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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Slate Valley School Board Moves Forward with Innovation Project
Creates Educational Opportunities; Addresses Declining Enrollment and Facilities Needs

Fair Haven, VT, November 7, 2019 – The Slate Valley Unified Union School District (SVUUSD) Board recently voted to move forward with the full scope of the Slate Valley Innovation Project. As a result, the board is prepared to warn a bond vote for the spring of 2020. The bond will address facilities needs across the district and include a plan to house 7th and 8th grade in an autonomous middle school wing connected to Fair Haven Union High School (FHUHS).

Slate Valley, like many school districts in the state, is faced with declining enrollment and huge facilities needs due to deferred maintenance. Over the past year, a committee including board members, community members, and staff have been working to examine facility and educational issues that are not being addressed in the current configuration or with current infrastructure.

The committee looked at ways in which the existing buildings in the district could be repurposed to address both educational and facilities needs. Based on committee findings, the current use of space is not efficient and does not match the educational programs that the district is implementing.

Two central ideas emerged from the committee work. First, that there was an educational need for a district middle school, and second, that aging infrastructure at FHUHS and Orwell Village School must be addressed.

In terms of the middle school, the committee considered different buildings within the school district that might accommodate 7th and 8th grade. There was not a perfect scenario that would allow this without some construction or major renovations. The committee then looked at desired educational outcomes for our students. Since the bulk of renovations proposed in this project are needed at FHUHS and there are educational benefits to siting a middle school on the high school campus, the committee decided to site the middle school on the high school campus.

Over the next several months, community members will have the opportunity to become involved and hear more about the project. On November 20, at 6:30 p.m. members of the community are invited to a tour of Fair Haven Union High School. This will be an opportunity for the public to visit the high school, see current facilities needs firsthand, and learn more about the proposed project.

“We are excited to bring this project to the voters of Slate Valley as this project will bring with it new opportunities for our students and for the Slate Valley School District as a whole,” said Brooke Olsen-Farrell, SVUUSD Superintendent.

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