

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

June 7, 2018
7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Diane Baum, Michael Bo, Mary Brolin, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Angie Tso, Eileen Zhang
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Bill McAlduff, Dave Verdolino

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy. She welcomed the two new Boxborough members, Michael Bo and Adam Klein.
2. **Public Participation** - none
3. **Superintendent's Introduction** – *Bill McAlduff*
 - 3.1. Boxborough Annual Election Results
 - 3.1.1. Welcome to new members Michael Bo and Adam Klein
Mr. McAlduff welcomed the 2 new members and also congratulated the 447 ABRHS Class of 2018 members on their graduation last week.
4. **ABRSC Annual Organizational Meeting**
 - 4.1. Election of Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Officers for FY19 –
The Superintendent described the process to elect new officers per School Committee policies BDA and BDB.
 - 4.1.1. Chairperson – **VOTE** – *Bill McAlduff*

Mr. McAlduff opened the floor for nominations.
Tessa McKinley nominated Paul Murphy to be Chairperson and spoke strongly in favor of Paul's ability to serve in this capacity as one of the most senior members. Amy Krishnamurthy seconded the nomination.

Eileen Zhang nominated Diane Baum to be Chairperson and described her many strengths and how she has mentored the newer members of the Committee.
Angie Tso seconded the nomination.

Mary Brolin asked for some discussion of the two nominations, given the significant amount of time and flexibility required for this position. Paul and Diane spoke about their commitment to the Committee. Diane stated that they had spoken to each other about this possibility and would both be fine no matter how it turned out. Both feel well prepared to take on the Chairperson role.

It was stated that Roberts Rules dictates that the first nominee is voted on first.
The Committee **VOTED** on Paul Murphy as Chairperson.
IN FAVOR: Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Brolin, Klein (2 Acton x 2.5 = 5 plus 2 Boxborough = 7) AGAINST: Kremer, Minkin, Tso, Zhang, Bo, McKinley (4 Acton x 2.5 = 10 plus 2 Boxborough = 12) ABSTAINED: Baum The motion lost.

The Committee **VOTED** on Diane Baum as Chairperson. IN FAVOR: Bo, Brolin, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Minkin, Murphy, Tso, Zhang ABSTAINED: Baum The motion carried.

Diane was welcomed as the new Chairperson and took over the running of the meeting from the Superintendent.

4.1.2. Vice Chairperson(s) – **VOTE** – *New Chair*

Diane Baum opened nominations for the Vice Chairpersons.

Maya Minkin nominated Paul Murphy as Vice Chairperson from Acton. Angie Tso seconded. No other nominations were made. It was unanimously **VOTED**: that Paul Murphy serve as Vice-Chairperson from Acton.

Mary Brolin nominated Tessa McKinley as Vice Chairperson from Boxborough. Amy Krishnamurthy seconded. No other nominations were made. It was unanimously **VOTED**: that Tessa McKinley serve as Vice-Chairperson from Boxborough.

4.1.3. Executive Secretary – **VOTE** – *New Chair*

Diane Baum opened nominations for Executive Secretary for the Committee.

Mary Brolin nominated Beth Petr as Executive Secretary. Paul Murphy seconded. No other nominations were made. It was unanimously **VOTED**: that Beth Petr serve as Executive Secretary to the Committee.

4.2. ABRSC 2018-2019 Meetings

The Chair asked committee members to review the list of meetings for next year that had been discussed at previous meetings. It was the sense of the Committee that this was acceptable.

4.3. FYI: School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting Policy, File: BDA
School Committee Officers Policy, File: BDB

5. **Chairperson's Introduction**

5.1. Thank you to FY18 Chairperson Amy Krishnamurthy

Diane Baum led the Committee in thanking Amy for her dedication, perseverance and poise during the previous very challenging year. Diane read a quote from Teddy Roosevelt and other members joined in thanking Amy for her significant efforts. Amy was presented with a card and flowers from the Committee.

