



**Acton-Boxborough
Joint/Regional/Acton Public School
Committee Meetings**

March 4, 2010

**7:00 pm
at the
R.J. Grey Junior High Library**

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 4, 2010
7:00 pm Joint Executive Session
7:30 pm Joint Open Meeting
Followed by AB Regional Meeting
Followed by APS Meeting

AGENDA

I. APS/AB JOINT MEETING – EXECUTIVE SESSION (7:00)

APS/AB JOINT OPEN MEETING begins

II. CALL TO ORDER

III. CHAIRPERSON’S INTRODUCTION

IV. STATEMENT OF WARRANT AND APPROVAL OF JOINT, AB, and APS
MINUTES OF 2/4/10 and 2/25/10 (addendum)

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

VI. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Director of Finance Search Committee Update – *Marie Altieri*
2. FY’10 Budget Update – *Steve Mills*
3. Health Insurance Trust Report – *John Petersen*
4. FY’11 Budget Update – *Steve Mills*

APS is suspended – AB OPEN MEETING begins

5. Recommendation to Approve Revised FY’11 ABRSD Budget and Assessments –
VOTE – *Steve Mills (distributed at meeting)*
6. Corporate Sponsorship Update

VII. NEW BUSINESS

1. Recommendation re: ABRSD Participation in School Choice, 2010-2011 – **VOTE** –
Steve Mills
Motion: To participate in the state’s School Choice program for 2010-11 by only accepting siblings of existing Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Choice students, and current 6th grade Choice students from the Blanchard School in Boxborough who will be entering R.J. Grey Junior High School in grade 7.

2. Recommendation to Approve ABRHS International Trip to China, June 26 – July 14, 2010 – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
3. Freshman Orientation Proposal Discussion – *Steve Mills*

VIII. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

1. ABRHS Information
 - a. Discipline Report
2. RJGJHS Information
 - a. Discipline Report
 - b. R.J. Grey Project Wellness – March 10 at Merrimack College
3. FY'10 Monthly ABRSD Financial Reports (*addendum*)
 - a. Object Summary
 - b. SPED Financial
4. ABRSD ELL Student Population – March 1, 2010
5. Spring Athletic Coaches (*addendum*)
6. Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards/Youth Art Month in Worcester
7. Invitation to Staff 20-Year Chair Ceremony – March 24, 5 pm, Maynard Country Club
8. 10th Annual Robert Creeley Award –March 16, 7:30 pm, ABRHS Auditorium
9. Parent Emails re: budget cuts and funding
10. PowerSchool Cost-saving Initiatives – *Margaret Murray*
11. Article from Boston Globe West, 2/28/10 : *More Towns Seeking Sponsors, Ads to Balance Books*

AB MEETING is adjourned – APS MEETING continues

IX. **APS UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

1. Acton Finance Committee Update
2. Recommendation to Approve FY' 11 Acton Public School Budget – **VOTE**– *Steve Mills (distributed at meeting)*
3. Superintendent's Update

X. **EXECUTIVE SESSION** (*if needed*)

XI. **NEXT MEETINGS:**

March 18 – 7:30 pm, APS SC meeting at Douglas School
 March 25 – 7:30 pm, AB SC meeting, followed by APS meeting, Jr High Library (serves as April meetings)
 April 1 – Acton Pre-Town Meeting Meeting, 7 pm, Acton Town Hall
 April 5 – Acton Town Meeting begins
 May 10 – Boxborough Town Meeting begins

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District					
School Choice Projections					
FY08-FY12					
	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11	FY12
# of Students *	70				
Grade 12		27	21	11	7
Grade 11		22	11	7	6
Grade 10		11	7	6	2
Grade 9 ** Sibling Projections of present Choice		6	6	2	5
Total ABRHS Choice		66	45	26	20
Boxborough Choice Grade 8			0	2	6
Boxborough Choice Grade 7			2	6	5
Total Choice 7-12			47	34	31
(*) Per DOE Rept					
(**) Sibling Choice Projection Report					
(****) Choice:Boxborough					
Beginning Balance	\$ 205,578	\$ 363,802	\$ 340,733	\$ 219,514	\$ 11,019
Budget (^)	\$ (243,960)	\$ (272,649)	\$ (389,925)	\$ (397,405)	\$ (419,335)
Budget Additional 2.0 FTE Teachers		\$ (95,600)		\$ -	-
Income from Choice	\$ 402,183	\$ 345,180	\$ 268,706	\$ 188,910	166,555
Proj Balance 6/30	\$ 363,801	\$ 340,733	\$ 219,514	\$ 11,019	\$ (241,761)

March 5, 2010

Mitchell D. Chester, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Commissioner Chester:

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District School Committee voted at its March 4, 2010 meeting to participate in the state's School Choice program for 2010-11 by only accepting siblings of existing Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Choice students, and current 6th grade Choice students from the Blanchard School in Boxborough who will be entering R.J. Grey Junior High School in grade 7.

