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# Minutes of Superintendents Advisory Committee, August 26, 1988

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Minutes of  
SUPERINTENDENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
Room 122, State Office Building  
August 26, 1988

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Commissioner Bither opened the meeting with the following people present: Eve Bither, Dick Card, Harvey Hayden, Vaughn LaCombe, Dave Brown, Ellery Bouchard, Reed Payne, Paul Brunelle, Dan Calderwood, Greg Scott, Jim Watkins, Polly Ward, Bill Cassidy, Ron Barker, Bill Richards, Howard Cushman, Dick Unruh, and Leta Young.

Commissioner Bither reported that Maine leads the nation in the increase in state funding of education. Recently, there has been a 24% increase. She distributed a booklet on the Governor's Workforce 2000. She also distributed the Maine Human Resource Development Plan, Executive Summary.

Commissioner Bither asked the group for thoughts on the tracking system which has been proposed for following and tracking students. Jim Watkins reported that the RFP's will be going out on December 15 for the new state computer. We are committed to make a final decision by the end of the fiscal year. The computer is supposed to have a true data base capability. This would be extremely helpful for the student tracking system.

An item which should be added to the next agenda -- discussion of linking the system to connect with the state regarding the student data base.

Commissioner Bither asked for thoughts about reaching the 90% graduation rate -- how can we increase the rate by 12%? Problems are created by grouping children by ability and achievement levels too early. The problem of dropouts needs to be addressed and solved much earlier in the grade levels, possibly as low as in kindergarten. Whatever is being done for gifted and talented should be made available to every student. Commissioner reported that Minnesota has a 91% graduation rate now. Their goal is for 96% in '96. Part of their secret is a great variety of alternative schools, programs within schools, and regional and area programs. They also have programs in which they encourage students to take the first year of college while still in high school and give college credit as well as high school credit. High school graduation is expected of every student. As far as Maine is concerned, state supported start-up costs and subsidy programs for alternative education programs should be a consideration.

The group was reminded that the deadline for legislative proposals is in October. If the regional groups of superintendents have any ideas, they should get them in as soon as possible.

Dan Calderwood announced that Nelson Walls has been working with regionalized administrator groups to discuss certification issues. He has



offered a luncheon forum at the Holiday Inn with a group of superintendents present representing the regional groups for further discussion on this topic.

Extended school year -- each time the issue arises, there is discussion about quantity vs. quality. One doesn't necessarily follow the other. Howard Cushman reported that MSBA and MSSA had sent out a survey. As a result of the survey, neither group is opposed to the idea but feel that the decision should be a local determination by the local school board as to whether the extra days are student days or teacher days. Discussion followed centered on the following: How many days are teachers out of the classroom? How much time on task is being spent? If DECS offers workshops in the summer, is there support at the local level for this? The consensus was that superintendents would be willing to pay teachers a stipend for them to attend the summer workshops.

Report Cards. Each unit has received sheets to verify the information we have on file to be placed on the report card. The issue was raised as to whether or not private schools which serve as a public school should be included on the report card effort. Superintendents in attendance felt that they should. DECS is trying to do the best they can with what information they have available. Previously, a lot of the necessary information has not been collected from private schools because it was not needed.

Dick Card reported on the "Come to Campus" effort sponsored by all public and private post-secondary institutions in Maine. Information will be sent to all superintendents for distribution to their students unless a definite negative expression is made. Enough sheets are being provided so that each high school student will be able to receive one through his superintendent unless dissatisfaction is expressed right away to Barbara Allen.

Phyllis Deringis is currently responsible for home schooling until a new consultant is on board.

There was further final clarification expressed by Howard Cushman that the extended school year would be acceptable by MSSA and MSBA if mandated and funded, but DECS should allow locals to determine whether it should be teacher days, student days, or a combination of both.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 A.M.

