



Acton-Boxborough Regional  
School Committee Meeting  
Followed by Executive Session

March 3, 2016

7:00 p.m.

at the R.J. Grey Junior High Library

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 3, 2016  
7:00 p.m.  
Followed by Executive Session

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**AGENDA**

1. **Chairman's Introduction** – Annual Spring Town Elections (7:00)
2. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**
  - 2.1. ABRSC Meetings of 2/11/16 and 11/5/15
3. **Public Participation**
4. **Kelley's Corner Improvement Plan Presentation** – *Andrew Brockway, Chair, Acton 2020 and Kelley's Corner Improvement Steering Committee (7:05)*
5. **Change to 2016 ABRSD Summer School Course Preview Practice** – *Deborah Bookis (7:20)*
6. **Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update** – *Glenn Brand (oral)*
  - 6.1. Results of Boxborough Special Town Meeting on 2/24/16
7. **Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Search Decision** – *Glenn Brand*
  - 7.1. Recommendation to Appoint Dr. Dawn G. Bentley, Ed.D. as Assistant Superintendent of Student Services – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*
  - 7.2. Director of Special Education Update (*oral*)
8. **ABRSD Capital Study Update** – *Glenn Brand*
  - 8.1. Link to posted materials: <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>
  - 8.2. Memo and 2016 Existing Conditions Study Capital Improvement Plan
  - 8.3. Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Statement of Interest – **First Read** - *Glenn Brand*
  - 8.4. Request for School Committee members for the Visioning Team Workshops
  - 8.5. Invitation for Non-School Community members to Join Visioning Team Workshops
9. **Comparative Communities Study Proposal** – *Michael Coppolino*
10. **Response to Citizen's Request for School Committee Position re Testing** – *Kristina Rychlik*
  - 10.1. Memo from K Rychlik re Committee's Possible Response, 2/26/16
  - 10.2. ABRSC Statement Read at Acton Special Town Meeting on 11/10/15
  - 10.3. Comments from ABRSC Chairwoman at Acton Special Town Meeting on 11/10/15
  - 10.4. Excerpt from 11/19/15 ABRSC Meeting Draft Minutes
  - 10.5. Email Regarding MCAS Participation for Spring 2016, *Deborah Bookis, 2/12/16*
  - 10.6. ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing, *September 2015*
  - 10.7. Emails from Citizen re "Non-binding Resolution Official Response", 2/4/16
11. **Subcommittee Reports**
  - 11.1. Budget – *Maria Neyland (oral)*
    - 11.1.1. Meeting on 3/2/16

- 11.2. Regional Financial Oversight (RFOC) – *Michael Coppolino (oral)*
  - 11.2.1. Meeting on 3/3/16
- 11.3. Policy –
  - 11.3.1. **Physical Restraint of Students**, File: JKAA – Second Read - **VOTE** – *Bonnie Bisbicos*
    - 11.3.1.1. Procedures and Current Policy
  - 11.3.2. **Public’s Right to Know**, File: KDB – First Reading – *Brigid Bieber*
  - 11.3.3. **School Committee Legal Status**, File: BB – First Reading – *Brigid Bieber*
- 11.4. Outreach – *Kathleen Neville (oral)*
- 11.5. Legislative – *Kathleen Neville*
  - 11.5.1. Discussion of Suburban Coalition’s Resolution dated 2/1/16
    - 11.5.1.1. Updated Resolution and List of Communities in Support (3/1/16)
  - 11.5.2. Proposed Letter Rep. Jennifer Benson re Governor’s Budget, *Paul Murphy*

**12. School Committee Member Reports**

- 12.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Kristina Rychlik, Paul Murphy*
  - 12.1.1. Minutes of meeting on 2/9/16
  - 12.1.2. Materials from meeting on 2/25/16
  - 12.1.3. Charge of the Town of Acton Capital Improvement Planning Committee, 1/28/16
- 12.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – *Maria Neyland*
- 12.3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)– *Mary Brolin*
- 12.4. Acton Finance Committee – *Kristina Rychlik, Deanne O’Sullivan*
- 12.5. Acton Board of Selectmen – *Mike Coppolino*
- 12.6. Boxborough Finance Committee- *Mary Brolin*
- 12.7. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – *Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber*
- 12.8. PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs– *Deanne O’Sullivan*

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

**14. FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

- 14.1. Youth Risk Behavior Survey Parent/Guardian Letter
- 14.2. Family Learning Series: “*Celebrating Aha Moments*”, Melissa Stewart on 3/23/15 at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High School
- 14.3. ABRSD Financial Reports as of 1/31/16
  - 14.3.1. Revenue vs Budget
  - 14.3.2. Expenses vs Budget
  - 14.3.3. Special Revenue
  - 14.3.4. Grants
- 14.4. At The Table, USDA Nutrition Assistance Newsletter, 2015 Wrap Up – “Acton in Action for School Breakfast”, *Kirsten Nelson*
- 14.5. 2016 Chair Ceremony Honoring Staff with 20 Years of Service to the District
- 14.6. 2015 Education Report (distributed at the April/May Town Meetings)
- 14.7. “*Building Schools for Tomorrow*”, Boston Globe, 2/27/16, page 1
- 14.8. Acton Candidates’ Night, Wednesday, March 9<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m., Acton Town Hall

**15. EXECUTIVE SESSION**

*For strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Office Support Association (OSA), American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA)*

**16. Adjourn**

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

Mar 17            ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (*School Choice Public Hearing*)  
Mar 29            Acton Local Elections  
April 4            Acton Town Meeting begins, 7:00 p.m. in the ABRHS Auditorium  
April 28          ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library  
May 9             Boxborough Town Meeting begins, 7:00 p.m. in the Blanchard Gym  
May 16            Boxborough Local Elections  
May 19            ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING  
FY17 OPEN BUDGET HEARING and BUSINESS MEETING  
DRAFT Minutes

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 11, 2016  
7:00 p.m. Open FY17 Budget Hearing  
Followed by ABRSC Regular Business Meeting (7:30)

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*Members Present:* Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy (8:35 p.m.), Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik  
*Members Absent:* none  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Clare Jeannotte, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr, members of the public

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1. Chairwoman Kristina Rychlik called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

*Please see material posted for 1/23/16 School Committee meeting at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>*

2. **Chairmen’s Introduction**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the Budget Hearing. Dr. Brand stated that the proposed FY17 School Budget represents a total team effort and all of the information is posted online for review.

3. **ABRSC FY17 Budget– Glenn Brand and Clare Jeannotte**

1. FY17 Final Budget Presentation
2. Revised Recommended Table of Assessments (Table 6)

Dr. Brand and Ms. Jeannotte presented a revised proposed FY17 Budget of \$83,073,204. This is an increase of \$2,776,809 or 3.46%. This breaks down to an Acton Assessment of \$55,547,097 which is an increase of 4.5%, and a Boxborough Assessment of \$11,503,148 which is an increase of 3.4%. The total assessment increase is 4.3%. Use of E&D is \$200,000. Uncertainties and assumptions include: State Aid, CASE Assessment, Circuit Breaker and Regional Transportation.

The budget voted by the Committee on Budget Saturday (1/23/16) totaled \$83,426,767 with an Acton assessment of \$55,839,692 and a Boxborough assessment of \$11,564,116.

The Committee asked about special education transportation. There are two components to the \$298,287 increase (19.5%). \$133,000 is the increase in the CASE assessment, which is increasing 9.5% based on how many of our children attend CASE. For the private transportation, our budget figure was too low based on growth in that group of students this year so it will be paid next year. When asked if the District puts this type of transportation out to bid each year, Ms Jeannotte said that we do not because special education transportation is exempt from that requirement. Mike Coppolino suggested that with such a dramatic increase, the District might consider doing so.

The Committee asked that slide 23 regarding the Pathways Program be clearer regarding the savings it would actually generate. School Committee members understand the total actual cost from previous explanations, but it may not be evident to others.

Brigid Bieber pointed out that although the hearing was a briefer presentation than in the past, the process started a number of months ago. She thanked the Staff and Administration for making this process better every year, and noted that the budget subcommittee has been very valuable to everyone.

**4. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Update – Kristina Rychlik**

ALG met on 2/9/16 and reviewed the updated spreadsheet and the schools' revised budget. Due to a decrease in the Health Insurance Trust rates estimate (from 8% to 4%), there is a reduction of \$292,000, the Acton portion of the total projected health insurance savings, that can be used to lower the tax levy or reserve use. The Fincom advocated for an overall reduction of \$1.5 million in addition. The group discussed how to handle this but there was no decision. The Schools made it clear that the timing of the request was late and they had already made cuts to the proposed budget.

**5. Acton Finance Committee Update**

Slides from Dr. Brand and Ms. Jeannotte's presentation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report and FY17 Budget at the Fincom meeting on 2/9/16 were in the packet, as well as answers to Finance Committee questions from Budget Saturday. There were questions about class size and the Pathways Program. Feedback was good. A comment was made that there was not much innovation in the proposed budget, although it was not a criticism. Kristina Rychlik stated that while she would like to do more capital projects or add more staff, given the budget constraints, she is satisfied with the proposal and does not feel more cuts should be considered at this time.

**6. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) Update**

Mary Brolin reported that BLF will meet on March 2. They are preparing for their Special Town Meeting regarding Minuteman Technical School.

**7. Boxborough Finance Committee Update**

Mary Brolin is hoping that February 29 will work. Mike Coppolino asked if BLF has a similar spreadsheet to what ALG uses. Mary said there is a model but they have not seen it yet for this year. She will share it with School Committee when it is available.

**8. Discussion and Deliberation – Kristina Rychlik**

Maria Neyland reviewed the Budget subcommittee's work. Budget Saturday was moved up a week earlier this year and they are looking for feedback on how that worked. Next year, answers to questions that come up will be included in the Budget Binder. It was helpful that Dr. Brand copied the whole committee when he responded to questions.

Paul Murphy was very happy with the process. He really appreciated that this budget tries to address the stress and mental health issues that came up with the YRBS. Mike Coppolino suggested that budget questions and answers could be included in the SC meeting packets as they come up. Kristina Rychlik noted that Budget Saturday this year conflicted with the MA Municipal Association (MMA) meeting and we should check on that for next year.

**9. Recommendation to Approve Revised FY17 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget and Assessments – VOTE – Glenn Brand**

Brigid Bieber moved, Michael Coppolino seconded, and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017 be set at \$83,073,204, and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the

Education Reform Law and the terms of the Regional Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$55,547,097, Boxborough \$11,503,148, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$14,531,276, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$27,683, Anticipated Regional Bonus Aid in the amount of \$74,000, Anticipated Chapter 71, Section 16C Transportation Aid, in the amount of \$1,190,000, and a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$200,000.

**The Annual Budget Hearing was adjourned at 7:51 p.m.**

### **ABRSC Regular Business Meeting Begins**

1. **Chairman's Introduction** – The Chair reviewed the Annual Spring Town Elections' deadlines
2. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**  
The Minutes of the meeting on 2/4/16 were approved as amended. Warrant #16-0177 dated 2/11/16 in the amount of \$1,634,423.87 was signed by the Committee.
3. **Public Participation** - none
4. **Superintendent's Mid Cycle Goal Review** – *Glenn Brand*
  - 4.1. DESE Model Evaluation Process for Superintendents, pages 6 & 7
  - 4.2. Superintendent's Memo

Dr. Brand presented a mid-year progress report on his goals for the year, involving Professional Practice, Student Learning and District Improvement. Many of these goals are ongoing. Kristina Rychlik asked if Dr. Brand should consider changing some of his timing because when he created his goals, Phase II of the Capital Study was to take place next year, and now it has been moved up. She noted that in addition to this adding to his workload, it also involves other people's time.

The Committee and Superintendent discussed whether the District has a vision, and whether the mission and vision are the same and if both are needed. The last strategic planning efforts identified a set of values and a mission, but Dr. Brand felt that plans for organizations usually include a vision with their mission and values. He stated that, "Clarity around the work that we do and where we are going, is important." Deborah Bookis felt that there are a few interpretations of what a vision is. She suggested that the District is asking "Why" for the vision and "What" for the mission. Mike Coppolino stated that the vision is what you see in the future and what you hope to obtain.

In response to a question, Dr. Brand said that the student learning goal working group around the teacher assistant team and inclusionary practices had a late start. He felt that he had set too ambitious a schedule initially for that part.

5. **Recommendation to Revise FY17 School Calendar - Possible No School on Tuesday 10/11/16 and Addition of Early Dismissal Days** – Second Reading - **VOTE** – *Glenn*

The Committee discussed whether to make 10/11/16 a no school day due to how the previously voted calendar had no school scheduled for 10/10/16 (Columbus Day) and 10/12/16 (Yom Kippur). Kristina Rychlik reviewed other districts who take the same holidays and they varied - Sharon has school on Oct 11, as does Newton, Needham and Lexington. Brookline does not. If there is no school, it makes

the last day of a school a Monday, which is not ideal. Weather closures would change this. As in the past, the point was made that this would put High School students behind regarding AP tests, etc. Maya Minkin was conflicted but many of her peers said they would be out of town if there was school that day. Maria Neyland asked the Committee to be sensitive to the high schoolers who have plans at the end of the school year. Polling the staff was considered but not done. Union leadership were in favor of having the date off. Deanne O'Sullivan suggested taking a day off of a vacation break to avoid affecting the high school students. The Committee has already agreed to have Kathleen Neville and Maya Minkin look into alternative vacations for future years.

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to approve the early release days as proposed.

Maya Minkin moved to make October 11, 2017 a non-school day. Mike Coppolino seconded and it was,

**VOTED:** **YES:** Baum, Coppolino, Minkin, Murphy, O'Sullivan, Rychlik  
**NO:** Bieber, Brolin, Neville, Neyland

The motion passed. (Amy Krishnamurthy arrived after the vote.)

6. **Draft ABRSC Letter to Commissioner Chester re Conflict between DESE's Recommendation for March Vacation Week and Standardized Testing Schedules** – *Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville*  
Kathleen Neville explained that a vacation in March cannot be considered given the testing schedules. They proposed asking for guidance on this and will ask other School Committees as well.

Kristina Rychlik suggested that if the State wants districts to consider changing their vacations, the State could plan a testing free week in March and give districts enough notice to include that in their calendar planning. The MASC listserve had information on this recently and Kathleen and Maya will review this. They will come back to the Committee with other districts who are interested before sending the proposed letter out. Mike Coppolino thinks surveying staff about this question would be valuable. Mary Brolin assumes the process would include input from the students and the community. Everyone agreed that it is a complex issue.

7. **Assistant Superintendent of Student Services Search Update** – *Marie Altieri*  
Dr. Brand thanked Marie Altieri for leading the entire search process, which has been extensive. Site visits are happening this week for the 3 finalists. The intent is that a recommendation will be made at the 3/3/16 School Committee meeting. Dr. Brand will make a conditional job offer, then the School Committee will vote to appoint the candidate.
8. **ABRSD Capital Study Update** – *Glenn Brand*  
JD Head is working on figuring out which of the proposed projects may be done in house. The Working Group met for the first time today. This includes Amy Krishnamurthy and Maya Minkin, as well as John Fallon and Doug Tindal. They will meet every other week for most of the course of this study. The Visioning Group of almost 80 people will come together for 3 all day meetings.

