

## PUBLIC LETTER TO COMMUNITY REGARDING POSSIBLE SCHOOL CLOSURE

October 28, 2024

Without question, a school is, first and foremost, a community of people. School sites provide the indoor and outdoor spaces within which these communities gather. School buildings and classrooms are a critical part of the teaching-learning experience. When communities age, or when birth rates fall, it may become increasingly costly to operate schools efficiently with fewer children. As a result, districts are sometimes fiscally compelled to consolidate the number of schools they can afford to sustain when the district is serving a diminishing number of students. These are difficult fiscal decisions that may impact a district's future for many years.

There is a process dictated BY LAW (<https://www.maine.gov/doe/schools/structure/schoolclosure>), that we are going to follow, which includes opportunities for public input and a public referendum.

There are so many challenges with the decision of possibly closing one of our schools. It is an enormous challenge and one we will not take lightly. We will engage with the community. This is not JUST a building we are talking about. It is the center of a community of students, parents, staff and administrators, all of whom will be deeply impacted by the loss of a school site.

In making this decision, we will do our best to research every positive and negative aspect of each possibility and the effect that each decision will have.

Before any decision is made by the board, there will be a series of events that will take place so that we may listen to community perspective, questions and ideas... There will be public meetings, public tours of each school, and we will do our research....

We will look at the condition of each facility, needed repair costs, operating costs of each school, associated savings of each school, if it were to close, the capacity to accommodate students, access to purchase more land in the future if needed.

Environmental factors: safety concerns at each site, traffic, new road factors – access will be quicker, distance from fire station, access to water vs. well,

Pupil demographics, community use of buildings inside and outside – Holbrook Rec basketball, baseball/softball, little league,

Impact on each town – How it will affect the town and people in the town without the school,

Real estate values and curb appeal of the town without a school

Value of building– which school would maximize more revenue (revenue that we will use to do building updates to the school we keep open)?

All the research and findings will be posted on our website <https://www.rsu63.org/Page/9> under the “**Consolidation**” tab. This tab will be dedicated to this discussion. We have also set up an email ([consolidationinfo@rsu63.org](mailto:consolidationinfo@rsu63.org)) to gather questions and concerns the public may have. We will compile this information into a frequently asked Q & A document.

In closing, the board realizes there are so many factors in this decision. There is the financial strain our three schools have on our taxpayers. There are the emotional factors in the lasting impact of closing a school in our communities, but most importantly we will make this decision based on establishing the best educational experience for all our students.

Respectfully,  
Linda Graban  
RSU # 63 School Board Chair