

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #15
GRAY ♦ NEW GLOUCESTER

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Received

JUN 13 2008

June 11, 2008

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

Maine Department of Education

Dear Commissioner Gendron,

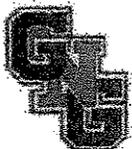
On May 6 you sent a letter to MSAD #15 stating that you are approving our request to file an alternative plan. Enclosed is a copy of MSAD #15's alternative plan with requested documentation. The School Board reviewed and approved this plan on June 11, 2008.

If you have any additional questions, please call Victoria Burns, Superintendent of Schools, at 657-3335.

Sincerely,



Alan Rich, DMD
MSAD #15 School Board Chair



14 Shaker Road
Gray, ME 04039

msad15.org
207-657-3335
fax: 207-657-2040

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- MSAD #15 (Gray-New Gloucester)

Contact Information:

Name: Superintendent Victoria A. Burns

Address: 15 Shaker Road

Gray, Maine 04039

Telephone: 207-657-3335

email: vburns@msad15.org

Date Plan Submitted by SAU: June 12, 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? <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.

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #15
GRAY AND NEW GLOUCESTER

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

SAU Submitting: MSAD #15 Gray/New Gloucester
Contact Information: Victoria Burns, Superintendent
14 Shaker Road, Gray ME 04039
Telephone: 657-3335 Email yburns@msad15.org

Date Submitted by SAU: June 12, 2008

MSAD #15 will reorganize administrative functions, duties and noninstructional personnel so that projected expenditures of MSAD #15 in fiscal 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education, and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program. In 2007-2008, 55.21% of MSAD #15's budget was spent on instruction. In the 2008-2009 budget 57.6% is spent on instruction.

System Administration

07-08 Budget \$581,140 08-09 Budget \$563,832 Change (\$17,308)

MSAD #15's system administration serves a student population of approximately 1940. Unlike our neighboring school districts, however, our elementary population is increasing:

2004 119 K students
2005 139 K students
2006 160 K students
2007 174 K students
2008 175 K students.

In 2005-2006, MSAD #15's administrative costs for our student and staff population were below the state and local average. In 2007-2008 MSAD #15's administrative costs were \$293 per pupil. This per pupil cost will be reduced in 2008-2009 to \$280. MSAD #15's administrative organizational chart will meet the guidelines proposed by the State for an efficiently run RSU of approximately 2,000 students and will be reconfigured to include the following positions:

1 Superintendent
1 Director of Finance and Operations
1 Payroll Clerk
1 Accounts Payable Clerk
1.5 Administrative Assistants.

The 08-09 school budget reflects the reduction in System Administration of a .5 administrative support position at a savings of \$24,000. In addition, although not

reflected in the final 08-09 budget, there will be savings in School Board insurance due to savings generated through the bid process.

Transportation

07-08 Budget \$1,361,792 08-09 Budget \$1,464,120 Change \$103,328

Due to rising fuel costs and the rural nature of the Towns of Gray and New Gloucester, it is difficult to find savings in transportation. In addition, the voters included a four-day a week activity bus in the 08-09 budget. MSAD #15 has a large percentage of its student population engaged in cocurricular activities, and citizens felt that "all students" should have equal opportunity to participate in the District's programs. The School Board, however, is seeking efficiencies in transportation whenever possible:

- Consolidation of two managerial administrative positions into one. The position of transportation manager has been combined with facilities to create a new Manager of Transportation/Facilities.
- Reduction in vehicle insurance due to the insurance bidding process.
- Creation of a vehicle replacement schedule for buses in order to have consistent purchasing from year to year.
- Implementation of the routing software program Versatrans.
- Creation of a committee to study consolidation of bus stops.
- Review of special education van runs to consolidate numbers of children riding on separate vans.

Special Education

07-08 Budget \$2,838,535 08-09 Budget \$2,878,287 Change \$39,752

Due to renewed focus on training in the identification process, MSAD #15 reduced the special education student identification to 15%. The decline in the identified population resulted in the elimination of 4.5 Ed Tech positions. In addition, the Functional Life Skills special education program was consolidated into one of our (2) K-2 buildings. Due to a more effective administrative office and new regulations, 15 special education teaching stipends given for scheduling IEP meetings and paperwork were eliminated from the budget resulting in a \$15,000 savings every year. This savings is not yet reflected in the 08-09 budget due to the fact that the teachers' contract was recently settled. MSAD #15 is providing day treatment programs for behavior at both the Middle School and High School resulting in fewer out of District student placements.

