

Maine's Reorganized School Districts and the Budget Cuts of March 3, 2010

Public Law 2007, Chapter 240, Part XXXX passed on June 11, 2007 and Public Law 2007, Chapter 668 (enacted by passage of LD 2323, An Act to Remove Barriers to the Reorganization of School Administrative Units), passed on April 18, 2008, requires that all school units, of whatever form and whatever size - SADs, CSDs and municipal school units, small and large - must:

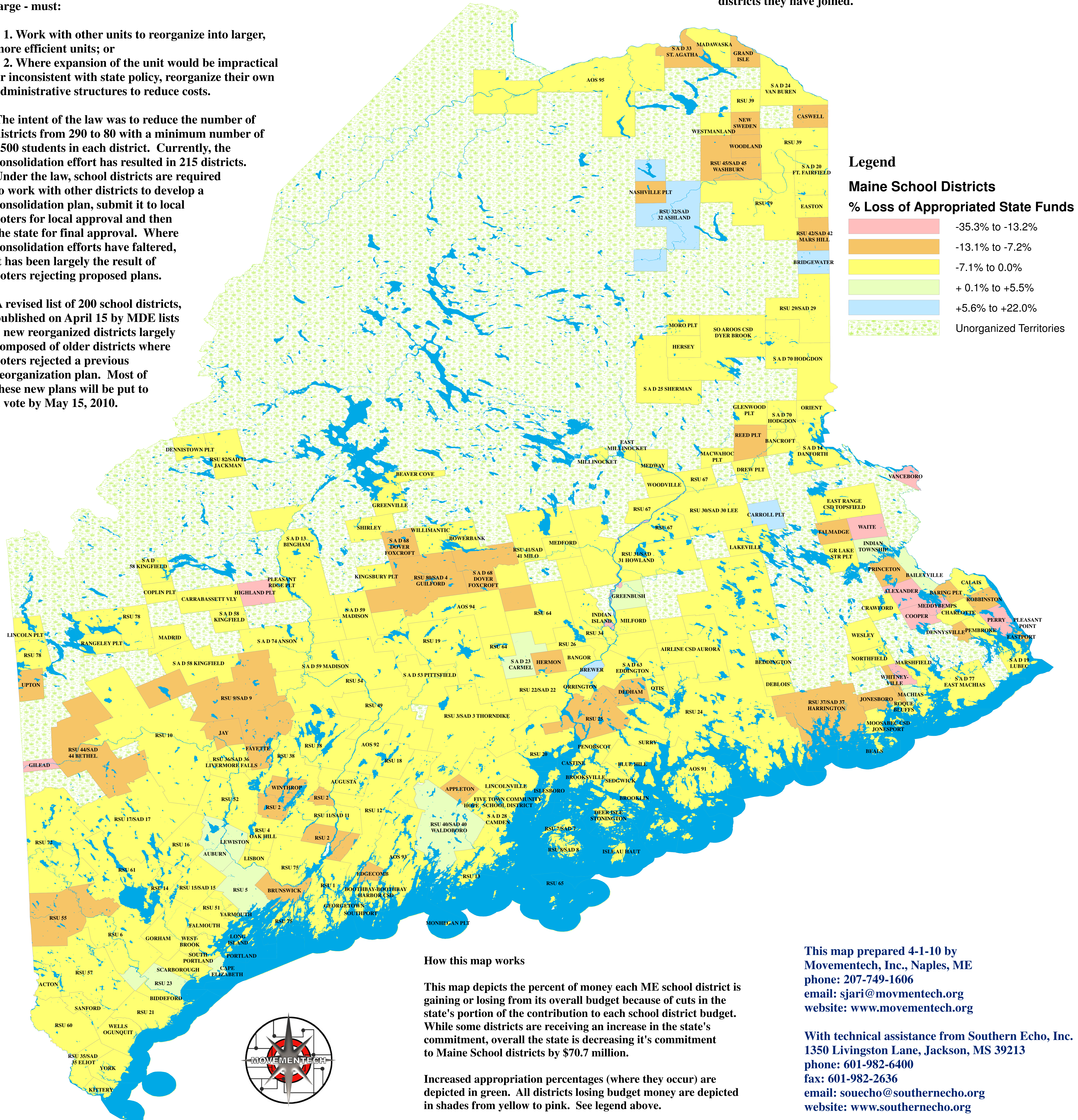
1. Work with other units to reorganize into larger, more efficient units; or
2. Where expansion of the unit would be impractical or inconsistent with state policy, reorganize their own administrative structures to reduce costs.

The intent of the law was to reduce the number of districts from 290 to 80 with a minimum number of 2500 students in each district. Currently, the consolidation effort has resulted in 215 districts. Under the law, school districts are required to work with other districts to develop a consolidation plan, submit it to local voters for local approval and then the state for final approval. Where consolidation efforts have faltered, it has been largely the result of voters rejecting proposed plans.

A revised list of 200 school districts, published on April 15 by MDE lists 4 new reorganized districts largely composed of older districts where voters rejected a previous reorganization plan. Most of these new plans will be put to a vote by May 15, 2010.

Despite claims from the state that the school districts that have engaged in consolidation were saving money, the state issued on March 3, 2010, a restated budget that includes \$70.7 in cuts to school district allocations.

Three days after the Governor announced the budget cuts, the Maine state legislature took up proposed amendments to the law allowing districts to opt out of the consolidation program. According to the Kennebec Journal: "The changes recommended by the Education Committee would eliminate minimum size requirements that some rural districts have been unable to meet, and would let towns withdraw from new school districts they have joined."



Legend

Maine School Districts

% Loss of Appropriated State Funds

[Pink]	-35.3% to -13.2%
[Orange]	-13.1% to -7.2%
[Yellow]	-7.1% to 0.0%
[Light Green]	+ 0.1% to +5.5%
[Blue]	+5.6% to +22.0%
[Green Stippled]	Unorganized Territories

How this map works

This map depicts the percent of money each ME school district is gaining or losing from its overall budget because of cuts in the state's portion of the contribution to each school district budget. While some districts are receiving an increase in the state's commitment, overall the state is decreasing its commitment to Maine School districts by \$70.7 million.

Increased appropriation percentages (where they occur) are depicted in shades from green to blue. All districts losing budget money are depicted in shades from yellow to pink. See legend above.

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