

SCHOOL UNION #98

Office of the Superintendent of Schools
P.O. Box 60 • Mount Desert, Maine 04660
207-288-5049 / 5040
Fax 207-288-5071

COPY

January 30, 2008

Dear Commissioner Gendron,

Written at the request of our Committee members, this letter summarizes the past and current work of the Mount Desert Island Reorganization Planning Committee.

After the enactment of the school reorganization law last June, the MDI RPC convened in July with an open invitation to all school administrative units of Union 98, as well as to units within neighboring Union 92.

At the end of August, the seven school administrative units of Union 98 submitted letters of intent to engage in planning and negotiations with each other to develop a reorganization plan to form a regional school unit. These letters of intent were approved by the Department.

Over the course of the summer and fall, the MDI RPC worked in good faith toward developing a reorganization plan. The RPC held 12 public work sessions and one community forum. Records of all RPC meetings are available on-line.

On November 29, the MDI RPC submitted a reorganization plan that was complete in concept, although not yet reviewed by legal counsel, which conformed to our general understanding of the law.

On December 15, while accepting the configuration of MDI's plan, the Department rejected the proposed governance model, ruling that it was not in conformance with the law specifically in relation to the authorities that the plan assigned to local school committees.

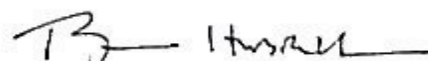
As the Legislature apparently finds the relevant section of the law unclear and is currently working to enact more specific language regarding this, the MDI RPC has decided not to re-evaluate its decision about the proposed governance model until the legislative direction is evident.

Beyond the substantial matter of governance, we do understand that MDI's plan is generally in compliance with both the existing law and the present legislative intent. Therefore, at this time, we are not working toward changing other aspects of the plan.

In the meantime, the MDI RPC continues to meet on a regular schedule and is following, with interest, the Legislature's work revising the current law.

Sincerely yours,


Gail Marshall, MDI RPC Chair


Brian Hubbell, MDI RPC Vice-chair

Cc: Senator Dennis Damon
Representative, Hannah Pingree
Representative Ted Koffman