

AUBURN SCHOOL DEPARTMENT

AUBURN, MAINE

REPORT OF REGULAR SESSION MEETING OF THE AUBURN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

5:30 WORKSHOP – Facilities Master Plan

Auburn Hall

October 17, 2007

Members Present: Mr. David Das
Mr. Lane Feldman
Dr. Susan Gaylord
Ms. Bonnie Hayes
Mr. Tom Kendall
Mr. Ross Leavitt
Mrs. Tara Paradie

Others Present: Tom Morrill, Interim Superintendent.

I. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. Introductions

Alendra Harris, a junior at ELHS sang the National Anthem. Mr. Das called the meeting to order at 7:03 P.M. and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Committee members introduced themselves and stated which ward they represent.

B. Communications

Mr. Feldman received a comment from parents regarding the Wednesday Afternoon survey. He noted that several parents felt the wording was confrontational. Mr. Feldman noted that he did not feel that way, but others did. Mr. Das noted that there was another meeting scheduled for the Wednesday Afternoon Committee and they would review the wording of the survey.

II. CONSENT AGENDA

A. Approval of Agenda

B. Approval of Minutes – October 3, 2007.

It was moved by Ms. Hayes, seconded by Mrs. Paradie and voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda for tonight's meeting including the addendum.

III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no public comments at this time.

IV. STUDENT INFORMATION

Tanya Gagne is excused from this meeting due to activities at the high school.

V. SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

A. Planning and Development

1. Advanced Placement Scholar Awards

Tom Morrill expressed appreciation to Steve Blatt for his offer of options regarding the issues surrounding implementation and updating of the Facility Master Plan. He then introduced Shelly Mogul, Assistant Director of Office of Learning and Teaching.

Shelly Mogul, Assistant Director of Office of Learning and Teaching, presented information regarding Advance Placement Scholar Awards. Ms. Mogul noted that she is transitioning out of the role of Gifted and Talented at the high school and mentoring Pat Gautier as she moves into that position. Ms. Mogul provided a paper with information regarding the number of students who have taken AP exams, the AP classes offered at Edward Little High School, and information regarding College Board award presentations. Ms. Mogul also noted that there are possibilities of additional

AP classes for next year. She reported that a student who had taken advantage of many AP opportunities started at the University of Maine as a second semester sophomore after graduating high school.

Mr. Morrill expressed appreciation to Ms. Mogul for her guidance with the AP program. Mr. Morrill noted that this is a valuable program at ELHS and the example of the college student that Ms. Mogul offered is evidence of the benefit such a program offers our students.

2. Department of Education High School Graduation Requirements

Mr. Morrill introduced Jim Miller, Edward Little High School Principal. He noted that the information being presented by Mr. Miller regarding the graduation requirements is not final and there will be a series of meetings scheduled in the near future regarding this information.

Mr. Miller provided a handout and presented information regarding the Department of Education's proposed High School Graduation Requirements. He noted that last spring the commissioner proposed some graduation requirements and is now proposing some changes that are quite different. Mr. Miller stated that of our current scores, 48-49% meet the criteria for graduation, which means that 52% of the students are going to have to move to the does not meet category. He stated that the most significant thing about these changes is that philosophically they make sense, but the timeframe is going to be difficult to achieve. He noted that these requirements are for all students regardless of the program they are taking in high school. Mr. Miller stated that some of the other requirements the State looked at were social studies, health/physical education and wellness, world language, and several other changes such as using technology to take computer generated tests on line.

Mr. Morrill noted that the requirement for world languages would mean more staff in order to ensure that students meet this new requirement. He noted that it is difficult to find qualified teachers to fill these positions and while some help can be achieved through on-line classes and web based assessments, support would still be necessary for this to happen.

Mr. Das stated that foreign languages would need to begin at the elementary level.

Mr. Leavitt stated that we all know that teaching students foreign language at an earlier age is beneficial and this mandate drives that point home.

Mr. Miller stated that this is a Commissioner's report, but there will be some forums at a later date. He noted that this will be a significant change to what is being done now, noting that they are looking at a more web based assessment.

Mrs. Hayes asked what if they don't meet or exceed the level?

