.4%

Brownington – 18.8%

Glover – 25.9%

Irasburg – 7.9%

Orleans – 11.9%

Westmore – 40.4%

Lake Region – 29.5%

Act 46: Creating PreK-12 Education Systems

On or before July 1, 2019 educational opportunities in Vermont shall be provided through “**sustainable governance structures**” that provide PreK-12 educational opportunities at a reasonable cost.



Act 46: Creating PreK-12 Education Systems

These governance structures are expected to achieve the following outcomes:

- ▶ Provide **equity** in the quality and variety of educational opportunities
- ▶ Lead students to **meet or exceed the Education Quality Standards**
- ▶ **Maximize operational efficiencies** through greater flexibility to manage, share, and transfer resources, with a goal of increasing district-level student-to-staff ratios
- ▶ Promote **transparency and accountability**
- ▶ At a cost taxpayers **value**



Act 46: Preferred Governance Structure

- ▶ A single PreK-12 district
- ▶ Serving at least 900 students
- ▶ That has one of the four most common structures:
 - ▶ Operates all grades PreK-12;
 - ▶ Operates PreK-8 and tuitions 9-12;
 - ▶ Operates PreK-6 and tuitions 7-12; or
 - ▶ Pays tuition for all students grades PreK-12.
- ▶ Districts that are able to merge into a “preferred structure” that is operational by July 1, 2019 are also able to obtain incentives – there is no deadline for a vote of the electorate.

▶

Act 153: MUUD

- ▶ The Modified Unified Union School District:
 1. If ALL local elementary school districts in the member towns of an existing union high school district vote whether to establish a unified union school district providing prekindergarten or kindergarten through grade 12; and
 2. If a **majority but not all** of the elementary school districts votes in favor of establishing the unified union school district; then
 3. A new modified union school district shall be established that shall:
 - (A) provide to the students residing in the member towns of the union high school district education in the grades provided by the union high school district; and (B) provide elementary education **to the students residing in the current elementary school districts that voted in favor of the unified union school district.**
- ▶ Approved by the electorate prior to July 1, 2017.*

▶ * Date may be moved to November 30, 2017 under S.122 in districts with failed vote.

Merger Incentives (Preferred and MUUSD)

- ▶ Homestead tax rate reduction of \$.08/\$.06/\$.04/\$.02 in the first four years of operation.
- ▶ New district will keep any small schools grants currently received by any of the merging districts.
- ▶ Transition facilitation grant of \$150,000, or 5% of the base education amount multiplied by the new district's ADM, whichever is less.
- ▶ Keep the 3.5% hold-harmless protection for declining enrollment, which otherwise will be eliminated in FY 2021.
- ▶ Exempt from the requirement to repay a portion of state construction aid upon sale of a school building.

Self-Assessment, Quality Reviews & Statewide Plan

- ▶ Districts that do not take action to reorganize themselves voluntarily and will not do so by July 1, 2019 are required to take certain actions prior to November 30, 2017.*
 - ▶ School board must evaluate the district's ability to meet the state's goals and meet with other school boards in the region.
 - ▶ District (or group of districts) must submit a proposal to either retain its current governance structure or form a different structure with other district(s) or otherwise act jointly (joint contract school, e.g.) to the Secretary and State Board of Education.
 - ▶ The proposal should demonstrate how the district will be able to achieve the goals and must identify specific actions the district(s) will take to achieve the goals.

▶ *Date may change to January 31, 2018, per S.122

Self-Assessment, Quality Reviews & Statewide Plan

- ▶ Proposals to retain current structure or form an “alternative structure” must follow the procedures established by State Board Rule 3400.
- ▶ Guidelines indicate an alternative structure may meet the goals of Act 46, particularly if:
 - ▶ The proposal states how the SU will maximize efficiencies and take collective responsibility for educating all students PreK-12
 - ▶ The SU serves 1,100 students*
 - ▶ The SU has the fewest number of districts practicable
- ▶ In 2018 the Secretary will develop a statewide plan to transition all districts to sustainable governance structures.

