REORGANIZATION PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

(Each municipality in a School Union must be indicated separately.)

School Administrative Units Included in **APPROVED** Notice of Intent	School Administrative Units Submitting Reorganization Plan
School Union 52: China Vassalboro Winslow	School Union 52: China Vassalboro Winslow
Waterville Public Schools	Waterville Public Schools
Maine School Administrative District No. 47	Maine School Administrative District No. 47

Contact Information:

RPC Chair

Name: Eric L. Haley, Elaine B. Miller, James C. Morse, Sr.

Address: 41 Heath Street

Oakland, ME 04963

Telephone: 207-465-7384

email: jmorse@msad47.org

ehaley@fc.wtvl.k12.me.us and emiller@su52.org

Date Plan Submitted: December 1, 2007

Proposed RSU Operational Date: July 1, 2009

School Union 52 – China, Vassalboro, Winslow

Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Lori A. Fowle Chairperson	11/27/07	Vassalboro
	11/27/07	VASSALBORO
Amy L Mulling	11.27.07	VASSALBORO
	11-27-07	Vassalboro
	11-27-07	Vassalboro
Chairman	11/29/07	China
	11/29/07	China
	11-29-07	China
	11-29-07	China
	11-29-07	Winslow
	11/29/07	Winslow
	11/29/07	Winslow

School Union 52 – China, Vassalboro, Winslow

Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Wendy Dwyer Roy	11/29/07	Winslow
Robert Hendrick	11/29/07	Winslow
Wendy Nurian	11/29/07	Winslow
Joel S. Selwood	11/29/07	Winslow

Maine School Administrative District No. 47

Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Michael Egnatelm Board Chair	11-30-07	M.S.A.D. 47

Per MSAD #47 Board action on November 7, 2007

MSAD 47

Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Board Member (Oakland)	11/15/07	MSAD #47
Jeffery Frost	11/15/07	MSAD #47
Constance Packard	11/15/07	MSAD #47
Town Mgr.	11/15/07	MSAD #47 (OAKLAND)
John T. Dutton	11/15/07	MSAD #47 (BELGRADE)
M Engley	11-15-2007	MSAD #47 (SIDNEY)
Dennis L. Keschl	11-15-2007	MSAD #47 (BELGRADE)
Melanie Jewell	11-15-07	MSAD #47 (Belgrade)
Linda Laughlin	11-15-07	MSAD #47

Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Ed. Chr	12/4/2007	Waterville Public Schools
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU
Signature/Title	Date	SAU

Reorganization Plan Cover Sheet

(Please attach Reorganization Plan as Exhibit A)

Required Elements							
Law Reference Item Number Sub-Chapter 2	Item	N/A	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Started	Identified Barrier[1]	Need Assistance[2]
3.A(1)	SAUs included in RSU	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(2)	Size of governing body	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Composition of governing body	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Apportionment of governing body	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(3)	Method of voting of the governing body	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(4)	Composition of local school committees	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Powers of local school committees	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Duties of local school committees	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(5)	Disposition of real & personal school property	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.A(6)	Disposition of existing school indebtedness (if not using provisions of section 1506)	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Disposition of lease-purchase obligations (if not using provisions of section 1506)	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(7)	Assignment of school personnel contracts	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Assignment of school collective bargaining agreements	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
	Assignment of other school contractual obligations	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.A(8)	Disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(9)	Transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year	■	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
	Transition plan that addresses interim personnel policies	■	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
3.A(10)	Documentation of the public meeting(s) held to prepare or review reorganization plan (to the date of this report)	■	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.A(11)	Explanation of how units that approve reorganization plan will proceed if one or more units do not approve the plan	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
3.A(12)	Estimate of cost savings to be achieved	■	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
3.A(13)	Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary	■	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

[1] **Please explain why this is a barrier and what assistance you need to remove this barrier on the next page.**

[2] **Please explain what assistance you need to complete this portion of your plan, and state from whom you need assistance, on page 3.**

Parameters for Plan Development

Law Reference Item Number Sub-Chapter 2	Item	N/A	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Started	Identified Barrier[3]	Need Assistance[4]
3.B(1)	Enrollment meets requirements (2,500 except where circumstances justify an exception[5])		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sec. XXXX-36, Parameter B	When viewed in conjunction with surrounding proposed units, may not result in one or more municipalities being denied the option to join an RSU		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.B(2)	Comprehensive programming for all students grades K - 12.		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	Includes at least one publicly supported high school		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.B(3)	Consistent with policies set forth in section 1451		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
3.B(4)	No displacement of teachers		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	No displacement of students		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
	No closures of schools existing or operating during school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512		☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sec. XXXX-26, Parameter F	The plan must address how the school administrative unit will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of the reorganized school unit in fiscal year 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program[6]		☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Collaborative Agreements

	Yes	No
Does your plan currently include information/documentation on collaborative agreements? *(not required, but encouraged)* **Kennebec Alliance**	☒	☐

Exceptions to 2,500 minimum

Actual number of students for which the RSU is fiscally responsible: 7,249

Exception	Exception Claimed in Plan	Documentation Provided? (Please attach as Exhibit B)	
		Yes	No
Geography	☐	☐	☐
Demographics	☐	☐	☐
Economics	☐	☐	☐
Transportation	☐	☐	☐
Population Density	☐	☐	☐
Other Unique Circumstances	☐	☐	☐

[3] **Please explain why this is a barrier and what assistance you need to remove this barrier on the next page.**
[4] **Please explain what assistance you need to complete this portion of your plan, and state from whom you need assistance, on page 3.**
[5] **Please note in the *Exceptions to 2500 minimum* section on next page**
[6] **This requirement is only for those who plan to be operational as an RSU in fiscal year 2008-2009, in accordance with a Reorganization Plan that is approved by the Commissioner and by the voters.**

Explanation of Barriers –
Please use this section to explain any/all barriers identified on the previous page as a barrier in completing your Reorganization Plan.

Law Reference/Required Element	Explanation of the barrier
	Manpower Restrictions
	Timeline
	Combining Policy Manuals
	Contract Insurance Merging
	# of Contracts to Merge
	In-kind Services
	Federal Funds Potential Loss
	Governor's $36 Million
	Cost Redistribution/Shifting
	Disposition of School Indebtedness
	Equitable Disposition of Funds
	Repeal Effort
	Redistribution of Costs Among Potential Members
	Ownership of Municipal Property (real and personal) to be Transferred to the RSU
	Bring all school unions to same financial profile.

Assistance Needs –
Please use this section to describe your needs for assistance and from whom you need assistance.

Law Reference/Required Element	Explanation of your assistance need	Assistance needed from whom?
	Legal Support	
	MDOE Money for Non-legal Issues	

REORGANIZATION PLAN

MSAD #47 (Belgrade, Oakland, Rome, Sidney)

SCHOOL UNION #52 (China, Vassalboro, Winslow)

WATERVILLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REORGANIZATION PLAN

SAUs Submitting:	MSAD #47 (Belgrade, Oakland, Rome, Sidney) School Union #52 (China, Vassalboro, Winslow) Waterville Public Schools
Contact Information:	James C. Morse, Sr.
Date Submitted by SAU:	December 1, 2007
Proposed RSU Operational Date:	July 1, 2009

Preamble

We believe that the following principles of school governance and financing are central to the efficient and productive operation of school systems.

1. Local schools are a central element of the identity of Maine communities. They should be preserved and should continue to function as community centers after consolidation. It is important, therefore, that there continue to be schools that are strongly identified with their communities, such as Messalonskee High School, Waterville High School, and Winslow High School.

2. Local communities should continue as stewards of their schools by having influence over the money spent for education and being able to invest additional community resources to make their local schools high functioning and unique.

3. We must consolidate administrative and other operational functions so that scarce taxpayer resources may be concentrated on providing students with a high quality education.

4. Our school system accepts all students and provides all students within the system with the best education possible so that each has the opportunity to be a valued, contributing member of our society.

Statutory Citations: Citations to "Section" (e.g., "Section XXXX36") refer to the school reorganization law, P.L. 2007 Ch. 240, unless otherwise indicated.

1. The units of school administration to be included in the proposed reorganized regional school unit.

   The proposed regional school unit includes the following school administrative units:
   a. MSAD #47 (Belgrade, Oakland, Rome, Sidney)
   b. School Union #52 (China, Vassalboro, Winslow)
   c. Waterville Public Schools

2. The size, composition and apportionment of the governing body.

3. The method of voting of the governing body.

The Regional School Unit Board shall be composed of thirteen (13) members. Each municipality in the RSU shall elect the following number of its residents to serve on the Board, and their votes shall be weighted as follows.

Town	Population	# of Votes	# of Members	Votes per member	% per member	Equal weight per member	Equal % per member	Excess over equal
Belgrade	3,209	69	1	69	6.86%	77	7.69%	-0.84%
China	4,408	94	1	94	9.42%	77	7.69%	1.73%
Oakland	6,202	133	2	66	6.63%	77	7.69%	-1.07%
Rome	1,101	24	1	24	2.35%	77	7.69%	-5.34%
Sidney	3,966	85	1	85	8.47%	77	7.69%	0.78%
Vassalboro	4,337	93	1	93	9.27%	77	7.69%	1.57%
Waterville	15,639	334	4	84	8.35%	77	7.69%	0.66%
Winslow	7,944	170	2	85	8.49%	77	7.69%	0.79%
Totals	46,806	1,000	13					

Each Board member shall serve a three-year term, except that the initial terms of the members of the first RSU board shall be staggered as provided by Section XXXX-40. The weighing of the votes shall be adjusted as allowed by law. The voting power of any one member may not exceed by more than 2% the percentage of voting power the member would have if all 1,000 votes were apportioned equally among all members.

The initial Board members shall be elected as follows.

Belgrade: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
China: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Oakland: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Rome: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Sidney: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Vassalboro: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Waterville: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Winslow: one member shall be elected for a _____-year term.
Lengths of terms are yet to be determined.

4. The composition, powers, and duties of any local school committees to be created.

The RSU Board of Education will be recognized as the only official governing body that will be empowered to make decisions for the RSU, as defined by law.

5. The disposition of real and personal school property.

   a. Real Property and Fixtures

The RSU assume transfer and title of the collective school facilities/sites provided in the attached summary as Exhibit 5-A. Except as listed below, all real property interests, including without limitation land, buildings, other improvements to realty, easements, option rights, first refusal rights, and purchase rights, and all fixtures of the school administrative units and of any school unions of which they are members shall be property of the region. The regional school unit board may require such deeds, assignments or other instruments of transfer as in its judgment is necessary to establish the region's right, title and interest in such real property and fixtures.

The following real property interests and associated fixtures shall not be transferred.

Scholarships associated with specific schools and programs.

b. Personal Property

All other school personal property, including movable equipment, furnishings, textbooks and other curriculum materials, supplies, inventories, software, leases, licenses and right of use, records, and contract rights including transportation maintenance and uniform contracts shall become property of the region as successor of the SAUs, except as listed below.

The RSU Board may require such assignments, bills of sale or other instruments of transfer as in its judgment is necessary to establish the region's right, title and interesting such personal property.

c. Agreements to share or to Jointly Own Property

In cases where real or personal school property is shared or is jointly used by an SAU with a municipality or other party, the RSU shall be the successor in interest to the SAU, unless that shared or jointly used property has been excepted in the above list of excepted real property or, as applicable, the above list of excepted personal property.

6. The disposition of existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase obligations if the parties elect not to use the provisions of Section 1506 regarding the disposition of debt obligations.

The RSU will include the assumption of local only debt and lease purchase obligations as part of consolidation planning. This would include the debt on record as of June 30, 2008, as some projects are currently underway but financing is not yet completed. If any future local only debt efforts were underway, that debt would need to be brought forth to the RPC as well.

7. The assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations.

The RPC is ongoing with its discussions regarding school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations.

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

    a. All existing trust funds at the date of RSU consolidation will be transferred to the RSU with existing trust fund conditions/restrictions remaining in place, to be administered by the RSU.
    b. All general fund balances be transferred to the RSU.
    c. The summer pay liability be transferred as either funded or unfunded as existing at June 30, 2009. Winslow, Vassalboro and China will be fully funded by the end of eight (8) years subsequent to the RSU formation through additional assessment to Winslow, Vassalboro and China. Waterville and MSAD 47 will be transferred as fully funded.
    d. Adult Education fund balances will be transferred to the RSU.

e. Food Service balances will be zeroed out prior to July 1, 2009 and transferred at zero balance.
f. Student activity account balances will be transferred to the RSU, keeping accounts for use by each school as they now exist.
g. Agency funds will be transferred to the RSU, keeping all accounts separate.

10. Documentation of the public meeting or public meetings held to prepare or review the reorganization plan.

Minutes of the following public meeting(s) held to prepare or review the reorganization plan are attached as Exhibit 10-A.

Date of Public Meeting	Time	Location
August 22, 2007	5:00 p.m.	MSAD #47 Central Office, Oakland
September 6, 2007	5:00 p.m.	Messalonskee Middle School, Oakland
September 20, 2007	5:00 p.m.	Messalonskee Middle School, Oakland
October 4, 2007	5:00 p.m.	Mid-Maine Technical Center, Waterville
October 18, 2007	5:00 p.m.	Winslow Elementary School, Winslow
November 1, 2007	5:00 p.m.	Messalonskee Middle School, Oakland
November 15, 2007	5:00 p.m.	George J. Mitchell School, Waterville

The RPC has approved the preceding provisions of the Reorganization Plan. Its Finance Subcommittee has made recommendations to the full RPC that have not yet been fully deliberated or decided. What follows are the remaining elements of the required plan as set forth in the consolidation statute. The RPC will continue its work on these elements until such time as a partial or complete plan must be submitted to the local school boards for submission to the Maine Department of Education.

9. A transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year of the reorganized unit and interim personnel policies.

Not yet started.

11. An explanation of how units that approve the reorganization plan will proceed if one or more of the proposed members of the regional school unit fail to approve the plan.

Still under discussion.

12. An estimate of the cost savings to be achieved by the formation of a regional school unit and how these savings will be achieved.

Still under discussion.

13. Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary.

On-going.

SAD #47
Facility Condition Summary
9/30/2007

Campus - Name	1-Oct-07 Enrollment	Bldg /Section	Replacement Value	Building Gross SF	Bldg FCI (Facility Condition Index)	Future Needs (within 7 yrs):	Estimated Cost	Implementation Date
		garage bldg	250,499			New garage needed		
		maintenance bldg	93,654			with 7 bays/wash system		
		site/grounds	269,421			and fuel pumps/land		
Total garage/maint bldg			**613,574**	**5,800**	**garage = 2.23**		**1,250,000**	**2009**
		Tapley building	1,502,655			Board Room handicap		
		tech bldg	65,389			access lacking -		
		site/grounds	137,708			need elevator		
Total Tapley campus			**1,705,752**	**22,224**	**Tapley = 0.15**		**100,000**	**2011**
		1987 Portable A	65,387					
		1987 Portable B	65,387			need sprinkler, parking		
		1951 Section	622,080					
		1975 Section	1,530,500					
		site/grounds	201,957					
Total Atwood Elem.	**245**		**2,485,311**	**28,761**	**1951 = 0.21**		**75,000**	**2010**
		2006 Portable	61,981					
		1951 Section	801,840			facility inadequate for		
		1975 Section	1,763,885			# of students - options:		
		2001 Section	1,012,560			1. Build new school	**12,000,000**	**2013**
		1989 portable	65,387			2. Move students out	**-**	**2009**
		site/grounds	671,479			3. Expand /upgrade school	**5,000,000**	**2013**
Total James Bean Elem	**348**		**4,377,132**	**42,802**	**1951 = .04**			
		1930 section	1,679,247			normal maintenance		
		1962 section	697,289			and renovations		
		1983 section	592,984					
		2001 section	804,384					
		site/grounds	636,158					
Total Belgrade Central Elem	**289**		**4,410,062**	**45,926**	**1930 = .05**			
		1924 Section	3,783,570			normal maintenance		
		1986 Section	1,719,550			and renovations		
		site/ground	528,612					
Total Williams Elem	**225**		**6,031,732**	**53,981**	**1986 = .05**			
		1968 section	12,907,760			completion of roof		
		1992 section	5,318,085			shingles replacement		
		Portable cluster	570,533					
		site/ground	2,841,719					
Total High School	**886**		**21,638,097**	**162,719**	**1968 = .02**		**600,000**	**2007-10**
		2002 building	13,604,400			normal maintenance		
		site/ground	2,257,813			and renovations		
Total Middle School	**584**		**15,862,213**	**120,000**	**0**			
Grand Total	**2,577**		**$ 57,123,873**	**482,213**				

Best FCI = 0.00
Worst FCI = >.70

Exhibit 5A-1

School Union 52 - Winslow, Vassalboro, China
Facility Condition Summary
9/30/2007

Campus Name	1-Oct-07 Enrollment	Bldg /Section	Replacement Value	Building Gross SF	Bldg FCI (Facility Condition Index)	Future Needs (within 7 yrs):	Estimated Cost	Implementation Date
		WINSLOW						
		1963 Main building	6,417,987	63,300	1963=0.64			
		1986 Section	769,615	7,700	1986=0.28			
		1957 Annex building	1,319,562	14,020	1957=0.78	1957 section to be demolished		
		2000 Portable	50,000	1,440	N/A			
		site/ground	2,185,260	1,806,000	1960=0.51			
Total Winslow High School	**518**		**10,742,424**	**1,892,460**	**Est. FCI post Construction = .15**			
		1928 Main building	6,429,196	62,120	1928=0.61	1) Energy Efficiency Project/Performance Contract 2) **Planning to submit Major Capital Application for replacement or renovation**	$500,000 **ESTIMATE** **$7,500,000 ESTIMATE**	
		1972 Section	1,676,459	18,000	1972=0.83			
		site/ground	638,924	172,000	1928=0.69			
Total Winslow Jr. High School	**291**		**8,744,579**	**252,120**				
		1993 building	8,985,380	87,300	1993=0.16			
		site/ground	3,044,400	1,032,000	1993=0.10	1) Energy Efficiency Project/Performance contract	$600,000 **ESTIMATE**	
Total Winslow Elem. School	**584**		**12,029,780**	**1,119,300**				
		1993 Garage - WES	35,000	384				
		2006 Maintenance - WH	75,000	2220				
Total Exterior Buildings (garage/maintenance)			**110,000**	**2604**				
		UNION 52 Combined - Interlocal Agreement - Building only						
		2001 Building	225,000	2,650				
Total Central Office			**225,000**	**2,650**				
		VASSALBORO						
		1990 Main building	7,881,720	77,000	1990=0.09			
		Site/grounds	1,958,220	258,000	1990=0.07	**Underway** Energy Efficiency Project/Performance contract	$600,000	
Total Vassalboro Community :	**512**		**9,839,940**	**335,000**				
		CHINA						
		1990 Main building	4,701,215	46,000	1990=0.11			
		Site/grounds	543,540		1990=0.08	1) Energy Efficiency Project/Performance contract	$300,000 **ESTIMATE**	
Total China Primary School	**260**		**5,244,755**	**46,000**				
		1948 Section	903,484	11,040	1948=0.77			
		1954 Section	625,837	13,474	1954=0.56	1) Energy Efficiency Project/Performance contract	$200,000 **ESTIMATE**	
		1968 Section	952,349	12,562	1968=0.51	**2) Planning to submit Major Capital Application to move to single K-8 school**	**$11,300,000**	
		1986 Section	632,706	6,889	1986=0.61			
		Site/grounds	454,539					
Total China Middle School	**216**		**3,568,915**	**43,965**				
Union 52 Schools Total	**2381**		**$50,505,393**	**426,099**	**Square feet**			
Non Union 52 High Schools	**563 estimate**							
Grand Total	**2944**							

Exhibit 5A-2

Waterville Public Schools
Facility Condition Summary
10/9/2007

Campus - Name	1-Oct-07 Enrollment	Bldg /Section	Replacement Value	Building Gross SF	Bldg FCI (Facility Condition Index)	Future Needs (within 7 yrs):	Estimated Cost	Implementation Date
		Building	1,133,988	10600		Normal maintenance and renovations		
Total Kindergarten Center	**138**		**1,133,988**	**10,600**	0.00			
		Building	8,361,297	63,300		Normal maintenance and renovations		
		Site/Grounds	708,960			Additional parking, fencing, re-paving of roadways and playgrounds	**251,535**	**2010-2011**
Total George J. Mitchell Elem.	**456**		**9,070,257**	**63,300**	0.00			
		Building	6,037,668	46,800		Normal maintenance and renovations		
		Site/Grounds	351,000			Re-paving and drainage	**128,078**	**2010**
Total Albert S. Hall Elem.	**281**		**6,388,668**	**46,800**	0.00			
		Building	8,354,808	69,300		Normal maintenance and renovations		
		Site/Grounds	961,884			Re-paving and drainage	**139,536**	**2011**
Total Waterville Junior High	**422**		**9,316,692**	**69,300**	0.01			
		Building	22,311,464	184,240		Major building renovation and upgrade	**13,432,278**	**2008-2013**
		Site/Grounds	2,584,887				**879,323**	**2008-2013**
Total Waterville Senior High	**665**		**24,896,351**	**184,240**	0.52			
Grand Total	**1,962**		**$50,805,956**	**374,240**				

Best FCI = 0.00
Worst FCI = 0.52

Exhibit 5A-3

Exhibit 10-A

Minutes of Public Meetings

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 15, 2007

Elaine Miller, Superintendent of Schools for School Union 52, called the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee to order at 5:00 p.m. in the library at the George J. Mitchell School in Waterville. Superintendent Miller thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and noted that she, Mr. Haley, and Dr. Morse appreciate people coming to the meetings.

