

Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee Seeks Volunteers

The Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee is looking for volunteers to serve on a Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC). The RSDSC is anticipated to meet weekly over a one to three year period. This is an opportunity to have a real impact on our students' educations for years to come!

On Tuesday, August 2nd, the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) voted to create the RSDSC to research, evaluate, and report back to the ABRSC its findings with respect to amending the Regional Agreement between the Towns of Acton and Boxborough. **This will include considering the viability of expanding the current Regional School District to include grades pre-K through 12 for Acton and Boxborough.**

Three members from Acton and 3 members from Boxborough will be selected by the ABRSC to serve on the RSDSC. The composition of the RSDSC will include:

- Current school committee member from each town
- Current or previous finance committee member from each town, or a person with the knowledge and experience to evaluate financial models
- Community Resident (parent of a current student(s) preferred)

It will be important to understand the time commitment for this committee. After preliminary work is completed by the RSDSC over the next 10-12 months, and if pre-K through 12 regionalization is approved by both member towns, the RSDSC will continue its work for up to approximately 3 years.

We anticipate that initially the RSDSC will meet weekly and these meetings will be open to the public. Frequency of the meetings will range from weekly to monthly depending on where the committee is in the process.

If you are interested in volunteering for this important study committee, and if you are someone willing to collaborate, compromise and work together in a spirit of cooperation as part of a committee, please submit your name and statement of interest to Beth Petr at bpetr@mail.ab.mec.edu and copy Bruce Sabot at bsabot@mail.ab.mec.edu. Please include a description of your skills and experience and why you feel you would be an asset to this study committee. (See <http://ab.mec.edu/about/schoolcommittee.shtml>)

Please submit the requested information by noon on Friday, September 9th.

In your statement of interest please include the following details:

- Briefly introduce yourself.
- Please describe personal and/or professional skills that you believe would benefit your work on the Study Committee.
- Please describe your experience serving on Town or other Boards.
- Do you understand the time commitment and expect to see the work of the study committee to its completion?
- Can you maintain an open unbiased opinion regarding regionalization as the study committee performs its research and analysis?
- Please explain how you will represent and consider the needs of our children, parents, teachers, and community at large as you represent your town on the study committee.
- Please share any other interests or information you believe the ABRSC should know about you as it evaluates your candidacy for the study committee.

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Peter K. Ashton
Acton

I wish to express my interest in serving on the Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC). I am a parent of three daughters who have attended the Acton-Boxborough schools; two have graduated from Acton-Boxborough Regional High School and one daughter is a sophomore there now. I am the President of Innovation & Information Consultants, Inc. an economic, finance, and management consulting firm located in Concord, Massachusetts. I hold master's degrees in business and economics from Columbia University and an A.B. from Colby College in economics and government. I have lived in Acton for 20 years. I have served on numerous boards including the town of Acton as well as several non-profit organizations.

I understand how boards and committees must work in a collaborative fashion and believe that a sense of humor is always a key asset when tackling difficult and sometimes contentious issues. As a member of the Acton Board of Selectmen I consulted with John Fallon and Dore' Hunter on the last revision of the Regional School Agreement and therefore, I understand the myriad issues facing both towns, the give and take that is required to develop consensus, and the hard work and cooperation that is necessary to reach a meaningful compromise. The issues facing the two towns and the school districts, while not unique, certainly require these skills and I believe my personality is well-suited to the task.

In addition, the work of the RSDSC will require an understanding of municipal and school finances, enrollment trends, educational priorities and the needs of our children and teaching staff. My experience and background make me well-suited for these tasks as well. I have served as a member of the Acton Finance Committee for one year, a member of the Acton Board of Selectmen for 9 years and I have worked closely with the School Committees and School Administration during and after those years. I have a thorough understanding of municipal finance issues and am currently consulting with other municipalities and interest groups on local fiscal matters. Also as a member of the Board of Selectmen I worked with Marie Altieri and Jonathan Chinitz to push an alternative approach to Chapter 70 funding that ultimately greatly benefited Acton and Boxborough.

I have assisted in the development of Acton and Boxborough's enrollment projections since 1997 and our firm now regularly does enrollment projections for various school districts including Miami-Dade County in Florida. In addition, we built the enrollment model used by the Massachusetts State School Building Authority and which is available to all Massachusetts school districts on line.

