

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- MSAD #17

Contact Information:

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Date Plan Submitted by SAU: November 28, 2007

The intent to submit an alternative plan has been approved by the Commissioner in the approval of the Notice of Intent?

YES NO

(If NO, please explain.)

Initial Receipt Revision (Version # _____)

Received: 11/29/07

Initial Review: 11/29/07

Review Completed: / /

Commissioner Response

Approved Revise & Return

Returned to SAU: / /

Revisions due to Department: / /

Initial Plan Received (if revision): / /

Alternative Plan Cover Sheet

(Please attach Alternative Plan as Exhibit A)

Part I - General Information				
Item	Complete	In Progress	Not Yet Started	Need Assistance ¹
Plan addresses how the SAU will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that projected expenditures of RSU in fiscal 2008-2009 for the following areas will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.				
system administration	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
special education	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
facilities and maintenance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plan addresses how cost savings will be achieved in fiscal 2008-2009 for the above four areas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part II - Plan Requirements				
Enrollment meets requirements (2,500 except where circumstances justify an exception)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
When viewed in conjunction with surrounding proposed units, may not result in one or more municipalities being denied the option to join an RSU	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Includes at least one publicly supported high school	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consistent with policies set forth in section 1451	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of teachers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No displacement of students	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No closures of schools existing or operating during school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted under section 1512	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Part III - Collaborative Agreements				
			Yes	No
Does your plan currently include information/documentation on collaborative agreements? <i>(not required, but encouraged)</i>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

¹ Please explain what assistance you need to complete this portion of your plan, and state from whom you need assistance, on the next page.

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

SAU Submitting: MSAD #17

Contact Information: Dr. Mark Eastman, Superintendent of Schools
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Oxford, ME 04270
207-743-8972 207-743-2878 (fax)

Date Submitted by SAU: November 30, 2007

POLICY OBJECTIVES

It is declared the policy of the State to provide sufficient resources to support the reorganization of school administrative units into regional, state-approved units of school administration to provide:

1. Opportunity. Equitable educational opportunity for all students to demonstrate achievement of the content standards of the State's system of learning results established in section 6209;

2. Programs. Rigorous academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209 and that prepare students for college, careers and citizenship;

3. Delivery. Uniformity in the delivery of academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209;

4. Tax rates. A greater uniformity of tax rates for the support of schools;

5. Sustainability. The efficient use of limited resources in order to achieve long-term sustainability and predictability in the support of public schools;

6. Public funds. Effective use of the public funds expended for the support of public schools by means of:

A. The creation of cost-efficient organizational structures; and

B. Administrative structures and efficiencies that permit the organized and regular delivery of uniform state-sponsored professional development programs to promote coherence and consistency in the understanding and application of the State's standards-based system for continuous improvement in student achievement;

7. School choice. The preservation of opportunities for choice of schools;

and

8. **Services.** The maximization of opportunities to deliver services that can more effectively be provided in larger districts than from within smaller units or individual schools.

Regional school units shall provide kindergarten to grade 12 public education, in accordance with Title 20-A, and shall develop and implement policies that address efficiencies in administration, educational programming and the sharing of community resources for the continuous improvement of student achievement and the preparation of students for college, careers and citizenship.

PARAMETERS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

In order for the plan to be approved by the Commissioner, the governing bodies of school administrative units shall work within the following parameters.

1. The proposed regional school unit must serve not fewer than 2,500 students, except where circumstances relating to the following factors justify an exception:

- (a) Geography, including physical proximity and the size of the current school administrative unit;
- (b) Demographics, including student enrollment trends and the composition and nature of communities in the regional school unit;
- (c) Economics, including existing collaborations to be preserved or enhanced and opportunities to deliver commodities and services to be maximized;
- (d) Transportation;
- (e) Population density; or
- (f) Other unique circumstances including the need to preserve existing or developing relationships, meet the needs of students, maximize educational opportunities for students and ensure equitable access to rigorous programs for all students.

When circumstances justify an exception to the size requirement of 2,500 students, the unit must serve as close to 2,500 students as possible and in no case, except for coastal islands and schools operated by tribal school committees, may it serve fewer than 1,200

students.

2. The plan must provide comprehensive programming for all students from kindergarten to grade 12 and must include at least one publicly supported secondary school.
3. The plan must be consistent with the **POLICY OBJECTIVES** set forth above.
4. The plan may not displace teachers or students or close any schools existing and operating during the school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted as follows:

20-A MRSA

§ 1511. Supermajority vote to close school in the regional school unit

A school operated within the regional school unit may not be closed unless closure of the school is approved at a regular or special meeting of the regional school unit board by an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the elected membership or voting power of the regional school unit board.