Dr. Brand described the Statement of Interest process regarding the MSBA. He is working on these details and will bring a proposal to the 3/3/16 School Committee meeting. The deadline is April 8, 2016.

9. **Subcommittee Reports**
  - 9.1. Budget – *Maria Neyland* - nothing further to report

## 10. School Committee Member Reports



- 10.1. Minuteman Technical Vocational School (MMT) Update – *Diane Baum*  
10.1.1. Boxborough Special Town Meeting – February 24  
See warrant: <http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/home/urgent-alerts/special-town-meeting-wednesday-feb-24-2016>  
Informational Meeting: Tues, **Feb 9 at 7 p.m.** in Sargent Library, Boxborough

Eight towns have accepted the amended agreement and two have voted to withdraw (Carlisle and Sudbury). Five meetings were snowed out and are being rescheduled.

- 10.2. PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs will meet in a week or so.

**11. Superintendent's Report/Updates – Glenn Brand**

Dr. Brand attended the League of Women Voters' meeting last night and updated them on district activities. On February 23, he will hold his second Community Forum at the Acton Memorial Library.

Regarding bad weather, every effort is made to have decisions made by 5:30 a.m. on days when weather is in question. Last Friday's storm was challenging and it took until 5:40 a.m. to make the decision to cancel school. Unfortunately, the District's electronic system had delays of up to an hour notifying families, which was an issue for some of them. The twitter feed worked very well for those who have signed up.

Dr. Brand announced that Mary Emmons, our Director of Special Education, has accepted a position with the Lincoln Public Schools effective July 1, 2016.

The ABRSC adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

Feb 24 Boxborough Special Town Meeting re Minuteman Tech School  
Mar 3 ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library  
Mar 17 ABRSC Meeting 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (*School Choice Public Hearing*)

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING  
DRAFT Minutes

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

November 5, 2015  
7:00 p.m.  
Followed by Executive Session

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*Members Present:* Diane Baum, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland (8:10 p.m.), Deanne O’Sullivan (7:40 p.m.), Kristina Rychlik, (7:45 p.m.)  
*Members Absent:* Brigid Bieber, Maya Minkin  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Bonnie Bisbicos, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

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1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mary Brolin, ABRSC Vice-Chairperson.
2. **Chairman’s Introduction** – Michael Coppolino read a statement in memory of former School Committee member, Michael Scanlon, who passed away recently. Mr. Scanlon was on the Committee for 6 years in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s and was an instrumental member of the School Building Committees for 10 years. He will be greatly missed by our community.
3. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
  - 3.1. Minutes of the meetings on 10/22/15 (Workshop) and 10/27/15 (3 Board Meeting) were approved as written.
  - 3.2. Warrant #16-009PR dated 10/29/15 in the amount of \$2,562,951.79 and #16-010 dated 11/5/15 in the amount of \$532,875.07 were signed by the Committee members.
4. **Public Participation** - none
5. **Enrollment Report**
  - 5.1. October 1, 2015 Enrollment Report – *Marie Altieri*

Grades 1, 2 and 3 are growing beyond the projected enrollment. Cross-Town Enrollment (Acton students attending Boxborough’s elementary school, and vice-versa) has helped to reduce class sizes in Acton schools a little. Diversity continues to grow. One third of our K-12 students are Asian-Americans. Students who are economically disadvantaged is also a growing group. More students are being identified because if they qualify for certain programs, they now automatically qualify for free and reduced lunch.
  - 5.2. Enrollment Projections – *Peter and Mary Ann Ashton*

Acton enrollment declined by 51 students (-1.1%) and Boxborough enrollment increased by 17 students (2.1%). Projection graphs continue to follow the “S” curve, as is customary for all school communities. A question was asked about how many students typically come from 40B developments. Peter stated that the development in Boxborough includes only 1 and 2 bedroom apartments so they will not add a significant number of new students. Housing turnover is picking up, but a decline in births and low new construction are expected to lead to continued decline in enrollment over the next decade.

6. **RJGJHS Class Size Report** – *Andrew Shen*

Current enrollment (10/1/15) is 888 students. RJ Grey has experienced a steady decline in enrollment since the peak of 1003 students in 2008-2009. Enrollment is projected to increase to 916 next year and 929 in 2017-2018. If divided equally, the average team size in Grade 7 and Grade 8 is 111 students. Mr. Shen explained how class sizes and math sections are determined. He emphasized that analysis of shifts in overall enrollment must take into account the changing profile of student (and family) population and their needs. 13% of students at RJ Grey receive support from the Academic Support Center (general education support) and 54 Jr High students are considered economically disadvantaged.

A committee member asked if the Administration ever spoke with other communities about their circumstances. Mr. Shen said they did often, but there are many variations to what they do that make it hard to compare. Mike Coppolino asked what the Administration attributed a potential increase of 40% in special education students to. He pointed out that Westford has a dramatically lower percentage of special education students over time. They attribute this to intensive services during the elementary years. Mr. Shen was not comfortable commenting on the topic because he does not work in the elementary schools. One member responded that AB has an attractive system for students who need special education services. The cohort of students coming into 7<sup>th</sup> grade now is the same cohort that the Committee was hearing about when they were having difficulty in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. Diane Baum advocated for the importance of early intervention. Mike Coppolino advocated for talking to other communities to learn about their best practices, saying, “We can’t do nothing about this.”

7. **ABRHS Class Size Report** – *JoAnn Campbell, Larry Dorey, Tina Van Ness*

Class sizes were presented by department and by level. The very complicated scheduling process, involving 150 course offerings, 8 periods and more than 1900 students, was reviewed. The many class changes that take place just before school starts and continue even after opening day, adds to the complexity. Class sizes at the High School has remained relatively constant over the past six years, with a slight decrease from 2010-11 to 2015-16.

Deanne O’Sullivan asked if the Administration tracks how many students override classes and if so, how successful they are. Larry Dorey replied that there is a long cultural history of allowing overrides for students, although it can be disruptive for students and teachers. He also said that they are considering whether to make Summer School only for enrichment, and not as a way to jump up a higher class level. For Physical Education (PE), the Administration added it in initially to free up class time in the fall, but now students are using it so they can take 7 difficult classes. That may not be good. It was pointed out that some athletes take PE to give themselves more time to do homework in the fall when they get a 2 hour workout due to their sport.

Mike Coppolino asked if the Administration is doing anything to limit the number of classes that a young person can take, regarding Health and Wellness and Mental Health concerns. Dr. Campbell said that there are absolutely ways to ask this question of a student. Mr. Dorey said that the High School Administration may reconsider an 8 period day because it allows students to take a lot of heavy classes. Dr. Campbell appreciated the Committee asking these questions because the Administration feels pressure to satisfy the community. She said that they are in year 3 of looking at Health and Wellness issues so they have been working on these questions. She described it as “a shifting culture.”

8. **MASC District Governance Program Update** – *Kristina Rychlik*

8.1. Recommendation to Approve ABRSC Goals – **First Reading**

The last workshop will be scheduled for January.

9. **FY17 ABRSD School Calendar – First Reading** – Glenn Brand, Marie Altieri

9.1. School Year/School Calendar, Policy File: IC/ICA

9.2. Staff Survey Results

9.3. Draft FY17 Proposed Calendar (*revised – Good Friday = no school*)

Dr. Brand proposed that, in accordance with last year’s discussion, the Committee consider the traditional three religious holidays off for next year (Good Friday, Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah). He explained the benefit of having no school for students on the November 1st Election Day, and using it as a Staff Professional Learning Day, given that the Conant School and Jr High are voting sites for the town of Acton. Marie Altieri reminded the Committee that the District has 2 contractual days for staff professional learning. Dr. Brand asked that comments be sent to him prior to the next meeting, when a vote will be taken.

10. **Recommendation to Accept Gifts from the Elementary School PTSOs – VOTE** – Glenn Brand  
Kathleen Neville stated that these gifts, totaling almost \$250,000, represent a lot of work by a lot of people. She feels that this is an inequity that the District has written off as school choice. Mary Brolin echoed Kathleen’s comments. She feels that although this is very generous, it pays for staffing and creates an inequity among the schools. The Committee agreed to discuss the issue at their summer workshop.

Maria Neyland moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously  
**VOTED:** to accept the gifts from the elementary PTOs with gratitude,

11. **Subcommittee Reports**

11.1. Budget – Maria Neyland reported that at their meeting on 10/28/15, they reviewed athletic fees and it will be on the agenda for next School Committee meeting.

11.2. Policy –

11.2.1. **School Councils**, File: BDFA – **First Read**

Dr. Brand explained that this revision to the policy was due to regionalization. The procedures were revised although the Committee does not vote on them. Mike Coppolino asked Dr. Brand to confirm that the School Improvement Plan name has not changed.

11.2.1.1. Procedures: School Improvement Plan, BDFA-R-1, Submission and Approval of the School Improvement Plan, BDFA-R-2, Conduct of School Council Business, BDFA-E-3

11.2.2. **New School Committee Member Orientation**, File: BIA – **First Read** – Kathleen Neville

11.2.3. **FYI** - Revisions to Procedures Only (no vote needed)

11.2.3.1. Special Education Parent Advisory Council, File: BDFB-R

11.2.3.2. Acknowledging Religious Holidays, File: ACD-R – Maria Neyland

11.3. Demographic Study Update – Mike Coppolino

Mike spoke to the professors at Boston College and they are looking forward to meeting with the group and learning more about how they can assist the District.

11.4. Legislative – Paul Murphy

11.4.1. Final Letter from ABRSC re Standardized Testing to Elementary BESE, 10/23/15

12. **School Committee Member Reports**

12.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – Kristina Rychlik, Paul Murphy

12.1.1. Meeting on 10/29/15

12.1.2. Three Board Meeting held 10/27/15

12.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – Mary Brolin reported that they met last week.

12.3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)– Mary Brolin reported that they might write a letter to protest that rates are being charged the same across the state.

- 12.4. Acton Finance Committee – *Kristina Rychlik reported that School Committee will present on 11/24/15.*
- 12.5. Acton Board of Selectmen – *Mike Coppolino reported that the Board voted to take no position on the Special Town Meeting question.*
- 12.6. Minuteman Tech Update – *Diane Baum reported that Wayland voted to leave the District and a vote is needed by all the towns because it has to be a unanimous decision. Acton Town Meeting will vote on this. Vince Amoroso from Boxborough will be proposing a plan to let some towns leave the District. This will be important to stay informed about.*

**13. Acton Special Town Meeting re Citizens’ Petition (11/10/15) – Kristina Rychlik**

- 13.1. ABRSC Statement
- 13.2. Warrant found at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/7371>

The Acton Fincom voted to take no action on this non-binding resolution because there is no financial impact to the Town. The Town Moderator allowed the petitioners to propose a new statement that is not final yet. There is concern that the School Committee’s statement is not accurate due to the changes being made. The Committee was not in agreement about how to proceed, whether to defer making a statement, or just make a simple one given all of the last minute changes. Mike Coppolino was very disappointed and surprised that a completely different article was being allowed to come forward. The Committee doesn’t know what they should be responding to. Maria Neyland suggested that the Committee simply say, “This is our stance on PARCC and Common Core and because …”

A School Committee meeting will be posted for 6:30 p.m. on 11/10/15, just prior to the Town Meeting to agree on a statement.

**14. A. Recommendation to Accept Donation of Baking Trays to ABRSD Food Service Department – VOTE – Glenn Brand**

Mike Coppolino moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,  
VOTED: to accept the donation from Bisousweet Confections to the ABRSD Food Service Department with gratitude.

**14. B. Recommendation to Accept \$2,500 Grant from Crayola to the Conant School – VOTE – Glenn Brand**

Mike Coppolino moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,  
VOTED: to accept the donation from Crayola to the Conant School with gratitude.

**15. Invitation to Nominate ABRSC member for Consideration by Acton TV Board of Directors – VOTE – Glenn Brand**

The School Committee declined to nominate a member for consideration but appreciated being asked.

**16. Superintendent’s Report – Glenn Brand**

- 16.1. Standardized Testing Statement from ABRSD Administration (*final*)
- 16.2. Report on 11/3/14 Professional Learning Day for Staff - Mental Health and Wellness. Dr. Brand noted that this was one of the first times the District included all faculty and staff including bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and assistants to participate. The Day was very well received. He thanked Deborah Bookis for her efforts in organizing this extensive event.

**17. Senior Leadership Administrative Restructuring Proposal – Glenn Brand**

(Note: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Clare Jeannotte and Bonnie Bisbicos left the room at 9:30 p.m. for this discussion.)

Dr. Brand presented his memo proposing to restructure the three positions of the Director of Pupil Services, the Director of Curriculum and Assessment, and the Director of Personnel and Administrative Services. He appreciated that he has had his first year to observe the district and its structure, and is confident that some changes would be beneficial. He hopes to seek a vote at the November 19<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting so he can begin advertising the Director of Pupil Services position.

Paul Murphy liked the proposal including having Erin Bettez and Community Education under “an umbrella”. Deanne O’Sullivan agrees but asked why the Assistant Superintendent positions were taken away. Dr. Brand was not sure, and said it could have been a certification issue. Diane Baum liked the proposal but although the memo says it is a budget neutral change with no budget increase, she questions whether that is true given that the candidates must be certified. Dr. Brand responded that many districts do not have Assistant Superintendents but they are still compensated at that level. This would be no change in FTEs and just a slight change in responsibilities.

Mike Coppelino was not in favor of the proposal and had shared his thoughts with Dr. Brand. He understands the need for an Assistant Superintendent to have a “second in command”, and disagreed with Dr. Mills about flattening the structure and eliminating the position when it happened. Mike has trouble with adding three Assistant Superintendents at once, when most districts have only one or two. If the reason for this is to attract better candidates, then he would suggest proceeding, but not with all three at once. Regarding the salary neutral claim, he believes it will end up costing more money.

Paul Murphy asked what the difference was between a Deputy Super and an Assistant Superintendent. He does not mind appointing three at once, and agreed with the importance of having a #2 position for times when the Superintendent is out. He suggested having 2 deputies and one assistant superintendent. Mike Coppelino clarified that a Deputy is a more senior title, as when George Frost held the position. Kristina Rychlik was in support of the proposal and said that it was important to note that Dr. Brand said these could all change over time. Maria Neyland agreed with Kristina and is in support. If approved, the policies will need to be reviewed and updated. Comments should be sent to Dr. Brand before the vote on November 19<sup>th</sup>.

18. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

19. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:45 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation.

(YES – Baum, Brolin, Coppelino, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik stated that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session solely to adjourn.

The ABRSC returned to Open Session at 10:05 p.m. and adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda



*Acton-Boxborough Regional School District*  
**Summer School Office**  
16 Charter Road  
Acton, MA 01720  
978-264-4700 [www.abschools.org](http://www.abschools.org)

**To:** Dr. Glenn Brand, Superintendent  
**From:** Maurin O'Grady, Director of AB Summer School  
**Date:** March 3, 2016  
**Re:** 2016 Summer School: Changes to Course Preview Practice

In the past, summer school has offered local students the opportunity to preview and review academic courses, advance in level or sequence in math courses, recover credit lost due to a failing grade, or for enrichment.

