

Office of the Superintendent
Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
<http://ab.mec.edu>
(978) 264-4700 x 3206

TO: Acton Public School Committee Members
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Members
Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee Members
FROM: Stephen Mills
ON: August 22, 2013
RE: **ADDENDUM**

- 4.0** **APPROVAL of MINUTES**
1. Minutes of 3/7/13 Joint School Committee meeting
- 6.0** **Update on ABRSD Track Renovation Proposal**
1. Presentation slides – *Steve Mills, JD Head*
- 11.0** **School Committee Member Reports**
1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG)
 ii. Meeting on 8/14/13 – DRAFT minutes
- 13.0** **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
5. FY14 Parent Communication Map
9. Superintendent’s Welcome Back Letter to Staff, 8/14/13

**ACTON PUBLIC AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEETING draft Minutes**

**Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School**

**March 7, 2013
7:00 p.m. Acton Public School Comm Meeting
7:30 p.m. Joint School Committee
followed by AB Regional School Committee Meeting**

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brodin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Xuan Kong, Paul Murphy, Kim McOsker, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’ Sullivan (7:04)
Members Absent: none
Others: Don Aicardi, Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Liza Huber, Steve Mills, Beth Petr

The Acton Public School Committee was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairman Kim McOsker.

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

1.1 Final Review of Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Financial Model

Don reviewed the ALG financial plan for the School Committee. There is no change in the FY14 numbers from the last time the Committee looked at it. Don urged the Committee to look at the FY14 and FY15 numbers not thinking what will happen, but what would happen if these conditions existed. The handout assumes full use of tax levy every year, not expansive aid year to year, some growth in local receipts, about 4.5% for AB over the next couple of years, long term liability of OPEB with \$300,000 put into reserve fund for it every year. Regarding reserve use, the last couple of years use has gone down. This year it is slightly under \$1.7 million as outlined on the handout. This presentation will go into Acton’s Warrant for Town Meeting. Members of ALG want to be sure everyone sees the final product.

Xuan said that as part of going forward to Town Meeting, at the last ALG meeting members were tasked to make sure their boards are comfortable with all assumptions being made in the model because it will be the “blueprint for future years”. One of the main purposes of the School Committee’s discussion was to confirm if there are any concerns from their members so they can be brought back to the ALG meeting.

Dennis asked if any one on Fincom has looked at past numbers that were brought to Town Meeting to see how close they came to actual numbers. Mary Ann Ashton said that the numbers are close to where they thought they would be at this time last year. The Committee discussed the numbers. Mary Ann said that the Finance Committee tried to put together 3 scenarios, as explained in the warrant message. She said that the point is not to say this is the budget that will happen a year from now, but to say “if we assume this, this, and this, this is where we believe we will end up.”

It was the sense of the Committee that they are comfortable with the model’s assumptions.

1.2 Principal Update

Dr. Mills informed the Committee that Edward Kaufman, Principal of Merriam School has accepted a new position in Wellesley. He and Marie Altieri are beginning a traditional principal search for both principals now. Ed told Dr. Mills that the principal positions are extremely labor intensive and full time assistant principals are really needed. The ½ time Assistant Principal for Douglas was just below the funding line and just below that were the full time Assistant Principals at each of the elementary schools.

ABRSC CALL TO ORDER – JOINT SC MEETING BEGINS

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee was called to order at 7:33 p.m. by Chairman Xuan Kong to begin the Joint School Committee meeting.

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

Recognition of Mae Shoemaker as NFHCA 2012 Coach of the Year was postponed due to very bad weather.

APPROVAL of MINUTES and STATEMENT of WARRANT

The minutes of the 2/7/13 Joint/AB/APS School Committee meeting were unanimously approved as written by the ABRSC and APSC.

AB Warrant #13-018 dated 2/21/13 in the amount of \$1,954,535.63 and #13-019 dated 3/7/13 in the amount of \$1,424,138.41 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures. APS Warrant #201317 dated 2/19/13 in the amount of \$112,470.93 and #201318 dated 3/5/13 in the amount of \$193,497.73 were signed by the Chair and circulated to the Committee for signatures.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION - none

EDUCATION REPORT

Andrew Shen, Principal of the R.J. Grey Junior High School presented his report. The 2012 – 2013 school year includes 935 students, 460 in grade 7 and 475 in grade 8. The average 7th grade team has 115 students and the average 8th grade team has 119 students. There are 4 teams in each grade. 1.5 FTEs have been converted into a second Academic Support Center. This year's transitions include: leadership changes, a new educator evaluation pilot, new common core standards, and new programs and services.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUSINESS

7.1 Security Measures in Place in our Schools

7.1.1 Superintendent's Safety Task Force Public Forums *(to report at 3/28/13 meeting)*

7.1.2 Letter from School Committee Chairs to Elected Officials re Gun Safety

Dr. Mills described the fire drills, lock down drills and an evacuation procedures practiced each year in the buildings. He will ask for panic buttons for all schools. Public Forums are scheduled for community input. The Task Force has decided not to lock the High School front doors, but doors on the other schools are being discussed. He thanked everyone for their efforts on this important issue. A letter calling for rational gun safety legislation has been sent by the School Committees to our federal and state elected officials. This will also be sent to MASC and CASE members. Mike Coppolino advocated for sending it to other School Committees and inviting them to share it with their communities as well.

