

## ALTERNATIVE PLAN

SAU Submitting: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Information: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted by SAU: \_\_\_\_\_

### POLICY OBJECTIVES

It is declared the policy of the State to provide sufficient resources to support the reorganization of school administrative units into regional, state-approved units of school administration to provide:

1. Opportunity. Equitable educational opportunity for all students to demonstrate achievement of the content standards of the State's system of learning results established in section 6209;

2. Programs. Rigorous academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209 and that prepare students for college, careers and citizenship;

3. Delivery. Uniformity in the delivery of academic programs that meet the requirements of the system of learning results established in section 6209;

4. Tax rates. A greater uniformity of tax rates for the support of schools;

5. Sustainability. The efficient use of limited resources in order to achieve long-term sustainability and predictability in the support of public schools;

6. Public funds. Effective use of the public funds expended for the support of public schools by means of:

A. The creation of cost-efficient organizational structures; and

B. Administrative structures and efficiencies that permit the organized and regular delivery of uniform state-sponsored professional development programs to promote coherence and consistency in the understanding and application of the State's standards-based system for continuous improvement in student achievement;

7. School choice. The preservation of opportunities for choice of schools; and

8. Services. The maximization of opportunities to deliver services that can more effectively be provided in larger districts than from within smaller units or individual schools.

Regional school units shall provide kindergarten to grade 12 public education, in accordance with Title 20-A, and shall develop and implement policies that address efficiencies in administration, educational programming and the sharing of community resources for the continuous improvement of student achievement and the preparation of students for college, careers and citizenship.

## **PARAMETERS FOR PLAN DEVELOPMENT**

In order for the plan to be approved by the Commissioner, the governing bodies of school administrative units shall work within the following parameters.

1. The proposed regional school unit must serve not fewer than 2,500 students, except where circumstances relating to the following factors justify an exception:

(a) Geography, including physical proximity and the size of the current school administrative unit;

(b) Demographics, including student enrollment trends and the composition and nature of communities in the regional school unit;

(c) Economics, including existing collaborations to be preserved or enhanced and opportunities to deliver commodities and services to be maximized;

(d) Transportation;

(e) Population density; or

(f) Other unique circumstances including the need to preserve existing or developing relationships, meet the needs of students, maximize educational opportunities for students and ensure equitable access to rigorous programs for all students.

When circumstances justify an exception to the size requirement of 2,500 students, the unit must serve as close to 2,500 students as possible and in no case, except for coastal islands and schools operated by tribal school committees, may it serve fewer than 1,200 students.

2. The plan must provide comprehensive programming for all students from

kindergarten to grade 12 and must include at least one publicly supported secondary school.

3. The plan must be consistent with the **POLICY OBJECTIVES** set forth above.

4. The plan may not displace teachers or students or close any schools existing and operating during the school year immediately preceding reorganization, except as permitted as follows:

20-A MRSA

§ 1511. Supermajority vote to close school in the regional school unit

A school operated within the regional school unit may not be closed unless closure of the school is approved at a regular or special meeting of the regional school unit board by an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the elected membership or voting power of the regional school unit board.

§ 1512. Closing school

1. **Vote; cost of election.** A school in a member municipality of a regional school unit may not be closed unless the voters in the member municipality vote on the article in accordance with the referendum procedure set forth in this chapter.

\*Article: Do you favor authorizing the board of directors of (name of regional school unit) to close  
..... (name of school)?

Yes No

The additional cost of keeping the school open has been estimated by the regional school unit board to be \$ .....

The election must be conducted within that member municipality only, pursuant to department rule, and the costs of the election are borne by the regional school unit.

2. **Expense of keeping the school open.** If the voters vote by a majority vote to keep the school open, the member municipality is liable for some additional expense for actual local operating costs and transportation operating costs as defined in section 15672. The determination of costs is subject to the approval of the commissioner. The cost to be borne by the municipality voting to keep a school open is the amount that would be saved if the school were closed. Any additional costs that must be borne by the member municipality must be part of the article presented to the voters at the meeting to determine whether the school should remain open.