Mr. Miller replied that there needs to be a formal alternative assessment that may be a longer, more difficult process. He stated that the intent of the Commissioner is for every student to have a post secondary plan and have applied to at least one college.

Mr. Miller noted that this seems to be a time when most people are focused on consolidation and some of these things may be passed through without realizing the implications. He noted that it is very important to look at this proposal carefully and provide input to the State. Mr. Miller stated that he worries about what position the state puts us in when it comes to a required curriculum. There is no correlation between a student's grades and success in life, there is no correlation between SAT scores and success in college. The state is offering and paying for SAT tests as well as PSATs; however PSATs require a half-day out of classes.

Ms. Hayes stated that she is concerned that the person who does not test well is going to be penalized.

Mr. Miller responded that there is some language about alternative assessments.

Mr. Das noted that SMTC closed down its instructors' courses. The students who have wonderful talents may not be given the opportunity to use these talents.

Mr. Miller reminded the committee members that these are proposals and there will be some compromises before this is finalized. He noted that he feels there will be a ripple effect that will change the requirements at earlier levels to prepare students to meet these significant changes to these requirements.

Ms. Mogul provided the minimum score for SAT as 460.

Mr. Feldman noted that there are many colleges that don't require SAT scores.

Mr. Morrill stated that there is an effort to prepare students for some post secondary education and this is one more effort on the part of DOE to usher that forward, but it does come as a cost. He noted that it would force us to rethink how we offer curriculum to students and what resources are required to fulfill these graduation requirements. Mr. Morrill noted that if this becomes law, we would be required to own this and respond accordingly.

Mr. Ross stated that if the State is going to mandate something that would help, he would rather that mandates include things that could help students succeed rather than using a score on a test.

The State is caught in between and must meet the NCLB mandates of the Federal Government.

Mr. Miller stated that we have focused on SATs, but there are many things that are proposed in other content areas that are going to be equally (if not more) significant in terms of costs and how the services are provided.

Mr. Morrill noted that it is an oppressive timetable that will require curriculum shifts and additional resources.

VI. INFORMATION / COMMITTEE REPORTS

- City Council Update

Mr. Berube was not in attendance at this meeting. Mr. Das noted that there was some confusion at the City Council meeting regarding our position on the fate of Webster School. He reported that we did not reject the City's proposal regarding this property, but as our minutes noted we simply tabled that item until further discussion.

Mr. Leavitt stated that he was disappointed that Mr. Berube was not here to listen to the options and the discussion.

VII. UPCOMING MEETINGS

- Regular School Committee Meeting – November 7th — 7:00 at Park Avenue
- Regular School Committee Meeting – November 28th — 7:00 at Auburn Hall
- Regular School Committee Meeting – December 5th — 7:00 at Washburn
- Regular School Committee Meeting – December 19th — 7:00 at Auburn Hall

VIII. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS – REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

- Joint Lewiston/Auburn School Committee Meeting – Early in December
- Budget Preparation Timeline

Mr. Morrill noted that our budget preparation meetings are held at Auburn Hall to ensure that people can view the meeting on television or attend the meeting. We are also posting as much information as possible on our website.

Mr. Kendall requested that a poll be held to get the opinions of the citizens.

Mr. Miller and Ms. Mogul stated that perhaps the Student Government Class or Technology classes could help with this process.

Mr. Morrill noted that input during the budget process would be absolutely critical. This is a new process for many in the community.

Ms. Hayes stated that we need to begin to educate people as early as possible regarding the new budget process.

Mrs. Paradie stated that she felt a friendly notice going home to the PTO would be beneficial and a straw poll would be vital.

Mrs. Hayes stated that she felt a friendly meeting with the City Council would be a good way to kick off the budget preparation so we can get a clear idea of what is expected of us with respect to the budget.

IX. EXECUTIVE SESSION

X. ADJOURNMENT

It was moved by Dr. Gaylord, seconded by Mr. Feldman and voted unanimously to adjourn from regular session at 8:10 PM.

Attest, a true record,

Thomas Morrill, Secretary
Interim Superintendent of Schools

TM/rmw