

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- Gorham

Contact Information:

Name: Ted Sharp, Superintendent
Address: 75 South Street
Suite 2
Gorham, Maine 04038
Telephone: 207-222-1000
email: ted_sharp@gorham.k12.me.us

Date Plan Submitted by SAU: March 27, 2008

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.)

RECD MAR 28 2008

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 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 2008-2009 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) Sebago Education Alliance</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.

GORHAM SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

Office of the Superintendent

75 SOUTH STREET, SUITE #2, GORHAM, MAINE 04038

Leighton O'Connor
Business Manager
(207) 222-1000
FAX 839-5003

Theodore G. Sharp
Superintendent
(207) 222-1000
FAX 839-8885

To: Susan Gendron, Commissioner of Education, Maine Department of Education

Fr: Ted Sharp, Superintendent, on behalf of the Gorham School Department

Re: Alternative Plan for Gorham, School Department

Date: March 28, 2008

Alternative Plan Narrative

The Gorham School Department anticipates no adverse impact on the instructional program resulting from the additional expenditures in the four target areas. Currently Gorham tax payers provide \$2.6 million additional local revenue than the Maine Department of Education has determined is necessary to provide for essential programs and services in the areas of "Regular Instruction," "Other Instruction," "Students & Staff Support" and "School Administration. Gorham recognizes EPS as an "adequacy-based" formula that does not enable Gorham to rely on it exclusively to fund our comprehensive educational program.

Although the Town of Gorham has contributed \$2.6 million dollars more than the MeDOE has determined is required to fund essential programs and services, historically, the Gorham School Department (GSD) has spent less than the average Maine School District "per pupil expenditure" for system administration and facilities maintenance. In the past several years the GSD on average has spent only 75% of the amount that the Maine Department of Education (MeDOE) has estimated was required to provide essential programs and services for systems administration and facilities maintenance.

The Gorham School Department is determined to achieve significant administrative and financial efficiencies during the short and the longer term. Some of the short-term efficiencies are compromised by contractual agreements with individuals and/or groups. An example of this is the decision that has been made to eliminate the position of Business Manager and to redistribute those duties and responsibilities to others and to

have the superintendent provide leadership and supervision to those individuals. Given that the incumbent Business Manager has a contract through June 30, 2009, we are not able to realize the \$115,000 projected savings resulting from this part of our administrative reorganization plan until the FY10 budget year.

Finally, please note that all numbers identified herein are only projections and will not be finalized until all revenues and cost projections are known, and approved, during the budget validation protocols. The Town Council will not act on the School Department budget until June and the validation referendum will follow, if the final approved budget were then to be significantly less after that process, certainly further reductions in programs, services, and personnel would result. Once that process is complete and definitive numbers are known, we will send that updated information to the Commissioner of the D.O.E.

The Gorham School Department will implement the following initiatives as of July 1, 2008

- 1. The Gorham School Department will refine the protocol and reduce the amount of time that has been dedicated to reviewing staff purchase orders and vendor invoices. Telephone answering services to the Gorham residents will be automated. This will facilitate the reduction of system wide staff by 1.0 full FTE. This will be accomplished by the elimination of reception/accounts payable position at annual savings of \$46,783.**
- 2. Recently, the Gorham School Department had been preparing the Town of Gorham's payroll and sharing the cost of the District's payroll clerk with the Town of Gorham for a savings wage and benefits reduction of \$17,222. This had been in place since early December. With the resignation of the Town's Finance Director in the fall of 2008, the School Department proposed to the Town Manager that the position not be advertised, rather, the School Department's Business Manager could assume those responsibilities for both entities, achieving savings for both the Town and the School Department. Subsequently, the Town Council decided to seek a new Finance Director and just prior to our FY2009 budget request presentation to the School Committee, the Town Manager filled the position of Finance Director and reassigned town payroll responsibilities to that office. Discussions between the Town Manager and the Superintendent are ongoing with both offices determined to work collaboratively to achieve both administrative and financial efficiencies.**
- 3. The \$ 46,783.05 savings in System Administration expense will be offset by increases in contractual obligations of \$59,260. This will result in an FY2009 System Administration budget request of \$714,980 an increase of \$12,477. Although, the Gorham School District FY 2009 budget request is only a \$12,477**

increase over the prior year's budget and Gorham's Per Pupil expenditure is at 75% of the State average PPE, with the 50% reduction of System Administration EPS imposed for FY 2009, the budget will be approximately \$163,568 greater than the MeDOE FY2009 Preliminary EPS of \$551,421