▶ *This may change to 900 based on S.122

Self-Assessment, Quality Reviews & Statewide Plan

- ▶ Statewide plan will be adopted by the State Board on November 30, 2018. Implementation of the transition effective July 1, 2019.
- ▶ Statewide plan **will not** require districts to lose choice or require districts to pay tuition.
- ▶ The statewide plan will not include the following districts:
 - ▶ Interstate school districts
 - ▶ Regional career tech center school districts
 - ▶ Districts that voluntarily merge into the preferred governance structure or a structure eligible to receive RED incentives by July 1, 2019

▶

Can We Tackle Our Challenges and Better Meet the Needs of All Students?

- ▶ What limitations prevent us from making our system better?
- ▶ How can we change, bend, or break those limits?
- ▶ What “how we’ve always done it” assumptions might be keeping us from finding ways to create a better set of opportunities for our children?



Orleans Central: Start With a Conversation

What do we want for our students?

Where do you see the district in 5-10 years?

What opportunities do you see that could come from collaborating with other districts?

What do you want to preserve in the future?



Contact Information

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APPENDIX D – ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS

**Table 1 – Middle School Analysis
OCSU Middle Level Time Allocations in Minutes/Week**

	<u>Language</u>				
	<u>Arts</u>	<u>Math</u>	<u>Science</u>	<u>Social Studies</u>	<u>Humanities</u>
Albany	375	415	240	***	350
Barton	480	480	240	240	0
Brownington	***	450	250	***	600
Glover	470**	225	225	225	225
Irasburg	***	435	435	***	435
Orleans	315	315	315	315	0
OCSU Avg	410	387	284	260	403

** This is the mean for grades 6-8

*** Reading instruction and Social studies embedded in humanities

Table 1, above, displays the minutes allotted for each subject in the middle level grades (6-8) at each of the six OCSU schools. The minutes per week in math vary widely, with Glover and Orleans offering over an hour less per week than the average in the other four schools. Each school's varied approaches to language arts is also evident: Albany, Brownington, and Irasburg offer humanities as opposed to a discrete social studies program. Time allocated for science programs varies as well, with Irasburg students receiving nearly 90 minutes per day while Albany, Barton and Glover students have under 50 minutes per day. These disparities would be addressed if one board governed all the schools.

The most compelling disparity is in the offering of algebra for 8th grade students. Students in Albany get algebra instruction via independent study. Brownington offers algebra as part of the eighth grade mathematics program. Orleans provides an additional 120 minutes per week to some eighth graders whose elective options are limited as a result. Some Barton, Glover, and Irasburg students take algebra at Lake Region High School. While all OCSU students can earn high school credit for algebra by attaining a 75 or higher on the mid-term and final exams, those students enrolled in classes at LRHS have a clear advantage because they are being taught by teachers with a strong background in that subject.

