

# CHITTENDEN SOUTH SUPERVISORY UNION

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December 15, 2010

Commissioner of Education  
VT Department of Education  
120 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05620-2501

Dear Commissioner Vilaseca,

The Chittenden South Supervisory Union and its member school districts have continued to address budget challenges, with a particular emphasis on responding to downturns in the economy and declining enrollments during the past few years. For example, Shelburne School District has not seen an increase in education spending since FY09. Hinesburg School District has cut over \$416,000 in FY 09 and FY10. Charlotte School District level funded their budget in FY10 and cut \$287,086 for FY11. Williston and CVU have seen meager increases in the past two years (1.06% to 3%). Shelburne and Williston are within \$440 of the statewide EPP average, and CVU is below the statewide EPP average. It is within this context that we approached Challenges for Change.

In early September the administrators started working together to review every single budget line to determine what, if anything could be reduced, eliminated, or reconfigured to save money. Together they developed a three-tiered approach to Challenges for Change. Tier I represents austerity measures – those cuts we would be recommending whether or not we had received a challenge from the State. Tier II represents the cuts necessary to maintain FY11 net educational spending levels, without adjustments for annual inflationary costs, and Tier III represents the cuts necessary to meet the Challenges for Change target. As is true elsewhere, the difficulty presented by the Challenge is that the capacity to meet the target is greatly dependent on other factors such as available fund balances to apply as revenue, pending retirements, and increases in utilities, contracts, health insurance and other operational costs.

In an effort to engage the entire educational community in this difficult task, the boards held community forums in each of our communities to review budget challenges. In addition, the administration met with faculty and staff groups in each of the schools to explain the challenge we'd received, the process we'd undertaken, and to solicit their input.

In the end, the tough decisions about what our budgets would include were made by those who are elected to be stewards of public education in our communities – the school board directors. In determining their course of action, they sought to balance the recommendations of the administration - in the form of the “tiered” reductions, the input from the community, and the educational needs of their students. It is a tribute to all of them that they were able to realize the savings indicated in this report – whether or not they were able to meet the full Challenge target.

Three of our districts intend to meet the Challenge. Three of our districts are not able to meet the Challenge.

Shelburne School District intends to meet its Challenges for Change target. They are able to do so by applying a generous fund balance (tribute to the hard work they did in the last budget cycle), profiting from retirements, making cuts to discretionary spending, and benefiting from a reduced special education service plan.

Hinesburg School District intends to meet the Challenges for Change target. They are able to do so by making across-the-board cuts in discretionary spending (supplies, texts, equipment), reducing programming, and reducing and eliminating positions. Their work is not yet complete, but they are committed to meeting the challenge. In efforts to reduce spending, Hinesburg will have cut about a million dollars over two years from a nearly eight million dollar budget.

Chittenden South Supervisory Union intends to meet its Challenges for Change target. It is able to do so by making cuts across the board in all discretionary spending and by applying a healthy fund balance, again as a result of austerity measures implemented in the last budget cycle.

Charlotte School District is unable to meet its Challenges for Change target by the December 15 deadline. They are unable to do so because they do not have the necessary financial data (from the Department of Education) to adequately inform their decision. They are equally concerned that meeting the Challenge would result in less than adequate education for the students of Charlotte. However, they will continue to evaluate their situation as revenue numbers are provided by the State and anticipate further reduction in their education spending. The work they have done so far would result in a 1.4% reduction from current education spending.

Williston School District was unable to meet its Challenges for Change target. They were unable to do so because they believe that the cuts required to fully meet the challenge would drastically compromise the quality of the education that they could provide for their students.

Champlain Valley Union High School District is unable to meet its Challenges for Change target. Their baseline budget – the cost of operating the same programs, with the same personnel, in the very same way increased their net spending by \$322,146. - resulting in a true challenge of \$722, 671. Like Williston, they believe that the cuts required to fully meet the challenge would drastically compromise the quality of the education that they could provide for their students.

In total, CSSU and its member school districts intend to realize \$619,409 of the \$1,169,526 (2.06%) Challenges for Change. Once our contract obligations and year-to-year increases over which we have no control, were factored in, our real challenge number was \$1,811,973 representing a 3.45% decrease in net education spending from FY11.

