



Acton-Boxborough Regional  
School Committee Meeting

August 5, 2020

6:30 p.m. Executive Session  
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

Via zoom webinar:

<https://abschools.zoom.us/j/95248771505>

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)  
\*REVISED MEETING AGENDA

Virtual Public Zoom Webinar Meeting

To attend the open meeting: <https://abschools.zoom.us/j/95248771505>

To call in: 312 626 6799

Live streaming:

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

6:30 p.m. Executive Session

7:00 p.m. Open Business Meeting

- 
1. **Call to Order** (6:30 p.m.)
  2. **\*EXECUTIVE SESSION (6:30 p.m.)**  
“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”
  3. **Chairperson’s Welcome** (7:00 p.m.)
    - 3.1. **Public Participation** – Please use “Hand Raise” feature to participate (do not use the “Chat”)
  4. **ONGOING BUSINESS**
    - 4.1. **Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 7/23/2020 (next meeting) and 7/30/20 – VOTE** – Tessa McKinley
    - 4.2. **School Opening Update** – Peter Light
      - 4.2.1. **VOTE** on 2020-2021 Learning Plan
        - 4.2.1.1. [Transition to School](#) website found on [www.abschools.org](http://www.abschools.org)
      - 4.2.2. **VOTE** on revision to the 2020-2021 School Calendar
      - 4.2.3. Budget Update (oral)
    - 4.3. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**
      - 4.3.1. New Subcommittee and Liaison Assignments for 2020-2021 – Tessa McKinley (brought to meeting)
      - 4.3.2. School Building Committee Update –Peter Light (oral)
  5. **Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve – VOTE** – Tessa McKinley (next meeting)
  6. **FYI**
  7. **Adjourn**

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

- August 13 and 27 – 7:00 p.m.
- September 3 – 7:00 p.m.

Posted on 7/31/20 at 11:30 a.m.

Reposted on 8/3/20 at 6:30 p.m. to add executive session

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)  
WORKSHOP DRAFT Open MINUTES

Auditorium  
Administration Building  
15 Charter Road, Acton

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

---

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.)

---

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



# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720  
978-264-4700  
[www.abschools.org](http://www.abschools.org)

Peter J. Light  
Superintendent of Schools

**To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee**  
**From: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools**  
**Date: August 4, 2020**  
**RE: Transition to School - Recommended Plan**

At your August 5 meeting, our administrative team is seeking your vote to approve our [Transition to School Plan](#). As you recall, we are required to submit our final plan to DESE by August 10, and this vote, per DESE guidance, is required to take place prior to submitting that plan.

Our team has studied three options for a return to school: a full return, with appropriate restrictions; a hybrid return with appropriate restrictions; and a fully remote return. All options studied include an opportunity for our families to opt for a fully-remote learning program. Details of this analysis can be found in the [District Overview of the Transition to School Plan](#). This memorandum is designed to supplement our Draft Transition to School Plan and offer our recommendation as to the most appropriate option to implement.

## **Analysis of Risk**

Our teams identified early in our planning process that our top priority would be the health and safety of our students and staff. This priority acknowledges that the primary risk associated with a transition to in-person schooling is the risk of transmission of Covid-19 and the possible impact the virus has on the health of our students and staff. We need to acknowledge that no amount of planning can create an environment that is risk-free, and we know that whether or not we return to school or work remotely, it is possible that some of our students and staff may contract this virus. The implication of this is that our goal in the planning process was to take appropriate steps to mitigate any possible spread of the virus in our schools. To this end, we have taken the steps outlined in our full plan, but are focusing on three primary protective factors:

- A requirement that all students and staff wear masks
- Adhering to a 6' physical distancing standard
- Planning multiple opportunities each day for students and staff to practice personal hygiene

While student and staff health is necessarily the primary risk considered by our teams in recommending an option to transition to school, it is not the only risk we must acknowledge. We must also acknowledge that there are additional risks our students face if we do not return to school. [The Parabola Project](#), a joint venture between Ariadne Labs and The Learning Accelerator identified some of the key risks our students face by not being in school including:

- loss of learning
- social and emotional impact
- reduced detection of child abuse
- nutritional insecurity
- loss of parental employment

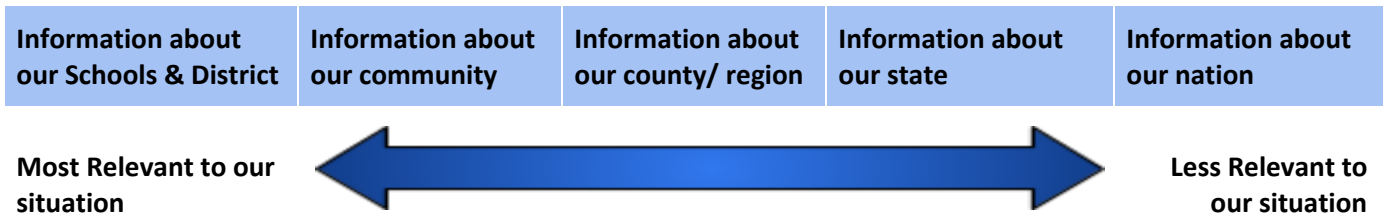
*To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.*

- lack of access to essential services

Schools play an essential role in the healthy lives of our students within and beyond the classroom walls. A decision to open our schools or keep them closed should be based on a balanced assessment of all of the risks to our students and staff, including the primary risk of infection from Covid-19.

