

James M. Jeffords Center's
Vermont Legislative Research Service



**Exit Poll of Voters in the June 7, 2011 Vote on the Chittenden East Regional Education School
District Proposal**

Vermont's Act 153, passed on June 3, 2010, "stimulates voluntary mergers of school districts, specifies responsibilities for supervisory unions (SU), and addresses the inclusion of secondary students with with

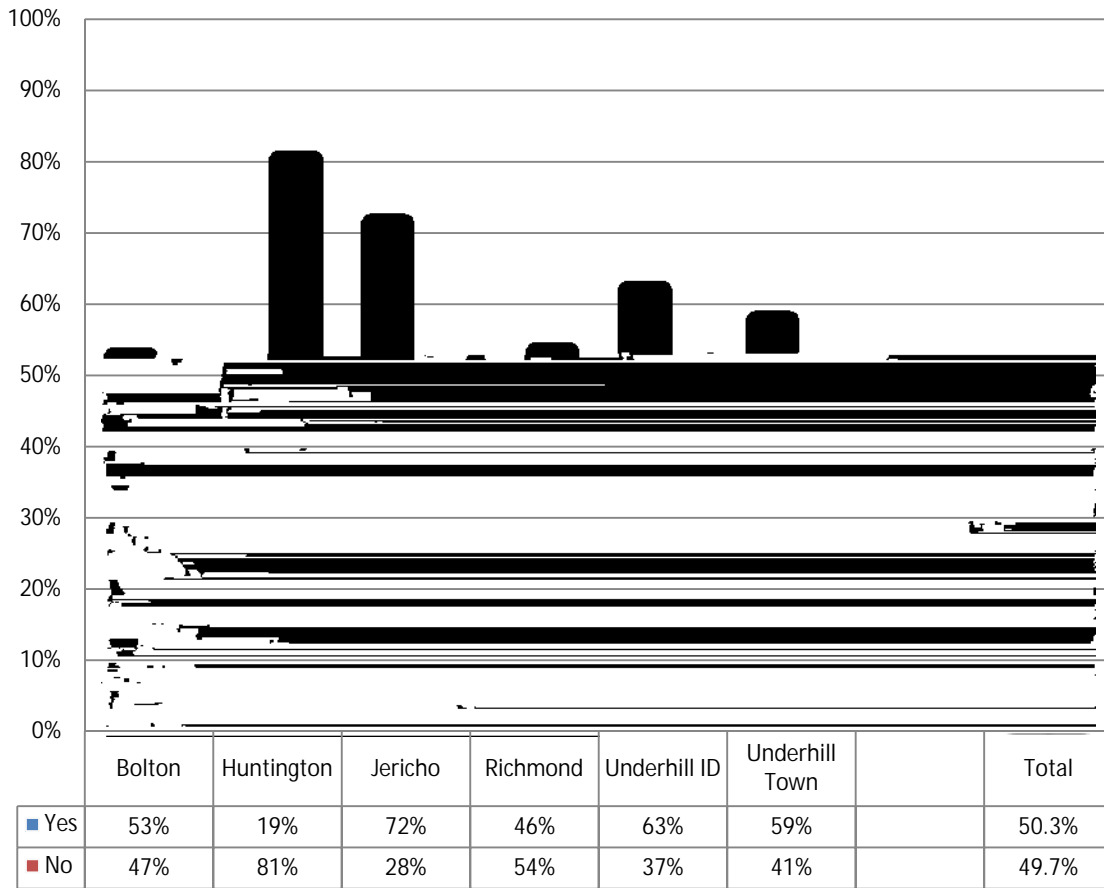


Figure 1: Vote on RED proposal for Chittenden East Supervisory Union, June 7, 2011.
 Source: Chittenden East Supervisory Union, accessed June 20, 2011,
<http://www.cesu.k12.vt.us/>.

Exit Poll Methodology

On Tuesday, June 7, 2011 eight University of Vermont (UVM) students conduct the exit poll under the supervision of the Jeffords Center and the Vermont Legislative Research Service. Due to larger C \$