7.2 Regional School District Study Committee (RSDSC) Update

7.2.1 Memo from RSDSC Chairs

7.2.2 Slides from 2/13/13 RSDSC meeting

7.2.3 Summary of Financial Analyses of Revised Regionalization Proposal, *P. Ashton*

Mac Reid began with the Mark Twain quote, "Reports of our death have been greatly exaggerated." He and Peter Ashton said that the RSDSC unanimously believes regionalization is good for all of our kids. The RSDSC met last night to see if they could agree on how to move forward. The Boxborough contingent met and put together a new proposal for RSDSC consideration. Five changes include:

1. Instead of sharing financial benefits 65% Acton and 35% Boxborough, the new proposal is 80% Acton and 20% Boxborough over 5 years, plus an additional \$450,000 to Acton spread over years 6 and 7 to ease transition
2. Instead of a Boxborough discount of 5% on new construction now there would be no discount on future construction, 5% discount would remain on finance costs of existing RSD construction
3. Regarding School Committee composition, the new recommendation is an 11 member School Committee, one more member from each town, with 2.5 votes for each Acton member
4. Hometown School Guarantee would now continue indefinitely with Regional School Committee override, instead of ending in 5 years
5. Assessment formula is based on a 5 year rolling enrollment average, at Acton's option, instead of a 3 year average

Peter Ashton reported that consensus was reached on all points except the 3 vs 5 year average. That issue may be discussed at a future meeting. The RSDSC feels strongly that the April 29 Special Town Meetings should be postponed to **Monday, June 3, 2013**. He said the final proposed agreement could be provided at next School Committee meeting and after agreeing on its support, outreach to the community regarding the changes made could be communicated. Tweaks are still being done on the financial analysis. Peter stressed that the School Committee needs to take ownership of the Agreement and communicate their support to both Towns. The educational benefits are particularly important for all to agree on and hear.

Mike Coppolino asked if there has been any further legal opinion on the assessment formula discussion. Mac reported that he spoke to Attorneys Lennox and Maddeus and they feel confident that section 5E will stand and we should move forward.

The Committee discussed the importance of getting voters to attend the Town Meetings and what information they need. Mary Brolin noted the importance of telling Boxborough voters what could happen if regionalization did not pass in their town. Brigid thanked the Boxborough members who put forward the revised proposal for everyone. She reminded the Committee that the state requires an educational benefit to be articulated. Peter stated that the long range plan needs to be finished.

John Petersen spoke from the public about the difficulties of using projections and assumptions. He advocated for expanding the size of the School Committee because there is a lot of work to be done. He hopes the Committee will establish more smaller subgroups to focus on some of their work.

Xuan Kong summarized that it has been a long process and everyone sees promise that regionalization would bring to both towns as well as some financial benefit. He is hopeful that the revised proposal will bring a more balanced benefit to both towns.

ABRSC VOTE:

Kim McOsker moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to request that the Special Town Meetings scheduled for April 29, 2013 in Acton and Boxborough be rescheduled to June 3, 2013.

7.3 Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Report

Xuan reported that the Acton Finance Committee approved both budgets. ALG also made a projection for FY15 without considering regionalization. Xuan discussed the assumptions made that result in a budget number using \$2 million of reserves each year.

7.4 Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) Report

The last meeting was postponed to next week.

7.5 Health Insurance Trust (HIT) Report

Kim McOsker reported that costs have to be managed and throughout the year, they have said the increase would be 8% - 10%. Don said the 8% increase that was just voted creates a \$40,000 hole in both of the budgets but it will be managed. Kim said last year was an anomaly.

7.6 OPEB Task Force Update

Dennis Bruce reported that a few issues are starting to converge now with OPEB situation. He used Steve Noone's presentation to the BOS on 2/25/13. OPEB is a moving target and no matter what, it is a big number that is a liability. Next steps are to continue to fund the Trust and they will recommend a funding strategy for all of the Boards after evaluating all sources of funds. Dennis as the School Committee for input to take back to the OPEB Task Force so he can communicate what School Committee is and is not comfortable with.

Paul Murphy asked if some of the regionalization savings could be used for OPEB, if it passes. Dennis thinks that it could, but stated that there will be many demands for that money.

7.7 Acton FinCom Report

Dennis reported that the Committee unanimously endorsed the APS budget and AB assessment at the last meeting.

7.8 Acton BOS Report

Paul reported that an OPEB presentation was done.

7.9 Policy Subcommittee Update

7.9.1 Mission and Vision/Values (File: AD-E) – SECOND READING

There were no comments since the First Reading.

ABRSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Kim McOsker seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revision to the Mission and Vision policy.

APSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Dennis Bruce seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revision to the Mission and Vision policy..

7.9.2 Prohibition of Harassment (File: ACAB, combining ACAB, JBA, GBA) – SECOND READING

ABRSC VOTE:

Kim McOsker moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revision to the Prohibition of Harassment policy

APSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the revision to the Prohibition of Harassment policy.

7.10 Public comment to School Committee members via email

The Committees reviewed their decision a few years ago to remove authors' names and email addresses when including them in the posted School Committee packet, unless they have given permission for that information to be included. The Committee now feels that unless an author specifically requests not to include it, that information should be included. This change should be clearly stated on the School Committee website page so the public understands that their name and town of residence will be on the public document.

The town School Committees' email "shell" addresses have now been replaced with abschools addresses.

7.11 Presentation on Kelley's Corner

This item was taken out of order at 9:00 p.m. due to audience members. Acton BOS member John Sonner presented on this Acton Town Meeting warrant article. A few thousand students are within walking distance of Kelley's Corner so this is pertinent to the School Committees. This will be a multi year process and the article is asking for \$277,000 to leverage a MassWorks grant. Some engineering work is required to be done first. John stated that a planned area like this will benefit students and teachers.

The APSC adjourned at 9:36 p.m. The ABRSC continued.

ABRSC BUSINESS

8.1 Recommendation to Approve Amended Conditions for the Loring Memorial Fund

ABRSC VOTE:

Maria Neyland moved, Mike Coopolino seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the amended conditions for the Loring Memorial Fund as requested by RJGJHS Principal Andrew Shen.

8.2 Recommendation to Approve Field Trip to Spain, April 2014

Mike Coplino asked that staff be sensitive to parents' financial needs when comparing the two trips. He wondered if some of the regionalization savings could be put in a scholarship fund.

ABRSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Field Trip to Spain in April 2014

8.3 Recommendation to Approve Field Trip to Italy, February 2014

ABRSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Field Trip to Italy in February 2014

8.4 Recommendation to Approve Gift to ABRHS AV department

ABRSC VOTE:

Mike Coppolino moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the gift to the ABRHS AV department with gratitude

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

See agenda

NEXT MEETINGS

- March 21, 7:00 pm, APSC Meeting at RJGJHS Library (Education Report – E. Kaufman)
- March 28, 7:00 pm, Joint SC Meeting at RJGJHS Library
- April 1, 7:00 pm, Acton Town Meeting begins in ABRHS Auditorium
- May 13, 7:00 pm, Boxborough Town Meeting begins

The Committees discussed whether to hold the meeting on March 28 because it was Holy Thursday and several members could not attend. It was agreed that if an important decision needed to be made a new date would be scheduled. (The meeting was cancelled.)

A pre Annual Town Meeting School Committee meeting will be posted as usual.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee adjourned at 9:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda



Capital Strategies / Philosophy

■ Four Questions

- Is further deterioration an issue?
 - Yes
- Is safety / security / or access a issue?
 - Yes
- Does completing the project open doors to opportunity?
 - Yes
- Does completing the project offer benefit to the community at large?
 - Yes

Track History

- Constructed in 1996
- Asphalt mat or the core sub-base is 17 Years old and the planarity of this base is in good condition
- Leary Field was turfed in 2005 as a change order to the HS building project and a partnership with the FOLF and Community Preservation
- Track was not part of the Leary Field Project
- 2006 the track was scraped, sprayed, and painted
- 2011 tried to work on the runways in the D-zones but they are beyond repair. Material will not adhere to the surface.

3

Existing Conditions

- 3 to 4 inch asphalt base with latex adhered surface
- 6 lane chute – 400 Meters – 102.5 ft radius (atypically long and narrow)
- Track inside edge is set by the turf anchor curb which is a pre-formed, segmented, high density plastic curb held in place by rebar earth nails which has not performed well.
- D-zones remain as originally constructed in 1996 and are natural grass. The east d-zone is significantly below the grade of the track curb and contains the high jump, long jump, and triple jump. West d-zone contains the pole vault and shot put venues.

4

Renovation Strategy

- Mill the existing surface and first inch or so of asphalt maintain good existing base and planarity.
- Convert to a two layer polyurethane system
- Install perimeter drainage 360 degrees
- Raise elevation and surface the d-zones, rearrange the venues
- Considering – making a wider oval, addressing as much of the curbing problems as possible (with concrete), create an 8 lane chute on the home field side, keep Leary turf replacement project on the front burner in decision process.

5

Cost Estimate and Timeline

- \$55,000 design, bid, permitting, and construction oversight
- \$545,000 Construction
- \$600K Total
- If we move forward we would start this fall (mid to late November) with the drainage, milling, d-zones, and asphalt layer allowing it to cure over the winter. In the spring once we get a break in the weather (April) we would lay the poly surface and paint the track. Hopefully we would be ready for events in May.

