

## **Name of the Committee:**

Belgrade/RSU 18 review committee.

## **Purpose of the Committee:**

The committee is a fact finding committee to identify the advantage for Belgrade to remain in RSU 18, given the large increase in cost to Belgrade residents.

## **Rationale:**

In recent years, the cost to Belgrade residents, related to funding our portion of the RSU 18 budget has been increasing at a significant rate. Our student population has been steady or declining and yet costs are going up. The funding formula for the RSU is structured such that Belgrade is paying a larger cost per student than other towns in the RSU.

In recent years there has been a growing split in town over funding the school budget. While few in town are interested in reducing the funding for Belgrade students, the only action available to resist this rising tax burden is to vote the budget down. Continuing to vote down the school budget is not a sustainable solution for providing quality education for Belgrade students.

Until all the facts related to current and alternative solutions for educating Belgrade children are examined, it is impossible to reach a factual conclusion about the benefit for Belgrade to be in RSU 18.

## **Committee Task:**

It shall be the task of this committee to identify the cost of providing education for Belgrade students. In order to do that, the committee needs to determine the services necessary and the subsidies available to the town from the state, to provide appropriate education. This assessment needs to include, but is not limited to, the following questions:

- List advantages for Belgrade to be in RSU 18
- List advantages for Belgrade to be their own system
- Current RSU 18 budget for BCS
- Building ownership
- Transportation options/issues
- Can RSU 18 be required to take Belgrade students, if not part of RSU, for 6-12 grades
- Would other systems – Augusta, Maranacook, etc. be open to tuition students
- State process, including legal questions about separation
- Special Ed requirements/solutions
- What would administration look like in a Belgrade School Department
- Can total school choice be rolled into a Belgrade School system
- What are the state requirements for evaluation of a preK - 5 school
- Are there state guidelines for establishing tuition contract costs
- Can Belgrade participate in RSU 18 as a non-member, tuition based participant

## **Committee Task con't:**

- Possible contract arrangements for tuition students to RSU 18
- Does Rome have any interest in joining with Belgrade
- What is the Belgrade population projection
- How do other towns in the state, with large lake front properties, set up education cost sharing formulas

## **Expected Conclusion:**

It is expected the conclusions of this committee will result in rationale to explain why it is in the interest of Belgrade to:

- remain in RSU 18
- withdrawal from RSU 18 and enter into a contract for K-12 through RSU 18
- withdrawal from RSU 18, run a K – 5 school and contract with RSU 18 for 6 - 12

## **Committee membership:**

Members of the committee should include:

- 1 representative of the Selectboard
- 2 members of the Budget Committee
- 2 teachers at Belgrade Central School
- 1 member from Belgrade on the RSU 18 School Board
- 4 citizens from Belgrade at large
- 1 member of the RSU 18 School administration

## **Time Frame:**

The committee needs to update the Selectboard at least once a month and have a final report to the board by Town Meeting, 2016.