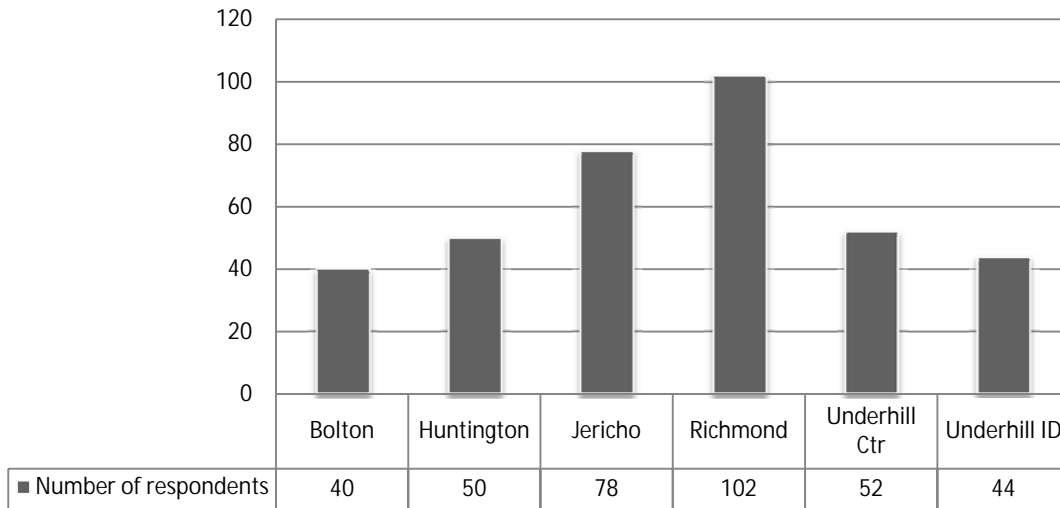


Figure 2: Number of Respondents by Polling Place (total = 366)

Results

Figure 3 shows the percentage of respondents who were in favor or opposed to the proposal to merge school districts to form a single K 12 Regional Education District.³ Although slightly more than half the respondents either strongly favored or somewhat favored the proposal, the merger did not pass because both Huntington and Richmond opposed the proposal. Forty percent of respondents either somewhat or strongly opposed the proposal.

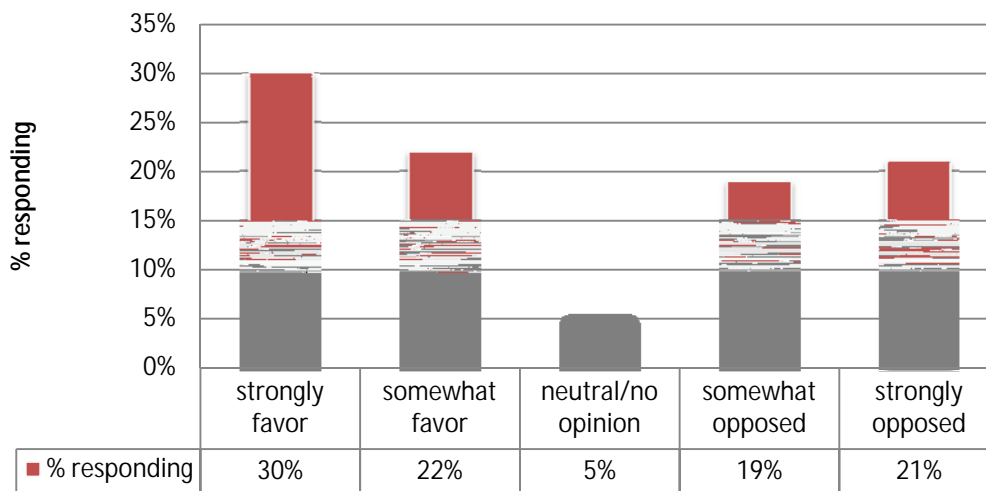


Figure 3: "How strongly do you favor or oppose the proposal to merge school districts to form a single K 12 Regional Education District."

³ Three percent of respondents are missing from this chart because they either

The benefit that respondents most often thought would result from the merger of school districts was the opportunity to save money, with 33 percent of the response (See Figure

The dominant *concern* among the respondents, with 47% of the response, was a loss of local control over the schools. A distant second, with 17%, was the concern that schools

Respondents with a family member either currently enrolled or soon to be enrolled in the school district were evenly divided over the issue of merging school districts (see Figure 6 below). The merger received greater support from respondents without a family member in the school system than from those with a family member in the school system. Fifty seven percent of respondents without a family member in the schools voted for the merger, compared to 49 percent of those with a family member in the schools.

