

**SCHOOL SYSTEM REORGANIZATION NEWS #5
BUCKSPORT, ORLAND, PROSPECT, VERONA**

DECEMBER 2007

REMAINING ITEMS FOR RPC:

Item 7. Assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements, and other school contractual obligations.

Item 8. Disposition of existing school funds and financial obligations, including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds, and other funds appropriated for school purposes.

Item 12. Estimate of the cost savings to be achieved and how these savings will be achieved.

State Policies:

1. Equitable educational opportunity for all students;
2. Rigorous academic programs;
3. Uniformity in the delivery of academic programs;
4. Greater uniformity of tax rates;
5. Long-term resource sustainability & predictability;
6. Effective use of the public funds;
7. Preservation of opportunities for school choice;
8. Maximization of opportunities to deliver services.

SCHOOL BOARD MONTHLY MEETINGS

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

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

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

Email addresses:

rob.howard@bucksportschools.com
roger.raymond@bucksportschools.com
tom.foster@bucksportschools.com
roxanne.mushrall@bucksportschools.com
jriefler@u98.k12.me.us
laurie.m.boardman@usps.gov
wayne.ames@bucksportschools.com
guy.haney@bucksportschools.com
judy.lucarelli@bucksportschools.com

Bucksport School Dept: www.bucksportschools.com

Maine Dept of Education: www.maine.gov/education

**SCHOOL SYSTEM REORGANIZATION NEWS #5
BUCKSPORT, ORLAND, PROSPECT, VERONA**

DECEMBER 2007

The RPC is co-chaired by Rob Howard and Laurie Boardman, and meetings are facilitated by Ann Bridge. On December 1st the RPC Plan that was submitted to the Commissioner was close to completion. A summary of the items approved so far follows. A complete statement of all items is available on the Bucksport School website.

RPC PROPOSED PLAN

The following Reorganization Plan is proposed by the RPC for Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18. All language proposed is subject to change in accordance with future changes in statute. That is, if a provision of this Plan is found to be counter to current or future statute, the relevant sections of the Plan will be reopened by the RPC to be made consistent with statute; and if statute changes to permit changes that would benefit the towns of the RPC, the relevant sections of the Plan will be reopened by the RPC to consider changes.

1. The school systems included in the Regional School Unit (RSU) shall be Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18 (Prospect and Verona), as proposed by the three school boards and approved by the Commissioner.
2. 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. 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 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. 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:

The RSU shall take title to buildings constructed with state funding, in which children receive instruction as of the

operational date of the RSU, in accordance with the following stipulations. Prior to the effective date of the RSU, all agreements and understandings about use and upkeep of facilities will be put to writing.

A. The Town of Bucksport will retain the Junior High Field and grant lease to the RSU for use of the facility per current conditions.

B. Jewett School will be transferred to the RSU except the Town of Bucksport will retain the following:

- 1) community center space and storage areas currently occupied by Town of Bucksport;
- 2) retain perpetual easement across property for the public drainage pipe;
- 3) perpetual easement across property for the sanitary sewer;
- 4) easement for the Head Start playground until playground no longer in use;
- 5) parking lot on Bridge Street adjacent Jewett School and lease required area for use by the RSU per current conditions;
- 6) drain pipe and sewer line on the parking lot property; and
- 7) Swimming pool parking lot.

C. Bucksport High School buildings and grounds will be transferred to the RSU except:

- 1) tennis courts
- 2) equipment storage shed (beyond power line)
- 3) Miles Lane Trail
- 4) new bathrooms and concession stand
- 5) football field
- 6) property that includes the power line right of way

These facilities will be leased to the RSU with exception of equipment storage facility located beyond power line.

D. Miles Lane School will be transferred to the RSU excepting the Miles Lane Trail and Miles Lane Access Road. These facilities will be leased to the RSU for school use per current conditions.

E. Bucksport Middle School buildings and grounds will be transferred to the RSU excepting the Miles Lane Trail and Miles Lane Road. These facilities will be leased to the RSU for school use per current conditions. In addition:

- 1) Storage buildings will be transferred to the RSU.
- 2) Middle School ball fields will be transferred
- 3) A perpetual easement to land off Forest Hill will be granted to the RSU for drainage way and structures.

Miles Lane Fields will be leased to the RSU for school use per current conditions.

F. The maintenance of fields in the Bucksport Schools shall become the responsibility of the RSU. The RSU Board may contract with the Town of Bucksport to continue to mow and maintain school grounds in Bucksport.

G. The Bucksport School Board will determine the future need for the Luman Warren School and implement this decision prior to the operational date of the RSU.

H. Orland Consolidated School shall be transferred to the RSU with the shop building, baseball dugouts, and recreation storage building.

I. The citizens of these towns shall continue to have the same access to school property after the operational date of the RSU, as they had with the municipal school systems.

J. All educational materials such as books, classroom supplies, equipment, and furniture shall become property of the RSU to continue to be used for the purpose intended: education of children in the schools.

