

Office of the Superintendent
Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
http://ab.mec.edu
(978) 264-4700 x 3211

TO: Acton Public School Committee Members
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members
FROM: Stephen Mills
ON: January 6, 2011
RE: **ADDENDUM**

JT SC MEETING:

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 December 2, 2010

5.0 JT UNFINISHED BUSINESS

5.3 FY'11 and FY'12 Budget Update

g. Presentation Slides (*will be brought to meeting*)

5.5 Subcommittee Updates

b. Class Size – *Amy Hedison*

6.0 AB NEW BUSINESS

6.1 Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Trip to Italy, April vacation 2012 – **VOTE** –
Steve Mills

c. Comparison of costs - ACIS and EF Tours

7.0 FOR YOUR INFORMATION

7.3 Pupil Services

a. ABRSD ELL Student Population, January 1, 2011

7.11 Letter to the Editor: The Beacon, *John Petersen*

7.12 AEA Grant Recipients

**ACTON PUBLIC AND
ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS
Draft Minutes**

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

**December 2, 2010
7:00 pm
Acton-Boxborough Regional Meeting
Followed by Joint SC Executive Session**

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mike Coppolino, Herman Kabakoff, Xuan Kong, Sharon McManus (7:15), Maria Neyland, John Petersen, Bruce Sabot
Members Absent: Terry Lindgren
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The AB School Committee meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Brigid Bieber, chair.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

The minutes of November 4, 2010 were approved as amended.

STATEMENT of WARRANT

Warrant #11-011 dated 11/18/10 in the amount of \$2,135,168.33 and warrant #11-012 dated 12/2/10 in the amount of \$1,576,750.00 were signed by the chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures. A memo regarding procedures for committee members' warrant questions was included in the packet.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

EDUCATION REPORT #1 - Professional Staff Support Around Student Stress

This report is a result of the Study Group that came out of last Spring's Demographics Study.

Alix Callen began by saying that student stress is an issue that we all own – teachers, parents, all staff, especially in a high achieving district like this. It is not a structural issue, as many often think, it is a cultural one. Technology is one big difference today. Students are plugged in 24-7 now and their expectations, and their friends' expectations of them, are that they will react quickly to everything. We need to help them find balance. Dr. Callen suggested that kids' cell phones and laptops be taken away from them periodically, and that it is OK for kids' to say that their parent took it away. This is something that is happening around the country. She said that families should try to have dinner together. Every risky behavior statistic declined for kids who ate dinner with their families. This is one of the most important things parents can do to help reduce stress for their children. She also noted that there is an active stress management committee is at the High School.

Stephen Hitzrot, Counseling Department Chairperson for the Region, began by saying that stress does motivate us. Staff tries to manage stress, not remove it totally. There are many resources and new initiatives in our schools including: Counselors, Peer Counselors, Peer Tutors, Academic Support Center, School Climate and Openness Committees and a Faculty Stress Committee. The new Freshman First Day Program was very successful in reducing some of the stress for 9th graders last September.

Craig Hardimon spoke about how different 7th and 8th graders are. Team structure and moving to trimesters this year has helped. The difference between social stress and academic stress must be considered. Professional development support is needed.

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

When asked what is next regarding addressing student stress, Dr. Callen suggested increasing parent-school partnerships, professional development for staff, and responding to technology stress. When asked if teaming could be expanded to Freshmen, she said that she would rather help kids develop good connections with their teachers, with perhaps an Advisory Program for the High School. The informal connections made with teachers and staff through clubs and activities are common and very valuable stress reducers. A member of the public recommended the stress reduction programs at UMass Medical in Worcester. A committee member shared a bumper sticker, “Don’t just do something, sit there!” Packet material included:

- a. Adolescent Stress Presentation Slides
- b. Promoting a Culture of Support at RJG
- c. Promoting a Culture of Support at ABRHS
- d. School Culture and Climate – Stress in Schools, *Sue Porter, Fall 2007*
- e. ABRHS Time Management Worksheet

The Acton Public School Committee was called to order at 7:50 p.m. by John Petersen, Chair.