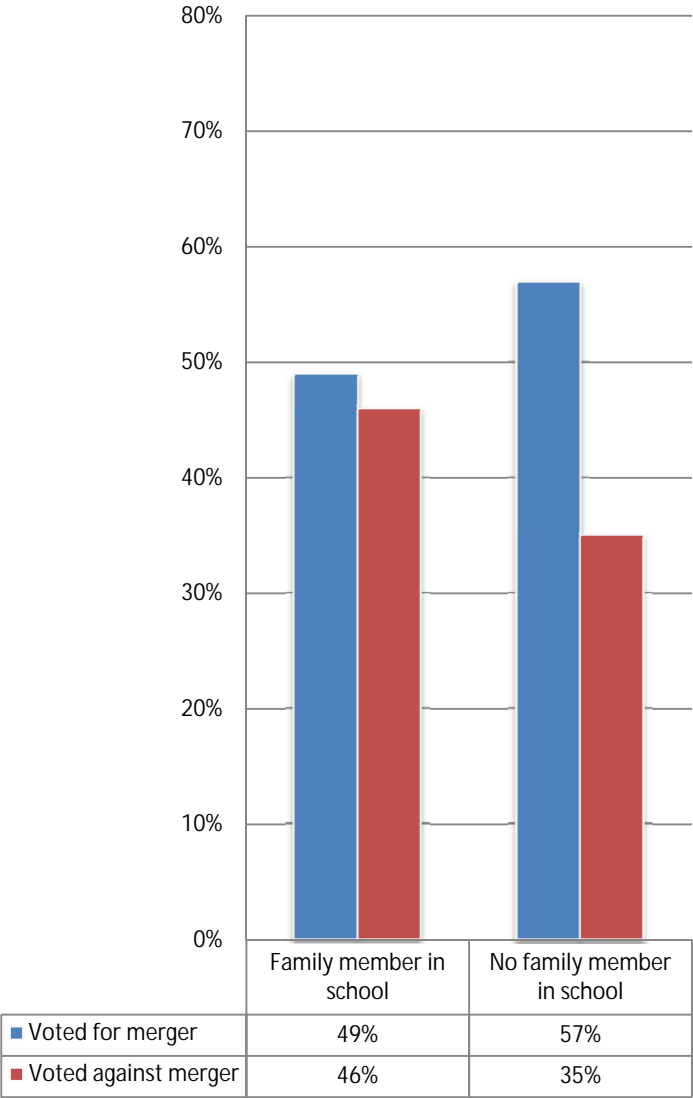


Figure 6: Responses to the question “Did you vote for the proposal to merge school districts into a single K 12 Regional Education District?” by presence of a family member “currently enrolled or soon to be enrolled in this school district.”

The news media was cited by a majority of respondents (43 percent) as the way in which they learned of the current proposal to merge school districts (see Figure 7). Following news media was the school district as the source of information with 32 percent of respondents. A number of respondents in Huntington identified the "Front Porch" internet discussion

Contact: Professor Anthony Gierzynski, 513 Old Mill, The University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405, phone 802 656 7973, email agierzyn@uvm.edu.

Disclaimer: This report has been compiled by undergraduate students at the University of Vermont under the supervision of Professor Anthony Gierzynski. The material contained in the report does not reflect the official policy of the University of Vermont.

Appendix: Exit Poll Questions

Hi, I am a UVM student conducting research for Vermont legislators and the Department of Education on voters' thoughts of the Chittenden East Regional Education School District proposal. Do you have a couple of minutes to answer a few questions about it? Your responses will be completely anonymous.

[A] How did you hear about the current proposal to join school districts to form a single K 12 Regional Education District?

- 1 From the Chittenden East Supervisory Union
- 2 From my School District
- 3 From a candidate or political party
- 4 From friends
- 5 From the news media
- 6 Internet source such as Google or Facebook
- 7 *OTHER: PLEASE WRITE IN*

- 8 *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*
- 9 *REFUSED*

[B] Did you vote for the proposal to merge school districts into a single K 12 Regional Education District?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

- 8 *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*
- 9 *REFUSED*

[C] How strongly do you favor or oppose the proposal to merge school districts to form a single K 12 Regional Education District?

- 1 Strongly in favor
- 2 Somewhat in favor
- 3 Neutral or no opinion
- 4 Somewhat oppose
- 5 Strongly oppose

- 8 *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*
- 9 *REFUSED*

[D] Which of the following do you think will be the most important **benefit** of merging school districts?

- 1 Save money
- 2 Increase educational opportunities
- 3 Enhance the quality of education
- 4 There are no benefits

5 [] *OTHER: WRITE IN MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT*

8 [] *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*

9 [] *REFUSED*

[E] Which of the following do you think is the most important risk about merging school districts?

1 [] Costs too much money

2 [] Loss of local control

3 [] Harm to education quality

4 [] Closure of local schools

5 [] There are no risks

6 [] *OTHER: WRITE IN MOST IMPORTANT RISK*

8 [] *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*

9 [] *REFUSED*

Now, just a few background questions....

[F] Are you a parent or family member of a student who is currently or soon to be enrolled in this school district?

1 [] Yes

2 [] No

8 [] *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*

9 [] *REFUSED*

[G] To which age group do you belong?

1 [] 18 24

3 [] 45 59

2 [] 25 44

4 [] 60 and over

8 [] *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*

9 [] *REFUSED*

[H] What is the highest degree of formal education you have completed?

1 [] Did not complete high school

2 [] High school diploma

3 [] Associates degree

4 [] Bachelors degree

5 [] Post graduate degree

8 [] *DON'T KNOW / NOT APPLICABLE*

9 [] *REFUSED*

[I] *Record gender:*

- 1 *FEMALE*
- 2 *MALE*
- 8 *CAN'T DETERMINE*

Those are all of my questions. Thank you for participating!