

Local Schools, Regional Support Initiative: *Regional Centers for Educational Excellence*

The Local Schools, Regional Support (LSRS) Initiative shifts resources from administration to the classroom to achieve excellence in education for all Maine students.

LSRS will:

- **Keep local schools local, boost classroom resources and improve student outcomes**
- **Consolidate educational administration to reduce costs and gain efficiencies**
- **Reinvest statewide savings in teachers and students to ensure all students are ready for College, Career, and Citizenship**

Benefits

- **A full-time principal for every school; increased teacher salaries**
 - 151 schools currently without a full-time principal would get one
 - \$3.6 million investment in teacher salaries over the next 2 years
- **\$2,000 scholarships* to encourage college access for all students**
 - More than 15,000 students over the next 4 years
- **Expansion of the laptop program to Grades 7 through 12**
 - 72,000 additional computers for Grades 9 through 12, and more than 100,000 laptops for Grades 7 through 12
- **Increased professional development for all teachers**
 - New teacher learning communities, with \$20 million in teacher development
- **Local savings that go directly to property tax relief**
 - \$170 million in local savings for property tax relief by achieving 55% state aid to local education.

*Estimated average scholarship: one-half tuition reimbursement at community college rates for two years for students who attend a public post-secondary school in Maine and are eligible for Pell grants

Administrative savings

Savings in the first three years after implementation achieved through the LSRS Initiative

	STATE /	LOCAL	TOTAL
System Administration	\$56 million	\$46 million	\$102 million
Administrative efficiencies in Transportation, Special Education and Facilities & Maintenance	\$76 million	\$63 million	\$139 million
TOTAL	\$132 million	\$109 million	\$241 million

How it works

- Close no schools.
- Maine has 152 district administrations and nearly twice that many districts. The Local Schools, Regional Support Initiative merges those into 26 Regional Centers, each with one superintendent and one regional school board supporting schools in several cities and towns. The boards will be governed by representatives from the communities they serve, guaranteeing every parent, teacher and community member a voice in how their schools are governed.
- Streamline purchasing, back office functions, curriculum coordination, transportation, and other administrative duties at existing school districts into 26 Regional Centers, based on the geography of the existing Career Technical Centers. These were designed for easy commutability.
- Determine the organizational structure that works best for each region through regional decision-making by a regional school board. Each superintendent will report to a regional board with representatives from member communities.
- Support principals with a local advisory council that includes parents and community members. Retain existing school boards during a transition period to work with schools on creating an advisory structure to strengthen community participation in local schools.

Why Local Schools, Regional Support?

The State of Maine spends more per student than the national average, while paying the lowest teacher salaries in New England. Meanwhile, student achievement, while above national averages, can be even better.

Around the state, we have seen examples of school districts working together to find efficiencies – sharing a specialist, making joint supply purchases to save money, jointly hiring a superintendent.

The LSRS Initiative does that on a much larger scale by creating substantial regional efficiencies, and save approximately \$250 million in the first three years of implementation, while focusing on strengthening local leadership of local schools.

The LSRS Initiative centralizes administration, but does not consolidate schools. Education funding continues under the same formula, only with a smaller amount for administration, and larger amounts for various instructional services, including increased teacher salaries to attract the best teachers, laptops in grades 7 through 12, and significant college tuition scholarships for many students.

Transitioning to this new model will require us to move beyond our traditional view of focusing on town by town school governance and instead recognize that we all have a responsibility to provide excellence in education for all children in our state and provide them the best opportunities and classroom experiences. Together we can achieve equity of opportunity in every school in every classroom for every student.

In Support of Consolidating Administration

“ Maine cannot afford the educational infrastructure currently in place... There is an enormous cost to taxpayers that drains resources from the classrooms where they could positively impact student learning. The structures simply must change if we are to move forward.”

- The Learning State: Maine Schooling for the 21st Century, Select Panel on Revisioning Education in Maine, September 2006

“The state’s huge K-12 system also requires scrutiny and urgent reengineering as school enrollment declines. One of the most expensive in the country and the largest single outlay in the state-local budget, Maine’s system imposes heavy costs on taxpayers, not just because of its small schools and small classes but also because of its cumbersome structure and complex, highly fragmented governance systems.”

- Charting Maine’s Future, Brookings Institution report, October 2006

“The design, organization and delivery of educational services is a complex process with a long history in Maine... The state’s increased responsibility for financing public schools, and its new system for doing so, demands more effective structures for guiding education at the state level, for governing schools at the local level, and for increasing cooperation at all levels.

- Case for Cooperation, Maine Children’s Alliance, August 2006

“Clearly, we must address these challenges if we are to insure that all our children receive a quality K-12 education. We must find more efficient ways to operate our public school system to ensure equity of education opportunities for all of Maine’s youth.”

- Task Force on Increasing Efficiency and Equity in the Use of K-12 Resources, January 2004

“The committee believes that work on the concept of regionalization of school governance has the potential to produce better results in student learning given the limited financial and personnel resources available.”

- A Regional Community Teaching and Learning Together, State Board of Education, January 1997

“Let’s start with K-12 in Maine. Consensus has developed – and this is very unusual – that we spend too much on administration.”

- George Smith, columnist, Kennebec Journal, November 29, 2006

“Maine cherishes its tradition of local control but the cost of that tradition and the lack of progress under the current system is forcing change.”

- Editorial, Bangor Daily News, September 2, 2006

“The multiplication of school district administrations requires that tax dollars are spent on unnecessary duplication, sucking up money that might otherwise be spent on students.

- Editorial, Maine Sunday Telegram, August 13, 2006

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