

ACTON PUBLIC and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL
SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING WORKSHOP



Sargent Library
Boxborough

July 26, 2011
6:00 p.m.



6:30 p.m. Business Meeting begins


AGENDA



- 1. Call to Order**
- 2. Chairmen's Introduction**
- 3. Regionalization**
 - Vote for Study Committee – discussion, timing
 - Goal for Study Completion – process overview
 - Goal for Town Meetings Apr/May 2012
- 4. Regional Budgeting Issues**
 - Financial Reporting to SC; adequate or alter format?
 - Service Level including Class size for FY13? FY14?
 - E&D target level? How should E&D be used?
 - Management of year end spending
 - ALG process, representation, communication and effect on the regional budget
 - Calendar for Regional Budget
 - CASE Accounting / Transportation Savings
- 5. Office of the Superintendent**
 - Superintendent Contract (update)
 - Format for Superintendent Review – should it be revised?
 - Central Office Staffing Levels – are they adequate?
 - Legal Counsel – are we using counsel cost effectively?
- 6. Policy Issues**
 - Long-Range Planning (Xuan)
 - Negotiation – should we have a negotiating subcommittee?
 - SC as a whole – are we functioning well?
 - Structuring SC meetings to end by 10pm and Ground Rules
 - SC Going Paperless
 - SC Members Email Practice and Policy
 - "Demographic Study" – further analysis of existing study? New study? Action plan?
- 7. Other Issues**
 - ABYS Fields Project
 - International Field Trip policy – school committee oversight role? Scholarships?
 - Identification of New Issues of importance to the schools, school committee
- 8. APS Issues**
 - K-6 Funding of Assistants – how should we fund (PTO, local budget, Comm Ed, other?)
- 9. Adjourn**

From:  Xuan Kong <xuankongsc@gmail.com> Fri, Jul 22, 2011 1:34:13 PM 

Subject: Background Information on CASE issue for Workshop

To:  John Petersen <john.s.petersen@verizon.net>
 Michael Coppelino <copp@verizon.net>

Cc:  **Beth Petr**

Attachments:  Attach0.html 4K
 SPEDTaskForcePresentation.pdf 83K

In December 2008, SPED Financial Task Force presented its findings on various drivers on SPED costs. The joint school committee accepted the task force recommendation. Presentation slides are attached.

The full report can be found at <http://ab.mec.edu/about/aboutpdf/SPED-FTF-II-FinalReportDec08.pdf>

During January 2009 meeting, Liza Huber (Director of Pupil Services) presented an action plan to address each of the task force recommendations, among them are

- 1) CASE Transportation Cost issue
- 2) CASE program accounting issues

Acton/Acton-Boxborough are only two of 13 member districts of CASE (Concord Area Special Education) Collaborative. Its governance structure is through board of directors (superintendents of member districts). The mission of the CASE Collaborative is to efficiently and effectively provide high quality and appropriate services to children with disabilities and to support the staff that serve them.

Currently, CASE program "assesses" the same program fee for every student attending their program. In contrast, EDCO and other collaboratives charge a different program fee for each student depending upon the actual program cost.

WHY Task Force recommends CASE change its program fee structure practice? The following is an idealized explanation (some numbers below are no longer accurate).

CASE offers various SpEd programs to its member districts. Consider that APS students use two programs, the cost of one is \$50,000 and the other is \$10,000 per student. Currently CASE does not distinguish the two program cost and just charge us \$30,000 per student.

Circuit breaker threshold is somewhere about \$35,000. So for either student, we will not exceed the threshold and get no reimbursement.

If CASE, like EDCO, charges us with actual program cost \$50,000/\$10,000. The total cost to us is still the same (\$60,000). However, for the \$50,000 student, we get $40\% * (50,000 - 35,000) = \$6,000$ back as circuit breaker reimbursement.

The Financial Task Force believed actual cost accounting would

- 1) help all member districts to benefit from circuit breaker reimbursement
- 2) help CASE board to identify inefficiency in their programs (if the same program at CASE cost \$50,000 while similar program at other places offers \$40,000, then one can drill down more)

The current school committee should make a decision on whether this is still a relevant issue for us with a reasonable high priority. If not, the school committee should make such a decision. If it is still worth pursuing, actions need to be taken (within the governance structure of CASE) in a more timely manner as we are approaching 3rd anniversary of the task force recommendation date.

Xuan Kong, PhD

XuanKongSC@gmail.com

Special Education Financial Task Force II

Final Report Presentation
December 4, 2008

Agenda

- Background & Task Force Goals
- Report Overview
- Recommendations and Suggestions

Background & Goals

- Original Task Force Report Delivered October 2003
- This Task Force Formed in June of 2007 to
 - Update the Report
 - Examine Changes in Funding and Practices
- Task Force Members:
 - School Committee: Michael Coppolino, Xuan Kong
 - Fincom: Kent Sharp, Allen Nitschelm (left May 2008)
- Frequent meetings with Liza Huber (A-B SPED Director) and Nancy Sherburne (SPEDPAC Chair)

Report Overview – 3 Sections

- **Process of Special Education**
 - Describes administrative steps to refer, evaluate and place SPED students
- **Cost Drivers**
 - Provides financial models for three basic placements: In-District, Collaborative and Out of District
- **Cross-School Analysis**
 - Graphs comparative data across groups of schools and includes findings from conversations and emails with schools districts that appear to have lower SPED costs/student than APS or AB

