

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING  
Minutes (approved 9/15/16)

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

September 1, 2016  
7:00 p.m. Open Meeting

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*Members Present:* Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland (7:15 p.m.), Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik, Eileen Zhang  
*Members Absent:* Diane Baum  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Glenn Brand, Clare Jeannotte, Beth Petr

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1. Chairperson Mary Brolin called the ABRSC to order at 7:00 p.m.
2. **Chairman’s Introduction**  
First Day of School Report – Dr. Brand and his administrative team visited all of the schools and said it was a “tremendous” start to the new year. He thanked everyone for all of the work that went on behind the scenes including the custodians, transportation department, cafeteria staff, central office, principals and all of their staff.
3. **Statement of Warrant & Approval of Minutes**  
Katie Neville moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** to approve the minutes of 6/23/16 and 8/8/16 as written.  
The warrants were read by the Chair (see attachment) and circulated to the Committee for their review and signatures.
4. **Public Participation** - none
5. **American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Contract Ratification – VOTE** – Marie Altieri  
*(THIS HAS BEEN REVISED TO A DISCUSSION ONLY. THE VOTE HAS BEEN POSTPONED TO THE 9/15/16 SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING.)*
  - 5.1. Proposed Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)  
Marie Altieri reviewed the MOA. The AFSCME expects to ratify it by the next School Committee meeting on 9/15/16. There will be a slightly modified agreement for the vote. The proposed contract has a 1.75% increase in each of the three years. There was an agreement to do a one time 1% increase to the top step of the 6 steps in FY17. One of the positions will be upgraded by one grade in FY17 and two positions in FY18. Total cost of contract increase for FY17 is 3.8%, for FY18 it’s 3.2% and FY19 is 2.5%. The Committee will vote at the next meeting.
6. **Office Support Association (OSA) Contract Update** – Marie Altieri, Mary Brolin
  - 6.1. Memo from ABRSC Chairperson Mary Brolin
  - 6.2. Notice of Hearing, 8/1/16
  - 6.3. MA Department of Labor Relations Representation Petition, 8/1/16
  - 6.4. Letter from Attorney Peter Ebb, 8/25/16Marie Altieri reported that soon after coming to a tentative agreement, the District was notified that there had been a petition filed regarding the OSA. The District must stay neutral, and at the advice of District counsel Peter Ebb, negotiating will stop and any votes will be deferred until the issue is decided. As required, the Hearing notice is posted on all of the employee bulletin boards. The prehearing conference is scheduled for September 22, 2016 and the hearing at October 6, 2016.

## 7. **FY17 Superintendent Goals** – First Read – *Glenn Brand*

Dr. Brand reviewed his FY17 proposed goals noting that he incorporated feedback that he received since his preliminary presentation at the School Committee workshop. The Committee appreciated the refinements. Eileen Zhang thanked Dr. Brand for all of the recent communications from her children’s principals, teachers, and the Superintendent.

Kristina Rychlik said that she had spoken to Dr. Brand already about how many and how extensive the goals are. She noted that sometimes when people are asked about so many things, people will expect a fast response on them. Kristina agreed that they are all legitimate concerns that should be addressed, but she reminded the Committee that they play a role in this ambitious work as well. Paul Murphy asked if they should ask Dr. Brand to pare the list down. Mary Brolin had thought about this but could not figure out what to cut out. Deanne O’Sullivan stated that although it is a long list, there is a step by step approach to start the processes. She does not expect resolutions on all of the items by May, just a step forward on them. Mary Brolin mentioned that the Challenge Success book stresses that changes are not immediate. The Committee needs to pay attention to the deliverable for this year and also understand that collecting school climate data this year is good, and to use it the next year is also good.

## 8. **Safety and Security Updates** – *Glenn Brand*

### 8.1. Letter to ABRSD Families

#### 8.1.1. ALICE Training Update

#### 8.1.2. School Building Security Update

Dr. Brand referred the Committee to the letter recently sent to all families cosigned by the three School Resource Officers. ALICE training took place the first week for all staff in all of the buildings. Over 20 staff members went to training last year and they delivered the training to others this week. A letter from principals will go home to families just before training happens for the students in early October.

Dr. Brand has heard concern about exterior door security since he first arrived at AB. As a result, he plans to lock all exterior doors, with the exception of the High School, starting October 1, 2016. There should be one point of entry for visitors. The High School will lock some of their exterior doors now, but some will stay open, due to how that building is used by students and staff. Over the past couple of years, card readers for entrances were added for all staff. Although all visitors are now signing in at the front offices, there are still questions that need to be answered, and processes to be decided on. No procedures can ensure that all buildings are always 100% safe, but locking the doors is a step in the right direction.

Maria Neyland appreciates locking all of the elementary schools but is concerned about locking many of the High School doors due to all the kids going outside to make it to their classes in time. This is part of the culture of the high school. She also feels it is good to have multiple doors open for dropping kids off at the High School when traffic is backed up.

The ALICE slides and other information are available on the website under the “About Us”, “Emergency Info/Weather Delayed Openings”. In response to a question about the plan for the doors at Conant and the Junior High on election days, Dr. Brand said that there are going to be times when procedures may be changed.

## 9. **District Master Plan Update** – *Glenn Brand*

Dr. Brand reviewed the upcoming meetings - the final Visioning Session on September 15 and the Working Group meeting on September 22. Dore and Whittier will present their options including pros and cons at the Visioning Session. They will make their final presentation of the District Master Plan options at the October 6, 2016 School Committee meeting. The public is urged to attend.