The large number of students previewing math and science courses during the summer prompted some inquiry and data collection during the 2015 summer session. Each student was given a brief survey on which to indicate the reason for enrollment in every course. A large number self-reported as previewers. Though the reasons for previewing courses vary, most students do so to gain an advantage for the upcoming academic year or to push through AB's math curriculum.

Conversation around the shift in policy has been ongoing and invested parties met formally in April and December of 2015.

Those involved in the conversations:  
Dr. Glenn Brand-Superintendent  
Deb Bookis-Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning  
Dr. JoAnn Campbell-ABRHS Principal  
Andrew Shen-RJ Grey Junior High School Principal  
Larry Dorey-ABRHS Associate Principal  
Bill Noeth-Math RDL  
Phil Stameris-Math BDL  
Maurin O'Grady-Director of AB Summer School

### **Change in Course Preview Practice**

In an effort to support the ABRSD's commitment to the emotional well-being of all students and staff, previewing courses is no longer an option at AB Summer School. This effort to mitigate some of the stress and pressure our students are experiencing has been a collective and informed decision by district and school leaders to further promote balance and healthy learning.

We have found that allowing students to preview courses:

- enhances stress for those whose ambition is to progress rapidly through core curriculum
- presents teaching challenges in classes during the academic year when some students have previewed the course and some have not
- creates inequity among the student body when some students have had the opportunity to preview courses while others have not

*Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.*

As in the past, students are encouraged to participate in the many summer course offerings for enrichment, review, course advancement, and/or retake for failure.

### **Communication**

*From Maurin, as the Director of AB Summer School, officially implementing the change*

- ABRHS Chatter and RJ Grey Chatter
- Summer school website homepage
- Summer school course descriptions (restrictions and/or prerequisites will be identified for each math course)

*From Deb and Glenn, indicating Central Office's support of the shift in policy*

- District site
- When necessary, referring families to the ABRSD "About Us" page to revisit our mission and values

*Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.*



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TO: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members  
FROM: Glenn A. Brand, Ed.D.  
RE: Assistant Superintendent for Student Services Recommendation  
DATE: 2/26/16

As you know, the District recently embarked on a nation-wide search to hire an *Assistant Superintendent for Student Services*. This search attracted an extensive number of candidate applications from both within and outside of the state representing a pool of highly qualified and experienced candidates.

After a thorough review of all of the feedback obtained throughout the process, coupled with consideration of the qualities, characteristics and experiences which our stakeholders have identified as essential for this senior leader of our district, I am pleased to share that ***Dr. Dawn Bentley has accepted my offer to become the District's first Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, effective July 1, 2016, contingent upon successful appointment by the School Committee.***

Dr. Bentley currently serves as the *Executive Director of Special Education for the Livingston Educational Service Agency* in Livingston County, Michigan where she has been in the role since 2010. Prior to that, she served as a Supervisor of Special Education and a Special Education teacher. She holds a Doctorate of Education degree as well as a Master of Arts in K-12 Educational Administration from Michigan State University and a Bachelor of Science in Secondary Education from Butler University.

Feedback gathered throughout the search process in consideration of Dr. Bentley's candidacy pointed to her extensive knowledge and experience in many of the related areas that fall under the department, her strong leadership in working with a variety of stakeholders in building strong and effective relationships, and her success in leading large and complex departments and the delivery of services. People involved in the search process described her as a leader who is creative, collaborative and a person dedicated to continuously learning and growing.

Under Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71 Section 59 the School Committee also holds the authority to establish and appoint positions of assistant superintendents as well as fix the compensation as per the following reference:

*Section 59. The school committee of a town not in a superintendency union or district shall employ a superintendent of schools and fix his compensation. A superintendent employed under this section or section sixty or sixty-three shall manage the system in a fashion consistent with state law and the policy determinations of that school committee. Upon the recommendation of the superintendent, the school committee may*

*also establish and appoint positions of assistant or associate superintendents, who shall report to the superintendent, and the school committee shall fix the compensation paid to such assistant or associate superintendents. The school committee shall approve or disapprove the hiring of said positions. Such approval by the school committee of the recommendation shall not be unreasonably withheld; provided, however, that upon the request of the superintendent the school committee shall provide an explanation of disapproval.*

The Committee approved the creation of the position of Assistant Superintendent for Student Services at their meeting on 11/19/15.

In terms of compensation, I have reviewed available data for related senior leadership positions across the comparable school districts. Not all salary data could be obtained but the information below was publically available for similar positions that oversee the departments of pupil or student services.

<b>District</b>	<b>District Population *</b>	<b>FY16 Salary</b>	<b>FY14 Pupil Services Budget **</b>
Concord-Carlisle	1290	\$152,169	\$3,571,105
Dedham	2747	\$122,000	\$3,207,610
Harvard	1137	\$112,363	\$1,379,206
Marblehead	3208	\$145,761	\$1,996,818
Westford	5143	\$120,000	\$6,250,312
Weston	2180	\$135,000	\$4,333,319
Nashoba	3428	\$120,277	\$4,864,191
Needham	5581	\$139,250	\$6,057,379
Wellesley	5075	\$136,680	\$6,152,233

\* Population DESE FY15 Data

\*\* Data obtained from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Website

Based upon a review of this available information, consideration of factors such as the size of district, the total operating budget for the departments, and the breadth of experience for Dr. Bentley, I am suggesting a salary for the 2016-17 school year of \$138,000. Additional compensation paid at a per diem amount in support of transition planning consistent with what the district might do for other such leadership positions will also be considered prior to her arrival in July.

It is my request that you accept the recommendation to appoint Dr. Dawn Bentley to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, effective July 1, 2016 and to set compensation at \$138,000.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal. I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to all who participated in this search process and took the time to provide me with feedback and reflections on the candidates.

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To: Acton-Boxborough School Committee Members  
From: Glenn Brand  
Re: 2016 Existing Conditions Study Capital Improvement Plan  
Date: February 26, 2016

Please find attached a copy of the *Capital Improvement Plan* (C.I.P.) that was completed by the firm Dore & Whittier as part of the Existing Conditions Study recently completed for the District. As the Committee has not yet formally had the opportunity to review this Plan, I wanted to ensure that you had the chance to do so.

It is important to note that the C.I.P. is in "draft" form as some items will be added, some deleted and some items listed have been completed. The C.I.P. represents the overall identified needs found at the time of the study as of the summer and early fall of 2015 and, therefore, cannot be considered a "static" document.

It should also be pointed out that some items listed are preventive maintenance tasks and are completed annually. In addition, some are special projects that can be completed by Facilities Department staff, which in turn will greatly reduce the cost of identified items as indicated due to in-house labor.

This plan will serve as a road map for the Administration and School Committee as we build future capital improvement priority lists.

The C.I.P. will be posted on the District's website and will be updated regularly. Additional information about the District's Capital and Space Planning can be found at <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>.

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TO: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members  
FROM: Glenn A. Brand  
DATE: March 1, 2016  
RE: Submitting a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA)

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update regarding the information that the Administration has learned relative to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) process.

On 2/24/16, Ms. Jeannotte, Director of Finance and Mr. Head, Director of Facilities and I held a conference call with Ms. Diane Sullivan, Director of Program Management with MSBA. The purpose of our call was to gain information related to the MSBA Statement of Interest (SOI) process. As you know, the MSBA is currently open to accepting "core" SOI submittals from interested communities until April 8, 2016. The "core" program centers around school building renovation and construction, as opposed to the replacement of building envelope issues such as roof and window replacements.

The District can submit multiple core SOI documents that would serve to place on record with the MSBA the needs of our particular schools as documented through our recent Existing Conditions Study completed by Dore and Whittier. Entering into the SOI process during this open enrollment period would target our core deficiencies around some of our aging elementary schools.

After submitting our SOI, the District would still complete Phase II of our Capital Study by early fall of 2016. In January 2017, we would learn whether or not the District is accepted into the MSBA project pipeline. If we are invited and we accept, the District would have a 270 day period to accomplish a number of specific tasks laid out by the MSBA, including more formal engagement and support from our respective towns.

Based on what we have learned about the MSBA process, **it is my recommendation that the District begin to pursue a possible future partnership with MSBA and put forth three SOIs - one for the Douglas Elementary School, one for the Gates Elementary School and one for the Conant Elementary School. In order to comply with the SOI process, we**

**would have to identify one priority project which, at this time, would be the Douglas School.**

It is abundantly clear that our respective facility needs far outweigh our future ability, through the financial support of our two towns, to completely address. Based on the Phase I Existing Conditions Analysis, we know that our core infrastructure deficiencies are centered around three of our aging elementary schools. We would focus our SOI filings on these facilities and allow our Master Planning Process to play out with the plan of updating and, if necessary, re-prioritizing our SOI submittal in the fall. Most importantly, filing the SOI at this time does not commit the District to anything, nor does it change the lens from which the MSBA sees the District moving forward if we decide to pull any SOI submittals in the future.

At this point, the immediate need of the Committee is to vote to authorize the District to submit our SOI filings to the MSBA, as proposed, by April 8, 2016.

**Timeline:**

April 8, 2016	Deadline to submit SOI for Core Project(s) to MSBA
March - October, 2016	Completion of Phase II Capital Study by Dore & Whittier
April - December, 2016	MSBA Review of Submitted Core SOI's
January 2017	MSBA Invites Selected Core SOI Applicants
January - September, 2017	Eligibility Period: Obtain Appropriation for Feasibility Study, Bid and Select Designer

More information may be found at <http://www.massschoolbuildings.org/>

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TO: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members  
FROM: Glenn A. Brand  
DATE: 3/1/16  
RE: ABRSD Capital Study: Phase II District –Wide Educational Vision Study

As discussed at the 2/4/16 School Committee meeting, Phase II of our Capital Study Process has now begun with the creation of our Working Group and Visioning Team.

- **Working Group**  
(12 members, meet every two weeks)
  - Oversees and manages Phase II of the Study
  - Provides feedback to consultants about the outcomes of the visioning workshops and about recommendations
  - ABRSC members: Amy Krishnamurthy and Maya Minkin
  
- **Visioning Team**  
(Approximately 78 members, to meet from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. on March 18, April 28 and September 15)
  - Provides insight and feedback to consultants for development of a long-term “vision” for educational space, building usage, and design
  - Goal is to develop recommendations to inform the building, renovation, and repair of school buildings to provide well-equipped, modern learning spaces in the decades to come
  - ABRSC members: *pending*

As outlined in my memo dated 1/27/16, I am seeking:

- 2 School Committee members from the town of Acton and
- 1 School Committee member from the town of Boxborough

Participation would be contingent upon a commitment to attend all three of the workshops noted above.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important community commitment.



# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

# Master Plan

# Buildings and Infrastructure

ABRSD is developing a Master Plan for buildings and infrastructure that will serve as a guide for repairs and renovations to our existing buildings, and for any possible new construction in the future. We have completed the first phase of this plan, an assessment of buildings and sites throughout the school district.

We are now beginning the creation of a long-term “vision” for educational spaces, building usage, and design. An important part of this process will be a series of three “Visioning” workshops.

We are **seeking several Acton and Boxborough citizens**, outside of our school community, who are interested and able to participate in these three workshops. Meetings will be held from **9:00am – 3:00pm** on the following dates:

- Friday, March 18
- Thursday, April 28
- Thursday, September 15

To learn more, go to the “About Us” page on the school district website, and click on “School Capital and Space Planning” (<http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>).

To be considered for participation, please contact **Karen Coll** at [kcoll@abschools.org](mailto:kcoll@abschools.org), or by phone at 978-264-3311, by **Wednesday, March 9, 2016**.

TO: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members  
FROM: Michael Coppolino  
DATE: 3/1/16  
RE: Proposal to Research Comparative Communities' Expenses

At the School Committee meeting on 2/4/16, I agreed to bring a proposal to the Committee for your consideration regarding the gathering and analysis of expense data from comparative communities, in an effort to see what we might learn that is working, or not working, for these school districts.

The following people have agreed to work with me on this project, if it is approved:

- Boxborough Finance Committee: Gary Kushner and Amy Burke;
- Acton Finance Committee: Doug Tindal;
- Community Reps: Mary Ann Ashton and Bill Guthlein

Rather than a detailed line by line analysis of expenses, we propose to do a higher level comparison of major budget drivers such as staffing, health insurance, Special Education, etc.

Our initial plan was to choose three Districts that spend more, as well as three that spend less per student than Acton-Boxborough. At this point rather than select only a few towns, we would like to survey all seventeen Districts. If that effort proves too time-consuming, we will contact a subset, so we would like to know from the Committee which they feel "must be included". We are open to suggestions and group consensus as to which they should be, e.g. Needham, Harvard, Sudbury/Lincoln-Sudbury and Belmont, Winchester, Westford (see attached PDF).

With the School Committee's approval, we hope to meet within the next two weeks to determine which expense categories and Departments/Organizational Levels we'd like to gather data for, come up with a template to assure consistency of data gathering, and get started!



