

**Acton Public, Acton-Boxborough Regional,  
Acton-Boxborough Transitional  
School Committees**

**March 6, 2014**

**7:15 p.m. APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Executive Session  
7:30 p.m. APSC/ABRSC/ABTSC Business Meeting**

**in the R.J. Grey Junior High Library**

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)  
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)  
MEETINGS**

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 6, 2014  
7:15 p.m. Joint ABTSC/APSC Executive Session  
7:30 p.m. Joint ABTSC/ABRSC/APSC meeting

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**AGENDA**

1. **Call to Order: APSC, ABRSC, ABTSC (7:15)**
2. **Joint School Committee EXECUTIVE SESSION – “strategy with respect to litigation”**
3. **Chairmen’s Introduction (7:30)**
  1. Danny’s Place Youth Services Update – *Maria Neyland (oral)*
4. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
  1. Meeting Minutes: 2/12/14 and 1/25/14 (ABTSC), 2/6/14 (APS/ABRSC/ABTSC)
  2. Meeting Minutes: 2/1/14, 1/15/14 and 1/7/14 (*next meeting*)
5. **Public Participation**
6. **Recommendation to Approve Refunding of Junior High and High School Construction Debt– VOTE – Tess Summers, Don Aicardi (7:40)**
  1. Memo re “AAA” credit rating, bid results and request for approval
  2. Memo requesting agenda item on 3/6/14 and process description
  3. Standard & Poor’s Rating Results, ABRSD, 2/26/14
  4. Motion Language and Certification
7. **Update on Athletic Revolving Accounts – Steve Mills, Steve Desy (7:50)**
8. **FY14 ABRSD 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter Report – Don Aicardi (8:10)**
9. **FY15 Budget Update – Maria Neyland (8:15)**
  1. Memo to Acton Finance Committee, 3/6/14
10. **ABTSC PreK – 12 Regionalization Update – Steve Mills(8:25)**
  1. Update on Intermunicipal Agreements
11. **Policy Subcommittee Update (8:30)**
  1. ABTSC/APSC/ABRSC Policies - Consent Agenda #4 - **FIRST READING** – *Maria Neyland (incorporating Blanchard policies with APS/ABRSD, see separately posted document)*
    - i. Section G: Personnel (*selected policies*)
    - ii. Section I: Instructional Program (*selected policies*)
12. **School Committee Member Reports (oral) (8:35)**
  1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) –*Dennis Bruce*
    - i. Draft minutes, 2/15/14

- ii. Meeting materials and draft minutes, 2/27/14
  - iii. Meeting agenda, 3/6/14
- 2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – *Maria Neyland*
- 3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT) – Possible **VOTE** on new rep – *Kim McOsker*
- 4. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Task Force– *Dennis Bruce*
- 5. Acton Finance Committee - *Dennis Bruce*
  - i. Slides from FY15 school budget presentation at 2-25-14 meeting
  - ii. Response to meeting question, *Kristina Rychlik*
  - iii. Community Correspondence: “*Review of Other Sources of Funds*”
- 6. Acton Board of Selectmen - *Paul Murphy*
- 7. Boxborough Finance Committee- *Maria Neyland*
- 8. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – *Maria Neyland*
- 13. **Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Choral Field Trip to Spain/France – ABTSC VOTE** – *Steve Mills* (8:45)
- 14. **Acton and Boxborough Local Election/Town Meeting Reminder** -*Dennis Bruce & Maria Neyland* (Addition of School Committee members per PreK-12 Regional Agreement)
- 15. **Follow up from Previous Meeting re School Mandates** – *Steve Mills, Liza Huber* (8:50)
- 16. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION** (8:55)
  - 1. Acton-Boxborough Regional High School
    - i. Discipline Report, 3/1/14
  - 2. R.J. Grey Junior High School
    - i. Discipline Reports, 2/7/14 and 3/4/14
  - 3. Pupil Services
    - i. ABRSD English Language Learners (ELL) Student Population
    - ii. Early Childhood Student Population, 3/1/14
  - 4. Monthly Enrollment 2/1/14
  - 5. Acton 2020
  - 6. Regionalization Update, Jan/Feb 2014
  - 7. Appointment of Glenn A. Brand, ABRSD Superintendent of Schools
  - 8. Community Correspondence: “Open Letter to BOS and FinCom urging NO VOTE on school assessment”
  - 9. Energy Update: “Electricity Continues to Drop in all of our Schools!”
  - 10. FY13 ABRSD Financial Statements Annual Audit
- 17. **ADJOURN** (9:00)

#### **NEXT MEETINGS:**

- March 20, 7:00 p.m. APSC meeting, Junior High Library
- ~~March 27~~, April 3, 7:30 p.m. ABRSC/ABTSC/APSC meeting, Junior High Library
- April 7, 7:00 p.m. Acton Town Meeting begins, ABRHS auditorium
- May 1, 7:30 p.m. ABRSC/ABTSC/APSC meeting, Junior High Library
- May 12, 7:00 p.m. Boxborough Town Meeting begins, Blanchard School gym

Acton Local Election is Tuesday, April 1, 2014.

4.1.1

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)  
MEETING Draft Minutes**

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

Wednesday, February 12, 2014  
7:00 p.m. ABTSC Executive Session  
7:15 p.m. ABTSC Business Meeting

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*Members Present:* Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Maria Neyland, Paul Murphy, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik  
*Members Absent:* none  
*Others:* Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

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The Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee was called to order at 7:02 p.m. by Chairperson Maria Neyland.

**ABTSC Executive Session**

At 7:02 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee** go into Executive Session to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel. (YES – Bieber, Brolin, Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, O'Sullivan, Rychlik) Maria Neyland declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session.

The ABTSC was polled to go out of Executive Session at 7:16 p.m.

**ABTSC Business Meeting**

**1. Public Participation**

Allen Nitschelm asked Liza Huber about cost parameters following Budget Saturday's discussion of needed special education supports. He asked about the possibility of reimbursements and direct payments from students' insurance and fees to cover some expenses, as is done with sports. Liza responded that unlike athletics, students with clearly identified special education needs are all funding and regulatory requirements from a federal mandate. Sports are an option, not a required element, of a free and appropriate education. Special education students go through a rigorous qualification process before they are given services. Many parents do seek out their health insurance for coverage. Allen clarified that he was asking a "social services question, not just a special education question". Allen's questions will be addressed at the next meeting.

Kim McOsker read the following statement:

*"I watched the video of the February 3rd Acton Board of Selectmen meeting and am very concerned about 2 comments, one made by Janet Adachi and the other by Mike Gowing related to attending ALG. During a discussion centered on the next ALG meeting, Janet states "there are going to be some dead bodies at that meeting one day" and later someone asks Mike what he wants to bring to ALG and he states 'a gun'.*

*We live in a time now where these are not flippant remarks to be ignored. Sandy Hook was only a year ago and each week we seem to hear of tragedies from violent acts in schools and public centers.*

*I have had a good discussion with the Town Manager and did hear today from Janet regarding the incident. But it is still very troubling and I think we all should expect civility from our elected officials especially those with whom I serve on other committees."* Kim was thanked and there was consensus that this type of behavior is inappropriate from our elected officials.

## **2. Recommendation to Approve Superintendent Contract**

The Committee reviewed the proposed contract effective July 1, 2014. It includes a starting salary of \$180,000, followed by a 3% increase in FY16 and a 4% increase in FY17 if Mr. Brand's annual evaluations are "proficient" or better. Although signed by Mr. Brand, it was not signed by the School Committee Chair.

Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously  
**VOTED**: to approve the Superintendent's contract as proposed.

## **3. FY15 Budget Discussion**

1. Presentation slides
2. Revised Table of Assessments (Table 6)
3. Possible Recommendation to Approve FY15 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) Budget and Assessments – **VOTE**

Steve Mills presented a revised budget proposal of \$76,181,500 compared to \$76,938,226 on 2/6/14, a reduction of \$756,726. Acton's assessment would increase 4.78% and Boxborough's would decrease 6.25%. He encouraged the Committee to look at the budget as a whole, knowing that it is not the budget he would like to see, but that it is sound.

Steve met recently with Peter and Mary Ann Ashton about how complicated it is to compare the two years to each other (slide 5). Caution was expressed about confusing the budget increase with the assessment increase. The 4.78% increase is under 5% which is what the School Committee asked him to do at the last meeting on 2/6/14. Steve noted that there are some possible areas of improvement, including the CASE and Middlesex assessments and circuitbreaker. Steve will introduce a motion at the next CASE meeting to reduce the surplus that CASE is holding.

Brigid stated that although she doesn't like this budget because it is not level service, she understands that one that will pass at both Town Meetings is needed, so she will support it. Deanne expressed concern about the special education services for next year with the elimination of the addition of a grade 6-8 special education coordinator. She advocated for removing the third custodian so the coordinator could stay in the budget. Mary Brolin agreed that this isn't the budget she wants for the students, but it needs to be supported by the towns so she will agree to it. She referred to the realignment slide, stating that these cuts need to go on the left half of the slide. There will be a conversation about how much efficiency savings would come from Boxborough and Mary said that there should be a talk with the two Finance committees about that.

Paul expressed frustration that the additional special education support has been eliminated and emphasized the cost of out of districts placements when students cannot be educated in our schools. He advocated for giving up the additional assistant support in order to keep the special education coordinator that was in the original budget. Kim appreciated the effort to bring the number down and hopes that it can "reboot" the discussion at ALG. Mike thanked the Boxborough members for understanding Acton's financial situation, and Steve and the staff for relooking at the line items.

Dennis talked about the range of emotions for Committee members since the superintendent interviews, Budget Saturday, and all of the meetings and discussions that have taken place recently. He was extremely appreciative that the staff spent the time to review all of the numbers and issues since last week's meeting. Maria urged the Committee to look at the budget and regionalization issues as a one year piece of a longer project. She reminded them that decisions

need to be measured, and everything cannot be done right away. She gave the example of the one-tier transportation system that was studied, then put on hold, and can be returned to when appropriate.

Deanne felt that the public was told that special education services would benefit from regionalization. She was struggling because services have been cut at Blanchard. She asked for a list of what Boxborough has before regionalization and what they will have in FY15. Steve Mills referred to a slide from Budget Saturday showing that there is "a lot" coming out of one school, even with declining enrollment. Steve said he would provide this information for the Committee.

Kristina stated the need to communicate more clearly and earlier in the process with all of the town boards.

Nancy Sherburne spoke from the audience saying that she is deeply disappointed with the budget being proposed, calling it "very difficult if not impossible to support". She feels it does not provide basic service needs to a certain group of students and it still requires young children to switch schools mid elementary years. Regarding the elimination of the proposed coordinator, Nancy said that Lynne Laramie is "grossly overburdened" being responsible for five schools now and adding Blanchard increases her workload by 20%. She noted that FUTURES evaluated our special education programming and services and they said we are very efficient and leaner than they would recommend. The CASE assessment change creates a huge increase but it has nothing to do with regionalization. She advocated for the special education coordinator being placed above the Assistant Principal line in the budget because items that have the most direct impact on student outcomes should be the highest priority. Nancy said that the commitment to this coordinator was made in the last budget cycle and she thought it would be funded for FY15.

Bill Guthlein spoke from the audience also advocating for the special education coordinator. Dr. Mills stated that Lynne Laramie does need support and he would consider adding some of it if more funds come in. He gave the examples of adding mental health professionals at the High School, adding the Bridges Program, and adding assistant elementary principals as how the schools serve our special education students well. He wanted the coordinator in the budget, but together the staff prioritized and put this position on the cut list.

John Petersen spoke from the audience stating that the Budget Saturday slide showing our schools' historical per pupil spending is painful to everyone. The budgets, however, have to be crafted using those painful numbers, because that is the amount of money available. The allocation issue is the Superintendent and staff's responsibility. John stated that the tax base in Acton and Boxborough cannot support a 5 or 6% increase to the towns, calling it "not sustainable or survivable". He urged the School Committee to reject this budget because it is too high.

Katie Green spoke from the audience, not speaking for the Acton Selectmen. She talked about the unmet financial needs on the town side as well, including new firefighters and police officers. She asked the Superintendent if the proposed budget is sustainable without an override over the next couple of years. He responded that to use 2 or 3 million dollars a year from reserves, it is sustainable without the need for an override. Katie disagreed with using reserves through 2017.

Allen Nitschelm spoke from the audience asking for a 2 or 3 year forward budget projection to know about sustainability. Mary Brolin mentioned the Boxborough efficiencies and explained the \$1,067,051 ("FY15 shift") found on Table 6 which comes from Appendix A in the new Regional Agreement. Mary's comment about efficiencies and savings is not part of Appendix A. These savings are an 82-17 split that go into the budget in that fashion. Allen is talking about the promise to taxpayers that 80% of savings would flow to Acton. Mary stated that all of the savings goes through the budget and are part of the School Committee's discussion.

Dennis Bruce moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED**: that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 be set at \$76,181,499 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$49,836,594 Boxborough \$10,625,802, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$13,714,944, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$67,707, Anticipated Regional Bonus Aid in the amount of \$139,000, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$1,296,794, a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$500,000, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$658.

Mike Coppolino asked if the Boston College professors could present their findings of the Demographic Survey results at the March School Committee meeting. The Committee agreed.

The Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee adjourned at 8:54 p.m.  
(This meeting replaced the APSC meeting originally scheduled for 2/13/14.)

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)  
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)  
MEETINGS Draft Minutes**

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

February 6, 2014  
7:00 p.m. ABTSC Open Budget Hearing  
Followed by Joint ABTSC/ABRSC/APSC meeting (7:30 p.m.)  
Followed by Joint Executive Session

*Members Present:* Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik  
*Members Absent:* none  
*Others:* Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri (7:30 p.m.), Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr, Several members of the Acton and Boxborough Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees

The Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson, Maria Neyland. Maria thanked Bob Stemple (BBOS), Katie Green (ABOS), Mary Ann Ashton (Acton FinCom). She convened the Budget Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

**ABTSC FY15 BUDGET HEARING**

*Please see material posted for 2/1/14 meeting at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>*

**1. Chairmen's Introduction**

Dr. Mills and his staff look forward to answering questions from Budget Saturday 2/1/14.

**2. ABTSC FY15 Budget – Dr. Mills**

The proposed FY15 school budget increase is 3.64% from final FY14. The Acton assessment increase is 6% mainly due to E&D moving from \$700k to \$300k, a 1% increase in the CASE assessment and a .5% increase in the OPEB Fund contribution. The Boxborough assessment is a decrease of 4.77%. Dr. Mills now recommends a more gradual approach of E&D using \$500k instead of \$300k for next year. This changes the Acton assessment from 6% to 5.67%. Given the history of the schools replenishing E&D, Dr. Mills feels that risk is minimized.

The Administration has stated since regionalization was proposed that the budget would be \$1 million less than it would be at this time if regionalization did not occur. This does not mean \$1 million less, but less than it would be without regionalization. Staff savings of \$416k and new Regional Transportation Revenue of \$550k have been included in the proposed FY15 budget. It was noted that slide 9 has an error in that the Workers Comp and Prop/Casualty decreases should not be included. Instead of \$50,853,332 Acton's share of the FY15 Total School Expenses should be \$51,048,332.

Dr. Mills reviewed slide 14, Realignment of Staff. His staff made a compelling case for these decisions on Budget Saturday, despite the concern he is hearing. There is a net staff reduction of 4 FTEs from this year to next. The need for the additional pupil services coordinator was reviewed and the possibility of adding the two special educators listed just below the cutoff line was discussed.

Noting that the Certified Free Cash slide 22 shows that there is 3 times more Free Cash than when he arrived, Dr. Mills asked for \$76,938,225 for the FY15 School Budget.



The Committee reviewed the numbers and requests. Mike Coppolino asked if FUTURES recommended any additional staff when they did their audit/review. They did not specifically recommend a coordinator, but they noted that the Districts are staffed extremely tight. Dr. Mills stated that FUTURES' charge was not to recommend programs or positions, but to confirm whether a system is efficient or not.

Several Committee members struggled with the 6% assessment increase and questioned whether the full time Assistant Principals could be phased in over three years. It was suggested that Merriam be the first because they are the largest elementary school. Mike Coppolino questioned the justification for the Energy Manager, given the need to mitigate the increase. Others asked about the Boxborough efficiencies and how those savings had been handled.

Dennis Bruce emphasized that several times over the past years, issues have come up and Dr. Mills has found ways to work around them. He gave the examples of the PTO funding of assistants, and the additional English teachers needed at the High School. Dennis urged Dr. Mills to consider the Assistant Principals in this light. Other members disagreed stating that the Assistant Principals' work is not phased in, and emphasized the compelling case made on Budget Saturday about the increased mandates and requirements.

Brigid Bieber respectfully appreciated her Acton colleagues' concern over the "alarming" number and said it is difficult to bring up because Boxborough's number is decreasing, but she urged the Committee to look at the issue as a Regional School Committee. She pointed out that it will be a different discussion going forward discussing one budget, each member looking at their own town, but the School Committee's job is to advocate for the educational needs and students. Stating that she supports the budget as presented, Brigid asked if there was a target number that the naysayers were trying to hit.

Paul Murphy said that there is a safety component in the Assistant Principal role that is key. To him, the value of having them all next year outweighs a rollout. Kim McOskey stated that from a financial standpoint, each school has the same issues and phasing them in would not be fair to all schools. That said, 6% is a huge number and it is all staff and recurring. She appreciated assessment driver slide 5.

The change in the CASE assessment was discussed, including the upcoming decision to go from a 2 year prior tuition calculation to a current one. Brigid noted that another driver is that more AB students are going to CASE now and with CASE's overall enrollment decreasing, that is costing our District more.

Peter Ashton spoke from the audience about the need to be very careful about making comparisons. Table 6 does not include some of the things that were in the Study Group model so not everything can be compared. He noted that there is about a \$1.7 million difference between the two documents. Peter has consistently said that comparing FY14 to FY15 is extremely difficult to do appropriately.

With the long term interest of the schools and community at heart, Peter expressed serious concern that, in his opinion, the budget and resulting Acton assessment fails to meet the commitment that the School Committee and Administration made to Acton voters in convincing them to support regionalization. He and Mary Ann are concerned about 3 areas from 1 to \$1.5 million:

1. Revenue plays an increasing role now that an assessment is being paid. State revenue is up \$1 million in Acton, due to additional transportation aid from regionalization, but Chapter 70 revenue is about \$600,000 less than what the Regional School District Study Committee expected. This is largely due to the decline in enrollment. This aid will lag as enrollment declines year to year. This is a message that increases in spending should be limited because the revenue will not be there going forward. Increasing E & D use is not sustainable.
2. With about \$650,000 in true cost savings from regionalization and \$416,000 in staffing cuts and some Blanchard staff realignment, Peter believes the proposed Budget spends every dollar of the savings, and the operating budget spends all of the regional transportation aid. He doesn't believe any effort has been made to return any savings to tax payers or the municipal issues, or even discuss how it is being spent.
3. Peter noted that the increase in the Budget is more than double the average increase of the past years, despite decreasing enrollment (slide 24). Without regionalization, he said this increase would be 11% and called it, "extraordinary". He said that a 6% increase in education is not what the public was told would happen.

Peter stated that he cannot support the budget as presented.

Mary Ann Ashton, Acton Finance Committee member but speaking only for herself, agreed with Peter and advocated for phasing in some of the needs. She agreed with Dennis that the Committee's credibility is at stake with the proposed Budget that "captures all of the savings from regionalization and then allocates it in the short term". She said when she began on School Committee years ago things had happened and it took a very, very long time to regain the community's trust. This eventually turned around because Committee members consistently did what they said they would do. Mary Ann urged the Committee to consider the message that they gave Acton voters regarding supporting regionalization.

Because the Committee did not vote a preliminary budget on 2/1/14, the Chair urged them to consider making a motion.

Paul expressed concern that he thought regionalization would mean the Committee could meet the unmet needs from last year, plus some savings. Now, instead of talking about approving a ½% or 1% increase, it is up to a 6% assessment increase. Allen Nitschelm pointed out that one of the cautions of regionalization was that the elementary students would be in a regional formula, and that has resulted in a huge shift to Acton tax payers.

Acton Selectman Katie Green stated that she was one of the biggest supporters of regionalization, but she wanted a discussion about how savings would be allocated. In her opinion, a 6% increase in the school budget, is not fair to the Town. The Superintendent pointed out that it is a 6% increase in the assessment to Acton, and a 3.6% increase in the regional budget.

Maria Neyland asked all who have concerns to give specifics to the Administration. Brigid asked for a number that Acton citizens want to consider in order to make a motion. Kim McOske said that it was a similar situation last year and it was felt that the community could not support an assessment increase above 5%. She stated that the Committee needs to show more savings to the Acton community.

3. Dr. Mills stated that to be under 5%, everything listed on the Realignment of Staff slide could be eliminated. Marie Altieri said that it would take cuts of approximately \$700,000 to get under 5%.

Mike clarified that lowering the 6% assessment increase to under 5% could come from any area, not just the list of positions on slide 14. Paul asked what percentage of the budget are items that the Administration has no control over, such as the CASE assessment. Mary Brolin asked if a decrease in the OPEB contribution is possible. It was agreed that this is a School Committee decision. Dennis emphasized the long term implications of the District's OPEB balance. It affects our debt restructuring and long term costs and was part of a process with our town and region regarding how to address this obligation. He felt that the \$200,000 gets the Committee a lot of leverage because they stuck with their word to tackle the OPEB liability.

Maria stated that if the CASE or Middlesex assessments come down, the Committee should discuss how to handle that. Results of this possibility were not considered or promised to the community. Kristina Rychlik said that although it is unfortunate timing that there were high expectations with regionalization, she feels it is time to catch up with some of the significant educational needs.

4. **Recommendation to Approve FY15 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) Budget and Assessments**

**ABTSC VOTE:**

Kristina Rychlik moved, and Mary Brolin seconded, the following

**MOTION:** that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2015 be set at \$76,938,225 and that member towns be assessed in accordance with the Education Reform Law and the terms of the Agreement and amendments thereto as follows: Acton \$50,460,332 Boxborough \$10,758,791, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$13,714,944, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$67,707, Anticipated Regional Bonus Aid in the amount of \$139,000, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$1,296,794, a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$500,000, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$658.

Members were asked to consider the importance of budget sustainability, and that the credibility of School Committee members depends on them creating a stable platform. The changes in budgets every year was noted, however, Mike said that FTEs are rarely reduced once added.

**VOTE:**           **YES:** Bieber, Brolin, Murphy, Neyland, O'Sullivan, Rychlik  
**NO:** Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker

Although it was initially thought that the motion had passed, 9 to 6, in fact a 2/3 vote was required so the motion failed.

