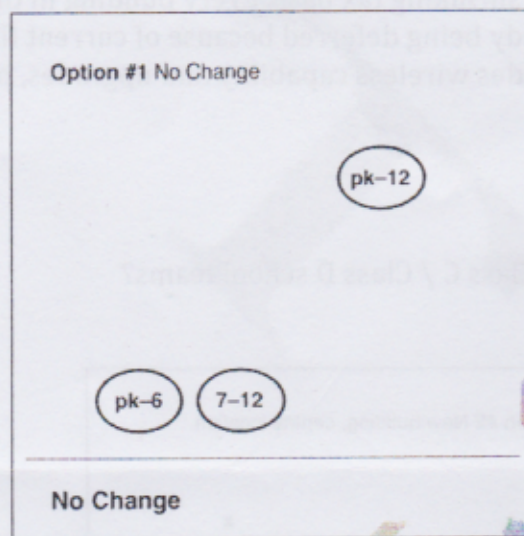


OPTIONS DESCRIBED AND REVIEWED



Analysis:

Option 1 represents a decision to operate the schools of RSU 50 as they are currently configured. It received no votes of support from the members of the FTF in a mid-April blind straw poll. Some of the FTF members' explanatory comments from that poll are summarized below.

Benefits of Option 1 include the retention of local pK - 12 schooling and maintaining local schools' identities, traditions and cultures. Current class sizes range from small - to - manageable, depending on the grade and the subject. Schools' current facilities can support music, art, food service, performances, and laboratory-based classes. Local taxpayers may feel connected to their own schools' budgets.

Challenges presented by Option 1 are numerous. Educationally, schools on both sides struggle to provide a comprehensive education as student populations and tax bases shrink over time. High school classes are at times run with rosters under 5 students, and more frequently under 10; it is a struggle to approach the State's EPS student:teacher ratios. Duplication of educational services is an unavoidable reality of operating two distinct pK - 12 systems. Where services are shared or split (technology integration, world language, etc.), such arrangements can present a challenge in recruitment / retention of faculty (wear and tear).

Curriculum coordination and alignment is an obvious challenge presented by operating two pK - 12 systems. Matching course offerings with Highly Qualified Teachers on each side of the district is similarly daunting. Schools currently operate tiny and parallel departments, and at times are challenged to comprise a Full Time Equivalent assignment for essential faculty and staff.

Culturally, school staffs would continue to uphold their present identities and traditions, yet may find themselves demoralized by unavoidable diminution over time.

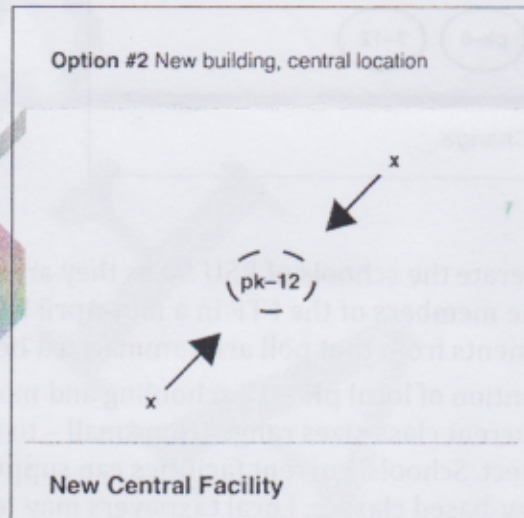
Co-curricular offerings represent a major source of school pride and history everywhere. While maintaining the status quo provides continuity in these traditions, schools in the RSU are experiencing challenges today in fielding full team (or school play) rosters, paying for two sets of uniforms and equipment, and in finding coaches and club sponsors.

A major challenge is operating and maintaining the full complement of RSU50's school buildings in spite of declining enrollments and a shrinking tax base. Every building in the district requires maintenance, some of which is already being deferred because of current fiscal constraints. Infrastructure of each building includes wireless capability and upgrades, phone systems and HVAC.

