



Acton-Boxborough Regional
School Committee Meeting

September 4, 2014

7:30 p.m.

at the R.J. Grey Junior High Library

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

September 4, 2014
7:30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** (7:30)
2. **Chairman's Introduction**
 - 2.1. First Day of School Report – *Glenn Brand*
 - 2.2. Introduction of Dr. Perry Davis – *Glenn Brand (oral)*
3. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
 - 3.1. Minutes of School Committee Workshop on 7/24/14 and Meeting on 8/4/14
 - 3.2. Minutes of Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Transitional/ABRSC School Committee Meetings on 6/28/14
4. **Public Participation**
5. **Recommendation to approve High School field trip to Nicaragua, July 2015 – VOTE – *Glenn Brand***
6. **Discussion of Process of Naming Elm Street Basketball Courts – *Kristina Rychlik, Maria Neyland***
 - 6.1. Letter received 7/31/14
 - 6.2. Naming of School Facilities Policy and Procedures, File: FF and FF-R
 - 6.3. Proposed Naming of Elm Street Courts memo, *Maria Neyland*
7. **Recommendation to Accept Gifts from AB Community Education to Conant, Gates and McCarthy-Towne Schools – VOTE – *Glenn Brand***
8. **Staffing Update – *Marie Altieri***
 - 8.1. 2014-2015 New Professional Staff
 - 8.2. Staff Recruitment Forms (since 8/4/14)
 - 8.3. Agenda from Orientation held 8/27/14
9. **Finance Department Update – *Clare Jeannotte***
 - 9.1. Recommendation to Accept Gift and Grant Funds from the Town of Acton pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, Sec. 53A in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement signed March 17, 2014 – VOTE – *Clare Jeannotte (see complete motion)*
 - 9.2. Recommendation to Accept Gift and Grant Funds from the Town of Boxborough pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, Sec. 53A in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement signed May 22, 2014 – VOTE – *Clare Jeannotte (see complete motion)*
 - 9.3. FY14 Update (*oral*)
 - 9.4. Discussion of Recommendation to Establish Transportation Revolving Account per M.G.L. c. 71, Sec. 16C amended (*vote at next meeting*)
 - 9.5. Recommendation to Approve Bus Lease – VOTE – *Clare Jeannotte (brought to meeting)*
10. **School Committee Member Reports (*oral*)**
 - 10.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Dennis Bruce*

- 10.1.1. Minutes of meeting on 7/31/14
- 10.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – *Maria Neyland*
- 10.3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)– *Mary Brolin*
 - 10.3.1. Draft Minutes from 6/19/14
- 10.4. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Task Force– *Dennis Bruce*
- 10.5. Acton Finance Committee - *Dennis Bruce*
- 10.6. Acton Board of Selectmen - *Paul Murphy*
- 10.7. Boxborough Finance Committee- *Maria Neyland*
- 10.8. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – *Maria Neyland*

11. Superintendent’s Report – *Glenn Brand*

12. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

- 12.1. Principals’ Back to School Letters to Families
- 12.2. Parent Communication Map
- 12.3. Summer Professional Learning Memo – *Deborah Bookis*
- 12.4. Transportation Update Memo – *JD Head*
- 12.5. Monthly Enrollment 9/1/14 (*next meeting*)
- 12.6. FY15 School Improvement Plans
- 12.7. Final letter of support to MassWorks Infrastructure Program
- 12.8. 2014 – 2015 ABRSC Committee Assignments, *approved 8/4/14*
- 12.9. *On Team* from the Director of Pupil Services, *September 2014*
- 12.10. Open Invitations for the Committee:
 - 12.10.1.1.1. Back to School Nights

13. Adjourn

NEXT MEETINGS:

- 9/18/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- 10/21/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library
- 10/28/14 Joint Acton Finance Committee/Acton Board of Selectmen/ABRSC Social/Meeting 6:15 p.m.



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

2.1

Glenn A. Brand
Superintendent of Schools

August 28, 2014

Dear "AB" Parents and Guardians,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the 2014-15 school year as the Superintendent of Schools for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD).

On July 1, ABRSD became a fully regional Prek-12 school district for the towns of Acton and Boxborough. Next week we look forward to welcoming 1000 staff who will greet approximately 5800 students in eight schools along with our pre-school program to kick-off the new year.

As I transition into the AB community, I intend to hold numerous meetings this fall with faculty, staff and community members to better understand the *values* that the District holds, the *challenges* deemed important to confront, and the *opportunities* we have for continued improvement. Collectively, this will play a significant part in helping chart the course for the long-term future of our district and I look forward to your participation in this process.

There is always a "sea" of information that is exchanged between a school, the district and our parent/guardians at the start of the year. Generally, information that is sent out is also available on www.abschools.org or the respective school sites. Two important areas for your attention:

- i) **School Calendars** - This year brings some changes to our calendar at the elementary level where early release days will now only happen on two Thursdays each month. <http://www.abschools.org/district/calendar>.
- ii) **Student Transportation** - There are some changes associated with our busing that parents should be aware of. While for the most part these changes are relatively minor, it is important for you to take a moment and review the information at <http://www.abschools.org/departments/facilities-transportation/bus-routes>

As an educator who has served as teacher, principal and central office administrator, I know the importance of effective communication between the home and school. A primary goal of mine is to ensure that I establish multiple methods to provide our community with timely information. I recognize the opportunity that social media plays in our current environment and, as one new tool, I welcome you to "follow me" on Twitter @SuperABRSD. It will be my intent to leverage this medium to convey a wide-variety of information about our wonderful school system.

I am thrilled and honored to lead the ABRSD and look forward to our partnership in the year ahead. I wish you and your family a terrific start to the school year and look forward to meeting many of you soon.

Yours in education,

Our Mission is 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.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
WORKSHOP DRAFT MINUTES

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

July 24, 2014

6:00 p.m.

6:30 p.m. School Committee Workshop

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan (6:35 p.m.), Kristina Rychlik

Members Absent: none

Others: Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

Chairperson Kristina Rychlik called the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee to order at 6:30 p.m.

She thanked the Acton Water District, Green Acton and the Acton Town Clerk's office for the water bottles for each committee member. Plastic water bottles will no longer be provided at meetings in an effort to be more "green". For more info, see www.ActonWater.com

1. Chairman's Introduction

School Committee members shared their answers to "Why did you join the School Committee? What do you consider your role to be? What is one thing we do not know about you?" Everyone enjoyed getting to know each other a little better as they began the school year as the "new" Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee for grades PreK-12.

2. Statement of Warrant and Minutes from Last Year's Workshop

The following warrants were signed by the School Committee:

- APS warrant #201427B dated 6/30/14 in the amount of \$291,843.44 and #201502 dated 7/22/14 in the amount of \$982.00.
- ABRSC warrant #14-025 dated 6/12/14 in the amount of \$1,867,536.58, #14-026 dated 6/26/14 in the amount of \$1,960,132.07, #14-026A dated 6/19/14 in the amount of \$2,470,768.00, #14-027 dated 6/30/14 in the amount of \$450,087.07, #14-027A dated 6/26/14 in the amount of \$46,143.40. and #14-028 dated 6/30/14 in the amount of \$54,673.85 for FY14.
- ABRSC warrant #15-001 dated 7/10/14 in the amount of \$611,136.33, #15-001A dated 7/1/14 in the amount of 2,343,405.50 and #15-002 dated 7/24/14 in the amount of \$1,824,967.32 for FY15.

3. Recommendation to approve changes to Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Handbook for FY15 – VOTE

(Handbook is found at <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/pdf/files/handbook.pdf>)

Dean Maurin O'Grady returned to the School Committee for a second reading of the handbook changes. A member commented on the two year requirement for math, when the vast majority of students take more math classes. This has been brought up at School Committee before and the reason for having only two years is that these are minimum requirements and for some students with a disability or temporary illness (such as a concussion) this requirement means they are able to graduate without "lowering the bar". Mike Coppolino stated that he is not in favor of in-school suspensions, or deducting points for excessive tardiness, even if they are unexcused.

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the changes as proposed to the ABRHS Handbook for FY15

4. **Superintendent's Entry Plan**

Mr. Brand reviewed his Entry Plan as posted in the packet. He will present back to School Committee in midwinter. He looks forward to his "Listen and Learn" meetings with many members of the Acton and Boxborough communities. Students are an important part of the mix for him, particularly at the Junior High and High School age. He plans to get into the classrooms often and be visible. Mr. Brand asked if there are any other groups that he should meet with or other feedback that would be valuable. The survey mentioned in his Plan is currently on hold. It may be paired with another effort so people are not bombarded with multiple survey requests.

5. **Update on Superintendent's Induction Program on 7/15/14**

Mr. Brand outlined the New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP), that he is participating in. This three year program is sponsored by Mass Association of School Superintendents (MASS) and the DESE.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL WORKSHOP

6. **School Committee Policy, Operations, and Organizations**

6.1. School Committee self-evaluation discussion – *Kristina Rychlik*

Committee members were sent self-evaluations to consider before coming to the meeting. Topics included: Governance, Operations, Member Relations, Committee/Superintendent Relations, Strategic Planning and Fiscal Management, Community Relations and Conduct of Meetings.

Several members felt community relations was a weak area for the School Committee. It was suggested that a Public Relations Plan (PR Plan) be developed. The Committee wondered if they had a mission statement. One member stated that more facetime from Committee members is needed in the schools. It was suggested that policies could be highlighted in a PR plan to help educate families. Mr. Brand stated that it is his job to be sure his staff knows the policies. Monthly School Committee updates used to be sent to the school newsletters, but it takes someone willing to write them and ensure accuracy.

Self-evaluation sheets were collected for the file if members brought them to the meeting.

6.2. Meeting Management

6.2.1. Public participation

Possible new policy: Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

The Committee discussed Kristina Rychlik's proposed draft policy prior to sending it to the policy subcommittee. Several members felt three to five minutes per person was more appropriate than two. Mike Coppolino stated that it is School Committee's job to be available to the public. Paul Murphy agreed except in situations where there are many people in the audience. Kristina suggested adding "If you have something new to add" to the time limit. It was agreed that a policy should be kept simple and that the Chair should be given a heads up prior to the meeting.

Bill Guthlein spoke from the audience and urged that discretion be given to the Chairperson on how to manage the meeting. Kristina pointed out that the guidelines are for the public commenting on items that are on, and not on, the agenda. Some districts call it public comment, and there is no interaction after the comment (Brookline). AB has not operated that way. Dennis Bruce advocated for speakers being allowed to

question the Committee on a topic at the discretion of the Chair. Mary Brolin did not like the two minute limit and does like the back and forth with a speaker. She questioned if the time should be different for agenda and non-agenda items.

6.2.2. Working together/communications

Mr. Brand read the statement found in the packet. Kristina asked members who miss a meeting to please watch it on tv, then give her a call to catch up if needed.

It was agreed that there should be no surprises from either direction.

6.2.3. Which items are given First and Second Readings before voting?

Policy changes and the School Calendar receive two readings for public input. The Committee also would like two readings on the High School handbook. Often items that require a vote get two readings.

6.2.4. Public email response protocol

When an email is sent to ABRSC@abschools.org, either the Chair, Glenn Brand or Beth Petr will respond. The Committee will be cc'd on a response, unless it is just a "thank you". Maria Neyland pointed out that care is needed for some emails that are sent due to confidentiality or the appearance of "discussing business" outside of an open meeting. A member asked that something be written explaining how emails to the School Committee are handled. Maria will have the policy subcommittee look at this.

6.3. Policy Subcommittee annual review and plan for next year

Maria reported that approximately 50 policies still need to be reviewed from the 200 or so that were approved over the course of last year. Policy subcommittee will meet soon. It was suggested that only a couple of policies be considered at a time.

6.4. Meeting Set Up

The Committee discussed if the meeting set up should be changed given the addition of two more members. It was agreed that the student reps would be asked to sit in the front row, instead of at the table due to how crowded the tables are. Everyone needs to remember to speak directly into the microphones. Most members appreciated having the packet posted on Friday night so they could read it over the weekend.

7. School Operations

7.1. Class Size Overall including Jr High and High School

7.1.1. Acton and Boxborough Class Size Policies IIBA and IK

7.1.2. Background information

Kristina began by stating that she has a broader perspective on the class size issues than she had when it first came up in the spring. Her real issue was not the actual policy but how it was being addressed related to the budget that was being finalized at the same time. She asked if the issue at the High School is a class size issue, or a chair issue, or a chair allocation issue. The Committee was asked if they needed a new policy task force on class size or a HS/JH policy. Current policy applies to elementary schools only. Deanne O'Sullivan stated the PTO co-chairs felt class size at the High School is an issue.

After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that administrators and staff should be asked for input before anything else is done. There was not a need for a new task force to gather information, as that has already been done. Mr. Brand was asked to consult with his staff and make a recommendation to the School Committee at a future meeting. One member stated that the policy guidelines may not "trip" a new class, but they do trigger a discussion. It is a statement of values.

7.2. Switching the elementary and Jr High/High School start times/one-tier

Deanne O'Sullivan spoke to people in Duxbury who have elementary schools on the early schedule and older students on the later schedule, and it has worked well for them. The Committee discussed how this could affect students' mental health and abilities. Amy Krishnamurthy feels strongly about this as well. Kristina pointed out that Marie Altieri did her masters' thesis on this topic and the key is kids getting enough sleep. There are other things that can be done to address this need for sleep. Mike Coppolino felt that it is time to address this issue now that there is data. He stated that the health and safety of the students takes top priority and it should not take years of study. Maya Minkin agreed and urged the Committee to give this their full consideration and then talk about one tier busing with JD Head.

JoAnn Campbell and Andrew Shen will be asked for input and invited to report to School Committee so the Committee can decide how to move forward. Maria Neyland reminded members of the contract implications involved, the need to study it in detail before possible implementation, and the buy in that would be essential from the community.

Mr. Brand noted that a competing issue is one tier busing. He said that it appears that one tier busing would go into effect in September 2015. If so, JD and the administration need to know asap so they can prepare for the FY16 budget plan. The one tier busing is very closely linked to the school start times. The Committee realizes that there is a cost to one tier busing. Kristina concluded that the two immediate tasks are to get a financial estimate from JD and then to hear the High School and Jr High Administrators' opinions so the School Committee can discuss and decide.

7.2.1. Homework Policy, File: IKB

The Administration has been getting complaints about how much homework is being given at the Jr High. Based on school choice, every school has their own policy and the Committee was asked if they think one policy is needed. The Committee had concerns about K-12 homework and this came up when combining the Acton and Boxborough policies. One member stated that you cannot have a policy for everything and that the current policy IKB is general enough. The Committee agreed that the policy subcommittee could propose a general policy and the Administration could do procedures.

7.3. Curriculum Adoption Policy, File: IGD

Some of the members were not familiar with this policy. It appears to state that the Committee needs reports on new courses and major curriculum changes for their review only. Members remembered the discussions about adding the arts requirement, foreign language, and the 990 required hours issues. Mr. Brand suggested that approving the Program of Studies is good practice and beyond approving graduation requirements. He stated that instruction (such as electronic vs paper methods) is different from curriculum (such as a math program). Several members advocated for open communication and not being the last to know about changes going on in the schools.

7.4. Demographic Values Study

7.4.1. Executive Summary (of selected results presented to School Committee 1/28/10)

<http://www.ab.mec.edu/pdf/files/values-interest/Educational%20Values%20Exec%20Summary.pdf>

7.4.2. Presentation by Staff <http://www.ab.mec.edu/pdf/files/values-interest/Educational%20Values%20and%20Interest%20Presentation.pdf>

7.4.3. Executive Summary of Boston College Analysis, 3/28/14

Boston College has agreed to do another survey for the District if we would like them to.

After much discussion of the pros and cons, and what the goal would be, Kristina concluded that there did not appear to be a compelling reason to do another survey this year. Paul Murphy expressed his concern about some of the issues that the analysis brought out. Maya Minkin has heard from parents with concerns around these issues – that some of our schools' student demographics do not mirror our community. The Committee questioned whether this is something that they should, or even could, do anything about, particularly with the emphasis on open enrollment. Mr. Brand expects to hear more about this during his community conversations and that could drive how they move forward. His work in Toronto involved similar topics. Kristina confirmed that a survey is not a focus for the School Committee next year.

7.5. School Committee members connecting with the schools

The Committee discussed how members can make better connections. Members can tour the schools and attend the Open Houses. School Committee packets will include any appropriate invitations and members can report back if they attend. The Committee may consider reinstating liaisons to the individual schools. Mr. Brand will ask the Principals if they like this idea. The Committee considered whether to include Education Reports in their meetings again. Having the open invitations to schools' events could address some of this. The School Improvement Plans will be included in September's FYI.

8. Acton and Boxborough Political Relationship Building

8.1. Acton Finance Committee's suggestion of joint meetings of all boards for capital and long range planning

The Committee discussed the Acton Finance Committee's invitation to the School Committee and Acton Board of Selectmen to a joint meeting to get to know each other, and begin talking about long term planning. Mary Brolin stressed that any material that goes to any committee must be seen and discussed by the School Committee first. She reminded the Committee that this was an issue on Budget Saturday. It was also emphasized that the Committee is a regional School Committee and everyone needs to be very careful about including both town officials during budget discussions. It was suggested that Boxborough officials be asked if they would like to do the same type of gathering. Dennis Bruce will let Steve Ledoux know that the whole ABRSC would like to be invited.

9. 2014-2015 Subcommittee Members

The Committee discussed the list and will vote on it at their meeting on August 4.

10. Next Steps and Wrap Up

Given the late hour, Kristina did a quick wrap up and noted that input is needed from the administration on several different topics before the Committee can proceed.

The School Committee adjourned at 11:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda

Next Meetings:

ABRSC, Monday, August 4, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library
ABRSC, Thursday, September 4, 7:30 p.m. in the Junior High Library

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING
Draft Minutes

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

August 4, 2014
7:30 p.m.

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce (arrived at 8:00 p.m.), Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Michael Coppelino, Maya Minkin
Others: Marie Altieri, Glenn Brand, Liza Huber, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

Chairperson Kristina Rychlik called the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee to order at 7:31 p.m.

1. Chairman's Introduction

Kristina Rychlik recapped the annual School Committee Workshop held on 7/24/14:

- The policy subcommittee will work on proposed policies regarding public participation at school committee meetings, public emails detailing personnel matters, a mission statement and an update to the general homework policy.
- The outreach subcommittee will develop a proposed PR plan for the School Committee
- Increasing Committee members' "facetime" in the schools will be encouraged.
- Mr. Brand will discuss the class size issues with the staff and report back to School Committee at a later date with a recommendation.
- Regarding school start times, the Junior High and High School administrators will be asked for input before the Committee decides whether and how to proceed with this issue.
- One tier elementary busing will not be implemented at this time, but the Committee would like to know the financial implications of this option as soon as practically possible.
- A specific update to the Demographic Values Survey will not be done at this time.
- The Committee agreed to participate in an Acton "three boards" meeting regarding long-range planning, as proposed by the Acton Finance Committee Chair, Steve Noone.

Kristina emphasized that the first priority this year is positive integration of the new expanded region, and asked the Committee to be cognizant of the work that continues to be involved in that, as well as the work required to take advantage of the opportunities that full regionalization will bring.

Brigid Bieber asked the Committee to consider writing a letter of support for a MassWorks Infrastructure Grant that the Boxborough Planning Department is submitting for funding a sidewalk along route 111. The Committee agreed that Brigid's draft letter could be slightly edited and signed by the Chair in time for the August 14 deadline. Kristina noted that this is consistent with the Committee's encouragement of "walkers". As Chair of the Sargent Library Trustees, Mary Brolin said that they are also endorsing the grant.

2. Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes

The minutes of the School Committee Workshop on 7/24/14 and the Acton Public/Acton-Boxborough Transitional/ABRSC School Committee Meetings on 6/28/14 will be approved at the next meeting.

3. **Citizens' Request to Name Elm Street Basketball Courts**

Kristina reported that the letter in the packet was received on 7/31/14. Louis Levine and D. Biggs spoke from the audience about the request to name the Elm Street courts after Mr. Paul Cartwright who recently passed away. Mr. Cartwright was one of the founders of travel basketball and participated for more than 17 years. He was described as "an ordinary person who was an ordinary hero. He was all about the kids."

