

THANK:

- **Smilie School students** for hosting and for tomato plant:
 - **John Alberghini**, Superintendent
 - **Barbara Tomasi-Gay**, Principal
 - **Julia Dunn**, Senior at Mt. Mansfield and a student rep to Chittenden East School Board
- **Chair Dave Sharpe, Vice-Chair Bernie Juskiewicz** (JES – KUH – WITZ) and the entire **House Education Committee**
- **Chair Ann Cummings, Senator Phil Baruth** and the entire **Senate Education Committee**
- House and Senate Leadership
- **Jeff Francis**, Superintendents Association
- **Ken Page**, Principals Association
- **Steve Dale** and **Nicole Mace**, School Boards Association
- **Martha Allen** and **Joel Cook**, VT NEA (cannot attend)
- **Lisa Ventriss**, VT Business Round Table
- **Betsy Bishop**, Chamber of Commerce
- **Stephan Morse**, Chair of State Board of Ed and **all board members**
- **Rebecca Holcombe** and the **Agency of Education team**

SMILIE SCHOOL

- Happy to be at Smilie school in Bolton
- Joined by prek – 4 graders, and the 4th graders took trip to State House this year to see how laws are made – now they will see a bill become a law
- Smilie is an example of what we are seeing across VT - was struggling to keep its doors open because of the challenges we facing in education in the State of Vermont
- The community came together, looked at the facts, looked at data and decided if they organized themselves a little better, their kids, families, schools, teachers and administrators would benefit – and they would save money at the same time. And they were right!

WHY THIS BILL

- Lost over 20,000 students in 20 years in the system
- No reconfiguration given that decline
- 4.7 to 1 staff to student ratios in schools
- Highest per pupil cost in the state
- Lowest class sizes in the country – 20% of VT elementary school classrooms have between 2 and 9 children
- Infrastructure is too large
- Without change, no guarantee that all students will have equal access to high-quality education to prepare for 21st century
- Not succeeding in moving students past high school to college or training
- The only local control left is choosing which program to cut
- This bill has the potential to be a historic game changer for VT Education:
 - Creates incentives for local mergers
 - Removes contradictory incentives which send mixed messages to districts and discourages collaboration
 - If by 2019, a district has made no plans to change and is not doing right by its students NOR its taxpayers, State Board of Education and Secretary of Education can take action
 - In the short-term, it adds spending restraints to immediately control property taxes while the longer-term structural changes go into effect
- State Board of Education will play a crucial role, and I am grateful for my strong board, their dedication to VT education and the leadership of their Chair, Stephan Morse
- Need to thank my Secretary of Education, Rebecca Holcombe, and her extraordinary team at the Agency of Education for:
 - completely changing the conversation
 - partnering with communities
 - embarking on a process to get actionable, clear data to communities