

Swanton Elementary School

Swanton Central Building
24 Fourth Street
Swanton, VT 05488
Tel # (802) 868-5346
Fax # (802) 868-4861

Julie Benay - Principal
Brent Coon - Assistant Principal



Mary S. Babcock Building
113 Grand Avenue
Swanton, VT 05488
Tel # (802) 868-4920
Fax # (802) 868-3389

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am directing this letter of reference to my colleagues in the public school sector. I am currently the principal of a PreK-6 elementary school in Northwestern Vermont, a place known for cold and windy winters! We have two separate buildings with construction dates varying from 1964 to 1991 for various wings of each building.

Vermonters are also known to be thrifty and fiscally responsible. Our school governance structure allows local community members, elected by their communities, to make all decisions regarding the physical plant. It is actually one of the few areas left where they can truly exercise "local control." The Swanton Board is comprised of a former Superintendent of Schools, a small businesswoman, a retired railroad employee, an IBM employee, and a secretary for a large import/export business. These folks would not allow the administration to make careless investments or expenditures.

In the long-range plans for our facility, we have a goal of maximizing the safety of our students while increasing energy efficiency. Sadly, even Vermont has been touched by violence in schools. We wanted window shades that could be lowered quickly and smoothly in the event of a "lockdown," and ones that would provide for energy efficiency.

We found exactly what we wanted in the Gordon's "Ecosmart" product. The shades are not only energy efficient; they are lovely. My staff loves the cozy look when the shades are drawn, and we know vandals are discouraged from entering our buildings in the evenings as the shades are drawn down for energy savings. My custodians love them because they are virtually maintenance free.

The staff at Gordon's is always highly responsive to our needs. They created the shades exactly to our specifications and installed them quickly and professionally in time for the opening of our school year.

We have not yet begun to formally measure the cost savings in terms of our heating costs (Vermont schools rarely have air conditioning), but we are confident that Mr. Clement's research in this area will prove true in our school as well.

If you need to reach me for any reason, email is by far the best way. You can email me at jbenay@fnwsu.org or learn more about my school at www.swantonschool.org.

Sincerely,

Julie Benay
Principal