Kristina reviewed the Naming of School Facilities Policy and Procedures, File: FF and FF-R, found in the packet. She stated that with full regionalization, the courts are now school property and although some Acton Community Preservation (CPC) funding was used for previous renovations, it would not affect how the Committee may, or may not, name it, as was the case with naming the Edward Leary Field. Mr. Levine stated that Travel Basketball helped to fund much of the renovations as well, and that they would fund the naming as well, if chosen.

Kristina stated that the School Committee must first review the appropriateness of naming this facility. If they decide it is appropriate to name, then they must follow their procedures, including the announcement of a deadline for the submission of nominees' names to the Screening Committee. School Committee must establish this Screening Committee "of nine representatives of various interest groups in the community". Their role is to review all suggested names and recommend three for the School Committee to choose from.

Kristina urged members to consider "why the Committee feels it is appropriate to name these basketball courts" in preparation for the 9/4/14 School Committee meeting. Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber, Deanne O'Sullivan and Mary Brolin volunteered to be involved. Although in favor, Brigid Bieber suggested that this policy be reviewed because the last few times it has come up it has been because members of the public have asked for consideration of a request.

4. **Recommendation to Accept Gift to McCarthy-Towne Gift Fund – VOTE**

Paul Murphy moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the \$2,000. Gift to McCarthy-Towne School with gratitude.

5. **Confirmation of 2014-2015 Subcommittee Assignments - VOTE**

Paul Murphy volunteered to join the Negotiations Subcommittee.

Brigid Bieber moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the 2014-2015 ABRSC Committee Assignments list as proposed.

Dennis Bruce arrived at 8:02 p.m.

6. **Recommendation to appoint Clare Jeannotte as Chief Procurement Officer for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (Chapter 30B, Section 2) – VOTE**

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to appoint Clare Jeannotte as Chief Procurement Officer for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District per Chapter 30B, Section 2.

7. **Finance Director's Update**

7.1. FY14 and FY15 Status memo

Clare Jeannotte described the closing out of Fiscal Year 2014 as the closing of three budgets (ABRSD, Acton Public and Boxborough Public), and all of the complexity that that involves. Within the next three weeks there will be a more solid sense of the numbers. Clare will report back at the 9/18/14 School Committee meeting. The annual audit is scheduled for the end of August. That report is expected in November.

Regarding the FY15 budget, the final State budget was released earlier in August. After working with the Superintendent, Clare plans to recommend possible adjustments to the budget, if there are any, to the Committee in September. Revolving accounts will be on the 9/4/14 agenda. Everyone is learning to use the new MUNIS Chart of Accounts, created for the expanded region. With over 1250 lines now for expenses, some time was needed to train the staff on all of the changes.

8. Acton Finance Committee Update

Acton Finance Committee Chair, Steve Noone, presented slides used at the 7/31/14 ALG meeting regarding "Maintaining Excellence" and how to sustain the budgets going forward 5 – 10 years. He stated that the only solutions are to raise taxes or change spending/services. The Finance Committee invited the School Committee and Acton Board of Selectmen to a joint meeting to get to know each other better and begin some long term planning. Mary Brodin emphasized that the School Committee must meet and discuss any information before it is shared with the Finance Committee, or any other Board.

9. Staffing Update

Marie Altieri reported that staffing is going well with 31 new professional staff hired. Although salaries are budgeted at Master's level 3, a number of staff have been hired higher than that. The people that they are replacing, however, have had higher salaries. Brigid noted the high number of resumes that have come in for some of the positions.

10. School Committee Member Reports

Acton Leadership Group (ALG)

Kristina Rychlik reported on the meeting held 7/31/14. The charter and ground rules were reviewed. Meeting dates were set for the year. Glenn Brand reported that Marie Altieri will join him as a voting member at the table. Clare Jeannotte will also attend ALG as a non-voting member. Kristina and Dennis Bruce will represent the School Committee.

11. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

11.1. DOER Green Communities 2014 Grant Awards Memo

Mr. Brand highlighted this valuable award. JD Head stated that it allows some of the important projects like replacing boilers to be done immediately.

11.2. Financial Difficulties Letter for Families – August 2014

Mr. Brand highlighted this important letter and the need to be sure that families have access to it.

11.3. Open Invitations for the Committee

Kristina urged Committee members to attend as many of these school events as possible.

JD Head reported that new bus routes are being formalizing to include the six elementary schools. Conant will be on a subset of busses this year. JD hopes this will shorten the time needed for McT-Merriam-Conant dismissal. He will probably present to the Committee in October on single tier transportation. JD confirmed that bus passes will still be permitted, according to current procedures that are in place.

The School Committee adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

9/4/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library

9/18/14 ABRSC Meeting at 7:30 p.m. in the Jr High Library

**JOINT ACTON PUBLIC (APSC) and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL (ABRSC)
and ACTON-BOXBOROUGH TRANSITIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABTSC)
MEETINGS Draft Minutes**

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

June 24, 2014
7:00 p.m. Joint ABTSC/ABRSC/APSC Meeting

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Dennis Bruce, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maria Neyland, Paul Murphy, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Michael Coppolino
Others: Marie Altieri, Deb Bookis, Glenn Brand, Steve Mills, Maya Minkin, Katie Neville, Beth Petr, Officer Chris Prehl

Chairperson Kristina Rychlik called the ABTSC and ABRSC to order and Chairperson Dennis Bruce called the APSC to order at 7:03 p.m.

JOINT APS/ABRSC/ABTSC MEETING:

1. Chairmen’s Introduction

Kristina Rychlik thanked Dr. Mills for his 36 years of service in public education including the past five years he has spent at APS/ABRSD. She noted the impressive 707 School Committee meetings that he has attended during that time and the major projects that have been successfully undertaken during his tenure, including the Lower Fields Project, Richard Dow Track Resurfacing Project and PreK-12 Regionalization. The Committee thanked Dr. Mills for his “Open Letter to the People of Acton and Boxborough”.

2. Approval of Minutes and Statement of Warrants

The ABTSC/ABRSC and APSC minutes of 5/1/14, 5/14/14, 5/22/14 and 6/5/14 were approved by the three School Committees.

3. Public Participation - none

4. Discussion of PARCC vs. MCAS testing in FY15 decision

Dr. Mills introduced Deborah Bookis as our expert in this area. He and Mr. Brand have discussed this issue at length and agree to recommend continuing with MCAS for next year for the six reasons on slides 5 and 6.

The Committee questioned Deborah, Amy Bisiewicz and Dr. Mills about the options. Mary Brolin noted the absurdity that the PARCC pilot was done but there is no data provided to help make this decision. She agrees with Steve’s recommendation. Dennis Bruce asked if our network could handle the increased traffic if PARCC were used. Amy said capacity is being increased and resources would have to be scheduled appropriately. Amy noted that younger students would have to know certain technical skills to be successful taking PARCC. There might be more content on the screen outside of view and children must use the scroll bar to view it. Students need to know this before starting the test. Paul Murphy asked if the online testing would give results faster so teachers could intervene sooner if there is a need for a particular student. Deborah was not sure. A statement from Michael Coppolino (absent) was read advocating for continuing with MCAS.

Glenn Brand shared his perspective. He agrees with Dr. Mills that MCAS will fade away and another assessment will unfold but the manner in which PARCC is being introduced is troubling to him.

ABTSC VOTE:

Maria Neyland moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve MCAS administration for 2014-2015 school year for Grades 3-8 and Grade 10

5. Common Core Parent Forum Update

Deanne O’Sullivan summarized the parent sponsored forum recently held. The consensus appeared to be that PARCC was not ready to be fully administered. Paul is concerned by the number of business representatives involved in this endeavor, as opposed to educational experts. Noting her teaching background, Amy Krishnamurthy feels that students lack a higher understanding of math and how to be discerning readers. These are skills they need and what the Common Core will address, in her opinion. The Committee agreed there is some confusion around PARCC and the Common Core. Maureen Flynn spoke from the public and is concerned about all the strings tied to Common Core. Deb Bookis said this is really about the “District Determined Measures”.

Kristina summed up that while PARCC is new, the Common Core is not. In the FYI section she referred to the excellent material from Deb Bookis including a timeline about what information has been provided over time. She stated that, “Having an involved and interested parent community is very valuable to our school district.”

6. ABTSC: Recommendation to approve changes to Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Handbook for FY15

(Handbook is found at <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/pdf/files/handbook.pdf>)

JoAnn Campbell described the majority of the changes to the High School handbook as “mundane”, with the exception of three sections:

1. Pg 2 - The Student Support Team (SST) replaces the Student Assistance Team. This helps students pre-referral.
2. Pg 3 - Medical Exemptions – This addition helps with students who have concussions, mental health issues, etc. so there is a clear way to handle these important special medical exemptions.
3. Pg 6 - Academic Integrity – This changes the route for appeals. Next year will be a pilot for how to collect this confidential information, to be held with the Dean. Often these incidences are a result of kids who are very stressed, and next year they hope to have a very proactive stance on these issues.

Dennis Bruce disagrees that only two years of math are required for graduation (page 2). It was pointed out that some students struggle to make this math requirement.

The Committee decided to delay their acceptance vote until their meeting on July 24 to give them more time to consider the changes. It was suggested that tracked changes be used to make the document easier to follow. Some concern was expressed by how late this would make the final version for the High School to process.

7. Lower Fields Project Financial Report

The Committee reviewed the report from Erin Bettez. She noted that the Superintendent chairs the Lower Fields Committee and the next annual meeting will be in early fall. An eagle scout will install the fundraiser bricks soon. Spring was not good weather-wise for this work. When asked what the best strategic move for the surplus of funds being created might be, JD Head stated that FOLF could be asked to pay off their debt faster, or the rainy day fund might be

left as is. The Committee would like to see some of the walkways, goal pockets, and lighting issues be addressed. Lighting was noted as a safety issue. Paul Murphy noted bank loan payoffs of approximately \$11,000 monthly and asked why it jumped to \$66,000 in February.

8. APS and ABRSD End of Year Financial Updates

Dr. Mills reviewed the updates for both budgets, emphasizing the diminishing opportunity to replenish E&D. The vacancy factor technique has been helpful but has also reduced year end surpluses to some degree. Legal costs increased significantly this year with planning for regionalization, teacher contracts and the Pledge case. The athletics budget is in the red.

Dennis Bruce said that the Finance Committee and Acton Board of Selectmen were meeting the same night (6/24/14). He said the two groups were told the only year end spending would be for a few safety items. Dr. Mills said this would be some sidewalk work and internal cameras for safety reasons. JD stated that this was not really year end spending, but capital items that JoAnn Campbell had planned for at the High School. The items were included in JoAnn's line items as a capital request outside of the budget, (under the line but on the list) on Budget Saturday.

Several Committee members questioned why this would not be considered year end spending. Dennis Bruce advocated for letting the Finance Committee know about this, as opposed to calling the expenditures safety issues. Dr. Mills noted that they should have been mentioned in the Third Quarter Financial Report.

Mary Brolin summarized the essential need for clear disclosure on expenditures like this, stating that the School Committee is in a major transition with regionalization and the Committee needs to improve their relationship with our Finance Committees, Selectmen and ALG/BLF going forward. The Committee agreed.

9. ABTSC: Recommendation to Approve Changes to Non-union Employees' Benefit Manual for FY15

Marie Altieri explained that language related to personal days was updated and references to APS were deleted.

ABTSC VOTE:

Mary Brolin moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the changes to the non-union employees' benefit manual for FY15 as presented.

10. APSC: Recommendation to Accept All Day Kindergarten Surplus Donation from ABRSD to APS

Maria Neyland asked how this salary line was budgeted on Budget Saturday. Marie Altieri explained that this is a fee based program. Tuition is set based on projected salaries based on current students. The decision is made at the end of the year in case someone went on unpaid leave or there was another fluctuation in expenses/revenue. This is a revolving account managed by ABRSD Community Education that involves an APS program. This donation supports kindergarten staff salaries for the 2013-2014 school year.

APSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Kristina Rychlik seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the All Day Kindergarten surplus donation from ABRSD to APS.

11. ABTSC: Recommendation to accept gift to fund Smartboards in McCarthy-Towne kindergarten classrooms

ABTSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Maria Neyland seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept this gift to fund Smartboards in McCarthy-Towne kindergarten classrooms with gratitude.

12. ABTSC: Recommendation to Accept Donation from Intel to ABRSD

ABTSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brolin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept donation from Intel to ABRSD with gratitude.

13. ABTSC: Recommendation to accept gift from IBM to ABRSD

ABTSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the gift from IBM to ABRSD with gratitude.

14. Regionalization Update

Dr. Mills reported that title insurance is separate from the property insurance that the School District has. He spoke with Chuck Winn of MIAA and Mr. Winn advised that title insurance is not needed on the assets being transferred from the two Towns to the ABRSD because they are coming from municipalities that we know. The cost for coverage of Acton's assets would be \$41,000. This also applies to the land that Boxborough is contributing to the Region.

15. Policy Subcommittee Update

ABTSC/ABRSC/APSC Policies (*incorporating Blanchard policies*)

1. Consent Agenda #6 – **SECOND READING**

ABTSC VOTE:

Brigid Bieber moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Consent Agenda #6 as proposed with minor edits.

2. Tobacco Use on School Property, File: ADC, GBED, JICG – **SECOND READING**

ABTSC VOTE:

Mary Brolin moved, Brigid Bieber seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Tobacco Use on School Property policy as amended.

16. Wellness Committee Year End Report

Liza Huber reported and thanked Julie Towell for heading up this Committee this year. Next year the Committee wants to consider whether serving breakfast should be added at all of our elementary schools. Homelessness is a new issue in our community that we are seeing. Deanne O'Sullivan is the School Committee representative on this Committee.

17. School Committee Member Reports

1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG)

Dennis reported that the Board of Selectmen have noted how many new members there will be at ALG. Next meeting will be end of August.

2. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)

Mary Brolin reported that on June 19, HIT looked at cash flow and expect positive \$200,000 flow. Cook and Company were approved.

3. Acton Board of Selectmen

Paul Murphy reported that the State Reps attended the last meeting to get to know people. Paul spoke with Nancy regarding a letter of support for new state aid for special ed funding. Dennis Bruce presented at the last Selectmen's meeting.

4. Boxborough Board of Selectmen

Maria Neyland reported on last night's meeting. Selectmen are trying to decide whether Boxborough will leave Minuteman Tech or not.

18. Annual Superintendent's Evaluation

Maria Neyland read Dr. Mills' final evaluation into the record and apologized for the delay. Kristina Rychlik asked the APSC and ABRSC if this was an accurate evaluation and the Committees agreed that it was.

19. FY15 School Committee Meetings

1. Recommendation to Approve FY15 ABRSC Meeting Calendar

Agreeing that they should try to avoid known conflicts, the Committee agreed to reconsider their FY15 meetings. The High School administration has asked not to meet the night before graduation so the June meetings were moved a week later.

ABTSC VOTE

Paul Murphy moved, Mary Brodin seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the FY15 School Committee meeting calendar as amended.

20. APSC: Recommendation to authorize ABRSC to approve previous APSC minutes

Dr. Mills explained that school counsel D Moschos advised that it is acceptable for the Acton Public School Committee to give the authority to approve APSC's previous meeting minutes to the new body, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, given the new Regional Agreement.

APSC VOTE:

Paul Murphy moved, Deanne O'Sullivan seconded, and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to authorize the ABRSC to approve previous Acton Public School Committee meeting minutes.

21. FOR YOUR INFORMATION

1. An Open Letter to the People of Acton and Boxborough from Dr. Stephen Mills
Dr. Mills was thanked for his very nice letter to our community and all of his accomplishments while serving as our Superintendent.
2. ABRSD Food Services: The High School Cafeteria is open for breakfast/lunch from 9:00 – 11:30 until August 1st. Students who receive free/reduced lunch are eligible for this discount through the summer hours.
3. Dr. Mills thanked the Special Education Parents Advisory Council Chairperson, Nancy Sherburne, who is stepping down after many years of advocacy on behalf of our families. Nancy received an enthusiastic round of applause from all.

The three School Committees were adjourned at 9:32 p.m. It was noted that this concluded the last meeting of the Acton Public School Committee as the new Region commences in one week.

NEXT MEETINGS:

- Thursday, July 24, Annual School Committee Workshop, 7:00 p.m. RJGJHS Library
- Monday, August 4, ABRSD School Committee Meeting, 7:00 p.m. RJGJHS Library
- Thursday, September 4, ABRSD School Committee Meeting, 7:30 p.m. RJGJHS Library

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents used: see agenda

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Acton, MA

OVERNIGHT, INTERNATIONAL and/or OUT-OF-STATE
FIELD TRIP PERMISSION FORM

Submit for Superintendent and School Committee approval

The first step in this process is to meet with Blake Lochrie-our International Field Trip Coordinator to go over initial details.

Please file at least four (4) weeks in advance for 1-3 day trips

Please file at least three (3) months in advance trips longer than 3 days and/or trips with per student cost greater than \$500.00

Please TYPE or use COMPUTER FORM

• Name of Teacher(s): Michael Csorba & Emily Fishkin

• School: Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

• # of Students going: 10-15 # of Chaperones (gender): 1 Male & 1 Female

Names of Chaperones: Michael Csorba & Emily Fishkin

• Date(s) of Trip: July 2-July 16, 2015 School Time Involved: N/A

• Purpose of Trip/Destination: Students will travel to Nicaragua through the organization World Challenge. Cultural/Education/Service

• Have you taken this trip before? Not this specific trip, but Emily Fishkin has taken a trip in 2008 to India with AB students through the same organization, World Challenge.

• Any special arrangements required (such as extra insurance, ADA accommodations) Medical Insurance, accommodations, and guides are provided through World Challenge. Students will have to get necessary vaccinations and provide their personal gear (boots, appropriate clothing, etc.)

• Cost per Student: (Please describe how the cost is determined.) \$3,395.00

Included: Flights, In-country costs, lodging, medical insurance, build up to expedition, expedition leader fees

Not included: personal equipment and injections

• Who will pay for the trip? The student participants.

• Has any fundraising been done? No If so, what? We will conduct fund raisers throughout the year.

• Are any parents driving? No

*Students need to get to and from the airport on the day of departure and return.

If so, have appropriate insurance forms been filled out?

N/A

• Have you followed the procedure outlined in Policy IJOA? Yes

• Other comments: Attached are two sample itineraries for the trip. One provides a more detailed description of the day to day experiences for the students, while the other provides a general overview of the country.

The Mission and Philosophy of World Challenge (WC) from their website
(http://www.wcexpeditions.com/why_world_challenge.html?tab=0#TabbedPanels1):

Who are we?

World Challenge offers students the opportunity to develop themselves through student-led adventure travel focused on service work and trekking

We have been operating expeditions since 1987. Our extensive experience means students and teachers benefit from safety and service records second to none, while cross cultural service projects, adventure activities and exotic destinations guarantee an extraordinary, once in a lifetime adventure.

Philosophy

Education through experience is at the heart of our philosophy, and our expeditions offer the experience of a lifetime. Packed with physical challenges, eye-opening cultural exchanges and meaningful service projects in some of the world's most beautiful countries, these exhilarating 8, 10, and 14 day expeditions are also journeys of self discovery that benefit young adults from all backgrounds.

On expedition, students develop valuable skills and perspective for college and life beyond:

- Independence & personal responsibility
- Teamwork, problem solving & communication
- Cultural & environmental awareness
- Global citizenship

Students and teachers return with a new awareness of the world around them and confidence from completing a challenging and meaningful overseas expedition together.

