

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MINUTES**

Room 218 East
AB Regional High School

October 5, 2006
7:37 p.m.

Members Present: Michael Coppelino, Marie Altieri, Brigid Bieber, Jonathan Chinitz, Terry Lindgren, Sharon Smith McManus, Rebecca Neville, John Ryder, Bruce Sabot

Also Present: William Ryan, George Frost, Elizabeth Huber, Sharon Summers, citizens and press

The Chairperson called the meeting to order at 7:37 pm.

CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION

STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #2007-006 in the amount of \$1,934,535.36 and warrant #2007-007 in the amount of \$1,631,930.71 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the rest of the Committee for signatures.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes of September 7, 2006 were approved as written.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - None

EDUCATION REPORT - ABRHS

Steve Donovan, principal, reviewed the packet of information, which included the vision statement, School Improvement Plan (High School District Goals, 2006-07), Class of 2006 Profile, Student Assistance Team, ABRHS Report of Year End Surveys, Theft Report, and Ideas about reaching 990 hours. Most of the report included comments made in the End-of-Year surveys and 990 hours.

End-of-Year surveys/comments: ABRHS is not as welcoming to new students as it should be - we need to reach out. Most students feel good in school - a good climate. Several new questions were added to the survey for students and teachers. Rated highly by students was the availability of academic help when they need it. In general, Seniors were proud of the school climate, but were concerned about pressure. They felt there was a need for diversity education and awareness at AB. Students were concerned about the level of drug and alcohol abuse. They wanted more voice in decision making at ABRHS. Faculty comments were generally positive. Class size was a concern, but great strides were made this year. Another concern was meeting the needs of lower achieving students, and the need to address diversity. Michael Coppelino suggested surveying post-grads. Steve Donovan replied that this has been done several times in the past, and it could be done next summer again. Marie Altieri asked if class sizes are lower? Steve said there was an overall drop, especially in English.

990 Hours: Steve explained the mandate (each student must be scheduled for 990 of structured learning time), and where ABRHS is in meeting the mandate. He also referred to the guiding vision in meeting the mandate and options for meeting the mandate.

Karin Drowne reported on her research project, exploring alternatives to meet the 990 hours requirement. She interviewed many faculty and staff. She reviewed the DOE Action Plan response. It indicated that currently only 16% of ABRHS students meet the required 990 hours of structured learning time per school year. By 12/15/06, we must submit a plan to increase time and learning starting in January 2007, to result in full implementation of these requirements by September 2007. She reviewed typical student schedules - some did/did not meet 990 hours. Suggestions to meet 990 are: adding electives; more electives that are 'life-skill building', 'career building'; independent study courses; develop School-to-Work programs; teacher-directed study (especially for freshmen); provide

opportunities where students can 'work' during school day and earn 990 time (library assistant, etc.); providing hours for 'optional school programs'. Other ideas are to expand the summer institute, offer evening classes, give credits for community service learning. With a combination of credits for activities, evening and summer classes, most students should be able to reach 990. Options will be piloted in January. One idea, especially for Juniors, it to allow students to bank hours earned between January 2007 and Labor Day. Steve recommended looking at the hourly requirement as a 4-year overall project. The focus will be on kids we have shortchanged with fewer hours. Steve also advised looking at our too-easy graduation requirements (only 80 credits). This needs a yearlong dialog that the School Committee would want to be involved in. An additional 2.0 staff will be needed in January, and a total of 8.0 FTE will be needed by September.