The Budget Hearing was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

## **JOINT BUSINESS MEETING**

5. The ABRSC and APSC were called to order at 8:57 p.m. by Maria Neyland and Dennis Bruce, the respective chairs.
6. **Statement of Warrant**  
APS warrant #201416 dated 2/4/14 in the amount of \$127,197.93 and warrant #201415 dated 1/21/14 in the amount of \$753,546.76 was signed by the chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures.  
ABRSD warrant #14-014 dated 1/9/14 in the amount of \$1,466,345.00, warrant #14-015 dated 1/23/14 in the amount of \$4,041,266.82 and warrant #14-016 dated 2/6/14 in the amount of \$1,460,692.88 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures.
7. **Approval of Minutes** – Minutes will be done at the next meeting.
8. **Public Participation** - none
9. **ABTSC PreK – 12 Regionalization Update**  
This update was included in Dr. Mills' SMART goals update.
10. **Recommendation to Approve Change to Administrators Benefits Manual**  
The proposal is to add "Superintendent" to the list of positions on page 14 of the manual posted at <http://ab.mec.edu/hr/hrpdf/2013-2014-administrators-benefits-manual.pdf>  
The Administration is recommending that contracts point to the Benefits Manual now instead of trying to outline details in the actual contract.  
Brigid Bieber moved, Mary Brolin seconded, and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to add the word "Superintendent" to page 14 of the manual as proposed.
11. **FY14 SMART Goals Update**  
Dr. Mills reviewed the updates to the SMART goals.
12. **School Committee Member Reports**
  1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG), next meeting is 2/13/14
  2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF)  
Brigid reported BLF's concerns about the Minuteman Tech School Budget. A generator is being installed at Blanchard, as it is their community emergency center.
  3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)  
Kim reported that HIT met last Thursday, will vote an increase of 10%. As of July 1, approximately 50 new employees from Boxborough will be added
  4. Acton Finance Committee  
Dennis reported that Steve Mills and Don Aicardi presented the Budget at the last meeting. School Committee will present to Acton Fincom on Feb 25.
13. **Acton and Boxborough Local Elections Reminder**  
Two Acton residents have turned in papers and several more have taken them out. At this time, only Marie Neyland has taken out papers in Boxborough.
14. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
  1. CASE Collaborative AB Assessment Proposed Change memo and Annual Report 2012-2013 found at <http://casecollaborative.org/annual-reports>  
Dr. Mills highlighted this information.

It was decided that the ABTSC would meet on Wednesday, 2/12/14 because ALG is scheduled for 2/13/14.

15. **JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

At 9:15 p.m., the ABTSC was suspended. Maria Neyland announced that the ABTSC would reconvene after the ABRSC/APSC Executive Session and adjournment at approximately 9:30 p.m. Reconvening the ABTSC would be for the sole purpose of an Executive Session for strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, followed by adjournment.

**ABRSC and APSC JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:15 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, Brolin, Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Maria Neyland declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

At 9:15 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 - Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Dennis Bruce declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

The ABRSC and APS Committees were polled to go out of Executive Session at 9:30 p.m. and were adjourned at that time.

**ABTSC EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 9:31 p.m. the ABTSC was reconvened.

At 9:31 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee** go into Executive Session to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

(YES – Bieber, Brolin, Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Maria Neyland declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

The ABTSC was polled to go out of Executive Session at 9:48 p.m. and adjourned at that time.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents used: see agenda

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)**  
**MEETING Draft Minutes**

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

Saturday, January 25, 2014  
9:00 a.m. ABTSC Meeting  
Followed by ABTSC Executive Session

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<i>Members Present:</i>	Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
<i>Members Absent:</i>	none
<i>Others:</i>	Beth Petr

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The Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee was called to order at 9:01 a.m. by Chairperson Maria Neyland.

**1. Chairmen's Introduction**

Maria thanked Brigid Bieber for leading the Superintendent Search Committee and Andrew Shen for facilitating. She reviewed the timeline and procedures for the meeting and stated that this vote to appoint a new superintendent is the most important decision that will be made during her tenure on School Committee.

**2. Interviews of Superintendent Finalists**

**1. Marie Altieri**

Marie stated that the top issues for the new Superintendent would be the regionalization transition, budgetary issues and the curricular requirements from the state. She emphasized the importance of communication and having good relationships with people. Her nontraditional background includes a variety of teaching experience – adults first, then young people. Her master's degree will be complete in 11 weeks. All of her coursework has been relevant to AB. She was hired 7 years ago as our Director of Personnel and Administrative Services and oversees all HR and Food Service. She has a supervisory role in technology and is intimately involved in budget planning. Salary and benefits all come under her, which make up 80% of the budget. She works with principals and teachers on whatever they are dealing with, as well as parent, student or staff issues. She is also responsible for student enrollment and School Choice. For 20 years, she taught all kinds of students and knows how hard it is for teachers with the wide range of issues and abilities that their classroom students have. Marie has a strong background in technology, but a tempered view of it. She noted that it can engage kids in a way that they have not been engaged before.

Marie emphasized that the Superintendent's role in budgeting is critical. Budgets must be sustainable. Taxpayers need to know that when they give their dollars to the school district, they are going to the highest priority of helping students learn. Regarding stress, Marie said that while our District has high standards, we must be sure to always maintain a healthy balance. Students need to learn that everyone has to make choices to stay balanced.

Marie has spent many years involved with the Acton Leadership Group (ALG), working with the State on Chapter 70 funding, and working with Boxborough this year on regionalization. Because of her excellent relationships, she knows who to contact for answers and how to get things done. As Superintendent, she would have more opportunity for these conversations

and collaboration with School Committee so the Committee can make the most informed decisions possible. She gave the example of a time when the District had the potential to lose three principals, but she took proactive leadership steps to prevent that.

Given that the Superintendent's role is as an educational leader in the district, as well as a business leader, Marie said that she would spend 15-20% of her time in classrooms to stay in touch with students and teaching. To do that, a person must rely on a strong team, which she is confident that we have.

In conclusion, Marie asked the Committee, "Of what are you the most proud in AB?" Answers ranged from: how "giving" all of the staff is, how proud families are of their school, the creativity and products of the classrooms, staff working across subject areas, the respect that the Committee has for the staff that the Committee does not meddle in the day to day operations of the schools, the community, extraordinary community service, and how the kids support each other and treat each other throughout the buildings and activities. One member loved that the kids are obviously proud of what is going on in their community.

Marie then asked "What are you worried about for our kids and the school district?" The Committee's responses centered on regionalization and how it will affect the people who work in the schools particularly with a new superintendent, and dealing with financial pressures as the changing needs of the students' education must be balanced with the concerns of the taxpayers. Young people that graduate today must have the same quality of education and be as ready for the new world as the kids who graduated years ago. One member expressed concern about technology that has evolved that allows anonymous comments to be made that have affected civility.

Marie stated that she shares the Committee's pride and concerns and urged them to consider all of her experience and education as a whole. She reminded them of Dr. Yong Zhao's visit last summer. He emphasized the need to help our kids find their passion, give them the ability to follow it, and be well rounded socially and emotionally. The District needs to be ready to learn and change because no one can predict the future. Teachers need to be allowed to be creative and passionate, excited and engaged and that is not easy in today's environment of requirements and changes.

## **2. Glenn A. Brand**

Glenn began by stating that he could not imagine serving in the role of Superintendent without all of the experiences that he has had to this point. He has worked in different kinds of communities and understands the diverse range of needs. Sharon and Needham are similar to AB where partnerships are vital, and there are high expectations for and demands on students to be successful. Glen said it is not just about fiscal resources. He is impressed with AB's focus on providing a wealth of experiences for students in and out of the classrooms and agrees that social and emotional goals are essential. He is excited about the prospect of leading the first year of full regionalization.

Glenn's top priority would be his entry plan and articulating it clearly. This will provide him with the needs and desires of the community. Even in the best school system, there is room for growth. He would gather information from all the key stakeholders in both towns, of all ages, synthesize it, and then report it back. He is aware of the growing diversity of the AB schools and community and understands this issue from his early years in education where there was much diversity. Understanding the heritage and culture of students is essential. Lastly, he understands that the projected decline in AB enrollment must be a priority.

Glen shared his views on special education services, and the core philosophy that all regular education staff understand the equal access that all students must have. Special education is expensive so needs must be communicated.

He was fortunate to teach in a high functioning collaborative in the beginning of his career focused on working collaboratively as a team. Teachers stayed with students for 3 years, requiring close work with colleagues. The importance of teaming was the take away for him. Teaching is no longer an isolated activity. The second element of the experience was that teaching is a profession of everyone being a lifelong learner. He also saw the need for educators to provide the best classroom experiences for students including social and emotional experiences as well as exploratory ones. "Students need to explore who they are."

Glenn spoke about the central role of technology and while it cannot replace a teacher, it is a tool that can supplement and support the educational vision. This requires dedication to professional development for staff to ensure that they understand how to integrate the technology into their teaching, with attention to resources because that is a reality.

Budgeting is obviously critical for a school district to meet their goals. This requires planning ahead and being extremely organized. The AB budget is about twice as big as Glenn is working with now, but there is a methodical way to break it down. He described the need for a keen eye on maintaining reasonable growth, combined with the ability to plan long term and articulate future school needs. After "navigating the tension between being creative and reality", the decisions must be translated so the wider community can understand them and support the "story" of what the school system needs.

Regarding stress, Glenn said there will never be a check next this box meaning it is finished. He shared his experiences as a principal in Needham dealing with student suicide. Even in great communities with many resources and loving supportive families that provide much for the kids, reality can be very stressful. The creation of an advisory program and enhanced professional development for everyone working in the schools so they could recognize student stress was helpful. He stated that dealing with students' stress cannot be just during the school day. Strengthening relationships with families and the community and working with adults as a whole to strengthen student resiliency, all of this helps.

Regarding his leadership style, Glenn is "partnership orientated", because leading is about relationships. Because 80% of the budget centers on people, this automatically requires attention to people. Shared dialogue is needed and it can take time. Creating opportunities for people to get involved so they feel like they have a voice is also key.

Glenn described the vision for our District as one that will be globally recognized, anchored around global connections, through travel, individual contacts, and fostering connections for students to learn about the world around them. When asked why he wants to be a superintendent when it is so challenging today, Glenn responded that he has a passionate belief in public education and what it can accomplish and provide for students. He greatly admires the success AB has had and the support that the entire community provides.

Glenn concluded that he has the experience and understanding of being a teacher, administrator and educational leader that AB needs. He has achieved success in communities similar to Acton and Boxborough including interfacing with many town leaders. As the educational leader, he can be expected to be visible in the community, and to lead the system and community as a whole. He looks forward to the opportunity to see the classroom work on the playgrounds, the fields and the stage. As a leader he will be anticipatory, because technology and changes in society demand it, but he is committed to leading the system to the



future, not standing still. He is forward thinking with strong communication skills in and outside of the school system and will be sure that the school's voice is heard. Leading AB, which has achieved many great things and still wants to explore, innovate and provide creative opportunities for students and staff, is a leadership position that he feels he is the best candidate for.

*The Committee took a break for lunch.*

### **3. Brett M. Kustigian**

Brett began by stating that what is best for kids, is always the most important thing to him. He is attracted by ABRSD's high standards, track record of excellence, commitment and Long Range Strategic Plan. He recognizes that his community is very different from AB but because he is on the MARS Board of Directors he has established a vast network of colleagues with whom he can consult. His leadership style is one of collaboration and a team effort. He stated that a superintendent cannot implement things by himself.

His entry plan would involve many kinds of communication, honoring AB's work of the past and using both of these to create a plan for the future. He draws on his experience as a teacher every day and talked about how important it is for a superintendent to be visible in the classrooms. This is true for new teachers as well as veterans. He totally revamped technology in his district using a debt exclusion purchase plan which was very difficult at first, but well worth the effort in the end.

Brett stated that no matter the size of your budget, accountability, oversight, transparency and using every dollar to the absolute best you can is key. He is used to working with budgets that are extremely tight and he is very creative in reallocating resources and saving money. In today's day and age that is the challenge going forward. He would bring a work ethic, integrity, transparency and the ability to build relationships with town officials, elected officials and all members of the community.

Having an overarching goal to ensure the social and emotional wellbeing of the students means AB has their priorities set correctly in his opinion. This school statement sends a message to everyone in the community. School Improvement Plans have to have the same focus. He believes that data drives many, if not all, decisions and he is comfortable using it and understanding it.

He has known Dr. Mills for 15 years so he feels like it could be a seamless transition. He will look for a mentor like Dr. Mills and build on it. Brett has been very successful in his current role and he is confident that he would do well at AB. He stated that he has "the experience, education and leadership skills to lead a high performing district." and that it would be a good fit, based on the data.

### **3. Public Comment and Feedback**

Maria Neyland stated that only 2 minutes per person would be permitted due to time.

Allen Nitschelm asked if Acton was going to appoint people to key positions based on who they know. He stated that this is the most important decision the School Committee will make. He advocated for Glenn Brand or Brett Kustigian.

Ann Corcoran has concerns about the shortness of the deliberation process in winnowing the 29 candidates to three, but was impressed with the three finalists. She has written three books on technology and education and wants to make sure that the new superintendent has a clear vision for technology in our schools.

Richard O'Brien spoke in strong support for Marie Altieri. His family is invested in Acton education with one daughter a teacher and another an administrator at AB. He has worked with Marie over many years and described her as a leader with the educational wisdom to take on the position. He thanked the Committee for three excellent finalists but urged them to choose someone who is invested in our community over the long term, Marie.

Former Acton Selectwoman Lauren Rosenzweig Morton spoke in support of Marie Altieri. They have worked together for years on committees and events in town. Marie has the proven people skills, education and background to be superintendent. This is a very high caliber school system and she is very well respected by the teachers. Lauren noted that a lot of Marie's work is done behind closed doors due to confidentiality requirements that protect individuals so Marie cannot discuss or respond to some issues.

Marc Lewis has taught 7<sup>th</sup> grade at R.J. Grey for 7 years and served as President of the teaching association (AEA) for 10 years. Although he did not want to speak at the meeting, he didn't want to regret not speaking up. He stated that our schools are at a precipice, with regionalization, all the new initiatives (PARCC, Common Core), budget issues and more, What we need is someone to guide us through the process and relationships and who has the earned trust of whom he/she will lead. "The last thing we need is uncertainty."

Nancy Sherburne encouraged the School Committee to think of someone who will be the single individual who establishes the vision and direction of the School District for an extended period of time. That person should have experience in a broad range of positions in public education and extensive and recent educational training. Having been a teacher, an administrator, a principal, and a superintendent brings a breadth of background. The three finalists are all strong candidates with different skills and differences. Nancy feels it is critically important for the superintendent to have superb communication skills with people in all different roles in the community.

#### **4. Discussion and Deliberation**

Kristina Rychlik read a summary of the site visits that had been made. Dennis Bruce gave a summary of the multiple groups' feedback. Brigid Bieber reviewed the reference checks done by FMS and Herb Levine. Herb thanked Brigid, Andrew Shen and the Search Committee for a job well done. Herb stated that what has been said about the three candidates is verified by the reference checks that he did. He shared some concerns that were mentioned. Regarding Marie, this was not a criticism but in changing jobs from her current one, it was asked if she can thicken her skin and make very difficult decisions involving people whom she knows. Regarding Brett, it was noted that while he has been very innovative and creative in his current position, he has learned that he has to be sure his initiatives are being well received and has followers before proceeding. Regarding Glenn, in a particular school he was not as visible as in the other schools, although this type of visibility (in all schools) may not have been in his job description so Herb said that that may not be a valid comment. All candidates are kind and passionate about education and their jobs. Herb believes they have all the required background.

Maria opened the discussion for School Committee comment.

The Committee agreed that it was a very tough choice, with lots of information to process about the three finalists. Concern was expressed about the size of Brett's school community compared to AB and was he ready for such a "big jump". Marie impressed members with her accomplishments around things that many thought could not be done such as increasing the funding formula. She is very giving of her time and would have to be conscious of this. Some of the feedback comments noted that she has less experience in the classroom than Glenn and Brett.

The Committee wondered if her administrative experience makes up for this. A member said that Glenn has a good fit with the Leadership profile created.

Stating that this decision is the biggest one the School Committee will make, Dennis Bruce moved and Michael Coppolino seconded the

**MOTION: to appoint Glenn Brand to the position of Superintendent of the ABRSD, subject to successful contract negotiation and satisfactory results of final background checks.**

After discussion, there was consensus that Brett's qualifications and experience were not as closely matched to our District as Marie's and Glenn's.

Additional members' comments regarding Marie's qualifications included:

- Marie commands impressive respect from our teachers.
- Marie "knows us" and has been quietly behind many important changes in our community.
- Her educational training is recent and relevant to our District.
- Everyone loves Marie. She provides counsel and guidance for all. She is a friend to many.

Members' comments regarding Glenn's qualifications included:

- During his site visit, similar comments about the respect that he commands were made.
- As our mission statement states, we "prepare students for a global society". Glenn has a global perspective with his experience in Canada and doctorate program in England.
- He has principal and teaching experience. He has "all the experience we are looking for".
- He said he would move his family to the community.
- Glenn would like our school district to be a global leader in five years.

After some difficult discussion, there appeared to be consensus that Marie could certainly run our school district well as superintendent, but the Committee noted the difference between running the district and leading it. Glenn referred often to his teaching and principal experiences during the interview process and the Committee valued that he had more of this type of background than Marie.

**ABTSC VOTE:**

The motion to appoint Glenn Brand as the new ABRSD Superintendent was unanimously **APPROVED.**

## **5. ABTSC Executive Session**

At 3:30 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

**VOTED** by role call: that the **Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee** go into Executive Session to discuss strategy in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel.

(YES – Bieber, Brolin, Bruce, Coppolino, McOsker, Murphy, Neyland, O'Sullivan, Rychlik)

Maria Neyland declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board and the Committee would return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

The ABTSC was polled to go out of executive session at 4:12 p.m. and was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used:

- Agenda
- Finalists' Cover Letters, Resumes, Licenses, Handouts
- Search Committee Materials: Timeline, Committee members, Charge, Leadership Profile, Advertisement, Memo dated 1/7/14 announcing Community Forums, Memo dated 1/14/14 announcing Superintendent Finalists
- Interview Questions for 1/25/14
- Summary of District Forums, Brigid Bieber
- Summary of Finalists' Site Visits, Kristina Rychlik
- Emails from the public

# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

ABRSD Bond Refinancing  
March 6, 2014

3/6/2014

1

## Rating Upgrade Accomplished

**AAA**  
S&P Rating

3/6/2014

2

## Bond Refinancing

- Bonds Sold - February 27, 2014
- Eight bids received
- J P Morgan Securities LLC - 1.97% TIC

3/6/2014

3

## Bond Refinancing

**\$1,321,225**

Savings over the Life of the Bonds

From FY15 to FY25

3/6/2014

4

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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
**FROM:** SHARON SUMMERS, DISTRICT TREASURER  
**SUBJECT:** REFUNDING OF JUNIOR HIGH AND SENIOR HIGH CONSTRUCTION DEBT  
**DATE:** 2/28/2014  
**CC:** STEVE MILLS, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS; DON AICARDI, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

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Standard & Poor's (S&P) has assigned its "AAA" credit rating to Acton-Boxborough's General Obligation Bonds. The rating applies to the bond sale of \$13,395,000 for the Junior High and Senior High Construction project refunding. The AAA rating is the highest rating given by S&P, and it reflects the strong credit characteristics of the towns of Acton and Boxborough, the district's stable financial operations, and favorable debt position. A copy of S&P's written opinion is enclosed with this memo.

On February 27, the district received eight bids for the refunding of the Junior High and Senior High Construction Debt. The winning bid from J.P. Morgan Securities LLC resulted in budgetary savings to the District of \$1,321,224.99 over the remaining life of the Bonds.

<u>Bidder</u>	<u>TIC(1)</u>
J.P. Morgan Securities LLC	1.97%
Fidelity Capital Markets	2.00
Robert W. Baird & Co., Inc	2.07
Roosevelt & Cross, Inc	2.08
Bank of America Merrill Lynch	2.09
Janney Montgomery Scott LLC	2.10
PNC Capital Markets	2.11
BMO Capital Markets	2.12

(1) The TIC or True Interest Cost is the bond issue's weighted average interest cost.

As District Treasurer, I am seeking your unanimous approval and confirmation of this debt refunding.

6.2

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**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** STEVE MILLS  
**FROM:** SHARON SUMMERS  
**SUBJECT:** REFUNDING OF JUNIOR HIGH AND SENIOR HIGH CONSTRUCTION DEBT  
**DATE:** 2/28/2014  
**CC:** ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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Please place the approval of the \$13,395,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds on the agenda for the March 6, 2014 meeting. Bond proceeds will be used to refund the callable maturities of the Bonds issued on December 1, 2004 and December 1, 2005 for the Junior High and Senior High Construction Projects.

The District's Financial Advisor, First Southwest Company of Boston, Massachusetts received bids for the Bonds on February 27, 2014.

Attorney Sam Gill, Bond Counsel at Edwards Wildman Palmer LLP, has provided the vote to be taken by the regional committee at the meeting. The vote has been attached for your reference.

If you have any question regarding this procedure, please let me know.



# RatingsDirect®

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## Summary:

### Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Massachusetts; General Obligation

#### Primary Credit Analyst:

Victor M Medeiros, Boston (1) 617-530-8305; victor.medeiros@standardandpoors.com

#### Secondary Contact:

Timothy J Daley, Boston (1) 617-530-8121; timothy.daley@standardandpoors.com

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Rationale

Outlook

Related Criteria And Research

## Summary:

# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Massachusetts; General Obligation

### Credit Profile

US\$14.03 mil GO rfdg bnds (Unlimited Tax) ser 2014 due 02/01/2025

Long Term Rating

AAA/Stable

New

## Rationale

Standard & Poor's Ratings Services assigned its 'AAA' long-term rating and stable outlook to Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Mass.' series 2014 general obligation (GO) refunding bonds.

The ratings reflect our view of the district's:

- Member towns (Acton and Boxborough)'s strong credit characteristics;
- Stable financial position with consistent general fund results and good cash reserves; and
- Low overall net debt burden coupled with limited capital needs.

The 2014 bond proceeds will be used to refund the district's 2004 bonds for interest-rate savings. The district will not extend the maturity schedule and will realize the savings through the life of the bonds.