§ 1512. Closing school

1. Vote; cost of election. A school in a member municipality of a regional school unit may not be closed unless the voters in the member municipality vote on the article in accordance with the referendum procedure set forth in this chapter.

"Article: Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to close
..... (name of school)?"

Yes No

The additional cost of keeping the school open has been estimated by the regional school unit board to be \$"

The election must be conducted within that member municipality only, pursuant to department rule, and the costs of the election are borne by the regional school unit.

2. Expense of keeping the school open. If the voters vote by a majority vote to keep the school open, the member municipality is liable for some additional expense for actual local operating costs and transportation operating costs as defined in section 15672. The determination of costs is subject to the approval of the commissioner. The cost to be borne by the municipality voting to keep a school open is the amount that would be saved if the school were closed. Any additional costs that must be borne by the member municipality must be part of the article presented to the voters at the meeting to determine whether the school should remain open.

3. Costs and procedures during subsequent years. During any year subsequent to the year during which a school remains open contrary to the regional school unit board's vote to close that school as a result of a municipal referendum, the school will be open without any additional cost to the municipality except as described in paragraphs A and B.

A. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality again vote to keep the school open, as described in this subsection, then the school will remain open and the member municipality will be obligated to pay the additional costs as described in subsection 2.

B. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality fail to vote to keep the school open, then the school is closed. In this event, the school may be reopened only if the regional school unit board votes to reopen the school.

4. Definition of school closing. For purposes of this section, a school closing is any action by the regional school unit board that has the effect of providing no instruction for any students at that school.

5. Method of payment by liable municipality. If a municipality is liable for additional expenses as determined in subsection 3, paragraph A, then the amount of this additional expense must be subtracted from the regional school unit budget before each member municipality's assessment is computed. This additional expense must be paid by the

member municipality that is liable in equal monthly amounts, unless the regional school unit and that member municipality mutually agree to another method of payment.

6. Multiple municipalities. If a school proposed for closure is an elementary school that serves students from more than one municipality, the article set forth in subsection 1 must be submitted to the voters in each of the municipalities that sent all elementary students from that municipality to the school. If the article is approved by a majority of the voters in each of the municipalities, the school is not closed and the municipalities share in the costs under this section in the same proportion as they share the current operating costs of the school.

REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

1. The intent to submit an alternative plan has been approved by the Commissioner in the approval of the Notice of Intent.

An alternative plan may be submitted only by a unit that is:

- (1) An offshore island;
- (2) A school operated by a tribal school committee pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30, section 6214;
- (3) A school administrative unit that serves more than 2,500 students, or 1,200 students where circumstances justify an exception to the requirement of 2,500 students under XXXX-36, subsection 6, paragraph A, where expansion of the unit would be inconsistent with the policies set forth in Title 20-A, section 1451; or
- (4) A school administrative unit that is designated as an efficient, high-performing district. For purposes of this subparagraph, a school administrative unit is designated an "efficient, high-performing district" if:
 - (a) It contains at least 3 schools identified as "higher performing" in the May 2007 Maine Education Policy Research Institute report "The Identification of Higher and Lower Performing Maine Schools"; and
 - (b) Its reported 2005-2006 per-pupil expenditures for system administration represent less than 4% of its total per-pupil expenditures.

MSAD #17's Letter of Intent to submit an Alternative Plan was approved by Commissioner Susan A. Gendron on September 13, 2007. The Commissioner requested continued exploration with MSAD #39.

Commissioner Gendron held a meeting on October 16th with stakeholders from both school systems. The barriers to consolidated of the two school systems were discussed. The major barriers identified were:

1. ***Financial***
 - a. ***Cost Sharing - eight towns in MSAD #17 would face significant tax increases and three towns in MSAD #39 would see significant decreases under the required cost sharing formula (\$639,000)***
 - b. ***Contract Alignment - \$200,000 - \$300,000 in increased cost to the RSU to bring SAD #39 and SAD #17 contracts into alignment***
 - c. ***Cost Savings - unable to identify sufficient cost savings to offset the increases***
2. ***Timeline***
 - a. ***Developing a Regional Planning Committee and addressing the various components of a regional plan would be impossible to complete by December 1, 2007 even if financial issues could be addressed***

b. *Since the Commissioner recommended that SAD #39 pursue other partnerships, it complicated discussions with our district*

3. **Penalties**

- a. *Under current law, we would not be subject to penalties from DOE if we stand alone and file an Alternative Plan*
- b. *If we attempt consolidation and the voters reject the plan, we would be subject to significant financial penalties*

Based on these barriers, the MSAD #17 Board of Directors voted on November 19th to submit an Alternative Plan.

2. The alternative plan must address how the SAU will reorganize administrative functions, duties and non-instructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of the SAU in FY 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program. **Please describe.**

MSAD #17 is efficiently organized and operated to maximize the resources spent on instruction and ease the tax burden on the citizens.

