

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- RSU/MSAD #37

Contact Information:

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Date Plan Submitted by SAU: February 2, 2011

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.)

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 2011-2012 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 2011-2012 for the above four areas.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input 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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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

Exceptions to 2,500 minimum

Actual number of students for which the SAU is fiscally responsible (use Oct 1, 2006 numbers) : **800**

Exception	Exception Claimed in Plan	Documentation Provided? (Please attach as Exhibit B)	
		Yes	No
Geography			
Demographics			
Economics			
Transportation			
Population Density			
Other Unique Circumstances	X	X	

Assistance Needs –

Please use this section to describe your needs for assistance and from whom you need assistance.

Law Reference/Required Element	Explanation of your assistance need	Assistance needed from whom?

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

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Contact Information: Ronald C. Ramsay, Superintendent of Schools
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E-mail: rramsay@msad37.org
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DUE DILIGENCE

The RSU/MSAD #37 Board of Directors has proceeded with due diligence in an effort to find partners to reorganize with, and we feel we have exhausted all reorganization efforts. The district has met with SAUs in our area several times, including Machias, Union 96, and Jonesport/Beals-Moosabec CSD, yet we have been unsuccessful in forming any type of consolidated units with them. In every case, our school board voted to support reorganization with these units, while they voted against it.

On November 4, 2008, a referendum was conducted in MSAD #37, and citizens in our communities voted in the affirmative to join an RSU with Jonesport/Beals-Moosabec CSD; however, those towns voted in the negative. Subsequent meetings were held to look into forming an AOS or RSU, but to no avail.

Below is a brief history of our reorganization efforts:

- We started several years ago when we looked at Machias in an attempt to form a Comprehensive High School/Vocational Program, for which we had the state's full support. Machias chose to go a different direction and is now part of AOS #96.
- June 27, 2007: SAD 37 School Board authorized sending a letter to Union 102 (Machias area), Union 96 (Steuben, Sullivan area), and Jonesport / Beals regarding creating an RSU.
- August 29, 2007: SAD 37 School Board authorized the Superintendent to submit a letter of intent to the Commissioner for an RSU.
- November 8, 2007: SAD 37 School Board authorized the Superintendent to sign the Reorganization Plan to submit to the state for SAD 37, Jonesport / Beals, Beddington and Deblois.
- August 27, 2008: SAD 37 School Board authorized the submission of RSU plan for SAD 37, Jonesport / Beals, Beddington and Deblois.
- November 4, 2008: Referendum vote on RSU. SAD 37 and Deblois citizens voted yes. Jonesport / Beals and Beddington voted no.
- RPC began planning for an AOS with Jonesport / Beals, Beddington and Deblois and disbanded prior to the referendum on changing the reorganization law in Nov. 2009
- September 2010: RPC recreated with some new and veteran members
- October 5, 2010: Reorganization Planning Committee voted to stop action. It is not profitable for Jonesport and Beals to reorganize with SAD #37

While we have been unsuccessful in consolidating with others, RSU/MSAD #37 has exerted a great amount of time and effort to find and develop efficiencies in the operations of the district in order to become a more sustainable school unit. The bullets below address actions the district has taken to meet these goals:

- Budget reductions: From \$8,568,405 (08-09) to \$7,883,725 (10-11), \$684,680 reduction
- Closed Columbia Falls Elementary School in 09-10
- Reduced teaching force by 7 teachers in 10-11
- Reduced from 5 full time elementary principals to 1.29
- Reduced from 2 full time High School Administrators to 1.5
- Reduced central office staff by one assistant superintendent and .5 receptionist
- Reduced from 45 elementary classroom teachers to 28
- Total staff reductions include 28 elementary, 9.5 high school, and 2.5 central office positions, for a total of 40 positions
- Met with Union #102/Moosabec CSD superintendent to look at possible partnerships.
- Collaborated with Union #102/Moosabec CSD and Machias to share bus drivers in shortage situations.
- Replaced all gymnasium lighting in our five schools with energy efficient lights.
- Created efficiencies in our hot lunch program, resulting in a decrease of \$10,000 in local contribution to the program and another estimated decrease of at least the same amount for next year.
- Combined/eliminated some bus runs.
- Contracted with outside energy contractor (Patriot Energy) to bulk purchase our electricity needs.