Those in Attendance: Maryanne Bernier, Lawrence Brown, Lee Cabana, Charley Clark, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Steve Dyer, Elwood Ellis, Doug Eugley, Lori Fowle, Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Eric Haley, Michael Heavener, Melanie Jewell, James Jurdak, Dennis Keschl, Linda Laughlin, James C. Morse, Sr., Nora Murray, Wendy Nivison, Constance Packard, Gerald Saint Amand, Debrajean Scheibel, Gary Smith, Jamie Soule, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Peter Thiboutot, Michael Thurston, Lauchlin Titus, Michael Tracy, and David Trask

Gerald Saint Amand made a motion, and Peter Thiboutot seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2007 meeting as printed.

Phil St. Onge asked about the exchange that occurred at the November 1 meeting between Mike Thurston and Dennis Keschl related to identities and one school.

Mr. Keschl clarified his comment. He was hearing a lot over the past several weeks about people thinking that things won't change. When a new institution is built and things come together, there will be changes. Changes are inevitable. People could not just think there will not be any changes. People may think that things will be the way they are now and that nothing will change. The fact is that people and loyalties will change. Their focus will be on the RSU. Change will occur.

Mike Thurston noted that the reason there was an exchange is that part of the law protects that. For example, a student will not be thinking that he/she goes to school at a Regional School Union. The student will, for example, refer to his/her school as Winslow High School.

Mr. Keschl noted that this is true. This happened when Belgrade joined MSAD 47; however, people adopted the SAD #47 identity as time went on, as people will ultimately be focused on the RSU and adopt its identity.

Phil St. Onge said he would say that. Winslow High School will not be closed. There needs to be some language in the charter that will leave it in the hands of the town as to whether the law penalizes an RSU if a school stays open. He noted he has been told by Jim Morse many times that they are not looking to close Winslow High School. It is not known who the superintendent will be or who will be on the RSU Board. There needs to be some language that states there needs to be "hoops we can jump through" before reassigning or closing a school.

The original motion, made by Gerald Saint Amand and seconded by Peter Thiboutot, to approve the minutes of November 1, 2007 carried.

The meeting turned to Subcommittee reports.

Eric Haley noted that members of the Personnel and Transition Subcommittee all took major assignments in reviewing contracts and insurances.

Mike Thurston prefaced his presentation by stating that this is not negotiations. He doesn't want salary scales to be thrown around, and noted that he did not provide copies of his PowerPoint presentation for that reason. This is an interim report regarding merging teacher contracts. The good news is that this RPC seems to be way ahead of other school districts. The four presidents of the local associations were at a meeting last night and making sure to get together with groups of teachers and having those discussions. They have actually been meeting for years. That transition might be easier for this RPC. This is not a negotiation. If the RSU is formed, real bargaining will be in the fall of 2009 and, hopefully, a contract in 2010-11. At this time there will not be any recommendations, as the Subcommittee is working on ways to merge the contracts.

School Union 52's is the most difficult to bring together because of so many contracts and differences in them. The problem is that there are five vastly different scales. Some have steps of $3,000 - $5,000, and some it's $8,000. There are five sets of language in these contracts related to school day, just cause, and teacher rights. There are five benefit packages. Messalonskee probably has the best health package right now. The Subcommittee will have to look at potentially the best benefit packing in that situation. There are five stipend schedules. The same is true of ESP units. Potentially the Subcommittee might be looking at taking between 10 to 15 contracts and whittling them down to see if everything falls into place the way it could.

Once the RSU is formed, existing contracts will remain in force until a new single RSU agreement is reached, even if it takes until 2011-12. The law says contracts must be merged as soon as practicable. China is negotiating this year; Vassalboro will negotiate next year. Right now Messalonskee and Winslow go to 2010. Ideally, the RSU will have a new contract for when those contracts expire.

In comparison to other school districts, Elaine Miller noted the contracts for our new RSU would be simpler that others, for example, Millinocket's contract which includes lifetime health benefits.

Mr. Thurston noted that merging salary scales bring the greatest challenge. He reviewed some of the ways the scales could be merged. (1) Build an index scale for the new RSU. (2) Agree on real increase for each teacher as a method of bringing them on that new scale. It could be 4% for example. (3) In year one of the agreement each teacher is awarded a 4% raise and is placed accordingly from one of the five old scales to the new scale. (4) In year two, each teacher would begin climbing from that point.

Eric Haley noted that that is a major shift. Teachers need to know that they are not going to be any worse off. Build on teacher scales on years of experience. It is possible for a teacher in China and a teacher in Waterville with each 15 years of experience to be on a different scale.

Mike Thurston noted that it would be the RPC's job to sell that idea.

Lori Fowle asked about hiring teachers from within the Union. If, for example a person who teaches in Vassalboro were hired to teach in Winslow, where would that person be placed on the salary scale?

Mike Thurston noted that the teacher would be placed on the scale according to the number of years of teaching experience. There aren't any jumps in this scale; there are just 20 steps. For example, in using 2006-07 salary scales from five different schools, teachers would be placed on the respective scales according to experience, as listed below.

China	16	$46,804
Vassalboro	14	$43,330
Waterville	12	$40,578
Winslow	17	$48,278
Messalonskee	17	$47,991

In eight years all would be making the same no matter what. Some may see it as though it is not fair. Is it fair, however, that one person is getting a $2,000 raise and another person is getting a $10,000 raise? Trying to find an equitable way of placing teachers on a scale has been a challenge. Teachers will benefit over time.

Mr. Keschl noted that a similar issue occurred throughout the State when the Legislature moved the beginning teacher salary to $30,000. In a sense we are talking about the same thing but involving 4 different schools. There has to be some way to adjust the salaries of people who may have been at five years making $30,000, and now new teachers making $30,000. That needs to be adjusted some way.

Nora Murray noted that a neighboring small town had a lower pay scale at the beginning. There were teachers with 6-7 years of experience making the same as a beginning teacher.

Mike Thurston noted that for China and Vassalboro the beginning contract is the same for the first five years.

Eric Haley noted that this happens a lot. For example, he said he coached and taught. When the head coach retired, the coach was making $700 a year coaching baseball. When Mr. Haley took the job, he made $750. The contracts and amount of money change as time goes on. The important piece is that teachers will not be any worse off than they were if they stayed in the original school system.

Mike Thurston noted the new scale would earn teachers a lot more money over time. If teachers are hired from the outside, where are they placed on the scale? There has to be some type of mechanism on how to place teachers on the scale. All that must be included in the contract language.

Jack Sutton said he understood the problem and at some level he understands the concept of the solution being discussed, however, he doesn't understand how all this contributes to the role of the RSU for saving money.

Mike Thurston noted that the big savings do not come from this.

Jim Morse noted that if the RPC went from the principle that we traditionally bargain from, the teachers' association would take the highest paid contract and place everybody on that contract accordingly.

Judy Coombs noted that it would take $900,000 alone to bring Waterville up to this scale.

Eric Haley noted the savings would come from here but over a three to five-year period, as people leave who don't need to be replaced because of student count. It is a less drastic increase or decrease.

Dennis Keschl noted he finds it hard to understand mathematically how one could see a savings in the approach to teacher salaries. The fact is that all the teachers will be at the highest step at some time over 20 years. Everyone will get to that high level. That means that costs will increase in salaries within the RSU vs. as it is now. The point is there is a dollar cost out there that is higher for some schools than others, but over that 20-year period ultimately all these personnel costs will increase.

Judy Coombs noted that there are so many people who are at the latter part of their careers, and they will be retiring within the next five years.

Lori Fowle noted that an increase would still be negotiated each year for these teachers. They will still receive step increases even if consolidation does not occur.

Dennis Keschl noted that the only point he is making is that personnel costs aren't where the savings are. By bringing everyone up, there will be higher costs per teacher in the end.

Lori Fowle noted that the Governor's plan was not looking at teachers being reduced; it was looking more at administrative costs.

Phil St. Onge asked if this is where people are being asked to take a giant leap of faith. It would be nothing to have your members asking for a higher contract. It is difficult when the case is where we are asked to trust in the future that it will work out. There are no guarantees.

Lori Fowle noted that there is a factor that needs to be considered. There is the possibility of the contract being much higher. Teachers have to consider being a little reasonable when moving forth.

Phil St. Onge noted that everything that is discussed in these groups is brought into the best possible light.

Eric Haley noted that in the first meeting it was suggested that everyone be placed under the best contract.

Phil St. Onge asked if the RPC shouldn't be sharing with the voters the worst-case scenario.

Lori Fowle said she thinks it is her job to explain to teachers that they should not be expecting to have that if this plan is approved. The expectations of the plan are put on the table. When

people go back to the community they have to speak to the citizens as to what they think the expectations are – the teachers' expectations.

Phil St. Onge said the RPC must follow a labor contract that doesn't go backward. It needs to go forward.

Lori Fowle said that makes sense, but the RPC can't expect that will happen.

Mike Thurston said that what is being discussed is the merging of five contracts. The RPC, for example, can come to the table and say it wants Messalonskee's scale. Finding some kind of solution to that is the job of all RPC members.

Judy Coombs said that at this time it is unknown who will even be negotiating a contract.

Lauchlin Titus noted that right now the RPC is being presented with reasonable information. When the new RSU Board bargains, if it all falls apart, hopefully the RPC has laid out enough now so that people working on fact finding and arbitration will hold as to what the RPC was talking about now. That is the checks and balances and minimizes the risk.

Mike Thurston noted that China, Vassalboro and Waterville would negotiate before the RSU is formed.

Doug Eugley noted that the presentation is very good and ideas presented are very reasonable. It seems to make sense whatever that 4% number ends up being, hopefully that scale will change over time. If all towns vote to join this RSU, are they locked into joining the RSU? If a town joins the RSU and there are teachers' contracts that are staggered, can these towns get out?

Jim Morse noted that once the RSU is formed, faith needs to be put into the bargaining team.

Doug Eugley noted that people who have worked on that know that there is not an endless supply of cash in the towns. That will be a huge impact to some of the towns if, in fact, that goes the other way.

Robin Colby said she understands you have to agree it may go the other way.

Doug Eugley noted that it is not known who will be on the negotiating team.

Judy Coombs said that what is here are the who, what and when as to who will represent and when the different contracts will expire. China teachers and ed techs are negotiating now. MSAD 47 custodians, food service personnel and ed techs are negotiating now. Waterville custodians and food service personnel are also currently negotiating. The law says that within 90 days prior to the expiration date of the agreement, once the RSU is formed that a petition needs to be sent to the Maine Labor Relations Board in order to set up the election. The only bargaining agreements that can be considered are the ones that are already in place. For example for bus drivers it would be the agreement with the American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) union. There could be a vote between them and no union at all.

Jim Morse noted that this would become effective at the date of the forming of the RSU.

Judy Coombs noted that for custodians there would have to be a vote because there are three groups – Teamsters, MEA, and AFSCME. For food service personnel there would be a vote because current contracts are with the MEA and AFSCME. For secretaries and education technicians, it would be the MEA or no union at all. The task for the Personnel and Transition Subcommittee is to determine for the interim what things need to be addressed.

Lauchlin Titus noted that in Vassalboro the only gray area was the contract of a school nurse.

Judy Coombs noted that the nurse is now under the teachers' contract.

Jim Morse noted that the recognition clause is all part of the bargaining process.

Elwood Ellis said that the concern is the transfer of real and personal property. For example, Vassalboro has charges that will be incurred by the RSU. An SAD is all one unit, so it is an easier transfer. Waterville Parks and Recreation wants to keep all property. All of these issues will be settled.

Eric Haley reviewed with the RPC a scenario regarding calculations for converting health insurance benefits to the highest benefit now allowed in the five school systems. He noted that in China, Vassalboro, Waterville, Winslow and SAD 47 the plans are Blue Cross/Blue Shield HMO or standard plans. Reviewed were the highest rates now paid and the number of staff at each benefit level. It would cost $654,625.94 to move everybody to the best benefit level.

James Jurdak asked if those are today's insurance rates.

Eric Haley noted that they are today's insurance rates.

Wendy Nivison asked if these costs would be shared, and Eric Haley noted that they would be.

Eric Haley said he was contacted by Walt Harris, Director of the Center for Research and Evaluation at the University of Maine. The Center is conducting a survey for RPC members. The purpose of the survey is to document the views of RPC members about school district reorganization and determine the extent to which these views change over time. Mr. Haley distributed copies of the survey to RPC members and asked that they be returned to the Center in the postage-paid envelope provided. He thanked the RPC members for giving the Personnel and Transition Subcommittee additional time this evening to review the progress of their work.

Jim Morse reviewed the work of the Governance Subcommittee. He noted that he received a report from the Maine Department of Education via email yesterday. He indicated that there still is a December 1 deadline for reporting the work that has been completed to date. The towns are required to submit a progress report but not a full plan. The RPC will review the plan, and if members are in agreement, he asked that they sign the document.

Dr. Morse reviewed the required elements of the plan and the status for each element, e.g., not applicable, complete, in progress, not yet started, identified barrier, and need assistance.

3.A(1) - SAUS included in the RSU - complete
3.A(2) - size of governing body – complete
- composition of governing body – complete
- apportionment of the governing body - complete
3.A(3) - method of voting of governing body – complete
3.A(4) - composition of local school committees – not applicable
- powers of local school committees – not applicable
- duties of local school committees – not applicable
3.A(5) - disposition of real and personal school property – in progress
3.A(6) - disposition of existing school indebtedness – complete
- disposition of lease purchase obligations - complete
3.A(7) - assignment of personnel school contracts – in progress
- assignment of school collective bargaining agreements – in progress
- assignment of other school contractual obligations – in progress
3.A(8) - disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations – complete
3.A(9) - transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year – not yet started
- transition plan that addresses interim personnel policies – not yet started
3 A(10) - documentation of the public meeting(s) held to prepare or review reorganization plan (to the date of this report) – complete
3.A(11) - explanation of how units that approve reorganization plan will proceed if one or more units do not approve the plan – in progress
3.A(12) - estimate of cost savings to be achieved – not yet started
3.A(13) - such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary – in progress

Eric Haley noted that this is a Maine Department of Education survey to determine where the RPC is.

Dennis Keschl stated that item 3.A(8) does not to include insurance group in teacher contracts.

Jim Morse noted that that was a correct assumption.

Regarding item 3.A(9) related to a transition plan, Jim Morse noted that in conversations with the Governance Subcommittee, it was recommended that no action be taken because the RPC is in need of better financials before a recommendation may be made.

Doug Eugley noted that for 3.A(12), estimated cost savings to be achieved, the RPC hasn't really started looking at cost savings.

Jim Morse noted that that item is the next section.

Dr. Morse reviewed the parameters for plan development and the status for each element, e.g., not applicable, complete, in progress, not yet started, identified barrier, and need assistance.

3.B(1) - Enrollment meets requirements. – complete
Sec. XXXX-36, Parameter B
- When viewed in conjunction with surrounding proposed units, may not result in one or more municipalities being denied the option to join an RSU. – complete

3.B(2) - comprehensive programming for all students grades K-12 – complete
- Includes at least one publicly supported high school. – complete

3.B(3) - consistent with policies set forth in section 1451 – complete
3.B(4) - no displacement of teachers – complete
- no displacement of students – complete
- no closures of schools existing or operating during school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512 - complete

Sec. XXXX-26, Parameter F
- The plan must address how the school administrative unit will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of the reorganized school unit in fiscal year 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program. – in progress

Jim Morse noted that the RPC needs to start thinking about what obstacles it faces.

The items listed below are considered by the RPC to be barriers in completing the reorganization plan.

- manpower restrictions
- timeline
- combining policy manuals
- contract insurance merging
- number of contracts to merge
- in-kind services
- federal funds potential loss
- Governor's $36 million
- cost redistribution/shifting
- disposition of school indebtedness
- equitable disposition of funds
- repeal effort
- redistribution of costs among potential members
- ownership of municipal property (real and personal) to be transferred to the RSU
- bringing all school units to same financial profile

Dennis Keschl asked whether the RPC agreed to refer policy work to the RSU Board.

Jim Morse noted that was correct, but the RPC is referring to the work involved.

Jim Morse noted that in terms of what the RPC just did, if they are comfortable with the progress report, he asked that each member sign his/her name by their respective school units so that each town may present the report to their respective school boards for approval in order to be submitted by the December 1 deadline.

Eric Haley noted that the law says that each of these plans needs to be submitted by the Board, stating that they concur that this is the status of where we are at in the RPC now.

Jim Morse noted that a copy of the plan would be given to each Board to sign. The school boards will give approval to submit this report.

Elaine Miller said that there is a union meeting scheduled for November 29th regarding the new Superintendent. There will be time set aside at the beginning of that meeting for China and Vassalboro to deal with the issue of the RPC progress report.

Jim Morse reviewed with the RPC the final recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee related to the composition, powers and duties of any local school committees to be created.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that no local school committees be created.

Dennis Keschl asked when speaking of local school boards if it referred to advisory committees.

Jim Morse noted that that was not the case. The law says that they can actually be governing bodies. The RSU school board has the authority to transfer its governmental rights to local school committees if it chooses.

David Trask asked for clarification as to how much power the local school committee would have.

Jim Morse noted that it could have as much authority as the RSU board is willing to give it. For example, it could actually govern MSAD 47 schools differently than China schools, if the RSU Board is willing to give it that authority.

Jack Sutton asked why the Governance Subcommittee voted against this.

Jim Morse stated that he thinks it would be difficult to govern the regional unit if there were a school board for each school unit.

Phil St. Onge noted that it has to be kept in mind that the RPC has to do what is best for the kids, not the superintendent. If the RPC thinks local control is important, it is important to look at how local boards exist in different educational policy. This law is supposed to be about money. He stated he thinks it is a big mistake to not allow the operation of our schools at local control.

Dr. Morse noted that the RPC needs to take a vote at this time regarding the Governance Subcommittee recommendation that no local school committees be created.

Jack Sutton speaking on behalf of representatives of MSAD 47 stated that they support the recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee.

