

Union School Associations (USA's)

1. Continues to allow the creation of RSU's as established in existing law.
2. Adopts LD 1932 as proposed by the Department, allowing locally-developed cost-sharing agreements, eliminating the 2-mill minimum, preserving minimum subsidies
3. Allows RPC's to develop **Union School Associations** in place of Regional School Units
 - USA's are to be governed as outlined in existing School Union statute, by joint boards with representatives from each member districts. The method of voting is as set forth in existing School Union statute, a weighted vote of Joint Board members based on population. To foster better cooperation, Joint Boards are required to meet no less than 4 times a year.
 - The administrative services provided by the USA are to be funded on cost-per-pupil basis, though the member school districts are given the power to approve alternative funding arrangements developed by the Joint Board to pay for other services provided by the Union.
 - Districts would remain independent. They continue to own their own property, have their own local school boards, negotiate their own labor contracts, etc.
 - Joint Boards are given the power to hire the Union superintendent and other necessary staff, just as they do in the School Union model today. The member school districts may approve the granting of additional powers to the Joint Board as necessary..
4. If choosing to develop a USA, the RPC must develop a **Two-Part Alternative Plan**.
 - a. Part one of the plan is due July 1, 2008 and includes all of the elements of the Alternative plan described in current law, including:
 - Identification of units in the USA, governance details, budget process, powers of Joint Board, etc.
 - Projected cost savings and ways that the cuts to state share of K-12 spending will be dealt with, just as RSU plans must do under current law.
 - A transition plan including a proposed first-year budget.
 - b. Part two of the Alternative plan is due by September 1, 2008 and must lay out a three-year timeline for the regionalization of services under the USA in each of following four broad areas:
 - Central office financial and human resource services, including but not limited to accounting, business management, payroll and benefits, human resources, teacher certification, and substitute teacher services;
 - Non-instructional support services, including but not limited to transportation and vehicle maintenance, facilities management, food

services, information technology and communications, fuel and energy, and bulk purchasing of supplies;

- Instructional support services, including but not limited to curriculum development, testing and assessment, data collection and reporting, professional development, instructional materials and resources, and library and media services; and
- Instructional services, including but not limited to adult education, career and technical education, gifted and talented education, alternative education, transitional programming, special education (including therapy services), guidance counseling, etc.

NOTE: The timeline plan need not describe how ALL of the above services will be provided under the Union system, but must put plans in place to regionalize some services in each of the four areas.

5. The Amendment keeps the existing cost center budget format in place as in current law. Regarding the budget validation referendum process, the amendment requires that only SAU's whose spending is 5% above EPS or greater must use the existing budget validation process, though by vote of the legislative body of the municipality, any municipality may make use of the budget validation process.
6. To better address the issue of state mandates, the section XXXX-45 Department review of state education mandates is now due from the Department on July 1, 2008, as opposed to December 1, as it is under current law.