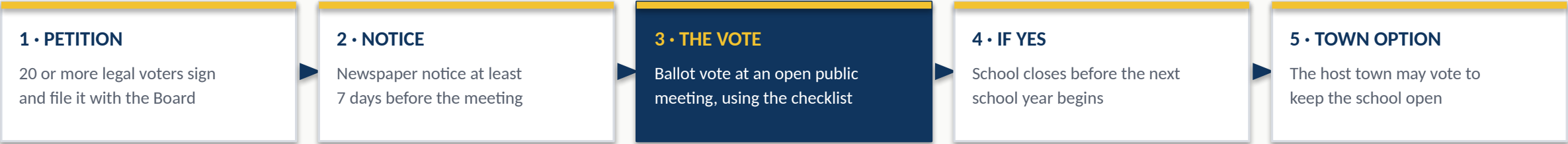


HB 1374: A New Way a School Can Be Closed

Signed July 10, 2026. Effective October 8, 2026. One statewide process now governs closing a school, and how a town may leave a cooperative.

1 HOW A CLOSING WOULD HAPPEN — FIVE STEPS SET BY THE STATE



2 THE TWO RULES THAT MATTER MOST

WHO VOTES ON CLOSING A SCHOOL

ALL TOWNS SERVED

It takes a majority of voters residing in all municipalities served by the school or district — one combined count, not a separate vote in each town.

IF THE HOST TOWN KEEPS IT OPEN

90 DAYS

The town then has 90 days to reach an operating agreement with the district. If no agreement is reached, the State Board of Education decides.

3 WHAT CHANGES FOR A SEVEN-TOWN COOPERATIVE LIKE OURS

Our Articles must change. The law bars a cooperative's Articles of Agreement from working around it. Any conflicting provision is amended when it takes effect.	Leaving gets easier. One town may now withdraw on a three-fifths vote of its own voters alone. The other six towns no longer get a say.	A review cycle begins. Every three years the Board must review the Articles and bylaws and publish its findings in a newspaper circulated district-wide.
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Still being sorted out: the law does not define which towns count as “served by” a school. How it applies here is under review.

Source: enacted text of HB 1374, Chapter 303 (2026). Prepared by KRSD administration.

What the Words Mean

A plain-language guide to the terms on the other side. Nothing here is a legal definition — it is meant to make the conversation easier to follow.

THE PROCESS

HB 1374

A state law signed July 10, 2026 and effective October 8, 2026. It creates one statewide process for closing a school and changes how a town may leave a cooperative district.

Discontinuance

The legal word for closing a school and ending its operation.

Petition

A written request signed by voters that obligates the School Board to act. Twenty signatures are enough to start this process.

Legal voter

Someone registered to vote in the town, whose name appears on the official voter checklist.

Checklist

The official list of registered voters. Your name must be on it to vote at the meeting.

Open public meeting

A meeting anyone may attend. The law requires time for public comment before the vote is taken.

Newspaper notice

The meeting must be announced in a newspaper of general circulation at least seven days beforehand.

WHO DECIDES

Municipalities served

The towns whose students the school or district serves. Their voters are the ones who vote on closing it.

Majority vote

More than half the ballots cast. Ballots are counted together across all the towns that vote, not tallied separately town by town.

Three-fifths (60%) majority

More than a simple majority — sixty of every hundred votes cast. This is the threshold for a town to withdraw.

Cooperative school district

A district formed by two or more towns that share schools. Kearsarge is a cooperative of seven towns.

Pre-existing district

The individual town school district that existed before the towns joined together to form the cooperative.

Withdrawal

One town leaving the cooperative district to run its own schools.

AFTER THE VOTE

Municipal preservation option

After a district-wide vote to close, the town where the school sits may choose to keep it open and operate it.

Governing body

The board of selectmen in a town, or the city council in a city.

Operating agreement

The contract between the town and the district covering who pays, who staffs the school, who owns the building, transportation, and which students may attend.

State Board of Education

The state body that holds a hearing and issues the final decision if the town and the district cannot reach agreement within 90 days.

Articles of Agreement

The founding document setting out how the seven towns share Kearsarge. Any part that conflicts with the new law must be brought into compliance.

Open enrollment school

A school that may accept students from outside the town — one option an operating agreement is allowed to include.