The Committee will review the decision (for the 2011-2012 school year) in March 2011.

Of course we understand that all Choice students currently in our schools will remain with us until they graduate, or decide to leave.

Sincerely,

Stephen Mills, Ed.D.

To: Superintendent Steve Mills and members of the School Committee
From: Rixin Li

Dear Superintendent Mills and members of the School Committee,

The World Language Department Chair Claire Dix at the high school and I are excited about the "Experience Chinese Language and Culture" summer camp we plan to offer to Chinese II AE students at the high school in the summer of 2010. A group of students of similar ages from Acton Chinese Language School will also join ABRHS students at the summer camp. The camp will be hosted by the well known Beijing Language University (website: www.blu.edu.cn). This is a wonderful educational opportunity for our students to spend three weeks in China, attending customized Chinese language and culture classes, interacting with local high school students, participating in daily sports, art/crafts, and performance activities, volunteering in social services, and visiting many tourist sites they have studied about in Beijing, Tianjin, and Xian. Our students will also have the option of spending a night or two in a host family whom they will get to know from interactions with local high school students during the first week of the camp. In addition to many obvious linguistic advantages our students will develop through everyday living interactions, they will also achieve a deeper cultural understanding and appreciation for the language that they are studying.

The main camp site will be on the campus of Beijing Language University. One additional camp site in Tianjing was also considered initially. A parent volunteer of ACLS visited both camp sites in November 2009. He has spoken with the representatives of each camp and has discussed the needs and expectations of our HS students. After he came back from the visits, a meeting was held among administrators of ACLS, parent volunteers, and myself to compare program offerings, logistics, insurance, and costs of the two potential camp options. It was decided, at that point, that the program specially tailored for us by Beijing Language University would best fit the expectations and the needs of our students.

We expect about 10 students from the high school Chinese II AE class will participate in the summer camp program. They will be joined by another 10 students from ACLS at the summer camp. ACLS students are organized by Acton Chinese Language School. During the summer camp program, two chaperones, one from the high school, and one from ACLS will stay with the students at all times, in addition to camp counselors from BLU. The high school Chinese language program and many other programs have been strongly supported by many local communities including the Chinese community and ACLS. Many students of Chinese II AE participated in ACLS sponsored activities such as Chinese Music Night, China Day, Chinese New Year Party, and listened to an invited ACLS parent speak about Chinese medicine. We believe that the joint summer camp will strengthen our relationship with the local community and ACLS. Our high school students will also benefit from close interactions with their peer native Chinese speakers during the camp.

The proposed dates for our travel are from June 26 to July 16. The cost of the program will include all camp activities, food and lodging, transportation costs for all field trips and cultural events, as well as insurance related to the trip. We anticipate that the cost of the entire trip for our students will be in the vicinity of \$3000 to \$3200 (camp fee of \$1580 and airfare/visa fee of \$1400). Naturally, discretionary funds vary greatly among individuals. A proposed itinerary and camp schedule are included.

We hope that this trip meets with your approval. We are very eager to begin our official planning.

Sincerely,

Rixin Li
Chinese Teacher, W. L. Department, ABRHS

Claire K Dix

To: ABRHS School Committee
From: Alixe Callen
Re: Freshman Orientation proposal
Date: March 1, 2010

Attached, please find a proposal from our Transition to High School committee, which was formed this year in response to feedback we have received that the transition to high school can be overwhelming to incoming ninth grade students.

This committee, led by Ryan Steege (history teacher) and Todd Chicko (counselor), has proposed that we alter our start-of-the-year schedule to provide more support for these incoming students. Please see the attached proposal for details.

I support this proposal wholeheartedly as it is in the best interest of students.

