

Office of the Superintendent
Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
<http://ab.mec.edu>
(978) 264-4700 x 3211

TO: Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members
FROM: Stephen Mills
ON: June 2, 2011
RE: **ADDENDUM revised**

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING:

6.0 UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- 6.2 Class Size Task Force Presentation - *Amy Hedison*
 - 6.2.1 Survey Results and proposals
- 6.7 FY'12 Budget Update – *Steve Mills / Don Aicardi*
 - 6.7.1 Possible **VOTE** to reallocate FY'12 funds to 2 FTE personnel
 - 6.7.2 Memo re FY12 Personnel Requests –*Liza Huber*

9.0 FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 9.1 ABRHS
 - 9.1.1 Discipline Report
 - 9.1.2 Gifts from Mr. and Mrs. A. Taylor and Ms. P. Quilty for Class of 2011's Community Service Day
 - 9.1.3 Gift from Dr. X Liu to support the Science team trip to the National Science Olympiad
- 9.3 Pupil Services
 - 9.3.1 ABRSD ELL Student Population, May 2011
- 9.12 Acton 2020 film
- 9.13 28th Annual Employer Breakfast and Coffee – Occupational Development Program

CLASS SIZE TASK FORCE

Recommendations 6/2/2011

Overview

- Survey results indicate a majority of responders feel that children would benefit from smaller class sizes
- Significant number of families are supplementing with private tutors
 - This plus the PTSO funds is essentially an additional tax/surcharge for households with children in the school system
- There are ways to mitigate the negative effects of large class sizes that are "cost-effective"
 - Fundamental issue of tax base and population growth needs to be addressed realistically
- Consistent support for teachers' efforts
 - Recognition that large class sizes impact teachers' ability to know each student, return work in a timely manner and provide more than a few in-depth assignments

Survey results

- 579 people completed survey
 - Responding for more than one child/school
- Comments and tallied answers do not always “foot”
- General conclusions (i.e. significant number of responses):
 - Not enough individual attention for students at all levels
 - More teaching assistants would help
 - The “average” child is being missed
 - Teachers are overloaded both in terms of administrative work and teaching needs; “crowd control” and “classroom management” were consistent themes
 - Tutoring (at home or professionally) a significant issue beginning in Junior High

APS recommendations

- Two modular units for Gates
 - While assistants are important there is a space issue
- District-funded, FULL-TIME assistants
 - Assistants need to be trained and their responsibilities need to be clearly described
- Math and reading specialists in each elementary school
- More screening and support at K-2 levels to identify and manage learning and behavior issues
 - Teachers spending time on disruptive behaviors/other children's learning and experience negatively impacted
 - Early identification and management of special needs will save money in the long-term

Junior High recommendations

- A fifth full team - -if at all possible in both grades, if not, then in 8th grade first
 - Addition of a half team in 8th grade not a good solution
- Additional SPED center
 - 1 teacher, 2 assistants
- A reading specialist (plus assistants)
- Need to evaluate other spaces for administration

High School recommendations

- At least one more counselor
- Creation of homeroom time every morning
 - Same teacher, same group of kids for four years
- "Floating schedule" with an extra 20 minutes added to rotating periods
 - NOT to be used for teaching but for questions, homework review, notebook check, etc.
 - Coaches must work this into practice schedules
- Regularly scheduled office hours for every teacher
 - Space issues; 25-30% of staff have to "float"
 - Modularity?
- Second ASE center

Conclusion

***SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT
GOAL IS TO INCREASE
STUDENT – TEACHER
INTERACTIONS AT ALL
LEVELS***

Next Steps

- Feasibility analysis
 - Administration and SC need to determine to what extent they can commit to addressing this issue at this time
 - Financial analysis of options
- Town and school need to work together more closely to monitor and understand future growth
 - Impact on schools is significant
 - Need to engage community

Thank you

- Task force members, particularly Christine Phillips, Torri Horovitz and Kristina Rychlik
 - Brendan Cotter, Chris Renzi, Nancy Sherburne
- Administration
- Principals and teachers
- Students, particularly Dr. Callen's "Senior Advisory Group"
- All parents, particularly those who answered our survey and provided thoughtful and thought-provoking insights and comments

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School
District
FY'12 Proposed Reallocations
June 3, 2011

Superintendent's Introduction
Dr. Stephen Mills

1

Introduction

Thank you to both communities for your
support of the FY'12 ABRSD budget.

