



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting

May 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

Administration Building Auditorium To view only: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

APPROVED MINUTES

Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Ben Bloomenthal, Tori Campbell, Liz Fowlks, Adam Klein, Tessa McKinley, Leela Ramachandran, Yanxin Schmidt, Andrew Schwartz, Rebecca Wilson

Members Absent: Ginny Kremer

Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino

1. CALL TO ORDER & CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME (7:00) - *Tessa McKinley*

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

Members of the public who wished to watch the meeting online were invited to use Acton tv's youtube channel. The chair stated that the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

Acton's newest members, Tori Campbell, Leela Ramachandran and Yanxin Schmidt were welcomed to their first meeting. Boxborough's election is May 16 so the Committee will welcome two more new members at the next meeting due to the retirement of Evelyn Abayaa-Issah and Tessa. Tessa thanked Kyra Cook, Amy Krishnamurthy, Yebin Wang and Evelyn for their dedicated years of service to the community. Evelyn thanked Tessa for her service as well.

a. ABRHS Student Representative Update - *Rohan Ravindran, Harshini Magesh, Molly Norris, Diksha Mhatre, Julia Zhou*

Members reported that school routines are disrupted due to AP tests going on.

"Everyone feels stress." ABSEJ is working on a proposal for relocating gender neutral bathrooms to more convenient locations with proper signage.

b. Public Participation

Scott Smyers spoke about the new members bringing a fresh start for everyone. He asked that members be open, transparent and respectful to parents and students.

Martin Benson read a statement hoping that the new members will provide a change of direction for the Committee referring to the previous meeting and the process used to retire the mascot in October 2020.

c. Superintendent's Update - *Peter Light*

Mr. Light congratulated Seniors on the 29th Annual Community Service Day, our AB Special Olympics participants, and all involved in hosting our first Unified Track Meet. Project Graduation is only 4 weeks away and many more volunteers are needed. He also reported on the upcoming Cartwheel Care Webinar- Recognizing and Managing Anxiety and the Ask Me Fair. The last Community Coffee is May 24. The next meeting will include more on the Welcome Center being established and the partnership with the AB United Way. This will be a very exciting project.

2. NEW BUSINESS

- a. New School Building Committee membership - **VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley*
Some ongoing work will take place this summer and fall, focusing on parking lots, resurfacing the basketball courts, and a new softball field on the Elm Street side where Douglas used to be. Design work is completed. With the retirements of Dave Verdolino Marie Altieri, and Amy Krishnamurthy, a revision to the membership is needed.

Adam Klein moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to approve the Acton Boxborough School Building Committee member list as posted in the packet.

3. ONGOING BUSINESS

- a. Finance Update - *David Verdolino*
 - i. Third Quarter Financial Report
Dave reported that the primary two categories responsible for improved revenue surplus projection (from the second quarter report) are Earnings on Investments and Regional Transportation Aid. The total FY23 revenue surplus could exceed the noted amount by up to \$100,000 due to these two factors, depending on the final Transportation Aid reimbursement rate. As of Q3, Dave expects the yearend FY23 net turnback/surplus to end up between \$1.0M and \$1.3M. This would closely reflect the amount (\$1.375M) of E&D reserve voted to offset the District's FY24 budget appropriation. See summary memo.

Athletics is in a minor deficit situation but there is still the last quarter to go although Dave and Steve Martin think it will come in a bit worse than it stands at this time. There was no cushion from last year. A comprehensive presentation is being prepared for a future meeting.

Mr. Light noted that one of our biggest cost centers is special education assistants due to students moving in after the start of school. If a child has an IEP, we are required to provide those services. \$275,000 of special education costs came in after the budget was done that had to be covered. Another large cost resulted from staff postponing medical procedures during the pandemic and now they are addressing them. The most recent Cherry Sheet has good and bad news. The good news is the increased amount of Regional School Transportation Aid that is expected. The bad

news is that state tax collections dropped significantly for the month of April. This could create a deficit position for the first time in several years. E&D has been certified.

b. Superintendent Annual Evaluation - *Adam Klein*

i. Final Report on Status of FY23 District & Superintendent Goals - *Peter Light*

ii. Invitation for Public Input by June 1, 2023

(to aklein@abschools.org and jlalumiere@abschools.org)

Adam Klein will compile the individual evaluations and write the summative which will be presented at the June 8 School Committee meeting. Individual evaluations should be sent to Adam and Julie by May 18th for the record.