- Becky Neville asked how are other schools are meeting the 990 hours? Steve replied that many districts are in the same situation. Becky was concerned for the junior class - how will they meet the requirement. Steve said that many are upset and angry.
- Bruce Sabot asked if we needed DOE approval for topics we want to give credit for. Steve answered no, but we do need School Committee approval to count credits outside of school day, banking hours, etc. He added that this can be a win-win situation, and is an opportunity to be more creative. We need to balance class size issue and 990 issue.
- Steve Donovan reviewed the difference between AB transcript courses and credits from other places. Outside credits would need to be approved by AB for academic credit/hours.
- Jonathan Chinitz said that charging for classes outside the school day would open a Pandora's box. Some students already do this - taking PE courses in summer school, so they will have free period during the year.
- Terry Lindgren thought it was good to offer different courses for the underserved student population.
- Regarding funding the additional FTEs, Bill said he will bring a recommendation to the November School Committee meeting to take the monies out of Chapter 70, not E&D. He has talked to the Deputy Commissioner of Education and he is in agreement that this makes sense. Bill will discuss with ALG and BLG.
- John Ryder suggested asking retired residents to offer courses in their area of expertise for a reasonable cost. Steve will look at all these options. He said that online courses are at the bottom of the list, as we do not have the funds to join up as yet. It will not help the neediest group. Steve recommended joining the Virtual High School.
- Becky Neville suggested looking at a tax write-off for seniors who taught a course.
- Brigid Bieber noted that we can quantify things our kids have been doing for years. They have had a huge learning experiences. She asked Steve if he will be tracking every student for 990 hrs? Steve said yes.
- Marie Altieri noted that we didn't have the space or staff to meet 990 hours before. These are great ideas. Class size issue is important to watch.
- Sharon McManus asked the Committee to look at changing (increasing) the graduation requirements.
- The student reps commented on 990. Doug Breuer was glad to see diversification courses in school, as well as classes outside school day. Anil Tripathy did not like the requirement. He thought the state didn't take into account how many hours of homework kids already have. He felt we need to educate the state educators. Jyoti Jasrasaria like the idea of banking hours. She added that students do so many things out of school. Evan Feng liked the multi-pronged strategy to meet the mandate.
- Joanne Campbell spoke about the challenge of finding attractive courses for the underserved population.
- Marie Altieri said that communication to the parent population is important - there is a lot of anxiety out there. Steve Donovan said that they are talking to students first for input, as well as school council and PTSO..
- Jonathan Chinitz recommended that our students go to DOE to explain the situation. It is a question of quality vs. quantity.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. ALG Report

- Marie Altieri asked the draft minutes be corrected for accuracy.

2. FY'07 Budget

Bill Ryan reported that the FY'07 budget is on track in most areas except SPED Out-of-District tuition.

3. Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Friends of Leary Field

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: To accept, with gratitude, the generous gift of \$2,000 from the Friends of Leary Field.

The funds will be used to complete the terracing project beside the field.

4. CPA Lighting Proposal Update

Michael Coppolino updated the committee on the proposal to light the ABRHS varsity baseball field and adjacent tennis courts to the Community Preservation Committee. The project is eligible for CPA funding.

5. Health Trust Report

- Marie reported that the trust fund balance is good.

6. CAFY Report

- Terry Lindgren reported that CAFY will participate in Octoberfest in West Acton on October 14.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Amendments to Regional Budgets, E&D, etc.

Bill Ryan reported that he had attended a meeting regarding possible changes in the regional budgets. It is too early to tell what will finally be proposed. He will update the Committee as more information comes in.

2. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Soccer Booster

It was moved (Lindgren), seconded (Ryder) and unanimously

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the generous gift of \$1,000 from Top Flight Soccer, Inc. and the Soccer Boosters.

The money will be used to host the Dual County League Preseason Soccer Clinic.

3. Recommendation to Accept Final FY'06 All-Day Kindergarten Surplus

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (McManus) and unanimously

VOTED: To accept the final FY'06 All-Day Kindergarten surplus amount of \$18,508.09.

4. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Friends of Drama

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Sabot) and unanimously

VOTED: To accept with gratitude the generous gift of \$650 from the Friends of Drama.

This money will be used to pay stipends for Larry Myles, Cathie Regan and Janet Neely.

5. Recommendation to Approve Special Education Tuitions, 2006-07

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Neville) and unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Special Education tuitions, 2006-07, as follows:

ABRHS - Occupational Development Program (ODP):	<u>\$21,312.84</u>
- Supported Career Education (SCE):	<u>\$20,614.19</u>
RJGrey - Center for Learning & Student Services (CLASS):	<u>\$20,097.44</u>

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- The Superintendent referred to several items.

ISSUES OF THE COMMITTEE**• Membership - Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC)**

It was moved (Ryder), seconded (Lindgren) and unanimously

VOTED: To accept MASC's offer of free membership, 2006-07.

- Members congratulated Marie Altieri's selection as a member of MASC's All-State 2006 School Committee (Division II). The award will be presented at the MASS/MASC Conference on November 10 in Hyannis.
- George Frost reported that each school has in place an updated, comprehensive emergency plan, which includes procedures for fire drills, intruder alerts, lock downs, etc. Drills are held in each school, and principals are taking special care to lock exterior doors.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:00 p.m. it was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: To go into executive session under Chapter 39, Section 23 B, paragraph 3 to discuss strategies relative to collective bargaining. Each member was polled individually. All members voted in the affirmative to go into executive session for the stated purpose.

The Committee returned to open session at 10:16 pm and adjourned.

NEXT MEETING: November 2, 7:30 pm, RJ Grey Junior High Library

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah T. Lawton, Secretary