

REC'D NOV 30 2007

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- M.S.A.D. #49

Contact Information:

Name: Dean Baker
Address: M.S.A.D. #49
8 School Street
Fairfield, ME 04937
Telephone: 207-453-4200 ext. 102
email: dbaker@msad49.org

Date Plan Submitted by SAU: November 30, 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 / 30 / 07
Initial Review: 11 / 30 / 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)

Plan Requirements				
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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
facilities and maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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"/>
Parameters for Plan Development				
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"/>
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.

MSAD #49 Alternative Plan Report

Current Expenditures

The 2007-08 budget in MSAD #49 reflects the high priority of student services and instruction. The chart below details the comparison of EPS and local budget amounts for each of the four areas specified in the re-organization plan. We have put great effort into aligning the new chart of accounts, as we understood them, with the district's existing budget structure under the federal Handbook II Revised. We believe that we are on schedule to comply with the State of Maine revisions for 2008-09, to the extent that State guidance has been articulated to date. That said, we expect further refinement in response to ongoing guidance from the State.

Funding Comparison

MSAD #49 2007-2008

	<u>EPS Amount *</u>	<u>Budgeted</u>	<u>Variance</u>
Special Education	2,377,938	3,127,809	749,871
Operations/Maintenance	2,708,402	2,964,843	256,441
District Administration/Support	952,933	751,343	-201,590
Transportation	** 930,069	** 1,181,285	251,216

* EPS Amount included both State and Local amounts

** Does not include bus purchases

Analysis of Expenditures

An analysis of the expenditure levels shows that M.S.A.D. #49 operates below the EPS target for district administration in 2007-08. Special Education costs show the widest variance with EPS targets, of \$749,871 beyond the state allocation. Local expenditures reflect the needs identified in the individual education plans of our students. Our district hosts students with significant needs and lower than average economic and social service resources. The district has identified 416 students (17% of total enrollment) who qualify for special education services.

The Goodwill-Hinckley School also receives services through the district special education budget. For instance, we employ a 3/5 time coordinator for state-agency clients. Her responsibilities include monitoring approximately 85 Hinckley students and their transition plans through a year. The great preponderance of special education expenditures go directly to student services, including eight placements out of district. Administrative costs for special education, as for all areas in M.S.A.D. #49, are already minimal.

Most of the school building in M.S.A.D. #49 have reached the half century mark. Aside from a locally and privately funded fine arts center at Lawrence Junior-Senior High Schools, our newest school is nearly 20 years old. Two elementary schools, serving Albion and Clinton, incorporate sections originally intended to be temporary construction. Our main facilities, the junior-senior high schools, were built in 1974 and 1958 respectively. While surrounding districts have erected new construction or undertaken major renovation, this district has invested in preventative maintenance to avoid the cost of new buildings. One architect described our facilities as “old buildings that are maintained to death.” The offset to higher maintenance/operations costs can be seen in declining debt service over the last several years.

District voters have supported transportation funding at a level \$251,216 beyond the EPS allocation for 2007-08. Our four communities bus all secondary students to a centralized school complex. The district operates two complete bussing cycles daily at the elementary and secondary levels. The system transports elementary students to four buildings, with the towns of Benton and Fairfield together in a pre-K and kindergarten building and a school housing grades one through six. Many students reside in areas of low population density, which increases the ratio of miles traveled per student. The school board has also responded to public concerns for student safety by providing bus routes and pick-up sites close to students’ houses. The district also supports field trips embedded in the curriculum, co-curricular transportation and a late bus for secondary students. The miles traveled to create educational opportunities require funding beyond the single daily round trip recognized under EPS.

Plans to Control Expenditures

M.S.A.D. #49 operates with a very cost effective district administration. That level of frugality has already created concerns about the lack of district staff to support instructional improvement and to extend increases in student achievement in the elementary grades into the junior-senior high school levels. Given that this district operates with \$201,590 less in district administration than the 2007-08 EPS allocation, it is obvious that we already operate in a very lean and efficient manner. M.S.A.D. #49 also participates in collaborative activities to improve the quality of education while controlling costs. For example, the Kennebec Alliance coordinates joint summer school administration and reduces overhead through joint training in all sectors and joint purchasing of school supplies, hot lunch, copiers and custodial supplies. We expect to continue with current minimal, yet effectively focused, staffing and funding levels. Over the last three years the school board has reduced local assessments to our municipalities by \$1,571,261. Despite reductions in local assessments this district increased resources going directly to instruction by \$1,334,236.

