
Please comment below with anything else you would like to communicate to the board about future planning at this time. We understand that these decisions we are facing can be emotional. We appreciate feedback that is honest, respectful and constructive.

RESPONSES

A new building is needed. The committee needs to think LONG term, not just the next 5 years.

Against strong community disapproval the board over the 6th grade because of "added opportunities". As the parent of a 6th graders I can tell you they have LESS than they had at the grade schools. You've dragged us through that change and now you want to make more change because the 6th grade didn't save the building? How about truly looking out for our children. Cut some administration to save some money.

Choice is a very desirable "choice" for resident of Jamaica. It is a win/win situation for the town, students of Jamaica and our real estate. Please pass choice!

Classrooms must be ventilated, lit with natural sources, and have access to restrooms.

Consider school choice for k- 8 also.

Diversity in educational options for all careers, including trades and other non-university track opportunities

from the center of Jamaica Village, there are three elementary schools within 15 miles, seems excessive and wasteful.

Get rid of the mask mandates and start teaching farming classes.

High school choice

High school choice would greatly benefit Jamaica. Many families have left the area in order to send their students to other high schools already.

High school choice would stop families like our own from seriously considering moving out of Jamaica even though we love it so. Please vote for choice, it is a gift for so many, it is a generous appropriate wonderful gift for Jamaica's kids. It would equal the playing field. It is the right thing. Thank you for working on this, for volunteering your time & energy, much appreciated.

How will students get to their "School of Choice", I wonder? Without the customary busing system which exists now, I worry that this will disproportionately impact families with lower incomes. Speaking of Future Planning, it's my opinion that closing Leland and Gray would be a huge loss for our community and our students!

I absolutely do not agree with tuitioning HS students. We will sell and move to a district we would like. We chose Townshend because of its wonderful and small school. My child will not be hauled hours a day to another HS.

I am an alumni of L&G, now my oldest child is in middle school there. I know the teachers and staff are doing all they can to make it a positive, safe and dynamic place to learn and grow. But I am not satisfied with the offerings that L&G has, there are schools in the surrounding area with many more options of classes and extra curricular activities. It saddens me to think of not having a school right in my town that my kids can go to, and I know that all of our children will thrive with more diversity and options. On a side note, someone needs to start a forest school for the elementary aged children, there are a lot of families that would pay for that!! Thank you for all of your hard work and time being put into this important issue!!

I am highly supportive of school choice and of maintaining schools in our individual towns (JVS, TES, NB). Thank you for seriously considering this option!

I am in favor of keeping the L&G High School. Community schools are an integral part of community strength. If L&G can not remain open for high school students, then I favor school choice for grades 10-12.

I am very concerned about issues of equity, civility and justice in our schools/

I believe we should build a new facility that houses PK-12 grade-several wings to prevent mixing the youngest students with the older students. Ideally centrally located. It would be fantastic if all the school board members SUPPORT the school and staff and be on the board for the right reasons-educating our future. Offer options for students that make this district a magnet for new students, families choosing this district to live and raise their families. Build pride in our schools with students, staff, and community members.

I don't want my child going to school in Brattleboro, or in a school that has classrooms with no windows. I think it's important that the people talking about this be professional and not personalize things when people don't agree with them. I feel that better plans could be made if the planning board was more approachable and open minded. Might actually make parents feel like their voice might matter.

I feel strongly about keeping L&G high school in our community. I think our kids have to travel far enough to get to school and would hinder students to have to go elsewhere.

I hope that the board can show the community that they actually care about what we have to say. I'm so tired of seeing most of them only care about their own agendas. If it comes to closing any of the school buildings I hope they give a fair and accurate assessment to each building and maybe even hire an outside firm to help with this. The first comparison that was done a few years ago was disgraceful. It was so biased on lacked important information so it fit with their agenda. Hopefully something positive will come out of this and that the board treats this committee better then they treated the last committee. I'm sorry if their work didn't fit into everyone's agenda. At least they were trying to make a fair and equal education for all students. It was disheartening to see all their work practically tossed out and the board redoing the committee with people that will be more for the original personal agenda.

I look forward to envisioning an improved, dynamic and integrated preK-8 program. I see potential for our high school students to have choices regarding their learning path and know there are many great high schools/learning centers they could choose from in the area. I see a central campus in Townshend (K-8) with building and ground modifications made in the years to come to tailor to outdoor/place-based learning. I envision the NewBrook and JVS campuses as early learning centers as well as community/senior centers. Our communities need more spaces and opportunities to connect with others. I see a lot of potential with the preK and seniors sharing a space. If we were to work on a preK-12 model I think we would need a whole new building/campus built in Townshend to improve our programming and attract families to our schools.