Through my many years as a community activist I have come to understand the intricacies of operating a large school district, the potential costs and benefits of regionalization from both the perspective of a parent and a community leader. I have spent countless hours talking with people in this town and elsewhere about the strengths of our school system and why our children both deserve and receive an excellent education.

I understand the time commitment and am willing to work hard on this committee and see it through its mission. I do continue to volunteer in other capacities but one advantage of having one's own firm located nearby is that I can be available for meetings most any time of day.

I will come to this committee an unbiased, but relatively informed member with regard to regionalization. I have no preconceived notion as to whether it is a good idea or a bad idea to regionalize pre-K-12, but I believe I already have a good understanding of the research and analysis that is required for the committee to perform its work. In doing so I will represent and consider the needs of our kids, teachers, parents and the community as a whole in the same manner in which I have done so previously as an appointed and elected official. Working hard, listening, cooperating, and understanding the varied perspectives of all constituents is a hallmark of my experience here in Acton as well as in my professional life where I often participate in mediation and other forms of dispute resolution on issues where it is not uncommon for there to be hundreds of millions and even billions of dollars at stake.

The future of the Acton and Boxborough schools is critically important for all of us and I would be honored to work on this Study Committee to help shape that future.

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Mary F. Brolin
Boxborough

Hello, my name is Mary Brolin. I am writing to volunteer to serve as the Boxborough School Committee Member to the Regional School District Study Committee. I have been a member of the Boxborough School Committee for 3.5 years and have been involved in the process of assessing Boxborough's interest in expanding the current Regional School District to include grades pre-K through 12 for Acton and Boxborough.

I have a strong interest in the Boxborough community and have volunteered in a number of roles. I was the President of the Parent, Teachers, Friends organization for Boxborough for three years; I served on the Blanchard School Council for one year; I have been a Trustee of the Sargent Memorial Library for seven years; and I currently serve on the School Committee. Professionally, I am a Social Scientist at Brandeis University. I conduct research on behavioral health issues and teach a course in the Masters in Public Policy program at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. I have expertise in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, and routinely use data to inform policy and program decision making. I believe these skills and interests would benefit my work on the Committee.

I fully understand the time commitment involved in this process and expect to see the work of the Committee completed to the best of my ability. I am up for re-election in May 2012 and will run again for the School Committee. I am expressly interested in serving on this Committee because I believe it is vitally important that the Committee members come to the table with an open, unbiased opinion regarding regionalization. I expect that the Committee will use the input from its research and analysis, including input from both communities, to determine the best course of action. Although the Committee will work together to determine the research that needs to be done for this effort, I foresee getting input from other communities and the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, compiling cost data from both the Boxborough and Acton Public School Districts, and gathering community input through forums and perhaps electronic survey platforms. We will have to work to ensure that the community input is broad, including parents of the school systems, families who are not yet in the school systems, community members who do not have children in the schools, and the elected officials of each town. Together, all of these data will guide the Committee's planning and decision making.

I look forward to continuing my commitment to serve the community of Boxborough and hope you will consider me for the Committee.

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Adria O. Cohen
Acton

I am submitting a statement of interest for the RDSC in the role of community resident. Although I am no longer the parent of a current student, I have lived in town since 1987 and am involved in education on a daily basis as a language immersion instructor in another system. As an employee in this system, I have seen first hand how collaboration among and between systems in areas such as ELL instruction and food services can be accomplished with cost savings and efficient and effective delivery of services to students. At the same time, the personal identity and preferences of residents of both towns must be kept in mind; I attended meetings where the regionalization with another system was discussed many years ago and still remember some of the commentary and discussion that took place.

While my family, educational and professional responsibilities did not allow me to volunteer on town committees in the past, I now have the time and energy to give back to the community, recognizing that the study group will require many hours of voluntary commitment. I believe that all of us in the community, whether our children are still in the system or not, have a moral obligation to think of how our actions will affect future generations of students and residents and in addition, keep in mind the financial and social advantages and disadvantages of decisions. There are a number of ways to involve the interests of our diverse ages and backgrounds, but neighborhood discussions and feedback through social media may be one way to facilitate the involvement of a wide range of the community.