Approved Not Approved

Umojady
Department Leader
Dean of Students

Date 7/11/14

Approved Not Approved

John Campbell
Principal

Date

Approved Not Approved

MARK
Superintendent

7/18/2014
Date

Approved Not Approved

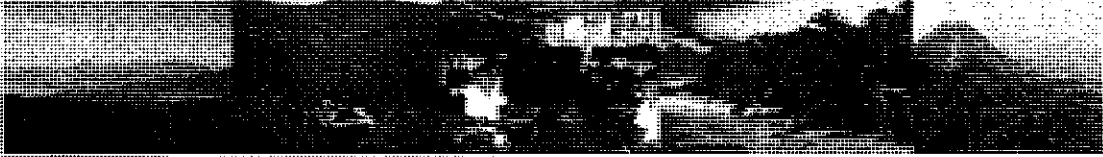
School Committee

Date

Revised 11/15/06

Nicaragua - Expedition Itinerary

After months of planning and building your bespoke expedition itinerary, here it is! This is your day-by-day itinerary that you will take on expedition and use as a guide. You'll need to work as a team of students to ensure you're where you should be, when you're supposed to be there. Don't rely on the adults, this is your expedition! In the developing world, things don't always go according to plan so it is quite common to have to make alternative arrangements as



Date	Day	From	To	Remarks	
1	23-Jul-13	Tue	Departure	Departure	Arrive into Managua and take transport to your prebooked accommodation in Leon. There are lots of things to keep you busy on your first full day in country: Leon is a beautiful and historic colonial town with lots of interesting ruins, cathedrals and markets to explore. As well as exploring Leon you will need to change money, make arrangements for travelling to your first phase, get in touch with your trekking agents, book accommodation and liaise with project hosts for later stages of the expedition. You will also have time to familiarise yourself with the culture and history of Nicaragua.
2	24-Jul-13	Wed	Arrival	Admin Day: Leon, Nicaragua	Tip: Dollars can be used as a primary currency in Nicaragua and only small amounts of local currency are required. It is also important to remember that transport and accommodation needs to be booked significantly in advance and, in the case of transport, must be done at the booking office. Telephone bookings do not work in either country.
3	25-Jul-13	Thu	Admin Day: Leon, Nicaragua	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	San Cristobal, Telica, Rota, and Cerro Negro are all names that you will become familiar with during your time on the Los Maribos volcanic chain. The three volcanoes in three days trek is one of Nicaragua's best treks and takes your team on a linear journey along the volcanic chain which is made up of 21 volcanoes, five of which are active. The local flora and fauna is magnificent and your expert guides will teach you incredible amounts about the large variety of animals and plants.
4	26-Jul-13	Fri	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	
5	27-Jul-13	Sat	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	
6	28-Jul-13	Sun	Main Trek: 3 Volcanoes in 3 days	Project Preparation Day	Project Phase
7	29-Jul-13	Mon	Project Preparation Day	Community Project	By now you'll be well bonded as a team, well acclimatised, hopefully well versed in Spanish and ready to dive in to your project phase! Now is your chance to give something back. The rural areas of Nicaragua often contain impoverished villages, though you'd never believe it from all the friendly smiles and happy faces that you'll meet. The project will provide you with the opportunity to learn about some of the environmental, social and economic challenges facing this area and to make a genuine contribution to the needs of the local community. So what does this mean for you and your team?
8	30-Jul-13	Tue	Community Project	Community Project	You're going to be living and working alongside a Nicaraguan community for the next few days, with everything that entails: waking at dawn to the calls of the various farm animals, learning to make traditional dishes, keeping the local children entertained even though they might not understand much of what you're saying, being taught Spanish in turn by your hosts, and rolling your sleeves up for some serious DIY!
9	31-Jul-13	Wed	Community Project	Community Project	
10	1-Aug-13	Thu	Community Project	Community Project	Tip: The project work may well demand plenty of initiative from the team in order to make it a success and you will only get out of this what you put in.
11	2-Aug-13	Fri	Community Project	Travel Day	While in Nicaragua most teams choose to spend their time on the Pacific coast in one the major resorts; Las Perlas, San Juan del Sur and Masachpa. Watch the sunset over the Pacific from a hammock or kick back and relax on one of the numerous long sandy beaches. Alternatively you may decide to spend more time in Granada, shopping in the cultural Spanish metropolis. Teams flying out of Managua should aim, where possible, to travel directly to the airport. If accommodation is required it should be booked well in advance and researched thoroughly.
12	3-Aug-13	Sat	Travel Day	Rest and Relaxation	
13	4-Aug-13	Sun	Rest and Relaxation	Rest and Relaxation	Time for those last minute jobs before you pack up your gear for the final time and head to the airport for the flight back home. Tip: get to the airport at least 3 hours before your departure time!
14	5-Aug-13	Mon	Rest and Relaxation	Arrival	

Don't forget all rest and relaxation activities are to be undertaken in accordance with World Challenge risk assessments and will be at the team's own expense, unless otherwise specified. Please note that although swimming may not be specified on the itinerary, the team may have the opportunity to paddle or swim during the course of the expedition.



World
Challenge

NICARAGUA

Stunning Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea coastlines, friendly smiles and happy faces in remote rural communities, dense jungles that are home to diverse wildlife and exciting volcanic and mountainous landscapes to trek; all this and more is waiting for you in Nicaragua.

Nicaragua is one of Central America's most diverse countries. Options on our range of Nicaragua expeditions include exploring the incredible atmosphere of Granada or Leon, beautiful historic colonial cities with ruins, cathedrals and markets, trekking along a chain of volcanoes, and immersing yourself in a rural community to assist in development projects, and experience living in and working alongside a Nicaraguan community. Afterwards teams will have the chance to spend time chilling out on one of the numerous sandy beaches on the Pacific Coast.

Reputation at a glance...

How tough 1-5 (5 being most difficult) 3-4.

Typical accommodation: Hostels and tents.

Terrain: Rain, pine and cloudforest, mountains, altitude, jungle and coast.

Climate: Nicaragua experiences average year-round temperatures of between 70°-81°. The coldest months are from Nov-Jan, and the warmest from Mar-May. The nation's climate is classically divided into rainy and dry. The dry season runs from Jan-May and the rainy season from May-Nov and December.

Culture: about 1-3 (4 being very different from home) 3.

Any questions? Contact us for more details:

E info@worldchallengeexpeditions.com

W www.world-challenge-expeditions.com

T 477 333 1000

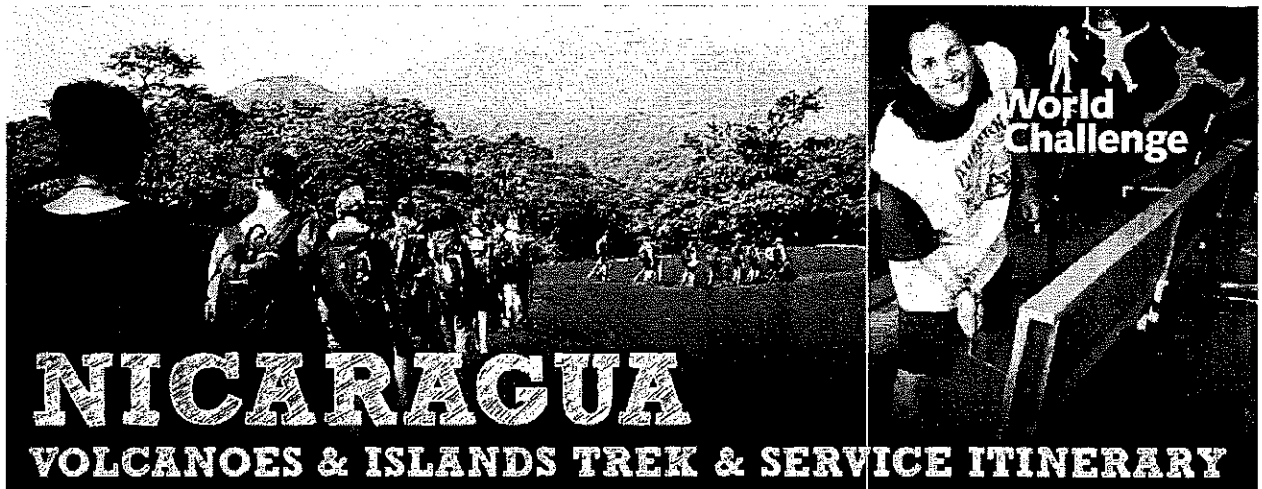
F 477 507 5155

A World Challenge Expeditions

3 Essex Center Drive, Peabody MA 01960



509



This is your trip! A World Challenge Adventure Itinerary isn't a guided tour where the adults run the show. Our highly qualified Expedition Leaders will encourage students to develop life skills by taking ownership of their trips wherever possible. You'll be involved in making decisions so come prepared and make the most of your adventure!

Day 1 Depart North America/Arrive in Nicaragua

The day of departure is spent making final preparations for your expedition. Excitement builds as the much anticipated flight gets nearer and nearer. Try your best to be well rested before this important day! You and your family should arrive at the airline's ticket counter 5 hours before your departure; your Expedition Leader will be waiting for you there. Make sure that you're ready to fly and that you're wearing your boots and World Challenge t-shirt! After saying your goodbyes, your team will check-in to your flight. You will then have time to organize all of your personal and team gear, plan your expedition budget, and play some team games before boarding your flight to Nicaragua. After your flight, you'll be met at the airport by pre-booked transportation to take you to your pre-booked hostel for your first night.

Days 2-5 Community Service Project

Hopefully you'll be well acclimatized, well versed in Spanish and ready to dive in to your project phase! Now is your chance to give something back. The rural areas of Nicaragua often contain impoverished villages, though you'd never believe it from all the friendly smiles and happy faces that you'll meet. The project will provide you with the opportunity to learn about some of the environmental, social and economic challenges facing this area and to make a genuine contribution to the needs of the local community. So what does this mean for you and your team?

You're going to be living and working alongside a Nicaraguan community for the next few days, with everything that entails: waking at dawn to the calls of the various farm animals, learning to make traditional dishes, keeping the local children entertained even though they might not understand much of what you're saying, being taught Spanish in turn by your hosts, and rolling your sleeves up for some serious help around the community!

The project work may well demand plenty of initiative from the team in order to make it a success and you will only get out of this what you put in.

Day 6 Leon

Today you will spend your time meeting your trekking guides, stripping your kit and purchasing supplies ahead of your Volcano adventure!

Days 7-9 Trekking - 3 Volcanoes in 3 Days

San Cristobal, Telica, Rota, and Cerro Negro are all names that you will become familiar with during your time on the Los Maribos volcanic chain. The three volcanoes in three days trek is one of Nicaragua's best treks and takes your team on a linear journey along the volcanic chain which is made up of 21 volcanoes, five of which are active. The local flora and fauna is magnificent and your expert guides will teach you incredible amounts about the large variety of animals and plants.

Days 10-13 Rest & Relaxation

While in Nicaragua most teams choose to spend their time on the Pacific coast in one of the major resorts; Las Penitas, San Juan del Sur and Masachpa. Watch the sunset over the Pacific from a hammock or kick back and relax on one of the numerous long sandy beaches. Alternatively you may decide to spend more time in Granada, shopping in the cultural Spanish metropolis. Teams flying out of Managua should aim, where possible, to travel directly to the airport. Accommodation is required and it should be booked well in advance and researched thoroughly.



Day 14 Depart Nicaragua/Arrive North America

Time for those last minute jobs before you pack up your gear for the final time and head to the airport for the flight back home.
Tip: get to the airport at least 3 hours before your departure time!

Getting off the plane, you'll be bursting with stories and photos to keep family and friends entertained for hours! Saying goodbye to your team will be harder than you'd imagine as you'll have become lifelong friends but the excitement of a shower, clean sheets, a comfy bed and catching up on all the news at home will make it easier. Don't forget to keep the experience alive and put your images, videos and best stories up on Youtube, Flickr and Facebook - remember to tag them all as World Challenge so you can compare notes with other returning Challengers.

* Don't forget all rest and relaxation activities are to be undertaken in accordance with World Challenge risk assessments and will be at the teams own expense, unless otherwise specified. Please note that although swimming may not be specified on the itinerary, the team may have the opportunity to paddle or swim during the course of the expedition.

** Please note the order of phases/activities in the itinerary may change.

Background Memo
Nicaragua-Summer 2015
Faculty Chaperones-Emily Fishkin and Michael Csorba

History of World Challenge at ABRHS

Overview

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School has participated in four World Challenge expeditions since 2005. The years of involvement, destinations and number of ABRHS participants are included below.

2005 - South Africa - 4 students

2007 - Thailand - 8 students

2009 - India - 9 students

2011 - Ecuador and Galapagos Islands - 43 students

Testimonial

In July 2009, Emily (Mullin) Fishkin participated in the month-long World Challenge expedition to India with nine AB students. As a result of this time abroad, each student on the trip returned home with a stronger sense of self, a willingness to connect with others and a more sophisticated global perspective. Emily can say from firsthand experience that students and teachers felt safe in all phases of the expedition.

Safety and Security

As stated on the World Challenge website, every expedition is supported by the following resources and services:

- Emergency satellite phone and position beaconing
- 24 hour emergency support through the World Challenge Operations Center
- Access to British Air Force search and rescue coordination
- Comprehensive insurance policy
- Western Union terminal in-house
- International medical assistance company First Assist

Additionally, because they believe that "safeguarding young participants is the absolute priority," the expedition coordinators at World Challenge employ the following safety practices and policies:

- Ratio of adult to student does not exceed 1:8
- Detailed risk assessments for every destination and activity
- Every expedition itinerary signed off individually by a World Challenge Expedition Planning Manager
- Diplomatic advisory services (US State Department) monitored 24 hours a day
- Trained, experienced and qualified Expedition Leaders
- Teacher Leader(s)
- In-country agents and local guides

Further information on expedition safety can be found at the link listed below.

<http://www.wcexpeditions.com/safety.html?tab=3#TabbedPanels1>

Fundraising

Because the cost of this trip is extensive, we plan to work with students in order to help them raise funds for the trip.

Whole Group Fundraising

We plan to use whole group fundraising to cut down the cost of the trip for everyone participating. Part of signing up for this trip will include an agreement that students must participate in whole group fundraising. This not only ensures the required participation, but also gives students an investment in the group and the preparation for the trip. Additionally, some of the funds will be set aside for items we will have to bring with us on the trip. Because we want the students to be part of the planning the following are suggestions for whole group fundraising.

- Car Wash
- Selling merchandise at school-wide events
- Bake Sale
- Used Gadget Drive (primarily cellphones)

Individual Fundraising

Students will have the opportunity to organize individual efforts to raise funds. World Challenge has a blog designed to give students ideas

(<http://blog.world-challenge-expeditions.com/category/individual-earning/>).

- Sponsorship-Letter Writing Campaign
- Donation Website
- Babysitting, Yard Work, other odd jobs



D'AGOSTINE, LEVINE, PARRA & NETBURN, P.C.
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Louis N. Levine
F. Alex Parra
Cathy S. Netburn
Maryann Cash Cassidy

July 31, 2014

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
District Central Office
16 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720

RE: Naming Elm Street Basketball Courts in Memory of Paul Cartwright

Dear School Committee Members,

On behalf of the Acton basketball community and the legions of youth and adults to which Paul Cartwright was a mentor and inspiration, it is respectfully requested that the School Committee name the Elm Street Basketball Courts in memory of Paul.

Paul passed away May 14, 2014 after a six year heroic battle with cancer. He never complained, but rather continued his physically demanding job as a postal carrier and his dedication to Acton youth basketball. As his son described in his eulogy, referencing John Lennon's famous saying, Paul was "Yes, A Working Class Hero is something to be. If you want to be a hero, well just follow me."

Paul was a founder and for more than 17 years the backbone of AB Youth Basketball, which provided thousands of youths from the fourth to eighth grades the opportunity to play and, more importantly, enjoy basketball with other towns throughout Middlesex and Worcester counties. During this time he also coached both boys and girls, many of whom went on to be some of the best basketball players Acton has ever had. I am sure these players would tell you that Paul was their most influential coach. Most importantly, and lost in the competitive world we live in, Paul made it fun for young people he coached, simply because he was just a fun loving "good guy".

Paul also directed and coordinated the youth basketball referees. His approach to refereeing was the same as coaching; let the kids have fun and referee as a teacher and mentor, not just as an enforcer of the rules. Paul constantly stressed this approach to refereeing in more than 10,000 individual referee slots he assigned over the years. He officiated more games in Acton than anyone else, right up to the final weeks before he died, always making basketball fun for the kids that played it and brought proper perspective to the adults, whether they be coaches, referees or fans.



D'AGOSTINE, LEVINE, PARRA & NETBURN, P.C.

Attorneys at Law

I knew Paul for over twenty years, both as a fellow referee and a good friend. Currently, I am President of the North Central Massachusetts Basketball Officials (International Association of Approved Basketball Officials – Board 44) which has approximately 175 members. The members of Board 44 and I refereed many games with Paul. At each and every game, no matter the circumstances or the attitude of the participants, he always exemplified the best in sports – sportsmanship, learning and fun are most important. I can truly say he was an “inspiration” to referee with.

Enclosed are recommendations supporting the naming of the Elm Street Basketball Courts after Paul. Also enclosed is a rough sketch of how it is suggested Paul’s name appear at the courts.


It is respectfully submitted that this request is in accordance with the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District’s “Naming School Facilities” criteria as Paul provided “[u]nusually effective and dedicated service to or on behalf of the youth in Acton or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, . . . [c]ommunity service, . . . and [e]ffective citizenship.”

Naming the Elm Street Basketball Courts after Paul will be a perpetual reminder of what he believed: that sports really are about sportsmanship, learning and fun. This will not only be a justly deserved tribute to Paul, but also an ongoing example for all who play, coach, referee and watch basketball at Elm Street.

I look forward to appearing before the School Committee to discuss this further. Please let me know when this would be convenient for you.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,


Louis N. Levine

e-mail: llevine@dlpnlaw.com

Enclosures (11)

Cc: Joseph E. O’Brien, A-B Travel Basketball Program, Co-President – Via E-mail
Joshua P. Hammer, A-B Travel Basketball Program, Executive Director – Via E-mail
Mark L. Scheier, A-B Travel Basketball Program, General Counsel – Via E-mail
Rick Kilpatrick, A-B Regional High School, Head Boys Basketball Coach – Via E-mail
Ray and Cathy Gallant, past and present A-B Coaches – Via E-mail
Lisa M. O’Brien, Community Liaison, Elm Street Reconstruction Project – Via E-mail
Kimberly Landry, past A-B Coach – Via E-mail
Brett McDonald, past A-B Captain – Via E-mail
Bob Eglitis – Via E-mail

NAMING SCHOOL FACILITIES

The School Committees of Acton and Acton-Boxborough believe naming a school facility is a matter of significant importance, one that deserves the most thoughtful attention of the School Committee and the Administration, and one that is indeed an unusual occurrence or event. Further, the Committee should not be influenced in its decision by personal prejudice, favoritism, political pressure or temporary popularity.

In the naming of public school facilities, if the name of a person is to be used, the following criteria will be applied in the selection of a person(s) to be so honored.

1. A person, living or dead, for whom a public school facility may be named must have made significant contributions to education of the youth of the Acton or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools. Evidence of such contributions may include, but are not limited to the following:
 - Unusually effective and dedicated service to or on behalf of the youth in the Acton or Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
 - Persistent efforts to sustain a high quality system of public education for all youth and to improve programs and services for these young people.
 - Demonstrated understanding of the essential nature of public education in the furthering of our democratic form of government and the free enterprise system.
2. The nominee must otherwise be worthy of the honor of having a school facility named for her/him. Evidence of such attributes could include, but may not be limited to the following:
 - Superior levels of performance in strengthening and supporting Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
 - Community service
 - Effective citizenship
 - Seminal ideas or research
 - Excellent character and general reputation

The Superintendent shall prepare procedures for the naming of school which are consistent with this policy.

NAMING SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. The appropriate School Committee will announce the process to be used for naming a school facility (new or existing).
2. That School Committee will announce the deadline for submission to the Screening Committee of nominations of names of a new or existing facility.
3. The process will include the acceptance of nominations from the following groups:
 - a. the community at large
 - b. officials of the towns
 - c. the staff of the school to be named or renamed
 - d. other interested staff
 - e. the current and former students in the school system
4. In the case of an unusual building, e.g. a building which houses two school programs, or a section of a larger facility, the School Committee will determine how many names are needed. Nominations will be accepted from the list in #3 above. Nominations may come in the form of email or letters to the Superintendent or School Committee.
5. The School Committee may set aside some time during selected meetings to accept nominations.
6. Nominations will be submitted with answers to the following questions:
 - a. What is the reason you are suggesting the person/name? (See the criteria in the policy statement.)
 - b. Why is this a good name for the facility?
 - c. What is the biographical/other information about this person which will assist in making a decision?
7. The School Committee will establish a Screening Committee of nine representatives of the various interest groups in the community. The role of the Screening Committee is to review and evaluate all the suggested names and recommend three for the School Committee to choose from.

To: ABRSC members
From: Maria E. Neyland
Date: 9/2/14
RE: Proposed Naming of the Elm Street Basketball Courts

On July 31, 2014, the School Committee received a request from a group of citizens that the Committee consider naming the Elm Street Basketball Courts after a longtime community volunteer.

