

Marlboro Town Meeting Day Merger Vote

March 7, 2017

Triggers and Unknowns

A Yes vote on a merger with Dover and Wardsboro on Town Meeting Day triggers...

- Creation of one Governance Body (Marlboro receives 1/3 voting power)
- Consolidation into one School Budget
- Moving vote to Australian Ballot
- Tax decrease (amount estimated to be between .12 and .20)
- Tax incentives for first 4 years
- Marlboro would close 7-8 and tuition Middle School grades
- School assets are transferred to the new governance body (no longer solely Marlboro's debt/ownership)

Current Unknowns for *Yes* vote (questions for the Study Committee to answer in January)

- How will the merger create opportunities for students? Reducing tax rate does not expand opportunities
- No guarantee that the new board won't simply keep cuts/incentives and not increase opportunities
- How will SpEd be handled (all three towns use different methods)
- Unsure what existing programming will remain (current study committee does not want to tie the hands of future board)
- What will per pupil spending be for Marlboro since other towns we are merging with currently spend less

A No vote on a merger with Dover and Wardsboro on Town Meeting Day triggers...

- Potential loss of Small School Supports and Grants (~\$112,000)
- Loss of ADM supports [Marlboro only benefits in a small capacity from this as our enrollment is steady]
- Alternative Structure Committee Proposal Preparation and Submission by the Marlboro School Board

Proposal inclusions outside of current MES programming:

- exploration with WSESU and Brattleboro for increasing opportunities (Brattleboro already enthusiastic)
 - reintroduction of shared Special Education across the SU (Marlboro tabled a proposal for the WCSU due to Act 46 timing)
- Alternative Structure Committee hires consultant for assistance and review on proposal submission
 - One-year grace period during which Marlboro can vote to re-join the Unified District of Dover and Wardsboro, allowing time to explore other options

Current Unknowns for *No* vote

- Unclear whether we can keep our small schools (mixed signals from consultants, legislators, superintendents, and news)
- Unclear whether the state or SU will move to share Special Education costs through the SU or Region (legislators have said it is under review and next on the list in terms of ed reform)
- Unclear what programming areas at MES would be affected if there is a loss of \$112,000 annually
- Unclear what the AOE decision would be to do with Marlboro should the Alternative Structure proposal be denied (see possibilities next slide)

Alternative Structure Committee Proposal Denied by State Board of Ed (Options list)

- Marlboro is added to a list of "unmerged" districts that the AOE begins placing in new areas
- Marlboro lobbies the AOE, expressing best pairings with neighboring K-8 districts
- Hold a re-vote to re-enter the merger with Dover and Wardsboro