6. **Recommendation to Approve FY19 ABRHS Handbook Changes – Second Read – VOTE**

Mr. McAlduff reviewed the changes in Mr. Cavanagh's memo from the last meeting. See memo #6 changes regarding the Physical Education requirements that are now deleted. Michael Bo asked that being home sick, field trips and college visits be added to the list of cases that do not require a PE class to be made up (page 16 of the 2017-2018 Handbook under "Expectation and Attendance". The Administration agreed. Also change #4 on the first page provides clarification to the last day of school. It was agreed that the word "within" would be changed to "as many as".

Mr. McAlduff noted that the change on page 2 #5 "Scheduling" generated the most responses from the Committee and the public. This year, six students took six AP exams and 22 students took five. This was more than last year. They are proposing to add "the Administration strongly recommends" that students take no more than 5 AP courses in one school year. Some staff members have real concern about the workload that our students carry today and the pressures they face. This was the rationale for this change. Eileen Zhang asked if this referred to AP courses taken or students who just take the AP tests. Mr. Dorey clarified that this document refers to courses, not just the tests. Mr. McAlduff referred to a

handout brought to the meeting with responses to questions submitted earlier to the administration.

Angie Tso quoted from the book *The Price of Privilege* - "it is not about low standards and disengagement. Quite the opposite, it is about how to help children develop the very skills that will lead them to set their own bar high.". She disagreed with an absolute cap but she agreed that five AP courses should not be considered lightly and any student who wants to do that needs to check with their counselor first.

Tessa McKinley emphasized that the School Committee's role in reviewing the High School Handbook is based on whether it is in line with the mission and vision of the district and the policies of the School Committee, not whether members personally agree or disagree with some of the procedures at the High School. She used the discussion about limiting the number of AP courses that students can take as an example. The Committee's charge is to use Challenge Success as a guiding principal and taking 5 or more AP courses goes against these principals, Tessa emphasized. She hopes the district will make a bigger push about what Challenge Success means for our students. Mr. McAlduff feels the district has worked hard to get the Challenge Success message out to everyone, but agrees that getting the right balance is key. The Administration will monitor the AP courses carefully. They understand that some students may be able to handle more work and the Administration doesn't want to shut them out. This is a work in progress. Members emphasized that the Administration is charged with making some of these decisions as professional educators.

Mary Brolin moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the fiscal year 2019 High School handbook changes as amended.

7. **District End of Year Goals Report** – *Bill McAlduff*

Mr. McAlduff reported on this year's goals with additional information about homework and bell schedule work that the High School has done. He began with start times and single tier bussing. This has been a three year long process with a decision made by the School Committee in January to move to the new start times effective in September. It will take a few years of review and monitoring to be sure things are running smoothly. Dawn Bentley spoke about Goal 2 reviewing data entry around equitable opportunities and tools to learn, in an effort to develop smart goals. Marie Altieri spoke about the progress made regarding the centralization of the before/after school programs and the additional 12 hours of assistant time being added in every classroom. The 5 Year Capital Plan will be addressed at the next School Committee meeting. Marie reviewed the Building Committee progress this year. The District is currently out to bid for the Design Selection Process.

Members thanked the Administration for all of their efforts on this work. They appreciated that reports have been given throughout the year, not all at the end.

Regarding the homework policy and its implementation, Mr. McAlduff referred to a handout on the table with additional information. He felt this has been one of the more challenging issues for the district because our schools have been at different points relative to the new policy. This is another work in progress for our schools and needs a few years of implementation. He acknowledged that there are many different opinions about the homework policy.

The purpose of the presentation was to update the Committee on the status of the homework goal. The administration is looking for questions, comments and feedback from the perspective of the implementation. The principals were all in attendance to assist.

Ginny Kremer was surprised to see what was said about homework at the elementary level because from her experience at Merriam two years ago, there seems to be a precipitous drop in the amount of homework. In her opinion, there appears to be very little, or no homework at the elementary level.

Angie Tso mentioned that in Challenge Success, there is a Change Process. She asked what change process has been implemented at each school. She said since Challenge Success is new, it's like a pilot program. She is asking what is the roadmap or what is the set up of the change process to collect feedback for Challenge Success. Mr. McAlduff clarified that the new homework policy is not considered a pilot. He noted that much work, research and review was done to put the policy in place, although it does not mean the policy can't change in the future.