A preliminary discussion was held at the 8/4/14 School Committee meeting and it was agreed to bring the issue up again at the meeting on 9/4/14.

Based on ABRSD's "Naming School Facilities" policy FF and procedures FF-R, I would like to propose the following process:

9/4/14 - The ABRSC will decide whether or not naming this facility is appropriate. If it is, the Committee could announce the process at that time. Information will be distributed to the Beacon, PTOs, Boards of Selectmen, AB News Acton Patch and the Acton CPC.

9/18/14 – A screening Committee of nine members, as outlined in the procedures, will be confirmed by the School Committee. This should include two SC members, the Athletic Director or his designee, a staff member, three community members and two students.

9/30/14 - Deadline of submission for names to be considered. Nominations may be via email or letter to the Superintendent or the School Committee. They will become public information and must answer the following questions:

1. What is the reason you are suggesting the person/name? (See criteria in policy.)
2. Why is this a good name for the facility?
3. What is the biographical/other information about this person which will assist in making a decision?


10/10/14 – Screening Committee will review and evaluate all suggested names and recommend three for the School Committee to choose from at the School Committee meeting on 10/16/14.

6.0

Acton-Boxborough Community Education

*** MEMO ***

TO: Glenn Brand

FROM: Erin Bettez 

RE: Community Education Donations

DATE: August 21, 2014

I have had three checks cut from Community Ed's revolving fund. These are being sent to the schools to help pay expenses associated with operating the buildings in which we run our extended day and before and after school childcare programs.

1. To Gates School for \$13,138.79
2. To McCarthy-Towne School for \$35,957.50
3. To Conant School for \$57,077.29

cc: Clare Jeannotte
David Krane
Lynne Newman
Damian Sugrue
Denise Kelly

2014 – 2015 New Professional Staff

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Sal Step</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Administration				
Dana Labb	Principal	Blanchard		1.0
Abigail Dressler	Assistant Principal	Conant		1.0
Juliana Schneider	Assistant Principal	Merriam		1.0
Teachers				
Heather Haines	K-6 Math Specialist	Systemwide	8M + 15	1.0
Erica Daigneault	Speech Language Teacher	Blanchard	2M	1.0
Mairin Gulliver	1 st Grade (1 yr. position)	Conant	3M + 15	1.0
Deborah Barolsky	6 th Grade (1 yr. position)	Douglas	12M	1.0
Anne Corkery	Kindergarten Teacher	Douglas	11M + 15	0.5
Maureen O'Brien	Reading Teacher	Douglas	4M	0.4
Charlene Eckl	Occupational Therapist	Doug/Gates	5M	0.6
Molly Meehan	Special Education Teacher	Gates	12B + 15	1.0
Kara Whitcomb	Kindergarten Teacher	Gates	1M	0.5
Benjamin Wolfson	3 rd Grade Teacher (1 year)	Gates	1M	1.0
Lindsey Howe	5 th Grade (1 year position)	McT	2B	1.0
Kathryn O'Hara	4 th Grade Teacher	McT	2M	1.0
Nicole Krenning	Special Education Teacher	Merriam	7M	0.4
Caroline O'Malley	Science Teacher	RJ Grey	3M	1.0
Andrew Thompson	Science Teacher	RJ Grey	12M	1.0
Erica Wright	Mathematics Teacher	RJ Grey	12M + 15	1.0
Karen Campbell	Science Teacher	ABRHS	1B	1.0
Sinikka Gary	World Language RDL	ABRHS	11M + 45	1.0
Anna Gvirtzman	French Teacher	ABRHS	5B	0.4
Minjung Kim	English Teacher	ABRHS	2B	0.4
Eleonora Lecei	Visual Arts (1 yr. position)	ABRHS	7M	0.8
Michael Lopez	Drama Teacher	ABRHS	12M	1.0
Tiffany Pellegrini	Social Studies Teacher	ABRHS	8M	1.0
Brian Publicover	Special Education Teacher	ABRHS	1M	1.0
Lindsay Pucino	School Psychologist	ABRHS	1M + 30	1.0
Susan Ropiak	Math Teacher	ABRHS	2M + 30	1.0
Katrina Rubner	English (1 year position)	ABRHS	3B	1.0
Adam Rundell	Science Teacher	ABRHS	12M + 30	1.0
Carla Serkin	Chemistry Teacher	ABRHS	12D	1.0
Kate Sullivan	Special Education/ETL	ABRHS	12M + 15	1.0
Nicole Soucie	Board Cert. Behavior Analyst	Systemwide		0.7

Transfers of Professional Staff

<u>Name</u>	<u>New Positions (Previous Position)</u>	<u>School</u>
David Green	Interim Social Studies RDL/History Teacher	ABRHS
Jean Oviatt-Rothman	STEM Science Curr. Specialist/Coach (K-6 Math Curr. Specialist/Coach)	District-wide
Sharon Ryan	Elem. Literacy & Social Studies Curr. Spec./Coach (Reading Specialist K-6)	District-wide
Lannon Twomey	Speech and Language Chairperson (Speech/Language Pathologist)	District-wide

Barolsky, Deborah

**Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools**

School Committee Staff Recruitment Form (#4)

Date: 8/8/2014 **Position:** 6th Grade Mat. Leave Sub **Location:** Douglas

Qualifications: Massachusetts certification and successful supervised experience within the last five years as a teacher, student teacher, intern or apprentice in this discipline.

Posted: Yes **Advertised:** Yes

#Applicants: 40 **# Candidates Interviewed:** 4 **Interviewers:** Chris Whitbeck, Hilary Bonnell, Catherine Christensen, Katie Oxnard, Glenn Brand

Recommended Candidate: Deborah Barolsky **Step/Salary:** 12M

Resume: Yes **Application:** Yes **References Checked:** Yes

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Major/Minor</u>
Swathmore	BA	1993	Religious Studies
Wheelock	M	1997	Teaching

Certification Required: Yes **Licensed:** Elementary 1-6

Experience

- 1997 – Present Teacher Grade 4 Jewish Community Day School
- 2000 – 2006 Lower School Math Coordinator – Jewish Community Day School

Daigneault, Erica

Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools

School Committee Staff Recruitment Form (#4)

Date: 7/22/14 **Position:** Speech Lang. Pathologist **Location:** Blanchard

Qualifications: Massachusetts certification and successful supervised experience within the last five years as a teacher, student teacher, intern or apprentice in this discipline.

Posted: Yes **Advertised:** Yes

#Applicants: 12 **# Candidates Interviewed:** 3 **Interviewers:** Dana Labb, Karen Tower, Lynne Laramie, Lannon Twomey, Jennifer Weisberg, Stephen Mills

Recommended Candidate: Yes **Step/Salary:** 2M

Resume: Yes **Application:** Yes **References Checked:** 3

<u>College:</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Major/Minor</u>
MGH Institute of Health	MA	2013	Communication Disorders
Boston College	BA	2010	English

Certification Required: Yes **Licensed:** Yes

Experience Wilmington Public Schools Clinical Fellow

Eckl, Charlene

**Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools**

School Committee Staff Recruitment Form (#4)

Date: 7/30/14 **Position:** .6 FTE Occupational Therapist **Location:** Multi Schools

Qualifications: Massachusetts certification and successful supervised experience within the last five years as a teacher, student teacher, intern or apprentice in this discipline.

Posted: Yes

Advertised: Yes

#Applicants: 10 **# Candidates Interviewed:** 5 **Interviewers:** Kathy Knight,
Tammy Kucharski, Lynne Laramie, Glenn Brand

Recommended Candidate: Charlene Eckl

Step/Salary: 5M

Resume: Yes

Application: Yes

References Checked: Yes

College

State U. of NY

Degree

BA

Date

1989

Major/Minor

Secondary Educatin

Tufts University

MS

1993

OT

Certification Required: Yes

Licensed: Elementary 1-6

Experience

18+ years

Gvirtzman, Anna

**Acton Public Schools
Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools**

School Committee Staff Recruitment Form (#4)

Date: 8/21/2014

Position: French .4 FTE

Location ABRHS

Qualifications: Massachusetts certification and successful supervised experience within the last five years as a teacher, student teacher, intern or apprentice in this discipline.

Posted: Yes

Advertised: Yes

#Applicants: 7

Candidates Interviewed: 3

Interviewers: Sinikka Gary,

Debbie Leavitt, JoAnn Campbell, Glenn Brand

Recommended Candidate: Anna Gvirtzman

Step/Salary: 5B

Resume: Yes

Application: Yes

References Checked: Yes

<u>College</u>	<u>Degree</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Major/Minor</u>
Moscow State Pedagogical Inst. for Foreign Language	BA	1990	French
Worcester State College	in process		Spanish

Certification Required: Yes

Licensed: Yes

Experience

2/2013 – 5/2013 Westborough High School – French/Spanish
9/2010 – 6/2011 Gann Academy Jewish High School – French
9/2009 – 6/2010 Norton Public Schools – French/Spanish
8/2008 – 11/2008 Wellesley Middle School - French

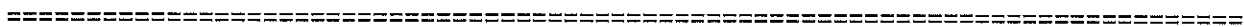
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

**Orientation for Professional Staff
New to the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools**

Wednesday, August 27, 2014

8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

R.J. Grey Junior High School Library



8:00 – 8:15 Continental Breakfast

8:15 – 9:00 Introduction of New Staff to Each Other

9:00 - 9:15 Welcome and District Overview

Mr. Glenn Brand, Superintendent

Marcia Rich, Acton Memorial Library

Maureen Strapko, Sargent Memorial Library (Boxborough)

9:15 – 10:30 Introduction of Central Office Team and Presentation of Essential Information

- Glenn Brand, Superintendent
- Marie Altieri, Director of Personnel and Administrative Services
- Deborah Bookis, Director of Curriculum and Assessment
- Liza Huber, Director of Pupil Services
- Amy Bisiewicz, Director of Educational Technology
- Clare Jeannotte, Director of Finance
- J.D. Head, Director of Facilities
- Erin Bettez, Director of Community Education

10:30 – 10:45 Round Table Q & A

11:00 – 12:00 Community Bus Trip - Marie Altieri

12:00 – 1:00 Lunch in the Junior High cafeteria, courtesy of the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA), Members of the School Committees, ABEA, Principals and Central Office staff will join us

1:00 – 2:30 Mentoring Workshop with Carolyn Smiley and Kaitlin Nealon

Vote to Accept Funds from the Town of Acton:

I move that the Committee vote pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, § 53A and in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement between the District and the Town of Acton dated March 17, 2014, to accept the following grants and gift funds from the Town of Acton, to be held as separate accounts and spent by the District for the same purposes as the prior Town of Acton fund, grant or gift:

{See following page}

Fund	Account Title	*unaudited Balance 6/30/2014
Acton Public Schools Funds to transfer		
APS Grants-Private		
	2207 Bay State Readers 2nd	170.29
	2208 Singapore Math	20.16
	2249 Big Yellow School Bus	1,704.05
		<u>1,894.50</u>
APS PTO Gift Accounts		
	2610 APS Conant PTO	7,815.77
	2611 APS Douglas PTO	4,595.25
	2612 APS Gates PTO	2,020.93
	2613 APS McCarthy Towne PTO	177.04
	2614 APS Merriam PTO	355.28
		<u>14,964.27</u>
APS Gifts		
	2601 APS Library Support	10,040.80
	2602 APS Superintendent	145.29
	2604 APS Damon Bldg Playground	2,086.85
	2606 APS ESL After School	323.53
	2609 APS PD Outdoor Classroom	314.37
	2617 APS Conant Technology	756.20
	2618 APS Douglas Dec Math	48.14
	2619 APS Douglas Japanese	4.94
	2620 APS Douglas Mentoring	606.44
	2621 APS Gates Private	9,018.03
	2622 APS McCarthy Technology	3,300.00
	2626 Conant Foundation Mtg Gift	11.29
	2627 Douglas Foundation Mtg Gift	42.22
	2633 Con: Professional Dev Gift	229.23
	2636 Comm Ed ADK Gift	1,788.29
	2638 Acton Garden Club Gift	500.00
	2639 EDFAAB Gift	270.74
	2640 Gates Playground Equipment	317.31
	2641 Conant Art Gift	95.48
	2642 Merriam Handshake Project	62.91
	2644 Gates Anonymous Gift	902.94
	2646 Curriculum Gifts	10.00
	2647 West Acton Boardwalk	11,822.50
	2648 Conant Enrichment Gift	101,114.97
	2650 Gates Enrichment Gift	25,265.37
	2651 McT Enrichment Gift	51,330.60
		<u>220,408.44</u>
APS Revolving Accts		
	2401 Douglas at Dawn	169,984.19
	2403 Merriam Morning/Afternoon	141,867.97
		<u>311,852.16</u>
APS Other:		
	2206 Circuit Breaker	<u>14,726.00</u>
	2500 School Lunch	(621,990.62)
	2501 Conant School Lunch	159,528.72
	2502 Douglas School Lunch	107,451.89
	2503 Gates School Lunch	153,842.24
	2504 McCarthy School Lunch	36,654.30
	2505 Merriam School Lunch	283,100.10
	Total School Lunch funds APS	<u>118,586.63</u>
	TOTAL ACTON TO TRANSFER	<u>680,537.50</u>

Vote to Accept Funds from the Town of Boxborough:

I move that the Committee vote pursuant to M.G.L. c. 44, § 53A and in accordance with the Intermunicipal Agreement between the District and the Town of Boxborough dated May 22, 2014, to accept the following grants and gift funds from the Town of Boxborough, to be held as separate accounts and spent by the District for the same purposes as the prior Town of Boxborough fund, grant or gift:

Fund	Account Title	*unaudited Balance 6/30/2014
Boxborough Funds to transfer:		
	Student Activities	15,521.43
	School Choice	196,220.71
	School Lunch	51,156.32
	Extended Day	166,841.31
	Full Day K	67,815.34
	Circuit Breaker	73,470.00
	Preschool Tuitions	82,713.75
	Blanchard Gift	7,191.57
	Insurance Claim	1,539.82
	P Hall Scholarship Trust-non expendable	10,000.00
	P Hall Scholarship Trust-revenue	3,125.90
	Total Funds - Boxborough	675,596.15

MEMO

To: MARS Membership

From: Stephen Hemman, Executive Director

Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools (MARS)

Cell Phone: 978-821-2890, Office: 978-874-0385, mars.hemman@marsregionals.net

Re: Regional Transportation Fund MARS filed legislation that would create a regional transportation fund that would allow the funds to be carried over for one year. The legislation was passed by the House and Senate and signed by the Governor on August 5, 2014. The following is the legislation: An Act regarding the establishment of a regional school transportation reimbursement fund. Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows SECTION 1. Section 16C of chapter 71 of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2012 Official Edition, is hereby amended by adding at the end the following sentences: Regional school districts may establish a Regional School Transportation Reimbursement Fund. Reimbursements made by the commonwealth pursuant to this section may be deposited into said fund and may carry forward for one fiscal year. We suggest this fall that your school committee votes to establish the fund. Then when reimbursement funds are sent to districts in January, you have the money deposited into the Fund. I spoke to Jay Sullivan and Christine Lynch concerning an advisory concerning the procedures for the Fund. I expect they will send something out in the Fall. Having this Fund will allow districts to do some planning on how much they will have for reimbursement for member towns. This Fund will operate someone similar to Circuit Breaker. We owe thanks to Rep Anne Gobi and Rep. Cleon Turner for filing the bill for us.

9.1.1
Start 8/4/14
Version #2

ALG Minutes, July 31, 2014

Present: Bart Wendell, facilitator; Mike Majors & Steve Noone, FC; Kristina Rychlik, SC; Katie Green & Mike Gowing, BoS; Steve Ledoux, Glenn Brand & Steve Barrett, Staff. Absent: Dennis Bruce, SC, Marie Altieri, school staff.

Audience: Brian Mc Mullen, Asst. Assessor; Janet Adachi, BoS; Charlie Kadlec & Bob Ingram

Extra Information: ALG Charter and Ground Rules; Statement of Net Positions; Global Cash Flow Project & FC's maintaining Excellence.

Members' introduced themselves. Bart: The ALG Charter is a tradition, not a legally binding document. Are there any questions or changes?

Steve N: why no substitutes?

Bart: because the negotiations are cumulative and with subs there is a loss of what is happening and why. This is just an advisory group that will champion a proposal when taken back to boards and committees. If you do not agree with an idea, you say so here, if you cannot take an agreement back to your board and make a case, and then the change has to be here. This is a deliberative body, not a decision-making body.

Superintendent Glenn Brand reported that Marie Altieri will be the second school staff member of ALG. The interim Finance Director Clare Jeannotte will be a member of the audience.

There were questions as to why the plan was called "a three-board plan." The name has changed over the years. Steve Noone said that the FC is obligated to produce a long range plan for Town Meeting "We always seem to agree, so the plan, regardless of its title, can be printed in the warrant."

Bart: the name has gone back and forth between plan and model. Another point of contention has been public participation. There has been misunderstanding. This meeting is supposed to last 1 1/2 hours so people can get to work. When we use the full time allotted that does not allow time for public comment. What do you want?

SN: I like what you've been doing. I have time limits and need to get this meeting done.

Katie: the selectmen have the comments at the beginning. But for us, setting a time limit is less important.

MG: Perhaps questions can be put on the ALG shell and answered at the next meeting.

The discussion continued with nothing resolved.

Bart: we will continue public comments at the end, we can request emails but we still have the time constraints. The rest of the ground rules and Charter were accepted.

Minutes approved

4. Update on FY15 Revenue & expenditures and FY14 year end

SL: We are in the 31st day of FY 15 and things are going according to plan. The FY 14 unaudited results in expenses shows a \$450k made up from refinancing twin schools at \$150k; legal at \$150k and Middlesex retirement at @\$90k.

For revenues we are seeing an estimate \$700k with excise tax at \$250k; investment revenues are flat; \$275k in fees & permits and \$150 in miscellaneous So FY 14 in general is in good shape.

Brand: we are closing out FY14 and will report to the SC the first meeting in Sept. at the same time we will be doing FY15. Tight now we are getting out the orders for supplies and materials; doing an analysis of the Governor's budget; going through the changes in the chartered accounts and transitioning from the three budgets into one.

5. Global cash flow Steve Barrett (extra info sheets)

SB: Town's website documents show @\$40M in cash and the DOR's audited numbers leaves a sum of \$28M. I worked through the numbers in detail with Mr. Noone and found that on average we have between \$35-40M in cash on hand But that is broken down into : \$1.4m for general fund; sewer @\$5M with \$2M in prepaid debt and \$1.5M in reserve capital and the different enterprise funds—the one with the most money is the ambulance. This has been an exercise to find more money within the budget. We seem to have dwindling reserves, we spend between \$1.5-\$2M a year and somehow we manage to regenerate it.

SN: several years ago we "found" money in old warrant articles. We are looking to see if there are other sources.

MG: Things will be different without the APS enterprise funds on the Town side. We also build our budgets on House I which is changed by the time the governor signs the budget in late June.

SN: we also have one of the earliest Town meetings in the Commonwealth.

Bart: Petersham has their Town Meeting in June and the state budget numbers are still not known.

6. Maintaining Excellence (extra Info)

SN: said the genesis of the handout was from the FC's obligation to provide a long range plan for the voters. He suggested that there be a three-board social meeting sometime in October which will deal with a common set of facts (financial) to help develop a financial plan for the Town

SN: noted that Acton in general was a good place to be—excellent schools and AAA bond ratings. However, looking ahead the FC sees a decrease in Ch 70 funds due to declining student populations; the agreement to fund OPEB at @ \$1m/year; the increase in taxes by 2.5% was being spent by the operating budgets. The state recommends that a town have 5% of total budget in reserve—at the rate we are spending, the FC thinks the reserves will be used up by FY18. Solutions include raising taxes---we are

already 18th highest tax rate in the state; 15th highest in ability to pay. One question is: do we raise taxes now to cover pending shortfalls? Will people still buy houses?

Our greatest spending is on schools---66% of the budget which is the highest in the state. With the changing demographics in 20 years 80% of the population will be 55+ these are the MAPC projections that we will have more seniors than children.

There are no obvious solutions; so we need to plan. Approximately 500 people at Town meeting vote the budgets/taxes while 7,000 turned out for override votes. In recent years we have had 5 overrides pass and four fail. It is not clear that we can pass an override. The stats showed that last override 51% voted yes and 49% no. We have always assumed that we can pass an override when needed. The FC does not think we can make that assumption.

