

OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF FALMOUTH, CUMBERLAND AND NORTH YARMOUTH

FROM THE MSAD #51/FALMOUTH REGIONAL SCHOOL REORGANIZATION PLANNING COMMITTEE

We are writing as members of the SAD #51/Falmouth Regional School Reorganization Planning Committee. Our membership includes 3 voting members from Cumberland, 3 voting members from North Yarmouth, and 4 voting members from Falmouth, as well as one Cumberland alternate and the Superintendents of the MSAD #51 and Falmouth school districts. (Yarmouth is currently considering, but has not yet decided, whether to join this reorganization unit.)

The Committee is charged by State statute with drafting a proposed school administration consolidation plan. The statute sets a deadline of December 1, 2007 for submitting the plan to the State Department of Education, and a preferred deadline of January, 2008 for submitting the plan to a referendum vote by the citizens of the member municipalities.

The plan will propose to dissolve the current MSAD #51 and Falmouth school districts and to create a new consolidated Regional School Unit ("RSU"). The reorganization plan will propose to consolidate only the administration of the MSAD #51 and Falmouth school districts: it will not include any proposal to close a school.

We want to share with our communities our agreed-upon guiding principles, and a proposed public input process.

Our guiding principles are:

1. To have a reorganization planning process that is transparent, inclusive, timely and decisive;
2. To draft a plan that controls costs and enhances educational program quality, and conversely, does no harm to the educational program for any of the students in the new RSU;
3. To draft a plan that is thoughtful and equitable and will stand the test of time; and,
4. To propose an RSU Board that ensures a voice for each municipality, and also ensures that the majority of the RSU Board represent all RSU citizens.

We will be making regular "work-in-progress" reports to our respective municipalities at their town council or selectmen meetings, as well as to our respective school boards. Superintendents Hasson and Entwistle propose to post our minutes and drafts on their school websites at www.msad51.org and www.falmouthschools.org (and Falmouth's website will include an opportunity for

readers' on-line comments). We will request of our Town Managers that this information also be posted on the Town websites. We will distribute an informational poster to the schools, town halls and libraries. In October or November, the Committee's municipal representatives will hold a municipal public hearing in each of their respective towns. The Committee as an entity, will also hold a general public hearing to hear from the citizens of all the member municipalities.

There is a great deal of work to do in the next two months, in order to submit a proposed plan by the statutorily required deadline of December 1. Thank you, therefore, for your early attention and involvement in this important work.

- Beppie Cerf (Falmouth School Board Chair and Chair of the School Reorganization Committee)
- Kathy Hillman Reed (Falmouth School Board Vice-Chair)
- Joe Wroblewski (Falmouth Town Councilor)
- George Entwistle (Superintendent, Falmouth School District)
- Peggy McGehee (Falmouth Citizen Representative)
- David Perkins (MSAD #51 School Board Vice-Chair and Vice-Chair of the School Reorganization Committee)
- Anne Graham (North Yarmouth Town Selectmen)
- Shirley Storey-King (Cumberland Town Council)
- George Tuner (Cumberland Town Council; Alternate Committee Member)
- Susan Campbell (MSAD #51 School Board and Vice-Chair of the School Reorganization Committee)
- Mark Fortin (Cumberland Citizen Representative)
- Peter K. Bingham (MSAD #51 School Board Chair)
- Lincoln Merrill (North Yarmouth Citizen Representative)
- Bob Hasson (Superintendent, MSAD #51 School District)