Data still required:

Need bus route and fleet baselines

What are the current MPA caps for Class C / Class D school teams?



Note from FTF: Building a new school structure and "decommissioning" all current school facilities in the RSU is clearly a long-term scenario. Uncertainties within this option include funding sources (state v. local), sustainability of local effort, and timeline. If the school committee determines that this option is their desired future, more research will be needed. Also, another scenario from among these choices will need to be selected in the interim as a means to span the 10+ years of waiting time for a new building to be sited, proposed, approved, and funded.

Analysis:

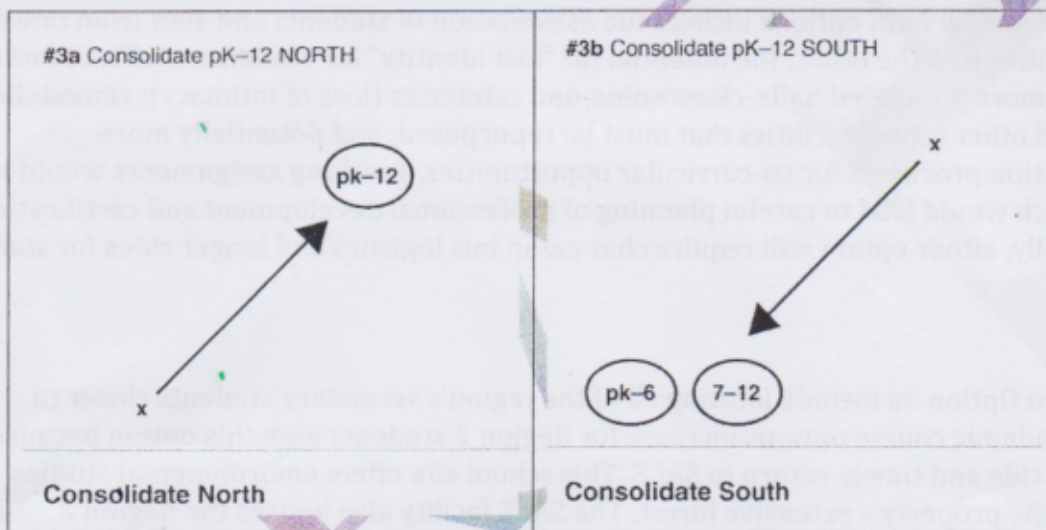
Option 2 represents a long-term commitment to the construction of a new pK - 12 school, positioned centrally in the RSU. While this option does not represent an immediate solution to the RSU's concerns, it received very strong endorsement from the FTF membership. Some of the FTF members' explanatory comments from that poll are summarized below.

Benefits of Option 2 include site neutrality, coordination of services, educational opportunities and staffing, creation of a new regional multi-community asset, and all the efficiencies that accompany a centralized location.

Challenges presented by Option 2 include time frame (the RSU requires an immediate solution), funding uncertainty, and garnering and maintaining very long-term regional support between now and approval.

Data still required:

- Obtain the process, cost, and timeline specifics of applying for school construction funds from the State of Maine
- Determine an acceptable transitional solution (i.e., one of the other scenarios) for implementation beginning fall 2015
- Acknowledge that the transitional solution could become a permanent solution, should any of the factors involved in new school construction become unworkable
- Determine (officially) whether local funding would be sufficient for new school construction. In other words, formally identify the necessary source(s) of funding for Option 2
- Describe and cost-out the process for decommissioning all current schools once a new school is constructed.



Analysis of 3a and 3b:

Option 3a and 3b are intentionally paired as two sides of the same coin: consolidate all students and staff to either the north end campus (3a) or to buildings on the south end (3b). Both options share some benefits and challenges. However, they are not identical. Each option presents unique benefits and challenges as well.

Benefits of both Options include the formation of larger and more diverse communities of learners (elementary and secondary students), merging professional and support staffs, and consolidating roles. A pK - 12 school on either end of the district would likely choose to rally around the creation a new school name and mascot, similar to the recent experiences of Spruce Mountain (Jay / Livermore Falls) and Oceanside (Rockland / Georges Valley). This phenomenon is not foreign to the RSU 50 communities' own histories of past consolidation. In other words, it can be done.