Lee Cabana speaking on behalf of representatives of the Waterville Public Schools stated that they are in agreement with the recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee.

Gerald Saint Amand speaking on behalf of representatives of China, Vassalboro and Winslow stated that they are in agreement with the recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee.

Gary Smith provided an update of the work of the Finance Subcommittee. The Subcommittee has met and is continuing to line up the financial chart of accounts. The Finance Subcommittee is recommending that all the grants, upon formation of the RSU, become part of the RSU.

Judy Coombs said that she needed clarification regarding this recommendation. There are, for example, grants that are specific to certain schools, such as the George J. Mitchell School. There needs to be assurance that that money will stay with the school.

Gary Smith noted that the grants that are being discussed are federal funds such as Title IV, V, and VI.

Connie Packard noted that there could also be grants that are private in nature for a particular purpose, or federal funds for special education. In some cases that money has to be used for specific purposes. All grants are special revenue funds to transfer wherever they are and whatever conditions they have at that point in time. Some might not be there and there may be some new ones. Whatever there would be at the formation of the RSU would get transferred with the same conditions and the same amounts that are currently in place.

Nora Murray noted that she had discussions with staff at the Department of Education concerning federal funds. As she understands it, when we become an RSU they then will look at us as one school system and will come to us as one school system, not individually as we are now. Together we need to decide how we will use funds as an RSU.

Connie Packard noted that at that point in time there would be carryover funds.

Nora Murray noted that there are times when funds have not been spent by the end of the year.

Jack Sutton asked if this would result in reduced administrative time through less grant writing.

Elaine Miller noted that it would be less time. For example, in a school union right now a grant is written for each individual town, whereas an SAD it is one grant for the entire unit.

Gary Smith noted that today there would be five grants and one significantly great one for the new RSU.

Elaine Miller noted that time would be saved in writing the grants in a larger system like the SAD or new RSU; however, the RSU would still have to take into consideration each individual town. So there is still time, but there is not much duplication of the same grant.

Peter Thiboutot noted that when looking at the needs of particular towns, consideration has to be given to the equitable allocation of all federal money.

Elaine Miller noted that this would present a barrier in the new RSU because it will be distributed according to the new socioeconomic status. That is something that has to be considered.

Eric Haley noted that for example, if Waterville were a budding Cape Elizabeth, it would get those funds for those needy children. To some extent this issue is going on in this proposed RSU.

Nora Murray noted that those schools with the highest free and reduced lunch status students would receive more money. The state dictates that the school with the highest free and reduced percentage needs to receive the greatest percentage of money for students.

Gary Smith noted that to bring components of the RPC plan together it needs to be made clear that these grants and special targeted grants and existing covenants would transfer.

The RPC members gave their consensus to the Finance Subcommittee recommendation that all the grants, upon formation of the RSU, become part of the RSU.

Linda Laughlin provided a summary of the work of the Educational Programming Subcommittee. There have been two meetings of the Subcommittee since the RPC last met. Two new recommendations are included for this evening. Lennie Goff, Director of Transportation for Messalonskee, has been working with the state on routing software. He brought in a comprehensive report of what new transportation would look like in the new RSU. With combining five transportation systems, the savings would be in the bus routes, as some bus routes could be eliminated. One of the biggest needs would be a wash bay facility. The different contract groups would be the big challenge for bus drivers.

Nora Murray noted that the Subcommittee also met and talked about high school programming for a bell schedule. They ended up talking about a common school calendar and did take a vote for one school calendar. If students were taking advantage of different courses in the region, would it be at an advantage to have a common bell schedule? If there were to be some scheduled time between some of the periods then that would allow for transportation time.

Ms. Murray also noted that Waterville, Winslow, and Messalonskee did have many conversations about combining special education administration and how they could best maximize some of the services provided, as well as staff. They reviewed statistics from 2003-04. They met with special education directors to discuss what issues would need to be reviewed. There is no recommendation at this point. The Subcommittee, with special education directors, is now in the process of collecting more data.

Peter Thiboutot noted that the special education director has the personal contact with family and knows personal issues and often avoids litigation as situations arise. The same can be said for transportation, as the bus drivers know the children.

Linda Laughlin reviewed the recommendations of the Educational Programming Subcommittee.

1. We recommend that a common bell schedule be adopted to open opportunities for high school programming.
2. The transportation system will be designed to allow students to access programs across the RSU.

Eric Haley asked if it is the recommendation that the RSU take up the issue of common bells and common schedules.

Linda Laughlin noted that that is not a recommendation at this point.

Nora Murray noted that a common bell schedule would be appropriate for the sharing of courses.

Robin Colby stated that at times the schedules are similar but there is a difficulty in trying to share students. When there is a semester schedule versus an every other day schedule, the sharing of students will be an issue.

Eric Haley recommended that the new RSU Board deal with the scheduling issue.

Nora Murray noted that what was discussed was the opportunity to share courses at the three high schools.

Eric Haley noted that it doesn't make sense to him that an RSU is being created that would have different schedules.

Linda Laughlin noted that the issue is that there is a vision statement that could send the RSU in a different direction. What are the needs? If you have a vision statement that requires everybody on the same schedule, then so be it. The vision of trying to put everybody on the exact schedule probably would not be realistic.

Eric Haley noted that it would make sense that the RPC recommend the RSU optimize opportunities for students by looking at schedules and buildings, etc.

Doug Eugley asked why the schedules don't all line up.

Jim Morse noted that it does make sense in terms of lining up the beginning and end of the days. The internal schedules of these three high schools require conversations that belong with the RSU Board and not here. What needs to happen to align these high schools? There is a tremendous amount of data that supports the actual scheduling of students and the way it is currently being done. He noted that Eric Haley is right in stating that this issue belongs with the RSU.

Jim Morse noted that there are 118 students who were able to take college courses. There is only one week that overlaps in semesters. If the RSU is on an AB schedule, then that course has to parallel with AB schedule. It is more difficult as opposed to a semester schedule.

Doug Eugley asked if a student wants to take college courses then the student would want to attend Messalonskee, as that schedule aligns with the college schedule.

Jim Morse noted that Messalonskee would have the most students taking college courses because Messalonskee's semester schedule lines up with the college schedule.

Elaine Miller noted that it is more difficult in Winslow because of the AB block. You are seeing more and more push and more and more money from the state to pay for those courses. Kids have credit for college courses without paying. It is not an easy answer. For most of us who tackled the schedules in high schools, it has taken years to do that.

Nora Murray noted that they felt the greatest balance for sharing those opportunities would be the school calendar and the building schedule.

Elaine Miller noted that with the current bell schedule some of the students are arriving late for classes.

Eric Haley noted that right now Messalonskee and Waterville can share Robin Colby, a Latin teacher, because she is at Messalonskee in the morning and in Waterville in the afternoon. With the morning and afternoon schedules, it is possible to share a teacher but not to share students.

At this time Elaine Miller asked if there were questions from the audience.

James Jurdak, resident of Oakland, stated that at the last meeting he asked for financial data. Specifically, he requested copies of each SAUs detailed worksheet of the over/under EPS for both FY 2007 and FY 2008. Also requested were copies of each SAU's student enrollments for the past five years, by school and by grade. He also asked for any information that is available on how consolidating the five SAUs will impact the over/under EPS, reduce other costs, improve educational opportunities and performance for students, and improve operational efficiencies. He indicated that he has received the requested information from MSAD 47, but not yet from China, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow. He said he knows it is a lot of work, but he would like to see some data.

Regarding contracts, he stated that there is no way he would ratify that contract as presented. He stated he thinks the RPC has a lot more homework to do.

In response to Mr. Jurdak, relevant to pay and contract issues, Dennis Keschl stated that what is legal and not legal will get decided by the courts. The Legislature by mandate dictates the entry-level teachers' salary at $30,000, while at the same time there may have been teachers with more experience at $30,000.

Phil St. Onge noted that the union didn't negotiate that.

Mike Thurston noted that nothing like this has ever been to arbitration. So we have no idea how this would play out.

Lauchlin Titus asked how many RPC members have laid awake thinking about this consolidation. He did last Saturday night. At 1:00 a.m. he got up and started typing a letter and sent it to Libby Mitchell and Lori Fowle. Most of the things that were articulated in frustration were discussed tonight. Libby Mitchell will address this in the Legislature. He wants the RPC to discuss child indebtedness. We have been doing this in a real feel good situation. We have to know what one office looks like with one superintendent. As a private citizen it is my responsibility to see this.

Jim Morse thanked Mr. Titus for sharing his letter and noted that there are a number of other issues that need to be addressed tonight. This was the last official meeting of the RPC because there had to be a plan out by December 1. The work of the RPC is far from done. We need to be thinking about future meeting dates. We are coming into December. We have accomplished all of the components of the plan that the Governance Subcommittee was designed to work out and approve, other than what happens if a member votes the RSU down. There are two items to discuss.

1. Do we want to form an information committee to discuss how we can distribute information to citizens other than the web site?
2. Future meeting dates –to continue to address issues.

Dennis Keschl said he thinks an information committee makes sense. He and his Selectboard in Belgrade have been considering ways for public awareness. They are considering a town get together at Belgrade Central School, with the Selectboard, School Board members, and the Superintendent, to answer questions and give a status report regarding the consolidation issue. They are discussing these and other approaches to educating the public about consolidation. He noted that they distributed 300-500 copies of the informational sheet at the election on November 6. He believes the information committee make sense.

Nora Murray suggested an information piece in principals' newsletters.

Jack Sutton noted that he thinks the information meetings are fine, but until the information is available to present at those meetings gets to the heart of Lauchlin's letter, it is a waste of time.

Lori Fowle noted she feels the same. She feels she doesn't have enough information for a public forum in her town. We can get out there as much as we want, but right now we don't have information.

Something else we have done in Vassalboro is Lauchlin Titus has gone home from every meeting and has typed an informational newsletter. It's been very informative. People are informed and all get the same information.

Phil St. Onge asked if people are engaged yet. When it gets to Election Day people will have a lot of questions.

In response to this, Dennis Keschl said, "Are people engaged? I think people are interested. The problem is that they don't have access to information." A lot of the questions that he receives are about savings. These are very valid questions. "The answer I have come up with is when you start looking at those numbers as they relate to savings in consolidation and the formation of the RSU, it does not look good. You will not see a lot of savings. If you want people to support something like this concept of consolidating schools, you should not focus just on savings. All of the information I have read and am reading about regionalization is that you first look at what quality of services you can provide at the same cost, and then in the long-term look at potential savings as you move forward. I think that savings was the focus of this effort and not service quality improvements. People believe what the Governor has said; $36 million will be saved . . . and from what I can tell, no one believes that the savings will be there in the short term (three to five years) or perhaps even in the longer term. I have heard it time and time again we will not see any savings. Consequently, because the savings have been "booked" in the budget, the educational quality may actually be impacted negatively."

Lauchlin Titus noted that the checklist shows that we have done a lot. We need to do a piece for the Sentinel. We have done a lot of work and identified barriers. He will draft a letter for submission to the Sentinel.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Thursday, December 6, 2007 at Vassalboro Community School in Vassalboro.

The meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
November 1, 2007

James C. Morse, Sr., Superintendent of Schools for the Messalonskee School District, called the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee to order at 5:00 p.m. in the cafeteria at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland.

Those in Attendance: Gwen Bacon, Maryanne Bernier, Lawrence Brown, Doug Carville, Charley Clark, Robin Colby, Don Dufour, Steve Dyer, Elwood Ellis, Ralph Farnham, Jr., Lori Fowle, Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Michael Heavener, Melanie Jewell, James Jurdak, Dennis Keschl, Kathi King, Linda Laughlin, Mike McQuarrie, Libby Mitchell, Jonathan Moody, Robert Moreau, Nora Murray, Wendy Nivison, Constance Packard, Paula Pooler, Don Poulin, Mark Powers, Marie Pulsifer, William Pulsifer, Kelly Roderick, Gerald Saint Amand, Debrajean Scheibel, Joel Selwood, Gary Smith, Frank Soares, Jamie Soule, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Peter Thiboutot, Michael Thurston, Lauchlin Titus, Linda Titus, and Michael Tracy

Dr. Morse noted that as Committee members thought about the next meeting, they wanted an official report by November 15 so that the respective school boards would have an opportunity to approve a plan prior to submission to the State by December 1. The State recognizes that December 1 is an unfair deadline. As December 1 approaches, the Commissioner is not expecting a completed plan. She will be looking for a progress report. The State will be submitting a checklist type format so that school districts may indicate what they have accomplished. Dr. Morse suggested that the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) complete this process at the next meeting scheduled for November 15. The RPC needs to review a summary of the work that needs to be completed. The report that is submitted to the state must be accurate. Once that process is complete, the RPC needs to think about scheduling a meeting in December.

Robert Moreau made a motion, and Jeffrey Frost seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2007 meeting as printed. Motion carried.

The meeting turned to Subcommittee reports.

Dr. Morse noted that as a Committee the RPC decided to create an Educational Programming Subcommittee, which was not part of the state's requirements. The law did not require one, but people are connected to children and our towns. Before consolidation discussions Waterville and Messalonskee had planned to conduct a future search vision exercise. Eric Haley suggested that the Future Search exercise be turned over to the Educational Subcommittee, but to insure that Winslow, Vassalboro, and China were directly involved in that process as well. There were 36 people involved, representative of business community and school personnel. Key questions included, "What is it that we would like to see accomplished?" and "What could happen for our children if this was one school system?"

Linda Laughlin updated the RPC regarding the work of the Educational Programming Subcommittee, specifically the vision statement and recommendations regarding school calendar and educational policies. Regarding the Future Search workshop held on October 11, 12, and 13, 36 people participated from the communities of Belgrade, China, Oakland, Rome, Sidney, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow. Of the 36 people, 17 were staff members from MSAD 47, School Union 52, and the Waterville Public Schools, and 14 were community members, including parents, business people, political leaders, and board members. Ms. Laughlin

reviewed the description of a Future Search, which is a process used to engage a diverse set of stakeholders in a planning process that establishes a clear direction for the organization. At the end of the three-day workshop, participants had developed a set of themes. Also, the group wants to write a vision statement that reflects what was discussed in those three days. The essential questions are, "Does this reflect what it is that was talked about? Is this an accurate statement? Does it accurately reflect the results of those three days?"

Lori Fowle reviewed one of the vision themes, which is learning for all. Education shouldn't stop at a certain age, or when people achieve what they need to achieve. Learners should experience continuous achievement. At this point in time education is thought of as education for students. The idea of learning for all would give opportunities for those who need to take more time. Continual access to educational opportunities allows for learners of all ages to continue to learn throughout their life span.

Jeff Frost reviewed a second vision theme, which is a personalized and engaging educational environment. Discussed was relevancy as it relates to technology. Electives are centered around clusters or pathways as defined by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE). Specific direction is provided where students may go forth and pick up additional information needed to make their final career decision. There would be specific personal learning plans (PLP) for students, focusing on their interests and aspirations, allowing students to progress and master the curriculum.

Linda Titus discussed varied pathways and schedules, which relate to school year and school day for varied learning opportunities. This would allow educational opportunities to have an open format where students may access multiple learning experiences in ways that accommodate their learning styles and educational needs.

Elwood Ellis reviewed the high tech environment. Students have state of the art technology available, exposure to emerging technologies, as well as virtual courses as part of their daily schedule. Technology is used as a tool for global learning and to enhance collaborations and partnerships.

Another theme is community is our campus. Mark Powers noted that the community is an integral part of the educational program. Community support for education happens through a variety of relationships, including mentoring, partnerships, and internships. Local businesses and the community are integral parts of the educational experience.

Kathi King reviewed the theme of professional growth through collaboration. If the face of education changes, we will all have to change, even classroom teachers. We have to use applied technologies. If we want to connect to this, we have to think about how we do things. Staff will access an established school community coordinated training center to improve their delivery of instruction.

Linda Laughlin noted that those six themes were on the core at the end of the Future Search workshop. Committee members took those six themes and put a writing committee together to work on writing a mission statement. This mission statement is going through a draft process.

What is happening right now is that the 36 people who participated received the copy of this draft. The next steps would be to engage communities in public forums to build on the future search work, with the objective of building an understanding and ownership and to gather data about the strategies that would move the system in the desired direction. Once that work is completed, the plan would be to put together a smaller strategic planning committee to develop long and short-term goals and specific action steps to be taken to move the system toward the vision.

Dr. Morse noted that the vision statement presented is a fairly elaborate first draft. He suggested that RPC members read it through and offer their suggestions. The ultimate goal would be to have the blessing of the RPC. Tonight we want you to take it, read it, absorb it, and react to it. Then, ultimately, the Educational Programming Committee will have something to present to the RPC for the next meeting.

The Educational Programming Subcommittee had two recommendations for this evening. Peter Thiboutot reviewed the first recommendation, which is for the Regional School Unit (RSU) to adopt a common school calendar, allowing high schools to better share courses and to better share professional development resources. This common school calendar should include common workshop days, as well as common student days.

Nora Murray reviewed the second recommendation of the Educational Programming Subcommittee, which is for the RSU to assign a subcommittee immediately upon reorganization that will align all school programming policies across the region.

Don Dufour asked if that alignment of policies would be done prior to the citizens voting on the RSU.

Nora Murray noted that that would not happen prior to the vote. That would happen once the vote occurred.

Peter Thiboutot noted that policies would need to be prioritized as to which policies would be reviewed first.

Dr. Morse noted that federal and state mandates would start this process immediately.

Jack Sutton asked if this subcommittee feels that the objectives of these recommendations can only be met if the RSU is formed formally according to the plan that is being drafted.

Jim Morse noted that that is what they are seeing in these recommendations. To try to do any work before there is a blessing of the voters would be premature.

Jack Sutton asked if the RSU has to be formed in order to make these things occur.

Jim Morse noted not to the extent that they are envisioning here. For example Messalonskee, SAD 49, Waterville and Winslow currently work on a common calendar related to the vocational center. In state statute districts have to make an attempt to getting the calendars the same.

Then the state gives districts a "fudge factor" of about nine days in total. In the current governance model there are several different school systems involved at the Mid-Maine Technical Center. It is unlikely that all four districts would have the exact same calendars. If an RSU were formed, all districts in the RSU would have the exact same calendar. Participating Districts at MMTC are as close as any school system in the State of Maine, with only five days difference this current school year.

Melanie Jewell noted that a foreign language curriculum is missing at the elementary school level. At Messalonskee one of the things that has been cut from previous budgets is the life skills class. How do you teach kids how to balance a checkbook?

Dr. Morse noted that those are the kinds of issues that would need to be deferred to the Educational Programming Subcommittee.

Gerald Saint Amand was wondering if the RPC is not reaching too far at making work that doesn't need to be done.

Dr. Morse noted that policy formation would happen once the formation of the RSU is approved.

Lori Fowle asked about policies being different in each town.

Dr. Morse noted that this would be one of the first actions of the RSU Board. Districts are continuously adding policies. There would have to be a full-time Board working to get through all the policies on the books. It does provide an opportunity for review and updates.

Gerald Saint Amand asked if everything that was discussed and reviewed affects individual district identity in each community.

Eric Haley noted that the RPC is getting at the core of one of the issues of consolidation in that there is a culture in the communities. For example, there are differences in certain policies in Messalonskee and Waterville.

Dennis Keschl said that he thinks it is almost essential that the RSU have a common set of policies, especially giving the fact that students will potentially be moving from one school to another. Every student in the RSU must know that there is a common set of expectations. The very fact that a new RSU is being formed, with a new structure over time will result in a new culture and common policies to govern students in that new culture and structure are essential. .

Nora Murray noted that when looking at a union with different policies in different towns, if there is a new RSU Board and discipline issue comes forth, for example, the Board would have to act on policy.

Dr. Morse noted that it opens up legal issues and liability for the RSU if there are different policies for different communities.

Phil St. Onge asked if someone checked if Portland and Deering have the same policies.

Dr. Morse noted that they do have one policy.

