



Carrabassett Valley School Department

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Thursday, October 20th, 2022

Dear MSAD 58 School Committee and Administrators,

Over the last several years, there has been a lot of change and uncertainty in our regional area regarding the longevity and health of MSAD 58. Even after this year's MSAD 58 middle school consolidation, it has come to our attention that decision makers are still considering the closure of Mt. Abram High School as a solution to budgetary shortfalls.

While we appreciate wanting to solve a budgetary crisis, we believe that an actual closure of Mt. Abram would be devastating to our region. It would fracture the sense of community itself, scattering children further away from home. Graduation and extra-curricular participation rates would decrease due to the logistical and social hardships that would result. Parents would not choose to move or live here knowing that there were limited high school options.

Furthermore, we believe that it is extremely harmful to even continue *discussing* Mt. Abram's closure as an option. Exploring closure heightens panic in many ways. It threatens the mental well-being of our matriculating students and the ability to hire and retain great educators. Within our own town, which is enjoying a burgeoning student-aged population thanks to covid, parents are nonetheless questioning their 9-12 options and living here, due to a lack of faith in Mt. Abram's longevity.

The closure of Mt. Abram, no matter if it is real or just discussed, contributes to the spiral *downwards* that people *without* hope predict - decreased population numbers will cause further economic and social depression, causing further exodus of young families.

We want Mt. Abram to succeed. Carrabassett Valley, with its large tax base, has the potential ability to contribute financially, and substantially, to help our local schools. An example of our funds in action is that we increased our Innovative Education Fund this year from \$25,000 to \$100,000. We received 23 applications, the vast majority of which are from educators in MSAD 58. The passion, talent, drive, and devotion to the students that these applicants possessed blew us away. It was so discordant with the "doom and gloom" talks of closure.

The MSAD 58 crisis is a regional problem. We are asking you today to join forces with other education stakeholders from Carrabassett Valley, Stratton, and the Unorganized Territories. Together, we have the thought-leaders, financial resources, and passion to create a well-researched, comprehensive, visionary solution. A solution that *doesn't* involve school closures but involves embracing Mt. Abram as a vibrant educational opportunity comprised of engaged

students, an amazing location, and devoted educators. We have no doubt that together, we could chart a 10-year path towards making Mt. Abram High School one of the best high schools in the state.

Working together would instead contribute to the spiral *upwards* that people *with* hope predict - if we build it, they will come. Economic and social prosperity would ensue.

We also want to make it clear that due to the instability of MSAD 58, we feel it is our obligation to proactively investigate alternative secondary school solutions to secure future quality education for our children. It is our strong preference, though, to be heavily involved, planning-wise and financially, in charting a path towards a great 10-year vision for Mt. Abram.

Our question to you, the MSAD 58 School Board and Administration, is - How can we help? Can we host a working session with MSAD 58's, Stratton's, and the EUT's School Boards and Education leaders to start creating a 10-year vision that will make Mt. Abram one of the best high schools in the state?

Let's choose a hope mindset together.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

The Carrabassett Valley School Committee