

**ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
MINUTES (approved 10-20-11)

**Cafetorium**  
**Douglas School**

**September 15, 2011**  
**7:30 p.m.**

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*Members Present:* Dennis Bruce, Mike Coppolino, Kim McOsker, Paul Murphy, John Petersen,  
*Members Absent:* Xuan Kong  
*Others:* Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

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1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Mike Coppolino called the Acton Public School Committee to order at 7:30 p.m.

2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRO

Mike Coppolino thanked the Douglas PTO co-chairs, Deanne O'Sullivan and Martha Papalia, and Hospitality Chair, Cheryl Witty for the refreshments.

Dr. Mills reported that it was a good opening of school but there were some issues due to the weather and Hurricane Irene. His opening day speech for staff stressed his goals for the year. AEA President Marc Lewis also spoke on opening day and complimented the Superintendent's message. See posted information.

3. STATEMENT OF WARRANT

Warrant #201205 dated 9/6/11 in the amount of \$538,504.31 was signed by the Chairperson and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES – to be done at the next meeting

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

6. EDUCATION REPORTS

6.1 Christopher Whitbeck, Principal, Douglas School

Dr. Whitbeck reported on what is happening in the Douglas School. He explained "Global Education" and said that in K- 6th grade, kids should know that there are children who are much less fortunate than they are and that they can do something do change that. "Free the Children" was started by a young person 12 years ago to help children in India and build them a school. Douglas partnered with this organization and raised \$8500 and built a school in Kenya. Throughout the year, the students are involved with many community service projects. Club Penguin awarded them the Big Dreamers award of \$5000. Conant and Douglas were the only schools in the US to receive this award. This is in addition to working on reading, writing, and arithmetic.

When asked what he considers his most important School Improvement Plan goal, Dr. Whitbeck said that it is his focus on assessment. Teachers are now coming together for two Thursdays every month to work on formative assessment and finding the best way to assess children. He reported that this is "a very exciting time".

6.2 English Learner Education (ELE) Report

The Superintendent introduced this report by reminding everyone that speaking casual "Friday Night" English is very different from the language used in the English speaking classroom. He said that he is very proud of this part of what our schools do.

Suzanne Szwarczewicz, Liza Huber, Theresa Laquerre and Pat Garrison (7-12) gave an excellent presentation about how English Learner Education is handled in our district. (see slides) They were assisted by Juhi, an AB senior and Igor, an AB graduate now in college, who shared their experiences as young students in our schools who did not speak English when they started. Currently we have 111 students in this category, compared to 90 last year. See posted slides. One difference between ELE and special education services with an IEP, is that all ELE services must be provided by a trained ELE instructor.

John Petersen stated that the school's mission is that every student reach their full potential. He asked how well the staff is doing connecting with students' families, as this is an important support for all students. Suzanne said that they are doing ok but always wish they had more resources. Some schools have buddy programs. Zoila Riccardi has reached out to the ELE program and has been a wonderful help. An annual family night is popular. Acton's Community social worker, Laura Ducharme has been a great resource.

Liza Huber said that the ELE program is woefully understaffed. Suzanne's direct service time has been cut so that .2 of it can be used for coordination at the administrative level. Liza will be advocating for an additional ELE teacher for the elementary schools. Currently, there are two.

## 7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### **7.1 Budget**

Don Aicardi reported that APS ended FY11 with a \$497,861.47 positive fund balance. This is slightly higher than the \$471,000 reported to the School Committee on August 2<sup>nd</sup> due to some final transactions completed after the close of the fiscal year. The vast majority of this positive balance was created by a combination of \$434,000 of non-recurring, one-time factors including: FY10 ARRA IDEA grant, scheduling of Early Retirement Incentive (ERI) enabling a portion to be paid from FY10 instead of FY11, and an SFSF grant. These kinds of surpluses will not be available in FY12.

Planning has begun for FY13, as we close out FY11 and get into FY12. Internal documents go to department heads next week, asking how much accounts will increase to maintain level service as a start. The month of November will be spent analyzing the requests so thoughtful discussions about budget priorities can take place in December about FY13.

### **7.2 ALG Update, 9/8/11 meeting**

Mike Coppolino read a summary of the meeting submitted by Xuan Kong. Don Aicardi reported that he presented at FinCom on Tuesday night. He said some people feel a stabilization fund should be created for the first time, as well as other options. He is researching this and will get results out in advance of the October School Committee meeting. A new Table 6 may be voted.

### **7.3 Subcommittee Updates**

#### 7.3.1 Long Range Strategic Planning

Steve Mills reported that a survey is being given to the staff for their input on the proposed goals and values. He hopes all staff will participate.

### **7.4 Initial MCAS Results**

Deb Bookis reported that the MCAS results are embargoed until approximately September 19 by the DESE. She said that the APS as a district scored very high.

### **7.5 Food Service News**

Food Services Director, Kirsten Nelson reported on the new Point of Sale payment system being installed in the APS and ABRSD schools. This will be in use next month. There is a lot of effort being spent on informing students, families and staff about how this will work. The website will have complete information. Cafeteria managers, as well as Kirsten, can answer questions. Many schools use the system very successfully.