The bonds are a general obligation of the district. When debt service is not paid from other sources, the district pays principal and interest from sums annually apportioned to Acton and Boxborough. Under an agreement with the towns, capital costs and operating costs will be apportioned based on prescribed formula that takes the ratio of each town's respective pupil enrollments over a three-year period to the sum of the enrollments in the district. These ratios are the base percentages. Debt service on the bonds is considered a construction cost. Boxborough's share of construction costs are based on the base percentage minus five percentage points. Acton pays the remainder of the construction costs.

Since Massachusetts' school districts by law cannot levy taxes directly, we view payment by both member towns as necessary to pay debt service. As such, the rating reflects the creditworthiness of each member. We do note that both towns have voted to exempt the debt service on all outstanding bonds from the limitations of Proposition 2½, a Massachusetts law that limits municipalities' ability to raise taxes to 2.5% annually over the previous year's level.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, which serves a combined population of roughly 27,000, was established in 1955 under Chapter 71 of the Massachusetts General Laws. The district currently provides educational services for grades seven through 12. Beginning in the 2015 school year, the district will be a full regional district serving K-12 students of both communities. The district operates two school buildings and has an enrollment of approximately 3,000.

*Summary: Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Massachusetts; General Obligation*

Economic characteristics of the district are very strong. We consider household income levels district-wide to be very high, with the median household effective buying income at 202% of the national level. The per capita effective buying income is similarly high at 205%. The total combined tax base is also very strong at 169,585 per capita, reflecting the affluence and wealth of both communities.

The district relies somewhat on state aid appropriations, which account for about 28% of its general fund revenues. State aid has been stable, and credit conditions in the region are improving based on our economic forecasts (see "U.S. State And Local Government Credit Conditions Forecast", published Dec. 17, 2013 ). The balance of revenue comprises the apportionment of district costs to the member towns. The cost-sharing assessments result in apportionments, with Acton and Boxborough at 86% and 14%, respectively, of total school costs.

State policy limits the unassigned general fund balance to no more than 5% of expenditures. When a district's reserve funds exceed the 5% limit, it must use the extra funds to lower its member towns' assessments for the following fiscal year. As of fiscal year-end 2013, the district's total general fund balance was \$3 million, which was 6.9% of expenditures. Of that amount, about \$1 million (2.5%) and \$1.5 million (3.4%) represent the unassigned and assigned general fund balances, respectively. The assigned general fund balance will be allocated to the subsequent year's expenditures. The district typically maintains a total fund balance nearing 5% of expenditures, a level we consider good, and generally appropriates about half for next year's expenditures. For fiscal 2014, management projects balanced operating results and a fund balance level similar to that of 2013. The 2014 budget is likewise balanced, according to management, at \$41.5 million, about a 6% increase from the prior year. The increase largely reflects higher instruction costs.

The district's debt burden is low, in our view, even with overlapping debt from both communities factored in. The total debt is \$18.9 million. Factoring in overlapping debt of both communities, the overall net debt is a moderate 2,314 per capita but a low 1.4% of estimated market value. Principal amortization is above average, with 77% of principal debt scheduled to be retired within 10 years and 100% by 2028. Debt service carrying charges are a low 3.7% of expenditures and should stay flat for the year before decreasing through maturity.

The district's long-term liabilities, pension, and other postemployment benefit (OPEB) costs accounted for 5% of total governmental fund expenditures, which we consider manageable. The district provides OPEB benefits to its retirees. As of the last actuarial valuation, the district reported a \$22.9 million liability. It has traditionally funded this on a pay-as-you go basis, but it recently set up an irrevocable trust fund to begin funding the liability for the long term. The district contributed \$236,000 to this fund in 2013. In the future, management will determine each year how much to appropriate into the plan depending on available resources. In the past, the district has paid on average about 22% of its annual required contribution.

### **Member towns**

Given that the payment by both member towns as necessary to pay debt service, the 'AAA' rating on the school district largely reflects Acton's and Boxborough's respective credit quality.

Key credit characteristics of Acton (AAA/Stable GO debt rating) are its:

- Very strong economy with projected per capita effective buying income at 202% of the U.S. and per capita market

value of \$167,000.

- Very strong budgetary flexibility, with reserves above 15% of expenditures for the past two years and no plans to significantly spend them down. Audited fiscal 2012 reserves were \$13 million, or 15.8% of expenditures. Unaudited fiscal 2013 results showed available fund balance at 17.8%. Acton expects to close fiscal 2014 with a similar fund balance level as 2013.
- Strong budgetary performance, in our view, with a surplus of 0.9% in the general fund and a surplus of 2.8% in the total governmental funds for fiscal 2012. Property taxes remain the town's primary revenue source, accounting for almost 81% of general fund revenues, followed by intergovernmental receipts at 14%. Acton does not depend on federal revenues for operation; federal revenues account for less than 5% of expenditures.
- Very strong liquidity with total government available cash at 23% of total governmental fund expenditures and almost 700% of debt service. We believe Acton has strong access to external liquidity as it has issued GO bonds frequently in the past 15 years.
- Strong management conditions with good policies in most key areas although not all might be formalized or regularly monitored by governance officials.
- Very strong debt and contingent liability profile, with total governmental funds debt service at 3% of total governmental funds expenditures at 3% and net direct debt at 13% of total governmental funds revenue. The town does not have any plan to issue debt in the next two years.

Key credit characteristics of Boxborough (AAA/Stable GO debt rating) are its:

- Very strong economy with projected per capita effective buying income at 211% of the U.S. at 211% and per capita market value of \$187,959.
- Very strong budgetary flexibility, with reserves above 15% of expenditures for the past three years and no plans to significantly spend them down. Audited fiscal 2013 reserves were \$3.4 million, or 17% of expenditures. We believe Boxborough's budgetary flexibility is further enhanced by \$750,000, equivalent to 3.5% of budget, in unused levy capacity for the fiscal 2015 budget cycle.
- Strong budgetary performance with a surplus of 1.9% in the general fund and a surplus of 1% in the total governmental funds for fiscal 2013. Property taxes remain the town's primary revenue source, accounting for almost 81% of general fund revenues, followed by intergovernmental receipts at 13%. Boxborough does not depend on federal revenues for operation.
- Very strong liquidity with total government available cash at 16% of total governmental fund expenditures and almost 277% of debt service. We believe Boxborough has strong access to external liquidity as it has issued GO bonds frequently in the past 15 years.
- Strong management conditions with good policies in most key areas although not all might be formalized or regularly monitored by governance officials.
- Strong debt and contingent liability with total governmental funds debt service at 5.7% of total governmental funds expenditures and net direct debt at 21% of total governmental funds revenue. The town has no significant debt plans in the medium term.

## Outlook

The stable outlook reflects our view that the district will continue to maintain generally positive operating trends and good reserves. Moreover, we anticipate that the member towns will maintain sound financial positions. We therefore do not expect to change the rating within the two-year outlook period.

## **Related Criteria And Research**

### **Related Criteria**

- USPF Criteria: GO Debt, Oct. 12, 2006
- USPF Criteria: Local Government GO Ratings Methodology And Assumptions, Sept. 12, 2013
- USPF Criteria: Key General Obligation Ratio Credit Ranges – Analysis Vs. Reality, April 2, 2008
- USPF Criteria: Methodology: Rating Approach To Obligations With Multiple Revenue Streams, Nov. 29, 2011
- Ratings Above The Sovereign: Corporate And Government Ratings—Methodology And Assumptions, Nov. 19, 2013

### **Related Research**

U.S. State And Local Government Credit Conditions Forecast, Dec. 17, 2013

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VOTE OF THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
SCHOOL COMMITTEE

I, the Secretary (the "District Secretary") of the School Committee (the "Committee") of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, Massachusetts (the "District"), certify that at a meeting of the Committee held March 6, 2014, of which meeting all members of the Committee were duly notified and at which a quorum was present, the following votes were unanimously passed, all of which appear upon the official record of the Committee in my custody:

Voted: that the sale of the \$13,395,000 General Obligation Refunding Bonds of the District dated March 12, 2014 (the "Bonds"), to J.P. Morgan Securities LLC at the price of \$15,148,507.97 is hereby approved and confirmed. The Bonds shall be payable on February 1 of the years and in the principal amounts and bear interest at the respective rates, as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Interest Rate</u>
2015	\$ 40,000	4.00%	2021	\$1,455,000	4.00%
2016	260,000	4.00	2022	1,515,000	4.00
2017	1,320,000	4.00	2023	1,575,000	4.00
2018	1,345,000	4.00	2024	1,565,000	4.00
2019	1,355,000	4.00	2025	1,565,000	4.00
2020	1,400,000	4.00			

Further Voted: that in connection with the marketing and sale of the Bonds, the preparation and distribution of a Notice of Sale and Preliminary Official Statement dated February 20, 2014, and a final Official Statement dated February 27, 2014 (the "Official Statement"), each in such form as may be approved by the District Treasurer, be and hereby are ratified, confirmed, approved and adopted.

Further Voted: to authorize the execution and delivery of a Refunding Escrow Agreement to be dated March 12, 2014, between the District and U.S. Bank National Association as Refunding Escrow Agent.

Further Voted: that the District Treasurer and the Chair of the Committee be, and hereby are, authorized to execute and deliver a continuing disclosure undertaking in compliance with SEC Rule 15c2-12 in such form as may be approved by bond counsel to the District, which undertaking shall be incorporated by reference in the Bonds for the benefit of the holders of the Bonds from time to time.

Further Voted: that we authorize and direct the District Treasurer to establish post issuance federal tax compliance procedures in such form as the District Treasurer and bond counsel deem sufficient, or if such procedures are currently in place, to review and update said procedures, in order to monitor and maintain the tax-exempt status of the Bonds.

Further Voted: that each member of the Committee, the District Secretary and the District Treasurer be and hereby are, authorized to take any and all such actions, and execute and deliver such certificates, receipts or other documents as may be determined by them, or any of them, to be necessary or convenient to carry into effect the provisions of the foregoing votes.

I further certify that the votes were taken at a meeting open to the public, that no vote was taken by secret ballot, that a notice stating the place, date, time and agenda for the meeting (which agenda included the adoption of the above votes) was filed with the Town Clerks of each of the member towns of Acton and Boxborough, Massachusetts (together, the "Town Clerks") and a copy thereof posted in a manner conspicuously visible to the public at all hours in or on the municipal buildings in which the offices of the Town Clerks and the District Secretary are located, or in accordance with an approved alternative method of notice prescribed or approved by the Massachusetts Attorney General as set forth in 940 CMR 29.03(4), at least 48 hours, not including Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, prior to the time of the meeting and remained so posted at the time of the meeting, that no deliberations or decision in connection with the sale of the Bonds were taken in executive session, all in accordance with G.L. c.30A, §§18-25 as amended.

Dated: March 6, 2014

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District Secretary

AM 29152522.1



# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Athletics Financial Data Presentation  
March 6, 2014

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## Introduction

Funding for Athletics comes from:

- Gifts Special Revenue Account
- ABSAF Special Revenue Account
- Athletics Revolving Fund
  - Gate Receipts
  - User Fees
- ABRSD Appropriated Budget (\$536K in FY14)

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## Budget Drivers That Affect Spending & Revenue

- Coaches salaries (Reflects FY13 contract settlements)
- MIAA Rules for staffing and leagues
- Weather Conditions and Cancellations
- Transportation
- Staffing for Events
- Supplies
- Waivers

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## Waiver Totals

YEAR	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	FAMILY CAP	TOTAL
FY'08	1	7	6		14
FY'09	9	10	10		29
FY'10	16	11	15		42
FY'11	24	7	11		42
FY'12	19	15	16		50
FY'13	16	15	22	16	69
FY'14 YTD	25	21			46

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## Athletics Financial Data Presentation

### Expenses

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## Total Athletic Expenditures FY'08-FY'14

FY	Combined Total Expenses (SRF & Approp Budget)
FY'08	\$890,452
FY'09	\$935,271
FY'10	\$953,751
FY'11	\$1,027,132
FY'12	\$1,041,436
FY'13	\$1,025,319
FY'14 (EST)	\$1,037,579

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### Total Athletic Expense Percentages FY'08-FY'14

FY	*SRF % of Total Expense	GF % of Total Expense
FY'08	46%	54%
FY'09	44%	56%
FY'10	43%	57%
FY'11	54%	46%
FY'12	50%	50%
FY'13	47%	53%
FY'14 (EST)	45%	55%

\* Special Revenue Fund % includes ABSAF, Athletic Revolving & Gifts

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### ABRSD Financial Data Presentation

## Revenue

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## SRF Combined Revenue Totals

YEAR	ATHLETIC FEES	GATE RECEIPTS	GIFTS	ABSAF	OTHER	TOTAL
FY'09	\$320,029	\$40,716	\$24,661	\$40,000		\$425,406
FY'10	\$319,309	\$55,191	\$26,767	\$44,000		\$445,267
FY'11	\$372,157	\$73,906	\$25,386	\$44,000		\$515,449
FY'12	\$383,506	\$53,452	\$23,209	\$46,000	\$1,125	\$507,292
FY'13	\$372,039	\$43,885	\$13,996	\$44,945		\$474,865
FY'14 (EST)	\$369,131	\$36,979	\$14,570	\$43,000		\$463,680

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## ABRSD Financial Data Presentation

FY14 Status

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## ABRSD Athletics Financial Data Presentation

Total FY14 Estimated SRF Revenue	\$463,680
Total FY14 AB Operating Budget	<u>\$536,476</u>
TOTAL	\$1,000,156
Total Combined (SRF & GF)	
FY14 Estimated Athletic Expenses	<u>\$1,037,579</u>
Current FY14 Estimated Shortfall	(\$37,423)

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## ABRSD Athletics Financial Data Presentation

### Special Revenue Fund Balances

FY'09	\$64,897	
FY'10	\$98,010	
FY'11	\$11,995	(Moved \$72,060 from GF to Athl Rev)
FY'12	\$ 2,223	(Reclassified \$43,228 to GF)
FY'13	\$ 0	(Reclassified \$30,234 to GF)
FY'14 (EST)	\$ 0	(Potential \$37,424 reclass to GF)

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## ABRSD Financial Data Presentation

### Athletic Fee Comparisons

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#### Total Athletic User Fees For Area Schools

<u>School</u>	<u>Fee Per Season</u>	<u>Family Cap</u>
Lincoln-Sudbury	\$365 per sport	3 sports
Lexington	\$325/1 <sup>st</sup> sport, \$300 2 <sup>nd</sup> sport	\$600
Dover-Sherborn	\$275 per sport	\$1,375
Ashland	\$259 running sports, \$275 other sport	None
Wellesley	\$250 per sport HS, \$150 per sport MS	\$1,500
Westford	\$225 per sport without Facility Fee	None
Concord-Carlisle	\$200 per sport	\$600
Acton-Boxborough	\$205 per sport	\$820

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### Total Athletic User Fees For Area Schools

<u>School</u>	<u>Fee Per Season</u>	<u>Family Cap</u>
Wayland	\$250 TY / \$300 Next Year	\$1,100
Natick	\$150 Per Sport	\$450
Medfield	\$225 per sport/\$250 for sports that require facility fee	None
Westwood	\$250 per sport HS/\$125 per sport MS	\$750
Medway	\$225 per sport	\$940
Holliston	\$200 per sport	\$1,000
Bedford & Waltham	No Fees	

**Note:** Many of these schools have up-charges for ice hockey, skiing & gymnastics

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### ABRSD Athletics Financial Data Presentation

#### Westford Academy Fees

Varsity Boys Ice Hockey	\$650
JV Boys Ice Hockey	\$400
Varsity Girls Ice Hockey	\$559
JV Girls Ice Hockey	\$300
Swimming	\$425
Diving	\$295
Nordic Ski	\$325

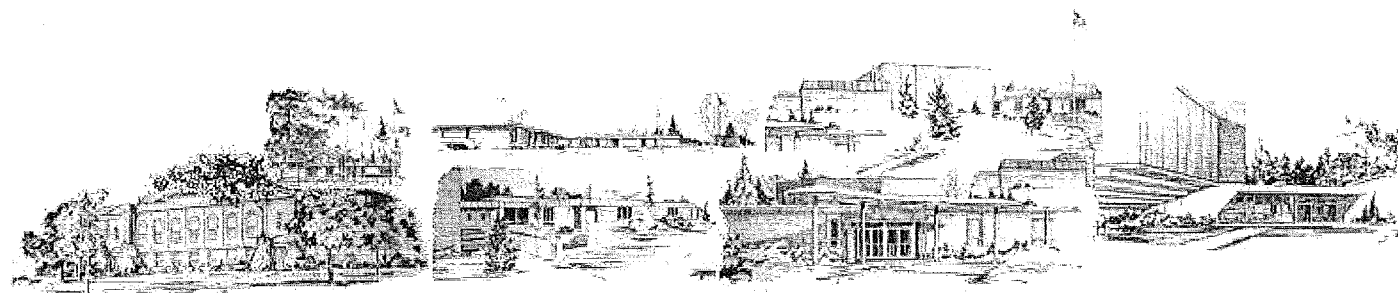
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## ABRSD Athletics Financial Data Presentation

### Future Options:

- 1) Reduce Program Spending
- 2) Increase Operating Budget Support
- 3) Increase Athletic Fees



Acton Public Schools ☐ Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
16 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720 Phone: 978-264-4700 Ext. 3205 Fax: 978-264-3340  
E-mail: [daicardi@abschools.org](mailto:daicardi@abschools.org)

Donald Aicardi  
Finance Director

TO: Superintendent Stephen Mills  
FROM: Don Aicardi, Director of Finance  
RE: FY14 Status Report-2nd Quarter  
DATE: February 28, 2014

#### **A. Summary**

My current projections show that the Acton-Boxborough School District ended the second quarter of Fiscal Year 2014 with a \$11,466, projected year end fund balance. I would like to highlight the most interesting observations for the regional school committee.

#### **B. Review of FY14 Budget-Highlights**

**1. Salaries, Teaching. (\$+318K)** I noted that first quarter projections for teachers are notoriously unreliable due to the lack of "real payrolls" to base projections on in addition to corrections that occur at the beginning of the fiscal year. This trend has proven to be true as the first quarter estimate of a \$173k positive fund balance has grown into a projected \$318k fund balance. It is important to note that there was \$200,000 in 'anticipated vacancy factor' savings applied to these accounts before the school year began; without that, this surplus would have been even higher.

**2. Salaries, Buildings (\$-49k)** Higher than anticipated Overtime Costs and Summer Grounds & Buildings expenditures still have this account projected to be in deficit. After examining unfavorable final FY13 expenses and current FY14 trends, these accounts were adjusted in the new, expanded FY15 budget to make sure that these accounts do not turn into a larger liability.

**3. Fringes, Health Insurance (\$-15k)** This account has been difficult to budget traditionally due to the fluidity of the open enrollment period, the timing of when rates are actually finalized, and the timing of new hires. Even so, this complex account has often led to considerable surpluses by the close of the fiscal year. Not this year. First, the budget estimated the larger accounts at a 9% increase; the larger accounts actually increased by 10%. Second, we are seeing a shift in the counts estimated for retirees from HMOs to Medex. Third, due to traditional surpluses in this account, a vacancy calculation was applied to these accounts.

**4. Fringes, Unemployment (+\$5K) and Fringes, Worker's Compensation (\$-23K)** These accounts are notoriously difficult to predict and will need to be carefully monitored throughout the fiscal year. On the other hand, for the third year in a row, the Workers Compensation number has proven to be problematic, showing an estimate of a \$23k deficit at year end. This annual assessment, paid early in the fiscal year, even after factoring in adjustments and credits for participation in MIIA (Massachusetts Interlocal Insurance Association), paying early, and other rewards/credits for history, has exceeded the budget for the third year in a row.

**5. Other, Capital Outlay (-\$84K), Other Maintenance Buildings (-\$70k) and Other, Utilities (+102k)** As anticipated, this projected year end deficit is related to the upcoming contribution to the Track repair project as authorized by the Regional School Committee over the summer. The deficits in those two accounts are being offset by a projected surplus in the energy accounts by the close of FY14. Due to the severity of this winter, this projected surplus will likely evolve as bills continue to be paid.

**6. Legal Services (-\$69K)** This projected year end deficit is due to collective bargaining negotiations, ongoing legal expenses related to implementing regionalization, and the ongoing "Pledge of Allegiance" legal case.

**7. Other Admin Supplies (-\$85k)** This projected deficit at fiscal year end accounts for expenses related to the recently concluded Superintendent search as well as expenses related to the design of the new Chart of Accounts.

**8. Athletic Expenses (\$-42k)** Actual athletic expenses straddle two different financial entities: special revenue accounts related to athletics and the ABRSD general operating budget. We have been forced to reclass expenses from the athletic revolving fund into the ABRSD general fund at the end of last two fiscal years because there wasn't enough money in the athletic special revenue account to pay for the expenses charged there. Currently, I am forecasting \$37,000 in expenses would have to be re-classed from special revenue accounts into the operating budget at fiscal year end if the current trends hold. We will be watching this situation closely. The FY15 Budget recently approved by the Regional School Committee did increase funding by \$35,000 which will definitely help next year's financial situation.

**9. Other, Student Transportation (-\$36K)** Last year's high gasoline costs proved to have an adverse effect that emerged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarters of FY13. Based on those trends, we are seeing similar trends that the gasoline accounts will also be an issue by the close of FY14. These accounts were increased as part of the upcoming FY15 budget.

**10. Other, SPED Tuition (\$+128K)** Still too early in the fiscal year for any definitive call. However, if the full amount of FY14 circuit breaker reimbursement revenue were to be applied in its entirety, a positive fund balance would be achieved. We will continue to monitor these complex accounts in cooperation with Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services.