Marie Altieri explained that per the Challenge Success process, there will be more surveys done about homework. In 2016, one of these surveys was done and the district worked with Dr. Denise Pope of Stanford to come up with 3 goals – homework and work load, schedules and parent/community engagement. This drove development of our Long Range Strategic Plan and Goals. The district is implementing the survey this coming year which will provide comparative data from 2016 to 2018/19. This is also related to our data equity inquiry cycle.

Michael Bo asked to see comments from both sides of the issues, not just positive ones. Dawn agreed and referred to the statement about parents' concerns. Diane Baum thanked the Administration for all of their significant efforts in this area.

8. **ABRSD FY19 Budget Update** – *Dave Verdolino*

8.1. Elementary FY19 Expense Budgets

For a number of years, AB's elementary school budgets have all been approximately the same amount. Dave Verdolino was asked to come up with an idea for how to better address the schools' individual enrollment. For next year, they are trying to make some differentiation, on a per student basis, in the non-personnel budgets for these schools. This is just a first look. The Administration intends to consider this issue in the future, trying to be more objective and rational. Mary Brolin asked how the principals felt about this new idea. Dave met with them and they were ok with it. Committee members appreciated the intentionality and thoughtfulness of this process.

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

9.1. Recommendation to Appoint JD Head as the SC Rep on the MSBA Designer Selection Panel - **VOTE** – *Mary Brolin*

The Designer Selection Panel has 16 members. Thirteen are appointed by MSBA and 3 from our community. Peter Light and Marie Altieri will serve on this committee per the Building Committee. The Building Committee is recommending that JD Head be the School Committee's representative.

Paul Murphy moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to appoint JD Head as the School Committee representative to the MSBA Designer Selection Panel.

10. **Subcommittee Reports**

10.1. **Policy**

10.1.1. Security Camera Systems, File: EEAEB – Second Read – **VOTE** – *Marie Altieri*

One phrase was deleted since the First Read as requested. The revision to this policy is due to the data storage and student records reference. A member asked that examples of when the district might retain footage be considered for inclusion in the procedures.

Amy Krishnamurthy moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the Security Camera Systems policy as amended.

11. School Committee Member Reports

Tessa McKinley reported on Boxborough Leadership Forum and that a new Library Director has been hired, Ms. Peishan Bartley.

12. Statement of Warrants & Approval of Minutes

- 12.1. Diane Baum read the warrants.
Amy Krishnamurthy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and the Committee
VOTED: to approve the meeting minutes of 5/17/18 as amended.
(IN FAVOR: Baum, Bo, Brolin, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Minkin,
Murphy, Tso, Zhang ABSTAINED: Klein)
- 12.2. FYI: The following Executive Session minutes were voted to be released at the
5/17/18 meeting: 4/2/18, 3/12/18, 11/16/17, 10/3/17, 8/24/17, 8/1/17, 7/11/17,
6/22/17 and 6/13/17

13. FYI

- 13.1. 2018-2019 School Calendar format revision
Mr. McAlduff explained that there are no date changes, but a second page with
major religious holidays and the schedule has been added, similar to Westford's.
This is after much discussion over a number of School Committee meetings.
Tessa asked that the early release times at the Jr High and High School be added.
Members very much appreciated the additional information being included on the
school calendar.
- 13.2. Fall 2018 Schools Open Schedule
- 13.3. Acton Boxborough Student Activities Fund (ABSASF) Donation Memo & History
- 13.4. Appointment of Director of Performing Arts: George Arsenault
- 13.5. Schedule for the Last Day of School on Wednesday, June 27, 2018
- 13.6. FY19 School Committee Members
- 13.7. Save the Date: District Retirement Celebration on June 14th at 3:15 p.m.
- 13.8. Appointment of new EDCO Executive Director

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: List of warrants, See agenda, Response to Handbook Questions 6/7/18,
Additional Homework Information 6/7/18

Next School Committee Meetings: June 21 at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library