Significant cost savings would appear to be immediate due to the closure of facilities.

Course and co-curricular offerings would likely experience greater diversification and enrichment. Faculty would benefit professionally from the presence of larger departmental and grade level cohorts. Curriculum would be more readily coordinated and aligned. Administrative roles and support staff could be diversified (e.g. Curriculum Coordinator, Assistant Principal) and/or consolidated. Managing Student Information Systems (data, reporting, grading) would be significantly more efficient under one roof.

Either location's infrastructure and maintenance would be easier to fund and sustain in the RSU's budget. Co-curricular opportunities may become more competitive, thus contributing to higher levels of performance (not limited to sports). The district may climb to Class C competition, and uniforms and costly equipment can be shared more readily. Consolidation of coaching / club sponsor roles, and efficiencies in the costs of games and events would appear likely.

Regarding student transportation, both 3a and 3b surpass Options 4a and 4b for logistical advantages. Because each "3" option entails one final destination, there would be no duplication of bus routes. Please refer to the analysis section of 4a - 4b.

Challenges presented by both options include the assimilation of students and staff from one of the district's facilities into the other; the potential for "lost identity" for students, staff and families from either side; more populated halls, classrooms, and cafeterias (loss of intimacy); remodeling of classrooms and other school facilities that must be repurposed; and potentially more competitive selection processes for co-curricular opportunities. Teaching assignments would need adjustments, which would lead to careful planning of professional development and certification support. And finally, either option will require changes in bus logistics and longer rides for some children.

Analysis of 3a:

Benefits unique to Option 3a include locating all of the region's secondary students closer to Region 2 CTE. Academic course options increase for Region 2 students with this option because of their shorter bus ride and timely return to SACS. This school site offers environmental studies opportunities in the property's extensive forest. The SACS facility also houses the Region 2 Forestry program, includes a large multi-purpose room/cafeteria, expansive playing fields (and forest?), and has a capacity for 800 students. Handicap accessibility has been installed throughout the school. There are dedicated office spaces for elementary administration, secondary administration and superintendent.

Challenges unique to Option 3a primarily involve facilities constraints. The SACS building does not have a dedicated auditorium or music instruction space. The building will require a new heating system, and the roof needs work. Science lab classrooms may need to be refurbished or expanded.

Analysis of 3b:

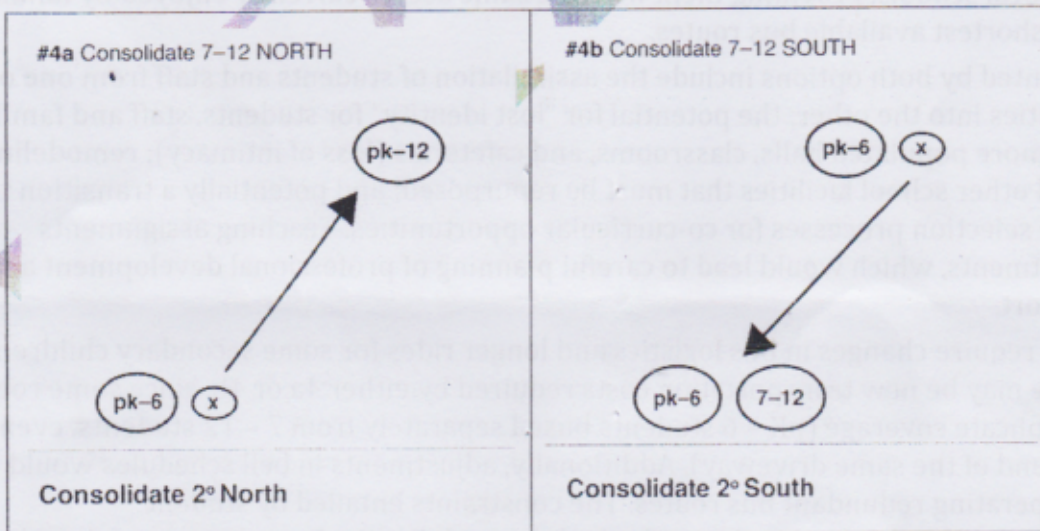
Benefits unique to Option 3b include dedicated space for school performances and for music instruction, sufficient spaces for administrative offices, playing fields and an environmental studies ecosystem resource behind the middle high school.