6



DRAFT ALG Minutes August 14, 2013

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Janet Adachi, Mike Gowing, BoS; Steve Noone, Pat Clifford, FC; Kim McOsker, SC; Steve Ledoux, Steve Mills & Steve Barrett, Staff. Absent: Dennis Bruce SC & Don Aicardi.

Audience: Brian McMullen, Asst. assessor; Bill Mullin, FC; Charlie Kadlec & Dick Calandrella. Parents in support of the AB track: John Raguin, Maria Cox, Shana Pyun-Brown, Julia Solarte, Joanie Davis, & track coaches Ken Felt, & Mary Price Maddox.

Extra Info: Agenda; minutes; proposed ALG schedule & OPEB valuation comparison

Minutes were accepted

2. Update on FY13 & 14 Revenues & expenditures

Steve L: the good news: S&P has retained our 3A rating we will refinance the Twin School debt & expect to save @ \$1.1M. The Governor vetoed some of the state aid which was then overridden by the Legislature.

Steve B: We are closing the books and will apply to the state for the free cash certification by Labor Day & expect to get an answer by Columbus Day. Tax collection is high—nearly 99%; we have 100% of our state aid; there has been an uptick in motor vehicle excise revenues about \$200k more than was budgeted; fees & investment is also up @ \$100k more than budgeted. For **turn-backs**: @ \$200k from APS; the town's is in the \$500k range. There have been significant savings in both the legal & health accounts.

Steve M: From the APS budget of \$27M our turn back is \$240k---better than last year. There has not been a lot of year-end spending. I did spend @ \$150k on safety & security. There was a task force after Newtown and we now have video monitors in all the schools.

For FY 14 we have to get used to the conversation that there will be one budget of K-12. We are still working off Peter Ashton & Xuan Kong's savings projections [somewhere between \$900k to \$1M]. We have a "Wednesday afternoon club" where we review the agreement & look at the savings. It is beginning to get exciting to construct one budget. We want to have a financial oversight with members from the BoS & FC. They will be reporting to the transitional school committee.

Pat: Bob Evans has agreed to participate as the member from the FC.

3. Spreadsheet format

Steve N: the look & feel for FY 15 will be different—some want a hard look at the detail on the revenue side---we should look at the expense.

Steve N: in the FC's Long Rang Plan (LPR) we will have the actual numbers on the spreadsheet rather the number for the year; we will do details of the actuals.

Pat: FC LRP will have the actual experience with expenditures. Our projections will be based on real experience rather than budget to budget.

Steve B: the current ALG model has worked for a number of years and there have been lines with detail. We need to have a working session before the next ALG to work on this otherwise with the change over work [for the new region] we will not have time to complete the spreadsheet.

Mike: my concern is we need to be operating with some model. It won't change until the new region. We should maintain what we have now & build a different for the future. We should have two sets of books

Steve N: our concern is transparency with the details that go into the warrant

Janet: I would not foreclose on making changes in the numbers unless the result is a complicated computation. It is good to look at all the options & the FC has suggestions to improve transparency that will help.

Sharon: looking at the warrant as a citizen, the town has many lines ---the schools do not. The budgets are different and can't be compared.

Pat: when we stand on Town Meeting floor and are asked questions we need to have the answers. We need to be able to show where the money comes from & where it is going (Steve Mills nodded in agreement)

Bart: do Don & Steve B have the time for this proposal?

Steve B: said he'd love to work with the FC over the Labor Day holiday.

4. Maintaining spreadsheet

Steve L: noted that the schools would be extra busy with the building of the new regional budget & offered to have the town maintain the spreadsheet for the ALG year.

His offer was most appreciated & accepted.

5. Calendar

The calendar sets out the dates of the ALG meetings, the discussions that will happen at that session and the need for a preliminary consensus and then a final consensus

Bart asked if anything were missing from the discussion lists.

Sharon noted that the HIT meetings might not be ready for Nov. 21.

Steve L noted that the town would start the meetings on the hill in early October so he would not have a Capital plan ready for the Sept. 12 meeting. The capital plans for Minuteman are not in good shape. He

attends meetings with other Town Managers in the district to share information on the Minuteman budget. He should have the information available for the Oct. 10th meeting

Pat: we do not need the specific plans for the capital or the override by Sept. 12—just a general idea.

Steve L: we should know about the big capital items by then

Janet suggested that Pat add the committee meetings of the participating boards as Mary Ann did in the calendar for last session. Pat agreed.

6. Update on OPEB

Steve N went over the Segal actuarial report for OPEB. Such a report is required every two years by the state. He noted that the liability had dropped from a high of \$100M to \$54M for the combined town & schools. There has been an increase in return, medical inflation is down but the biggest reason for the decline has been the costs savings from the sharing and design changes---not legislation, as was expected last year. There is still some hope that the legislature will act on this matter and put in a 25-30% reduction. Meanwhile we will continue to fund the program as designed earlier.

Steve L noted that the APS members would become a part of the school budget OPEB liability rather than the Town's.

Steve N: the taskforce will meet soon & go over all the numbers and projections and will report back to boards & ALG.

