

Leadership Forum

The Newsletter of the Association of Educational Leaders, Anne Arundel County

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Back-to-School 2006

Building relationships

Larry Lorton takes over as AEL Administrator

One crucial element to move our school system forward is for the new superintendent of Anne Arundel County schools to reach out to the Association of Educational Leaders, according to new AEL Administrator Larry Lorton.

“From my experience most principals feel that the better a superintendent gets to know them, the more respectful and sensitive s/he will be to their needs,” says Lorton, former AACPS superintendent who was hired this summer to replace long time AEL Administrator Don Smith. “AEL is no different – it needs a relationship with the superintendent that includes regular, systematic, high-quality contact.”

Lorton, who was AACPS superintendent in the 90s, has been in school administration since 1968. He began his career in education in 1962 as a math teacher and football coach in Ohio. “Becoming a math major was a bit of an accident, but I always wanted to teach and coach,” says Lorton who earned his Ph.D. in 1971. Devoting nearly a quarter century as a superintendent was not part of a master plan, he says. “The reality is I never had a job I didn’t like. Because I was happy at everything I did I never really thought about doing anything else.” Nevertheless, job opportunities came along in Ohio and eventually in Maryland. He considered jobs “usually because someone put a bug in my ear.... They’d say ‘why don’t you think about that....’” One job led to another until his retirement in 2003. Since then he has served as a management consultant to various educational organizations.

In 2004, Lorton sat on the AEL side of the table, working as a collective bargaining consultant in negotiations with the Board of

Education. Having worn a variety of educational leadership hats over the years, Lorton says that a principal’s job isn’t that different from the superintendent’s. “The demands on a principal are as challenging and onerous as on a superintendent,” says Lorton. “To be a principal takes outstanding skill and judgment... the first lesson most any superintendent learns is that if the principals are on board, then the things that need to happen in a school will get done.”

He is confident that Superintendent Maxwell knows that much of his success in his new job lies in the hands of the principals. “The crux of the process begins and ends with principals. There’s a large body of research that shows the climate for learning starts with the principal. Principals are the difference makers. They create the climate that allows teachers to teach,” says Lorton.

Succeeding Don Smith as AEL Administrator is an honor, according to Lorton. “I have known Don for a number of years and AEL was very close to his heart.” Looking ahead, Lorton is enthusiastic about some new ideas being considered by the AEL Board of Directors, including improved electronic communication with members. “The current board is interested in strengthening the health of the association, building on the foundation that is in place,” he says.

AEL Board member Rocco Ferretti, says that Lorton is honest and sincere and is excited to have Lorton on board. “It’s great to have someone who knows how this business



Larry Lorton

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Where did the summer go?

One of the goals that I had at the beginning of the summer was to start reading about our Founding Fathers – particularly Thomas Jefferson. I was taken by his quote, “Eternal vigilance is the price of freedom.” Those that know me are probably wondering “why is he reading about Jefferson?”

Jefferson was apprehensive of a strong government and wanted specific rules to allow control of the government by the people.

Where am I going with this? Eight board members, a director, as well as our legal counsel direct your association.

When I look at the board, I see a hard working group of people trying its best to do what is right for AEL members. This past year our members received a six percent pay increase. Everyone is happy and life is good. But we need to look ahead.

Consider the following:

- This past spring three board members were up for re-election and ran unchallenged. Two ballots had write in candidates and one member wrote about how the “old guard” should step

aside and bring in new people. (I couldn’t agree more!)

- Five of the eight members have 30+ years in the system and could retire.

- One of my goals has been to bring in new people to the board to assume leadership roles.

- We are beginning negotiations on our new contract and it will be totally from “scratch,” thus we need to hear from members as to what they feel are important issues they would like to see addressed in this process.

- Participation. Our meetings are open. We will be traveling around the county all year, holding our monthly meeting in a variety of locations. (See the schedule to the left.)

- This spring the following positions will be up for election: President, Vice President and two board positions. If you have any interest, please feel free to get involved now and run for any of these offices. All meetings are open and we invite participation by our members.

Back to Jefferson’s quote... the vigilance part is up to you. As I said earlier, we need to get more involvement in this association or the organization may simply become a group that continues to change names and positions every few years.