Challenges unique to Option 3b include locating the region's secondary students farthest from Region 2 CTE in Houlton. The end-of-day travel time from Region 2 back to Katahdin would reduce

school-based academic course options for this student population because of a late return to school. Assuming that 3b would prompt the full closure of the SACS facility, a related problem would be finding a suitable new location for the Region 2 Forestry program. Regarding facilities constraints, KMHS would need to analyze their cafeteria capacity and consider rebuilding their kitchen for food production.

Data still required (both options):

- Determine the capacity of KMHS to house all of the RSU's children.
- Study SACS and KMHS for refitting and remodeling projections. Both sites will require careful space analysis and budgetary commitments if they are to accommodate the full population of the RSU.
- Catalog facilities maintenance needs of each campus, and project timelines and costs.
- Carefully analyze bus routes for each option. Project maximal riding times, Region 2 logistics, and arrival / departure impacts for Region 2 students' academic course needs.
- Determine whether there is a suitable alternate location for the Region 2 Forestry Program.
- Research the sequence of steps and transactions entailed in school closure, disposition of equipment and property, etc.
- Estimate the potential costs of renaming school: new colors and uniforms, new logos and letterhead, etc.
- Optional: contact schools where student relocations have occurred in recent years to gain their perceptions about the experiences of students, teachers, and families. Spruce Mountain (formerly Livermore Falls HS and Jay HS; now housed at the Jay HS campus and renamed) and Oceanside (formerly Rockland District HS and Georges Valley HS; now sending students to either campus depending upon grade span) are two, and there may be others.



Analysis:

Option 4a and 4b are intentionally paired as two sides of the same coin: consolidate all secondary students and staff to either the north end campus (4a) or to buildings on the south end (4b). Both

options share some benefits and challenges. However, they are not identical. Each option presents unique benefits and challenges as well.

Benefits of both options include the formation of larger and more diverse communities of learners (secondary students), merging professional and support secondary staffs, and consolidating roles. A pK – 12 school on either end of the district would likely choose to rally around the creation a new school name and mascot, similar to the recent experiences of Spruce Mountain (Jay / Livermore Falls) and Oceanside (Rockland / Georges Valley). This phenomenon is not foreign to the RSU 50 communities' own histories of past consolidation. In other words, it can be done.

Modest cost savings would appear to be immediate due to the closure of facilities (though the options may not be equal in this respect).

Secondary course and co-curricular offerings would likely experience diversification and enrichment. Secondary faculty would benefit professionally from the presence of larger departmental and grade level cohorts. Curriculum would be more readily coordinated and aligned. Administrative roles and support staff could be diversified (e.g. Curriculum Coordinator, Assistant Principal) and/or consolidated. Managing Student Information Systems (data, reporting, grading) for the secondary students would be significantly more efficient under one roof.

Either location's infrastructure and maintenance might be easier to fund and sustain in the RSU's budget, although the two options are not equal in this respect. Co-curricular opportunities may become more competitive, thus contributing to higher levels of performance (not limited to sports). The district may climb to Class C competition, and uniforms and costly equipment can be shared more readily. Consolidation of coaching / club sponsor roles, and efficiencies in the costs of games and events would appear likely.

Regarding student transportation, options 4a and 4b propose to retain the RSU's youngest students in their local schools, providing them with the same access currently enjoyed by families, and provides the shortest available bus routes.

