

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- M.S.A.D. #61

Contact Information:

Name: Frank Gorham

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Bridgton, ME 04009

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Date Plan Submitted by SAU: March 26, 2008

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

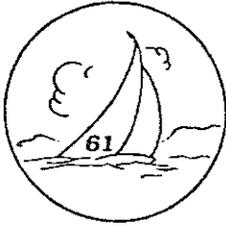
YES NO

(If NO, please explain.)

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? (not required, but encouraged)			<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.



Lake Region School District

Maine School Administrative District 61
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March 21, 2008

Maine Department of Education
Susan Gendron, Commissioner of Education
23 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333-0023

RE: Status of M.S.A.D. #61 Alternative Plan

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

As we emerge from the 2008-09 budget planning process, M.S.A.D. #61 is proud, for the third year in a row, to have shown remarkable resourcefulness in further trimming the budget and mitigating the revenue shortfalls we have had to face. That shortfall this year is approximately \$2,700,000.00, although at the writing of this letter, the numbers are yet to be finalized. The basic goals of our Alternative Plan have remained important considerations in the process:

- To target significant reductions in the four cost centers (System Administration, Operations and Maintenance, Transportation, and Special Education) without adversely affecting the education of our students or putting the District at risk for legal action or penalties.
- To develop a long-range plan to streamline the District through consolidation of facilities from nine buildings to four or five buildings.

Reductions

Due to Accounting Handbook changes, some accounts have had to be reclassified. This has caused changes in some of the 2007/08 budget figures quoted in the original Alternative Plan. Please see the enclosed "Proposed Adjustments to Expenditures 2008-09 for the most current figures.

System Administration:

\$117,599.00 was cut from System Administration. This represents a 16% reduction from the 2007-08 budget. The 2007-08 budget for this cost center was revised upward when the line for the Central Office lease had to be moved from Facilities to System Administration. That lease is now paid off and is not a part of the reductions. We failed to consider salary and benefit increases in our projections, nor the need to hire a new superintendent. Those additional costs added up to approximately \$33,000.00. We had also projected cutting the Central Office receptionist, but it was agreed that this would not be a wise move until such time as we can move the Central Offices to another facility where a receptionist can be shared. This move was projected in the Alternative Plan after renovations to the high school are completed. Other projected cuts that were not made this year were a \$7,000 cut in legal fees and a \$7,000 cut in printing costs. Legal fees

"Setting a course for the future"

System Administration: (cont.'d)

have seen an increase this year and we are unsure of what printing costs may be with the new budget validation referendum process, should we end up going through the process more than once. Our new superintendent is aware that System Administration costs continue to need scrutiny in future budget planning processes.

Transportation:

The transportation budget, which now includes Special Education transportation, achieved a 3% budget reduction through elimination of one staff development day, reduction of one bus route, reductions in repairs and maintenance supplies, reduction in insurance premiums and only purchasing one bus instead of the usual two.

Operations and Maintenance:

A 6% budget reduction will be achieved due to holding off on Capital Improvement funding, cuts in equipment expenditures, savings in electricity due to replacement lighting at SBES and savings in fuel at CRES.

Special Education:

The Alternative Plan purported that there was no room for reductions in Special Education when the costs are driven by the IEPs. However, our Director went to work and found \$688,376.00 in cuts. This represents a 14% cut. There has been considerable debate over whether cutting eight educational technician I's will adversely affect the education of our Special Education students or put the District at higher risk of due process hearings. Upon the suggestion that some of the reductions be added back into the budget, the director was convincing to a strong majority of the board that her recommendations were sufficient and appropriate. This issue may resurface with the public during the budget validation process.

Facilities Consolidation

6th grade move to Lake Region Middle School:

The Board approved the funds to complete the lower level of Lake Region Middle School for the purpose of moving the 6th grade classes from Crooked River, Sebago and Stevens Brook Elementary Schools. This has allowed for the reduction of three sixth grade teachers across the district. It has also allowed for slight reductions in physical education, art, band, music and library staffing at the elementary level. The move has created enough space at Crooked River Elementary School to house the Special Education offices. In addition, the Board has voted to house the SPED Day Treatment program at Lake Region Middle School. This will integrate the Special Ed students (currently eight) into a mainstream school of the appropriate age bracket. All of these moves create a vacancy in the Casco Memorial School, and the district would like to close the building and turn it back over to the Town of Casco at such time as school law will allow.

Facilities Long Range Plan:

Many needs and options were outlined in the Alternative plan. Some of the decisions we have to make will necessitate public votes. The Facilities Committee will be re-addressing the long-range plan this summer with the hopes of bringing a more concrete plan forward to the public in the fall of 2008. Representatives from the four towns and former members of the Facilities Ad Hoc Committee will be included in this process.