AB/APS JOINT MEETING began

STATEMENT of WARRANT

Warrant #201111 dated 11/30/10 in the amount of \$80,929.23 was signed by the chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

JT EDUCATION REPORT #2 - Update on School Enrollment and Enrollment Projections

Peter Ashton presented enrollment projections done by Peter and Mary Ann Ashton of Innovation & Information Consultants, Inc. of Concord. He began by stating the predicting kindergarten enrollment is the hardest part. There has been a slide in building permits in both Acton and Boxborough. Construction of new homes has dropped significantly. Peter reported that based on their extensive research, Chapter 40B projects do not have a dramatic impact on school enrollment. Affordable units (25% of the total) do attract families with children. The market rate units do not attract more school children. Although the Birth to Kindergarten numbers are increasing dramatically, the Kindergarten to 1st to 2nd to 3rd, is declining so the numbers are not growing like it would seem by looking at the Birth to Kindergarten figures.

The projections show:

1. Declines in births and in-migration lead to decrease in enrollment over the next decade. APS drops gradually; big drops in 2016 and 2017 based on birth projections, not actuals. RJGJHS drops starting in 2012 but levels off until 2018. ABRHS is at peak this year; decline starts next year.
2. Total Acton enrollment drops 210 students over the next five years (4.4%)
3. Boxborough enrollment drops 20% over same period.

When asked if we have sufficient school buildings for our upcoming enrollment, Peter said “yes”, although there will be a need to renovate some of the existing buildings in the near future. Herman Kabakoff thought the Committee should be looking closely at Choice programs for the future, particularly with Boxborough’s sharply declining enrollment. Marie Altieri noted that the Ashtons’ last projections for the High School and Junior High numbers were almost exactly right. The Committee thanked them for their work and excellent presentation.

JT UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Recommendation to Approve School Calendar, 2011-12

An online survey was offered to school families and staff with a deadline of 11/19/10. It included 4 proposed Calendars – start before/after Labor Day, with/without Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah off. Yom Kippur is not on a school day in 2011. Dr. Mills emphasized that there are two separate issues,

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starting before or after Labor Day and whether or not to make the religious holidays of Good Friday, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur non school days. The issue is not the start date, but the ending of school and whether it is productive to be in school very late in June.

Survey response was good with 1750 parents responding (we have 5500 students in the school systems) and 420 staff members including 220 teachers. Parents were essentially evenly divided over when to begin school although the staff prefers 2:1 to start before Labor Day. See 6.1.c for results. Based on all input received, Dr. Mills recommended starting school on August 30th and continuing to give Good Friday, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur as non school days.

Sharon McManus asked about the cost of this decision. Thirty five staff members said they would be out for the Jewish holidays, and an average day has 10-20 substitute teachers. These numbers combined would be a stretch to cover. On Good Friday, 90 staff members said they would be out, plus the average of 20 a day. Substitutes are paid an average of \$80 per day. Marie Altieri added that the ability to fill those sub positions is the real question. Being a holiday affects how many substitutes are available.

Maria Neyland feels strongly that there should not be any religious holidays on our school calendar, but agrees that the Committee has to support the Administration regarding how the schools are run. Xuan Kong reported that the MASC (Massachusetts Association of School Committees) was asked about starting before/after Labor Day, the religious holidays and one vs. two vacation weeks. He also went to the DESE website and looked at similar school districts. Of 36 school districts, 25 started before Labor Day this year and 11 of them started after. Those who started after Labor Day typically had a policy in place. Regarding the 2 Jewish holidays, 14 of the 36 closed their schools and almost all closed on Good Friday. Xuan commented that children have to learn about others' religions, but not by closing the schools. He would like to see all of the religious holidays noted on the calendar. Unless the Superintendent feels that the schools will not be run appropriately, Xuan would like to see no religious holidays as non-school days.

Bruce Sabot commented that this calendar decision has nothing to do with religion. It is strictly an operational question of whether or not our kids will be educated and safe if schools are open. The Committee votes this calendar every year because, as part of how the schools are managed, they need to be aware of any changes in our community and staff. A policy is needed that insures that our teachers and students are "protected", that it is not held against them, if they are absent from school on a religious holiday. Bruce feels that this is a far more important question than if the holidays are school days or not.

Mike Coppelino agreed 100% with Maria and Bruce about the sensitivity of this topic. A calendar listing all of the holidays would be beneficial. The survey said that 200 parents would observe other holidays than Good Friday, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, most notably 80 parents whose children miss school for Diwali.