Freshman Orientation Day

Proposal:

As we have looked more closely at the school during the NEASC process we believe there is an opportunity to enhance our Freshman Orientation and make it a more powerful and positive experience for our incoming freshman. In the past orientation has been held before the school year starts and is a day where the counselors have a large number of students to attend to. We would like to propose a Freshman Orientation Day on the first scheduled day of school (Tuesday, August 31st) just for the freshmen. The students present for this day would be the freshman along with approximately 150-200 junior and senior volunteers. The teachers would also be here providing a number of different services for the students. The teachers would either be with students in the classroom if they teach freshman or helping with a variety of tasks throughout the day. We believe that helping the freshman adjust to the complexities of the school is something we all have an interest in and therefore this gives us an opportunity to help them in a more comprehensive way. We believe that this will provide freshman to AB a much more positive experience as they become a part of this very large school community. We also believe it provides a number of positives for the school in general and for the juniors and seniors.

Educational Objectives:

1. Assist students in transition to larger more complex school.
2. Promote enthusiasm and camaraderie among classmates and for ABRHS.
3. Assist students in their understanding of school procedures.
4. Promote school spirit.
5. Ease stress of first day through mentoring.
6. Assist incoming freshman with moving around the building.
7. Promote leadership of upperclassman.
8. Promote interconnectedness of classes.
9. Promote strong relationship between students, teachers, and administration.
10. Connect with NEASC mission statement and further the social emotional development of our students.

Schedule for the Day

7:15 – 7:30	Volunteer Check In
7:30 – 7:55	Freshman Class Meeting
7:55 – 8:15	Move to Homerooms/ Check Lockers...Teachers/ Ambassadors/ Senior Volunteers out to help
8:15 – 8:35	Homeroom
8:40 – 9:00	Period 1
9:05 – 9:25	Period 2
9:30 – 9:50	Period 3
9:55 – 10:15	Period 4
10:20 – 11:05	LUNCH
11:10 – 11:20	Period 5
11:25 – 11:45	Period 6
11:50 – 12:10	Period 7
12:15 – 12:35	Period 8
12:40 – 12:55	Homeroom
1:00 – 2:00	Outdoor Leadership Activities
2:00 – 2:18	Wrap-up/Dismissal/Departure

To: Stephen Mills
From: Larry Dorey
Re: Discipline Report for February, 2010
Date: 2/28/2010

There were 26 discipline referrals to the administration during the month of February. This total is down from 28 last year. 3 students were suspended this month, while 6 students were suspended during February, 2009.

Suspensions

Referral	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Abusive/Obscene Language		1			
Alcohol Use	2				
C.H. Drugs	1				
Disrespectful				1	
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior	2				
Drug Use			2		
Harassment					1
Insubordination					2
Leaving School Grounds			4		
Non Compliance with School Rules	2				
Physical Aggression		1		2	
Stealing	4		2		
Truancy Issues			2	3	
Total	11	2	10	6	3

A list of all infractions for the month of February appears on the backside of this page.

c: Alixe Callen

Other Infractions

Infraction	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Abusive/Obscene Language	1	1			
Academic Integrity				3	
Alcohol Use	2				
Bus Discipline Issue	1				
C.H. Alcohol			1		5
C.H. Drugs	2	1			
Computer Use	1				
Disrespectful	5	1	2	4	1
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior	6	6	1	7	7
Drug Offense				1	
Drug Use			2		
Forgery				1	
Harassment					5
Leaving School Grounds	4	8	17	2	2
Non Compliance w/school rules	3	1			2
Other		1		2	4
Out of school issue	3				
Physical Aggression				2	
Stealing	4		3		
Tardy to Class	1			1	
Threatening		1			
Truancy		2	1	5	
Total	33	22	27	28	26

R.J. Grey Junior High School

To: Steve Mills
From: Allison Warren and Andrew Shen
Re: Discipline Report for February 2010
Date: March 1, 2010

There were 28 discipline referrals/concerns (including requests from teachers for assistance) reported to the Administration during the month of February. There were 9 suspensions this past month, compared to 3 last year during the same period.

