

Welcome to Kindergarten 2020



**Kindness begins
with Us...**

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Front Page Artwork courtesy of Douglas Kindergarten Class. Class of 2019-2020.

2020-2021 Kindergarten Handbook

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Superintendent's Office
15 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700 www.abschools.org

Peter Light
Superintendent of Schools

January 2020

Dear Parents and Guardians:

We welcome you and your child to the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. As teachers and administrators, our purpose is to provide a Kindergarten experience that will prove to be an excellent beginning for your child's school years.

This booklet was prepared as part of our Kindergarten orientation program. The purpose of this booklet is to help you through the registration process, to introduce you to the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, and your child to Kindergarten.

We start our relationship with the class of 2033 and their families in the winter of 2020 and are happy to answer any of your questions. We welcome your suggestions and your support, and look forward to working with you and your child in the fall.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Light", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Light

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS
2020-2021 KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION SCHEDULE**

The following are important dates for parents/guardians of children who will be entering Kindergarten in September 2020 (5 years old on or before September 1, 2020). See also: www.abschools.org Student registration

GENERAL MEETING

Our Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, Principals, Community Education Director, Registrar, Kindergarten staff and School Nurse will be on hand to answer questions.

**Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., High School Auditorium
(Snow date January 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m., High School Auditorium)**

PRIOR TO PRE-REGISTRATION:

'Register to receive Kindergarten information' at <https://www.abschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=216111&pageId=521396> for dates rescheduled due to weather, updates on kindergarten registration, and to let us know about potential siblings and All Day Kindergarten requests. **NOTE: This is not Kindergarten registration.**

SCHOOL TOURS

Conant, Merriam and McCarthy-Towne schools will be open for tours on **January 13 and February 4**

Blanchard, Gates and Douglas schools will be open for tours on **January 21, and January 27**

Please call individual schools after January 3, 2020 to reserve tour times. You may reserve more than one tour per day. (Please note these are the only available days for tours.) Tour hours for all schools: **9:30-10:45 a.m. and 1:45-3 p.m.**

If school is canceled or delayed on a tour day, parents should call the school to reschedule.

Please do not bring young children with you on the tour.

PARENT INFORMATION EVENING MEETINGS

Tuesday, January 14, 7pm McCarthy-Towne

Tuesday, January 21, 7pm Merriam

Tuesday, January 28, 7pm Douglas

Tuesday, February 4, 7pm Conant

Tuesday, February 11, 7pm Gates

Tuesday, February 25, 7pm Blanchard

** In case of snow, ANY postponed evening meeting will be held the next evening: Wednesday*

KINDERGARTEN ONLINE REGISTRATION OPENS JAN. 8th & CLOSES MARCH 1st.

(Be sure to register by March 1st to be included in the Kindergarten Lottery.)

Go to <https://www.abschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=216111&pageId=521396> January 8th, 2020 to pre-register.

SIBLINGS and WALKERS WITH PRIORITY ADMISSION STATUS

The families who are eligible, or who believe they may be eligible for priority admission status include siblings of current students, students who live in Boxborough who wish to attend Blanchard and walkers. (Students who live within a safe mile walk.) **Please be sure to check your priority admission status. Siblings have priority over walkers.**

NEW FAMILIES

New families, without siblings in the schools, are required to complete the online registration submitting all documentation online: Your child's original birth certificate, most recent physical examination & immunization record, Copy of your Government issued Photo ID and Proof of Residency Affidavit with an item from each column.

REGISTRATION PROCESS FOR COMMUNITY ED EXTENDED DAY PROGRAM GRADES K-6

We offer morning and afternoon extended day in all of our schools. Please refer to our website for more information.

https://abce.abschools.org/extended_day

Registration begins in April 2020

OTHER IMPORTANT DATES

End of March/April -School Placement Lotteries held (as necessary). Notification email sent out.

May15 –All Day kindergarten deposit due

May 31 - Parent-released/teacher-completed Pre-K Assessment Form due at Registrar's Office..

July 31 - Children's medical forms (complete immunization history, physical exam completed after 1/1/20) due at school nurse's office. Bus forms to the Transportation office by August 1st

All registration information is located at: <http://www.abschools.org/home/kindergarten-registration>

Office of the Superintendent
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Acton, MA 01720

TO: Parents and Guardians Enrolling New Kindergartners
FROM: Peter Light
ON: January 2, 2020
RE: Guidelines for School Visits

Although each school develops its own description of what a “typical visit” will be like, and “suggestions of what to look for,” they all agree that the following guidelines will make the visiting process more worthwhile for everyone involved.

- 1) Parents should call each school office to arrange for an appointment to visit.

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

- 2) Tour sizes are limited. If particular times are important to you, please make your reservations early!
- 3) Visitors are asked to leave their children at home in order for the visitors to be able to move freely throughout the building and to engage actively in discussions with their guides.
- 4) Visitors are asked to observe this common set of “tour guidelines” in order not to interrupt the students’ and teachers’ important work of learning and teaching:
 - Speak in whispers or very soft voices.
 - Avoid questions and comments to teachers and students in the classrooms.
 - Refrain from touching things on students’ and teachers’ desks, display tables and counter tops.
 - Move about quietly.
 - **Turn off cell phone.**

Thank you!

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SCHOOLS

WHAT IS OPEN ENROLLMENT?

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School system has an "open enrollment" policy that allows some choice in selecting the school you would like your child to attend, providing that the school can accommodate the student.

The official School Committee policy on enrollment states:

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee strives to provide high standards of educational excellence in all its elementary schools. Since no single teaching method is best for all students, the Committee supports the use of a variety of teaching methods and techniques that will achieve the prescribed curriculum objectives. It follows that parents should have the opportunity to choose the school they think best fits the needs of their children subject to the availability of space and staff.

In the placement of students, the following guidelines will be utilized in appropriate situations.

1. PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL PROGRAM NEEDS

Children requiring specialized programs will be placed in appropriate schools upon recommendation by the Student Services Department.

2. KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER

It is important to build a strong corps of families who can devote their energies to their school's activities. Volunteerism, active parent/teacher organizations, and parent involvement in advisory groups and the like are valuable school resources. So is a family's long-term connection to a school community. Therefore, if the newly enrolling student has a sibling in the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools and that sibling attended an Acton-Boxborough elementary school, the newly enrolling student will be given school selection preference at that same school.*

3. ENCOURAGING WALKING TO SCHOOL

Although we must bus the vast majority of Acton's children to our centrally located schools, we support the town's sidewalk building program and feel children should walk to school wherever possible.

Since this approach offers economic advantages, walkers will be given preference to the school of their choice providing there is seat availability after the placement of siblings. Walkers require school approval after registration.

*A sibling is defined as: 'a relative (by birth, adoption or guardianship) who is living in the same home.'

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

DESCRIPTION OF LOTTERY PROCEDURES

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee has an Open Enrollment Policy that allows parents some choice in selecting the Elementary school they would like their child to attend.

Priority is given to children who:

- Have or had a sibling enrolled in a particular school (the sibling must still be enrolled in the school system K-12);
- Children who live within a one mile safe walk from school (as determined by transportation) and who will walk to that school (commencing in grade one) providing there is seat availability at school. Siblings have priority over walkers.
- Children with special needs that can only be met in a particular school (as determined by the Student Services Department).
- Students who are retained in a grade
- Children who live in Boxborough may attend Blanchard if they prefer, and children who live in Acton may attend school in Acton if they prefer.

An online lottery will be conducted to include these priority admissions and to allocate children to the All Day Kindergarten classes based on parent requests.

- If the number of families who wish admission to a school exceeds the number of available spaces, the remaining students are put onto a waiting list.
- Wait lists are established at each level for all students who do not receive admission to the school of their choice.

The Lottery process is designed to provide an equitable opportunity for all families who do not have priority admission to be enrolled in the school of their choice. All students are given an equal chance to be placed in a school of their choice.

Students who move into Acton or Boxborough after the lottery has been held are enrolled in a school with available seats and added to the end of the waiting list based on their preferences list. It is important to note that attention is always given to maintaining as close a class size balance between and within schools as possible.

Office of the Superintendent
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Acton, MA 01720

TO: Parents Enrolling New Kindergartners
FROM: Peter Light
ON: January 2020
RE: Optional All-Day Kindergarten (ADK) Program, 2020-2021

In order to be responsive to the educational and personal needs of the children and parents of the Acton and Boxborough communities, the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools offer an **optional** All-Day Kindergarten program. This program is offered at all six elementary schools on a space-available basis (see "Acceptance" below). Tuition is charged for the hours beyond the regular Half-Day Kindergarten program.

Purpose

The All-Day program provides an alternative to the more fragmented day experienced by many children in a Half-Day program. All Acton and Boxborough Kindergarten students learn the same curriculum. The difference in the All-Day program is one of pace, time and enrichment. The day is less rushed, and there is more time available to meet the social, emotional and developmental needs of the children enrolled. This is not a childcare program.

Length of School Day

For ADK students, for the entire school year, the length of the school day and the bus schedules are the same as those for students in grades 1-6. All-Day Kindergartners eat lunch at school.

Tuition Charge

The cost of having your child in the All-Day program for 2020-2021 is estimated to be \$3,750 payable in 10 equal monthly installments (To be decided and approved by school committee in December). **A one month, non-refundable deposit of \$375 will be due on May 15, 2020 to secure a placement in the All-Day program. This deposit will be applied to the final June 2021 payment.** The September tuition will be due by August 1, 2020, subsequent payments will be due on the first of each following month. All tuition is payable to A-B Regional School District. You will receive payment information in mid-July.

Tuition assistance is available. Eligibility and level of assistance are based on ability to pay. To inquire about tuition assistance, **once your child has been admitted to ADK**, please contact Sally Cunningham 978-264-3303.

Acceptance in All-Day Kindergarten

At Kindergarten registration you will be asked to indicate your interest in having your child participate in the All-Day program during the online Kindergarten pre-registration process. If accepted in ADK, you will also be asked to turn in the All Day Kindergarten form along with your \$375 non-refundable deposit by May 15. Half-Day Kindergarten students will go home mid-day.

Transportation Information

School Committee policy states that transportation will be provided *"to and from school, with pick-up points at the nearest safe street location to the particular student's home"*.

