

# SAD 1 adopts resolution opposing plan

By Scott Mitchell Johnson  
Staff Writer

MAPLETON — At last Thursday night's SAD 1 board meeting held at the Mapleton Elementary School, directors unanimously approved a resolution urging community voters to oppose the school reorganization referendum question that will be on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The referendum question reads: "Do you favor approving the school administrative reorganization plan prepared by the 3-2-1 Reorganization Planning Committee to reorganize Maine School Administrative District No. 1, Maine School Administrative District No. 32 and Nashville Plantation School Department into a regional school unit with an effective date of July 1, 2009?"

The resolution states that voters of the municipalities of Ashland, Castle Hill, Chapman, Garfield,

Mapleton, Masardis, Nashville Plantation, Oxbow, Portage Lake, Presque Isle and Westfield "will be deciding the future of education for our children."

The resolution includes five bullet points outlining why a 'No' vote should be cast. Reasons include:

- The so-called Reorganization Law was haphazardly developed and hastily presented after the elections of November 2006, and pushed through the Legislature in the spring of 2007. Because the original law was so flawed, many revisions were put in place earlier this year. The law still contains many ambiguities that are posing significant problems for school districts. Haste and indecision at the state level do not inspire confidence at the local level.

- Promises at the state level of reduced local property taxes and

Please See Page 4 PLAN

## Plan

Continued from Page 1

improved local education have not been and cannot be proven. In fact, property taxes are likely to increase as a result of the proposed reorganization. In addition, nobody at the state level has presented an explanation of how the quality of education will be enhanced through reorganization.

- If the reorganization plan is approved, residents of the municipalities within SAD 32 and Nashville Plantation will be required to pay a portion of the local debt outstanding for SAD 1. Likewise, residents of SAD 1 and Nashville Plantation will be required to pay part of the local debt associated with the construction of the new school in Ashland.

- If the plan is approved, there will be a first-year shifting of over \$300,000 in local property taxes from SAD 1 to SAD 32 and Nashville Plantation just to equalize the current levels of local funding. It is plainly unfair to ask the taxpayers of SAD 32 and Nashville Plantation to pick up this additional burden. In years two and three when teacher and other employment contracts would be combined if the plan is approved, there will be additional and substantial cost shifting from SAD 32 to SAD 1 in order to make all employment agreements consistent.

The resolution was written in a way so that it pertains to all communities that would be affected by

the potential reorganization," said Superintendent Gehrig Johnson. "We tried to make it sound respectful and not offensive, but make the necessary points, as well."

By approving the resolution, Johnson said, the directors have also sanctioned a full-page ad in the local newspaper urging voters to oppose the referendum. No taxpayer funds will be used to pay for the advertisement.

"Instead it will be paid for by private donations," he said.

SAD 32 and Nashville Plantation board members have already approved a similar resolution urging community members to vote "No" on the referendum ballot.