Challenges presented by both options include the assimilation of students and staff from one of the district's facilities into the other; the potential for "lost identity" for students, staff and families from either side; more populated halls, classrooms, and cafeterias (loss of intimacy); remodeling of classrooms and other school facilities that must be repurposed; and potentially a transition to more competitive selection processes for co-curricular opportunities. Teaching assignments would need adjustments, which would lead to careful planning of professional development and certification support.

Either option will require changes in bus logistics and longer rides for some secondary children. Importantly, there may be new transportation costs required by either 4a or 4b, since some routes would require duplicate coverage (pK – 6 students bused separately from 7 – 12 students, even if they stand at the end of the same driveway). Additionally, adjustments in bell schedules would be necessitated by operating redundant bus routes. The constraints entailed by student transportation, overlaid by the need to dovetail schedules with Region 2, warrant careful study.

Cost savings of facilities operations do not appear to be as significant as the 3a – 3b options, since the 4a – 4b options retain pK – 6 students locally. Inherently this requires the operation and maintenance of more physical plants.

Analysis of 4a:

Benefits unique to Option 4a are identical to those outlined in Option #3a. These include locating all of the region's secondary students closer to Region 2 CTE. Academic course options increase for Region 2 students with this option because of their shorter bus ride and timely return to SACS. The SACS facility houses the Region 2 Forestry program, includes a large multi-purpose room/cafeteria, expansive playing fields and forest, and was built for a capacity 800 students. Handicap accessibility has been installed throughout the school. The SACS facility has dedicated office spaces for elementary administration, secondary administration and superintendent.

Challenges unique to Option 4a primarily involve facilities constraints. The SACS building does not have a dedicated auditorium or music instruction space. The building will require a new heating system, and the roof needs work. Science lab classrooms may need to be refurbished or expanded.

Analysis of 4b:

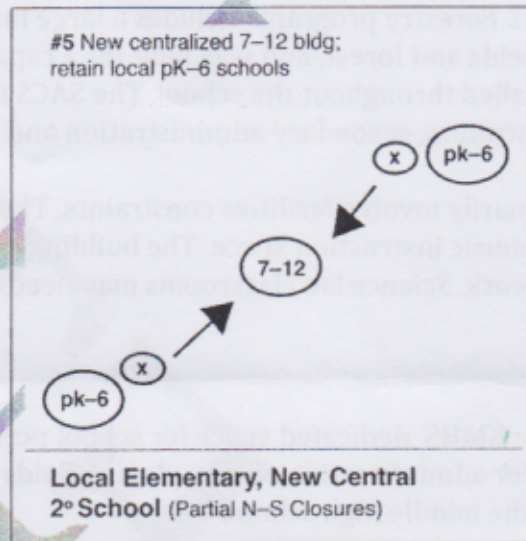
Benefits unique to Option 4b include KMHS' dedicated space for school performances and for music instruction, sufficient spaces for administrative offices, playing fields and an environmental studies ecosystem resource behind the middle high school.

Challenges unique to Option 4b include locating all of the region's secondary students farthest from Region 2 CTE in Houlton. The additional travel time to and from Region 2 would reduce school-based academic course options for this student population because of a late return to school. Assuming that 4b would prompt *partial* closure of the SACS facility, a significant question implied in this option is whether it is feasible to mothball part of the SACS building while operating pK - 6 and Forestry in other portions of the facility. Regarding facilities constraints, KMHS would need to analyze their cafeteria capacity and consider rebuilding their kitchen for food production.

