

REC'D JAN 12 2011

ALTERNATIVE PLAN SUBMITTAL SHEET

School Administrative Unit Submitting Alternative Plan:

- R.S.U 68

Contact Information:

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Date Plan Submitted by SAU: January 4, 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input 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.

Exceptions to 2,500 minimum
Actual number of students for which the SAU is fiscally responsible
(use Oct 1, 2006 numbers) : 1072

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

ALTERNATIVE PLAN

SAU submitting: RSU 68/MSAD 68
Contact Information: Alan R. Smith, M.Ed, CAS, Superintendent of Schools
Phone: (207) 564-6535
E-mail: asmith@sad68.org
Date Submitted: January 4, 2011

Due Diligence

For over three years, RSU68/MSAD68 (Charleston, Dover-Foxcroft, Monson and Sebec) has been involved in discussions and meetings with its neighboring school districts in an attempt to find a partner to consolidate with. In January of 2009, RSU 68/MSAD 68 voted to consolidate with MSAD 12, MSAD 41, Union 60 and Bowerbank. However, the vote failed due to Bowerbank, Union 60, MSAD 12 and MSAD 41 voting against the consolidation.

Subsequently, RSU 68/MSAD 68 has tried in vain to find another partner. We have continued to meet and have conversations with the surrounding, non-conforming school units in an effort to conform. We met with MSAD 53 in an effort to reorganize with them. However, in August of 2010, they were granted an exception pursuant to MRSA Title 20-A, section 1461(C)(2). Since then, the RSU68/MSAD 68 Board of Directors and Superintendent have held informational reorganization open forum meetings as well as several reorganization ad-hoc committee meetings with representation from the Department of Education, MSAD 4 and MSAD 41.

On September 7, 2010, the RSU68/MSAD 68 Board of Directors voted to and, then, filed three Notices of Intent to form an AOS in the following configurations:

- MSAD 4, MSAD 41 and MSAD 68
- MSAD 4 and MSAD 68
- MSAD 41 and MSAD 68

MSAD 4 and 41 have since clearly stated that they are not interested in reorganizing with RSU68/MSAD 68. On 9-13-2010, the MSAD 41 Board of Directors voted to file a Notice of Intent with MSAD 31 and on 9-14-2010, the MSAD 4 Board of Directors formally voted 11-4 to not participate in reorganizing with RSU68/MSAD 68. Minutes from the MSAD 4, MSAD 41 and RSU68/SAD 68 Board of Directors meetings are attached as evidence of each SAU's reorganization position. Further included, is a time line of reorganization events which shows the due diligence on the part of RSU 68/MSAD 68 to conform.

A unique circumstance that affects our district is the private school, Foxcroft Academy, with which we have an exclusive contract for our 9-12 students to attend for their educational years. The Pre-K-12 student enrollment in RSU 68/MSAD 68 as of October 2009 was 1,014 students. As of 9-28-2010, our student enrollment is 1,015 of which 342 students attend Foxcroft Academy and 673 attend our Pre-K – 8 building. Foxcroft Academy (FA) is able to offer many educational opportunities that other area high schools are not. For example, FA offers four foreign language programs as well as four levels of core course work in each subject area. FA is also able to provide a greater cultural experience.

Where, on one front, the private academy is able to offer educational benefits to the students of RSU 68/MSAD 68, it also presents unique budgetary challenges. RSU 68/MSAD 68 negotiates a contract with Foxcroft Academy and currently, has a four-year exclusive contract with them. The financial commitment, by contract, to RSU68/MSAD 68 is approximately one-third of the budget. Due to this fact, it places our district in a different place when the budget is being developed and revenue changes. When a lost revenue scenario occurs, RSU68/MSAD 68 now only has two-thirds of its budget to work with in finding the needed adjustments.

This past year, RSU68/MSAD 68 communities' state valuation percent of increase has and will rise significantly above the State average. It is also predicted that the state valuation for this year will be above the State average. Due to the fact that the educational funding formula bases a large percent of its state contribution to school units on state valuation, RSU68/MSAD 68 has been one of the SAU's that has felt the greatest negative financial impact. Therefore, we are working with less state contributions. This unique situation only gets worse when you realize that this part of Maine is one of the poorest fiscal areas, yet hit the hardest financially in state contribution. Then, to add the penalty onto this, it is extremely troubling. RSU68/MSAD 68 voted in favor of consolidation the first time. Subsequently, RSU68/MSAD 68 has filed three Notices of Intent only to find that no one is willing to reciprocate with a Notice of Intent.

RSU 68/MSAD 68 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.

RSU68/MSAD 68 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.