At this point, there are two recommendations from the Educational Programming Subcommittee before the RPC related to school calendars and policies. Representatives from the different towns met in their respective groups to determine how each group will vote.

The Educational Programming Subcommittee recommends that the RSU adopt a common school calendar to allow high schools to better share courses and to better share professional development resources. This common school calendar should include common workshop days, as well as common student days.

The Educational Programming Subcommittee recommends that the RSU assign a subcommittee immediately upon reorganization that will align all school programming policies across the region.

Gerald Saint Amand speaking on behalf of representatives of China, Vassalboro and Winslow stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended, noting that the group was unanimous regarding the school calendar but not quite unanimous regarding policies

Jack Sutton speaking on behalf of representatives of MSAD 47 stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Maryanne Bernier speaking on behalf of representatives of the Waterville Public Schools stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Motion carried to support the Educational Programming Subcommittee recommendations relating to a common school calendar and the assignment of a subcommittee to review and align all school programming policies across the region once reorganized.

Gary Smith reviewed the work of the Finance Subcommittee and noted that the Committee is making progress. One of the last major tasks to complete is the identification of how to achieve savings in system administration, transportation, facilities and maintenance, and special education. In the next year the financials will have to be converted into one common chart of accounts. How will the savings be determined and documented among the five separate systems? The Finance Subcommittee has been reviewing the chart of accounts, and they are amazed at how very little differences there are in system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance. At the next meeting there will be a recommendation with respect to acquisition of land and buildings by the RSU.

Jim Morse reviewed the work of the Governance Subcommittee related to tuition contracts and school choice. At the meeting of October 18, the Governance Subcommittee recommendation related to school choice read as follows.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends "choice" among the three public high schools as long as no students who would have traditionally attended Messalonskee, Waterville, or

Winslow would be displaced by a student from one of the other communities, and as long as there is available space in the school requested.

Regarding this recommendation, RPC members decided to have an intense discussion. The Subcommittee met on October 25, 2007 and tried to incorporate the suggestions of members of the RPC into the new proposals. The suggestion was that high school students have choice. In the Subcommittee meeting it was decided to strike the recommendation entirely because it can be dealt with at the RSU level when the RSU is formed.

The recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee related to school choice is as follows.

This is an issue that is not required to be addressed by the state. The Governance Subcommittee recommends that this issue be left to the RSU Board yet to be formed.

Gerald Saint Amand asked how the RPC could respond to citizens and taxpayers and tell them not to worry about the school choice issue, that the RSU will deal with it. The original recommendation seemed to be sound and make sense. There was a concern that the recommendation as written would cause more problems than solve.

Mike Thurston noted that there might be students who transfer from one school to another who have particular advantages or issues. Transfer between schools can be creative, such as sharing a strings program. A student doesn't have to be a transfer student to participate in that program. A student, for example, could still attend Messalonskee for a particular class and maintain local identity.

Dennis Keschl noted that this seems to be a policy that has to be developed once the RSU is formed because the RSU could take a look at this issue in a more clear way.

Lauchlin Titus noted that he believes RPC members are safe in saying that the RPC endorses choice within the RSU, and it charges the newly formed board with the mechanics. He noted that it is important the RPC tell the voters if they think consolidation is a good idea or not. The RPC members need to tell voters what they think.

Don Dufour questions the validity of both arguments. When looking at a situation like this, the RSU will need to be relied on to make some decisions. The RPC can perhaps give impressions or ideas, however as the union is developed, they will have to make these tough decisions, and we have to let go.

Dennis Keschl noted that on a couple of occasions he has heard that districts don't want to lose identity. Once infrastructure is developed, loyalties will change and identities will be lost. The same that will happen with RSU; districts will lose identity in the long run.

Mike Thurston noted that he didn't think that is the reality. The SAD forms one high school. There is no loss of schools.

Melanie Jewell noted that the RPC is not selling this to the people in the communities. The RPC's job is to get all information to the people, and that the information is presented accurately. The voting will still be done and everything will still be the same. There will be some issues that will not be the job of the RPC to address.

Gerald Saint Amand noted that if members of the RPC live in China, Vassalboro or Winslow, they are the ones who will be asked for some information regarding school choice.

Senator Mitchell noted that she agrees that the fine details of this will be worked out at the RSU level. But there is something more important here at stake to those who have school choice. People like the idea of choice. Most RSUs have one high school. What brought China and Vassalboro to the table was the excitement for shared resources. That should not be lost in this discussion, otherwise people might feel they are giving up too much. Towns are gaining here. Choice has multiple meaning, and it is an opportunity for improved education for our children. If that is lost, then a lot is lost. The vision must be kept that there might be a better school system at the end of the day. This choice piece needs to include reference to sharing resources with these three independent cultures.

Eric Haley noted that there is a difference between choice versus where students register and where they receive programming. There are students registered in Winslow who come to take a course in Waterville. There is a difference where students register versus the ability to take courses elsewhere. There needs to be a list of items for the RSU Board that will give them some priority as to what they need to take on as a RSU. This is something of which the RSU needs to be aware.

Phil St. Onge stated that parent choice is being confused with superintendent choice. What we are advocating for is parent choice. For example if a parent comes in to say I want my child to attend school here. The RPC has authority to grant that request.

Linda Laughlin noted that what is difficult now is to make a decision based on reality at this point. There are three comprehensive high schools trying to run programs for their students. Is the goal to have a particular program hosted by a particular building versus having a program done in all three buildings?

Phil St. Onge noted that it is probably essential that the RPC as a group decides that educational programming is an integral part of the program, not just governance or finance. Currently there are three comprehensive high schools.

Dennis Keschl noted that the RPC is here to inform the public. He believes that an informed public will make the right choice. He commented that based on the discussions the RPC has had over the past few months, there seems to be a belief that the framework that is being set for an RSU is like the framework in our constitution, except there does not seem to be any provision to allow the RSU Board to change what is being built. He would like to provide an opportunity for amendments based on changing circumstances that can't be predicted now. There should be some method of amending whatever is done if it does not work.

Dr. Morse noted that China and Vassalboro as of the operational date shall continue to have the same choices in the RSU.

At the meeting of October 18, the Governance Subcommittee recommendation related to vocational technical education read as follows.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that students from China and Vassalboro who choose to participate in vocational technical education do so at Mid-Maine Technical Center in Waterville. Students who are enrolled at the Capital Area Technical Center in Augusta at the time this agreement becomes operational may continue to participate in the program in Augusta.

Gerald Saint Amand noted that this Subcommittee is changing the recommendation regarding vocational centers.

Dr. Morse asked as an RSU if would we want students to go to Mid-Maine Technical Center exclusively. The students who are attending Erskine are not exclusively China and Vassalboro students. For example, a youngster attended Erskine in grade 9 and grade 10. That student decides to attend Capital Area Technical Center. The RSU would actually be endorsing relationships that students have formed. Why not let students go with their peers that they went to school with in 9th and 10th grade year? Cost difference is about $200 per student. Bussing becomes an issue of cost.

The revised recommendation reads as follows.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that students from China and Vassalboro who are enrolled at Erskine and choose to participate in vocational technical education do so at Capital Area Technical Center. China and Vassalboro students who attend RSU high schools will attend Mid-Maine Technical Center.

At the meeting of October 18, the Governance Subcommittee recommendation related to transportation read as follows.

The Governance Subcommittee discussed transportation of students enrolled at Erskine. Currently those costs are embedded in the school budgets of China and Vassalboro. As per the consolidation law, it is understood that the RSU is responsible for the average high school tuition cost for each student attending a school of choice. The RSU would not be responsible for transportation of any student who has chosen to attend any school other than those public schools within the RSU.

The Governance Subcommittee made no changes to the recommendation related to transportation. This is a restatement of what the RSU's responsibility is in terms of transportation. The RSU law failed to address directly transportation, which will be corrected in this upcoming Legislative session. The intent is that the RSU law follow SAD law. That means this recommendation is accurate.

At the meeting of October 18, the final recommendation of the Governance Subcommittee related to special education costs read as follows.

The Governance Subcommittee discussed the additional costs being charged by Erskine for educating special needs students. Currently those costs are embedded in the school budgets of China and Vassalboro. As per the consolidation law, it is understood that the RSU is responsible for the average high school tuition cost for each student attending a school of choice. The RSU would not be responsible for additional costs of any student who has chosen to attend any school other than those public schools within the RSU.

It is already know that there are certain programs that Erskine does not provide. Erskine does not have a resource room program. A child could attend Erskine. That would have been the federal law. However, there would need to be a PET. Would we disrupt a student because the student received special education services and move the student into an RSU high school? That is not the intent. The intent is to look at the child's situation and make the best placement for that child.

Lori Fowle noted that with special education there are usually extra monies. Would those monies follow that student?

Deb Scheibel, Director of Special Services in Winslow addressed the RPC. She said that she attended a workshop with Eric Herlan, an attorney from Drummond Woodsum of Portland. The interpretation is that students would be identified through an IEP process as to whether or not their placement would be at a particular town. If it were a choice, that student with an IEP process would be placed in that particular town with the program for the student. If the cost exceeded what the cost would be within the RSU for the same services for that child, the RSU would pay up to that dollar amount. Anything above that would be insured by the town. For example it costs $8,016 to educate a child. Erskine charges $9,016. The RSU would be responsible for $8,016, and the additional $1,000 would have to be paid by the town.

Dr. Morse noted that the recommendation before the RPC this evening is the same as was presented on October 18, with language added that refers to the PET process as written below.

The Governance Subcommittee discussed the additional costs being charged by Erskine for educating special needs students. Currently those costs are embedded in the school budgets of China and Vassalboro. As per the consolidation law, it is understood that the RSU is responsible for the average high school tuition cost for each student attending a school of choice. The RSU would not be responsible for additional costs of any student who has chosen to attend any school other than those public schools within the RSU, unless, through a P.E.T. process run by the RSU Special Education Director or his/her designee, it is determined that the student's educational needs are best met at a location other than the RSU schools.

Melanie Jewell asked if the RSU recommendation is to send the special education student to a particular school, and if the parents want the child to attend Cony or Erskine, for example, and cost is $1,000 more, then taxpayers of that town pay for that bill.

Lori Fowle noted that this only affects China and Vassalboro students. That is basically what happens now. The town picks up the added cost after what the state pays.

Dr. Morse noted that it is possible for a youngster with special needs to attend Erskine as long as the child has gone through a PET/ IEP process.

Dr. Morse noted that at this time there are four recommendations from the Governance Subcommittee before the RPC. Representatives from the different towns met in their respective groups to determine how each group will vote.

Gerald Saint Amand speaking on behalf of representatives of China, Vassalboro and Winslow stated that the group couldn't accept recommendation #1 related to school choice as written. They would like additional wording and language regarding programming and opportunities. Their recommendation would be to return the issue to the Governance Subcommittee for further review. Regarding recommendations #2, #3, and #4, they gave their consensus to move forward as recommended; however, they asked that additional language be included in recommendation #3 related to transportation, as it is unclear regarding classification of new law.

Don Dufour speaking on behalf of representatives of the Waterville Public Schools stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward on recommendations #1, #2, #3, and #4 as written.

Melanie Jewell speaking on behalf of representatives of MSAD 47 stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward on recommendations #1, #2, #3, and #4 as written.

Linda Titus of Vassalboro noted that she was part of the Future Search workshop held in October. She said that she left the workshop with excitement about potential for students in respective districts. Discussed were different ideas and models that could be used as a base.

James Jurdak requested copies of financial information related to China, MSAD 47, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow. Specifically, he requested copies of each SAUs detailed worksheet of the over/under EPS for both FY 2007 and FY 2008. Also requested were copies of each SAU's student enrollments for the past five years, by school and by grade. He also asked for any information that is available on how consolidating the five SAUs will impact the over/under EPS, reduce other costs, improve educational opportunities and performance for students, and improve operational efficiencies.

Dr. Morse noted that most of this information is already available on line on the District's Web site. The information related to enrollment will be gathered and forwarded to Mr. Jurdak.

Gerald Saint Amand asked if the RPC could look ahead to December meetings.

Dr. Morse noted that the RPC would review the work that is remaining at the next RPC meeting on November 15, find out where the RPC is collectively and determine where to go. There is still work to be done with which the RPC is charged to do under the law.

Dr. Morse noted that a document was prepared with questions related to consolidation. Dennis Keschl and Pam Trinward had requested that such a document be made available at the polls for the November 6 election. The publication is not something that the RPC is "selling", but just factual information. The document will be made available to all towns at all polling locations.

Steve Dyer asked how the document would be presented and if there would be someone at each polling place, or if the document would simply be placed on a table for people to pick up.

Dr. Morse noted that the intent is to have the document on display.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Thursday, November 15, 2007 at Waterville Junior High School in Waterville.

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 18, 2007

Eric L. Haley, Superintendent of Schools for the Waterville Public Schools, called the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee to order at 5:00 p.m. in the cafeteria at Winslow Elementary School in Winslow.

Those in Attendance: Maryanne Bernier, Lawrence Brown, Lee Cabana, Doug Carville, Charley Clark, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Don Dufour, Steve Dyer, Elwood Ellis, Doug Eugley, Lori Fowle, Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Michael Gosselin, Michael Heavener, Dennis Keschl, Linda Laughlin, Mike McQuarrie, Libby Mitchell, Robert Moreau, Nora Murray, Constance Packard, Paula Pooler, Marie Pulsifer, William Pulsifer, Gerald Saint Amand, Debrajean Scheibel, Joel Selwood, Gary Smith, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Peter Thiboutot, Michael Thurston, Lauchlin Titus, and Pamela Trinward

Gerry St. Amand made a motion, and Phil St. Onge seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of the October 4, 2007 meeting as amended. Motion carried.

The meeting turned to Subcommittee reports.

Linda Laughlin noted that on October 11 through October 13, 2007 a Future Search Conference was held. Thirty-eight people from China, Messalonskee, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow participated, representing a variety of stakeholders, including parents, students, businesses, town officials, community members, teachers, school staff and administration. The focus of the conference was to engage the communities in a dialogue about the future direction of our schools, with the outcome being a community-based vision for our students' learning. As participants facilitated through the three-day process, they discussed what an educational program would look like. There is a small group that will get together on Monday, October 22, to write the mission statement. The details will be shared at the next meeting of the Regional Planning Committee (RPC). Photos of individuals who attended the event were viewed. Nora Murray noted that there were similarities in terms of what people wanted for their children. All communities were represented at the workshop. She noted that several high school students attended as well, and took on their roles very seriously.

Jeff Frost noted that it was interesting to see all the different cultures represented at the Conference.

Eric Haley noted that even before the Governor's proposal regarding consolidation, Waterville and Messalonskee were working on collaborative efforts, including quality programming and what can be done to make our educational program that much better through this process. There were common themes that came from all the communities involved and what everyone wants for our students.

Jim Morse noted that there are numerous bills that have been presented to the Legislature in consideration of modifying the consolidation law. Pam Trinward could bring some real life experience to the Legislature. The educational programming piece needs to be in the law. What participants spent three days doing was focusing in on students. It was suggested that Libby Mitchell and Pam Trinward bring that suggestion to the Legislature.

Connie Packard reviewed the work of the Finance Subcommittee. Discussed were the buildings, enrollments, square feet, additions and future needs. An overview of the VFA Facility Management Software used by all districts was provided. It provides information regarding the condition of the districts' buildings. Also discussed was the concept of a building's facility condition index (FCI), which is a measure in place for all buildings. FCI is a measure of a building's condition using a standardized approach, which reflects the ratio between the amount of repairs, renovations requirements, deficiencies, life safety issues and other issues. All that needs to be addressed in a building and costed out compared to the replacement value. As a building's FCI approaches 1.0, typically around 70%, the building is approaching the end of its useful life. At that point, the recommendation would be for a new building. The lower the FCI, the better. Ms. Packard noted that the Subcommittee identified projects needed in each town, which reflect needs for the next seven years. This is a snapshot of how five SAUs rate with all their buildings.

The recommendation of the Finance Subcommittee is that the Regional School Unit assume transfer and title of the collective school facilities/sites provided in the summary lists prepared for this meeting (refer to spreadsheets for SAD 47, Waterville, and Union 52). All preexisting arrangements/joint use agreements to be maintained/honored as currently done in each District.

Eric Haley asked how the cost sharing method in the consolidation law is adversely affecting some communities. There have been two articles recently in the paper regarding this issue. The Commissioner has said the Legislature will review the law and make adjustments to it regarding cost sharing and EPS.

Libby Mitchell noted the Commissioner stated there is a possibility of being able to return to cost sharing prior to EPS and calculating it in a different way. That seems to be a barrier for lots of schools. Senator Mitchell noted the Commissioner is committed to bringing legislation in January because this is an issue for lots of schools.

Several questions were asked. What would go if consolidation took place? What about the football field in Waterville, for example? It is used by the Parks and Recreation Department. Would the City have to give the field to the RSU? What happens to a building if it is not being used and the City paid for building? Would it go to the RSU?

Jim Morse noted that the representatives from the school systems that currently exist need to discuss with town government officials the parameters of what they see as being transferred.

Gary Smith noted that there were also projects completed with federal money. The RSU would have to work that out.

Elaine Miller noted that there is also the superintendent's office in Winslow, which is owned by Winslow, China, and Vassalboro, but sits on Winslow land.

Jim Morse noted that these issues will need to be reviewed by town and city governments to determine what will be school property.

Eric Haley noted that Elwood Ellis will discuss transfer issues with Mike Roy, Waterville City Administrator, to determine what would be considered RSU land, school land, municipal land and what transfers to the RSU.

Gerry St. Amand asked if it was premature to vote tonight regarding the RPC's intent.

Jim Morse recommended that representatives of the Subcommittee have a discussion with town leaders to define school property.

Joel Selwood noted that whatever the entities end up being, it would require title work and all legalities to transfer the titles. He asked where expenses would be borne.

Don Dufour asked how this will go through and what the impact will be. The feeling is to postpone the vote.

Judy Coombs noted that if the RPC is trying to work with the towns and maintain good relations, it would be wise to get their input before a formal vote.

Doug Eugley noted that when the Finance Subcommittee met, it was discussed that any town owned properties could be deeded to the RSU. He has no problem with delaying the vote and getting a more detailed listing. He asked if there are any fields that are town owned or part of Recreation Departments.

Eric Haley noted that fields would still be used as they are now.

A motion was made by Phil St. Onge and seconded by Dennis Keschl that the Regional Planning Committee table action regarding the recommendation of the Finance Subcommittee that the RSU assume transfer and title of the collective school facilities/sites provided in the summary lists prepared for this meeting, until such time as representatives of the Subcommittee have had an opportunity to discuss with town leaders the definition of school property and provide them the opportunity for discussion prior to a vote by the RPC. Motion carried unanimously.

Eric Haley asked if there were any delegations to be heard. Bill Pulsifer of Belgrade asked how this will affect different sports programs and if the sports programs will become one budget.

Jim Morse noted that the vision is to bring athletic programs under one budget but to have three separate programs to maintain identity.

Eric Haley noted that schools would still have their booster groups supporting teams within their communities because those teams would all exist. The vision is to run sports programs as they are currently run, but under one budget.

Jim Morse noted that it does open the opportunity for districts to save money. For example, athletic tape and services with Red Cross. Can we get a better deal on those services if we run the program together?

Jim Morse provided a report of the Governance Subcommittee meeting held on October 9, 2007. The Subcommittee had two tasks that they needed to work through: school choice and governance in terms of how many members each town will have represented on the RSU Board. Unresolved at the last meeting was how to proceed through the election of Board members, and whether this Committee can establish the structure of a new board. The Commissioner, in addition to the Planning Committee report she will approve, has to make sure it meets the law. There currently are three-year cycles for election of Board members. This deals with how territories of elected representatives will be defined. The idea is communities with multiple representatives for three different voting methods, as long as it follows one-man one vote rule.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends the Board voting pattern noted below with the understanding that Waterville, Winslow and Oakland Board members will need to draw lots to determine who is on the RSU Board for one, two or three year terms once they have been elected.

