

Update on School Reorganization

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State & Federal Relations

It's been a little more than one year since the Legislature and the Governor passed the mandatory school consolidation law. In that time much has happened, including a substantial amendment to the law. Relying primarily on information posted online by the Department of Education, this article provides an overview of the status of the various reorganization plans.

In a press release dated June 20, 2008, David Connerty-Marin, a spokesman for the Department of Education (DOE), indicated that "We still anticipate coming in under 80 regional school units, as called for in the law." Using information provided on the DOE website, MMA calculates that there are currently 84 proposed RSUs, regional school units, (or exceptions) which have received preliminary DOE approval and 29 SAUs, school administrative units, whose status is either non-compliant or still pending.

The DOE information also demonstrates that the task of complying with

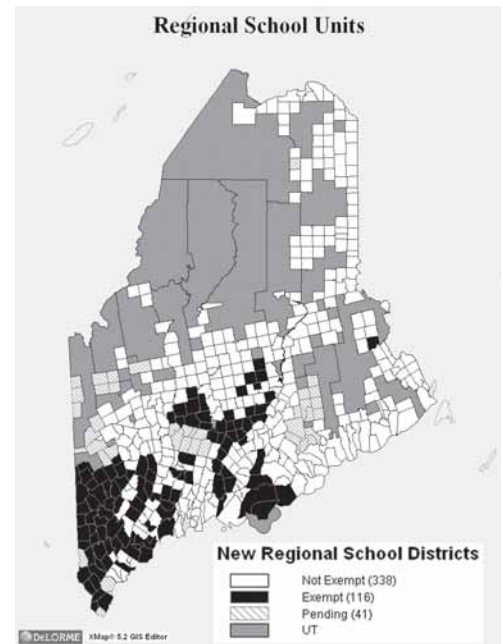
the consolidation law does not fall evenly in Maine. The smaller school systems of northern and western Maine will do most of the consolidating whereas the larger school systems of southern Maine are largely exempt. (See Map and Tables on pages 14-15). That said, the average enrollment of the 32 SAUs that have been exempted from reorganization because of their size is over 2,800 whereas the size of the 39 DOE-approved reorganizations is slightly over 2,300.

Two proposed RSUs were presented to voters in June (#37 and #38 in Table 3). The first, involving MSAD 16 (Farmingdale & Hallowell) and Monmouth, Dresden and Richmond was approved by the voters. The proposed name of the new school district is Kennebec Intra-District Schools -- KIDS RSU. The second proposed RSU was defeated -- albeit narrowly. This proposal would have combined SAD 53 (Burnham, Detroit and Pittsfield) with SAD 59 (Athens, Madi-

son, Starks and Brighton Plantation.) The voters of Madison were the only ones to reject the plan. According to the Bangor Daily News, the superintendents of SAD 53 and SAD 59 have asked the DOE for guidance.

It was expected that the majority of plans of the proposed RSUs would be presented to the voters in November, 2008. That assumption is now unclear. (see sidebar below)

Table 2 has a list of "non-compliant" or pending plans. Please note that in order to limit our map to three colors, we have included these com-



munities in this catch-all category when the status for each may be more nuanced. It appears the DOE is hopeful that some of these SAUs will ultimately agree to present a DOE-approved reorganization proposal to their voters.

For a more detailed spreadsheet identifying each of the reorganization submissions, please visit the MMA School Reorganization webpage at: <http://www.memun.org/public/news/school/election.htm>

For the source data posted online by the Department of Education, please visit the DOE website: <http://www.maine.gov/education/reorg/plansandresponses.html>

**In Table 3, the first reorganized district - RSU 1 - in the Arrowsic area began operating on July 1. It was created by a parallel reorganization law to the one that is now governing all other school units.*

Voting on Reorganization Plans

Only 3 of 39 reorganization plans have been submitted to the voters. It appears from the DOE website that of the remaining 36 plans, 33 have only provisional DOE approval and 3 (identified on Table 3 as #14, 22 & 36) has been given final DOE approval.