2

Potential Reallocations To FY'12 ABRSD Budget

(from May 5, 2011 meeting)

Our current plan is to:

- a) Continue to review final FY'12 revenues;
- b) Review revisions to existing FY'12 line items;
- c) If possible, make recommendations to revise FY'12 budget to address unmet needs;
- d) For June discussion: weigh potential reallocations to FY'12 budget

3

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District FY'12 Proposed Reallocations June 3, 2011

FY'12 Status Review
Don Aicardi, Finance Director

4

FY'12 ABRSD Revenue Review

Recent trends affecting the FY'12 budget continue to be positive:

- Both Boxborough and Acton approved the recommended FY'12 ABRSD budget
- House of Representatives (+\$121k) and Senate (+\$164k) FY'12 Budgets go into conference committee using revenues higher than those used in our FY'12 budget

5

FY'12 ABRSD E&D Review

Continuing to monitor/weigh options for fall:

If final FY'12 State Aid numbers are higher than budgeted, additional revenue could reduce the FY'12 use of E&D reserves

Reminder:

\$502,300 in "Excess and Deficiency" funds were used to support the FY'12 ABRSD budget

6

FY'12 ABRSD Status Review

Two promising trends that we can confirm so far:

- a. Post open enrollment trend is showing shift from more expensive to less expensive health plans (\$89k savings)
- b. We revisited FY'12 ABRSD electricity assumptions due to lower use (\$61k savings)

Proposed Reallocations Within Current
FY'12 ABRSD Budget:

**Are there needs we can still
address within the existing FY'12
ABRSD budget which won't
require additional funds?**

Acton-Boxborough Regional School
District
FY'12 Proposed Reallocation

June 3, 2011

Dr. Stephen Mills

9

Reallocation Within FY'12 ABRSD
Budget

(Revised from January 2011 Presentations)

For Junior High:

1.0 FTE "Student Support" Professional \$75,000
(SPED/Testing/Reading Support)

For Senior High:

1.0 FTE "Student Support" Professional \$75,000
(Special Educator/School Psychologist)

Current FY'12 ABRSD Strategy

1. Without requiring any overall change in the current level service budget, can we reallocate money within the current budget to address some unmet ABRSD needs? (INTRODUCED TONIGHT)
2. Continue to monitor the state budget process to see if state aid comes in higher than estimates used in the FY'12 budget. (STILL UNDER REVIEW)

11

Proposed motion:

To reallocate \$150,000 from within the current FY'12 ABRSD budget as currently approved:

FROM:

Health Insurance:	\$89,000
Electricity	\$61,000

TO:

Junior High ABRSD salaries:	\$75,000
Senior High ABRSD salaries:	\$75,000

12

Superintendent Wrap Up

Thank you for your continued support of the
ABRSD FY'12 budget.

We are happy to answer any questions that you
may have.

6.7.2

(A)

Office of the Superintendent
Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
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<http://ab.mec.edu>

TO: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
FROM: Steve Mills
DATE: June 1, 2011
RE: FY12 Personnel Requests

Attached please find a memo from Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services, created with the assistance of Alixe Callen, Principal of ABRHS and Craig Hardimon, Principal of RJGJHS, outlining the request for 2 FTE (1 at each school) using reallocated funding for FY12.

*Pupil Services Memorandum
Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools*

To: Dr. Stephen Mills, Superintendent

From: Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services

Date: June 1, 2011

RE: FY12 Personnel Requests

Over the last recent fiscal years, in collaboration with building principals, classroom teachers, specialists and clinicians, Pupil Services thoughtfully planned out objectives to advance effective reforms by yearly action plans that enhance educational growth through data systems, developing cost-effective programs, and realigning resources, both in personnel and in educational programming.

One specific example includes continuing to develop and/or to enhance in-district programs that offer equivalent services to Out-of-District placements (OOD), by specifically, keeping students in their home communities while addressing their complex needs through programs such as the Connections Programs, the Hayward Center, etc.

