

**Acton Public  
School Committee Meeting  
November 18, 2010  
7:30 p.m.  
at the  
Merriam School Library**

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Library

Merriam School/Parker Damon Building

November 18, 2010

7:30 p.m.

### AGENDA

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER
- 2.0 CHAIRPERSON'S INTRODUCTION
- 3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES of October 21, 2010 (addendum) and November 4, 2010 and STATEMENT OF WARRANT
- 4.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
- 5.0 EDUCATION REPORT - Merriam School – Ed Kaufman, Principal
  - 5.1 Preventative Anti-Bullying Programs – Open Circle
  - 5.2 Assistant Principal Update
- 6.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS
  - 6.1 ALG Report – *Xuan Kong*
    - a. Meeting packet and draft minutes 10/28/10
    - b. Agenda, 11/18/10
  - 6.2 Acton Finance Committee Report – *Xuan Kong*
  - 6.3 BOS Update – *Herman Kabakoff*
  - 6.4 FY'11 and FY'12 Budget Update – *Steve Mills*
    - a. FY'12 Operating Budget Assumptions/Key Decisions
    - b. FY'12 Revenue and Expenditures Assumptions
    - c. Budget Timeline
  - 6.5 Health Trust Report – *John Petersen*
  - 6.6 Policy Revisions
    - a. Recommendation to Approve Revised School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention (File: JICFB), Exhibit (File: JICFB-E), Plan (File: JICFB-R) – **FIRST READING** – *Liza Huber*
    - b. Recommendation to Approve Revised School Committee Policy on the School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting (File: BDA) – **FIRST READING** – *Steve Mills*
    - c. Recommendation to Approve Revised School Committee Policy on the Kindergarten and First Grade Entrance (File: JEB) – **FIRST READING** – *Steve Mills (addendum)*
- 7.0. NEW BUSINESS
  - 7.1 2011-2012 School Calendar Process Update – *Steve Mills*
    - a. 4 proposed Calendars – start before/after Labor Day, with/without Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah
    - b. DOE list of holiday observances in MA

- c. Parent/Staff Surveys (*addendum*)
- 7.2 School Committee Policy Subcommittee Update
  - a. APS FY11 Non Resident Tuition Rate/Exchange Students
  - b. Field Trip Policy (File: IJOA) and Student Travel (File: JJH)
  - c. Long Range Planning Subcommittee
- 7.3 Correspondence from/to the Community
  - a. "Use of reserves", *Ann Budner*
  - b. "So many half days", *Yongjiang Liang*
  - c. "Public information and participation", *John Petersen*
- 8.0. FOR YOUR INFORMATION
  - 8.1 ESL Student Enrollment Report – November 1
  - 8.2 FY'11 Monthly APS Financial Reports (*addendum*)
    - a. Budget Status Summary
    - b. Budget Status Summary – Merriam
    - c. Budget Status Summary - SPED
  - 8.3 November 1, 2010 Student Enrollment Numbers/Class Size Info
  - 8.4 Report of Professional Development Day, November 2, *Deborah Bookis*
  - 8.5 Educational Technology 3 Year Plan, *Amy Bisiewicz*
  - 8.6 Links to School Newsletters:
    - Acton Public School Preschool: <http://ab.mec.edu/Preschool/index.htm>
    - Conant Crier: <http://conant.ab.mec.edu/pto/newsletter.html>
    - Douglas Digest: <http://douglas.ab.mec.edu/index.html?pto/pto>
    - Gates Gazette: <http://gates.ab.mec.edu/gazette.html>
    - McCarthy-Towne Bulletin: <http://www.mcptso.org/bulletin/>
    - Merriam Community News: <http://merriam.ab.mec.edu/newsletters.html>
- 9.0. ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE
- 10.0. NEXT MEETINGS
  - December 16, 7:30 pm APS SC at R.J. Grey Junior High School
  - December 2, 7:30 pm AB SC at R.J. Grey Junior High School
- 11.0 ADJOURNMENT

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Library  
AB Regional High School

November 4, 2010  
7:00 pm

Acton-Boxborough Regional Meeting  
Followed by Joint SC Executive Session  
Followed by APS Meeting

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*Members Present:* Mike Coppolino, Herman Kabakoff, Xuan Kong, Terry Lindgren, John Petersen  
*Members Absent:* Sharon McManus  
*Others:* Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

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The Acton Public School Committee meeting was called to order at 10:20 p.m. by John Petersen, chair. This began the Joint School Committee meeting.

Herman Kabakoff asked if we should continue as planned, given the late hour. John said that the APS meeting to follow the Executive Session would be brief.

### **JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 10:25 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED by role call:** that the **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

**YES** (Bieber, Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, Neyland, Petersen, Sabot)

This was done after Brigid Bieber declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board. She said the meeting was to discuss contract negotiations with the AEA union.

At 10:26 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED by role call:** that the **Acton Public School Committee** go into Executive Session (Joint School Committee) to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining.

**YES** (Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Lindgren, Petersen)

This was done after John Petersen declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board. He said the meeting was to discuss contract negotiations with the AEA union.

At 10:50 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee adjourned.

## **ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

The Acton Public School Committee discussion began at 10:56 pm.

### **STATEMENT OF WARRANT**

APS warrant #201109 dated 11/2/10 in the amount of \$122,738.64 was circulated for signatures and approved.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The APS Minutes of October 7, 2010 were approved as amended.

### **FY'12 APS Budget**

- Level of service
- Use of reserves
- Waterfall redux
- ALG recommendations

With the election now over, John Petersen asked for opinions on the budget assumptions and how much reserves should be used for FY12. He and Xuan Kong will take the APS Committee's opinions to the next ALG meeting.

Herman Kabakoff stated that the assumptions outlined in 6.4.a and b of the packet are good estimates to use at this time. John asked for a sense of the Committee to bring to ALG. Herman said they need ALG to see how all of the numbers come together. He thought that ALG had agreed that \$2 million in reserves would be used. Don Aicardi noted that he has used \$3 million as a placeholder. Herman doesn't think we know enough at this stage to have a clear opinion on use of reserves.

Terry Lindgren stated that the formulation is fine and that with time we will converge on the numbers. Reserves are a function of what expenditures will be. Reserves cannot be decided until we know what expenses are, so he can't express an opinion yet.

Mike Coppolino agreed and does not have an answer right now. He feels the question is too vague and tends to agree with whatever ALG is proposing right now.

Xuan asked how we define a "level service" budget. He believes an investment should be made in professional development and class size improvements. Whatever would lead to that result, that would be the budget requirement that he would advocate for, and that would drive the level of reserves to be used. He stressed that a multi year plan is needed.

Heather Harer spoke from the audience and commented on how unclear so many of the issues are right now for everyone. She urged the School Committee to give the message to ALG that whatever it takes to get what is needed for our schools, is what should be brought to the ALG table. It is not black and white. She said that the priority of the School Committee is to save every dollar for the schools and support the educational program. Tax payer relief is not as important as supporting the schools' needs in our current situation.

Herman Kabakoff disagreed and advocated for the waterfall model. The waterfall gives some relief to the tax payers and also honors the commitment that the School Committee made politically. Herman feels it will be to our advantage to support the waterfall and return back whatever the calculated amount would be.

Paul Murphy spoke from the audience and stated that by being on the School Committee, members have made a commitment to support the schools and let the Finance Committee worry about the finances.

Terry Lindgren wants John Petersen to tell ALG that the waterfall is not our model anymore and we do not want to return money to the tax payers. Xuan Kong advocated to fulfill the waterfall commitment that was made last spring. He explained it as insurance. Six months ago, the School Committee wanted to protect our education by buying an insurance policy to cover our shortfall so we didn't have to fire teachers. In exchange, he felt that the Committee agreed to pay the Town in the future, and it is wrong to change our minds now. He feels that it is about getting support behind us for the educational resources that we need.

Mike Coppolino asked if we actually have a dollar amount on this. Herman Kabakoff said that the amount doesn't really matter for this discussion. It is the principal of the commitment that is why we should agree to it.

John Petersen summed up that a variety of opinions have been expressed on the waterfall model and what was meant by the decisions made in the past. Some say it relates only to chapter 70 funding, or only this year or many other things. It falls to the public officials to say what we thought we had agreed to. The Committee could say that we made a mistake. The FinCom was divided on the waterfall model definition, including some that say it was for last year only.

It was moved, seconded and

**VOTED:** The waterfall was last year's news.

The motion lost 4 – 1. (NO: Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, Petersen and YES: Lindgren)

Lauren Rosenzweig (BOS Representative) asked for some solid numbers for the BOS to take to ALG by the end of November. John Petersen said that the vote and discussion are the input he will take to ALG.

Heather Harer spoke from the audience and asked for a better description of the waterfall model to help the community understand it. John agreed that this would be valuable, but this discussion was to get input to take to ALG. He's happy to take this up again at the next APS meeting to answer any questions. Amy Hedison spoke from the audience and said that this is an important discussion to have in front of the public, at a decent hour with a reporter there. It was almost 11:30 pm and the reporter had left. Xuan Kong pointed out that all of the waterfall discussions were in last year's public record and posted in minutes on the website.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:26 p.m.

**NEXT MEETINGS:** November 18 – 7:30 pm, APS Meeting, Merriam School Library

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

## ALG minutes October 28, 2010 (draft)

Present: Bart Wendell, Facilitator; Lauren Rosenzweig Morton, Mike Gowing (BoS); Xuan Kong, John Petersen (SC); Mary Ann Ashton, (FC) Dore Hunter (MMT); Steve Mills, Don Aicardi, Steve Ledoux and John Murray, staff. Absent: Bill Mullin, FC.

Audience: Steve Barrett, finance dept. Marie Altieri, school personnel director; Ruth Kohls, LWV; Clint Seward, Paul Huff, Dick Calandrella, and Mr. Kadlec, AVG.

Before Bart arrived, the minutes of September 16<sup>th</sup> and October 7<sup>th</sup> were accepted with minor typo corrections.

Dore reported a MM study group was close to finishing changes on the regional agreement & their report was due next week He reported that another community might join the 16-member region. All 16 towns need to pass the changes.

Mary Ann asked about a time line and if a Special Town Meeting would be required to pass the changes. Dore thought the BoS could accept the changes.

J. Petersen: at the end of this process are we to assume that there will be a capital request—is it possible that it will come for the April Town Meeting?

Dore: the formation of the MM budget is going forward now. He doubted that the capital request will be ready for this spring.

Steve L. The superintendent had lunch with the MM towns. He does not think the capital request will be ready for another year. Acton's enrollment at MM has increased from 23-31 kids that's a shift of something like 5.2-7.2% for Acton's share of the budget costs.

J. Murray: do you have any info on the budget---the numbers have a 40% increase in population, does that mean a 40% increase in assessment?

Dore: we are now educating too few at too great a [per pupil] cost.

J. Murray: the shift may be \$300k that is not in the plans

Dore: I will get the numbers up [on the web] the freshman class has grown from 70- 103 non-member towns have increased from 43-81; we expect the school population to continue to grow

Mary Ann: the enrollment info we got from the schools shows MM enrollment at 22 for Oct 09 & 23 for Oct. 10---the increase you mentioned is not reflected in the numbers we have from ABR.

Lauren suggested that Dore come back with information of the exact numbers of students at MM---he agreed.

**TASK: Dore will supply exact pupil populations for MM**

**2. Budget Revenue updates FY 11 & 12—Steve Ledoux & Steve Mills**

**Steve L:** at this point there is nothing new for FY 11---wait until after the election. State tax revenues are up a bit [but the threshold was lowered] For FY 12, the Town has started the budget process ---on The Hill day & starting meetings with individual department heads The concern comes from a MMA meeting where the prediction for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2011 shows a MAJOR downturn for both state & municipal revenues---we need to think of that as we plan ahead.

(Bart Arrived!)

Steve M: Right now there seems to be no problems for FY 11. We are looking at a 9% increase for the HIT; a 10% decrease for Ch 70. We have settled with two of the three unions so we can plug in those numbers. It will be a problem to have no, or slowly increasing revenues for the next couple of years. We do have pockets of resources that are one-time monies; Ed Jobs; IDEA was \$600K; regional transportation \$600k. We have just had an external audit at ABRH by NEASC based on seven standards—everyone is critical, especially class size and number of counselors per student—we have to present a “corrective action plan” for these areas.

My sense is that it is not an expense problem but a revenue one. Our expense requests are quite conservative—the reserves—Ed Jobs & IDEA monies will be spent next year---we said we would give back \$300k but rather than give back we need to apply those dollars to next years’ budgets. The Regional PTSO is very outspoken and they are very unhappy over the NEASC report about ratios and they want to spend the money now [for their children] I am not sure it would be good to spend the money [on staff] now just to lay them off at the end of the year---that would give us [a line item] for unemployment compensation next year.

Next Tuesday [election] will be huge. If the sales tax is repealed; the governor [Patrick] has a clear track record of supporting education which will bode well for Ch 70

Mary Ann: Suggested that the focus first be on the revenue pieces.

She attended a meeting of the Association of Town Finance committees where the featured speaker was Michael Widmer of the non-profit Mass Taxpayers Association.

His points: 1. State revenues have “bottomed-out” and will now start to exceed the (lowered) benchmarks. 2. The impact of question 3 will be severe---he predicts that come Jan 1 if the rate



is lowered from 6.25% to 3% it will add an additional billion to the known \$2.5b deficit and an additional \$2b for the following fiscal year. 3. A bill passed last June relating to capital gains tax---only use 5% of the tax revenues as part of the budget process, the remaining 95% post employment benefits & a rainy day fund. 4. FY 12 will be the worst ever---long term outlook beyond FY 13 looks better.

Lauren: it's difficult not knowing what will happen at the election and what cuts there will be in state aid

MA: our assumption is that the excise tax was cut for FY11 --we think it will be flat for FY 12 & 13

Bart: are you proposing a number?

MA: I want to hear what the staff says.

Steve L: relying on MMA they are recommending that local aid will be cut 10%; 20% cut in other revenues and a 10% cut in local receipts.

Murray: level funded means we will take the FY 10 actuals and that will be the FY 11 level---we expect the revenues to start to come back for FY 12 & 13

Bart: budget for FY 11 is what?

Murray: our biggest receipt is the excise tax---the information will become available in Feb-March. We also need to remember that an incumbent governor has three weeks to prepare a budget---a new governor has 8. We will have to prepare the budget on assumptions

Don A: we expect a 10% cut for Ch 70---all others will be flat

Bart: Ch 70---10% cut; everything else 20% with FY 12 flat?

There was a question about new growth. Murray reminded them that for new growth to reach the \$500k figure with \$17/\$1000---you need \$30 m in new construction---that means significant construction & the available land is decreasing---so every year there are fewer places to put the new growth.

Steve L: the building permits are up but they are for home improvements

Murray: the forecast is 20 months from now the construction will be down; prices down & homes not selling. This sector is the worst hit all across the country.

There was a general discussion on what numbers should be used and the impacts of the upcoming election.

**\*\*\*\*\*It was agreed to go forward---to boards ---with the 10% cut in Ch.70 and 20% cut in all other state revenues.\*\*\*\*\*It was also agreed that this issue would be revisited at every ALG meeting**

**Tasks:** take info back to boards for discussion. Add to agenda

### **3. ALG Spreadsheet—new format**

Info was sent by email

Mary Ann reported that she's not heard from anyone regarding the proposed changes & wondered if that meant everyone was in agreement with the new format.

Lauren noted that she had difficulty in tracking the changes & will have a sit down with Mary Ann to go over the rationale for some of the changes.

There was a general discussion about the new format & it became clear that the members did not understand that the spreadsheet would be in a "booklet form" with back pages of notes.

