

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)  
WORKSHOP Approved Open Minutes

Auditorium  
Administration Building  
15 Charter Road, Acton

July 30, 2020  
7:00 p.m.  
8:00 p.m. Executive Session

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Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer, Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang  
Members Absent: none  
Others: Marie Altieri (arrived at 8:00 p.m.), Dawn Bentley, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Maureen Lin (left at 8:20 p.m.) and Beth Baker (left at 8:20 p.m.)

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The ABRSC was called to order at 7:17 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

1. **Preliminary Discussion of 2020-2021 ABRSC Goals**

SEED Trainers and AB staff members Beth Baker and Maureen Lin led the discussion. They began by reviewing the Norms Brainstorming list. Using Ibram X. Kendi's framing, members shared comments on a series of quotes, then identified patterns and areas of unique thinking.

The quotes were:

- What is racism? Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequalities.
- A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains inequality between groups.
- What if we realized that the best way to ensure an effective educational system is not by standardizing our curricula and tests but by standardizing the opportunities available to all students?
- Assimilationists can position any racial group as the superior standard that another racial group should measure themselves against, the benchmark they should be trying to reach.

In a discussion of possible policy changes, concern was expressed by a number of members regarding the leveling of many of our classes and the use and objective of having School Resource Officers in our school buildings. There was a comment about the prohibition of Black Student Unions.

Members discussed Phase Theory based on Peggy McIntosh's work. She is the founder of the National SEED Project. Phase 1 is a narrow definition of excellence. Phase 2 is "Exceptional" others are admitted. Phase 3 covers Resistance, Issues and "Isms". Phase 4 is the Transformative Power of Inclusion. Finally Phase 5 is Education as a Balance Between the Phases. Beth cautioned that Ms. McIntosh is an academic so her work is also talking about teaching. Members talked about possible blind spots at AB. What behaviors or policies might need some consideration?

The example of a school multicultural dinner was given. While it seems like a thoughtful symbolic activity, is it the right thing to do? Is it truly inclusive? Does it show some cultural blindness?

Asked for their thoughts, members' comments included:

- I would like time to digest these comments, and think about my response. Several members echoed this.
- I wonder where I am in the phases. I am afraid that I will be hurtful when I don't want to be.
- I am thinking about the different kinds of student activities we have and how they create identifies. How can you make one group of kids feel just as valuable as another group?
- People like having a special identity. How can we help young people enjoy being the whole person.
- It is difficult when you don't speak English well and with a mask on.
- Does policy drive things or the other way around?
- We need to help kids work their way up to reach their confidence level.
- What are the little things that we can start doing? What is the low hanging fruit?

Tessa noted how especially important it is to be doing this work this year, despite the pandemic. It is critical to have a clear path forward for School Committee members' work for the year, particularly given the relatively narrow path of their responsibility to the community. Members must understand the goals and use that to guide all of the Committee's decisions.

For the Wrap Up, members were asked to give one word describing how they were feeling with the training/workshop completed. Responses included: hopeful, thoughtful, overwhelmed, Unsure/hopeful/overwhelmed, cooked, and encouraged. Beth and Maureen were thanked for a very interesting session.

## 2. EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 8:20 p.m., Tessa stated the need for an executive session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec.21(a) Purpose 3: to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) because an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Committee. She stated that the Committee would return to open session for the sole purpose of adjourning.

John Petersen made the motion, seconded by Amy Krishnamurthy and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by Roll Call** to enter executive session.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang. Adam Klein had stepped out for a moment.)

## 3. ADJOURN

At 9:40 p.m. the Committee returned to open meeting. Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by Roll Call** to adjourn.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, Kremer, Krishnamurthy, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Tso, Wang)

*At ABRSD, our mission is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.*

*WELLNESS - EQUITY - ENGAGEMENT*

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: Norms Brainstorming, Kendi Quotes Jamboard, Continuum Brainstorming

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

- August 5, August 13, August 27, September 3