Town	Population	# of Votes	# of Members	Votes per member	% per member	Equal weight per member	Equal % per member	Excess over equal
Belgrade	3209	69	1	69	6.86%	77	7.69%	-0.84%
China	4408	94	1	94	9.42%	77	7.69%	1.73%
Oakland	6202	133	2	66	6.63%	77	7.69%	-1.07%
Rome	1101	24	1	24	2.35%	77	7.69%	-5.34%
Sidney	3966	85	1	85	8.47%	77	7.69%	0.78%
Vassalboro	4337	93	1	93	9.27%	77	7.69%	1.57%
Waterville	15639	334	4	84	8.35%	77	7.69%	0.66%
Winslow	7944	170	2	85	8.49%	77	7.69%	0.79%
Totals	46806	1000	13					

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that the city and towns with multiple Board members determine whether they wish to use at-large representation, a ward system, or some combination, noting that whatever method is chosen must adhere to the one man one vote principle.

The Governance Subcommittee recommends that the official ten-year census be used to adjust the votes per member and that the updated U.S. Census figures be used to adjust votes per member mid-way through the official census. Such adjustments will be made the first year after the official census and the 6th year after the official census using updated numbers generated by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Gerald Saint Amand speaking on behalf of representatives of China, Vassalboro and Winslow stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Lee Cabana speaking on behalf of representatives of the Waterville Public Schools stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Jack Sutton speaking on behalf of representatives of MSAD 47 stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Motion carried unanimously to support the Governance Subcommittee recommendations relating to governance in terms of how many members each town will have represented on the RSU Board.

Jim Morse noted that the Governance Subcommittee also discussed the issue of school choice and tuition contracts. This issue needs to be addressed based on the plan put forth. There are currently no tuition contracts in existence in any of the districts. However, two of the towns offer school choice. Dr. Morse reviewed a description of school choice. For China "All students 9-12 may choose to attend any secondary school approved for tuition purposes. China pays the maximum allowable tuition for each student plus insured value factor for students attending Erskine. They also pay Erskine an additional amount for any special education students enrolled at Erskine. Transportation is also provided to Erskine, paid for by the towns." The same language was duplicated for the Town of Vassalboro. The vast majority of youngsters in China and Vassalboro make the choice to attend Erskine.

Dr. Morse reviewed with the RPC the recommendations of the Governance Subcommittee related to school choice.

1. The Governance Subcommittee recommends "choice" among the three public high schools as long as no students who would have traditionally attended Messalonskee, Waterville, or Winslow would be displaced by a student from one of the other communities, and as long as there is available space in the school requested.

2. The Governance Subcommittee recommends that students from China and Vassalboro who choose to participate in vocational technical education do so at Mid-Maine Technical Center in Waterville. Students who are enrolled at the Capital Area Technical Center in Augusta at the time this agreement becomes operational may continue to participate in the program in Augusta.

3. The Governance Subcommittee discussed transportation of students enrolled at Erskine. Currently those costs are embedded in the school budgets of China and Vassalboro. As per the consolidation law, it is understood that the RSU is responsible for the average high school tuition cost for each student attending a school of choice. The RSU would not be responsible for transportation of any student who has chosen to attend any school other than those public schools within the RSU.

4. The Governance Subcommittee discussed the additional costs being charged by Erskine for educating special needs students. Currently those costs are embedded in the school budgets of China and Vassalboro. As per the consolidation law, it is understood that the RSU is responsible for the average high school tuition cost for each student attending a school of choice. The RSU would not be responsible for additional costs of any student who has chosen to attend any school other than those public schools within the RSU.

Mike Gosselin asked how the Committee proposed to have that enforced in terms of schools that traditionally attend. For example, what happens if a student from China and attends Waterville High School and makes the varsity basketball team and causes a Waterville student to be placed on the JV team?

Pam Trinward noted that students would be accepted based on space in the school, not space in the specific programs.

Mike Gosselin asked what would happen if all three schools said there was no room.

Pam Trinward noted that it would be the responsibility of the RSU. If there were room at Waterville and Winslow but not at Messalonskee, then students would have to go to Waterville or Winslow.

Mike Thurston asked if recommendation #1 speaks to China and Vassalboro only.

Jim Morse noted that it did not. He, Eric Haley and Elaine Miller have philosophically done this. What currently happens is if a child from Winslow wants to go to Messalonskee or Waterville, the student generally does based on the best interests of that child. It is an exchange between the schools now.

Elaine Miller noted that what is currently done is based on academic courses, not sports. For example students who go to Waterville for the strings program or for an AP bio class it is because those are courses that are not currently offered at their own high school.

Eric Haley noted that Waterville has superintendents' agreements for ten students who are coming for one course only. The law says if two superintendents agree, it is in the child's best interest.

Elaine Miller also noted that if there are homeless students, the homeless law must be followed.

Doug Eugley asked about transportation for choice schools. What about transportation to other schools? What if a Sidney child goes to Winslow all day?

Jim Morse noted that primarily Belgrade buses serve Belgrade and Rome; Sidney buses serve almost exclusively all of Sidney. Parents may need to provide transportation. For example, if someone will want to go from Summer Haven to Winslow, it doesn't necessarily mean that the District would pick up transportation costs.

Pam Trinward noted that if there is a student who is failing in terms of social behavior issues in Winslow, for example, that student now will have the opportunity to attend Waterville or Messalonskee to try to get the student out of a situation where he/she is failing and put him/her in a place where the student will succeed.

Mike Gosselin noted that people from China and Vassalboro would have to pick up what's left. If choice is to be given, then it should be a choice among the three high schools. If China and Vassalboro students want to go to Waterville, why can't they now?

Mr. Haley noted that students should go to the high school in the town where they reside. In viewing communities with multiple middle schools, for example, those middle schools are organized such that students go to the ones that are in their regions or wards. If choice is allowed, the expectation is that the students would go to the schools in the towns where they reside.

Judy Coombs noted that she is a teacher, taxpayer and has a student in the system. She has 32 years of teaching experience and has seen a lot of changes. One of her concerns is that communities will separate and lose diversity. All the "haves" cannot be in one school. What happens to the "have-nots" is not acceptable. That needs to be supported for our schools.

Libby Mitchell noted that people do, indeed, move to China and Vassalboro because of school choice. Choice is very cherished by parents and by students. It is so important that people move. Where do these children go? Mostly to Waterville, Winslow, Messalonskee, and Erskine. It is schools where parents feel they are welcome. According to the law, opportunities for school choice provided by a previous school unit must be maintained by the RSU for students in those municipalities that offered choice. You are willing to compete for our kids. One of the things we are being asked to consider is to give up our choice to all schools to Messalonskee, Waterville, Winslow, and Erskine. That is a much smaller universe than before. It is okay to give up the universe because we will have three great high schools. They are all good schools. We can overcome that if we keep the vision.

Charley Clark noted that his understanding is that the benefit of being in an RSU is because of special education and the way the law was written. If we would end up with a high student cost, would it go back to the town?

Jim Morse noted that with regard to school choice, the issue is more complicated. For students choosing a public school in a different school unit the RSU must pay tuition not to exceed its own secondary tuition rate. If the tuition payable to the choice school exceeds the RSU's tuition rate, the additional expense must be paid by the responsible municipality. It is about special education students from private schools only. If a child continues to attend Erskine, for example, then the community would pick up the cost. The RSU would not be responsible under the statute. Special education law states that the municipality has to cover the cost.

Jack Sutton asked if the adoption of any or all recommendations would be binding for future Boards or if future Boards would have the option to make adjustments.

Jim Morse noted that whatever is included in these organizational plans becomes binding contracts. All these sections that have been approved ultimately will go before our school boards before a final plan is adopted. This is something that we can live with, but once Board and voters approve the future RSU is bound.

Eric Haley noted that if something is not required to be in the plan, it is not necessarily binding. If it's mandated by the consolidation law to be in the organization plan, then it probably binds the RSU. If not required, then RSU Board may change.

Lori Fowle asked about China and Vassalboro students who choose to participate in vocational technical education programs in Augusta. If they were currently enrolled there, would their transportation be picked up by the RSU?

Jim Morse noted that an assumption was made that the RSU would be responsible for transporting high school students because it is the law related to SADs not the law for municipal school systems. The law is unclear regarding this issue, but it makes sense that one would come to that conclusion.

Eric Haley noted that given the amount of concerns expressed with the recommendations presented this evening, that the Governance Subcommittee take this input and make amendments to the recommendations for the next meeting.

Peter Thiboutot asked if there was additional language to that first recommendation regarding school choice. If a student wants to attend another school why is that? What does that other school offer that we don't have? The RSU needs to discuss equity to level the playing field in those areas that are in question. What will philosophy be in terms of providing opportunities for students?

Lori Fowle made a motion, and Phil St. Onge seconded, to table the recommendations until the Governance Subcommittee has had an opportunity to review them further and make amendments if necessary.

The RPC gave its consensus to table the recommendations of the Governance Subcommittee until such time as the Subcommittee has had time to review those matters and return with amended recommendations as necessary.

The next meeting of the Governance Subcommittee is scheduled for Thursday, October 25, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at the George J. Mitchell School in Waterville.

The Personnel and Transition Subcommittee continued to work on trying to come up with a solution to merge employee contracts and what should occur as contracts are negotiated. Mr. Haley noted that the three teachers' association presidents, Robin Colby for MSAD 47, Judy Coombs for Waterville, and Mike Thurston for China, Vassalboro and Winslow, have been very helpful. Contracts are very different, and Mr. Haley noted that these meetings are not considered negotiations meetings. What is being discussed is the creation of a 20-step teacher contract, giving them an increase from wherever they are on their current scales, regardless of how that compares to where they are on the scale. Eventually, all teachers would be paid the same. The Committee is working through regarding what those costs would be. Mr. Haley noted that another issue being discussed is health insurance. There is about a $2,300 difference between the top insurance plan and the lower plan.

The Subcommittee was charged with looking at a transition plan, and has not yet done anything with the transition plan. The Subcommittee needs to determine what services will be provided to local municipalities and schools. Real estate and title to properties are issues as well. There is also the issue of liability insurance and whether it will be more or less expensive than what is currently in place. The RPC needs to insure that there are no lapses in coverage.

The transition plan also needs to address the development of personnel policies. In order to determine what the transition plan is we need to know dates and timelines. Will we be ready for December 1, with a referendum vote by January 15? If not ready by then, when?

Jim Morse noted that the RPC should consider a deadline of June. This would give school systems a full year for coming to conclusion on this work.

Phil St. Onge asked if there was any sentiment in Augusta to let up on this date.

Libby Mitchell said there is not at this time. Perhaps if more people report back about honest efforts to get the work done, maybe. What there is not support for is that school districts may have forever to complete their work.

Pam Trinward noted that this was one of the compromises in the Legislature with December and a referendum in June. We should continue to work as hard as we can. It is possible that if it does not pass in the community, that November election will be needed.

Eric Haley noted that this RPC is so far ahead of everybody else in terms of completing its work. The work has been good. He received a call from a reporter from the Portland Press Herald yesterday, and the reporter noted that this RPC has completed more work than anyone else with whom he has spoken.

Dennis Keschl noted that the press is not taking this seriously. They should be. It will be difficult to bring the public along. The education process needs to start now to let the public know what work has been completed and where we stand.

Mr. Keschl suggested that a common product be put together that is at the polls on November 6 to at least make the public aware of these discussions. There can be a display at each polling location. This would allow time to educate the public as to what is being proposed and the amount of work needing to be done. It would also allow time to provide for public education and awareness in order for the public to make an informed decision and for community leaders to answer their questions.

Pam Trinward suggested that the polls should be manned. People should be told when the RPC meets and to please come to the meetings.

Dennis Keschl noted that the press needs to be brought into these meetings because they are part of the public process.

Eric Haley asked if the RPC would like the Personnel and Transition Subcommittee to develop a transition plan based on a June referendum vote on the plan and a November referendum vote on the school board. At the next Subcommittee meeting a timeline will be drafted based on those benchmarks.

Libby Mitchell noted that Laughlin Titus writes an email message. Each town might do some of that as well. His letter is published in the *Town Line*, a local paper. The Paper prints his letter verbatim.

The next meeting of the RPC is scheduled for Thursday, November 1, 2007 at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
October 4, 2007

1. Call to order: Jim Morse, Superintendent of Schools for School MSAD 47, called the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee to order at 5:03 p.m. in the cafeteria at Mid-Maine Technical Center in Waterville. James Morse introduced Mark Powers who provided an overview of the Mid-Maine Technical Center. Dr. Morse then introduced Claire Moen, Webmaster of MSAD 47, Messalonskee High School, and Messalonskee Middle School. He also recognized audience members who have been present for each meeting—questions from the audience were postponed to later in the meeting.

2. Those in Attendance: Maryanne Bernier, Lee Cabana, Malcolm Charles, Charles Clark, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Steve Dyer, Don Dufour, Ralph Farnham, Jr., Lori Fowle, Jeffrey Frost, Eric Haley, Dennis Keschl, Linda Laughlin, Michael Mcquarrie, Elaine Miller, Claire Moen, James Morse, Nora Murray, Constance Packard, Deanne Pizzo, Mark Powers, Marie Pulsifer, William Pulsifer, Debrajean Scheibel, Gary Smith, Frank Soares, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Mike Thurston, Lauchlin Titus, Michael Tracy, and Pam Trinward

3. **Education Committee Report** – A Powerpoint presentation, prepared by Jackie Godbout and Kathryn Manning, Title IA Program Consultants of the Maine Department of Education, was presented by Nora Murray. The presentation outlined the impact of consolidation on federal funding and No Child Left Behind, which funding levels will increase and which would actually cease based on population numbers. Title 1 funds are the largest source of federal funds. For more information please see: Consolidation and No Child Left Behind.

   Concerns were voiced regarding Title funds that would be directed to schools with the highest needs (Highly Qualified Teachers for example) and take away from schools with lower needs. Linda Laughlin and Dr. Morse noted that use of local funds would insure equity among the schools.

   Nora Murray noted that Title 1 funding levels may very well stay the same based on census figures for FY 2004-05 rather than based on free and reduced numbers.

4. **Finance Committee Recommendations**

   Committee Tasks: Recommendation on disposition of school accounts, balances, reserves, summer pay liability and trust funds

   1. Recommend to RPC that all existing trust funds at the date of RSU consolidation be transferred to the RSU with existing trust fund conditions/restrictions remaining in place, to be administered by the RSU. Consensus.

   2. Recommend to RPC that all general fund balances be transferred to the RSU. Consensus.

   3. Recommend to RPC that the summer pay liability be transferred as either funded or unfunded as existing at 6/30/09. Recommend that Winslow, Vassalboro and China will be fully funded by the end of eight (8) years subsequent to the RSU formation through

additional assessment to Winslow, Vassalboro, China. Waterville and MSAD 47 will be transferred as fully funded. Consensus.

4. Recommend to RPC that Adult Education fund balances be transferred to the RSU. Consensus.

5. Recommend to RPC that Food Service balances be zeroed out prior to 7/1/09 and transferred at zero balance. Consensus.

6. Recommend to RPC that Student Activity Account balances be transferred to the RSU, keeping accounts for use by each school as they now exist. Consensus.

7. Recommend to RPC that the agency funds be transferred to the RSU, keeping all accounts separate. Consensus.

Phil St. Onge: Can we dictate to school boards? Answer: We can make recommendations- our best work and request adoption as a plan. Local boards have to approve the RPC plans and it is binding on the RSU.

Vote: Move these recommendations (individually or collectively) to break out groups by town to decide. Dennis Keschl moved, Jeff Frost seconded. Waterville questions general fund balances. State the recommendation clearly 6/30/2009 balances are returned to towns to disperse and 7/1/2009 general fund starts with a zero balance. Balances left would lessen a town's financial commitment to the RSU (to lower the liability of the individual towns). **3-0 vote to accept recommendations.**

5. **Governance Committee Recommendations**:
Complete recommendation available here
http://www.msad47.org/co/consolidation/plan_committee/governance_subcmte/pdf/gov_rec.pdf
based on each town having representation on the RSU School Board – a 13 member board:
Motion to disperse for further discussions by town representatives -- moved by Ralph Farnham, Pam Trinward seconded.
3-0 vote to accept recommendations.

Audience Questions: No questions. Malcolm Charles – Board continue to allow time at the end of the meeting for questions from the audience.

The meeting adjourned at 7:05 pm.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 20, 2007

Elaine B. Miller, Superintendent of Schools for School Union 52, called the meeting of the Regional Planning Committee to order at 5:02 p.m. in the cafeteria at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland. Ms. Miller served as Chairperson of the meeting, noting that she, Dr. James C. Morse, Sr., Superintendent of Schools for MSAD 47, and Eric L. Haley, Superintendent of Schools for the Waterville Public Schools, would share that responsibility on a rotating basis.

Those in Attendance: Lawrence Brown, Lee Cabana, Charley Clark, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Don Dufour, Doug Eugley, Ralph Farnham, Jr., Lori Fowle, Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Michael Heavener, Dennis Keschl, Linda Laughlin, Libby Mitchell, Robert Moreau, Nora Murray, Wendy Nivison, Constance Packard, Paula Pooler, Gerald Saint Amand, Gary Smith, Frank Soares, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Peter Thiboutot, and Lauchlin Titus

Ms. Miller asked Committee members if they would consider the possibility of changing the time of the meeting to 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., rather than 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. Committee members gave their consensus to the time change for meetings.

Ms. Miller noted that there is an agenda item called "Declaration of a Quorum," and that agenda item will be removed from future agendas.

Doug Eugley made a motion, and Judy Coombs seconded the motion, to approve the minutes of the September 6, 2007 meeting as amended. Motion carried.

Ms. Miller asked if there were any delegations to be heard. As there were none, the meeting turned to Subcommittee reports.

Linda Laughlin noted that the Educational Programming Subcommittee met on September 13 and brainstormed educational programming topics that need to be addressed, as consolidation is reviewed more closely. Committee members also created a template that would help investigate each of these topics. Student handbooks and high school curriculum guides were shared with Committee members, and information regarding bell schedules and Advanced Placement (AP) programming, collected from a 2004-05 study, was reviewed. The next Educational Programming Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2007, at 4:00 p.m. at the Superintendent's Office in Waterville.

Nora Murray noted that representatives from the Maine Department of Education will be invited to attend the next Educational Programming Subcommittee meeting to discuss consolidation and the impact of federal programming, if any, such as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and if so, what the impact would be.

Jim Morse noted that he, Eric Haley and Elaine Miller discussed the possibility of assigning data collection surrounding special education to the Educational Programming Subcommittee. The plan must address choice, and part of that choice is special education. Another significant requirement by the State is transportation, which is a major issue for an SAD. Collectively China, MSAD 47, Vassalboro, Waterville and Winslow have to review transportation, as transportation is a targeted area in which the State is expecting efficiencies. The consensus of

the Regional Planning Committee (RPC) was that the charge of collecting data for special education and transportation would be assigned to the Educational Programming Subcommittee.

Jim Morse provided a report of the Governance Subcommittee meeting held on September 20, 2007. Two major issues were discussed: the size and configuration of the proposed RSU Board and the voting methods prescribed in the law. Committee members reviewed a number of configurations for size, composition and apportionment of the RSU Board. The Subcommittee was prepared to make a 16-member RSU Board recommendation to the Regional Planning Committee. However, upon review by Attorney Bruce Smith of Drummond Woodsum, a 16-member RSU Board would not be in compliance with statute, as there cannot be more than 2% variance between the weights of each member's vote. The Committee needs to review how large this Board can be in order to meet the requirements of the law, with the potential of towns sharing representation.