**C. Conclusion.** I am happy to answer any questions that you might have. Thank you.

# ACTON/BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## FY14 BUDGET STATUS REPORT

2/28/2014

	FY14 Budget Original	FY14 Budget Adjustments	FY14 Budget Current	FY14 Year End Projected Expenses	% Committed	FY14 Year End Projected Balance
Salaries, Teaching 01	\$17,386,571	(\$230)	\$17,386,341	\$17,067,374	98.2%	\$318,967
Salaries, Principals 02	\$852,194	\$0	\$852,194	\$841,996	98.8%	\$10,198
Salaries, Central Administration 03	\$552,042	\$0	\$552,042	\$575,633	104.3%	(\$23,591)
Salaries, Support Staff 04	\$3,655,424	\$31,136	\$3,686,560	\$3,648,403	99.0%	\$38,157
Salaries, Athletics 05	\$465,852	\$0	\$465,852	\$461,797	99.1%	\$4,055
Salaries, Buildings 06	\$423,893	\$0	\$423,893	\$473,614	111.7%	(\$49,721)
Salaries, Custodial 07	\$838,643	\$0	\$838,643	\$873,071	104.1%	(\$34,428)
Salaries, Home Instruction 08	\$16,000	\$0	\$16,000	\$25,337	158.4%	(\$9,337)
Salaries, Substitute 09	\$276,374	\$0	\$276,374	\$216,302	78.3%	\$60,072
Fringes, Course Reimbursement 10	\$28,000	\$0	\$28,000	\$30,942	110.5%	(\$2,942)
Fringes, Health Insurance 11	\$5,395,366	\$0	\$5,395,366	\$5,410,902	100.3%	(\$15,536)
Fringes, Other Ins 12	\$10,710	\$0	\$10,710	\$21,355	199.4%	(\$10,645)
Fringes, Unemployment 13	\$15,000	\$0	\$15,000	\$9,306	62.0%	\$5,694
Fringes, Workers Comp 14	\$127,000	\$0	\$127,000	\$150,568	118.6%	(\$23,568)
Fringes, Pensions 15	\$1,098,204	\$0	\$1,098,204	\$1,098,530	100.0%	(\$326)
Instructional Supplies 16	\$262,740	\$7,830	\$270,570	\$278,898	103.1%	(\$8,328)
Instructional Textbooks 17	\$178,718	\$0	\$178,718	\$178,957	100.1%	(\$239)
Instructional, Library 18	\$29,724	(\$1,500)	\$28,224	\$28,224	100.0%	\$0
Other, Capital Outlay 19	\$317,107	\$737	\$317,844	\$402,193	126.5%	(\$84,349)
Other, Prop/Casualty 22	\$35,000	\$0	\$35,000	\$36,882	105.4%	(\$1,882)
Other, Maintenance Buildings 23	\$315,970	(\$737)	\$315,233	\$385,560	122.3%	(\$70,327)
Other, Maintenance Outlays 24	\$197,542	\$0	\$197,542	\$217,566	110.1%	(\$20,024)
Other, Legal Service 26	\$70,000	\$0	\$70,000	\$139,987	200.0%	(\$69,987)
Other, Admin Supplies 27	\$655,105	(\$5,789)	\$649,316	\$734,762	113.2%	(\$85,446)
Other, Athletic Support 28	\$59,913	\$0	\$59,913	\$101,985	170.2%	(\$42,072)
Other, Custodial Support 29	\$72,409	\$0	\$72,409	\$78,958	109.0%	(\$6,549)
Other, Sped Transportation 30	\$870,759	\$0	\$870,759	\$907,392	104.2%	(\$36,633)
Other, Student Transportation 31	\$1,101,110	\$0	\$1,101,110	\$1,137,239	103.3%	(\$36,129)
Other, Travel 32	\$26,070	(\$311)	\$25,759	\$43,596	169.2%	(\$17,837)
Other, Sped Tuition 33	\$2,932,626	(\$31,136)	\$2,901,490	\$2,773,254	95.6%	\$128,236
Other, Utilities 34	\$1,067,238	\$0	\$1,067,238	\$964,941	90.4%	\$102,297
Other, Sewer 35	\$218,300	\$0	\$218,300	\$225,613	103.3%	(\$7,313)
Other, Debt Service 21	\$2,020,296	\$0	\$2,020,296	\$2,019,295	100.0%	\$1,001
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$41,571,900</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$41,571,900</b>	<b>\$41,560,434</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$11,466</b>

## Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

To: Acton Finance Committee  
 From: Maria Neyland, Chair Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee  
 Dennis Bruce, Chair Acton Public School Committee  
 Date: March 6, 2014  
 RE: Answers to Budget Questions

As a result of the School Committee's presentation to the Acton Finance Committee on 2/25/14, we appreciated the opportunity to hear some of the concerns that the Finance Committee had around this year's unique school budget process. Primary concerns included: communication of budget needs, timing of information and clearer explanation of those needs to the public. Below please find answers to questions that were asked.

1. Special Education FY '14 to FY '15 Increases  
 The Out of District and CASE costs have increased by a little over one million dollars. This is the biggest budget driver in the AB budget, representing more than half of the total budget increase. See the attached spreadsheet for a breakout of the increases.

2. What are the class sizes in the grade/school we are cutting the three teachers?

The three sections that we are cutting are because of sections that we cut in previous years that are moving their way through the schools:

Blanchard 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: There are currently 4 sixth grades and 3 sections of 5<sup>th</sup> grade and below. The projected class size for next year's 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Blanchard is 23.7.

Gates 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade: Gates has 3 classes in grades 2-6 and two classes in K and 1. When the two sections of 1<sup>st</sup> grade move to 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, we will only need two classes. The projected class size for next year's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade at Gates is 22.

Blanchard 1<sup>st</sup> Grade: Similarly, Blanchard has three 1<sup>st</sup> grades and 2 Kindergartens. When the Kindergarten moves to 1<sup>st</sup> grade, we will only need two classes. The projected class size for next year's 1<sup>st</sup> grade at Blanchard is 20.5.

Each of these cuts were part of the long term class size plan that we have been presenting to the school committee for the last 2-3 years. K-6 Class sizes will average 21.5 in the next five years. See the attached spreadsheets.

3. Provide information about the Blanchard Custodian  
 The square footage and staffing of each elementary school is as follows:

School	Square Footage	Custodial Staffing
Douglas	48,000	2 FTE
Gates	53,000	2 FTE
Conant	55,000	2 FTE
Blanchard	72,000	3 FTE
PDB	140,000	5 FTE

Blanchard is the community center for the town of Boxborough, and there are many after school and evening activities scheduled there. As an example, on a typical afternoon or early evening there will be music lessons in 11 classrooms at Blanchard. We decided to keep the third Custodian (Salary \$45,000) and use him partially at Blanchard and partially as a floater. We decreased the Custodial overtime budget by \$20,000 in anticipation of him filling in shifts at all of the schools instead of using overtime. Over the next couple of years we should be able to pay for some of the salary through use of building fees.

4. Choice Revenues and Expenses

The number of choice students and the number of staff paid for by choice have been stable for the last few years, with roughly 34 choice students and 2.8 staff members. We receive \$5,000 for each choice student from the state, but we also receive additional money for special education choice students. Over the last few months our revenue from the state has increased dramatically. We did not increase the FTE paid for by choice in the FY '15 budget, but we will watch the revenues and we should be able to increase staff paid for by choice in the future. See the attached chart.

5. How is Circuit Breaker reflected in the budget?

Circuit breaker is shown as a negative expense in the budget. It is shown in the attached Special Education spreadsheet with the FY '14 to FY '15 expenses.

6. Are we cutting \$400,000 from our transportation budget? Will the reimbursement will be lower next year?

No, we are not cutting transportation in our budget. We are showing a reduction in APS transportation in FY '14 because AB is paying the APS transportation expenses in FY '14 and then invoicing APS for the same amount. This will allow the region next year to receive the full reimbursement from the state because the reimbursement is based on this year's expenses.

7. Why the need for full time assistant principals?

Please see attached job posting and description as well as the memo describing how assistant principals can help alleviate some of the issues that result from large class sizes.

### FY '14 to FY '15 Special Education Cost Breakout

	<b>FY14 ABRSD</b>	<b>FY14 APS</b>	<b>FY14 Blanchard</b>	<b>FY14 TOTAL</b>	<b>FY15 TOTAL NEW AB</b>	<b>FY 14 to FY15 Variance</b>	<b>FY14 to FY15 Increase</b>
Private Day Tuition	\$2,130,729	\$966,494	\$165,982	<b>\$3,263,205</b>	<b>\$3,909,320</b>	<b>\$646,115</b>	<b>20%</b>
Residential Tuition	\$674,629	\$0	\$0	<b>\$674,629</b>	<b>\$767,123</b>	<b>\$92,494</b>	<b>14%</b>
Circuit Breaker	(\$1,146,293)	(\$459,698)	(\$103,600)	(\$1,709,591)	(\$1,757,154)	(\$47,563)	3%
CASE Tuition	\$764,791	\$385,082	\$275,699	<b>\$1,425,572</b>	<b>\$1,788,455</b>	<b>\$362,883</b>	<b>25%</b>
CASE Credit for Room Space	\$0	\$0	(\$15,000)	(\$15,000)	\$0	<b>\$15,000</b>	<b>-100%</b>
Tuition Other Collaborative	\$505,770	\$0	\$0	<b>\$505,770</b>	<b>\$505,770</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>0%</b>
Medicaid Services	\$0	\$1,040	\$0	<b>\$1,040</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>(\$1,040)</b>	<b>-100%</b>
	<b>\$2,929,626</b>	<b>\$892,918</b>	<b>\$323,081</b>	<b>\$4,145,625</b>	<b>\$5,213,514</b>	<b>\$1,067,889</b>	<b>26%</b>

6-Mar-14

# ABRHS/JH School Choice

	FY '09	FY '10	FY '11	FY '12	FY '13	FY '14	FY '15
Choice Students	66	47	34	33	37	34	38
FTE Funded By Choice	7.2	7.2	7.0	3.8	2.8	2.8	2.8
Revenues		\$251,722	\$211,848	\$192,628	\$235,418	\$328,627	\$328,627
Expenses		\$385,437	\$381,043	\$225,721	\$174,345	\$183,797	\$187,523
End of Yr Fund Balance	\$340,733	\$207,018	\$37,822	\$4,729	\$65,801	\$210,631	\$351,735



## Combined Acton and Boxborough Section Planning

### Acton Enrollment

2013-2014							2014-2015					
		Oct 1 Actual	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Sections	Class Size			Staff	Total Project Oct 1	Sectns	Class Size
K	261	281	7	288	14	20.6	K	272	6	278	14	19.9
1	286	302	6	308	14	22.0	1	302	7	309	14	22.1
2	325	316	6	322	15	21.5	2	313	6	319	14	22.8
3	361	365	9	374	16	23.4	3	329	8	337	15	22.5
4	387	375	7	382	16	23.9	4	370	8	378	16	23.6
5	358	355	2	357	15	23.8	5	378	8	386	16	24.1
6	358	358	2	360	15	24.0	6	360	2	362	15	24.1
	2336	2352	39	2391	105	22.8		2324	45	2369	104	22.8

### Boxborough Enrollment

2013-2014							2014-2015					
	Oct 1 Proj	Oct 1 Actual	Choice	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Sections	Class Size		Oct 1 Proj	Choice	Total Project Oct 1		Class Size
K	40	35	4	39	2	19.5	K	39	0	39	2	19.5
1	45	43	8	51	3	17.0	1	37	4	41	2	20.5
2	63	53	7	60	3	20.0	2	45	8	53	3	17.7
3	53	55	4	59	3	19.7	3	53	7	60	3	20.0
4	53	57	0	57	3	19.0	4	56	4	60	3	20.0
5	68	69	2	71	3	23.7	5	60	3	63	3	21.0
6	70	64	5	69	4	17.3	6	69	2	71	3	23.7
	392	376	30	406	21	19.3		359	28	387	19	20.4

### Combined Acton and Boxborough Enrollment

2013-2014							2014-2015					
		Oct 1 Actual	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Sections	Class Size		Oct 1 Proj	Choice / Staff	Total Project Oct 1	Sectns	Class Size
K		316	11	327	16	20.4	K	311	6	317	16	19.8
1		345	14	359	17	21.1	1	339	11	350	16	21.9
2		369	13	382	18	21.2	2	358	14	372	17	21.9
3		420	13	433	19	22.8	3	382	15	397	18	22.1
4		432	7	439	19	23.1	4	426	12	438	19	23.1
5		424	4	428	18	23.8	5	438	11	449	19	23.6
6		422	7	429	19	22.6	6	429	4	433	18	24.1
		2728	69	2797	126	22.2		2683	73	2756	123	22.4

Updated January 24, 2014

# Acton Elementary Enrollment and Class Size History and Projections FY '09 - FY '20

2014-2015							2015-2016							2016-2017						
	Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Sections	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge		Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Secti ons	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge		Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Secti ons	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge
K	269	7	276	14	19.7	-12	K	268	6	274	14	19.6	-2	K	238	6	244	13	18.8	-30
1	302	7	309	14	22.1	1	1	290	6	296	14	21.1	-13	1	288	6	294	14	21.0	-2
2	313	6	319	14	22.8	-3	2	313	7	320	14	22.9	1	2	300	6	306	14	21.9	-14
3	329	8	337	15	22.5	-37	3	325	6	331	14	23.6	-6	3	326	7	333	14	23.8	2
4	370	8	378	16	23.6	-4	4	334	8	342	15	22.8	-36	4	330	6	336	14	24.0	-6
5	378	8	386	16	24.1	29	5	373	8	381	16	23.8	-5	5	336	8	344	15	22.9	-37
6	360	2	362	15	24.1	2	6	383	8	391	16	24.4	29	6	378	8	386	16	24.1	-5
	2321	46	2367	104	22.8	-24		2286	49	2335	103	22.7	-32		2196	47	2243	100	22.4	-92

# Acton Elementary Enrollment and Class Size History and Projections FY '09 - FY '20

2017-2018							2018-2019							2019-2020						
	Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Section s	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge		Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrolled Oct 1	Section s	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge		Oct 1 Proj	Staff	Total Enrol led Oct 1	Section s	Class Size	Year to Year Chnge
K	230	6	236	12	19.7	-8	K	244	6	250	14	17.9	14	K	257	6	263	14	18.8	13
1	256	6	262	13	20.2	-32	1	248	6	249	12	20.8	-13	1	262	6	268	14	19.1	19
2	298	6	304	14	21.7	-2	2	265	6	271	13	20.8	-33	2	256	6	262	12	21.8	-9
3	312	6	318	14	22.7	-15	3	310	6	316	14	22.6	-2	3	276	6	282	13	21.7	-34
4	330	7	337	14	24.1	1	4	316	6	322	14	23.0	-15	4	315	6	321	14	22.9	-1
5	333	6	339	14	24.2	-5	5	333	7	340	14	24.3	1	5	319	6	325	14	23.2	-15
6	341	8	349	15	23.3	-37	6	337	6	343	14	24.5	-6	6	337	7	344	14	24.6	1
	2100	45	2145	96	22.3	-98		2053	43	2091	95	22.0	-54		2022	43	2065	95	21.7	-26

**Acton Boxborough Regional School District**  
**Job Description**

10.6.

**Job Title:**

Elementary Assistant Principal

**Qualifications:**

Massachusetts License as Principal/Assistant Principal

**Responsible To:**

Principal

**Representation Status: (check one)**

☐ AEA    ☐ OSA    ☐ AFSCME    ☒ Administrator    ☐ Support Staff  
☐ Transportation    ☐ Unrepresented    ☐ Salaried Employee

**Work Status:**

☐ Full Time (12 months)    ☒ Full Time/School Year + (195 days)  
☐ Full Time/School Year + 5 weeks    ☐ Part Time    ☐ Other

**Primary Functions:**

Along with the Principal, serves as an instructional leader and provides direct service to students and families in all aspects of leading a 400 - 500 student elementary school and supervising 75 - 90 faculty and staff.

**Major Responsibilities:**

**1.0 Direct Service to Students**

- Works to enhance the educational experience and academic growth of each child.
- Visits classrooms and participates in small group and individual student instruction.
- Assists students struggling with social or emotional issues. Works with students and parents to resolve issues.
- Resolves student behavioral issues, keeping parents and staff informed. Meet with students and parents regularly.
- Reviews student assessments, individual, classroom and school-wide data to advise teachers of next steps academically.
- Member of crisis team, responding to all immediate student situations that need assistance.
- Member of child-study team reviewing needs of struggling students.
- Monitor attendance trends including overseeing truancy and tardiness interventions.
- Work with bus drivers to ensure student safety on school buses and to respond to any issues.
- Provides for student safety through supervision, investigating incidents, meeting with students and parents, etc.

**2.0 Instructional Leadership**

- Implement instructional and assessment strategies by collecting and analyzing student achievement data, facilitating discussions amongst teachers and staff and working with the Principal and District personnel to plan professional development.
- Leads curriculum committees, reviews standards, and works with teachers to implement curriculum K-6.
- Works with teachers (individuals and groups) to development assessments, review of student work, analysis of student data, etc. Strategically plans next steps for students at all levels.
- Attends Special Education TEAM meetings to work with parents and faculty to best design

Last Update: 1/30/2014

# Acton Boxborough Regional School District

## Job Description

Individual Education Plans for students.

- Facilitates team discussions about the best way to help students access curriculum.
- Assists teachers in performance reports to parents, preparation for conferences, and other ways to communicate student progress to families.
- Assists Principal in leading school implementation of state and federal changes to curriculum, assessment, and evaluation.
- Assists in the scheduling and administration of state and federal standardized testing.

### 3.0 Supervision and Evaluation

- Responsible for evaluation of 12 - 15 educators, including 7 - 10 observations, follow-up conversation and written feedback for each educator.
- Goal setting with individuals and teams of educators throughout the school.
- Participation in hiring committees, interviews, reference calls for 70 - 90 staff members.
- Mentoring and orientation for new teachers.
- Coaches struggling teachers and modeling of high quality instruction.

### 4.0 Administration/ Community Outreach

- Address building management concerns by working with the custodial staff, office staff, teachers and District staff including implementing school-wide safety and emergency protocols.
- Assists Principal in oversight of physical plant.
- Serves as Principal when Principal is out of building or attending district meetings.
- Ensures compliance with state and federal laws and School Committee policies.
- Responds to inquiries from parents and community members, writes articles for newsletters, etc.
- Attends school events and participates in various school committees which might include School Council, Parent-Teacher Organizations, etc.
- Participates in district-wide committees including curriculum, leadership institute, technology, etc.
- Collaborate with Principal and faculty to develop master schedules. Plan, schedule and coordinate school projects.

### 5.0 Other Duties as Assigned by Principal

## **Class Sizes and Elementary Assistant Principals**

Class sizes do make a difference. The research is robust and while interpretations differ, even the most critical analysis identifies a correlation between class size and student achievement. One important consideration, however, is that these class size studies show that they are beneficial in specific circumstances.

The most well known research is the Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio, or STAR, which tracked the performance of students placed in classes of 13 to 17, from kindergarten through third grade, comparing them to students in larger classes. The study found that children in the smaller classes not only experienced bigger improvements in early learning but also performed better in the long term. Minority and low income students saw the biggest benefit.

This and many other studies prove that small class sizes are effective at affecting achievement growth for specific groups of students, subject matters, and teachers. Critics point out how specific these groups are and the difficulty generalizing these results across populations and districts. Although the critical effect differs across groups, the most common conclusions suggest that resources are optimally allocated if they were targeted toward those students who benefit the most.

Class size reduction is very expensive, and little or no consideration is given to alternative and more productive uses of those resources. Unfortunately, there is no research from the U.S. that directly compares class size investments to specific alternative investments. The comparison condition for all studies has been business as usual rather than, for example, a comparison of investment in smaller classes vs. investment in alternative curriculum. Studies can be found showing short-term rates of return for computer-aided instruction, cross-age tutoring, early childhood programs, and increases in instructional time that are all greater than those for small class sizes.

In today's environment of fiscal austerity educators must look for the most effective ways to boost student performance with limited funding. The costs and benefits of class-size mandates need to be carefully weighed against alternatives when difficult decisions must be made.

The Acton Public and Blanchard School have made important decreases in class size either by maintaining or adding sections or through attrition. Acton realized its peak population in 2010 with 2551 students and an average class size of 23.6. Projections to 2019 show population decreases to potentially 2022 students. If sections are decreased to current guidelines, average class size will decrease by two students per class to 21.7 students in grade K-6. If sections remain at 104 (the number of sections expected in 2015), average class sizes would be 19.5 students or a decrease of four students per class.

A similar longitudinal look at class size at Acton Boxborough Regional High School finds high class size peaking at 1990 in 2011 and a decline as the population moves from the elementary programs dropping to 1808 in 2019. With a commitment to not reducing the number of teachers, a trend of class size reduction similar to the elementary schools would be seen at the Jr. High and High schools.

We must continue to balance investments to decreasing class size as enrollment drops with alternative investments that will boost student performance. How do we do this? To paraphrase Abraham Lincoln, we must think anew. We must *disenthrall* ourselves of the ideals of education that we hold dear but which do not prepare our children to compete and create. We must disenthrall ourselves of the notion of administrative personnel as middle management and understand that our administrative positions provide direct support to students who are most in need.

Elementary assistant principals in Acton-Boxborough are not clerks completing DESE paperwork. They are facilitators of team discussions of a child's behavior that prevents her from accessing classroom curriculum. They are master teachers who work with classroom teachers to design curriculum accommodations for struggling students. They are coaches who guide a struggling teacher, and they are counselors to parents whose child struggles with the demands of first grade. They are providing services so that our high quality teachers can focus on the academic needs of all of their students. They are part of a team that enhances the educational experience and the academic growth of each child. Without this assistance, simple reduction in class size by two, three or even four students will not provide for the academic needs of the most fragile child. A teacher requires help and that is the role of our principals and assistant principals.

An investment in elementary assistant principals, combined with a mindfulness toward maintaining a reasonably affordable class size is a sustainable and effective investment. The best investment that we can make as a school system is an investment in people who make a difference in the lives of the greatest number of our children.

## ALG minutes Sat. Feb 15' 2014

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Mike Gowing, Janet Adachi, BoS; Pat Clifford, Steve Noone, FC; Kim McOsker, Dennis Bruce, SC; Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills, Don Aicardi and Steve Barrett, staff.

Audience: Doug Tindal, FinCom; Marie Altieri, Asst. Super, personnel; Charles Kadlec, Allen Nitschlem, Jon Benson and Pam Lynn.

Extra Information: Multi-year financial model (ALG spreadsheet) and ten pages of back up info; Finance Committee's administration cost comparison sheet.

Bart started off with a statement: when I get numerous emails between meetings, I know something is happening. I am assuming that reaching a consensus is still important. Question: is everyone in agreement that we should reach a consensus and make a recommendation to Town Meeting; or is there something different and every board should go its own way?

Dennis: there is no reason that we cannot work through the numbers, reach a consensus and present it to Town meeting.

Janet: consensus is preferable. I acknowledge that comments by Selectmen have generated communication back and forth and some members have tried to make amends. It is not a good idea to go to the voters at Town Meeting without a consensus.

Steve N: we can reach consensus here but we go back to split boards and we are all having trouble delivering the consensus among our members

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Pat: 1. We have to trust each other that there will be no inappropriate comments; 2. we need to solve FY 15—we need to look at the "extra" pots of money and then look at the out years for sustainability; 3. Bring our yes back to our boards for agreement.

Bart: so my comment---this time of year we butt heads on the structure of the budget process. This happens to some extent every year. Research has shown, and common sense agrees that when people are angry, IQs go down. Every year people have found a way to let their anger go to the side and get the work done.