With that in mind the School Committee recognizes that parents of Kindergarten students may need to have their children transported to and from places other than home. Therefore, the district issues "Permanent Special Arrangement" for Kindergartners. **These arrangements will be issued only to Kindergartners who will be transported somewhere other than home.**

After the school and All-Day Kindergarten lotteries, you will receive a placement email informing you of where your child will attend school. Accompanying that email, you will receive a Kindergarten Bus Transportation Needs Form. Please complete this form accurately to ensure the appropriate transportation schedule for your child. This form must be returned by July 15 to the Transportation Office, Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, 16 Charter Rd., Acton, MA 01720.

If you find that you need to make changes in your child's regular schedule after turning in your Transportation Needs Form, you need to call the Transportation Office at 978-264-4700 ext. 3228. **All changes must be made at least two weeks in advance and must be "Permanent" changes.**

Bus Schedules

Bus routes are published on the school website. The bus routes are posted on the website about 2 weeks prior to the start of school, with the exception of the kindergarten mid-day routes.

Based on the information provided, each school is responsible for notifying parents of bus schedules.

The information for each individual student's bus schedule includes:

- Your child's name, address, telephone number and daycare (if applicable)
- Scheduled time your child is picked up (students should be at their bus stop five (5) minutes prior to their scheduled pick-up time.)
- The location of the bus stop (students must be dropped off at an existing bus stop)
- The bus number of the bus your child rides to school
- The bus number of the bus your child rides from school

In case of emergencies, and to prevent mix-ups, administrative assistants at each school retain up-to-date maps of Acton and Boxborough, as well as copies of all bus routes including bus numbers and bus stop locations.

Kindergarten students must be met at the bus stop by a parent or guardian. If they are unable to meet the bus they must call transportation to notify them of the adult who will be meeting the bus so transportation can relay the information to the drivers. Kindergarten students will be returned to their school of attendance if it appears they would otherwise be left unattended.

One-day bus passes will be issued to students in grades 2-6 to provide transportation to the student residence(s) on file, a licensed childcare provider, or to a pre-scheduled bus stop location on the bus route servicing the child's elementary school. Please refer to the policies and procedures which can be found at <https://www.abschools.org/district/transportation>.

Forms for one-day bus passes are available in each elementary school office or on the district website. Kindergarten students will not be issued a one-day pass.

General Bus Information

Riding the school bus is a new experience for some children. It would be most helpful if you would talk to

your child about the bus rides and make sure that he/she is feeling comfortable. If your student has some fears, talk it over with him/her and, if necessary, contact the Transportation Office. In the beginning of the year, it is helpful to have an older brother, sister, or neighbor child, sit with your child on the bus.

Information relative to bus numbers, bus routes, and bus stops can be obtained via InfoFinder.

<http://www.abschools.org/departments/facilities-transportation/bus-routes>

The elementary school offices, in consultation with the Transportation Office, reserve the right to deny the issuance of bus passes which are not filled out properly.

If your Kindergartener is going to be absent, please contact the school.

School Bus Lost and Found

If your child leaves an item on the school bus, it will be kept on the bus for a few days in anticipation of the child claiming it. **Check with your child's bus driver first** to see if the item is still on the bus or if it was turned in to the school office. Anything left unclaimed on a school bus will eventually be put in a lost and found container. However, you may call the Transportation Office as a last resort to try to locate an item. **Please remember to label all of your child's clothing and belongings to help return lost items!**

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Junior High and High School Schedule

SCHOOLS OPEN

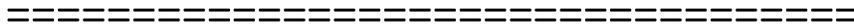
Monday August 31, 2020

*With the exception of

8th, 10th, 11th, & 12th graders, who start on Tuesday September 1, 2020

JUNIOR HIGH: 8:00-2:36 p.m.

HIGH SCHOOL: 8:07-2:47 p.m.



Elementary School Schedule

SCHOOLS OPEN

Monday August 31, 2020

All-Day K and Grades 1-6:

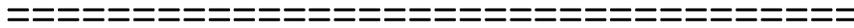
8:50-a.m. – 3:20 p.m.

(Thursdays – 12:50 p.m. dismissal)

Half Day Kindergarten

AM Session: 8:50 a.m. – 11:50 noon

(Thursday Schedule 8:50 a.m. – 12:50 p.m.)



Elementary School Lunch Price: \$2.75

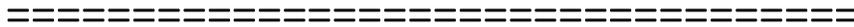
Junior High/ High School Price: \$2.75

Lunch, includes fruit, vegetable, milk

Milk only: \$.50

For more information, see the Food services website at:

<http://www.abschools.org/departments/food-services/lunch-menus>



***** Direct Phone Numbers *****

Blanchard: 978-263-4569

Douglas: 978-266-2560

McCarthy-Towne: 978-264-3377

All other schools: 978-264-4700

Conant: 978-266-2550

Gates: 978-266-2570

Merriam: 978-264-3371

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

Bold BOXED Dates = No School Days / ELEMENTARY EARLY DISMISSAL IS EVERY THURSDAY AFTERNOON

	M	T	W	T	F		M	T	W	T	F	
Aug.	24	25	26	27	28		Jan.	4	5	6	7	8
Sept.	31	1	2	3	4	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27		11	12	13	14	15
	7	8	9	10	11	Schools Open – Aug 31	16	17	18	19	20	21
	12	13	14	15	16	No School – Fri, Sept 4	22	23	24	25	26	27
	14	15	16	17	18	Labor Day – Sept 7	28	29	30			
	21	22	23	24	25	Y'om Kippur – Sept 28						
	28	29	30			School Days - 25						
Oct.	M	T	W	T	F		Feb.	1	2	3	4	5
	1	2	3			Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	8	9	10	11	12	13
	5	6	7	8	9	Schools Open – Aug 31	15	16	17	18	19	20
	12	13	14	15	16	No School – Fri, Sept 4	22	23	24	25	26	27
	19	20	21	22	23	Labor Day – Sept 7						
	26	27	28	29	30	Y'om Kippur – Sept 28						
						School Days - 25						
Nov.	M	T	W	T	F		Mar.	1	2	3	4	5
	2	3	4	5	6	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	8	9	10	11	12	13
	9	10	11	12	13	Schools Open – Aug 31	15	16	17	18	19	20
	16	17	18	19	20	No School – Fri, Sept 4	22	23	24	25	26	27
	23	24	25	26	27	Labor Day – Sept 7	29	30	31			
	30					Y'om Kippur – Sept 28						
						School Days - 25						
Dec.	M	T	W	T	F		Apr.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4		Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	5	6	7	8	9	10
	7	8	9	10	11	Schools Open – Aug 31	12	13	14	15	16	17
	14	15	16	17	18	No School – Fri, Sept 4	19	20	21	22	23	24
	21	22	23	24	25	Labor Day – Sept 7	27	28	29	30		
	28	29	30	31		Y'om Kippur – Sept 28						
						School Days - 25						
Jan.	M	T	W	T	F		May	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	3	4	5	6	7	8
	8	9	10	11	12	Schools Open – Aug 31	10	11	12	13	14	15
	15	16	17	18	19	No School – Fri, Sept 4	17	18	19	20	21	22
	22	23	24	25	26	Labor Day – Sept 7	24	25	26	27	28	29
	29	30				Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	31					
						School Days - 25						
Feb.	M	T	W	T	F		June	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	Schools Open – Aug 31	7	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19	No School – Fri, Sept 4	14	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26	Labor Day – Sept 7	21	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30				Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	28	29	30			
						School Days - 25						
Mar.	M	T	W	T	F		July	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	Schools Open – Aug 31	7	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19	No School – Fri, Sept 4	14	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26	Labor Day – Sept 7	21	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31			Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	28	29	30			
						School Days - 25						
Apr.	M	T	W	T	F		Aug.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	8	9	10	11	12	Schools Open – Aug 31	7	8	9	10	11	12
	15	16	17	18	19	No School – Fri, Sept 4	14	15	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26	Labor Day – Sept 7	21	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31			Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	28	29	30			
						School Days - 25						
May	M	T	W	T	F		Sept.	M	T	W	T	F
	3	4	5	6	7	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	10	11	12	13	14	Schools Open – Aug 31	7	8	9	10	11	12
	17	18	19	20	21	No School – Fri, Sept 4	14	15	16	17	18	19
	24	25	26	27	28	Labor Day – Sept 7	21	22	23	24	25	26
	31					Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	28	29	30			
						School Days - 25						
June	M	T	W	T	F		Oct.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	Schools Open – Aug 31	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	No School – Fri, Sept 4	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	Labor Day – Sept 7	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30			Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	29	30				
						School Days - 25						
July	M	T	W	T	F		Nov.	M	T	W	T	F
	1	2	3	4	5	Teachers' meetings – Aug 26 & 27	1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	Schools Open – Aug 31	8	9	10	11	12	13
	14	15	16	17	18	No School – Fri, Sept 4	15	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	Labor Day – Sept 7	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28	29	30			Y'om Kippur – Sept 28	29	30				
						School Days - 25						

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

↔ Professional Learning for JHHS Staff Early Dismissal

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 <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee> for more information.

Voted by School Committee 11/21/19

11/21/19

Total Days = 180

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

Major Religious and Cultural Holidays
(some are school days, some are not)

July 31
 September 19-20
 September 28
 November 14
 December 11
 December 25
 December 26-Jan 1
 February 12
 April 2
 March 28 – April 3
 April 4
 April 13 – May 11
 May 13

Eid al-Adha
 Rosh Hashanah
 Yom Kippur
 Diwali begins
 Chanuka begins
 Christmas
 Kwanzaa
 Lunar New Year
 Good Friday
 Passover
 Easter
 Ramadan
 Eid al-Fitr

The observance of both Jewish and Muslim holidays begins at sundown of the preceding day. Please see policy IMD (School Ceremonies and Religious Holiday Observances) and policy ACD (Acknowledging Religious Holidays) on the school website for more information at: <http://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

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Kindergarten Screening

As mandated by Federal and State special education regulations, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District conducts a screening of all Kindergarten children. The screening surveys functioning in areas that include vision and hearing, speech and language development, perceptual-motor development, memory and reasoning, and social development. A parent questionnaire is also an important component of the screening program as it provides information about the child's developmental background and parent observations. To conduct the screening, Student Services' staff members meet with children individually.

