

**SCHOOL SYSTEM REORGANIZATION NEWS #4  
BUCKSPORT, ORLAND, PROSPECT, VERONA**

**NOVEMBER 2007**

**REMAINING DEADLINES**

By 12/1: Each partnership files a plan with the Commissioner addressing 13 points specified in the law.

By 12/15: Commissioner notifies school boards of approval with modification suggestions or specific reasons why plan not approved.

January, June, or November 2008: A referendum is held in all towns on the approved plan.

45-60 days after the community vote: The new RSU school board is elected by vote in each town.

July 1: Start-up date for the new RSU. The Plan submitted by December 1 will specify that the start-up date will be July 1, 2009.

**SCHOOL BOARD MONTHLY MEETINGS**

Bucksport: 1<sup>st</sup> Wed, in Town Council Chambers  
Orland: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues, in Orland Consolidated School  
MSAD 18: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wed, in Superintendent's Office

**RPC MEETINGS**

RPC meetings are open to the public. All meetings are posted on the Bucksport school website.

**THE RPC WILL MEET AT 6 PM AT BUCKSPORT HIGH SCHOOL ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19 AND 6 PM AT MILES LANE SCHOOL ON MONDAY NOVEMBER 26.**

**RPC CONTACT INFORMATION**

|                 |                            |          |
|-----------------|----------------------------|----------|
| Bucksport:      | Rob Howard, Board          | 479-5700 |
|                 | Roger Raymond, Town        | 469-7368 |
|                 | Tom Foster, Community      | 469-7364 |
| MSAD 18:        | Roxanne Mushrall, Board    | 469-0800 |
|                 | Jennifer Riefler, Town     | 469-2045 |
|                 | Laurie Boardman, Community | 469-0535 |
| Orland:         | Millard Clement, Board     | 469-3032 |
|                 | Wayne Ames, Town           | 469-3186 |
|                 | Guy Haney, Community       | 469-2532 |
| Superintendent: | Judy Lucarelli             | 469-7311 |

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Bucksport School Dept: [www.bucksportschools.com](http://www.bucksportschools.com)

Maine Dept of Education: [www.maine.gov/education](http://www.maine.gov/education)

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**RPC DELIBERATIONS**

The RPC has held a total of 5 meetings. Meetings are rotating around the five schools in the proposed RSU so all RPC members can become familiar with all schools. The RPC is co-chaired by Rob Howard and Laurie Boardman, and meetings are facilitated by Ann Bridge.

A total of 18 items must be addressed in the RPC Plan. The items addressed so far are as follows.

1. Specify school systems to be included in the RSU: The school systems included in the Regional School Unit (RSU) will be Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18 (Prospect and Verona). This has been proposed by the 3 school boards and approved by the Commissioner.

2. RSU School Board size, composition and apportionment across the towns The RPC voted on 10/15 that the RSU Board shall include four (4) members from Bucksport, two (2) members from Orland, one (1) member from Prospect, and one (1) member from Verona.

3. Method for voting by RSU Board: The RPC voted on 10/15 that school board votes shall be weighted based on the most recent estimated census of the town divided by the number of board members allocated to the town. Based on the July 1, 2006 census and using the board size and apportionment from Item 2, votes in 2007-2008 would be weighted as follows:

| RSU 9 towns | 7/1/06 census | members | weighted votes |
|-------------|---------------|---------|----------------|
| Bucksport   | 4,961         | 4       | 1,240          |
| Orland      | 2,056         | 2       | 1,028          |
| Prospect    | 581           | 1       | 581            |
| Verona      | 647           | 1       | 647            |
| total       | 8,245         | 8       |                |

4. Composition, powers, and duties of any local school committees to be created: The RPC voted on 10/30 that the RSU shall have no local school committees. The RSU shall have a Facilities Oversight Committee consisting of eight members, two from each town. One member from each town shall be appointed by the RSU Board and one member from each town shall be selected by the elected municipal officials of the town. The Committee shall be advisory to the RSU Board regarding facilities planning priorities and the budget for facilities maintenance and improvements.