## 10. **FY17 Staffing and Enrollment Update** – *Marie Altieri*

10.1. September Enrollment and Additional 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Classroom

10.2. 2016-2017 New Professional Staff (updated)

10.3. Agenda from Orientation held 8/24/16

Marie Altieri explained how the additional 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom was recently added due to enrollment. Kristina Rychlik emphasized that the situation illustrates the need to build flexible spaces so changes like this that often happen as school is getting ready to start, can be accommodated. The Committee discussed how many families with incoming kindergarteners were coming in over the summer to register. It was agreed that Kindergarten registration information should be sent out earlier and more widely distributed to try to prevent some of the last minute registrations. Late registrations have an effect on class sizes and can sometimes be significant.

11. **Financial Updates**– *Clare Jeannotte*

- 11.1. Acknowledgement of MIAA (MA Interlocal Insurance Association) Rewards Earnings
- 11.2. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Investment Update, 6/30/16
- 11.3. FYI – School Finance Reporting Discussion Sessions, 8/16/16, DESE

Clare Jeannotte updated the Committee on the above.

12. **Minuteman Technical High School (MMT) Update** – *Mary Brolin*

- 12.1. MMT District Ballot Vote – Tuesday, September 20, 2016 from 12-8 p.m. at the Jr High (*Acton registered voters only*) and Boxborough Town Hall (*Boxborough registered voters only*)
- 12.2. See information on <http://www.acton-ma.gov/>, <http://www.boxborough-ma.gov/> and <http://www.minuteman.org/>

- 12.3. **VOTE** on proposed ABRSC statement regarding MMT Ballot Question

The Committee reviewed the restrictions that they cannot advocate a ballot question position using school resources but they can vote a position statement. Paul Murphy and Kristina Rychlik spoke in support of the statement proposed in Mary Brolin’s memo.

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

**VOTED:** to adopt the proposed statement in support of this ballot question.

13. **Discussion of November 8, 2016 Ballot Question - Lifting the Charter School Cap in MA** – *Mary Brolin*

- 13.1. Memo from the Chair
- 13.2. Initiative Petition
- 13.3. Proposed Resolution Against Lifting the Cap from [massteacher.org](http://massteacher.org) - *for discussion*
- 13.4. Memo from ABEA President, Karen Sonner

Mary Brolin thanked Diane Baum for finding the background material in the memo. Mary proposed a discussion of the topic and then the Committee could decide if they wanted to vote a statement at their meeting on 9/15/16. Benjamin Blumenthal, parent of a kindergartner and new to Acton, spoke from the audience against the ballot question. He stressed that charter schools take critical funding from the local public schools. Because some of the links in the memo were not working, the Committee decided to wait to discuss the issue until their next meeting. Kristina Rychlik reminded the Committee that they do not need to decide if they support charter schools or not. The ballot question statement involves whether they support lifting the cap on the number of charter schools or not.

14. **Subcommittee Reports**

- 14.1. Budget – *no report/next meeting is 9/14/16*
- 14.2. Policy - *no report/next meeting is 9/14/16*
- 14.3. Comparative Communities Study – *meeting held 8/30/16 – update at 9/15/16 meeting*
- 14.4. Outreach (including PTO Co-chairs) – Kristina Rychlik reported that they are meeting 9/7/16.

15. **School Committee Member Reports**

- 15.1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG) – *Amy Krishnamurthy*
  - 15.1.1. Agenda and materials for meeting on 9/1/16, including 6/30/16 minutes

- 15.1.2. Five Board Meeting on 9/21/16 – This would be a social event with no business so it would not be posted. Details are being confirmed. A Three Board meeting may be held on 9/15/16. Amy will check with Acton BOS Chair Peter Berry.
- 15.2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – Mary Brolin reported that this meeting was postponed.
- 15.3. Acton Finance Committee – Deanne O’Sullivan reported that Free Cash and the stabilization fund were discussed. Steve Noone asked why reserves keep going down even though Boards keep replenishing them. Someone stated that it is due to the unpredictability of the budgets.
- 15.4. Acton Board of Selectmen – Eileen Zhang was on vacation so no report.

**16. Superintendent’s Report/Updates – Glenn Brand**

- 16.1. FY17 Student Representatives to the ABRSC  
The election for the High School Representatives will be in the beginning of October.
- 16.2. Challenge Success Update  
Much work was done over the summer on this new initiative, including reviewing all of the survey results from last year. Challenge Success will be a very exciting partnership for ABRSD. As an introduction, School Committee members were given a copy of *Overloaded and Underprepared, Strategies for Stronger Schools and Healthy, Successful Kids* by Denise Pope, Maureen Brown and Sarah Miles.
- 16.3. ABRSD 2016-2017 Family Learning Series  
Deborah Bookis is enthusiastic about this year’s speakers. The District has joined forces with the schools’ PTOs, PTF, and PTSOs as well as The United Way, AB Special Education Parent Advisory Council and Danny’s Place Youth Services. These presentations will be taped and posted on Acton TV and our website. November 8<sup>th</sup> is ABRSD Professional Learning Day for staff and it will be all about Challenge Success. Families are welcome to attend the Presentation that night with Dr. Pope to learn more. The taping of this presentation is being confirmed.

The ABRSC adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda and list of warrants

**NEXT MEETINGS:**

September 15 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (packet posted September 9)  
October 6 – ABRSC Meeting at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library (packet posted September 30)