3. **Costs and procedures during subsequent years.** During any year subsequent to the year during which a school remains open contrary to the regional school unit board's vote to close that school as a result of a municipal referendum, the school will be open without any additional cost to the municipality except as described in paragraphs A and B.

A. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality again vote to keep the school open, as described in this subsection, then the school will remain open and the member municipality will be obligated to pay the additional costs as described in subsection 2.

B. If the regional school unit board again votes to close the school and the voters of the member municipality fail to vote to keep the school open, then the school is closed. In this event, the school may be reopened only if the regional school unit board votes to reopen the school.

4. **Definition of school closing.** For purposes of this section, a school closing is any action by the regional school unit board that has the effect of providing no instruction for any students at that school.

5. **Method of payment by liable municipality.** If a municipality is liable for additional expenses as determined in subsection 3, paragraph A, then the amount of this additional expense must be subtracted from the regional school unit budget before each member municipality's assessment is computed. This additional expense must be paid by the member municipality that is liable in equal monthly amounts, unless the regional school unit and that member municipality mutually agree to another method of payment.

6. **Multiple municipalities.** If a school proposed for closure is an elementary school that serves students from more than one municipality, the article set forth in subsection 1 must be submitted to the voters in each of the



municipalities that sent all elementary students from that municipality to the school. If the article is approved by a majority of the voters in each of the municipalities, the school is not closed and the municipalities share in the costs under this section in the same proportion as they share the current operating costs of the school.

## REQUIRED ELEMENTS OF THE PLAN

### 1. The intent to submit an alternative plan has been approved by the Commissioner in the approval of the Notice of Intent.

An alternative plan may be submitted only by a unit that is:

- (1) An offshore island;
- (2) A school operated by a tribal school committee pursuant to the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 30, section 6214;
- (3) A school administrative unit that serves more than 2,500 students, or 1,200 students where circumstances justify an exception to the requirement of 2,500 students under XXXX-36, subsection 6, paragraph A, where expansion of the unit would be inconsistent with the policies set forth in Title 20-A, section 1451; or
- (4) A school administrative unit that is designated as an efficient, high-performing district. For purposes of this subparagraph, a school administrative unit is designated an "efficient, high-performing district" if:
  - (a) It contains at least 3 schools identified as "higher performing" in the May 2007 Maine Education Policy Research Institute report "The Identification of Higher and Lower Performing Maine Schools"; and
  - (b) Its reported 2005-2006 per-pupil expenditures for system administration represent less than 4% of its total per-pupil expenditures.

### 2. The alternative plan must address how the SAU will reorganize administrative functions, duties and non-instructional personnel so that the projected expenditures of the SAU in FY 2008-2009 for system administration, transportation, special education and facilities and maintenance will not have an adverse impact on the instructional program. Please describe.

## COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

Collaborative agreements are agreements to share the responsibility for and cost of the delivery of certain administrative, instructional and non-instructional functions. "Collaborative agreements" includes, but is not limited to:

- A. Shared purchasing or contract agreements;
- B. Agreements for shared staff or staff training;
- C. Agreements to share technology or technology support;
- D. Agreements to provide special education programs and support services;
- E. Agreements to share accounting, payroll and financial management services;
- F. Agreements to coordinate transportation routing and vehicle

maintenance;

G. Agreements to share food service planning and purchasing; and

H. Agreements to coordinate energy and facilities management.

A school administrative unit may enter into collaborative agreements with other school administrative units and, whenever possible, with local and county governments and State Government, to achieve efficiencies and reduce costs in the delivery of administrative, instructional and non-instructional functions.

A collaborative agreement between 2 or more previous education units may remain in effect after July 1, 2008. Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, collaborative agreements in existence on the effective date of this section may be extended or modified by the parties to the collaborative agreement.

***Please describe any collaborative agreements proposed by the SAU.***

DOE USE ONLY: Date Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Date Reviewed/Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Date of Commissioner Response re: Approval \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Date Returned to SAU for Revisions \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Due Date for Revisions from SAU \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Date Revisions Reviewed/Approved \_\_\_\_\_  
DOE USE ONLY: Date of Commissioner Response re: Revised Plan \_\_\_\_\_