Minutes approved

2. Updates---no changes

3. Spreadsheet

SB: the assessors met and declared \$325k of the overlay account surplus. On June 30<sup>th</sup> this money will flow into free cash. Since last meeting there have been changes which have resulted in a positive \$855k balance. Changes include: a reduction of \$440k from the selectmen's vote to jettison the Harris Street capital project; \$additional \$100k in new growth; \$100k increase in excise tax (based on the FY14 experience); and an increase in fees.



Minuteman is in the mix at \$29k. There are also cuts in the school budgets and increases in E&D spending.

The model still has a 2.5% increase<sup>4</sup> and uses the Governor's numbers with the increase in transportation.

Bart: is this part of the consensus?

S. Noone: despite the fact that the budget looks solvable but there is no taxpayer relief; does not fully fund OPEB; there is \$880k in deficit and the use of a full \$2m in reserves to cover it.

My Concerns: 1. FY 16 & 17 have not been addressed. If I escalate the education by 5%/year in FY16 the reserve use will be \$2-3m and FY 17 \$3.5-\$4m---this is unsustainable.....this is just kicking the can down the road. 2. I do not like the way regionalization turned out in the school budget. We were led to believe that the budgets would be flat or go down and we are not seeing that. We can sign off on FY 15 but it's a hard choice not to fund OPEB and if we do not cut personnel we will have an override in FY17.

S. Mills: It is important that we not co-mingle the regionalization with this year's budget problems. We had 14 SPED kids move in; two are out-of district residential at several \$100k each. We have no control over this but are responsible for the costs. The \$500k for OPEB has nothing to do with regionalization. The budget has increased by less than 2% Peter Ashton [at the Town meeting on regionalization] said the average would be an increase of 1.7% with 6.8% for the next four years..

S. Noone: I hear what you are saying but I also heard what Dennis said. I see lower class sizes but there is an increase cost of per pupil/administrator. {Regionalization} may be more efficient but the savings have been spent elsewhere and have not translated to the bottom line. People were led to believe that the costs would come down---they have in Boxboro; the split is inherently unfair.

Bart: do we need a fact check on admin costs? I see two issues: 1. did regionalization deliver savings as was promised and 2. How was the savings spent?

SN: the savings in regionalization were achieved but were repurposed and were not in the regionalization numbers

Bart: so we agree that the savings occurred but are being spent on personnel. So the question now is sustainability

Pat: we have things that are more than one-time costs; especially SPED. Once it's in the budget, it stays. The FC has had two meetings on sustainability and the school budgets make us very uncomfortable.

Mike: did FTE's go down or increase?

S. Mills: There are eight fewer for a \$400k reduction. Pat is right: once the SPED expenditures start they will be in next year's budget. The circuit breaker has us paying the first \$40k.

Janet: we know that we cannot escape our SPED obligation and that's not connected to regionalization. The first year is not as rosy as projected. Regionalization has been accomplished but the budget has increased. People complain to the BoS about the budget and tax increases but we do not have any control over 2/3 of the budget.

Dennis noted that the school budget was not the final that will be taken to Town Meeting.

It was agreed that the issue of sustainability was the more important to discuss.

Steve Noone noted that the FC wanted to give the taxpayers relief and the FC felt that having reserves in the \$10m range warranted such action.

Bart: is it relevant to ask if it's important to get this budget through Town Meeting.

All agreed it was.

Pat asked about the changes in the town's budget. The biggest shift is the \$440k removed from the Harris street project. She asked if that would be returned and Steve Ledoux said the project could not go forward until the selectmen went through the space study.

Pat asked why there was a difference between the percentage increase for health insurance between the town (8%) and the schools (10%) Kim, a member of the HIT said the Blue cross range was between 7.5% and 9%. The schools took the higher number to be on the safe side.

If the numbers come in a 9%, Don said the savings would be between \$72-\$75k; while the towns' would be \$25k

Pat also had concerns about legal costs: the costs for the Inter Municipal Agreement (IMA)

Steve L: noted that the town has four big cases out: Next Generation; a suit against the EPA about Grace; IMA and a possible suit by CVS over 19 parking spaces. He considers legal guidance to be a form of insurance. The legal fees due to the IMA should be a one-time cost and should not carry over; the town and schools will be discussing the IMA on March 3. Steve Mills agreed that the IMA fees are a one-time cost.

After a short break, Janet presented the Town's proposal to have FY15 comport with the finance committee's point of view recommendations: \$2m in reserve use; \$1.1m in OPEB and tax relief.

Pat suggested that the overlay surplus be used to drop the tax rate percentage by .5% more than what the FC posited at the start of the budget season. That would give the town and increase of 1.5% rather than 2.5%

There was discussion on the impacts and how the reductions would affect the out years.

Bart: do we have an agreement: to take the proposal back to the boards

\*\*\*\*\*The Proposal:

**\*\*\*\*\*Proposal:**

Reduce reserves for FY 15 by \$175k to \$2m;

Hit \$1.1m target for OPEB for FY 15 through Town's addition of \$342k to municipal OPEB trust;

Apply \$350 toward tax relief;

Apply \$325k overlay surplus to tax relief.

\*\*\*\*\* There was agreement to take it back to individual boards.

Staff was asked to put the new proposal into the ALG spreadsheet for the next meeting.

The next meeting will focus on the out years of FY16 & 17

Steve N: asked that there be a separate sheet for OPEB and a line item for trusts

Pat asked if the teacher's contracts would be ready as well. It's doubtful

However, Don is refinancing the JH and HS construction debt and that will be shown in the updates sheets.

**The next meeting will be Feb 27<sup>th</sup> at the Junior High School Library at 5:30**

**Public**

Allan N. said the perception that the voters got from the regionalization vote was that there would be a decrease in the school budget. Regardless of whether the savings promised have been realized, the assessment for Acton is increasing while that for Boxboro is not. This will be very difficult to explain on town meeting floor.

C. Kadlec suggested that the school committee return to the regional agreement and make changes which would be fairer to Acton. He suggested that this issue be discussed before the next ALG and see if something could not be done.

Adjourned 12:30

Ann Chang



# Acton Leadership Group Meeting

February 27, 2014

5:30 PM

RJ Grey Junior High School

Library

*\*Snow Date: February 28, 2014, 3:00 PM, Room 204, Acton Town Hall\**

Bart Wendell Facilitating

***Agenda Topics***		
		<u>Comments</u>
1. Approve Minutes of January 15, 2014	General Discussion	
2. Update on FY14 Revenues and Expenditures	Steve Ledoux Steve Mills	
3. Review of Updated Spreadsheet	Steve Barrett Don Aicardi	
4. Discussion of FY16 + 17 Projection	All	
5. Update of Health Insurance Trust	Mike Gowing Steve Barrett Don Aicardi	
6. Public Comment		
7. Next Meeting Date Discussion		
8. Adjourn		

# Town of Acton Multi-Year Financial Model

Prepared for Annual Town Meeting by Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee

2/27/2014

Town of Acton Revenues				
	FY14 Recap	FY15	FY16	FY17
<b>A. Revenues (GROSS)</b>				
Tax Levy (excluding debt exclusion)	\$68,616	\$70,905	\$74,080	\$76,573
State Aid	\$12,734	\$13,865	\$14,212	\$14,567
Local Receipts	\$3,821	\$4,170	\$4,251	\$4,333
Debt Exclusion	\$2,895	\$2,947	\$2,911	\$2,852
SBAB Reimbursement	\$1,009	\$923	\$923	\$923
<b>Total Revenues (including debt)</b>	<b>\$89,074</b>	<b>\$92,811</b>	<b>\$96,377</b>	<b>\$99,249</b>
<b>B. Debt Exclusion Debt Service</b>				
APS School Debt Exclusion	\$547	\$611	\$588	\$559
Public Safety Facility Debt Exclusion	\$462	\$451	\$434	\$423
Municipal Debt Exclusion	\$244	\$230	\$222	\$201
JHS/SHS Debt Exclusion	\$1,642	\$1,655	\$1,667	\$1,670
SBAB Reimbursement-Parker/Damon	\$1,009	\$923	\$923	\$923
<b>Total Debt Exclusion/SBAB</b>	<b>\$3,904</b>	<b>\$3,870</b>	<b>\$3,834</b>	<b>\$3,775</b>
<b>C. Available Town Revenues (NET) (A - B)</b>	<b>\$85,170</b>	<b>\$88,941</b>	<b>\$92,543</b>	<b>\$95,474</b>
Town of Acton Expenditures				
Town of Acton Municipal	\$27,213	\$27,901	\$29,119	\$29,985
Acton Annual Contribution to OPEB Trust Fund	\$432	\$675	\$870	\$1,057
+ Transfer to Acton Municipal for APS Retiree Health Ins		\$588		
Transfer to ABRSD - Property & Liability Insurance		(\$100)		
Transfer to ABRSD - Workers Compensation		(\$95)		
+ Transfer to Acton Municipal for APS Debt	\$198	\$157	\$124	\$122
<b>Total Acton Municipal Allocation</b>	<b>\$27,843</b>	<b>\$29,126</b>	<b>\$30,113</b>	<b>\$31,164</b>
Percentage change year-to-year	2.91%	3.9%	3.00%	3.00%
Acton Public Schools Allocation	\$27,159	\$0	\$0	\$0
- Transfer to Acton Municipal for APS Debt	(\$198)	\$0	\$0	\$0
	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Acton Public Schools Allocation</b>	<b>\$26,960</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>
Percentage change year-to-year	-100.00%	-100.00%	#DIV/0!	#DIV/0!
Acton Portion of Annual ABRSD Budget	\$31,212	\$62,573	\$64,314	\$66,523
Final Assessment Shift Per Appendix A of Regional Agreement		(\$1,067)	(\$1,005)	(\$1,005)
- Transfer to Acton Municipal for APS Debt		(\$157)	(\$124)	(\$122)
- Transfer to Acton Municipal for APS Retiree Health Ins		(\$588)		
Transfer to ABRSD - Property & Liability Insurance		\$100		
Transfer to ABRSD - Workers Compensation		\$95		
Acton Portion of Contribution to ABRSD OPEB Trust Fund	\$306	\$425	\$530	\$643
<b>Total Acton Contribution To ABRSD Budget</b>	<b>\$31,518</b>	<b>\$61,381</b>	<b>\$63,715</b>	<b>\$66,039</b>
Percentage change year-to-year	104.19%	104.19%	3.80%	3.65%
<b>Total Minuteman Allocation</b>	<b>\$687</b>	<b>\$758</b>	<b>\$781</b>	<b>\$806</b>
Annual Minuteman Allocation				
Acton Share of Trade Hall Remediation Project				
Percentage change year-to-year	-8.26%	-8.26%	3.09%	3.13%
<b>D. Town of Acton Expenditures (NET)</b>	<b>\$87,008</b>	<b>\$91,265</b>	<b>\$94,609</b>	<b>\$98,009</b>
<b>Subtotal Town of Acton Projected Balance</b>	<b>(\$1,838)</b>	<b>(\$2,325)</b>	<b>(\$2,067)</b>	<b>(\$2,535)</b>

Highly volatile numbers

Subject to Board

2 of 3

LG 2/27/2014

**Town of Acton Multi-Year Financial Model**

**F. Appropriation of Reserves (TOTAL)** **\$1,919** **\$2,325** **\$2,730** **\$2,730**  
 Prepared for Annual Town Meeting by Board of Selectmen, School Committee and Finance Committee

**G. Total Town of Acton Projected Balance** **\$82** **\$0** **\$663** **\$195**

Annual Contributions Towards Long Term OPEB Liability				
Acton Annual Contribution to OPEB Trust Fund	\$432	\$675	\$870	\$1,057
Acton Portion of Contribution to ABRSD OPEB Trust Fund	\$306	\$425	\$530	\$643
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$738</b>	<b>\$1,100</b>	<b>\$1,400</b>	<b>\$1,700</b>

<b>Town of Acton - Tax Impact</b>	<b>FY14</b>	<b>FY15</b>	<b>FY16</b>	<b>FY17</b>
Existing Valuation ('000s)	\$3,668,800	\$3,742,176	\$3,846,049	\$3,846,049
New Growth value ('000s)	\$47,466	\$37,269	\$31,684	\$31,215
Total Valuation ('000s)	\$3,716,266	\$3,779,445	\$3,877,733	\$3,877,264
Tax Rate	\$19.45	\$19.73	\$20.02	\$20.65
% Change in Tax Rate	1.90%	1.40%	1.50%	3.15%
SF Value	\$505,494	\$515,604	\$520,546	\$520,546
SF Tax Bill	\$9,833	\$10,171	\$10,422	\$10,751
% Change	1.95%	3.43%	2.48%	3.15%
\$ Change	\$188.52	\$337.23	\$251.83	\$328.11

3 of 3

ALG Minutes Feb. 27, 2014

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Janet Adachi & Mike Gowing, BoS; Dennis Bruce & Kim McOsker, SC; Pat Clifford & Steve Noone, FC; Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills, Steve Barrett and Don Aicardi, Staff

Audience: Doug Tindal, FC; Paul Murphy, SC; Allen Nitschlem & Charlie Kadlec.

Extra Information: ALG spreadsheet

Minutes were accepted, with corrections.

## **2. Update on FY14 revenues and expenditures**

S. Mills: Nothing new. S. Ledoux: the snow and ice account is now in deficit.

## **3. Review of updated spreadsheet**

SB went through the changes made at last meeting where the positive \$885k was divided: \$350k for the tax levy; \$342k to increase OPEB to the \$1.1m level; lowered reserve use by \$176k; the remaining \$17k to the tax levy. The \$325k from the overlay surplus needs to go through the mechanics of being declared surplus and then into reserves before being used to lower the tax levy.

\*\*\*\*There was agreement with these changes

The discussion turned to the listing of the OPEB numbers for the out years of FY 16 & 17.

Mike noted that the municipal contribution of \$675 was a one-time thing and should not be a multiplier for the out years.

Steve Noone suggested that the OPEB numbers be pulled from the listing and be put into its own box.

There was a discussion on how the OPEB numbers would be split in the outlying years.

## **4. FY 16 & 17**

SB went through the changes to the outlying years. He assumed a 3% increases for FY 16 for the town for both FY16 and 17; and 3.8% and 3.65% school assessment for FY 16 and FY 17.

Kim asked what the estimated were for the increase in value from the tax levy. Ans: 5%

SN; asked if the taxpayer relief was carried over to FY 16 & 17. Ans: no.

SN: indicated that there were specific areas that needed discussion: 1. Are we comfortable with Ch. 70 increases at 2.5% for both years even with the declining enrollment numbers? 2. Where is the money for the fire station/senior center [Steve L; they have not been factored in] 3. Debt exclusion costs 4. Salary assumptions at 2.5% increase---how will that be accomplished?

Bart: we now have six things that need to be discussed

1. OPEB split
2. Level of increases in regional assessments
3. tax relief for FY 16 & 17
4. Is a 2.5% increase in state aid reasonable
5. Reliability of a 2.5% increase in school salary figures

Mike: does OPEB level off at \$1.4m in FY16?

SN: no, it goes to \$1.6 in FY 17 and then levels off.

Mike was concerned about the OPEB split and he wanted to insure that the schools would be paying their fair share and the town would not be penalized.

Bart: the split will use the \$1.4m to \$1.7m? Is this agreeable?

SN noted that it would be far more complex in developing the split because of the transfer of the employees, the use of the trusts and the possible actuarial changes. It was agreed that the split would be something that would need to be determined when there was more information and could not be accomplished at this meeting.

Mike noted that there might be changes in the state legislation; a reassessment by Segal [contractor hired to develop the plan]; and changes from the unions.

It was agreed that the OPEB numbers would be pulled out for the Town Meeting presentation and that the next ALG would deal with the split. It was also acknowledged that one year's decisions by the ALG were not binding on the following year.

Bart: regional assessment

Don: there is no experience for this. He did agree that the number would increase but he was not willing to put in numbers for the out years.

Pat noted that the major concern of the FinCom was the use of the reserves for budgets that were not sustainable.

Bart: tax relief in FY 16& 17

SB: did not add any tax relief and was building a spreadsheet using 2.5% increase.

SN: said that the FC wanted the tax relief to continue and it was suggested that the NESWC liability fund of \$1m be used over the two-year period to give the relief.

Pat noted that the unused revenue (levy left on the table) could be used in the future as a revenue source. So using the reserves now, we can always tax to that level in the future.

Bart: I detect sluggishness in the response.



SN: perhaps we should move on and come back to this later

Bart: number 4---is the 2.5% increase in state aid reliable?

Don: this is the first time we have had a unified Ch 70. It basically went up 1% but the formula is complex and part is determined by enrollment. If you'd like us to change...

SN: we want it as accurate as possible

Pat: is there a minimum amount per student?

S. Mills: the number is based on demographics; there are also the SPED costs. The governor has increased the amount by \$25/per pupil but the 2.5% increase is optimistic.

Bart: do we have a suggestion for a percentage closer to the mark?

Don: we could put in 1% for Ch 70 and 2.5% for everything else.

S. Mills: Patrick has been very positive about Ch 70 but he's leaving office so we don't know what will happen.

Bart: #5 fire station/senior center impacts on FY 16 & 17?

S. Ledoux: if we agree to go ahead, FY 16 will be a vote for design money and FY 17 for capital so the impact will have debt in FY 18.

Mike: by FY 18 we will drop the debt for the library and NARA and so have some debt capacity available\SB: twin school debt was for 10 years and so that will mature in 2023.

Bart: #6 2.5% salary increase for school; can that be maintained and how?

S. Mills: in reality it's the contracts that will make the determination. The law has steps and lanes and 2.5% does not give us a lot of wiggle room.

SN: this year's regional budget has a 2.2% increase that will translate into a 4% increase for next year.

Don: there is savings in this year's retirement; can't talk about the contracts; we lose some high salaried teachers and have fewer teachers.

SN: we need some answers for the warrant message. The deficits we are showing are not so different from last year; the gap seems to be growing rather than narrowing. How far should we let the reserves fall and still be able to maintain the 5% cushion. We don't have much time if we are using between \$2.5-\$3M in reserves per year.

Pat: does the proposal continue to be 2.5%?

Kim: there are variables each year---I think the 2.5% is OK.

Pat: there is little appetite to tax unused levy capacity [for operational uses] If the variables don't come in, do we have someplace to go?

I cannot imagine that in order to keep a 5% reserve we tax to 4%. Part of this discussion is trying to find the fulcrum to build the fire station and not have an operational override or a debt exclusion override.

Bart: #3 tax relief

Kim: what's the amount needed to drop a percentage? Ans: \$325k = ½%

SB: we have relief now at a 1% drop \$675k plus \$17k

SN: at issue is taxing to keep a reserve level. Budgets using @ \$2m [in reserves] are out of whack. I have it on good authority that the turn backs are going to be slim to none. We are in a declining curve if we expect to keep the 5% cushion. We are in a vicious circle and we need to say something at Town Meeting.

Kim: let's do a ½% as a place holder at \$325k

Bart: is ½% for FY 16 & 17 ok?

Pat: the FC's POV has suggested 2%

Janet: this ALG cannot commit future ALG's given the bind, there is no good choice, the budgets will grow. You [the FC] can send the message that we are considering relief and controlling budgets. At this time I think ½% is enough.

\*\*\*Bart: do we have an agreement of ½% We recognize we cannot bind future ALGs, but we can have a gentlemen's handshake here and the ½% will be a feature of next years budget.

Pat: the message it gives to people is that we have given some thought to the size of government and that there are other sources for reserves and not everything needs to be on the property tax.

\*\*\*There was a general consensus to the ½% over the two years.

Pat: when will see the fixes.

SB: the warrant deadline is March 10<sup>th</sup>, perhaps we should meet one more time to review them.

## 6. HIT

Kim: there was a vote to have the rate at 9.5% increase. That is higher than we wanted but the fund is at the lower end due to some high medical costs and we do not know what will happen when Boxboro joins

Mike: the rate is 5% for retirees

Pat: that's good news for the schools but not for the town

SB: it will cost the town somewhere between \$40-\$5k

Don: the schools used 10% so that will provide a nice cushion.

**7. Public**

C. Kadlec: are the OPEB numbers in the budgets? Ans. yes

Tax relief for FY 15 is 1%. The numbers on the tax impact sheet look a little low.

\$300k to \$350K each year "there is more water in puddles" There is a couple of million floating around there is plenty of money to cover it.