5. Disposition of real and personal school property: This item will be addressed in November. State law specifies that the RSU shall take title to buildings constructed with

state funds, in which children receive instruction as of the operational date of the RSU. School buildings and other buildings to be considered are as follows.

| <b><u>Bucksport School Buildings</u></b> |                |
|--|----------------|
| Bucksport High School                    | 400 Broadway   |
| BHS Storage Building                     | 400 Broadway   |
| BHS Grounds storage                      | Football field |
| BHS Press Box/Concessions                | Softball field |
| BHS Modular Classroom                    | 400 Broadway   |
| BHS Concessions                          | Football field |
| BHS Maintenance Building                 | 400 Broadway   |
| BHS Press Box                            | Football field |
| BHS Athletic storage                     | Football field |
| BHS Chemical Storage                     | 400 Broadway   |
| BHS Athletic storage                     | Football field |
| Bucksport Middle School                  | 100 Miles Lane |
| BMS Storage Building                     | 100 Miles Lane |
| BMS Storage Building                     | 100 Miles Lane |
| Miles Lane School                        | 52 Miles Lane  |
| Jewett School                            | Bridge Street  |
| Warren School (Central Office)           | 62 Mechanic    |

| <b><u>Orland School Buildings</u></b> |                      |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| School Building                       | 21 School House Road |
| Shop Building                         | 21 School House Road |
| Recreation Storage                    | 21 School House Road |
| 4 baseball dugouts                    | 21 School House Road |

In addition to buildings, recommendations by the RPC will address vehicles, grounds equipment, and instructional equipment and materials. The RPC may also stipulate that citizens in each town shall have the same access to school facilities as they did before the RSU was formed.

6. Disposition of existing indebtedness: The RPC voted on 10/30 on the following items:

- A. Because Bucksport's state-approved debt payments for debt that remains on June 30, 2009 shall continue to be provided by the mill rate required by EPS, these payments are not a tax burden for Orland, Prospect, or Verona.
- B. The remaining "local-only" debt of the Bucksport School Department that exists on June 30, 2009 for the Miles Lane School gymnasium and Middle School Auditorium shall be the responsibility of Bucksport.
- C. The remaining "local-only" debt of the Bucksport School Department that exists on June 30, 2009 for the Bucksport High School roofs shall be the responsibility of Bucksport, Orland, Prospect, and

Verona, allocated based on state assessed valuation of the towns.

D. The local only debt shall be paid in the first year of the RSU.

7. Assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements, and other school contractual obligations: The RPC will make recommendations to the School Boards regarding existing contracts. This includes:

- ✓ Negotiated Agreements with Teachers and Support Personnel
- ✓ Formation of new bargaining units for the RSU
- ✓ Individual employment contracts with district personnel
- ✓ Contracts for transportation with First Student (formerly Laidlaw)
- ✓ Contracts for photocopiers
- ✓ Contracts for goods including electricity, heating oil, bus fuel
- ✓ Other contracts for services

8. Disposition of existing school funds and financial obligations, including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds, and other funds appropriated for school purposes: This item will be addressed once the audits are complete for the 06-07 school year. It will address monies to be set aside for July and August teacher paychecks in the in the summer of 2009, scholarship trust funds, and how the undesignated balance for each school system will be used to offset taxes in the first year of the RSU. It may also establish a reserve account for school facilities to be used by the RSU, funded from school system balances.

9. Transition plan that addresses the development of the first annual budget for the RSU and interim personnel policies: This item will provide a budget development process and timeline for the 2009-2010 RSU budget. It may also recommend that each school system raise monies for the RSU during 2008-2009, such as the cost of this newsletter. A process will be described for the development of those policies that are essential for the RSU when it becomes operational. In addition to personnel policies, school board operations, certain student policies, and a facilities use policy are likely to be listed for development.

10. Documentation of the public meeting(s) held to prepare or review the reorganization plan: Agendas and minutes of all meetings are posted on the Bucksport School Department website. Citizens in attendance at these meetings are permitted to speak before any vote.

11. Explanation of how the school systems that approve the plan will proceed if not all involved school systems approve the plan: It is not likely that the RSU will be approved by the Commissioner unless it is approved in Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18. If citizens of any of the three school systems fail to approve the Plan, the RPC will be reconvened to draft a plan more likely to be approved by all school units.

