

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

April 12, 2018
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting
7:30 p.m. FY19 School Choice Program Participation Hearing
7:40 p.m. (approximately) Return to Open Business

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville (7:10 p.m.), Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: Paul Murphy
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley, Bill McAlduff, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy.
2. **Chairman's Introduction** – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
 - 2.1. Annual Spring Town Elections
 - Welcome to new Acton School Committee Reps: Angie Tso and Ginny Kremer
 - Boxborough Election will be on May 22
3. **Public Participation** -
Corrine Hogseth spoke from the audience advocating for a better contingency plan for next year if there are many snow days, as has happened this year and avoid having school the last week of June.
4. **Conant School Presentation** – *Damian Sugrue, Principal*
Mr. Sugrue focused on the literacy work being done at Conant including their monthly themes and activities in kindergarten, Grade 2 and Grade 6. Brigid Bieber thanked him for the Book Buddies program and how valuable it is to all students.
5. **The School Choice Program PUBLIC HEARING** was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Amy Krishnamurthy.

FY'19 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program Participation Memo

Marie Altieri explained that because the district does not have space to take new choice students, she revised the motion to recommend voting NOT to participate in the School Choice program for next year. She explained that there was one sibling of a current choice student who may have been planning to go to kindergarten in September, but she was now informed that the child will wait one year. At this time, we believe there will be 2 siblings who will request acceptance in September 2019.

6. **The motion to adjourn the PUBLIC HEARING** was made at 7:32 p.m. by Mary Brolin, seconded by Katie Neville and unanimously approved.
7. **FY'19 ABRSD MA DESE School Choice Program Participation - VOTE** – *Marie Altieri*
Brigid Bieber moved that the ABRSC not accept any School Choice students for the school year beginning September 2018. The motion was seconded by Katie Neville.

Bill McAlduff suggested a friendly amendment to the motion to read, “The ABRSC moves to not participate in the school choice program for the 2018-2019 school year.”

Brigid Bieber accepted the amendment and Katie Neville seconded it.

The School Committee unanimously,

VOTED and approved the amended motion.

8. **ABRSD School Calendars** – *Bill McAlduff*

8.1. FY19 – Reformatted & Addition of Jr High/High School Early Dismissal Days

8.2. FY18 – Superintendent’s Memo re last day of school on June 27, 2018

Bill McAlduff reviewed the slight changes to the voted calendar. The Junior High early release days and MCAS late starts have been added. The month of June was also reformatted to show the full month and be clearer about what can happen if many snow days are used, as has been the case this year. Snow days prior to April 1 must be made up. After that, if 5 days have been used, they do not have to be made up. (See memo)

The Westford School Calendar was provided on the table as an example of how additional religious holidays could be shown (although not as no school days). It was noted that Westford’s version is two pages, compared to our one page. Mr. McAlduff also provided information regarding Alternative Student Learning/ Distance Learning used by Westford as another idea. The Committee discussed the memo from Mr. McAlduff in the packet.

It was agreed that, as recommended by the Superintendent, the days for this year would be made up by extending the school year to June 27, 2018.

In response to a question, Mr. McAlduff said that two people responded to his recent memo to families alerting him to what other communities were doing and one family shared that they were in support of his position. He spoke about the difficulty of adding a number of minutes to each day as a way to make up days, as well as the contracts’ restrictions. Marie Altieri clarified that there is language in the contracts requiring the April and February vacations and the holidays. A side letter or revision in language in the next negotiations round would be needed for these types of changes.

The Committee asked about surveying families and staff again. Marie said that the last time surveys were done in the Fall of 2016, 77% of staff wanted to keep the vacation schedules. Families were split 50-50. Mary Brolin suggested that they consider making Good Friday an early dismissal day.