Data still required (both options):

- Study SACS and KMHS for refitting and remodeling projections. Both sites will require careful space analysis and budgetary commitments if they are to accommodate the secondary population of the RSU.
- Catalog facilities maintenance needs of each campus, and project timelines and costs.
- Carefully analyze bus routes for each option. Project maximal riding times, Region 2 logistics, and arrival / departure impacts for Region 2 students' academic course needs. Identify all routes that would require double-coverage. Develop bell-schedule mock-ups in consideration of these bus routes.
- Determine whether there is a suitable alternate location for the Region 2 Forestry Program.
- Research the sequence of steps and transactions entailed in school closure (KES in Option 4a; partial closure of SACS in Option 4b), disposition of equipment and property, etc.
- Optional: contact schools where student relocations have occurred in recent years to gain their perceptions about the experiences of students, teachers, and families. Spruce Mountain (formerly Livermore Falls HS and Jay HS; now housed at the Jay HS campus and renamed) and Oceanside (formerly Rockland District HS and Georges Valley HS; now

sending students to either campus depending upon grade span) are two, and there may be others.



Analysis:

Note from FTF -- this scenario was tabled and not analyzed, by consensus agreement of the FTF. The rationale was that it does not appear to be fiscally sustainable to build and maintain a new building while also maintaining two pK - 6 elementary schools. The FTF proposes that it makes more sense to review option #2 (pK - 12 in Crystal) if a new school is determined to be a priority.

FTF member comments from straw poll:

- Few benefits involved
- Would "appease" some stakeholders, but would not address current and future constraints
- Too draining on the budget or too much loss for each individual community
- No cost savings
- "not"

#6 Katahdin Consolidation only
(move into one building)

pk-12

x



pk-12

Katahdin Consolidation:
Close 1 BLDG

Analysis:

Option 6 represents consolidation on the Katahdin end of the district only. It entails moving pK - 6 across Rte. 11 and closing the KES facility. SACS students and faculty would appear to be unaffected by this option.

Benefits of Option 6 include the retention of local pK - 12 schooling and maintaining local schools' identities, traditions and cultures. Current class sizes range from small - to - manageable, depending on the grade and the subject. Schools' current facilities would continue to support music, art, food service, performances, and laboratory-based classes. Local taxpayers may feel connected to their own schools' budgets. There may be some opportunity to consolidate roles and services within the Katahdin schools as well, at professional and support staff levels. Savings from the closure of the KES building would accrue to the region's taxpayers. *- still have quality educa*

Challenges presented by Option 6 are numerous. Educationally, schools on both sides struggle to provide a comprehensive education as student populations and tax bases shrink over time. High school classes are at times run with rosters under 5 students, and more frequently under 10; it is a struggle to approach the State's EPS student:teacher ratios. Duplication of educational services is an unavoidable reality of operating two distinct pK - 12 systems. Where services are shared or split (technology integration, world language, etc.), such arrangements rely on the willingness of employees to work under these conditions.

Curriculum coordination and alignment is an obvious challenge presented by operating two pK - 12 systems. Matching course offerings with Highly Qualified Teachers on each side of the district is similarly daunting. Schools currently operate tiny and parallel departments, and at times are challenged to comprise a Full Time Equivalent assignment for essential faculty and staff.

Culturally, school staffs would continue to uphold their present identities and traditions, yet may find themselves demoralized by unavoidable diminution over time.

Co-curricular offerings represent a major source of school pride and history everywhere. While maintaining the status quo provides continuity in these traditions, schools in the RSU are experiencing challenges today in fielding full team (or school play) rosters, paying for two sets of uniforms and equipment, and in finding coaches and club sponsors.

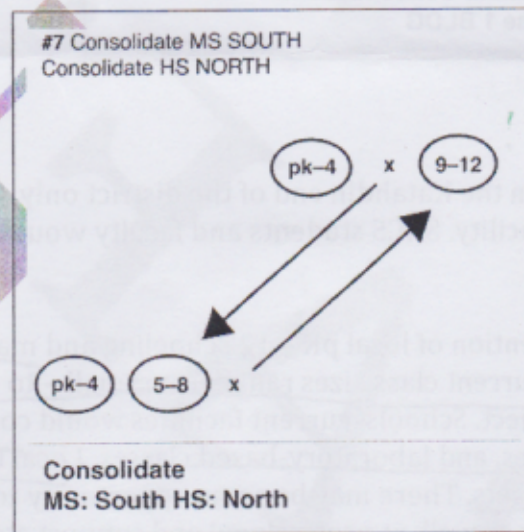
SACS take next
→
KES?

no different than SACS.