Pat noted that the OPEB task force was creature of last year & did the ALG members wish to continue their "contract"

Bart: everyone seems to be in agreement that the task force should continue.

7. Leary Track

Steve M reported that he had a dilemma---a positive one. The lower field's project has been more successful than planned. Last year when J.D. Head—grounds person—spoke about his budget he had two big capital projects. First was the N Star project which has been completed. The second project on the list was the refurbishment of the Leary track. That did not happen due to other needs in the budget for the money. Most notable was the reduction from five sections to four for HS teachers and additional mental counselors.

John Raguin, a parent has organized a fund raising effort to replace the track. Mr. Raguin said the total cost would be around \$600k he feels he can raise around \$4-\$500k. A design has estimated the total cost at \$600k--he would like the schools to put in the rest. Mr. Raguin spoke of the poor condition of the track & that it is used by many in the community. Several track coaches in the Dual County do not like to allow their students on Acton's track.

Bart asked what they wanted the ALG to do

It appears that they want the “blessing” of the ALG for the schools to spend the approximate \$150k to compliment the fund raising efforts.

Steve N noted that since the track was in such poor repair that running on it was a matter of safety---he had no problem with the expenditure. He suggested that J.D. come & talk with the FC

Pat thanked them for bringing the issue to their attention & said that the FC had not voted on this but she thought that it would not be difficult to find the money within the school budget.

Bart: this sets a bit of a precedent for the purpose of the ALG. You have given us a “heads-up” which is good. I don’t know if this is a scheduled train wreck or if others come forward. Nor do I know what the implications in the future will be on ALG budgets or policy

Pat: “This is your problem”---the ALG need not adopt it---it is not far enough along the risk curve

Bart: the consensus is that this project does not rise to the level of an ALG discussion.

8. Public Comment

Mr. Kadlec had a question about the spreadsheets in the warrant: “Does anyone on staff get calls from citizens about the numbers on the spreadsheets.

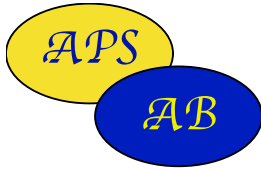
Pat---the only class come from you.....

CK: the reason is that there is not enough back-up information to explain the numbers & there is not enough interest/understanding by 99% of the Town. Maybe redesigning the format of the spreadsheet so it is more understandable for the readers would be a help.

Adjourned: 8:35

Next meeting Sept 12 at 7:30 AM in room 204

Ann Chang



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PARENT COMMUNICATION MAP

2013-2014

Dear Acton and Acton-Boxborough Parents/Guardians,

The school districts always seek to promote good communication – with parents/guardians, the civic and business community, the Town, and within and among the schools themselves. This *Parent Communication Map* is a tool that facilitates good communication.

While some types of communication – for example, congratulations – engender little or no confusion, other categories can sometimes lead to unnecessary misunderstanding, conflict, or frustration. The purpose of the "map" is to prevent some of the more avoidable communication problems. Also, there is a wealth of information on the website that may provide the answers without any further effort.

We expect that the *parent communication map* will help parents to obtain assistance when they have questions, comments or concerns about the educational program or some aspect of their children's school experience. The map indicates where parents should begin with various kinds of queries, concerns or ideas. Many issues can be addressed through this initial contact. In the "referral" column, the map also lays out the next step parents may take if their problem is not resolved or their question cannot be answered through the initial contact. The structure of the map is grounded in one underlying principle: If the solution to a problem is achieved at the level closest to that problem, the result will be more effective and lasting.

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District are two distinct entities. This *communication map* indicates how you should pursue questions or concerns within each of these two distinct organizational structures. If you know the name of the person you are supposed to contact, you may call (978) 264-4700 and connect to that individual through our automated telephone system, or you may call your school directly.

We would like to emphasize the importance of the map structure when it comes to classroom inquiries. At fall open houses and back-to-school nights, or even earlier via memo or other communication, your children's teachers will provide you with information about how to contact them. Please bring to the teacher first any question related to classroom issues. Supervisors and administrators are willing to listen to questions and concerns related to classroom issues, but if you haven't spoken to the teacher yet, they will ask you to begin there. Most problems can be resolved when parents take this initial step. Teachers are interested in the concerns of parents and want to address those concerns in an open and professional manner.

If you have any suggestions after you have "road tested" our map, please don't hesitate to share them with us. Thank you.

I wish you well in the upcoming school year.

