

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 15, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Deanne O'Sullivan, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Brigid Bieber, Vice Chairperson from Boxborough.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** –
Deanne O'Sullivan was thanked for her past 6 years of service on the Committee. Dennis Bruce was thanked for serving for the past year, as well as his prior service. They both chose not to run for re-election.
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Acton Election is March 27
 - Boxborough deadline to submit papers is April 3 for Election on May 22
3. **Public Participation**
Terra Friedrichs stated that she is running for Selectmen in Acton.
4. **Blanchard Memorial School Presentation** – *Dana Labb*
Principal Dana Labb gave a terrific presentation with Dr. Karen Tower on their School Improvement Plan and activities at Blanchard. Dana congratulated Karen on her promotion to Principal of a school in Lynnfield. She will be greatly missed at Blanchard.
5. **Proposed Legislative Communication from the School Committee**
 - 5.1. Draft Letter regarding Gun Violence and Regulations - **VOTE** – *Paul Murphy*
The Committee reviewed the draft letter that they decided to send several meetings ago in response to the recent tragedy and public outcry. They decided not to include the issue of arming teachers. It was agreed that all members would sign it.

Bill McAlduff mentioned that there is another initiative that some School Committees in MA have started called the Parkland Project. They are looking for Committees to sign and plan to send it to the President after 100 days have passed so there is time for the School Committee to discuss it at their next meeting.

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: that the ABRSC approve the Draft Letter about gun related school violence and that said letter be sent to our elected federal representatives (Senators and Congressmen,) the President of the United States and the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education. Further, our elected state representatives and Senator should be copied on the letter.

6. **MCAS Update – Deborah Bookis**

The Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning reviewed the Spring MCAS 2017 results emphasizing that they are only one measure of a child's growth and achievement. These results are a baseline for the new ELA and mathematics tests. See memo. It was stated that these tests should not be compared to last year's tests per the state because they are different. It would be like comparing apples to oranges. All test schedules are now posted on the website. They are all untimed this year.

The Committee asked if there had been any response to the letter Deborah sent to Mitchell Chester in October 2015. She also wrote back to them regarding the growth piece. Because we cannot compare this year's test to last year's, how can we look at comparable growth. The response from the MCAS chief analyst said that they did feel like validity was there. When asked how we assess if our students are coming prepared for the Junior High and High School, Deborah stated that benchmarks are reviewed, and decisions made about where we want them to be. We have different students every year, and therefore sometimes different standards. Eileen Zhang asked about accountability levels and was told that they involve growth percentiles and achievement, and that there are several factors that go into a school's score. She is concerned about the no homework policy. Deborah feels that these new tests will help the District understand more of what is going on. Over time, different schools perform differently. This performance is something that the principals discuss with the teachers, noting that sometimes different students also account for some of this. In response to a question, Deborah said that students and staff are very comfortable now using the computer tests.

7. **School Building Committee Update – Mary Brolin**

7.1. MSBA Meeting on 2/14/18

Bill McAlduff reported that all went as planned at this meeting in Boston.

7.2. Recommendation to Submit Statements of Interest (SOIs) to MSBA for

7.2.1. Conant School – **VOTE**

7.2.2. Gates School - **VOTE**

The deadline to submit new SOIs to the MSBA is April 6. The Administration recommends that the Committee submit for the Gates and Conant Schools as has been indicated all fall. The documents will be unchanged from last year with the exception of enrollment data. We believe the focus will be on a two school project involving Douglas and Gates or Conant.

Mary Brolin moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: To authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 6, 2018 for the Luther Conant School located at 80 Taylor Road in Acton, MA 01720 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future

Priority #2 Elimination of existing severe overcrowding:

The Conant school's capacity based on gross square footage and MSBA guidelines is 307 students, compared to 442 students as of 10/1/17.

Priority #5 Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility: The Conant School was built in 1970 with essentially no renovations, other than roofing in 1986.

Priority #7 Replacement of, or addition to, obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirement: Lack of proper accessibility and space at the Conant School affects programs that may be offered to these students.

; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: To authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated April 6, 2018 for the Paul P. Gates School located at 75 Spruce Street in Acton, MA 01720 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority categories for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future

Priority #2 Elimination of existing severe overcrowding:
The Gates school's capacity based on gross square footage and MSBA guidelines is 300 students, compared to 402 students as of 10/1/17.

Priority #5 Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility: The Gates School was built in 1968 with essentially no renovations, other than roofing in 1986.

Priority #7 Replacement of, or addition to, obsolete buildings in order to provide a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirement: Lack of proper accessibility and space at the Gates School affects programs that may be offered to these students.

