

§1464. Collective bargaining

1. Assumption of obligations, duties, liabilities and rights. On the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1, the regional school unit board of directors shall assume all of the obligations, duties, liabilities and rights of the participating school administrative units for all purposes under Title 26, chapter 9-A. The regional school unit is considered a single employer. Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the responsibilities of the regional school unit include:

A. Continued recognition of all bargaining agents that represented any bargaining units of employees who were employed by a participating school administrative unit, pending completion of merger proceedings described in this section; [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

B. Assumption and continued observance of all collective bargaining agreements between such bargaining agents and a participating school administrative unit, which agreements continue in effect for the remainder of their unexpired terms unless the bargaining agent and regional school unit mutually agree otherwise; and [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Collective bargaining for an initial or successor collective bargaining agreement in any bargaining unit in which a collective bargaining agreement is not in effect on the operational date and for any interim agreement that may be required to align expiration dates in a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, as described in this section. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]
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2. Structure of bargaining units. As early as possible after reorganization, all bargaining units must be structured on a regional school unit-wide basis. Bargaining units that existed in the participating school administrative units shall merge in accordance with the procedures and criteria in this section. Merger into regional school unit-wide bargaining units is not subject to approval or disapproval of employees.

A. Merger into regional school unit-wide bargaining units must be completed according to the schedule contained in this section and, except as required by paragraph H, no later than the latest expiration date of any collective bargaining agreement that was in effect on the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 that covered any employees in the merged unit. [PL 2007, c. 566, §1 (AMD).]

B. There must be one unit of teachers and, to the extent they are on the effective date of this section included in bargaining units, other certified professional employees, excluding principals and other administrators. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

C. Any additional bargaining units in a regional school unit must be structured as follows:

(1) In the initial establishment of such units, units must be structured primarily on the basis of the existing pattern of organization, maintaining the grouping of employee classifications into bargaining units that existed prior to the creation of the regional school unit and avoiding conflicts among different bargaining agents to the extent possible; and

(2) In the event of a dispute regarding the classifications to be included within a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the current bargaining agent or agents or the regional school unit may petition the Maine Labor Relations Board to determine the appropriate unit in accordance with this section and Title 26, section 966, subsections 1 and 2. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

D. When there is the same bargaining agent in all bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the units must be merged as of the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1, and the regional school unit shall recognize the bargaining agent as the representative of the merged unit. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

E. When all bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit are represented by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be merged as of the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1. The identity of the single affiliate that will be designated the bargaining agent for the merged unit must be selected by the existing bargaining agents and the state labor organization. Upon completion of the merger and designation of the bargaining agent and notification by the state labor organization to the regional school unit, the regional school unit shall recognize the designated bargaining agent as the representative of employees in the merged unit. If necessary, the parties will then execute a written amendment to any collective bargaining agreement then in effect to change the name of the bargaining agent to reflect the merger.

Prior to the operational date of the regional school unit, the single affiliate that is designated as the bargaining agent for the merged unit shall take measures necessary to prepare to meet its obligations as the bargaining agent on and after the operational date pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A, including, but not limited to, the authority and duty to negotiate a successor collective bargaining agreement that will take effect on or after the operational date. Until the operational date of the regional school unit, each existing bargaining agent retains all other authority, duties and obligations of the bargaining agent of the employees of the school administrative unit pursuant to Title 26, chapter 9-A. [PL 2009, c. 107, §3 (AMD).]

F. When there are bargaining units that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit in which there are employees who are not represented by any bargaining agent and other employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization, the units must be merged as of the operational date pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 as long as a majority of employees who compose the merged unit were represented by the bargaining agent prior to the merger. The procedures for merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph E must be followed if applicable. If prior to the merger a bargaining agent did not represent a majority of employees who compose the merged unit, a bargaining agent election must be conducted by the Maine Labor Relations Board pursuant to paragraph H, except that the petition for an election must be filed not more than 90 days prior to the expiration date of the agreement having the latest expiration date among the bargaining units that will be merged into the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit. [PL 2007, c. 566, §2 (AMD).]

G. When there are unexpired collective bargaining agreements with different expiration dates in the merged bargaining units described in paragraphs D, E and F, all contracts must be honored to their expiration dates unless mutually agreed to otherwise by the public employer and the bargaining agent. Collective bargaining agreements must be bargained on an interim basis in any merged bargaining unit so that all collective bargaining agreements expire on the same date. [PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

H. When bargaining units with different bargaining agents must be merged into a single regional school unit-wide bargaining unit pursuant to this section, the bargaining agent of the merged bargaining unit must be selected in accordance with Title 26, section 967 except as modified in this section.