J. Murray suggested that the proposed changes be highlighted on the front so the group could focus on these & discuss them first---he expressed concern that there could be changes that might not be agreed to first.

Bart: I'm hearing that we go forward with the format to see how it works & some people will look at it for comprehension before [it comes to the ALG meeting]

Mary Ann added that this was a formative year [for this format] and that the spreadsheet had changed greatly over the years. Her question was who would maintain the spreadsheet. Don Aicardi volunteered and was accepted. He will work with Steve Barrett from the town staff & will ensure that it gets to the meetings.

### **4. Decision calendar---Mary Ann**

**Extra info draft planning calendar sheet**

Mary Ann's draft calendar specifies the dates that the ALG needs to make important decisions & includes the dates that the boards and committees also need to discuss the agreements so that there is common agreement among all.

One early decision needs to be about the use of reserves---the FC will develop their Point of View statement at their Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> meeting---this will impact the tax setting process---this document will be sent to boards prior to ALG on Nov. 18<sup>th</sup>. The second point will be the turn backs---that will also be on the Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> agenda

Bart: will we have the split; reserve use & turn backs all on the 18<sup>th</sup>?

Steve L. I have to give the BoS the Town's budget by Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>---we will need this information. It is cutting the time short.

John P. the HIT has reserves---should those be part of a turn-back---the split is a budget estimate if we do not have the actual number [for the split] this exercise will not be helpful.

Mary Ann: It will be helpful---we need the turn-backs & the specific grants to the schools and the timetable when they must be used---we may have disagreements as to whether they are to be used as reserves-- but we need [before the ALG meeting] to have the boards clarify their positions.

J.P: we can have the clarifying discussion---we cannot have deficit spending---if the turn-backs are consistent---the clarifying discussions are irrelevant.

Bart: can we discuss turn-backs; changes in policy ---I assume you want forward movement---nods of agreement

J. Murray: we need prelim split agreement on the 18<sup>th</sup>---we need to move up the confirmation by boards [to get the town budget out] to 1<sup>st</sup> week in December.

Bart: is there an ideal date---you need three weeks---will that mean a post Thanksgiving Day meeting?

Xuan: last year we were discussing the split up to the very last minute---the town shifted \$96k to the schools--- we need to see the best use of resources for each department--see a gross match between needs & revenue & not past practice.

Steve L: the budget has to be realistic---we'll never have a budget that meets all needs---we can't be overly optimistic

There was a general discussion on which year to use as the basis for the split decision. The real decision needs to be on the percentage points between the two and not the level of turn-backs. Xuan noted that the split is the "end point" and by knowing the needs we can determine the increase that is affordable.

**\*\*\*\*there was a consensus that the split; turn-backs; override will be discussed [consensus reached] on 12/2 & keep 12/16 as a fall back date.**

Mary Ann reminded the group that a decision on the waterfall needs to be finalized as well & it should be added to the agenda.

**\*\*\*\*It was agreed that the 11/18 meeting agenda would have: split/allocation; reserve use & waterfall**

**Task: Mary Ann will update the budget planning sheet**

## **6. Request from public for "open format for ALG meetings"---Dick Calandrella**

Mr. Calandrella stated that he thought it was "disrespectful" for ALG members to have their backs to the audience & he wanted the tables set up in the same horseshoe shape as the BoS & FC

Bart noted that the closed seating arrangement was based on research that stated when the participants could look each other in the eye---better & faster results were achieved

JP: indicated that he liked to see the expressions on the faces of other members & the mikes made the statements perfectly audible---one of the stated purposes of the ALG is to foster communication among the participating boards---television would interfere with that.

Mike suggested that the U shape have the opening facing the audience (as it was then)

Xuan suggested moving the tables 180 degrees & he would come early next meeting for the set up.

Mr. Calandrella also requested that the public have a chance to comment on the issues under discussion when they were being discussed rather than waiting to the end. He noted that Mr. Kadlec had made suggestions that were adopted by the ALG & there may in fact be other points of view that should have a chance to be discussed.

Bart: I was asked by this group to keep the time to a minimum---that's one major reason we stopped inter-issue public discussions.

J. Murray noted that the public has three opportunities to make their opinions known: BoS, SC & FC meetings

Mary Ann: agreed with John noting that frequently brief comments went on forever & getting the meetings done on time was important.

Mike suggested that the ALG adopt the LWV's two minute rule for statements

Bart said that keeping the meeting moving & on time was his responsibility & if he found that the public discussion was impeding the end-time of the meeting, he would stop the participation.

**Tasks: Xuan will move the tables before the next meeting**

Adjourned 8:45

Next meeting 11/18

Ann Chang



# Acton Leadership Group Meeting

**October 28, 2010**

**7:15 AM**

**Town Hall, Faulkner Hearing Room**

Bart Wendell Facilitating

## ----- Agenda Topics -----

----- Agenda Topics -----		
1. Approval of Minutes, September 16, 2010 and October 07, 2010	General Discussion	
2. Budget Revenue Update FY 11 and FY 12	Steve Ledoux Steve Mills	
3. ALG Spreadsheet	General Discussion	(1) New ALG Format
4. ALG Decision Calendar	MaryAnn Ashton	
5. Minuteman Career and Technical High School Progress	Dore' Hunter	
6. Request to hold ALG Meetings in "Open Format"	General Discussion	
7. Adjourn		

APG 10/28/10  
#1

## **ALG minutes September 16, 2010 (draft)**

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Lauren Rosenzweig-Morton, Mike Gowing, BOS; Xuan Kong, John Petersen, SC; Mary Ann Ashton, Bill Mullin FC; Steve Ledoux, John Murray, Steve Mills, and Don Aicardi, Staff.

Audience: Steve Barrett, Town Finance Dept; Marie Altieri school personnel dept.; Ruth Kohls, LWV; Dick Calandrella, Clint Seward, and Charlie Kadlec, AVG.

1. Draft minutes of 08/17/10 were passed with corrections in spelling
2. **Budget Review & Update**—Steve Ledoux & Steve Mills

### **Extra information: documentation from recap sheet re free cash certification**

Free cash—general fund \$4,650,574; nursing enterprise \$83,935; COA van enterprise fund \$17,456; septage enterprise fund \$109,141; Recycling/transfer station enterprise fund \$2,435,334; sewer enterprise fund \$355,011 and ambulance enterprise fund \$697,823.

Steve Mills reported that there was nothing new. APS returned \$200k to free cash & AB returned \$225k to E&D. He added that the \$600k for special Ed was “in hand”

He was looking/asking about possible 9 c cuts.

He announced a new Federal Ed Jobs program where Acton will get \$770k over three years.

**Mary Ann:** Free cash is higher than projected---why?

**Steve Barrett:** we closed off some accounts---\$1.275M from overlay; closing warrant articles @ \$1M; between Town & APS over \$1M in turn-backs. There is a \$150k deficit from loss in interest and excise--- we have to go into FY 11 using FY 10 numbers for excise; we expect a \$750K drop in permits; we added a one-time tax title of @ \$500k; the NESWC piece went into an enterprise fund and was drawn down but we kept the \$1M for the liability.

**Bill:** we projected @ \$6.6 M of free cash; we now have \$7M plus a \$1 M in reserve--- that gives us a \$400k gain on paper. Who controls the \$1M NESWC liability?

**S. Barrett:** we keep it on the books as a liability—it is Acton’s share [of the estimated clean-up costs]

**MaryAnn:** I think we have to plan as if the “spigot will be turned off” after the election—we will not hear about any 9c cuts before the election

**Steve B:** I don’t see an impact for FY11 but for FY 12 we should expect a 10% cut [in state aid]—we budget for that anyhow.

**J. Murray:** MMA is saying that there is already a \$2b deficit for FY 12 & if there is a sales tax roll back that loss will be added to the existing \$2b deficit

## **2—discussion of waterfall proposal**

**Extra info:** waterfall proposal accepted by the ALG and all three boards last January and the concept at April Town Meeting

**Bill:** We worked with a 10% cut in Ch.70 between FY 10 & 11—the waterfall concept was designed to make sure the school debt was covered (\$300K) & the “most draconian cuts” (\$700k) were ameliorated—the original plan had \$500k as coming back under step three to be allocated to the taxpayer. “We ended up slightly worse off so the taxpayer portion is \$216k. The mechanism for the allocation to the taxpayer has to be at the time the BOS sets the tax rate (in early December) We now learn that there is additional money from the Ed Jobs bill—how will that impact the waterfall? Should we, as a Town use some portion to supplement the waterfall?”

We need to make the decision here & then go back to our boards—what are the Federal “strings?” When the finance dept looks to do the recap sheet, they need to resolve the \$150k shortfall in local receipts.

**Bart:** What are the strings?

**Steve M:** The Ed Jobs bill is crystal clear the money is to be used for staff and benefits. I suppose we could do a “shell game.”

**John P:** This money is not Ch 70—which was the focus of the waterfall—it cannot be part of the waterfall. We need to figure out how to manage the reserves & look to taxpayer relief in FY12.

**Lauren:** we need to be cautious we do not know [the level] of local revenues or any 9c cuts. I am concerned about FY 12 ----the stimulus money is going away.

**Bill:** I could not disagree more. The waterfall is public policy---if we wish to change it---that’s another discussion. It was designed to deal with just the circumstances before us--it is not consistent [with the waterfall] for the SC try to preserve the money for FY12. Can we turn the \$218K (the number on the waterfall sheet) into \$500k? I hope no one is to use sophistry—the waterfall policy has been helpful to both the town and schools. We need to remember it is public policy & trying to preserve the money for FY 12 is just not consistent.

**Bart:** any more comments or is this a show stopper?

**Bill:** under the law we can move money around—I think this is a conversation starter---we go back to our boards and see if we have the frame work [for implementation of the waterfall or changes]

**Xuan:** last year we projected Ch. 70 for FY 11 & it came in higher. The new Jobs grant is spread over three years—11, 12 & 13—we need to take into consideration that its use is not to augment CH 70.

**Mary Ann:** we will only have \$66k to fund tax relief when you deduct the \$150k loss in local receipts.

**Bill:** the public policy did not say anything about off-setting variations in local receipts

**Lauren:** it becomes difficult to pay [tax relief] when local receipts are dropping-- if the projections for new revenues were greater it would make sense.

**Bill:** the vote [for the waterfall] refers to Ch. 70---this is sophistry vs. games

**Bart:** the “game” in this case is judgment.

**Bill:** but we cannot vote for something and eight months later discard it because we do not like it.

**Bart:** (pause) It's good to see you [Bill] again. This looks like the beginning of another “interesting year.” Take note that what you see as games, others may see as legitimate concerns. If we start out like this the positions will get dug in and we will have a very rough year.

**Lauren:** I may have been naive not to understand the full implications of the waterfall. I just know that in general state aid is given & taken away. I don't think we should make cuts when we cannot cover our budget. Last year we [Town] did a hiring and spending freeze, helped the schools—we have done what we could to keep whole---I'm not sure we can give back.

**Bart:** if that reason is legitimate---how does it differ from the policy. Is the disagreement in regard to the policy or the implications?

**Bill:** the extent of this change is a change of the policy. I see the policy as being hugely beneficial to both the town and schools—now it's the taxpayers turn. If we are going to apply the vote [waterfall policy] for the FY 11 budget it needs to be done when the selectmen set the tax rate.

**MaryAnn:** this has been a good discussion—it's time to take it back to our boards---Is the waterfall still policy? We also have a mechanical issue---we have a shortfall in local receipts and new money from the Ed Jobs. If the three boards agree, we then we will look to the managers about how to make it happen

**Bart:** What's the timing?

**Steve L:** if we do not apply the \$150k local shortfall to the waterfall, then we will have to make \$150k in cuts. If we want to lower the appropriation then we need Town Meeting vote---the warrant for the STM on Oct 12 is still open.

**John M:** I'm not sure what it is we will take back to the boards: FY 11 or 12?; total revenue; segmenting Ch 70? Is the shortfall part of the total revenues?



Caution this [\$150k] may be just the star of the shortfall---revenues could increase, we will know in November.

**Xuan:** last year we had to guess total receipts---what happened to make a \$150k shortfall?

**Steve L:** the projection is from June 30<sup>th</sup>---we cannot project more than has come in

**Bill:** at the time [annual Town Meeting vote] we could not put a number on Ch 70 but we allocated a specific number

**Bart:** is there agreement that the Ed Jobs grant is for three years---can it be considered [as a revenue source for the taxpayer's return]

**Don:** the last charge against the Ed Jobs grant is Sept. 30, 2012 we can start charging for FY 11, 12 and three months of FY 13.

**Bart:** the second piece is the timing---are we talking about a two-week window [to meet the warrant requirements for the STM]---what's the deadline for the boards & committees?

**Bill:** the setting of the tax rate

**John M:** are we really going back to Town Meeting in two weeks to reset budgets?

**\*\*\*\*\*Bart:** is there agreement to the tax rate setting time? (nods of agreement)

**\*\*\*\*\*agreement that we will not go to Town Meeting**

**Bart:** Is there anything that needs to be discussed before setting the tax rate? The specific pot for the Ed jobs money; Reserves?

**John M:** There is a genuine disagreement as to the intent of the waterfall language as it applies to multi-year federal grants. I do not see we are changing policy---we are attempting to come to consensus on the differing intent of the parties.

**Bill:** I'd like to see the formula for the NESWC liability number

**\*\*\*\*\*Bart:** for the next meeting each entity will come back with their stand on the waterfall policy---agreement

**TASK:** staff to get Bill Mullin the formula for the NESWC liability number.

### **3. Spreadsheet-- New format**

**Extra info:** spreadsheets sent by email

**MaryAnn:** there is too much info on the spreadsheet to be useful---the summary on the front will show the vetted numbers and explain any changes. I want you to take this back to the boards and see if they have any changes for purposes of clarity. I think we need to do debt exclusion as a revenue

There were some suggested changes such as actual & it was agreed to take back to boards for review. The spreadsheet will be on the agenda for the next meeting

#### **4. ALG schedule**

**Extra info—a master calendar with meeting dates of the boards & holidays**

**ALG scheduled meetings: October 28, November 18, December 16, January 13 & 27<sup>th</sup>, February 10 & 17<sup>th</sup>, March 24<sup>th</sup>.**

#### **AGENDA for October 28**

**Minuteman**

**Update on budget revenues**

**Waterfall**

**ALG spreadsheet format**

#### **5. Public**

**Mr. Kadlec** said there are three ways to address the \$150k shortfall: reduce appropriation; tax reserves and three, from the levy. The first two need Town Meeting approval. His preferred method was to take it from reserves rather than the taxpayers.

Adjourned 8:45

Ann Chang

APG 10/28/10  
#1

Acton Leadership Group  
Thursday, October 7, 2010 7:15AM  
Faulkner Hearing Room, Acton Town Hall

Present: Lauren Rosenzweig-Morton, Steve Ledoux, Mike Gowing, Xuan Kong, John Peterson, Don Aicardi, Mary Ann Ashton, Bart Wendell facilitating

Audience: Clint Seward, Charlie Kadlec, Dick Calendrella, Marie Altieri, Ruth Kohls

Agenda Item: Informational discussion on Special Town Meeting warrant

Rosenzweig-Morton reviewed the history and progress of the Simeone – Caouette land purchase:

- The land had been in Chapter 61A so when the family decided to sell it, the town has right of first refusal. The original appraisal showed space for 6 house lots at a value of \$100,080. An error in calculation of division of the mill pond now leaves 5 lots and the existing house was included in the original appraisal when it should not have been.
- The town wishes to save the farm for two reasons:
  - To save the farm land, adjacent to the Simeone farm. The Simeones would continue to farm the land. This acreage helps make the operation viable with much of the produce is sold locally. The parcel is identified in the South Acton Village Plan as a priority to keep as open space
  - It is adjacent to the Assabet River Rail Trail
- April 2010 Town Meeting supported the purchase and the town has pursued the purchase with due diligence. Once the process started, there is a deadline of 120 days to conclude it. The deadline has passed and the town asked for an extension to continue negotiation, which the owners have agreed to. Some funds for continuance fees, etc. have been expended from the general budget.
- Environmental remediation will be required. The town has been responsive to environmental groups who have asked for more testing. The remediation costs are now estimated to be lower than originally thought.
- The reappraised value is \$830,000.
- The owners are controlling the clock.
- There has been a lot of support for the purchase, though the price is increasing. The original idea was to go to town meeting for the difference between the appraised value and the price from free cash.
- This is a strategic purchase and it is the intent of the board of selectmen to continue to negotiate with the family to reduce costs, to continue seeking grants, and to continue outreach to economic development groups.