These 36 plans must be submitted to voters before the deadline of January 30, 2009. It was anticipated that most of the plans would appear on the November, 2008 ballot. However, given the time available, this is unclear.

The November election will be held on Tuesday, November, 4th. In order to comply with election laws, ballots must be finalized 45 days prior to the election -- which is approximately Friday, September 19th. So, the reorganization plans must be finally (not provisionally) approved by DOE prior to September 19th.

In its most recent round of responses to the reorganization planning committees, the DOE has set an August 15th deadline for plan submittal to DOE for its review and final approval. It is simply unclear how many of the 36 reorganization plans will be finalized by August 15 (approximately 30 days from the date this article was written).

TABLE 1 – Reorganizing School Systems

Status	Current School Administrative Units	Proposed Regional School Units	Municipalities Or Plantations	Total Students
Compliant –Consolidating	220	39	337	90,436
Not Compliant/Pending	29	13	40	14,002
Sub-Total	249	52	367	104,438
Exempt – Over 2,500 Students	21	21	53	71,088
Exempt – 1,000-2,500 Students	11	11	48	19,215
Exempt –Tribal & Island Districts	11	11	11	924
Exempt –High-Performing District	2	2	2	3,181
Sub-Total	45	45	114	94,408
STATEWIDE TOTALS	294	97	491	198,846

(Source: MMA review of DOE online data)

Please note that MMA staff placed the proposals in the above categories, not the DOE. Some proposals are in a state of flux and do not perfectly fit the above categories. Nevertheless, we believe the table is an accurate representation of the data on the DOE website.

TABLE 2 – Non-Compliant with Pending Consolidation Plans

	SAU Names	SAUs	Municipalities	Students
1	Acton	1	1	403
2	Airline CSD #8 (Amherst, Aurora, Osborn, Great Pond)	1	4	68
3	Carrabassett Valley	1	1	87
4	Ellsworth	1	1	1,035
5	Georgetown	1	1	118
6	Hancock & Surry & Lamoine & Otis & Mariaville & Trenton & MSAD 26 (Eastbrook & Waltham)	7	8	1,262
7	Kittery	1	1	1,081
8	MSAD 44 & Gilead & Upton	3	7	867
9	Nashville Plantation (Tuition Only)	1	1	13
10	Rangeley & Dallas Plt & Lincoln Plt & Magalloway Plt & Rangeley Plt & Sandy River Plt	6	6	307
11	Waterville	1	1	1,939
12	Wells-Ogunquit CSD #18	1	2	1,412
13	MSAD 47 & Winslow & China & Vassalboro	4	6	5,410
	Total Non-Compliant	29	40	14,002