; and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

7.3. Building Committee Meeting on 2/28/18 and 1/31/18

Documents used may be found at: <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>

7.4 Recommendation to Approve Changes to Building Committee Membership - **VOTE**

Mary Brolin asked the School Committee to revote the membership, particularly given a change in the Boxborough Finance Committee rep from Ted Kail to Gary Kushner. Also, Dennis Bruce will need to change from a School Committee member to a Community member. Rob Bukowski, Brian Griffin and Damian Sugrue will leave the Committee.

Paul Murphy moved, Tessa McKinley seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the AB School Building Committee members as presented
by Mary.

8. **Merriam School Principal Announcement** – *Bill McAlduff*
Bill McAlduff welcomed Assistant Principal Juliana Schneider as the new Principal replacing Ed Kaufman. It was a very complete and rigorous process and he thanked Marie Altieri for leading it.
9. **Town Meeting Preparations** (*Acton Meeting begins April 2, Boxborough on May 14*)
 - 9.1. Presenters for Acton and Boxborough – *Brigid*
Amy Krishnamurthy will present in Acton and Brigid Bieber will present in Boxborough.
 - 9.2. Financial Reporting of Per Pupil Costs per the Regional Agreement (Section 11/App A Section e) – *Dave Verdolino*
Dave Verdolino reviewed his memo that will be shared with the Regional Financial Oversight Committee (RFOC) at their meeting next week. He concluded that much of the variation shows as change in per pupil expense from FY16 to FY17 can be attributed to normally occurring factors. Adding the Pathways program at the Blanchard School added costs to that school, but ultimately created districtwide savings that are misleading if not understood. There is also a somewhat similar situation with the Conant school. The RFOC will create a statement to be voted on at the pre Acton Town Meeting School Committee meeting based on this information. This analysis was only to be done for 5 years per the Regional Agreement because when full regionalization began Blanchard's per pupil cost was significantly higher than the Acton schools' but that is coming into line more now.
10. **Kindergarten Registration Update** – *Marie Altieri*
Marie Altieri reviewed the memo. Placement and the lottery will be done by the end of March and she will report on that at the next meeting. Blanchard will have four Kindergarten classes. New children moving to Boxborough must have the option to go there so they may have a hybrid class next year to be sure all who want ½ day Kindergarten can get it. Marie discussed this year's lottery saying that it will involve mostly Blanchard with a few students for Douglas. She noted that Blanchard used to be thought of as having lots of space available but it is now full. Dana Labb has done an exceptional job managing his space. Dawn Bentley mentioned that incoming kindergarten families have noted that they speak 32 different languages. Next week they will screen 132 incoming Kindergarten students for ELL services (44% of these incoming students).
11. **Subcommittee Reports**
 - 11.1. **Policy**
 - 11.1.1. NEW: Section 504, File: IHBA – Second Read – **VOTE** - *Dawn Bentley*
Diane Baum moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously
VOTED: to approve this policy as amended for a comma.
 - 11.1.2. Discipline of Students with Disabilities, File: JKF – First Read – *Dawn Bentley*
Dawn Bentley distributed a revised version that included required language from the recent DESE review.
12. **School Committee Member Reports** (*oral*)
 - 12.1. MASC/MASS Summit on Poverty, 3/9/18 - *Diane Baum, Tessa McKinley*
Diane Baum and Tessa McKinley attended due to the significant increases in our students who receive free and reduced lunch. The rate of increase concerned both of them and they wanted to try to understand how to meet the needs of this population. The main speaker talked about the pedagogy of poverty providing a

framework of how to encourage more (build new knowledge) and do less (memorizing). Much of this works for all students. They also talked about the hidden costs of education such as field trips, athletic fees, yearbooks, etc. and how this affects families. Brigid Bieber mentioned the Homeless Coalition on presentation on Sunday that is open to all. All agreed it is an important topic to continue discussing.

- 12.2. ALG Meeting on 2/28/18
Bill McAlduff referred to the minutes stating that FY19 work is now wrapped up.

13. Consent Agenda – VOTE

- 13.1. **Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes of 3/1/18, 2/28/18, 2/15/18**
13.2. **Donations to our Schools – Bill McAlduff**
13.2.1. ABRPTSO Grant of \$1500 to the High School for Community Service Awards Night
13.2.2. AB Boys Basketball Boosters (\$621) and AB Colonial Club (\$2100) Donations to High School for cheer/gymnastics teams mats
13.2.3. Blanchard PTF donation of \$3750.60 for ipads and covers at Blanchard
13.3. **High School Field Trip to France, 4/9/19 – 4/18/19**

The minutes of 2/15/18 were held for a revision.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the minutes of 2/15/18 as amended.

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the consent agenda with thanks to all three of the donors.

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda, List of warrants

Next Meetings:

ABRSC Meeting, March 29 at 7:00 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Junior High Library (*NO NEED, NO Meeting, although there will be one added pre TM at 6:00 pm at the HS*)

Acton Town Meeting begins April 2

See warrant at www.acton-ma.gov/warrant

Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 14