Concurrently, effective reform must also be focused on regular education initiatives that will ultimately reduce special education costs:

- Reducing team/class size
- Developing/expanding regular education service delivery to students at risk
- Coordinating professional development in regular and special education

In order to influence changes in special education, a systems approach for collecting data (hard and soft), analyzing data, synthesizing results, creating action plans, allowing for input from the school and community are sequential steps in instituting and owning change. Complementing this systems approach, vision assists in understanding the two axes for influencing change: external and internal factors. By developing this dual approach, by addressing concurrently both factors, we are better able to control costs.

Internal controls are based upon the development of yearly action plans that enhance growth through data systems and development of phased-in cost effective programs and the realignment of resources, both in personnel and in educational programs. These action plans are based upon the intensive review of the special education financial task force of December 2008 in which cost drivers were highlighted for study. Consequently, we examined cost saving strategies and programmatic improvements in the following areas: monitoring finances, OOD study and transitions back to in-district settings, IEP

process, CASE programs and transportation, child study teams, communications, personnel distribution, legal trends and fees, early intervention, and program development.

The external factors are principally centered on our OOD population (CASE and approved private schools). We have created a substantial OOD action plan in which we have scrutinized not only the in-house factors that lead up to the recommendation of OOD, but also examined the factors which prevent a student from returning.

If we subscribe to a systems approach, with vision to concurrently look at internal and external factors, complex as they may be, that influence rising costs, we have a grand opportunity through the collection of data, analyzing and synthesizing that data, to predict outcomes which lead to solid program and budget building. Both sound educational programming and fiscal accountability are reciprocal elements to running a school system that is characterized by excellence and quality. It's a blueprint for accountability.

To continue our initiatives, we must address organizational requirements that best meet changes in our student body. At the high school level, an additional FTE 1.0 school psychologist / special educator) is required to effectively handle our adolescent challenges of mental health, and dissipate these challenges in order to optimally focus on achievement. With some re-allocation of resources, this would expand group interventions for students identified in our specialized programs including the completion of the remaining pieces of the Hayward Center and reduce our learning center case loads (N=47). The development of specialized programs (completion/continuation of the Hayward Center and the development of a high school Connections program respectively) as well as responding to Learning Center education caseloads are interconnected aspects of these potential cost drivers.

At the junior high, an additional special education / reading teacher (FTE: 1.0) is required to reallocate some existing resources and commit to some additional resources as well. Systemically, we want to group students in ways that make sense for their learning and achievement, specific to the area of reading and literacy. In this way, we can provide better programming and reduce potential special education referrals at the same time.

Within this junior high FTE, we are proposing to carve out a 0.2 FTE for a special education Building Department Leader (BDL) who will initiate assessments, where needed, and offer individualized reading and literacy services to offset potential referrals. This 0.2 FTE will assist in the overall Pupil Services plan for identifying needs of students in a timely manner, and intervening quickly through individualized approaches so that students not only learn the skills being taught but also keep pace with the curriculum.

In order to give every student the maximum opportunity to achieve, as well as meet our legal requirement to keep moving towards less restrictive and costly settings, we must have continuity of program to make transitions smooth and curriculum seamless. We have examined the complexity of diagnosis and placement issues for our students and

recognize that the continuation/completion of specialized programs at both the junior and senior high level is necessary to meet the needs of our identified at risk students, to meet their needs both programmatically and fiscally.

Summary:

Add FTE 1.0 at the high school level (school psychologist/special educator) for our specialized programs and caseloads in the learning centers.

Impact: Expands mental health group interventions in the specialized programs; district is better equipped to offer educational and social services to these students. Reduces caseloads in the learning centers, which results in more time on skill building and achievement.

Add FTE 1.0 at the junior high level (special education/reading teacher) of which FTE 0.2 will be designated for a BDL. The overall FTE will add and/or reallocate resources for skill groupings; the BDL will support early assessment and individualized skill building (reading and literacy), where needed.

Impact: Offers an opportunity to group students differently to maximize achievement, by programming students by skills, creates an environment for more time on task, and consequently, reduces special education referrals.

Overall impact at the region: Maximizes learning for students; reduces referrals; achieves cost saving strategies enumerated in the special education financial task force.

