



RSU 12

Sheepscot Valley RSU 12 News Information, recognition, and celebrations from our RSU 12 schools and communities.

Superintendent's Report

Legislative Update

A Fairer EPS Funding Law (LD 2226)

LD 2226 just passed the Education Committee with an 11-2 vote, and it's heading for a full vote in the House and Senate next week. This bill is really important for RSU 12 because it accounts for community income in the funding formula. Right now, the state only looks at property values, which can make our towns seem wealthier than they actually are. By updating this formula, we can secure more state aid, helping make education more affordable for our local property taxpayers. It's a big step towards creating a fairer system for everyone.

Support for School Construction and Repairs (LD 1892)

There's an important bill, LD 1892, that's currently working its way through the Legislature. This bill funds school construction and urgent school repairs. It establishes a fund to repair critical issues, including roof repairs and heating and cooling system upgrades. It also promises to increase the state budget for major construction projects. Just last Thursday, this bill passed the House with a vote of 79-63, and it's heading to the Senate for a vote this week. We all must reach out to our Senators and

voice our support for this bill. Our school buildings are in dire need of repairs, and this legislation could also help speed up the construction of a new Palermo Consolidated School.

How You Can Help

Your voice matters greatly in helping us push these important bills over the finish line. We need to rally support in both the House and Senate. Contact your State Representative and State Senator. Take a moment to contact them and urge them to support both LD 2226 and LD 1892. Share your personal experiences. Let them know how property taxes impact your family, or why it's time to replace the Palermo School and address the roof issues in our other buildings. Your story could be just what they need to understand the urgency of these changes. You can easily find your local legislators and their contact information by using the [Find Your Legislator](#) tool. Also, please read the [Talking Points](#) to help you write something convincing to your legislator. Tell your friends and neighbors to advocate too!

RSU 12 Proposed Budget - Fiscal Year 2027

The proposed budget for RSU 12 for the 2026–2027 school year demonstrates a commitment to delivering quality education, especially as we face rising costs together as a community. The proposed budget is a 4.8% increase over FY26. After accounting for state subsidies and various revenue sources, this results in a 4.2% increase for our local communities.

RSU 12 does not have its own high school, and tuition cost increases for grades 9-12 remain a significant concern. For example, regular tuition for our high school students in grades 9-12 has increased by 5.9%. Also, 9-12 special education tuition has risen even more sharply by 8.27%. These expenses, along with a \$222,842 addition in the state-mandated Insured Value Factor (IVF), are beyond our control and place additional strain on our district. As a grades 9-12 school-choice district, we do not set the fees for regular and special education tuition, yet they profoundly impact our budget.

The RSU 12 Board of Directors is proposing a budget that balances fiscal responsibility with the maintenance of important educational programs amid significant external pressures. With property valuations rising by more than 15% this year, we face stagnating state aid, which in turn places an even greater financial burden on local taxpayers. In response, we have worked diligently over the years to identify efficiencies through regional partnerships and grants, creating savings in critical areas such as special education, transportation, and energy. We continue to advocate for reforms, such as LD 2226 and LD 1892, to improve affordability in our communities. We are actively working to find solutions that benefit everyone.

Our budget reflects a thoughtful approach. We support critical parts of education, including reasonable class sizes, instructional support, school safety, Pre-K, and high school choice, all while

acknowledging the financial challenges our towns face. We genuinely appreciate the sacrifices that taxpayers make, and thank you for supporting the growth and success of every student.

The Superintendent and the Finance Committee are presenting information about the proposed budget on the following dates. We encourage community members to attend these meetings to stay informed and influence our schools' future.

Alna – 3/5 @ 6 pm – Town Office

Westport Island – 3/9 @ 6 pm – Town Office

Whitefield – 3/10 @ 6 pm – Fire Station

Palermo – 3/19 @ 6 pm – Town Office

Windsor – 3/24 @ 6 pm – Town Office

Somerville – 4/1 @ 6 pm – Town Office

Chelsea – 4/15 @ 6 pm – Town Office

District Budget Meeting – 5/20 @ 6:30 pm – Chelsea Elementary School

Budget Referendum – 6/9 – At Local Polling Places

Curriculum and Technology

The Spring assessment window opens upon return from April break. During the month of May, students in grades 3-8 will take the Maine Through Year assessment in Math and in Reading. Students in grades 5 and 8 will also be taking the Maine Science assessment. All of these assessments are taken online and are scheduled in consultation with classroom teachers. Teachers use the results of these assessments to inform instruction and any necessary interventions. During this time period, students in grades K-2 also take the Measure of Academic Progress assessment by NWEA. This assessment allows for analysis of growth over time with the school year and from year to year.

On March 13, teachers and administrators participated in an in-service workshop day. There were opportunities for teachers to engage in curriculum work across grade levels and content areas, to learn about assessment practices and reporting to parents, to practice using new tools for communicating with communities and families about student learning, and to explore effective uses

of artificial intelligence in the educational setting. Teachers also worked on school-specific goals and needs and practiced their implementation of Restorative Practices and other practices for student support.

During the last early release Wednesday of March, teachers gathered to discuss literacy and math instruction across grade levels. The goal of this time was to ensure alignment of the curriculum and close any gaps that might leave students unprepared for the next grade level.