Facilities and Maintenance

07-08 Budget \$2,099,795 08-09 Budget \$2,269,644 Change \$169,849

MSAD #15 is completing the renovation of all five of its buildings and is diligently working to maintain the buildings to a high standard of maintenance and cleanliness. Due to the increased space resulting from the renovation at the high school a custodial position was added in the 08-09 budget. The School Board, however, looked for efficiencies in this department resulting in the following savings:

- Consolidated two positions, Manager of Transportation and Supervisor of Maintenance into one position: Manager of Transportation and Facilities.
- Implemented a preventative maintenance software program, School Dude.
- Reduced energy costs through energy efficient lighting in the High School, Middle School and Dunn Schools.
- Renovated and upgraded all five school buildings resulting in energy efficiencies at the older K-2 buildings. Applied and received revolving renovation funds from the State to supplement the local bond.
- Through collaboration with the Town saved \$15,000 in heating costs by transferring the Pennell building to the Town of Gray. (This building was held in trust by MSAD #15 but was not used as a school building.)
- Savings through in-house snow removal as opposed to contracting snow removal services.
- Received a Voluntary Renewable Resource Fund Grant to install solar panels at the high school. This is an educational opportunity for the students and staff to study the impact of solar energy on our electrical bills and the need for energy conservation.

PARAMETERS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Alternative Plan Under “Donut Hole” Exception

On May 6, MSAD #15 received a letter from Susan Gendron, Commissioner of Education, stating that our intent to file an alternative plan for reorganization was approved. MSAD #15 is a school district with approximately 1940 students. Although MSAD #15 does not currently meet the 2,500 student enrollment criteria, we meet the exception criteria for consolidation due to regionalization decisions made by neighboring districts resulting in MSAD #15’s placement as a “donut hole”. MSAD #15 exercised “due diligence” to find a consolidation partner in order to meet the intent of the school consolidation law. MSAD #15 contacted every adjoining district in an attempt to find a prospective partner and engaged in talks with Union #29. Due to regionalization decisions made by neighboring districts, MSAD #15 is unable to find a partner and is filing an alternative plan.

Includes One Public High School

MSAD #15 has one public high school serving the students of Gray and New Gloucester. and this alternative plan does not displace either teachers or students. No closure of existing or operating schools result from this alternative plan.

Alternative Plan Consistent with Policies in Section 1451

Opportunities and Rigorous, Uniform Academic Programs

The alternative plan is consistent with polices set forth in section 1451 of the consolidation law. MSAD #15’s instructional programs provide equitable educational opportunity for all students to demonstrate achievement of the learning results. Our

students are provided multiple pathways to college, career, and citizenship. G-NG High School provides nine (9) Advanced Placement Courses as well as access to greater electives through Virtual High School. MSAD #15 also sends students to Portland Arts and Technical High School and has a partnership with Southern Maine Community College. A SMCC course is currently taught at G-NG High School for college credit. A Graduation Policy Committee recommended that four (4) years of math be required for all students in order to graduate, and traditional "tracking" of high school students is not practiced at G-NG High School. A world language program is being implemented K-12 to all students.

MSAD #15 has provided a steadily improving instructional program as it keeps school costs down. In 2006-2007 our students

- Exceeded state average in writing in grades 5,6, and 11th grade
- Met or exceeded state average in reading in grades 3,4,5,8, and 11th grade
- Exceeded state average in math in grades 3,8, and 11th grade
- Exceeded state average in attendance rates and graduation rates.

Effective Use of Public Funds

MSAD #15 has been effective in student achievement but also efficient in its use of resources

- Since 2003-2004, the mil rate for both Gray and New Gloucester has declined. More importantly, when the 2003-2004 school budget is compared to the 2007-2008 school budget, the actual dollars paid by Gray and New Gloucester taxpayers increased by only \$175,000.
- MSAD #15's budget did not exceed the EPS funding formula in any year until the 2007-2008 school budget. Due to rising property valuations resulting in our loss of state subsidy, MSAD #15 exceed EPS by only 2.60%.
- The School Board and Central Office use bid processes and consolidated purchases whenever possible to reduce costs.
 - Insurance, waste removal, paper bids.
 - Use of COG to purchase motor fuels, tires, and heating oil.
- MSAD #15 collaborates with the Towns of Gray and New Gloucester
 - The Board Chair, Superintendent, Business Manager and Managers of the Towns meet monthly to promote efficiencies and communication. A proposed priority is a combined "needs" assessment regarding recreation and facilities.
- MSAD #15 updated, renovated, and reorganized its buildings to reduce new construction and better meet the teacher/student ratio.
 - Our K-5 schools were reorganized in 2002-2003 to standardize class size, better coordinate curriculum and improve the efficient use of teacher and staff resources.
 - The taxpayers of both the Towns of Gray and New Gloucester funded a 10 million dollar bond to completely renovate and update all five of our buildings. This enabled us to resolve many years of deferred maintenance, restore all of our buildings to optimal utilization and eliminates the need to undertake the costs of new construction.