Several members liked the format change and wanted no changes for this year. In the future having a program in place that could be utilized if needed (if many snow days) would be valuable. A comment was made that alternative learning can be great but it has to fit in with what teachers want the students to be learning. The Committee’s decisions cannot add more work for staff. Alternative Learning also has consider all kinds of learners. Tessa McKinley stressed that continuity of learning is essential and this must be taken into account next time the calendar holidays are discussed due to our increased diversity. Eileen Zhang liked our clear calendar, but found the signs and shapes used by Westford very visual and helpful. They may be better than using colors.

Given the possible interest in Alternative Learning, Mr. McAlduff suggested that the first step be a discussion with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and some research (see Jan 5 DESE memo). Following that, a discussion with the ABEA at one of their monthly

meetings in June or so would be important. He felt that this could possibly be an initiative for the early part of next fall.

Mr. McAlduff commented that combining the February and April vacations into one has been an idea for many years across the state. Everywhere he has worked, it has come up but never moved forward. One of the big issues is that a vast majority of staff has school age children and live outside of the district that they work, so their schedules would be out of synch. He doesn't think combining the two weeks is a realistic option until this is taken up by the DESE and it becomes a statewide practice. That is how it has been successful in other states.

Ginny Kremer stated that public participation is asking for a shorter vacation in February or April, not the full week. She asked if that could be discussed. Marie Altieri responded that it was a good collaborative conversation with the unions but only if the state takes it up would they really support it.

The Committee agreed to continue the discussion regarding Good Friday at a future meeting.

9. **Superintendent Memo**

9.1. Response to Parents' Request for Review of Cul-de-Sac Bus Service

The Superintendent referred to the memo sent to the Committee yesterday in response to some families' concerns. He does not believe that a formal safety assessment as indicated in the memo is necessary at this time. Mr. McAlduff also indicated that with each new year there are some changes to bus routes and location of bus stops as the result of new students in our system. Given that we are moving to elementary level single tier bussing next year it will require a substantial review of routes and subsequently bus stops. He shared a Guide done by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and NHTSA. JD Head will go through this information with staff as they plan the routes next year. Mr. McAlduff recommends no further action.

Mr. McAlduff said that the policy subcommittee might review the transportation policies related to the Guide and see if it makes sense to include reference to it anywhere.

Parent Jay Simon spoke from the audience. He lives on the road near Strawberry Hill in question. When the changes were made, he contacted the Transportation Office and was frustrated that he got no response for a long time. The parents used this guide when speaking with the Superintendent at their meeting. There are many children involved in this issue and he stated that, "Care must be taken not to place a higher priority over safety for efficiency." He emphasized that the guide includes all of his points.

In response to questions from the Committee about next steps, Mr. McAlduff suggested that the Committee read the guide first and create a list of specific questions. Brigid Bieber asked that when the single tier bussing routes are looked at this information is considered. Mary Brolin noted in reading the article that it talks about the bus backing up near children. If it backs up in this cul de sac, maybe it should be reconsidered.

The policy subcommittee will review these policies and corresponding procedures and report back to the School Committee.

10. **Recommendation to Approve ABRSD Purchase Cards (P-card) – VOTE – Dave Verdolino**

Clare Jeannotte and Glenn Brand discussed this possibility over the past few years and Dave Verdolino feels like it is appropriate at this time for our district. The budget subcommittee talked about it several times, and felt that it gives the district much more control over spending compared to reimbursing staff. Dave explained that once the Committee votes to approve, other procedures will be developed. No cards will be issued for purchasing until all the controls and procedures are in place. There is no cost to the district.

Angie Tso asked if other options like Paypal or other mobil apps were considered. Dave said that the district has an account with Amazon but it is not universally accepted. Currently staff has to front money for a conference on their personal credit card and then be reimbursed. Mary Brolin stated that Brandeis uses these P-Cards and they work very well.

Diane Baum moved, Angie Tso seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the implementation of the AB Procurement Cards.

11. School Building Committee Update –

Mary Brolin did this update out of order, before the Choice Hearing.

Mary Brolin will ask the School Committee to vote new members of the School Building Committee in the future, including new Superintendent Peter Light as of July 1, and possibly 2 or 3 others who she is communicating with.

