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July 5th, 2007

To: Commissioner of Education, Susan Gendron
From: Heather J. Perry, School Union 60 Superintendent of Schools
Re: Excellence in Education and Definition of High Performing Schools
Cc: Governor John Baldacci
Sen. Doug Smith
Greenville School Committee
John Simko, Greenville Town Manager
Ben Bragdon - Moosehead Messenger
Fran Emmons - Piscataquis Observer
Diana Bowley – Bangor Daily News

Dear Commissioner Gendron,

I have been asked by the Greenville School Committee to write a letter to you, which addresses the Greenville School's consistent high performance and academic excellence over the past years. Unfortunately, due to our small size, we are unable to meet many of the criteria by which the state will be judging it's "High Performing Schools" that will be exempt from penalties if they choose not to become part of any RSU.

Let me begin with the facts:

- GHS has had a 94% rate of sending its graduates from high school on to post secondary education over the past 10 years. We had 100% last year, and from this year's graduating class, 22 out of the total 23 went on to post secondary schools.
- Graduates from GHS that enter post secondary schools average well above a 2.0 GPA as Freshman.
- Nickerson Elementary School, Greenville Middle School, and Greenville High School have NEVER been identified as "Needs Improvement" and have met all AYP requirements as part of NCLB.
- On last year's SAT testing, GHS scored the following:
 - Math – 462 (SS)
 - Reading – 464 (SS)
 - Writing - 480 (SS)

These scores are among the top 20 across the state, competing with schools as large as York High School, and Bangor High School. For a small school with just under 100 students TOTAL in our High School, we believe that these scores are highly competitive.

- Greenville High School was chosen by Newsweek Magazine as 717 out of the top 1,300 high schools across the nation. (only 3 other schools in the state were so honored)
- 4th, 8th, and 11th graders have consistently scored at or above the state average on MEA testing in all subject areas.
- 90% of ALL our High School Students participate in at least one co-curricular or athletic activity. Many times, students participate in multiple activities at the same time.
- 85% of ALL our Middle School Students participate in at least one co-curricular or athletic activity. Many times, students participate in multiple activities at the same time.
- GHS Key Club Members have represented our school at both the National AND International Level.

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The list could continue, but I hope this gives you an indication of just how successful our small school has been over the years, and how successful we continue to strive to be in future years. The Greenville School Committee, and the community of Greenville are uncertain as to how our schools could dramatically

improve the academic performance of our students as a member of a newly formed RSU. We are willing to participate in RSU planning in good faith, but ultimately, the Greenville School Committee and the Citizens of the town of Greenville will choose to do what is best for our children's overall education. As a small, rural, and geographically isolated school system we feel we offer the best educational programs available to our children. Can we improve? Certainly, we strive to improve each year and build upon the success of the previous year. Do we feel we are a "high performing school"? Yes, in fact we do. Will we be able to be designated as such by the Department of Education? More than likely no, due mostly to our small size and geographic isolation, as there is no way we can be defined as "efficient" under the EPS formula.

The Greenville School System has a lot to offer the children of this region. We send students to the college of their choice on a regular basis. A child growing up in our system knows from the beginning, that the only limits placed upon their successes are the limits they place upon themselves, because the schools will offer them the appropriate foundations and opportunities to do whatever they wish to do as adults.

On behalf of the Greenville School Committee, I thank you for your time in reading this letter. We know there is probably little that will be changed as a result of this letter, but we feel we must "blow our own horns" sort to speak as those in other parts of this state will certainly NOT do it for us.

Thank you,

Heather J. Perry,
Superintendent of Schools