



Municipal Office, Town of Bristol, Maine

P. O. Box 339 Bristol, Maine 04539

Telephone (207) 563-5270 Fax (207) 563-6103

www.bristolmaine.org

Comprehensive Plan – Education Subcommittee Tuesday, October 5, 2021 @ 6:30pm Town Office

Apologies for absence

1. Minutes of Last Meeting
2. Matters Arising
3. Discussion of Bristol Draft Submission
Appended with submissions from China, Oakland, New Gloucester
4. Any Other Business
5. Adjournment

Date of Next Meeting: TBD

Data amplifying agenda items 3 and 5

Agenda item 3

Questions from Jim Barnes and Becky Cooper

Jim: Do you believe there is a need for easier access to vocational training during and/or after high school?

If college is a goal, would you want or desire financial assistance?

How important is adult education?

Becky: Have any of your children ever attended BCS?

Do you have PreK-8 school age children living in Bristol at this time?

Do you expect to have elementary school age children living in Bristol in 5 years' time? Ten years' time?

Would you support expanded programming for experiential education (hands-on, direct experience, learning by doing) at the middle school level in Bristol?

Should there be a regional school(s) in the AOS?

Agenda item 5

Discussion of other town's submissions

Chapter 208 requirements

Note of Education in Public Services

g. Education – Identify school administrative unit. Include primary/secondary school system enrollment for the most recent year information is available and for the ten (10) years after the anticipated adoption of plan.

Note of Education in capital planning

(8) Is school construction or expansion anticipated during the planning period? Are there opportunities to promote new residential development around existing and proposed

China

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/China_2020.pdf

Page 115 ff.

Education: Public education for China residents is provided by Regional School Unit (RSU) 18, which also serves the communities of Belgrade, Oakland, Rome and Sidney. Schools operated by the district are as follows: The total enrollment for the district in 2018 was 2,633.

The school system is a high priority of China residents. This is evidenced on an annual basis with the adoption of a school budget that is higher than that of surrounding communities. This strong commitment to education puts an increased level of strain on the municipal budget of over three and a half million dollars, and as a combined tax rate, it can be hard on many property taxpayers.

For the 2017-2018 fiscal year expenditures within RSU 18 were slightly lower than other school districts when measured on a per-pupil basis, as seen on the table above. Per pupil expenditures are the common method for comparing school investments across jurisdictions. Since per-pupil expenditures would be expected to rise as a result of falling enrollments, such as been happening in China, the fact that RSU 18 costs are still within close range with neighboring districts is acceptable.

As evidenced by trends in the demographics chapter enrollment in public schools has been declining on average one percent per year for much of the past decade. Some of this is to be expected as a result of aging of the baby boom, but the accelerated decline since 2007 may be due to other factors. RSU 18 enrollments are also in decline, although the non-China portion of those numbers is declining faster so China is taking more of the burden.

School Education: China Primary and Middle School, on Lakeview Drive, take pre-school through to Grade 8 and has a current enrollment 232 and 197 respectively which have been declining over the past 5 years. There are plans to expand the Primary School facilities in the same way that the middle school was recently expanded (an additional 2,300 sq ft of space). The original building for both schools are beginning to show their age. Messalonskee High School in Oakland has a current enrollment of 723 which has also declined by 74 over the last 5 years.

There is high school choice in China so students may choose which school to attend in the region. Erskine Academy: This is a private school within China that is 60% publicly funded and has 560 students in grades 9–12 from eight sending towns (Chelsea, China, Jefferson, Palermo, Somerville, Vassalboro, Whitefield, and Windsor, which offer school choice and pay tuition), and private pay tuition by families from other communities. The class of 2018 included 139 graduates. 1% are international students. There are 86 employees, 39 of whom are Erskine alumni.

School Transportation: RSU 18 runs numerous busses to and from China on the following schedule: (list of routes)

There are no other major educational institutions in China but there are some within the region. One is the Kennebec Valley Community College, located on in Fairfield adjacent to the Interstate. The school provides post-secondary education in medical, mechanical, and other technical disciplines. KVCC has been often expanding with a new classroom building and added parking, and both enrollment and budget are growing. Others include Snow Pond Arts Academy in Sidney, Colby and Thomas Colleges in Waterville and Unity College in Unity.

Oakland

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Oakland_2020.pdf

Page 65

d. School System Public education for Oakland residents is provided by Regional School Unit 18/Messalonskee School District (SAD 47), which includes the towns of Oakland, Belgrade, Sidney, Rome, and China. Schools operated by the district are Atwood Elementary (grades K-2), Williams Elementary (grades 3-5), Messalonskee Middle School (grades 6-8), and Messalonskee High School (grades 9-12). Outlying schools include Belgrade Central (grades K-5), James H. Bean School (grades K-5), China Primary School (K-5), and China Middle School (6-8).