	<u>Feb- 06</u>	<u>Feb- 07</u>	<u>Feb- 08</u>	<u>Feb- 09</u>	<u>Feb- 10</u>
<i>Total Discipline Referrals Reported</i>	<i>36</i>	<i>56</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>42</i>	<i>28</i>

	<u>Feb- 06</u>	<u>Feb- 07</u>	<u>Feb- 08</u>	<u>Feb- 09</u>	<u>Feb- 10</u>
Total Suspensions	7	1	2	3	9
Alcohol Use					
Defacing property/vandalism					
Drug-related incident					
Fighting	1				1
Harassment (non-sexual)				2	4
Inappropriate/disruptive/disrespectful behavior					1
Physical aggression	5	1	1		
Sexual harassment			1		
Stealing					
Threatening	1	1		1	3

	<u>Feb- 06</u>	<u>Feb- 07</u>	<u>Feb- 08</u>	<u>Feb- 09</u>	<u>Feb- 10</u>
Total Other Infractions	29	55	47	39	19
abusive language/profanity	1		1		
alcohol use/possession					
bus discipline	1			1	
Academic Integrity	1				



class/school truancies		4	3	3	4
computer violation	3			1	
disruptive behavior (classroom, cafeteria, hallway)	14	38	23	17	9
harassment (non-sexual)/bullying/teasing	1	2	6	1	1
non-compliance with school rules	6	6	1	1	1
out of school issue				4	
physical aggression	1		5	1	1
sexual harassment		1	2	1	1
stealing					
threatening	1	1	2		
uncooperative/disrespectful behavior		3	4	4	2

The referrals/concerns generally were quickly resolved and no further intervention was required.

ELL STUDENT POPULATION
 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
 March 1, 2010

Category	Final Total as of 2/1/2010	Additions	Subtractions	Current Total as of 3/1/2010
RJG JHS	10	0	0	10
ABRHS	11	0	0	11
ABRSD TOTALS	21	0	0	21

From:  **Diana Woodruff**

Monday, February 22, 2010 10:39:59 AM  

Subject: AB Schoalstic Art Award Wlnners

To:  **Stephen Mills**  **Susan Horn**  **Marie Altieri**

Cc:  **Alexandra Callen**  **Craig Hardimon**  **Beth Petr**

2010 Boston GlobeScholastics Art Awards

The following 24 Acton-Boxborough students received awards in the 2010 Boston Globe Scholastics Art Awards competition. Gold and SilverKey award winners were recognized at awards ceremonies at the John HancockBuilding, on Sunday, February 14. Gold and Silver Key winning work is onexhibit at the Massachusetts State Transportation Building through March 19.

1. **Chloe Bulpin, "TheChambered Nautilus", Printmaking - Gold Key – Gr. 11**
2. **Sophie Carreras,"Chasing Wind", Movie Poster /Design – Honorable Mention –Gr. 12**
3. **Kathleen Cheng,"Still-Space," Drawing - Silver Key – Gr. 11**
4. **Ryan Cullen,"Cornfield", Photography – Silver Key – Gr. 11**
5. **Kelly Donovan, "Extension",Photography – Silver Key – Gr. 11**
6. **KC Faulkner, "Overpass", Photography –Honorable Mention – Gr. 10**
7. **Suwichak Finneran,"Line Boot", Drawing – Silver Key – Gr. 12**
8. **Isaac Guilmet, "Daffodil Bath," Photography –Honorable Mention – Gr. 11**
9. **Clara Hong, "Self-Portrait", Painting – Silver Key-Gr. 10**
10. **Hannah Hong,"Dominoes", Photography - Silver Key, Gr. 12**
11. **ElizabethKurenkov, "Alien Animation," Storyboard/Comic Art - Honorable Mention – Gr. 12**
12. **Sunny Li,"Self-Portrait", Painting – Gold Key – Gr. 11**
13. **Sunny Li, "PoPo",Drawing – Honorable Mention – Gr. 11**
14. **Ashley Lin,"Hello Stairs", Drawing – Honorable Mention – Gr. 10**
15. **Shansi Zhang,"Step by Step", Drawing - Gold Key – Gr. 12**
16. **ElizabethBellotti, "French Artist", Mixed Media – Honorable Mention –Gr. 7**
17. **Charlotte Bendig,"Self-Portrait", Drawing – Honorable Mention – Gr. 8**
18. **Lily Blackshaw,"Still Life in Chocolate", Drawing – Silver Key – Gr. 7**
19. **Sophie Brown,"Untitled", Mixed Media - Honorable Mention – Gr. 7**
20. **Kevin Fang,"Untitled", Drawing - Honorable Mention – Gr. 7**
21. **Corinne Johnson,"Self-Portrait," Drawing – Silver Key – Gr. 8**
22. **Alice Kazberouk,"From the Other Side", Mixed Media – Honorable Mention –Gr.7**
23. **Nicole Robertson,"At First Sight", Mixed Media – Silver Key – Gr. 7**
24. **Claudia Weaver,"Untitled", Mixed Media – Silver Key – Gr. 7**

*The Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
and the
Acton Education Association
cordially invite you
to attend a reception to honor
the following staff
who have given service to the
Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
for twenty years.*

★ ★ ★

Susan Atwater-Rhodes Kerry Byrne Robin Kynoch

Virginia Laughlin Jane Link Stanley Nelson

William Seymour Wendy Tompkins

★ ★ ★

March 24, 2010

5:00 p.m.