This screening is designed to identify those children who may need more intensive support in language, readiness or motor areas in order to make effective progress in school. Additionally, this screening provides staff with information regarding particular children who may need further evaluation. An evaluation may determine the child eligible for special education and necessitate an individualized education program (IEP) to ensure effective progress.

Preschool Screening

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Special Education Law contains regulations that include public screening of children, ages 3-4, whose parents/guardians request such a screening because they have concerns about their child's development.

Parents may request a screening if they have concerns about their child's development. For further information, please call Joe Gibowicz, Early Childhood Coordinator, at 978-264-4700, x3268.

Communication with the School

Close communication between home and school is encouraged. The following information may prove helpful:

- **Appointments:** Please contact the school for an appointment, if you wish to speak with teachers, other staff or the principal. Parents are encouraged to contact the school directly when any problem, concern or question arises. Any questions concerning the child should first be discussed with the teacher.
- **Tardiness:** Children who are tardy should inform the office of their arrival before going to their room.
- **Parent Notes:** When a parent sends a note to school, it is advisable to use an envelope. The child's full name, school and room number should be written on the outside of the envelope, and the child's full name should be included in any note if the child's last name is different from that of the parent.

- Field Trips: Field trips are an integral part of the Kindergarten program. Before each field trip, a form will be sent home for your signature. This permission slip must be signed and returned to the school.
- Parent Conferences: Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled during the late fall.
- Calendar: Please note that there are two conference days scheduled in the fall. These days are half-days for all students. At these times the parent is informed of the child's progress and activities. A parent may request a conference at any other time during the year.
- Change: Notify the school office and the Transportation Office whenever there is a change in address, telephone number or emergency number.

Day Care

If you will be transporting your child to day care at the end of the Kindergarten day, please be sure to **notify your child's day care and school on any day when your child will not attend.**

Lunch Program

Students in the All Day kindergarten have the ability to prepay for lunches or milk either by way of an online payment or by sending in a check or cash to school. If you would like to prepay on line you will need your child's student id number and their 4 digit lunch id number. Please visit our website for full details at: <https://www.schoolcafe.com/>

Please note if you wish to apply for free or reduced lunch you can do so directly online in mid-August 2020: <https://www.schoolcafe.com/>

KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

2020

SECTION 2

AN INTRODUCTION TO ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SCHOOLS

The following description of the Acton-Boxborough Schools was prepared jointly with the Acton-Boxborough elementary school principals. This document stresses the similarities among the schools, rather than the differences engendered by the policy of “open enrollment.”

Our schools are far more similar than they are different. The Acton-Boxborough elementary faculty, staff and administration hold the same values, priorities and objectives for all students. These are reflected in the philosophy of the Acton-Boxborough schools. The elementary principals work as a team to ensure that these values, priorities and objectives are addressed and fostered in all of the schools.

A brief description of each individual school is included in this section.

We are confident in assuring you that your child will receive the best education that our community can offer, regardless of the school that she/he attends.

We welcome you and your family to the Acton-Boxborough schools.

The Elementary School principals.

Dana Labb, Blanchard school

Damian Segrue, Conant School

Christopher Whitbeck, Douglas school

Lynne Newman, Gates school

David Krane, McCarthy-Towne School

Juliana Schneider, Merriam School

I. GENERAL INFORMATION, 2020-2021

BLANCHARD SCHOOL

Principal.....Dana Labb
Location.....493 Massachusetts Ave, Boxborough
Telephone..... 978-263-4569
Telephone Attendance #..... 978-263-4569
Year School Built.....1949, renovated 1977
Student Population (October 1, 2019)..... 472
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019).....16 to 24 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 23

CONANT SCHOOL

Principal.....Damian Sugrue
Location.....80 Taylor Road
Telephone..... 978-266-2550
Telephone Attendance #..... 978-266-2555 (Select Option 8)
Year School Built..... 1971
Student Population (October 1, 2019)..... 409
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019).....18 to 25 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 19

DOUGLAS SCHOOL

Principal.....Christopher Whitbeck
Location.....21 Elm Street
Telephone..... 978-266-2560
Telephone Attendance #..... 978-266-2566
Year School Built.....1966
Student Population (October 1, 2019).....393
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019)..... 18 to 24 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 18

GATES SCHOOL

Principal.....Lynne Newman
Location..... 75 Spruce Street
Telephone..... 978-266-2570
Telephone Attendance # 978-263-SICK
Year School Built..... 1968
Student Population (October 1, 2019)..... 371
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019)..... 18 to 24 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 17

McCARTHY-TOWNE SCHOOL

Principal.....David Krane
Location.....11-13 Charter Road
Telephone..... 978-264-3377
Telephone Attendance #..... 978-264-4098
Year School Built.....2002
Student Population (October 1, 2019)..... 515
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019)..... 18 to 24 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 24

MERRIAM SCHOOL

Principal.....Juliana Schneider
Location.....11-13 Charter Road
Telephone..... 978-264-3371
Telephone Attendance #..... 978-264-3373
Year School Built..... 2002
Student Population (October 1, 2019)..... 475
Class Size Range (October 1, 2019)..... 16 to 25 students
Number of Classroom Teachers..... 22

II. ALL SCHOOLS HAVE THE FOLLOWING PHYSICAL FACILITIES:

- Cafeteria/Cafetorium
- Counseling Office
- Gymnasium
- Health Room/Nurse's Office
- Library/Media Center
- Special Education Areas
- Teachers' Room
- Computer Lab or Google Charts

III. HOURS OF OPERATION

All Elementary schools
All Day Kindergarten: 8:50 a.m. - 3:20p.m.
Half Day AM Kindergarten: 8:50 a.m. - 11:50 a.m.

*Note: Every Thursday dismissal 12:50 p.m.

IV. THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SCHOOLS' EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The learning process begins at birth. Learning is as instinctive as breathing, eating and sleeping. Education, however, is more than learning. It is a conscious and organized effort to direct the learning process and to achieve specific goals. Education is a process that requires structure, planning, evaluation and cooperative effort. The process functions and achieves its aims through a joint commitment on the part of all concerned; schools, family and community.

Each individual school is charged with the major responsibility for organizing and carrying out the educational process. In order for the school to meet this responsibility, the community must provide intelligent direction, resources and continuous support. Individuals must recognize what the process offers them and accept responsibility in making that process work.

Education then is seen as the joint enterprise of the school, the community and the student which demands the active commitment and cooperation of each party to the whole.

Our schools have the responsibility to:

- Contribute to the learner's physical and emotional well-being, especially to a sense of personal worth and dignity, and to a capacity for influencing his/her own destiny.
- Develop the listening, speaking, reading, writing, visual and computational skills needed for perception, conceptualization, communication and evaluation of ideas.
- Develop the ability to reason logically and to use mathematical and scientific knowledge and methods to solve problems.
- Foster and stimulate in each learner the natural desire for lifelong learning and develop the thinking, reasoning, problem-solving, organizational and study skills necessary to fulfill that desire.
- Provide each learner with experience leading to discovery of new relationships, stimulation of imagination and personal reflection.
- Provide each learner with experience to gain knowledge and understanding of how society functions in theory and in practice.
- Foster each learner with guided experience that promotes cooperation and mutual respect.
- Develop each learner's capacity to adapt to changing conditions and to meet unexpected challenges, to take calculated risks.
- Increase knowledge of and respect for various world cultures and the interdependence of nations.
- Develop each learner's capacity to adapt to changing conditions and to meet unexpected challenges, and to take calculated risks.

- Increase knowledge of and respect for world cultures and the interdependence of nations.
- Provide each learner with knowledge and experience that contribute to an understanding and appreciation of human similarities and differences.
- Provide each learner with varied opportunities to nurture interests, to discover and to develop natural talents and to express values and feelings through various media.
- Provide each learner with varied opportunities for expression through the arts and to appreciate the artistic expression of others.
- Develop in each learner an understanding of the uses of technology and its potential.
- Provide each learner with the skills, attitudes, experiences and counseling to pursue a career consistent with individual interests and capabilities.

V. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH SCHOOLS' CURRICULUM

KINDERGARTEN

Kindergarten typically represents the widest range of developmental skills and abilities than any other grade level, given the diverse experiences our children have from birth through age five. Research continues to establish a strong connection between social and emotional learning, academic learning, and overall life success. Therefore, in addition to appropriate academic readiness skills, our educators focus on social and self-awareness, self-management, and building relationships with peers.

GRADES ONE - SIX

English Language Arts

The elementary English Language Arts program focuses on developing skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language to develop a foundation for college and career readiness, as stated in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for ELA and Literacy.

1. Reading: Students will read widely and deeply from among a broad range of high - quality, increasingly challenging literary and informational texts. Through extensive reading of stories, dramas, poems, and myths from diverse cultures and different time periods, students gain literary and cultural knowledge as well as familiarity with various text structures and elements. By reading texts in history / social studies, science, and other disciplines, students build a foundation of knowledge in these fields that will also give them the background to be better readers in all content areas. Students also acquire the habits of reading independently and closely, which are essential to their future success.

2. Writing: Students will learn to use writing as a way of offering and supporting opinions, demonstrating an understanding of the subjects they are studying, and conveying real and imagined experiences and events. They learn to appreciate that a key purpose of writing is to communicate clearly to an external, sometimes unfamiliar audience, and they begin to adapt the form and content of their writing to accomplish a particular task and purpose. Students devote significant time and effort to writing, producing a variety of text types, including: Opinion / Argumentative, Informational, and Narrative writing.

3. Speaking and Listening: Students participate in a variety of rich, structured conversations (whole class, small group, or partner). As productive members of these conversations, students contribute accurate, relevant information; respond to and develop what others have said; make comparisons and contrasts; and analyze / synthesize a multitude of ideas.

4. Language: Students gain control over many conventions of standard English grammar, usage, and mechanics as well as learn other ways to use language to convey meaning effectively. They must also be able to determine or clarify the meaning of grade-appropriate words encountered through listening, reading, and media use; come to appreciate that words have nonliteral meanings, shadings of meaning, and relationships to other words; and expand their vocabulary in the course of studying content.

