

To the Citizens of Newry,

As many of you know our school withdrawal negotiations with SAD 44 have not been productive. We have seen absolutely no compromising movement in the district's position. A position that they publicly admit is to prevent Newry's withdrawal by any means necessary. They are fixated on using Newry's tax money to subsidize the education of Bethel, Greenwood and Woodstock students.

The one thing that both sides have agreed on is to bring in a mediator to help break this impasse. We have scheduled two negotiating sessions with mediator John Alfano present. John has extensive experience in helping competing sides reach resolution. The state law requires a signed withdrawal plan between the district and the town before a vote on withdrawal can occur. The first mediated negotiating session will be on November 17<sup>th</sup> and the next on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

On July 1<sup>st</sup> I sent every Newry citizen a letter explaining what was happening with the withdrawal process. I am sorry to say other than scheduling these upcoming mediated negotiating sessions nothing has changed but we are very optimistic that the generosity and fairness of our last proposal to the district will be evident. Having an impartial mediator witnessing and facilitating in the negotiations will be a good thing.

Maine's school funding formula recognizes that each town of a district has the financial responsibility of educating their own students. Town payments are made to all the school districts based on the number of students attending from that town EXCEPT at SAD 44. When this responsibility is shifted heavily onto only one town problems are sure to develop. Accountability and educational quality at SAD 44 are poor at best. Administrative expenses are far above the state average while instructional cost are far below. This situation needs to change for the benefit of all the districts children.

Sincerely,

Jim Sysko

Chair, Newry Withdrawal Committee