**Comparable Communities**  
Effective 10/1/2015

**Towns**

Acton  
Belmont  
Concord  
Dedham  
Harvard  
Hingham  
Marblehead  
Milton  
Sudbury  
Westford  
Weston  
Wilmington  
Winchester

**School Districts**

Acton-Boxborough  
Belmont  
Concord/Concord-Carlisle  
Dedham  
Harvard  
Hingham  
Marblehead  
Milton  
Sudbury/Lincoln-Sudbury  
Westford  
Weston  
Wilmington  
Winchester  
Nashoba  
Needham  
Reading  
Wachusett  
Wellesley

**Comparable Communities  
High Needs Student Comparisons  
2015-2016**

*Sorted by % of Students with Disabilities*

DISTRICT	Enrollment	First Language Not English		English Language Learner		Students With Disabilities		High Needs		Economically Disadvantaged	
		#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Dedham	2747	350	12.7	147	5.4	539	19.3	1,001	35.8	490	17.8
Marblehead	3208	183	5.7	126	3.9	593	18.4	846	26.2	276	8.6
Westwood	3151	145	4.6	30	1	565	17.8	720	22.7	152	4.8
Wilmington	3373	68	2	34	1	601	17.5	862	25	310	9.2
Reading	4392	88	2	46	1	772	17.4	1,031	23.2	292	6.6
Concord/Concord Carlisle	3388	189	5.6	53	1.6	582	17.2	567	16.7	160	4.7
Sudbury/Lincoln Sudbury	4424	129	2.9	29	0.7	751	17.0	946	21.4	218	4.9
<b>Acton-Boxborough</b>	<b>5622</b>	<b>878</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>968</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>1,419</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Weston	2180	213	9.8	84	3.9	362	16.4	532	24.1	90	4.1
Winchester	4591	643	14	180	3.9	724	15.6	1,098	23.7	205	4.5
Needham	5581	494	8.9	110	2	877	15.5	1,165	20.6	267	4.8
Wellesley	5075	317	6.2	100	2	791	15.4	1,104	21.5	271	5.3
Milton	4094	311	7.6	72	1.8	613	14.8	942	22.7	343	8.4
Nashoba	3428	97	2.8	36	1.1	477	13.8	658	19	199	5.8
Westford	5143	696	13.5	57	1.1	688	13.3	948	18.3	228	4.4
Wachusett	7343	265	3.6	121	1.6	979	13.2	1,564	21.1	594	8.1
Harvard	1137	50	4.4	12	1.1	149	12.9	205	17.7	47	4.1
Hingham	4327	43	1	8	0.2	560	12.8	731	16.7	213	4.9
Belmont	4362	882	20.2	257	5.9	444	10.0	998	22.4	322	7.4
<b>Average of Comparable Communities</b>	<b>4082</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>15.5</b>	<b>912</b>	<b>22.3</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>6.5</b>
State Totals and Averages	29172	181,185	19	85,762	9	165,560	17.2	419,764	43.5	260,998	27.4

Comparable Communities  
DESE Data Comparisons

2014-2015

School District	Student Enrollment 2014-15	Per Pupil Expenditures*	Student Teacher Ratios	MCAS CPI All Students	MCAS CPI High Needs	SAT (Combined Math, Reading, Writing)
Weston	2,253	\$21,652	11.5	93	78	1829
Concord/Concord-Carlisle	3,369	\$17,919	13.2	92	65	1751
Wellesley	5,067	\$17,108	13.4	99	74	1818
Dedham	2,776	\$16,906	12.0	55	51	1473
Sudbury/Lincoln-Sudbury	4,491	\$15,637	13.4	72	63	1795
Harvard	1,143	\$15,523	12.9	95	79	1778
Needham	5,519	\$15,020	14.5	88	72	1764
Wilmington	3,448	\$14,664	12.7	60	55	1559
<b>Acton-Boxborough</b>	<b>5,658</b>	<b>\$14,075</b>	<b>15.6</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1854</b>
Nashoba	3,475	\$13,649	14.0	79	67	1680
Milton	4,011	\$13,499	14.0	67	46	1582
Marblehead	3,245	\$13,218	12.6	78	70	1702
Belmont	4,283	\$12,799	17.2	100	75	1788
Winchester	4,505	\$12,579	13.5	97	85	1789
Westford	5,139	\$12,529	14.3	100	78	1746
Reading	4,407	\$11,807	14.1	61	49	1662
Hingham	4,292	\$11,676	15.1	90	66	1726
Wachusett	7,346	\$11,131	16.1	70	54	1596

**Average of All Comparables**

**4,135**

**\$14,522**

**13.9**

**83**

**67**

**1716**

State Average

\$14,518

13.3

51

43

1526

\*All Data is reported from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) for 2014-2015 except for Per Pupil Expenditures which is 2013-2014 (the most recent available data).