12. Estimate of the cost savings to be achieved and how these savings will be achieved: The RPC will examine the budgets of the three school systems and identify possible cost savings. These school systems belong to the Penobscot River Educational Partnership (PREP). Bucksport is one of the districts that received a grant from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to find ways to save costs through shared services. This grant extends through June 2008. Currently we are exploring savings in food service, maintenance and safety, financial operations, and adult education.

13. Other matters that the current boards find necessary: It is likely that the RPC will recommend that the RSU become operational on July 1, 2009. There could be a recommendation on pay for RSU Board members. There may be a process to name the RSU. Other items will arise as the RPC meets and hears from citizens and school personnel about the new school system.

#### ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL SYSTEMS

Because our RSU will have fewer than 2500 students, there will be additional requirements to be met in developing a plan for the Commissioner's approval:

- A. Demonstrate that Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18 school boards "performed due diligence" to develop a regional plan with 2500 students but neighboring school systems voted to partner with others [we can document contact with neighboring school systems];
- B. Plan provides comprehensive programming K-12 with at least 1 publicly supported high school [our 4 towns will continue to meet this requirement];
- C. Plan is consistent with specified policies in statute;
  1. Opportunity. Equitable educational opportunity for all students to demonstrate achievement of the content standards of the State's system of learning results;

2. Programs. Rigorous academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results and that prepare students for college, careers and citizenship;
3. Delivery. Uniformity in the delivery of academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results ;
4. Tax rates. A greater uniformity of tax rates for the support of schools [each town in the RSU will have the same education tax rate]
5. Sustainability. The efficient use of limited resources in order to achieve long-term sustainability and predictability in the support of public schools
6. Public funds. Effective use of the public funds expended for the support of public schools by means of the creation of cost-efficient organizational structures; and administrative structures and efficiencies that permit the organized and regular delivery of uniform state-sponsored professional development programs to promote coherence and consistency in the understanding and application of the State's standards-based system for continuous improvement in student achievement [the school systems will continue to participate in regional professional development through PREP, which has been locally funded since state funds for regional professional development were eliminated];
7. School choice. The preservation of opportunities for choice of schools [Bucksport and MSAD 18 do not have choice of schools. Orland has choice of schools for up to 40% of high school students and this will be preserved in the RSU. Any additional costs of maintaining school choice for Orland high school students should be the responsibility of the Town of Orland after the operational date of the RSU, subject to Maine statute.];
8. Services. The maximization of opportunities to deliver services that can more effectively be provided in larger districts than from within smaller units or individual schools [There will be savings in purchasing for Orland based on joining with Bucksport. In addition, the PREP initiative will mean savings for all 3 systems.]

- D. The Plan does not displace students or teachers or close any schools [this will be part of the RPC plan]; and
- E. Reorganizes administrative functions, duties, and non-instructional personnel so the projected expenditures of the RSU for 08-09 in system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities & maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program [does not apply since the RSU will not be operational during 08-09].

#### NEXT STEPS

- ✓ The RPC will determine which items can be completed before the end of November. The Plan will not be complete by that time.
- ✓ Each School Board will have a special meeting in the last week of November for a vote to submit the Plan, to the Commissioner by December 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ✓ By December 15<sup>th</sup> the Commissioner will provide feedback on the parts of the Plan that are complete, and will notify us of the deadline for the remainder of the Plan.
- ✓ Citizens will vote on the Plan no sooner than 30 days after approval by the Commissioner (so absentee ballots can be provided). It is likely that the vote will be no sooner than June 2008, after the end of the Legislative session.
- ✓ To be approved, the Plan must pass by a majority vote in Bucksport, in Orland, and in MSAD 18 (Prospect and Verona combined).
- ✓ 40 to 60 days after the Plan is approved, RSU Board members must be elected from the four towns.

#### ROLE FOR CITIZENS

Please stay informed about reorganization. These newsletters can help. This will be discussed at all school board meetings. RPC meeting notices will be posted in the schools, on the website, and in local newspapers. When the vote to form the district is announced, it is very important that you vote: a large voter turnout will ensure that the result is the will of the communities.

**PLEASE CONTACT AN RPC MEMBER, A SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER, OR THE SUPERINTENDENT WITH ANY CONCERNS OR QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PLAN. YOUR INPUT WILL BE CONSIDERED AS THE PLAN IS DEVELOPED.**