K. The vehicles and grounds equipment used by the school departments shall become the property of the RSU.

6. Disposition of existing indebtedness

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.

9. Transition plan

A. All policies existing in the previous school administrative units shall continue to apply to the same employment positions and schools after they become part of the regional school unit. After the operational date, the regional school unit board and superintendent shall develop and adopt region-wide policies in accordance with applicable law.

B. A process was outlined for development of 2009-2010 RSU budget. This is available on the Bucksport school website.

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. If citizens of any of the three school systems fail to approve the Plan, the RPC shall be reconvened to draft a plan more likely to be approved by all school units. Failing in this, the school boards shall restart the process.

13. The operational date of the RSU shall be no sooner than July 1, 2009.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SMALL SYSTEMS

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

A. The documentation that Bucksport, Orland, and MSAD 18 school boards "performed due diligence" to develop a regional plan with 2500 students is included on the website.

B. MSAD 18 and Bucksport students have benefited from comprehensive K-12 program for decades. The RSU will add the PK-8 program in Orland to this. Bucksport High School shall be the publicly supported high school for the RSU.

D. To be consistent with statute, no students or teachers will be displaced by this Plan, and no schools where students are educated will close because of this Plan in the first year after the RSU becomes operational.

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].

COLLABORATION

Collaboration is particularly important for small school systems. The opportunity to learn from each other, to share services, and to conduct research into greater efficiencies is provided to members of the Penobscot River Educational Partnership (PREP). This model school and University collaborative effort has been in place since 1996 and supports member school systems in many ways. Focusing on efficiency and effectiveness has led to increased collaboration, trust, and support to the member school units.

PREP partners include Brewer schools, Bucksport schools, Orland, School Union 90 (Alton, Bradley, Greenbush, Milford), Indian Island School, Orrington, University of Maine (College of Education & Human Development, College of Business, Public Policy & Health, College of Liberal Arts & Sciences), Old Town schools, School Administrative District 22 (Hampden, Newburgh, Winterport), Union 87 (Orono, Veazie), SAD 63 (Clifton, Eddington, Holden), United Technology Center (Bangor), and Maine CDS/Penobscot County.

The following is a listing of current initiatives involving schools within the PREP Partnership.

Executive Officers meet four times yearly and provide overall direction for PREP Initiatives. The Executive Officers are comprised of school superintendents and the Dean of the College of Education and Human Development and the Dean of the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health.

Curriculum Coordinators meet monthly to provide planning, direction and support for professional improvement, student achievement, and planning for improvement.

Guidance Initiative: This is the fourth year of this group's functioning. Overall leadership has moved from the Mitchell Institute to a group involving guidance counselors and university faculty. This group will meet five to six times a year. Members consistently speak of the support received from this community. These activities are provided at no cost.

Response to Intervention K-1 Literacy: This initiative provides 8 days of staff development supporting K-1 Literacy at no cost, by University professors in literacy and special education.

Pre-Referral Initiative: The new special education regulations require a focus on regular education. Initial planning is provided at no cost to PREP school units. A summer institute is projected at costing each involved school unit \$1,000 for the involvement of their school staff.

Professional Learning Community Development: 4 days of staff development in a Train the Trainer format for PREP Schools around the development of Professional Learning Communities costs \$1,000 for each school unit for 8 days of training for 12-15 staff members from each school unit.

Adult Education: A committee has been established to review the current status of Adult Education staffing and programming within PREP school units.

Virtual High School Initiative: A committee has been established to plan for and implement development of on-line courses. A University of Maine Associate Professor in Information Technology will be assisting this committee in their initial planning. Funds remaining from a previous Secondary School Initiative will fund the initial planning and development efforts.

Special Education Related Services Initiative: A psychologist, a certified psychological service provider and two speech therapists have been hired by PREP to provide evaluations and direct services to students served by the PREP partnership. This provides expanded services at a reduced cost.

Maine Municipal Bond Bank Initiative: The Penobscot River Educational Partnership was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Maine Municipal Bond Bank to support the

development of efficiencies within PREP schools in areas supporting business functions.

1. Food Service Initiative: A consultant has been hired and has met with representatives of school units, making several extended visits to gather additional information prior to developing an analysis and recommendations regarding efficiency and effectiveness.

2. Health, Safety, and Efficiency: Three committees are focusing on efficiencies in purchasing, school safety, and training. Each committee is identifying possible areas involving collaboration and increasing efficiencies.

3. Financial Services: One PREP school unit will be initiating use of software for the management of timekeeping and payroll data. Information on this implementation will be made available to all PREP schools in the spring of 2008.

4. Substitute Teachers: PREP schools will pilot a software program to enhance the current system of securing substitute teachers.

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ The RPC will continue meeting to complete the plan: items 7, 8, 12, and state policies. The Commissioner has presented legislation that would allow the RPC to address how costs would be shared across the 4 towns in the RSU: valuation, enrollment, or a combination.
- ✓ Once complete, the Plan will be submitted to the Commissioner for approval before our towns vote.
- ✓ 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 on the website. 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.