Mr. Light reviewed his End of Year Goals Update memo found in the packet, highlighting things that went well and some opportunities for growth. He explained the template and suggested ways to consider thinking about the year's efforts. He noted that some aspects of the ongoing work may not be reflected in the District Goals but that commentary could be included in members' feedback.

Mr. Light was asked to elaborate on how the District is seen by others as a DEI leader. Mr. Light spoke about being invited by MASC to present around the leadership structure we built and particularly the expanded teacher/leader roles around DEI. Previously, we had a "stand alone" DEI person but there was no structure for how they would impact what goes on in the classroom. This year we added "culturally responsive teacher leaders" working with Michelle Shannon and Jen Faber. These leaders go back to their school and share what they've learned with their colleagues helping colleagues. The expanded SEED training is another aspect of engaging our staff in this work.

The public was invited to send evaluation comments for Mr. Light by June 1st to Adam and Julie.

c. Subcommittee and Members' Report

i. Community Engagement - *Andrew Schwartz (4/14/23)*

Focus continues to be on creating greater connections with the Acton and Boxborough community, including methods for informing the public about Town Meeting and the importance of the vote. Members were happy about the unanimous acceptance of the Budget at Acton Town Meeting.

ii. Budget Subcommittee - *Adam Klein*

The presentation by Dave Verdolino included subcommittee discussions.

iii. Leadership Coalition to Combat Hate and Bias Speech - *Liz Fowlks*

This group has met twice and includes about 25 - 30 people. The student participation is appreciated. There are many issues to tackle, including the increase in anti semitic incidents in many communities including our own. A

member expressed concern that people are “becoming numb about it”. Mr. Light explained the importance of sharing stories of different acts of hate. The group is working very hard to define the problem as their first step. They want people to feel well prepared to interrupt an incident in the moment. Lack of swift action can reinforce bad behavior. Mr. Light added that this is a representative group of our students and the public at large. A goal was to have leadership representation so members could bring the information back to their groups. A member offered to help with educating our immigrant communities that may have language barriers. Mr. Light was thanked for his leadership in these meetings.

School Resource Officer (SRO) Subcommittee - Adam Klein

Due to the significant amount of work to do, this subcommittee will not be finished this year. Several members have stepped down so Adam invited any school committee members who would like to join to email him. An update will be provided at the next school committee meeting.

The new Boxborough members will attend the meeting on May 18 and at that time, the Committee will reorganize and elect a Chair and Vice-Chairs.

Members can start thinking about subcommittees where they would like to serve for the new year.

- d. Consent Agenda/Action Items - **VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley*
 - i. Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 4/13/23
Ben Bloomenthal moved, Rebecca Wilson seconded and it was unanimously **VOTED**: to approve the minutes of 4/13/23.
- e. Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve - **VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley*
Adam Klein moved, Leela Ramachandran seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the warrants (see memo for language)

FYI

- Proposed ABRSC Meetings for 2023-2024
Members should consider starting at 6:30 or 7:00, as well as a summer full day workshop date. This will be confirmed when the new Boxborough members join.
- CASE Annual Report III

Leela Ramachandran noted that May 11 is the end of the pandemic emergency order in MA when insurance changes and ends for covid tests and vaccinations. People on Mass Health needs to renew their coverage. She is happy to answer questions.

Boxborough Town Meeting is on May 8. All school committee members are asked to attend.

Adam thanked Tessa McKinley for serving for the past 6 years and chairing for 2 years during the pandemic. She will be remembered for her advocacy for more and better reading intervention.

NEXT MEETINGS: May 18 and June 8 at ABRSC at 7:00 p.m. in the Admin. Building Auditorium

4. ADJOURN

Adam Klein moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously,
VOTED: to adjourn the ABRSC at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: Agenda, Agenda summary pages, Statement read by M. Benson 5/4/23, Revised School Building Committee Members Memo effective July 1, 2023, Q3 Financial Report for FY23 including Revenue by Type & Character, Cherry Sheet Estimates, E&D Certification email, from D. Verdolino 5/4/23, Superintendent's End of Year Goals Update Memo from P. Light 5/1/23, Mid-Year Update Annual District Improvement Plan 2022-2023, End of Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent Template, Draft Minutes of ABRSC meeting 4/13/23 from B. Petr, Warrants Memo from D. Verdolino 5/4/23, ABRSC FY24 Meetings, CASE Program Updates