As students advance through the grades and master the standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and language, they are able to exhibit with increasing fullness and regularity these capacities of the literate individual:

- Demonstrate independence
- Build strong content knowledge
- Respond to the varying demands of audience, task, purpose, and discipline
- Comprehend as well as critique
- Value evidence
- Use technology and digital media strategically and capably
- Come to understand other perspectives and cultures

Mathematics

The goal of our elementary mathematics program is to help develop mathematically proficient students by allowing students to explore their curiosity about mathematics, develop a deep understanding of concepts they explore, and to see mathematics as an engaging, worthwhile endeavor.

Content topics which will be addressed in elementary school will include: counting and cardinality, operations and algebraic thinking, numbers and operations in base ten, measurement and data, geometry, understanding and operating with fractions, the number system, ratios and proportional relationships, expressions and equations, and probability and statistics.

Along with addressing specific content, students will also:

- Continue to work on mathematics problems even when they are challenging.
- Think about numbers in many ways.
- Explain their thinking and make sense of the thinking of others.

- Show their work in many ways.
- Use math tools appropriately.
- Understand the importance of precision.
- Use what they already know to solve new types of problems.
- Solve problems by looking for patterns.

Students will use these math practices to show their understanding of content by applying it to problem solving situation. Technology will be used to enhance the mathematics curriculum in appropriate ways at each grade level. This may include measuring tools, base ten blocks, fraction bars, scientific calculators, and computers with appropriate software. Reading, writing, and communication skills are a part of every content area and math is no exception. Teachers will also make the connections between math and other disciplines where appropriate.

The mathematics our student engage in during elementary school will prepare them for their journey towards college and careers as mathematically literate members of our community.

Science and Technology/Engineering

The elementary program focuses on investigating basic science concepts through the science and engineering practices. The science and engineering practices include: asking questions, planning and carrying out investigations, developing and using models, analyzing and interpreting data, constructing explanations, designing solutions, and communicating information with evidence. These practices are used in developing a basic understanding of life, physical, and earth & space science.

The science investigations listed below provide examples of the types and range of science topics studied in the elementary years.

- K Our Backyard: Weather & Schoolyard Science; Solids & Liquids; Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
- Gr. 1 Seasonal Patterns; Living Things; Motion & Force with Balls & Ramps
- Gr. 2 Wind & Water Shape the Land; Habitats; Sound and Light; Forces & Motion with Toys
- Gr. 3 Local Weather; Animals & Plants: Life Cycles, Traits, & Survival Over Time; Things in My World: Observing and Measuring, Materials and Objects (Matter); Energy & Force through Electricity & Magnetism
- Gr. 4 Earth’s Changing Landscape (Earth Materials; Land & Water: Changes and Interactions; Climate); Energy and Information Transfer (What can we observe about Energy? Focus on Energy; Waves, Energy and Information transfer; How we See)
- Gr. 5 System Interactions and Ecosystems; Earth, Sun, Moon Systems; Matter: Water Transformations; Substances: Properties, Mixtures, & Reactions; Engineering Water Filters
- Gr. 6 Meteorology: Oceans & Atmosphere; Global Climate & Climate Change; Energy & Engineering

Social Studies

The K – 6 Social Studies curriculum addresses the four “strands” of history, geography, civics and economics. The curriculum is organized around essential, open-ended questions that promote reflection and discussion; wherever possible, we seek to enrich our History and Social Science program

through the study of literature and language arts. The curriculum topics are as follows and reflect the 2018 MA History and Social Science Curriculum Framework:

Kindergarten:	Many Roles in Living, Learning, and Working Together
Grade 1:	Leadership, Cooperation, Unity, and Diversity
Grade 2:	Global Geography: Places and Peoples, Cultures and Resources
Grade 3:	Massachusetts, Home to Many Different People
Grade 4:	North American Geography and Peoples
Grade 5:	United States History to the Civil War and the Modern Civil Rights Movement
Grade 6:	World Geography and Ancient Civilizations

Throughout our History and Social Science education, we strive to prepare students to have the knowledge and skills to become thoughtful and active participants in a democratic society and a complex world. Our students will be prepared to make informed civic choices and assume their responsibility for strengthening equality, justice, and liberty in and beyond the United States.

Physical Education

The program includes: physical fitness, rhythmic movement, group games, team games, stunts, tumbling, movement exploration, basketball, softball, individual sports, team handball, volleyball, track and field, indoor hockey, dance, rope skipping, ropes course, confidence building activities and group cooperation initiative challenges.

Health Education

All grades have objectives which deal with the following strands: Emotional and Social Health; Safety and First Aid; Physical Wellness; Dependency (Alcohol and Drug Education); and Growth and Development (includes understanding health related problems). From time to time, the district also provides parent education opportunities on health related topics.

Library/Media Centers

Each school has a library/media center. The goal of the library/media program is to promote a love of literature and support the reading lives of our students. Classes visit the library/media weekly to gain exposure to a variety of literature, learn how libraries are organized and to use the online catalog to locate and check out books. The library/media specialists and assistants strive to cultivate curious, independent learners and develop the skills needed to be ethically responsible and successful in our global community through unit and lesson instruction, collaborative curriculum integration, and classroom support. They connect learners to diverse materials and learning opportunities in an environment that supports cooperation, collaboration, and a love of reading.

The library/media centers are equipped with access to quality print and digital materials that are curriculum relevant to enhance classroom thematic units and appeal to student interests. The library also serves as a resource for teachers and staff members who require the most current literature to support grade-level standards across content areas.

To enrich our students' experience, our libraries conduct an annual reading incentive program featuring the Massachusetts Children's Book Award collection. The library staff plans literacy celebrations such as Read-Across-America Day, family literacy events and author visits. The goal of the library program is to develop the habit and enjoyment of reading quality literature and independent use of libraries throughout each student's life.

Visual Arts Department

The visual arts program provides opportunities for students to create in a wide variety of media, including drawing, painting, printmaking, ceramics, sculpture, and weaving. Students explore art from many different cultures and time periods, including contemporary art. In addition students build a vocabulary for discussing and critiquing art so that they can begin to develop their own identity as an artist and appreciate the critical role that the visual arts play in past and present societies. The visual arts learning standards are based on the "Studio Habits of Mind (Hetland, Winner, et al, Teachers College Press, 2007). These include:

1. Develop Craft
2. Engage and Persist
3. Envision
4. Express
5. Observe
6. Reflect
7. Stretch and Explore
8. Understand Arts Community

Students meet with an art specialist once a week. At McCarthy-Towne School, teachers also work with an Art Integration consultant to integrate arts across the curriculum.

Music/Performing Arts

All students have music with a music specialist at least once a week.

Classroom Music:

The classroom music program is designed to provide an authentic learning experience through engaging in the artistic process. The artistic process, as outlined in the National Core Arts Standards, consists of four main areas of practice: Creating, Performing, Responding and Connecting. The music education curriculum fosters competence in self-discovery, presentation, expression, creativity, and the communication of complex human feelings. Students in classroom music will engage in a variety of music practice and analysis exercises including: Singing; Dancing (moving to music); Playing instruments (recorder, drums, ukulele, xylophone); Reading/writing/composing music; Creating/analysing music with technology; Learning about relevant music history/events and influential musicians/artists.

Performance Music Ensembles:

Performance Music Ensembles provide a unique, community-based performance experience where students collaborate across classrooms and grade levels, to accomplish their shared artistic goals. These ensembles meet as outlined below.

- Each elementary school has a combined 5th and 6th grade chorus that meets once per week at the beginning of the school day. Additional co-curricular chorus ensembles vary by school.

- Band instrument instruction begins in grade 5. Lessons are held before school with a school band rehearsal held once per week at the beginning of the school day. There is a fee to join the before-school band lessons. (scholarship funds are available for eligible students)
- String Orchestra instrument instruction begins in grade 4. The beginner class is held before school with the advanced class ensemble held once per week at the beginning of the school day. There is a fee to join the before-school orchestra lessons. (scholarship funds are available for eligible students)

*All 5th and 6th grade students will select one performing ensemble (band, string ensemble, or chorus) as part of their 5th and 6th grade music experience.

Digital Learning and Computer Science

In alignment with the MA DESE Digital Learning/Computer Science Framework, digital learning experiences are woven across all curriculum areas.

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VI. ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS COMMON TO ALL SIX ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- The district provides all of our elementary classrooms with more access to real-time, on-demand learning technologies with direct support from teachers. Currently, the district offers iPad learning centers in all K-2 classrooms and 1-to-1 Chromebooks in all 3rd-6th grade classrooms.
- Each school offers whole-school events such as orientation programs for Kindergarten parents and children as the school year begins. There are back-to-school nights in the fall and Memorial Day programs in the spring.
- Teachers have opportunities for system wide in-service professional learning programs or continued formal course work, and to attend professional conferences and institutes. In addition, faculty in each school work with student teachers. Through their actions, the faculty demonstrates that they are committed to being "lifelong learners."
- Each school hosts "Before and After School" Care programs and there is a centralized Extended Day program at the Administration Building.
- Vital parent organizations play an active role in the life of the schools. These organizations raise funds for school-wide projects and sponsor assembly programs that enrich each school's cultural and aesthetic life with musicians, storytellers and other performers. Parent organizations also staff the "Safe Arrival" hot lines, produce school newsletters, host ice cream socials and arrange meetings and other events to welcome newcomers.
- Each school holds special receptions and events to acknowledge and honor the parents and volunteers who assist during the school year.

VII. DESCRIPTION OF INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS (in alphabetical order)

BLANCHARD MEMORIAL SCHOOL: *an exemplary school that exhibits Support, Teamwork, a positive Attitude, personal Responsibility, and mutual Respect. These (STARR) values are reflected by our learning community.*

History and Overview

The public schools of Boxborough once consisted of four one-room schoolhouses. In 1949, Blanchard Memorial School was built with a gift from Arthur F. Blanchard, a descendant of Boxborough's Revolutionary War Minuteman Luther Blanchard. The campus property was donated by the Boxborough Grange. As the town of Boxborough grew, so did Blanchard Memorial School, with renovations and additions in 1959, 1967, 1975, and 1997. Blanchard is now a 75,000 square foot facility with 23 classrooms, dedicated spaces for music and the arts, and a full-size gymnasium with a stage, which is used for concerts, special events, and monthly school wide community meetings. The school building is surrounded by hundreds of acres of conservation land, wetlands including a pond and stream, and several outdoor learning spaces, all of which our students and teachers take advantage of on a regular basis. A walking path leads "over the river and through the woods" to the Sargent Memorial Library.