\$15.00

Cash Bar

*Maynard Country Club
Rt. 27, Maynard*

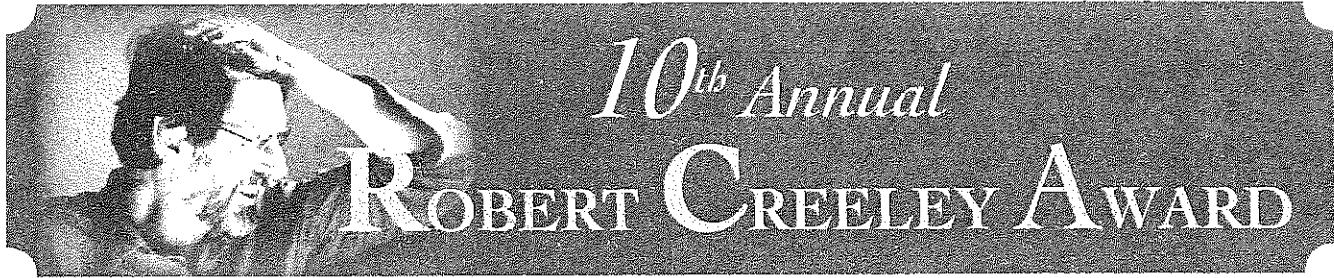
R.S.V.P. by March 17th

Judy Hause

c/o

Conant School

(Please make checks payable to the Acton Education Association)



Presenting

Pulitzer Prize-Winning Poet

Gary
Snyder



Photo by Stephen Lee Hoard Publishing

3rd Annual Helen Creeley

Student Poetry Prize Winners

Andy Vo, Boston Latin

Melanie Wang, Wayland High School



This program is supported in part by grants from the Chelmsford, Concord, and Acton-Boxborough local Cultural Councils, local agencies supported by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency.

Tuesday, March 16 7:30pm

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium

36 Charter Road

Acton, MA

Admission is free and open to the public.

----- Original message -----

Date: Tue, 26 Jan 2010 11:06:48 -0500
From: Keith Linda Jones
Subject: cuts in jr high
To: abrsc@acton-ma.gov>

Dear School Committee:

We are hearing about proposed cuts to jr high services including classroom teachers and sports teams. We support smaller class sizes **above all** and would like to have our daughter in classes with far less than 25 students. 20 students is the maximum a teacher should have at the 7th grade level. Please vote to keep the 7th grade 1/2 team.

We also would be very disappointed to see school sports teams eliminated.

Thank you, Linda Jones, :

----- Original message -----

Date: Mon, 01 Feb 2010 09:34:56 -0500
From: Coleen Phillimore <
Subject: Opinion about police officers in schools
To: s _____ <abrsc@acton-ma.gov>

To the Acton Boxborough School Committee,

I am a resident of Acton and have sons in the 10th and 8th grades. I do not believe we need to fund 3 policeman \$70,000 each in the schools. One part time officer is probably enough for the DARE program. I strongly believe that police presence in the school is detrimental to our school community. Police presence increases "zero-tolerance" policies that increases criminalization of school incidents. This criminalization both hurt the student population as a whole, cost individuals, school and state a lot of money. There is no record of school arrests that is publicly available, but I have direct personal experience in this matter and have talked to other parents who have as well. Saving \$140k for two police would save more than that in state costs for DA, juvenile judges, defense attorneys who bill \$175/hour, and personal pain and suffering. If there is a concern with parents on school safety, a much better funding would be another school counsellor who would actually get to know the students before arresting them.

Thank you for considering this letter.

Coleen Phillimore

Acton, MA 01720

Date: Fri, 05 Feb 2010 14:22:15 -0500
From: Heather Harer
Subject: 2/4/10 meeting
To: <apsc@acton-ma.gov>, <abrsc@acton-ma.gov>

School Committee members,

No doubt there are difficult decisions to be made during this budget process. However, asking the obvious questions year after year and over and over just to "justify" spending money seems like a really poor use of everyone's time.