The next meeting of the Governance Subcommittee is scheduled for September 27, at which time Committee members will attempt to resolve this issue, with the goal of having a recommendation for the Regional Planning Committee on October 4.

Mr. Keschl asked a question about the 2% variance between weights of members' votes. He asked if the Governance Subcommittee was reviewing votes by town, and then asked if Dr. Morse could provide more information.

Dr. Morse noted that the weighted vote is directly tied to the census. As the population changes, the weight of each voting member may be adjusted accordingly. Weighted voting guarantees that every community would have representation on the RSU Board, with different weights afforded each member when it is time to vote. Weighted voting guarantees a voice for each town in all discussions.

Dr. Morse noted that the consensus of the Subcommittee was that weighted voting was the best possible solution, as it would allow the smallest town to have a voice at the table. For example, Rome would still influence voting because of its participation. There was strong consensus that each town should have a voice at the table.

Steve Dyer asked if the only way this would work and give Rome at least one vote would be to have a Board with at least 19 people.

Jim Morse said that they have not been able to create a board with the weight system with less than 19 people.

The Personnel and Transition Subcommittee met last Thursday and discussed employee contracts, with the most discussion centering around teacher contracts. The next meeting is scheduled for September 27 at 3:30 p.m. at the Superintendent's Office in Waterville.

Discussion centered around what should occur as contracts are negotiated. The Winslow teachers' association tried to find a pay scale that was in depth so that everything had equal

adjustments so that teachers move up the scale according to degree earned. There are peaks and valleys in individual district pay scales. A base figure will be negotiated. Placement of teachers on the salary scale needs to be reviewed so that pay will be based on where teacher salaries are now and where they would be placed on the scale according to degree earned and years of experience. Robin Colby will put together the data for MSAD 47, Judy Coombs for Waterville, and Michael Thurston for China, Vassalboro, and Winslow.

Robin Colby asked if other members of the teachers' associations could be part of the discussions of the Personnel and Transition Subcommittee. Mr. Haley noted that they are welcome to come and listen to discussions, but there is no authority to add people to subcommittees at this time.

Elaine Miller noted that parts of the meeting were like the negotiations process, and that is not the responsibility of this Committee. Representatives from the different personnel groups are welcome to attend the meetings, but not as members of the Committee. Communications will remain open so that all personnel groups will stay informed.

Lori Fowle asked if this group would consider inviting representatives from China and Vassalboro so that they can be communicating their concerns and feedback to people.

Mr. Haley noted that Committee members would listen to any issues and concerns. These are public meetings and anyone may attend; however, Committee representation will remain as it is.

Libby Mitchell asked how the Committee chose to represent itself at the table.

Jim Morse noted that the law was followed, and in inviting teacher union presidents to the table, the Committee actually stepped outside the law. However, the Committee felt it was important to have union representation at the table.

Mr. Haley noted that the regionalization process began before the Governor announced the consolidation law. Messalonskee and Waterville have been working together for over five years in relation to transportation, nutrition, and purchasing of certain supplies. What happened was that the existing committee was expanded according to State law.

Gerald Saint Amand asked if Subcommittees are limited to those members on the Committee.

Eric Haley stated that the subcommittee is responsible for reporting to others. Voting will be completed by school system. If a request is made, then it will be discussed, and if a vote is required, voting will be completed with one vote per school system.

Libby Mitchell noted that there is an emphasis on not just bringing in school people but bringing in the public as well, but that school officials are needed on the Committee as they have the knowledge needed regarding the school systems.

Phil St. Onge asked who actually on the Committee has a vote.

Jim Morse noted that he is more interested in the people of the Committee who are not the superintendent. He is more interested in what they have to say, and that superintendents are the hired professionals working at the behest of the Committee. He wants to make sure that the work of the Governance Subcommittee represents the work of the entire Committee.

Elaine Miller noted that she doesn't see herself voting, but sees herself as a facilitator.

Charley Clark noted that in China this subject has arisen. Elwood Ellis and he are thinking about forming a subcommittee that is only responsible to oversee - another set of eyes. They would be able to report back to these other people in the town who are interested, and suggested that something similar could be done with this Committee.

Elaine Miller noted that she had a meeting in Vassalboro and it became apparent that some Committee members are a month behind and requesting what happened a month ago. She has invited them to please come to the meetings. There is a lot that happens in a month. It is important that community members are encouraged to come and listen and feel that they are part of the process.

Gary Smith reviewed the progress of the Finance Subcommittee. The key task that they are working on is the financial template for the RSU that was developed by the state, along with updates by the business managers. They want to insure that the work is as accurate and complete as possible prior to releasing it to the public. Mr. Smith noted that he met with Jim Rier, Management Information Systems Team Leader for the Maine Department of Education, to figure out if this financial template makes sense for all the communities. Mr. Smith reviewed the financial template for the proposed RSU; debt, including bond and lease/purchases; recommendation regarding local debt; and finance teamwork plan.

The financial template is based on the 2007-08 funding year and assumes no changes in students, valuations, mil rate, etc. If reorganization of SAUs had occurred this year, it is likely that some funds would have been allocated differently, resulting in a lower mil expectation. For 2008-09 pupil counts, valuations, and total state dollars will change. There is an additional $43 million in state subsidy for the EPS model for next year. This may result in a lower mil expectation, possibly as low as 6.80 mils.

Regarding the communities versus the state template, in one scenario based on the new cost sharing formula, the RSU assumes local debt. Total debt for the towns in the proposed RSU is $27,510,006. The difference due to template difference from the ED 281 numbers is $34,020. In a second scenario if the SAU keeps the debt, the difference due to template difference from the ED 281 numbers is $34,018.

Mr. Smith also reviewed per pupil costs and contribution. The RSU operating budget would be $59,193,042. RSU per pupil student count would be 7,363.5, with an average per pupil cost of $8,039. He noted that the cost per student would typically be less for K-8 students than for 9-12 students. All communities will be contributing the per pupil amount to the cost of educating their children through state and local contribution. This would include students with school choice attending non-RSU schools.

Mr. Smith also reviewed issues related to tuition and school choice. The law requires school choice towns to pay the difference from the RSU tuition rate for students attending non-RSU schools. The Department of Education created a blended tuition rate for Messalonskee, Waterville, and Winslow High Schools of $7,147. The state average tuition rate for 2006-07 was $7,618. As an RSU the obligation for students not attending the RSU is no greater than that tuition rate. The contribution per community approaches $8,000 per student. It is the difference between the state average tuition rate and the tuition rate where the students will attend school. The assessment to China for students attending non-RSU schools would be $113,859, and to Vassalboro it would be $77,161. These assessments would be direct costs to those communities and not shared across the RSU.

The combined RSU is roughly $3 million over the Essential Programs and Services (EPS) funding target, $2 million in SAD 47 and $1 million in China and Vassalboro combined. Today that money comes directly from the communities. In the law that money is allocated according to the cost sharing formula.

The current financial analysis does not address the duplicative efforts or possible efficiencies that will be achieved regarding the four targeted areas of system administration, special education, transportation, and facilities and maintenance.

Phil St. Onge asked how many times the State Department of Education has changed how much money each district will receive, and how concrete those figures are, and asked if it would be possible to run those numbers with new schools in Waterville and China and with what everybody in the proposed RSU needs. He also asked when the 281 reports are provided.

Jim Morse noted that that would be difficult because of the process. The reports are received later and later every year. By statute, districts are supposed to have the reports by January. This past budget year school districts all made adequate guesses, and the funding came in after budgets were presented, not before. That is when superintendents rely on past experience.

Eric Haley noted that before this process is complete, it must be determined what districts need what facilities. This needs to be determined before these decisions are made and what will go on with school consolidation and how the RSU will handle local debt. If the RSU will take a building and use it, then the RSU would have an obligation to take the debt for that building as well.

Charley Clark noted that the RSU needs to identify the needs, but that doesn't mean they will do it with local money. The RSU should not spend local money if the state will provide major construction money.

Regarding Waterville High School, Eric Haley noted that because the staff takes care of the buildings Waterville rates low on the state's rubric for school construction, receiving no priority for construction or renovation. When money is non-state approved, it is money that is not subsidized by the state. It must be insured that all projects are put on the table.

Dennis Keschl made the following points: (1) Members of the RPC should be clear that they are part of a committee that is analyzing whether or not they should consolidate, that they are not developing a plan to consolidate. This is an important distinction. As the Belgrade Town Manager he doesn't want any Belgrade citizen to think that the RPC has already decided and is putting the "plan" together. However, he does not recognize that the Committee must put a plan together to do the analysis, but he is not using that terminology in speaking to citizens. (2) There needs to be time to explain to citizens what it is that will ultimately be recommended to the public. That is, if China, MSAD 47, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow go forth with consolidation, all need to explain what has been done and how they came to that conclusion. The education process alone will take a long time. People need to understand the potential impact on our residents. Members of the RPC all need to know how the numbers are put together so that they may explain it to those who ask. (3) Finally, there needs to be stability in what funding the State provides through EPS. In the current situation, the State decides what is or is not an "essential program or service". This makes it difficult for the towns to make decisions based on the analysis that is being done because funding scenarios could change. Mr. Keschl urges the State to try to provide stability in EPS so that town residents understand and can go forward with what that is going to be. The real question with State funding from year to year is, "Fifty-five percent of what?"

Eric Haley noted that $20 million is what needs to be raised among the school districts, to add to what the state says it will be able to give is about $62 million. There is another $11 million of non-tax revenue that comes into the school systems in the form of tuition. However, this will no longer be tuition; it will be part of an assessment. Other examples of non-tax revenue are Maine Care, for which Districts bill for day treatment program and receive reimbursement, gate receipts, and assessments for Mid-Maine Technical Center students.

Jim Morse noted that the Finance Subcommittee provided a work plan, and the issue regarding facilities is part of the work plan. That work will be presented to the RPC at a future meeting.

Gary Smith also reviewed the respective debt of each school district. As a way of doing business, each community does use lease purchasing, as well as bonds. Bonds are used for school construction and renovations. Lease purchases are used for buses, technology, copiers, telecommunication, facilities and efficiency projects. Total outstanding obligations, including state/local debt, local only debt and lease purchases, for China, SAD 47, Vassalboro, Waterville and Winslow are $41,353,912.96. What are some of the important factors of the local only debt? Bonds and lease purchase agreements must be reviewed in total. Ongoing positive relationships between the RSU and local communities must be maintained. For the long-term all communities will require facilities work, and the decision of the Regional Planning Committee may lead to quid pro quo voting or non-approval of needed facility work in a community.

At this point the Finance Subcommittee recommendation to the RPC work group is that the RSU should include the assumption of local only debt and lease purchase obligations as part of consolidation planning. This would include the debt on record as of June 30, 2008, as some projects are currently underway but financing is not yet completed. If any future local only debt efforts are under way, that debt would need to become the responsibility of the RPC as well.

Doug Eugley stated that there needs to be clarification. There are some projects that are underway, such as copier leases and bus leases. There are some projects that need to be outlined. Large construction projects are not part of this June 30 date.

Jim Morse assured members involved in this discussion that no SAU would undertake a capital improvement project, with the understanding that the RSU would pay for that project. The Committee is trying to select a point in time so that all will feel comfortable that a process has been identified so that a limit on capital improvement projects has been set during these discussions.

Dennis Keschl noted that it seems as if everyone recognizes that putting a plan together by December 1, 21007 to meet a goal of implementation by July 2008 was probably not doable. He further commented that, given this while the Committee should work as expeditiously as possible to get the work done, the Committee must make sure that it is doing the best analysis possible. Recognizing the time issue, there should be agreement that any plan would not be ready for submission to the public until November 2008 at the earliest. This recognition would help to alleviate some of the pressure everyone feels. It would also allow time to educate the public as to what is being proposed, the amount of work needing to be done, and not push to get as much work done. It would also allow time to provide for public education and awareness in order for the public to make an informed decision and for community leaders to answer their questions.

Jack Sutton asked if there would be any amendments to this recommendation, as this analysis is based on the debt situation, as it exists now.

Eric Haley noted that everything that each district is undergoing is reported in this analysis.

Laughlin Titus asked if the RSU could include the debt identified on record as of December 1, 2007 and encumbered by June 30, 2008.

Gary Smith noted that as this process goes forward, there would be a collection of decisions made and brought forth. What needs to be considered is what makes sense for the RSU.

Dennis Keschl stated that what he is hearing is that all of that debt would be included in this year's budget, which runs through June 30, 2008. No other debt can be assumed because it is not already in that budget.

Eric Haley noted that all of the debt assumed is included. He is comfortable with the work of the subcommittee. That number will be reduced before districts consolidate, as there will be less local debt.

Jim Morse noted that the next step in this process is that there would be a recommendation. The Committee would break up by respective units, MSAD 47, School Union 52 and Waterville and come to consensus, with school units having to vote to accept or reject the recommendation.

Dennis Keschl noted that the fact that the Committee may or may not vote regarding this issue tonight, to accept that recommendation does not necessarily go in the direction of forming the RSU.

Jim Morse noted that that was a correct assumption. What the RPC is doing is putting a plan together to present to respective school systems.

The Finance Subcommittee recommendation before the RPC is that the RSU should include the assumption of local only debt and lease purchase obligations as part of consolidation planning. This would include the debt on record as of June 30, 2008, as some projects are currently underway but financing is not yet completed. If any future local only debt efforts were under way, that debt would need to be brought forth to the RPC as well.

Larry Brown speaking on behalf of representatives of MSAD 47 stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Lee Cabana speaking on behalf of representatives of the Waterville Public Schools stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Gerald Saint Amand speaking on behalf of representatives of China, Vassalboro and Winslow stated that the group gave its consensus to move forward as recommended.

Nora Murray stated that in the Finance Committee work, there have been discussions about federal programming, and asked if committees should work together regarding this issue.

Elaine Miller noted that every system receives a significant amount of money from federal funds and noted that the Finance and Educational Programming Subcommittees should jointly review this data.

Elaine Miller noted that it has been asked if the RPC would consider changing locations of some of the meetings so that it is not perceived that all planning and analysis work is all done at Messalonskee. The next meeting, scheduled for October 4, 2007 will be held at the Mid-Maine Technical Center in Waterville. The meeting scheduled for October 18, 2007 will be held at Winslow Elementary School.

Libby Mitchell asked what the status is with the Department of Education.

Elaine Miller noted that if districts filed their letters of intent, they now know whether or not their letters have been accepted or denied. China and Vassalboro were denied because Waterville and Winslow did not submit amendment letters including China and Vassalboro. The question this evening is what is the plan regarding China and Vassalboro?

Mr. Haley noted that Waterville would need to submit an amended letter of intent. That item is on the Waterville Board of Education's agenda for their next meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
September 6, 2007

Eric L. Haley, Superintendent of Schools for the Waterville Public Schools, called the meeting of the Consolidation Planning Committee to order at 5:03 p.m. in the cafeteria at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland. Mr. Haley served as Chairperson of the meeting, noting that he, Dr. James C. Morse, Sr., Superintendent of Schools for MSAD 47, and Elaine Miller, Superintendent of Schools for School Union 52, would share that responsibility on a rotating basis.

Those in Attendance: Mary Ann Bernier, Lawrence Brown, Lee Cabana, Malcolm Charles, Charles Clark, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Donald Dufour, Steven Dyer, Elwood Ellis, Doug Eugley, Ralph Farnham, Jr., Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Michael Gosselin, Eric Haley, Michael Heavener, Melanie Jewell, James Jurdak, Linda Laughlin, Libby Mitchell, Robert Moreau, Nora Murray, Wendy Nivison, Joan Phillips Sandy, Paula Pooler, Kelly Roderick, Gerald Saint Amand, Phil St. Onge, Jack Sutton, Sara Sylvester, Peter Thiboutot, Michael Thurston, Laughlin Titus, and Michael Tracy

Mr. Haley reviewed with Committee members the ground rules.

- Each School Administrative Unit (SAU) will appoint a spokesperson for voting.
- There will be one vote per SAU.
- There will be 20 minutes reserved at the beginning of each session for public comments, with a two-minute limit per person.
- Meetings will occur on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month.
- Superintendents of the three schools systems involved will chair the Committee on a rotating basis.

Mr. Haley asked if there were any delegations.

Malcolm Charles, a Selectman representing the Town of Rome, addressed the Committee regarding the addition of the Towns of China and Vassalboro. With the addition of China and Vassalboro, there are only five meetings to develop a plan to submit to the state, and he expressed concern about developing plans and having enough time to do so.

Mr. Haley noted that these needs are formulative needs, and that there are no absolutes because towns have filed letters of intent.

Elaine Miller noted that Vassalboro voted to submit two letters of intent to the State, one including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, Palermo, and Waterville, and a second including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, and Palermo. China also voted to submit two letters of intent, one including China, Vassalboro, Winslow, Palermo, and Waterville, and a second including China, Vassalboro, Winslow, and Palermo. Winslow also submitted two letters of intent, one including Winslow, Waterville, and MSAD 47, and a second including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, and Palermo. The only town that has filed an amendment for this group is Vassalboro. Ms. Miller noted that representatives from the Town of Palermo have openly stated that they have no

interest in partnering with Winslow, and if Winslow is involved with any of the letters of intent of the other towns with which they will partner, Palermo will not be involved.

Dr. Morse noted that the letters of intent are just that – the intentions of what will be done. MSAD 47 filed three letters of intent, one by itself, one including MSAD 47, Waterville and Winslow, and one including China, MSAD 47, Vassalboro, Waterville, and Winslow. As Committee members go through the process, they need to review what makes sense, how they want to proceed, and then make recommendation to respective school committees. They are trying to meet state deadlines while not knowing definitely where they will be going. They want to insure that towns are covering all the bases.

Elaine Miller noted that School Union 52 is very effective and efficient, but under the new law, the school union will be dissolved. It is difficult for school unions because they have worked in partnership for many years. Under the new law, what was once a good partnership does not necessarily become a good RSU.

Jack Sutton, Chair of the Budget Committee for the Town of Belgrade, noted that the pro forma analysis of the financial impact on the municipalities before the savings by taking today's budget and allocating them based on the letters of intent will go a long way in sorting out what route this Committee will take.

Mr. Haley noted that whatever the Committee decides for a plan will have to be presented to and approved by the public, and their question is the budget.

Phil St. Onge noted that at the last meeting the Committee voted to have one vote per SAU and asked how that would be accomplished.

Dr. Morse noted that what was attempted last week was to level the playing field. What would have happened is that if voting were done by town/SAU, Messalonskee would have four votes, Waterville one vote, and Winslow one vote. Any vote that was taken, the Messalonskee vote would carry. By having one vote per SAU it insures that each SAU is acting as one and that the voting would be equitable for all parties.

Joan Phillips Sandy noted that when it really comes down to it, the key decision is who will be partnering with whom and where they are headed. This group does not have the authority to compel any arrangement; it has to be voluntary.

Gerald Saint Amand noted that last week Commissioner Gendron reinforced her intent. Once towns finalize and focus on one letter on intent, there is no mechanism in the law to change that.

Mr. Haley noted that there are no financial penalties if the Committee does not come up with a plan by December 1, 2007. The next fiscal year is not where the penalties will be assessed if the Committee does not agree regarding consolidation. It very well may be that the December 1, 2007 plan will state that the RPC is "in progress". There is that flexibility.

At this point, Mr. Haley asked for new members of the Committee to introduce themselves and state a couple concerns they each have.

Don Dufour, representative from the Waterville City Council, is concerned about the quality of education for children, as well as the financial impact on voters and taxpayers.

Joan Phillips Sandy, a member of the Waterville School Board, is concerned about the quality programming for children and the fiscal responsibility.

Jeffrey Frost, Board Member from MSAD 47, stated he is convinced it takes a community to raise a child and is concerned that if there is too much centralization, community involvement will be lost. Can this be done without interruption to employees, by putting money into the classrooms and by reducing costs?

Laughlin Titus, community representative from the Town of Vassalboro, stated that the Committee needs to insure that this makes sense financially.

