

December 14, 2007

John Dirnbauer, Superintendent
MSAD 68
63 Harrison Avenue, Suite C
Dover-Foxcroft, ME 04426

Dear Superintendent Dirnbauer:

Thank you for the Reorganization Plan that you submitted on behalf of MSAD 68, Greenville School Department, Shirley School Department, Beaver Cove School Department, Kingsbury Plantation School Department, Bowerbank School Department and Lake View Plantation School Department on December 3, 2007 for Department review for compliance with the school reorganization law, P.L. 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX.

I recognize how much time, effort and thoughtful work is required to complete a reorganization plan and appreciate the efforts made, to date, by all those involved.

Members of my staff and I have reviewed the submission and offer the comments and notes listed below to assist you in completing the plan. If you make any substantive change(s) to any part of the plan beyond those listed below, please be sure to note those on the Updated Reorganization Plan Cover Sheet Checklist, along with notation of those items that have changed per the notes contained in this response.

General Documentation (Submittal Sheet)

- Please submit the Reorganization Plan Submittal Sheet, including signatures from the authorized representatives from all SAUs included in your Reorganization Plan.
- The actual number of students for which the proposed RSU was fiscally responsible as of October 1, 2006 was 1,303. I am making you aware of this as this is the enrollment number that will be used in determining Essential Programs and Services funding.

Checklist/Plan Text Items

Items Checked “In Progress” or “Not Yet Started”

With respect to the items you checked as “in progress” or “not yet started”, we are unable to complete our review until the additional information is provided. However, based on our preliminary review we would ask you to please note the following:

** Required Elements*

1. Please clarify when revisions are submitted.

2 & 3. As you prepare a plan for the size, composition, apportionment and method of voting for the new regional school unit board, I encourage you to review the information and examples available on the following Department of Education website on “Determining Voting Method”:

www.maine.gov/education/supportingschools/votemethod.html

4. Please continue work on this section.

5. Please continue work on this section.

6. It is important that each regional school unit’s plan address the disposition of debt in accordance with 20-A MRSA 1461(3)(A)(6) and in sufficient detail to provide clear direction for the new regional school unit with respect to the options outlined in 20-A MRSA Section 1506 on debt liability. Please provide further description of the disposition of debt that addresses these details; and please consider using the language offered in the Drummond Woodsum workshop materials.

7. Please continue work on this section.

Please provide assurance that all terms of the grant agreement between the grantee Greenville School Department and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Utilities Service will be assumed by the RSU than succeeds the grantee Greenville School Department.

8. Please continue work on this section.

9. Please continue work on this section.

10. Please continue work on this section.

11. Please continue work on this section.

12. Each regional school unit’s plan must provide an estimate of the cost savings to be achieved by the formation of a regional school unit and how these savings will be achieved in accordance with 20-A MRSA 1461(3)(A)(12) and in sufficient

detail to provide clear direction for the new regional school unit. Please provide the information regarding estimated cost savings; and please consider using the guidance offered in the Drummond Woodsum workshop materials.

A model for budgeting for system administration is available at www.maine.gov/education/supportingschools/planning.html.

The Department of Education will be issuing an RFP to procure routing software to be available statewide. It is the Department's intent to issue the RFP early in 2008 and have a contract signed with a vendor as soon thereafter as possible so that the software will be available to RSUs and municipalities as soon as possible. SAUs may begin to work with the system in FY 2008-2009 but will not be able to budget any cost savings until FY 2009-2010.

13. Please continue work on this section.

We will review all items on the checklist again, upon your completion of the plan.

** Parameters*

B (1). Please continue work on this section.

B. Please continue work on this section.

B (2). Please continue work on this section.

B (3). Please continue work on this section.

B (4). Please continue work on this section.

F. NOTE: If you have given an operational date of July 1, 2009 or later, see Cover Sheet, Footnote 6.

Needs for Assistance

The Department's Reorganization Management Team will be contacting you shortly to discuss how best to address the needs for assistance you identified.

Barriers Identified

The Department has submitted a bill, LD 1932, to the legislature to address certain identified barriers (cost shifting, the 2 mill minimum and minimum subsidy). In addition, the legislature will be considering, in one bill instead of in the multiple bills proposed to the Legislative Council, the issues and barriers to reorganization that have been brought to them by their constituents. Meanwhile, the Department's Reorganization

Management Team will follow up with you where more information is needed by them to understand the barrier you've identified, and will share this information, along with possible solutions, with the Commissioner for her continuing discussion with the Education Committee.

SUBMISSION OF REVISIONS:

Please provide the additional materials to complete your plan by February 1, 2008. Please include:


- Any additional data required
- An updated Submittal Page with Signatures
- An updated Cover Sheet Checklist
- A copy of this Response from the Commissioner.

I will respond no more than 14 days after the revisions/additional materials are refiled with the Department. As you are the contact person identified on the Submittal Sheet, this response is addressed to you but with the understanding that you will share it with your school administrative unit board members, RPC members and others involved with this Reorganization Plan.

Finally, what I am reviewing for approval is a plan (or a submission, if the plan is incomplete) which is by its very nature prospective, with steps yet to be taken or finalized; and any review comments or approval given are in relation to the elements required under P.L 2007, chapter 240, Part XXXX but not the legality of all the activities proposed. Thus, I strongly recommend that you have your own legal advisor(s) review the details of any particular transaction proposed in your plan (particularly with respect to the disposition of property, to debt, and to employee contracts/relations) as you proceed, to ensure the legality of the steps you'll be taking to implement the plan. If that review leads to any substantive changes in any parts of your plan, please be sure to submit an amended plan to the Department for our review and our file.

Again, my sincere thanks for your efforts.

Sincerely,



Susan A. Gendron
Commissioner of Education

cc: Heather Perry, Superintendent, Greenville, Shirley, Beaver Cove and Kingsbury Plantation School Departments
David A. Walker, Superintendent, Lake View School Department
C. Ann B. Bridge, Superintendent, Bowerbank School Department