

**Massachusetts Association of School Committees
Regional Schools Subcommittee
Assabet Valley V-T High School - Marlborough, MA
March 18, 2010**

I. Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 6:00 pm by E. Holmes.

II. Update on Chair's Conversation with Regional Caucus

Senator Brewer shared his thoughts with the Chair on RST and other matters related to regional school districts. He continues to be supportive of RST, but noted his concerns with the Commonwealth's revenue projections. An important discussion of the timing of a joint statement between the House and Senate regarding Chapter 70 for FY'11 took place. He was very candid (as he has been in other forums) that it is more important to give districts the best information rather than early projections. The senator did feel that a consensus number for Chapter 70 might involve a window of a 3 – 5% reduction. He was hopeful that as the budget process moved along, there would be more opportunities to make some incremental increases in regional school transportation and special education circuit breaker. The senator stressed that all of this is contingent on where revenues fall for the Commonwealth.

III. Draft Regionalization Bill

The Executive Office of Education has met with a variety of stakeholders with a proposed regionalization bill. The Committee discussed the variety of concerns they had with the legislation, and suggestions to make such a bill beneficial to the regional school community.

IV. Old Business

Day on the Hill – March 30, 2010

The Chair expressed concerns that time was running out for her to submit a letter to the MASC office for the Day on the Hill packet. In addition, Assabet Valley will not be able to produce a handout as the Committee has done in previous years. The Committee reviewed the Chair's suggestions for a handout design, and discussed possible slogans. The idea is to keep the handout simple with a statement "A Promise is a Promise". The main talking point for the letter will remain 100% Reimbursement of eligible RST expenses.

V. New Business

A. Ayer-Shirley Regional

With the new Ayer-Shirley Region, the Chair extended an invitation to some of the current Ayer and Shirley school committee members to discuss their path to regionalization. We were very pleased to hear the depth of work and research done, and that these two communities welcomed regionalizing. This is definitely a success story as well as blue print of how the process can work. It was noted that Lunenburg had been a part of the original discussion, but they withdrew. It was felt that this would not be a good fit for them. They certainly have not ruled out exploring regionalization further, as they are currently discussing with North Middlesex Regional about exploring the subject with them more. An interesting point of discussion revolved around the transition funds the Administration made available to more fully support the community efforts to regionalize. Members, while pleased to hear the assistance provided to the new region, expressed concern that there is no focus in these regionalization proposals to help sustain current regions.

B. Joint Meeting with MARS

The Chair proposed that the Committee meet with the executive committee of MARS. Their executive director, S. Hemman, has approached the Chair on many occasions about having a joint dialog. We decided to invite them to our meeting next month.

C. Advocacy Efforts of the Committee and Regional Schools Community

The Chair recommended that the Committee think of ways to more fully engage additional regional school committee members in advocacy. While we are an active community, as demonstrated with our work around the 9C cut proposal, there is a real concern that we must remain vigilant throughout the next few budget cycles about regionalization. It is especially important to note that the emphasis has been more focused on creation and expansion of regions vs. supporting existing regions.

VI. Schedule of Future Meetings

April 15th; May 20th

V. Adjournment

MOTION to adjourn by R. Newman; seconded by C. Fountain. Unanimous. 8:30pm.

Respectfully submitted

E. Holmes, Chair.