Commissioner Gendron

March 21, 2008

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The next facility targeted for closure would be Bridgton Memorial School. The programs housed there could function at the high school in the late afternoon and evening. Both Casco Memorial and Bridgton Memorial are older buildings. The District can avoid significant maintenance projects by turning these buildings over to the towns that originally owned them.

In order to effect long-needed solutions to problems with our bus garage and aging high school, the District needs to bring a capital improvement proposal to the voters. We were almost ready to do this in November of 2007. The Alternative Plan threw a wrench into the works by suggesting that, in order to consolidate elementary schools from four down to two or three, an addition might be needed at Songo Locks. Not having been studied, this concept harbored many questions. To be resolved are issues including inadequate land, well problems, septic problems and location in relation to all of the towns this "regional" elementary school would serve. Not wanting to ask the voters for funding for the high school project and come to them a few years later for another project, the Board has asked that the Facilities Committee lay out a clear and complete plan to bring to the voters for their support.

As the Facilities Committee begins to re-tackle the long-range plan, the DOE might consider the possibility of helping SAD 61 build a well-planned, regional elementary school that could be more strategically located to serve the southernmost three towns of the district. An up-to-date design for the intended purpose would provide efficiencies that would be impossible to achieve in a modified structure. This, along with the more strategic location, could be a great selling point to the public of at least two towns that would necessarily be voting to close their current local schools. The biggest battle is likely to be in Sebago, whose school has the most operational inefficiencies and looming maintenance needs. Crooked River and Songo Locks Elementary Schools would be attractive sites for the local Economic Development Council to promote to businesses to bring jobs to the area. One of these facilities could provide a nice home for a community college satellite facility. This idea has real merits, but with all that we are preparing to ask the voters for in regards to high school renovations, the District would need to have DOE help with a regional elementary school. The time to indicate whether any consideration might be given is this year, while the Facilities Committee is clarifying the long-range facilities plan. With the many potential roadblocks (closing local schools), a comprehensive plan with funding for a modern, efficient regional elementary school would be most likely to pass the political process and would save the most money in the long run.

SAD #61 is eager to make restructuring decisions that will help the four towns provide improved educational opportunities to our students while getting better control of our financial destiny. We are confident that the decisions we have made to date maintain, and in some cases enhance the quality of instruction for our students. The future of our Alternative Plan will continue to be a work in progress for a while, by virtue of the local votes needed to allow many of the steps to become reality. However, it is our hope that in 2008/09, much of the vision of the plan will become more concrete and garner both DOE and local support.

Sincerely,



Estabrook Sulloway, D.C.

Chairperson, SAD #61 School Board

Maine School Administrative District No. 61

PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS TO EXPENDITURES 2008-09

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION

2007-08 Budget	2008-09 Budget (proposed)	Difference
\$ 747,400.00	\$ 629,801.00	\$ (117,599.00)

Significant Changes:

- Reduction in time of the Assistant Superintendent
- Reduction in Insurance premiums due to bid
- Reduction in dues and memberships
- Reduction in related benefits
- Reduction in telephone/advertising/interest expense
- Reduction in time of Technology Coordinator

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

2007-08 Budget	2008-09 Budget (proposed)	Difference
\$ 3,328,903.00	\$ 3,126,400.00	\$ (202,503.00)

Significant Changes:

- Reduction in Capital Improvement Funding (special projects)
- Reduction in equipment
- Reduction in some electricity at Stevens Brook Elementary School
- Reduction in fuel at Crooked River Elementary School

TRANSPORTATION

2007-08 Budget	2008-09 Budget (proposed)	Difference
\$ 1,610,644.00	\$ 1,560,413.00	\$ (50,231.00)

Significant Changes:

- Reduction of one staff development day
- Reduction of bus driver salaries (1 route)
- Reduction in repairs/maintenance/supplies
- Reduction in Insurance premiums due to bid
- Reduction in equipment
- Reduction of one (1) bus

SPECIAL EDUCATION

2007-08 Budget	2008-09 Budget (proposed)	Difference
\$ 4,944,939.00	\$ 4,256,563.00	\$ (688,376.00)

Significant Changes:

Increase in caseloads
 Reduction of 8 educational technician I's
 Reduction of 1/2 hour per day for all educational technicians
 Reduction of one (1) out-of-district placement

Other Reductions:

Reduction of 4 Elementary Teachers
 Reduction of (1.6) Physical Education (.2) Art (1) Band (.2) Music, and (.4) Library
 Reduction of Supplies and Equipment

** Other Considerations:

State subsidy reduction for 2008-09 is expected to be between 2.1 and 2.7 million.
 This is due to increased land valuation and declining or maintaining student enrollment.

Total Reductions	\$ (1,058,709.00)
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