

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Minutes (approved 10/6/16)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

September 15, 2016
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy (7:35 p.m.), Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan (7:03 p.m.), Kristina Rychlik, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Maya Minkin
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

1. Chairperson Mary Brolin called the ABRSC to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Chairman's Introduction**
3. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**
Brigid Bieber moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 9/1/16 as written.
The warrants were read by the Chair (see attachment) and circulated to the Committee for their review and signatures.
4. **Public Participation** - none
5. **FY17 School Improvement Plans Presentation**
Dr. Brand introduced the FY17 School Improvement Plan presentations that will take place over the next few School Committee meetings.
 - 5.1. **Blanchard Memorial School** – Principal *Dana Labb*, Assistant Principal *Karen Tower*
Dana Labb reviewed Blanchard's FY16 Outcomes and FY17 Goals around Social and Emotional Health, English Language Arts and Mathematics. These are all ongoing from the previous year. He thanked Damian Sugrue for connecting Blanchard with the Tufts University data. Karen Tower appreciates how being part of the K-12 region means more professional development opportunities compared to when Blanchard was on its own.

Kristina Rychlik was surprised how often schools seem to change their math programs. Deborah Bookis explained that staff will receive more SRSD training as it was very popular with the first cohort. Deanne O'Sullivan asked if the school library was redone after adopting Fountas and Pinnel. Dr. Tower replied that they did a leveled library, as well as the traditional library.
 - 5.2. **Luther Conant School** – Principal *Damian Sugrue*
Damian Sugrue reviewed Conant's FY16 Outcomes and FY17 Goals consisting of - Community: Increase staff/student interactions, Community: Increase PTO membership, involvement and volunteering, and Student Growth: Implement the new science standards in all grade levels. Deanne O'Sullivan commented that she attended a Conant PTO meeting and it was very engaging. Maria Neyland noted that the student/principal lunches that all of the principals are doing now are wonderful.
6. **American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Contract Ratification** – **VOTE** – *Marie Altieri*
 - 6.1. AFSCME Custodial and Maintenance Contract Approval Memo

6.2. Proposed Memorandum of Agreement

Marie Altieri reviewed this process. Maria Neyland and Paul Murphy were involved in this negotiations process with Marie.

Kathleen Neville moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: To approve the proposed contract for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees AFL-CIO Massachusetts State Council 93 Local #1703 in effect retroactively from July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019.

7. **FY17 Superintendent Goals – VOTE – Glenn Brand**

Dr. Brand took feedback from the last School Committee meeting and revised Goal II.B. Assessing the Culture and Climate of our School Committees to be a two year goal. Kristina Rychlik expressed appreciation for this change.

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Superintendent's 2016 – 2017 Goals as proposed.

8. **Master Plan Process Update – Glenn Brand (Presentation at 10/6/16 ABRSC meeting)**

8.1. Visioning Workshop on 9/15/16 (oral)

Feedback from today's final Visioning Session will be incorporated into the final report that is presented at the next School Committee meeting on 10/6/16. A final report would be delivered to the School Committee around November 1st.

Kristina Rychlik attended the Vision Session and said it was great. The large amount of work that has gone into the process so far is very apparent. Knowing that it took 5 hours to review these options at Visioning, she asked what material will be shared at the Oct 6 meeting in one hour. Dr. Brand explained that October 6th will be a recap/overview but obviously not as extensive. The Final Report in November will be more comprehensive. Marie Altieri added that the list of options for the Oct 6 meeting, will still be available to review. A single solution will not be decided on. There will be plenty of time for public input before a final decision is made.

9. **Financial Updates– Clare Jeannotte –none**

10. **Discussion of November 2016 Ballot Question - Lifting the Charter School Cap in MA – Mary Brolin**

- 10.1. Memo from the Chair – possible **VOTE** of an ABRSC position statement?
- 10.2. Initiative Petition
- 10.3. Proposed Resolution Against Lifting the Cap from massteacher.org - *for discussion*
- 10.4. Memo from ABEA President, Karen Sonner

Mary Brolin heard that 100 School Committees have signed on to this resolution against lifting the cap on charter schools. She asked the Committee how they felt about the statement.

Paul Murphy stated that if it is important to the teachers, he wants the School Committee to sign even though a cap would not affect our school district that much. Diane Baum agreed saying that it is wrong to incentivize innovation by financially challenging the public schools. Mary Brolin agreed stating that charter schools are unfunded so they pull money out of the public school systems. She noted that there are many intelligent people on both sides of the arguments, but there are some important steps that are not happening. She also disagreed generally with creating policy by ballot question. Kristina Rychlik agreed but wanted to be clear that the decision does not signify her opposition to charter schools, particularly our great ones.

Paul Murphy moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was

VOTED: to support the resolution against lifting the cap on commonwealth charter schools as proposed. Brigid Bieber abstained. All other ABRSC members in attendance voted YES.

11. Subcommittee Reports

11.1. Budget – 9/14/16 meeting

Maria Neyland reported that the subcommittee discussed FY17 budget timeline and guidelines, the Hager Well (another meeting with Boxborough was coming up), and the FY16 audit status.