**Current Public Health Information**

In addition to monitoring the evolving body of evidence around the transmission of Covid-19, as we prepare to transition our students and staff to school this fall, we will need to be vigilant in monitoring public health data. Below is a chart summarizing the types of information we will consider in making decisions for our schools.



A summary of key Public Health data available to us as of this memorandum:

**Local Data**

Active Cases in Acton: 4  
 Active Cases in Boxborough: 0

**Middlesex County Data (covidactnow.org)**

Daily New Cases (per 100K residents): 5.0  
 Infection Rate: 1.14  
 Positive Test Rate: No data available

**Massachusetts (covidactnow.org)**

Daily New Cases (per 100K residents): 5.8  
 Infection Rate: 1.15  
 Positive Test Rate: 3.0%

The state has not yet released information about “target” metrics that schools and districts may use to determine the relative safety of a return to school. We are hopeful that this is forthcoming as it would be a helpful, predictive measure that can assist schools in making decisions around additional opening steps, or closure.

As of this date, our state continues to be among the top in the nation with regard to containment of the virus. It is noteworthy that data for Middlesex County remain more favorable for a return to school than any of our neighboring counties (Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk, Worcester), and most significantly, the number of active cases in Acton and Boxborough has remained extremely low for several weeks.

*To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.*

We also need to acknowledge that despite very favorable local health data, and generally favorable state and country data, Massachusetts' "numbers" have elevated slowly. It will be critical for us to monitor this data carefully in the coming weeks and to make adjustments to our opening plan should the data no longer support in-person instruction.

**Enrollment Update**

As of this memorandum, enrolment for the in-person or remote learning programs is complete and our school administrators are following up with families who were not able to respond by the deadline. Since our surveys in early July, we have seen an increase in the percentage of students who have opted for a fully remote environment. Overall, the percentage of students who opted for fully remote increased by 4% from approximately 20% (July) to 24% (August). The most notable change occurred at the elementary level, where enrollment in the Remote Learning Program increased to approximately 31% of the overall elementary population.

**Enrollment as of 8/4**

	Remote	In Person	Total Responded	% Remote	Total Not Responded	Total Students	Response Rate
<b>RJ Grey</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>813</b>	<b>23.1%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>832</b>	<b>97.7%</b>
<b>ABRHS</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>1463</b>	<b>1715</b>	<b>14.7%</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>1776</b>	<b>96.6%</b>
Blanchard	134	330	464	28.9%	29	493	94.1%
Conant	162	201	363	44.6%	18	381	95.3%
Douglas	69	285	354	19.5%	26	380	93.2%
Gates	155	190	345	44.9%	17	362	95.3%
McT	120	343	463	25.9%	13	476	97.3%
Merriam	103	314	417	24.7%	18	435	95.9%
<b>Elementary Totals</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>1663</b>	<b>2406</b>	<b>30.9%</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>2527</b>	<b>95.2%</b>
CHECP	To be determined						
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1183</b>	<b>3751</b>	<b>4934</b>	<b>24.0%</b>	<b>201</b>	<b>5135</b>	<b>96.1%</b>

Enrollment in the Remote Learning Program *could possibly* warrant assignment of individual cohorts of students to teachers attached to elementary schools at *some schools and grade levels*. However, this is not the case across all schools and grade levels across the district. If we pursued this opportunity, I strongly believe we would create new inequities in our system and I strongly recommend we continue a district-wide approach to the creation of the Remote Learning Program. We are considering ways that the student in this program may remain connected to their original schools at different times throughout the year.

*To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.*



From a staffing perspective, changes in the enrollment to the remote program have necessitated a different strategic approach to staffing the program. Instead of using our curriculum coordinators to teach across grade levels in the remote program, we will use approximately 25 classroom teachers from across the district to staff this program K-6. This will also provide greater flexibility for the district to assign elementary staff to the Remote Learning Program who may have constraints that prevent them from working in an in-person environment.

### **Additional Information/ Considerations**

In a conference call with Superintendents on 8/3/20, DESE Commissioner Jeffrey Riley asked Superintendent's to share the following information with school committee's as they consider a decision to reopen schools:

- Video: [Medical Advisors to DESE on Back to School in MASS](#)
- Any additional federal funding for school districts may be tied to opening in-person
- If a school district opens remotely, interscholastic athletics may not be an option
- DESE will be implementing an "Accountability Auditing System" for school districts opening remotely

I do not have any additional information on the above statements at this time, but am sharing at the request of the Commissioner.

### **Conclusions and Recommendation**

Any decision about returning to school is extraordinarily complicated. **At this time, our team believes that current health metrics coupled with strict adherence to recommended practices support a transition to in-person instruction in a hybrid model as indicated in our Draft Transition to School Plan.** We believe that starting in a hybrid model will allow the district to pivot based on public health information to an either fully in-person model or a fully-remote model.