I understand that financially you may need to make a decision to cut the half team. Everyone in town, including the students could tell you the pros and cons of that. Not too difficult. In an ideal world smaller class sizes benefit every single child that walks our school halls. The tougher question that some of you keep coming back to is what is that "magical" number. The answer is easy, we are almost twice that number. Studies show that the ideal ratio is about 15/1. We are headed towards doubling that number. So, to ask the obvious question of "what is the educational impact on the students", is purely frustrating and obvious. It is not as though we are nearing the 20/1 ratio and we are questioning a cut off point. We are well over it and if you spend any time with your own kids or in the schools this is obvious.

More students per teacher = less time for students to get any one on one time.
What don't we understand about this....how much more data do we need???

Our educational values presentation last Thursday showed us that the stress level of on young students is great and getting even greater. It gave us information that showed parents and teachers are struggling with workloads and balancing the "whole child". What more do we need? More DATA?? We are talking about kids here, just look at them; they can tell you....we don't need more studies to prove it. It is purely COMMON SENSE. The facts have been in front of us for years. However, if we need to make cuts, let's do it. Just don't keep running staff and faculty into the ground to hear the same thing.

Last night's conversation and questions to Craig about "hearing about the impact on students" was insulting....that is who we are talking about. What more can the teachers tell us, we've heard for 10 years that our large class sizes have significant negative impact on all of our students. AB and APS is at the top of every chart on class size...to push it higher and ask what is the disadvantage to kids is frustrating.

If tough decisions need to be made based on finances, then make them, but don't keep asking what is the impact....we already know what that is.

K. Suess stood up and spoke the words that many of our community members are asking. She isn't afraid to state the obvious...you should listen to her words.

Why do we ask our professional staff (specifically Principals) to give reports if the information that they are reporting on isn't good enough for you???? Regardless of the topic and issue, when the Principals stand in front and give their recommendation on issues, many of you don't pay attention to their professional opinion, question it, and vote against it. How much longer do you think they will stick around and do this??? It seems to me we need to start respecting, trusting and depending on our talented professionals. We pay them good money to do their jobs....now let them do it.

Heather

To: Steve Mills
 From: Margaret Murray
 Subject: PowerSchool Cost-saving Initiatives

Date: 2/23/2010

A few weeks ago I attended the SC Saturday budget session. My reasons for attending were two-fold; as a SC member in my town, I felt it would be helpful to understand how other committees deliberated their budgets, and I had missed the opportunity to attend the superintendent's previous budget sessions. When technology was discussed, several members commented about the negative impact of budget cuts on district technology initiatives. I thought that you might be interested in some of the PowerSchool cost-saving and data-related initiatives that have been implemented during this fiscal year. We plan to continue to build on our technical capability and will seek other ways to use the district's investment in this software to find automated solutions to save the district time and money.

Implementation of Web-based Gradebook (Sept. 2009)

Problem: The PowerSchool client-based gradebook software (PowerGrade) was not user friendly and fraught with problems; teacher data files often needed to be restored, the software would freeze when large class sizes were loaded, and software upgrades required that teachers bring their laptops to TRC for updated software.

Solution: We updated to PowerTeacher Web-based gradebook in August. A study group of 16 teachers was formed in the spring 2009 to test our district-originated training documentation. Dozens of training sessions were conducted for JH and HS teachers in the fall and our transition to the web-based gradebook was seamless. Teacher feedback has been very positive and, after the initial training, support time has been reduced and upgrades are part of the PowerSchool installation process.

JH Interim Report Cards (Dec. 2009 - March 2010)

Problem: At the mid-term point each quarter, teachers completed a hand-written, single page, single-subject interim report for any student whose current average was C- or lower. This was a time-intensive process for teachers and the Counseling office that had to sort hundreds of interims for mailing. Counseling also spent a considerable amount of time assembling statistics on reports sent.

Solution: In Q2, custom PowerSchool screens were created enabling teachers to enter interim report information. Instead of printing/collating 738 individual subjects reports, the JH produced 338 reports, pre-formatted for window envelopes. While this solution was an improvement over the manual system, it has been refined in Q3 to limit the report to only those subjects where the student would receive an interim. This change will reduce the report from two pages to a single page.