CPI is Composite Performance Index

MEMO

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) Members

From: Kristina Rychlik, Chairwoman, ABRSC

RE: Official Response to Acton Citizen's email of 2/4/16

Date: February 26, 2016

~~~~~

As you will recall from our February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, the ABRSC has been asked the following question by Acton Citizen Scott Smyers:

***What is the School Committee's official response to the voices and concerns of parents of Acton (who passed the resolution AGAINST more testing and return to pre-2011 standards) AND the MTA's incredibly strong stance promoting opting out/refusing any tests AND the current action at the State House?***

I watched the video footage of our meeting and have done a bit of research. To that end, I propose this draft memo to be edited as required to serve as our official response and welcome your feedback. I have split his request into individual questions:

***1. What is the School Committee's official response to the voices and concerns of parents of Acton (who passed the resolution AGAINST more testing and return to pre-2011 standards)?***

We have made our official response quite clear, through our voted Statement distributed at the Acton Special Town Meeting (STM) on 11/10/15<sup>1</sup>. In addition, this statement and our position was explained by my oral presentation at that STM<sup>2</sup>. Lastly, at the School Committee meeting immediately following STM on 11/19/15, we again discussed this issue in light of the events of the prior week<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Statement is posted in SC packet along with this memo.

<sup>2</sup> K Rychlik STM prepared comments are posted in SC packet along with this memo.

<sup>3</sup> See draft minutes excerpt posted in SC packet along with this memo.

**2. What is the School Committee's official response to the MTA's incredibly strong stance promoting opting out/refusing any tests?**

To address this request, I would ask that we support the district's position on this matter as articulated in the attached documents (MCAS 2016 Statement and Final District Statement on Standardized Testing<sup>4</sup>).

In addition, I would like to share some information from the MASC on the matter, of which I believe we should all be aware:

"With ESSA as well as with NCLB, districts with lower than 95% testing participation may have sanctions imposed on them. Those sanctions now will include:

- Lowering a school's ranking, including designating a school as high risk, subject to additional sanctions.
- A student may be declared "not proficient."
- A district may face financial sanctions by the federal government including limits on federal funding or restrictions on how funding may be used.
- State financial aid may be withheld, although the legal basis of this is not clearly established.<sup>5</sup>"

**3. What is the School Committee's official response to the current action at the State House?**

At our February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting, the following ideas/comments were shared addressing this question:

'I am wary of "mission creep and worried that MCAS will end up looking like PARCC.'

'It now appears difficult to get involved in the development of MCAS 2.0 and that is concerning.'

'I do think we over test, and politicizing it brings even more focus on the issue/'

'More focus on testing is frustrating.'

'We need to focus on our budget and Town Meetings now, creating a statement is not at the top of my list but this is an important conversation.'

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<sup>4</sup> These statements are posted in the SC packet along with this memo.

<sup>5</sup> MASC Bulletin, January 2016, v.50 n.1

'I'm concerned about over testing and potential time limits in testing due to concerns about student stress.'

'We voted to do MCAS, but not MCAS with PARCC-like questions.'

'There is only so much we can do, we need to work with the state on this and we are.'

In my opinion these comments demonstrate our understanding of the issue, and our concerns moving forward. However, an official statement does not seem to naturally flow from these comments, nor do I feel that an official statement regarding the state is appropriate at this time.

***Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Statement***

Regarding Citizens' Petition at Acton Special Town Meeting on 11/10/15  
(11/5/15)

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee has been asked to comment on the Citizens' Petition being brought to the town of Acton as a non-binding resolution at a Special Town Meeting planned for November 10<sup>th</sup>.

While the Committee appreciates the interest, concern and involvement of parents and community members in support of this petition, we are unfortunately unable to support this petition as written for a number of very specific and valid reasons. We do realize that although it must seem ironic, given our committee's stance against PARCC as it has evolved, we still must oppose this Citizens' Petition as written.

First, we as a board and district have very specific concerns about the accuracy of numerous claims within this petition<sup>i</sup>. In addition, we disagree with the petitioners' view of the financial impact of this petition<sup>ii</sup>. Those concerns are specifically detailed following this statement.

Secondly, we are concerned about the process and approach being employed by the proponents. As a committee we have spent a great deal of time in recent years on the subject of standardized testing and have taken the time on numerous occasions to make our position known to our legislators and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Those are activities we feel have been thoughtfully considered by members of both communities and were designed to influence those in a position to affect real change. When we advocate for change, we make a deliberate effort to speak as one region. In this case, when we as a regional district are asked to accept a non-binding resolution recommended by constituents from only one of our towns, we believe there is a perceived loss of cohesion in the message any action may send.

The BESE is set to vote on the choice of MCAS or PARCC on November 17<sup>th</sup>; in preparation for that vote, we as Committee members attended public forums, met with legislators and wrote letters summarizing a great deal of thought and discussion. While the results of this Special Town Meeting vote may make it to those decision-makers in advance of November 17<sup>th</sup>, we feel that the petition as written is off message from that particular vote.

Lastly, as a regional district shared with our neighboring town of Boxborough, we find ourselves in the uncomfortable position of having been asked to take direction from members of only one of our towns that would impact all of our students. We have been told by one of the petitioners that there have been no similar efforts made in the town of Boxborough.

1. Para 1: Common Core (CC) and PARCC are lumped together here but we as a district and committee have separated those issues and feel differently about each.
2. Para 1: We are currently using 2006 Science/Technology/Engineering (STE) Frameworks that are not part of Common Core State Standards (CCSS). The new MA STE framework draft is due for public comment this fall, and these frameworks are based on the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), which are not part of the CCSS. We are currently using the 2003 History and Social Science Framework, also not part of CCSS. CCSS refer to just ELA and Math.
3. Para 3: We have been using CCSS since 2011, the same year the petition cites our district as being consistently highly rated.
4. Para 4: CCSS were adopted in a public process, for which the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released draft standards for public comment in May 2010.
5. Para 5: We control our curriculum on the local level, and we follow federal law and state regulations regarding testing.
6. #2: We are not yet using PARCC and the state will vote Nov. 17 to choose PARCC or MCAS. The standards the District uses and how they are referenced incorrectly has been mentioned.
7. #3 MCAS testing already exceeds this number of testing days; for example, 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA is 2 days for 3 sessions of reading and one of writing, 10<sup>th</sup> grade math is two days for two different sessions, and STE is 2 days for 2 different sessions. 7 days total. In addition, item three refers to standardized testing where in actuality the petitioners likely mean high-stakes standardized testing. As written, this limits the vast majority of testing that happens in schools. A "standardized test" is any test where students answer the same questions and it is scored in a standard way to compare results.
8. #4 It is unclear what is meant by "the use of any state or federal educational programs" and testing is governed by federal law and state regulations not the School Committee (SC). It is the SC job to develop the budget, develop policy and oversee the Superintendent.
9. #5 We as a district receive a great deal of money from various grants such as Title III for ELL students, Title I for improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, and other Entitlement grants. Those provide money to directly serve our students. This is funding that we cannot do without.
10. Summary: The Common Core State Standards effort was led by the National Governors' Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, all of whom are state leaders.
11. The last statement in the second summary paragraph does not include standards or assessment...and to be clear, the terms standards and curriculum are not synonymous. Curriculum is defined as a combination of knowing the standards, knowing the available materials, knowing your students, knowing the assessment practices and having a deep knowledge of



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instructional practices. Curriculum is not something you could buy off the shelf or have foisted upon you. We control our curriculum locally here at Acton-Boxborough.

<sup>ii</sup> Lastly, the authors of the petition were at a recent Acton Finance Committee meeting, speaking to the financial impact of their petition. The petitioners cited four reasons to support their position:

1. Too much technology
2. Privacy concerns
3. Loss of local control
4. Expense

Regarding these points:

1. We have taken a very slow organic approach to technology overall in our district, both to manage the costs and maximize impact. 2. We believe concerns about privacy and security of student test data would be best addressed with the BESE and DESE. 3. As previously explained, we have control over what matters...our curriculum. 4. We currently are well prepared to implement a standardized computerized assessment should we need to, and would not need to purchase additional hardware for such purposes.

Comments by ABRSC Chairwoman, Kristina Rychlik, at Acton Special Town Meeting, 11/10/15

Good evening. My name is Kristina Rychlik and I am the Chairwoman of the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee. I would like to take just a few minutes to comment on Warrant Article #1. When the Citizens' Petition as presented in the warrant was final, our Finance Committee and Board of Selectman asked for our opinion. The school committee and administration reviewed the petition in detail, discussed it at a number of public meetings and developed a statement that we voted to accept on October 27<sup>th</sup>. Copies of that statement have been provided for your information, and it has been posted on the district website as well.

To highlight: While the Committee appreciates the interest, concern and involvement of parents and community members in support of this petition, we are unfortunately unable to support this petition as written for a number of reasons.

First, we as a board and district have very specific concerns about the accuracy of numerous claims within this petition. In addition, we disagree with the petitioners' view of the financial impact of this petition. Those concerns are detailed in the printed statement.

Secondly, we are concerned about the process and approach with this petition. As a committee we have spent a great deal of time in recent years on the subject of standardized testing and have taken the time on numerous occasions to make our position known to our legislators and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). Our administration worked to develop a district position statement on standardized testing (posted in the packet from our Nov. 5<sup>th</sup> SC meeting), and in a letter dated October 22<sup>nd</sup>, the school committee urged Mr. Paul Sagan, the Chair of BESE, to vote against the state-wide implementation of the PARCC exam on November 17<sup>th</sup>. We first heard of this petition from the Acton Town Manager; the petitioners did not contact the district or school committee directly regarding this petition, although they have been responsive to my requests this fall.

Lastly, as a regional district shared with our neighboring town of Boxborough, we find ourselves in the uncomfortable position of having been asked to take direction from members of only one of our towns that would impact all of our students. We were told by one of the petitioners at our October 15<sup>th</sup> meeting that there had been no similar efforts made in the town of Boxborough, though I believe that may have changed.

However, the Warrant Article that the school committee responded to is no longer being presented. I received draft language for the new article during our SC meeting last Thursday night, *but still have not received a final version*. Those of you familiar with the requirements of operating within the Open Meeting Law will understand that this timing has not allowed for the school committee to review, discuss or respond to this new warrant article.

Without having taken the time for an in-depth discussion, a cursory review of the two articles (*comparing what is printed in the warrant with the draft language I was sent last Thursday*) shows that some of our initial concerns have been addressed and some remain. The school committee has not taken a position on the Citizens' Petition as revised.

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**Excerpt from DRAFT Minutes of ABRSC Meeting on 11/19/15:**

- 14. Acton Special Town Meeting re Citizens' Petition (11/10/15) Report – Kristina Rychlik**
- 14.1 Amended Article, distributed at Town Meeting
- 14.2 Final ABRSC Statement
- 14.3 Warrant found at <http://www.acton-ma.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/7371>

Acton Town Meeting voted in favor (104-88) of the Citizens' Petition. Kristina Rychlik asked the Committee to consider what, if anything, this means for the committee/district/administration. She summarized that a number of things were learned as this process evolved: there is some sentiment against over testing, there is some sentiment against government involvement in education, and there is some sentiment concerned with data privacy. The Committee agreed that all should try to be sensitive to those sentiments moving forward. There are, however, a number of issues that continue to be misunderstood, particularly around Common Core. One member asked, "Does the town really know that they voted to ask you to do something illegal?" It was the sense of the Committee that given that the District will not participate in PARCC testing, and Common Core is a reality, they could agree to disagree with the Citizens' Petition and Special Town Meeting decision.

EMAIL from Deborah Bookis to ABRSD Principals on 2/12/16 regarding MCAS participation for Spring 2016:

Thank you for your inquiry. The January 29, 2016 MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Commissioner's Weekly Update addressed this issue. We agree with this position and so include it below for your reference, with our additional comments at the end.

*As the spring assessment administration nears, please keep in mind that participation in statewide assessments is required of all students enrolled in public schools in the relevant grade levels. The state assessments provide important feedback to families, teachers, administrators, and state policymakers as to where schools are succeeding and where schools and districts need to enhance their efforts.*

*In some instances, a student may refuse to take a test, either of his/her own volition or at the direction of a parent. In these cases, we ask principals to encourage parents to rethink their refusal and remind them that the assessments are a valuable gauge of their student's and school's progress. We ask principals and test proctors to handle refusals with sensitivity. Students should not be pressured to take the test, nor should they be punished for not taking the test. They may sit quietly and read in the testing room, but if they are distracting others in the class who are taking the test, it would be appropriate to have them move to another location in the school with adult supervision. There is no requirement to provide formal or informal instruction to these students during the test period; having them do homework or read a book is sufficient, provided that the material is separate from the content being assessed in the testing room.*

There is no "opportunity to opt out"; students are required to take the State assessment. However, DESE recognizes that there may be some students who refuse to take the test. Please note that "alternate instruction" is not provided. Additionally, MA law requires all students in grade ten or later, at least through the class of 2019, to take MCAS tests to meet the Competency Determination requirement for a diploma.

# **Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**

**Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing**  
**September 2015**  
**Revised October 2015**

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# **ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing**

## **September 2015**

Revised October 2015

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this ABRSD statement is to state clearly and communicate directly to our constituent groups our position on and use of standardized testing. To support our statement, we reference and use as context for discussion several recent, relevant resources, including the following:

The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) *Conditions and Considerations for a New Generation of Student Assessment in Massachusetts* (2014) focuses on the characteristics, frequency and timing, necessary conditions, and the logistics and roll out for a new system of assessment, whether that is PARCC or the next generation of MCAS.

The *Resolution Calling for a Moratorium on High-Stakes Standardized Tests* (2015) signed by school committees of some surrounding districts, Worcester, Sudbury, Arlington, and Hampshire Regional, calls for a moratorium on high-stakes standardized tests so that we (teachers, parents, community) can work together to develop assessment systems.

The Vermont State Board of Education *Statement and Resolution on Assessment and Accountability* (2014) includes the many facets and tools needed to evaluate students, schools and districts, and emphasizes the proper role of standardized testing, including eight specific guiding principles.

This statement is divided into three sections in order to:

- Provide the context for our statement
- Address the limits of standardized test scores
- Set forth guidelines to support the appropriate use of standardized testing in our district

# **ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing**

## **September 2015**

Revised October 2015

### **Our Mission as the Context for a District Statement on Testing**

Our mission statement, which makes clear our goal to “prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society” demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that all students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions (inquisitive, engaged, joyful and reflective) that they will need for life after graduation. It also expresses our acknowledgement of and commitment to a wide range of abilities, student demonstrations of their abilities, and the multiple domains in which continuous improvement is taught and assessed: “literacy, mathematics, scientific inquiry and knowledge, citizenship, physical and health education and wellness, artistic expression, and transferable 21<sup>st</sup> century skills” (Vermont 1).

Our educators need to be able to “focus on a broad range of learning experiences that promote the innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication, critical thinking and deep subject matter knowledge that will allow our students to thrive in a democracy and an increasingly global society”(Resolution 1). In order to achieve our mission statement, “educators need to make use of diverse indicators of student learning and strengths if they are to comprehensively assess student progress and adjust their practice to continuously improve learning” (Vermont 1).

“Uniform, standardized tests, administered across all schools, can be a critical tool for schools’ and districts’ improvement efforts” (Vermont 1). They can provide a stable external measure by which we can analyze trends and patterns to evaluate our efforts to improve schools and learning over time. They can also tell us “how students are doing in a very limited set of narrowly defined subjects, as measured at a given time” (1).

What standardized tests cannot do is tell us how to help students do even better in the future “nor can they adequately capture the strengths of all children, nor the growth that can be ascribed to individual teachers” (Vermont 1). Current research (see below) makes this abundantly clear. We believe that the trend to ascribe weight to these measures is not an appropriate direction, thus we will conclude this statement with proposed guidelines for the appropriate use of standardized tests in our district.

### **Research on Uses of Standardized Testing**

*Reliability and Validity of Inferences About Teachers Based on Student Test Scores by Edward H. Haertel, March 22, 2013*

*Review of Learning About Teaching by Jesse Rothstein, January 2011*



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*The Legal Consequences of Mandating High Stakes Decisions Based on Low Quality Information: Teacher Evaluation in the Race-to-the-Top Era* by Baker, Oluwole and Green, January 28, 2013

*Instructional Alignment as a Measure of Teaching Quality* by Morgan Polikoff and Andrew Porter, May 2014

Morgan Polikoff discusses Instructional Alignment as a Measure of Teacher Quality

*Why I Am No Longer Comfortable in the Field of Educational Measurement* by Gene Glass

## **The Limits of Test Scores and Questions of Validity**

Even rising scores may not be evidence that students are learning more than in the past (Vermont 1). “At best, a standardized test is an incomplete picture of student learning; without additional measures, a single test is inadequate to capture a year’s worth of learning and growth” (1) And yet, in addition to graduation and test participation rates, standardized test results are the measure by which schools and districts are held accountable. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education wisely stated that multiple measures with a weight on professional judgment should be used in the new educator evaluation system (MA Department 3). The question remains as to why the same was not afforded to schools and districts when determining their accountability ratings.

Additionally, these tests are presently being used for too many distinct purposes: assessing student learning, evaluating educators (though how it applies to the evaluation process differs among states), and determining school and district accountability. As the American Psychological Association states:

(N)o test is valid for all purposes. Indeed, tests vary in their intended uses and in their ability to provide meaningful assessments of student learning. Therefore, while the goal of using large-scale testing to measure and improve student and school system performance is laudable, it is also critical that such tests are sound, are scored properly, and are used appropriately.  
(American Educ. Res. Assoc. introduction)

Any new, standardized test should also only be administered once the students in that specific grade level have been instructed in the new standards associated with the test in the years leading up to the test. A “phase-in” approach is one that would be beneficial both to districts and the state as feedback could then be used to make modifications for not only the next grade, but for the existing test as well. Following these guidelines, given that kindergarten students in the 2011-12 were the first to receive instruction with the new standards, a new competency determination

# ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing

## September 2015

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graduation requirement test should not be implemented until 2022 when that same cohort of students is in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. Furthermore, The Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents stated in their *Conditions and Considerations for a New Generation of Student Assessment in Massachusetts Position Paper* that “during the initial years of implementation . . . the proposed results will not be used to calculate accountability rating, rather they should be regarded as pilot results. It is both unfair and counterproductive to publicize test results when the implementation issues have not been resolved . . . to publish results prematurely will cause children to feel like failures because they will have been tested on content or in a manner in which they have not had practice” (MA Assoc. 6).

Learning is a cumulative process. We believe that our graduation rates and student post secondary school plans are a result of all the learning that takes place, in and out of the classroom, during a student’s time at the ABRSD. “While the federal government continues to require the use of subjectively determined cut-off scores, employing such metrics lacks scientific foundation” (Vermont 3). “There is no single point on a testing scale that has proven accurate in measuring the success of a school or in measuring the talents of an individual. Claims to the contrary are technically indefensible, and their application would be unethical. The use of cut-off scores reports findings only at one point on a statistical distribution.” (3) The most recent results of the Smarter Balance Mathematics Test in Connecticut, another high scoring state on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), shows what can happen when a new test is implemented too soon and/or when cut scores are subjective as 63.9% of all eleventh graders failed the test in the spring of 2015 (Megan).

### **Research on Cut Scores**

*A Primer on Setting Cut Scores on Tests of Educational Achievement* by Michael Zieky & Marianne Perie

*NAEP’s Odd Definition of Proficiency*, by James Harvey

*Evaluation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress* by Buckendahl, Davis and Plake, 2009

Furthermore, “the targets established for proficiency are subjectively determined” (Vermont 3). In July 2006, Andrew Rotherham stated in *Making the Cut: How States Set Passing Scores on Standardized Tests*:

On a technical level, states set cut scores along one of two dimensions: The characteristics of the test items or the characteristics of the test takers. It is essential to understand that either way is an inescapably subjective process. Just as academic standards are ultimately the result of professional judgment

# **ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing**

## **September 2015**

Revised October 2015

rather than absolute truth, there is no “right” way to set cut scores, and different methods have various strengths and weaknesses. (3-4)

“Interpretations based on ‘percent proficiency’ also lack predictive validity. Modest changes to cut scores could dramatically affect the percent of students who meet the target. Whether a cut score is set high or low arbitrarily changes the size of the proficiency gap independent of students’ learning. Thus the results can be misleading” (Vermont 3-4).

### **Proposed Guidelines**

Given this context and our roles as educational leaders in the ABRSD, we propose the following guidelines as to the appropriate use of standardized tests in our district.

1. Standardized tests will only be used in concert with a diverse set of measures to capture how well our students are doing at a given time, including but not limited to: educator developed assessments, educator observations and notes, student self-assessments, student work, performances, presentations, and multimedia productions.
2. Standardized test results will not be given any weight over other indicators of student learning.
3. Standardized test results can be used to analyze trends and patterns to evaluate our efforts to improve schools and student learning over time.
4. Percent proficiency targets will not guide our work with students; rather student raw and scaled scores will be analyzed to determine if any supports or instructional changes are needed.
5. While we are currently required by the DESE to incorporate SGP data as part of determining some\* educators' student impact ratings, we do not intend to focus on that data point in our work with teachers and their professional growth or, determining school improvement priorities or goals.

\* Classroom teachers in grades 4-6, mathematics and English teachers in grades 7 and 8 according to DESE educator evaluation regulations

**ABRSD Administrative Statement on Standardized Testing**  
**September 2015**  
Revised October 2015

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Vermont State Board of Education. "Statement and Resolution on Assessment and Accountability." VT: 2014.



Beth Petr &lt;bpetr@abschools.org&gt;

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## Non-binding Resolution Official Response

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Scott Smyers <sdsmyers@gmail.com>  
To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 9:39 AM

Dear School Committee,

As you are aware, soon after the town of Acton voted against any increase in High Stakes Standardized Testing and a return to pre-2011 state standards (November 2015), the DESE was supposed to vote on either MCAS or PARCC. They did neither and voted for a third option (previously undisclosed to the public): MCAS 2.0. Unfortunately, MCAS 2.0 does not exist, so their approval of a fictitious test further undermines their credibility with parents, teachers and students. It is an obvious political deflection to deny parents any ability to evaluate the details of the testing and we are left with our imaginations to explore the possibilities. Furthermore, MCAS has already been corrupted by PARCC, so we are aware it is not what it used to be.

The MA Teachers Association (MTA) is fully behind allowing students to opt out (refuse) high stakes standardized testing.

[http://www.massteacher.org/issues\\_and\\_action/high\\_stakes\\_testing.aspx](http://www.massteacher.org/issues_and_action/high_stakes_testing.aspx)

In light of the current context of testing, what is the School Committees official response to the voices and concerns of parents of Acton (who passed the resolution AGAINST more testing and return to pre-2011 standards) AND the MTA's incredibly strong stance promoting opting out/refusing any tests.

Furthermore, the state house is currently considering an important bill with the same objectives.

<https://www.votervoice.net/RMC/campaigns/44167/respond>

I was pleased that AB stood up against PARCC, but now that we know the DESE's corruption plans on repackaging PARCC into MCAS and MCAS 2.0 we need to make a stand against any high stakes standardized testing. One individual at a time.

I encourage you all to make it easy for students to refuse MCAS to avoid unnecessary stress AND send a message to the local administrators and state officials who have the authority to do something about this. The DESE has successfully removed all checks and balances and shoved our local authority to the side, therefore left us no other options. Our administrators and School Committee have been either supportive of this gradual transition or far too timid in their resistance.

Thank you for your consideration.

Scott Smyers  
382 Central St.  
Acton



Beth Petr <bpetr@abschools.org>

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## staying focused, my direct question

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Scott Smyers <sdsmyers@gmail.com>

Thu, Feb 4, 2016 at 9:44 AM

To: AB School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

To follow up on my long-winded email message, let me focus on my simple question embedded in the 3rd paragraph. I noticed I forgot the question mark. I would like a brief answer to this question given the context of my message.

What is the School Committee's official response to the voices and concerns of parents of Acton (who passed the resolution AGAINST more testing and return to pre-2011 standards) AND the MTA's incredibly strong stance promoting opting out/refusing any tests AND the current action at the State House?

Thank you.

Scott Smyers

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS - DRAFT**

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District seeks to provide a safe and productive workplace and educational environment for its employees and students. In accordance with the Code of Massachusetts Regulations (603 CMR 46), the regulation governing the use of physical restraint of students, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District seeks to ensure that methods of restraints used with any student will adhere to these regulations. **PHYSICAL RESTRAINT SHALL ONLY BE USED IN AN EMERGENCY AS A LAST RESORT AFTER OTHER METHODS HAVE FAILED OR BEEN DEEMED INAPPROPRIATE, AND WITH EXTREME CAUTION.**

School personnel shall use physical restraint with two goals in mind:

1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious physical harm, and
2. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of physical restraint.

The following definitions of forms of restraint are included in 603 CMR 46.02:

1. Physical Restraint: Direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement.
2. Extended Restraint: A physical restraint lasting longer than 20 minutes.
3. Physical Escort: Not a restraint: temporary touching or holding a student (hand, arm, wrist, shoulder, back) without the use of force for the purpose of redirecting the student.
4. Time-out: Behavioral support strategy in which a student is temporarily removed from the learning activity or classroom either by choice or adult direction for the purpose of calming.

**Prohibitions:**

- Mechanical, medicinal, and seclusion restraints shall be prohibited in public education programs
- Prone restraint shall be prohibited in public programs except on an individual basis as follows:
  - When a student has a documented history of self-injurious behavior or injures other staff or students
  - When all other forms of physical restraint have failed
  - When there are no medical contradictions documented by a licensed physician
  - When there is psychological or behavioral justification for use of a prone restraint and no contradictions as documented by a licensed mental health professional
  - When the program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03 (1)(b) and approved in writing by the principal

- When the program has documented 603 CMR 46.03 (1)(b) in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation
- Physical restraint is prohibited as a means of punishment, or as a response to destruction of property, disruption of school order, or in response to a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats when those actions do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others.
- Physical Restraint cannot be used as a standard response for any student. It cannot be written into an individual behavior plan or I.E.P. as a standard response to any behavior.
- Physical restraint is prohibited when it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting.

**Training:**

- Only school personnel who have received training pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(2) or 603 CMR 46.04(3) shall administer physical restraint on students. Annually in September or within a month of employment for new hires principals shall provide all staff with training regarding the district's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used. At the beginning of each school year, the principal shall identify program staff that are authorized to serve as a school-wide resource to assist in proper administrations of physical restraint. Such staff shall participate initially in 16-hour of in-depth training in the use of restraint and shall participate in refresher training annually thereafter.

**Reporting**

- The program staff member who administers a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the event as soon as possible and in writing within 24 hours
- Principals shall verbally inform the student's parents of a restraint within 24 hours of the event and by written report within three (3) school working days. All reporting shall be provided in the parent's home language. Parents and student shall be given the opportunity to respond orally or in writing on the use of restraint and school reports of such
- Principals shall conduct weekly and monthly reviews of school-wide restraint data so as to identify student needs and patterns, frequency, types of restraints used.



- When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) by regular mail postmarked no later than three school working days of the restraint. The District will report data regarding the use of physical restraints to DESE annually in a form and manner directed by DESE.

The district will develop written restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures consistent with 603 CMR 46.00 regarding:

- Appropriate responses to students behavior that may require immediate intervention;
- Methods of preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide including crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behaviors among groups of students or individuals;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint as well as the schools' method of physical restraint for use in emergency situations;
- Descriptions of the school's training and procedures to comply with reporting requirements including, but not limited to making reasonable efforts to orally notify a parent of the use of restraint within 24 hours of its imposition:
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about restraint prevention and use of restraint solely as an emergency procedure;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted by 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), seclusion, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00;
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for a time out exceeding 30 minutes.
- A procedure for conducting periodic reviews of data and documentation of the use of restraint described in CMR 46.06 (5)(6)
- A procedure for implementing reporting requirements (CMR 46.06)
- Procedures for notifying parents within 24 hours of a restraint and in writing within 3 days.

Legal Reference: M.G.L. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00

Regulations: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/>

**PHYSICAL RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS***January 2016***I. Procedures for use of Physical Restraint in Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools****Training:**

- A. All staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will receive training within one month of starting their employment.
- B. Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
  - a. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint;
  - b. The District's restraint policy;
  - c. Staff is expected to make every effort to prevent the need for the use of restraint and only use restraint as an emergency procedure of last resort;
  - d. Interventions which may preclude the need of restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
  - e. When behavior presents an emergency that requires physical restraint, the types of permitted physical restraints related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when any restraint is used, in particular a restrain of extended duration;
  - f. Physical escort shall mean a temporary touching or holding without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location. Physical escort is not physical restraint.
  - g. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student;
  - h. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.
- C. Designated Safety Care Intervention Staff shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint.
  - a. At the beginning of the school year, the principal will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.

In-depth training will include:

- a. Appropriate procedures for preventing the use of physical restraint, including the de-escalation of dangerous behavior, relationship building, and the use of alternatives to restraint;
- b. A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of a student that may lead to the use of physical restraint and methods for evaluating risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
- c. The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
- d. Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints;
- e. Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and
- f. Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects.

D. Staff/faculty and the Student Services department will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques for identified students. School counselors or psychologist will provide copies of Behavior Plans to building principals and the Special Education Liaison. Plans should be reviewed and updated monthly.

## 2. Proper Administration of Physical Restraint

A. Physical restraint may only be used as a last resort, in the following circumstances:

The student's actions pose a threat of imminent, serious, harm to self and/or others.

B. Physical restraint is **prohibited** in the following circumstances:

(1) As a means of punishment; or

(2) As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive could escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.

C. Only school staff who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one

adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

D. Physical restraint shall be limited to the use of such reasonable force as is necessary to protect a student or others from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation.

F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued when it is determined that the student is no longer at risk or causing imminent physical harm to self or others.

G. Additional safety requirements:

(1) A restrained student shall not be prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin color and respiration, during the restraint.

(2) If at any time during a physical restraint the student demonstrates significant physical distress, as determined by the staff member, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.

(3) Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.

H. At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, the principal or other appropriate school staff shall:

(1) review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;

(2) review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and

(3) consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident

(4) review the incident and student behavior with the Special Education Coordinator

3. Reporting requirements:

A. Program staff shall report the use of all physical restraints,

B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and by written report no later than the next school working day.

(1) The written report shall be provided to the Principal for review of the use of the restraint. If the principal has administered the restraint, the principal shall prepare the report and submit it to an individual or team designated by the superintendent or board of trustees for review.

(2) The principal shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the Department or the student's parent, upon request.

(3) Copies of all restraint reports will be forwarded to Superintendent's Office and Assistant Superintendent of Student Services

C. The principal shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint within 24 hours of the event and shall notify the parent by written report sent either within three school working days of the restraint to an email address provided by the parent for communications about the student, or by regular mail postmarked no later than three (3) school working days of the restraint,

NOTE: If the school customarily provides school related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

The written report required by both sections B and C above shall include:

- (1) Names and job title of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any;
- (2) Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;
- (2) Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint,
- (3) Date and time student's parent(s)/guardian(s) was verbally contacted and informed of the use of physical restraint;
- (4) Description of the activity the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint;
- (5) Student's behavior/actions that prompted the restraint;
- (6) Efforts made to prevent escalation of behavior, including the specific de-escalation strategies used; alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
- (7) Justification for initiating physical restraint;

(8) Description of administration of restraint including:

- a. the holds used and reasons such hold were necessary
- b. the student's behavior and reactions during the restraint
- c. how the restraint ended and
- d. documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided;

(9) Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including consequences that may be imposed on the student; and

(10) Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any consequences that may be imposed on the student and other related matters.

D. The District will, within five school working days of the reported restraint, provide to the Department of Education a copy of the written report as describe above and a copy of the record of all physical restraints maintained by the program administrator for the thirty-day period to the date of the reported.

4. Individual student review. The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene the Child Study or evaluation team as the principal deems appropriate to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include as least the following:

- (a) review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 an any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
- (b) an analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
- (c) consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
- (d) an agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the Superintendent or School Committee shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

5. Administrative review. The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data (see attached form). This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention/management activities, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction or prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

6. A report of all restraint-related injuries must be sent to the Department of Education. When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report required to the Department postmarked no later than three school working days of the administration of the restraint. The Department shall determine if additional action by the program is warranted and, if so, shall notify the program of any required actions within 30 calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

7. Reports of all physical restraints must be sent to the Department as well. Each school shall collect and annually report data to the Department regarding the use of physical restraints. Such data shall be reported in a manner and form directed by the Department.

#### 8. Grievance Procedures

a. Parents will notify principal or designee of any concerns regarding restraint practices and procedure. If a designee receives the complaint or a concern that designee shall notify principal within the school day. Principal shall notify Superintendent within twenty-four hours of receiving a concern. The Superintendent of School Committee shall at his/her or its discretion order an investigation.

#### 9. Interventions and alternatives to the use of physical restraint.

There are a variety of appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention. These alternative methods should be used first when seeking to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior and/or de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student. Physical restraints only should be used as a last resort in emergency situations after these other less intrusive alternative have failed or been deemed inappropriate.

Examples of interventions and less intrusive methods that may preclude the need for the use of physical restraint include but are not limited to, the following:

1. Active listening
2. Use of a low non-threatening voice
3. Limiting the number of adults providing direction to the student
4. Offering the student a choice
5. Not blocking the student's access to an escape route
6. Suggesting possible resolutions to the student

