

May 28, 2008

My notes from a meeting in Presque Isle on May 27th with Maine's Commissioner of Education, Susan Gendron regarding **Alternative Organization Structures (AOS)** as now permitted under the provisions of LD 2323. Any mistakes or misunderstandings are mine! Links for further information are below.

Nancy

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1. The term "core curriculum" means K-12 alignment with the Learning Results, nothing more.
 2. The model for AOS is the Mount Desert Island (MDI) area.
 3. In terms of collective bargaining, the MDI system has it right (and although Union #122 here does it the same way, the Commissioner said that many other school unions statewide do not): 5 communities/5 school committees meet to bargain as a group with the local Association and then return to ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) at the school committee in each town.
 4. The Commissioner said that "*the plan to move to consistent collective bargaining agreements*" (as the AOS structure requires):
 - a. Will plan for the final "consistent" contracts to be in effect within 3 - 5 years (maybe longer, if necessary).
 - b. Does not need to involve the local bargaining agents [in the planning process]
 - c. Could expect that all the bargaining agents in the AOS will sit down at the table at the same time.
 - d. Should explain how the various labor markets will be aligned 3 -5 years (or longer) down the line.

It was quite clear, though, that separate CBAs are the norm; what "consistency" means was not explained. Identical CBAs? Similar? I don't know.

5. The primary differences between an RSU and an AOS are:
 - a. Each School Administrative Unit (SAU) in the AOS is its own employer.
 - b. Each SAU in the AOS owns its own buildings (although a town in an RSU could retain theirs too)
 - c. Each SAU in the AOS develops its own budget.
 - d. An AOS can be made up of towns, SADs, CSDs, whatever, all sharing central office functions. An RSU is one unit, period.
6. AYP will be calculated/reported at the AOS level. All state/federal reporting (e-rate, Title 1, etc) will be at the AOS level, too, and the DoE is working with the federal government to smooth out any potential glitches.

FMI: <http://www.maine.gov/education/reorg/lawsummary.html>
http://www.maine.gov/education/reorg/aos_summary.html