- The MSAD 68 School Board met with the school boards from MSAD 4, 12, 41, 46, 53, and Union 60 to discuss RSU and AOS partnerships.
- As of August 2009, MSAD 68 has consolidated its schools (PreK-8) onto one campus in Dover-Foxcroft that consists of an elementary school that was newly constructed in 2007 and that is connected to a middle school that underwent renovations as well in 2007.
- Started a Pre-K program at the elementary school with an anticipated expansion to the program.
- Our Adult Education program is a cooperative with districts MSAD 4, 41, and 46.
- MSAD 68 obtained a grant from Efficiency of Maine to invest in a lighting retrofit project for the middle school gymnasium.
- An energy audit and calibration of our HVAC system was performed to control and ensure significant savings in our heating and electricity costs.
- Through collaboration with MSAD 4, we are sharing the services of an occupational therapist, which not only allows us to fill a position that has previously been hard to fill, but also represents a savings to the district.
- The Food Service Department participates in bulk buying bids for Bread and Milk with the districts of MSAD 4, 41, 46, 48 and Foxcroft Academy.
- MSAD 68 and MSAD 4 share the cost of Rosetta Stone, a language-learning software, to provide students the opportunity to learn a foreign language.
- MSAD 68 participates with MSAD 4 in bulk buying bids for paper.
- Through collaboration with neighboring school districts, special education staff development presentations were held at MSAD 68 to lower costs for each of the districts.

- MSAD 68 and MSAD 4 collaborate to share ESL and psychological services as well as recreation therapy time at the local YMCA to maximize time and savings.
- The MSAD 68/Foxcroft Academy Liaison Committee meets together jointly to discuss contract negotiations and prepare for their respective budgets.
- The MSAD 68 School Board created an Ad Hoc Secondary Study Committee to study the expectations, issues, and possibilities surrounding secondary education for the students of MSAD 68. The Committee met with various community and business organizations, municipal representatives and surrounding school districts to discuss the delivery and substance of secondary education to our students and to explore ways of sharing services and finding efficiencies.

PLAN REQUIREMENTS:

System Administration

FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
\$291,265.00	\$272,003.00	\$319,430.00	\$283,286.00

- Administrative services to the District are provided through a small central office that consists of a three person staff, each of whom performs multiple functions. In addition the standard responsibilities of a central office, the Superintendent and office staff manage fiscal administration of all federal and state grants, fiscal administration of the adult education cooperative, and fiscal administration and oversight of food services. As the District does not employ a Supervisor/Director of Transportation (we contract for transportation services), the Superintendent assumes direct oversight of that area.
- The central office has historically operated, and continues to operate in a very fiscally efficient manner, 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.
- A new chart of accounts has been implemented.
- Since FY08, the position of Curriculum Director has been eliminated and is the role of the Superintendent of Schools.
- MSAD 68 participates with MSAD 4 in bulk buying paper.
- The Food Service Department participates in bulk buying bids for Bread and Milk with the districts of MSAD 4, 41, 46, 48 and Foxcroft Academy.
- The Food Service Department is currently in a consortium with SAD 4, SAD 68, and FA.
- There has been savings in the superintendent contract from previous years.

Facilities and Maintenance

FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
\$605,467.00	\$715,920.00	\$651,224.00	\$562,306.00

- Elimination of debt on the middle school addition.
- We have increased our efforts in energy efficiency. Through a grant from Efficiency of Maine, we were able to invest in a lighting retrofit project in the middle school cafeteria and gym.
- An energy audit and calibration of our HVAC system was performed to control and ensure significant savings in our heating and electricity costs.

Facilities and Maintenance continued

- \$38,854 reduction in oil and electricity from FY09 to FY10.
- The electrical efficiency projects that have been achieved at RSU/SAD 68 have continued to show a reduction in the electrical costs for the FY11 school year.
- We have eliminated two part-time and a full-time custodian.
- With the closure of the Monson Elementary School, we have consolidated our schools (PreK-8) onto one campus in Dover-Foxcroft.

Transportation

FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
\$492,582.00	\$558,270.00	\$540,490.00	\$540,195.00

- FY10 budget reflects \$17,780 in gasoline and diesel savings.
- In FY10, we budgeted for an additional vocational bus run that did not happen.
- In FY11 school year, we negotiated our transportation contract to find more efficiencies.
- Our vocational transportation contract has been negotiated with SAD 41 at a significant transportation savings.

Special Education

FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
\$1,148,532.00	\$1,193,702.00	\$1,052,036.00	\$978,800.00

- Through collaboration with neighboring school districts, special education staff development presentations are held at MSAD 68 to lower costs for each of the districts.

- A review of caseloads in FY09 resulted in the consolidation of positions resulting in the reduction of one special education teacher.
- MSAD 68 and MSAD 4 collaborate to share ESL and psychological services, recreation therapy time at the local YMCA as well as the services of an occupational therapist.

Instructional Impact

The savings and efficiencies listed in this plan will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program.

Collaborative Agreements

- Piscataquis Valley Adult Education Cooperative: MSAD 4, 41, 46 and 68
- Tri-County Technical Center: MSAD 4, 41, 46, 48 and 68
- Food service with FA, 68 and 4

Plan Requirement

RSU 68/SAD 68 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 section 1465.