

RESPONSES FROM DISTRICT LEADERS TO QUESTIONNAIRE ON DISTRICT LEADERSHIP STRUCTURES—Conducted as part of Laura Houle’s committee to review possible changes to the ICS administrative structure, December 2017=January 2018.

1. Questionnaire: Medway responses (Dawn Pray, Superintendent and Principal)

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment?
Medway Middle School houses 5th-8th grade. We tuition K-4 and 9-12 to East Millinocket. I have 115 students in my building (Medway residents and East Millinocket residents). Medway has 158 total resident pupils.

2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize?
I am the superintendent and principal of Medway. I am also the assistant superintendent for East Millinocket and Woodville School Depts. Our 3 districts work very collaboratively. As principal in a small school, I wear many hats along with being a full-time principal: food service director, grants, transportation director, curriculum coordinator, etc...

3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure?
We have full-time coverage of our district and school, while previously we paid for a part-time superintendent. This ensures that decisions can be made efficiently. We also house the central office functions within our building- which has improved communication, reduced the time it takes to pay invoices, and has improved the business management of the district.

4. What challenges has this structure presented?
As principal, it is important to be in the building, to be visible, and to be the educational leader. As superintendent, it is important to network, attend meetings, and work with many stakeholders. Sometimes, these roles counteract one another and my supt. role causes me to be out of the building. Making sure someone can be "in charge" in the building at all times is crucial for discipline issues, being proactive, etc. I couldn't do this "dual role" without having a head teacher, or someone that is available to deal with the unforeseen issues that arise that need to be addressed in the moment.

5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff?
Having a STRONG business manager is CRUCIAL! It is important to have someone focusing on the money, finances, human resources, etc. Also, I share discipline with a head teacher, so when I am out of the building, the students and staff are supported. I have a part-time secretary that works directly with the school board--she drafts agendas, polls for meeting dates, drafts minutes, etc, while my school secretary now does accounts payable. The head bus driver takes care of all scheduling and transportation needs.

6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why?
This structure works very well for our district currently. With regional opportunities being stressed at the state level, this structure could change if something were to present itself that would help our district. I do believe that Medway would keep this structure, or something similar, to ensure full-time coverage at a "part-time" cost.

7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures?
This works very well with the RIGHT people! You cannot short change the important pieces--- educational leadership is key! Sometimes the many administrative issues get in the way, so it is important that people are not stretched too thin in order to get things "covered."--Focuses should be: finances, administrative duties, educational leadership.

8. Other comments:

Just because it has "always been done this way" doesn't mean it should! Please really reflect on your current staff--your current capacity, and be creative! Don't put too much on one person....

Call if you have any questions!

2. **Questionnaire:** Gwen Smith, Superintendent & Building Administrator Greenbush School Department

1. What grades does your school district encompass? Helen S Dunn School - PreK through Grade 8 =140, We tuition 68 high school students to the school of their choice.

With what total school district enrollment? 208

2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize? Combined Superintendent/Principal Position Combined Special Ed Director/Special Ed Teacher Position (We also have other SpEd teachers on staff.)

3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure? The district has the Superintendent and the Principal available to them every day. The combined position is doable due to our smaller size although combining roles is a very busy job. The students, staff, and community can communicate, solve problems, and function on a daily basis. It is far more efficient and effective.

4. What challenges has this structure presented? When I first started, I had no support but we have now formed a collaborative group since the number of combined administrative positions has grown over the past few years. The position is very busy since the administrator is doing two jobs and all Superintendents are required to do essentially the same tasks. I have found that the pros outweigh any cons.

5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff? We contract services from a Business Manager. We have shared a music teacher with another district in the past. We stipend an Athletic Director. Our school secretary also does part of HR. We stipend the 504 Coordinator. We pay for these services very efficiently because we only buy what we need. The needs will vary district by district depending on what the Superintendent/Principal can cover in their role.

6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why? No. The board recently gave the Superintendent/Principal another 5 year contract.

7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures? Treat your administrator well. My board values me, which has much to do with why I am still in this district after 8 years. They make it clear that they want me to succeed, which pushes me all the more to do an excellent job for them.

8. Other comments: If I can assist you or answer any other questions, please feel free to contact me at 826-2000. Sincerely, Gwen

3. Jon Ross
Superintendent/Principal
Acton School Department

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment?

PreK-8th grade = 252

We financially support 100 high school students at a contracted per pupil rate

2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize?

My title is Superintendent/Principal but being a small district, I jump in when we are short on subs or are in need anywhere in the building.

3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure?

Knowing the students and their families as the principal. When I make decisions with the school committee as the superintendent, I know who and how those decisions affect.

4. What challenges has this structure presented?

Time management - issues can arise during the school day that can impact a meeting that evening, there's no "real" division of labor when you serve as the principal and superintendent

5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff?

We outsource transportation, we tuition our high school students to an area high school, we share a Food Service Director with another district and have shared a Special Ed Director with a different district but found someone willing to work part-time for Acton this year.

6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why? Not at this time.

7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures?

I am unsure if my particular arrangement as Superintendent/Principal would work if we had our own high school. I served as a high school principal for a number of years. With the many of issues that come to school every day with high school aged students along with college and career readiness initiatives, class rank, accreditation, proficiency diplomas, varsity athletics etc, I think the job would be too much to manage.

8. Other comments: I am happy to help in any way I can. I hooked Patrick up with a group of administrators who share the same responsibilities and assume you'll reach out to them as well. I really enjoy this position because it's very "boots on the ground" which is where I am at my best.