7. Avoiding dramatic gestures (waiving arms, pointing, blocking motions, etc.)
8. Verbal prompt - A verbal prompt is communicating what is expected behavior by clearly stating instructions and expectations.
9. Full or partial physical cue - A full or partial physical cue is anytime an adult needs to temporarily place their hands on a student or physically redirects a student without force. These are used at increasing levels as needed to return a student safely back to task. See Physical Redirection and Physical Escort below.
10. Physical Escort - A physical escort is a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder or back, for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.
11. Physical Redirection –A physical redirection is done by temporarily placing one hand on each of the student’s shoulders, without force, and redirecting the student to the learning activity, classroom or safe location.
12. Time-Out – A time-out is a behavioral support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary and appropriate for the purpose of calming, Time-out shall cease as soon as the student is calmed.

### **C. General De-Escalation Guidelines**

General guidelines for de-escalating potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student include the following:

1. Remain calm –To possibly help prevent the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating his/her behavior use a neutral and even tone of voice, control one’s facial expressions and use a supportive non-threatening body language.
2. Obtain Assistance - Whenever possible, school personnel should immediately take steps to notify school administrators, the school’s administrative response team and/or other school personnel of a potentially dangerous situation and to obtain additional assistance.
3. One Person Speaks - In order to minimize the Likelihood of confusion and/or the likelihood of a student experiencing distress from escalating his/her behavior having one person providing overall direction to the response and the follow up procedures is leave an area with other students and move to another more private and safe area in order to de-escalate should be considered,
4. Remove Other Students - If it is not feasible to have a student experiencing distress move to a more private and safe area in order to de-escalate, consider the feasibility of having other staff assist and monitor the removal of other students to another area within the school until the student be considered.
5. Remove Other Students – If it is not feasible to have a student experiencing distress move to a more private and safe area in order to de-escalate, consider the feasibility of having other staff assist and monitor the removal of other students to another area within the school until the student de-escalates.



## RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS

The Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools comply with the Massachusetts Department of Education's restraint regulations, 603 CMR 46.00 et seq. ("Regulations"), to the extent required by law.

According to their terms, the Regulations apply not only at school but also at school-sponsored events and activities, whether or not on school property.

Approved: 5/22/14

## **RESTRAINT OF STUDENTS**

### Methods and Conditions for Implementation

School staff may use physical restraint only (1) when non-physical interventions would be ineffective and the student's behavior poses a threat of imminent, serious harm to self and/or others or (2) pursuant to a student's IEP or other written plan developed in accordance with state and federal law and approved by the school and parent or guardian.

Physical restraint may not be used as a means of punishment or as a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent serious physical harm. Chemical and mechanical restraints may only be used if explicitly authorized by a physician and approved by a parent or guardian. Seclusion is prohibited.

The Regulations do not prevent a teacher, employee or agent of the District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent serious harm or from restraining students as otherwise provided in the Regulations.

### Staff Training

All school staff must receive training with respect to the District's restraint policy (i.e., following the Regulations), including receiving information about interventions that may preclude the need for restraint, types of restraint and related safety considerations, and administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student. Additionally, the school must identify specific staff to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint. These individuals must participate in in-depth training with respect to restraint and implementation of the Regulations.

### Reporting Requirements and follow-up (see Physical Restraint Report form)

In instances where a physical restraint (1) lasts more than five minutes or (2) results in injury to a student or staff member, the school staff must report the physical restraint to the principal or a designee. The principal/designee must maintain an ongoing record of all such reported instances, which will be made available in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations. The principal/designee must also verbally inform the student's parent or guardian of the restraint as soon as possible, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of the restraint. The written restraint report must be provided to the parent or guardian in the language in which report cards and other necessary school-related information are customarily provided.

In the event that a physical restraint (1) lasts longer than 20 minutes or (2) results in serious injury to the student or staff member, the school must, within five school working days of the

reported restraint, provide a copy of the written report to DOE along with a copy of the school's record of physical restraints covering the thirty-day period prior to the date of the restraint.

For students who require the frequent use of restraint because they present a high risk of frequent, dangerous behaviors, school staff may seek and obtain the parent or guardian's consent to waive reporting requirements for restraints administered to an individual student that do not result in serious injury to the student or staff member or constitute extended restraint (longer than 20 minutes).

Follow-up procedures for restraint include not only the reporting requirements set forth above, but also reviewing the incident with the student, staff and consideration of whether follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

### Complaints

Students, parents or guardians who have a complaint regarding physical restraint procedures may request a meeting with the building principal to discuss their concerns. If the parents'/guardians' issues are not resolved at this level, they may request a meeting with the Superintendent or designee.

Additional information, including a copy of the regulations, can be obtained from the school district's Director of Pupil Services at 978-264-4700, x3265. A copy of the regulations may also be obtained at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr46.html>

**PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW**  
**FIRST READ 3/3/16 \***

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee members are public servants, and as such, their meetings, discussion, and records are a matter of public information. Some exceptions will be made for exemptions specifically outlined in the Open Meeting Law to be discussed in Executive Session. The School Committee supports the right of the people to know about the programs and services of their schools and will make every reasonable effort to disseminate information. All reasonable requests for information will be acted on fairly, completely and expeditiously.

The official minutes of the Committee, its written policies and regulations, and its financial records will be open for inspection at the Office of the Superintendent by any citizen desiring to examine them during hours when the office is open. No records pertaining to individual students or staff members will be released for inspection by the public or any unauthorized persons by the Superintendent or other persons responsible for the custody of confidential files. The exception to this will be information about an individual employee (or student) that has been authorized in writing for release by the employee (or student, or student's parent).

Each building administrator is authorized to keep parents and others in the particular school's community informed about the school's program and activities.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 66:10; 39:23B

CROSS REFS.: BEDG, Minutes GBJ, Personnel Records JRA, Student Records

*\* Minor edits for regionalization only*

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS**  
**First Readings 11/7/13 and 3/3/16**

**(NOTE: Not voted at meeting on 11/21/13 because SC asked about "Established by law")**

State law provides that:

~~Every town at its annual meeting shall in every year when the term of office of any incumbent expires, and except when other provision is made by law or by charter, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:~~

~~... Three or more members of the School Committee for terms of not more than three years ...~~

~~The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although it functions as a duly elected Committee of town government, the School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process.~~

The School Committee is the governing board of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. Although the Committee functions as a duly elected committee of local government(s), Massachusetts General Laws state that each public school system will be governed by a school committee.

The School Committee possesses all powers and duties conferred upon it by state law. The Committee alone may determine policies, approve a budget, and employ a Superintendent to implement their directions for the education of the children of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District.

Members of the School Committee shall have no authority over school affairs as individuals. They shall have authority, within the General Laws, over school affairs when they serve as a legal body.

Regional school districts are created in accordance with state law and the Regional Agreement approved by the member towns. The Acton-Boxborough Regional District School Committee consists of eleven members, seven from the Town of Acton and four from the Town of Boxborough. At the annual town elections, the Town of Acton shall elect two or three members to the Committee, and the Town of Boxborough shall elect one or two members to the Committee, each to serve three-year terms.

~~Established by law~~

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1, and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts Relating to School Committees  
M.G.L. 71:14B, 71:16A

CROSS REFS.: AA, School District Legal Status  
AA-E Regional Agreement between the towns of Acton & Boxborough, MA  
BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties



11.5.1.1

Beth Petr <bpetr@abschools.org>

**Re: [masinfo] Fwd: Resolution Calling for Full Funding of the Foundation Budget Review Commission's Recommendations**

Dorothy Presser <dpresser@masc.org>  
Cc: "masinfo@lists.masc.org" <masinfo@lists.masc.org>, Dorothy Presser <DorothyPresser@suburbancoalition.org>

Tue, Mar 1, 2016 at 8:25 AM

Good morning:

The boards and committees that have passed the resolution so far, to the best of my knowledge is listed below. If you are aware of any other boards that should be added to this list, including Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees, please respond to the list.

- Arlintgon SC & BOS
- Belchertown SC
- Blackstone-Millville SC
- Douglas SC
- Dudley-Charlton SC
- Framingham SC
- Hingham SC (this was a slightly amended version, with a difference in the timing of implementation.)
- Leicester SC
- Lincoln-Sudbury SC
- Melrose SC
- Millbury SC
- Northbridge SC & BOS
- North Reading SC, BOS & FinCom
- Norwood SC
- Oxford SC
- Quaboag Regional SC
- Walpole SC & FinCom

The text of the resolution and some background materials are attached.

My best,  
Dorothy

*Dorothy Presser*  
*Field Director*  
*Massachusetts Association of School Committees*

1 of 3

## Chapter 70 Resolution

The success of Massachusetts' economy is a result of dedicated commitment and strategic priorities. Beginning as the birthplace of public education in America and advancing to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, student achievement in Massachusetts is frequently cited, by various academic measurements, as the best in the nation. This enduring tenet is a key ingredient to the strength of our State's economy. Strong public schools provide the foundation for successful college students as well as a feeder system for bright, innovative future leaders in the workplace. If we do not take active steps to preserve our commitment to public education, other states will be glad to gain a marginal advantage. After acknowledging that the 1993 funding formula for Chapter 70 contains unrealistic and outdated factors, the Massachusetts Legislature commissioned a study group known as the Foundation Budget Review Commission in 2014. The task was to determine the cost of providing an adequate education in current times in Massachusetts. The results were released in two phases, one in June 2015 and the other this past November, and they confirmed what educators and local officials have long known to be true: the cost of educating the students of Massachusetts is severely underestimated by the existing funding formula.

**As we prepare local FY17 budgets, the Suburban Coalition urges each town's Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee or Advisory Committee to adopt the attached resolution that simply asks the Legislature and the Governor to fund the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission.** Especially during the recession, the cost of an adequate education has disproportionately fallen on local taxpayers and the resulting strains on local budgets are not sustainable within the limits of Proposition 2 ½. The Suburban Coalition has chosen this specific area of focus because Chapter 70 is generally the single largest contributor to the bottom line of cities or towns' Cherry Sheets. Additionally, too many cities and towns have struggled with "minimum aid increases" for five or more years, and the timeliness of the Foundation Budget Review Commission's reports makes this the ideal budget cycle. With the release of the Governor's budget proposal, it has become clear that we need to stand together if we hope to see progress with Local Aid. We would like to track our progress, so please alert us at [DorothyPresser@suburbancoalition.org](mailto:DorothyPresser@suburbancoalition.org) after your boards have voted to send the attached resolution (**see below**) to Beacon Hill.

Sincerely,  
Dorothy Presser  
President

Reference documents on our position:

Foundation Budget Review Commission Final Report <http://www.mass.gov/legis/journal/desktop/2015/fbrc.pdf>  
"Cutting Class: Underfunding the Foundation Budget's Core Education Program", Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center [http://www.massbudget.org/reports/pdf/Cutting\\_Class.pdf](http://www.massbudget.org/reports/pdf/Cutting_Class.pdf)  
"Our Communities and Our Commonwealth: Partners for Progress and Prosperity", Massachusetts Municipal Association [http://www.mma.org/images/stories/NewsArticlePDFs/mma\\_news/mma\\_partnership\\_principles.pdf](http://www.mma.org/images/stories/NewsArticlePDFs/mma_news/mma_partnership_principles.pdf)  
"A Preview of the FY17 Budget", Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center [http://massbudget.org/reports/pdf/FY17BudgetPreview\\_Final\\_1-21-2016.pdf](http://massbudget.org/reports/pdf/FY17BudgetPreview_Final_1-21-2016.pdf)  
"Building a Strong Economy: The Role of Education, Transportation and Tax Policy", Massachusetts Budget & Policy Center <http://massbudget.org/reports/pdf/building%20a%20strong%20economy.pdf>  
Massachusetts Municipal Association Testimony <http://www.mma.org/advocacy-mainmenu-100/letters-to-state-leaders/14517-mma-testimony-to-joint-committee-on-ways-and-means-urging-support-for-key-municipal-and-school-aid-programs>

## **Resolution Calling for Full Funding of the Foundation Budget Review Commission's Recommendations**

**Whereas** the Massachusetts Foundation Budget Review Commission identified two areas (employee health insurance and special education) where the Massachusetts Foundation Budget significantly understates the true cost of educating students in the Commonwealth and has failed to keep pace with rising costs;

**Whereas** this underfunding means the cost of providing a quality education has increasingly been borne by local communities, most often at the expense of other vital municipal operations;

**Whereas** investing in education today leads to higher incomes, and thus less investment in police, prisons, subsidized health care, low income housing, welfare, etc. in the future;

**Whereas** state and local economies are most effectively strengthened "by investing in education and increasing the number of well-educated workers."

**Therefore Be It Resolved** that the [insert name of local governing board here] calls on the Massachusetts Legislature and the Governor of Massachusetts to fully fund and adopt the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission in the immediate future.

**Rationale:** The Foundation Budget Review Commission (FRBC) was established by the Legislature in the FY16 budget and was charged with examining the Foundation Budget (Chapter 70) formula. The formula was first established as part of the Education Reform legislation in 1993 and has not been thoroughly reviewed or updated since that time. The FBRC found that the current formula understates costs significantly in two areas: Employee Health Insurance and Special Education.

If the recommendations of the FBRC had been implemented in the FY16 budget, state funding for education would have been about \$500 million more than it was. However, if Chapter 70 reflected the true cost of education, the number would be closer to \$2 billion.

Spending by school districts over the required Net School Spending amounts has increased, as a whole, for more than a decade, indicating that communities are using local property taxes and diverting funding from other portions of municipal budgets to fund their schools. In FY14, the total spending above Foundation in the state was \$1.7 billion. At the same time, the state's commitment to municipal aid has declined. Since 2001, unrestricted local aid has been cut by 43%. The net effect is a combination of cuts to local and school services and an increasing reliance on the regressive property tax.

The evidence overwhelmingly establishes the correlation between a well-educated workforce and higher income individuals. States that invest more in education have a higher paid workforce; also, states that increase the level of education of their population see greater productivity and higher wages over time. The link can then easily be made between higher paid individuals and less reliance on various forms of government assistance, as well as lower rates of crime.

A state's high school and college attainment rates are important factors in the state's overall economic strength. Additionally, investments in education can have significant long-term impacts on state and local economies, as well-educated individuals tend to stay relatively local and contribute tax dollars to the state and municipality in which they reside. In general, the taxes paid over time by these individuals are substantially higher than the cost of their public education.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee **DRAFT**  
 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
 16 Charter Road  
 Acton, MA 01720  
 978-264-4700  
[www.abschools.org](http://www.abschools.org)

March XXX, 2016

Mr. Sean Rourke  
 District Director  
 Office of State Representative Jennifer E. Benson  
 State House, Room 42  
 Boston, MA 02133

Dear Mr. Rourke:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Representative Benson's office with comments on the Governor's budget. In September, two of our members met with Rep. Benson to talk about the coming year and reported back to the committee that Rep. Benson understood the need of all school districts for the support of the Commonwealth through Chapter 70 and Chapter 71, so there was no need to ask. We appreciate Rep. Benson's ongoing support and understanding.

However, we would like to take you up on your recent invitation to comment on the Governor's budget. In the table below we have summarized several budgetary line items for our district. For each line item, the table shows the estimated increase for FY17. These line items are based on current estimates.

**Table 1. Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) FY 17 Budget Estimate**

| FY17 Budget Line Item       | Increase (%) |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Salaries, Teaching          | 3.4          |
| Health Insurance            | 4.2          |
| Middlesex County Retirement | 6.4          |
| SpEd Transportation         | 19.5         |
| Utilities                   | 11.9         |

These line items represent nearly 60% of our total budget estimate of FY17. On the whole, our FY17 budget increase is 3.46%. This budget reflects a priority that we have placed on the social and emotional wellbeing of the students in our district. Our communities are not immune to the opioid crisis and all the underlying problems that our students and families face. Our committee feels the need to respond to this crisis to help however we can to alleviate the underlying issues with the goal of preventing future crises. This is our responsibility and we take it seriously.

DRAFT

We contrast these projected expenditures with certain projected revenue sources as shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2. FY 17 Governor's Budget for ABRSD Revenue Sources**

| <b>FY17 Budget Line Item</b> | <b>Increase (%)</b> |
|------------------------------|---------------------|
| Chapter 70                   | 0.16                |
| Chapter 71B                  |                     |

In addition, the Governor's Budget level funded statewide support for Circuit Breaker and Regional Transportation, despite rising costs among school districts.

While we will continue meet our responsibilities as best we can as a local political body, we would like to pass on our grave disappointment with the governor's proposed budget. We had hoped that the Commonwealth would have been more willing to stand with us shoulder-to-shoulder to meet these responsibilities. Instead, we feel we are standing alone. The governor's budget as it appears to us is one of shirked responsibility.

We would like to applaud the work of the Foundation Review Commission and look forward to the legislature addressing the report recommendations relative to needed adjustments to the foundation budget, particularly as they relate to health care, special education, ELL and student mental health.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Governor's budget.

Sincerely,

Members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

12.1.1

✓KR  
✓KG

## **ALG Minutes February 9, 2016**

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Kristina Rychlik & Paul Murphy, SC; Margaret Busse & Mike Majors, FC; Katie Green & Peter Berry, BoS; Steve Ledoux, Glenn Brand, Marie Altieri & Steve Barrett, Staff.

Audience: Janet Adachi & Franny Osman, BoS; Brian McMullen & Clare Jeannotte, staff.

Extra Info: Town of Acton ALG data analysis; ALG plan spreadsheets

Minutes accepted

### **2. Update on FY 16 Revenues and expenditures**

Steve L: last time I said we were lucky; we had no snow. Now we have had two storms. The excise tax returns are larger than expected.

Glenn: nothing has changed

### **3. Spreadsheet**

Steve B: We are \$292k. Steve directed members to the change page which charts all the changes made to the plan starting from last October.

Two changes since the Jan. 28<sup>th</sup> meeting: the \$603k was used to reduce the tax levy; reduction in AB FY17 assessment by \$292,685 which is responsible for the positive position. We still have \$2.6M in reserve use.

Marie: there was a consensus from last meeting to lower the levy. The Health Insurance Trust has not set rates as yet but we have budgeted for an 8% increase. This can come down so we have now budgeted for a 4% increase. That's a \$292k reduction which we can use to lower the levy or the reserve use.

Mike these are new numbers to the FC. Our POV calls for reductions in the levy and reserve use. We will support SFT bill below 4%.

Bart: is the level now below 4%?