Gerald Saint Amand, a member of the Winslow Town Council, stated that he hopes that further possibilities will be available for the students of Central Maine, and that there needs to be a better understanding of school choice.

Charlie Clark, a member of the China School Committee, wants to insure the educational enhancement and benefits for all schools in the Central Maine area and wants to review the financial picture.

Mr. Haley noted that the state has provided for up to $2,500 to RSUs, once letters of intent have been approved, to help pay for costs in order to move ahead. The public must be kept as informed as possible, and information must be made available for the public as soon as it is available. On each district's web site there is a regionalization link that will provide updated information.

A discussion ensued regarding the availability of the meeting minutes and at which point they will be posted on line for access to the public. It is very important that the information that is published is the best information available and that it is accurate.

The Committee reached a consensus that the minutes will be distributed to Committee members. Everyone will have 48 hours to report any errors or omissions. If there are none, then the minutes will be posted as a draft copy. If there are concerns, the minutes will not be posted, and amendments will occur at the next Committee meeting.

Elaine Miller addressed the Committee regarding the latest developments involving the Towns of China and Vassalboro. There has been much discussion surrounding the towns of the school union. There are concerns about a K-12 system being aligned. The one issue that continues to arise is how the school choice piece in the law impacts the K-12 systems. There were multiple

meetings with the union board and also the separate school committees. Members felt they wanted to stay together and wanted to be aligned with K-12 systems. The Town of China is being recruited to join School Union 132 (Chelsea, Jefferson, Whitefield) and School Union 133 (Palermo, Somerville, Windsor). China and Vassalboro representatives felt very strongly that in the law they need to be aligned or be able to contract with a public high school. They cannot align with a school that will not contract. They want to insure that all children in China and Vassalboro have the opportunity to attend public high school and give them more choices.

In the initial conversations Winslow included Waterville and Messalonskee in their consolidation discussions, but Waterville and Messalonskee had concerns over school choice, as did Winslow. There have been discussions this week regarding China and Vassalboro, and it was decided that China and Vassalboro representatives would be invited to come to the table to discuss consolidation.

Charlie Clark of China noted that the process has been long. The Board had a couple of options. Erskine has been considered the hometown high school for many years. There were issues, and there was the possibility that the School would be turned over to the Town of China. There are certain groups of people who feel they should not have to pay for the extras. China pays the state average, and that has always meant higher tuition rates. It is a higher burden because the state average includes all high schools. China pays an insured value, and that has been an issue of concern. Insured value is the state's way of equalizing state aid funds. When this law was passed China thought that it would simply turn the union into a RSU, with the possibility of becoming RSU 26, including Winslow, Vassalboro, China, and Palermo. Looking at that it could be seen that the savings would be from Palermo. The Town of Palermo is much like China and Vassalboro in some ways, with regard to economic background, lakefront properties and valuation.

The Town of China does not want to give up school choice. China representatives have opted not to partner with Augusta because of governance issues. They were told that they are very interested in the "Super 8", the six union towns that wanted to come together and include Vassalboro and China with them and wanted to try to come up with agreements with 16 towns. The concerns were very varied, but they wanted to align with two high schools. The RSU with Messalonskee, Waterville, and Winslow has three public high schools. We have some very good things in the Town of China that would benefit the group. For the last 12 years China has voted their budget by referendum. Budgets not only have to be sold to school boards and school committees, but they also have to be sold to the public.

Mr. Haley noted that the insured value factor pays for private school is a 10% surcharge. Even paying a state average, tuition is still at a higher rate. It costs China and Vassalboro more money to send students to Erskine. What the law says is that the additional cost would be borne by the municipality.

Dr. Morse reviewed with Committee members a PowerPoint presentation he presented at the last meeting on August 22, 2007 related to a Messalonskee, Waterville, and Winslow regional school unit, with the addition of the Towns of China and Vassalboro, giving a snapshot of the three school systems. The most important issue is the focus on the youngsters. What are the educattional opportunities that could exist for MSAD 47, Waterville, Winslow, China and Vassalboro?

The purpose of the Regionalization Planning Committee is to increase educational opportunities for Messalonskee Waterville, Winslow, China and Vassalboro students, as well as to create cost efficiencies, and to comply with the consolidation law in order to make recommendations to respective school boards. Can we create a better school system, perhaps the best public school system in the state, and can we do it cost effectively?

The Consolidation Law reduces Maine school systems from 290 to 80, with at least 2,500 students per Regional School Unit (RSU). The Consolidation Law was drafted due to declining student enrollment statewide, taxpayer revolt, and school administrative units being too small due to declining enrollment. Exceptions to the 2,500-student goal per RSU include offshore islands and Indian Schools, efficient high performing schools, and the "doughnut" hole. This would be a case where a school unit would be in the middle of surrounding school units that have consolidated but no one has partnered with the particular school unit. The Consolidation Law requires the formation of Regional Planning Committees to review pros and cons of possible partnerships and the creation of a regional agreement.

Key Dates of the Consolidation Law include:

- Summer of 2007 – formation of Regional Planning Committee
- August 31, 2007 – Notice of Intent Letter submitted to Commissioner
- December 1, 2007 – Regional Plan submitted to Department of Education
- January 15, 2008 – 1st voting opportunity, with operational date of July 1, 2008
- November 4, 2008 – 2nd voting opportunity, with operational date of July 1, 2009 - If there is lack of voter approval, penalties will be invoked.

Penalties for non-compliance include an additional 50% reduction in administrative support, less favorable treatment for school construction, reduction in Essential Programs and Services (EPS) subsidy, and ineligibility for transition adjustment.

There are currently three governance models for school districts: municipalities, school unions, and school administrative districts. A municipality is a department of the city, such as Waterville. A school union is comprised of several municipal school systems that share the cost of a central office, but each member is independent of the other members and has its own school board, such as School Union 52. Under a school administrative district, member communities share school governance through one school board, such as MSAD 47. Under the consolidation law, all these units will disappear and be replaced with Regional School Units, which are similar to school administrative districts. Every school system in the state will become a regional school union, even if the systems have no partners. A system may have one member, but it will be a RSU.

Dr. Morse reviewed details related to MSAD 47, Waterville, Winslow, China and Vassalboro. The Census 2006 estimated population for MSAD 47 is 14,478, Waterville is 15,639, China is 4,408, Vassalboro is 4,337 and Winslow is 7,944, for a total population of 46,806, with each community having a voting weight of 1 vote per thousand. If districts are viewed collectively, they are at about 1/3 of the population each. In relation to the merging of these five different administrative units, the balance is impressive.

The valuation as per 2006 data from the Maine Department of Education for MSAD 47 is $1,248,200,000, for Waterville is $632,500,000, for China is $285,100,000, for Vassalboro is $236,250,000, and for Winslow is $437,650,000, for a total valuation of $2,839,700,000. Collectively the towns look balanced, indicating that in terms of how each is viewed socio-economically, they are very similar. This is the data that the Department of Education uses as a foundation as to what districts receive for school funding. The valuation as per 2007 data from Maine Revenue Service is $1,484,600,000 for MSAD 47, $697,450,000 for Waterville, $323,450,000 for China, $259,650,000 for Vassalboro and $474,850,000 for Winslow, for a total valuation of $3,240,000,000.

The estimated debt as of June 30, 2009 is $11,981,809 for MSAD 47, $4,401,351 for Waterville, $385,330 for China, $1,267,784 for Vassalboro and $10,246,524 for Winslow. The way the law was written, state approved debt transfers into the RSU, meaning that debt will be paid for by all taxpayers in the RSU.

The 2007-08 combined school budgets total $73,840,451, with MSAD 47 at $25,401,211, Waterville at $19,367,633, China at $7,936,777, Vassalboro at $6,990,830 and Winslow at $14,144,000, serving a total student population of 7,117. Each district is operating efficiently. As a comparison, the Portland Public Schools has a budget of $75,000,000, serving a student population of approximately 7,000.

Student population (based on 2004-05 data) is 7,117, with 2,634 students in MSAD 47, 2,010 students in Waterville, 535 students in China, 513 students in Vassalboro and 1,425 students in Winslow. There are some small neighborhood schools in these towns. These schools are not in danger of closure in an RSU because they are all full. School closure is an unlikely event based on the population that is being served in those schools. The 2007-08 student population as per the ED 281 state report is 7,249 for all three districts. The ED 281 report uses the average of the April 1 and October 1 enrollments.

Dr. Morse reviewed a comparison of student drop out rates, graduation rates, average daily attendance, and college placement.

District	Drop-out Rate	Graduation Rate	Average Daily Attendance	College Placement (2005-06)
SAD 47	0.77%	92.76%	96.90%	84.00%
Waterville	1.50%	87.57%	94.15%	78.00%
Winslow	0.17%	88.65%	94.24%	80.00%

It was noted that all three high schools are accredited through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The socio-economic data related to free/reduced lunch status and special education counts was also reviewed. All three school systems have comprehensive programs to deal with the most needy youngsters, as well as gifted youngsters. All of the units, except for Waterville are in the 1/3% range in terms of free/reduced lunch and special education counts. Waterville has twice as many poor youngsters as Winslow. When high school completion, placement, and dropout rates are reviewed, Waterville is comparable to MSAD 47 and Winslow in each category. It may be speculated that because there are many poor students, there must be a lot of children with special needs. This is not true. Waterville has taken poverty out of the equation. .

Per pupil costs (based on 2004-05 data) for secondary education were also reviewed. The yearly cost to educate students in grades 9-12 is $7,729.32 in MSAD 47, $9,037.85 in Waterville, $8,040.97 in China, $8,125.73 in Vassalboro and $8,480.27 in Winslow. The state average is $8,951.75. The cost per student in MSAD 47 is lower than the other towns. This is because there are four towns in MSAD 47 that share expenses and have already "regionalized". Dr. Morse stated that the regionalization of school systems should not be anything to fear. At Messalonskee the education results are great, and the cost per student is decent.

Per pupil costs (based on 2004-05 data) for elementary education were also reviewed. The yearly cost to educate students in grades pre-k through 8 is $6,621.48 in MSAD 47, $6,764.78 in Waterville, $6,961.75 in China, $7,008.22 in Vassalboro and $7,912.86 in Winslow. The state average is $7,873.29. By and large almost all of the schools are operating below the state average.

Required elements of the regional plan to be submitted to the Department of Education include governance, disposition of real and personal school property, disposition of existing school indebtedness, lease purchase obligations, assignment of school personnel contracts, disposition of existing school funds, transition plan for the development of a first-year budget, and interim school policies. Dr. Morse noted that by combining the three school districts, the opportunity exists for enhancing educational opportunities for all students. Dr. Morse stated that from his perspective and from the perspectives of Superintendents Haley and Miller this consolidation effort will not involve the closure of high schools or the elimination of sports programs. The new vision for schools is providing the best education in the State of Maine. The Superintendents feel strongly that by combining efforts, they can enhance educational opportunities for all students.

Dr. Morse noted that the commitment that could come from China and Vassalboro is that these issues are on the table. If discussions go forward in the next couple of months, they might be willing to limit that choice and then have discussions regarding special needs programs and costs associated with tuition and assuming a share of debt. The result of inviting China and Vassalboro representatives to the table is to move forward together to see if a plan may be forged that is cost effective and benefits students.

Eric Haley noted that the state approved debt service by law has to be absorbed by the RSU. Who will benefit the most? The RSU could state that a school will be accepted and used, but that it doesn't want the debt service. According to the current law, the school system that was in the original district will assume that debt.

Mr. Haley stated that he, Superintendent Miller and Superintendent Morse have a vision of a school system that would be the envy of all. This would be a unique development tool to entice people to move to the Central Maine area because people would want their children in these schools. People will move here if they believe that there is a much better system in this area. There are resources to make this happen. There are opportunities right now to make some major changes in opportunities for students.

Mike Gosselin said that it is his understanding that Elaine Miller has resigned as of December 1. He asked if the Winslow Board would appoint a new superintendent. Superintendent Miller noted that if a superintendent were appointed, it would be a superintendent of schools for the union and, most likely, would be an interim position. There has been some discussion about the plan for a superintendent, but nothing has been decided.

Mr. Gosselin said that the Director of Technology for Waterville has resigned. He asked if there was intent to replace that position. Mr. Haley said that a discussion needed to occur with the Board of Directors prior to hiring.

Jack Sutton noted that the presentation was well and good, but until these numbers are translated with pro forma figures, there is a lot of doubt. The sooner that is done, the better all will know where the districts are headed financially. He asked that the figures be out on the table so that the core of the issues may be discussed. He noted that the Commissioner sent a template for systems to use and asked when a budget would be available.

Dr. Morse noted that those figures should be available when the Finance Subcommittee meets next Thursday, September 13. The superintendents want to insure that the data that will be presented is as accurate as possible.

Phil St. Onge asked what themed high schools are and what type of high school Winslow High School would be, and if there would be school choice for students.

Mr. Haley stated that there is much discussion about being able to offer specialty discipline areas to students.

Elaine Miller stated that discussion has occurred regarding thematic high schools, but the culture of communities should be maintained. We want to make sure we don't take opportunities away from students. The concept of a themed high school is similar to the concept of a vocational school, where students come together for vocational courses. In viewing themed high schools, if communities are part of an RSU instead of each high school in the RSU trying to offer everything, each high school in the RSU would have an expertise, such as math or science.

Dr. Morse noted that the U.S. Department of Education has identified 16 career pathways. Fundamentals of the high school curriculum being exactly the same in all three high schools would not change. What would change would be the electives in that high school. For example, if Winslow High School were a science high school, it is very possible that an engineering course would be offered there, with Messalonskee and Waterville students sitting in their host schools picking up that course through technology, or attending Winslow for that course. Themed high schools would open up pathways for students who have a particular interest. However, there needs to be assurance that the populations of the high schools are balanced.

Mr. Haley noted that the technology is available now through ATM. There are, however, scheduling issues with these three high schools that would need to be aligned.

Charley Clark asked if there is much that has been said about finances and debt service. In relation to consolidation discussions, China has very little debt. But that doesn't mean that there isn't any anticipated debt. It is anticipated that there would be debt service in China.

Eric Haley noted that by June 30, 2009, school districts need to be consolidated. There will be no more state approved debt service. He noted that Libby Mitchell sponsored a public hearing last night and asked if she would provide an update.

Senator Mitchell referred to a newspaper article that appeared today and noted that often newspaper articles are not clear. In reading the article, those were the questions asked, and those were the answers provided. She thought the Commissioner was extraordinarily professional. The Commissioner stood and took questions for almost two hours. If she could score one thing when this law was being discussed in the Legislature, what is happening around this table was the ideal vision for legislators. People coming together trying to create something better for children, building on the work that Waterville, Winslow, and MSAD 47 has done for five years. When there are huge differences in valuation that is a big issue for cost sharing for bringing towns together. It doesn't work so well with the current school funding formula when funding is based on valuation.

Another issue was school choice and who will take care of all of the special needs students. What are the financial barriers for dealing with young people from towns with choice and the fear that all students will not be accepted at private schools? This will now become the financial problems of all these RSUs. School districts will bring their debts and assets to the table and try to balance out those issues. We are very dedicated to trying to make this work. You are offering the best of all worlds, and we will do our part. Senator Mitchell noted that the leadership of this group has been noticed in Augusta.

Elaine Miller stated that there were a many questions. Winslow, China and Vassalboro representatives attended the meeting. A majority of the audience members were representing small towns and school choice towns. Joel Elliott, Sentinel reporter, revisited the question of how towns were going to work with their voters regarding school choice. There needs to be a way for the public high schools to also have some choice. Work needs to be done on the

law to make it more palatable with public high schools. There needs to be assurance that all students are provided with a quality education.

Joan Phillips Sandy asked if there is a likelihood the legislators will address the specific piece of who pays for school choice. Currently, the towns pick up the tuition. She also asked if there is a likelihood that the law will be addressed and altered so that perhaps families pay some portion of the tuition rather than towns.

Senator Mitchell stated that the law states that municipalities must pay the tuition. As the state struggles, she is learning that it is not just Vassalboro and China who are working in good faith, but this issue encompasses the entire state. How do we solve and recognize the extra burden and the cost?

Charley Clark noted that in Vassalboro the town pays the state average tuition plus 10% insured value. If parents wants their children to attend school elsewhere, then the family picks up the difference over and above the state average plus 10%. Senator Mitchell noted that under the new law, the municipality picks up the cost.

Mike Gosselin asked in terms of the school choice issue, if he is a resident of Oakland, and he has an 8th grade student, whether his family would have school choice.

Senator Mitchell noted that the law guarantees choice to those schools that had it. Eric Haley noted that within the RSU there is the possibility of school choice because it is would be the same school system.

Jim Morse noted that there are different kinds of required subcommittees that need to be formed. The handout lists the items the plans must cover. He asked that Committee members assign themselves to a Subcommittee.

Subcommittees were formed to carry forth work regarding these issues in relation to what needs to be completed to have a plan ready for the Commissioner for December 1. There must be a balance of community representation on each subcommittee.

Jim Morse stated that the last time the Committee met there were various questions and concerns from the communities, centering on two issues: educational planning and finances. The law requires four areas to address: transition, personnel, governance and finance. There is also a local option committee to discuss educational programming.

Dr. Morse reviewed the charges of each Subcommittee (from flip chart).

Charges of The Transition Subcommittee

1. Develop a protocol for the first RSU budget.
2. Educate community and public regarding the budget validation process.
3. other transition issues as identified

Elaine Miller will lead this Subcommittee.

Charges of the Personnel Subcommittee

1. contracts
2. salary comparisons
3. comparing collective bargaining agreements
4. review personnel issues
5. other personnel issues as identified

Eric Haley will lead this Subcommittee.

Charges of the Governance Subcommittee

1. SAUS involved
2. size, composition, coordination of public meetings
3. method of voting
4. Identify what happens if one SAU does not pass consolidation.
5. choice issue
6. what to do regarding local school committees
7. other governance issues as identified

Jim Morse will lead this Subcommittee.

Charges of the Finance Subcommittee

1. indebtedness
2. lease purchases
3. trust funds, reserve accounts
4. disposition of school funds
5. real and school property
6. facilities
7. estimate of savings (costs – transition)
8. other finance issues that develop

Connie Packard, Paula Pooler, and Gray Smith will lead this Subcommittee.

Charges of the Educational Programming Subcommittee

1. future search
2. schedules
3. graduation requirements
4. course offerings
5. other educational issues identified

Linda Laughlin, Nora Murray, and Peter Thiboutot will lead this Subcommittee.

Jim Morse asked Committee members to sign themselves on to the Committee on which they would like to work and begin the process of identifying what is required for information.

There are 13 required elements of the reorganization plan, and the Subcommittees identified the required elements and assigned individual Subcommittee work as follows.

Finance Subcommittee

5. The disposition of real and personal school property. Please describe.

6. The disposition of existing school indebtedness and lease-purchase obligations if the parties elect not to use the provisions of section 1506 regarding the disposition of debt obligations. Please describe.

8. The disposition of existing school funds and existing financial obligations, including undesignated fund balances, trust funds, reserve funds and other funds appropriated for school purposes. Please describe.

9. A transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year of the reorganized unit and interim personnel policies. Please describe.

12. An estimate of the cost savings to be achieved by the formation of a regional school unit and how these savings will be achieved. Please describe.

13. Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary. Please describe.

The Finance Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on September 13 at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Oakland Town Office.

Governance Subcommittee

1. The units of school administration to be included in the proposed reorganized regional school unit. Please describe.

2. The size, composition and apportionment of the governing body. Please describe.

3. The method of voting of the governing body. Please describe.

4. The composition, powers and duties of any local school committees to be created. Please describe.

11. An explanation of how units that approve the reorganization plan will proceed if one or more of the proposed members of the regional school unit fail to approve the plan. Please describe.

13. Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary. Please describe.