Ledoux continued by noting that the warrant is predicated on the higher value and funding up to \$200,000 in cleanup expenses. CPC funds can only be expended up to the appraised value of the

property. The Selectmen will meet on Friday morning to consider a special meeting within a special town meeting on October 25. The closing is scheduled for October 26.

It was noted that a death in the Simeone – Caouette family will delay some communications.

Rosenzweig-Morton planned to make a call, but the Selectmen will likely not be able to meet with the family until Tuesday morning, October 12.

Rosenzweig-Morton noted that there is also the possibility for a cluster development, allowing for more units, or a 40B could be built if the law is not repealed in November. Other possibilities allowed under zoning include day care, school or religious institution. In the current scenario, the area with the pollution will be used as green area next to the rail trail. Other considerations: the town is in a good reserve position. The current difference between appraised value and price plus remediation expenses plus some out of pocket expense is about \$370,000. The town will still try to negotiate a lower price, but there is a risk of letting it go to a developer.

Rosenzweig-Morton asked if people understand what is going on and whether they feel comfortable with the financial issues. She added that she felt it necessary to maintain mutual communication with the other boards and will ask for the recommendation of the Finance Committee on the articles. The School Committee would not make a recommendation since this is outside their purview.

Wendell checked to see if he was correct in that this meeting was to ensure that there are no surprises from the boards at Town Meeting and that questions, concerns and objections should be raised now, or at least prior to the meeting.

Resenzweig-Morton agreed and added that she hoped that this discussion and any agreement to use reserve funds would avoid bad feelings when discussing the next budget.

Gowing pointed out that the Selectmen would be meeting with the open space committee prior to its own meeting on Friday morning.

Peterson, speaking only for himself and not for the school committee, felt that there is no merit in considering the sunk costs, money already spent on legal fees, etc. The single family valuation is not necessarily relevant. If we own the land for years outward, the purchase price won't matter so much. He is highly motivated to complete the purchase.

Ashton pointed out that it is important that there be agreement on the use of reserves. There are ramifications on other things down the road. The finance committee is divided and did not make a recommendation at its meeting on October 5. The project started with the idea of using \$200,000 from reserves and that has grown to \$400,000. We have a very adequate group of reserves that we can now make new decisions on using. The finance committee wants not to tax to the max, so that could leave some untapped levy capacity. There impact of the state ballot questions is not yet known. Everyone needs to be comfortable with this level of free cash use and the other impacts that will have on the budget. The finance committee will take a position before Town Meeting.

Kong added that the school committee has not met to discuss and so have no input. However, he is in support of the purchase and agrees that the costs already incurred should not be part of any discussion going forward. The town should understand the need to project and include these costs up front.

Gowing added that you can anticipate costs, but not how much in every case.

Ashton agreed with Kong and recommended that the relevant committees should gather when it's all over to debrief on costs and process. Committees have to do work in the public eye, but this is a private purchase.

In response to a question, it was determined that approximately \$139,000 has been spent as of last week on things such as environmental testing, earnest payment, legal fees, appraisal fees, and survey fees.

Since what the Selectmen will recommend at the October 12 town meeting is not clear due to the tight timeline and the death in the Simeone-Caouette family limiting the ability to meet with them, there was no way to know whether there would be a need for another Special Town Meeting on October 25. Any action that the Town Meeting can take is limited by the articles on the warrant and new articles based on new information cannot be posted in time for consideration on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Any information that is available is and will be posted to the town website. School Committee members agreed that Rosenzweig-Morton should speak during public participation at that evening's meeting.

Charlie Kadlec was concerned that the situation be communicated clearly so that voters don't show up for the meeting only to learn that it will be postponed. In addition, it needs to be clearly communicated that the town will not get a second bite at the apple if this opportunity is not taken. He would communicate to his list. ALG members agreed that they would get the word out as well.

Adjournment at 8:00AM

Next meeting October 28.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jo-Ann Berry

ALG 12/28/10  
#41

**Suggested Calendar for Budget Planning for FY12 - DRAFT**

Issue	ALG Discussion	ALG Preliminary Consensus	Back to Boards	Final ALG Consensus	Confirmation by Boards
Revenue projections	10/28/2010	11/18/2010	BOS - 11/8, 11/22; Fincom - 11/9, 11/30; SC - 11/4, 11/18	12/16/2010	After 12/16/2010
Override? No Override?	11/18/2010	11/18/2010	BOS - 11/22, 12/6; Fincom - 11/30, 12/14; SC - 12/2, 12/16	12/16/2010	After 12/16/2010
Split allocation	11/18/2010	11/18/2010	BOS - 11/22, 12/6; Fincom - 11/30, 12/14; SC - 12/2, 12/16	12/16/2010	After 12/16/2010
Minuteman Capital funding source - year 1	11/18/2010	11/18/2010		12/16/2009	After 12/16/2009
Any further work on split allocation?	12/16/2010	12/16/2010	BOS - 12/20, 1/10; Fincom - 12/14, 1/11; SC - 12/18, 1/6	1/13/2011	After 1/13/2011
	1/13/2011	1/13/2011	BOS - 1/24, 2/14; Fincom - 1/25, 2/8; SC - 1/20, 2/3	2/10/2011	After 2/10/2011
Any further revision of revenues?	12/16/2010	12/16/2010	BOS - 12/20, 1/10; Fincom - 12/14, 1/11; SC - 12/18, 1/6	1/13/2011	After 1/13/2011
	1/13/2011	1/13/2011	BOS - 1/24, 2/14; Fincom - 1/25, 2/8; SC - 1/20, 2/3	2/10/2011	After 2/10/2011
Assumptions for 3-year plan	1/13/2011	1/13/2011	BOS - 1/24, 2/14; Fincom - 1/25, 2/8; SC - 1/20, 2/3	2/10/2011	After 2/10/2011
	2/10/2011	2/10/2011	BOS - 2/14, 2/28; Fincom - 2/22, 3/1; SC - 2/17, 3/3	3/24/2011	After 3/24/2011

**Other Important Dates:**

Manager's Budget Due 12/20/2010  
Municipal Budget Saturday ?  
AB/APS Budget Workshop ?  
BOS Vote Budget 1/24/2011  
BOS MUST Vote Budget for Fincom 2/1/2011  
ABRSC Budget Hearing 2/3/2011  
APS Budget Hearing 2/17/2011  
Warrant to Printer This Week 3/1/2011  
Post Warrant 3/11/2011  
Town Election 3/29/2011  
Town Meeting Begins 4/4/2011

**ALG Meeting Dates:**

10/28/2010  
11/18/2010  
12/16/2010  
1/13/2011  
1/27/2011  
2/10/2011  
2/17/2011  
3/24/2011

**Maryjane Kenney**

ALG 10/28/10  
#5

**From:** DoreHunter@aol.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 14, 2010 2:42 PM  
**To:** Acton Leadership Group  
**Subject:** Minuteman Career and Technical High School progress

Members of the Acton Leadership Group,

This is a brief report of the Minuteman activities which may be of interest to the members of the Acton Leadership Group.

1. The Regional Agreement Task Force, consisting of an impressive group of volunteers from the Minuteman area, is close to completing its work in regard to recommended potential changes in the current Minuteman Regional Agreement. The Task Force's report will include what I believe will be a small number of recommendations. Those recommendations will then be presented to, discussed and voted upon by each of the member towns. At this point no time table has yet been established for the presentation to the 16 towns. I will further report to the ALG when the recommendations are finalized.

2. Preliminary figures indicate overall student enrollment at Minuteman has increased by approximately 5%. The entering freshman class scheduled to graduate in 2013 has increased approximately 60% year over year. This is the result of coordinated work by the administration and affiliated Minuteman organizations.

3. The Feasibility Study has been approved by all 16 Member Towns. The conditions for approval with a feasibility project include that the Regional Task Force completes its work; that a demographic study be done to estimate future student attendance at Minuteman; and that Minuteman substantially increases its student enrollment.

4. I believe that Minuteman is going to meet those conditions.

Regards,

Dore' Hunter  
Minuteman School Committee

10/22/2010

11 of 12

**Maryjane Kenney**

**From:** Steve Ledoux  
**Sent:** Friday, October 15, 2010 8:49 AM  
**To:** Manager Department  
**Subject:** FW: ACTON LEADERSHIP GROUP - A PUBLIC MEETING

ALG 10/28/10  
#6

On Wednesday, October 20, we should send email to ALG asking for agenda items for 10/28 meeting. We had previously agreed to add Mr. Calandrella's request ( Below) to agenda for discussion on 10/28

Steven L Ledoux  
Town Manager  
472 Main Street  
Acton, MA 01720  
Telephone (978) 929-6611

When writing or corresponding, please be aware that the Secretary of State has determined that most email is a public record and, therefore, may not be kept confidential.

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**From:** Richard Calandrella [mailto:dickcalandrella@earthlink.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 19, 2010 10:55 PM  
**To:** Acton Leadership Group  
**Subject:** ACTON LEADERSHIP GROUP - A PUBLIC MEETING

Members of the ALG:

This E-mail is sent to respectfully request that the meetings of the Acton Leadership Group (ALG) be returned to the previous arrangement during part of 2008-2009 when an "open" table format was provided where "all" ALG members were seated facing the public using microphones for sound clarity.

Since ALG meetings are listed as "public" meetings, It is not only disrespectful to the public to have some ALG members seated with their backs to the audience, but it is virtually impossible to clearly hear discussions when tables are closed.

In addition, it is also respectfully requested that brief questions or comments from the public be allowed "at the time" topics are discussed as was done previously --- rather than waiting until the end of the meeting.

Those few of us who regularly attend ALG meetings as members of the public are highly mindful of the time limits of ALG meetings, and our questions or comments will be brief and to point.

The favor of a reply will be appreciated.

Best Regards,

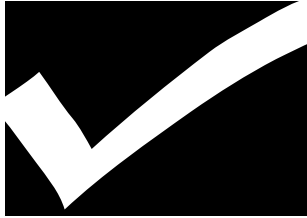
Dick

Dick Calandrella  
Cell Phone --- 508-733-2705  
Email --- [dickcalandrella@earthlink.net](mailto:dickcalandrella@earthlink.net)

10/18/2010

12 of 12





# Acton Leadership Group Meeting

**November 18, 2010**

**7:15 AM**

**Town Hall, Faulkner Hearing Room**

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Bart Wendell Facilitating

----- Agenda Topics -----		
1. Approval of Minutes, October 28, 2010	General Discussion	
2. Budget Revenue Update FY 11 and FY 12	Steve Ledoux Steve Mills	
3. ALG Spreadsheet	General Discussion	
4. Split/Allocation	General Discussion	
5. Reserve Use Policy	General Discussion	
6. Waterfall Proposal	General Discussion	
6. Adjourn		

Acton Public Schools  
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
Acton, MA 01720

**APS/ABRSD FY'12 Operating Budget Assumptions/Key Decisions**

=====

The following budget assumptions/key decisions are not listed in priority order.

1. Work with both towns to determine the revenues (e.g., state, local, including reserves, etc.) that will be available for the FY'12 operating budget(s), including fluctuating circuit breaker reimbursement.
2. Conduct negotiations with remaining collective bargaining unit to produce fiscally responsible settlements.
3. Coordinate with the Town of Acton/health insurance trust the FY'12 health insurance premiums/rates as early as possible.
4. Determine whether the APS Capital Plan (e.g., continuation of Phase II – Roof replacement) should go forward and, if so, what funding mechanism (e.g., debt inside Proposition 2 1/2, debt exclusion override, one-time revenue, etc.) should be used. Maximize any opportunities for SBAB reimbursement.
5. Key decisions that need to be resolved:
  - Decide on the appropriate number of sections at elementary grade levels.
  - Review/determine elementary (K-6) classroom assistant staffing levels.
  - Review/determine appropriate staffing levels at Senior and Junior High Schools.
  - Review/determine K-12 staffing (e.g., counselors, nurses, custodians, monitors, etc.) needs.
  - Review/determine funding for textbook replacement (K-12).
  - Review/recommend any CPA requests for funding.
  - Review/determine ELL staffing as recommended in the Coordinated Program Review.
  - Review staffing requirements for SPED subgroups based on AYP performance.
6. Determine if existing user fees should be increased and new fees instituted.
7. Develop level service and reduction proposed budgets to meet changing revenues and to understand and explain reduced educational services and programs.
8. Discuss use of both town-wide reserves and school reserves in supporting both the FY12 budget and future budgets. Discuss use of year end balances towards current and future fiscal policy.
9. Discuss the assumptions for FY12 of whether COPS expenses should be/will be a town expense or included in the school budgets.
10. Discuss and articulate underlying philosophical assumptions regarding all budget reductions (e.g. programs, class size, etc.)

10/29/10

**Discussion of FY12 Revenue and Expenditure Assumptions**  
**Acton Public Schools**  
**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**

- 1) **Estimated FY12 Chapter 70 Estimate**                      **Foundation Budget, then 10% reduction**
- 2) **Estimated FY12 Cherry Sheet Revenue**                      **20% decrease in FY12**
- 3) **Estimated FY12 Town Income Level**                      **Level funded at FY10 Level**
- 4) **Estimated FY12 Town Expenses**                      **2.4% increase in FY12**
  - a) assumes level service
  - b) based on collective bargaining agreements
  - c) assumes 9% increase in health insurance rates
- 5) **Estimated FY12 Minuteman Assessment**
- 6) **Estimated FY12 APS Expenses**                      **Preliminary 3.7% increase**
  - a) assumes level service
  - b) based on collective bargaining agreements
  - c) assumes 9% increase in health insurance rates and FY12 increase from ARRA
  - d) assumes 4% growth in SPED tuition
  - e) assumes 5% decrease in energy (due to conservation and low natural gas market)
- 6) **Estimated FY12 A/B Expenses**                      **Preliminary 1.3% increase**
  - a) assumes level service
  - b) based on collective bargaining agreements
  - c) assumes 9% increase in health insurance rates
  - d) assumes 4% growth in SPED tuition
  - e) assumes 5% decrease in energy (due to conservation and natural gas market)
- 7) **Reserve Accounts**
  - a) **Certified Free Cash \$4.6 million**
  - b) **NESWC Balance \$2.4 million**
  - c) **Regional E & D \$1.2 million**
- 8) **Other**
  - a) **One Time Regional E & D FY11 Transportation Aid**
  - b) **ARRA Federal Grant Turnbacks from AB & APS \$620k**
  - c) **Federal grant (Ed Jobs) \$776k for APS and A/B combined**

*Office of the Superintendent*  
Acton Public Schools  
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
Acton, MA 01720

**Proposed FY'12 Budget Schedule for the Schools**

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10/7/10 AB Regional School Committee meeting, Draft Budget Schedule distributed

10/15/10 Budget packets (appropriated and revolving budgets) distributed to all administrators, including budget schedule.