**Next Meeting (if Needed)**

**March 6<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM in the JHS Library**

Adjourned 7:15

Ann Chang



# Acton Leadership Group Meeting

March 6, 2014

5:30 PM

RJ Grey Junior High School

Library

Bart Wendell Facilitating

***Agenda Topics***		
		<u>Comments</u>
1. Approve Minutes of February 27, 2014	General Discussion	
2. Update on FY14 Revenues and Expenditures	Steve Ledoux Steve Mills	
3. Review of Updated Spreadsheet	Steve Barrett Don Aicardi	
4. Discussion of FY16 + 17 Projection	All	
5. Public Comment		
6. Next Meeting Date (if necessary)		
7. Adjourn		

## Acton-Boxborough Regional School District FY'15 Budget Vote

Dennis P. Bruce – Acton Public School Committee Chairperson  
February 25, 2014

1

### ABRSD FY'15 Operating Budget (in thousands)

	<b>AB</b>
FY'14 Final (Constructed)	\$74,237
FY'15 Budget	\$76,182
\$ Change from Final FY'14	\$1,945
% Change from Final FY'14	2.62%

2

## ABRSD FY'15 Proposed Budget

February 6 Budget	Budget Increase	\$76,938,226 3.64%
February 6 Assessments	Acton Boxborough	6.08% -4.77%
February 12 Budget Vote:		<b>&lt;\$756,726&gt;</b>
Budget	Budget Increase	\$76,181,500 <b>2.62%</b>
Assessments	Acton Boxborough	<b>4.78%</b> -6.25%

3

### Proposed Budget Reductions

Across the board .5% reduction in salary increases	\$200,773
Reduce 1.0 Special Education 6-8 Coordinator	\$95,000
Custodial Overtime	\$20,000
1.5 Campus Support Staff	\$40,000
.5 HS Support Staff	\$14,340
.5 Support Staff	\$24,500
.5 Tech Desktop Support	\$22,400
Health Insurance: 3 Reduced Positions; 2 moved to School Lunch	\$75,000
Move .5 Custodian to Douglas Before & After Program	\$24,845
Move 1.4 to ODP (Tuitions received from other towns)	\$59,868
Increase Unemployment \$25k instead of \$50k	\$25,000
Move \$30k out of Athletic Revolving instead of \$65k	\$35,000
Move \$75k of \$128k Lower Fields Debt to CommEd	\$75,000
Reduce PD and/or Technology Capital	\$30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$756,726</b>

4

## Acton FY14 to FY15 Comparison

### *FY14 Acton School Expenses:*

FY14 APS Budget	\$26,960,725
Subtract APS CH70 Aid	<u>(\$ 5,596,025)</u>
	\$21,364,700
Add School Expenses in Town Budget	<u>\$ 300,000</u>
FY14 APS Total	\$21,664,700
FY14 ABRSD Assessment – Acton Share	<u>\$26,459,873</u>
Total FY14 School Expenses – Acton Share	\$48,124,573

### *FY15 Acton School Expenses:*

FY15 ABRSD Assessment – Acton Share	\$49,836,594
Add HI School Expenses in Acton Town Budget	\$ 588,000
FY15 Total School Expenses – Acton Share	<u>\$50,424,594</u>
FY14 to FY15 Increase is:	\$ 2,349,477
	4.78%

5

## ABRSD FY'15 Operating Budget

FY14 Regional Transportation	\$746,205
FY15 Regional Transportation	<u>\$1,296,794</u>
FY14 to FY15 Increase	\$550,589
Staff Regionalization Savings	<u>\$416,464</u>
TOTAL	\$967,051*

\*Does Not Include \$139,000 in new Regional Bonus Aid

6

## Realignment of Staff

### Positions Reduced

3 Classroom Teachers	\$ 162,269
0.8 Speech/Lang Specialist*	\$ 52,550
0.6 SpEd Chairperson	\$ 52,199
0.5 HS Support Person	\$ 24,892
1.0 Curriculum Specialist	\$ 77,491
Boxborough Efficiencies	\$ 73,000
Health Insurance Savings	\$ 96,822
<b>5.9 FTE</b>	<b>\$539,223</b>

### Positions Added

3 Asst. Principals	\$ 271,000
0.6 Psychologist Merriam/McT	\$ 42,000
0.5 Psych ABRHS	\$ 35,000
0.4 SPEDTchr Merriam	\$ 21,000
0.4 Speech/Lang Chair	\$ 28,000
Health Insurance	\$ 60,000
<b>4.9 FTE</b>	<b>\$457,000</b>

\*0.4 FTE of this reduction is being re-allocated to new 0.4 FTE Speech/Lang Chairperson.

7

## Overall Staff Changes

	FTE	Budget
Positions Reduced from Regionalization	4	\$416,454
Positions Reduced for Realignment	6	\$539,223
Additional Positions Reduced	3	\$161,240
Total Reductions	14	\$1,116,917
Additions from Realigned Positions	5	\$457,000
Net Staffing Reductions	8	\$659,917

8



### Calculation of Final Assessments per Appendix A to Revised Regional Agreement

TABLE 6	TOTAL	Acton	Boxborough
FY15 Budget Assessments	\$60,462,397	\$50,903,646	\$9,558,751
Assessment % with Actual Budget	100%	84.19%	15.81%
Shift in % Shares per Regional Agreement		-1.76%	+1.76%
Final Assessment FY15	\$60,462,396	\$49,836,594	\$10,625,802
Actual \$\$\$ Shift	\$0	(\$1,067,051)	\$1,067,051
Final Assessment % FY15	100%	82.43%	17.57%

9

### “Percentage Shares” for \$1,873,119 in Projected Benefits Outlined In Appendix A, Section 3

	Acton	Boxborough
FY'15	80.0%	20.0%
FY'16	87.5%	12.5%
FY'17	90%	10%
FY'18	82.5%	17.5%
FY'19	60.0%	40.0%

10

Actual Grade 7 to 12 “Three Year Averages”  
Used In Last Three 7 to 12 ABRSD Budgets

	Acton	Boxborough
FY'14	81.61%	18.39%
FY'13	80.67%	19.33%
FY'12	79.81%	20.19%



12.5.22

Beth Petr &lt;bpetr@abschools.org&gt;

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## Tuesday's FinCom Meeting Question re: Mental Health Awareness at ABRHS

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Kristina Rychlik <krychlik@abschools.org>

Thu, Feb 27, 2014 at 10:45 AM

To: Margaret Busse <

Cc: fincom@acton-ma.gov, Dennis Bruce <dbruce@abschools.org>, Beth Petr <bpetr@abschools.org>

Dear Margaret:

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing in response to a comment and question you asked at Tuesday night's Acton FinCom meeting, and wish to clarify that issue in this email.

During Budget Saturday, Dr. JoAnn Campbell was describing the process of deciding to focus as a high school on mental health this year in direct response to the increased needs and issues we are seeing with our students in this area; choosing that as a focus goes into planning for certain activities and programs for the faculty, students and community-at-large. You may recall last year's focus on substance abuse, with the tie-in of bringing Chris Herren to speak at the High School in a program jointly sponsored by the AB United Way.

The focus for this year has been very much on professional learning in the area of mental health education and awareness for faculty and staff. In tandem, the PTSO is also coordinating forums to serve students, parents and community members, partnering where it makes sense.

Dr. Campbell specifically said that they consciously decided not to "ask why" now, because they knew that the dramatic increase in mental health issues of our youth is a complex, multifaceted issue that could take years of study to unravel and better understand. I'm sure as a parent you can understand that. But they did recognize the urgent need to bring the issue of mental health more into the open, and by avoiding the why they could focus more intently on the task at hand: bringing mental health into the spectrum of the community conversation. Making it ok to discuss mental health and related issues is, I believe, the first step to providing tools to students, parents and community members, empowering them to begin addressing those issues. And making it ok to ask for real help when they recognize someone who needs it goes along with that.

I'm sure you can recall news stories in recent years of troubled teens taking destructive action at their schools or causing self-harm. In most cases people all around those teens knew of their troubles but it is difficult to know exactly what actions or interventions, if any, could have changed the outcome. I applaud Dr. Campbell and her staff for bringing this issue to the forefront and being brave enough to address it in a proactive manner.

I would like to assure you that the "why" is not being ignored completely, it is just not the focus for the high school for this year; while the "whys" are pondered often, by many, the "what" is the focus now. However, mental health education and awareness will continue to be a focus for the high school next year, and at that time it is most likely that we will begin to be able to focus on some of the "whys," ideally from a district and community perspective.

Many thanks for your careful consideration of this and other issues as they relate to our schools and our town.

Best regards, Kristina

Kristina W. Rychlik  
Acton Public School Committee  
Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee



17.5.iii

Both Petr <bpetr@abschools.org>

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## Review of town's and school's "other" sources of funds

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Charles Kadlec <webmaster@stolab.com>

Thu, Feb 27, 2014 at 7:27 AM

Reply-To: Charles Kadlec <webmaster@stolab.com>

To: Acton Finance Committee <fincom@acton-ma.gov>

Cc: Acton Board of Selectmen <bos@acton-ma.gov>, Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee <abrsc@abschools.org>

To the Acton Finance Committee :

I fully support the FinCom's focus on the balances held in the various Enterprise Funds, Parking Lot (whatever it is called) Fund and other such "puddles" of money as Doug Tindal likes to call them. There are also significant amounts received from developers for use by the Selectmen such as the \$500,000 from Avalon which, to my knowledge, is still available.

The schools have similar "puddles" such as the Community Ed funds, which they used to pay for personnel and thereby appear to reduce their budget (for FY15), as seen from their presentation last Tuesday. I hope that the FinCom will ask for a complete accounting of these funds and that the ABRSC will provide the information.

Some of these "puddles" are small lakes. There are many Acton taxpayers whose bank accounts are experiencing a drought. With all this extra money and reserves far exceeding the DoR's recommended 5%, we do not need to raise property taxes for FY15.

Charlie

13

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

**OVERNIGHT, INTERNATIONAL and/or OUT-OF-STATE  
FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM**

**Submit for Superintendent and School Committee approval**

Please file at least four (4) weeks in advance for 1-3 day trips

Please file at least three (3) months in advance trips longer than 3 days and/or trips with per student cost greater than \$500.00


**Please TYPE or use COMPUTER FORM**

- Name of Teacher(s): Jennifer Moss, Choral Director
- School: ABRHS – Choruses/Music Department
- # of Students going: +/- 125 # of Chaperones (gender): 1 chaperone per 6 students. Male & Female.

Names of Chaperones: TBD

- Date(s) of Trip: April 17-25, 2015 School Time Involved: None. The trip will take place over April school vacation in 2015.
- Purpose of Trip/Destination: Northern Spain & Southern France. Concert Tour, community service, performing music of Spain, France, and the United States.
- Have you taken this trip before? Not to this specific location, but the ABRHS Choruses have toured four times with the Tour Resource Consultants tour company - (Italy 2007, Canada 2009, Costa Rica 2011, and most recently to San Diego, CA 2013).
- Any special arrangements required (such as extra insurance, ADA accommodations)? No.
- Cost per Student: (Please describe how the cost is determined.) \$2,300. Cost includes all meals, transportation, lodging, admission to sites, gratuity, and travel insurance. (See attached draft of itinerary.)
- Who will pay for the trip? Students.
- Has any fundraising been done? Yes If so, what? Our Music Department offers 4-5 fundraisers throughout each school year. Financial assistance for students in need is available from our parent boosters group, ABFOM (AB Friends of Music).
- Are any parents driving? No. Students will be traveling by coach buses & airplanes.
- Have you followed the procedure outlined in Policy IJOA? Yes
- Other comments:

☒ Approved ☐ Not Approved

  
Department Leader

2/14/14  
Date

☒ Approved ☐ Not Approved

  
Principal

2/14/14  
Date

☒ Approved ☐ Not Approved

  
Superintendent

2/20/14  
Date

☐ Approved ☐ Not Approved

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Committee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Revised 11/15/06



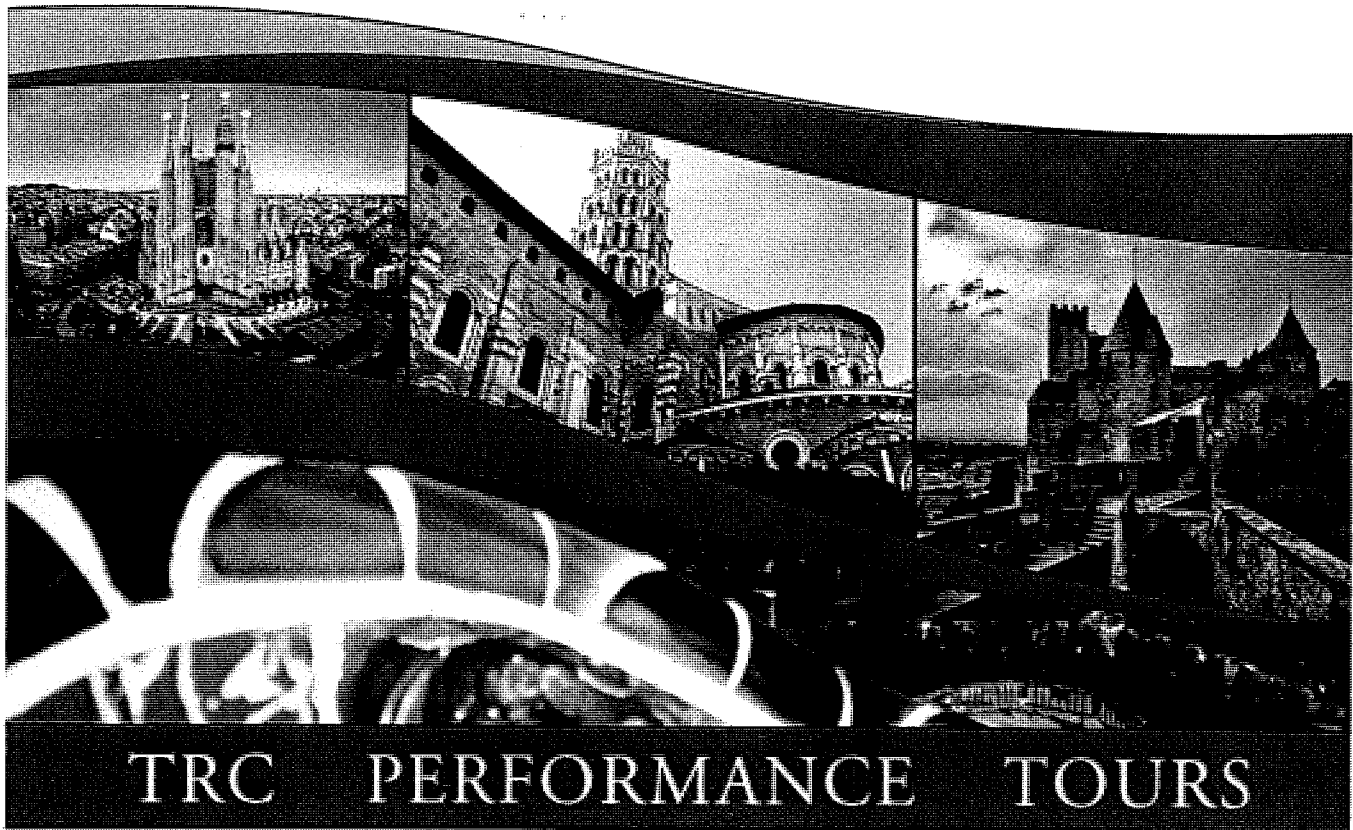
presents

# Acton-Boxborough

Regional High School Choral Ensembles  
*Jennifer Moss, Director*

## Performance Tour of France & Spain

7 Days/6 Nights, April 17 - 24, 2015





# Acton-Boxborough

## Regional High School Choral Ensembles

*Jennifer Moss, Director*

## Performance Tour of France & Spain

7 Days/6 Nights, April 17 - 24, 2015

Itinerary #3, Edition #1

Date of this Proposal: February 1, 2014

### TOULOUSE, FRANCE

#### **April 17 - 20 (1 night in flight, 2 nights in or near Toulouse)**

Load the motorcoaches at Acton Boxborough HS after lunch, transferring to Boston-Logan Airport. We depart on Friday evening, flying overnight to Paris, connecting into Toulouse early Saturday afternoon. We sightsee in the city on Sunday morning, with a **Service Participation** and **Concert** on Sunday evening in the **Basilique Saint-Sernin**. On Monday we have an excursion to Carcassone, visiting this historic fortress until mid-afternoon. **Lunchtime Concert** in the Basilique (tbc). Continue on to Barcelona and check into the hotel.

### BARCELONA, SPAIN

#### **April 20 - 24 (3 nights in Barcelona)**

Having arrived Monday night, Tuesday morning we will have a **Guided Historical Tour**. In the afternoon we have a guided tour of the **Palau de Musica**, the world's first concert hall built by an association of community choirs (**informal concert**). On Wednesday we visit Barcelona International School, where we present two **School Assembly Concerts** and have lunch with their student musicians. In the afternoon we visit the architect Antonio Gaudy's world famous **Sagrada Familia Basilica**. Thursday morning we visit Gaudy's **Guell Park** (with an **informal concert**). Thursday evening have an **Evening Concert** in **Barcelona Cathedral**. **Farewell Banquet** after the concert. We depart on Friday morning for the Madrid Barajas Airport (80 minutes), checking in for our non-stop flight back to Boston. Return to Boston-Logan mid-afternoon, then load the motorcoach and return to Acton Boxborough. Welcome Home!!

### Land Tour Specifics:

- Private motorcoach transfer from Acton Boxborough HS to Boston-Logan Airport and return
- 6 nights accommodation in 3 and 4 star hotels, in twin rooms with private bath
- Deluxe Private Motorcoach throughout the land portion of the itinerary
- Chaperones included at a 50% discount
- 4 – 6 Performances
- All Meals
- Guided sightseeing tours of Barcelona, Carcassone and Toulouse
- Paid entrances to the Sagrada Familia, Guell Park, Palau de Musica and Carcassone
- One TRC Tour Manager per motorcoach throughout the land portion of the itinerary
- All gratuities to bus drivers, tour managers, local guides and group meal waitstaff included
- Group Travel Insurance included, featuring Trip Cancellation for Medical Reasons, Medical Coverage and Medical Evacuation, Trip Delay, Lost Luggage and Theft coverage
- A Pre-Tour Meeting with TRC Staff to review the itinerary and answer questions
- Prices based on an exchange of US\$ 1 = € 0.73 (Euro)

### Group Air Price (Iberia Air, estimated per person Boston-Paris/Madrid-Boston):

Base Airfare: \$370

Estimated Taxes: \$550

Est. Total: \$ 920

### Tour Prices (per person):

145 total travelers, 2 music staff, 20 chaperones:

Land only

\$ 1,380

Estimated Total with Air

\$ 2,300

March 5, 2014

Dear Allen,

Thank you for your email, compliments, and questions you articulated in the attached email. Through those questions, you articulated the complexities of supporting a specific subset of students while at the same time, ensuring that our schools act fiscally responsible and conservative in our approach.

The real crux to the series of thoughtful questions you asked focus on the schools becoming a “social agency”. From my perspective, it is not through a crafted design or innovation that the schools have become a social agency, but rather the schools became that agency through a default model.

As both federal and state resources shrink, families are forced to rely on local resources to ask for assistance. The local resources are the schools. We pay for services because the federal laws, state regulations, and guidelines guarantee that every child who is eligible for special education and who is not making effective progress is entitled to special education through a contractual agreement called an IEP with specialized instruction. They are entitled to a free and appropriate public education; parents are exempt from fiscal costs by regulation. Similiar contractual obligations exist for students receiving 504 accomodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, English Language Learners, homeless students, and more.

In order to be efficient about your questions, I have inserted my responses into your email below. Wherever I can help, through answering additional questions or by your reviewing any of our programs and services through a walk through site visit, I will make myself available.

Thanks,  
Liza

From: **Allen Nitschelm** <[allen@thehomesteader.com](mailto:allen@thehomesteader.com)>

Date: Mon, Feb 24, 2014 at 8:44 AM

Subject: Comments for Liza re: mandates

To: [lhuber@abschools.org](mailto:lhuber@abschools.org), Stephen Mills <[smills@abschools.org](mailto:smills@abschools.org)>

Cc: [allen@thehomesteader.com](mailto:allen@thehomesteader.com), [abrsc@abschools.org](mailto:abrsc@abschools.org), [fincom@acton-ma.gov](mailto:fincom@acton-ma.gov), [bos@acton-ma.gov](mailto:bos@acton-ma.gov)

Hi Liza,

I understand you will be preparing some remarks regarding my question during my two-minute "public participation" section of the recent School Committee meeting about some of the new mandates and the schools' reaction to them. Please let me know when that discussion is planned so I can attend.

Afraid that my comments will once again be limited by the clock, I wanted to make my concerns plain so that you could be specific in addressing them.

What I am not looking for is another detailed review of all the programs and projects we have or soon will have. You did a wonderful job on budget Saturday on that already. I have no doubt that your implementation plan is well done.

Instead, my concern is one of "mission creep." The mission is to educate our kids, and somehow that is slowly (or maybe quickly) morphing into "we are responsible for solving every problem if it could inhibit their learning." Unfortunately, that expanded mission could require more money than even Acton taxpayers possess.

If we define "mission creep" as expanding our services, we are obligated to educate ALL kids and we are responsible for demonstrating effective academic growth. Part of that growth is behavioral and social growth (as defined by the disabilities categories – discussed below). If not, the student is at risk for special education, a 504-accommodation plan, or regular education help to assist that student achieve. If there are emotional and/or social issues, we remediate those deficits in order to free up the student for learning.

Let me briefly mention one of the stories I saw unfold a few years ago, related to Acton's failure to comply with the state's "990" requirements. I'm sure you remember this well. Acton was dodging a state mandate to provide 990 hours of learning for every student. The reason was primarily financial: meeting the requirement would have meant a significant cost. We had top students and top test scores, but many students did not meet this 990 requirement. So we kept asking for waivers and reviews. How could one of the state's top school systems possibly be deficient in academics? It seemed counterintuitive.

But that process started another discussion, which was about the majority of kids "in

the middle." Could those kids benefit from more classroom time and activities and less "free time?" (And I think the answer was yes.) So we decided to find a way to meet the mandate, tried to keep costs down, and expanded the offerings and activities so we were in compliance.

To me, this was a good thing, because it went to the core mission of education. And it truly was about educating all the kids (not just how the top achievers were doing.)

But I think there were several lessons to be learned. First, we should make sure that our programs focus directly on learning, and second, we have some flexibility in how we accept and administer "mandates." When the feds or state says "jump" we don't have to ask right away "how far?"

So here are my questions and concerns in no particular order:

1. We should make a list of all of the perceived mandates and requirements and carefully analyze them. What is the specific requirement? Are there different ways to react, administer, or comply with it?

One test is this: How do the hundreds of school systems (with far fewer resources than Acton) react to each mandate?

A second test is what is the cost of compliance. A day of training for staff is a one-time expense (not bad.) Hiring new personnel can cost millions of dollars over time (try to avoid this at all costs.)

The mandates are written and enforced through Compliance Program Review (DESE), a DESE reporting system (timetabled reports), and through our own requested independent 3<sup>rd</sup> source (Futures Education, Inc. – special education fiscal and programmatic review) to cite a few examples. Failure to respond to the mandates and their timely implementation can result in letters of reprimand, the withholding of federal funds to the school district, and litigation from our parent community.

When mandates seem unreasonable, we seek technical assistance from DESE by asking for a clarification and more time for implementation extension. DESE cannot change the mandate (it reflects federal law), but rather can mechanically offer an extension based upon extenuating circumstances in the school district.

Which brings us to:

2. Are we getting too "out front" on some/all of the mandates? Should we wait to comply until we can see how others interpret the requirements and see how they control the costs?

I do not believe that we are too "out front" on these mandates. As a department, we consider the mandates through collaboration, study and then we plan for implementation. This systemic approach has offered us the best chance for ownership among our individual schools. It's that sustainability that is key for success. Through the independent review from Futures Education, Inc., the firm found us not only in compliance for programs but also efficient in our spending. They are a firm that has addressed these issues nationally.

3. If some of these mandates could be broadly put under the "SPED" umbrella, would it make sense to ask CASE to handle this centrally rather than having Acton provide each service on an individual basis? (This might not just save costs but provide us more time to comply, since the "plan" could be that CASE will handle it.)

CASE deals with programs for our students who have severe and/or multiple disabilities. If CASE were to be assigned such responsibility, the Collaborative would be the core of all services, training, professional development, etc. Since mandates are the skeleton or structure of the program, they cannot be seen in isolation. The mandates are the stepping-stone to programs, monitoring achievement and effective progress, designing specialized instruction, etc. CASE would be overwhelmed with our community's request (and if replicated by other communities); costs would be prohibitive and the structure cumbersome.