Currently, Blanchard serves approximately 500 students in kindergarten through grade six, with class sizes ranging from 16–24 students. We also house two classrooms from the Carol Huebner Early Childhood program and one classroom from the CASE Collaborative. Classes in grades K-4 are self contained, while grades five and six are departmentalized; students in those grades rotate to different teachers for English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science. All students attend weekly classes in Art, Music, Library/Technology, and Physical Education/Health. We provide support to students with special needs and English Learners through co-teaching, inclusion, and dedicated learning center spaces. Additionally, we host a district wide specialized program called Pathways for students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Our STARR values provide the framework for our school culture. Through a system of positive behavior interventions and supports (PBIS), our staff and students work collaboratively to develop shared language for behaviors that support learning and community building. We use the Responsive Classroom approach to foster connections within the school and teach social-emotional skills; you will see structures like morning meeting/advisory, quiet time, problem solving conferences, and closing circle in many classrooms. Restorative Practices inform the way we handle student discipline. We keep relationships, respect for children, and our shared humanity at the center of all decisions.

The entire school gathers monthly to celebrate and share about our learning. These high energy Community Meetings sometimes include staff performances, too! Additionally, each classroom is assigned a class from another grade as their STARR buddy class. They meet monthly to do themed activities and develop a sense of community within the school.

Curriculum

Blanchard Memorial School is a learning community where all children are loved, valued, challenged, and supported. We get to know students' strengths and interests, then provide them with opportunities to develop autonomy and independence in their learning. Outdoor explorations, small

group instruction, and joyful learning structures are hallmarks of our instructional practices at Blanchard.

Blanchard's curriculum is aligned to the Common Core Standards, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, as well as with district wide objectives and goals. We strive for balance in all things; while teachers have access to curriculum materials and programs, they also have the autonomy to develop unique learning experiences that meet the needs of their students. Teachers, instructional coaches, interventionists, and administrators meet regularly to discuss student progress, examine trends in student learning, and plan for accommodations, supports, and extensions.

Math

All mathematics teaching at Blanchard is rooted in the belief that students should engage in learning experiences that both strengthen their understanding of math concepts and allow them to reason with their ideas. Kindergarten through fifth grade teachers use the Investigations Math program for the core of their instruction, while sixth grade uses Illustrative Math. All teachers employ a range of instructional tools and strategies including: math workshop, three-act tasks, number talks, and enrichment projects. All grade levels provide tiered interventions and supports, based on students' skills and academic needs.

Language Arts

Blanchard Memorial School employs a balanced literacy approach to reading and writing. Students engage in all domains of literacy: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Teachers use a range of instructional strategies to instill a lifelong love of reading and writing, which include: reading and writing workshop, guided reading groups, individual reading and writing and conferences, reader's theatre, book clubs, phonics instruction, and word study.

Instructional resources utilized to teach reading and writing include:

- Handwriting Without Tears
- Wilson Foundations
- Lucy Calkins Units of Study
- Jennifer Seravallo's Reading and Writing Strategies
- Daily Five/Cafe
- Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRSD)
- Fountas and Pinnell Leveled Literacy Interventions (LLI)
- Words Their Way Spelling Inventory
- Houghton-Mifflin Reading

MTSS

To support learning for all students, each classroom dedicates time for small group remedial instruction, extra practice, or extensions using Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS). All students participate in MTSS instructional time two to three times per week for about 20-30 minutes in the tiered group that most closely matches their learning needs for the target skill. The tiered groupings in MTSS represent increasing support and interventions. Students who show proficiency in a grade level skill participate in tier one instruction, which consists of extension and enrichment. Students in tier two

groups receive review or reteaching of particular concepts. Tier three instruction is more intensive and targeted, and often takes place in a separate classroom space with the support of a reading or math specialist. The groupings of students are designed to be flexible and reflect the range of learning needs in the classroom. Families will be notified if their child is to receive tier two or three support.

Technology

Technology provides an avenue for staff to model the habits we hope to instill in our students: perseverance, risk-taking, exploration, and bold thinking. At Blanchard, we integrate technology intentionally and take time to teach media literacy skills. We have three teacher-leaders who work with our district technology team to stay abreast of current research, tools, and best practices in digital learning. Additionally, our Instructional Technology Specialist and Librarian both work collaboratively with classroom teachers to introduce foundational computer programming skills, keyboarding, and robotics. All learning spaces are equipped with interactive white boards, ceiling mounted projectors, and document cameras. Students have access to Chromebooks, iPads, and desktop computers.

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is an important phase in a students' educational life. Our Kindergarten teachers curate developmentally appropriate, play-based learning environments in which children can build the foundational skills and habits they will carry with them throughout their time in school.

Kindergartners engage in literacy experiences designed to foster a lifelong love for reading and writing. Literacy skills introduced include, but are not limited to:

- Letter recognition
- Sound/symbol relationships
- Initial, medial, and final sounds
- Sound blending and segmenting
- High-frequency word recognition
- Rhyming/word families
- Story retelling
- Comprehension
- Developmental spelling
- Concepts of print
- Bookmaking, journal and story writing
- Letter formation/handwriting

Mathematical learning experiences in kindergarten are primarily hands-on and allow children to:

- Develop a strong sense of numbers;
- Experiment with ways of representing numbers;
- Find and describe relationships among numbers; and
- Understand and explain their mathematical thinking.

Science education in kindergarten at Blanchard is designed to build a sense of wonder. Children explore concepts about our world and the role they play in it. Curiosity and inquiry are encouraged through books, hands-on exploration, and active learning experiences outdoors.

Enrichment Programming and Activities

Blanchard Memorial School has a long tradition of strong musical programming. Students in fourth, fifth, and sixth grade have the option to participate in before and after school strings, chorus, and band programs. This is in addition to the performing arts enrichment block during the regular school day. Through Community Education and the Boxborough Recreation Commission, we also host a variety of before and after school programs, including a running club, bird-watching group, Tae Kwon Do, Nature's Explorers, and Destination Imagination.

Blanchard Memorial School also offers a before and after school Extended Day Program. Children are grouped by grade levels with separate staff members assigned to each group. Children participate in arts and crafts, nature and science activities, games, cooking, and sports. A quiet study area is available for students who wish to read. Our Extended Day Program also sponsors enrichment activities and trips.

Family and Community Involvement

Blanchard Memorial School operates on the premise that home and school form an intrinsic bond; students need support from both in order to find success. We hope families and community members feel welcomed into our educational family. Our doors remain open to all.

Learning is enhanced through the support of the Blanchard Parent, Teachers & Friends (PTF) Organization who provides resources for enrichment programs to support all curriculum areas. The Blanchard PTF also helps to coordinate special events, room parents, classroom volunteers, and grants for innovative teacher/staff programs and materials.

As reflected in our School Improvement Plan, Blanchard Memorial School is dedicated to the social-emotional health and well being of our students, staff, and families. We encourage you to read the [2019-2020 School Improvement Plan](#) found on our school website.

CONANT SCHOOL: *Where the Whole Child is the Whole Idea*

The Conant Elementary School, located at 80 Taylor Road, was constructed in 1971. It is a one-story facility with a contemporary architectural design. The building's twenty classrooms are arranged in clusters of five that open onto "pod" areas utilized for large and small group instruction. Conant also has a cafetorium, gymnasium, library/media center, computer lab, art room and several suites of small rooms used for support services. Approximately 488 students are enrolled in Kindergarten through grade six. There are three sections at each grade level, including one All-Day Kindergarten program. Grade 1-6 classes range in size from 20-25.

Conant's educational focus is on promoting high standards and developing a strong academic program while ensuring the emotional needs of our children are met and nurtured. A strong focus on the emotional well being of our students enhances our approach to teaching which is based on current research and evidence of best practice. Instructional strategies and materials support our philosophy of engaging the whole child, and many subject areas are integrated into each thematic unit taught. Enter a classroom and you will see students engaged in the learning process, working cooperatively, communicating effectively, and thinking critically

and creatively through a variety of methods with numerous opportunities to celebrate their learning.

At Conant, we believe that listening, speaking, reading, and writing should be developed simultaneously and integrated throughout the curriculum. To accomplish this, our language arts program is literature based and is designed so that students are directly taught skills and strategies pertaining to oral language, reading, and writing. Students are regularly assessed in these areas to inform instruction that is tailored to ensure strong growth for all children in all subject areas. Technology is used as a learning tool throughout the curriculum. It reinforces and enhances all aspects of attaining and applying knowledge. Computers and multi-media tools assist students in the development of relevant technology skills and in obtaining valuable information that supports instructional goals.

Conant's core value is respect, which is envisioned as flowing in all directions among parents, children, and staff. The community grounds itself in the expectation that all its constituents will treat each other with kindness and respect through our words and actions. Our clear emphasis on respect is a key ingredient in fostering our harmonious school culture. Conant welcomes a large international population, and offers many opportunities at each grade level for cultural sharing and celebrating its diversity. A majority of our students speak at least one language other than English --- at least 20 languages and dialects are represented at the school.

In addition to our shared values, community events bring Conant together on a regular basis. Our Student Council helps us celebrate Pajama Day and Valentine's Day. Our Community Service Learning Committee organizes creative outreach initiatives. Once a month, the school participates in an All School Meeting to share our talents and interests, to explore our shared values, and to make music together. Each grade takes responsibility for one of the Meetings during the year, and have performed dance, drama, poetry, and songs for their fellow Conant students.

Conant hosts Before and After School Care programs, as well as an Extended Day Kindergarten Program, in partnership with Community Education. Care is provided from 7 a.m. until the start of school and from the close of school until 5:45 p.m. each day. Children have the opportunity to participate in a range of individual and group activities; healthy snacks are provided, and time is always set aside for outside play after school. More information is available through Community Education office.