- 11.1. Building Committee Meeting on 3/22/18
- 11.2. Owner’s Project Manager (OPM) Review Subcommittee Meeting on 3/27/18

12. Town Meeting Updates

- 12.1. Acton’s meeting began April 2
 - 12.1.1. Presentation Slides
- 12.2. Boxborough’s meeting begins May 14

13. Kindergarten Registration Update

Marie Altieri did this update out of order, before the Choice Hearing.

Marie reported that the lottery was done last month placing 309 children in kindergarten. 313 were projected. Only Blanchard had a lottery. Families who chose any of the 5 Acton schools got their first choice. There is a wait list of 15 Acton families requesting Blanchard right now. There is significant interest in All Day Kindergarten. The joint PTO co-chairs had many questions about hybrid classes. Marie explained this history in her memo. Over the years the district has decided not to do hybrids unless required, because it has turned into somewhat of an equity question.

14. DRAFT 2018-2019 School Committee Meeting Calendar – Amy Krishnamurthy

The Committee briefly discussed the proposed dates. There was agreement not to conflict with the MASC November meeting. Beth will confirm.

15. Subcommittee Reports

- 15.1. **Policy**
 - 15.1.1. Discipline of Students with Disabilities, File: JKF – Second Read – **VOTE** -
Dawn Bentley

Dawn Bentley reported that this policy needed to be revised following advice resulting from the District’s Coordinated Program Review. She had made a revision since the posting removing language in the draft policy referring to preschoolers because it is not required in the law.

Amanda Bailey spoke as the Chair of the ABSpedPAC. She stated that if the district sends a student home early, it is considered a suspension, so maybe that should be included in the policy. She requested that "ECC" be added in addition to the principal. The Committee discussed these points and agreed to vote at their next meeting.

15.1.2. Minutes, File: BEDG – First Read

15.1.3. Remote Participation, File: BEDJA – First Read

15.1.4. Research Requests from Outside the District, File: NEW – First Read – *D.Bookis*

Comments should go to any member of the policy subcommittee. Mary Brolin commented that more than just the secretary should be included in the Minutes policy.

15.2. **Regional Financial Oversight Committee (RFOC)**

15.2.1. Minutes of meeting on 3/27/18

15.2.2. Recommendation to Dissolve – **VOTE** – *Mary Brolin*

Mary Brolin reported that at their last meeting, there was a recommendation that the committee be dissolved and it was unanimously approved. She referred to the Regional Agreement where it talks about this in appendix A. They feel the public isn't as concerned about this as much now, as the numbers have come closer together and it's not worth the significant time to continue to do the calculations.

Tessa McKinley moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to dissolve the Regional Financial Oversight Committee.

16. **School Committee Member Reports** (*oral*)

16.1. Diane Baum reported on her inspiring visit to Minuteman Tech where they laid the top beam of their new building.

16.2. Angie Tso asked if the Regional Agreement would be reviewed next year. Amy Krishnamurthy said that the Committee can decide if we want it looked at next year.

17. **Consent Agenda – VOTE**

17.1. **Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes** (*minutes next meeting*)

17.2. **Donations to our Schools** – *Bill McAlduff*

17.2.1. Cynthia J.McCarthy and Daniel McCarthy Memorial Fund grant of \$900 to the ABRHS Envirothon Student Activity Club

17.2.2. Boxborough Community Center donation of a piano valued at \$2,500 plus \$1,000 endowment for tuning each year to the Blanchard Memorial School

17.2.3. Blanchard Parents/Teachers/Friends Organization Grant of \$1,096.53 for OT Supplies

Mary Brolin moved, Tessa McKinley seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the consent agenda as proposed.

18. **FYI**

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda

Next Meetings:

April 26 - ABRSC at 7:00 p.m. in the R.J.Grey Junior High Library

May 14 - Boxborough Town Meeting begins

May 17 - ABRSC at 7:00 p.m. in the R.J.Grey Junior High Library

May 21 - Boxborough Elections