- MSAD #15 invested in technology software programs to efficiently manage its resources:
 - Business office has a fund accounting software package compatible with MEDMS and provides payroll and budget functions.
 - PowerSchool for student management (We will convert to Infinite Campus when available from the state.).
 - SpedNet software for Special Services
 - Versatrans software for transportation routing
 - Follett software for District library services
 - School Dude software for facilities/maintenance/technology management
 - Nutrikids software for food service
- MSAD #15's administrative costs for System Administration were \$293 per pupil-below EPS funding in 2007-2008.

No Displacement of Teachers, Students or Closure of Schools

MSAD #15's alternative plan does not displace teachers or students. No closures of schools are included in this alternative plan.

Collaborative Agreements

This Alternative Plan does not include information/documentation on collaborative agreements other than current business practices noted above (Consolidated purchases through Council of Governments and on-going collaborative discussions with the Towns of Gray and New Gloucester).

Exhibit A

**Maine Department of Education
Alternative Plan Financial Review**

School Administrative Unit: MSAD #15 Gray-New Gloucester

1. 100% Essential Programs and Services

10/1/2007 Enrollment	Required Local	Additional Local	ED 281 Line 60 Subsidy	Taxes and Subsidy	100% EPS	Amount Over (Under) EPS	Percent Over (Under) EPS
Pg. 1 Ed279: 1971 Pg. 2 ED279: 1930 Residents	\$8,206,495	\$1,509,607	\$9,260,152	\$18,976,254	\$17,902,996	\$1,073,264	5.99%

2. System Administration

FY '09 Budget	K-8	Assessment 9-12	Total	Less Revenues	Amount Over(Under) Assessment	Percent Over (Under) Assessment
\$563,832	\$268,464	\$131,172	\$399,636		\$164,196	41.1%

3. Operations and Maintenance of Facilities

FY '09 Budget	K-8	Assessment 9-12	Total	Less Revenues	Amount Over(Under) Assessment	Percent Over (Under) Assessment
\$2,269,644	\$1,230,460	\$714,373	\$1,944,833		\$324,811	16.7%

4. Special Education

Fy'09 Budget	Assessment	Less Revenues	Amount Over (Under) Assessment	Percent Over (Under) Assessment
\$2,878,287	\$2,052,344		\$825,943	40.2%

5. Transportation

Fy'09 Budget	Assessment	Less Revenues	Amount Over (Under) Assessment	Percent Over (Under) Assessment
\$1,465,120	\$1,114,065		\$351,055	31.5%

FY'09 Information from actual 2008-2009 Budget and ED279 Revised 5/19/08

**MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT #15
GRAY ♦ NEW GLOUCESTER**

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Staff Development*
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Victoria Burns
*Superintendent
Of Schools*
vburns@msad15.org

Terry Towle
*Director
Finance & Operations*
ttowle@msad15.org

June 10, 2008

Enrollment Figures for MSAD #15 Gray-New Gloucester

October 1, 2007	1940 students + 35 tuition for a total of 1975 students
April 1, 2008	1904 students + 37 tuition for a total of 1941 students



14 Shaker Road
Gray, ME 04039

msad15.org
207-657-3335
fax: 207-657-2040

5-7-08



STATE OF MAINE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
23 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0023

JOHN ELIAS BALDACC
GOVERNOR

SUSAN A. GENDRON
COMMISSIONER

May 6, 2008

Dr. Alan Rich, Chair
MSAD 15 School Board
14 Shaker Road
Gray, ME 04039

Dear Dr. Rich:

Thank you for your patience as members of my team and I reviewed the documentation you submitted in support of MSAD 15's intent to file an alternative plan in lieu of continuing reorganization discussions with Poland, Minot and Mechanic Falls. We have completed the review and I am pleased to inform you that I am approving your request to file an alternative plan.

If you need assistance as you proceed, I encourage you to contact Ray Poulin or Norm Higgins of our Reorganization Team for more information. They may be reached at 624-6802.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

cc: Victoria Burns, Superintendent
Bob Connors, Facilitator