I strongly feel that students in grades 9-12 need to be given the choice to attend other schools in the area. My reason for this is the declining efficacy of the teachers since they are not held accountable, insufficient or nonexistent coordination in various matters from the administration, minimal opportunities for social or emotional growth, increasing substance use among the student body, and the limited curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for the students. As an institution, Leland & Grey has proven in the last decade that our children are not being adequately prepared to further their education at post-secondary institutions or graduate with the necessary marketable and/or soft skills to successfully enter the work place. Change is hard, but this is inevitable if we, as a community, want our children to have a better future than the one available to them now.

I support 9-12 choice, with full choice (including private/independent schools such as BBA). This is a significant value to our community's children as it allows each child to attend the school that works best for them and their family. Choice will also make our towns more desirable to new/young families. Everyone can see the declining population and enrollment in our community. This is a way to change that. Look at the towns around us, every one of them offer some level of choice (Stratton, Winhall,

Londonderry, Peru, Landgrove, Dover, Wardsboro, etc). This is why families move to those towns and not our towns. Please seriously consider school choice for the future of our district.

I think that the more open the options for families and students/children the better.

I think younger students need to be close to home in neighborhood schools. It is the nature of the elementary students to want to play with their neighbors and not be traveling around the district to play. As student mature and become more independent, traveling and distance from parents is appropriate. I believe the diversity in classes and sports at a larger more well funded school provides options for every students.

Most families will find it difficult to transport students to high schools far away. To provide equal access for academic as well as after school programming, bus transport must include a late bus service.

I urge you to look beyond the emotional reactions and look towards what will build and revitalize our community. Time and time again, when a high school closes a community dies. A vibrant K-12 education system is a cornerstone for any community. Leland and Gray can be and I would say already is a pillar of our community, bringing together the people of our towns. This in turn keeps people living in the area which in turn keeps the local economy going. While the sense of community a K-12 school creates is undeniably an emotional tie, it is also an economic driver and source of stability in the lives of local residents.

I want Leland and Gray to remain open if at all possible. L& G is a crucial resource for many families in this area so if it is at all possible to keep L&G I would be in favor of that. If L&G has to close for financial reasons, than I would go with the second option of preK-8th in the district and school choice for high school. I just don't know how grim the financial outlook is for L&G. It would be a big lose to the community if it were to close.

I would honestly prefer Pre-K through 6th with 7th and up given school choice. I really believe keeping LGUHS open is a bad move, it could be repurposed, but it's failing to meet students social and education needs and there is not much you can do to fix that.

I would hope that the NewBrook Elementary School would continue housing students and not serve as administrative office space. It is the largest campus, with a great playground and athletic facilities. It also has an updated heating/cooling system. It also features room for expansion, should such be necessary. None of the other elementary schools in the district offer such amenities for students. Townshend Elementary is an old building, with multiple floors, and little ability to provide playground/athletic fields or future expansion. Parking space is also limited. Jamaica is too far away to be convenient to most of the district population. It seems as though many West River valley students are already opting to attend BUHS, Burr & Burton, or Twin Valley in lieu of L&G, for reasons of geographical convenience, programming, or other reasons.

I would like to express my deep concern for Newbrook closing, assuming that is still an option on the table. My husband and I moved here 7 years ago with Newbrook being a major factor in why we decided to start a family and grow our roots in this community. The building, the extensive land/property, the values, the type of education in which kids learn about and get to explore nature, they get to learn thru arts/music and play ... how to compost, how to grow their own food and how to prepare it, etc. are all qualities in an educational system that far exceed those of standardized academics—especially in the earlier years— and there is plenty of research to prove this! I feel the space provided and the safety of the space/building/grounds (at this point in time) far exceed what is offered in Townshend. We have young children who we hope will go to school in the district and grow to become valued members of this community, however, depending on what happens with WRED in the upcoming months. We are not ruling out sending them to another district and/or relocating completely. We would be devastated to leave the West River Valley but this is very much on the table for us. We have actually decided to NOT send our daughter to Kindergarten in the fall (she turns 5 this summer) for fear that would be her only year at Newbrook, which we know she would love!, and then have to change schools completely the following year. Newbrook is a stellar elementary school and checks off so many boxes for our family, please

consider keeping it open!

I would like to see learning objectives in educational content areas (i.e. "by 8th grade, 80% of students will be proficient in algebra"). I have no idea what students are learning but they seem to be behind academically, especially after the pandemic.