(1) A petition for an election to determine the bargaining agent must be filed with the Maine Labor Relations Board by any of the current bargaining agents or the regional school unit.

(2) The petition must be filed not more than 90 days prior to the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1.

(3) The election ballot may contain only the names of the bargaining agents of bargaining units that will be merged into the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit and the choice of "no

representative," but no other choices. No showing of interest is required from any such bargaining agent other than its current status as representative.

(4) The obligation to bargain with existing bargaining agents continues from the operational date established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 until the determination of the bargaining agent of the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit under this section; but in no event may any collective bargaining agreement that is executed after the operational date extend beyond the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit.

(5) The Maine Labor Relations Board shall expedite to the extent practicable all petitions for determination of the bargaining agent in the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit filed pursuant to this section.

(6) The bargaining units must be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as of the date of certification of the results of the election by the Maine Labor Relations Board or the expiration of the collective bargaining agreements in the unit, whichever occurs later.

(7) Until the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit, existing bargaining agents shall continue to represent the bargaining units that they represented on the day prior to the operational date of the regional school unit. If necessary, each bargaining agent and the regional school unit must negotiate an interim collective bargaining agreement to expire on the first August 31st occurring after the 3rd anniversary date of the operational date of the regional school unit.

(8) When there are 2 or more bargaining units in which there are employees who are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization that will be merged into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit with one or more other bargaining units pursuant to the election procedures described in this paragraph, the bargaining units that are represented either by the same bargaining agent or by separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization must merge as of the operational date. The procedures for merger of separate local affiliates of the same state labor organization described in paragraph E must be followed if applicable. [PL 2009, c. 580, §6 (AMD).]

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3. Agent to engage in collective bargaining. After the merger of bargaining units into a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the bargaining agent of a regional school unit-wide bargaining unit and the regional school unit shall engage in collective bargaining for a collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit. In the collective bargaining agreement for each regional school unit-wide bargaining unit, the employment relations, policies, practices, salary schedules, hours and working conditions throughout the regional school unit must be made uniform and consistent as soon as practicable.

In the event that the parties are unable to agree upon an initial regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement, the parties must use the dispute resolution procedures pursuant to Title 26, section 965 to resolve their differences.

[PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW).]

4. Application of collective bargaining agreements. On or after the operational date of a regional school unit established pursuant to section 1463, subsection 1 but before the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3, the wages, hours and working conditions of an employee of the regional school unit who is in a bargaining unit and who is reassigned to a different position that is or, upon the completion of the merger of bargaining units, will be included in the same regional school unit-wide bargaining unit are determined by the terms of the existing collective bargaining

agreement that applies to the position to which the employee is reassigned, except as provided in this subsection.

A. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement would cause a reduction in the employee's wage or salary rate, the employee's wage or salary rate must be maintained at the rate the employee was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3 or the applicable collective bargaining agreement or any interim successor agreement requires a higher wage or salary rate for the employee, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

B. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement would cause a reduction in the amount that is paid by the regional school unit for premiums for health insurance for the employee and the employee's dependents, the regional school unit's payment must be maintained at the amount that was paid immediately prior to the reassignment until the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3 or the applicable collective bargaining agreement or any interim successor agreement requires a higher payment, whichever occurs sooner. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

C. If the application of the existing collective bargaining agreement provides for coverage under a different health insurance plan, the employee may elect to retain coverage under the health insurance plan in which the employee was enrolled immediately prior to reassignment if the eligibility provisions of the plan permit until the completion of negotiations for a single regional school unit-wide collective bargaining agreement for the regional school unit-wide bargaining unit as described in subsection 3. [PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

[PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (NEW).]

5. Bargaining units of employees of school unions. For purposes of section 1463, subsection 4 and this subsection, a school union that employed public employees, within the meaning of Title 26, section 962, subsection 6, who were represented by a bargaining agent on the day prior to the operational date of a regional school unit board of directors is considered to be a school administrative unit.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §7 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2007, c. 240, Pt. XXXX, §13 (NEW). PL 2007, c. 566, §§1-3 (AMD). PL 2007, c. 668, §6 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 107, §§3, 4 (AMD). PL 2009, c. 580, §§6, 7 (AMD).

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