



**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**

**Deputy Superintendent**

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**Marie Altieri**

*Deputy Superintendent*

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee  
From: Marie Altieri, Maria Neyland, Paul Murphy, Amy Krishnamurthy  
Date: January 5, 2017  
Re: Elementary Early Release Schedule

A committee of teachers, administrators, and School Committee members met throughout 2016 to evaluate the current schedule for elementary school early releases and to consider possible changes. The committee developed a survey, and feedback was gathered from parents and teachers as well as committee members. The process was extremely collaborative, and creative solutions were explored with a solution developed which was agreed to by all parties.

Concerns with the current schedule of two early release Thursdays per month:

- The current schedule of two early release Thursdays per month and two full day Thursdays per month is confusing and difficult for parents and teachers to manage.
- The Acton-Boxborough current elementary schedule includes 896 hours of time on learning per year, which is below the state requirement of 900 hours. The district had to submit a corrective action plan which stated that we would work with the teachers' contract to increase hours to meet the state requirement.
- A review of other districts' schedules showed that most school districts have a 6 hour and 30 minute elementary school day, compared to the Acton-Boxborough 6 hour and 10 minute school day.
- Other districts also have more time built in for professional learning and for teachers to work together to review student work and implement curriculum and instruction. This was expressed as a significant need for our teachers.

The committee developed a new model which addresses these issues. This model has been presented to elementary teachers, and the teachers' union (ABEA) has voted to approve the contractual changes related to this new model. The model, which will go into effect in September 2017, includes:

1. Early release every Thursday. All teachers will be required to work on Thursday afternoons in scheduled activities, including meeting with grade level colleagues to review student work and implement curriculum as well as professional learning.
2. The school day will start 20 minutes earlier to increase student instructional time and to meet the state requirement for time on learning. This will move us from 896 hours per year to 930 hours per year.

The new schedule will be:

Early Schedule 8:20 – 2:50 (Thursdays 8:20 – 12:20)

Late Schedule 9:00 – 3:30 (Thursdays 9:00 – 1:00)

*At ABRSD, our mission is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.*

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**Elementary Early Release Thursday Changes  
Effective September 2017**

- 1) The elementary schools will have an early release dismissal of students one day per week. Teachers will be expected to remain until the end of the regular school day on building based professional early release days. Teachers will be expected to stay until 3:45 on district-wide professional early release days (so that teachers from all schools can participate together).

If, during this contract, all elementary schools move to one schedule, teachers will stay until the end of the regular school day on professional learning early release days.

- At least 10 of these will be for building based grade levels/collaborative teams
- At least 7 of these will be for Building-Based Professional Learning
- At least 6 of these will be scheduled each year for fall conferences, spring conferences, and end of year progress reports (teachers can leave at any point after students have been dismissed on these days).
- The rest will be used for district-wide grade level or department meetings, as well as district-wide professional learning.

- 2) The elementary school day will be extended by 20 minutes (we are not meeting the state requirements for time on learning at the elementary schools). Even if we don't agree to these new Thursday guidelines, the elementary school day will need to be extended by 5-10 minutes to meet time on learning.

New Elementary Schedule:

Early 8:20-2:50 (Thursdays 8:20 – 12:20)

Late 9:00-3:30 (Thursdays 9:00 – 1:00)

- 3) There will be four preparation periods for a total of 175-195 minutes per week except for half-day kindergarten teachers, who will have a total of 90 minutes of preparation time per week. This is consistent with current contract language.

# Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

## DRAFT

### SCHOOLS OPEN

**Tuesday September 5, 2017**

\*With the exception of

8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, & 12<sup>th</sup> graders, who start of Wednesday September 6, 2017

**HIGH SCHOOL:** 7:23 a.m. - 2:18 p.m.

**JUNIOR HIGH:** 7:30 a.m. - 2:06 p.m.

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### BLANCHARD, DOUGLAS & GATES

All-Day K and Grades 1-6:

9:00-a.m. – 3:30 p.m.

(Thursdays – 1:00 p.m. dismissal)

Half Day Kindergarten

AM Session: 9:00 a.m. – 12 noon

(Thursday Schedule 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.)

PM Session: 12:50 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

(No PM session on Thursdays)

### CONANT, McCARTHY-TOWNE, MERRIAM

All-Day K and Grades 1-6:

8:20 a.m. – 2:50 p.m.

(Thursdays - 12:20 p.m. dismissal)

Half Day Kindergarten

AM Session: 8:20 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

(Thursday Schedule 8:20 a.m. - 12:40 a.m.)

PM Session – 12:10 p.m. - 2:50 p.m.

(No PM Sessions on Thursdays)

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Elementary School Lunch Price: \$2.75

Junior High/ High School Price: \$2.75

Lunch, includes fruit, vegetable, milk

Milk only: \$.50

For more information, see the Food services website at:

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

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

**Blanchard:** 978-263-4569

**Douglas:** 978-266-2560

**McCarthy-Towne:** 978-264-3377


**All other schools:** 978-264-4700

**Conant:** 978-266-2550

**Gates:** 978-266-2570

**Merriam:** 978-264-3371

ABRSD 1



Our **vision** is to provide high-quality educational opportunities that inspire a community of learners

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Our **mission** is to develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

**Contractual Changes**  
**Elementary Early Release Thursdays**

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**School Committee Meeting**  
**January 12, 2017**

ABRSD 2

## Early Release Review Committee

- A committee of elementary teachers, ABEA leadership, School Committee Negotiations Subcommittee and Administrators met throughout 2016 to review the current elementary early release day schedule and to provide recommendations for possible changes
- A survey developed and distributed to parents and teachers in May 2016
- Feedback reviewed and committee discussed various options, arriving at a shared recommendation

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## Current Early Release Schedule

- Parents and teachers reported that the current schedule (early release 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday, full school day 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday) is inconsistent and hard to manage
- The current schedule provides 896 hours of time on learning per year, just below the state minimum 900 hours; the district is in corrective action and needs to submit a plan to increase time on learning
- Most area districts have a 6 hour 30 minute school day, compared to AB's 6 hour 10 minutes
- As the needs of our students have changed, teachers need more time to work together to meet the needs of all students across the grade level and for professional learning

## New Schedule – Effective September 2017

- Early release for students every Thursday
- Teachers will remain in school every Thursday afternoon to meet in teams and for professional learning
- School days will be extended twenty minutes every day
- New Schedule

Early Schedule: 8:20 – 2:50    Thursdays: 8:20 – 12:20

Late Schedule: 9:00 – 3:30    Thursdays: 9:00 – 1:00

## Thursday Schedule for Teachers

Teachers will be scheduled to participate in each of the following activities on a rotating basis:

- a. School-Based Grade-Level Collaborative Team Meeting Time
- b. School-Based Professional Learning
- c. District-Wide Grade-Level or Department Meetings
- d. District-Wide Professional Learning
- e. Parent/Guardian Conferences  
All schools will provide a fall and spring conference

## Benefits

- Consistency
- More instructional time: From 896 hours per year to 930
- Fewer teacher absences for professional learning and grade level meetings
- Increase in valuable teacher collaboration time:
  - Review student progress across grade level
  - Create common assignments and assessments
  - Meet with special educators, reading specialist, etc.
  - Implement curriculum
- Professional Learning – school-based and district-wide  
Update instructional practices