I would love to see full high school choice, including the option to attend a private school via tuitioning from district. I am extremely happy to see this being considered as an option. I am certainly interested in what the K-8 program(s) would look like under this option. Would it be all in Townshend? Or would we maintain our individual schools? I like the idea of individual schools and if we can give JVS a fighting chance, that would be great. If that is not feasible, I would support intra-SU choice (if the laws allow for it) that would open access to Wardsboro. Thank you for finally considering this option seriously!!!

I'm a 1955 graduate (8th grade) of Windham's school and would like to see the school remain open in spite of its small size. We are fortunate to have such a small school, especially with such a small student population (pre-K - 6th). With such low student numbers, we are able to provide non-standard curriculum (farming, circus skills to name a couple) to augment the standard and required programs (3 R's).

Ideally it would be perfect to have one building for all students and separate grades by primary, upper elementary, and middle school. Each grade level would need adequate para staffing, nursing staff and a way for collaboration between the grades. It's a shame to close any building that is working well for students and has an established campus that provides adequate outdoor educational opportunities, place-based education, and staffing collaboration that works well.

If I felt confident the current Superintendent, School Board and Administrators intended to make dynamic positive changes that benefit all the schools and devise a solid timeline to enact those changes I would be inclined to keep grades 9-12. However, if the Future Plan is just closing Jamaica Village School and continueing on as is I see no benefit for the town of Jamaica or our students making it the "loser" town in this process.

It is time to consider building a new school. The loss of Leland & Gray to this region would be extremely detrimental to the families and the businesses in the area. Be BOLD and VISIONARY. A new, modern and green school would attract families.

It should be time to face the facts that Leland and gray does not have the resources to give most children a well rounded education with the ability to go to college.

Keep all schools k through 5 and Leland and gray 6th 7th and 8th grade.

L&G's building is in sorry shape and doesn't have many more years of use, I gleamed this from the study that was done..... What are you doing to NOTIFY the public of this and where will the next building be? I see nothing in the Commons or the Reformer.

Trying to find the minutes to your meetings is nearly impossible! Please be proactive in letting the public know where they are.. Try posting on Front Porch Formum where the minutes are located with a link. The Windham Central website is not user friendly.

Leland & Gray is the heart of the West River Valley. It's an integral hub for our small communities to gather for numerous events. If you close the school you lose your community. Families will leave this district. If that's your goal, then that's sad!

Living in Brookline and working in Brattleboro, it was really important for my son to be attending school in the same town where I work, especially when he was too young to drive and was also involved in the New England Youth Theatre. That was one reason we chose private school for grades 7 and 8, even though it was financially difficult, and then luckily got into BUHS on lottery. He is still involved in community theatre and other activities in Brattleboro, so even though he's driving himself now, attending BUHS is extremely important in order for him to maintain involvement in the activities he cares about and to be attending school with his friends. We would have moved away from Brookline to accommodate this, if necessary, but thankfully at the time, we got lucky with the lottery system and this has been the best scenario for my son's educational experience. The closest school is not always the most convenient

school, or the best school to fit a student or family's needs.

Losing LGUHS would have a significant detrimental effect on the entire West River Valley.

NewBrook Elementry School is the perfect place to have a PK- either grade 5 or 8 school. The design of the school would make it easy to add an addition to house the kids.

TES is also a great spot to have either staff offices or extracurricular programs there.

Opportunity for our children to have access to the best education available to them should be top priority for all

Please define 'local campuses'"Would that include not having pre-k-5 traveling 20 miles to school? I feel that is putting undue hardship on parents who live in outlying ares.Taking schools out of towns is like taking the connections between communities and children away. The saying"it takes a village to raise a child" still holds true.

Please include intradistrict choice for windham students to choice out to be be fair and equitable.

School choice for HS would be very advantageous for our children.

School choice is vital for kids success!

Different children have different learning needs and being able to pick a school that is right for them will make all the difference!

SCHOOL CHOICE!!! My kids did not have the opportunity but I think as communities this gives our children the best learning opportunities.

Stop putting more kids into schools. Leave the schools the way they are. Each elementary school has something unique. L&g has enough grades in it if you add more grades you will take away from what they offer. This constant switching of school plans is hurting the district and hurting our students. It is causing uncertainty in career futures causing good teachers to leave. It is challenging for schools to find good teachers. Put your time into figuring out mental health for children.

Thank you for providing this survey! Appreciate your thoughtfulness to work at providing the best education with forward thinking on meeting the needs of our changing community, nation and world.

The children and taxpayers of Jamaica deserve better than our ever-dysfunctional school board provides. It's time for school choice.

