

TO: Acton Public School Committee members
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee members
Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee members

FROM: Beth Petr, Secretary to the School Committees

DATE: 12/3/13

RE: PreK – Grade 12 ABRSD policies for FY15 – Consent Agenda #2

The following policies have been reviewed by the Transitional Policy Subcommittee as well as the Joint APSC/ABRSC Policy Subcommittee and are submitted for a First Reading at the 12/5/13 School Committee meetings:

1. School Attorney, File: BDG
2. School Committee Meetings and Notification, File: BE (includes BEDA and BEDD)
3. Agenda Format, File: BEDB
4. School Committee Policy Development, File: BG (includes BGB, BGC)
5. Suspension of Policies, File: BGF
6. School Committee – Staff Communications, File: BHC (also GBD)
7. Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members, File: BHE
8. Superintendent of School, File: CB (includes CBD)
9. Policy Implementation, File: CH
10. Development of Procedures, File: CHA
11. School Committee Review of Procedures, File: CHB
12. Administration in Policy Absence, File: CHD

Behind the policy with changes tracked, is a clean copy of the proposed draft. Current APS/ABRSD policies are found at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/policies.shtml>. Blanchard School policies are found at <http://www.boxboroughschool.org/node/82>.

(This policy for Blanchard references Superintendent/Curriculum Director, should be changed to
Superintendent)
File: BDG

SCHOOL ATTORNEY
(First Reading 12/5/13)

~~The School Committees may use the services provided by the town counsel. The Committees and the Superintendent may seek his/her services to counsel and represent the school systemsdistrict at various times.~~

~~However, because the complexity of school department operations often requires specialized legal services, the Committees may also retain an attorney or law firm to provide additional legal services.~~

~~It will be the duty of the counsel for the Committees to advise the School Committee_s and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to him/her. He/she will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law to enable him/her to offer the necessary legal advice.~~

~~A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school systemsdistrict will be made by the Committees. The Superintendent may also take such action at the direction of the Committees.~~

~~Many types of legal assistance are routine and do not require specific Committee approval or prior notice. However, when the Superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, he/she will advise the appropriate Committee and seek either initial or continuing authorization for such service.~~

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

Approved on by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee: INSERT DATE.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

File: BDG

**SCHOOL ATTORNEY
(First Reading 12/5/13)**

The Committee may retain an attorney or law firm to provide legal services.

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Committee to advise the School Committee and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to him/her. He/she will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law to enable him/her to offer the necessary legal advice.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: BE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND NOTIFICATION
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The School Committees will transact all business at official meetings of the Committees. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting:** the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly
2. **Special meeting:** an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Every meeting of the School Committees, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

Notification:

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As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours advance notice will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerks at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

Rules of Order:

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Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the Committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the Committee's approved policies and regulations.

In accordance with Robert's Rules, the Committees may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A; 39:23B; 39:23C

CROSS REFS.: BEC, Executive Sessions
BEDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND NOTIFICATION
(First Reading 12/5/13)

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CROSS REFS.: BEC, Executive Sessions

File: BEDB

AGENDA FORMAT
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chairperson of the ~~respective~~ School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meetings agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The Committees will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it ~~votes~~ agrees to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committees, or to expedite Committee business.

Any School Committee member, staff member, or citizen may suggest items of business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the ~~respective~~ Committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committees.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members ~~three~~ days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the public ~~press~~.

CROSS REFS: BE, School Committee Meetings and Notification

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee on: INSERT DATE.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**AGENDA FORMAT
(First Reading 12/5/13)**

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CROSS REFS: BE, School Committee Meetings and Notification

Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: BG

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT
(First Reading 12/5/13)

According to Chapter 71, Section 37, the School Committees "shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education."

Policies and/or revisions may be proposed by any member of the Committees, any member of the public and any member of the staff. The Superintendent shall have the responsibility of recommending policies for adoption and/or revisions of existing policies. These policies shall be in the form of general principles and statements of intent. The Superintendent is responsible for developing the procedures to ~~insure~~ensure implementation.

The School Committees shall have two readings of any proposed policy/revision to allow for input from interested parties. A vote shall be taken on the second reading. Only under emergency conditions will a policy be adopted on the first reading.

The Committees shall periodically review policies to maintain their timeliness and relevance.

~~The Superintendent shall also recommend annually to the School Committees the goals for the School Districts. These shall be developed with input from the School Committees and members of the staff.~~

Policies will be available to the public by being posted on the District website.

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CROSS REFS.: BGF, Suspension of Policies
CH, Policy Implementation

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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

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

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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: BGF

SUSPENSION OF POLICIES
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The operation of any section or sections of School Committee's policies not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of Committee members present at any regular or special meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and will be so noted on the agenda for that meeting.

CROSS REFS: BG, School Committee Policy Development
CH, Policy Implementation

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Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee on: INSERT DATE.