10/29/10 All completed budgets turned in to Central Office  
Preliminary budgets entered into computer  
Central Office meetings with administrators about budget

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11/04/10 AB School Committee meeting discussion of Assumptions and Key Decisions

11/18/10 APS School Committee meeting discussion of Assumptions and Key Decisions

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12/2/10 APS/AB/possible Joint School Committees' budget discussion continues

12/16/10 APS School Committee budget discussion continues

12/31/10 Acton Town Meeting warrant closes

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1/6/11 Presentation of preliminary budgets to APS and AB Regional School Committees (overview/issues)

1/20/11 Discussion of preliminary budget with APS School Committee

? Joint School Committee Saturday All-Day Session with presentations by school leaders; Selectmen / Finance Committee / public at large encouraged to attend

? Acton and Boxborough Finance Committees / Review / Comments to School

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2/3/11 AB Regional School Committee budget hearing (required by law) - *Possible Budget Vote*

2/5/11 All-Day Saturday Budget Meeting

2/17/11 APS School Committee budget hearing (required by law) - *Possible Budget Vote*  
Possible Joint School Committee meeting if vote needed on Regional budget/assessments (2/18/11 is deadline to vote according to Regional Agreement)

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*cont.*

3/3/11 AB SC Meeting

3/? Public Hearing for Acton Budgets (coordinated by Finance Committee)

3/17/11 APS School Committee Meeting

? Boxborough warrant goes to printer

3/24/11 Joint Acton/Acton-Boxborough SC Meetings

3/29/11 Acton Town Election

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4/4/11 Acton Town Meeting begins

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5/9/11 Boxborough Town Meeting begins

5/16/11 Boxborough Town Election

***Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District***

File: JICFB

**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY**

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (hereinafter referred to as "The District") recognizes that safe learning environments are necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. The District strives to provide and maintain safe learning and working environments for all students and all employees. It is the conviction of educators that all students have the right to participate confidently and fully in learning activities, both in and out of school, and contribute meaningfully to society by learning in a community culture where individual and developmental differences are acknowledged, appreciated and respected.

Bullying behaviors are persistent, pervasive or chronic which intimidate and/or intentionally harm or threaten to harm someone who is perceived as weaker and vulnerable. Specifically, bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through electronic, written, verbal, physical acts, either direct or indirect, mental and/or visual, when such intentional behavior substantially interferes with a student's education, threatens the overall educational environment, and/or substantially disrupts the operation of the school. These behaviors include maliciously teasing, taunting, name-calling, sexual remarks, stealing or damaging an individual's possessions, spreading rumors, or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone. This intentional behavior includes but is not limited to harassment, intimidation, and bullying based upon race, color, national origin, limited-English-proficient, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, veteran status, handicap, homeless, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, physical appearance, or mental, physical or sensory disability. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited. This prohibition shall apply to all District employees, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and students, including conduct between/among all parties.

The School Committees expect administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying behaviors (as defined above) in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated and will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and expulsion for students, and termination for employees.

Furthermore, the Districts will immediately investigate allegations of bullying, including cyberbullying, intimidation, and/or harassment. The Principal of each building, or his/her designee, will be responsible for responding to all complaints by students alleging harassment, including bullying, in accordance with harassment. If it is determined that bullying has occurred, the District will take appropriate action to end the bullying and ensure that it is not repeated. In this regard, schools will remain sensitive to the confidentiality of all parties, but may not be able to preserve fully the confidential nature of the allegation.

All schools in Acton and Acton-Boxborough will include a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a school-based bullying prevention and intervention program by providing the necessary funding, training and staff time. Each school is directed to develop or adopt a research based bullying prevention program and/or curriculum that include the major components listed in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. Additionally, bullying prevention and intervention will include school based teams responsible for the systematic tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the school based

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with special emphasis on analyzing incidents for systemic intervention at the school building level and the school system at large.

Each Team will:

- Consist of members of the already existing Crisis Intervention Team appointed by the Principal representing the following constituents: Building Principal or Assistant Principal, Teacher representatives, Counselor/Psychologist/SPED.
- Additional collaboration from Pupil Services administration and/or School Nurse.
- Meet a minimum of two times during the school year.
- By October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year:
  - Distribute Policy and procedures to all students, parents, faculty and staff (student handbook, annual written notice, website, employee handbook, etc.)
  - Notify the Superintendent of Schools in writing of their school's compliance with this Policy and submit a copy of the bullying prevention and intervention procedures adopted for each school.
- Yearly, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedures.
- By June of each year, provide a brief annual summary to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with recommendations for building based enhancements/improvements.

The Superintendent or designated representative has operational responsibility for the Districts' implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c. 71, §370

File: JBA, ADA

CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination  
ACAB, Sexual Harassment  
JICFA-E, Hazing

*Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District*

File: JICFB-E

**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY**

**Exhibit of Definitions**

**Aggressor**

A student who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation

**Bullying**

The repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that: (1) causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property; (2) places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his/her property; (3) creates a hostile environment at school for the target; (4) infringes on the rights of the target at school; or (5) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this definition, bullying shall also include cyber-bullying.

**Cyberbullying**

Bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, telephones, cell phones, computers, and the internet. It further includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings.

M.G.L. c. 71, 370 further defines cyber bullying as "any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying shall also include (1) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or (2) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (1) to (5), inclusive, of the definition of bullying. Cyber-bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in clauses (1) to (5), inclusive, of the definition of bullying."

**Hostile environment**

A situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student's education.

**Retaliation**

Any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

**Staff**

This includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

**Target**

A student against whom bullying, cyberbullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. c.71, 370



***Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District***

File: JICFB-R

**BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN**

Bullying behaviors are persistent, pervasive or chronic which intimidate and/or intentionally harm or threaten to harm someone who is perceived as weaker and vulnerable. Specifically, bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through electronic, written, verbal, physical acts, either direct or indirect, mental and/or visual, when such intentional behavior substantially interferes with a student's education, threatens the overall educational environment, and/or substantially disrupts the operation of the school. These behaviors include maliciously teasing, taunting, name-calling, sexual remarks, stealing or damaging an individual's possessions, spreading rumors, or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone. This intentional behavior includes but is not limited to harassment, intimidation, and bullying based upon race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, physical appearance, or mental, physical or sensory disability. Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, who provides information during an investigation of bullying, or who is witness to or has reliable information about bullying is prohibited. This prohibition shall apply to all District employees, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and students, including conduct between/among all parties.

Peer conflict involves disagreement and oppositional interactions which are situational, immediate, and developmentally appropriate. These latter behaviors, with adult guidance and modeling, assist in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries and conflict resolution strategies.

All schools in Acton and Acton-Boxborough will include a bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational. Major components include:

- Development of a community culture that publicly communicates that bullying is unacceptable in any form.
- Commitment to a pro-social, research based curriculum and/or program that promotes positive peer relations.
- Commitment to addressing the needs of the victim concurrently with the on-going investigation and response to the bully.
- Annual discussion of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with students (no later than October 1<sup>st</sup> of each year).
- Adequate supervision of students to address bullying prevention and intervention.
- Ongoing training and support of teachers and school staff in the use of proactive and effective strategies for responding to bullying and supporting bystanders and targets.
- Systematic review of the overall bullying prevention and intervention approaches used by each school.

As used in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, bullying can be any intentional written, electronic, verbal or physical act or actions against a student, school volunteer or school employee that a reasonable person, under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- A. Placing a student, school volunteer or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her emotional or physical well-being or damage to his or her property,

- B. Creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating or abusive educational environment due to the pervasiveness or persistence of actions or due to a power differential between the bully and the victim,
- C. Interfering with a student, school volunteer or school employee having a safe environment that is necessary to facilitate educational achievement, opportunities or benefits,
- D. Perpetuating bullying by inciting, soliciting or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass or cause emotional, psychological or physical harm to another student, school employee, or school volunteer,
- E. Infringing on the rights of the other student, school volunteer or school employee at school, or
- F. Materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

### **Reporting Requirements:**

A culture of openness is considered the most effective means for countering this behavior. It is the responsibility of each member of the school community: students, staff and parents to report instances of bullying or suspicions of bullying, with the understanding that such reports will be listened to and taken seriously.

- A. Any school employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying shall immediately report it to the administration. This includes custodians, cafeteria workers, recess and bus monitors.
- B. Each school is required to have a procedure for the administration to promptly investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying has occurred.
- C. If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.
- D. All confirmed bullying incidents must be reported to parents and guardians and must be documented. In addition the administrator must be aware that some acts of bullying may also be a crime and required to be reported to law enforcement.

### **Investigative procedures:**

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying v. peer conflict). Once determined, an investigation and outreach to the victim and family shall occur **concurrently** with a commitment to addressing the needs of the victim, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing formative/educational consequences for bullies. Steps to be taken should include:

- A. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- B. Identify bully(s), victim(s), and bystanders
- C. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the victim(s).
- D. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus.

- E. Immediately inform bullies/cyberbullies about the consequences for bullying or cyberbullying in or out of school.
- F. Have conversations with all parties.
- G. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation; notice of confidentiality.
- H. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of victims
- I. Collection and documentation of data.

#### **Non-Classroom Supervision:**

Each school must supervise non-classroom areas. The review and exchange of information regarding non-classroom areas are important to:

- A. Determine “hot spots” that bullying may more likely occur.
- B. Consider ways of keeping certain groups or students apart during transitions, or building positive collaborations between older and younger students.
- C. Consider adult density in “hot spots” if necessary.

#### **Consequences from Findings:**

Consequences for bullying should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner. Consequences should be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should take into consideration:

- A. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the victim
- B. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the victim
- C. Student’s age, development and degree of maturity
- D. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- E. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- F. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- G. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, is as follows:

- A. Verbal reprimand
- B. Temporary removal from the classroom
- C. Loss of privileges, including before and after school activities
- D. Time-out
- E. Notice to parent
- F. Supervised break times
- G. Detention
- H. In-school suspension
- I. Out-of-school suspension
- J. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- K. Reassignment of classes
- L. Referral to an outside agency
- M. Reassignment to another school or another mode of transportation

- N. Expulsion
- O. Report to law enforcement

In addition, formative activities will be given, which may include:

- A. Reparation to the victim (recognizing that direct apology may be contraindicated)
- B. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- C. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- D. Completion of community service designed to help the perpetrator understand and respect differences; written report required by the perpetrator
- E. Therapeutic support for both perpetrators and victims

### **Ongoing Professional Development**

In general, professional development opportunities will establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, civil communication, and respect for differences. Specifically, the District will provide an annual school-based bullying prevention and intervention training each year for all employees to help them identify and respond to bullying, teasing and harassment. Continual on-going coaching for administrators will be provided to enhance the skill set of teachers and staff as well. The content of such professional development will include:

- A. developmentally appropriate strategies to prevent bullying incidents;
- B. developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to stop bullying incidents;
- C. information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target and witness to the bullying;
- D. research findings on bullying, including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment;
- E. information on the incidence and nature of cyber-bullying; and
- F. internet safety issues as they relate to cyber-bullying.

In addition, schools are encouraged to offer education to parents about bullying prevention.

File: BDA

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The annual organization meeting for the Acton Public School Committee shall be held each year at the first meeting following the completion of the Acton annual town meeting. At this meeting, the Committee shall organize by electing one of its members as chairperson, another as vice-chairperson and a secretary who does not need to be a member. At this meeting, the Committee shall also fix the time for holding its regular meetings.

Deleted: on  
Deleted: third Thursday of the first month

The annual organization meeting for the Acton-Boxborough Regional District School Committee shall be held each year at the first meeting following the completion of the Acton and Boxborough annual town meetings. At this meeting, the Committee shall organize by electing one of its members as chairpersons, another as vice-chairperson, and a secretary who does not need to be a member. At this meeting, the Committee shall also fix the time for holding its regular meetings.

Deleted: on  
Deleted: Thursday of the first month

Aug.	M	T	W	T	F	Teachers' mtg. - Aug 29
Sept.	29	30	31	1	<b>2</b>	Schools Open - Aug 30
	<b>5</b>	6	7	8	9	No School - Sept. 2
	12	13	14	15	16	Labor Day - Sept. 5
	19	20	21	22	23	HS Early Dismissal - Sept. 23
	26	27	28	<b>29</b>	30	Rosh Hashanah - Sept 29
						School Days - 21
Oct.	M	T	W	T	F	
	3	4	5	6	7	Yom Kippur - Sat., Oct 8
	<b>10</b>	11	12	13	14	Columbus Day - Oct. 10
	17	18	19	20	21	Elem Early Dismissal - Oct 26
	24	25	26	27	28	School Days - 20
						31
Nov.	M	T	W	T	F	Prof. Day - Nov. 1 (no school/students)
		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	3	4	Elem Early Dismissal - Nov 2
	7	8	9	10	<b>11</b>	Veterans Day - Nov. 11
	14	15	16	17	18	Half Day - Nov. 23
	21	22	23	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	Thanksgiving Recess - Nov. 24-25
	28	29	30			School Days - 18
Dec.	M	T	W	T	F	
				1	2	Jr. High. Early Dis. - Dec. 15 & 20
	5	6	7	8	9	
	12	13	14	15	16	Winter Recess - Dec. 24 - Jan. 2
	19	20	21	22	23	School Days - 17
	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	

No School and Delayed Opening Announcements air on: <http://ab.mec.edu>

TV Channels 4, 5, & 7 and radio stations WBZ, WEIM

Delayed Opening - delayed starting time.

NO SCHOOL SIGNALS: 2-2-2-2 6:30 AM - No School ABRSD, 7-12, ALL DAY;

2-2-2-2; 7:00 AM - No School ALL Schools ALL DAY;

1-1-1-1 7:15 AM - No School APS, K-6, ALL DAY

School Committee Meetings:

A-B Regional - 1st Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM;

APS Local - 3rd Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM (exceptions: Oct-Mar. @ Elem.

Schools). Check postings as locations may change.

Jan.	M	T	W	T	F	Schools Open - Jan. 3
	<b>2</b>	3	4	5	6	Jr. High Early Dis. - Jan. 5
	9	10	11	12	13	Martin Luther King Day - Jan. 16
	<b>16</b>	17	18	19	20	Kindergarten Change-over - Jan. 23
	23	24	25	26	27	School Days - 20
	30	31				
Feb.	M	T	W	T	F	
		1	2	3		Presidents' Day - Feb. 20
	6	7	8	9	10	Winter Recess - Feb. 20-24
	13	14	15	16	17	
	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	School Days - 16
	27	28	29			
Mar.	M	T	W	T	F	
				1	2	
	5	6	7	8	9	
	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	HS Early Dismissal - March 15
	26	27	28	29	30	School Days - 22
Apr.	M	T	W	T	F	
	2	3	4	5	<b>6</b>	Good Friday - April 6
	9	10	11	12	13	Spring Recess - April 16 - 20
	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	Patriots Day - April 16
	23	24	25	26	27	School Days - 14
May	M	T	W	T	F	
		1	2	3	4	
	7	8	9	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	
	21	22	23	24	25	
	<b>28</b>	29	30	31		Memorial Day - May 28
						School Days - 22
June	M	T	W	T	F	
					1	Graduation - June 1
	4	5	6	7	8	Last day - June 14 - 21
	11	12	13	14	15	(depending on snow days)
	18	19	20	21	22	School Days - 10
	25	26	27	28	29	Total Days = 180 - 185

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**DRAFT #2** SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2011-2012

**Bold Underlined Dates = No School Days**

Proposed 11/18/10  
Before LD, No Holidays

Aug.	M	T	W	T	F	Teachers' mtg. - Aug 29
Sept.	29	30	31	1	2	Schools Open - Aug 30
	5	6	7	8	9	No School - Sept. 2
	12	13	14	15	16	Labor Day - Sept. 5
	19	20	21	22	23	HS Early Dismissal - Sept. 23
	26	27	28	29	30	
						School Days - 22
Oct.	M	T	W	T	F	
	3	4	5	6	7	
	10	11	12	13	14	Columbus Day - Oct. 10
	17	18	19	20	21	Elem Early Dismissal - Oct 26
	24	25	26	27	28	School Days - 20
						31
Nov.	M	T	W	T	F	Prof. Day - Nov. 1 (no school/students)
	1	2	3	4		Elem Early Dismissal - Nov 2
	7	8	9	10	11	Veterans Day - Nov. 11
	14	15	16	17	18	Half Day - Nov. 23
	21	22	23	24	25	Thanksgiving Recess - Nov. 24-25
	28	29	30			School Days - 18
Dec.	M	T	W	T	F	
	5	6	7	8	9	Jr. High. Early Dis. - Dec. 15 & 20
	12	13	14	15	16	Winter Recess - Dec. 24 - Jan. 2
	19	20	21	22	23	School Days - 17
	26	27	28	29	30	

No School and Delayed Opening Announcements air on: <http://ab.mec.edu>  
TV Channels 4, 5, & 7 and radio stations WBZ, WEIM  
Delayed Opening - delayed starting time.  
NO SCHOOL SIGNALS: 2-2-2-2 6:30 AM - No School ABRSD, 7-12, ALL DAY;  
2-2-2-2; 7:00 AM - No School ALL Schools ALL DAY;  
1-1-1-1 7:15 AM - No School APS, K-6, ALL DAY  
School Committee Meetings:  
A-B Regional - 1st Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM;  
APS Local - 3rd Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM (exceptions: Oct.-Mar. @ Elem. Schools). Check postings as locations may change.