9.1.1
(A)

To: Stephen Mills
From: Larry Dorey
Re: Discipline Report for
Date: 6/1/2011

There were 50 discipline referrals to the administration during the month of May. This total is down from 53 last year. 17 students were suspended this month, while 18 students were suspended during May, 2010.

Suspensions

Infraction	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Abusive/Obscene Language					
Alcohol Use/Related Use		1		4	11
Disrespectful Behavior			2		
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior				2	
Drug Paraphernalia		1			
Drug Possession		1			1
Fighting	1				3
Harassment				3	
Insubordination		1			
Leaving School Grounds		2			
Physical Aggression		2		1	
Physical Attack					1
Sale of Alcohol					1
Stealing		1			
Truancy Issues	1	1		8	
Total	2	10	2	18	17

A list of all infractions for the month of May appears on the backside of this page.

c: Alixe Callen

Other Infractions

Infraction	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Abusive/Obscene Language				1	
Academic Integrity			2		3
Alcohol use/Related use		1		4	11
Bullying					1
Bus Discipline Issue	1		4		
Chem Health Smoking					3
Computer use Violation	1	4			3
Disrespectful	1	2	3	3	
Disruptive/Uncooperative Behavior	5	5	2	7	4
Drug Paraphernalia		1			
Drug Possession		1			1
Fighting	1				3
Forgery			1		4
Harassment			2	4	2
Leaving School Grounds	1	17	3	11	4
Non Compliance w/school rules				2	
Other		2	1	3	1
Out of School Issue			2		
Physical Aggression		2		3	
Physical Attack					1
Sale of Alcohol					1
Stealing		1			
Tardy					1
Teasing				1	4
Truancy	1	6	1	14	3
Total	11	42	21	53	50

9.1.2.

(A)

To: Stephen Mills
cc: Kay Steeves
From: Alixe Callen
Date: May 5, 2011
Subject: Community Service Day Donations

The following have made donations to benefit the Class of 2011's Community Service Day activities:

We would appreciate it if you would approve these donations, which will be deposited into Fund 3328 – SHS Community Service Gifts.

Mr. & Mrs. Arthur Taylor	\$25.00
Patricia Quilty	\$25.00

Thank you.

9.1.3

(A)

To: Stephen Mills
cc: Brian Dempsey
From: Alixe Callen
Date: May 23, 2011
Subject: Donation

The Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund, at the request of Dr. Xiaomei Liu, has donated \$50 to support the Science Team's participation in the National Science Olympiad in Wisconsin.

We would appreciate it if you would approve their donation.

Thank you.

File Note: Do not issue a tax receipt. Dr. Liu received one from Fidelity Fund at the time his donation was made.

9.3.1.
(A)

ELL STUDENT POPULATION
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
June 1, 2011

Category	Final Total as of 5/1/2011	Additions	Subtractions	Current Total as of 6/1/2011
RJG JHS	7	0	0	7
ABRHS	10	0	0	10
ABRSD TOTALS	17	0	0	17

6/1/11

WORLD PREMIER FILM SCREENING

of *"It's a Wonderful Acton"*

What would
Acton be like
if *you* never
existed?



Come experience a future life in ACTON...
all through the eyes of George,
compliments of his angel guide Clarence.

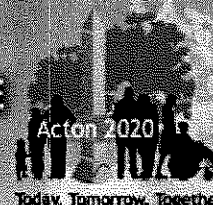
Join us at
THEATRE III
250 Central Street
West Acton

MONDAY
JUNE 6, 2011
20 minute showings
6:30 - 8:30pm

Refreshments, Post Screening Interviews
Red Carpet and Lights
(not really... well maybe!)

FREE SHOWINGS - ALL ARE WELCOME

This film is in collaboration with Acton 2020's 'Choose Your
Own Acton' Event - June 23rd 6:30 - 9:30pm - Town Hall - Rm 204



9.13
(A)

**The 28th Annual Employer Breakfast and Spring Coffee
The Occupational Development Program
May 2011**

*Welcome
by
Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services*

On behalf of the Acton Boxborough Regional School District, I want to extend a warm welcome and appreciation to all of you in participating in our 28th annual Employer Breakfast.

I want to make special mention of all the administrators, teachers, parents, employers who make all of this possible. This takes dedication, staying power, and most of all a love and commitment to all children.