Chelsea Elementary School Report

We have successfully completed the long month of March, which included various spirit days, activities, and learning. A highlight of the month was the school-wide Rock Paper Scissors tournament; congratulations to our overall champion, Evelyn H. (4th Grade), for her win! The matching of staff to their baby/toddler pictures was also a big hit with both students and staff.

Looking ahead, we are having a Celebration of Learning night on Wednesday, April 8, for students in our ABLE and Life Skills programs and their families. This event is a valuable opportunity to recognize the progress and specific achievements of these students in a fun, creative setting with some hands-on learning and fun for the whole family.

Lastly, the excitement is already building for our next PBIS assembly on April 10, where we will host the PTA-sponsored "Pie a Teacher" event. It is sure to be a messy, hilarious, and well-deserved reward for our students' continued commitment to our school expectations!



Palermo Consolidated School News

We have a few weeks leading up to April vacation. This is the time of year that truly shows the growth of our students. They have been in school, working on their skills and putting it all together. Our Education Fair is coming up soon. Education Fair (Ed Fair) is a time when all students build projects and develop reports on important student-led topics. Students' families come to explore their projects and the students get a chance to show off their skills. This is a well-attended event and something we look forward to each year.

Just before April vacation, we hold our annual Beach Day activities. Our 8th-grade students help support the younger students during our activities and projects. Something new this year will be the planting of sunflower seeds, which will be a part of next year's school-wide theme of "Positivity and Hope". The sunflower is known for being cheerful, warm, and bringing joy to our community.

Once we return from vacation, we will be focusing on ending the year with great growth. We will have our final testing sessions to measure progress and reflect on the year.



Bring on the hard work and bring on the years of practice - these are the important lessons our students learned during the juggling performance by Shane Miclon. He had a fun performance that had the students in awe! He encouraged students to try new things and stick with it - the rewards are life-changing.

Whitefield Elementary School Report

Tuesday marked an unusual day for us here at WHES as we were visited by Chunk the Whale, a 45 foot inflatable scale model of an actual Humpback whale, and she was the delight of our Pre K - 5 students. Presented by the program "Within the Whale," our students learned about the anatomy of the whale, the daily routine of a whale, and what a whale's inner organs actually look like! After a very thorough introduction, all students were ushered inside the whale to get a true picture of what goes in there. Many students reported that they were very impressed by the size of Chunk's brain, her three stomachs, how much air could be taken in by her lungs, and, especially for the younger learners, the "color of her poop - pink!" It was a very special event for all participants.

Chunk's visit would not have been possible had it not been for the generosity of the Whitefield Parent / Teachers Association, and we all want to pass on our thanks for their gesture. This group, always looking for new members (hint, hint), raises funds to be able to provide exactly this type of activity for our children, expanding and enhancing their overall experience here at school. These are not experiences we could have provided in our operating budget, so the staff and students of WHES are so appreciative of the PTA's efforts on our behalf. The next time the PTA sponsors a fundraiser, please give as much as you can and remember Chunk the Whale.

Windsor Elementary School Report

During the month of March, Windsor School experienced a strong sense of community and engagement through a variety of academic, extracurricular, and school-wide initiatives. One highlight was our March Madness staff event, which fostered collaboration, creativity, and positive morale among staff members through friendly competitions, including scavenger hunts, themed days, and a culminating staff vs. 8th grade basketball game. We summarized the game by saying that the staff showed great effort, but the 8th graders showed no mercy! These activities not only strengthened staff relationships but also created a fun and supportive atmosphere for students, who were actively involved and excited participants.

In addition to these community-building events, Windsor School continued to prioritize student learning and support services. The school hosted multiple IEP and 504 meetings throughout the month to ensure that student needs were being met, alongside ongoing MTSS and SAT work during early release days. Professional development remained a focus, with staff participating in workshop days, EL Education training, and collaborative team meetings. Opportunities for experiential learning were also prioritized, including a fifth grade trip to the Colby Museum of Art and the third grade at the Maine Mariners game. We are also encouraging outdoor learning experiences to foster student engagement and well-being. The Windsor Educational Reed Foundation has supported us in our efforts, funding camp chairs for our outdoor classrooms and rain gear for 3rd-5th grade students.

Windsor School also demonstrated a strong commitment to community support and student-centered initiatives. Our annual spring fundraiser was highly successful, generating over \$29,000 in online sales. Our community has been working together for several years in an effort to fund a new playground in a safer location behind the school. We are forming a committee to plan the steps needed to make the playground happen soon, and welcome a board member to join if interested. We also worked together on a staff-led fundraiser that raised \$843 for a community member in need. Family engagement remained a priority through conferences and regular

communication, while enrichment opportunities such as the second Gold Card Assembly, performances, and a visiting juggling show enhanced the student experience. Overall, March was a productive and positive month, reflecting Windsor School's dedication to fostering a supportive, engaging, and inclusive learning environment.

RSU 12 serves the towns of Alna, Chelsea, Palermo, Somerville, Westport Island, Whitefield, and Windsor.

Learn more about us at svrsu.org and on our Sheepscot Valley RSU 12 app. Use the QR code to download the app on your mobile device.



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