A major challenge is operating and maintaining a nearly-full complement of RSU50's school buildings in spite of declining enrollments and a shrinking tax base. Every building in the district requires maintenance, some of which is already being deferred because of current fiscal constraints. Infrastructure of each building includes wireless capability and upgrades, phone systems and HVAC. There would be no savings in student transportation.

Finally, the KMHS kitchen would require an upgrade, and the KMHS building itself would require remodeling and some refurbishings (bathrooms and water fountains, etc.).

Option #6 appears to avoid the ultimate question of programming and staffing in the face of declining populations over time. In other words, is it educationally and fiscally viable in the long term to operate schools on two ends of the district as everything shrinks?



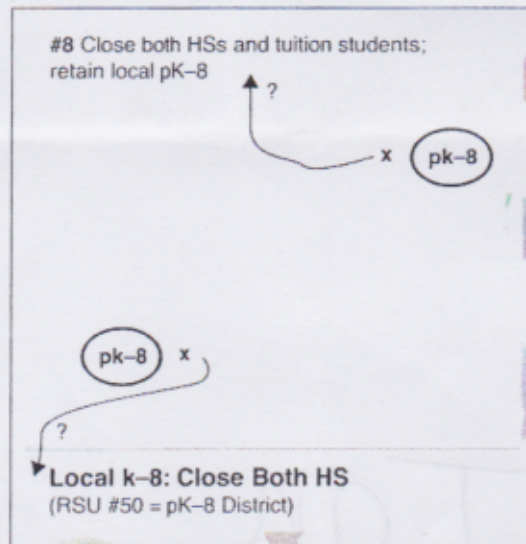
Analysis:

Option 7 envisions a bi-directional and partial consolidation, in which pK - 4 students remain local, students in the 5 - 8 grade range would be consolidated into one building (KMHS?), and students in the 9 - 12 range would be consolidated in the other building (SACS?). The destination of 5 - 8 and 9 - 12 students would be up to the school board, but for the sake of analysis 9 - 12 is being sent to the north in order to gain proximity to Region 2.

Benefits of this option run somewhat parallel to previous analyses (3a-b; 4a-b), including the creation of new and merged student populations. It may be worth considering the creation of an original school name and new mascot (similar to Oceanside East and West; both campuses were renamed, there is a new mascot and school colors). Middle school and high school course and co-curricular offerings might experience expansion and diversification. Staff may benefit from mergers of tiny departments and greater internal professional collaboration opportunities. Curriculum would be easier to coordinate and align, at least within each building's self-contained grades spans. Athletic teams may become more competitive, and the school may elevate to Class C status.

Challenges of Option 7 include the prospect of needing to assign teachers to either high school or middle level, when some teachers' loads, as well as adopted curricula, presently span these grades. There appear to be less potential for efficiency in merging or redefining professional and support staff roles. Some duplication of services would continue as they do today.

All or most buildings in the RSU would be required to remain open (conceivably, one of the Katahdin buildings could contain everyone), and none of the pending repairs could be taken off of the RSU's capital improvement list. Busing complications similar to those described in Options 4a - 4b seem likely, as well. This option offers little potential for fiscal savings.



Analysis:

Option 8 envisions an RSU with no operating high schools. In this vision of the future, all pK - 8 students would be educated locally in their respective ends of the district, while high school students would be tuitioned to regional schools.

It is not clear how much traction this option has in the larger RSU 50 school community; as such, the FTF is not currently aware of the level of community support for this idea.

Benefits of this option are speculative at present, but could include consolidation of the Katahdin students into one building (closure of one facility), considerable reductions in the costs of professional and support staff, and general simplification of the RSU's educational services to the region.

Challenges of Option 8 include paying for high school students' tuition and transportation while losing all local control over their education. The region may struggle even more than it presently does to attract families with school-aged children (including teachers with families).