Rabbi Lewis Mintz spoke from the audience. He came not really as a member of the local clergy, because he very strongly does not see this as a religious issue, but to describe why these holidays impact the schools the way they do. He stated that this is not about giving preference to any one holiday or another, or about sanctity. It is about the nature of the observance of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. He used the example of Hanukkah saying that there is nothing about its observance that impacts the school day because it is celebrated at night. The nature of observance of these two holidays, however, is that attendance at temple is during the morning, and there is a festive family meal during mid day often with travel involved. He feels that it is similar to the day after Thanksgiving which often requires travel due to the nature of the observance. He mentioned that at times there have been issues at school with children who are absent on the second day of Rosh Hashanah and appreciates that this will be reviewed in the future.

It was noted that the staff contracts might need to be changed although next year is not a problem as it is.

A motion was made by Herman Kabakoff for the AB SC that August 29th be the first day of school for FY11. It was pointed out that if the staff begins work on August 29th, the students begin on August 30th and the 30th would be considered the first day of school. The motion was withdrawn and a new one was proposed by Mr. Kabakoff.

Acton-Boxborough:

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: that the calendar for 2011-2012 be set as indicated on 6.1.a. (start before Labor Day and give Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah off, Yom Kippur is on Saturday)
(Yes: Bieber, Coppolino, Kabakoff, McManus, Petersen, Sabot
No: Kong Abstained: Neyland)

Acton Public:

It was moved, seconded, and

VOTED: that the calendar for 2011-2012 be set as indicated on 6.1.a. (start before Labor Day and give Good Friday and Rosh Hashanah off, Yom Kippur is on Saturday)
(Yes: Coppolino, Kabakoff, McManus, Petersen No: Kong)

The Committee very much appreciated the community's enthusiastic participation in the survey and discussion.

2. ALG/FinCom Report

Xuan Kong reported on the 11-18-10 ALG Meeting. The new ALG Spreadsheet, prepared by Don Aicardi in cooperation with Mary Ann Ashton and John Murray, has been very well received. Dr. Mills agreed to ask the AB School Committee Chair if another discussion of E&D could take place at their meeting on 12/2/10. The ALG agreed to recommend to the Boards that they use \$2m for reserves and see if the numbers need to be adjusted in the future. The next meeting is scheduled for 12-3-10. Xuan reported on the 11-30-10 FinCom meeting where their draft Point of View for FY12 document was discussed.

3. BLF Report and Spreadsheet

Mary Neyland reported on the Boxborough Leadership Forum and the spreadsheet in the packet.

4. FY'11 and FY'12 Budget Update

- a. FY'12 Operating Budget Assumptions/Key Decisions
- b. FY'12 Revenue and Expenditures Assumptions
- c. Revised Budget Timeline (*1/22 Saturday meeting and FinCom invited to attend regular 2/3/11 AB SC meeting*)
- d. Powerpoint presentation
- e. Revote of Regional Assessment

Dr. Mills presented on the budget and recommended 108 classroom sections for next year. He highlighted slide #7 from his presentation showing a 2.3% increase from FY'11 K-12. He stated again that the districts have a revenue issue, not an expense issue. He emphasized that slides #8 and #9 are not "wish" lists, but "need" lists, and represent conversations that have to be held. One example is that most schools have a textbook replacement policy, but we do not. Dr. Mills said that since he began as Superintendent, he has not spent money mainly due to ARRA and EdJOBS money. Last year he spent ahead on some items and he wants to do the same this year. Money was budgeted, but because items had been paid ahead, some funds were leftover. This resulted in \$673k uncommitted at APS (slide #11), and \$434k at the region (slide #12). Dr. Mills advocated for using this money to prepay certain items again.

Much of next month's discussion will focus on slide #13 – How should FY' 11 Year End Balances be used? Dr. Mills went through the budget timeline, highlighting the Saturday, January 22nd Budget Presentations and the February 3rd School Committee with the Finance Committees.

Bruce Sabot asked for slides #8 (Personnel Needs Not Yet Included in FY' 12 Level Service), #9 (Non-Level Service FY' 12 Small Capital Budget Requests) and #10 (continuation of previous slide) to be prioritized. Xuan Kong asked for slide #8 to be costed out.