At a three-board meeting we need to discuss service levels; capital infrastructure and class size. The FC can present the standard revenue assumptions to the group [9 FinCom members; 5 BoS and 11 SC]

Glenn: as a new superintendent I appreciate the chance for such a discussion. The administration is sensitive to the shift in enrollment and our strategy is to look towards the long term needs of the system

There was general agreement that such a meeting would be productive. Krysta volunteered to do the invitation. In order to have "adult" beverages, it was suggested that the meeting take place in Exchange Hall.

7. Meeting Dates

Bart: we have to set a seasonal calendar for the meeting dates so we cover topics before there is the predictable train wreck.

SL: agreed to do that

Bart said he would not be around for Jan and March (he will be here for Feb.) In prior years we held the meetings at 7:30 AM until snow season when the time changed to 5:30 PM. Do Thursdays still work?

There was some discussion about other meetings scheduled for Thursdays---HIT and School Committee.

There was agreement that an August meeting would not be necessary, and the ALG season would start in September.

Dates agreed to: Sept. 11; Oct 9; Nov. 13 Dec. 11---all meeting at 7:30 AM

On Sept 11 a plan for the meetings' topics will be presented. SL will prepare the outline.

Jan. 15th is also a date for the first ALG to start at 5:30 PM

Agenda items: Spreadsheet. The Town will take over the maintenance of the spreadsheet.

8. Public Comments

Charlie: when comments are held to the end of the meeting the comments become irrelevant. There have been innumerable times when information from the public could save time. You do not really want public comment. This meeting is informal and you should encourage public comment not discourage it. I think you should reconsider your stand of having comments only at the end.

Adjourned 9AM

Next Meeting September 11, 7:30 AM

Ann Chang

Minutes of the Health Insurance Trustee Meeting

June 19, 2014

 **DRAFT**

8:00 a.m.

Superintendent's Conference Room

Members Present: Steve Barrett, Bob Evans, Mike Gowing, Sharon Summers and Mary Brolin

Members Absent: None

Also Present: Peter Savage, Ruth Cvitkovich

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 by Chairman Evans.

Elect Officer for Fiscal Year 2015: Mike Gowing nominated Bob Evans as Chairman, Mary Brolin seconded the nomination. No other nominations were put forwarded. All voted in favor of Bob Evans as Chairman for fiscal year 2015. Bob Evans nominated Mary Brolin as Secretary, Mike Gowing seconded the nomination. No other nominations were put forwarded. All voted in favor of Mary Brolin as Secretary for fiscal year 2015.

Approval of April 30, 2014: The minutes from April 30, 2014 were unanimously approved.

Discussion of Cash Flow Report: Mr. Savage reviewed the Cash Flow Summary report for May 2014. The revised projections show a \$82,076 positive projection for the year and Mr. Savage thinks that will improve somewhat toward the close of the fiscal year.

Discussion of and Vote on Reinsurance Bids: Mr. Savage reviewed the reinsurance bids received from Cook & Company Insurance Services, Inc. (Cook) and Stop Loss Insurance Brokers, Inc. (SLIB). Each provided bids for deductibles of \$125,000; \$130,000; and \$135,000. Cook's estimated annual premiums were lower than SLIB's but their estimated liability was higher. Mr. Savage explained how the liability was estimated. Mike Gowing moved to accept the Blue Cross Blue Shield \$125,000 deductible contract basis stop loss insurance as managed by Cook & Company Insurance Services, Inc. Steve Barrett seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion of and Vote on Consultant Contracts: We received only one proposal from Cook & Company Insurance Services, Inc. The proposal included three distinct scopes of work. We will sign a contract for three years but we can terminate the contract at the end of any specific year. Sharon Summers moved to approve the three contracts with Cook & Company Insurance Services, Inc. and Mike Gowing seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Discussion of Possible Agenda Items for FY 2015 Meetings: Bob Evans indicated that he would like to have a representative from Blue Cross Blue Shield come to our September meeting to talk about Employer Group Waiver Plans (EGWP) – "Egg Whip". He also suggested we invite other interested parties to join us

for the presentation. Mike Gowing suggested that we discuss the changes resulting from the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and how this may affect collective bargaining. Sharon Summers would like to have Blue Cross Blue Shield come to a meeting to discuss their policies.

With all the changes due to the ACA, we also decided that we should have ACA changes as a standing agenda item.

Other Discussion: Mr. Savage noted that we need to file an A&F report by the end of June. Marie Altieri filed this report last time so Mr. Savage will get in touch with her about filing it for this year. He also mentioned that we will need to pay a PCORI (Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute) fee by the end of July.

Setting of Next Meeting Date: The next meeting of the trustees is scheduled for September 18, 2014 at 8:00 a.m. Bob Evans will invite Tanya Chakmakian of Blue Cross Blue Shield to meet with us to discuss EGWP and Blue Cross plans.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Brolin, Trustee/Secretary

 DRAFT

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT
SEPTEMBER 4, 2014**

Superintendent Entry Planning Update

Throughout the course of the summer I have met with School Committee members, principals and central office administrators as I begin to gather data as part of my entry into the District. Beginning in September, I will start to arrange meetings with community leaders as well as establish meetings with additional staff in schools and with members of our wider community. It will be my intent to provide the School Committee with an update on my progress to-date towards the end of October and a report of my findings in December.

Professional Staff Orientation

On August 27 approximately 35 professional staff new to the district spent the day engaged in their first formal orientation to the district. The first half of the day the district administrators met with the group to provide them with an overview of the District and our respective roles and function. This was capped off by a wonderful luncheon with new staff, their mentors and administrators throughout the District. In the afternoon our new employees spent time with their mentors as they began their formal mentor-mentee relationship.

Community Education

Over a seven week summer session the A-B Community had more than 5,800 registrations across a total of 553 program offerings within Community Education. Some highlights "by-the-numbers" include:

- Over 50 students enrolled in "Techscapades" classes which ran the week of June 23. These classes were taught primarily by current High School students and recent ABRHS grads and represented a terrific partnership between EdTech staff and Comm Ed.
- Over 80 teens completed Driver Ed classes.
- Over 300 children took tennis lessons and almost 550 completed Red Cross Swim lessons.
- There were just over 600 students who participated in the Summer Escapades programs at the Parker Damon Building.
- Community Education Summer Day program had an average of 100 children participate each week.

School Nutrition Program Update – Department of Public Health

On August 14 the Massachusetts Department of Public Health issued a letter to superintendents regarding the USDA federal nutrition standards for competitive foods and beverages released in June 2013. As stated in their memo, the Massachusetts standards for competitive foods do not

meet the minimum federal standards in all categories. As a result, they are proposing revisions to those portions of the regulations so as they might align with the federal standards.

These proposed amendments were presented to the Public Health Council on August 13, 2014 and the next phase is an opportunity for public comment at a public hearing on Tuesday, September 9, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. There is also an opportunity for written feedback which will be accepted until Friday, September 12, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. More information can be found at the following link: (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/mass-in-motion/school-nutrition-delay-letter.pdf>)

Track Completion

In early August the Richard Dow Track project was substantially completed by *Copeland Athletic Surfacing Inc.* out of Albany, NY. A minor “punch list” is now being addressed. The renovated track represents a significant asset for the District, noting that it is anticipated that every 5-7 years some general surface maintenance will be required. A final financial report will be made at the September 18 School Committee meeting.

RJ Grey

There are a number of exciting developments at the Junior High as the school year gets underway. These include:

- Every educator at RJ Grey will have a course website accessible to both families and students via the RJ Grey website. Courses that assign homework will be updated regularly to include current assignments.
- A number of new after school clubs for students will be launched this fall including but not limited to: tennis, yoga, fly fishing, and Bollywood appreciation.

High School

Over the summer, teachers in the alternative program at the high school (the MAP program) worked on the development of semester-long, interdisciplinary courses to better serve the needs of our students. In addition, a group of teachers continued the work on disciplinary literacy that was begun last year that centered around a grassroots effort to form relationships between departments based on shared literacy goals.

Technology

EDTech has been very busy this summer in our ongoing efforts to provide more meaningful access to technology in classrooms and learning labs district-wide. At the High School, we are pleased to announce that students will now have access to two new labs. Sixty computers were purchased this summer to support a much-needed upgrade to the World Language Lab. Included in the purchase is Sony Virtuoso, a proven instructional software platform that provides a fully digital-language learning solution that helps to maximize class time and enhance student learning.

ChromeBooks and iPads at the High School have also been expanded. A classroom set of iPads will be used in the World Language department and three classroom sets of ChromeBooks will be used in the English department and Special Education.

At RJ Grey, we are introducing over 200 ChromeBooks to our students! Each RJ Grey team will now have access to a complete set of ChromeBooks (25) that will be used to support student learning in the classroom. As student access to technology continues to increase in the building, students will find it easier to connect with teachers and collaborate with others through the use of their ABSchools account (Google Apps for Education).

This summer we have deployed over 450 ChromeBooks throughout the elementary schools. Many of our teachers will be using these tools to provide teacher feedback on student work, explore paperless classrooms, support personalized learning, and innovate their practice. Our elementary schools are continuing to use ABSchools and ChromeBooks successfully to support student writing and group collaboration in the 4th- 6th grade classrooms. In support of our youngest students (K-3), EDTech has deployed 80 iPads for classroom over the course of the summer.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Blanchard Memorial School
493 Massachusetts Avenue
Boxborough, MA 01719
978-263-4569



<http://blanchard.abschools.org>

MR. DANA LABB, PRINCIPAL

dlabb@abschools.org

DR. KAREN TOWER, ASST. PRINCIPAL

ktower@abschools.org

MS. KATHY BOWER, ADM. ASST.

kbower@abschools.org

MS. GAIL WALSH, GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

gwalsh@abschools.org

"The mind of a child is fascination, for it looks on old things with new eyes."

-F. Scott Fitzgerald

August 22, 2014

Dear Families,

Welcome back to Blanchard! It has certainly been a summer of 'firsts'. Upon my first day on July 1st, I became the first principal of the newly regionalized Blanchard Memorial. In June, I watched as the last 6th grade from the Boxborough School District graduated and, in a few short days, I will greet the first graduating class of Blanchard A/B! It was also a summer where my son, Logan, took his first steps!

On August 21st, the Parent Portal on our secure website was opened for you to update the On-Line Emergency Card and gain access to classroom teachers. There are instructions for creating a new account and then logging in using the student username and password that were distributed last spring. For clarification, the username and password travels with the child throughout their time at Acton-Boxborough but you will need to create a new account to get access. On August 28th, a complete class list will be posted on the Parent Portal.

The first Value on the Acton-Boxborough Mission Statement is "An environment that promotes social development and emotional and physical well being for the entire school community." While Blanchard's STARR values of Support, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect, and Responsibility with excellence of mind, imagination and body reflect the district's goal, we will maintain the strong relationships and sense of close-knit community that is the rich tradition Blanchard has established. While we preserve this identity, we must remember that all of our friends in the other regional buildings are going through a similar process. A reoccurring theme this year will be 'life balance' for both staff and students. While academics will certainly be at the forefront of our daily practice with a tiered system of support and extensions in an effort to recognize individual learning styles and engage in project based learning- fostering this learning with joyful exploration will be paramount.

As the 'new guy' it will be appropriate to share my interests in music and activities with families and students as I get to know each of you. However, it is more important for me to first share a bit about the individuals that are new to Blanchard.



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Kristen Pawl- Office Clerk: She has a degree from Salem State University and extensive background in finance and accounting in addition to office management.

Erica Daigneault- SLP: She is a 2013 graduate of MGH Institute of Health Professionals and is board licensed in Massachusetts.

Tim Lundy- Technology Assistant: He is a familiar face at Blanchard and we are excited to have him here on a more regular basis.

Regina Fitek- Math Assistant: She has a Masters of Teaching in Special Education from University of Virginia and a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Psychology from North Carolina State University. She holds licenses for Elementary, Moderate disabilities and Mathematics/Science.

Theresa Laquerre- English Learner Educator: Theresa will divide her time between Gates and Blanchard.

Chiuling Campo- General Education Para-Professional: She has a Masters of Arts in Intercultural Relations from Leslie University and a Bachelors of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies from Fitchburg State College. She has dual certifications as an Elementary and Foreign Language Teacher.

Danielle Fredericks- Special Education Para-Professional: She has a Masters of Education in Special Education from Boston University and a Bachelors of Arts in Elementary Education from Mount Marty College. She has dual certifications in Elementary (1-6) and Special Needs (Pre K-9).

I want to wish them all a warm welcome.

My immediate goal is to ensure a smooth adjustment for the Blanchard community. Additionally, I will be working closely with my staff in addressing the areas of improvement in the School Improvement Plan, as well as our ALICE protocol. Briefly, my core values central to guiding this work are to actively pursue a multi-faceted and well-balanced lifelong education, be open, honest and transparent in communication, be collegial and respectful of all individuals and to support and advocate for those that cannot advocate for themselves.



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gwalsh@abschools.org

The first day of school for our students is on September 3, 2014. As a reminder, our start time has changed and we are on the 'early schedule' with our day beginning promptly at 8:40 a.m. and concluding with dismissal at 2:50 p.m. Additionally, the 1st & 3rd Thursdays are early dismissal days at 12:20 p.m. Please do not drop off your child at school before 8:30 a.m. as there is no supervision available. Students who arrive to school after 8:40 a.m. must report to the office with an adult and sign in before going to class. An orange note must be filled out if your child's regular dismissal arrangement changes in any way. Orange notes are provided to students on the first day of school. We ask that you call our Safe Arrival line before 9:30 a.m. at 978-264-4293 on the same morning that your child is not attending or will be late for school. Buses will be parking in the front entrance of the school loop. Please use the parking lot by the gym to pick-up or drop off your child. This always takes some time but is in place to keep children safe--please bear with us. Bus information will be posted in the newspaper but for more information on buses, lunches, dates for your calendar and more...please visit our newly revised website at: <http://blanchard.abschools.org/> and click on the 'About Our School' tab. For latest updates, you can also follow us on twitter at: <https://twitter.com/BlanchardMem>

To that end, communication is paramount. You will notice resources online to streamline information on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. *The Paw Print* is the new collaborative monthly newsletter from the school and PTF with articles, information and a calendar, which will go home in the backpack as well. *The Bulldog Bulletin* is a weekly notice to staff and the *Blanchard Buzz* is a day-to-day blog of school community happenings.

We have a caring and dedicated faculty and staff that include master teachers who make your students central to their work. I want to thank the hard-working custodial staff for beautifying the building and grounds with fresh paint, wax and lots of elbow grease. We have increased safety and security with improved playground surfacing, LED automatic lighting, signs, door locks and entry point cameras.

I want to conclude with an invitation. You are an essential part of our success and we would love to partner with you whenever possible. Please join us as often as you can. New students are invited to tour the building from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. on August 28th. I extend that invitation to you. I am very much looking forward to seeing you all on September 2nd!

Sincerely Yours,

Dana F. Labb



Luther Conant School
80 Taylor Road
Acton, MA 01720
978-266-2550 www.conant.ab.mec.edu
Damian J. Sugrue Principal ~ Abigail C. Dressler Assistant Principal



August 25, 2014

Dear Conant Families,

Summer always seems to fly by so quickly but we have to say we are ready to have some life back in this building of ours. The floors have been waxed, walls have been painted, furniture was re-arranged and everything has been scrubbed. Staff changes have been completed and supplies are coming in. The only things missing are our beloved students and their families.

A week from now we begin another school year. We start the year full of great enthusiasm and excitement for all of the wonderful things we know our students and teachers will achieve. We look forward to strengthening our newly expanded district under our new superintendent of schools, Dr. Glenn Brand. And we look forward to nurturing stronger relationships with our incredibly supportive families.

The start of a new school year is always exciting and a bit anxiety ridden for everyone. With new teachers, classmates and bus routes, there are many new situations to get used to. We thank you in advance for your patience and ask you to contact us immediately if you have any questions. Please check the district website for bus routes, health information and policies. Familiarize yourself with the different departments and resources available to you. Try to read our school improvement and long range strategic plans to see where we hope to improve as a learning community. You can also look at our curriculum to see the many interesting and exciting topics your child will study in the upcoming year.

The 2014-2015 school year is going to be our best yet. We are thrilled and thankful that you are sharing your children with us here at the Conant School. All that we do is based on making decisions in the best interest of our students. Our main focus is educating the whole child, academically, socially and emotionally because the whole child really is the whole idea!

Sincerely,

Damian J. Sugrue
Principal

Abigail C. Dressler
Assistant Principal



C.T. Douglas School
21 Elm Street
Acton, MA 01720
978-266-2560 www.douglas.abschools.org



Dear Douglas Families,

Welcome back to school. I hope that you enjoyed the glorious summer weather and recharged your batteries in your favorite way. We have been busy at school preparing for September. The building is in great shape - shiny floors, clean carpets, painted hallways, a new bathroom in the nurses office, new fixtures in the primary bathrooms, and even new locks on the adult bathrooms that show when it is occupied! I have been busy hiring new staff. We have four new assistants - Theodora Kaunalakis in Art, Susan Bartow in 4th grade, Jen Patenaude in 3rd grade and Judy Nolan in 6th grade. We were also thrilled to hire Deborah Barolsky as a long term sub for Melissa Hubbell. Deborah comes to Douglas from the Boston Jewish Community Day School in Watertown. She has many years of experience and is well versed in the curriculum work that we are beginning to match with our new vision.

This year is our year to bring our new vision to life. We want Douglas students to feel joyful, valued, brave, full of wonder, and have a deep sense of pride. We want them to build the skills needed to be creative, innovative and entrepreneurial. We know that this means our classrooms will look different than they have before - that building skills and learning content must serve the larger purpose of problem solving and that public exhibitions of student work will be an essential part of what we do. Please mark your calendars for December 17th. Early that evening will be our first All School Exhibition.

There are several things that we are doing to make life simpler this year. First, everyone (teachers, students and even parents) should be able to explain how classroom work and homework is helping students solve a larger problem. What are students trying to solve and how does this particular assignment help them get to the solution? Second, we will ask parents to sign an "Honor Code for Homework." I expect all work to be done by students. That means that it looks like a 9 year old did third grade homework or even exhibiton work. To simplify this even more, we will keep homework to the essential minimum and projects and reports (even book reports) completed at school as much as possible. Any home project should engage the family and be assigned as a family project. I've asked teachers to keep these to a minimum - one per year. ***If we want students to work hard at school then we must allow them time to enjoy family life.*** All of our days are too short to spend entire evenings and weekends completing school work. Finally, refer to the vision frequently. Are your children joyful? Do they feel valued? Do they have the opportunity to be brave? Are they full of wonder? Do they have pride in school and their work? When they do, please share these moments - we will have a public display celebrating all of these moment! Again, welcome back and have an AMAZING year!

Dr. Whitbeck



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Paul P. Gates School
75 Spruce St.
Acton MA 01720
ph: 978-266-2570
fax: 978-266-2573
<http://gates.ab.mec.edu>



Lynne Newman, *Principal*
lnewman@abschools.org

August 18, 2014

Dear Gates Parents,

Welcome back! I hope everyone has had a wonderful summer vacation and is rested, excited, and ready for the coming year.

All parents will be able to log onto Powerschool on Thursday, August 21st to update the online emergency cards and to find out their child's classroom teacher. On Thursday, August 28th a complete class list for each grade will be posted on Powerschool. Please take this time to thoroughly update all contact numbers so that we can reach you in case there is an emergency. If you have forgotten your password feel free to email Pam at pbittner@mail.abschools.org in the office and she will be happy to email you your family password.

I am very pleased to share with you that Dr. Priscilla Kotyk will be the full-time Assistant Principal of the Gates School! Dr. Kotyk shared her time between Gates and Conant the past few years and we are very excited to have her exclusively at Gates!

I would also like to share that Mrs. Kerri Stoffel has decided to follow her passion in technology and has accepted an Instruction Technology Specialist position in Methuen. We wish Mrs. Stoffel the very best in her new position. As you know we had several staff retire in June and I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our new teachers:

.5 Kindergarten Teacher – With the return of three sections of kindergarten at Gates, **Ms. Kara Whitcomb** will be joining our kindergarten team with Mrs. Tina Lamonakis & Mrs. Linda Subsick. Ms. Whitcomb earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Endicott College with a concentration in Elementary Education. She has completed her M. Ed in Curriculum & Instructional Technology from Framingham State University. Ms. Whitcomb has been working at the Gates School for the last three years as the Kindergarten assistant teacher in the all day kindergarten program. She is a familiar face to families and students at Gates!