Special education costs flow directly from the collective requirements of individualized programs for students identified under the criteria of I.D.E.A. Although we are very cost conscious, we must comply with the mandated identification of and service for students with disabilities. The district will review case loads of all staff and configuration of delivery to avoid duplication of services or under utilization of staff. A few out-of-district placements can cause disproportionate expenses. For example, in 2007-08 five such placements accounted for \$227,567. We plan, if possible, to reduce the number of aids assigned to individual students by careful matching of student needs with staff resources. Reductions through normal staff attrition

would reduce the unnecessary dislocation and unproductive cost of unemployment compensation. At this point, we can commit to a vigorous review process, but we cannot guarantee reduction of costs for special education.

Our plans to limit or reduce funding for buildings and maintenance will be severely challenged by ongoing increases in energy costs. The district is in the process of its third round of projects to reduce energy consumption and retrofitting lighting and heating wherever new technology would lower costs. We have been very aggressive in implementing cost avoidance projects and we will continue. Our contract for electrical power nearly doubled this year upon the expiration of our previous agreement. Although the terms are still at rates well below the general market, cost avoidance appears for more realistic than cost reduction.

Transportation captures the dilemma facing Maine schools in their efforts to reduce costs. In order to control expenses we will have to reduce the level of service provided. Last year the school board adopted a revised transportation policy that restricts service to consolidated routes. The district will now only transport over paved public roads and the number of stops may be reduced in order to lesson the amount of time to complete bus runs. This change is estimated to save up to \$15,000, all other variables remaining constant. We also plan to continue collaboration with the members of the Kennebec Alliance in training of drivers. We will also continue partnerships with municipalities in the district for vehicle fuel. Towns will avoid cost by purchasing gas and diesel from M.S.A.D. #49 at lower rates than any other available to them. The Town of Fairfield reciprocates by plowing certain large, central parking lots, thereby helping to control operations expenses for the schools. Because we have already taken cooperative efforts to avoid costs, the impact on 2008-09 will not be as obvious as it would have been in the absence of current practices. M.S.A.D. #49 recently purchased Edulog software to maximize efficiency in bus routes and scheduling. We also plan to study participation in software made available through the State if it becomes available. Recent steep increases in fuel costs jeopardize efforts to reduce the transportation budget, forcing a 40% increase from last year.

This school district welcomes ideas for cost containment and procedures that would improve efficiency.

M.S.A.D. #49

Board of Directors

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Clinton: Janice Chesley
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Fairfield: Lois Cooper
Stew Kinley
Richard Spear

Facilitator

Charlie Richardson

Superintendent

Dean Baker

Maine School Administrative District No. 49

Office of the Superintendent of Schools

8 School Street
Fairfield ME 04937
207-453-4200

August 6, 2007

Superintendent Elaine Miller
School Union #52 Superintendent's Office
20 Dean Street
Winslow, ME 04901

Dear Superintendent Miller:

I am writing to follow up our telephone conversation of early last week. MSAD 49 would like to know if the Winslow School District is interested in exploring the possibility of consolidation.

I would appreciate receiving your written response as soon as possible. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,



Dean P. Baker
Superintendent of Schools

SCHOOL UNION 52

China-Vassalboro-Winslow

Elaine B. Miller
Superintendent of Schools

Gary N. Smith
Director of Business

Nora F. Murray
Director of Curriculum,
Instruction and Assessment

20 Dean Street
Winslow, ME 04901-6740

Telephone: (207) 872-1960
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www.su52.org

August 9, 2007

Dean P. Baker
Superintendent of Schools
MSAD #49
8 School Street
Fairfield, ME 04937

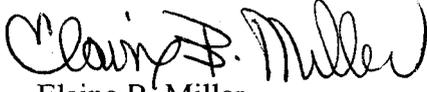
Dear Dr. Baker,

This letter is in response to your letter dated August 6, 2007 requesting Winslow School Department's interest in exploring the possibility of working in partnership on consolidation with MSAD #49. The towns of Winslow, China and Vassalboro are currently exploring partnerships with Union 133 and Waterville.

We hope to continue our successful partnership with the Kennebec Alliance.

If you have any questions, please feel free to give me a call at 872-1960.

Sincerely,


Elaine B. Miller
Superintendent

/lw