Sincerely,

Stephen E. Mills, Superintendent
August 2013

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

NATURE OF CONCERN	CATEGORY	INITIAL CONTACT	REFERRAL
Policy	Schoolwide	Principal	Superintendent
Student Registration	School Registration and Placement	Registrar	Director of Personnel and Admin. Services
	Classroom Placement	Principal	
Student Records	Content/Availability	Principal	Director of Pupil Services
Transfers	Within School District (Not Out of District)	Principal/Registrar	Director of Personnel and Admin. Services
Transportation	Busing/Crossing Guards	Principal	Director of Facilities and Transportation
Teaching/Instruction	Performance	Teacher	Principal
Student Progress	Academic Progress	Teacher	Principal
	Social Development	Teacher/Counselor	Principal
Discipline	Classroom	Teacher	Principal
	Lunchroom	Teacher	Principal
	Playground/Recess	Teacher	Principal
Curriculum	Content	Teacher	Principal/Specialist/Department Head
	Content/Policy	Special Subject Teacher	Specialist/Director of Curriculum and Assessment
	Policy	Teacher	Principal/Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Special Learning Needs	Regular Education/ Special Needs	Counselor/Special Educator	Counseling Chairperson/Coordinator of Special Education/ Director of Pupil Services
	APS Preschool Screening	Coordinator of Early Childhood	Director of Pupil Services
	Transportation	Special Educator	Early Childhood Coordinator/ Coordinator of Special Education/ Director of Pupil Services
Kindergarten Screening	Kindergarten Screening	Kindergarten Teacher	Principal/Director of Pupil Services
Counseling	Program/Performance	Counselor	Principal/Counseling Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services
Instrumental Music	In-school Lessons	Instrumental Music Specialist	Director of Performing Arts
Extended Day Opportunities	Programs	Community Education	Community Education Director
	Registration Information		
Private Tutoring	Referrals	On-line Tutoring Database http://ab.mec.edu/	Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Health	Medical Issues	School Nurse	Chairperson of Nursing/ Director of Pupil Services
On-line Emergency Card	School-related	Principal	Information Management Specialist

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

NATURE OF CONCERN	CATEGORY	INITIAL CONTACT	REFERRAL
Student Registration	School-related	Registrar in School Counseling Office	Principal
Policy	School-related	Principal	Superintendent
Administrative Decision	School-related	Principal	
Discipline	School-related (including attendance and tardiness)	HS: Dean of Students → Associate Principal // JHS: Assistant Principal	Principal
Transportation	Regular Special Needs	HS: Dean of Students → Associate Principal // JHS: Assistant Principal Counselor/Special Educator	Director of Facilities and Transportation Coordinator of Special Education/ Director of Pupil Services
Personal or school-related issues that may impact educational performance	Counseling	HS: Counselor → Dean of Students → Associate Principal JHS: Counselor or Assistant Principal	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services Principal
Student Records	Content/Availability	Counselor	Counseling Chairperson Coordinator of Special Education Director of Pupil Services
Student Progress	Classroom issues: grades/academic concerns; pupil/teacher relationships	Classroom Teacher	Counselor/Department Leader Assistant Principal/Principal
Scheduling	Placement/programs: schedules, placement, college/postgraduate admissions, career planning	Counselor	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services Assistant Principal/Principal
Special Learning Needs	Regular Education and Special Needs	Counselor/Special Educator	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Coordinator of Special Education/ Director of Pupil Services
Curriculum: course content Placement: policy information and advice Approval for credit	Departmental	RDL (Regional Department Leader) BDL (Building Department Leader)	Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Health	Medical Issues	School Nurse	Chairperson of Nursing/ Director of Pupil Services
Athletics	Schedules Team Activities	Coach	Athletic Director
Curriculum and Instruction	Systemwide	Director of Curriculum and Assessment	Superintendent
Private Tutoring	Referrals	On-line Tutoring Database http://ab.mec.edu/	Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Home/Hospital Programming	Regular Education and Special Needs	Counselor/Special Educator	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services Assistant Principal/Principal
On-line Emergency Card	School-related	Principal	Information Management Specialist

Any concern should be directed first to the teacher, counselor or principal, using the charts provided inside. Should further information and assistance be needed, the following directory may be used. Call (978) 264-4700 to reach all departments.

ELEMENTARY CONTACTS

LEVEL I – SYSTEMWIDE SPECIALISTS

Curriculum Specialists: Jean Oviatt-Rothman and Tina Bloom,
Math; Eileen Sullivan, Science, Social Studies, Health

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

Reading Specialists: Amy Barrett, Kerry Cusick,
Noel Powers, Renee Luttati, Sharon Ryan
Art Teachers: Melissa Hayes, Celia Knight, Anne Kress,
Heidi Kupferman, Beth Warner
Music Teachers: Peter Broggi, Jillian Gilfoil, Chris Porth,
Kerrin Stewart, Kim Ward
Physical Education Teachers: William Chan, Nicole Embry,
David James, Mary O'Brien, Jill Reed
Special Education Staff: Check with each building

LEVEL II – PRINCIPALS

Conant School: Damian Sugrue
Douglas School: Christopher Whitbeck
Gates School: Lynne Newman
McCarthy-Towne School: David Krane
Merriam School: Ed Kaufman