Your concerns are important to me as well as the other board members, please contact us if you have issues, concerns or complaints. ■

AEL Executive Board Meeting Schedule

Sept. 13	South River High
Oct. 11	Severna Park Middle
Nov. 8	Old Mill High
Dec. 13	North County High
Jan. 8	Broadneck High
Feb. 7	Arundel High
March 14	Chesapeake High
April 11	Annapolis High
May 9	Severna Park High

All Meetings begin at 4:30 pm

Larry Lorton, from page 1

is run on both sides of the fence.”

Lorton is also looking forward to AEL having a good relationship with Dr. Maxwell. “I do not know him personally but several mutual friends and colleagues hold him in high regard as both an administrator and ‘people person.’” He has a reputation for doing what’s good for kids in the classroom. I am sure Dr. Maxwell is critically aware that the federal and state initiatives in so-called accountability have dramatically changed the demands on school leadership as well as teachers. It is my hope he em-

braces AEL as a full partner in the planning and execution of policies and strategies for today’s schools.”

“In these days of aggressive federal pressure through ‘No Child Left Behind and an active State Department of Education pushing so-called accountability, the demands on school leadership is greater than ever,” says Lorton. “The climate for Maryland school systems is demanding... the role of every principal is ever more crucial... I am hoping he systematically includes us in the formulation of strategy and policy development.” ■

by Bob Ferguson
AEL President

The times they are a changin'

Welcome Back! As always a new school year comes with challenges in the schools but this year it also comes with challenges at the bargaining table. As many of you are aware, the current Negotiated Agreement is open on July 1, 2007 and as a result negotiations begin this fall for the future. The composition of all the participants has changed over the last three years. We have a new Administrator in our organization that I am proud to work with – Larry Lorton. Larry and I were on opposite sides of the bargaining table when he served as Superintendent and I began my first year of negotiations as chief negotiator for AEL. I have a great deal of respect for his ability, acumen and integrity and welcome him aboard.

The BOE is in large part a newly composed body. Paul Rudolph has served his terms, the

student member has changed, and those that are on the Board with the exception of three individuals have not experienced negotiations with AEL.

The Superintendent and his executive staff are all new faces. There is little or no institutional history left at that level upon which to draw. Thus, we will be in a large sense starting from scratch. The challenges are always large but today they seem enormous.

**by Richard Kovelant,
Executive Director & General Counsel**

Included with this newsletter is a brief survey that asks for your input in identifying issues in our current

contract that you believe need to be changed, modified, eliminated or amended. Please take the time to provide us with this information. There is nothing worse than hearing that we failed to address an issue when we were never advised that it was even a concern.

Aside from salary issues and benefits, always popular items for negotiations, we wish to address work load, pay differential with Unit II employees, committee participation, equality of pay among all coordinators, streamlining grievance matters, revision of salary scale, extra curricular compensation, etc. Please look at the Agreement and advise us what items you believe need repair or enhancement.

This year AEL plans to take the Executive Board meetings on the road to a school nearest you. See the schedule on page X. We hope that you will join us at an Executive Board meeting and provide feed back that we can use in our representation of your interests.

As always this is your organization. While it is always nice to have the business entrusted to a few, it is far better to have the involvement of the members. Please help where you can... The times they are a changing. ■

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Negotiations Survey

Please complete the enclosed survey and return it to any AEL Negotiations Team member (Louise DeJesu, Bob Ferguson, Linda Ferrara, Rocco Ferretti, Charles Jansky, Sharon Morell, Will Myers or Rick Wiles) absolutely no later than Wed. Sept. 20.

Use the back of this survey if necessary. Reference current Negotiated Agreement Articles/ Appendices, if possible.

The Association of Educational Leaders

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Association of Educational Leaders

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Story ideas and Letters to the Editor welcomed

We encourage members to use this newsletter to share their opinions and ideas.

If you would like to express your thoughts on an issue (i.e., "climate surveys") or a time saving tip or a creative solution to a common problem, send your submission to Denise Hofstedt at 410.421.5832 (fax) or dmhofstedt@verizon.net.