TABLE 3 – Compliant and in Process of Consolidating

SAU Names		SAUs Mun. Students		
1	MSAD 1 & MSAD 32	2	10	2,398
2	Alna & Wiscasset & Westport Island & Palermo & Somerville & Whitefield & Windsor & Chelsea	8	8	2,272
3	Blue Hill & Brooklin & Brooksville & Castine & Penobscot & Sedgwick & Deer Isle-Stonington CSD #13	7	6	1,320
4	Boothbay & Boothbay Harbor CSD # 3 & Jefferson & Edgecomb & Southport & Bremen & Bristol & Damariscotta & Newcastle & Nobleboro & South Bristol & Great Salt Bay CSD #14 (Bremen, Damariscotta, Newcastle)	11	11	2,740
5	Brewer & MSAD 63 & Dedham & Orrington	4	6	3,228
6	Bucksport & Orland & MSAD 18	3	4	1,255
7	Calais & Crawford & Alexander & Baring & Robbinston & Charlotte & Princeton & Talmage & Waite & Meddybemps & Cooper & Grand Lake & Perry & Baileyville & Dennysville & Eastport & Vanceboro & Pembroke & East Range CSD #12--Codyville and Topsfield	19	20	1,881
8	Fayette & Winthrop & Maranacook CSD #10 & Manchester & Readfield & Mt. Vernon & Wayne	7	6	2,429
9	Five Town CSD #19 & MSAD 28 & Hope & Appleton & Lincolnville	5	5	2,048
10	Freeport & Durham & MSAD 62	3	3	1,931
11	Glenburn & Orono & Veazie	3	3	1,595
12	Hermon & MSAD 23	2	3	1,869
13	Jay & MSAD 36	2	3	1,868
14	Litchfield & Sabattus & Wales & Oak Hill CSD #915	4	3	1,601
15	Mount Desert & Bar Harbor & Frenchboro & Southwest Harbor & Cranberry Isles & Tremont & MSAD 76 & Mount Desert CSD #7 (Mt. Desert, Bar Harbor, SW Harbor, Tremont)	8	8	1,462
16	MSAD 10 & MSAD 24 & MSAD 27 & MSAD 33 & Madawaska & Grand Isle	6	15	2,514
17	MSAD 12 & MSAD 13 & MSAD 74 & Caratunk & Dennistown & The Forks & West Forks & Pleasant Ridge	8	13	1,283
18	MSAD 14 & MSAD 25 & MSAD 29 & MSAD 70 & CSD #9 [Crystal, Dyer Brook, Island Falls, Merrill, Oakfield, Smyrna], & Orient & Bancroft & Hersey & Moro Plt.	9	27	2,863
19	MSAD 19 & Machias & Jonesboro & Marshfield & Northfield & Roque Bluffs & Wesley & Whitneyville & Cutler & Machiasport & Whiting & East Machias	12	12	1,158
20	MSAD 20 & Caribou & Limestone & Woodland & Westmanland & Stockholm & New Sweden & Caswell	8	8	2,747
26	MSAD 21 & MSAD 39 & MSAD 43 & Hanover	4	12	3,239
21	MSAD 30 & MSAD 31 & MSAD 67 & Carrol Plt & Reed Plt & Drew Plt & Millinocket & E.Millinocket & Glenwood Plt & Lakeville & Lowell & Macwahoc & Medway & Reed & Seboeis & Woodville & Medford	17	27	3,417
22	MSAD 34 & MSAD 56	2	9	2,659
23	MSAD 37 & Deblois & Beddington & Beals & Jonesport & Franklin & Steuben & Gouldsboro & Sorrento & Sullivan & Winter Harbor & Schoodic Bay CSD #11 - Sorrento and Sullivan & Penninsula CSD #20 - Gouldsboro & Winter Harbor & Moosabec CSD #17 - Beals & Jonesport & Flanders Bay CSD -- Sorrento, Sullivan, Winter Harbor, Franklin, Gouldsboro	15	16	1,892
24	MSAD 38 & MSAD 48	2	8	2,497
25	MSAD 4 & MSAD 46 & Harmony & Willimantic	4	12	1,942
27	MSAD 42 & MSAD 45 & Easton & Bridgewater	4	7	1,080
28	MSAD 5 & MSAD 50	2	6	2,312
29	MSAD 68 & MSAD 41 & Greenville & Shirley & Beaver Cove & Kingsbury Plt & Bowerbank & Lakeview Plt	8	14	2,030
30	MSAD 71 & Arundel	2	3	2,909
31	MSAD 9 & MSAD 58 & Coplin & Highland	4	16	3,163
32	Old Town & Alton & Greenbush & Bradley & Milford	5	5	2,041
33	Poland & Minot & Mechanic Falls	3	3	1,730
34	Saco & Dayton & Old Orchard Beach	3	3	4,124
35	Windham & Raymond	2	2	3,520
36	Falmouth & MSAD 51	2	3	4,419
37	MSAD 16 & Richmond & Monmouth & Dresden	4	5	2,450

Total Compliant/Reorganizing 22 337 90,436