

BRADFORD
CORINTH
HUDSON
KENDUSKEAG
STETSON

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT No. 64

Office Phone 207-285-3334
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P.O. Box 279
408 Main Street
Corinth, Maine 04427

Received

June 24, 2008

JUN 25 2008

Maine Department of Education

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

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

Thanks you for your letter of June 10, 2008 extending the Alternative Plan submission deadline from June 13 to June 30. The M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors and RPC appreciate your approval of that request.

In accord with formal action taken by the M.S.A.D. No. 64 Reorganization Planning Committee on June 19, 2008 and as authorized by the M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors on June 23, 2008, I am submitting the following documents:

- Alternative Plan Submittal Sheet
- Alternative Plan Cover Sheet
- Alternative Plan (Exhibit's A and B)
- Attached supporting documents

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Higgins
M.S.A.D. No. 64 Superintendent of Schools



Rhonda Williams
Chair, M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors

Enclosures (6)

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- Maine School Administrative District No. 64

Contact Information:

Name: Daniel A. Higgins
Address: 408 Main Street
PO Box 279
Corinth, Maine 04427
Telephone: (207) 285-3334
email: supt@sad64.k12.me.us

Date Plan Submitted by SAU:

November 29, 2007 - Initial Draft - Revised Submission - June 24, 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.)

Approval to submit an Alternative Plan was granted by the Commissioner on May 20, 2008.

Does your plan currently include information/documentation on collaborative agreements? <i>(not required, but encouraged)</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Exceptions to 2,500 minimum

Actual number of students for which the SAU is fiscally responsible: 1283

Exception	Exception Claimed in Plan	Documentation Provided? (Please attach as Exhibit B)	
		Yes	No
Geography	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demographics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Economics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Population Density	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other Unique Circumstances	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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?

Plan Requirements:

System Administration

Fiscal Year	Proposed Expenditures	100% EPS	Variance	% of Budget	Per Pupil Cost	Per-Pupil EPS
2007-08	\$288,798	\$460,909	(\$172,111)	2.94%	\$219.20	\$358
2008-09	\$299,007	\$252,756	\$46,251	2.92%	\$233.05	\$204

Expenditures for system administration have historically accounted for less than 3% of the M.S.A.D. No. 64 budget. Administrative services to the District are provided through a small central office manned by a three person staff, each of whom performs multiple functions. In addition to the standard responsibilities of a central office, the Superintendent and office staff manage fiscal administration of all federal and state grants, fiscal administration and oversight of adult education services, and fiscal administration and oversight of food services. As the District does not employ a Supervisor/Director of Transportation (we contract for transportation services) or Technology Director (we also contract for maintenance services), the Superintendent assumes direct oversight of those areas.

The central office has historically operated, and continues to operate in a very fiscally efficient manner, with costs accounting for less than 3% of the total operating budget, and well below the 4% cited for highly efficient systems statewide. We continue to look for efficiencies in methods of operation and continue to investigate other areas in which fiscal savings may be realized. Areas in which we have been able to reduce costs between FY08 and FY09 without adversely impacting services or programs have been in increased efficiencies in purchased services, printing costs, and advertising costs.

As the consolidation/regionalization process moves forward in our area, we will continue to explore opportunities for collaboration or sharing of purchasing and administrative services with neighboring units.

At this time we are not able to further reduce expenditures in this area without adversely impacting other departments. The projected expenditures for FY 2008-09 for system administration will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.

Transportation

Fiscal Year	Proposed Expenditures	100% EPS	Variance	% of Budget
2007-08	\$1,011,023	\$889,017	\$122,006	10.3%
2008-09	\$1,111,948	\$902,788	\$209,160	10.8%

We have been unable to identify any significant savings that would not adversely impact students who rely on the District for transportation. Transportation costs represent a significant challenge in M.S.A.D. No. 64 due to the following factors:

reserve have been used to complete three major renovation/addition projects over the past three years. The revolving renovation loan fund has also been used to finance roofing projects.

