

February 6, 2007

**MSAD 51 School Board Update: School Consolidation and District Budget**

Dear MSAD 51 Community:

Our next school board meeting will be held at the Greely Middle School on Monday, February 12<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. I invite you to attend.

**Legislative School Consolidation Proposals:** The Maine State Legislature is considering a range of initiatives to restructure the delivery of K-12 education including plans to regionalize administrative services and mandatory consolidation of school systems. On Monday, February 5, the Joint Standing Committees on Education and Appropriations held an all-day hearing in Augusta on the various initiatives with the goal of developing legislation to be reported out of committee in March. The Chair of the Falmouth School Board and I provided testimony on behalf of the five school systems comprising the Casco Bay Education Alliance Regional Study Group: Falmouth, Freeport, MSAD 51, MSAD 62 (Pownal) and Yarmouth. Please contact me if you would like a copy of our testimony.

Our local representatives, Sen. Karl Turner and Rep. Meredith Burgess, who serve respectively on the Appropriations and Education Joint Standing Committees, will be attending our February 12<sup>th</sup> board meeting. This will give members of our communities and the School Board an opportunity to ask questions and give feedback on the various plans for consolidation and regionalization presented to the Education and Appropriations Committees. If you are interested in the summary of bills, please link to: [http://www.maine.gov/legis/schreg\\_feb05/homepage.htm](http://www.maine.gov/legis/schreg_feb05/homepage.htm). I understand this site will be routinely updated with new information as it becomes available.

**Efficiency Grant from the Department of Education:** In regards to our continued effort to improve efficiency and student achievement, we are pleased to announce that MSAD 51, as part of the Casco Bay Education Alliance Regional Study Group together with Falmouth, Freeport, MSAD 62 (Pownal) and Yarmouth, was recently awarded a \$25,000 grant from the Maine Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Educational Services. The grant supports our current work with The New England School Development Council (NESDEC) to determine what collaborative efforts will give us the greatest opportunities to improve efficiency and what specific changes to our current organizational structures would derive the greatest cost savings and promote academic excellence. We hope to have information from NESDEC by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

**School District Budget:** The MSAD 51 School Board began the process of planning for next year's budget. On January 18<sup>th</sup>, the Board held a budget workshop. The Finance Committee provided a framework to consider the development of priorities and an operating budget target. The identified budget priorities are to maintain current programming, allowing for reallocations for enrollment shifts and increased operational costs, fund unanticipated operating costs since the adoption of the current year's budget, replenish professional development eliminated during the last three budget cycles, and increase the contingency fund commensurate with recommended guidelines. The budget target will be based upon balancing expenses with a variety of revenue sources. Once the Board establishes priorities and an operating budget target (in addition to the District's obligation for debt service), the Board will ask the Administration to come forward with a recommended budget consistent with District goals.

**Budget Calendar:** The Board has adopted the following calendar to consider the District's budget for next year.

- Monday, February 12 – Greely Middle School, 7:00p.m.  
Board Approval of Budget Target
- Monday, March 19 – Greely Middle School, 7:00p.m.  
Superintendent Presents Proposed Budget
- Wednesday, April 4 – Cumberland Town Hall, 7:00p.m.  
Board Approval of Budget for Public Hearing
- Tuesday, April 10 – Cumberland Town Hall, 7:00p.m.  
Public Hearing on Proposed Budget
- Tuesday, April 24 – Cumberland Town Hall, 7:00p.m.  
Board Approval of Budget to forward to District Budget Vote
- Thursday, May 17 – Greely High School, 7:00p.m.  
District Budget Vote

As always, I encourage your attendance at our board meetings and I also welcome your questions and comments.

Betts Gorsky  
MSAD 51 Board Chair