Creating Individual Transcript Files (Feb. 2010)

Problem: The HS needed to produce transcript files for their students four times a year. Producing individual files with our present software required the administrative assistant to execute a single print command for each .pdf file.

Solution: A solution was devised that combined Adobe Pro and a renaming script to generate a .pdf transcript file for each student. This solution saves the HS 56 hours a year.

PowerSchool Training Too Costly (Aug. 2009)

Problem: Tuition at PowerSchool University costs \$2,000 per year (excluding travel and lodging) and provides training for a single employee.

Solution: Working as a member of the PowerSchool user group (PSUG-MA), we organized a cost effective, locally produced 3-day training program in Shrewsbury this summer and were able to attract nationally recognized PowerSchool trainers. A half dozen AB employees attended the low-cost training (\$150 each for three days). Our group has since incorporated to provide low-cost training to districts. Two members of the HS team recently participated in that training as a first step to automating student course selection.

Posting Douglas Progress Reports on Line (Feb. 2010)

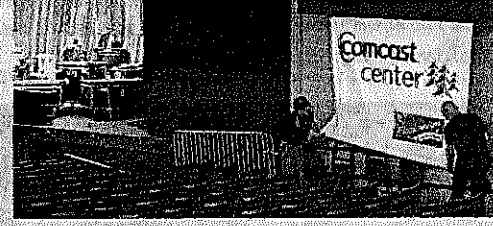
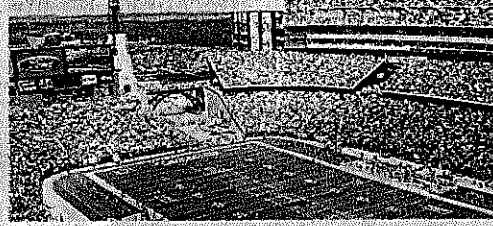
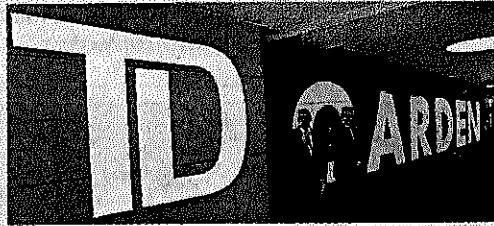
Problem: The Douglas school principal wanted to use the parent portal to post progress reports. The progress reports exceeded the 32K PowerSchool limitation and the “insertfile” workaround construct does not function on the parent portal. Since progress reports are grade-specific, we also needed the capability to control the display based on grade level.

Solution: Convert the PowerSchool progress report into an .html file and customize the code to display the grade-appropriate report card. This enhancement was introduced in February.

In addition to engineering technology solutions to automate administrative tasks, the Management Information Specialist provides data analysis services to principals and building department leaders to disaggregate the MCAS Student Growth Percentile scores, enable them to target interventions, and/or evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum initiatives. Recent examples of data services are analysis of MCAS framework by subgroup, an analysis of the differences between the MCAS scores, Student Growth Percentile and final year grades of students in standard math and override groups.

Other data services are provided to support grant applications, community requests and applications for special acknowledgement such as the Blue Ribbon award.

Thank you for the opportunity to share these cost-saving initiatives!



More towns seeking sponsors, ads to balance books

By Megan McKee
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Ripping a page from the playbook of professional sports teams, several area communities are looking at offering sponsorships and naming rights for everything from trash trucks to schools.

In Natick, officials have talked to the same company that's helped the NFL broker deals with corporate sponsors about how to bring clean-up bags for dog owners back to the town common.

"We're taking a creative approach to this," said Natick selectman Joshua Ostroff, who heads a committee charged with finding cash for the town, which is facing a \$2.6 million deficit next fiscal year.

The committee has talked informally with Chicago-based IEG LLC, which advised the Dallas Cowboys and Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim on how to secure corporate sponsorships. Ostroff said Natick could employ the same

strategy for endeavors ranging from public garden maintenance to big-ticket items like playing fields or the gymnasium at a proposed community center.

For some communities, the lure of corporate help, once seen as the province of huge arenas and professional sports — think TD Garden, the Comcast Center, and Gillette Stadium — is an option that can't be ignored in an era when tax revenues don't match what communities owe their employees, retirees, and vendors.

Like Natick, both Newton and Hopkinton are facing budget deficits in the millions. Hopkinton last summer signed a two-year deal for advertising rights at its high school indoor athletic complex, while Newton will consider sponsorship and naming rights for its new high school within the next couple of months.