4. If the services we provide/must provide/should provide are non-academic in nature and require substantial resources (i.e., staff time or outside placements) should we look at other funding sources: the federal government, the state, or parents?

As previously discussed, parents are exempt from the equation in seeking funding. Federal and state monies are shrinking. Other than grants or corporate sponsorships, I am at a loss for such intervention. However, a letter from the towns (finance committee/school committee) may have some long-range implications.

You had mentioned that we request that parents provide health-insurance information and that some parents voluntarily do that which can help defray costs. Why would this be a voluntary program and not a mandatory requirement? And if there are children in Acton without health insurance, shouldn't they be put into the state's health-insurance program first?

The regulations are clear: parents can only volunteer their health insurance; they are not required to do so. We cannot coerce parents to tell us their insurance (or lack thereof).

As an example, providing mental health services would appear to be far outside the school's scope of responsibilities. If a child has severe mental-health issues (as opposed to cognitive issues), then the parents should perhaps instead get care/treatment/medication until such time that the child is able to be taught. Having schools screen for potential issues is in itself a valuable service...but does that mean the schools also have to bear the cost of treatment, as opposed to having the parents take responsibility for their own children?

The federal and state governments have listed the disabilities that are eligible as part of the equation for eligibility in special education. The disabilities cover a range of deficits, in addition to cognitive ones, e.g., autism, emotional impairment, sensory impairment, hearing impairment or deaf, visual impairment or blind, neurological impairment, communication impairment, physical impairment, health impairment, specific learning disability, etc. Although the IEP TEAM and specialists (school psychologists) aggressively encourage parents/guardians to be part of any school plan, parents cannot be required to get treatment and/or medication for their children (case law). Federal law further exempts parents from paying for guaranteed services (free and appropriate education).

5. One of your slides showed a large increase in the number of hospitalizations. (I hope we aren't covering medical bills!) While this shows the challenges we face, does this increase Acton's school costs? If so, how? And if it does, are we considering the most cost-effective solutions or are we meeting a higher standard, and if so, why?

One of my major concerns is that the further we go down this path, the higher future costs will be. We have to be very careful establishing precedents that aren't fully required, or else we may be forced to continue providing those services even if, in trying to do the "right thing," we overstepped our legal responsibilities.

The slide showed an increase, which is worrisome both fiscally and programmatically. In anticipating this increase, we have built programs (continuum) to bring back our students, after stabilization, into our in-district programs. We have coordinators who meet with the parents and hospital staff to build the bridge between hospitalization and our school program. We do NOT cover medical bills (hospital stays) but do cover tutoring programs for these students. By creating the liaisons and a continuum of programs, we have been able to curb our costs.

6. Another concern is that we are using (at least part of) the "SPED" framework to handle all children with issues that could affect learning. That may be convenient but may be far more expensive than what is necessary. One of the major initiatives discussed on Saturday appears to be an expansion of how we deal with students who don't speak English as their primary language. It was explained that we used to just put them in regular classrooms and they had to "sink or swim." Now we don't do that. So what do we do, and how much does it cost? Because if our solution now is some type

of one-on-one tutoring, a less expensive solution might be an "ELL" class after school that all students attend. Perhaps that would be a big step above what used to be done, but not so expensive as to cause a large budgetary impact. (And the justification of this is that we expect students who come to school to know English as all classes are taught in English. And if they are weak in English, we offer after-school programs to bring them up to speed. That would seem to strike a reasonable balance.)

Similar to special education regulations, we have very specific mandates for ELE service delivery hours and instruction, specific to where a child is leveled (ability to speak English). Both with special education and ELE, we may remember through our own school days that students were placed in regular education classes with no or minimal help. Most of them were unsuccessful which led to other learning problems. Today, we consider each child as a responsibility to educate. We cannot exclude students from their peers by designing instruction before or after school as this is a civil rights issue and considered discriminatory.

7. There are some questions that would appear to be outside your area of expertise but fall under this general category of mandates, so whoever would handle this could perhaps address it at the meeting as well. And the question concerns the new "teacher evaluation" system that was mentioned during the budget hearing.

Yes, this question is outside my jurisdiction.

The new evaluation system sounds fantastic, but it is going to be very expensive. It appears to be the primary justification in hiring three additional FTE administrators (full-time Assistant Principals for each elementary school.) It is probably going to cost us about \$500,000 a year for this additional staff (if that is all that is required.) To me, this sounds like a very steep cost for whatever potential benefit the additional feedback is going to provide...perhaps there are other cost-effective methods to achieve similar feedback. (Peer reviews or department chair reviews come to mind. Or how about plain old-fashioned student surveys? Or maybe we can partner with outside schools and have staff review each other for feedback?)

Thanks for bringing this issue to the School Committee's and the public's attention and I look forward to further discussion with you in March.

Cordially yours,

Allen Nitschelm



## **Running for Office in Boxborough**

### **Boxborough 2014 Town Election Calendar**

**Date of Election: Monday, May 19, 2014**

**Qualifications:** Any registered voter residing in Boxborough may run for office.

**Nomination Papers:** Nomination Papers for town office are available from the Town Clerk starting **January 13, 2014**. Candidates must appear in person to take out papers or else provide a written request specifically stating the office he/she is interested in running for. Candidates must collect a **minimum of 25** signatures of voters registered in Boxborough to get on the ballot.

**Nomination Paper Filing Deadline:** The deadline for submitting completed nomination papers to the Town Clerk's office for certification is **Monday, March 24, 2014, at 5pm**.

**Campaign Finance Reporting:** Candidates and their committees, if any, are required by state law to file periodic campaign finance reports with the town clerk. These reports must be filed whether or not any money has been raised or expended during the reporting period. The clerk will provide you with the forms and the schedule for filing.

#### **Elected Offices on the 2014 Town Ballot:**

**Town Moderator** One-year term (1 position)

**Selectman** Three-year term (2 positions)

**Regional School Committee** Three-year term, effective 5/19/2014 (1 position)  
Three-year term, effective 7/1/2014 (1 position)

**Planning Board** Three-year term (2 positions)

**Library Trustees** Three-year term (2 positions)

**Board of Health** Three-year term (1 position)

To: Stephen Mills  
 From: Larry Dorey  
 Re: Discipline Report for February, 2014  
 Date: 3/1/2014

There were 13 discipline referrals to the administration during the month of February, 2014. This total is down from 29 last year. 0 students were suspended this month, while 7 students were suspended during February, 2013.

### Suspensions for February, 2014

Infraction	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Abusive/Obscene Language		1	1		
Academic Integrity			2		
Disreputable Conduct			2		
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior		1			
Drug Offense				2	
Drug Use			1		
Drug Possession		1			
Fighting		2			
Harassment	1			3	
Insubordination	2			2	
Stealing		1			
Vandalism			1		
Total	3	6	7	7	0

A list of all infractions for the month of February, 2014 appears on the backside of this page.

c: JoAnn Campbell

### Other Infractions for February, 2014

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>
Abusive/Obscene Language		1	2		1
Academic Integrity		1	2		
Bullying		1			
Bus Discipline Issue		7		1	
C.H. Alcohol	5		2		
Computer Use		9			
Disreputable Conduct			2		
Disrespectful	1		2	4	1
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior	7	4	4	2	7
Drug Offense		1		2	
Drug Possession		1			
Drug Use			1		
Fighting		2			
Forgery		3		3	
Harassment	5	1	1	3	1
Leaving School Grounds	2			2	
Non Compliance w/school rules	2		1		
Other	4	2	3	3	
Out of school issue		2		1	
Stealing		1			
Tardy to Class			1	2	
Teasing/General Harassment		5			
Threatening			1		
Vandalism			1		1
Truancy		10	6	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>13</b>

## ***R.J. Grey Junior High School***

To: Steve Mills  
 From: Allison Warren and Jim Marcotte  
 Re: Discipline Report for February 2014  
 Date: March 4, 2014

There were 4 discipline referrals/concerns (including requests from teachers for assistance) reported to the Administration during the month of February. There was 1 suspension this past month.

	<u><b>Feb-10</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-11</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-12</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-13</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-14</b></u>
<i>Total Discipline Referrals Reported</i>	28	10	21	11	4

	<u><b>Feb-10</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-11</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-12</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-13</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-14</b></u>
<b>Total Suspensions</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
Alcohol Use					
Defacing property/vandalism					
Drug-related incident					
Fighting	1		2		
Harassment (non-sexual)bullying, teasing	4		6		
Inappropriate/disruptive/disrespectful behavior	1		1		
Physical aggression		1			1
Sexual harassment					
Stealing					
Threatening	3				

	<u><b>Feb-10</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-11</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-12</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-13</b></u>	<u><b>Feb-14</b></u>
<b>Total Other Infractions</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>
abusive language/profanity				1	
alcohol use/possession					
bus discipline		1			
Academic Integrity		2			1
class/school truancies	4	1		1	
computer violation					
disruptive behavior (classroom, cafeteria, hallway)	9	1	3		
harassment (non-sexual)/bullying/teasing	1		7	5	

non-compliance with school rules	1			2	1
out of school issue					
physical aggression	1	1	1	1	
sexual harassment	1				
stealing					
threatening					
uncooperative/disrespectful behavior	2	3	1	1	1

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

## ***R.J. Grey Junior High School***

To: Steve Mills  
 From: Allison Warren and Jim Marcotte  
 Re: Discipline Report for January 2014  
 Date: February 7, 2014

There were 13 discipline referrals/concerns (including requests from teachers for assistance) reported to the Administration during the month of January. There was 1 suspension this past month..

	<u><b>Jan-09</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-10</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-11</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-12</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-13</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-14</b></u>
<i>Total Discipline Referrals Reported</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>37</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>24</i>	<i>13</i>

	<u><b>Jan-09</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-10</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-11</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-12</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-13</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-14</b></u>
<b>Total Suspensions</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
Alcohol Use						
Defacing property/vandalism			1			
Drug-related incident		1	1			
fighting		1				
harassment (non-sexual)				1	1	
inappropriate/disruptive/disrespectful behavior		3		1		
physical aggression	1					1
sexual harassment		1				
stealing						
threatening		1			1	

	<u><b>Jan-09</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-10</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-11</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-12</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-13</b></u>	<u><b>Jan-14</b></u>
<b>Total Other Infractions</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>12</b>
abusive language/profanity		1		2		
alcohol use/possession						
bus discipline				1	5	
Academic Integrity						
class/school truancies	1	4		1		1
computer violation						
disruptive behavior (classroom, cafeteria, hallway)	10	10	7	6	2	4
harassment (non-sexual)/bullying/teasing		4		3	9	3
non-compliance with school rules	7	10	1	1	6	3
out of school issue						
physical aggression	1	1	1			1
sexual harassment						

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

16.3.i

**ELL STUDENT POPULATION**  
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
March 1, 2014

Category	Total as of 2/1/2014	Additions	Subtractions	Current Total as of 3/1/2014
RJG JHS	10	0	0	10
ABRHS	13	0	0	13
<b>ABRSD TOTALS</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>23</b>

2/27/14

**EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDENT POPULATION  
MONTHLY REPORTING & PROJECTIONS**

Acton Public Schools  
March 1, 2014

	January 1, 2014	Additions/ Subtractions January 1, 2014	Final Total As of January 1, 2014	February 1, 2014	Additions/ Subtractions February 1, 2014	Final Total As of February 1, 2014	March 1, 2014	Additions/ Subtractions March 1, 2014	Final Total As of March 1, 2014	End of Year Projection**
<i>SPED</i> 3-Year Olds (In-District)	20	+1	21	21	+3	24	24	+1	25	26
<i>SPED</i> 4-Year Old (In-District)	17	0	17	17	0	17	17	-1	16	19
<i>SPED</i> 5-Year Old (In-District)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
<i>SPED</i> 3-Year Old <i>Tuition in From</i> <i>Boxborough</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<i>SPED</i> 4-Year Old <i>Tuition in From</i> <i>Boxborough</i>	2	0	2	2	0	2	2	0	2	1
<b>SPED Student In Class TOTAL</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>48-50</b>
Itinerant	9	0	9	9	+4	13	13	+2	15	20
OOD Preschool	0	+1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2
<b>SPED TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>+7</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>61-62</b>
<i>*TYPICAL</i> 3-year old (In-District)	20	0	20	20	+3	23	23	0	23	24
<i>*TYPICAL</i> 4-Year Olds (In-District)	26	0	26	26	-1	25	25	0	25	28
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>+9</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>+2</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>112**</b>

The school district must ensure that programs are available for eligible students 3 and 4 years of age. The programs must developmentally appropriate and located in a setting that includes student with and without disabilities (State Requirement 603 CMR 28.06 (7) and Federal Requirement 34 CFR 300.101 (b); 300.124(b); 300.323(b))

\*\*Projections may be impacted by move-ins and/or Department of Public Health referrals



2/1/2014

**MONTHLY ENROLLMENT**  
**ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS**  
**2013-2014 ACADEMIC YEAR**

	Sept. 1				Oct. 1				Nov. 1				Dec. 1				Jan. 1				Feb. 1				Mar. 1				Apr. 1				May 1				Jun 1			
Levels	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	A	B(1)	C	Tot	A	B(1)	C	Tot				
K	281	39	7	288	281	39	7	288	281	40	7	288	281	39	7	288	280	40	7	287	278	40	7	285	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
1	302	51	6	308	302	51	6	308	301	52	6	307	298	51	6	304	300	51	6	306	302	52	6	308	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
2	316	60	6	322	316	60	6	322	317	60	6	323	316	60	6	322	315	61	6	321	314	61	6	320	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
3	366	59	8	374	365	59	9	374	365	60	9	374	365	59	9	374	365	59	9	374	365	59	9	374	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
4	373	57	7	380	375	57	7	382	375	57	7	382	374	58	7	381	373	59	7	380	372	58	7	379	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
5	355	71	2	357	355	71	2	357	355	72	2	357	356	72	2	358	358	73	2	360	360	74	2	362	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
6	358	71	2	360	358	69	2	360	359	69	2	361	358	69	2	360	357	70	2	359	356	70	2	358	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
1 D.Pre-sch. Clr	55	22	0	55	41	22	0	41	41	22	0	41	45	22	0	45	46	23	0	46	53	23	0	53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
In D.Pre-sch. ltr	0	2	0	0	8	2	0	8	8	2	0	8	9	2	0	9	9	2	0	9	9	2	0	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
OOD Pre-sch	2	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
O.D. SPED K-6	22	7	0	22	24	7	0	24	25	7	0	25	25	7	0	25	26	7	0	26	26	7	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
A.P.S. Total	2430	441	38	2468	2425	439	39	2464	2427	443	39	2466	2427	441	39	2466	2430	447	39	2469	2436	448	39	2475	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
7	391	71	7	469	389	72	7	468	390	72	7	469	390	72	7	469	391	72	7	470	389	71	7	467	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
8	374	77	9	460	376	78	9	463	376	78	9	463	376	79	9	464	373	77	9	459	373	76	9	458	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
J.H.S. Total	765	148	16	929	765	150	16	931	766	150	16	932	766	151	16	933	764	149	16	929	762	147	16	925	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
9	398	71	9	478	394	72	9	475	396	72	8	476	396	72	8	476	394	72	7	473	394	72	7	473	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
10	403	72	9	484	404	73	9	486	404	73	9	486	404	73	9	486	403	73	9	485	401	73	9	483	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
11	396	78	8	482	393	81	8	482	393	80	8	481	395	80	8	483	394	81	8	483	396	82	8	486	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
12	411	108	5	524	405	106	6	517	405	107	6	518	403	107	6	516	403	107	6	516	404	106	6	516	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	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	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
H.S. Total	1608	329	31	1968	1596	332	32	1960	1598	332	31	1961	1598	332	31	1961	1594	333	30	1957	1595	333	30	1958	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Total JHS & HS	2373	477	47	2897	2361	482	48	2891	2364	482	47	2893	2364	483	47	2894	2358	482	46	2886	2357	480	46	2883	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
O.D. SPED 7-12	43	8	0	51	43	8	1	52	48	8	0	56	48	8	0	56	51	8	0	59	53	8	0	61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
Reg. Total	2416	485	47	2948	2404	490	49	2943	2412	490	47	2949	2412	491	47	2950	2409	490	46	2945	2410	488	46	2944	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
A.P.S. Total	2430	441	38	2468	2425	439	39	2464	2427	443	39	2466	2427	441	39	2466	2430	447	39	2469	2436	448	39	2475	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Reg. Total	2416	485	47	2948	2404	490	49	2943	2412	490	47	2949	2412	491	47	2950	2409	490	46	2945	2410	488	46	2944	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Grand Total	4846	485	85	5416	4829	490	88	5407	4839	490	86	5415	4839	491	86	5416	4839	490	85	5414	4846	488	85	5419	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		

A = ACTON

B = BOXBOROUGH

C = Choice/Staff/Tuition In

Pre-School = SPED

P.G. = Post Graduates

Ungr. = Ungraded

O.D. = SPED Out of District

In D. = In District

Distribution:

S. Mills

M. Altieri

D. Bookis

L. Huber

D. Aicardi

A. Bisewicz

K. Nelson

E. Weiner

R. Cvitkovich

C. Bates

All Principals (2)

Students other than Choice counted under column C:

Staff Students -

Tuition In Students -

Sped Tuition in Students

16.4

**Actual**  
**Acton Public Schools**  
**2013-2014**

2/4/2014  
11:05 AM

**February 1, 2014**

Grade YO	Conant				Total	Douglas				Total	Gates				Total	McCarthy-Towne				Total	Merriam				Total	#Sec.	Avg. Siz
Rm	CAD	CAM	CPM	2#	DAD1	DAD2	DAM			GAD	GAM	1#			TAD1	TAD2	TAM	[1]3#		MAD	MAM	MPM	1#	7#			
															Case	21	20	21	62								
K-26	20	20	19	59	20	21	20	61		21	21	42			20	20	21	61		20	21	21	62	285	14	20.4	
Rm	3	4	5	1#	3	4	5	2#		3	5				310	311	312	[1]2#		133	231	334	1#	6#			
															Case	23	22	22	67								
Gr. 1-2	21	22	22	65	22	22	23	67		22	22	44			22	22	22	66		22	22	22	66	308	14	22.0	
Rm	6	7	8		6	7	8			6	8	10	3#		301	302	303	{1}1#		224	234	323	2#	6#			
															Case	22	23	22	67								
Gr. 2-2	21	21	21	63	22	20	22	64		21	21	22	64		22	22	22	66		21	21	21	63	320	15	21.3	
Rm	9	10	20		9	10	11			17	7	9	3#		313	314	315	[4]2#		230	324	330	331	4#	9#		
															Case	23	25	26	74								
Gr. 3-2	23	24	23	70	23	24	24	71		23	24	24	71		23	24	23	70		23	23	23	23	92	374	16	23.4
Rm	17	18	19	1#	12	13	14	2#		18	19	20	1#		213	214	215	[3]3#		233	321	322	332		7#		
															Case	26	24	24	74								
Gr. 4-2	23	24	24	71	25	24	23	72		24	24	24	72		23	24	24	71		23	23	23	24	93	379	16	23.7
Rm	14	15	16		19	20	21			13	15	16	1#		210	211	212	[3]		135	232	333	1#	2#			
															Case	24	27	24	75								
Gr. 5-2	24	25	24	73	23	25	25	73		24	24	25	73		24	24	24	72		23	24	24	71	362	15	24.1	
Rm	11	12	13		15	16	17			11	12	14			113	114	115	1#		223	235	335	1#	2#			
Gr. 6-2	24	24	24	72	24	24	24	72		24	24	24	72		23	24	24	71		23	24	24	71	358	15	23.9	
Total Staff				4#				4#				9#						12#					10#	39#			
														Case+	[13]	Average	23.5	494									
Total	21 Sec	Average	22.5	473	21 Sec	Average	22.9	480		19 Sec	Average	23.1	438		21 Sec	Average	22.7	477		23 Sec	Average	22.5	518	2386	105	22.7	
Range	19	25			20	25				21	25				20	24					20	24			19	25	

**ALL DAY K - CAD, DAD1, DAD2, GAD, TAD1, TAD2, and MAD**

16.5



**Today. Tomorrow. Together.**

### ***A Comprehensive Community Plan***

#### **ACTON 2020 IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE**

##### **Committee Members**


Andy Brockway (Chair)  
Kat Hudson (Vice Chair)  
Bruce Forman  
Charles Mercier  
Bonny Nothern  
Eric Solomon  
Vickie Wallin

##### **Planning Department Staff**

Roland Bartl  
Kristin Domurad-Guichard

##### **Committee Liaisons**

Dylan Ambrosoli  
(ABRHS)  
Rob Bukowski  
(Planning Board)  
Ann Corcoran  
(Council on Aging)  
John Sonner  
(Board of Selectman)  
Margaret Woolley Busse  
(Finance Committee)

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#### **BOSTON URBAN LAND INSTITUTE**

If you are interested in viewing the presentation that the Boston Urban Land Institute gave to the Board of Selectmen on Monday, February 10th, you can access the slides [here](#).

You can also watch the presentation at Acton TV's website: <http://actontv.org/on-demand/government>

#### **ACTON 2020 MEETINGS**

Acton 2020 meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month at 7:30pm at Town Hall, Room 204. Our next meeting is this Wednesday, February 26th.

#### **ACTON 2020 WELCOMES NEW LIAISON**

Acton 2020 would like to welcome its new liaison, Ann Corcoran, from the Council on Aging.

If you are interested in being a liaison to Acton 2020, please email us at [acton2020committee@gmail.com](mailto:acton2020committee@gmail.com)

**Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) and Acton  
Boxborough Transitional School Committee (ABTSC)  
Regionalization Update  
January/February 2014**

The 2013-14 school year continues as what the School Committees in both Acton and Boxborough are calling a "transitional year," a year in which all the planning related to expanding our school district to include both Acton and Boxborough from Pre-K through grade 12 is underway. Here, we continue updates of the issues being addressed that relate to this transition. If you have any comments or concerns regarding this update, please contact Kristina Rychlik at [krychlik@abschools.org](mailto:krychlik@abschools.org).

***First, we begin with excerpts from a January memo from Dr. Stephen Mills, Superintendent. It clearly covers a number of issues of interest and decisions that were made in the prior quarter:***

**Blanchard Principal**

We have completed the hiring process for Blanchard Memorial School's next principal. Dana Labb, currently the Principal of the West Street School in Southbridge, MA, will officially start his role as Principal of BMS on July 1, 2014. We welcome Dana to AB and to the Blanchard Memorial School.