PROGRAM MANAGERS

Elementary Principals: See above
Title I Coordinator: Deborah Bookis, Director of Curriculum
and Assessment
Special Needs/ESL: Lynne Laramie, Coordinator of
Pupil Services
Counseling/Psychological Services: Hilary Bonnell, Chairperson
Preschool Services: Joseph Gibowicz, Early Childhood
Coordinator
ELE Services: Suzanne Szwarczewicz, Chairperson
Nursing Services: Diane Spring, Elementary Chairperson
Health Education: Eileen Sullivan
World Languages: Claire Dix, RDL, ABRHS
Visual Arts: Diana Woodruff, Director
Performing Arts: Mark Hickey, Director
Physical Education: David James, Chairperson
Out-of-District Coordinator: Matthew Kidder

SECONDARY CONTACTS

LEVEL I – SYSTEMWIDE SPECIALISTS

Regional Department Leaders located at the High School

English Language Arts RDL: Dianne Telicki
Math RDL: Bill Noeth
Science RDL: David Palmer
Social Studies RDL: Pam Lynn
World Languages RDL: Claire Dix
Alternative Programs Chairperson: Carol Moser-Wight, Interim

Junior High Department Leaders (JHDL)

English Language Arts Contact Person: Melanie Scalice
Math: Philip Stameris
Science: Mary-Frances Doiron
Social Studies: Lynne Bover
World Languages: Robin Crown

LEVEL II – PROGRAM MANAGERS

High School Interim Principal: JoAnn Campbell
High School Associate Principal: Beth Baker, Interim
High School Associate Principal: Larry Dorey
High School Dean: Steve Martin
High School Dean: Maurin O'Grady
Junior High School Principal: Andrew Shen
Junior High School Asst. Principal: Jim Marcotte
Junior High School Asst. Principal: Allison Warren
Title I Coordinator: Deborah Bookis, Director of Curriculum
and Assessment
Special Needs/ESL/Academic Support: Mary Emmons,
Coordinator of Pupil Services
Counseling/Psychological Services: Todd Chicko, Chairperson
Nursing Services: Diana McNicholas, Secondary Chairperson
Visual Arts: Diana Woodruff, Director
Music/Performing Arts: Mark Hickey, Director
Athletics: Steve Desy, Director
Summer School: Chris Clinton, Director
Physical/Health Education: David James, Chairperson
Out-of-District Coordinator: Matthew Kidder

LEVEL III – CENTRAL AND SYSTEMWIDE OFFICES

Deborah Bookis, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Marie Altieri, Director of Personnel/Administrative Services
Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services
Donald Aicardi, Director of Finance
Amy Bisiewicz, Director of Educational Technology

Kirsten Nelson, Coordinator of Food Services
John D. Head, Director of Transportation and Facilities
Erin Bettez, Director of Community Education
Marty Finnegan, CASE Transportation Administrator

Stephen E. Mills, Superintendent of Schools
email address: smills@abschools.org



ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS ♦ ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

16 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720-2995 Phone: 978-264-4700 x3206 Fax: 978-264-3340 Email: smills@abschools.org

Stephen E. Mills, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

August 14, 2013

Dear Colleague:

“It’s STILL all about instruction...”

It is very exciting for me to welcome you back as your Superintendent. I hope you all have spent time with your friends and families and have enjoyed the summer, as you prepare for the new school year.

This summer we had a very rewarding Leadership Conference which included all of our Principals, RDLs, BDLs, Central Office Administrators and several teachers. Two full days were spent talking about how we can best prepare our students to succeed in our global 21st century environment. This will continue to be our districts’ theme and primary goal throughout the year. As you know, we were honored to have Dr. Yong Zhao as a very special guest during the first day of the Institute. Dr. Zhao is an internationally known expert on public education and the author of *Catching Up or Leading the Way* and *World Class Learners*. He shared with us many wonderful insights about what we should do to make sure that all of our students are ready for life in the 21st century. Dr. Zhao was very impressed with our Long Range Strategic Plan that states our mission and core values. He stated to me privately that all we need to do is to live by this plan. As we move forward he suggested that our work with students needs to be personalized, product-oriented and in the context of globalization.

Thank you to the Teacher Evaluation Task Force led by Marie Altieri during this past year. We must continue to work together to comply with changing state requirements. All of us are fundamentally committed to a teacher evaluation process that is productive, meaningful and fair to all staff members. I truly appreciate the wonderful relationship that I have with the Acton Education Association.

As your Superintendent, I know that we are all struggling with this phenomenon of initiative overload. The state and federal governments have never been so demanding of local school districts. This year we are required to implement the new teacher evaluation system, work on developing district determined measures of student growth, participate in RETELL and a host of other efforts. I know that Marc Lewis brought to your attention the fact that I lobbied 80 of my colleague superintendents to attend a legislative hearing on June 26th to ask the Legislature to intervene and prohibit these unfunded mandates. I will continue this advocacy with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents.

As always, the faculty was busy this summer with curriculum R&D work. In addition to the assorted projects focused on updating courses and units, resources were concentrated on several priorities. More than half of our APS teachers voluntarily participated in a 4-day Teachers’ College Reading workshop.

