

## **Consolidation Forum Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***How has school administrative consolidation come to be and what are the intended goals?***

The concept of school administrative consolidation emerged as a way to address increasing concerns about rising costs associated with the delivery of education in the State of Maine, while simultaneously preserving and enhancing the quality of education for all students. Specifically, the goals for consolidation are to reduce the number of school units and provide:

- Equitable educational opportunities
- Rigorous academic programs
- Uniformity in delivering programs
- Uniformity in tax rates
- More efficient and effective use of limited resources
- Preservation of school choice
- Maximum opportunity to deliver services in an efficient manner.

Consolidation of the Saco, Dayton and Old Orchard Beach administrative structures would result in savings to ensure sustainability of educational programming by limiting budgetary increases resulting from administrative overhead and by taking advantage of the efficiencies and economies of scale in areas such as purchasing, finance, transportation, maintenance, energy, as well as shared and/or cooperative educational programming.

### ***Can't we accomplish some of the same goals/objectives simply by collaborating vs. consolidating?***

Yes, we can accomplish some of the same goals/objectives through collaboration rather than consolidation. Examples would include efficient and effective use of resources and maximizing the opportunity to deliver services in an efficient manner. However, even these examples rely heavily upon the will of those in leadership positions. The sustainability of these goals/objectives and the pursuit of ones that would truly impact uniformity of tax rates and continued improvements in educational programming can only be achieved successfully through the administrative restructuring supported by consolidation.

### ***Will consolidation result in the closure of any school?***

The plan does not recommend the closure of any school (and, indeed, the legislation is clear that this not occur as a result of consolidation). Our plan specifically states that no schools will close for at least five years.

### ***How will the newly formed Regional School Unit be governed? How will the transition occur?***

The new Saco School Unit (RSU) will be governed by a 7 person Board that proportionately represents the communities of Saco (4 representatives), Dayton (1 representative), and Old Orchard Beach (2 representatives). Board members will serve staggered terms, with initial terms determined in accordance with the provisions included in the approved consolidation plan.

The timeline and transition coincides with a favorable vote on consolidation in November, 2008. If approved, election of a new 7-member RSU Board will occur in January, 2009. The core responsibilities of the new RSU Board will, by statute, include:

- employment of the superintendent
- central business functions
- administration of special education; administration of transportation
- adoption of a core curriculum

- adoption of the regional school unit budget; reporting required by state or federal regulation; employment of all RSU employees
- establishing a common school calendar; adoption of policies for all schools in the RSU

The existing Boards and the new RSU Board will meet and work collaboratively to ensure a smooth transition to the effective date of the new RSU on July 1, 2009.

***Who will be the Superintendent of the new RSU and how will that individual be selected and by whom?***

Once elected, the first work of the new RSU Board will be to search for and hire a Superintendent.

***Are there alternative options or exemptions that might be pursued by Saco, Dayton, and Old Orchard Beach?***

The statute is clear that only one alternative may be pursued at a time. This means that alternative options may not be pursued until the voters have had the opportunity to decide their preferences regarding the proposed Consolidation Plan. That vote will occur on November 4, 2008.

The possibilities for students are just beginning to be understood and explored.

**Elementary School Possibilities**

**Middle School Possibilities**

**High School Possibilities**

- Pre-Kindergarten
- ALL Day Kindergarten
- Expand Summer Academic Programs
- Professional Development Center
- Intervention Resource Center
- Expand G.T. Programs
- Share and Expand U.A. Staff/Programs
- Expand After-School Activities
- Use In-House Experts
- Expand Specialist:
  - Math Specialist
  - Literature Specialist
- Improve Mentoring for New Teachers
- Expand Leadership Team
- Share Visiting Artist
- More Opportunities for Curriculum Integration
- Foreign Language
- Health/Wellness Program/Teacher
- Common Calendar
- Common Sub Pool
- Technology Center
- Data Management Center
- Leadership Development
- Graduate Courses offered within
- More Languages (Spanish, etc.)
- Special Education Opportunities (Behavior)
- C.M.P. (Math Program)
- Integration Specialist
- Literacy Strategist
- Gifted and Talented Program
- Accelerated Math and Reading
- Cut Transitions
- Distribute Programs
- Purchasing
- Bank/Music Program
- Shared Transportation
- Shared Food Service
- Sports Program (everyone plays)
- Summer School
- Consolidation of Special Education Behavior Services (FLS)
- Consolidation of Alternative Education
- Expand AP Courses/Pre-AP
- Expand Foreign Language/Traveling Teacher
- On-Line Courses
- Share Electives
- Magnet Center – (Tech (especially freshmen & sophomore), Music, etc....)
- College Counseling
- Senior Year – Work – Study
- Expand Internships
- Expand Business Course Offerings
- Coordinate Testing
- Develop, Expand Culinary Arts
- College Connections – UNE, USM
- Intramural Programs – Additional Extra Athletic Opportunities
- Share Facilities
- Visiting Artist – Speakers (Artist in Residence)
- Summer Programs
- Sharing Best Practices
- Libraries – Shared Resources

***How will our communities address any differences in how teachers are paid?***

Some teacher salary differences do exist between towns; these are mostly for those with teaching longevity. The RSU will need to continue to monitor and address these differences through contract negotiations.

***Specifically, short and long term, what are the anticipated cost savings to the towns of Saco, Dayton and Old Orchard Beach? Further, does the calculation of cost savings include consideration for the “costs of consolidation”?...and what are these costs?***

Our plan projects an estimated savings of approximately \$200,000 due to administrative reorganization. Additional miscellaneous cost savings may be approximately \$20,000.

It is the opinion of the RPC that some of the savings realized from the elimination of redundant services or duplicate personnel will be needed for start-up costs of the newly created RSU, and

that some of the savings from improved efficiencies and operating procedures will be needed to sustain quality educational opportunities for all students and staff.

***What about penalties that the state will impose if a decision is made NOT to consolidate....what exactly are these penalties?***

Penalties for not consolidating:

Old Orchard Beach:	\$461,827
Saco:	\$570,307
Dayton:	\$ 70,736

\* plus less favorable consideration for school construction request.

***It's Up To You!!!!***

***Who will ultimately make the decision about the future of the Dayton, Saco and Old Orchard Beach school districts?***

The ultimate decision about the future of the Dayton, Saco and Old Orchard Beach School districts is in the hands of the voting community. On November 4, 2008 the proposed Consolidation Plan will go to the voters in each community for consideration.

Please check out the following websites to review the RPC plans with their corresponding exhibits.

***Collaborative Information provided by Casco School District:  
Falmouth, Cumberland, North Yarmouth.***