The premise that our district would even entertain a plan that would require families to personally foot the bill for the difference between a school's real cost and the state's per-pupil voucher is disturbing. Not only will families need to weigh the disastrous consequences of the commute to another district's school (which almost guarantees a reduction in engagement) they'll have to weigh cost. The danger of creating class segregation of our students is imminent and palpable. This doesn't even begin to touch on the more emotional aspects of relinquishing our community's small school which many families have settled here specifically for. I can't possibly describe on this Google form just how many ways that idea is awful. What a disappointment to find our best and brightest think passing the buck on our youth is a solution.

The state minimum standards for student academic performance should be, as said, a minimum. This should never be the goal. Having such poor expectations and goals are the very reason No one would tuition into our schools. We owe it to our students and community to challenge our students to do more and better than the minimum.

These smaller elementary schools are invaluable and offer a more individualized start for students in their academic careers. We should do everything possible to keep them thriving for many reasons. I'd be happy to discuss them all, as I have lived in different areas that adopt different educational environments.

This will help the town of Jamaica attract new people into the town.

Underwhelmed by L&G

We looked at different communities based on their educational structures and chose the West River Valley because L&G offered interesting programs and had a smaller and more community-minded atmosphere. I think, not only would a brain-drain occur when L&G employees lose their jobs and quite possibly have to move out of the area, but you'd be losing a high school, which tends to tie communities together. Would families want to move here?

I understand that a parent was concerned about the lack of accreditation and I think I understand why that's not pursued (expense?). I don't know if there's data that demonstrates that students suffer when looking at college, but that might be good to have. But I disagree with that vocal parent's desire to just shut down L&G. In fact, I think it's what divides us from being a true community and a bunch of folks just passing through. I think closing L&G would be devastating to the area and highly inconvenient for those of us who chose to live here due to proximity to a high school and also to have a community center.

I disagree with the plan for the centralized campus. At the elementary level, I think that it wasn't utilizing the buildings properly, in terms of where the plan would send the kids. I also think communities have invested in their local schools to the point where regionalism doesn't necessarily make sense. However, if the regionalist model were to take over, it seems logical that the facilities at NB would best serve the older elementary cohort (grades 3-5) and Townshend would best serve the younger set (grades PK/K-2).

Rather than closing down L&G, if a school did need to be closed, Jamaica makes the most sense due to the folks who have abandoned that school since choice was enacted. TES could possibly absorb Jamaica's remaining students and create a two-town school as there is at NewBrook. It certainly seems that the community has shown it doesn't want to keep a school there, while the other communities are much more attached and heavily invested. But if the building remains, I can't figure out why the immersive learning center was scuttled. That seemed cool and innovative. Needed more detail, but was an interesting concept.

I sincerely hope we don't abandon our local high school, though. I believe that will have unforeseen negative ramifications and will pull apart the community while community life is already pretty strained due to the pandemic and politics.

Side note: It's difficult to sort through the meaning of documents when they aren't presented with context on the website, so when the LTP group added documents in the fall, I couldn't understand what I was looking at, what was current and what was no longer viable. Additionally, on the regular WRED site, minutes and agendas are not in chronological order, which also is frustrating.

Thank you all for your service to the community.

We need to provide a more robust education to our students that meets each student where they are, challenging each student to maximize their personal potential.

We need to provide an education that is exciting and innovative that will attract new families to the area (instead of encouraging them to move elsewhere)

We need to stabilize staff and students. Our schools have high turn over rates. Many new teachers move on within the first 3 years, both in our elementary and especially at L & G. We have many families that are moving out of the district or choosing to educate their children elsewhere. To address this we need:

1. SU Leadership that is visionary, creates positive work environments, communicates well with staff and families, collaborates with peers around the state and advocates for our school district at the state level.
2. Exit interviews with all staff and students that leave the district. Staff interviews are conducted by HR and go directly to the board. The board conducts interviews with all families that leave the district, either through choice or relocation. There could even be surveys sent to all staff and families that have left in the last 5 years to get info as to why they left. Personally I know many former staff and families that would be happy to share why they left. This would help the board get a sense of what is needed to retain staff and bring students back.
3. Hire a full-time grant writer and development director to secure funds, develop a donor base, and develop an alumni association. This position would pay for itself, provide needed resources, promote our schools and increase community engagement.

I am quite torn about whether we should have a high school in our district. Geographically it makes sense to have a high school in our district. But with the declining enrollment, the lack of opportunities currently offered and the L&G building itself being full of mold and crumbling, it doesn't make sense to keep that building open.

If we keep a high school we need a new building. Here are my thoughts on how we do that. I believe we should move forward in 2 stages of future planning.