Parents play an important role at Conant School. They volunteer in our classrooms and our library, chaperone field trips, and represent the community on a wide range of Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) committees. Conant is fortunate to have an active PTO that works collaboratively with the staff to implement the school's vision and goals. In addition to multiple fund-raising events, the PTO sponsors many cultural arts programs and activities, including our unique Nature Program. We welcome and celebrate all parent contributions!

C.T. DOUGLAS SCHOOL: *At Douglas School, Children feel joyful, valued, brave, are full of wonder, and experience a deep sense of pride.*

The Douglas Elementary School has 18 classes of students. The building also contains a cafetorium, a gymnasium, a library, and additional rooms/offices/spaces that offer support services for the school. Douglas enrolls approximately 400 students in grades K-6 in sizes ranging from 18 to 25.

We create experiences that empower students to do amazing things that make a difference in the world. We meet children where they are and build skills to be Creative, Innovative, and Entrepreneurial young adults. We understand that students prosper best with a broad curriculum that celebrates, accommodates, and nurtures their academic and individual diversity. Instruction is provided in small and large groups, and on an individual basis. Teaching methods and approaches employed by the collaborative faculty include balanced reading programs, direct instruction, cooperative learning, team teaching, partnered cross-grade learning, active inquiry-based learning, field trips, and thematic teaching. Skills, concepts and content are taught so that students can participate in public exhibitions of learning twice a year.

Our teaching materials include a strong phonics program, children's literature, Guide Reading, Scott Foresman Reading Street Curriculum; a math program entitled Investigations; science units from TERC, as well as other investigations, experiments, and nature walks; social studies units, literature, texts, research endeavors, and community resources. We also have 1:1 computers for students' grades 3-6. Students are active and resourceful learners who are immersed in meaningful, interesting, and integrated curriculum work.

Art, music, and physical education both support and are supported by our language arts, math, science, and social studies curriculum. Grade level jobs include communication, recycling, the school store, horticulture, a school post office, and community service. The two main focus areas for the Douglas staff this year are to enhance the Douglas community through study of the moral development of children and to focus on writing instruction, while fostering a respectful environment of belonging and safety for all students, staff and parents.

Douglas attracts an international population. We take every opportunity to learn from and celebrate our diversity, including our 27% international student population representing 22 different countries. Douglas has a strong social justice curriculum and strives to teach children to be caring and intellectually reflective citizens; who can recognize problems both locally and globally and realize that they can each affect change.

Over 200 parent volunteers are an active part of the Douglas Community. Our Parent Teacher Organization meets monthly to participate in programs and to discuss ways to support our school. The P.T.O. also organizes our cultural enrichment programs and funds our sixth grade plays produced by each class. At school parents help students to operate a school store, a

school-wide letter writing endeavor, with classroom science lessons, and with nature walks. The School Council formulates our School Improvement Plan, serves as an important advisory body, and is a forum to discuss issues of the day.

We have before and after school programs run by Community Education, entitled “Douglas at Dawn/Dusk,” “The Breakfast Club,” and “Work and Play” to meet the interests and needs of our students. The Douglas community has articulated our academic, social, and personal goals for students and has developed expected behavioral priorities addressing the areas of health and safety, respect, pride and responsibility, and trust. Students learn about human commonalities amidst their differences. Once a month, the school assembles in a Community Meeting to discuss and reinforce our values, to enjoy our talents and interests, to engage in challenges that build community, and to sing together.

GATES SCHOOL: *built upon core values consisting of generosity, acceptance, trust & respect, enthusiasm, and scholarship. At Gates we are proud to be “Growing a Caring Community”*

The Gates School, built in 1968, currently houses 17 classroom sections in grades K-6. The building contains a library, cafetorium, and a gymnasium. Classrooms are designed to be heterogeneous and are primarily self-contained, which means that one teacher is responsible for teaching all subject areas.. Presently we have a student population of 372,, with class sizes that range from 17-24.

Go Math! is our math curriculum that is aligned with the Common Core math standards and is being taught to students in grades K - 6. In language arts, teachers assess students by using the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System. Students are divided into small, guided reading groups with children who share similar abilities. We have expanded our guided reading library collections of fiction and non-fiction text. In addition to our guided reading library, teachers use a variety of resources such as Words their Way, Foundations phonics program, and novels. Lucy Calkins, Empowering Writers and the Six Traits model are applied in teaching writing skills. System-wide topics are covered in science and social studies. Learning is enhanced through related field trips and special in-school presentations. Students enjoy participating in specials each week, which includes art, music and physical education. We are pleased to offer an extra rotating special so that all students are able to participate in an extra art, music or physical education for a total of four specials each week.

The Gates School parent community continues to be a very active and supportive group to the life of the school through the PTO and School Council. The PTO provides the funding for classroom assistants, a media assistant, cultural enrichment programs, and other school activities. The PTO also provides volunteer services, conducts school-wide social functions, and supports a variety of sixth Grade activities such as the Yearbook, Nature’s Classroom, the Sixth Grade Play, and the Sixth Grade Social.

The School Council is composed of Gates parents, teachers, and a member from the community who meet monthly to discuss the school budget and plan for the School Improvement Plan. This year we are focusing on three goals that are written in o - 2020 School Improvement Plan. One goal we are working on is to help students develop self-awareness and self-management skills to support school achievement and life success by becoming a school that practices a growth mindset. We are also implementing a variety of District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) instructional supports

and interventions for all students who experience difficulty in school. The Gates School is also in the process of adopting the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems (BAS) which allows for targeted reading instruction for our students in grades 1-6.

The Gates School core values focus on generosity, acceptance, trust & respect, enthusiasm, and scholarship. Each month the school participates in an All School Meeting where we gather together and celebrate core values through song, performances, stories, and plays. All classrooms participate in book buddies where our younger students are paired with older students to celebrate literacy. Students are proud to have flags from their countries displayed in the cafeteria. Student Council leads the school with a variety of community service projects throughout the year. We take pride in giving back to our community.

The Gates School offers both a before and after school extended day program that is run by Community Ed. In addition to childcare, students enjoy participating in chorus, band, strings and student council. Enrichment activities are also offered before and after school. A few enrichment offerings this year included: Math Olympiad, a Geography Club, and a Morning Exercise club. We are also very invested in technology and are proud to have Smartboards in all classrooms, 1:1 chromebooks in grades 3-6, and iPads in grades K - 2. Our art, PE, and music specialists also integrate technology into their curriculum. We are a community of learners that value high expectations, respect individual differences, and celebrate the diversity of our school population.

THE McCARTHY-TOWNE SCHOOL emphasizes integrated curricula, the process of learning, and the responsibilities of students.

The McCarthy-Towne School was founded in 1971 and moved in 2002 to its new home in the Parker Damon Building, which it shares with the Merriam School. McCarthy-Towne has a student population of approximately 525 students in Kindergarten through 6th grade with 24 sections. In addition to regular education classrooms, the school has a music classroom, a Visual Arts classroom, special education support rooms, as well as spaces shared with the Merriam School, including cafetorium, library, gymnasium, multi-purpose room, health office, upper and lower playgrounds, an outdoor nature classroom and a Maker Space, which adjoins the Library.

McCarthy-Towne is a community of learners where children, teachers, and families work cooperatively to encourage the individual growth and success of all students. The teachers at McCarthy-Towne School use activities and lessons that encourage independence and instill a life-long enthusiasm for learning. Students are trusted to take an active role in their own education and are given the responsibility for learning independently, solving problems, making decisions and being part of building a healthy classroom community. Using the philosophies and tenets of the Responsive Classroom help us to build and sustain community and community building. For many years we had professional relationship with the Teachers College of Columbia University Reading and Writing Project. Consultants from Teachers College worked closely with our teachers over a number of years as we sought to implement best practices in literacy from Kindergarten through Sixth Grade. The Reading Workshop and the Writing Workshop are now an integral part of our school-wide instructional practice.

McCarthy-Towne uses integrated curricula and a thematic approach in the classroom. Students will often combine math, language arts, writing, science, music, art, engineering and geography in a unit of study. Our Art Integration work encourages students to take risks, to make mistakes and learn from them, and to use art as a lens through which to view the content areas. Art Integration is also used as means for students to learn patience and a greater understanding of themselves as a learner. Our philosophy is to present materials in a variety of ways in order to accommodate different learning styles, to help students develop their own set of problem-solving strategies and to support individual student goals, strengths and needs. For various disciplines and units, some published curricula form the foundation from which teachers develop their instructional plans. For instance, the Investigations Mathematics Curriculum is used in first grade through fifth grade, while sixth grade uses Illustrative Mathematics. Teachers, however, draw from a variety of sources, methods, and texts in their daily instruction. This provides flexibility for teachers to adapt curriculum to individual and class needs, and changes in federal, state, and local mandates.

Another component of our school's success is our enthusiastic parent community. Parents are actively involved in the students' success by volunteering in classrooms and on field trips, attending student teacher and student-led conferences. McCarthy-Towne parents have always been actively involved in and are an essential part of the school. Parents support our faculty and students by volunteering in classrooms, library, the Visual Arts program, music, and the school office, to name a few. Parents also provide guidance for faculty and staff with their involvement in the School Council and the Parent, Teacher, Student Organization (PTSO). The PTSO does significant fund raising for our Arts Integration consultant and Parent Involvement Coordinator, as well subsidizing field trips, and organizing social events and cultural presentations.

McCarthy-Towne's greatest source of strength is its community of teachers, staff, students and parents. Community is emphasized on the school level through our monthly Community Assemblies and our Reading Buddies program. Reaching beyond our school community, the Student Council performs community service by collecting food, clothing and household goods for local agencies, including Project Bread and support for the Decibels Foundation and sponsoring the annual Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF campaign.

MERRIAM SCHOOL ("Holding Community at Our Center") *is structured to promote community, collaboration, and creativity, and is organized primarily into looping classes that stay together with the same teacher for two years whenever possible. Students and teachers actively participate in a project-based curriculum with an emphasis on the core values of respect, persistence and risk-taking.*

The Merriam School reopened for the 1993-94 school year, then moved into the new Parker Damon Building in 2002. The school now serves approximately 520 children in grades Kindergarten through six, in 22 classes.