11.2. Policy - 9/14/16 meeting

Brigid Bieber reported that a number of the emergency and safety policies were discussed with Dr. Brand and three of our youth officers attending the subcommittee meeting. These will be ready for a First Reading at the next School Committee meeting.

11.3. Comparative Communities Study – Diane Baum

Diane Baum presented the final report from this subcommittee. The driving question was why ABRSD spends more per pupil in some categories than some comparative communities. Members hoped to identify areas that the District might review based on what neighboring districts are doing. Diane acknowledged that the stories behind the numbers are hard to unpack and despite similarities, many districts are unique, making financial comparisons difficult at times. Diane suggested that Out of District Transportation is the most important area that could be looked into at this time, although the subcommittee did not make recommendations.

Clare Jeannotte will review these observations during the next budget season. Regional School Districts usually do not charge a bus fee because it is not reimbursable. The lack of sidewalks around Blanchard restricts the charging of a transportation fee for those students. Marie Altieri noted that a thorough review of bus fees was done a few years ago and it was determined not feasible. Out of District transportation has been reviewed in the past, but Maria Neyland suggested that it would not hurt to revisit it. Dr. Brand agreed to look at the transportation issue overall, noting that it is especially complicated due to our choice program.

Diane and her subcommittee were thanked for their extensive report. Mary Brolin said that the wealth of information will be used in many different places including the Budget Subcommittee, Transportation Department, Student Services and general budget planning. It was suggested that the report be shared with all of the communities that participated. Marie Altieri liked how the Certified Specialists and Paraprofessionals/Assistants are defined at the bottom of page 5. She will look into this area. Brigid Bieber agreed, especially with the high caseloads that some of our specialists have.

Diane reminded the Committee that the report is just the highlights and there is more data in the full spreadsheet. When asked why the subcommittee did not make recommendations and stopped where they did, Diane replied that a discussion without a conclusion was preferred for the presentation. Subcommittee member Steve Noone stated that he is a numbers guy and not a policy maker, so recommendations were left for the Administration to make. It was agreed that the report would be shared with the various administrators to use in their appropriate ways. Mary Brolin asked that if administrators use some of the data collected, the School Committee could be informed that it was useful. Diane and her committee of Mary Ann Ashton, Amy Burke, Michael Coppelino, Bill Guthlein, Gary Kushner and Steve Noone were thanked again for their efforts.

11.4. Outreach (including PTO Co-chairs)

Kristina Rychlik reported that they met on September 7 and reviewed past outreach efforts, the subcommittee's charge and talked through a plan for the year. Their three major topics are: capital and master plan work, start times and budget. They will focus on these using a tracking tool. She asked the Committee if they would like a monthly summary of School Committee activities for the PTOs as was done in the past. It was agreed that bullets were best. Kristina will do this. Next meeting is 9/21/17.

12. School Committee Member Reports

12.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy

12.1.1. Meeting minutes 9/1/16

12.1.2. Three Board Teambuilding Meeting on 9/21/16 at 6:30 PM at NARA

There had been no meeting since the last School Committee meeting.

- 12.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – *Mary Brolin* reported that they will meet on Tuesday.
- 12.3. Acton Finance Committee – *Amy Krishnamurthy* reported that there is a Special Town Meeting on October 5. They discussed reserves and Fincom will bring a recommendation to a future meeting.
- 12.4. Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update – *Diane Baum*
 - 12.4.1. MMT District Ballot Vote – Tuesday, September 20, 2016 from 12 - 8 p.m. at the Jr High (*Acton registered voters only*) and Boxborough Town Hall (*Boxborough registered voters only*)
 - 12.4.2. See information on <http://www.acton-ma.gov/>, <http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/> and <http://www.minuteman.org/>
 - 12.4.3. ABRSC statement voted 9/1/16
Diane reported that the vote is next week. Janet Adachi and Pam Nourse have been working tirelessly to get people to go out to vote.

13. **Superintendent’s Report/Updates** – *Glenn Brand*

- 13.1. Family Learning Series: The Science of Sleep – Kirsty Kerin, PhD, Wednesday, September 21, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. ABRHS Auditorium
- 13.2. ABRHS Field Trip to Quebec – date was changed from 4/15/17 – 4/18/17 to 4/17/17 – 4/20/17 due to the Easter holiday.
- 13.3. ABRSD Nature Play Spaces Grand Opening will be on Friday, September 23, 2016 at 11:00 a.m. at the Conant School. This celebration includes the Nature Play Spaces at Parker Damon Building, Douglas and Gates Schools and all are welcome.

14. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- 14.1. “Expanding our Notion of Success” - Challenge Success Update, September 2016 – Dawn Bentley shared the first monthly update with the Committee. Principals had asked for consistent messaging on this new initiative so this is the first edition. It was well received.

The ABRSC adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants

NEXT MEETINGS:

October 6 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (packet posted September 30)

This meeting will begin with a “**Final District Master Plan Options**” presentation by Dore & Whittier (approximately 7:00 – 8:00), followed by regular ABRSC meeting business.

October 20 - ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (packet posted October 14)