Adopted budgets for RSU/MSAD #37 over the last four years are as follows, showing the effort to reduce expenditures:

FY 08	\$8,392,875
FY 09	\$8,568,405
FY 10	\$8,468,405
FY 11	\$7,883,725

RSU/MSAD #37 reduced its budget by \$584,680 for the current year, but still saw local taxation increase by \$614,000 and state allocation decrease by over \$750,000. Due to the fact that the educational funding formula bases a large percent of its state contribution to school units on valuation, RSU/MSAD #37 has been one of the SAUs that has felt the greatest negative financial impact. Therefore, we continue to work with less state contribution. This situation only gets worse when you realize that Washington County is the most economically depressed area in the state, and yet hit hard financially in state contributions for education. To add a penalty for non-conformity to this is extremely troubling for the district. RSU/MSAD #37 has pursued due diligence in an effort to meet the Public Law, Chapter 240, part XXXX, as enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature as well as adjustments made to this law. We have exhausted all possible geographical, non-conforming units to consolidate with.

The budgeted figures shown below are consistent with the district's efforts to become more efficient and reduce operating costs, with the exception of the transportation department. We continue to look at ways to be more efficient, but factors beyond our control, such as the wide geographic area represented by our district and the rising costs of fuel, have impacted the transportation budget.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS:

System Administration (Supt./Office Personnel)			
FY08 Budget	FY09 Budget	FY10 Budget	FY11 Budget
\$284,140	\$283,905	\$279,195	\$278,575

Administrative services to the district are provided by a small central office staff, including the Superintendent, Administrative Assistant, Bookkeeper, and half-time Receptionist. In addition to the standard responsibilities of a central office, the Superintendent and office staff manage fiscal administration of all federal and state grants, the adult education program, and the food service program.

We have reduced our central office staff in recent years by eliminating the following positions: Assistant to the Superintendent, half of the Receptionist position, and the Curriculum Coordinator, with the Superintendent and Administrative Assistant picking up the duties associated with them.

A new chart of accounts has been implemented, in line with state requirements.

We are looking at additional reductions for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Facilities and Maintenance			
FY08 Budget	FY09 Budget	FY10 Budget	FY11 Budget
\$1,485,239	\$1,559,700	\$1,405,371	\$1,291,508

We have increased our efforts in energy efficiency through a grant from Efficiency of Maine, through which we were able to invest in a lighting project to retrofit all of our gymnasiums (5 total) with energy efficient lighting.

An energy audit and calibration of our HVAC system was performed to control costs and ensure savings in our heating costs.

We have contracted with Patriot Energy to bulk purchase our electricity for the district.

Through the closing of the Columbia Falls Elementary School we were able to eliminate one full-time and one part-time custodian, as well as eliminating all of the Facility and Maintenance costs at that location.

With the closure of the Columbia Falls School, we have consolidated our elementary students into four schools vs. five.

Transportation			
FY08 Budget	FY09 Budget	FY10 Budget	FY11 Budget
\$606,690	\$568,352	\$573,980	\$597,585

We have been collaborating with Union #102/Moosabec CSD and Machias to share bus drivers in shortage situations.

Escalating fuel costs and the large geographical area of our district are hindrances in reducing this budget; however, we have combined/eliminated some bus runs, and are continuing to look for further efficiencies in this department for the 2011-2012 fiscal year.

Special Education			
FY08 Budget	FY09 Budget	FY10 Budget	FY11 Budget
\$1,533,050	\$1,607,173	\$1,720,570	\$1,595,093

We have reduced our Special Education staff by one teacher and two educational technicians in the last two years.

We continue to look at consolidating the special education programs to help reduce staff and other costs, while continuing to provide the appropriate services for children.

RSU/MSAD #37 collaborates with surrounding school units to share the services of an occupational therapist and physical therapist, when available. This has been ongoing for the past few years.

Plan Requirement:

RSU/MSAD #37 is willing to file a Notice of Intent with any contiguous Regional School Unit or Alternative Organizational Structure and proceed as outlined in 20-A MRSA §1465.

Instructional Impact:

The savings and efficiencies listed in this plan will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program in RSU/MSAD #37.