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## New Educational Partnership Shares Responsibility, Resources to Improve K-12 Teaching and Learning

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# COLLEGE OF EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

## *Selected News Releases*

### **New Educational Partnership Shares Responsibility, Resources to Improve K-12 Teaching and Learning**

ORONO, Maine -- A new partnership forged on common goals and needs unites the University of Maine College of Education and Human Development and seven area school systems in a commitment to improve teaching and learning by bridging the gap between educational theory and classroom practice. The collaborative network, based on sharing and strengthening resources and expertise, links all areas of teacher preparation and continuing development.

Officially established in a June 14 signing ceremony, the Penobscot River Educational Partnership: A Professional Development Network (PREP: PDN), represents the merger of two area groups of educational leaders with similar and often overlapping school improvement objectives. The new, common-goal partnership is the result of two years of cooperative work to create the structure, programs, commitment and flexibility to challenge traditional educational strategies and address future challenges

PREP: PDN schools and districts include: Brewer; Bucksport; Old Town; SAD 22 (Hampden, Newburgh, Winterport); Union 87 (Orono, Veazie); Union 90 (Alton, Bradley, Greenbush, Milford); the Indian Island School; and the UMaine College of Education and Human Development.

Union 90 Superintendent A. Keith Ober, who was among the school chiefs signing the agreement, described the initiative as the most "extensive level of partnering" and "most involvement between public schools and a university" he has seen in his educational career.

The partnership's primary purpose is to enhance the learning of K-12 students by continually improving teaching and related aspects of the educational experience. To attain their goal, members have committed to a collaborative process that, among other initiatives, calls for:

- continuous assessment of learning
- monitoring, evaluating and adapting educational innovations
- providing continuing professional development of practicing teachers
- guiding the professional development of the next generation of teachers
- conducting systemic inquiry and research to address critical issues of teaching and learning

The Network schools provide a supportive base and realistic setting for UMaine Education majors to do field experiences and student teaching and to apply course theory in the classroom, under the guidance of experienced teachers and University faculty who teach together and separately, both at the schools and on campus.

The partnership structure is framed around a steering council, a community advisory forum and four committees — Systematic Inquiry and Research, Professional Development, Teacher Preparation, and Resources and Support.

A core group of more than 40 university/public school faculty and administrators has been actively involved in the planning and organizational process. Already, the Network has piloted professional development and other programs, surveyed teachers about needs and current practice, applied for grants, sponsored seminars on timely topics such as curriculum and assessment, shared the work of a technology consultant, sponsored a research conference and published three editions of a newsletter, among other collaborations.

The PREP: PDN will continue its work through the summer and launch the new school year at its September 20 meeting.

### **Media Note:**

For more information about the Penobscot River Educational Partnership: A Professional Development Network and its goals, contact:

- UMaine College of Education and Human Development: Robert A. Cobb, Dean, 581-2441; Walter J. Harris, Associate Dean, 581-2433
- Brewer: Allan G. Snell, Superintendent, 989-3160
- Bucksport: Marc A. Curtis, Superintendent, 469-7311
- Indian Island School: Sr. Janet Campbell, Principal, 827-4285
- Old Town: Owen Maurais, Superintendent, 827-7171
- SAD 22: Richard A. Lyons, Superintendent, 862-3255
- Union 87: Thomas H. Perry, Superintendent, 866-5521
- Union 90: A. Keith Ober, Superintendent, 827-8061

**June 15, 1999**

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