



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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JOHN ELIAS BALDACCI
GOVERNOR

SUSAN A. GENDRON
COMMISSIONER

August 8, 2008

Ronald Whary, Chair
Winslow School Committee
5 Mar-Val Terrace B-2
Winslow, ME 04901

Dear Mr. Whary,

I am writing to follow up on information we have received that Winslow's School Committee voted not to submit the reorganization planning committee's plan to the Department of Education for my review.

While the law gives the authority to submit the plan to the individual school administrative units rather than the RPC itself, the law does not give school boards the option to refuse to submit the plan. Section XXXX-36(4) states that "By December 1, 2007, each school administrative unit shall submit to the Commissioner of Education..." (emphasis added). I note that Winslow's School Committee did submit an initial plan on November 29, 2007, in compliance with the Reorganization Law.

By not submitting the completed plan, the school board has deprived the citizens of Winslow the opportunity to vote on the reorganization plan. The Legislature was clear in its desire that the public have an opportunity to vote on the RPC's plan. The school board's role is to "submit." Submitting a plan does not indicate "approval" or "endorsement." A school board is entitled to advocate for or against the RPC's plan with the voters, but not to take away the voters' right to have the ultimate say.

It is my view that the Winslow School Committee's action on this matter puts it out of compliance with Public Law, Chapter 240. Therefore I ask the School Committee to reconsider its actions, and to inform the Department of its plans, at which time I will consider appropriate action.

The Department remains committed to assisting in whatever ways possible, including the provision of a facilitator at no expense to the RPC or the Winslow School Committee. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ray Poulin or Norm Higgins of our Reorganization Team. They may be reached by phone at 624-6802.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

cc: James Morse, Superintendent of Schools, MSAD 47
Hugh Riordan, Superintendent of Schools, School Union 52