Jan.	M	T	W	T	F	Schools Open - Jan. 3
	2	3	4	5	6	Jr. High Early Dis. - Jan. 5
	9	10	11	12	13	Martin Luther King Day - Jan. 16
	16	17	18	19	20	Kindergarten Change-over - Jan. 23
	23	24	25	26	27	School Days - 20
	30	31				
Feb.	M	T	W	T	F	
		1	2	3		
	6	7	8	9	10	Presidents' Day - Feb. 20
	13	14	15	16	17	Winter Recess - Feb. 20-24
	20	21	22	23	24	
	27	28	29			School Days - 16
Mar.	M	T	W	T	F	
				1	2	
	5	6	7	8	9	
	12	13	14	15	16	
	19	20	21	22	23	HS Early Dismissal - March 15
	26	27	28	29	30	School Days - 22
Apr.	M	T	W	T	F	
	2	3	4	5	6	
	9	10	11	12	13	Spring Recess - April 16 - 20
	16	17	18	19	20	Patriots Day - April 16
	23	24	25	26	27	School Days - 15
May	M	T	W	T	F	
		1	2	3	4	
	7	8	9	10	11	
	14	15	16	17	18	Memorial Day - May 28
	21	22	23	24	25	School Days - 22
	28	29	30	31		
June	M	T	W	T	F	
					1	Graduation - June 1
	4	5	6	7	8	Last day - June 12 - 19
	11	12	13	14	15	(depending on snow days)
	18	19	20	21	22	School Days - 8
	25	26	27	28	29	Total Days = 180 - 185

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**DRAFT #3 SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2011-2012**

**Bold Underlined Dates = No School Days**

**Proposed: 11/18/10**  
**After LD, Holidays off**

Sept.	M	T	W	T	F
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	<b>29</b>	30

Labor Day – Sept 5  
Teachers' mtg. – Sept 6  
Schools Open – Sept 7  
HS Early Dismissal – Sept. 23  
Rosh Hashanah – Sept 29  
School Days – 17

Oct.	M	T	W	T	F
	3	4	5	6	7
	10	11	12	13	14
	17	18	19	20	21
	24	25	26	27	28
	31				

Yom Kippur – Sat. Oct 8  
Columbus Day – Oct. 10  
Elem Early Dismissal – Oct 26  
School Days – 20

Nov.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
	28	29	30		

Prof. Day – Nov. 1 (no school/students)  
Elem Early Dismissal – Nov 2  
Veterans Day – Nov. 11  
Half Day – Nov. 23  
Thanksgiving Recess – Nov. 24-25  
School Days – 18

Dec.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>

Jr. High. Early Dis. – Dec. 15 & 20  
Winter Recess – Dec. 24 – Jan. 2  
School Days – 17

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TV Channels 4, 5, & 7 and radio stations WBZ, WEIM  
Delayed Opening - delayed starting time.  
NO SCHOOL SIGNALS: 2-2-2-2 6:30 AM - No School ABRSD, 7-12, ALL DAY;  
2-2-2-2; 7:00 AM - No School ALL Schools ALL DAY;  
1-1-1-1 7:15 AM - No School APS, K-6, ALL DAY

School Committee Meetings:  
A-B Regional - 1st Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM;  
APS Local - 3rd Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM (exceptions: Oct.-Mar. @ Elem. Schools). Check postings as locations may change.

Jan.	M	T	W	T	F
	2	3	4	5	6
	9	10	11	12	13
	<b>16</b>	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	26	27
	30	31			

Schools Open – Jan. 3  
Jr. High Early Dis. – Jan. 5  
Martin Luther King Day – Jan. 16  
Kindergarten Change-over – Jan. 23  
School Days – 20

Feb.	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	
	6	7	8	9	10
	13	14	15	16	17
	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
	27	28	29		

Presidents' Day – Feb. 20  
Winter Recess – Feb. 20-24  
School Days – 16

Mar.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29	30

HS Early Dismissal – March 15  
School Days – 22

Apr.	M	T	W	T	F
	2	3	4	5	<b>6</b>
	9	10	11	12	13
	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>
	23	24	25	26	27

Good Friday – April 6  
Spring Recess – April 16 – 20  
Patriots Day – April 16  
School Days – 14

May	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	<b>28</b>	29	30	31	

Memorial Day – May 28  
School Days – 22

June	M	T	W	T	F
					1
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	18	19	20	21	22
	25	26	27	28	29

Graduation – June 1  
Last day – June 20 – 27  
(depending on snow days)  
School Days – 14  
Total Days = 180 - 185



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**DRAFT #4 SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2011-2012**

**Bold Underlined Dates = No School Days**

**Proposed 1/18/10**  
**After LD, No Holidays**

Sept. M T W T F  
5 6 7 8 9  
12 13 14 15 16  
19 20 21 22 23  
26 27 28 29 30

Labor Day - Sept 5  
Teachers' mtg. - Sept 6  
Schools Open - Sept 7  
HS Early Dismissal - Sept. 23  
School Days - 18

Jan. M T W T F  
2 3 4 5 6  
9 10 11 12 13  
16 17 18 19 20  
23 24 25 26 27  
30 31

Schools Open - Jan. 3  
Jr. High Early Dis. - Jan. 5  
Martin Luther King Day - Jan. 16  
Kindergarten Change-over - Jan. 23  
School Days - 20

Oct. M T W T F  
3 4 5 6 7  
10 11 12 13 14  
17 18 19 20 21  
24 25 26 27 28  
31

Columbus Day - Oct. 10  
Elem Early Dismissal - Oct 26  
School Days - 20

Feb. M T W T F  
1 2 3  
6 7 8 9 10  
13 14 15 16 17  
20 21 22 23 24  
27 28 29

Presidents' Day - Feb. 20  
Winter Recess - Feb. 20 -24  
School Days - 16

Nov. M T W T F  
1 2 3 4  
7 8 9 10 11  
14 15 16 17 18  
21 22 23 24 25  
28 29 30

Prof. Day - Nov. 1 (no school/students)  
Elem Early Dismissal - Nov 2  
Veterans Day - Nov. 11  
Half Day - Nov. 23  
Thanksgiving Recess - Nov. 24-25  
School Days - 18

Mar. M T W T F  
5 6 7 8 9  
12 13 14 15 16  
19 20 21 22 23  
26 27 28 29 30

HS Early Dismissal - March 15  
School Days - 22

Dec. M T W T F  
5 6 7 8 9  
12 13 14 15 16  
19 20 21 22 23  
26 27 28 29 30

Jr. High. Early Dis. - Dec. 15 & 20  
Winter Recess - Dec. 24 - Jan. 2  
School Days - 17

Apr. M T W T F  
2 3 4 5 6  
9 10 11 12 13  
16 17 18 19 20  
23 24 25 26 27

Spring Recess - April 16 - 20  
Patriots Day - April 16  
School Days - 15

May M T W T F  
7 8 9 10 11  
14 15 16 17 18  
21 22 23 24 25  
28 29 30 31

Memorial Day - May 28  
School Days - 22

June M T W T F  
4 5 6 7 8  
11 12 13 14 15  
18 19 20 21 22  
25 26 27 28 29

Graduation - June 1  
Last day - June 18 - 25  
(depending on snow days)  
School Days - 12  
Total Days = 180 - 185

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Delayed Opening - delayed starting time.  
NO SCHOOL SIGNALS: 2-2-2-2 6:30 AM - No School ABRSD, 7-12, ALL DAY;  
2-2-2-2; 7:00 AM - No School ALL Schools ALL DAY;  
1-1-1-1 7:15 AM - No School APS, K-6, ALL DAY  
School Committee Meetings:  
A-B Regional - 1st Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM;  
APS Local - 3rd Thursday, JHS Library - 7:30 PM (exceptions: Oct.-Mar. @ Elem. Schools). Check postings as locations may change.

November 2010						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				



## Holiday Observances in Massachusetts

(Statewide Legal Holidays are in Bold)

**Notes:** This list does not include all religious holidays observed by each faith. State and federal law require schools to make reasonable accommodation to the religious needs of students and employees in observance of holy days. For information on other religious holidays observed by members of religions represented in your school community, please contact local clergy.

School vacations are determined by School Districts, not the ESE. Contact the local School Administration Office for details. [View contact information](#) for Massachusetts Schools and Districts.

	2010-2011 School Yr.	2011-2012 School Yr.	2012-2013 School Yr.
<b>Labor Day</b>	<b>Mon., Sept. 6</b>	<b>Mon., Sept. 5</b>	<b>Mon., Sept. 3</b>
Rosh Hashanah*	Sept. 9-Sept. 10	Sept. 29-Sept. 30	Sept. 17-Sept. 18
Yom Kippur*	Sat., Sept. 18	Sat., Oct. 8	Wed., Sept. 26
Sukkot*	Thurs., Sept. 23	Thurs., Oct. 13	Mon., Oct. 1
<b>Columbus Day</b>	<b>Mon., Oct. 11</b>	<b>Mon., Oct. 10</b>	<b>Mon., Oct. 8</b>
Ramadan**	Aug. 11-Sept. 9	Aug. 1-Aug. 30	July 20-Aug., 18
<b>Veterans' Day</b>	<b>Thurs., Nov. 11</b>	<b>Fri., Nov. 11</b>	<b>Sun., Nov. 11</b>
Eid al-Fitr**	Fri., Sept. 10	Wed., Aug. 31	Aug., 19
<b>Thanksgiving</b>	<b>Thurs., Nov. 25</b>	<b>Thurs., Nov. 24</b>	<b>Thurs., Nov. 22</b>
Eid al-Adha**	Tues., Nov. 16	Sun., Nov. 6	Sat., Oct. 26
Chanukah*	Thurs., Dec. 2	Wed., Dec. 21	Sun., Dec. 9
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Sat., Dec. 25***</b>	<b>Sun., Dec. 25****</b>	<b>Tues., Dec. 25</b>
Kwanzaa	Sun., Dec. 26	Mon., Dec. 26	Wed., Dec. 26
<b>New Year's Day</b>	<b>Sat., Jan 1***</b>	<b>Sun., Jan. 1****</b>	<b>Tues., Jan. 1</b>
<b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>	<b>Mon., Jan. 17</b>	<b>Mon., Jan. 16</b>	<b>Mon., Jan. 21</b>
<b>Presidents' Day</b>	<b>Mon., Feb. 21</b>	<b>Mon., Feb. 20</b>	<b>Mon., Feb. 18</b>
Ash Wednesday	Wed., March 9	Wed., Feb. 22	Wed., Feb. 13
<b>Evacuation Day (Suffolk County only)</b>	<b>Thurs., Mar. 17</b>	<b>Sat., Mar. 17</b>	<b>Sun., Mar. 17</b>
Palm Sunday	Sun., April 17	Sun., April 1	Sun., Mar. 24
Passover *	4/19-4/26	4/7-4/14	3/26-4/1
Good Friday	Fri., April 22	Fri., April 6	Fri., March 29
Easter	Sun., April 24	Sun., April 8	Sun., March 31

Orthodox Easter	Sun., April 24	Sun., April 15	Sun., May 5
<b>Patriots' Day</b>	<b>Mon., April 18</b>	<b>Mon., April 16</b>	<b>Mon., April 15</b>
<b>Memorial Day</b>	<b>Mon., May 30</b>	<b>Mon., May 28</b>	<b>Mon., May 27</b>
Shavuot*	Wed., June 8	Sun., May 27	Wed., May 15
<b>Bunker Hill Day (Suffolk County only)</b>	<b>Fri., June 17</b>	<b>Sun., June 17</b>	<b>Mon., June 17</b>
<b>Independence Day</b>	<b>Mon., July 4</b>	<b>Wed., July 4</b>	<b>Thurs., July 4</b>

\* According to the Massachusetts Lawyers Diary and Manual, "In addition to dates noted, observant Jews celebrate the second, seventh and eighth days of Passover; the second, eighth and ninth days of Sukkot; and two days of Shavuot. All Jewish holidays begin at sundown, the evening prior to the day of the holiday."

\*\*Due to the lunar calendar these are only approximate dates.

\*\*\*Under G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 18, legal holidays that fall on a Saturday are observed on that day.

\*\*\*\*Under G.L. c. 4, § 7, cl. 18, a legal holiday shall be observed the day following when said holiday shall occur on Sunday.

To: Brigid Bieber and John Petersen  
Chairs of APS and ABRSD School Committees  
From: Xuan Kong  
Date: October 25, 2010  
Subject: Long-Range Planning and the Budget Process

It is often said that the primary responsibility of the school committee is to advocate for the education needs of our students through policy making and budget planning. In my view, we lack the long-range planning that is essential for appropriately advocating for the educational resource needs of our students. Every year, we merely repeat the exercise of allocating available resources to maintain a certain level of services (at best, resulting in a level-service budget).

A long-range plan helps us achieve the goals we value. Thoughtful and accurate financial planning is the most effective tool for the school committee as a whole to advocate for the educational needs of our students. During every election cycle and every school committee meeting, our student-teacher ratio is a key topic for all. If this is what our community views as the most important issue, then we must plan for a realization of that value. Without knowing what it would take to get to a specific student-teacher ratio, say 20:1, we will never realize that goal. Long-range planning will also help the community to understand the requirements of financial assets, physical assets, and human assets to reach their desired goals.



A long-range plan helps us establish critical needs. Without a clearly articulated and well documented plan, it is understandable that some citizens might accuse us of wasteful spending when, in fact, the superintendent is wisely and thoughtfully taking advantage of operational savings at the end of the fiscal year to address the needs of our schools. These misunderstandings could be avoided if we clearly establish the needs ahead of time. Many months ago when Dr. Mills compared Acton's lack of a textbook replacement plan with Worcester's plan, it should have sounded an alarm for all of us.


A long-range plan helps us avoid overlooking our financial obligations. During the FY2011 budget planning cycle, APS experienced a "surprising" \$300K shortfall related to its obligations of capital project expenses not outside the 2 ½ limit. This year, we fortunately received an MSBA matching grant for replacing the Douglas School roof. The debt service for the \$265K balance must be planned as a part of the APS future operational budget unless a debt exclusion override is passed. Having a long-range plan would also allow us to act more effectively and coherently when external grant opportunities like Green Community Grants become available.