### **Possible Motions**

**Recommended motion:** I move that Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee approve the Transition to School Plan as published, including the recommendation to begin the year in a hybrid model of in-person learning with a fully remote option for families, with the understanding that this plan may be altered by the administration based on changes to public health information.

**Alternate motion:** I move that Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee approve the Transition to School Plan as published, AND direct the District to begin the year in a [select one]:

- fully in-person learning mode; OR
- a fully remote learning mode;

with the understanding that this plan will include a full-year remote option for families, and with the understanding that this plan may be altered by the administration based on changes to public health information.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
**DRAFT Revised SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2020-2021**  
**Bold BOXED Dates = No School Days**

Aug.	M	T	W	T	F
	24	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>
Sept.	<u>31</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
	<u>7</u>	8	9	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>
	<b>14</b>	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	<u>28</u>	29	30		
Oct.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	<u>9</u>
	<u>12</u>	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29	30
Nov.	M	T	W	T	F
	2	<u>3</u>	4	5	6
	9	10	<u>11</u>	12	13
	16	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
	30				
Dec.	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>
	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>	

Teachers' Professional Learning Days  
begin Aug 26 and are underlined  
Labor Day - Sept 7  
Schools Open – Sept 8 14  
Yom Kippur – Sept 28  
School Days – 16-12

Prof Learning Day – Oct 9  
Columbus Day – Oct 12  
School Days – 24 20

Prof Learning Day – Nov 3  
Election Day – Nov 3  
Veterans Day – Nov 11  
Early Release Day – Nov 25  
Thanksgiving Recess – Nov 26 & 27  
School Days - 17

Jr High Early Release Confs– Dec 10 & 15  
Winter Recess - Dec. 24 – Jan 3  
School Days - 17

Jan.	M	T	W	T	F
					<u>1</u>
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	<u>18</u>	19	20	21	22
	25	26	27	28	29
Feb.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12
	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>
	22	23	24	25	<b>26</b>
Mar.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31		
Apr.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	<u>2</u>
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
	26	27	28	29	30
May	M	T	W	T	F
	3	4	5	6	7
	10	11	12	13	14
	17	18	19	20	21
	24	25	26	27	28
	<u>31</u>				
June	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	<b>15</b>	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	28	29	30		

Schools Open - Jan 4  
JH Early Release – Jan 8  
Martin Luther King Day - Jan 18  
School Days - 19

Presidents' Day - Feb 15  
Winter Recess - Feb 15-19  
School Days – 15

School Days - 23

Good Friday – Apr 2  
Patriots Day – Apr 19  
Spring Recess - Apr 19 - 23  
School Days - 16

Memorial Day - May 31  
School Days - 20

Graduation – June 4  
Last Day/Early Rel– June 15  
School Days – 43 11 for total of 477 170

Some major religious and cultural holidays are found on page 2. Rosh Hashanah is Saturday, September 19, 2020.

*Weeks with a no-school holiday will have students in school on the Wednesday.*

No School and Delayed Opening Announcements air on TV Channels 4, 5 and 7 and radio stations WBZ and WEIM. See postings at <http://abschools.org>  
Acton Town Meeting begins April x, 2021. Boxborough Meeting begins May x, 2021.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meetings are usually held twice a month. See [https://www.abschools.org/school\\_committee](https://www.abschools.org/school_committee) for more information.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District  
**SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2020-2021**

**Major Religious and Cultural Holidays**

*(some are school days, some are not)*

July 31	Eid al-Adha
September 19-20	Rosh Hashanah
September 28	Yom Kippur
November 14	Diwali begins
December 11	Chanuka begins
December 25	Christmas
December 26-Jan 1	Kwanzaa
February 12	Lunar New Year
April 2	Good Friday
March 28 – April 3	Passover
April 4	Easter
April 13 – May 11	Ramadan
May 13	Eid al-Fitr

The observance of both Jewish and Muslim holidays begins at sundown of the preceding day. Please see our Religious and Cultural Holidays policy IMD on the school website for more information at:

[https://www.abschools.org/school\\_committee/policies](https://www.abschools.org/school_committee/policies)

**2020 - 2021 School Start Times**

**Carol Huebner Early Childhood Programs:**

Monday – Thursday  
Morning Session 8:30 – 11:15 am  
Afternoon Session 12:15 – 3:00 pm  
All-Day Session 8:30 am – 3:00 pm

**All Elementary Schools:**

8:50 am – 3:20 pm  
Thursdays 12:50 pm dismissal

**Secondary Schools:**

AB Regional High School 8:00 am – 2:47 pm  
(Early Dismissal 11:22 am)

R.J. Grey Junior High School 8:00 am – 2:36 pm  
(Early Dismissal 11:10 am)

**Direct School Phone Numbers:**

Blanchard: 978-263-4569  
Conant: 978-266-2550  
Douglas: 978-266-2560  
Gates: 978-266-2570  
McCarthy-Towne: 978-264-3377  
Merriam: 978-264-3371  
All Other Schools: 978-264-4700