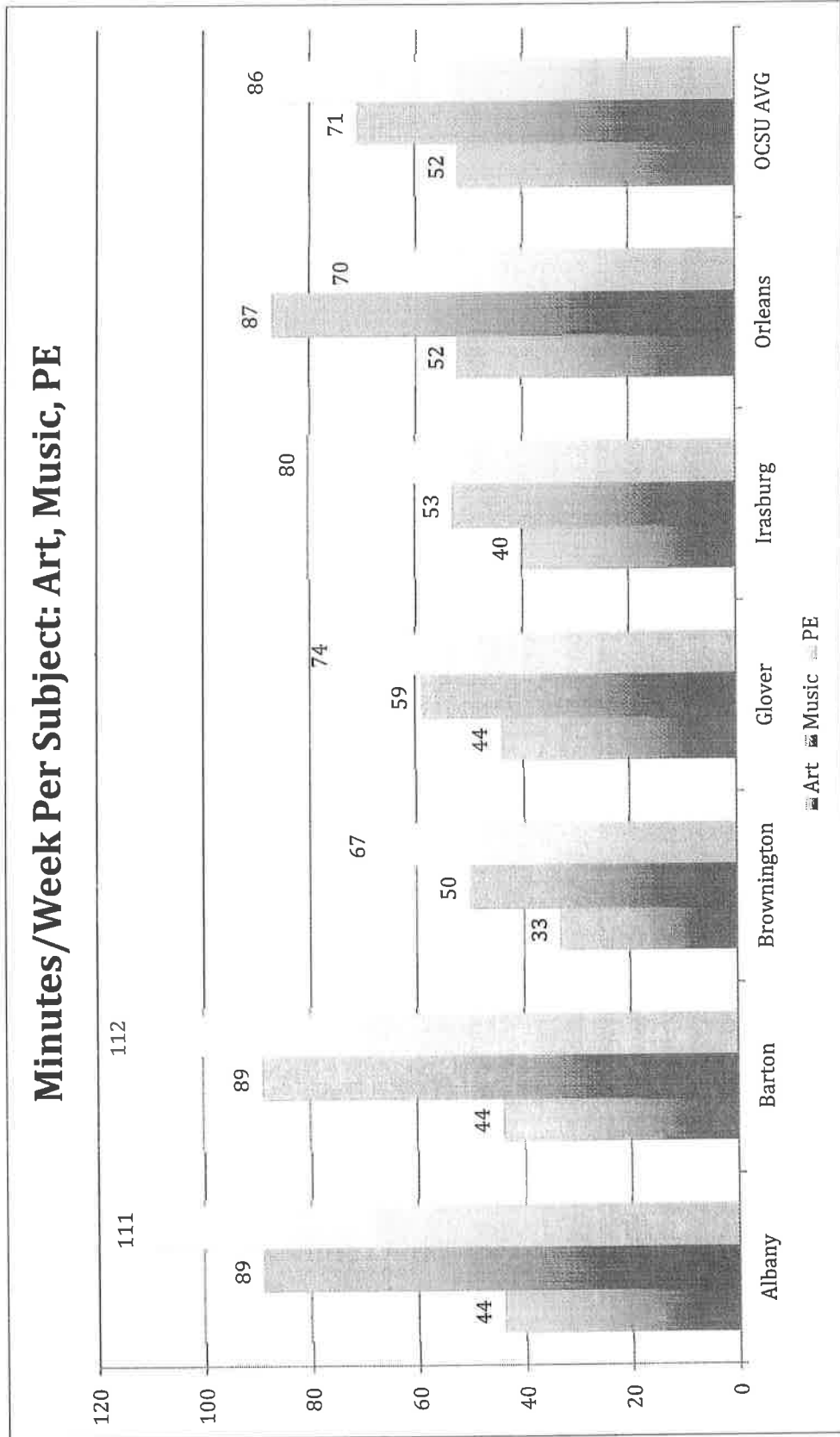
APPENDIX D – ADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS

Table 2 – Staffing Analysis: OCSU Minutes Per Week in Art, Music, PE

The table below and the chart on accompanying page display the minutes per week each student receives in each of the six OCSU schools in Art, Music, and PE. Note that this table and the accompanying chart assume that each grade level receives instruction in that area and that the minutes of instruction are identical at all grade levels. While it is unlikely that is the case since schools may provide more time for students in upper grade levels, these figures do provide a means of measuring the availability of these subjects in each building. The table does make it clear that each of the elementary schools in OCSU has some degree of inequity in one or more of these areas, inequities that would be addressed if all the schools were governed by one board.

	<u>Art</u>	<u>Music</u>	<u>PE</u>
Albany	44	89	111
Barton	44	89	112
Brownington	33	50	67
Glover	44	59	74
Irasburg	40	53	80
Orleans	52	87	70
OCSU AVG	43	71	86

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Table 3 – Staffing Analysis: Support Services, Academic Support Services

The table below displays the student to staff ratios for each of the six OCSU schools in five areas: Guidance, Nursing, Library, Reading Intervention, and Math Intervention. The number in each cell is the number of students for each staff member, which is the metric the State uses to determine minimum staffing levels. The higher the number in the cell, the lower the opportunities for contact with each student. For example, in Brownington, where a counselor works one day per week, students have five times less access to counseling than Orleans students, where a counselor is available five days per week. By comparing the OCSU average student-to-staff ratio to each school's ratio, it is clear that each of the elementary schools in OCSU has some degree of inequity in one or more of these areas, inequities that would be addressed if all the schools were governed by one board.

	<u>Guidance</u>	<u>Nurse</u>	<u>Librarian</u>	<u>Reading Intervention.</u>	<u>Math Intervention.</u>
Albany	405	135	203	90	***
Barton	268	161	403	161	161
Brownington	540	180	NONE	108	108
Glover	305	153	305	122	NONE
Irasburg	338	135	***	135	482
Orleans	103	206	***	206	206
OCSU Avg	326	162	303	137	239

*** = A support person is assigned to provide these services in lieu of a certified staff member