Merriam School is committed to creating and sustaining an environment that promotes academic excellence, encourages social development, fosters emotional well-being, and instills a passion for life-long learning. We strive to combine the thought provoking enriching qualities of a children's museum with the nurturing support of a family and the learning structure of a school. We accomplish this by holding community at our center: Merriam parents, teachers, and students learn and work closely together.

Merriam students are active participants as they gain skills and learn to problem solve and to be independent thinkers in all areas of their studies. Students are assigned projects as a means to integrate

and deepen different areas of learning. Through these projects, students not only learn a great deal of information, but also how to set goals, work in groups, and present their learning to an audience. Both teachers and students are actively involved in the assessment process throughout the project.

Students grow in confidence not only from their work in the academic disciplines, but from the time spent learning with others and by giving to their community. Older children are assigned to younger children as buddies. Children across grade levels are assigned to family groups, to create bonds and to share learning at school events such as All-School Meeting, Community Day, Theme Days, and Field Day. All classroom teachers utilize the Open Circle program, which helps children to learn social skills and conflict resolution tools, and to be effective learners when working in groups. In addition, school-wide curriculum themes provide opportunities for the community to work together. For the 2018-19 school year, all students are involved in studies related to the overall theme of “water”. Merriam students participate in service learning projects that take the form of school jobs or other projects designed to help people outside of the school community.

Collaboration is central to the life of the professional staff at Merriam. The teachers meet regularly – at least once a week – to prepare, design, and coordinate curriculum and to share ideas with one another. The in-depth and creative projects that students undertake are a direct result of this teacher collaboration. All support staff are encouraged to work in the classrooms and to be an integral part of the classroom life. A classroom assistant for every class is a mainstay of the school, and these assistants become major participants in the students’ education.

Merriam parents come to three conferences during the year to hear about their children’s progress. They meet with the classroom teachers in both beginning and end of year conferences. Mid-year, we have a unique student-led conference. All students in grades kindergarten through six reflect on their goals, expectations, and progress, and then organize this material into an informative, rewarding presentation for their parents. It is often a highlight of the year for both parents and children.

The Merriam community draws its strength from the joint efforts of staff, parents, children and community representatives. These groups worked together to design Merriam and are all still very actively involved in its development. This collaboration continues through many committees that perform a variety of services, from fund-raising to teacher hiring to event planning. Community is clearly at our center at Merriam School.



Other sources of program information are:

Superintendent of Schools.....	Peter Light 978-264-4700, Ext. 3211
Deputy Superintendent.....	Marie Altieri 978-264-4700, Ext. 3209
Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning.....	Deborah Bookis 978-264-4700, Ext. 3213
Assistant Superintendent of Student Services.....	Dawn Bentley 978-264-4700, Ext. 3265
Registrar.....	Sally Cunningham 978-264-4700, Ext. 3310

KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK

2020

SECTION 3

AN INTRODUCTION TO KINDERGARTEN

This last section of the Kindergarten orientation booklet is intended for parents as a supplement to the regular elementary school description booklet. It should answer many of your questions about Kindergarten and its routines.

We are happy to welcome you and your child to Kindergarten, the beginning of a thirteen-year sojourn in our schools. We hope that you will visit the school and actively support your child by keeping in close contact with the teacher. There will be many opportunities to help the class. Next fall you will receive more information about ways in which you can do this.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District has six elementary schools:

Blanchard School
Conant School
Douglas School
Gates School
McCarthy-Towne School
Merriam School

Definition of Kindergarten

kin·der·gar·ten  (k ɪ̃n dər-gär tən, -dn)

n. (G., lit., garden of children < *kinder*, gen. pl. of *kind*, child (see KIND) + *garten*, GARDEN) a school or class of young children, usually four to six years old, that prepares them for first grade and that develops basic skills and social behavior by games, exercises, music, simple handicrafts, etc. – kin' der-gart'-ner, kin' der-gar'ten-er (-gart'ner) n.

Description of Kindergarten

Kindergarten is a time to find out that wanting to know is exciting, stimulating and fulfilling. It is a time to ask questions, seek answers, wherever they are to be found and to exchange ideas, knowledge and impressions. It is a time to learn that mistakes and confusion can be turned into clarification and enlightenment.²

Kindergarten is a place where a young child feels known; where he/she feels safe; where he/she feels free and where he/she can count on being understood.

Purpose of Kindergarten

The purpose of Kindergarten is to prepare the child for the school experience. This involves the development of the whole child - socially, emotionally, physically and intellectually.

Kindergarten provides children with a common base of vocabulary and experience, which serves as a foundation for the teaching of academics and helps them to learn how to function comfortably and safely in the larger environment of a school. Children should enter Kindergarten at a time when they are ready to learn the vast array of skills and understandings essential to all later learning and living.

1. Resource Unknown
2. Witty, Paul and Kopel, David: Reading and the Education Process, Ginn and Company, Boston, p. 182.

Kindergarten Objectives

Kindergarten provides certain basic learning experiences for the child. These experiences are the foundation on which the child's academic growth develops. Objectives have been established to provide a framework for these experiences.

Kindergarten objectives include helping the child:

- to gain a sense of self-worth
- to gain a sense of self-confidence
- to be sensitive to the needs of others
- to respect authority and property
- to learn to share with others
- to learn the art of good sportsmanship
- to learn to work well with others
- to learn to listen attentively
- to learn to make good use of time
- to learn to share ideas with others
- to develop good speech and language habits
- to develop self-control
- to learn to listen to and follow directions
- to enjoy stories, poetry and books
- to begin to develop skills basic to the regular academic program.

Readiness for School

To help your child have a positive school experience, parents can:

- speak enthusiastically about school
- give the child responsibilities at home, such as errands and chores
- read to the child
- allow and encourage social interaction with the child's peers
- allow the child to be away from home for short periods
- help the child learn his/her name, address and telephone number
- encourage the child to dress himself/herself

- help the child learn to manipulate buttons, zippers, boots, mittens and gloves
- encourage the child to be kind, considerate and courteous to others
- listen to him/her
- encourage the child to express him or herself verbally, using complete sentences and complete thoughts.
- encourage and use conversation whenever possible.

Clothing Needs

If you have ever seen twenty-three Kindergarten children getting ready to go home, you understand the clothing needs!

Clothing should be:

- simple and easy to manage
- loose and comfortable to play in
- kept in repair - zippers working easily and buttons which attach tightly
- appropriate for weather conditions. We do go out to play. Boots, mittens and proper head coverings are essential in cold weather.
- labeled to avoid confusion.

Health and Safety Practices

You can help your child develop proper attitudes toward health and safety. We offer the following suggestions:

- help your child become familiar with his/her bus stops and the school.
- explain to your child safe and appropriate behavior at the bus stop.
- teach your child to obey traffic rules.
- encourage safe and courteous behavior while riding the bus.
- please continue to tell your children that under no circumstances are they to go with strangers.
- do not allow sharp objects or "potential weapons" to be taken to school.

Health habits may be strengthened when home and school work together. We will encourage your child to:

- attend to his/her toilet needs, to wash his/her hands without help and to have regard for his/her personal appearance
- sneeze or cough into his/her elbow
- use a tissue
- rest and relax quietly
- get plenty of rest
- eat a good breakfast

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, active military/veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other administered programs and activities. In addition, students who are homeless or of limited English-speaking ability are protected from discrimination in accessing the course of study and other opportunities available through the schools.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or MGL ch. 76, sec.5 is directed to contact the Director of Student Services, Administration Building, 15 Charter Road, Acton, MA, telephone number 978-264-4700, x3265, who has been designated by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with these laws, or write to the Office for Civil Rights, J. F. Kennedy Federal Building, Room 1875, Boston, MA 02203, or the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Program Quality Assurance Services, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148.

LEGAL REFS.: Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964
Title VII, Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972
Executive Order 11246, as amended by E.O. 11375
Equal Pay Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972
Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972
Rehabilitation Act of 1973
Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
M.G.L. 71B:1 et seq. (Chapter 766 of the Acts of 1972)
M.G.L. 76:5; Amended 1993
Board of Education 603 CMR 26:00
Board of Education Chapter 766 Regulations, adopted 10/74, as amended through 3/28/78
CROSS REFS.: GBA, Equal Opportunity Employment
JB, Equal Educational Opportunities
Revised 11/21/13 Policy File: AC

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICIES 2020

SECTION 4

ENROLLMENT OF STUDENTS

File: JC-R

1. Kindergarten Registration

Students are placed in the school of the parents' first choice, according to the priorities listed below. In the event there is an over-enrollment in any school after children with priority have been placed, a lottery will be held which will provide a fair way for all other children to be placed in the school of their highest choice.

2. Students Moving into Acton or Boxborough

Every effort will be made to place students (K-6) who move to Acton or Boxborough in the schools requested by their parents, with preference given, if necessary, according to the priorities below. However, in certain circumstances it may not be possible to place these students in the school of their first choice.

3. Transfers between Elementary Schools

A parent or guardian who wishes to transfer his or her child from one elementary school to another shall go on line to <https://abschools-registration.hosted.src-solutions.com/> to setup an account and request to be added to the wait list.

Please be sure to answer the following question -**Yes**:

"Is your child attending one of Acton-Boxborough elementary schools in Kindergarten through 6th Grade (not including the Preschool); and do you wish to place your student on a waitlist for another elementary school?"

Any transfer requests that are made during the school year up to July 1, will be considered in July for transfer in September. Students will rarely be transferred during the school year to minimize disruptions.

4. Priorities to be used in Assigning Students

- a. Providing for children with special needs and/or accessibility accommodations - These students will be placed appropriately upon the recommendation of Student Services.
- b. Keeping families together - It is important to build a strong core of families who can devote their energies to their school's activities. Volunteerism, active parent/teacher organizations, and parent involvement in advisory groups and the like are valuable school resources. So is a long-term family connection to their school community. Therefore, if the newly enrolling student has a sibling in the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools and that sibling attended an Acton or Boxborough elementary school, the newly enrolling student will be given school selection preference at that same school.

* A sibling is defined as: "a relative (by birth, adoption or guardianship) who is living in the same home."

- c. Encouraging walking to school - Children should walk to school wherever possible

for economic and energy-saving reasons. Therefore, students who live within a one

mile safe walk will be given preference when placing students. A safe walk will include sidewalks on major roads and crossing guards when students need to cross a major road.