Grade 3 Classroom Teacher –**Mr. Ben Wolfson** received his Bachelor of Arts in Sociology from Quinnipiac University and his Masters of Arts in Teaching Elementary Education from Simmons College. Most recently, Mr. Wolfson completed a yearlong internship in third grade at the Countryside School in the Newton Public Schools. Mr. Wolfson will be joining the third grade teachers, Mrs. Nancy May and Mrs. Sheryl Kokkinos.



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Grade 5 Classroom Teacher – Ms. Nancy Melbourne earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology & Education from Mount Holyoke College. With over 30 years experience in the classroom, Ms. Melbourne's teaching career began in Fort Wayne, Indiana. For the last eight years, Ms. Melbourne has taught at the Blanchard Memorial School in Boxborough where she taught 4th & 6th grade. Prior to teaching in Boxborough, she taught 5th grade in Longmeadow. Ms. Melbourne is very excited to be joining the fifth grade teachers, Ms. Chelsea Stetson and Mrs. Erika Cormier.

Grade 6 Classroom Teacher – Ms. Susanne Rued Conley is no stranger to the sixth grade team. Ms. Conley taught 6th grade at Gates during the 2013-2014 school year. We are thrilled to share that Ms. Conley is re-joining her sixth grade colleagues, Mrs. June Montepeluso and Mrs. Becky Acheson.

Special Education Teacher – Ms. Molly Meehan received her Bachelor of Science in Special Education (PreK – 8) from The College of Saint Rose in Albany, NY. Ms. Meehan's career began at the Chango Elementary School in Ballston Lake, New York where she taught 5th grade. After teaching for 8 years in New York, Ms. Meehan moved from New York to Massachusetts. For the past two years she has been a 6th grade Special Education Teacher at the Longsjo Middle School in Fitchburg. Ms. Meehan will be working with our intermediate special education students in grades 4 – 6.

Additionally, I have hired several new assistants. Ms. Noorj Khan and Mrs. Kristen Thomas will be our new math assistants. Mrs. Jenn Gaeta will be the ADK assistant with Mrs. Subsick and Mrs. Mandy Zervolglos is the AMK assistant with Ms. Whitcomb. Mrs. Katie Cushing and Mr. Thomas Jacobs will be supporting special education students in grades 4 – 6. The new 4th grade classroom assistant is Ms. Vicki Haley.

I am sure you will have an opportunity in the coming weeks to meet our new staff. I would like to remind everyone that the Gates School is on the early schedule this year, which means that we will begin our day at 8:40 a.m. and dismissal is at 2:50 p.m. The 1st & 3rd Thursdays are early dismissal at 12:20 p.m. Remember, our parent pickup location is in the 6th grade pod. Parents need to enter the side door (second door next to the garden on the left side of the building) to help minimize the front door traffic at the end of the day. Our official first day of school is Wednesday, September 3rd.

Finally, the Back-To-School-Night has been scheduled for September 16th & 17th. Please check the calendar on the Gates homepage for grade specific times. The Gates calendar has been updated with lots of important dates, including MCAS dates, so please check it out! Lunches are \$2.75 and milk is \$.50. For additional information regarding lunches & food service please check out the following link: <http://ab.mec.edu/departments/food/pdf/2012-2013fall-food-service-news.pdf>



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Paul P. Gates School

75 Spruce St.
Acton MA 01720
ph: 978-266-2570
fax: 978-266-2573
<http://gates.ab.mec.edu>



I am looking forward to a new school year! If you have any questions don't hesitate to contact the office and we will be happy to help you out! Enjoy the last few weeks of August and we will see you in September ☺

Lynne Newman, Principal

McCarthy-Towne School
11 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
978-264-3377
Website: mct.abschools.org

August 2014

Welcome to a new school year at McCarthy-Towne. This letter includes information that is important to both new and returning families.

The **first day of school** for students will be Wednesday, September 3. Thursday, September 4 is an “early release day” with dismissal at 1 PM. (There is no school for half day K on “early release days” for the first half of the year.) The school year calendar is available on the school system website at: <http://www.abschools.org/district/calendar>

This year McCarthy-Towne is on the “**Late Elementary School Schedule.**”

- NEW: School hours are from 9:20 AM to 3:30 PM, Monday through Friday
- NEW: The first and third Thursdays of each month will be “early release days.” Dismissal on “early release days” will be 1 PM.
- NEW: Morning kindergarten meets from 9:20 AM to 12 noon, Monday through Friday except on “early release days” for the first half of the year.

Please remember that students cannot enter the school building before 9:05 AM. Students arriving after 9:20 AM are tardy and must go to the school office before going to the classroom. Please make every effort to insure that your child arrives at school between 9:05 and 9:20 AM. Late arrivals miss important schoolwork that begins at 9:20 AM in classrooms every morning.

If your child will be late to or absent from school, remember to call the McCarthy-Towne **Safe Arrival** line at 978-264-4098 any time, day or night. Leave a message stating your child’s name, their teacher’s name, the date of the absence or late arrival, and the reason for the absence. The Safe Arrival program is run by the PTSO to help confirm students’ absences. Parent volunteers reconcile classroom attendance and Safe Arrival notifications every morning.

The **bus schedule** for the new school year will be posted on the school district website at: <http://www.abschools.org/departments/facilities-transportation/bus-routes>.

- NEW: Bus routes for the Late Elementary Schedule have been changed: only students going to McCarthy-Towne and Merriam school at the Parker Damon Building will be travelling on certain buses; Conant students will be travelling on separate buses.

Please check the routes posted carefully as your child’s bus number and route have been changed. There may be two different buses picking up students in your neighborhood, so make sure your child knows their new bus number.

- NEW: Dismissal time in the Parker Damon Building will be revised. The administrators from both schools are working with the Transportation Department to plan new dismissal procedures. We will inform families of new procedures as soon as they are determined. Parents will receive information by email (make sure your current email and permissions are correct on the Parent Portal), and updates will also be posted on the McCarthy-Towne website. We appreciate the co-operation of all members of our communities.

Students are expected to go home on the bus after school. *Bus passes or dismissal passes* must be submitted for both permanent changes (such as going to day care or walking home), or for one day changes (such as taking a bus to a friend's home or being picked up for an appointment). The bus pass or dismissal pass should be filled out completely, signed by a parent/guardian and sent to school with the child on the day it will be used. Students should hand it into their classroom teacher first thing in the morning, and it will be brought to the school office with morning mail. Bus and dismissal forms are available in the school office and on McCarthy-Towne School website at <http://mct.abschools.org/school-forms>.

REMEMBER: IF YOUR CHILD WILL NOT BE GOING HOME ON THE BUS AFTER SCHOOL, PLEASE SEND A COMPLETED BUS PASS OR DISMISSAL PASS STARTING ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.

Lunch is scheduled for every day except early release days. Students may bring lunch from home, or buy a school lunch for \$2.75. The Food Services Department of the Acton Public Schools has a website (<http://www.abschools.org/departments/food-services>) with information about the ParentOnline payment and student lunch activity account, lunch menus, and applications for Free & Reduced Lunch.

Students should also bring a healthy snack to school for daily snack break time.

From the Principal's Desk is an email I send to all parents/guardians. Please make sure your email address is updated on the Parent Portal (<https://absis.ab.mec.edu/public>) and indicate "Yes" in the *District Permissions* section of the "Permissions" page if you wish to receive *From the Principal's Desk*.

The McCarthy-Towne Bulletin is published by the PTSO (Parent Teacher Student Organization) once a month. The *Bulletin* is an important means of communication between the school and home. A printed copy is sent home with the youngest child in the family on the date of publication, and is also posted on the PTSO website. (www.mctptso.org)

The PTSO emails a weekly newsletter, *The Howler*, that includes information about current happenings in school and the Acton community. Indicate "Yes" on the *Parent Group Permissions* of the "Permissions" page of the Parent Portal to receive the PTSO weekly newsletter.

McCarthy-Towne has many opportunities for parents who want to be involved in school activities. Massachusetts state law requires that any adults working or volunteering in public schools complete a **CORI** background check with the school system. Since CORI checks can take several weeks to process, make sure yours has been submitted well in advance of any field trip or other volunteer opportunity. Parents who had approved CORIs last year will not have to submit new CORI applications until 2015.

Please feel free to call Astrid Trostorff or Carol Chytil in the school office if you have any questions or concerns. The McCarthy-Towne School number is 978-264-3377.

Sincerely,

David Krane
Principal

Merriam School

Notes from Principal Ed Kaufman

September 2014

I hope that all of you had a wonderful summer with your family, complete with many stories to tell. One of my personal highlights of the summer was a trip to the mountains of North Carolina with my family. It had a little something for everyone: hiking, fishing, horseback-riding, kayaking, swimming under waterfalls, browsing in shops – and discovering the legend of Tri-paw, the three pawed black bear who lives in the forest behind the large cabin where we were staying. I found out from the owner of the cabin that his son Jeb had stayed in the house with his family the week prior to our arrival. One morning when Jeb went out the back door onto the deck to read, to sip his coffee, and to look at the beautiful view of the mountains, there was Tri-paw sitting on the deck waiting for him. Apparently Jeb's coffee flew everywhere as he slowly backed his way into the house, and ultimately to safety. You can imagine my vigilance every morning as I made my way outdoors with my mug, looking every which way for signs of a bear. As the week went along, the stories we created in our minds (and out loud) about Tri-paw grew and grew, but I'm sad to report that I never did get to see her. I hope that you all wound up with some exciting stories and adventures to share from your summer....

Back here at school there were also some exciting things happening. Juliana Schneider, our new full-time assistant principal, began working at Merriam on July 1. She has jumped right in and is getting familiar with our school culture and community members very quickly. Nicole Krenning, a new part-time special educator, will also be joining our staff this year. We also hired a number of new assistants (whose bios. we will share in upcoming newsletters).

Many of our staff participated in trainings this summer. Eight of our educators attended a weeklong Literacy Institute at Lesley University. They returned with a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and information, debriefed with Juliana and me, and plan to share what they learned with the rest of the staff early this fall.

Other staff members participated in a wide range of professional learning opportunities offered by the district, including reading and writing workshops sponsored by Teachers College at Columbia University, Six Traits Writing, and math and science workshops. Our summer offerings for educators at AB have continued to grow!

For the past two years Merriam School has taken part in a two-year research study cosponsored by the University of Virginia and the Northeast Center for Courage and Renewal, entitled "Leading Together". The research looked at the relationship between academic progress of students and the relational trust among members of a school faculty. We (along with the other schools involved in the project) did a great deal of work over the past two years to deepen the relational trust within our

staff and a number of Merriam faculty were interviewed as part of the study. This summer we received the initial research results, which are both fascinating and promising. Chip Wood (co-founder of Responsive Classroom) and Pamela Seigle (co-founder of Open Circle) were facilitators of the teams representing the ten schools involved in this study. We will continue to consult with Pamela this year in order to continue this important work.

Juliana, Deborah Bookis (Director of Curriculum and Assessment) and I met several times with Steven Levy, a consultant for a growing organization called Expeditionary Learning. Steven worked with our staff some years ago, and we found him to be an inspiring educator and tremendous resource for the work we were doing in our classrooms. He was named "Massachusetts Teacher of the Year" while teaching in Lexington and we've contracted him to work with our staff this year as we reinvigorate project work at Merriam, and begin to think about how to best integrate Project Based Learning with Common Core expectations. We're very excited about getting started and working with him once again at Merriam.

As you can see, we've been busy this summer and look forward to many exciting opportunities ahead of us this year. We look forward to our work together as a staff at Merriam, our work with colleagues across schools in both Acton and Boxborough (welcome Blanchard!), and we look forward to working with all of you, our parent community. And most importantly, we look forward to creating a joyful, exploratory, and meaningful learning environment for your children.

Welcome back to Merriam School!

~ Ed



Raymond J. Grey Junior High School
16 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720
Andrew Shen, Principal

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
(978) 264-4700 x 3303 FAX (978) 264-3343
James Marcotte, Assistant Principal
Allison Warren, Assistant Principal

August 11, 2014

Dear Families,

There are still a few weeks left in the summer, don't let this letter interrupt you too much from the rhythm, and hopefully relaxation, of your summer days, and the plans you may have for the remainder of August (but please still read all of this!).

On behalf of our staff, I want to welcome both new and returning families to the RJ Grey community for the 2014-2015 school year. This letter starts our process for sharing with you some important information about the upcoming year. Please review the contents of this mailing, along with the documents posted on our website (www.rjgrey.abschools.org).

Along with providing some time for recreation, the summer gives us all a chance to regroup and re-energize. As we near the start of school, encourage your children to think about their hopes for this year and what they want to be different, the same, or better than the last. Our teachers, and our school as a whole, go through a similar reflection process. There will always be programs and practices that we are adjusting or changing-- all with the goal of continually growing and improving. Three quick examples for this year: first, all teams will each have a mobile cart with a classroom set of Chromebooks for use on their team, and supporting the expanded use of the AB Schools (Google) platform of applications. Second, we continue to expand our list of extracurricular clubs and activities available to students - with plans already in motion to offer new clubs for those interested in fly fishing, yoga, weight lifting, and tennis. And third, every educator at RJ Grey will be maintaining a course website that is accessible to students and families, and will include updated information about assignments and upcoming assessments. There's nothing quite like the excitement and possibilities that come with the start of a school year, and we look forward to not only what I mention above, but everything else that lies before us this year.

This summer, we are continuing our approach of sharing information with families by way of this mailing as well as our school website. Included with *this* letter are three documents:

- A two-page document providing an overview of the start of the school year, some reminders about procedures, and information on how to stay informed about RJ Grey-related activities
- A letter providing instructions and reminders about how to access your family's PowerSchool student accounts (also known as the "parent portal"), and information we will need you to input via the parent portal regarding emergency contact information
- A letter from the JH/HS PTSO that explains the process for becoming a member, and how your support directly benefits our schools

The remainder of our summer packet can be found as downloadable documents on our website. The address for our site is <http://rjgrey.abschools.org>. If you go to "News & Notes" or the "Families" page, you will see a link to our "Back to School Info" page. If access to our website is not readily available to you, please call our main office, and we would be happy to send you a paper copy of the materials. There are a number of documents that are important to read, including:

- The **2014-2015 School Supply List**
- A document on the **Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)**
- A document on **student concussions and the classroom**
- Information for student use of **school technology** and student email accounts
- A communication guide for families (with some frequently asked questions)

On our website we have also posted information and links to various school services. As you prepare for the next school year, you may want to visit the following pages:

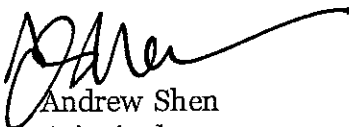
- **RJ Grey Athletics** page, for information on green forms, Fall tryout schedules, etc.
- The **Wellness @ RJ Grey** page, which will provide updated information on programs, speakers, and activities offered at RJ Grey on wellness-related topics
- The **Acton-Boxborough Food Services** page, which provides information about the food program and the pre-paid point of sale accounts

A quick note about the *Wellness @ RJ Grey* page. Returning families are likely familiar with Project Wellness, a daylong event at Merrimack College that we have organized for 7th graders and their parents. This year, we have decided to shift away from that one-day model and instead of organizing that day, dedicate some time, energy, and resources to programs, services, and parent workshops that are offered throughout the year to all RJ Grey students and parents on health and wellness-related topics. While the Project Wellness day model definitely had some unique benefits, we're also excited for the opportunity instead to build and grow our yearlong efforts, including (but not limited to) the addition of the student clubs that I referenced earlier in this letter.

For families who had older siblings attend RJ Grey two or more years ago, the 2014-2015 school supply list you will download is not a prank! We have streamlined the supply list and worked with teams to make them universal across subject areas. In other words, the school supply lists are no longer team-specific. In the past, families needed to wait until team assignments were released before completing school supply shopping. Now, families can complete this task at their leisure. I thought it important to mention these changes as some returning families may look at this year's school supply list and wonder if we forgot to include the rest of it.

Finally, an early reminder and "save the date" note about Back-to-School Night. This year, it will be on **Tuesday, September 23** for parents/guardians of both 7th and 8th grade students. You will receive more information about this event in a few weeks, and I hope to see many of you there. In the meantime, please continue to enjoy the summer and let your kids know that we look forward to seeing them soon (it's OK if the feeling isn't exactly mutual on their part right now).

Cheers,



Andrew Shen
Principal
R.J. Grey Junior High

Creating and Posting of Team Assignments

As you can imagine, scheduling a school with over 900 students is a complex process of checks and balances and a significant portion of the summer is spent building these teams in order to balance them by:

1. sending school
2. gender
3. race
4. world language choices
5. special education, ELL, and other academic services
6. math levels

Given those and a number of other variables, it is virtually impossible to build the schedule around individual team requests. When we received information from families about individual student situations, we did review them and made our best attempt to accommodate situations when possible and appropriate. We are confident that we have built the teams in a manner that will ensure every student has the opportunity to maintain or develop friendships with his/her peers.

On **Thursday, August 21st, at 12PM**, we will post the team assignments via the parent portal.

In order to access this information, you need to log into the parent portal via the internet (please see attached letter about the parent portal). You will first be required to complete your child's emergency card information and answer some additional school permission related questions, including specific PTSO permissions. **Please note that the parent portal will be closed until August 21st, so you will not be able to complete these forms in advance.** Once you complete the required information, you will be able to access your child's team placement, which is listed in your student's account.

Should you be unable to access the internet, please feel free to come to our Main Office the following week and we will assist you in entering the on-line emergency card information and permissions forms after which we will give you your child's team assignment.

In summary, to complete the emergency card, and to access your son/daughter's team assignment on-line, please mark your calendars that the parent portal will open on Thursday, August 21st at 12PM.

First Day(s) of School

For seventh graders, the first day of school is Wednesday, September 3. Upon entering the school, students will be directed to various locations where they will meet with their team teachers and other students on their team.

After a series of team-building activities, students will be divided into their homerooms and will proceed with the school day. Students may bring their own lunch or purchase lunch at our outdoor cookout (\$2.75), where I will be cooking burgers, hot dogs, and a vegetarian option. After lunch we will hold an assembly where we officially welcome everyone to RJ Grey, and begin the school year with some words of encouragement and a preview of what will be a part of their RJ Grey experience.

RJ Grey prints and makes available a **student planner** that includes the highlights of the student handbook, as well as a calendar that includes the rotation schedule for the year, important dates, and a calendar where they can write down assignments and important due dates. Beginning this year, student planners will be provided to every student at no cost.

Any **8th grade students new to the Acton-Boxborough District (those who did not attend RJ Grey as 7th graders last year)** are invited to participate in an orientation program on **Wednesday, September 3** beginning at 12:30 PM and ending at 2:06 PM, so that students may ride home on their regular bus. Students are invited to gather in the lobby where they will be directed to a meeting space. **The first day of school for all other grade eight students is Thursday, September 4.**

8th graders should report to the auditorium by 7:30 AM on Thursday morning for a short program before proceeding to their homerooms.

Food Services at RJ Grey

Lunch at RJ Grey will cost \$2.75 this year. Additionally, there are also a la carte items that can be purchased by students. Students can pay for lunches with cash, or they can utilize a prepayment system that was implemented in all schools several years ago. This Point of Sale system lets parents prepay for the student's meal account. All students are assigned a confidential Lunch ID (located in PowerSchool) which they should use for every cafeteria purchase. If your child had an account while in the Acton Public Schools, that account carries over and he/she will still have the same Lunch ID pin. Food Services also offers a limited breakfast service from 6:50am to 7:20am in the cafeteria.

Communication - At and With RJ Grey

Given the digital landscape that surrounds us, we have focused a lot of energy on maintaining and updating a user-friendly school website that families can utilize to access useful and current information, including contact information, a Google calendar of events and downloadable forms and handouts. The address for our site is: **<http://rjgrey.abschools.org>**.