Personnel matters kept us busy as well. To date, we have hired 35 new certified staff members, mostly due to retirements and normal staff turnover. All of our new certified staff will participate in orientation before school starts and most will be involved in our mentoring program throughout the school year.

As you have heard me say before, our fundamental mission is to provide high quality instruction to 5500 students every day. Teachers actually deliver the product of our work and the rest of us support that delivery of high quality instruction. As Superintendent, and with support from the School Committees, we succeeded in approving investment budgets for the schools for this year. Beginning this week the High School English Department will teach 4 sections rather than 5. This is due to the School Committee's support of my request to add 4 English teachers over the last two budget cycles. This achieves a goal that the School Committee and the AEA have been working on for over 40 years. Also this year, we are able to build out and complete a much needed special education program at the High School. This is all consistent with the Long Range Strategic Plan and I again appreciate your support and that of the School Committees to this end.

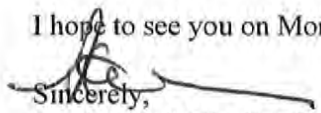
On to a new school year! The schedule for the first day for all staff (**Monday, August 26**) is attached. The first day for K - 7th and 9th graders is **Tuesday, August 27**. Other students begin one day later. The Professional Staff Development Day is on **Tuesday, November 5**. The focus this year will be to complete and implement the new teacher evaluation process as well as agree on district determined measures of student achievement.

I look forward to continuing our work together and am very pleased with my 2013-2014 Administrative Team. This group includes: Don Aicardi (Director of Finance), Marie Altieri (Director of Personnel), Erin Bettez (Director of Community Education), Amy Bisiewicz (Director of Educational Technology), Deborah Bookis (Director of Curriculum and Assessment), J.D. Head (Director of Facilities), Liza Huber (Director of Pupil Services), and Beth Petr (Assistant to the Superintendent). Our principals are also an important part of the Leadership Team: JoAnn Campbell (ABRHS), Andrew Shen (RJGJHS), Damian Sugrue (Conant), Chris Whitbeck (Douglas), Lynne Newman (Gates), David Krane (McCarthy-Towne), and Ed Kaufman (Merriam). I am excited to welcome Steven Martin and Maurin O'Grady as the new ABRHS Deans of Students and Beth Baker as the Interim Associate Principal. I am happy to introduce Jenna Larrenaga as the Douglas School .5 Assistant Principal and Joseph Gibowicz as the new Early Childhood Coordinator at the Carol B. Huebner Preschool. Together, our focus will be on serving our teaching staff to ensure high quality instruction in every school, in every classroom, every day.

On June 3, 2013, voters at simultaneous Special Town Meetings held in Acton and Boxborough overwhelmingly approved including the Blanchard Elementary School as part of one seamless PreK - 12 school district of 6 elementary schools, the Junior High and High School. The task before the Central Office this year is to integrate the Blanchard School into our system. Personally, I believe this to be a wonderful opportunity to enhance the resources for all of our elementary schools, in terms of class size, curriculum, technology and special education. I encourage teachers and administrators to reach out to our new colleagues at Blanchard and welcome them into our system. On July 1, 2014, there will be one public school system in Acton and Boxborough, PreK - 12.

Lastly, this district continues to become increasingly diverse in terms of student population. This is an enormous asset and an opportunity as we prepare our young people for the global marketplace. I look forward to hearing more about the many ways our schools are teaching how to respect and celebrate differences. After much debate, the Long Range Strategic Planning committee prioritized our districts' values and the first one, ahead of academic achievement, is the healthy social, emotional, psychological development of all of our students. Let us all work together to implement this most fundamental value.

I hope to see you on Monday morning, August 26th, and wish you a wonderful school year.


Sincerely,
Stephen E. Mills, Ed. D.

Welcome Back!

All Staff First Day

→ **Monday August 26, 2013** ←

at the
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

- 7:30 a.m. -** Continental Breakfast and Reconnecting
8:00 Lobby outside the High School Auditorium
Hosted by members of the School Committees and Central Administration
- 8:15** Greetings from Superintendent Dr. Stephen Mills
High School Auditorium
Introduction of New Staff and Staff with more than 30 years
- 8:40** Welcoming Remarks from Acton Education Association (AEA) President
Marc Lewis and Presentation of Teachers Receiving Professional Status
- 9:15 – 9:45** Conclusion by Dr. Mills
- 10:15** Building Based Meetings followed by lunch on your own
(Dr. JoAnn Campbell to meet with ABRHS faculty/staff immediately following Dr. Mills in the auditorium)
- 1:30 p.m. -** - Art Teachers with Diana Woodruff in High School Art Faculty Center
3:00 - Music Teachers with Mark Hickey in the High School Chorus Room
- Physical Education/Health Teachers with David James in the JH Library

For Pupil Services Staff - This year, Pupil Services professional staff will participate in mandatory training on September 16th and 17th, 12-2 p.m. (location to be determined). This will allow all staff to remain in their respective schools on August 26th to prepare for the start of the school year and to participate in their required building based activities.