

December 2008

Collaboratively Speaking

“Managers do things right; leaders do the right thing”

With this quote, Rob Evans led a number of us through a provocative and very thoughtful conversation. The workshop entitled “Surviving and Thriving in Challenging Times” focused on the complexity of the world in which you lead. Your leadership in these critical times will be essential as we attempt to forge a different relationship with our districts in each of our regions.

In several meetings this past week with statewide policy makers, the regionalization of school districts has been the primary issue. A process and plan is being readied for the spring that will strongly encourage districts to consider regionalization or consolidation. Given the strong parochial and local-control traditions across the Commonwealth, initiatives to this end will be controversial at best. Secretary Reville has been quoted as saying the ideal number of districts is somewhere between 1 and 329. I acknowledge the fact that we have too many school districts. Nonetheless, if the driving factor in this initiative is capacity-building, as I am told it is, then districts should have multiple pathways to create that capacity. Clearly, in some cases, regionalization makes sense. In other situations, it is not a good idea for a variety of reasons. However, I do not believe that districts should be relieved of the responsibility to generate capacity in some locally acceptable way. In my mind, a second pathway will lead them to us. It will be our challenge and opportunity to partner with our member districts to fill that void, particularly in the areas of curriculum development, alignment, and support; data collection, analysis, and interpretation; human resource management; and business management and related business services.

I look forward to 2009: we have the opportunity not only to do things right but also to exercise our leadership to do the right thing. Best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season and a happy new year.

Best wishes,

Steve

Meeting reminder: Please make every effort to attend our January 12 membership meeting at The Education Cooperative at 9:30 a.m. We will discuss this and other significant issues.