A long-range plan helps us communicate effectively with all stakeholders regarding the sustainability and challenges of our school finances. As Acton Leadership Group presented its financial models at Town Meeting last year, an unrealistic 2% expense increase for FY12 and FY13 was assumed in the model. While predicting the future is always most difficult, a more realistic percentage increase derived from a long-range plan would have been better. An accurate and complete description of financial obligations and requirements of our long-range plan and goals would also facilitate meaningful dialogue among all stakeholders. When people understand the consequences of the assumptions and plans, they are more likely to adjust their views to match the reality.

By definition, long-range planning does not necessarily impact our immediate work such as how to plan our budget for next year. However, each and every delay is an opportunity lost for our students. They will forever lose the opportunity to learn in their 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom with a lower student-teacher ratio. They will forever miss the opportunity to learn their favorite science subjects with that up-to-date textbook.

In conclusion, I urge my fellow school committee members to commit to our students' future by developing a long-range plan today so we can collectively advocate for their education needs in the most appropriate and effective way possible, while also achieving the goals that our community values so highly.

From:  Ann Budner  
Subject: Re: Use of Reserves  
To:  <apsc@acton-ma.gov>

Fri, Nov 05, 2010 11:23:49 AM 

Attachments:  Attach0.html

7K

Dear Acton School Committee,







As a parent of two children in the Acton school system, and as an Acton taxpayer for the last 16 years, I am writing to express my concern about using the Fed Ed jobs money and the transportation money remaining in this fiscal year to reduce the tax rate by a small amount. These dollars should be used for the schools themselves in the current and coming years, as our Superintendent has requested. We know that budgets are going to be tight over the next few years – in fact, they already are. Witness the large class sizes throughout the system, the parents anxiously raising funds to support staff positions, and the dramatic rise in school fees for all student activities. In light of this, it seems irresponsible not to use the reserves for the education of our children.

I was upset to hear that members of the School Committee stated, at the October 21 meeting, that their primary responsibility is not necessarily to our children and our children's education. We elected you to be the primary advocates for our kids and our schools, within a fiscally responsible framework; we have other town boards to be advocates for other constituencies and Town Meeting to vote final budgets. But if our School Committee is not going to advocate for our children – nor support our Superintendent when he asks for their commitment in providing level service to our children – then who, besides ourselves, will do so? Many of us moved to Acton for the great school system and now that we are part of it we want to keep it great - for all of our kids.

Yes, we would all love to see our taxes lowered. But it doesn't make sense to do it with these one-time funds. Please have the courage to use the Fed Ed Jobs money and the excess transportation money *not* to fund a small decrease in taxes, but instead to support our Superintendent and all of our children. The reserves should be used to provide at least level service in our schools and to retain teaching staff in the coming years. Our schools are stretched to the brink and the cracks are showing. We need your leadership.

Sincerely,

Ann Budner

From:  John Petersen <john.s.petersen@verizon.net> Sun, Nov 07, 2010 8:56:18 PM   
Subject: RE: Use of Reserves, school budgets  
To:  'Ann Budner <apsc@acton-ma.gov> i>   
Cc:  bpetr@mail.ab.mec.edu  
Attachments:  Attach0.html 13K

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Dear Ann,

Thank you very much for writing to the Acton Public School Committee to express your interest in maintaining our reserves for the use of our school systems. Your attention to this issue and participation are much appreciated. The School Committee places a high value on citizen input in its decision making processes. Your email will be included in the SC materials for discussion at a future meeting.

The "reserve" question is complicated because we have "free cash" and NESWC as reserves for the town (APS, K-6) and E&D (Excess and Deficiency) at the regional school level (grades 7-12). In terms of additional revenues available to fund the schools, we have the recently appropriated federal "Edujobs" money (both a local APS and a regional appropriation) as well as the ARRA funds (which may be spent in FY11 or FY12).

Transportation funds are an annual appropriation to the regional schools which due to a change in state regulations has caused us to receive an "extra" \$600K this year. Transportation funding is somewhat volatile, the legislature has sometimes reduced transportation funding when faced with a difficult state budget.

The SC (local and regional) has affirmed that the edujobs money is solely for the use of the schools. Likewise the ARRA funds are solely for the use of the schools.

As we manage our FY11 budget and plan for FY12 and beyond, I assure you that it is the primary objective of the committee to preserve and enhance our wonderful educational programs. Our school budgets are predominantly funded (80%) by our local property tax. The school committee portion of the local property tax is the result of a discussion within and amongst the boards (SC, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee) and, of course, is ultimately the decision of Town Meeting. While the School Administration and School Committee have the unilateral authority to determine the use of certain funds (Title 1 grants and the one-time "edujobs" and ARRA funds); the bulk of our funding is dependent on the decisions of the town. My personal belief is that, over the long-term, a town-wide collaborative discussion which recognizes that there are multiple competing interests and drives resource allocation will best serve the town and our students.

Sincerely,

John Petersen

Chair, Acton School Committee

From: John Petersen <john.s.petersen@verizon.net>

Thu, Nov 04, 2010 1:29:43 PM

Subject: RE: Acton School Question - instructional time

7.3.b.

To: 'yongjiang liang' <yongjiang.liang@acton-ma.gov>

Attachments: Attach0.html

9K

Dear Yongjiang,

The length of the school year and instructional time are regulated by the state. The Acton Public School schedule is established each year so that it meets the state requirements. Due to state regulation, all the local city and town school systems have almost exactly the same instructional time.

I do agree that in this period we are going through with teacher conferences, professional development day scheduled to coincide with election day (which creates a lot of traffic at the schools) and soon veteran's day, it feels like the kids aren't in school very much. Hopefully, the kids are using this time to work on fun projects or reading a non-academic book or just running around and getting exercise.

If would like any additional information about the school schedule, please let me know.

Best regards,

John Petersen  
Chair, Acton Public School Committee

**From:** yongjiang lian  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 04, 2010 1:14 PM  
**To:** [shover@alum.mit.edu](mailto:shover@alum.mit.edu); [apsc@acton-ma.gov](mailto:apsc@acton-ma.gov)  
**Subject:** Acton School Question

Dear Members of APS Committee:

Why our schools are having so many half days? Every Thursday is a half day, the last Wednesday in October is early dismissal, and it is a holiday (professional day, how many people enjoy this holiday?) on Tuesday, November 2nd, and Wednesday, November 3 is yet again another early dismissal day.







With SO MANY UNCOMMON holidays and half days, are our kids having enough classroom hours comparing with kids in neighboring towns?

Thanks.

Yongjiang



7.3.c.

From:  John Petersen 11/5/2010 11:43:50 AM   
Subject: Public information, participation  
To:  'Amy Hedison' ·  
 'Heather and Jim Harer'  
Cc:  <aps@acton-ma.gov>  
Attachments:  Attach0.html 5K

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Dear Amy and Heather,

Thank you for your patience in waiting through executive session so that you could participate in last night's APS meeting. I appreciate the importance of involving the public in our discussions to help us make decisions that reflect the desire of our community.

Unfortunately, open meeting law does not let us casually establish forums for public discussion involving multiple committee members. However, individual committee members may always be contacted and these individual conversations may provide you additional opportunity to discuss issues and provide input to the committee.

Reflecting the fact that it is not convenient for many people to attend the meetings, the SC has worked hard to make materials available on the school web site. For example, the waterfall information was already available in February this year.

<http://ab.mec.edu/about/scpackets0910/BudgetPresentation2-6-10.pdf>

[slide 69, 70 where slide 70 shows the \$400k levy reduction as a green bar]

And the SC waterfall vote recorded in our minutes:

<http://ab.mec.edu/about/minutes09-10/03-04-10%20JT%20AB%20APS%20SC%20Min%20A.pdf>

[Page 4 of the meeting minutes]

Thanks again for your commitment to our democratic process. I look forward to your input in our ongoing discussions.

Best regards,

John

John Petersen  
Chair, Acton Public School Committee

**MONTHLY REPORTING OF  
ELL STUDENT POPULATION**

Acton Public Schools

November 1, 2010

Category	Total as of 10/1/2010	Additions	Subtractions	Total as of 11/1/2010
Conant	25	0	0	25
Douglas	22	+1	0	23
McCarthy-Towne	17	+2	0	19
Merriam	29	+2	0	31
<b>APS TOTAL</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98</b>

**MONTHLY ENROLLMENT**  
**ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS**  
**2010-2011 ACADEMIC YEAR**

Nov-10

Levels	Sept. 1			Oct. 1			Nov. 1			Dec. 1			Jan. 1			Feb. 1			Mar. 1			Apr. 1			May 1			Jun 1		
	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot		
K	318	48	8	326	320	49	8	328	325	49	8	333	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1	347	54	7	354	347	55	6	353	347	54	6	353	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
2	344	69	2	346	342	68	2	344	346	68	2	348	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
3	343	68	2	345	344	68	2	346	342	68	2	344	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
4	370	71	5	375	369	71	5	374	370	71	5	375	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
5	362	80	3	365	360	80	4	364	364	82	4	368	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
6	393	75	1	394	394	75	1	395	394	76	1	395	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
K-6 Ungr.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
In D.Pre-sch.	40	7	0	40	41	7	0	41	44	7	0	44	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
O.D. Pre-sch.	8	3	0	8	5	3	0	5	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
O.D. SPED K-6	13	4	0	13	13	4	0	13	20	4	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
A.P.S. Total	2538	479	28	2566	2535	480	28	2563	2553	482	28	2581	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
7	400	73	8	481	395	69	9	473	397	70	9	476	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
8	401	76	5	482	401	75	5	481	401	75	5	481	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
J.H.S. Total	801	149	13	963	796	144	14	954	798	145	14	957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9	416	110	3	529	402	108	4	514	404	108	4	516	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10	394	100	6	500	390	101	6	497	392	101	6	499	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
11	381	93	6	480	370	97	8	475	370	97	8	475	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
12	385	117	12	514	381	115	12	508	381	115	12	508	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9-12 Ungr.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
P.G.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
H.S. Total	1576	420	27	2023	1543	421	30	1994	1547	421	30	1998	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Total JHS & HS	2377	569	40	2986	2339	565	44	2948	2345	566	44	2955	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
O.D. SPED 7-12	43	10	0	53	42	11	0	53	41	10	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Reg. Total	2420	579	40	3039	2381	576	44	3001	2386	576	44	3006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
A.P.S. Total	2538	479	28	2566	2535	480	28	2563	2553	482	28	2581	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Reg. Total	2420	579	40	3039	2381	576	44	3001	2386	576	44	3006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Grand Total	4958	579	68	5605	4916	576	72	5564	4939	576	72	5587	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

A = ACTON  
 B = BOXBOROUGH  
 C = Choice/Staff/Tuition In  
 Ungr. = Ungraded  
 O.D. = SPED Out of District

Distribution:

In D. = In District  
 S. Mills  
 M. Altieri  
 D. Bookis  
 L. Huber

C. Bates  
 D. Aicardi  
 A. Bisewicz  
 K. Nelson

All Principals (2)

**NESDEC Correction 10/6/10 7th Sheet**

Students other than Choice counted under column C:  
 Staff Students -  
 Tuition In Students -  
 Sped Tuition in Students

Grade	YOG	Conant			Douglas			Gates			Total			McCarthy-Towne			Total			Merriam					Total	#Sec	Avg. Siz.
		CAD	CB	CC	DAD	DB	DC	GAD	GB	GC	2#	TAD	TB	TC	312#	MAD	MB	MC	MC2	4#							
K-23	Rm																					5#					
		21	21	21	63																						
	Rm 3	4	6	1#				1	3	8	1#																
Gr. 1-22																											
		22	23	23	68																						
	Rm 5	7	8					5	6	10	1#																
Gr. 2-21																											
		23	24	22	69																						
	Rm 9	10	17					7	9	17																	
Gr. 3-20																											
		24	23	22	69																						
	Rm 18	19	20					18	19	20	1#																
Gr. 4-19																											
		25	25	25	75																						
	Rm 14	15	16					14	15	16																	
Gr. 5-18																											
		24	24	24	72																						
	Rm 11	12	13					11	12	13																	
Gr. 6-17																											
		25	25	24	74																						
	Total Staff			1#							5#																
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		21	25																								
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### Professional Development Day 2010

The **Acton Public Schools Pre-School** engaged in discussions and activities on the topics of Social Language Development and Play and Motor Therapy Interventions.

**Conant** reviewed *Second Step/Steps to Respect* by grade level, discussed the schools' newly implemented reading assessments and how to move forward with the data, and then Dr. Elizabeth Goranson presented *Yoga in the Classroom for Elementary Teachers and Specialists* teaching stress reduction and ways to help students focus on body awareness, self-control, and being positive.

At **Douglas**, the umbrella theme was "Teaching Compassion, Courage & Commitment to Community." They began with a short overview from Dr. Whitbeck. Teachers were assigned to a mixed grade level group and then attended three 45-minute workshops:

- Building a Community of Respect - An analysis of bullying perceptions and how teachers teach respect, facilitated by Hilary Bonnell, school counselor.
- C.A.R.E.S - Teaching positive character building, facilitated by Melissa Hubbell, 6th grade teacher
- The Global Community - Free The Children: educating their students about commitment to improving local & global issues, facilitated by Dr. Whitbeck.

In each workshop, the focus was "Instruction" and how teachers can teach these aspects of community - ultimately shaping their students into compassionate community members committed to improving both local and global communities. The afternoon entailed a work session for grade level teams to form an action plan from the morning's workshops. The day ended with presentations of team action plans and a discussion of next steps.

The **Gates School** met for the day at Beth Elohim. A consultant presented the *Second Step/Steps to Respect* program. The *Second Step* program helps students solve problems without anger and treat others with compassion. The program includes lesson cards and DVDs that lead students through role-plays and discussions. *Steps to Respect* teaches elementary students to recognize, refuse, and report bullying, to be assertive, and how to build friendships.

At **McCarthy-Towne**, a facilitator from The Northeast Foundation for Children presented an all-day training in the tenets of teacher language and the use of social strategies to reduce conflict entitled, "Responding to Misbehavior." This workshop is part of a yearlong process of training teachers to use *Responsive Classroom*. *Responsive Classroom* is a research-based program developed to foster teacher-directed problem solving strategies in the classroom. It combines academic and social problem-solving skills to help students actively make appropriate choices in both areas.

**Merriam School** began the day with an *Open Circle* Bully Prevention Workshop. *Open Circle* is comprehensive, grade-differentiated social and emotional learning program which recently created an anti-bullying component. Merriam School is piloting this component for the developers. In the afternoon, they debriefed the morning activities and participated in *Yoga in the Classroom for Elementary Teachers and Specialists*, teaching stress reduction and ways to help students focus on body awareness, self-control, and being positive.

The **K-12 nursing staff** spent the day at Children's Hospital learning about Traumatic Brain Injury: Assessment and Management of Pain in Students, Eating Disorders and their treatment plans, and Pediatric Obesity and the role of the school nurse.

The **R. J. Grey** faculty spent the morning focused on Adolescent Literacy. A consultant from Education Development Center shared reading comprehension strategies, vocabulary instruction, and text features that can be used across content areas to help students read and comprehend in-class and assigned reading. The afternoon was spent in department meetings:

- The math department had a training session on the new MOBIs and RF pads (clickers). They also learned how to integrate the two items with the 7th- and 8th-grade MCAS software package.
- The science department continued work on the integration of new texts in both the 7th grade (Biology) and 8th grade (Biology and Chemistry).
- The social studies department discussed how to implement some of the specific strategies learned in the morning session and integrate them into the curriculum. They looked at samples of specific non-fiction readings/lessons in both grades 7 and 8 and discuss how they might apply these tools.
- The English department began to examine the new Common Core Standards for Literacy and to identify department goals in this area.
- The world language department worked by grade level and language to continue developing and revising classroom materials to supplement the curriculum.
- The art department met with the Director of Visual Arts to review the sequence of content and skills in the K-8 drawing units.
- The music and drama staff customized the spring musical numbers and coordinated with the choreographer.
- The librarian met with the high school library/media services staff to discuss information literacy skills.
- The health teachers spent the afternoon off-site, visiting the UMass Medical Center or the Prevention Center in Cambridge to focus on specific areas of the curriculum that need enhancement.
- Study Skills staff reviewed curriculum and student handouts for refinement.
- Special educators, PT, OT, and S&L teachers focused on multiple measures of assessment and MCAS preparation.