The frustration felt by all boards, administration, and community members was the lack of a systemic means of attaining changes that would be more cost effective and produce better opportunities and results for our students. Because member districts of the Chittenden South Supervisory Union have been working collaboratively for more than ten years to improve efficiencies in the supervisory union by centralizing essential functions, the challenge presented did not result in any new centralizing functions. In the end, whether a district was able to meet its challenge was a result of "cuts and luck" versus creating newly developed educational and operational efficiencies, which we believed to be the spirit of Challenges for Change.

Sincerely,



Elaine F. Pinckney

On behalf of:

Jeanne Jensen, CVU Chair

Lynne Jaunich, CSD Chair

Paul Lamberson, HSD Chair

Russell Caffry, SSD Chair

Holly Rouelle, WSD Chair

Darlene Worth, CSSU Chair

Please save this file as:

SU0xx C4C.xls

where "xx" is your S.U. number

Drop-down filter to choose S.U.

Enter the best estimate for FY2012 expenditures in column 1 and FY2012 local revenues in column 2.			Do not enter data in these columns.			Enter school district specific targets in column 7 and the amount met in column 8. S.U. targets are included as assessments.			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
FY2012 ESTIMATED Expenditures	FY2012 ESTIMATED Lcl Revenues	FY2012 ESTIMATED Education Spending	FY2012 Proposed Ed Spending Agg'd to S.U.	FY2011 Ed Spend Agg'd to S.U.	Change in Ed Spend FY2012 minus FY2011	School District and S.U. Reduction as Set by Boards	\$\$\$ Amount of Reduction District or S.U. Achieved	Remaining Reduction Unmet by School District or S.U. as entity	Remaining Reduction Unmet by aggregate S.U.
6	6	6	1	60	0	0	2	4	1
64,710,144	11,190,820	53,519,324	53,519,324	54,138,733	(619,409)	(1,169,526)	(619,409)	550,117	550,117
9	10	11	12	14	15	16	17	18	19
T045 Charlotte SU014	6,874,586	728,215	6,146,371			(136,771)	(43,563)	93,208	
T096 Hinesburg SU014	7,460,369	1,238,078	6,222,291			(138,937)	(138,937)	-	
T178 St. George SU014	1,925,913	233,058	1,692,855			-	36,074	36,074	
T186 Shelburne SU014	11,143,499	1,773,057	9,370,442			(195,343)	(195,343)	-	
T244 Williston SU014	15,993,488	3,387,660	12,605,828			(297,950)	(293,953)	3,997	
U015 Champlain Vall SU014	21,312,289	3,830,752	17,481,537			(400,525)	16,313	416,838	
S014 Chittenden Sc SU014	NA	NA	NA	53,519,324	54,138,733	(619,409)			550,117

GovID	LEAID	S.U.	##
1	2	7	8
T045	Charlotte	SU014	
T096	Hinesburg	SU014	
T178	St. George	SU014	
T186	Shelburne	SU014	
T244	Williston	SU014	
U015	Champlain Vall	SU014	
S014	Chittenden Sc	SU014	

The target for CSSU = \$1,169,526. (2.16%) (Updated 12-15-10 with Actuals)

CSSU example:

A	+	B	-	C	=	D
FY11 Net Education Spending \$5,392,585. PS: \$3,711,849.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund balance</li> <li>• Health insurance</li> <li>• Salary forecast</li> <li>• Attrition</li> <li>• Fuel, utilities, contracts</li> <li>• Capital debt</li> <li>• Revenue</li> </ul>		Total Challenge for Change Target \$124,093. P.S.: \$85,416.		Targeted FY12 Net Education Spending \$5,268,492. PS: \$3,626,433.
				CORE: \$1,680,736.		CORE: \$38,677.
						CORE: \$1,642,059.
						<b><u>ACTUALS</u></b>
						TOTAL: \$5,256,416.
						PS: \$3,627,738
						CORE: \$1,628,678

A+B= baseline budget  
 "amount needed to open the doors"  
 = \$.