

BRIDGING THE GAP: Tuition for 7TH and 8TH graders

Understanding the working of an SAU can at times be complicated, particularly at the time of year when budgets are being created and proposed. Along with FY10 budget proposals, this year the Mont Vernon and Amherst Districts of SAU39 also will be proposing a renewal of the ten-year tuition agreement for the 7th and 8th graders who attend Amherst Middle School from Mont Vernon.

This agreement has worked well for both districts these past nine years. Mont Vernon pays Amherst approximately \$850,000 to one million dollars per year on average for the education of all the seventh and eighth graders coming from the K-6 Mont Vernon Village School. These students join their Amherst schoolmates at Amherst Middle School, and then continue to the Souhegan School District for high school. The tuition dollars pay for teachers, materials and supplies and for the debt on Amherst buildings, including the debt incurred from the recent renovations to the Middle School.

Mont Vernon will be holding a public hearing on the tuition agreement at its School Board meeting this Thursday, November 13 at 7:00 p.m. at the Village School. The MVVS Board also will be discussing how the calculation of the most recent tuitions has affected its budget this FY09 school year. Other public hearings will be held when the two Boards and their attorneys reach a proposed agreement for FY11 and beyond. This agreement will be presented as a warrant article and voted along with other contract obligations that affect the school budget.

I often have said that the goal of the SAU is to make a student's journey through the three districts that comprise it as seamless as possible. This tuition agreement for 7th and 8th graders is a key piece of that journey. The public's attention to and understanding of it will be most appreciated.