We have undertaken steps to increase efficiency in the use of oil and electrical resources, including training of staff and annual follow-up on simple energy savings practices and installation of automatic controls on boilers that have resulted in a reduction in the amount of No. 2 fuel used in locations where the controls have been installed. We are currently involved with a purchasing group who is engaged in discussions with a local provider to deliver heating oil at a reasonable cost. Efforts to continue to identify and implement efficiencies with resources will continue as we move forward.

We are also currently investigating the on-line bid purchasing model developed by M.S.A.D. No. 36 to determine if savings can be realized with supplies and equipment purchases.

Despite continuing to be fiscally efficient in facilities maintenance, an anticipated increase of over \$110,000 (91%) in projected heating oil costs have been included in our approved budget.

The projected expenditures for FY 2008-09 for facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.

Special Education

Fiscal Year	Expenditure/Budget	100% EPS	Variance	% of Budget
2007-08	\$1,324,785	\$989,100	(\$335,685)	13.5%
2008-09	\$1,416,533	\$889,770	(\$526,763)	13.8%

In 2007-08 M.S.A.D. No. 64 identified 10.7% of its student population as eligible for special education services, below the corresponding state and national averages.

We are a member of the Southern Penobscot Regional Program for Children with Exceptionalities (SPRPCE), a regional program serving fifteen school units designed to provide programs and services more effectively and cost efficiently than member districts can provide using their own resources. The program has been in place since the late 1970's and has been successful in providing appropriate programs and direct and support services to identified children and in providing in-service training to teachers and educational technicians at costs lower than individual districts could provide on their own. SPRPCE has been successful in winning grants that supplement training for staff members and further reduce local expenses.

The executive officers of the regional program are currently in the process of restructuring the program to meet the changing needs of our student population, address facility needs, and implement a program to more effectively and efficiently serve students

Collaborative Agreements:

M.S.A.D. No. 64 is currently a member of two formal collaborative groups; the Rural Schools Partnership (RSP) and the Southern Penobscot Regional Program for Children with Exceptionalities (SPRPCE).

Rural Schools Partnership (RSP)

The Rural Schools Partnership is a regional collaborative designed to help members remain responsive to change by sharing professional development opportunities that are directly linked to high achievement for all students. The collaborative includes eight member districts who share in the costs of providing in service opportunities to staff. The Steering Committee annually solicits input from members and designs a program of professional development activities for recommendation to the Board of Directors. Once approved, the program is implemented throughout the year. Activities and programs offered are based on current research and best practices.

Southern Penobscot Region for Children with Exceptionalities (SPRPCE)

As referenced in Special Education section above.

Other Collaborative Initiatives and Considerations

- We have participated in meetings with the Penobscot River Educational Partnership (PREP) to discuss the concept of regionalizing administration of Adult Education administration along with enhancing programming and participation both regionally and at local school sites. We anticipate that group will meet again during the 08-09 school year.
- Our superintendent has met with Terry Despres and Colleen Akerman to discuss the GetBestBid purchasing portal system and is investigating the possible savings that could be achieved by joining the bid purchasing program.

Exhibit B

Exceptions to the 2500 Minimum

As the detailed information in the attached copies of prior submissions (letters demonstrating due diligence efforts submitted with required documents) demonstrates, M.S.A.D. No. 64's exception to the 2,500 student minimum enrollment applies under the "other unique circumstances" category.

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March 28, 2008

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

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

Pursuant to the revised timelines as approved by the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee and direction of Norm Higgins and as authorized by the M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors March 24, 2008 approval of the Reorganization Planning Committee (RPC) recommendation, this letter is being submitted to provide a report of the consolidation-related work of the M.S.A.D. No. 64 RPC and Board of Directors since our February 1, 2008 progress report.

Since submitting our progress report on January 28, 2008 and given legislative deliberations and multiple proposed amendments on LD 1932 and other bill submissions, our RPC opted to delay formal meetings on our Alternative Plan until such time as the Legislature enacts final legislation and the Department is able to provide clear guidance consistent with the amended legislation.

