

## Administrative Ratios Study Group Winter 2010

Goal of RSU #23 Study Groups: to research, meet and discuss/evaluate the current administrative structure in RSU #23

"Schools today are under-administered. Frequently, one principal supervises as many as 30 teachers. No principal can evaluate and mentor this many. In addition to teacher evaluation, principals are handling curriculum, scheduling, student discipline, parent and community relations, and supervision of buildings and grounds. Lately, in our enthusiasm for administrative decentralization, we've added budgeting and purchase of supplies to a principal's load. Even with the addition of an assistant principal, the challenge is impossible. The reason we have such terrible 'drive by' teacher evaluation systems, with principals taking perfunctory peeks into classrooms, is that principals have no time (or training) to do it right" (Richard Rothstein in the *National Journal of Education* from the Economic Policy Institute).

The administrative ratio study group was charged with looking at and analyzing the existing administrative structures within RSU #23 – Old Orchard Beach, Saco, and Dayton. Our guiding questions: What is the realistic structure for administrators vs. student population? What is the optimal structure? Is this structure working? We approached this analysis with the understanding that maintaining the excellence of education in our schools is paramount and must not be compromised.

We researched, discussed, and analyzed such factors as demographics (ESOL, socioeconomic status, special education, race, ethnicity), grade-level configurations, developmental needs, academic and social needs, state mandates, state-recommended ratios, and other administrative structures.

Based on this research, it was clear that the demands and challenges of each school are unique and that student population alone is not a fair indicator of administrative needs. Our schools are site-specific; for example,

- Dayton Consolidated is a rural school located fourteen miles away from central office. It houses the only K-5 format in the RSU.
- Loranger Middle School operates two paradigms of instruction – elementary and middle. It houses the only 4-8 format in the state.

Furthermore, we discussed the philosophical and operational differences between school management and school leadership. A school manager makes sure the school is physically running. A school leader not only runs the building, but he or she ensures that the vision, mission, values, and goals of the RSU are being met.

We explored alternatives to the current administrative structures, and it is our recommendation that while our current structure is working, it is certainly not optimal. In better economic times, we would be proposing that we augment the administrative structure – especially at Saco Middle School. If any changes to our current structure were to be made, the academic and social needs of our students would be adversely affected. Maintain the number of administrators in the schools of RSU #23.

Addenda: Administrative Responsibility Charts  
School Demographics

**Members:**

Richard Talbot, SMS Principal, Co Chair  
Jim Walsh, OOBHS Asst. Principal, Co Chair  
Janelle Harrison, Grade 1 teacher at Dayton Consolidated  
Carrie Lamothe, CK Burns Assistant Principal  
Carol Marcotte, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Sue Smith, K teacher at Fairfield  
Julie Smyth, LMS Assistant Principal  
Carol Marcotte, Director of Curriculum and Instruction  
Catherine Faust, Special Education Director  
Gary Curtis, RSU #23 Board Member