From a broader vantage point, this is also a time to thank each and every one of you for being part of the support system in Massachusetts for special education, enriching the lives of students with disabilities.

The Occupational Development Program, initiated in 1983, has always been about team work, dedication, and an unwavering belief that all students can learn, achieve, and become independent, contributing adults.

Some of you may wonder.... How did the Occupational Development Program start? I wanted to tell you a little bit about that.

When I began my career in special education, the early 80s, I started in a residential school for students ages 8-22. There were nine classrooms in the building and students of all ages and need were grouped together. That provided me with the first opportunity to work in a real team atmosphere; simply talking about children and how best to work with them. Overall, we thought we were doing a great job, providing for the needs of students in a supportive positive setting, focusing on a functional academic curriculum with a life skills focus.

But, my thinking began to change over time and I - like many others - began to think about segregating students with disabilities - the separation of these students from their typical peers, and the separation of students from their home communities. We began to think about what that did to a student's self-esteem and social development. How did that impact a young adult's independence over time? What was missing from a child's educational experience?

It's hard to believe that Federal Law related to special education services is fairly young. In 1975, President Gerald Ford signed the original Education for all

handicapped Children Act, now known as the IDEA. Massachusetts preceded Federal Law by 2 years in 1973.

It is important for us to consider that in 1983, there were no vocational/career based programs for students with disabilities and through a grass roots effort, a small group of dedicated professionals participated in writing a grant that would allow them to design a program that would offer alternatives to a traditional diploma; an integrated program where students with disabilities would participate in the public school with their typical peers, pursue an academic curriculum focused on high academic achievement, along with a comprehensive vocational and career based training model.

After 28 years and countless graduates, we continue to try out new ideas that offer an equitable educational experience to all students. There have been many successes and challenges in special education since that time, but today highlights one of it's many successes.

Today we honor the accomplishments of our students as they learn and grow and the employers who provide the integrated experience these students need to develop critical career skills for an independent life.

We appreciate the opportunity to network with all of you concerned with the education of students with disabilities.

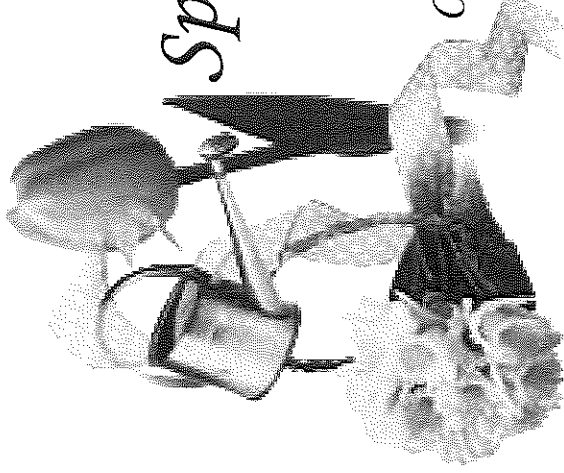
Thank you very much!

OLD

Welcome to Our

Spring Coffee

*In Appreciation of
Community and School
Employers*



*Occupational Development Program
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School*

May 25, 2011

The staff and students of the Occupational Development Program want to thank our employers and members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Community for their support of our employability training program. We believe that successful participation in a variety of work-related opportunities contributes to student growth in self-confidence, independence, and future employability.



The principal funding for this coffee is made possible by the students of the Occupational Development Program. Their enthusiastic efforts to load the soda machines as well as to count and deposit money into the school's bank account have helped to sponsor revenue accounts for school activities.

Our appreciation and recognition to our community and school employers:

A.B.R.H.S. Attendance Office
A.B.R.H.S. Beverage Machines

A.B.R.H.S. Cafeteria

A.B.R.H.S. Custodial Staff

A.B.R.H.S. Faculty Support Center

A.B.R.H.S. Radio and Television

A.B.R.H.S. School Store

A.B.R.H.S. School Library

A.B. Comm. Ed. Integrated Pre-School

Acton Highway Department

Acton Memorial Library

C.A.S.E. Program

C.A.S.E. Program

Concord Academy

Emerson Hospital Community Service

Household Goods Recycling of Massachusetts

Hybrid Farm

Littleton Selectmen's Office

Restoration Project Incorporated

Reuben Hoar Library

West Acton Citizens' Library