"We kind of have to find innovative ways to raise money," said Kurt Kusiak,

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BILL GREENE/GLOBE STAFF

Corporate cash helped Hopkinton build athletic fields at EMC² Park after the town took a tip from sports and entertainment venues like (above, from left) TD Garden, Gillette Stadium, and the Comcast Center.

More towns seeking sponsorships, ads to boost sagging bu

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chairman of the Newton School Committee. The new Newton North High School is scheduled to open in September, and the nearly \$200 million building could hold a treasure trove of naming rights possibilities. Before any decisions are made, said Kusiak, the School Committee must determine which parts of the school are available, and then decide whether to pursue the initiative.

But Kusiak said the committee is open to the idea, especially since preliminary numbers show a \$6 million deficit for the school system next year.

"Any way you look at it, it's not good," he said.

Two years ago, then-Hopkinton School Committee member David Stoldt, who works in finance and assists start-up companies, did a comprehensive study of advertising and sponsorship options at schools by looking at national case studies. His report, published online, has prompted people from Georgia and North Carolina to call him about his research, which included revenue estimates.

Stoldt estimated the most lucrative school initiative would be bus advertising, which could bring in \$24,000 to \$48,000 per year, while selling naming rights for things like the high school auditorium would bring in less than \$10,000 per year.

But these estimates are unique to Hopkinton, he said, since rates are directly linked to the number of people who view the sponsored items and ads. No matter what, towns and cities probably won't be closing their deficits with million-dollar deals, he said. But by adding numerous small deals, communities can accomplish smaller results such as keeping a half-time teacher's aide or buying new curriculum materials.

The school system decided that scoreboard advertising was one of the most feasible options. Hopkinton-based Phipps Insurance Agency is now paying \$4,000 per year for a sign on the indoor athletic complex's scoreboard, said Stoldt.

Hopkinton was also able to secure multiple private donations for a public playing field, and named the field for one of the biggest donors, EMC Corp. Stoldt said though this type of funding

deal isn't common, it's doable for many communities.

In Natick, Ostroff said the town would ease into any program it pursues since the town doesn't have the resources to devote staff or hire expensive consultants to secure the deals. And he stressed that the town isn't going to be plastered with logos.

The Natick School Committee made sure that plans for a proposed new \$89 million high school would include opportunities for private and corporate contributions.

"We are certainly open to direct contributions, sponsorships, naming rights, long-term lease commitments, or donations in-kind of specific needed materials or equipment," said chairman Dirk Coburn. "Some efforts . . . are under development or in a 'quiet phase' of solicitation."

On March 30, Natick residents will vote on whether to approve the high school project as well as a \$10 million community center.

Bill Chipps, a spokesman for IEG LLC, the sponsorship company contacted by Natick officials, said they've seen a big increase in the number of towns and

cities interested in corporate dollars or "municipal marketing," as the company calls it. He said San Diego has been at the forefront of the movement, and remains a model for other communities.

The city's website has a section devoted to corporate partnerships, where visitors can see how Cardiac Science is San Diego's official automatic external defibrillator partner and Pepsi Bottling Group is the official beverage provider. Corporate dollars have brought the city \$16 million since 1999, when the program began, according to the website.

In 2005, Medford started running exterior advertisements on its school buses but that lasted only a couple of years, said Superintendent Roy E. Belson.

"It's such virgin territory that you have to be careful," said Belson. He said the program brought in about \$40,000 to \$50,000 per year, but the city dropped it when interest dwindled and officials realized maintaining the program was difficult.

"It's a lot of work and it's distracting," said Belson.

Chipps said one of the biggest difficulties for towns and cities pursuing corporate dollars is selling the idea to resi-

ing budgets

dents. And some say there's good reason.

Josh Golin of Boston-based Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood said schools should remain devoid of advertising.

"It's a tragedy that schools are even being put in this position," he said. "Clearly schools recognize that there's a downside to this, because they don't do it in better economic times."

But he said that's no excuse for allowing corporate influence in the schools.

"You're exploiting a captive audience of students," said Golin. "The purpose of education is to raise critical thinkers. . . . Advertising has been linked to the problems facing kids today, including obesity, materialism, and violence."

As communities consider corporate dollars, they'll have to confront these issues head-on. Stoldt said there was opposition in Hopkinton a few years ago when the idea first came up. But since then, protest has died down.

"I really think we've become numb to a lot of the influences of the media," he said. "People get it."

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