**Performing Arts**

After a thorough program review, Mark Hickey, Acton-Boxborough's K-12 Director of Performing Arts, met with the Blanchard Friends of Music and Music Staff. Mark announced that the current Blanchard Music and Band Programs would continue on as they currently are being run. The Band will continue to be open to students in grades 4-6. Scheduling and invoicing for private lessons will take place through Acton-Boxborough's Community Education Department.

**Transportation and Scheduling**

J.D. Head and the Transitional School Committee spent the fall looking at various options for transportation. In December, the School Committee decided to go forward with a two-tier elementary busing schedule. In the fall of 2014, Blanchard, Douglas and Gates will be on the early schedule from 8:30 to 2:45. Conant, Merriam, and McCarthy-Towne will be on the late schedule from 9:15 to 3:30. Buses will run from Acton to Boxborough and vice-versa for students enrolled in either town.

### **Food Services**

The food services organizations from Acton and Boxborough will be combined with the new Region. The AB schools have an on-line lunch purchasing program called "Parent Online." Blanchard will transition to this new system in May 2014. Students will have a four-digit code which they will enter into a keypad when they purchase lunch. Parents will be able to put money on their child's account. Students will be able to charge lunch to their account or use cash. Any existing lunch tickets will be transferred to the student's account. Details will be provided in April.

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### **Elementary Class Size Policy Update**

After lengthy discussion about how to reconcile the Acton and Boxborough class size policies as a result of regionalization, the Committee agreed to review the K-12 class size policy guidelines at their annual Summer Workshop and create a task force to study the issue in detail.

### **ABRSD FY'15 Budget Update**

As a part of the budget planning process, the School Committee held their annual Budget Saturday open meeting on Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. We thank our school leaders and administrators for their fine presentations during that day, and urge all community members to learn more about the budget, major issues facing the schools and the reasons behind our budget requests for FY'15.

The School Committee voted unanimously to support the school budget as modified and recommended on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Meetings with town boards and committees will continue in the coming weeks, with a budget vote for Acton at Town Meeting beginning on April 7<sup>th</sup> and Boxborough beginning on May 12<sup>th</sup>. Information can be found at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>

*Meanwhile, please mark your calendars with the following dates:*

- April 7, 2014 Acton Town Meeting begins
- May 12, 2014 Boxborough Town Meeting begins

### **Other News**

#### **ABRSD Superintendent Search Committee Update**

At the AB Transitional School Committee meeting on Saturday, January 25<sup>th</sup>, the Committee voted to appoint Glenn Brand as ABRSD Superintendent effective July 1<sup>st</sup>, pending contract negotiations; his contract has since been finalized. Mr. Brand is currently the assistant superintendent in Sharon, MA. We look forward to welcoming him to our community. Thank you to all who provided input to this very important process.

***Please note: the March 27<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting has been moved to April 3<sup>rd</sup>.***

**Statement regarding the Appointment of**

**Glenn A. Brand**

**to the position of  
Superintendent of Schools**

February 14, 2014

---

It is with great pleasure that we announce the appointment of Mr. Glenn A. Brand to the position of Superintendent for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District effective July 1, 2014. After much process, the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee took a unanimous vote to appoint Mr. Brand on January 25, 2014.

Mr. Brand received his bachelor of arts and bachelor of education degrees from the University of Western Ontario in Canada. His master's degree in education is from the University of Toronto. Mr. Brand anticipates receiving his Ed.D. from the University of Bath in the United Kingdom this year. He began his career as a middle school classroom teacher outside of Toronto and over six and a half years taught every grade, three through eight. He served for three and a half years as assistant principal in Ontario and then in the Dennis-Yarmouth Regional School District. He served for two years as principal of the Wareham Middle School, followed by five years as principal of the Pollard Middle School in Needham. For the past three years, Mr. Brand has been the Assistant Superintendent for Administration and Finance in the Sharon Public Schools.

Mr. Brand has enjoyed almost twenty years of service in public education as a classroom teacher, building principal and central office administrator. Throughout his career, Mr. Brand has been committed to building strong, positive and productive relationships within the communities he serves. In his former positions he has served as liaison between the schools and a Multi-Cultural Council to support students and families of culturally diverse backgrounds. He has overseen a heritage language program that provided extended instruction to students engaged in learning their heritage language of Mandarin. Mr. Brand has been actively involved in bringing schools and communities together through his work in Needham and Sharon. Mr. Brand is a passionate believer in the important role that public education plays in the future lives of our young people.

We welcome Mr. Glenn Brand to the Acton-Boxborough school community.

*Maria E. Neyland*  
Chair, Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee



16.8

Beth Petr@bpetr@ab-schools.org

## Open Letter to BOS and FinCom urging NO VOTE on school assessment

Allen Nitschelm <allen@thehomesteader.com>

Mon, Mar 3, 2014 at 10:27 AM

To: bos@acton-ma.gov, fincom@acton-ma.gov

Cc: allen@thehomesteader.com, Stow Laboratories Inc <stomail@stolab.com>, dickcalandrella@earthlink.net, Clint Seward <cseward@verizon.net>, "Smith, Margaret" <Msmith@wickedlocal.com>, ALG@acton-ma.gov, abrrsc@abschools.org, Stephen Mills <smills@abschools.org>, manager@acton-ma.gov

Dear Members of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee:

We are greatly concerned about the proposed AB School assessment and we urge both of your boards to **NOT RECOMMEND** the assessments for Acton. Our reasons are detailed as follows.

### (1) Town Meeting was misled about the full financial effects of regionalization.

The voters at Town Meeting were given several clear messages which influenced their vote to approve full regionalization. They were told that there would be educational advantages, they were told that there would be efficiencies, and they were told that Acton would save at least a million dollars per year. All of these promises were kept.

What they were not told was that their assessments would greatly increase while Boxborough's assessments would greatly decrease. This is an important point that was either left out of the presentation or was unknown by the proponents. (We have heard conflicting information on this but we hope it was the latter.)

Voters were simply told that full regionalization was a good financial deal for Acton. This was emphasized again and again. The million dollars in savings did not include additional Boxborough efficiencies. Regionalization was presented as a financial windfall for Acton, including the suggestion that the savings could be used to lower taxes.

Clearly voters were misled **because the assessment formula does not equitably share the costs or savings between the two towns.**

While we can discuss what "the insiders" might have known (and we do so below), it is clear that Town Meeting was never given any indication that Acton taxpayers would be facing a large increase in the assessment while Boxborough would benefit from a large decrease. This imbalance in the result appears to be caused by a miscalculation in the "Appendix A" payment to Acton that was supposed to make the results fair (for at least five to seven years) in spite of the formula's enrollment shift effects. Over the next several years, we believe this unintended subsidy of Boxborough taxpayers by Acton taxpayers will be greater than \$10 million.

The promise to voters at Acton Town Meeting was that the process had produced a good net result for Acton's taxpayers. Payments to Acton were stretched out as specified in Appendix A of the new agreement. Voters were asked to trust the fairness of the outcome to the eighteen-month process, to trust town leaders, to have faith in the goodwill of both towns and to approve the proposal because it was a good deal for everybody.

The end results are clearly not consistent with that message. Acton's assessment is 2% higher than the school budget increase and Boxborough's is 8% lower.

Instead of "saving a million dollars a year," which was clearly the message given at last June's Town Meeting, Acton taxpayers will be asked to spend an extra million dollars a year, and that disparity will grow over the next

10/9

six to ten years.

## **(2) The internal information did not show this problem.**

The backup documentation that was not presented to Town Meeting but was available to everyone who worked on this issue showed roughly **equal savings** due to regionalization. The attached Excel spreadsheet is based on the summary distributed by the schools and it shows (Column A) that both towns save about 2-3% of their annual spending. This is from a Regionalization subcommittee handout of 4-10-13 (Scan attached.)

The actual results are shown in Columns D-F of the Excel sheet.. This is from the February 12, 2014 School Committee handout. (Scan attached.)

The argument now is that expenses have gone up higher than expected. If that is true, **both towns** should bear that burden (somewhat equally, we would assume.) Instead, Acton's expenses are much higher and Boxborough's are lower. They have moved in opposite directions. This is a surprising outcome to us who carefully followed the process and would certainly be unanticipated by the average Town Meeting voter.

While it is true that the assessment disparity mirrors some recent trends, it is **not true** that anyone knew the solution being proposed didn't fix the problem. The fact that we were fully aware of the issue means that the solution should have addressed it. Anyone would have assumed that the "mitigating payments" as outlined in Appendix A would smooth over these differences, for at least five to seven years.

On the contrary, "the solution" appears to have made the problem worse. Whatever savings regionalization has achieved have flowed to Boxborough taxpayers and whatever costs have been added are being paid by Acton taxpayers.

Had we not fully regionalized, the assessment formula would only have applied to half of our budget and whatever disparity trend already existed would be only half as bad for Acton taxpayers. So the argument that this would have happened anyway without regionalization is false.

The formula unfairly shifts \$1 million of expenses towards Acton **regardless of the amount of new spending**. That shift will be present for five years and will then approximately double in six or eight years. This is a huge and unexpected financial burden for Acton.

## **(3) School spending increases are not warranted.**

We are not convinced that school spending needs to increase by such a large amount this year. While we can and will debate the specifics, if you remove the savings and efficiencies due to regionalization and a declining enrollment, and reverse the move to hide some spending in "off budget" accounts, then the increase in school spending is much greater than the budget increase of 2.6%. We would guess the actual increase is closer to 6-8%. This is unsustainable and is not prudent given all the factors in our economy, our high property tax rate, and in light of the increased assessment costs to Acton taxpayers.

## **(4) Conclusion**

Should your boards decide not to recommend the assessments, the Acton members of the school committee should ask the Regionalization subcommittee to reopen discussions with Boxborough about the assessment formula. We do not need to unwind the regional agreement, but **we do need to modify the formula so both towns share equally in the costs as well as the savings.**

if instead you vote to recommend the assessment, or if the schools do not move forward with a revision of the formula, we will ask Acton Town Meeting voters to reject the assessment.

Once the assessment is approved by Town Meeting, there will be no future recourse for Acton taxpayers. The



only way to stop this unfair agreement is to deny funding this year.

**Regionalization should be in the best interests of both towns, not one town over the other.** We have enjoyed a great working relationship with Boxborough over the years but having Acton taxpayers subsidize Boxborough taxpayers for the next decade or longer is going to cause resentment and financial hardship. It is not in the spirit of cooperation and mutual benefit that have made our partnership with Boxborough work so well.

We cannot accept the disenfranchisement of Acton Town Meeting voters due to misinformation, whether deliberate or not, that results in permanently higher property tax rates and lower housing values for Acton relative to Boxborough.

Charlie Kadlec and Allen Nitschelm  
Acton, MA

---

### 3 attachments



**Analysis of Acton savings.xls**

16K



**School budget handout 2-12-14.pdf**

1124K



**Regionalization Options handout 4-10-13.pdf**

267K

Information taken from "Analysis of Different Options re: Regionalization" (summary 7.1.3 Revision 4/7/13 of the Summary 4-10-13 SC meeting"

Base Case - No Expanded Region	
	FY15
Acton	\$51,788,675
Boxborough	\$11,097,136
New Expansion Proposal 80/20 3 yr w/Boxborough Efficiencies	
Acton	\$50,290,179
Boxborough	\$10,722,512

My calculations (from cells above)

		Calculated Assessment		Assessment change FY14-
		FY14 (Revised ABRSD		FY15 (Revised ABRSD FY'15
		FY'15 Proposed Budget	Actual School Expenses	Proposed Budget Handout,
		Handout, 2/12/14, p3-4.)	FY15 (ibid, p3-4)	2/12/14, p1.)
<b>Savings</b>				
Acton	\$1,498,496	\$48,124,573	\$50,424,594	4.78%
Boxborough	\$374,624	\$11,334,345	\$10,625,802	-6.25%
<b>Projecting Percent savings</b>				
Acton	-2.89%			
Boxborough	-3.38%			

If Acton's "savings" of -2.89% increased to higher costs of 4.78% because of additional school spending, then that explains why Acton's savings have turned into extra spending. What explains how Boxborough's savings went from -3.38% to -6.25% in light of such significant additional school spending?

## Acton-Boxborough Regional School District FY'15 Budget Vote

Transitional Regional School Committee  
Meeting  
February 12, 2014

1

## ABRSD FY'15 Proposed Budget

February 6 Budget	Budget	\$76,938,226
	Increase	3.64%
February 6 Assessments	Acton	6.08%
	Boxborough	-4.77%
Tonight's Proposal reduces \$756,726:		
Budget	Budget	\$76,181,500
	Increase	2.62%
Assessments	Acton	4.78%
	Boxborough	-6.25%

2

### Proposed Budget Reductions

Across the board .5% reduction in salary increases	\$200,773
Reduce 1.0 Special Education 6-8 Coordinator	\$95,000
Custodial Overtime	\$20,000
1.5 Campus Support Staff	\$40,000
.5 HS Support Staff	\$14,340
.5 Support Staff	\$24,500
.5 Tech Desktop Support	\$22,400
Health Ins: 3 reduced positions; 2 moved to school lunch	\$75,000
Move .5 Custodian to Douglas Before & After	\$24,845
Move 1.4 to ODP (Tuitions received from other towns)	\$59,868
Increase Unemployment \$25k instead of \$50k	\$25,000
Move \$30k out of Athletic Revolving instead of \$65k	\$35,000
Move \$75k of \$128k Lower Fields Debt to Comm Ed	\$75,000
Reduce PD and/or Technology Capital	\$30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$756,726</b>

3

### Salaries

- Original Budget included 1.5% to 2.5% salary increases
- Revised Budget includes 1% to 2% salary increases

4

### ABRSD FY'15 Operating Budget (in thousands)

	AB
FY'14 Final (Constructed)	\$74,237
FY'15 Budget	\$76,182
\$ Change from Final FY'14	\$1,945
% Change from Final FY'14	2.62%

5

### Acton FY14 to FY15 Comparison

Uses \$500k of E&D and includes new reductions

#### *FY14 Acton School Expenses:*

FY14 APS Budget	\$26,960,725
Subtract APS CH70 Aid	<u>(\$ 5,596,025)</u>
	\$21,364,700
Add School Expenses in Town Budget	<u>\$ 300,000</u>
FY14 APS Total	\$21,664,700
FY14 ABRSD Assessment – Acton Share	<u>\$26,459,873</u>
Total FY14 School Expenses – Acton Share	\$48,124,573

#### *FY15 Acton School Expenses:*

FY15 ABRSD Assessment – Acton Share	\$49,836,594
Add HI School Expenses in Acton Town Budget	\$ 588,000
FY15 Total School Expenses – Acton Share	\$50,424,594
FY14 to FY15 Increase is:	\$ 2,349,477
	4.78%

6

## Boxborough FY14 to FY15 Comparison

Uses \$500k of E&D and includes new reductions

### *FY14 Boxborough School Expenses:*

FY14 BPS Budget	\$ 5,798,321
Subtract BPS CH70 Aid	<u>(\$ 1,320,503)</u>
	\$4,477,818
Add School Expenses in Town Budget	<u>\$1,034,000</u>
FY14 BPS Total	\$5,511,818
FY14 ABRSD Assessment – Boxborough Share	<u>\$5,822,527</u>
Total FY14 School Expenses – Boxborough Share	\$11,334,345

### *FY15 Boxborough School Expenses:*

FY15 ABRSD Assessment – Boxborough Share	\$10,625,802
FY14 to FY15 Decrease is:	-\$708,543
	-6.25%

7

## FY15 Possible Areas of Improvement

CASE Assessment

Middlesex Retirement

Circuit Breaker (Budgeted 72%, could come in at 75%)

8

### Analysis of Different Options re Regionalization

	<u>FY15*</u>	<u>FY16</u>	<u>FY17</u>	<u>FY18</u>	<u>FY19</u>	<u>FY20</u>	<u>FY21</u>	<u>FY22</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Base Case - No Expanded Region</u>									
Acton Costs	\$51,788,675	\$53,398,447	\$55,056,859	\$56,675,977	\$58,148,708	\$59,872,383	\$61,653,774	\$63,495,566	\$460,090,389
Boxborough Costs	\$11,097,136	\$11,134,949	\$11,308,113	\$11,426,890	\$11,521,994	\$11,683,387	\$11,845,170	\$12,006,084	\$92,023,722
TOTAL	\$62,845,904	\$64,491,812	\$66,321,664	\$68,057,723	\$69,623,669	\$71,506,793	\$73,447,967	\$75,448,615	\$552,114,111
<u>New Expansion Proposal 80/20 3 yr</u>									
Acton Costs	\$51,040,849	\$52,580,513	\$54,215,555	\$55,904,782	\$57,587,839	\$60,269,352	\$62,372,292	\$64,022,619	\$457,993,800
Boxborough Costs	\$10,910,179	\$11,018,101	\$11,214,635	\$11,263,303	\$11,148,081	\$10,419,247	\$10,233,405	\$10,559,018	\$86,765,968
TOTAL	\$61,951,029	\$63,598,614	\$65,430,190	\$67,168,085	\$68,735,920	\$70,688,598	\$72,605,696	\$74,581,637	\$544,759,769
<u>New Expansion Proposal 80/20 3 yr w/ Boxborough Efficiencies</u>									
Acton Costs	\$50,290,179	\$51,759,468	\$53,371,052	\$55,130,653	\$57,024,836	\$59,146,895	\$61,248,715	\$62,900,204	\$450,872,002
Boxborough Costs	\$10,722,512	\$10,900,809	\$11,120,801	\$11,099,094	\$10,772,746	\$10,247,859	\$10,063,006	\$10,387,480	\$85,314,308
TOTAL	\$61,012,691	\$62,660,277	\$64,491,853	\$66,229,747	\$67,797,582	\$69,394,754	\$71,311,721	\$73,287,684	\$536,186,310

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Revision

4/7/13

"Summary"

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Sent: Petr Chapetr@abschools.org>

## Electricity continues to drop in all our schools! Energy update



Kate Crosby <kcrosby@abschools.org>  
To: AB News <news@abschools.org>

Fri, Feb 28, 2014 at 8:17 PM

We'd like to start posting quarterly updates on energy data, and we're starting off with this first installment looking at the first half of FY2014.

The news is excellent: **every one of our school buildings shows a drop in electricity consumption compared to the first 6 months a year ago!!!** This is amazing considering that we've already seen terrific gains in efficiency across all of our schools. Congratulations to Conant leading the way with a 13% drop so far this year, and also leading the way with a 23% drop over four years compared to our benchmark numbers!

Natural gas is far more weather-dependent, and we can see that in the 4% increase district-wide for the first 6 months of this year. Despite the weather, both ABRHS and the Admin Building actually show a significant drop in natural gas consumption - incredible! - due to big improvements in efficiency of equipment at these two buildings. The district as a whole will show a drop in natural gas consumption with weather-adjusted data (a useful way to get a true picture of what's going on).

Your ongoing efforts to turn out unnecessary lights  and power down unneeded equipment  are HUGELY appreciated! The efforts of lots of us have combined to make a big success story here. In fact, the state is using our school district as the model for a new grant program with a goal of establishing similar programs around the state!

Details on the data for those interested: The attached documents display reductions in actual therms and kWh for all of our school buildings. In addition, outcomes are color-coded (green for reduction, yellow for neutral and red for increases) and buildings are rank ordered by percentage for performance against three yardsticks:

1. the first 6 months of this year compared to the same 6 months a year ago
2. the most recent full year compared to the year before
3. the most recent full year compared to our benchmark data that we filed with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts when they began the Green Communities program.

Congratulations and thanks to one and all, and we'll post another report in three months!

-Kate

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Kate Crosby  
Energy Manager  
Acton Public Schools/Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
C 978-580-0052  
kcrosby@abschools.org  
ab.mec.edu/departments/facilities/facilities.shtml  
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2 attachments

 **ELECTRICITY REPORT Dec. 2013 v2.docx**  
25K

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# ELECTRICITY (kWh) DECEMBER, 2013

	First 6 months of this year compared to last year	
	%	kWh
CONANT	-13%	-17,304
GATES	-8%	-11,046
DOUGLAS	-7%	-8,172
ABRHS	-6%	-80,047
RJ GREY JHS	-4%	-17,132
ADMIN BLDNG + MAINT SHED	-2%	-9,029
PARKER DAMON	-2%	-8,495
ALL BUILDINGS	-5%	-151,225
	All of 2012-2013 compared to previous year 2011-2012	
	%	kWh
DOUGLAS	-7%	-20,035
ADMIN BLDNG + MAINT SHED	-5%	-46,394
ABRHS	-4%	-101,592
PARKER DAMON	-4%	-35,395
RJ GREY JHS	-4%	-45,336
CONANT	-2%	-4,727
GATES	3%	7,802
ALL BUILDINGS	-4%	-245,677
	2012-2013 compared to Benchmark year 2008-2009	
	%	kWh
CONANT	-23%	-87,825
RJ GREY JHS *	-22%	-294,349
DOUGLAS	-21%	-71,579
ADMIN BLDNG + MAINT SHED *	-21%	-258,569
PARKER DAMON *	-18%	-192,087
ABRHS *	-18%	-559,856
GATES	-8%	-25,252
ALL BUILDINGS	-22%	-1,780,837

\*N.B. Benchmark calculation for these four buildings is based on 2009-2010 so the "All Buildings" total compared to the 2008-2009 benchmark is larger than the sum of the column figures.

# NATURAL GAS (therms) DECEMBER, 2013

<b>NATURAL GAS SUMMARY THRU DECEMBER, 2013</b>		
	<b>First 6 months of this year compared to last year</b>	
ADMIN BLDNG	-14%	-1,284
ABRHS	-9%	-4,208
GATES	0%	-38
CONANT	4%	338
DOUGLAS	9%	622
RJ GREY JHS	20%	5,733
PARKER DAMON	34%	4,262
ALL BUILDINGS	4%	5,425
	<b>2012-2013 compared to prior year 2011-2012 (mild)</b>	
ABRHS	0%	473
CONANT	8%	1,811
RJ GREY JHS	11%	8,423
GATES	11%	3,222
DOUGLAS	14%	2,262
ADMIN BLDNG	14%	3,014
PARKER DAMON	35%	10,725
ALL BUILDINGS	9%	29,930
	<b>2012-2013 compared to Benchmark year 2008-2009</b>	
	<b>%</b>	<b>therm</b>
ADMIN BLDNG	-40%	-16,068
RJ GREY JHS	-24%	-26,629
DOUGLAS	-24%	-5,909
CONANT	-24%	-8,087
PARKER DAMON	-20%	-10,147
ABRHS	-17%	-25,960
GATES	-6%	-1,964
ALL BUILDINGS	-21%	-94,764