

The Bar Harbor Teachers' Association, representing the teachers at Conners-Emerson School in Bar Harbor, Maine, makes the following observations:

The Maine public school system has evolved to be a solid institution consisting of many excellent schools.

The schools in Maine depend on the support of local communities, and in turn, the communities in Maine depend on local schools.

Through Maine public teachers' commitment, this state is able to provide high quality education to its students at costs that are in line with other states in its region and in the United States.

The public school teachers in Maine have embraced the challenges of modern education, and Maine's schools are on the forefront in the nation in preparing students for post-secondary education and careers.

Maine's public schools' excellence and the schools' close connection with their communities enhances the business atmosphere in the State of Maine by properly preparing students and by providing attractive communities in which educated, productive families thrive.

The teachers in the State of Maine have reason to be proud of the work that they are doing, both individually and collectively.

The Bar Harbor Teachers' Association takes the following position against degradation of our educational system through mandatory consolidation and spending limits.

If the conditions in Maine's schools are not conducive to student learning, the quality of life in our schools, our communities, and our state will decline.

The effectiveness of our teachers will be compromised if our educational leaders - our superintendents and their support - become overburdened and geographically removed.

An additional level of bureaucracy to manage regional school systems would compete for educational funds.

The true savings from mandatory consolidation will come directly from lower school budgets as a result of:

- (1) spending limits mandated by the state (like the EPS limit that is being proposed; and
- (2) as communities become distanced and estranged from the governance of their schools, the communities' ability and inclination to invest time and money in their schools will decline.

The proposals emerging from Augusta will result in fewer teachers and larger classes. While larger classes may have been acceptable fifty years ago, the demands of modern education, with mainstreaming, state and federal standards, and sophisticated demands on graduates, make larger classes unacceptable.

The proposals emerging from Augusta will result in less diversity in course offerings, and fewer co-curricular activities like jazz band and sports teams.

The Bar Harbor Teachers' Association would endorse consolidation and spending limits if they achieved savings through efficiencies that do not compromise the education of the students in the State of Maine.

The Bar Harbor Teachers' Association recognizes the importance of reducing spending while balancing the needs of education with tax relief. As teachers and taxpayers, we are flexible and want to be part of the solution. We recognize that consolidation of school administrations and services are merited in specific circumstances.

We, however, oppose broad-sweeping mandatory consolidation and spending limits that will place too great a burden on our schools.

The public education system in the State of Maine is a solid asset that enriches its citizens, its businesses, its communities, and the state as a whole. It would be foolhardy to jeopardize this state's public school system with senseless mandatory consolidation and crushing spending limits. The economic, societal, and cultural future of our State lies in the education we impart to our children and in the communities that our schools uphold.

We urge all individuals and organizations to speak out against mandatory consolidation and spending limits, and encourage any and all citizens of the State of Maine to join us in publicly adopting this Statement.

Dated: April 11, 2007 Bar Harbor Teachers' Association

by

Amanda Dyer, its President

Kimberly Smallidge, its Treasurer

Robert Chaplin, its Vice President

Roxie Brechlin, its Secretary