Thank you for your consideration of my application.

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Kristin Hilberg
Boxborough

I would very much like to be considered as one of the Boxborough members of the proposed Regional School District Study Committee. I believe I have a unique perspective and skill set that I can bring to the committee and will serve the Region well.

I'm a lifelong resident of Boxborough, having attended and graduated from both Blanchard Memorial School and then Acton Boxborough Regional schools. I received a phenomenal education, and after college returned to Boxborough to marry, build a home and raise my own family. I have a son, Nick Goodemote, who has graduated from the High School, and a daughter, Megan, who is currently a Junior.

Professionally, I am a Realtor with Keller Williams Realty and serve on our Agent Leadership Committee which is essentially a Board of Directors for our franchise. I cannot stress enough the fact that our excellent schools maintain our property values and bring talented families to the area to raise their children.

My educational background includes a B.S. in Elementary Education and a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction. Believe it or not, these degrees have held me in good stead and have helped me to build a very successful real estate career. The talents and skills one needs to run a classroom and to develop curriculum are also needed to help buyers and sellers navigate the sales process and end up with a win-win real estate experience.

My family believes in giving back to the community, and I have proudly upheld that tradition. I've been involved in Boxborough's town government in various capacities for more than 20 years. I began the recycling program in the early 1990s, served 5 years on the Finance Committee (including chairing and presenting the budget to Town Meeting) and 6 years on the Board of Selectmen. Over the course of my two elected terms I represented countless articles successfully on Town Meeting floor and during my last term I chaired the board. My eleven year tenure on these two major boards meant interacting and liaising with virtually every board and committee in town, interfacing with the public and press as well as communicating our needs to our local state representatives. I loved every minute of it! Currently, I serve on the ZBA and enjoy the ability to continue to serve in yet another facet of town government.

With regard to the schools, I volunteered in many capacities at Blanchard. To name just a few roles I played, I was a room mother, the PTF Hospitality Coordinator, the Academic Volunteer Coordinator and served on the School Council. All of these positions were held for more than 3 years each. They also gave me the opportunity to interact with the administration, teachers, staff and community to help foster the goals of educating our children.

I'm no stranger to committing to a cause and following it through to its completion. I'm a team player, and understand and appreciate the importance of studying, exploring and listening to all sides of an issue and then working together to come to a consensus that makes the most sense. I thoroughly enjoy working in groups and present well to both large and small audiences. I believe I am also good at listening to our community members concerns, and more importantly hearing what they are expressing.

I believe I can offer the Region my unique experience as both a Boxborough student and parent in the ABRS system. I also know how to read and understand a municipal budget and have a lot of experience working with many different people with differing points of view. Quite frankly, I have also grown from my experiences on various committees over the past 20 years and feel I can meet the challenge of serving on this committee.

Finally, I'd like you to know that I am an optimistic, proactive, positive person who enjoys a challenge. I truly hope you will consider allowing me to serve on this very important committee.

If you have any questions, or plan to conduct interviews, please contact me using the information below.

Thanks for considering me, and keep up the good work!

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Xuan Kong
Acton

I would like to be considered as a member of the Regional School District Study Committee.

Currently I serve as a member of Acton and Acton Boxborough Regional School Committees. My wife and I have been Acton residents for over ten years and we have two children, one is studying at the high school and one at Gates elementary school. I have served on various town and school committees, including Acton Leadership Group, District Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee, Cost Saving Task Force, Special Education Financial Task Force, and Comprehensive Community Plan Steering Committee (Phase I). I also volunteer at Gates elementary school, Acton Chinese Language School, and a local Boy Scout Troop.

Currently I hold a senior management position in a medical device firm. Prior to that position, I was an associate professor at Northern Illinois University. My education background includes an advanced engineering degree, an MBA from Boston University, and an undergraduate degree from China.

I understand the time commitment required and will strive to maintain an open and unbiased opinion on issues in front of the RSDSC.

Thank you for your consideration.