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

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CROSS REFS: BG, School Committee Policy Development
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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: BHC (also GBD)

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The School Committees wish to maintain open channels of communication between themselves and with the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent. ~~(Note: Blanchard's policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director here)~~

Staff Communications to the School Committees

All communications or reports to the Committees or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. ~~(Note: Blanchard's policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director here)~~

This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committees for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent ~~(Note: Blanchard's policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director here)~~

has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent ~~(Note: Blanchard's policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director here)~~

. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent ~~(Blanchard's policy references Principal here)~~ of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee on: INSERT DATE.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication with the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: BHE

(Note: Boxborough's policy is dated 2006, so while the spirit is similar it is much less detailed, and the update is due)

USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(First Reading 12/5/13)

As elected public officials, School Committee Members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including, but not limited to, electronic mail (e-mail), Internet web forums and Internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law, deliberations by a quorum of members constitute a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision, including, but not limited to, the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the Committees have supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law, electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records and therefore are subject to the record retention requirements of that law. Accordingly, in order to be sure e-mail communications between and among School Committee members are captured and retained through the Districts' electronic archiving system:

- The District will establish individual e-mail accounts for each school committee member;
- School Committee members will make every effort to utilize the District e-mail address exclusively for sending and receiving any and all school committee related communications including, but not limited to, communications to and from other school committee members; ~~members, members~~ of the District's staff and administration and members of the public;
- Effective 3/15/12, School Committee Members will not forward their District e-mail to any other third party e-mail accounts, as this may impact the Districts' ability to capture School Committee related e-mails for record retention purposes,
- In any case where it is ~~impracticable~~ impractical or impossible for a School Committee member to utilize their District e-mail address to send an e-mail, and the member utilizes a private e-mail account, the School Committee Member will provide an electronic copy of the School Committee related e-mail to the District e-mail "shell address" as soon as practicable.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 4:7; 39-23A, 23B; 66:10

Revised 3/1/12

Approved on: INSERT DATE.

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Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

~~(The Boxborough policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director and should be changed to Superintendent)~~

**ACTON AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS**

(First Reading 12/5/13)

The Committees shall employ a Superintendent of Schools and fix his/her compensation. The Superintendent shall act in accordance with General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 59, and shall perform such other duties consistent with this section as the Committees may determine. He/she shall also prepare such reports as may be required by the State Department of Education and shall submit materials for the Committee's² annual report to the selectmen of the member towns in sufficient time for printing in the annual reports of the member municipalities.

Superintendent's Contract

The Committee, upon the election of a candidate or upon reelection of the incumbent Superintendent, will enter into a written contract with the Superintendent which will meet the requirements of law and will protect the rights of both the Committee and the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:41; 71:42,

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:59, 72:3

Approved on: INSERT DATE.

~~*Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District School Committee: insert date*~~

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POLICY IMPLEMENTATION
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The Superintendent has responsibility for carrying out, through regulations, the policies established by the School Committees.

The policies developed by the Committees and the regulations developed to implement policy are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system. Consequently, it is expected that all District School Committee employees and students ~~will carry them out~~ will comply with them.

✶

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for informing staff members in their schools, departments, or divisions of existing policies and regulations and for seeing that they are implemented in the spirit intended. (Boxborough does not have this paragraph.)

CROSS REFS.: BG, School Committee Policy Development
BGF, Suspension of Policies

Approved on: INSERT DATE.

~~*Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District School Committee: insert date*~~

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(First Reading 12/5/13)

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DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES
(First Reading 12/5/13)

The Superintendent will be responsible for specifying required actions and designing the detailed arrangements under which the school ~~system~~district will be operated in accordance with School Committee policy. These detailed arrangements will be designed to implement policies, goals, and objectives of the Committees and will be one of the means by which the school system will be governed.

In the development of procedures, the Superintendent may involve at the planning stage those who would be affected by the procedures, including staff members, students, parents/guardians, and the public. He/she must weigh with care the counsel given by representatives of staff, student and community organizations. He/she will inform the Committees of such counsel in presenting pertinent reports of procedures and in presenting procedures for Committee^s approval.

As long as the Superintendent operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by the Committees, he/she may issue procedures without prior Committees² approval unless Committees¹ action is required by law, or the Committees have specifically asked that certain types of procedures be given Committee^s approval, or the Superintendent recommends Committees² approval in light of strong community attitudes or probable staff reactions.

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee on: INSERT DATE.

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School ~~District~~ School Committee: insert date

**DEVELOPMENT OF PROCEDURES
(First Reading 12/5/13)**

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Approved on: INSERT DATE.

File: CHB (also BGD ~~(there is no BGD)~~)

~~(The Boxborough policy references Superintendent/Curriculum Director and should be changed to Superintendent)~~

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES **(First Reading 12/5/13)**

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue regulations implementing policies of the School Committees. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committees.

~~The Committees may review the procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school system district whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district, but it will revise or veto such procedures only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committees.~~

The Committees will not officially approve procedures except as required by state law, or in cases when strong community attitudes or possible student or staff reaction make it necessary or advisable for a regulation to have the Committee's advance approval. ~~(Do we want this? Have Policy Comm. Review)~~

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." (Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Education for information purposes only.) Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committees.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H

~~Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee on: INSERT DATE.~~

~~Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District School Committee: insert date~~

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(First Reading 12/5/13)**

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ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE
(First Reading 12/5/13)

In cases where action must be taken within the school systems and where the Committee has ~~s~~ have provided no guidelines for action, the Superintendent shall have the power to act and the responsibility to report significant action to the Committees.

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committeeon: INSERT DATE.
~~Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School DistrictSchool Committee: insert date~~

File: CHD

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(First Reading 12/5/13)

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