4. The Gorham School Department has reviewed all bus routes and is preparing to eliminate one bus route. The wage and benefit savings are \$27,500. Under the administrative reorganization plan the departments of Facilities Management and Transportation are being merged and this will result in a savings of \$56,206 as the position of Director of Transportation will be eliminated. We anticipate that these savings will be offset by a 30% increase in diesel fuel costs (not included the FY2009 EPS calculation,) a 4.9% increase in contractual salary increases and a 8.6% increase in health insurance costs resulting in a FY2009 Student Transportation budget of \$1,330,046 FY2009 MeDOE's Preliminary EPS is \$1,204,211 a difference of \$125,835.
5. The Gorham School Department historically has remained 25% below the MeDOE EPS allocation for facilities and maintenance. Next year's budget for facilities maintenance will be \$2,722,711. This means that the Gorham School Department budget will be \$41,141 or 1.5% above the MeDOE Preliminary EPS of \$2,681,570, which does not provide for the increasing cost of heating fuel and the related impact on other utilities, rather, it is reduced by \$80,208.
6. The Gorham School Department general fund budget request for Special Education as mandated by MeDOE Regulation, Federal Regulation, and Maine State statutes totals \$4,812,385 for FY2009. The administrative cost to oversee compliance with these regulations and to assure the quality of these services totals \$141,222 or 2.8%. The only reduction in Special Education cost intended to meet the MeDOE mandate that is within the various regulations as delineated in the maintenance of effort and the least restrictive environment language of the law(s) is in the delivery of direct services to children. To meet the MeDOE mandated reduction is Special Services the District will eliminate 3 Ed-Tech positions for a reduction of \$90,000. The funding for a .5 FTE psych examiner, \$40,214 will be transferred to a non-local source. These cost savings will be offset by an increase in the time line for processing summer referrals as recently proposed (mandated) by MeDOE. This change has a budget impact of \$25,000 required to hire staff (call-in) that do not work for the District during the summer. The FY2009 budget has also been increased to fund the cost of a legal settlement with parents that arbitrarily enrolled their child in a private school claiming that the under-funded District program could not meet her child's learning disabilities needs. The FY2009 budget is further increased to address the increased number of students with severe autism who are entering the District. The net impact of

these reductions and additions is an increase of \$7176. In addition, the Special Education salary budget will increase 5% and health benefits will increase by 8.6%. The combined budget impact is \$74,287 or 1.6%

7. Presently, the School Department is engaged in preliminary work designed to reorganize the delivery model of several administrative entities in the District, including targeted and non-targeted areas as defined by the MeDOE. As a result of LD1932. While we will not be prepared to finalize that work prior to the March 28, 2008 submittal deadline for those School Administrative Units (SAUs), certainly by the beginning of the new fiscal year on July 1, 2008, the component parts of this reorganization plan will be in place. Preliminary savings for FY09 are projected at \$91,269 given the elimination of the position of Director of Curriculum, with those duties and responsibilities being redistributed to other administrators.
8. The Sebago Educational Alliance, a collaborative of six school districts including Gorham, Raymond, Scarborough, Windham, Westbrook, and MSAD #6 (Bonny Eagle) is in its fourth year of existence. The mission of the Alliance is to identify efficient ways to provide students with a high quality, comprehensive educational program within the framework of an efficient administrative and financial delivery model. This includes achievement of said efficiencies in business operations through this collaborative model. Beginning with school year 2008-2009 the Alliance opened a Day Treatment Program, housed in the Little Falls School in Gorham. This program is designed to meet the needs of the most needy students, grades 4-9. Prior to this Alliance Program, these students were tuitioned to schools including Sweeter and Spurwink, at a prohibitive tuition cost to the sending school district, and with little or no input with respect to program or personnel. In this the initial year of the program, Gorham realized a savings in tuition in FY 08 of \$16,000 per student (\$96,000 total), plus a \$30,000 savings in transportation for a grand total of \$126,000. The projected savings for FY 2009 is an additional \$56,000. And finally, the Alliance has hired a fulltime psychologist, Dr. Heather Alvarez, and she will assume this position beginning with the 2008-2009 school year. Her salary rate will generate savings of \$30,000 over the amount paid to psychologists who have been hired in the past either on retainer or on a case-by-case basis. The total savings projected for FY 09 is \$86,000 over the \$126,000 in savings realized in FY 08. This program is the first of what the Alliance expects will be many collaborative programs that will reap significant cost savings for member Districts in subsequent years.
9. In sum, the Gorham School Department embraces the intent of LD1932 to achieve administrative and financial efficiencies, while not compromising the educational program (teaching and learning). This goal, while laudable,

presents challenging and complex issues and the resolution of many of those issues are often at cross-purposes (example: (1) reductions in Special Services while maintaining services and the sanctity of the least restrictive environment, and, (2) the lack of adequate, and in some cases, no and/or minimal EPS funding for programs including Advanced Placement, Modern & Classical Languages, and Extracurricular Programs, to name a few). Yet, despite these complexities, the Gorham School Department is dedicated to achieving these efficiencies to the total amount possible without compromising our comprehensive educational program.

Attached, please find the completed Alternative Plan Submittal Page and the Alternative Plan Cover Sheet (Exhibit A).