Statement of Interest - Acton Boxborough Regional School District Study Committee
9/21/11

Malcolm (Mac) P. Reid
Boxborough

Please accept this letter as my application to participate on the Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC). I have spent the last five years as Superintendent of Schools in Shirley. For over three of those years I participated fully as an ad hoc member of the Ayer Shirley Regional Planning Committee. In that time, the Superintendent of the Ayer Public Schools, the Shirley Business Manager, and I provided the Regional Planning Committee with all the information that they used to make their decision whether or not to regionalize the Ayer and Shirley School Districts.

From March 2010 through June 2011, my main responsibility with the same two administrators was to develop and implement a transition plan prior to the start of an operational region on July 1, 2011. These two periods of time gave me significant opportunity to study both the obvious and subtle nuances of regionalization: i.e., what is in the best interests of the students, the families, the districts, and the communities; what are the advantages and disadvantages; what are the political and financial implications; how do you keep the members of the communities, and relevant boards/committees informed and involved; etc.

Requested Information

Briefly introduce yourself: I have lived at 140 Flagg Hill Road in Boxboro for twenty-four years with my wife Beth (Elisabeth) to whom I have been married for 43 years. I worked in the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools as the Director of Personnel for ten years, as Principal of RJ Grey for nine years, and as the Interim Superintendent/Principal at Blanchard for one year. One of my daughters attended Blanchard and both attended RJ Grey and ABRHS as soon as we moved here in 1987. I have a great interest in the young people of Acton and Boxborough and an equal interest in the educational systems in which I worked here for twenty years.

Please describe personal and/or professional skills that you believe would benefit your work on the Study Committee: Most of my forty-three years as an educator have been spent as either a central office administrator or principal. During this time I had either budgetary responsibility of a specific school, or in most years, for the entire school district. Budgetary experience will be both important and necessary to the RSDSC. I believe that I have a long track record of being a team player and willing to work with all issues and people in a thoughtful and reasonable manner to accomplish a task.

Please describe your experience serving on Town or other Boards: While at Acton-Boxborough, I served as an ad hoc member of the Acton Leadership Group. During my year as Superintendent/Principal of Blanchard (2005-6), I served as an ad hoc member of Boxborough's budget committee. During the 2009-10 school year, I was an active

member of the study committee at Blanchard looking at options to merge Blanchard in some form with another district. This led to the positive sense of the meeting vote to pursue the concept of regionalization at last spring's Annual Town Meeting. I was a long-term member of the ABSAF Board and a seventeen year member of the Board of Corporators of the Emerson Hospital representing Boxborough. I chaired the Ty-Rods (car) Club's Old Timers' Reunion event for seventeen years. I have served on and been the chair of several committees in my church including the Trustees and Personnel Committees. I have chaired many committees which hired school administrators (including superintendents). I chaired the Blanchard staff and community committee which re-organized the administrative structure of the school district during the 2005-6 school year.

Do you understand the time commitment and expect to see the work of the study committee to its completion? I retired from full-time work as of June 30, 2011. As a full-time administrator for many years, I am very familiar with evening meetings and commitments.

Can you maintain an open unbiased opinion regarding regionalization as the study committee performs its research and analysis? My highest priority is what is in the best interests of the students. The answer to this in the long-term will also be what is in the best long-term interests of the towns. I will be committed to answering this question in an unbiased, organized, respectful, thoughtful, and thorough way.

Please explain how you will represent and consider the needs of our children, parents, teachers, and community at large as you represent your town on the study committee: Having gone through this experience for the last five years in Ayer and Shirley, I know what some of the questions are, and I know what it will take to find the answers to these questions. As stated above, the best answer to this regionalization issue will come from the study which determines what is best in the long-term for students. It will be important to foster an RSDSC committee that communicates openly and frequently with members of both communities. This includes students, parents, community members, and people representing town boards like the Boards of Selectmen and Finance Committees.

Please share any other interests or information you believe the ABRSC should know about you as it evaluates your candidacy for the study committee: I have a commitment to all the schools in Acton and Boxborough as well as the communities where I have worked, socialized and raised my children. These communities have served my family and me very well and I want to continue to serve them.

Regionalizing at the elementary level is an important decision. It speaks to the long-term quality of education for future generations of students, for taxpayer's willingness and ability to pay, the quality of life in Acton and Boxborough, and to the overall pride in these communities. The Regional School District Study Committee has significant long-term implications for the students and both communities. I welcome the opportunity to participate in this process.