Xuan clarified that even though salaries have a zero percent cost of living increase, they still include steps and lanes. He then asked how much steps and lanes cost. Marie Altieri replied that steps and lanes cost about 2.9% of total salaries, similar to last year with a zero COLA. Xuan said that last year's Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) was a big expense, and asked what the impact would be this year. Marie said that what is included in the proposed budgets are actual 2011 retirees. More detail will be provided at the next meeting, but it is definitely a decrease from last year.

John Petersen asked that the School Committees accept the budget recommendation for Non-Union Staff (slide #6) and add to that the Superintendent's salary as well.

He made the motion: **“We build our budgetary assumptions around the recommendation of a \$1 per hour increase for hourly employees and a \$2000 increase for salaried employees and administrators for next year.”** (slide #6)

Herman Kabakoff felt this was premature because the analysis has not been done yet. Mike Coppelino suggested adding an amendment to include the words “not to exceed”, although he does not feel right voting on a single line item like this. Xuan Kong said that the School Committee traditionally gives guidance to the Superintendent and his team about how to build the budget. He suggested that it is reasonable to give this input to Dr. Mills but that a formal vote may not be needed.

John withdrew his motion. Brigid Bieber confirmed that there was consensus that Dr. Mills should use the numbers on slide #6 to budget going forward.

Dr. Mills recommended revoting the FY' 11 Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget and Assessment. Don Aicardi said that the Table 6 analysis has been revised from last month to incorporate final cherry sheet numbers and transportation. The projected E&D amount generated from the close of the FY10 fiscal year is \$1.862 million. While this is close to the \$1.9 million, 5% cap enforced by the DOR, it is below the maximum.

Based on the entire situation - that we have to stay below \$1.9 million, maintain level service, and give back to the taxpayers, the Administration is recommending an additional tax return. If E&D is lowered, the Administration will send these new numbers to Acton and Boxborough so they can be used for their calculations. Our E&D number needs to be certified so we can find out what is available for FY12.

Herman Kabakoff wants to discuss lowering the assessment even more and consequently reducing the tax rate for payers. Brigid Bieber encouraged the Committee to ask themselves, “What is the right number for us to have in E&D for the ABRSD?” and focus on what they need to do on the Regional Board for the Acton-Boxborough schools.

Maria Neyland expressed frustration that the Committee was voting again. She was very much against Herman's suggestion of giving tax relief. John Petersen said that he did not vote last time because he had a different sense of how E&D should function. By law E&D cannot grow by more than 5% but there is no limitation on Free Cash. He feels that there is a good reason the Legislature capped E&D, because it is not meant to be a place to build a buffer. Free Cash is that place, in John's

opinion. He emphasized that the tax rate is the province of the Boards of Selectmen, not the School Committees. John was not comfortable with these numbers initially because of the high amount of E&D. While he agreed wholeheartedly that the Committee needs to deal fairly with the taxpayers, the Committee is charged with educating well, spending responsibly, and taxing prudently. He stated that the Committee does educate and spend well and responsibly, but based on how E&D was built, the tax is too high. He asked the Committee, at a minimum, to accept Don's recommendation for a revised assessment.

John moved that the School Committee accept Don Aicardi's proposal and increase the reserves. Mike Coppolino seconded the motion and agrees with the reduced assessment but wanted to talk about Maria's point. He was not as clear when the vote was taken at the Region last month as he is now after Xuan's excellent presentation at the 11/18/10 APS School Committee meeting. He agreed with Maria that Herman's suggestion of lowering the tax rate is wrong.

Maria Neyland asked if this discussion was a direct result of the waterfall model. John said that it absolutely was not. He said that there is no mark on which E&D dollars are which.

Sharon McManus agreed with many of Maria's comments but thinks that what we're doing is helping Acton's problem with decreased revenues that we did not budget for. She does not support Herman's proposal of going further. If Boxborough asked for our help to solve a problem like this, Sharon believes that the Committee would work with them and help as well.

Amy Hedison spoke from the audience and said that as a taxpayer, she feels giving money back is ingenuous. She believes that the taxpayers want it used for the schools and that where the money comes from should be clear. Based on this budget, she feels that we are taking transportation money and using it to reduce the assessment.

