

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Minutes (approved 12/1/16)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

October 20, 2016
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin (7:05 p.m.), Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan (7:05 p.m.), Kristina Rychlik, Eileen Zhang (7:25 p.m.)
Members Absent: none
Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

1. Chairperson Mary Brolin called the ABRSC to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**
Paul Murphy moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED:** to accept the minutes of 10/6/16 as amended.
The attached list of ABRSD Warrants were reviewed and signed by the ABRSC members.
3. **Public Participation - none**
4. **FY17 School Improvement Plans Presentation**
 - 4.1. McCarthy Towne School –
Principal David Krane and Assistant Principal Matt McDowell presented on their goals of continuing to develop and support the workshop model in all classrooms and using Responsive Classroom in the entire school.
 - 4.2. R.J. Grey Junior High School –
Principal Andrew Shen presented on the goals at the Junior High including Challenge Success-related initiatives, those focused on Student Engagement, Mechanical & Operational Protocols and others on the radar. Responding to a question about whether classrooms would be moved to create more cohesive teams, Andrew said probably not yet as outlined in the Capital Planning. Science classrooms now are located in some unusual places because they are specialized and that is a challenge. Brigid Bieber commented on how many professionals at the Junior High truly embrace change and move things forward year after year with a constant effort to make things better. This is very impressive and can be difficult for some people to do. She thanked Andrew and said that it benefits the students and adults. Several members agreed. Andrew said that new Junior High students in need of ELL services arrive with all different ability levels. This year a number of students registered just before school started, and many knew no English. It is hoped that families will register for school as soon as they arrive in the community so the schools can plan effectively.
5. **AB Special Education Parents Advisory Council (SpedPAC) Bi-annual Presentation –**
Nancy Sherburne from the Friends of AB SpedPAC introduced High School Special Educator, Nikki Jeannotte as the 2015-2016 recipient of the Staff Recognition/Teaching Excellence Award, based on parent and staff feedback. The Committee congratulated Nikki on this honor. The 2016 – 2017 SpedPAC goals were presented and progress was reported. Bill Guthlein will present an MCAS analysis at a future meeting. Mary Brolin acknowledged the “Care Map” slides and how visually impressive the map for a 6 year old with level 1 autism was. Amanda emphasized how unique each child’s “map” would be. The SpedPAC was thanked again for all of their efforts.

6. **Challenge Success Presentation – Deborah Bookis, Dawn Bentley**

6.1. Overview of Presentation Slides

6.2. October installment of the AB Expanding Our Notion of Success newsletter may be found at:
<https://www.smore.com/app/pages/preview/0dbh3>

6.3. Recommendation to Accept Gift from Danny’s Place Youth Services – **VOTE** – Glenn Brand

Deborah Bookis and Dawn Bentley presented on Challenge Success and introduced the new AB Wellness website at <http://abschoolswellness.weebly.com>. They highlighted the three high-leverage areas of: homework/workload, schedule and family engagement/communication. The public was urged to attend the presentations by Dr. Denise Pope on 11/8/16 and Maria Trozzi on 11/14/16. Kristina Rychlik appreciated how this effort ties in with the District’s Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP). She asked how the schools will try to readjust parental expectations. The Committee agreed that this could be challenging. Brigid Bieber agreed with Kristina about the LRSP and wonders how much of a disconnect there really is when it comes to how we all define success. Mary Brolin suggested inviting parents in to listen to TED talks, followed by discussion. Dawn Bentley stated that it will take time and relationship building to make some of the changes the District is considering. Maria Neyland asked if any of this conversation is filtering up to the college level. She stated that there is an expectation from the colleges when kids are filling out applications, even with the common application. She emphasized that this goes beyond just our school district. Paul Murphy encouraged everyone to attend the Denise Pope presentation because she speaks about the college piece.

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was,

VOTED: to accept the gift of \$2,000 from Danny’s Place Youth Services to pay for free parent access to two Challenge Success On-Demand videos. (All YES, with exception of Amy Krishnamurthy who abstained.)

7. **ABRSD Master Plan Study Report Presentation Discussion – Glenn Brand**

7.1. MSBA Visit to Douglas School on October 19

7.2. Community Presentation - Wednesday, November 9, 2016 at 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. in the JH Auditorium

7.3. Short List of Master Planning Options & DRAFT Planning Level Cost Estimates for Short-Listed Options (from 10/6/16 SC Meeting)

Dr. Brand described the MSBA visit to the Douglas School and reviewed the short list of Master Planning Options. Assistant Principal Jenna Larrenaga was complimented on how she ran the tour. Mary Brolin felt the MSBA reps really knew the District’s application and the visit went well. Enrollment is the centerpiece of the MSBA’s consideration, once a District is invited in. An option does not need to be selected, however the District will need to identify the options that there might not be any interest in. The District will not be notified until February. Dr. Brand invited all to attend the District Master Plan Study Report on November 9th.

8. **ABRSD Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP) – Second Reading – VOTE at 11/3/16 meeting – Glenn Brand**

8.1. Proposed Plan, September 2016

8.2. Long Range Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016, updated Spring 2014

At the previous School Committee meeting, the Committee had questions about the different format/approach compared to the previous LRSP. Dr. Brand agreed to consider the feedback and make some refinements. He stated that the mission, values, vision and goals are long term (five years) but strategies will be added over time for years 3 – 5. The intention was that the Plan be voted on 10/20/16.

The Committee discussed the difference between the Vision and the Mission Statement currently posted on the website. Eileen Zhang felt that the mission does not include the whole picture and should include more detail. She does like the values and the strategic actions as outlined. Amy Krishnamurthy questioned if the vision, as written, captures resilience and she thought that the District wants to build strong resilience students. Brigid Bieber was confused about what the word “equity” refers to, and if it really is about funding, or something different. She felt that the proposed plan is not that different from the previous plan, just in a more succinct way, with the exception to the reference to “equity”.