The total enrollment for the district is 2,647 students with 897 students (34%) representing the town of Oakland. All high school students from the participating communities attend Messalonskee High School, although just a portion of China students attend the high school.

The school system, which employs 558 people, is a high priority of Oakland residents. This is evidenced on an annual basis with the adoption of a fiscally responsible school budget. In the Spring of 2018, the community members of RSU 18 approved a \$14 million bond of which \$10 million dollars is dedicated to school improvements and \$3.9 million is earmarked for a new athletic complex at Messalonskee High School to which the community will have access.

The schools and citizens of Oakland have established several partnerships which benefit the students. The Town provides the two school resource officers that serve Messalonskee Middle School and High School, local donations and fundraising efforts stock in-school food pantries and extend educational and co-curricular activities for the students, and the many student events, including concerts, athletics, art exhibits, plays, and robotic competitions, are well attended by the community.

Appreciation for one of Oakland's major employers and residential attractions runs deep in our community.

For more information on the Messalonskee School District, including its history and projected enrollment, please see Appendix 10.3.

Damariscotta 2014 Plan

https://www.maine.gov/dacf/municipalplanning/comp_plans/Damariscotta_2014.pdf

B. EDUCATION

While the number of Damariscotta residents 25 years or older only increased by about 1% between 2000 and 2010, there was a substantial increase in the percentage of adults with high school degrees and some attainment of post-secondary education. There was a corresponding drop in adults who had no high school degree. This may reflect the continued influx of moderate to higher income retirees who came into town during the decade and who would tend to have education beyond the high school level. In 2010, Damariscotta is comparable with Lincoln County and the State in the percentage of about 24% of the people attaining a high school degree, which is higher than for the country as a whole at 19%. Damariscotta (16%) and the County (14%) had higher percentages of the population attaining a college degree than Maine or the US (12%). For advanced graduate or professional degrees, the Town was comparable to the County, State and US at around 8% of the population. So Damariscotta conforms to the spread of educational achievement across the country.

Maine AOS 93 AOS93 is composed of the towns of Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Jefferson, Newcastle, Nobleboro and South Bristol. Within the system are the Great Salt Bay Community (Elementary) School in Damariscotta, elementary schools in Nobleboro and Bristol and Lincoln Academy in Newcastle, which is private but functions as the public high school for the seven towns of AOS 93.

Projecting school age population is notoriously hard. But if the relationship between the school age population and the total population in the seven AOS 93 towns were to be assumed to remain the same as in 2013, then a guest-estimate would project the future school-age population to decrease to 2025 similar to the overall population estimated decrease. For lack of a more rigorous method, let the

guesstimate herein provide at least an idea of how the school age population might fare between 2014 and 2024.

2013 AOS Town population interpolated between 2010 real and 2015 estimated populations; (AOS 93 towns: Bremen, Bristol, Damariscotta, Jefferson, Newcastle, Nobleboro, South Bristol) If the guesstimate herein turns out to be true, then AOS 93 and Lincoln Academy may be confronted between 2014 and 2024 with empty classrooms and decreased class sizes putting pressure to reduce the number of teachers and school programs. In recent years (2012) Lincoln Academy has been recruiting Chinese and other foreign students to fill the gap from the perceived future decreasing local enrollment. This has enabled the Academy to maintain a robust income to support its full roster of educational programs, extra-curricular activities including theatre, the arts, sports and the capability to engage in such outside activities as debate team and model UN. Great Salt Bay Elementary School has recently (2013) been pondering the possible benefits and costs of offering Pre-K education to 4 and 5 year olds from the seven AOS 93 towns. If such a program were to be instituted, it might use possible empty classrooms. Or, there could be exploration with Central Lincoln County YMCA, Coastal Kids or other venues for a cooperative arrangement to develop a Pre-K program, the school doing the instruction, these venues providing the requisite classroom space.

1. ISSUES WITH EDUCATION

- (1) Given the projected decrease in GSB School enrollment, how to get more students in order to maintain the teachers, facilities, and pedagogical quality?
- (2) Should GSB School start a universal pre-K (HeadStart) program for all AOL 93 kids? Already HeadStart, the YMCA and Coastal Kids are cooperating with AOL on considering the costs and benefits.
- (3) What could the Town do in terms of educational opportunity to keep more young people in Town? In terms of voc-ed, targeted local job training, entrepreneurial zones for start-ups; others?
- (4) What could the Town do to enhance the quality of retirees' life through life-long learning? With Midcoast Community College, transportation to local cultural events such Salt Bay Chamber music performances, etc.? This would help motivate retirees to be involved on town committees and nonprofit groups such as the DRA.