Dr. Mills emphasized that ARRA and EdJOBS are one time funding. Maria Neyland confirmed that the waterfall model was for one year only. She does not want to hear about it next year. Xuan Kong said that by honoring the policy to fund the waterfall for taxpayer relief, we are securing future support for the schools because we will still face a challenging time in the future. He supports Don's proposal for this year. Herman emphasized that the Committee is not talking about the waterfall. His point was that our E&D is right to the limit.

Nancy Sherburne submitted a letter for the last meeting about this, and spoke from the audience. She shares Maria and Amy's concerns, but feels there is a lot of consternation about returning money to tax payers. She referred to the referendum that came back with a resounding 'not at the expense of our town's needs'. She said it would be odd to a taxpayer to get a token amount back when there is talk of a possible override coming up. This seems shortsided/short term thinking right now. She emphasized that it is essential to realize that we have been cutting essential services in our schools for years now, and really need to think before turning funding away.

John Petersen wants more precision in the language that is being used. If the Regional School Committee decides to change the assessment, then the Board of Selectmen sets the tax rate. He said that the School Committees would not be acting responsibly if they didn't bring budgets to the Annual Town Meetings that they don't believe would pass. Sharon asked if this would be a permanent or temporary tax cut. She asked Xuan and John to take this to the ALG for an answer.

Mary Ann Ashton, Chair of the Acton Finance Committee, spoke from the audience and agreed with Maria that she doesn't want to hear waterfall again. She reminded the Committee, however, that this began last spring when we were looking at \$900,000 cut in schools and this waterfall model deal with the Acton tax payers was a solution. She commented that the FinCom and School Committees have a great track record of working collaboratively with the Acton and Boxborough Boards of Selectmen to

get through tough times. She recommended being honest with the public and doing what you say you will do. Brigid expressed being torn about the decision, but noted that it is a slight change compared to the totality of the budget.

John Petersen reread the motion (6.4.e in the packet).

Acton-Boxborough:

It was moved, seconded and

VOTED: that the total appropriation for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the fiscal year of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011 be set at \$38,276,079 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 \$23,945,163, Boxborough \$6,162,691, remainder to be accounted for by the Anticipated Chapter 70 Aid in the amount of \$6,539,039, Anticipated Charter School Aid in the amount of \$111,022, Transportation Aid, Chapter 71, Section 16C in the amount of \$593,641, a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$318,059, a transfer from E&D Reserves in the amount of \$605,806, and a transfer from the Junior High School Project Premium on Loan in the amount of \$658.

(Yes: Bieber, Coppolino, Kong, McManus, Petersen, Sabot No: Kabakoff, Neyland)

5. Health Trust Report

John Petersen reported on the HIT.

6. Subcommittee Updates

a. Policy

Brigid Bieber reported that the subcommittee had not met since the last meeting.

b. Class Size

Amy Hedison reported that the subcommittee is being formed and members will be announced at the next Regional meeting.

c. New Long Term Planning

Bruce, Xuan and Steve Mills agree that there is a need for this type of discussion. They will look at what and how other school districts do their planning. Steve will talk to the Brookline Schools' Superintendent Lupini about their new 5 year plan. The subcommittee plans to complete their work before the start of next school year. He asked the Chairs to seek input and feedback from the general public. They will meet later this month to finalize objectives and timelines.

At 10:35 p.m., the Committees took a two minute break.

7. Policy Revisions

a. Recommendation to Approve Revised School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention (File: JICFB), Exhibit (File: JICFB-E), Plan (File: JICFB-R) – **SECOND READING**

Liza Huber provided a marked copy with the revisions and reviewed the comparison of our district's compliance to the Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (see 6.7.a, in addendum). She commented that there has been tremendous ownership of this policy and plan.

Acton-Boxborough:

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to approve the revised School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention (File: JICFB), Exhibit (File: JICFB-E), Plan (File: JICFB-R)

Acton Public:

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

VOTED: to approve the revised School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention (File: JICFB), Exhibit (File: JICFB-E), Plan (File: JICFB-R)

- b. Recommendation to Approve Revised School Committee Policy on the School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting (File: BDA) – **SECOND READING**

Acton-Boxborough:

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to approve the revised School Committee Policy on the School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting (File: BDA) as proposed

Acton Public:

It was moved, seconded, and unanimously

VOTED: to approve the revised School Committee Policy on the School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting (File: BDA) as proposed

APS SC is suspended. AB SC continues. At 10:45 pm

AB NEW BUSINESS

- 1 Recommendation to Approve ABRHS Trip to Italy, April vacation, 2012 – **VOTE**
- 2 Recommendation to Accept Gift from ABRHS Friends of Drama to the Proscenium Circus – **VOTE**
- 3 Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Acton Boxborough Regional PTSO to the ABRHS – **VOTE**
- 4 Recommendation to Accept Gift from the Acton Boxborough Swimming Boosters Club – **VOTE**

Herman Kabakoff made a motion to approve the trip and accept the three gifts with gratitude.