Findings

- The school system has worked to implement some of the key recommendations from the previous report, including:
 - Intervention at an early age
 - More In-District programs
- There are opportunities that should be explored for further improvement in the effective delivery of services

Recommendations

- 1. Regular, formal meetings between the Special Education Director and the Director of Finance
- 2. Evaluate the targeted use of consultants as a way to keep costs down over the long term
- 3. Hold the CASE Collaborative more accountable for the effectiveness of its transportation services
- 4. Re-examine the cost accounting strategy and methods used for the overall CASE program, as well as for individual programs

Recommendations (cont'd)

- 1. Streamline the efficiency and effectiveness of the IEP process
- 2. Continue proactively communicating more regularly with parents, and also do so at the school level with regular education teachers
- 3. Collect and analyze data so that the effectiveness of regular education interventions based on the Child Study Team model can be measured

Suggestions

- 1. Explore the possibility of establishing a legal resource pool with neighboring school districts
- 2. Evaluate our own school district data to verify that more intense and frequent evaluations of a student at an early learning stage reduce the overall SPED costs for that student

In Closing

- Document is both informative and analytical
- '07- '08 will be out Dec/Jan. 2009 per Roger Hatch; we'll review and update in the appendix.

- Generally, moving in the right direction

- Questions?

APS/AB Long-Range Planning Status Update

Xuan Kong
July 26, 2011

Why Long-Range Planning?

- To define a shared vision of the community
- To focus on what the community values
- To identify resource needs from the community
- To enable community to work towards common goals

SC Summer Workshop 2

What Are the Key Ingredients?

- **Mission**
 - describes the school system's reason for being
- **Values**
 - represent the system's core beliefs
- **Goals**
 - are time-bounded and measurable outcomes that serve to identify essential elements that support the mission

SC Summer Workshop 3

Who Are the Key Players?

- Planning Steering Committee
- Community Organizations
- Elected and Appointed Boards
- General Public
- District Leadership Team
- Faculty and Staff
- Students and Parents

SC Summer Workshop 4

Planning Steering Committee

- Steve Mills, Superintendent of Schools
- Donald Aicardi, Deborah Bookis, and Alexandra Callen (District Leadership Representatives)
- Marc Lewis and Jennifer Pratt (Teacher Representatives)
- Mary Ann Ashton and John Fallon (Community Representatives)
- Xuan Kong and Bruce Sabot (School Committee Representatives)

SC Summer Workshop 5

Planning Process Timeline (1)

- Formed Steering Committee (Jan 2011)
- Reviewed mission and goals of all eight schools in the community (Feb)
- Surveyed planning documents and processes of other school districts (Mar)
- Proposed Mission and Values statements for the districts (Apr)
- Seeking community input (May)
- Finalize Mission and Values (Jun/Jul)

SC Summer Workshop 6

Planning Process Timeline (2)

- Draft a comprehensive set of goals by leadership team (summer)
- Partner with faculty and staff to refine long-range planning documents (Sep)
- Finalize goals and value statements (Nov)
- Incorporate planning priorities with FY13 budget

SC Summer Workshop

7

Proposed Mission Statement

To prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society

SC Summer Workshop

8

Proposed Value Statements

- An environment that promotes social development and emotional and physical well-being for the entire community
- An excellent academic program that prepares all students to achieve their individual potential
- A community that welcomes and respects the differences among us
- Diverse extracurricular opportunities accessible to all students that provide for student growth and connections within the schools and the broader community
- Literacy, communication and technology skills for life-long learning
- Educational, policy and resource decisions informed by research and evidence

SC Summer Workshop

9

Feedback From School Committee

- The LRSP Committee made explicit request to seek SC feedback on Mission and Values
 - Your View on Mission and Values
 - Your View on Timeline
 - Your Suggestions

SC Summer Workshop

10

Acton/Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committees 2011-2012 Committee Assignments

| | |
|--|--|
| ALG | John/Xuan |
| BLF | Brigid/Maria |
| BOS LIAISON | _____ |
| EDCO | Steve/Xuan |
| Board | Brigid |
| Public Policy | |
| New School Comm. | |
| School Comm. Leadership | Brigid |
| FIN COM LIAISON | Dennis |
| HEALTH INSURANCE TRUST | John |
| HEALTH SAC (Supt's. Advisory Council) LIAISON | Mike |
| LEGISLATIVE ISSUES/BALLOT INITIATIVE | Dennis/J. Benson _____/C. Atkins |
| POLICY | Brigid/Maria/Kim/Paul |
| PTSO LIAISON | Kim |
| SPEd PAC LIAISON | Paul |
| WARRANT SIGNATURES | Brigid/Kim/Dennis Alternates: John/Maria Mike/Xuan |
| CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP | |
| NEGOTIATIONS | John/Brigid |
| COST SAVINGS TASK FORCE | Xuan |
| LONG RANGE STRATEGIC PLANNING | Xuan/Bruce |
| AB FIELD DEVELOPMENT | Mike/Brigid |

Note: Class Size last year was a Task Force, not subcommittee