Through its deliberations, the RPC did reach consensus:

- to engage in a thoughtful, thorough, and ongoing review on the current state of education and to discuss the future of education in M.S.A.D. No. 64. The RPC formally initiated these conversations on March 12, 2008. They are scheduled to meet again on March 26, 2008 and will conduct community forums in each of our five towns during the month of April,
- to direct the Superintendent to continue to collect and organize information necessary for the ongoing development of the Alternative Plan and work with the Committee to finalize the plan, and
- to continue to exercise due diligence in complying with the requirements of consolidation law.

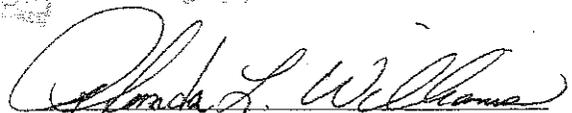
Our Board of Directors expressed support for the actions of the RPC and also reached consensus to engage in an ongoing review of the current state of education and to discuss the future of education in M.S.A.D. No. 64. They met in a workshop on March 19, 2008. They also directed the Superintendent to develop a plan to coordinate a joint meeting of the RPC and Board of Directors and to elicit input from community members, parents, staff and students.

Our RPC and Board of Directors remain committed to continue due diligence efforts to comply with the requirements of the consolidation law and to develop a clear vision for the future of education in our district. We will continue work on our Alternative Plan submission with an eye on developments in the legislature and submit a finalized Alternative Plan in accord with forthcoming direction from the Department.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Higgins
M.S.A.D. No. 64 Superintendent of Schools



Rhonda Williams
Chair, M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors

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January 28, 2008

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT No. 64

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

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

As requested by Norm Higgins, this letter is being submitted in accord your directive to provide a report of the consolidation related work of M.S.A.D. No. 64 since the December 1, 2007 submission deadline.

Since the submission of our Alternative Plan and supporting letter on December 1, 2007, our RPC has held the following formal meetings:

- December 12, 2007 – Joint Meeting with Glenburn RPC at Central High School
- January 12, 2008 – Joint Meeting with Glenburn RPC at Glenburn Elementary School
- January 16, 2008 – M.S.A.D. No. 64 RPC Meeting

The two meetings with the Glenburn RPC followed a November 16, 2007 exploratory meeting between the RPC Chairs, Board Chairs, and Superintendents of Glenburn and M.S.A.D. No. 64 and focused on sharing philosophical, financial, curricular, and various other types of information. The goal of the meetings was to gather enough information for each RPC to make an informed determination as to the potential for a long-term, sustainable, and educationally sound relationship.

At the January 16 meeting the M.S.A.D. No. 64 RPC reviewed the information obtained during the meetings with Glenburn and voted unanimously to continue discussion with the Glenburn RPC with the condition that the Drummond, Woodsum, & MacMahon 13-component reorganization plan model be used as a guide in all subsequent meetings. We were notified the next day that Glenburn had unanimously voted to discontinue discussions with our RPC.

As outlined in detail in the letter accompanying our December 1, 2007 Alternative Plan submission, our District RPC and Board of Directors has demonstrated due diligence in complying with the requirements of Public Law, Chapter 240, part XXXX as enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature. Given the current set of circumstances that have resulted in M.S.A.D. No. 64 not having an identified partner who provides an appropriate match for our district and communities, our RPC is resolute in their intent to continue to demonstrate due diligence and is working to complete the components of our Alternative Plan; a course of action the Committee believes to be in the best interest of our district, communities, and students at this time. Pursuant to the revised timelines as approved the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee, we plan to provide you with a status report on that plan by the March 28, 2008 deadline. Should circumstances change and the opportunity to meet and discuss possibilities with other units who provide an appropriate match for our district presents itself, our RPC and Board would welcome that opportunity.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Higgins
M.S.A.D. No. 64 Superintendent of Schools



Rhonda Williams
Chair, M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors

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Office Phone 207-285-3334
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P.O. Box 279
408 Main Street
Corinth, Maine 04427

August 29, 2007

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

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

Please find enclosed two notices expressing the intent of the Board of Directors of Maine School Administrative District No. 64 to engage in discussions and planning for possible development of a re-organization plan with other school administrative units in accordance with the requirements of Public Law, Chapter 240, part XXXX as enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature.

