

October 24, 2014

This was quite a week. The 2014 STEM Summit at the DCU in Worcester when I was part of a panel moderated by Larisa Shelkin. I spoke about the importance of global STEM education and action now in MA.

Next was the MassCUE/MASS Technology Conference. This combined conference is the result of the work of several people including Annamria Schrimpf and Ann Koufman.

When I mounted the first PD event for Superintendents (supported by Peter Finn and the MASS and Apple) after which the conference ran for many year separate from and yet not too separated in time the MassCUE Conference where I connected with Connie Louie and we stopped to speak with the Apple folks. Five of them were at a table relaxing. This encounter reminded me of several stories which I told them.

Apple invited me to serve on an Advisory Committee twice...During one of those we were shown the prototype for a computer for middle school students and the women of the Council (there were a few!) recommended changing the form factor because it too closely resembled a body part...Apple did.

Apple paid for all my expenses (flight, hotel, food) but there was no stipend. Peter Finn, then ED of MASS, suggested I talk with the Ethics Commission. I did and their remedy was that either:

- I stand up in Town Meeting and announce my advisorship and its conditions (not particularly attractive given that one of the Selectmen asked at a Town Meeting why "she was allowed to speak when she doesn't live in town...")
- or I pay for everything myself, Apple would send an equivalent check to the School Committee which then could give me that "stipend." Needless to say the choice is obvious!

The other incident that came to mind, also during my stay in Easton (Easton was on my mind because I sat at lunch at the Summit with a current Selectman) is when I wrote in the newsletter (YES...Your Easton Schools in Action) what the impact of not securing the \$1.6M override for the schools would be. It was an entirely factual statement. However, the two men, who wanted to get me out of the position, called the Ethics Commission and complained that I used public money for political purposes.

The Ethics Commission called me. I explained that it was my job as Superintendent to inform the community about what was happening and might happen in the schools—education but advocacy.

The lawyer asked me to calculate the cost of that statement (time, postage, paper, electricity, etc) and send a check to the Commonwealth. The School Committee offered to pay but I declined and sent a personal check for \$179.00.

The schools were successful in securing the override!

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