Financial Statistics

MSAD #17 is below state average expenditures in almost every controllable category except instruction and transportation.

Per pupil expenditures by category:

	State Average	SAD #17	Over(Under) State Ave.
Regular / Technical Instruction	\$ 4,188.05	\$ 4,201.43	\$ 13.38
Special Education	\$ 1,277.29	\$ 660.76	\$ (616.53)
Other Instruction	\$ 192.82	\$ 141.65	\$ (51.17)
Support Services	\$ 595.99	\$ 553.53	\$ (42.46)
System Administration	\$ 371.66	\$ 200.68	\$ (170.98)
School Administration	\$ 492.69	\$ 476.67	\$ (16.02)
Transportation	\$ 503.92	\$ 614.30	\$ 110.38
Facilities Maintenance	\$ 1,092.48	\$ 859.31	\$ (233.17)
Debt Service	\$ 597.90	\$ 789.46	\$ 191.56
Other	\$ 43.28	\$ -	\$ (43.28)
Total	\$ 9,356.08	\$ 8,497.79	\$ (858.29)

- *MSAD #17 is \$590,689 below EPS funding levels*
- *MSAD #17 ranks 106 out of 111 K-12 school systems in per pupil spending*
- *96% of school systems in the state spend more dollars per student*

System Administration

Since MSAD #17 is significantly below EPS levels in System Administration (\$440,000 – 34%), the district does not plan to reduce services or reorganize. The administration, however, will continue to look for efficiencies in the delivery of services and in purchasing procedures.

The state mandated MEDMS accounting systems has created a significant data entry burden in our business office. This along with other state mandated reports are impeding our ability to operate efficiently.

Special Education

MSAD #17 intends to continue to identify and serve our special education students as required by state and federal laws. The district has an identification rate of 13% which is below the state EPS target of 15% and significantly lower than state averages.

Facilities & Maintenance

Our school system is 5% below EPS funding levels in facilities and maintenance. Our school board and administration believe that proper care of our facilities protects the district's and the state's investment. The district intends to continue with our capital improvement /renewal plan. We will continue to look for efficiencies.

Despite an energy retrofit project that is reducing our consumption of energy by 28%, we are facing significant increased costs in fuel oil and electricity, which will make it difficult to operate at the reduced level of funding in this area.

Transportation

The district will be forming and Transportation Study Committee to identify areas where increased efficiencies can be achieved. The district has already implemented a routing software system.

We believe that the current EPS funding model is flawed in that it does not recognize the need to operate two bus runs in very large regional school systems. We would need at least 15 more buses and bus drivers in order to transport all our students to school at the same time. The implications of switching to one bus run will be studied by the committee.

COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

Collaborative agreements are agreements to share the responsibility for and cost of the delivery of certain administrative, instructional and non-instructional functions. "Collaborative agreements" includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Shared purchasing or contract agreements;
- B. Agreements for shared staff or staff training;
- C. Agreements to share technology or technology support;
- D. Agreements to provide special education programs and support services;
- E. Agreements to share accounting, payroll and financial management services;
- F. Agreements to coordinate transportation routing and vehicle maintenance;
- G. Agreements to share food service planning and purchasing; and
- H. Agreements to coordinate energy and facilities management.

A school administrative unit may enter into collaborative agreements with other school administrative units and, whenever possible, with local and county governments and State Government, to achieve efficiencies and reduce costs in the delivery of administrative, instructional and non-instructional functions.

A collaborative agreement between 2 or more previous education units may remain in effect after July 1, 2008. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, collaborative agreements in existence on the effective date of this section may be extended or modified by the parties to the collaborative agreement.

Please describe any collaborative agreements proposed by the SAU.

MSAD #17 currently collaborates with MSAD #39 in the following areas:

- ***MVR#11 serves students from MSAD #17 and MSAD #39***
- ***MSAD #39 half time superintendent also serves as MSAD #17 half time assistant superintendent***
- ***Adult Education program serves both MSAD #17 and MSAD #39***
- ***Purchasing***

- **Staff Development**
- **The district intends to continue and expand these collaborations unless the reorganization law forces SAD #39 to withdraw from collaborations with SAD #17**

DOE USE ONLY: Date Received: _____
DOE USE ONLY: Date Reviewed/Approved _____
DOE USE ONLY: Date of Commissioner Response re: Approval _____
DOE USE ONLY: Date Returned to SAU for Revisions _____
DOE USE ONLY: Due Date for Revisions from SAU _____
DOE USE ONLY: Date Revisions Reviewed/Approved _____
DOE USE ONLY: Date of Commissioner Response re: Revised Plan _____