We also *strongly encourage* all families to sign up for the RJ Grey mailing list - this is *separate* from the PTSO mailing list. When you sign up for this mailing list, you will receive our daily announcements (which includes reminders about upcoming activities, due dates, club meetings, and up-to date sports cancellations, etc.) as well as the Principal's weekly newsletter, called "Grey Matters." There are two easy ways to sign up for the mailing list:

1. Go to the RJ Grey website and on the bottom left, click on the icon that says, "Join Our Email Mailing List". Doing that will take you to a sign up page.
2. Using your cellphone, text "RJGREY" to 22828. Doing so will create a reply asking you to submit an email address. Those steps will add that email address to our mailing list.

Please note that parents and guardians who have already signed up for the mailing list have not been deleted, and need not re-enter their information. If you do not wish to sign up for the mailing list, but would like to read the weekly edition of *Grey Matters*, they will be posted on the RJ Grey website each Monday morning, under the Principal's tab.

Starting last year, we have been maintaining and promoting an RJ Grey twitter feed: @rjgreyjhs. We're still trying to catch up to Justin Bieber's twitter following of 40 million plus, and narrowing the gap with a current roster of 123 followers! We will continue to use this twitter feed to share information about school activity cancellations and reminders about important events (and share the occasional photo). This information will also be the same as what is listed in our daily announcements, and this is simply another option for those who prefer this medium. To sign up, visit the RJ Grey website.

Staff and faculty at RJ Grey can be reached through email or leaving a voicemail.

The format for staff email is first initial, last name, followed by @abschools.org. For example my email address is ashen@abschools.org. Links to teacher email addresses can also be found on the RJ Grey website. Teachers can be reached through voicemail by calling our main number (978)264-4700 x3304 and asking for the teacher's voice mail. Teachers do their best to respond to inquiries in a timely manner, and will get back to you within 24 hours.

Absentee Line, Cell Phones, Building Access

Regarding some basic school procedures, if your child will be absent from or late to school, please call the absence line at (978)264-4700 ex: 3333 **before** 7:30AM and state your child's:

1. name
2. team
3. and, briefly, the reason for the absence or tardy arrival.

If you need to call during school hours (7:30-3:30), please call extension 3304 to leave a message with a member of our office staff.

Our office staff will compare the messages with our homeroom attendance. Students who are marked absent in homeroom but for whom we did not receive a call will be marked as "unexcused" and will generate a call home. Please assist us in this process and remember to call the school if your child will be absent.

If you need your child to be dismissed during the school day, please send your child in with a note and instruct him/her to bring it to the main office when he/she arrives to school. The main office will issue a pass that he/she will use when it is time to be picked up. If your child is not feeling well, he/she should visit the nurse, and the nurse will work with your child to determine the next course of action. **Students should not use their personal cell phones to make arrangements with you to be picked up.** While on the subject of cell phones....

The video, camera, and real-time text capabilities of cell phones presents the difficult challenge of ensuring an appropriate learning environment for students at this age level. In order to maintain the focus on school activities and learning, use of student cell phones is not allowed during the school day. We appreciate that students wish to have cell phones available before and after school. Students who choose to bring cell phones to school **MUST keep their phones in their lockers** (and turned off) from 7:30am to 2:06pm. This means that even having a turned-off cell phone in your pocket is not permitted.

To maintain student safety and building security, the doors to the front lobby are the only public entrance to school during the school day (visitors are asked to check-in at the Main Office upon arrival). All other doors will be locked during the school day.

Morning Drop Off Procedures

First and foremost, our priority is to address the safety and well-being of all students. Beyond safety considerations, we certainly want to support a process that allows vehicles to exit the campus in a timely manner. Please be aware that along with Junior High students and parents, there are high school students and families also navigating the campus area (including pedestrians walking from across Rt. 111). It is inevitable that most mornings will involve a bit of a wait while coming to, passing through, or exiting the school campus, and parents should plan accordingly.

If and when it's an option, we strongly recommend utilizing the District's bus service! We will continue to evaluate different options in regards to the layout of our physical campus. In the meantime, having several hundred cars, pedestrians, and buses arrive at our schools in a 30 minute period means that we must all exercise a certain level of patience and cooperation to ensure the safety of our students and families.

Please note that the information below is specifically in regards to the time period between 7:00 AM and 7:30 AM, from Monday thru Friday.

Directions (also included as a downloadable document on our website)

- Parents **are not** allowed to enter the campus from the entrance closest to Prospect Street (by the JH gymnasium) when coming from Rt. 111. Until approximately 7:20 am, this entrance will be only for staff vehicles that park behind the school, handicapped student drop-offs, and for school vehicles.
- Buses will travel from the high school to RJ Grey and travel along the road closest to the school building. These buses will then park along the JH gymnasium and release students. Once a bus releases its students, it will exit the campus via the entrance closest to Prospect Street. This is another reason parents can not use that entrance! (it will be blocked by buses) To help with traffic on Rt. 111, all buses are required to turn right out of the campus onto Rt. 111.
- Until approximately 7:20, parents will need to drop off students via the lower parking lot - which is accessible via Charter Road. When exiting the lower parking lot, all vehicles must turn left at the tennis courts, and head towards Charter Road, until approximately 7:20 am. After all of the buses have left the campus, an RJ Grey staff member will remove the sawhorses blocking the pathway towards Prospect Street, and cars will then be permitted to turn right (or left) when facing the tennis courts and use the Prospect Street exit.
- RJ Grey staff members will be present in the lower parking lot to assist with the morning drop off process. Please assist those staff members by driving at appropriate speeds, watching for instructions and pedestrian crossings, and making sure your children are prepared to exit your vehicles in a timely manner.

ABRPTSO Annual Membership 2014-15.

Funds raised through Membership Dues provide for grants to the Junior High and High School, graduation scholarships, programs such as Freshman Orientation, Project Graduation, Project Interface , Speaker Forums, 8th Grade graduation dance, Staff Appreciation Luncheons, Saturday Night Activities for students and more.

If you prefer to pay electronically, please go to the PTISO website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu> and click on the link to Pay Membership Dues Electronically.

Only one contribution per family is requested per school year, regardless of the number of students in grades 7-12. **Donations are tax deductible.** The PTISO is a 501(c)3.

Parents/Guardians

	First and Last Name	Email address & phone
Parent/Guardian 1		
Parent/Guardian 2		

Students

	First Name	Last Name	Grade
Student 1			
Student 2			
Student 3			
Student 4			

Basic 2014-2015 Contribution:	\$ 35.00
Optional Contributions: (any amount is appreciated)	
RJGJHS student publication copying/The Blueprint*	\$ _____
ABRHS student publication copying/The Spectrum*	\$ _____
Project Graduation Event for Seniors (anyone may contribute)	\$ _____
R. J Grey Wellness Series	\$ _____
Additional general contribution	\$ _____
TOTAL	\$ _____

Please make checks payable to: **ABRPTSO** and mail to: **ABRPTSO Membership**, P.O. Box 912, Acton, MA 01720
THANK YOU!

Membership Chairs: Martha Papalia papaliamartha@gmail.com & Eileen Matarese mrsematta@verizon.net

To join the PTISO Email list, click the button on our website at <http://abrptso.ab.mec.edu>

* created by students and distributed for free to all students and staff throughout the year

Dear Rising 7th Grade Families:

We hope you are enjoying the summer! With still plenty of vacation time left before your children embark on their first day as junior high students, we wanted to take this opportunity to make sure you know about the PTSO at the Jr. High and High School level.

Unlike at the elementary level, ***we do not fundraise***. Instead, we rely solely on parents paying annual membership dues to fund a variety of school programs across grades 7-12. ***Your tax-deductible membership is only \$35 per year***, and this fee supports programs including:

- Generous grants to R.J Grey Junior High School and ABRHS
- Guest Speaker Forums for Students and Parents
- Support of the R.J Grey Wellness program
- The 8th grade graduation dance at R.J. Grey
- The freshman back-to-school ice cream social
- A pizza party for the Peer Ambassadors who are upperclassmen that help incoming freshmen learn about the high school
- Scholarships for graduating seniors
- Support of Project Graduation, which is an opportunity for seniors to spend the entire graduation night at the high school in a safe & fun environment
- Staff appreciation luncheons
- Saturday night activities for students
- And more...

Each member family also receives a free student directory by making this meaningful contribution.

While only one Annual \$35 contribution per family is requested each school year, regardless of the number of children you have in grades 7-12, we of course welcome families to contribute additional money beyond dues towards the specific PTSO program of your choice. (See membership form for more details) Again, **donations are tax-deductible.**

You may join the PTSO now for the 2014-2015 school year. Please fill out the enclosed membership form or visit abrptso.ab.mec.edu **to join/make your donation online.** Once you join, you will receive your free student directory at Back to School Night in the fall or your child can pick their directory up at the school office after school starts.

If you have any questions please contact one of our PTSO Membership Co-chairs:
Eileen Matarese (mrsematta@verizon.net)
Martha Papalia (papaliamartha@gmail.com)

Thank you,
Tammy Sarnelli and Cheryl Witty
ABRHS and R.J. Grey PTSO Co-chairs

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL
36 Charter Road, Acton, Massachusetts 01720

Together we promote respect for self, others, and learning.

JoAnn Campbell, Ed.D.
Principal

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM THE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

August 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the 2014-2015 school year! I hope that you are enjoying a fun and relaxing summer break, and I very much look forward to working with families in the Acton and Boxborough communities when the school year begins.

We here at the high school have been working hard this summer to prepare for the students' return. As you know, we will have a day-long freshmen orientation event on Wednesday, September 3rd. This event will include an assembly, an abbreviated class schedule, counselor meetings, and time for students to gather together for activities at the end of the day. We are very excited that we are able to support our incoming students in this way.

This letter contains lots of practical information about the start of school. As we progress through the year, I will be in touch via e-mail when issues and topics come up that I feel are important to share with you. I do not send a regularly timed message, choosing instead to be in touch as topics arise. Please note, however, that the PTSO sends out a "Weekly Chatter" every Sunday morning, which contains up-to-date information about our calendar, events, and school policies. Please make sure to note your preferences concerning email communication on the School/PTSO Permission page on the PowerSchool Parent Portal (accessible via the ABRHS website).

Start of School

This year school begins for freshmen students with a whole day (7:23-2:18) on Wednesday, September 3rd. As this is the official opening day for the district, buses will run and lunch will be served. Students in grades 10-12 will report on Thursday, September 4th. We will begin the day on September 4th in Advisory (noted on student schedules), to which all students should report by 7:23.

Student Schedules

Student schedules will be available online through the PowerSchool Parent Portal on Thursday, August 7th at 12:00 noon. In order to access PowerSchool, you will use your personalized username and password. If you have not created one, log on to the PowerSchool parent portal and click on "create an account" before logging in. Detailed instructions are available under "Learn More." You will need your student's ID number and old powerschool password to create this new account. These were listed on the back of your student's year end report card. If you need to retrieve this information, please contact JPotter@abschools.org.

Once you are logged into PowerSchool you will need to complete your child's online emergency information card and the School/PTSO permission page before accessing your student's schedule.

While we have put much work and thought into student schedules and are confident that they will be well received by students and families, we know from experience that some of you will have concerns. Because we have limited staff available in the summer, please use the following procedures if you have questions or concerns.

Should a student find an error in their schedule or have a simple request to add or drop a non-leveled elective they may go to the AB website under "Latest News" and click on the link for "Schedule Change Request Form." Students should follow the instructions on this form and submit their request to the Counseling Center.

At this time, we will no longer accept requests for level changes to a higher-level course. If there are extenuating circumstances, students should contact the department leader. Such requests will not be otherwise entertained.

Change in Course Titles

Please note the high school has changed the title of all Standard Preparatory courses (SP) to College Preparatory 1 (CP1). This change was based on consensus that College Preparatory 1 better reflects the rigor and objective of these courses. Weighted grade point averages based on course designation have not been altered.

Lockers

Most schedules contain information regarding lockers. Please do not be concerned if a student's schedule is lacking this information. If that is the case, we will provide that information to the student on the first day of school. Attention seniors: If you will not be using an academic locker during the 2014-2015 school year, please contact Mrs. Haras pharas@abschools.org over the summer or at the beginning of the school year.

Bus Schedules will be posted on our website in late August.

Fall Sports and Activities

Most fall sports practices will begin on August 21st, football begins on August 18th. Please check our website: <http://ab.mec.edu/abrhs/> for the starting time for each sport. Students trying out for a team must have proof (green form) of a current physical examination on file with the nurses before tryouts. The athletic fee is \$205 per sport per season with a \$820 family cap. Waivers are available for cases of financial hardship.

Band Camp begins August 18th (Monday - Thursday, 9am - 9pm; Friday, August 22nd, 9am - 3pm).

Chorus Camp will be Thursday, August 28th (9am - 2pm)

Student IDs/School Pictures

Student pictures will be taken on **Thursday, September 11th and Friday, September 12th**. Every student will be provided with an ID card. In addition, families may choose to purchase packages of these photographs. **Parents will receive information in the mail from the photography company regarding picture ordering procedures.** If you have any questions, the phone number for Prestige Portraits for Lifetouch Studios is **(800) 426-9533**.

Senior Portraits

To have a senior picture included in the yearbook, each student must have his/her senior portrait taken by Lifetouch Studio. Lifetouch will be on campus August 11th and August 14th and again on October 7th - October 10th. Families with questions about portrait appointments should wait to receive the postcard from Lifetouch which will include the contact information - or contact the Yearbook Advisor, Diane Cileno - dcileno@abschools.org.

Senior Privileges

Seniors who have not yet applied for privileges may pick up application forms beginning the week of August 19th. Forms will be available at the Main Office and Administration Offices. Please follow the instructions on the privilege request form.

Parking

Parking on campus will be available for seniors only, at a cost of \$200 for the year. Those seniors wishing to purchase a parking sticker may report to Room 102 North (Campus Support Room) on August 26 through August 29th from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Parking stickers may also be purchased after the school year begins during school hours. **Any incoming senior who owes a parking fine from junior year will not be issued a parking sticker until the fine is paid.**

During school hours parents and visitors are welcome to park in the designated visitor parking spaces at the high school. Please do not park in any numbered parking space as all of these spaces have been assigned to faculty and staff. The high school campus has specific drop off and pick up areas for parents, students and busses and the direction of traffic flow changes in the morning and the afternoon. We ask that all visitors please follow the direction of the high school campus support staff. The campus support staff are available to answer your questions and direct you through our campus.

Absences

Parents are to notify the Main Office of all student absences. Please call (978-264-3323) on the day of the absence. If parent notification is not received, the absence will be recorded as unexcused. An unexcused absence will be defined as a truancy. Details pertaining to consequences for student truancy will be discussed with students in advisory on the first day of school. As was the case last year, parents can review their child's daily attendance records on the PowerSchool Parent Portal. In order to receive access, you will be required to update your child's emergency contact information and the PTSO permissions first. In accordance with the school policy, each student is granted an opportunity to earn full credit for any course as long as his/her total absences (excused and unexcused) do not exceed 20 days per full year course, 10 days per semester course, or 5 days per semester course meeting on alternate days.

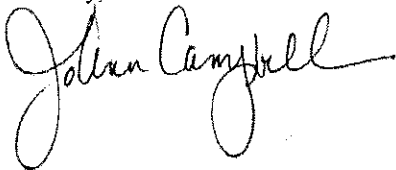
Dismissals

If a student needs to be released early, he/she must bring a note signed by a parent or legal guardian to the Main Office prior to third period on the day of the dismissal. **In the event of an emergency**, parents may call the Main Office to have their child dismissed on that day. Students returning to school must check in at the Main Office when they arrive. Students leaving campus without following the proper dismissal procedures will be considered truant from any class missed. Notes excusing truanancies due to the student's failure to follow the dismissal policy will not be accepted. Upperclassmen with privileges are expected to follow the same dismissal procedures whenever they are going to miss class.

I know this letter contains a lot of information. We do not expect you to remember everything! Please note that all of the information contained here is available on our school website: <http://ab.incc.edu/abrhs/>. Links are also provided to both the PTSO and the Counseling Department websites. We encourage you to check all of those sites regularly for information about school happenings, upcoming events, school policies, etc.

Again, I hope that you are enjoying your summer. We look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,



JoAnn Campbell, Ed.D.

Principal



ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
16 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720
www.abschools.org

Tele: (978) 264-4700
Fax: (978) 264-3340

PARENT COMMUNICATION MAP

2014-2015

August 2014

Dear Acton and Boxborough Parents/Guardians,

Effective communication is an essential aspect of any organization. Given the complexity of a large school district such as ours that includes multiple stakeholders (students, parents/guardians and community members), this is especially true. This *Parent-Communication Map* has been designed as a tool to help guide you to the information that you need to effectively resolve concerns related to a wide-range of aspects of our school system.

At any given point in a school year, parents/guardians may find themselves in a position where they have questions or concerns about a particular issue or assistance is required to resolve a problem. This *Parent-Communication Map* has been designed to assist by categorizing a wide array of issues and then identifying initial points of contact within the school system. If the desired information has not been obtained, or the issue has not been resolved through this initial contact, then the attached map identifies the "referral" for the next step the parents/guardians may pursue.

I recognize that one of the biggest areas that prompt inquiry is around a student's progress and experience in a particular classroom. Please note that such inquiries should always be directed to the classroom teacher. As a general rule, while administrators will certainly respond to questions, parents/guardians will be directed back to the classroom teacher as a first step in the process with the belief that most situations can be resolved first at this level of contact.

In addition to the points-of-contact outlined within this map, please remember that the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District website (www.abschools.org) contains extensive school and program information that is often helpful in answering questions.

If you have further suggestions regarding this *Parent-Communication Map*, or how communication in general can be improved in our district, please do not hesitate to let me know.

I want to wish you and your child an enriching and successful experience in the school year ahead.

Yours in education,

Glenn A. Brand
Superintendent

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
	Preschool Screening Transportation	Coordinator of Early Childhood Special Educator	Director of Pupil Services Early Childhood Coordinator/ Coordinator of Special Education/ Director of Pupil Services
	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	Extended Day Coordinator
	Registration Information		
Private Tutoring	Referrals	On-line Tutoring Database, www.abschools.org	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 Asst. or Assoc. Principal/Principal
Scheduling	Placement/programs: schedules, placement, college/postgraduate admissions, career planning	Counselor	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services Asst. or Assoc. 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	Online Tutoring Database www.abschools.org	Director of Curriculum and Assessment
Home/Hospital Programming	Regular Education and Special Needs	Counselor/Special Educator	Counseling Department Chairperson/ Director of Pupil Services Asst. or Assoc. Principal/Principal
Online 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: Heather Haines: Math; Jean Oviatt-Rothman: Science; Sharon Ryan: Literacy/Soc. St.

SPECIAL SUBJECTS

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

LEVEL II – PRINCIPALS

Blanchard School: Dana Labb
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
ELL Services: TBD
Nursing Services: Diane Spring, Elementary Chairperson
World Languages: Sinikka Gary, RDL, ABRHS
Visual Arts: Diana Woodruff, Director
Performing Arts: Mark Hickey, Director
Physical Education/Health: 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, Liz Marcotte
Math RDL: Bill Noeth
Science RDL: David Palmer
Social Studies RDL: David Green, Interim
World Languages RDL: Sinikka Gary
Alternative Programs Chairperson: Carol Moser-Wight
Physical Education/Health: Parindar Miller

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
Physical Education/Health: Beth Viscardi

LEVEL II – PROGRAM MANAGERS

High School Principal: JoAnn Campbell
High School Associate Principal: Beth Baker
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: Maurin O'Grady, Director
Physical Education/Health: 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
Clare Jeannotte, Director of Finance
Amy Bisiewicz, Director of Educational Technology

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

Glenn A. Brand, Superintendent of Schools
email address: gbrand@abschools.org



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
16 Charter Road, Acton, MA 01720
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www.abschools.org

113

Deborah E. Bookis
Director of Curriculum and Assessment

ph: 978-264-3313
dbookis@abschools.org

*"To learn with passionate intensity, (young) children need models.
They need teachers who are avid learners." -Ellin Keene*

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's Professional Learning Program exists to provide opportunities for all educators to be learners and to improve our practice. This summer our educators logged many hours on campus, attending workshops and working collaboratively on Research and Development Projects. Below are some highlights.

Research and Development

Over one hundred twenty educators worked on over thirty-five Research and Development projects to create curriculum and assessment. Research and Development (R&D) projects are intended to substantively advance current practice. Proposals are written in the spring and are thoroughly evaluated by a committee of administrators and educators to make certain they incorporate the following components:

- ~ What problem or need in current practice does this proposal address?
- ~ How will the R&D rectify this problem?
- ~ How does the proposal incorporate new thinking?
- ~ What will be produced/created?
- ~ With whom and how will the product be shared?
- ~ What measures will be used to evaluate the success of the project?