4. Questionnaire:

Jim Chasse, Greenville

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment? K-12, 218
2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize? Supt, AdEd
3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure? My own free time
4. What challenges has this structure presented? Same amount of paperwork as Bangor but with less people
5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff? AD, Principal is K-12
6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why? We discuss this topic quite a bit but enrollment and finance are not favorable to change the structure. We discussed picking up another small school system to combine positions which might help with supt longevity.
7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures? Job share, paperwork reductions, two principals who split the supt role?
8. Other comments: We have unique challenges in our school, a minimum receiver with a 53% FRL simply makes no sense. The money goes to Southern Maine while we receive virtually no aid due to our lake valuation- property rich and cash poor. The state needs to realize the unique rural schools that don't fit the funding mold and provide relief and incentive. I guess this is more editorial than commenting. Good luck.

5. Questionnaire: Kirsten Goff, Sebago Elementary School

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment?

Current district: K-12, including Sebago Elementary, approximately 1800 students

New district beginning July 1, 2018: K-5, with approximately 90 students. Grades 6-12 will be tuitioned out, approximately 110 students.

2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize?

Current district: I am a half time principal, half time technology integrator and literacy coach. I also receive a stipend for being the district's Affirmative Action/Title IX Officer. I used to be half time principal and half time teacher. As the demands of both positions increased, the decision was made to take me out of the classroom.

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

I have been told that at the very least, I will be a full time principal. The new school board won't be elected until February 27th. At that point, they will decide whether or not to hire a part time superintendent or create a superintendent/principal position. If they create the new position, I plan to apply for this as I am currently working on getting my superintendent's license.

3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure?

Current district: I am available to students, teachers, and parents all day. The only time I am not available is when I have to leave my building to go to another building for district administrative meetings.

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

I won't have to leave for district administrative meetings anymore. We will see what happens.

4. What challenges has this structure presented?

Current district: I am the furthest from the other schools. Also, since I have the fewest students in my school, I am often overruled in elementary level decisions.

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

Local control to decide what is best for our students.

5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff?

Current district: I do not assign other responsibilities. They are assigned to me by the superintendent and assistant superintendent.

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

I would imagine that I will have the ability to assign some duties, but we will see. I also imagine I will be taking on roles I haven't had before.

6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why?

Current district: If we were staying in the district, nothing would change.

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

My role will change, for sure. How much is yet to be determined...

7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures?

Current district: The responsibilities of a principal are the same regardless of the size of the school (creating and maintaining a budget, evaluating staff, supporting students and families, etc.). The differences are the number of students, staff, and families. The principal of a small school often picks up other jobs when itinerant staff are not available (i.e. special ed support for emotionally challenged students, custodial issues, nursing, secretarial, lunch/recess/bus duties, etc.)

New district beginning July 1, 2018:

I am hoping they opt for the combined principal/superintendent position. Having a part-time superintendent, in my opinion, is limiting and leaves a lot for a principal to cover on his/her own or he/she has to wait for the superintendent to be back in district before something can be done.

8. Other comments:

Check back next year! YOU never know, my answers could completely change!

6. Questionnaire: Matthew Cyr, Veazie School Department

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment?

Veazie School Dept. presently has 224 students PK - 12; however, we only have a PK - 8 school (135 students) within our town. Our secondary students (85) have school choice and currently attend 8 different high schools.

2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize?

I am superintendent, principal, curriculum coordinator, technology director and facilities director (we contract a cleaning service).

3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure?

I know my staff, I know my students, I know my facility and I know how they must all work together in regards to building a budget that supports student achievement as well as local tax payers. Most importantly, I am “working” every day...so even though I wear many hats, I’m available in any capacity 100% of the time as opposed to two days/week superintendent, two days/week curriculum, etc.

4. What challenges has this structure presented?

At times, something has to give...I cannot attend all meetings that my colleagues (in full-time capacity) attend. At times, I feel I am out of the building more than I’d like. Sub calling is also not my most favorite thing to do.

5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff?

I presently contract business offices (accounting, payroll, student data) with a nearby district. I have a part-time (2-days/week Special Ed. Director). I contract custodial services with a cleaning company and IT support with a nearby district.

6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why?

I am looking to add more time to my PK - 8 school counselor so that she can be in the building 4-days/week. I’m going to be making RTI, and attendance key responsibilities of this position.

7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures?

The dual roles work, however the challenge can be finding the person that is the right fit. I was hired 3 years ago when the exiting principal of 23 years made my new position a combined principal and curriculum coordinator. My strong technology background allowed me to reduce staffing and stipends by absorbing the technology leadership role. During that time we were contracting the services of another district for Superintendent services. This relationship (from my perspective) was not successful because of the distance between the Super and the school....I ended up taking on many Superintendent roles because they were not available all the times that I needed them. After completing my Super

certification, it only made sense that I take on that role as well. This year has been the first and it's been a learning curve trying to find the balance. I think delegating RTI and attendance to my guidance counselor next year (even though she won't be full-time), will be a huge help.

8. Other comments:

I'm here if you need to call!

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Questionnaire: William Crumley, Sad 12

Questionnaire:

1. What grades does your school district encompass? With what total school district enrollment? K-12 – 142 STUDENTS
2. What administrative roles do you currently utilize? SUPERINTENDENT 180 DAYS & PRINCIPAL 260 DAYS
3. What do you consider to be the most important advantages to your current structure? K-12 ALL IN ONE BUILDING. SUPERINTENDENT CAN FILL IN FOR PRINCIPAL WHEN NEEDED.
4. What challenges has this structure presented? NONE
5. Do you also assign various administrative responsibilities to other district or contracted staff? YES
6. Are you considering making any changes to the current structure in the near future? If so, why? NO
7. What suggestions do you have for a small K-12 school exploring alternative administrative structures? AVOID SUPERINTENDENT/PRINCIPAL COMBINATION IF POSSIBLE
