

SAD 5 / SAD 50 REORGANIZATION PLANNING COMMITTEE
June 25, 2008 – SAD 5 Board Room, McLain School

Present: Committee Members

SAD 5

David Matthews, Owls Head
Maynard Curtis, Owls Head
Paul Luttrell, Rockland
Ruth Hohfeld, South Thomaston
Jeff Northgraves, South Thomaston
Audrey Buffington, South Thomaston
Dick Levasseur, Owls Head
Nancy Jeffers, Rockland
Tom Hall, Rockland (for Eric Hebert)

SAD 50

Jamie Doubleday, Thomaston
Bill Reinhardt, St. George
David Cobey, Cushing
Connie Russell, Thomaston
Terry Driscoll, St. George
Val Blastow, Thomaston

Superintendents – Judy Harvey, SAD 50; Judy Lucarelli, soon to be SAD 5 superintendent
Business Managers – John Spear, SAD 50
Facilitator – Mary Jane McCalmon
Recorder – Ann Matlack, St. George
Members of the Public – Kim Appleby, SAD 5

1. **Welcome** – Chair Jamie Doubleday called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.
2. **Minutes** – On a motion by Dick, seconded by Audrey, the minutes from February 5, May 20 and June 4 were approved unanimously.
3. **Public Comment** – Judy Lucarelli was introduced as the new Superintendent for SAD 5. She will begin her duties in July.
4. **Old Business** –
 - a. **Consensus vs. Voting method of agreement** – At their August 21, 2007, meeting, the Committee determined that consensus rather than up-or-down votes would be the manner in which decisions would generally take place. It was also decided that a quorum would be 5 members from each district present for a meeting. There is now a question about how to determine a majority vote should one be necessary. Three options were discussed:
 - Simple majority – Since a quorum would indicate that there were at least 5 representatives from each district present, a simple majority would should general support for a vote. The concern with a simple majority is that if those present cannot be convinced, how can the Committee convince the public to agree with the decision?
 - Majority from each district – It was suggested such a vote would garner more public confidence since both districts would be supporting the vote. However, there was also concern about reaching such a level of support, with the tough decisions the Committee would soon be asked to make.
 - Super majority of those present – Two-thirds (2/3) of those present would be needed for a positive vote, irrespective of district.It was agreed by consensus that decisions would be made by a two-thirds vote of those present.
 - b. **Composition of District: One district, an Alternative Organizational Structure (AOS), or local school committees** – Jamie posed several questions to the Committee: What is in the best interest of the children? What is our mission and has it changed? Are we truly one district in the long run or do we maintain some sort of separate structures? How do we implement what is decided? How do we achieve equity across our districts?

Several Committee members spoke in favor of one district with one school board and one administration. They said it was not in the best interest of the children to have separate but equal schools and what was needed was a unified district with equity for all children and all schools.

Dick cautioned that while it was the responsibility of the Committee to put together the Plan on how to merge, elect a new board, and hire a superintendent, it will be the function of the new school board to implement the Plan the Committee puts together. He suggested the Committee was worrying about some details that were beyond their control.

Paul said it was important for the Committee to hear about AOSs from Jim Rier. He said Mr. Rier's presentation indicated the Committee had great flexibility to craft an arrangement that would achieve a successful vote on the final Plan. Others pointed out that the Committee had been assembled to work on an RSU and while there may be interest in working on an AOS, it would require starting over from square one and that any delay in voting on the RSU Plan would jeopardize the application for Many Flags.

Committee members spoke strongly in favor of Many Flags. Several agreed it is the best option for secondary education for students in the current districts and that in order to move forward with Many Flags, one district should be created.

Jamie said Commissioner Gendron of the Department of Education is currently drafting the rules for applying for funding for Many Flags. The rules are due in July, followed by 90 days of public comment, and are to be in place by October 31. While there is no final due date for applications, the Commissioner will have until December 31 to make a decision on the applications. She also said that no new RSU would be required to apply for the funding: a joint application would be made by SAD 5, SAD 50 and the Midcoast School of Technology. She also cautioned that Many Flags would not be the only application the Commissioner received.

The final date for voting on the new RSU is January 31, 2009. Members of the Committee were unsure whether to hold the vote in November at the same time as general election voting, to vote earlier, perhaps in September, or to vote later but prior to January 31. There is concern that if the vote is in November or later, there would not be enough time to elect a new RSU board and to begin work on the new district, which will be in place July 1, 2009. There was also concern that explanations of the Plan would get lost in all the election year information. Before it can get on the ballot, the Plan must be reviewed by the Commissioner and by the Committee's legal counsel.

Mary Jane said she was sure the Commissioner would expedite any Plans that were submitted to the DOE and suggested submitting those sections the Committee completed as they were finished. She also suggested the same process for submitting the Plan to legal counsel.

Committee members said it was extremely important that they craft a Plan that would be supported by the public.

- c. **Superintendent's Point of View** – Judy Harvey expressed her support for a single district. She also said she had concerns about how an AOS would operate and brought up questions she had about the role of local school committees under an RSU, such as: How would local communities effect the core curriculum? What happens when the administration and the local committees differ on raising money? What entity serves as treasurer for any monies raised by the municipalities? Where will the principals' alliances lie?

Judy Lucarelli said she was currently working for a school union and while she knows how they operate, she is more supportive of having one district with one school board and one governing structure.

David Cobey said he envisioned that school board members would serve as the local school committees, rather than having a separate committee. Another suggestion was to retain the current cost-sharing formulas in SAD 5 and SAD 50 for expenditures above EPS. He offered these as suggestions to garner public support for the Plan. Dave Matthews and Jamie said their impression from discussions that evening was that most Committee members favored all six towns working as one group rather than having additional funding from various communities.

- d. **LD 2323 Conference** – Those who attended Drummond, Woodsum’s most recent conference said there was new information on how to prepare the final Plan for the Department of Education. Also, that the recently passed legislation had provided more flexibility in dealing with problems created by the original legislation. For example, under Contracts & Collective Bargaining, the deadline for incorporating all units into one single bargaining unit has been extended. Judy Lucarelli will forward her electronic version of the updated Plan for the Committee to use.

John Spear suggested that one issue still before the Committee was how to amend the cost-sharing formula being proposed in the Plan. There is no template in the new law and the Plan should clarify how changes can be made.

- e. **Funding / Cost-Sharing** – John Spear had distributed via e-mail an updated spreadsheet using actual budget numbers from SAD 5 and SAD 50. Due to several factors, including a larger increase in SAD 5’s budget and a decrease in SAD 5’s student population resulting in lower EPS funding, the gap between SAD 5’s and SAD 50’s local shares has been narrowed by about \$250,000.

On a motion by Val, seconded by Audrey, the Committee agreed to let the Cost-Sharing Subcommittee continue working on the budget.

The Cost-Sharing Subcommittee will meet again on Monday, July 7, at 5 PM in the SAD 50 Board Room. John said he would look more closely at SAD 5’s enrollment numbers to see if there is a trend developing.

- 5. **Next Meeting** – The Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 9 at 6:30 PM in the Rockland City Council Chambers. Additional meetings have been set for Wednesday, July 16, and Wednesday, July 23, also at 6:30 PM at Rockland City Hall.
- 6. **Other Business** – Val Blastow advised the Committee that after a recent reval, the Town of Thomaston now has a valuation of \$352 million. This is a significant increase over the current valuation and will be but one factor that will affect the cost-sharing formula in years to come.
- 7. **Adjourn** – The Committee adjourned at 8:10 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Ann Matlack, Recorder