The notices call for planning and negotiations between Districts as indicated below:

- M.S.A.D. No. 64 and M.S.A.D. No. 46
- M.S.A.D. No. 64 and M.S.A.D. No. 41

Since Governor Baldacci's initial proposal, our Board of Directors has taken a proactive approach to the consolidation issue and demonstrated due diligence. In February, they directed me to begin the process of exploring potential relationships for possible consolidation and collaboration. I engaged in a series of thoughtful and productive meetings with several neighboring district superintendents to discuss potential options. Additionally, we held a joint work session of the Boards of those four districts to discuss ideas. Your May 21 presentation of recommended partnerships provided a different suggested course of action. After your informational meetings in July, we formed our RPC and began the process of formally inviting other District RPCs to exploratory meetings, including the District you recommended on May 21. Prior to issuing the invitation, I was notified that their RPC had formally voted not to consider us as an option. We continued to engage in discussions with other districts. Conversations between our RPC and the RPCs from M.S.A.D. No. 46 and M.S.A.D. No. 41 have been conducted in good faith, positive in nature, and included consideration of a multitude of consolidation-related factors and concerns.

However, because of a variety of factors, including:

- The rural nature of our geographic location,
- Our physical proximity to a several other districts with whom preliminary discussions have occurred,
- The uncertainty surrounding the potential fiscal hardship for our District as a result of merging with potential partners as demonstrated in the DOE provided financial analysis and other financial analysis,
- For contingency purposes, the possibility that negotiations with our Notice of Intent Partners demonstrate that a partnership will not meet the interests of our respective Districts, communities and students,
- The need to continue efforts to investigate all options to identify the district configuration that best meets the needs and philosophies of our District and communities and will provide the best opportunities for our students,

our Board of Directors has also formally authorized me to express a written notice of intent to continue in conversations with other potential partner Districts with whom we have previously engaged in discussions. If such discussions result in a potential partnership that meets our needs better than a partnership with the Districts

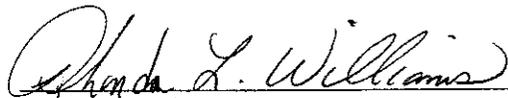
identified in our Notices of Intent, we will, as directed by Ray Poulin, contact you and inform you of our intent to pursue that potential partnership in good faith.

We intend to continue to exercise due diligence and act in good faith in exploring all potential consolidation options and determining the best course of action for our District, communities, and students in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Higgins
M.S.A.D. No. 64 Superintendent of Schools



Rhonda Williams
Chair, M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors

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November 28, 2007

MAINE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT No. 64

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408 Main Street

Corinth, Maine 04427

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

Dear Commissioner Gendron:

This letter and the enclosed documents are being submitted in accord with the requirements of Public Law, Chapter 240, part XXXX as enacted by the 123rd Maine Legislature.

In accord with formal action taken by the M.S.A.D. 64 Reorganization Planning Committee on November 19, 2007 and as authorized by the M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors on November 26, 2007, I am submitting the following documents:

- Letter Detailing Due Diligence
- Notice of Intent to File an Alternative Plan
- Alternative Plan Cover Sheet
- Alternative Plan Submittal Sheet

Since Governor Baldacci's initial proposal in January of 2007, our Board of Directors has taken a proactive approach to the consolidation issue and demonstrated due diligence in its efforts to not only comply with the law, but to identify the optimal direction for the future of M.S.A.D. No. 64. In February of 2007, my Board directed me to begin the process of exploring relationships with other area districts for the purpose of discussing possible consolidation, collaboration, and sharing of services and expenses. From February through mid May, I engaged in a series of thoughtful and productive meetings with several neighboring district superintendents in which we discussed a variety of options including consolidation of administrative functions. Additionally, on May 15, 2007 we held a joint work session of the Boards of those four districts to discuss our ideas. Your May 21, 2007 presentation of recommended partnerships provided a different suggested course of action. After your informational meetings in June and July, we formed our RPC and began the process of formally inviting other district RPCs to exploratory meetings, including the district you recommended as a potential partner on May 21. Prior to issuing the invitation to that SAU, I was notified that their RPC had formally voted not to consider us as an option. Regardless, we continued to engage in discussions with other districts. After accepting invitations from M.S.A.D. No. 46 and M.S.A.D. No. 41 conversations between our respective RPC's were conducted in good faith, positive in nature, and included consideration of a multitude of consolidation-related factors and concerns. In an effort to maintain a set of options and with the encouragement of the Department of Education, our RPC voted to submit two separate Notices of Intent; one with M.S.A.D. No. 46 and one with M.S.A.D. No. 41.

