

House Republican Press Release

February 9, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Mike Alberts said Window is Closing on Proposed New District 11 High School



State Money for New High School Would be Jeopardized without Prompt Compromise

District 11 school officials need to reach a compromise quickly, before special state funding incentives to build a new high school vanish, said state Rep. Mike Alberts, R-50th, Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret, Woodstock.

The towns of Hampton, Scotland and Chaplin would be reimbursed up to 85 percent of the cost of building a new cooperative high school in combination with the town of Brooklyn. That incentive is threatened under proposed new state law that would limit reimbursement to 65 percent of school construction costs. A complete grant application must be submitted to the state by June 30, 2007. All statewide school construction aid also would be capped at \$300 million per year, possibly delaying any future new high school for the region.

Rep. Alberts and other area legislators successfully won legislation last year to create financial incentives for a Region 11 merger with Brooklyn to create a new \$80 million regional high school. But, he said, new 2007 legislation could virtually wipe out those incentives if adopted this spring.

“The window is closing for Region 11, and time is critical to reach an agreement,” said Rep. Alberts. “Area legislators have obtained a generous funding package for a new high school, but we can’t count on that funding forever. A decision is needed as quickly as possible.”

Rep. Alberts noted that Hampton, Scotland and Chaplin currently operate a small, regional Parish Hill junior and senior high school. However, it has been on academic probation in the past and has a small student population that does not allow as many elective and advanced placement courses as might be found in other high schools.

Brooklyn has no high school, and currently buses its high schoolers to Woodstock Academy in Woodstock, Rep. Alberts added.

Area legislators have proposed that a mediator be selected to help revive negotiations among the towns that have stalled without reaching agreement on plans to build a brand

new high school in Brooklyn. The state Department of Education has offered the services of a state paid mediator to help resolve the impasse.

“If education officials in these towns cannot overcome obstacles in the next few weeks, I don’t know if we can save the state funding that we worked so hard to obtain,” Rep. Alberts said. “I am optimistic that bringing all parties together for a final round of negotiations can save this generous funding package.”

Rep. Mike Alberts serves the 50th assembly District of Brooklyn, Eastford, Hampton, Pomfret and Woodstock in the state House of Representatives