

§1461-B. Alternative organizational structure

1. Notice of intent. A school administrative unit may file with the commissioner a notice of intent to engage in planning and negotiations with other school administrative units for the purpose of developing a reorganization plan to form an alternative organizational structure in accordance with this section.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

2. Organization; procedures and parameters. An alternative organizational structure must be organized in accordance with the procedures and parameters applicable to regional school units as set forth in section 1461.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

3. Submission, review and approval of plans for an alternative organizational structure. A school administrative unit may submit a reorganization plan to the commissioner to form an alternative organizational structure in order to comply with this chapter.

A. The commissioner may designate a school administrative unit as part of an alternative organizational structure if the commissioner finds that the proposed alternative organizational structure will result in:

- (1) Consolidation of system administration;
- (2) Consolidation of special education administration, transportation administration and administration of business functions, including accounting, reporting, payroll, financial management, purchasing insurance and auditing;
- (3) Adoption of a core curriculum and procedures for standardized testing and assessment aligned with the system of learning results established in section 6209;
- (4) Adoption of a plan for both consistent school policies and school calendars; and
- (5) Adoption of a plan for consistent collective bargaining agreements. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

B. A plan for an alternative organizational structure must include an interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115. The plan must include procedures for conducting a kindergarten to grade 12 budget approval pursuant to paragraph C. [PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF).]

C. The budget procedures of member entities of an alternative organizational structure must conform to the format and referendum procedures set forth in sections 1485 and 1486 for regional school units. The budget of the alternative organizational structure must be approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities conducted in accordance with the procedures applicable to a regional school unit budget meeting except as provided in paragraph D. The budget of an alternative organizational structure is not subject to a separate budget validation referendum as described in section 1486. [PL 2011, c. 485, §1 (AMD).]

D. The governing body of an alternative organizational structure, by majority vote, may authorize a change in the alternative organizational structure budget approval procedures in paragraph C to require a budget approval by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure instead of a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure. The change in procedure must be authorized by a majority of the total number of voters of all of the member entities in the alternative organizational structure at the next regular election or at a special referendum election of the voters called for that purpose by a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure. The article to be voted on at the next regular or special election must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor changing the (name of alternative organizational structure) budget approval procedure from a meeting of the voters to a vote by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure?

Yes No" [PL 2015, c. 286, §1 (AMD).]

If approved by the voters, the budget approval procedure changes to a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure at a budget meeting. This procedure must remain in effect for at least 3 budget years before the alternative organizational structure may return to the requirement that a budget be approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure.

An article to consider reinstatement of the budget approval procedure in which the budget is approved at a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities may be placed on a warrant for referendum vote by either a majority vote of the governing body of the alternative organizational structure or by a written petition to the governing body of the alternative organizational structure signed by a number of voters of member entities of the alternative organizational structure equal to at least 10% of the voters who voted in the last gubernatorial election in the member entities of the alternative organizational structure. The governing body of the alternative organizational structure shall place the article on the next scheduled warrant or an earlier one if determined appropriate by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure. The article to be voted upon must be in substantially the following form:

"Article: Do you favor changing the (name of alternative organizational structure) budget approval procedure from a vote by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure to a meeting of the voters?

Yes No"

If approved by a majority of the total number of voters of all of the member entities in the alternative organizational structure, the budget approval procedure changes to a meeting of the voters of all of the member entities of the alternative organizational structure beginning in the next budget year or the following budget year if the approval occurs less than 90 days before the start of the next budget year. Once approved by the voters, this procedure may not be changed for at least 3 budget years.

A referendum authorized by this section must be called and conducted in accordance with the procedures for calling and conducting a referendum in a regional school unit under section 1502, but not including subsection 2, and section 1503, except that the duties of the board of directors of the regional school unit must be performed by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure. [PL 2015, c. 286, §1 (AMD).]

Upon the review and approval of the commissioner and the approval of the voters at a referendum, the commissioner may approve a plan to form an alternative organizational structure that meets the requirements set forth in this chapter.

[PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD); PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF).]

4. Recognition as discrete school administrative units for subsidy purposes. In fiscal year 2011-12 and subsequent fiscal years, the member entities of an alternative organizational structure are recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B, unless the member entities of the alternative organizational structure include in the reorganization plan under subsection 3 their decision to be recognized by the department as a single school administrative unit for purposes of chapter 606-B.

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

5. Recognition as school administrative unit for subsidy purposes; change. This subsection governs the procedure to alter the recognition of a school administrative unit that is an alternative organizational structure for subsidy purposes.

A. Notwithstanding the provisions of a reorganization plan under subsection 3 or interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115, the governing body of an alternative organizational structure that began operation on or before June 30, 2010 may vote to have its member entities recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B. Such a vote must be approved by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure and the commissioner prior to June 1st of the year prior to the allocation year. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

B. If the member entities of an alternative organizational structure that requested in their reorganization plan to be recognized as a single school administrative unit pursuant to subsection 4 vote to be recognized as discrete school administrative units for purposes of chapter 606-B, such a change must be approved by the governing body of the alternative organizational structure and the commissioner prior to June 1st of the year prior to the allocation year. [PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

[PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW).]

6. Withdrawal of a member entity. Notwithstanding chapter 103-A, subchapter 2, for an alternative organizational structure approved by the commissioner and approved by the voters, the withdrawal provisions for member entities that were adopted as part of the reorganization plan under subsection 3 and interlocal agreement under Title 30-A, chapter 115 govern the withdrawal of a member entity.

A. [PL 2011, c. 251, §2 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

B. [PL 2011, c. 251, §3 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

C. [PL 2011, c. 251, §4 (RP); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

[PL 2011, c. 251, §§2-4 (AMD); PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 2009, c. 580, §5 (NEW). PL 2011, c. 251, §§2-4 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 251, §12 (AFF). PL 2011, c. 485, §§1, 2 (AMD). PL 2015, c. 286, §1 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §2 (AMD). PL 2017, c. 284, Pt. VVVVV, §14 (AFF).

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