This summer, projects ranged from creating *3D Graphics I and II Curriculums* to identifying *Supplementary Text Sets for Underrepresented Voices in Freshman and Sophomore English*, creating *Inquiry-Based Science Labs*, and *Re-visioning the Grade Six Science Curriculum*.

Technology Workshops

Google Drive

Educators earned how to share documents with parents, students and colleagues; create blogs; collaborate on documents; provide students with feedback on their writing; use templates and Add-ons; and more.

SmartBoard Training

Educators learned how to use the SmartBoard and Notebook software as an integral tool in their instruction. Participants wrote daily reflection pieces on how each of the course's lessons can inform and complement their instructional practice.

*Our Mission is 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.*

So You Have an iPad, Now What?

Educators learned how to access the App store, rearrange apps, multitask, configure iPad settings, and many other useful applications for teaching and learning.

Conflict Resolution

A three-day training was held for twenty staff members (classroom teachers, psychologists, counselors, and special educators) interested in expanding their skills in addressing various types of conflicts. Managing conflicts and disagreements and having difficult conversations are an important component of our work as educators. The goal of this training was to develop strategies, tools, and language to help participants engage successfully in different situations. Metropolitan Mediation Services (MMS), an organization that has offered mediation services in the Greater Boston area since 1984, facilitated the training. MMS provides mediation services to businesses, government agencies, schools, courts, social service agencies, and individuals from Greater Boston neighborhoods and families. They also provide conflict resolution training to business people, attorneys, judges, mental health professionals, and educators, among others.

Columbia University Teachers College, Homegrown Institute: Growing Readers Workshop for K-2 and 3-6

Columbia University Teachers College facilitated on our campus a four-day institute entitled: *Growing Readers Workshop*. The workshop focused on the building blocks – the conditions of learning – for creating a successful Reading Workshop: immersion, expectation, demonstration and engagement, approximation and responsibility, feedback/response, and practice, as well as the following components:

- ~ The central role of curriculum development and planning in the teaching of reading.
- ~ Units of study across the year in the reading workshop.
- ~ The components of balanced literacy.
- ~ Comprehension strategies.
- ~ Assessing and planning for work with individuals and small groups.
- ~ Read aloud and accountable talk.
- ~ Writing about reading.
- ~ Book Clubs.

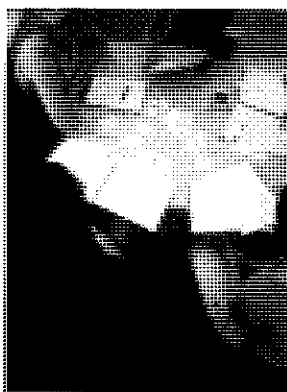
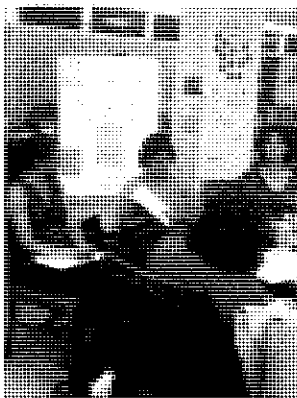
Twenty-five K-6 educators focused their work together based on the question, “*How does this teaching build upon what I already know about the teaching of reading?*” Discussions stemmed from: assigning books vs. giving choice, moving around the room to give all students feedback, and taking cues from students.

6 Traits of Writing, K-6

This two-day interactive workshop allowed participants to dive deeply into the six traits of writing. The course covered: understanding what each trait encompasses, connecting the traits to the MA ELA and Literacy Framework, teaching students to become self-assessors, assessing student papers, applying mentor texts to teach genre and skill, and implementing mini-lessons as a part of the writer’s workshop.

Columbia University Teachers College, Teaching Writing Units of Study K-2 and 3-6

Columbia University Teachers College facilitated on our campus a two-day Institute: *Teaching Writing Units of Study*. Fifty-three classroom teachers and special educators learned the structure that undergirds the *Units of Study in Opinion/Argumentative, Information and Narrative Writing*. They also learned methods to use while teaching opinion/argumentative, information and narrative writing, as well as how to integrate assessment into curriculum.



Adolescent Literacy Summer Institute

Two *AdLit* coaches facilitated a three-day institute for twenty-six classroom teachers, special educators, and administrators. The topics addressed aligned closely with the MA ELA and Literacy Framework, as well as the work done in the previous year-long coaching with Acton-Boxborough educators. Core topics included: disciplinary literacy strategies, academic language and discipline-specific vocabulary instruction, motivating and engaging adolescents with text, choosing and using multiple texts, text-based questions and answers, and considering text.

Fostering Mathematical Practices K-5 and 6-12

This three-day workshop focused on implementing the Mathematical Practices from the MA Mathematics Framework in grades K-5 and 6-12. Twenty-eight educators connected the mathematical practices to the critical areas, learned the key ideas in each practice, learned a set of questions to prompt mathematical practice use with students, identified evidence of the mathematical practices in the problem-solving process, and learned several instructional routines to develop the practices.

Mentor Training

For new mentors, training sessions were held at the beginning and end of the summer in anticipation of working with their protégés. The workshop focused on peer observations, feedback, protocols, curriculum review, classroom management, and district policies and procedures.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

16 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700 fax: 978-264-3340

www.abschools.org

11.4

JD Head

Director of Facilities and Transportation

TO: Glenn Brand, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: JD Head, Director of Facilities and Transportation
DATE: August 28, 2014
RE: FY15 Transportation Update

The new transportation system for the expanded Acton-Boxborough Regional School District is progressing nicely. The bus routes are posted on the website at the following link: <http://www.abschools.org/departments/facilities-transportation/bus-routes>. Please note that the times shown on these routes will vary and will be updated after the first couple of weeks of school. We ask families to please add or subtract 5 minutes from these times during this period, giving them a ten minute window of time during which the bus should arrive. This will be especially true for the first two days of school as families and drivers are learning the routes. With expanded regionalization, we have built routes that are projected to have students on the buses for no longer than 45 minutes.

In general, High School and Junior High families should not experience changes with the exception of students that reside in Boxborough who will be bused by the District now, as opposed to Dee Bus.

The most change this year is at the elementary school level. We are working to implement a system that will reduce the overall amount of time from school dismissal to home. We have done this by having dedicated buses for specific schools. At Blanchard, eight buses will serve those students while 23 buses will serve the Gates and Douglas students. Eleven buses will service Conant and 21 buses will serve Merriam and McCarthy-Towne.

Families will also notice some new faces driving our buses this year. With full regionalization, the District requires 34 bus drivers at peak demand to run our system. We ended last year with 24 drivers scheduled to return and are welcoming 10 new employees this year. We look forward to the families in the District getting to know these drivers and we expect they will deliver the same high level of service all of our drivers have provided for many years.

In summary, as a department we are excited to implement this new transportation system and we look forward to serving the individual school communities and meeting the needs of all of our constituents. For more information, members of the community can email me directly at jdhead@abschools.org or call the transportation office at 978-264-3328.

Best Regards,

JD Head

Our Mission is 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.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
16 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700 www.abschools.org



11.7

August 8, 2014

MassWorks Infrastructure Program
Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development
1 Ashburton Place, Room 2101
Boston, MA 02108

Re: Boxborough 2014 MassWorks Infrastructure Program Grant Application

To Whom It May Concern:

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee unanimously endorses the Town of Boxborough's application to the MassWorks Infrastructure Program for a sidewalk extension along Route 111 from the Sargent Memorial Library to Liberty Square Road. The safety of our children is paramount and our Committee wholeheartedly supports safe routes to our schools.

Both the Blanchard Memorial School and the Sargent Memorial Library are located on Route 111 adjacent to one another, but there is no pedestrian pathway providing access to them from the east. As a result, students and adults are required to walk with great caution along the side of the road to reach the library. To make matters worse, over this stretch of Route 111 there is a stream crossing with guardrails on either side of the roadway which forces pedestrians and cyclists into the travel lanes. This increases the danger of everyone using the roadway. Route 111 is heavily traveled by cars and trucks because it is the main corridor from Route 2 in Acton to Interstate 495 at the west end of Boxborough. It is a very busy, narrow road and many vehicles exceed the speed limit which raises concerns for our children's safety.

The request to extend the Route 111 sidewalk further to the east makes perfect sense as it will designate a separate pathway for pedestrians and cyclists. This will create a safe passage from the vehicles traveling along Route 111 as well as from the streams below. Everyone's safety: pedestrians, cyclists, and vehicle operators would be greatly improved with the implementation of this sidewalk extension.

On behalf of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee, I respectfully request that you fulfill the Town of Boxborough's grant application request for funding to extend the Route 111 sidewalk further to the east. If the School Committee can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact us via the Committee's Secretary Beth Petr at 978-264-3306 or bpetr@abschools.org.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Kristina Rychlik
Chairperson
Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
2014-2015 Committee Assignments (approved 8/4/14)

CASE Board Member	Glenn Brand
EDCO School Committee Leadership Liaison	Brigid Bieber
EDCO Board Member	Glenn Brand
EDCO Advisory Member	Glenn Brand
Legislative Issues/Ballot Initiative Liaison (for Representative Atkins' District)	Amy Krishnamurthy (Paul Murphy, back up)
Legislative Issues/Ballot Initiative Liaison (for Representative Benson's District)	Kathleen Neville
Legislative Issues/Ballot Initiative Liaison (for Senator Eldridge's District)	Dennis Bruce
Health Insurance Trust Representative	Mary Brolin
Superintendent's Wellness Task Force	Kathleen Neville
Superintendent's Safety Task Force	Maria Neyland, Maya Minkin Deanne O'Sullivan
PTSO Liaison	Deanne O'Sullivan, Maya Minkin
Community Outreach	Kristina Rychlik, Mary Brolin, Kathleen Neville
SpedPAC Liaison	Paul Murphy
Warrant Signature Subcommittee	Brigid Bieber, Deanne O'Sullivan, Dennis Bruce, Kristina Rychlik, Maria Neyland
Policy Subcommittee	Brigid Bieber, Maria Neyland, Paul Murphy, Deanne O'Sullivan, Amy Krishnamurthy
Negotiations Subcommittee	Maria Neyland, Dennis Bruce, Paul Murphy
Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Representatives	Kristina Rychlik, Dennis Bruce
Acton Board of Selectmen Liaison	Paul Murphy, Mike Coppolino
Acton Finance Committee Liaison	Dennis Bruce
OPEB Task Force	Dennis Bruce
OPEB Trust Fund Board of Advisors	ABRSC Chair, Kristina Rychlik
Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) Representatives	Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Maria Neyland, Kathleen Neville
Boxborough Board of Selectmen Liaison	Maria Neyland
Boxborough Finance Committee Liaison	Brigid Bieber
Regionalization Financial Oversight Committee	Michael Coppolino-Chair, Mary Brolin
Danny's Place Youth Services Advisory Board	Kristina Rychlik

Open House Dates - Fall 2014 04/23/14

Blanchard	September 16, 2014 6:30-8:00 PM - Grades PreK-3
	September 23, 2014 6:30-8:00 PM - Grades 4-6
Conant	September 15, 2014 7:00-8:00 pm - Grades 4-6
	September 16, 2014 7:00-8:00 pm - Grades K-3
Douglas	September 9, 2014 6:00-6:45pm - Grades 3&4 7:00-7:45pm - Grades 5&6
	September 16, 2014 6:00-6:45pm - All Kindergartens 7:00-7:45pm - Grades 1&2
	September 16, 2014 6:00-6:45pm - Grades 1&2 7:00-7:45pm - Grades 5&6
Gates	September 16, 2014 6:00-6:45pm - Grades 1&2 7:00-7:45pm - Grades 5&6
	September 17, 2014 6:00-6:45pm - ADK & AMK 7:00-7:45pm - Grades 3&4 & PMK
	October 1, 2014 6:00pm
McCarthy-Towne	September 16, 2014 6:00pm - Kindergarten 7:00pm - Grades 1-6
Merriam	September 23, 2014 7:00 pm
Junior High High School	September 17, 2014 6:50 pm



September 2014

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome back! I hope you had a rewarding summer, filled with learning and rest, and you are ready for a new school year. This time is exciting for students, for parents/guardians and teachers as well. It is filled with hope and dreams; we share them with you.

As always, we anticipate that your child's learning in our schools will reflect high standards, resulting in academic achievement, social and emotional gains, and a solid sense of citizenship. These core values are taught with deep commitment on your part, as parents and guardians, and reciprocally, we understand the expectations that you have set for our schools for achievement and the ladder of success.

Regular education is the door to learning through which all students are expected to enter and it should be the placement and location for all students. It is the environment that can enable students to be appreciated for their varied learning styles. It is the educational context to empower all school personnel. It offers a climate in which to celebrate the diversity of all students and creates an environment for the enhancement and support for learning and socialization.

Special education should be viewed as an integral part of the regular education system and a contributor to the education of those students who have special needs. Consider that it is only within the framework of regular education that a student can be afforded the broadest range of skills and learning experiences that are essential to his/her development.

The partnership to which we aspire offers an opportunity for collaboration among teachers to foster differentiated instruction to accommodate all students in general education while measuring the efficacy of inclusion through the progress of our students and feedback from our school colleagues and parents/guardians. Together, regular and special education can address student learning by providing a rich, varied curriculum, instructional practices geared to individual needs, and family education and involvement.

For all teachers, inclusionary classrooms give teachers an opportunity to foster teaching practices so that all students have the opportunity to access, participate, and grow in an academic environment that is meaningful and successful.

As we begin the school year, I have asked members of my Pupil Services Leadership Team to share their thoughts about inclusion and to highlight best practices in this regard.

Liza: Why is it so important to give the opportunity for inclusion at the preschool and elementary levels?

Joe Gibowicz (Early Childhood Coordinator): I strongly believe that most children learn best in an inclusive, child-centered, developmentally appropriate environment; children developing typically and those with identified special needs learning side by side.

Inclusion provides an opportunity for children to serve as role models to each other. Exposure to inclusion at an early age encourages children to be better able to accept differences and become more aware of the needs of others.

Hilary Bonnell (Elementary Counseling and Psychological Services Chairperson): The opportunity for all students to learn from their peers is a rewarding experience for all. Leadership skills often emerge that carry forward year after year. One example of inclusion at work is in our third grade classrooms where all students participate in a Pilgrim unit each year. Students write in journals and for some of our students with special needs, journals are structured to allow students to fill in the main details. When all students share their discoveries during group time, everyone is included, feel pride in their work and valued as a class member.

Lannon Twomey (Speech and Language Chairperson): Inclusion offers our students the opportunity to access the curriculum and instruction of the classroom with the accommodations and modifications necessary to make learning successful. It permits students of all abilities the access to a range of teaching styles, including techniques and strategies modeled and implemented by classroom teachers, special educators, speech-language pathologists and other specialists. With inclusion, whether through consultation and planning with specialists, co-taught lessons, or diversified small groups, we are enriching the education of all our students by incorporating effective and creative approaches to instruction. Inclusion offers our students with disabilities the opportunities to apply and generalize the specific, specialized strategies and skills they have been learning out of the classroom. It allows them the opportunity to hear, discuss and interact with their peers' ideas, responses and thinking strategies. The beauty of inclusion is how it benefits all students in the classroom, exposing everyone to diversified teaching techniques that all students can access and benefit from. It allows students the opportunity to learn from each other and to learn about and respect each other's learning styles.

Lynne Laramie (Elementary Pupil Services Coordinator): Through daily modeling and interaction with peers, children develop social skills and learn to become members of their school community. Inclusion provides students with special needs the opportunity to access the enriched curriculum and learning environment that our six unique elementary schools have to offer. Moreover, inclusion opportunities benefit all students and teach our children to celebrate and appreciate diversity.

Liza: Can you provide an example of how our elementary schools support this opportunity and challenge?

Lannon Twomey: In a successful inclusion classroom, the classroom teacher and specialist involved with a student participating in special education services would regularly meet to discuss that student's progress, specific learning strategies recently taught and together review upcoming curriculum and activities to consider necessary modifications to make instruction accessible. It may include implementation of modifications to classroom activities, co-taught lessons, modeled lessons by a special educator or specialist that reinforced a specific strategy, or simultaneous heterogeneous groups facilitated by several professionals. For example, for a student whose disability impacts his or her ability to comprehend language, a successful inclusive setting may include consultation between the speech-language and classroom teachers related to the comprehension strategy of making inferences, a skill the whole class has been applying in the curriculum. In collaboration, they may create or modify a graphic organizer to support student success in applying that strategy given a curriculum-based story. This organizer or strategy might then be available to the whole classroom, providing a common language among all students. In addition, a modeled lesson by the speech-language teacher or co-taught lesson with the classroom teacher that demonstrated use of the strategy to the whole class might be implemented. Successful inclusion opportunities are carefully planned and executed by all professionals involved in a student's education.

Lynne Laramie: We provide a range of inclusion models, which support students according to their individual needs. Through supported inclusion, students in Resource Room programs who are in need of more intensive services are able to participate in classes, attend field trips and assemblies, and interact with their peers in social settings. Other programs, such as Learning Centers, provide direct academic instruction and/or reinforce skills required for participation in general education classrooms. Often, academic support to students is provided within the general education classes.

Liza: Why is it so important to give the opportunity for inclusion at the secondary level?

Matthew Kidder (Out-of-District Coordinator):

Inclusion is important because "separate is not equal". In general, inclusion has fostered improvement in teaching practice over the years.

Incorporating strategies from working with special education students has benefited all students and practitioners. Inclusion reinforces the concept of a student-centered approach, a continued area of need for growth in education.

Todd Chicko (Secondary Counseling/Psychological Services Chairperson):

Inclusion at the junior and high school levels is very important for all students within the school. I believe students of all abilities need exposure to diversity in all forms. Inclusion allows all students to access our rich and varied curriculum commensurate to

their ability levels. In creating an environment where all people of diverse backgrounds and abilities are respected and appreciated, inclusion ensures that we are encouraging acceptance and cooperation across settings.

Mary Emmons (Secondary Pupil Service Coordinator): In education we think of inclusion as including students within the general education classroom to the extent possible and as is appropriate for individual learners. I continue to believe inclusion is more than the classroom experience. With our focus on transition at the secondary level, it is essential that we think of inclusion in a broader sense to encompass opportunities to access and learn within the greater school community as well as opportunities outside of the school community. Our students need to be prepared for their transition to life outside of high school and in order to reach this goal, we must think about the skill sets that students need to make this transition.

Inclusion supports a student's social and emotional growth through modeling, feedback, and participation. Inclusion also benefits the entire student body within our schools, providing life lessons in empathy, tolerance and the appreciation of diversity.

Liza: Can you provide an example of how the respective schools and programs support this opportunity and challenge for inclusion?

Joe Gibowicz: Our program model uses integrated therapies as often as possible. The specialists collaborate with the teaching team to provide therapy services throughout the school day. The therapists often work alongside the teachers. All children benefit from presence of additional staff in class and it enhances the learning for all.

Using music as therapy allows the therapist to transcend speech or developmental barriers and reach out to all children in a cooperative setting. Developmental skills that are addressed include teamwork and cooperation, confidence building and group participation.

Mary Emmons: Students at both the junior and senior high school levels are supported within many inclusionary special education programs. Support for our students happens both in and out of the classroom. From extracurricular opportunities to job placements, our students are provided opportunities to be part of the school community and the greater community. Our school communities are also committed to supporting our students through peer mentorship and ambassador programs. Both the RJ Grey JHS and the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School provide many extracurricular activities for all students. Students who require support to access these opportunities are supported as needed to provide accessibility.

Todd Chicko: At the RJG and the ABRHS, inclusion is supported through programs such as Best Buddies. This club matches special education students with mainstream students who serve as social mentors. As another example, the Peer Mentor Program matches trained ABRHS students with younger students of varied backgrounds who have been identified as benefiting from additional peer support and modeling. In both schools,

regular education staff works with special educators and counselors as a team to help students succeed in an inclusion setting. I believe this model provides an opportunity to develop skills for independence, academically and socially.

I hope you found the above thoughts and comments interesting and meaningful. It is a glimpse into the perspective of our talented chairpersons and coordinators who serve our students.

Sincerely,

Liza

Liza Huber
Director of Pupil Services



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