- 7.6 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as APS Rep to CASE  
**It was moved, seconded and unanimously,**  
**VOTED:** to Appoint Stephen Mills as the APS Representative to CASE for 2011-2012
- 7.7 Recommendation to Appoint Xuan Kong as Acton Rep to EDCO as a voting board member  
**It was moved, seconded and unanimously,**  
**VOTED:** to Appoint Xuan Kong as the Acton Representative to EDCO as a voting board member for 2011-2012
- 7.8 Recommendation to Accept Gifts from AB Community Education to the Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools from the surplus generated by the Extended Day/Enrichment programs  
**It was moved, seconded and unanimously,**  
**VOTED:** to Accept Gifts from AB Community Education to the Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools from the surplus generated by the Extended Day programs run by Community Education and to the Conant School from the surplus generated by the Extended Day program and Enrichment programs run by Community Education at Conant

Steve Mills appreciates that the Community Education Program is sharing these profits with the schools. John Petersen reminded the Committee that although it is great to have this source of revenue, the School Committee must review the way the funds are being generated and be sure it is understood by the public. The Committee agreed.

8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

8.1 School Improvement Plans

Steve Mills pointed out that while the schools' plans are similar due to district leadership, they are also different due to the different schools. Learning goals and tools to measure are included in all content areas in all grade levels. These will be in the SMART goals at the November meeting. Steve said, "We work toward goals but don't need to always attain them to be successful. If we don't know where we're going, how will we get there?" Mike Coppolino stated that the School Councils are very important. He feels that if they don't meet at least 4 or 5 times a year, they are not really taking their School Council seriously.

9. NEXT MEETINGS: September 21, 7:30 p.m. in the JH Library, ABRSC Meeting  
 (Appointment of Regional Study Committee)  
 John Peterson said that the purpose of this committee is to see if items can be identified that the community might support regarding regionalization. It is not to prejudge the community.  
 October 6, 7:30 p.m. in the JH Library, ABRSC Meeting  
 October 20, 7:30 p.m. in the McCarthy-Towne Library, APS Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
 Beth Petr

Documents Used: see agenda attached.

## ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Cafetorium  
Douglas School

September 15, 2011  
7:30 p.m.

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### AGENDA with addendum

1. CALL TO ORDER
2. CHAIRMAN'S INTRO  
First Day of School Report – *Steve Mills*
  - 2.1 Welcome Back Letter to All Staff from the Superintendent\*
  - 2.2 Staff Opening Day presentation slides 8/29/11\*
3. STATEMENT OF WARRANT
4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION
6. EDUCATION REPORTS
  - 6.1 Christopher Whitbeck, Principal, Douglas School (7:40)
  - 6.2 English Learner Education (ELE) Report, *Suzanne Szwarczewicz, Liza Huber, Theresa Laquerre, Pat Garrison\** (7:50)
7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS
  - 7.1 Budget – *Don Aicardi* (8:20)
    - 7.1.1 Closing out FY11 APS budget\* (*addendum*)
    - 7.1.2 Planning for FY13 budget
  - 7.2 ALG Update, 9/8/11 meeting – *Xuan Kong\**
  - 7.3 Subcommittee Updates (8:30)
    - 7.3.1 Long Range Strategic Planning – *Steve Mills (revised in addendum)\**
      - 7.3.1.2 Staff Survey\* (*addendum*)
  - 7.4 Initial MCAS Results – *Deb Bookis* (8:35)
  - 7.5 Food Service News – *Kirsten Nelson\** (8:40)
    - 7.5.1 Pricing Update
    - 7.5.2 Point of Sale System Transition
    - 7.5.3 Food Service News II with Point of Sale System Q and A (*addendum*)
  - 7.6 Recommendation to Appoint Stephen Mills as APS Rep to CASE, 2011-2012 – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills* (8:55)
  - 7.7 Recommendation to Appoint Xuan Kong as Acton Rep to EDCO as a voting board member 2011-2012 – **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
  - 7.8 Recommendation to Accept Gifts from AB Community Education to the Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools from the surplus generated by the Extended Day programs run by Community Education and to the Conant School from the surplus generated by the Extended Day program and Enrichment programs run by Community Education at Conant– **VOTE** – *Steve Mills*
8. FOR YOUR INFORMATION (9:00)
  - 8.1 School Improvement Plans\*: Conant, Douglas (*addendum*), Gates, McT, Merriam
  - 8.2 Enrollment Update\* (*addendum*)
  - 8.3 Interaction – Fall 2011: <http://comed.ab.mec.edu>
  - 8.4 The Lamplighter – September 2011: [http://ab.mec.edu/about/publications\\*](http://ab.mec.edu/about/publications*)
  - 8.5 Parent Communication Map: [http://ab.mec.edu/pdffiles/ParentCommunicationMap.pdf\\*](http://ab.mec.edu/pdffiles/ParentCommunicationMap.pdf*)

8.6 Acton 2020 Update\*

8.7 For Your Calendar: <http://ab.mec.edu/about/calendars>

8.7.1 Schools Open\*

8.7.2 Open House Dates\*

8.7.3 School Calendar 2011-2012\*

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(Appointment of Regional Study Committee)  
October 6, 7:30 p.m. in the JH Library, ABRSC Meeting  
October 20, 7:30 p.m. in the McCarthy-Towne Library, APS Meeting

ADJOURN (9:10)

\* see document in meeting packet