

November 6th Ballot Question Explained

Brunswick residents will see a question on the November 6th ballot that reads as follows: “Do you favor a plan for Brunswick School Department to join the Greater Sebago Education Alliance Regional Service Center through an interlocal agreement that will allow the School Department to receive additional revenue through the state funding formula and to more efficiently procure goods and services?”

This question asks voters to approve BSD’s participation in a “regional service center”, which will provide us with opportunities to purchase certain goods and services at more competitive rates. There is an annual fee/dues to join (\$1000) and the DOE is compensating all districts participating in a regional service center this year with additional subsidy (Close to \$38,000 for BSD this year – which obviously covers the service center fee and much more).

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q) WHY does this require voter approval?

A) Although we often partner with other districts to obtain better deals on goods and services and to develop collaborative ideas and seek efficiencies in many ways, this particular initiative was developed by DOE in an effort to foster more formalized partnerships and sharing among districts. The statute providing for the formation of regional service centers includes a requirement for obtaining voter approval.

Q) Is this like an RSU?

A) No. The Greater Sebago Education Alliance (GSEA) is a group of 10 separate school districts – including BSD – who are partnering in order to obtain better deals on certain goods and services and in order to receive the additional State subsidy. None of the districts will be relinquishing or changing school district governance or organizational practices.

Q) What goods and services will BSD be accessing through GSEA?

A) We will participate in some combined professional development (teacher training) and in a streamlining of the recruitment and training of substitutes. We will eventually also take advantage of purchasing Food Services items, including paper goods, cleaning supplies, etc... Other, non-member, districts may choose to avail themselves of some of the services GSEA will be offering, but they will likely have to pay a higher rate and would not receive the additional state subsidy (only official member districts receive that).

Q) How does GSEA work?

A) All participating member districts will have a seat on the board, and will have equal input into decision-making. One district will serve as the fiscal agent for the organization, and one part-time director will manage the details. DOE will pay all costs for the director this year, and 50% of the cost in future years. The revenue generated by partner dues and by non-partner fees for services will cover the remaining cost.

Q) Can we get out of this partnership if we want to?

A) There is an option to declare dormancy for the following year by February of any given year. We would then not pay the annual dues nor would we participate in the group purchasing of goods and services in that following year.

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