Mike Copolino said that he would vote no on the trip to Italy based on personal experience and what he considered exorbitant fees of almost \$4000. Xuan Kong commented that last year the state passed an ethics reform law about accepting gifts over \$50. He asked Brigid Bieber to follow up to see if the teachers who would chaperone this trip at no cost be in violation of this new law. He asked if the teachers' travel expenses would be reimbursed as a gift. Maria Neyland went to the information session about this trip and said that it appeared to include a tremendous number of activities that were sure to be expensive. Brigid concluded that there were enough questions that the trip should be voted on at the next meeting. Herman amended his motion.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously

VOTED: to accept with gratitude the gifts from ABRHS Friends of Drama to the Proscenium Circus, from the Acton Boxborough Regional PTSO to the ABRHS and from the Acton Boxborough Swimming Boosters Club.

AB FOR YOUR INFORMATION

8.1 ABRHS

- a. Discipline Report, November 2010

8.2 RJ Grey Junior High

- a. Discipline Report, November 2010
- b. MCAS Update and Staff Letter – Dr. Mills highlighted this information about the good work being done in this important area.

8.3 Pupil Services

- a. ABRSD ELL Student Population, November 2010
- b. On Team – November 2010

8.4 Curriculum Update

- a. Preliminary Teacher-to-Teacher Update

8.5 FY'11 Monthly ABRSD Financial Reports

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools' website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

- a. Budget Status Summary
- b. Budget Status Summary – Special Education
- 8.6 Winter Coaches
- 8.7 Correspondence from the Community
 - a. “District School Calendar”, *Cassie Stewart*
 - b. “Religious Holidays Should Not Be School Holidays”, *Richard DeFuria*
 - c. “Please Keep NO SCHOOL on Holidays!”, *Igor Chernin*
 - d. “Earmarked Federal Funds & Level Service Funding of our Schools in 2012”, *group of 10 parents*
 - e. “Districts May Drop Religious Holidays”, *Jennifer Fenn Lefferts*, <http://www.boston.com/news/local/articles/2010/11/28>
 - f. “Religious Holidays”, *Bettie Noble*
 - g. “Input on School Calendar”, *Sally Edwards*
 - h. “Continued Observance of Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Good Friday”, *Jonathan Linden*
 - i. “Calendar”, *Kristina Rychlik*
 - j. “Acton 2020 Inventory Data Collection”, *Kristin Alexander, Acton Asst. Town Planner*
 - k. “Waterfall” presentation at Nov 18 meeting, *Amy Hedison*
- 8.8 Enrollment Report/Class Size Numbers – November 1, 2010
- 8.9 Complaint regarding The Pledge of Allegiance

APS SC was reconvened at 11:00 p.m.. AB/APS JOINT MEETING continued.

JOINT EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 11:01 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

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

YES (Bieber, Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, McManus, Neyland, Petersen, Sabot)

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

At 11:01 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously

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

YES (Coppolino, Kabakoff, Kong, McManus, Petersen)

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

At 11:15 p.m., the Committees were polled and voted to go out of Joint Executive Session. Both Committees adjourned at 11:16 p.m.

NEXT MEETINGS:

December 16 - 7:30 pm, APS SC Meeting at RJ Grey JH Library

January 6 – 7:30 pm, AB SC Meeting at RJ Grey JH Library

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

Documents Used: See agenda attached.

Materials for this meeting are posted on the schools’ website at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/meetings.shtml>.