First, consolidate elementary schools to have 2 elementary schools, Jamaica Village School and NewBrook. Since there is a transportation issue, rather than focus our schools in the center of our district, let's utilize the 2 schools on either end of our district. Both of which have large campuses and the ability to expand. Pre-K can be kept at what is now TES and the SU offices can be moved into that building as well.

This consolidation will help save money while the board takes 5 years to secure a location, architectural designs, and funding for the new buildings. In the meantime the WRED leadership and staff (in concert with student and community input) develop a unique vision for the education programming at the HS that would both meet the needs of our students, incorporate our community resources, and be a draw for potential new students.

The new campus could be for a K-12 or 6-12. The campus would have plans for 3 buildings (elem, middle and hs) and extensive physical campus for outdoor learning opportunities. We would plan for 1 building in the next 5 years, and when enrollment increases a second building and then a third building would be constructed.

In addition to working on reorganizing the physical plant of our schools, we as a community need to put increased effort into community building within our towns, effectively leveraging the resources that are within our towns and outside resources. It is unreasonable to expect the school board to be able to solve enrollment and funding issues without working with other local governmental organizations. The struggle of the school board is not in isolation. It's a struggle of our entire region; small tax bases, housing affordability issues, job losses etc. In order to create a vibrant school learning communities it would be helpful to:

1. Work with planning commissions and town select boards from all towns when working on future planning.
2. Use your leverage as a school board to lobby our state government to work on changing funding structures for education.
3. Create partnerships with local, state and regional organizations (museums, social services,

non-profits) for enhanced learning opportunities, resource sharing and funding.

4. There are many people in this community that want to help make our schools vibrant. Please find a way to include them. Please let our community help the board. Lean on us, ask us to help you.

5. Develop multi-tiered ways of communicating with the community to boost awareness and involvement in the work of the school board.

6. Have school votes in conjunction with town votes/town meeting days. This would boost voting numbers.

We should be able to educate the declining # of students in the West River Valley without having to "choice out" our high school students at a taxpayer friendly price. We should commit to our children and our communities future.

We specifically chose to raise our children here, because we wanted them to eventually go to LGUHS, versus the other Southern Vermont high schools. Losing LGUHS would have a devastating, long-term impact on the entire West River Valley.

We would like to see more classes offered at the high school such as additional electives intro courses and field experiences in medical training/ grace cottage, veterinary medicine, sustainable practices, Internships in the community for students to have hands-on experiences to help direct their future interests/ studies. Accessibility to the on-site adventure course for all grade levels/ students, with a focus on team building and outdoor education.

When the populous was very clearly against the sixth grade move the board moved forward with its agenda in an unyielding manner disregarding a group of well over two hundred community members. How will this issue be any different? Based on my exposure to the process I fear this will be no different.

While either choice is not my favorite, I am mostly fearful of my child having exposure to older children. I understand the financial need to condense the schools, however I am afraid of the repercussions it will have when trying to combine say a nine-year-old with a 17-year-old. The dynamic is so far in between the two ages. And yes while multiple households have multiple children at different ages, I just do not feel comfortable with my young child being in the same building whether it be with bathrooms or common areas or anything like that. Younger children should not be exposed to the challenges of older children. They will have their time to get there. Another concern that I have is that my child will be lost in the mix when there is such a large student population. My child is special needs and my goal is for her to be as integrated with the general population as possible, but, she should be within her age range so she can learn acceptable behaviors and social cues from her peers. I moved my small family halfway across the country to be part of the Townshend culture, not only for the possibilities that my child will have in the school system here, but also because the schools and teachers and community as a whole take such great care of the children. How much will the care for the children change once everything is grouped together and the general population that said teachers and faculty care for grows?

While I am in favor of a consolidated campus and think there could be a future for a high school in townshend (based on geography and an "if you build it they will come" mindset), there needs to be strategic, phased planning to get us there which in my opinion ultimately includes building new or renovating/additions to the current facility, while better utilizing our existing school buildings/filling classrooms. The current high school building is not suitable for elementary kids and proper playground equipment needs to be available. I also think the cost savings from consolidation needs to be made explicitly clear to community members otherwise there will be no buy in - why change if it costs the same...

You need to provide a platform that permits the printing of the entire communication.

You should focus your attention on solutions to keep Leland & Gray open for our local West River community students!

Young kids do not belong with high schoolers, it has proven it doesn't work by putting the 6th graders there. Young kids are getting an education we rather they not have. L & G is not a place for pre-6th graders, period. It's reputation has diminished and the L & G culture is awful