However, because of a variety of factors, including:

- The rural nature of our geographic location,
- Our physical proximity to several other districts with whom preliminary discussions have occurred,
- The uncertainty surrounding the potential fiscal hardship for our district as a result of merging with potential partners as demonstrated in the DOE provided financial analysis and other financial analysis,
- For contingency purposes, the possibility that negotiations with our Notice of Intent Partners demonstrate that a partnership will not meet the best interests of our respective districts, communities and students,

- The need to continue efforts to investigate all options to identify the district configuration that best meets the needs and philosophies of our district and communities and will provide the best opportunities for our students,

our Board of Directors also formally authorized me to express a written notice of intent to continue in conversations with other potential partner districts with whom we had previously engaged in discussions on the premise that if such discussions resulted in a potential partnership that met our needs better than a partnership with the districts identified in our Notices of Intent, we would, as directed by Ray Poulin, contact you and inform you of our intent to pursue that potential partnership in good faith. That letter was submitted along with our Notices of Intent on August 30, 2007.

Despite the significant time constraints and pending December 1 deadline, we met formally on three occasions with both the M.S.A.D. No. 46 and M.S.A.D. No. 41 RPCs for the express purpose of learning about each district and determining whether or not a partnership with either district would be in the best interests of our unit. Ray Freve served as facilitator for both potential configurations. Following our third such meeting with M.S.A.D. No. 46, their RPC and Board determined that one of their other options better served the needs of their district and voted to pursue further planning with that SAU rather than with ours. Following our third meeting with M.S.A.D. No. 41, our RPC arrived at the conclusion that moving forward with M.S.A.D. No. 41 in a district reorganization was not in the best interests of our district and voted to discontinue that process. Amongst the factors leading to that decision were geographic considerations, differences in philosophy towards consolidation and the formation of a consolidated unit, commitment to a consolidated unit, and differences in philosophy for the future of our district.

As demonstrated in the above paragraphs, while our district has engaged in a good faith effort to identify and pursue the best possible options for either consolidation, collaboration, or sharing of services and is willing to continue discussions with potential partners who share similar educational and fiscal philosophies, we are currently in a position where we do not have an identified partner who provides an appropriate match for our district and communities. Our district RPC and Board of Directors are also clear in their resolve that while they are willing to work towards consolidation with the appropriate partner, they do not want to pursue further discussions with a partner who does not provide an appropriate match simply to satisfy a quota or configurations displayed on a map.

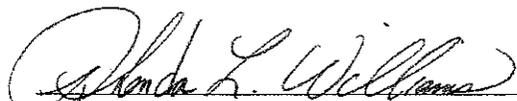
Thus, given the current situation and the fact that we have demonstrated due diligence throughout this process, our RPC voted to file an alternative plan. Our facilitator has agreed that, given the current circumstances, the decision to file an Alternative Plan is appropriate. The 2006 census count states our enrollment at 1283 students. Our district currently operates on a budget that is more than \$212,000 below 100% Essential Programs and Services levels, satisfies the parameters for Alternative Plan development, is involved in two collaborative regional programs, and can document exceptions to the 2500 student minimum. Certainly if circumstances change and the opportunity to meet and discuss possibilities with other units who provide an appropriate match for our district presents itself, our RPC and Board would welcome that opportunity.

We intend to continue to exercise due diligence and act in good faith in exploring all potential options and determining the best course of action for our district, communities, and students in accordance with the requirements of the legislation.

Sincerely,



Daniel A. Higgins
M.S.A.D. No. 64 Superintendent of Schools



Rhonda Williams
Chair, M.S.A.D. No. 64 Board of Directors