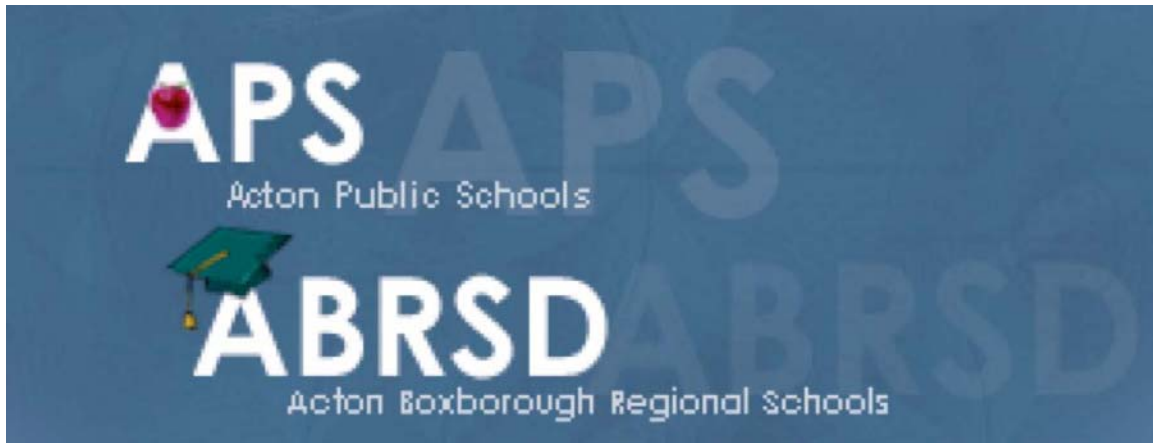
- Academic support staff worked on making 8th-grade science assessments accessible for ELL.
- The computer literacy staff met with librarians, media services staff, and the lab coordinator planning information literacy skills.
- Minuteman Tech staff wrote curriculum for crash tests and guardrails.

In the morning, **counselors** focused on specific department goals, based on Pupil Services SMART Goals. In the afternoon, they came together to discuss stress management initiatives with the high school counselors and psychologists. The **physical education staff** spent the day off-site, visiting other school districts or at a P. E. conference.

The **ABRHS** faculty spent the day discussing the components of high-quality instruction. Initially, they worked in small, cross-departmental groups to watch classroom video clips and discuss effective instruction. Later in the morning they returned to their departments to continue the discussions. Following lunch, the faculty attended technology sessions taught by their colleagues. **Counselors and psychologists** spent the afternoon discussing stress management initiatives. The **librarians, media services, and lab coordinator** spent the afternoon planning information literacy skills.

**School-based staff** worked within their buildings all day. **Central Office Staff, Administrative Assistant Staff** and **Community Education** office staff participated in a beginner to intermediate excel class or an intermediate to advanced excel class.

**Community Education Extended Day** teachers had a program of their own, featuring Jeanine Fitzgerald, from the Better Behavior Bureau, who presented a workshop entitled, "Act Your Age." Jeannine is an educational consultant whose focus is on empowering children, parents and professionals to promote social, emotional and behavioral competencies. The Extended Day staff also shared and discussed information learned at the recent NEDDS (Network of Extended Day Directors) conference and reviewed de-escalation techniques.



# EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY PLAN

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OCTOBER  
2010-2013  
(DRAFT)

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL  
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# Introduction

Educators in the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Districts understand the need to confront the challenge of preparing students to thrive in today's fast-paced, technology-driven global society. Having grown up within the Digital Information Age, it is implicit that children have extraordinary opportunities for success yet be equipped to face the challenges of a constantly evolving world. To effectively compete in a global society, our students must possess 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that emphasize critical thinking and innovative problem solving. They must be self-directed learners who can communicate and collaborate effectively.

Building upon the accomplishments of the 2006-2009 technology plan, the districts are well positioned to maximize the impact of increased access to technology by building a 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching and learning environment directed at helping students achieve. In aligning efforts to meet the Superintendent's focus on effective instruction in the classroom, the new technology plan contains clearly stated and reasonable goals highlighting educational technologies that enhance student learning, advance technology literacy, and support pedagogy. The support of teachers and administrators in integrating technology into the curriculum is imperative for successful completion of this plan.

This technology plan was created according to guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. These guidelines are based on the School Technology and Readiness Chart (STaR) developed by the state's Educational Technology Advisory Council (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edtech/planning.html>)

# Current Status

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The districts share an infrastructure maintained by the Educational Technology department (Table 1). The department supports more than 1,700 cross-platform computer devices, 15% of which are older than five years, and maintains a computer replacement cycle of five years. Both Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District entered into a four-year leasing agreement, which enabled all instructional staff one-to-one access to a type “a/b” computing device, which were mostly laptop computers. Currently, there are multiple on-site servers that deliver technology services to both districts, such as E-Mail, health records, library services, web services, print/file management, financial & budgetary planning, and personnel information. Both districts utilize Powerschool Premier for their student information system (SIS) and E-Sped for their special education needs, both of which are hosted off-site. Powerschool is one of the most heavily used systems and provides scheduling, attendance, grading, and reporting tools essential to efficient school administration.

The 2006-2009 technology plan was designed in direct alignment with the districts’ strategic improvement plan of increasing the amount of access to technology for all students, staff, and administrators. A highlight of the plan was the “Instructional Technology Initiative,” which afforded more technology for classrooms with laptops for teachers, installation of SMARTBoard devices & projectors, increased professional development opportunities, and an online course management system. In conjunction with this plan, the districts implemented a large-scale wireless environment blanketing all school and administrative buildings with complete, 100% wireless capability. Further, the wireless is completely managed and monitored at a central site, reducing the need for technical support while increasing reliability and security. All buildings utilize layer-2 Cisco switching, configured for multiple VLANs that route network traffic, meeting or exceeding quality of service demands. Verizon FiOS provides backbone connection to the Internet, with each building being connected through a 1-gigabit fiber connection.

Many administrative technology enhancements have been implemented, including the district-wide implementation of on-line emergency cards used by families to enter in student information electronically. Student information system enhancements included the consolidation and integration of data from within the district’s transportation and food service departments to provide on-line lunch counts, bus routes, and attendance information. High School-dependent services, such as extra-curricular activities and student parking were also integrated into the student information system.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

As a component of the “Instructional Technology Initiative,” technology-based professional development workshops were designed and delivered to promote innovative classroom instruction. Over the course of the 2006-2009 technology plan, the districts hired building-based Technology Integration Specialists who approached professional development opportunities at many levels. First, the team implemented a new initiative, iTIPs, designed to further instructional technology. Teachers designed an individual teacher innovation plan to enhance their instructional delivery or assisted with management/administrative tasks with technology. Teachers were given the resources to articulate specific plans for using instructional technology tools and controlled their own learning to what was

meaningful or relevant to them. Upon completion, teachers were more comfortable creating classroom websites, electronic newsletters, and digital assessment tools. They were able to utilize projectors, cameras, and web-based tools as instructional aids. Teachers created SMARTBoard lessons and multimedia projects, such as podcast/vodcast, wikis, and blogs. Currently, the Integration Specialists continue to assess all technology products and services that will be needed to improve teaching and learning on a school-by-school and district-level basis. All educational technology staff members work closely with school technology committees to identify areas of technology that align with school improvement plans. Initiatives must be fiscally responsible and appropriate in terms of integrating into our current operations. Each school conducts teacher technology proficiency surveys that collect data to inform and guide professional development needs.

**Table 1. Current Educational Technology Staff**

Title	Number of Full Time Employees
Director of Educational Technology	1
Systems Administrator	1
Desktop Support Technician	1.8
Technology Integration Specialists	3.36
Data Information Manager	1
Administrative Support	.48

Over the course of the last three years, the technology department has experienced a high turnover rate in staff. In an effort to streamline services and better accommodate district needs, the organizational structure was recently changed. Both districts are working towards matching the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education recommended staffing ratios. Currently, each Desktop Support Specialist supports an above average amount of computers. Technology Integration Specialists provide school-based support with each school having 19 hours of dedicated instructional technology assistance.

## FUNDING

Each district addresses most technology costs through an annual appropriated budget process in order to improve the continuity and public accountability of the budgeting planning process. Annually, the districts allocate resources for the regular replacement, upgrade, and disposal of technology. Costs, including staffing, infrastructure, hardware/software, professional development, telecommunications, and contracted services/support, are shared between both districts. Both districts receive E-Rate reimbursements used towards telecommunication services and will continue to actively seek and make use of federal and state resources for which we are eligible.

Additional funding for technology may come from individual school groups, associations, and after school

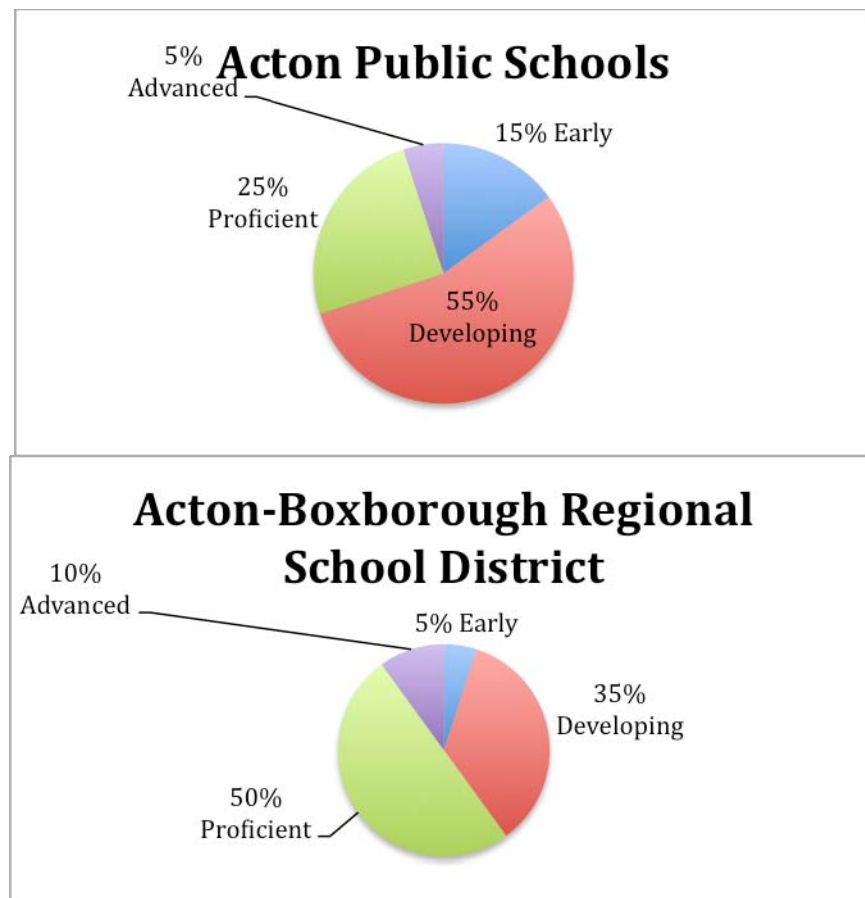
programs. Each school carefully utilizes these funds to best meet its overall academic and instructional needs. Recently, most schools have purchased technology hardware with these funds. However, inequities have occurred due to each school receiving and utilizing differing amounts of capital.

#### TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION AND LITERACY

Teachers from both school districts have successfully integrated technology into performing daily operational and administrative tasks, with 100% reporting using a computer daily to perform tasks, such as lesson planning, communications, and/or collaboration.

Although all teachers identify using technology on a daily basis, data collected from the district-developed Teacher Technology Self-Assessment surveys completed in 2009 demonstrated varying proficiency levels amongst instructional staff in both districts (Chart 1.)

**Chart 1. Percentage of Staff at Designated Proficiency Levels in 2009**

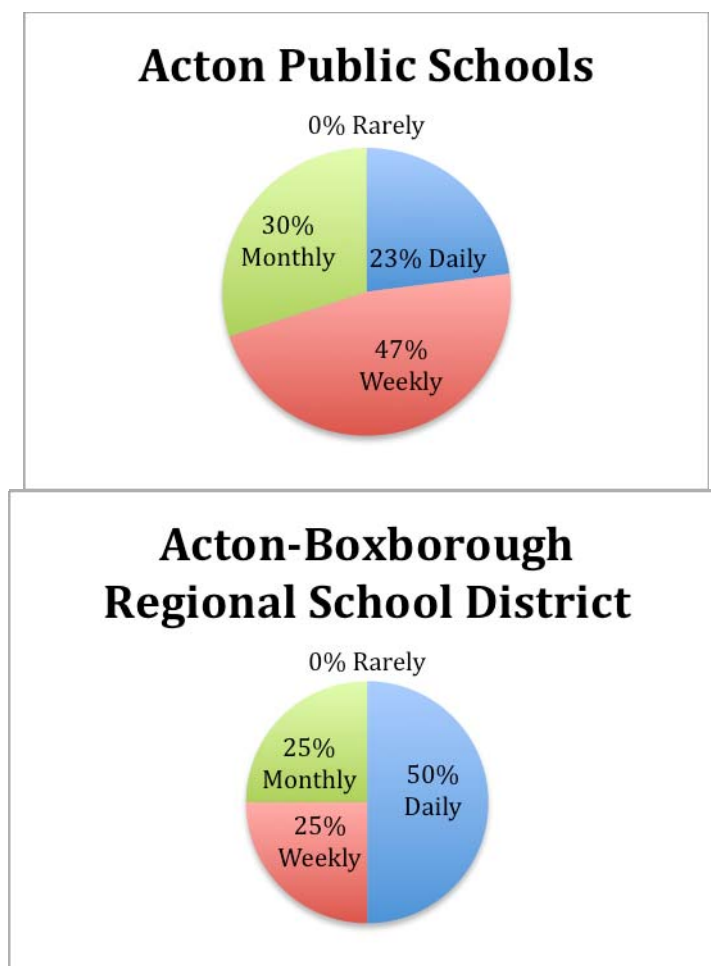


In Acton Public Schools, 15% of teachers identified themselves at the early technology level. Fifty-five percent of the teachers felt they were developing their technology skills, while 25% were proficient. Only 5% of the teachers felt their technology skills were categorized as advanced. In the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, 5% of teachers felt that they were at the early technology level. Thirty-five percent of staff identified with having developing technology skills. Proficiency level of skills was

identified in 50% of the staff, with 10% indicating an advanced level of technology skills.

Although there has been measured progress, there is still work to be done in using technology for instructional purposes within both districts (Chart 2).

**Chart 2. Percentage of Staff Utilizing Technology for Instructional Purposes in 2009**



In the Acton Public Schools, 23% of instructional staff reported using instructional technology with students on a daily basis for activities such as research, multimedia, simulations, data interpretation, communications, and collaboration. Forty-seven percent reported using technology on a weekly basis, while the remaining 30% utilize technology monthly. Acton-Boxborough reported 50% of instructional staff using technology on a daily basis for instructional purposes. Twenty-five percent of the staff reported using technology either on a weekly or monthly basis. For both districts, there were no teachers that reported having never used technology at some point during the school year.