- d. Children who are retained in kindergarten receive priority for all day kindergarten. If they request to transfer to another school, they receive priority to attend that school.
- e. Children who live in Boxborough are guaranteed a spot at the Blanchard School if they choose, and children who live in Acton are guaranteed a spot at an Acton school if they choose. Exceptions to this may be made for special education reasons or for other reasons as determined by the Superintendent. Rev 12/9/16

ASSIGNMENT OF STUDENTS FROM OTHER SCHOOL DISTRICTS OR HOMESCHOOLING

File: JCAC

Students transferring from another school or district or from homeschooling into the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will be placed in a grade based on their age on or before September 1 of the current school year.

A student enrolling who is five years old on or before September 1 of the current school year will be placed in Kindergarten.

A student enrolling who is six years old on or before September 1 of the current school year, and who has completed kindergarten, will be placed in first grade.

A student enrolling who is seven years old or older on or before September 1 of the current school year will be placed in the age appropriate grade, unless the student has attended a different grade level in his or her previous school district. In this case, the student will be placed according to the building principal's evaluation for a grade placement.

Students enrolling in grades 7 through 12 from another school or district or from homeschooling into the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will be placed based on placement testing and a review of records from the student's previous school(s). Students enrolled in school elsewhere will not be permitted to enroll in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. Students who have earned a diploma or the equivalent from another secondary school will not be permitted to enroll in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District.

Ref: Kindergarten Entrance Policy JEB
MGL Chapter 76 Section 1
Approved 1/22/15

KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE POLICY

File: JEB

This policy is designed to reduce the age span and therefore, normally, the developmental span in a classroom in order to enable instruction more suitably tailored to the children in the class.

Children reaching the age of five on or before September 1 are eligible to be enrolled in Kindergarten in September of that calendar year.

Approved 1/22/15

RESIDENCY AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT

File: JF

(formerly School Admissions)

In order to attend the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, a student must actually reside in the town of Acton or the town of Boxborough. The residence of a minor child is presumed to be the legal, primary residence of the parents or legal guardians who have physical custody of the child.

“Residency” is defined as the place where a person has his/her permanent home, not temporarily, and is the center of his/her domestic, social, and civic life.

In determining residency, the Acton Boxborough Regional Schools reserve the right to request a variety of documentation when students are initially enrolled in the schools, or in the course of any investigation intended to verify residency.

I. Registration Process and Residency Verification

Before any student is to be enrolled in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, his or her parent or legal guardian must provide to the school(s) proof of residency, proof of legal guardianship of the child being registered and other documentation pertaining to academic and medical records. Families should be prepared to furnish all of the following during the registration process:

- a. Copy of birth certificate for student
- b. Copy of student’s current immunization record and physical examination (within the last year)
- c. Copies of previous school records - report cards or transcripts, MCAS scores if moving within the state of MA
- d. A signed Statement/Affidavit of Occupancy
- e. Copy of photo identification of parent/guardian
 - i. *Evidence of Identification*: including, but not limited to one of the following: valid driver’s license, MA Photo ID card, valid passport, or other government issued photo ID
- f. Proof of residency & occupancy in Acton or Boxborough - note that parent/guardian name must be listed:
 - i. *Evidence of Residency*: including but not limited to recent mortgage payment or property tax bill, fully signed and executed lease and/or rental agreement, fully signed and executed purchase and sale (P&S) agreement (provided occupancy date occurs before a student can be registered), Section 8 agreement

AND

- ii. *Evidence of Occupancy*: Including but not limited to gas/Oil bill, electric bill, home (not cell) telephone bill, cable bill, water bill (note: bill must be dated within the past 45 days and address and name must be stated)

When applicable, families must also provide the District with:

- g. Copies of any IEP or 504 Plan documentation for the student
- h. Parenting plan for divorced or separated parents/guardians

II. Enforcement

Questions concerning any student’s residency in Acton or Boxborough will be subject to further inquiry and/or investigation. Such questions concerning residency may arise on the basis of

incomplete, suspicious, or contradictory proofs of address; anonymous tips; correspondence that is returned because of an invalid or unknown address, or other grounds.

The Director of Personnel and Administrative Services or his/her designee may request additional documentation and may use the assistance of the District's School Resource Officer to assist with or conduct investigations into student residency. A report of findings will be provided to the Director of Personnel and Administrative Services, who shall make an initial determination of residency.

Upon determination that a student is not actually residing in Acton or Boxborough, the student's enrollment in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District shall be terminated. In addition to termination of enrollment and the imposition of other penalties permitted by law, the Acton Boxborough Regional Schools reserve the right to recover restitution based upon the costs of educational services during the period of non-residency.

III. Exceptions & Extraordinary Circumstances

The residency requirements listed above shall not apply to the following. In all circumstances, if the request is granted, student transportation during the period of non-residency shall be the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians.

- a. Students who are entitled to attend the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- b. Students enrolled in the High School under special programs approved by the School Committee, such as educational exchange programs
- c. Children of non-resident employees of the Acton Boxborough Regional Schools, who meet the conditions established by the School Committee in the policy pertaining to such students
- d. Students accepted and/or grandfathered into the District through the School Choice program
- e. Students whose parents divorce or separate and share physical custody, provided one custodial parent remains a resident of Acton or Boxborough, and the student resides at least 4 nights a week with the parent who resides in Acton or Boxborough. The most current custody agreement and/or approved parenting plan must be provided in these circumstances.
- f. For children whose families have signed and accepted a Purchase and Sale Agreement to purchase and reside in a dwelling in Acton or Boxborough, they may be enrolled up to 60 calendar days in advance of the time actual physical residency occurs. This exception may only be granted with prior written approval from the Superintendent.

Below are extraordinary circumstances in which exceptions may be considered, at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee.

- g. If a student's family moves from Acton or Boxborough on or after April 1st of a given school year, the parents or legal guardians may place a request in writing to the Superintendent to have their student(s) remain in the Acton-Boxborough School District for the completion of the academic year. To be considered for this exception, families must make the request to the Superintendent at least two weeks prior to such a move.
- h. If a student is a senior at Acton-Boxborough High School, and his/her family moves out of the District on or after October 1st of a given school year, the parents or legal guardians may submit a request in writing to the Superintendent to have their student(s) remain in Acton-Boxborough for the completion of the academic year.
- i. Current students who move out of Acton or Boxborough because of the severe or chronic illness of the student or immediate family member; the death of an immediate family member; disaster to the residence; or other circumstances having a significant impact upon the student.

Special requests and extraordinary circumstances that are not specifically articulated above, must be presented in writing to the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent has sole discretion in rendering a decision for these requests, and those decisions are final.

IV. Notification

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District residency requirements, verification procedures, and consequences for falsifying or misrepresenting residency will be posted on the District's website, individual school websites, and the District's policy manual.

REF: JF-E Proof of Residency Affidavit

Approved 1/22/15

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Proof of Residency Affidavit JF-E

I/We, the parent(s), legal guardian(s) of _____ hereby certify as follows: (Print student's full name)

1. I/We wish to enroll the above named student in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District. I/We understand that pursuant to Massachusetts General Law (Chapter 76, Section 5) and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's Policy, students who actually reside in the Towns of Acton and Boxborough may attend school in the Acton-Boxborough Regional District and students who do not actually reside in the Towns of Acton or Boxborough may not attend school in the Acton Boxborough Regional School District.

2. I/We hereby certify that effective _____, 20____, the above named student is/will be residing at the following address in Acton or Boxborough Massachusetts, with:

Printed Names (s) of Parent(s)/Guardians(s)

Acton or Boxborough, MA 01720/01719

No.	Street	Apt. No.
Home Telephone:	_____	
Cell Phone:	_____	
Work Phone:	_____	

3. I/We acknowledge that I am/we are required to notify the Acton-Boxborough Regional District or the above student's school in writing, of any change in said student's address within five (5) business days of such change of address.
4. I/We understand that this Occupancy Statement will be relied upon by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the purpose of determining the above student's eligibility to attend school in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District on the basis of residency. If said student is enrolled in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District based upon the information provided and it is subsequently determined that the student does not actually reside in Acton or Boxborough, I/We understand that the student's enrollment in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District will be promptly terminated and I/We will be jointly liable to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District for the student's tuition for the full academic year(s).
5. I/We further certify that I am/we are the parent(s), legal guardians(s), or responsible adult of the above student.

6. I/We understand that all applicants must reside in the Towns of Acton or Boxborough as outlined in Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 76, Section 5 which states:

Every person shall have a right to attend the public schools of the town where he/she actually resides, subject to the following section. No school committee is required to enroll a person who does not actually reside in the town unless said enrollment is authorized by law or by the school committee. Any person who violates or assists in the violation of this provision may be required to remit full restitution to the town of the improperly attended public schools. No person shall be excused from or discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town, or in obtaining that advantages privileges and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. (amended by st. 1971, c622, c.1; st. 1973 c. 925, s 9A, st.. 1993, c. 282; st. 2004, c.352, s.33)

One item must be provided from each column:

Column A	Column B	Column C
Evidence of Residency	Evidence of Occupancy	Evidence of Identification Photo ID
Record of recent Mortgage payment and/ or property tax bill	Gas/Oil Electric Bill, Home (not cell) Telephone Bill, Cable Bill, Water Bill (Note: Bill must be dated within the past 45 days and address and name must be stated)	Valid MA Driver's License
Fully Signed and Executed Lease and/or Rental Agreement (Must be Executed by both Parties)	Recent bill dated within the past 45 days showing Acton or Boxborough address and name (Note: A Residency Statement/Affidavit is required with this option)	Valid MA Photo ID Card
Fully signed and Executed Purchase and Sale (P&S) Agreement (provided occupancy date occurs before a student can be registered)	Occupancy Statement from landlord must be provided if a bill cannot be provided prior to student's enrollment	Other Government issued Photo ID
Section 8 Agreement		

Signed under the pain and penalties of perjury on this _____ day of _____, 201____:

Parent /Guardian

(Please enter relationship)

Parent/Guardian

(Please enter relationship)

Review by Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools: _____

Acton-Boxborough Staff Member's Initials