



**Mount Desert Island Regional School System**  
**AOS - 91**  
**Reorganization Planning Committee**

Meeting Outcomes, Agenda & Notes  
August 14, 2024, 5:30-7:00 pm

[JOIN BY ZOOM HERE](#)

**Meeting Outcomes**

1. Consensus and Formal Recommendation for a Reorganized District Funding Model
2. Consensus and Formal Recommendation for School Advisory Councils

**Agenda**

1. Welcome and brief review of [working agreements](#)
2. Group Maintenance—Recall the [four patterns of group communication](#)
3. Action Item: Recommended Funding Model
  - a. Paired and Whole-Group Discussion
  - b. [Register your Recommendation and Review Menti Polls](#)
  - c. Wrap-up Discussion and Formal Recommendation (by 6:15)
4. Action Item: Recommended Model for [School Advisory Councils](#)
  - a. Brief report from ad-hoc committee
  - b. Paired and Whole-Group Discussion
  - c. Wrap-up Discussion and Formal Recommendation (by 6:55)
5. Review Meeting Outcomes, Gratitude/Last Words, and Look to Next Month: September 11, 5:30-7.

**Reorganization Plan Worksheet & Guiding Questions**

*What funding model should this committee recommend to the district community? Should the model be phased in?*

Jan - Concerns about pretty small tax base on Frenchboro, MCHT, and declining student base, some interest in 40/60 model

Susan and Fred - Starting at 60/40 and a 4 year ramp up to 80/20

Rob's group - Starting at 60/40 and a 4 year ramp up to 80/20

Sarah, Becky, Jessica - Starting at 60/40 and a 4 year ramp up to 80/20

Mike's Group - Ramp up would be essential in moving us in a direction that's thoughtful and reasonable

Brian, Keri, Holly - Brian: Phase-in process would be good, leaning more towards 75/25 rather than 80/20, but could possibly be convinced. 4 years is too long, 2 years instead, start at current level, then bump once and be done. If dragged out, you'll never hear the end of it, have to go to the towns. Keri likes what Brian said re: starting with the high school formula.

Jessica feels strongly that 80/20 is right and not overly burdensome, to make our structure strong we want equity across every homeowner, cuts down on tension, but for the greater good would go for 75/25. Suggestion to go from 67/33 to 80/20 over 2 years.

Clarification: First number = state valuation / second number = enrolment (ex: 67% state valuation / 33% enrolment)

Proposal to recommend 67/33 to 80/20 over two years.

Group consensus on ending with 80/20. Questions come with timing and starting point. **Most of the group felt comfortable with suggesting 67/33 to 80/20 over 2 years. Consensus confirmed, next action item.**

*Describe your recommended framework for School Advisory Councils and/or note your follow-up questions. Optional: [submit your detailed input/questions here](#).*

Sarah brought up question from June meeting about making sure we aren't putting additional burden on teachers with committees.

Cindy said that most schools have a leadership council and are already familiar w/ this kind of additional work.

Kendra suggested that this level of detail could be worked out by group that will be dedicated to hashing out action items.

Stipends were mentioned.

Jan mentioned being asked to do all kinds of things outside the school day during her career, as well as getting no stipend for ferry committee but has a personal interest in it.

Jessica - Sub-committee did discuss stipend, unsure it would go over well if parents participated and didn't get a stipend, felt like stipends are useful in many settings but not here. Suggested getting on sub-committee if folks feel very passionate about hashing out these details.

Brian asked what these committees will do. Mike/Jessica: Scheduling ideas, finding times for certain activities, looking at reading scores and what to do to improve academic achievement, supporting school staff/administrators through advocating for budget going to board, providing listening sessions for rest of school community to talk to members of this group. Keri mentioned it might take place of high school trustees, really important thing to keep in mind - trustees at high school have done a great job of keeping this building in great shape (compared to Connors Emerson, where money went to books and teacher salaries instead), so wanting to keep capital expenses in mind.

Rob reminds that site councils tend to address cultural things—how kids are feeling and how they participate in the school/community, how they communicate with their school leadership.

Jessica - site council would be active in advocating with the board for paying attention to capital needs (new roof as example)

Rob - would be greater region's responsibility to take care of issues advocated for, not individual schools - individual schools will be taken care of rest of region (ex: Frenchboro taken care of by citizens of BH, Trenton, etc.)

Sarah - brought up vetting process for members of council - Jessica said the sub-committee did add this to the recommendations

Jan - suggested having some flexibility in timing of meetings - Frenchboro's size might mean they don't need to meet monthly, so instead put a requirement for number of meetings per year, rather than one per month or something similar.

Jessica - Advocacy for physical plant needs would be a part of the council's responsibilities

Becky - Will school advisory councils take away some of the "teeth" that are currently customary w/ school boards with a vote? Is one RSU member w/ one vote on the district school board enough to carry the load of what the advocacy concerns are from the council?

Brian/Keri - As a school committee member and being on the AOS board, we're often thinking that schools should be well-run but we don't run the schools. This advisory council will have less teeth than the AOS board, but it seems like it'll have a bigger job based on the description and the topics they'll be covering. Concerns about capital projects - might be a different conversation about a committee different from school committee that's just focused on capital projects so we don't end up with falling down schools. Jessica said this doesn't remove that possibility.

Mike - we need to ensure flexibility, provide voice within those communities. Maybe trim out some words to focus more on core functions. These would not be statutory like other states. Job of this committee would be to advocate for those smaller groups. We don't want another school board on top of RSU board, so this is the middle ground to support the smaller voice. Brian still feels like it wouldn't function as an advocacy committee, can't make two pieces fit.

Susan— Looking less at purpose rather than core functions, sees it as a support w/ backing from larger knowledge of academic pursuits. Holly - who's going to pay for capital projects and convince taxpayers that things will be taken care of in our own towns.

Cindy and Jan - focused on having the people that are working with the students in the school making decisions on things that directly impact the students. Issues with bullying, getting kids to school, the teachers at that school should be making decisions on how to solve those problems and not have that come down from a larger group where those solutions may not be effective because they don't match the group that they're working with. Also talked about the group themselves deciding on how often they're going to meet.

Kendra - to summarize so far: this group is comfortable with the recommended function of these advisory councils to advocate for school culture and day-to-day priorities of the school—this group feels that these duties make sense for these councils, but there's concern about the potential loss of "teeth" and oversight of capital projects

Jessica - we are a very small district, please don't fear that things will get lost in this structure. There are plenty of teeth for those things to be taken care of.

Keri - a lot of this comes down to keeping a culture for each school, folks at Tremont aren't going to want BH deciding we can't do Quebec trip anymore. So a board that's being asked to look at some of these smaller ideas around how budget money is used, thinks these kinds of things should be looked at by smaller groups at individual schools. Budgetary items should come from the top, but is still concerned about discrepancies, going back to BH example of school falling apart and budget money being prioritized differently.

Becky - 20 years of observing the high school trustees in action - Mike says that work can be done by proposed RSU committee

Jessica - legally we're not going to turn the advisory councils into trustees. Mike - Separate building situation from advisory council. Rob - see them as advocates

Jan - seeing advisory councils as maintaining culture in schools (echoing Keri's point)

Jessica - please let sub-committee know if there are any important/urgent points as they wordsmith the proposal. Remove the need that this council would handle capital improvements from expectations

Brian and Jan want to see final version of document before voting

Decision to have sub-committee rework document, sending to larger group for review, use Menti poll for temperature check before next meeting

***Present:*** *Becky, Jessica, Sarah, Fred, Susan, Holly, Keri, Brian, Jan, Cindy, Mike, Rob, Aaron*