



Valley Unified Regional Service Center

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Progress Report on the Strategic Plan Aimed at Rightsizing Education in the Upper St. John Valley

[Rightsizing Education in the Upper St. John Valley 2017-2027](#), a strategic plan endorsed in 2017 by the school boards/committees of the Madawaska School Department, MSAD #33, and MSAD #27, was developed with the active involvement of and input from 400 upper St. John Valley citizens, including: business people; municipal officials and municipal staff; school administrators and school board/committee members; teachers and support staff from each school; and students from each high school in the region. Each of the eight (8) strategic priorities the plan addresses appears below with a note summarizing the key areas of progress accomplished to date:

Strategic Priority #1 - High School Regionalization - The three School Administrative Units (SAU's) will move grades 9-12 into one regionalized high school/Career and Technical Education (CTE) center to optimize educational and extra-curricular opportunities of all learners in the Upper St. John Valley.

Progress - Valley Unified Regional High School part 1 and 2 applications were submitted to the Maine Department of Education in June and December, 2017. In August, 2018, the Valley Unified School proposal was included on the State Board of Education Priority Project List, and, in September, the Valley Unified Regional School was included on the Approved Construction Project List.

Strategic Priority #2 - The three SAU's will maintain one elementary school (PK-8) in each of their respective districts and will continue to align, optimize and strengthen early education.

Progress - The Valley Unified Curriculum Coordinator works with staff to design and implement a consistent, proficiency-based curriculum in all three Pre-K through Grade 8 elementary schools in the region, and Project RISE pilot programs are redesigning the upper elementary experience by focusing on Personalized Pathways, student passions, and Habits of Mind.

Strategic Priority #3 - The three SAU's will develop a combined Adult and Continuing Education program that focuses on the education and training needs of families and adults in the community.

Progress - MSAD #27 Continuing Education and Madawaska Adult and Community Education merged to form Valley Unified Continuing Education, effective July 1, 2018, reducing administrative staffing, increasing access to instruction and high quality instructors, and maintaining full-service sites in Fort Kent and Madawaska.

Strategic Priority #4 - The three SAU's will develop an organizational structure that allows for the immediate implementation of shared administration, services, personnel, and programs.

Progress - The Valley Unified Regional Service Center was approved by the voters in each of the three school units in their respective 2018 School Budget votes. A Valley Unified Board of Directors made up of two local School Board/Committee members and an administrator from each school unit met in August, 2018, and named an Executive Director, a Chair, a Vice-Chair, and a Secretary.

Strategic Priority #5 - The three SAU's will review, align, and change St. John Valley Technology Center programs based on emerging workforce demands and will utilize the center as a site for other forms of shared curricula, extra and co-curricular activities, and hands-on learning opportunities across the curriculum.

Progress - The St. John Valley Technology Center now houses a Valley Unified Alternative Schooling Program, a Middle School Health Program, a Middle School Career Exploration Project, and an Innovation Lab for secondary school students and business partners to spur team-building, creative thinking, and individual or group problem-solving skills.

Strategic Priority #6 - The three SAU's will collaborate with the University of Maine at Fort Kent to expand on current early college/dual enrollment options and develop shared PK-16 programs in the arts and will collaborate with Northern Maine Community College to develop programs that allow for seamless, career and technical transitions for students seeking hands-on, trade and technical degrees and certificates.

Progress - The proposed Valley Unified Regional High School is a comprehensive, integrated learning center that includes both a regional Career and Technical Education Center and higher education programming on site. Learners in St John Valley Technology Center programs can earn articulated credit to the University of Maine at Fort Kent and/or to Northern Maine Community College as well as other Maine Community College System campuses. Valley Unified officials are always working to develop additional agreements with higher education partners.

Strategic Priority #7 - The three SAU's will continue to build working relationships with community organizations, businesses, parents, and other individuals to enhance experiential learning opportunities for all learners and to bring community and workforce perspectives into schools, programs, and classes.

Progress - A French Language Integrator has been hired through a grant to work with staff in all three districts to embed French language instruction into the elementary school curriculum and to assist staff in establishing critical Franco-American cultural connections in regional communities. The Alternative Schooling Coordinator, Jobs for Maine Graduates Teacher, High School Guidance Counselors, and St. John Valley Technology Center teachers all are placing learners in a variety of Job Shadow and Internship experiences throughout the region.

Strategic Priority #8 - The three SAU's will continue to invest in and support the integration of 21st Century technology into educational and administrative practices all the while maintaining a close, familial, and personalized approach to education.

Progress - All three School Administrative Units now employ Power School for maintaining contact with parents concerning their learners' progress and Empower for use by learners and learning facilitators as a learning management system. In each SAU, every learner has a technology device to facilitate their learning.