The Governance Subcommittee is tentatively scheduled to meet on September 13 at 5:00 p.m. at the Superintendent's Office of MSAD 47 in Oakland.

Personnel Subcommittee

7. The assignment of school personnel contracts, school collective bargaining agreements and other school contractual obligations. Please describe.

9. A transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year of the reorganized unit and interim personnel policies. Please describe.

13. Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary. Please describe.

Transition Committee

9. A transition plan that addresses the development of a budget for the first school year of the reorganized unit and interim personnel policies. Please describe.

10. Documentation of the public meeting or public meetings held to prepare or review the reorganization plan. Please describe.

13. Such other matters as the governing bodies of the school administrative units in existence on the effective date of this chapter may determine to be necessary. Please describe.

The Personnel and Transition Subcommittees will merge and are tentatively scheduled to meet on September 13 at 3:30 p.m. at the Superintendent's Office of the Waterville Public Schools.

Mr. Haley thanked members of the Committee for attending the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMITTEE
MINUTES
August 22, 2007

The meeting of the Consolidation Planning Committee was called to order by James C. Morse, Sr., Superintendent of Schools for Maine School Administrative District No. 47, at 5:00 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room at the Central Office at MSAD 47 in Oakland. Dr. Morse served as Chairperson of the meeting, noting that he, Eric Haley, Superintendent of Schools for the Waterville Public Schools, and Elaine Miller, Superintendent of Schools for School Union 52, would share that responsibility on a rotating basis.

Those in Attendance: Lawrence Brown, Lee Cabana, Robin Colby, Judy Coombs, Steven Dyer, Doug Eugley, Ralph Farnham, Jeffrey Frost, Monique Gilbert, Michael Gosselin, Eric Haley, Doug Harlow, Michael Heavener, Pamela Jabar Trinward, Dennis Keschl, Linda Laughlin, Elaine Miller, Robert Moreau, Nora Murray, Wendy Nivison, Constance Packard, Paula Pooler, Gary Smith, Jack Sutton, Peter Thiboutot, Michael Thurston and Michael Tracy

Dr. Morse asked members of the Committee to introduce themselves and state a question they each would like answered regarding the consolidation process.

Dennis Keschl, Belgrade Town Manager – What is the fiscal impact that the consolidation process will have on the Town of Belgrade?

Jack Sutton, Chair of the Budget Committee, town of Belgrade – Mr. Sutton stated he is very interested in the process by which the potential financial impacts on each one of the potential member communities is going to be.

Doug Eugley, Chair of the Sidney Board of Selectpersons – Mr. Eugley would like to see what the numbers look like.

Larry Brown, MSAD 47 Board Member representing the Town of Rome – Mr. Brown stated that the Town of Rome is a brand new member of the MSAD 47 District. How does this impact education for students?

Bob Moreau, Member, Rome Board of Selectpersons – What will the impact be on tax base and valuations?

Doug Harlow, Sentinel Correspondent – Mr. Harlow indicated he had too many questions.

Mike Thurston, President of the Winslow Education Association – If districts submit two or more letters of intent, who, ultimately, will make the final decisions in these cases?

Robin Colby, President of the Messalonskee District Education Association – How will consolidation impact teachers and students?

Judy Coombs, President of the Waterville Teachers' Association – Will we still be able to provide equitable quality education to our students? Where are the savings?

Mike Heavener, Winslow Town Manager – Will consolidation increase or enhance the educational opportunities for our students?

Mike Tracy, MSAD 47 Board member representing the Town of Oakland and Oakland Police Chief – How will consolidation impact the students?

Steve Dyer, Oakland Town Manager – Where are the savings? Is there the political will and wherewithal in Central Maine to make this happen? Is there the will of the people to make this happen?

Ralph Farnham, Member of the Oakland Town Council – What is the financial impact for Oakland?

Connie Packard, Business Manager, MSAD 47 – Ms. Packard is looking for the savings but is also concerned about preserving the integrity, quality and service for the students, teachers and the staff.

Wendy Nivison, Winslow School Committee Member – What are the fiscal outcomes for the towns, and can we maintain quality of education?

Nora Murray, Director of Curriculum, School Union 52 – What's going to happen with school choice and implications for Winslow where they have not been involved in the consolidation process with the towns of Vassalboro and China? What are the implications for the towns that don't choose to approve of a plan that goes forward?

Gary Smith, Director of Business, School Union 52 – We have three great educational systems. How do we bring three systems like this together and maintain the controls that exist in those systems while keeping efficiencies?

Pam Trinward, Member, Waterville School Board – How can we possibly work this out and bring back to the Legislature where the real issues are?

Lee Cabana, Chair of the Waterville School Board – What are the advantages the students in these communities will receive? Where will the savings be?

Mike Gosselin, Chair, MSAD 47 Board of Directors – Mid-Maine Technical Center has students from four communities represented by the people here. That is a model of cooperation among the communities.

Linda Laughlin, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, MSAD 47 – Ms. Laughlin stated she is looking forward to maintaining and improving programming for our students.

Peter Thiboutot, Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Waterville Public Schools – How do we enhance education for all students?

Paula Pooler, Director of Finance, Waterville Public Schools – Ms. Pooler stated she is concerned about maintaining integrity and quality of programming for students.

Elaine Miller, Superintendent of Schools, School Union 52 – How do we join together and maintain that culture, and how do we make sure that we maintain schools, sports teams and school choice?

Eric Haley, Superintendent of Schools, Waterville Public Schools – We have been at this for a number of years. There are two goals for any initiative that we take on: (1) program enhancement, and (2) financial savings and efficiencies.

Dr. Morse reviewed with Committee members the agenda for the evening, which included introductions of Committee members, a review of ground rules, a PowerPoint presentation with baseline data about the three school systems, a brainstorming activity, formation of subcommittees, and establishing future meeting dates. Dr. Morse stated that in the end the job of Committee members is to make a recommendation to their respective school boards. From that recommendation those boards will make a decision as to whether to merge or not. This process ends with a decision by December 1, 2007.

Dr. Morse reviewed with Committee members the make-up of the Consolidation Planning Committee. Representation on the Committee is as follows: three teachers' association presidents, six town/city managers/1st selectmen, six school board members, six community members and three superintendents. Meetings will be held on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the cafeteria at Messalonskee Middle School in Oakland. All meetings will be open to the public.

Dr. Morse reviewed with Committee members the ground rules.

- Each School Administrative Unit (SAU) will appoint a spokesperson for voting.
- There will be one vote per SAU.
- There will be 20 minutes reserved at the beginning of each session for public comments, with a two-minute limit per person.
- Meetings will occur on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month.
- Superintendents of the three schools systems involved will chair the Committee on a rotating basis.

Regarding delegations, Dr. Morse noted that if members of the communities want to address the Planning Committee they would have the opportunity to do so. There will be up to 20 minutes reserved at the beginning of each meeting for anyone in the audience who would like to address the Planning Committee, with a two-minute limit for each individual.

Pam Trinward suggested that at some point there should be an opportunity for citizens to respond to the work of the Committee.

Dennis Keschl suggested that the Committee offer an email address where people can email questions to the Committee.

Dr. Morse noted that at the next meeting the minutes will be adopted. Once adopted, they will be posted on the Web page. The PowerPoint presentation will be posted on the Web page as well.

Eric Haley asked how the group would feel about having a public session within each individual community. He suggested having a disclaimer on the Web page that states that people may send in their comments and questions, but won't necessarily receive an individual response. Questions will be addressed in a global fashion.

Meetings are scheduled for September 6, September 20, October 4, October 18, November 1, and November 15.

Gary Smith asked if respective school committees must approve plans before they are submitted to the Department of Education. Eric Haley noted that school districts must file a plan by December 1, 2007. There are no penalties that districts will receive prior to consolidation on July 1, 2009.

Jack Sutton asked where, when and how in this process the pro forma financials for each of the municipalities will be developed. Dr. Morse noted that that will be completed by the next meeting on September 6, 2007.

Dennis Keschl asked if there has to be a referendum by January 15. Eric Haley replied only if districts want to consolidate by July 1, 2008.

Hobart Pierce asked where the towns of China and Vassalboro fit in the plan.

Dr. Morse noted that the towns of China and Vassalboro are not represented at the table because the law allows China and Vassalboro to maintain school choice. If districts accept the two towns that have school choice, they would have to enroll any child who the other high schools choose not to enroll. For example, Erskine does not serve students with extreme special needs, behavioral problems or attendance issues. Under this law, if China and Vassalboro were part of the new regional school unit, the three high schools would have to enroll any students that Erskine does not enroll. Winslow would end up with a disproportionate number of special needs students. If China and Vassalboro were part of this particular discussion, there would have no choice.

Elaine Miller noted that Vassalboro voted to submit two letters of intent to the State, one including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, Palermo, and Waterville, and a second including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, and Palermo. China also voted to submit two letters of intent, one including China, Vassalboro, Winslow, Palermo, and Waterville, and a second including China, Vassalboro, Winslow, and Palermo. Winslow also submitted two letters of intent, one including

Winslow, Waterville, and MSAD 47, and a second including Winslow, China, Vassalboro, and Palermo. Ms. Miller noted that Palermo chose not to join any of those towns.

Dr. Morse noted that the law and implications of the law do protect school choice but do not necessarily favor towns like Winslow. Currently Winslow acts as Waterville and Messalonskee in that they may choose to enroll or not enroll students. If they consolidated only with Winslow, they will be forced to take every single student, and that is a huge concern for the public high schools. Dr. Morse noted that currently the three districts enroll tuition students, but they have the option of not enrolling them.

Mike Gosselin asked if communities might contract with high schools. Dr. Morse noted that MSAD 47, Waterville, and Winslow would continue to accept students on a tuition basis.

Elaine Miller noted that towns that have school choice must identify in their plans how they will educate students in grades K-12, and how to provide education for those students who can't get in or get dropped.

Dr. Morse reviewed with Committee members a PowerPoint presentation dated August 22, 2007 related to a Messalonskee, Waterville, and Winslow regional school unit, giving a snapshot of the three school systems. The Districts have been working on a relationship with Waterville, Winslow, and Messalonskee. All want to do more for students than under the Kennebec Alliance in terms of buying paper cheaper and copier contracts. They are looking for professional development for their teaching staffs. There are two issues: educational opportunity and maintaining and improving what is currently in place and doing it more cost effectively.

The purpose of the Regionalization Planning Committee is to increase educational opportunities for Messalonskee Waterville, and Winslow students, as well as to create cost efficiencies, and to comply with the consolidation law in order to make recommendations to respective school boards.

The Consolidation Law was embedded in the state budget. The law reduces Maine school systems from 290 to 80, with at least 2,500 students per Regional School Unit (RSU). The Consolidation Law was drafted due to declining student enrollment statewide, taxpayer revolt, and school administrative units being too small due to declining enrollment. Exceptions to the 2,500 student goal per RSU include off-shore islands and Indian Schools, efficient high performing schools, and the "doughnut" hole. This would be a case where a school unit would be in the middle of surrounding school units that have consolidated but no one has partnered with the particular school unit. The Consolidation Law requires the formation of Regional Planning Committees to review pros and cons of possible partnerships and the creation of a regional agreement.

Key Dates of the Consolidation Law include:

- Summer of 2007 – formation of Regional Planning Committee
- August 31, 2007 – Notice of Intent Letter submitted to Commissioner
- December 1, 2007 – Regional Plan submitted to Department of Education
- January 15, 2008 – 1st voting opportunity, with operational date of July 1, 2008
- November 4, 2008 – 2nd voting opportunity, with operational date of July 1, 2009 - If there is lack of voter approval, penalties will be invoked.

Penalties for non-compliance include an additional 50% reduction in administrative support, less favorable treatment for school construction, reduction in Essential Programs and Services (EPS) subsidy, and ineligibility for transition adjustment.

There are currently three governance models for school districts: municipalities, school unions, and school administrative districts. A municipality is a department of the city, such as Waterville. A school union is comprised of several municipal school systems that share the cost of a central office, but each member is independent of the other members and has its own school board, such as School Union 52. Under a school administrative district, member communities share school governance through one school board, such as MSAD 47. Under the consolidation law, all these units will disappear and be replaced with Regional School Units, which are similar to school administrative districts.

Dr. Morse reviewed details related to MSAD 47, Waterville, and Winslow. The Census 2006 estimated population for MSAD 47 is 14,478, Waterville is 15,639, and Winslow is 7,944, for a total population of 38,061, with each community having a voting weight of 1 vote per thousand.

The valuation as per 2006 data from the Maine Department of Education for MSAD 47 is $1,248,200,000, for Waterville is $632,500,000, and for Winslow is $437,650,000, for a total valuation of $2,318,350,000. This is the data that the Department of Education uses as a foundation as to what districts receive for school funding. The valuation as per 2007 data from Maine Revenue Service is $1,484,600,000 for MSAD 47, $697,450,000 for Waterville, and $474,850,000 for Winslow, for a total valuation of $2,656,900,000.

Eric Haley noted that there are two items that affect state funding: student count and state valuation. If valuation increases and student count decreases, it is detrimental to school districts, as school funding is based on these two items. This is what is happening in MSAD 47, Waterville, and Winslow. It will be difficult to sustain the quality of programming in schools with less funding.

The estimated debt as of June 30, 2009 is $11,981,809 for MSAD 47, $4,401,351 for Waterville, and $10,246,524 for Winslow. The possibility exists that both state and local debt will have to be assumed, but it is a negotiable item.

The 2007-08 combined school budgets total $58,912,844, with MSAD 47 at $25,401,211, Waterville at $19,367,633, and Winslow at $14,144,000, serving a total student population of

approximately 6,000. Each district is operating efficiently. As a comparison, the Portland Public Schools has a budget of $75,000,000, serving a student population of approximately 7,000.

Student population (based on 2004-05 data) is 6,069, with 2,634 students in MSAD 47, 2,010 students in Waterville, and 1,425 students in Winslow. In MSAD 47 there have been decreases in enrollment at both the Middle School and High School. All schools in Waterville are at capacity. Winslow schools are not to capacity, and Winslow High School has approximately 100 students attending on a tuition basis. The 2007-08 student population as per the ED 281 state report is 5,775 for all three districts. The ED 281 report uses the average of the April 1 and October 1 enrollment.

Dr. Morse reviewed a comparison of student drop out rates, graduation rates, average daily attendance, and college placement.

District	Drop-out Rate	Graduation Rate	Average Daily Attendance	College Placement (2005-06)
SAD 47	0.77%	92.76%	96.90%	84.00%
Waterville	1.50%	87.57%	94.15%	78.00%
Winslow	0.17%	88.65%	94.24%	80.00%

It was noted that all three high schools are accredited through the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

The socio-economic data related to free/reduced lunch status and special education counts was also reviewed. All three school systems have comprehensive programs to deal with the most needy youngsters, as well as gifted youngsters.

Per pupil costs (based on 2004-05 data) for secondary education were also reviewed. The yearly cost to educate students in grades 9-12 is $7,729.32 in MSAD 47, $9,037.85 in Waterville, and $8,480.27 in Winslow. The state average is $8,230.

In MSAD 47 50% of the teachers have master's degrees, and 5% have advanced degrees; in Waterville 42% of the teachers have master's degrees, and 9% have advanced degrees; and in Winslow 29% of the teachers have master's degrees, and 2% have advanced degrees. In the State as a whole 36% of teachers have a master's degrees, and 2% have advanced degrees.

Required elements of the regional plan to be submitted to the Department of Education include governance, disposition of real and personal school property, disposition of existing school indebtedness, lease purchase obligations, assignment of school personnel contracts, disposition of existing school funds, transition plan for the development of a first-year budget, and interim school policies. Dr. Morse noted that by combining the three school districts, the opportunity exists for enhancing educational opportunities for all students.

Eric Haley noted that Robin Colby, a Latin teacher, will be teaching this year at both Messalonskee High School and Waterville High School. The Latin program was eliminated at Winslow High School, but there are slots in Waterville for Winslow students who want to take Latin. This is an example of collaboration that is already occurring among the three districts.

Pam Trinward asked what kind of support districts would receive from the Department of Education. Dr. Morse noted that the superintendents feel that the work can be completed without help from the State, and that the school systems are similar in nature and comfortable with each other. At this point nothing has been requested from the State.

Ms. Trinward asked if the Committee could be provided with a model of what the districts would look like if they were one school system. What will the EPS model look like, and how will the districts be affected? Dr. Morse noted that the State will use state subsidy and budgets and will merge into "what if" scenarios.

Mike Gosselin noted that while districts are going forward with consolidation, all other day-to-day issues are going on as well. Top-level managers are at the disposal of the Committee. Dr. Morse noted that the Committee may apply for $2,500 to help with costs upon approval of a plan.

At this point Committee members formed subgroups to generate topics and ideas. Each group listed items and topics to address, which will be broken down into the required elements of the plan.

Waterville representatives had the following concerns.

- EPS Funding – How will it affect the local system and Waterville community? How will it be disbursed by the RSU? Will it be prorated?
- 281 – Individual vs. RSU
- Combined Contractual Costs – What will it look like, and how much will it cost?
- Merging of Contracts
- Manner in which staff reductions are handled

Winslow representatives had the following concerns.

- Management of Support Services (transportation, facilities, food service)
- Understanding Financial Impact
- Local Only Debt
- School Choice and Tuition
- RSU Equitable Programs and Services Across Schools
- Student Teacher Ratios
- Federal Funding Impact (NCLB)
- Governance and Voting
- Contracts/ Bargaining
- Policies

MSAD 47 representatives had the following concerns.

- Why do we want to join? What are incentives to join and what are incentives not to join?
- How do we offer the same opportunities to all elementary students? How do we insure equity and opportunity?
- Debt
- Salary Differentials
- Transportation Issues
- Facilities – What are the needs, and who will pay?
- Savings – Where are the opportunities? Priorities? Additional costs?
- EPS – How do we control EPS, and how do we insure we understand it?
- Public Education – Cost, Accurate Numbers, LD1 Limitations
- Role of Municipalities in Governance, Taxes, Warrants
- Small School Culture
- Educational Vision – themed high schools (career focused), reduce redundancy
- Saving money is important, but not at the expense of students' education.
- Maintain integrity of school systems. Analyze staffing needs across the board. Staff stretched too thin.
- Look at class sizes, curriculum, literacy, technology, arts, foreign languages.
- What does governance look like?
- Renegotiation of all Contracts and Unionization of Non-union Employees
- Policies and Procedures – What are transitional policies?
- Bottom Line for Member Communities
- Enrollment Projections

Dr. Morse reviewed the "big" issues with Committee members.

- Financial Concerns – local-only debt, LD 1
- Personnel Issues – support contracts, human resource issues
- Student Issues – equity in education
- Governance Issues – policies, role of municipalities
- Facilities

Subcommittees will be formed to carry forth work regarding these issues in relation to what needs to be completed to have a plan ready for the Commissioner for December 1. Subcommittees will be formed by sign-up. There will be a balance of community representation on each subcommittee.

Elaine Miller noted that this meeting was a good start, with good brainstorming. It points out similarities in questions and what information is still needed.

Dennis Keschl asked what would happen if the plan does not go forward as envisioned. Where will communities be on December 1? Dr. Morse noted that if the plan doesn't come together as the districts had hoped, work would continue. Have we put due diligence into this effort, and are

we working towards the closure? There are financial penalties for non-compliance. As much work needs to be completed as possible.

Mr. Keschl asked what would happen if we come together in due diligence but cannot come to agreement and efforts fail. Dr. Morse noted that under the current statute, if these discussions fall apart, MSAD 47 has over 2,500 students, so there is no penalty. Waterville and Winslow, with fewer than 2,500 students would face sanctions.

Dr. Morse thanked members of the Committee for attending the meeting. He noted that this is some of the most exciting work in terms of school governance that people have seen since the Sinclair Act of 1957. He appreciates those people who attended. The Superintendents thanked all who attended.

The meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.