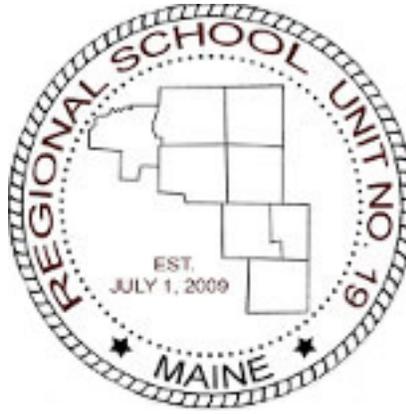


R E G I O N A L S C H O O L
U N I T # 1 9



SPACE CONSOLIDATION PROSPECTUS

By

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(In consultation with Oak Point Associates)



A Prospectus

Consolidate Pre-K to 12 services from eight school sites, to five school sites.

(Re: Option 5/6 Scenario from April, 2014 public forum discussions, inclusive of building a new, or renovating the existing Nokomis Regional High School, building a new district middle school, or renovating the existing Nokomis Regional High School into a district middle school, consolidating students from Newport-Plymouth Elementary and Corinna Elementary into the existing Seabasticook Middle School facility, and consolidating students from Hartland Consolidated School and St. Albans Elementary into the existing Somerset Middle School facility. In this scenario, the Etna-Dixmont School would remain open to house an elementary program, with middle level students attending a new and/or renovated district middle school in Newport)

The Superintendent of Schools believes it is very possible, and educationally and economically feasible to consolidate educational services from eight existing schools, into five buildings, in conjunction with state-approved construction projects. As of April 1, 2014, the eight schools in RSU 19 served a total of 2,189 students in grades PreK to 12. Nokomis Regional High served 661 students in grades 9 to 12, Newport-Plymouth School served 299 students in grades PreK to 4, Corinna Elementary School served 150 students in grades PreK to 4, Hartland Consolidated served 185 students in grades PreK to 4, St. Albans Elementary served 108 students in grades PreK to 4, Somerset Valley Middle served 192 students in grades 5 through 8, Seabasticook Valley Middle served 331 students in grades 5 through 8, and Etna-Dixmont School served 263 students in grades PreK to 8. The student capacity potential of each existing middle school, exceeds 350 students. It is further estimated that closing four existing schools in RSU 19 would save at least \$1.3 million in operational budget expenses, in the very first year of operation for a newly configured school system, AND more than \$9.0 million in capital improvement costs over a five to ten year period. This would likely result in either direct savings to local taxpayers, and/or inclusion of much-needed supportive programming for students, to comply with state mandates and enhance learning outcomes for students.

The RSU 19 Facilities Committee, with help from the district's architectural and engineering firm, Oak Point Associates, has conducted an analysis of current use of space in all RSU 19 facilities, and the potential of each building to house and deliver educational programming safely, comfortably and economically.

The RSU 19 Facilities Committee has examined enrollment trends for the past ten years, and projections for the next ten years. Enrollment has declined in the district by 276 students over the last ten years (from 2450 in 2003 to 2174 in 2013) and is projected to continue to drop by 276 students over the next ten years (from 2174 in 2013 to 1898 in 2023). (*see Appendix A-Planning Decisions: School Enrollment Projections for Regional School Unit 19 “Best Fit” Model)(Done)

The RSU 19 Facilities and Finance Committees have examined state-funding (EPS generated General Purpose Aide) trends and estimates, associated with declining enrollment projections. It is highly likely that state funding will continue to drop, in direct correlation with the declining number of students, without major changes in the current funding law. In 2014-15, the district experienced an EPS reduction in state funding in the amount of \$881,000 as compared to the previous year. The majority of this loss was due to a reduction of 44.5 students (average PreK to 12 student counts for October and April), as compared to the prior year. (*See Appendix B-RSU 19 Anticipated EPS State Funding Loss Over Ten Years)

If the RSU 19 Board were to operate five schools, instead of eight schools, what might this look like?

The Superintendent of Schools would anticipate the following:

1-significant savings in operational costs associated with facilities maintenance.

(*See Appendix C-Estimate of RSU 19 Maintenance & Energy Costs)

2-significant savings in operational costs associated with use of energy; primarily associated with heating of facilities. (does not yet assume Wood Chip, Biomass, or Natural Gas, which could provide additional savings)

(*See Appendix C-Estimate of RSU 19 Maintenance & Energy Costs)

3-significant savings in program staffing, as compared to CURRENT staffing structure (does not include new program staffing made possible by other savings)

(*See Appendix D-Estimate of RSU 19 Staffing Savings as Compared to 2014 Levels)

(DONE)

What are some potential educational benefits of consolidating school space in RSU 19?

1-a consolidation to five sites could allow the RSU to house the majority of its students in new, or newer and more modern facilities that meet current building codes, with the exception of the Etna-Dixmont School.

2-programming currently delivered to middle level students at three sites could be delivered more efficiently at one location, with greater potential to see equalization and improvement of offerings that would interest and engage middle level learners.

3-programming currently delivered to elementary level students at five sites could be delivered more efficiently in three locations, with greater potential to see equalization and improvement of offerings that would interest and engage elementary level learners.

4-staff evaluation, professional development/training and consistency in delivery of instructional programming, including intervention and special education services, could be enhanced by having instructional staff and administrators work more closely together, PreK to 8.

5-economic challenges could be mitigated, thus preventing further erosion/deterioration of valuable programs that serve students.

6-attendance, and high school completion rates could be enhanced (or further lowering of the drop out rate) via enhancement of opportunities to engage students in their learning.

7-student growth and achievement rates, including measures of school report cards via state and local assessment sampling could be enhanced.

8-college/post-secondary enrollment and completion rates could be enhanced.

How could the buildings be configured to serve students well and leave younger students close to their homes?

The current middle school sites in Hartland and Newport could be re-configured and re-named, without substantial cost, in the following manner:

- 1-move grades PreK to 4 from Newport-Plymouth and Corinna to Sebacook.
- 2-move grades PreK to 4 from Hartland Consolidated (including Palmyra students) and St. Albans to Somerset
- 3-construct new, or renovate the existing Nokomis Regional High main facility (removing all portables and temp spaces) into a 5 through 8 facility
- 4-move Etna-Dixmont grades 5 through 8 to Newport, operate a PreK to 4 program at the existing Etna-Dixmont School, and remove all portables.
- 5-construct a new Nokomis Regional High School for grades 9 through 12.

Other possible advantages?

- improve availability/ access to nurse, social worker and guidance services for all students
- improve availability/ access to literacy and math intervention, ESL, Gifted & Talented, Special Education & other services for all students
- improve ability to assign staff flexibly to meet the needs of students

Challenges?

- re-configuration of transportation routes; however, this is not seen as cost-prohibitive, or a cost-benefit. This is likely to be more cost “neutral.”
- staff re-assignments and/or adjustments in accordance with contract agreements and legal requirements.