



Benjamin Sirois - Superintendent of Schools / Executive Director • bsirois@vuesc.org

Gisèle Dionne - Assistant Superintendent of Schools • gdionne@vuesc.org

84 Pleasant Street • Fort Kent, ME 04743 • Voice: 207-834-3189 • Fax: 207-834-3395

February 10, 2020

Re: **Correction of Additional Misinformation**

Dear Valley Unified Residents,

These final days leading up to the public information and straw poll votes concerning the recommended site for the proposed Valley Unified Regional School have been marked by many social media posts, mail flyers, and campaign-style signs around town that are misleading and not factual. It is important that residents understand the truth behind some of these statements in order to make informed decisions. What follows is a list of incorrect statements that have been made; these statements are followed by a Valley Unified response that focuses on facts.

- **Incorrect Social Media Statement:** *"The current administration has been advised by the department of education to not share some of the information that they hold because in previous consolidation attempts it has failed by showing people numbers in advance".*

- **Valley Unified Response:** The current administration has never been advised by the department of education to not share some of the information that they hold. **Fact:** In the first meeting with the Department of Education School Construction team, Valley Unified administrators were advised to be careful not to share information that wasn't 100% factual. They advised VU not to share assumptions, or to make promises, such as lower taxes, that could not be proven with 100% data and factual information. To suggest that Valley Unified administrators are holding onto information is suggesting that they are lying to the public, which again is not true. This phase of the project has been dedicated completely to the site selection process.

- **Incorrect Mail Flyer Statement:** *"Some students will have to travel up to 4-5 hours total each day."*

- **Valley Unified Response:** No student will be on the bus for 4-5 hours each day. **Fact:** The additional 11 miles from FKCHS to the proposed site will add an additional 18 minutes of travel time, to all current bus runs. The longest bus run that MSAD27 currently has is the Allagash/St. Francis bus run. The first student pickup is at 6:30am, with the bus arriving at Fort Kent Community HS at 8:00am. The majority of students on that bus run are on the bus for 45-60 minutes.

- **Incorrect Mail Flyer Statement:** *"The administration has not allowed for a fair process in site selection."*

- **Valley Unified Response:** Valley Unified administration did not play any role in the site selection process. **Fact:** Prior to the start of the site selection process, VU administrators informed all SAU boards they specifically could not play a role because they represented all parties involved. This is why an independent facilitator was hired.

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- **Incorrect Mail Flyer Statement:** *"No guaranties [sic] to keeping all teacher positions from Fort Kent"*
 - **Valley Unified Response:** No teacher currently working for CHS, MMHS, or WMHS has been identified for a layoff because of the new school. **Fact:** When applying for the Regional School project, Valley Unified identified that staff reductions in the future would be done through attrition.

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- **Incorrect Social Media Statement:** *"Most people have been led to believe is [sic] that if you vote "No" you are saying that you don't want the Valley Unified School. THAT IS NOT TRUE. By voting "NO" you are saying no to the Valley Unified School going in Frenchville. This really means that the Valley Unified School will be in FORT KENT, because thats [sic] what will happen!"*

Valley Unified Response: This is a regional school project, and approval from the State Board for the project required and will continue to require a demonstration of regional collaboration and support. Each member on the grant application is a partner in this venture, again, showing unity and collaboration. If the straw polls show division for the project among the communities, all indications point to a new determination by the State Board concerning the status of our project, and making a new determination to fund a different service center project.

Valley Unified encourages all Valley Unified residents to attend the public hearings and straw polls on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 6:00 PM in Madawaska, at 7:30 PM at Dr. Levesque Elementary in Frenchville on the same night, and on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at 6 PM in the FKCHS gym.. If any resident is still unclear with the information circulating on social media or in the mail, please feel free to stop into the Madawaska Superintendent's office Tuesday afternoon between noon and 6:00 PM or the MSAD27 Superintendent's Office anytime during the day on Wednesday, February 12 between 7:30 AM and 6:00 PM.

Respectfully,
Benjamin Sirois
Executive Director/Superintendent of Schools