Katie: we have not talked about the \$292K as to whether it should be used to reduce the levy or the reserves.

Mike: there have been some reductions in the levy but we are using \$2.692m where \$2m would be the right number.

SB: if we put the \$292k for the levy that would be a reduction of \$896k which would make the average bill 3.66%

Margaret: what the FC voted was an overall reduction by \$1.5M. We want to see a lower spending package overall.

Bart: what I'm hearing is \$292k further reduction in the levy and \$1.5M reserve use.

Kristina: are these spending cuts prior to the use of the \$600k for the levy?

Margaret: After. From our last ALG spreadsheet we wanted a \$1.5M total, after the use of the \$600k now we are down another \$300k so I'm proposing an overall cut of \$1.2M

Kristina: this is a little late in the game to consider such a cut

Katie: I have a question for the FC---where do you want us to cut. This is a major cut and has not been part of the discussion. On the Town's side this would mean layoffs.

Bart: now we have a question of timing

PB: the schools have cut health care. The Town has not as yet. We have put the \$300k for the senior center study back into the budget. It will be funded through a series of gift accounts.

Margaret: FC has a question as when to bond or not bond. The FC is asked to look out for the taxpayers. With the use of reserves for FY16 plus the Walker property, we are getting close to the 5% level [of reserves that are tracked by the rating agencies and the level suggested by the DOR] we need to protect the Town's ability to borrow; that's the position of the FC.

As to lateness: there was a lack of clarity [on the spread sheets] and we did not know the [totals] until the proposal was done. The process can be discussed tonight [at the FC meeting] and we can bring back the comments. The FC does not have an answer on where to make the spending cuts.

Katie: A \$1.5M cut may be a priority on your side but our job is also to look out for the taxpayers. We are not dealing with a crazy bloated budget here, what you are now asking will be a cut in services. With a cut of this size, the FC should show us where they think the budget is bloated, otherwise these are just numbers to you and not services.

Bart: are there still questions about the spreadsheet numbers?

Marie: did you go over the reserves page? It goes from 11% to 8.7%

Mike when we go out three years I see the reserves projection at 3%

Bart: It seems we have a big range: you [Marie] are saying it's over 5% and the FC is saying it's below.

Marie: I think it's difficult to project out to FY 20

Glenn: the trouble is to reconcile where the budget is falling. This budget reflects the path we are heading.

Kristina: last year we presented cuts to the FC, this budget is lower. We struggle to find areas to cut--- personnel? Should we stop the progress we have made? We have been talking about this budget but have not seen this magnitude of cuts. You didn't say anything on budget Saturday.

Paul: There have been two recent surveys: Youth at Risk & United Way, There are similar findings in both. The problems in the town and district are serious. The school budget is being responsive; taking the problems head-on. This budget is doing what the townspeople are asking and to have it arbitrator cut is shirking our responsibility.

Katie: our budget is in line with the FC's budget Saturday discussions which were over a month ago. Since then the only things that have changed are the numbers have gone down. At this point in the process it's frustrating and concerning. Looking at a \$1.2M cut that's \$450 for the town and it's bigger for the schools. These aren't small numbers. We can take this back to the board but I don't know where the cuts can be.

PB: I'm confused about the reserves and the need to not go below the 5%.

Mike: the reserve policy is not to go below the 5% and based on our estimates they will dip below the 5%. We took this back to the committee and they do not want to go below the 5%. Based on our look at the outer years it goes from 11%-5% and then below. The FC thinks we should address some of these issues earlier rather than later.

Kristina: we all have the same reserves page but do not see the same things. It's not fair to see something that's not there. These cuts will decimate the town and school services

BS: On Jan 28<sup>th</sup> working through the reserves tab in FY20 it will be 4.5% that's a more than a manageable detail and there is not any column for replenishment.

Katie: the reserve number has not changed since the last ALG meeting. We're struggling to understand the FC's perspective where the reserves go below 3% in FY 20.

Bart: Where are the FC's figures?

Mike: We will show them at the FC meeting tonight and then we will come up with a final position.

Margaret: we are fully prepared to go back to the FC to give them your perspective. The POV asks for structurally balanced budgets. These are not new requests out of the blue. We have been having trouble understanding how much comes back and what's budgeted and what's spent. We have some new members on the committee and they have been slower in understanding, sorry. But we want to be consistent with the POV; we are all working for the betterment of the town, we just have different views on how to get there. We will take this [information/budgets] back tonight and see what happens.

Mike: I agree it's difficult to cut the school budget because of the fixed salaries.

Paul: That's a good point: a large portion of our budget is salaries. We don't know how to share the 3.6% cut---we will have to cut teachers but when you look at other data, we have class size policies we

can't keep. We are at the high end of the range and there is no area that can tolerate a cut. We've done a lot of soul searching over this budget and looking forward at 4-5 year trends when we have these issues now. The FC is being prudent for years in the future but we will have to absorb the pain today. It may or may not be prudent to have the pain today to solve a problem that may not exist in the future.

Marie: the change sheet accounting shows the turn backs that have been made since the start of the ALG process. The schools have to vote on their budget this Thursday. I'm concerned that the budget is too tight and there is no room for the ability to cover costs if something goes wrong. If you are concerned about the where the reserves are going we should not have put the \$292K or the savings from HIT in the levy but into the reserves. In the future we can tax to the levy limit, which we have not done for the past three years. Making cuts at this point in the budget is traumatic.

There was a back and forth discussion among the BoS, SC and Margaret for the FC on where to put the excess that was voted to go into the levy account to lower the taxes. Both the schools and selectmen complained that the FC was asking for cuts too late in the process and the cuts were far too large to be able to be met.

Bart: It's obvious that the FC is hearing something that the Schools and selectmen are not. Acton is a community that is known for its civility. If this were happening in Boston, there would be people stomping on the table. People have been through this budget process and feel that the process has been transparent. It seems that it is late in the day: the school needs to vote on their budget on Thursday and the selectmen have already voted on theirs.

Kristina: it's impossible to make the cuts in the two days and seven hours left.

Bart: what I'm hearing is a strong reaction to the ALG plan which I've not heard for a long time. Clearly I think it's a fair statement to say there is a strong disagreement. The message from the FC has been the same over the past couple of years but there have never been any specifics.

Mike: our goal is not to make it more difficult for the town or the schools. This position is coming from some of the more seasoned members of the FC they do not believe the numbers, perhaps they just look at them in a different way.

Kristina: the numbers have changed because something actually has been done to make them change. We have worked to reduce the numbers. We brought in lean budgets and our progress in addressing problems is very slow.

PB: In the planning process, both the town and schools had an 8% increase in the HIT costs. We now know we can get by with 4%, and we will vote that reduction at our next meeting. These are the numbers that are changing. We start out with very conservative budgets and it is not smoke and mirrors.

Mike: last year the ALG plan agreed to by everyone was said to be conservative yet the use of reserves keeps on going up by it makes it hard for us to look at these increases and the loss of reserves and say that we are being conservative.

Paul: It's hard for me to hear the disbelief on the part of the FC. Year after year, the money not spent in the budget goes back [into E&D or free cash]. I thought that would make for a level of trust. It's hard for me to hear that the FC does not trust us.

Margaret: I have no problem with the net \$600k and the \$292k

Bart: This speaks to trust. If the ALG process is to work at all it has to be based on trust. Some cannot feel that the numbers are bogus or the whole enterprise will be bogus.

Katie: I find the comments that some feel the numbers are fiction are concerning. The BoS has yet to vote on the HIT costs. It will be on our agenda. If Mike and Margaret or the whole FC wants to come and talk about the numbers, we would be happy to hear you.

Mike: I'm not sure I used the term fiction. The [rationale] the numbers must reside somewhere else [other than the ALG spreadsheet] Maybe we should come to get a better understanding.

Bart: The SC votes on Thursday.

SL we voted a week ago to be within the regulation of 60 days before the start of town meeting.

PB: Conversation is the key. We are lucky to have the ALG process, do come and we can discuss it and see how we can accommodate each other's positions.

4. Discussion of use of reserves

No more comments

#### **5. Public comment**

Clare: the administration has been giving info to the FC. I feel the message has been delivered on the school's budget. We are now working on the budget books

Bart: Nest meeting is Feb 25.

Kristina asked that babysitting for town meeting be made an agenda item.

Steve L will get back to everyone with the schedule for the warrant.

Adjourned 8:40; Meetings in March: 10th and 24<sup>th</sup>

Ann Chang



# Acton Leadership Group Meeting

February 25, 2016  
 7:30 AM  
 Room 204  
 Acton Town Hall

Bart Wendell Facilitating

## Agenda Topics

Comments

|                                              |                                |  |
|----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Approval of Minutes from February 9, 2016 | All                            |  |
| 2. Update on FY16 Revenues and Expenditures  | Steve Ledoux<br>Glenn Brand    |  |
| 3. Review of Spreadsheet                     | Steve Barrett<br>Marie Altieri |  |
| 4. Discussion on Use of Reserves             | All                            |  |
| 5. Babysitting Services for Town Meeting     | Kristina Rychlik               |  |
| 6. Public Comment                            |                                |  |
| 7. Adjourn                                   |                                |  |



NEW ALG Plan

|                                     | <u>Tax Recap<br/>FY15</u> | <u>Tax Recap<br/>FY16</u> |             |             | <u>Projection<br/>FY17</u> | <u>\$ Change</u>    | <u>% Change</u> | <u>Projection<br/>FY18</u> | <u>Projection<br/>FY19</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>Municipal Funding Sources:</b>   |                           |                           |             |             |                            |                     |                 |                            |                            |
| Tax Levy (excluding debt exclusion) | \$ 70,450,000             | \$ 73,348,000             | 85.27%      | 4.1%        | \$ 77,005,952              | \$3,657,952         | 5.0%            | 80,446,675                 | 83,355,342                 |
| State Aid                           | \$ 1,194,000              | \$ 1,476,000              | 1.72%       |             | \$ 1,528,090               | \$52,090            | 3.5%            | 1,559,543                  | 1,591,781                  |
| Local Receipts                      | \$ 4,702,000              | \$ 4,800,000              | 5.58%       |             | \$ 4,840,386               | \$40,386            | 0.8%            | 4,887,415                  | 4,941,616                  |
| Debt Exclusion                      | \$ 2,868,000              | \$ 2,835,000              | 3.30%       |             | \$ 2,817,959               | -\$17,041           | -0.6%           | 2,768,612                  | 2,538,007                  |
| SBAB Reimbursement                  | \$ 923,000                | \$ 923,000                | 1.07%       |             | \$ 923,000                 | \$0                 | 0.0%            | 923,000                    | 923,000                    |
| Add: Town Reserves                  | \$ 1,653,282              | \$ 2,641,000              | 3.07%       | 59.7%       | \$ 2,692,000               | \$ 51,000           | 1.9%            | 2,600,000                  | 2,600,000                  |
| <b>Acton Total Funding Sources</b>  | <b>\$ 81,790,282</b>      | <b>\$ 86,023,000</b>      | <b>100%</b> | <b>5.2%</b> | <b>\$ 89,807,387</b>       | <b>\$ 3,784,387</b> | <b>4.4%</b>     | <b>93,185,245</b>          | <b>95,949,747</b>          |

|                               | <u>Regional Actual</u> | <u>Table 6</u>       |  |  | <u>Regional Budget</u> | <u>\$ Change</u> | <u>% Change</u> | <u>Regional Budget</u> | <u>Regional Budget</u> |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|--|--|------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>ABRSD Funding Sources:</b> |                        |                      |  |  |                        |                  |                 |                        |                        |
| State AID Ch.70               | \$ 14,254,476          | \$ 14,393,376        |  |  | \$ 14,531,276          | \$137,900        | 1.0%            |                        |                        |
| Transportation                | \$ 1,353,855           | \$ 1,266,283         |  |  | \$ 1,190,000           | -\$76,283        | -6.0%           |                        |                        |
| Regional Bonus Aid            | \$ 136,900             | \$ 111,200           |  |  | \$ 74,000              | -\$37,200        | -33.5%          |                        |                        |
| Other Revenue                 | \$ 25,810              | \$ 34,287            |  |  | \$ 27,683              | -\$6,604         | -19.3%          |                        |                        |
| Excess & Deficiency           | \$ 300,000             | \$ 200,000           |  |  | 200,000                | \$0              | 0.0%            |                        |                        |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>\$ 16,071,041</b>   | <b>\$ 16,005,146</b> |  |  | <b>\$ 16,022,959</b>   | <b>\$17,813</b>  | <b>0.1%</b>     |                        |                        |

Allocation to Budgets

|                             |                      |                      |             |  |                      |                     |             |                      |                      |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| Municipal Spending          | \$ 31,341,000        | \$ 31,955,000        | 2.0%        |  | \$ 32,856,604        | \$ 901,604          | 2.82%       | \$ 34,006,585        | \$ 35,196,816        |
| ABRSD Assessment            | \$ 49,690,145        | \$ 53,171,000        | 7.0%        |  | \$ 55,547,097        | \$ 2,376,097        | 4.47%       | \$ 58,157,810        | \$ 60,891,227        |
| Minuteman Assessment        | \$ 758,000           | \$ 897,000           | 18.3%       |  | \$ 1,075,000         | \$ 178,000          | 19.8%       | \$ 1,175,000         | \$ 1,275,000         |
| <b>Total Acton Spending</b> | <b>\$ 81,789,145</b> | <b>\$ 86,023,000</b> | <b>5.2%</b> |  | <b>\$ 89,478,701</b> | <b>\$ 3,455,701</b> | <b>4.0%</b> | <b>\$ 93,339,395</b> | <b>\$ 97,363,043</b> |
| Net Position                | \$ 1,137             | \$ -                 |             |  | \$ 328,686           | \$ 328,686          |             | \$ (154,150)         | \$ (1,413,296)       |

Annual Contributions Towards

|                          |              |              |  |  |              |  |  |              |              |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--|--|--------------|--|--|--------------|--------------|
| Long-Term OPEB liability | \$ 1,100,000 | \$ 1,249,000 |  |  | \$ 1,400,000 |  |  | \$ 1,500,000 | \$ 1,500,000 |
|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--|--|--------------|--|--|--------------|--------------|

Town of Acton - Tax Impact

|                         | <u>FY15</u> | <u>FY16</u> |  | <u>FY17</u> | <u>FY18</u> | <u>FY19</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|--|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Tax Rate                | \$ 19.05    | \$ 19.23    |  | \$ 19.43    |             |             |
| SF Value                | \$ 531,639  | \$ 539,896  |  | \$ 556,093  |             |             |
| SF Tax Bill             | \$ 10,127   | \$ 10,384   |  | \$ 10,803   |             |             |
| % Change in SF Tax Bill | 3.0%        | 2.5%        |  | 4.0%        |             |             |

ALG

Thursday February 25, 2016

FY15 Municipal reserve replenishment of \$1.9m

|                                    |                 |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| FY15 Town Budget Turn-back         | - \$197k        |
| Closed Encumbrances/Articles       | - \$428k        |
| DOR Free Cash/Statutory adj.       | - \$381k        |
| FY15 Miscellaneous revenue         | - \$259k        |
| FY15 MV Excise > than budget       | - \$232k        |
| FY15 Local receipts > than budget  | - \$352k        |
| FY15 Transfers (Nursing/COA close) | - <u>\$111k</u> |
| Subtotal                           | \$1.9m          |

ALG

Thursday February 25, 2016

Motor Vehicle Excise – ALG amounts in plan

**FY16 - \$3,100,000**

**FY17 - \$3,223,000**

**FY18 - \$3,287,000**

**FY19 - \$3,353,000**

FY16 Activity to date:

Commitment #1 - \$2,717,000 dated 2/8/2016

6 years data on motor vehicle excise revenue

FY15 - \$3,231,930

FY14 - \$3,003,229

FY13 - \$2,714,651

FY12 - \$2,559,200

FY11 - \$2,599,291

FY10 - \$2,514,503

ALG

Thursday February 25, 2016

**ALG Plan Estimated and Actual Single Family Tax Bill  
increase**

|             | <u>Town Meeting</u> | <u>Actual</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|
| FY16        | 3.67%               | 2.51%         |
| FY15        | 3.43%               | 3.01%         |
| FY14        | 2.34%               | 1.89%         |
| FY13        | 3.10%               | 4.22%         |
| FY12        | <u>2.35%</u>        | <u>2.32%</u>  |
| 5 Year Avg. | 2.97%               | 2.79%         |

## CHARGE OF THE CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLANNING COMMITTEE

The Capital Improvement Planning Committee studies proposals from the Acton Town Manager and the Acton - Boxborough Regional School District which involve major tangible items with a total project cost of more than \$100,000 in a single year or over \$100,000 in multiple years and which would likely require an article at Town Meeting for the project's authorization.

The CIAC shall make a report with recommendations to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen on these proposals.

### SECTION 1

There shall be a committee known as the Capital Improvement Planning Committee, (CIPC) composed of seven members: The Town Manager or his designee; The School Superintendent or his designee; a member of the Board of Selectmen; a member of the Finance Committee; an Acton member of the Regional School Committee; and two at large members appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Town's Finance Director and the Acton Boxborough Regional School Finance Director shall be ex officio and advisory to the Committee. The CIPC shall choose its officers annually. The term of office shall be three years not more than three of which shall expire within the same year.

### SECTION 2

The CIPC shall study proposals from the Town Manager, and the Acton Boxborough Regional School District which involve major tangible items with a total project cost of more than \$100,000 in a single year or over \$100,000 in multiple years and which would likely require an article at Town Meeting for the project's authorization. The CIPC shall make a report with recommendations to the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen on these proposals.

### SECTION 3

The CIPC shall: prepare an inventory of existing facilities and major capital equipment; determine the status of previously approved projects; assess the Town's financial capacity; solicit, compile and evaluate project requests; establish project priority; and develop a capital improvement program financing plan, the first year of which shall be submitted along with the operational budget by the Town Manager to the Board of Selectmen in accordance with the Town Charter. The Committee shall also monitor approved projects and update the capital plan on an annual basis.

### SECTION 4

The Town Manager shall develop an operating budget for proposed capital expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year containing those items whose costs do not meet this threshold and are to be included in the annual budget and financing plan submitted to Town Meeting. This capital expenditures budget shall be submitted by the Town Manager to the Board of Selectmen in conformance with the Budget submission requirement of the Town Charter.

# ALG Compromise Plan

Version B

|                                            | <u>FY17</u>         | <u>FY18</u>              | <u>FY19</u>              |
|--------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Tax Levy (excluding debt exclusion)</b> | \$76,620,952        | \$80,446,675             | \$83,355,342             |
| <b>State Aid</b>                           | 1,528,090           | 1,559,543                | 1,591,781                |
| <b>Local Receipts</b>                      | 4,840,386           | 4,887,415                | 4,941,616                |
| <b>Debt Exclusion</b>                      | 2,817,959           | 2,768,612                | 2,538,007                |
| <b>SBAB Reimbursement</b>                  | 923,000             | 923,000                  | 923,000                  |
| <b>Add: Town Reserves</b>                  | 2,548,909           | 1,300,000                | 1,300,000                |
| <b>Acton Total Funding Sources</b>         | <b>89,279,296</b>   | <b>91,885,245</b>        | <b>94,649,747</b>        |
| <br><b><u>Allocation to Budgets</u></b>    |                     |                          |                          |
| <b>Municipal Spending</b>                  | \$32,656,604        | \$34,006,585             | \$35,196,816             |
| <b>ABRSD Assessment</b>                    | 55,547,692          | 58,157,812               | 60,891,229               |
| <b>Minuteman Assessment</b>                | 1,075,000           | 1,211,000                | 1,311,000                |
| <b>Total Acton Spending</b>                | <b>\$89,279,296</b> | <b>\$93,375,397</b>      | <b>\$97,399,044</b>      |
| <br><b>Net Position</b>                    | <br><b>\$0</b>      | <br><b>(\$1,490,151)</b> | <br><b>(\$2,749,298)</b> |

| <b>Impact on Town Reserves</b> |                 |                  |                      |      |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|----------------------|------|
| FY16                           | <b>Reserves</b> | <b>7,665,000</b> |                      |      |
| FY17                           | Use             | (2,200,000)      |                      |      |
|                                | Replenish       | 900,000          |                      |      |
|                                | <b>Reserves</b> | <b>6,365,000</b> | <b>\$ 89,279,296</b> | 7.1% |
| FY18                           | Use             | (1,300,000)      |                      |      |
|                                | Replenish       | 900,000          |                      |      |
|                                | <b>Reserves</b> | <b>5,965,000</b> | <b>\$ 93,375,397</b> | 6.4% |
| FY19                           | Use             | (1,300,000)      |                      |      |
|                                | Replenish       | 900,000          |                      |      |
|                                |                 | <b>5,565,000</b> | <b>\$ 97,399,044</b> | 5.7% |