



## **SLATE VALLEY UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

#### **Slate Valley Explores District Reorganization Looks to Consolidate Middle School at High School**

Fair Haven, VT, November 9, 2020 -- The Slate Valley Unified Union School District is exploring a district reorganization plan to consolidate 7th and 8th grade students at the high school beginning in the Fall of 2022.

Like many school districts throughout the state, Slate Valley faces declining enrollment, infrastructure needs, increasing costs, and decreasing capacity to meet student needs. The board's move to explore reorganization is an effort to address these challenges.

"We can't continue on the same path and expect better results such as increasing opportunities, an increase in student outcomes and a decrease in taxes," said Brooke Olsen-Farrell, Superintendent. "The math simply doesn't add up."

Castleton Village School currently serves grades 6 through 8. The consolidation of district middle school students at the high school would result in the closure, or educational repurposing of the school. Beginning with the 2022-2023 school year, 6th grade students would attend Castleton Elementary School and 7th and 8th grade students would join other middle school students from across the district at the high school.

"Castleton Elementary School has enough room to easily absorb the 6th graders at CVS," said Olsen-Farrell. "Closing CVS could potentially save the district over 1 million dollars."

The board is exploring a plan to make Benson Village School a PreK through 6 school for the 2021-2022 school year. With a total of 8 students anticipated for grades 7 and 8, operating as a PreK through 8 school would not be sustainable.

“Currently, we have 2 teachers teaching across 5 grade levels and while they are doing an amazing job, it isn’t best practice,” said Olsen-Farrell.

Benson middle school students would have in-district school choice (with transportation provided) to any Slate Valley middle school for the 2021-2022 school year. The board is anticipated to vote on the Benson portion of the reorganization plan on December 7.

“By having a fully combined middle school on the high school campus, we can increase opportunities and decrease costs,” said Olsen-Farrell. “This will allow us to address some of our infrastructure needs.”

The board is anticipated to vote on the full middle school portion of the reorganization plan on May 24, 2021. There will be many opportunities for community engagement as the board explores district reorganization.

Beginning on the week of November 30th, Slate Valley invites the community for a Week of Virtual Listening Tours where board members will be online to chat with community members. Further information for these events will be available at [www.SlateValleyUnified.org](http://www.SlateValleyUnified.org).

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