Class Size Sub-Committee - Basics

- Step 1 – Information gathering
 - Administration
 - All principals
 - Teachers
 - Parents
 - Students
- Step 2 – Suggestions, solutions and recommendations

Class Size Sub-Committee - members

- Brendan Cotter
- Alex Horovitz
- Christine Phillips
- Chris Renzi
- Kristina Rychlik
- Nancy Sherburne

Class Size – Re-frame the issue

*Availability and accessibility of
QUALIFIED, TRAINED adults for students
of all ages and at all levels of learning*

To: Mike Coppolino
From: Blake Lochrie
Date: 1/4/11

I have asked ACIS for justification for any price difference. I asked them to compare their prices and offerings with EF Tours. Their reply included these points:

- Hotels

ACIS - centrally located 3 - 4 star within walking distance or short subway rides of major points. (This has proven true in previous trips to England and France.)

EF Tours - 2 - 3 star in the suburbs. Dinners at the hotels, leaving students stranded in suburban hotels in the evenings. (On previous trips we have made the evenings into valuable experiences.)

- Rooming

ACIS - 2 to 3 students per room. No charge for upgrade if needed, if there are 5 girls, three in one room, two in another. EF will charge extra for a double.

EF Tours - Four to a room. I read reviews of people telling of 4 students in a room with two double beds.

- Meals

ACIS - Varied, three course meals. My experience has been that the meals have been memorable parts of the trips.

EF Tours - One review said, "Get used to chicken fingers and french fries."

- Tour guides

ACIS - Quality, experienced guides. Past guides have been wonderful, mature pros.

EF Tours - Young, college age kids, passing through.

- Private Tours

ACIS - with 18-20 students we are guaranteed our own bus and guide. I appreciate this as a management and safety issue as we are not placed with students from other schools who may have different behavior expectations.

EF Tours - 48 bus seats, all occupied.

I suggest that any one who is interested Google the ratings for any company. For example "ACIS tour ratings" or "EF tour ratings" to get a host of information. Frankly, I was shocked by the disparity between the different companies in this business.

ELL STUDENT POPULATION
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
January 1, 2011

Category	Final Total as of 12/1/2010	Additions	Subtractions	Current Total as of 1/1/2011
RJG JHS	7	+1	0	8
ABRHS	9	0	0	9
ABRSD TOTALS	16	0	0	17

Letter to the Editor: The Beacon

January 3, 2011

Petersen Runs for School Committee

To The Editor:

Three years have passed quickly and my first term as a member of the Acton School Committee will end with town meeting in the Spring. I have appreciated the opportunity to serve and will ask the voters to extend my service for an additional year. I will be running for the one year remaining on the School Committee seat held by Herman Kabakoff who has decided not to run for election. With Sharon McManus-Smith's decision not to run for re-election, this will leave two three-year seats open. I hope strong candidates will run for these positions and we will have a spirited debate about how we may best continue Acton and A-B's tradition of educational excellence.

January also marks an increased focus on our budget for next year and preparation for town meeting. The school committee meetings leading up to town meeting provide an excellent opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of our school operations and to influence our policies and our budgets. I encourage citizens who are interested in the schools to attend these meetings and send emails with questions or comments to the shell for the Acton Public School Committee: apsc@acton-ma.gov or the AB Regional SC: abrsc@acton-ma.gov or my personal email john.s.petersen@verizon.net.

John Petersen

6 Jackson Drive

Acton, MA

From:  **Marc Lewis**

Thursday, December 16, 2010 10:59:24 AM  

Subject: AEA Grant Recipients

To:  News

Cc:  AB School Committee

Dear Colleagues,

The Acton Education Association is delighted once again to support our newest colleagues with the outstanding work they are doing with their students. The seven individuals listed below have been awarded a total of \$1,400 for the following:

Cheryl Beaudoin - McCarthy-Towne - Writing Traits Book Bundle for Kindergarten classes

Adrienne Calotta - RJ Grey - materials for Spanish classroom to be obtained on upcoming trip to South America

Kerry Cusick - Merriam - materials for sight word instruction and activities

Noel Erickson - Douglas - books to assist with guided reading instruction

Spencer Harvey - RJ Grey - materials to enhance study of Colonial America

Sam McHale - ABRHS - books to enhance U.S. and world history curricula

Beth Warner - Douglas - materials for students to create buildings as part of "Acton Long Ago" unit

On behalf of the entire AEA, congratulations to each of our grant recipients. We are so proud to support such worthy efforts and colleagues eagerly looking for ways to enhance the excellent work they do for their students.

All the best,
Marc