## STUDENT INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGIES (ICT) LITERACY

In 2009, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District performed a technology literacy assessment based on the 2007 ISTE NETS-S standards for students at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and the Raymond J Grey Junior High.

Out of 80 high school seniors who took the ETS iSkills assessment based on the seven skills areas: Define, Access, Evaluate, Manage, Integrate, Create, and Communicate, 79 test takers completed the test. Based on an aggregate task performance feedback report, key findings indicated that less than 50% of our students could choose a research topic and explain their specific choice (Table 2).

**Table 2. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Define Skill Area**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>DEFINE Skill Area</b>				
Choose a research topic according to specific criteria and explain your choice (Finding a Topic: <i>Vietnam Project</i> )	You chose a research topic that fulfilled all of the criteria given	38 of 79	48%	38%
	You correctly reported the criteria fulfilled by the research topic selected	33 of 79	42%	19%
Answer three questions to clarify a research project (Clarifying a Project: <i>CollegeFund</i> )	You selected the best initial question to help clarify the project	68 of 79	86%	72%
	You selected the best database variable to provide useful information for the project	62 of 79	78%	59%
	You chose the best research question	59 of 79	75%	57%

Further, 86% of the students chose the best initial question to begin the activity, but as they progressed through the process, they started to lose ground. Seventy-eight percent were able to select best database and 75% were able to choose the best research or essential question. In short, as levels of complexity were added to the original task, the percentage of students who selected the best answer went from 86% to 75%.

Feedback from the Access skill area activity underscored students struggling with applying critical thinking skills (Table 3).

**Table 3. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Access Skill Area**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>ACCESS Skill Area</b>				
Search a store's database in response to a customer's inquiry (Finding an	You chose the correct store database on your first search	76 of 79	96%	86%
	You chose the best search expression for the	72 of 79	91%	83%
Item: <i>Veni Video Vici</i> )	category selected			
	You selected all of the appropriate items for the customer	43 of 79	54%	49%
	You did not select any inappropriate items for the customer	19 of 79	24%	22%
Locate two Web pages for a research project (Finding Information: <i>Living Wage Debate</i> )	You used search terms that were precise and useful in your Web searches	36 of 79	46%	49%
	You received a high percentage of relevant returns in one or two searches	4 of 79	5%	6%

Students could choose the correct database and the best search expression for the category in which they were researching, yet struggled to determine what were appropriate and inappropriate results. Forty-six percent of the students could apply useful search terms for Web searches, but only 4 students were able to refine the search terms to achieve a high percentage of relevant returns.

Determining whether a database was useful for their project and selecting the best articles was the weakest skill set (Table 4).



**Table 4. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Evaluate Skills Area**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>EVALUATE Skill Area</b>				
Evaluate a database in order to determine its usefulness for a project about opposing viewpoints (Evaluating a Database: <i>Privacy and the Media</i> )	You evaluated the database correctly and selected sources with authority and objectivity	53 of 79	67%	45%
	You selected current sources from the database	47 of 79	59%	41%
	You selected relevant sources from the database	44 of 79	56%	35%
	You correctly determined whether the database was useful for your project and selected the best articles	34 of 79	43%	24%
	You correctly evaluated the usefulness of the database without needing explicit criteria	63 of 79	80%	70%
Judge the usefulness of Web pages for a research project (Finding Information: <i>Living Wage Debate</i> )	You selected the best Web pages to visit the first time they were returned in a Web search	22 of 79	28%	16%
	You chose the best Web pages as most useful for the research project	9 of 79	11%	7%
	You judged Web pages correctly with regard to relevance	13 of 79	16%	11%
	You judged Web pages correctly with regard to authority	29 of 79	37%	16%
	You judged Web pages correctly with regard to point of view	63 of 79	80%	42%
	You judged Web pages correctly with regard to currency	58 of 79	73%	31%
Judge the probable usefulness of sites returned in a Web search for a particular research topic (Evaluating Search Results: <i>Horse Farm</i> )	You selected the best sites for the research topic	59 of 79	75%	49%
	You judged sites correctly with regard to authority	71 of 79	90%	54%
	You judged sites correctly with regard to bias	64 of 79	81%	52%
	You judged sites correctly with regard to currency	70 of 79	89%	59%

Students could judge web pages correctly with regards to point of view and could find a date on the Web page. However, they had difficulty selecting the best pages (28%), choosing the most useful Web page (11%), judging the page's relevancy (16%), or determining how meaningful the content was based on authority (37%). Essentially, the students were unable to look at a Web page and determine if the scholar or author had done their own research. This particular activity required students to find conflicting information or two sides of a debate.

The tasks designed to measure the Manage Skills Area showed that students were able to fill in an organizational chart (Table 5).

**Table 5. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Manage Skills Area**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>MANAGE Skill Area</b>				
Fill in an organizational chart to reflect the structure of a new business (Creating a Chart: <i>New Business</i> )	You represented all required elements in the organizational chart	71 of 79	90%	63%
	You represented all elements in the right relationships	69 of 79	87%	57%
	You appropriately deleted unused cells	65 of 79	82%	58%
Organize files into	You moved all files into proper folders	33 of 79	42%	15%
folders on a hard drive (Managing Files: <i>Electronic Game Company</i> )	You deleted all unnecessary folders	40 of 79	51%	30%

However, they had poor skills in organizing files on the hard drive. They struggled completing basic operational tasks, such as using folders and deleting unnecessary folders, with only 51% of the students being able to provide the highest scoring response. In terms of students being able to manage the files effectively and efficiently by moving files into proper folders, only 42% of the students were able to provide the highest scoring response.

In analyzing the data results from the Integrate Skills Area, more than half of the students were able to select proper headings and accurately represent information in cells (Table 6).

**Table 6. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Integrate Skills Area**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>INTEGRATE Skill Area</b>				
Fill out a spreadsheet in order to determine the season records of teams in a volleyball league (Keeping Records: <i>Volleyball League</i> )	You selected proper headings for spreadsheet rows and columns	56 of 79	71%	58%
	You represented information in spreadsheet cells accurately	56 of 79	71%	58%
	You accurately interpreted the information presented	64 of 79	81%	60%
Complete a table comparing potential checking accounts according to specific criteria (Summarizing Emails: <i>Checking Account</i> )	You selected correct column headings for the table	48 of 79	61%	29%
	You accurately represented information in the table	59 of 79	75%	42%
	You ranked the checking accounts correctly	60 of 79	76%	46%

However, only 61% of the students were able to select correct column headings for a table.

When analyzing the complexity of these tasks, the level of sophistication for all of the tasks was not high.

When presented with tasks related to the Create Skills Set, students were able to create a data display (Table 7.)

**Table 7. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Create Skills Set**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>CREATE Skill Area</b>				
<b>Create a data display (Creating a Graph: <i>Music Trends</i>)</b>	You selected the necessary content for the data display	60 of 79	76%	55%
	You organized the layout of the data display logically and effectively	76 of 79	96%	76%
	You created the data display very efficiently	76 of 79	96%	73%
	You drew a correct conclusion based on the data display	73 of 79	92%	80%
<b>Create a slide for a group presentation (Creating a Slide: <i>Jupiter's Moon</i>)</b>	You chose the best layout to create the slide	54 of 79	68%	48%
	You chose the best title for the slide	72 of 79	91%	56%
	You chose the best text for the slide	24 of 79	30%	5%
	You chose the best image for the slide	65 of 79	82%	53%
	You formatted the finished slide effectively	50 of 79	63%	24%

They were weakest in the area of selecting the content but once the content was selected, they were able to manipulate the display. With regards to a slide presentation, they had a harder time determining the best layout, regarding what information should go first and best practices for displaying essential information.

For the Communications Skill Set (Table 8), students had to manipulate two presentations based on the needs of the audience. For the first audience, the students were not able to select the best slides and titles.

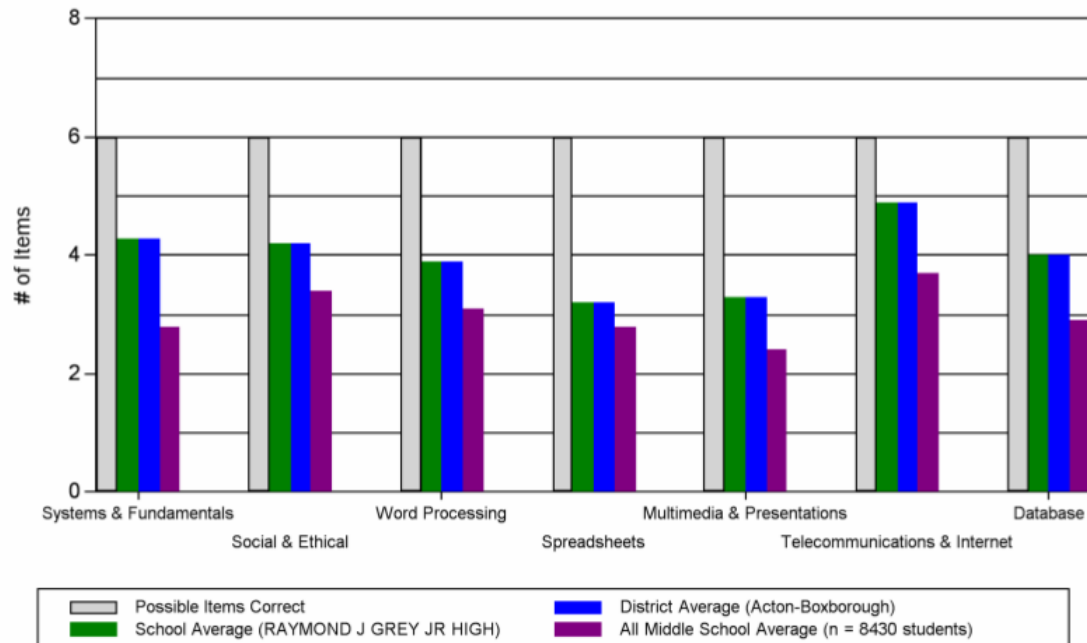
**Table 8. Number and Percentage of Student Results in Communication Skill Set**

What students were asked to do	Feedback on highest-scoring response	# of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% of your students who provided highest-scoring response	% in reference group who provided highest-scoring response
<b>COMMUNICATE Skill Area</b>				
<b>Select and organize slides for two distinct presentations to different audiences (Choosing Presentation Slides: <i>U-Serve</i>)</b>	You selected the best slides and titles for the first presentation	9 of 79	11%	8%
	You sequenced the slides correctly for the first presentation	18 of 79	23%	23%
	You selected the best slides and titles for the second presentation	36 of 79	46%	16%
	You sequenced the slides correctly for the second presentation	35 of 79	44%	31%
	You made a correct decision regarding the delivery mode for the two presentations	46 of 79	58%	41%
	You indicated an awareness of the different needs of the two audiences	4 of 79	5%	2%
<b>Select the best way to advertise products to users of an electronic mailing list (Communicating to a Group: <i>Mystery Fiction Mailing List</i>)</b>	You correctly analyzed the key details of all the advertisements	55 of 79	70%	48%
	You correctly applied the mailing list policy to the advertisements	32 of 79	41%	17%
	You chose an advertisement with language and tone suitable for the audience	71 of 79	90%	65%
	You selected the best advertisement for the mailing list	70 of 79	89%	61%

In general, students were unable to sequence the slides for the first audience. They did better with the presentation for the second audience. However, only 4 students were able to indicate an awareness of the different needs of the two audiences. In the advertisement activity, students were able to analyze the details (70%); choose the best advertisement with language and tone suitable for the audience (90%); select the best advertisement for the mailing list (89%), but were not as able to apply the mailing list policy to the advertisements (41%).

The junior high school participated in an online ICT literacy test designed by learning.com (Chart 3). The assessment used a blend of interactive, performance-based questions and multiple choice, knowledge-based questions to measure and report technology literacy and skills for middle school students.

**Chart 3. Learning.Com Assessment Skill Module Results**



Out of 385 junior high students who took the test, 87% met proficiency standards, while 13% of the scores fell below the proficiency standard. The assessment tool authentically assesses the concepts and skills in spreadsheets, word processing, database, multimedia and presentations, telecommunications and Internet, systems and fundamentals, and social and ethical issues. From the data, the junior high school scored above average in each area tested.

# Vision

This technology plan is aligned with the shared vision that all teachers and administrators from both districts work towards helping every child succeed. The districts are focused on supporting high quality instruction in “every school, every classroom, throughout every day,” and technology will play an important role towards successfully completing this mission. Oct-10Oct-10that are engaging, equitable, and authentic<sup>1</sup>. The Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District will use technology to enable our community of learners to think clearly, engage in creative production, and participate in civil communication. It is expected that both districts will successfully implement the technology plan with support from the Superintendent, Executive Cabinet, School Committee, staff/administration, and student population.

## Technology Goals

The goals presented in this plan are organized into the “key areas” listed in the Massachusetts STaR chart (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/edtech>). The districts expect overall goals to remain consistent over the course of the plan, although the action items may change from year to year as new technologies or initiatives arise. The act of continuously balancing the known need for steady resources with the inevitable unknown future needs will be addressed and reflected on through the yearly budgeting process.

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### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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**Goal One:** Enhance the student-learning environment to ensure 21<sup>st</sup> century readiness for every student.

**Strategies:**

- Develop a process to align and implement information and communication technologies digital literacy skills, districts’ curriculum objectives/standards, and assessments into the core curriculum experience working closely with districts’ Director of Curriculum.
- Identify information and communication technologies digital literacy skills gap within student populations from K-12. Map where skills are currently being taught and assessed. Determine where skills are needed and not being taught.
- Create and implement a P21 assessment tool

**Outcome:** By 2012, 85% of all students will meet the updated version of the Massachusetts K-

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<sup>1</sup> Waxman, H.C., Lin, M., & Michko, G. M., (2003). *A meta-analysis of the effectiveness of teaching and learning with technology on student outcomes*. Naperville, IL.: Learning Point Associates. From <http://www.ncrel.org/tech/effects2/>

12 Technology Literacy Standards, which incorporate the recommendations of the Partnership for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Standards.

**Goal Two:** Ensure that all teachers are proficient in the use and integration of technology into instruction.

**Strategies:**

- Continue to develop the technology integration support structure, evaluating the effectiveness of the program at each school and at a district-wide level.
- Provide a professional development program designed for all staff to embed educational technologies within the content areas.
- Utilize data to inform instruction.
- Participate in District Literacy Plan

**Outcome:** By 2013, at least 85% of district staff will have participated in 45 hours of high-quality professional development that includes technology skills and the integration of technology into instruction

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**ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT**

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**Goal:** Leverage the power of technology as a tool to improve operational efficiencies.

**Strategies:**

- Explore cost-savings initiatives with local government and increase utilization of student information system to continue to eliminate paperwork and improve administrative efficiencies.
- Provide high-quality, customer-focused technology support in a timely fashion.
- Update district policies and procedures to ensure customer satisfaction and encourage the use of educational technologies exploration by all staff members.

**Outcome: TBA**

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## COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

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**Goal:** Increase online communication and collaboration.

**Strategies:**

- Creation of consistent and dynamic websites for students, teachers, parents, administrators, and community members.
- Utilize Web 2.0 tools to effectively communicate to all members of the Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District learning community.

**Outcome:** Completion of an updated and enhanced district website.

## Evaluation

Historically, both school districts have been committed to annually reviewing and reflecting on the effectiveness of the technology plan through various committees and annual presentations to the School Committee. However, it is imperative that many of the current key performance indicators be updated to encompass much larger and complex goals, like incorporating educational technologies into the curriculum. As we are looking to build upon the accomplishments of providing access to technology, a new Steering Committee will be formed to assess these challenges and guide the evaluation process. Quantitative and qualitative data will continue to be collected through district-developed surveys. Dissemination of data findings will be reported out to stakeholders.