Maria Neyland thanked everyone who worked hard on the proposed Plan. She believed that the process the last time included a lot more community engagement. She was told that 55 people were involved, but emphasizing that this is a Long Range Plan for the 2 communities of Acton and Boxborough. In the past, Committee members could point to the Plan in many different ways as work was being done. She is concerned that this is lacking in the currently proposed one. She considers “equity” a buzzword. She particularly likes the current mission statement and asked that some of it be included in the new Plan.

Mary Brolin pointed out that an extensive survey was done before work began on this proposal, although it was of the school community only – parents/guardians, students and staff, not the general community and two towns’ boards. Kristina Rychlik asked if the Committee could see the survey feedback, to help them understand the process. Maya Minkin sees members’ point about how the proposed Plan is more vague/loose, but she appreciates the move away from a product orientation. Stating that this version is more about the process of being a student, this tone is better for her, although she would like a few more details to be included to include the “whole student”.

Mary Brolin commented that “academic excellence” is not mentioned at all, although it is implied. Part of her wants it to be included, but she wonders whether it might conflict with the Challenge Success philosophy. Elaine Zhang stated the basic path is study for a school. “Academic excellence” and “study” are necessary words in this type of Plan.

Maria said that there are people in the community that do want academic excellence for their children. Ultimately, the District educates children to be well balanced and well educated. Mary suggested that rather than use “academic excellence”, say “quality education”. Amy agreed with Maria, stating that “educating children for the 21st century” is not necessarily all about facts, but how to learn. She suggested including something about being sure our children are prepared for 21st century living. Paul Murphy agreed with Maya. He is not concerned with “academic excellence” missing because the words are overused these days and it is not good for kids. He wants to do something different with this Plan and not include it.

Mary concluded that the Superintendent will take this feedback and reconsider the proposal, with the intent to vote at the next meeting. Because it is a long range plan, she is fine if it takes a few more meetings for the Committee to finalize.

9. **Office Support Association (OSA) Update** – *Marie Altieri*

OSA recently held an election and it was decided that the OSA unit will go forward as the collective bargaining unit for those employees. There is a 7 day waiting period until the decision is final. There is a Memorandum of Agreement that will be in the next School Committee packet and a vote to be taken on 11/3/16.

10. **Subcommittee Reports**

- 10.1. Budget – *next meeting is 10/26/16 – Maria Neyland – no report*
- 10.2. Policy - Consent Agenda: *SECOND READINGS – **VOTE** - Brigid Bieber*
 - 10.2.1. Entry Intending Harm, File: EBBC and –R
 - 10.2.2. Threats to Safety, File: EBBD
 - 10.2.3. Emergency Plans, File: EBC
 - 10.2.4. Bomb Threats, File: EBCC
 - 10.2.5. Evacuations, File: EBCCA
 - 10.2.6. Building Security and Access, File: ECA and –R (new)

Brigid Bieber read the title of each of the policies in the Consent Agenda for the Committee. None of the policies were held.

Paul Murphy moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the consent agenda of policies as proposed.

- 10.3. Outreach (including PTO Co-chairs) – *10/19/16 meeting - Kristina Rychlik*

11. School Committee Member Reports

- 11.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy*
 - 11.1.1. Materials from 10/13/16 meeting
 - 11.1.2. Acton 3-Board Meeting scheduled for November 15, 2016 at 6:30 p.m.
- 11.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – Meeting on 10/25/16 - *Mary Brolin*
- 11.3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT) – *Mary Brolin*
 - 11.3.1. Agenda for 10/28/16
- 11.4. Acton Finance Committee – *Amy Krishnamurthy*

The Point of View (POV) document will be sent to School Committee before our next meeting so comments can be brought to the 3 Board Meeting.
- 11.5. Acton Board of Selectmen – *Eileen Zhang*

A company is going to move into the Nagog Office Park. Morrison Farm use is being discussed.
- 11.6. Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update – *Diane Baum*

Last night Belmont voted to withdraw from the Region. Diane thinks it means all towns will need to vote to approve the withdrawal but it is unclear at this time. She will confirm.

12. Recommendation to Accept Regional PTSO Grant to RJGJHS – VOTE – *Glenn Brand*

Kathleen Neville moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to accept this gift with gratitude.

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

- 13.1. Interschool Council meeting on 10/19/16 – Some councils are still being formed so not everyone was there but it was a good discussion. Dr. Brand highlighted the Superintendent's goals, the Master Plan and Challenge Success.
- 13.2. School Committee Liaisons to our Schools
Maria asked for clarification about the expectations for liaisons going to events during the day/evening, as well as fundraisers, and more. Dr. Brand said it is up to the liaison and the Principal to decide whatever works, no set expectations. Mary suggested that it is whatever is the best use of your time. Maria asked Glenn to communicate this to the principals as well.
- 13.3. Superintendent Email to all Families re Resources in Support of Student Health and Well-Being
- 13.4. MA Association of Regional Schools (MARS) vote regarding Charter School Cap

14. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 14.1. FY17 No School/Delayed Opening/Emergency Release Procedures & Memo
- 14.2. Change to Members of the Board of Advisors of the OPEB Trust Fund Memo
- 14.3. Family Learning Series: Denise Pope, PhD speaking on "The Well-Balanced Student" on Tuesday, November 8 at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Auditorium

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda, list of warrants

NEXT MEETINGS:

November 3 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (packet posted October 28)

November 9 – ABRSD Master Plan Study Report Community Presentation at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Auditorium