

Acton-Boxborough Regional
School Committee Meeting

March 30, 2015

7:00 p.m.

at the R.J. Grey Junior High Library

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) MEETING

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 30, 2015
7:00 p.m.

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Chairmen's Introduction** – Thank you to Dennis Bruce
3. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**
 1. Meeting on 3/19/15 (*addendum*)
4. **Public Participation**
5. **Special Education Administrator Legal Requirements** – *Marie Altieri, Glenn Brand*
6. **Leadership Search Update** – *Marie Altieri (oral)*
 1. Pupil Services Director
7. **ABRSD FY16 Budget Update**– *Glenn Brand (oral)*
8. **Kindergarten Registration Update** – *Marie Altieri*
9. **Acton Town Meeting Prep** (begins 4/6/15) – *Kristina Rychlik (oral)*
10. **Regionalization Financial Oversight Subcommittee Report** – *Michael Coppolino (addendum)*
11. **Subcommittee Updates**
 1. **Budget** – *Kristina Rychlik (oral)*
 2. **Policy** – *Mary Emmons*
 - i. Bullying Prevention and Intervention, File: JICFB – **FIRST READING**
 1. Proposed policy
 2. Current policy
 3. Current Plan/Procedures, File: JICFB-R
12. **School Committee Member Reports** (*oral*)
 1. Acton Leadership Group (ALG)
 2. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF)
 3. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)– *Mary Brolin*
 4. Other Post Employment Benefits (OPEB) Task Force– *Dennis Bruce*
 5. Acton Finance Committee – *Dennis Bruce*
 6. Acton Board of Selectmen - *Paul Murphy*
 7. Acton-Boxborough SpedPAC – *Paul Murphy*
 8. Boxborough Finance Committee- *Maria Neyland*
 9. Boxborough Board of Selectmen – *Brigid Bieber*
 10. Joint PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs – *Deanne O'Sullivan*

13. **Acton and Boxborough Local Elections** – *Kristina Rychlik*
14. **Superintendent's Report** – *Glenn Brand (oral)*
 - MASBO Visit Review
 - Blended Learning Presentation
15. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**
 1. Town Meeting Budget Book
 2. Annual Education Reports for the Town Meetings
 1. Acton Town Meeting
 2. Boxborough Town Meeting (Blanchard School Report)
 3. Family Friendly Movie Night for Acton Town Meeting
 4. Parent/Guardian letter re Budget Process, *Kristina Rychlik*
16. **ADJOURN**

NEXT MEETINGS:

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meetings – start 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library

- 5/7/15
- 5/21/15

Acton Town Meeting begins April 6, 2015 at 7:00 p.m. in the ABRHS auditorium.
Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 11, 2015.

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

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

March 19, 2015
7:30 p.m. Executive Session
8:00 p.m. Open Business Meeting

Members Present: Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Deanne O’Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik
Members Absent: Dennis Bruce, Maya Minkin, Maria Neyland
Others: Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis (8:00), Glenn Brand, Mary Emmons (8:00), Clare Jeannotte (8:00), Beth Petr

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:30 p.m. by Kristina Rychlik, Chairperson.

1. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 7:30 p.m., it was moved, seconded and unanimously,
VOTED by roll call: to enter Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to litigation
(YES – Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Murphy, Neville, O’Sullivan, Rychlik)

Kristina Rychlik stated that an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the litigating position of the Board and they would return to Open Meeting at 8:00 p.m.

2. **OPEN MEETING**

At 8:00 p.m., the ABRSC returned to Open Meeting.

3. **Chairmen’s Introduction** – Kristina Rychlik described the 20 Year Chair Ceremony held last night as a wonderful example of the camaraderie and friendships that develop among our staff members. She thanked the ABEA for sponsoring this annual event.

4. **Statement of Warrant and Approval of Minutes**

Warrants #15-017 dated 2/19/15 in the amount of \$3,279,790.19, #15-018 dated 3/5/15 in the amount of \$3,323,522.16 and #15-019 dated 3/19/15 in the amount of \$3,886,887.11 were signed by members of the Committee.
Meeting Minutes of 2/5/15, 2/12/15, 2/26/15 were approved as amended.

5. **Public Participation** - none

6. **ABRHS Professional Learning Update and 2015-2016 Midyear Pilot**

ABRHS Principal JoAnn Campbell, Associate Principal Beth Baker and Science Regional Department Leader David Palmer presented on a three year initiative at the High School that began in 2013-2014. The goal was to understand the challenges students and families face related to mental health and learning. A guiding question was “How do we put our students’ well-being at the center of what we do while maintaining our academic standards?” A Midyear Exam pilot is planned for 2015-2016 that would have all midyears given the week of January 19, 2016 and special schedules. Rationale for this change includes: equity, mitigating stress, offering timely instructional feedback and aligning curricular work with course objectives.

Starting next year, the parent community will be engaged by partnering closely with the PTSO. The administration recognizes that the role of families in the community is essential. Dr. Campbell emphasized that this is a pilot and will be evaluated at the end. Students have been asked for feedback.

Brigid thanked the presenters and said that they might hear concern about students having more tests. She loved that the PTSO and parent/guardians were going to be involved. Mary Brolin is very concerned about having a whole week of tests, instead of just a couple of midyear exams. She stated that currently there are rules about no homework during testing time and it is not enforced. She wants to be sure it is enforced in this case.

Amy Krishnamurthy agreed with Brigid that having exams before the winter break would be much better because students will be so worried about studying during the break. Mike Coppolino agreed with the pilot and having a midyear week. All staff will know not to assign anything during that week. Paul Murphy agreed and liked that the administration is trying something new. Deanne O'Sullivan liked that having midterms means students do not have to remember a year's worth of material. Dr. Brand also appreciated that the staff has put a lot of thought into this pilot.

7. **Curriculum Presentation: Elementary Literacy Overview**

Deborah Bookis and K-6 Social Studies and Literacy Curriculum Specialist Sharon Ryan presented on how literacy is taught in our district. See slides. They asked the Committee to analyze a poem and talk about how each person understands text differently. Deborah explained that students are encouraged to think about a story while they are reading, not just waiting until the end. Sharon shared her "ABRSD Literacy Newsletter" from March 2015. This publication goes out to PreK – Grade 6 staff. Family and community literacy engagement, how to weave literacy into things that families do together, is something that is very special to Sharon and evident in all of our schools. Brigid Bieber complimented Sharon on her enthusiasm for her work and her presentation.

8. **Superintendent's Midcycle Review**

1. DESE Model Evaluation Process for Superintendents
2. Progress Report and Goals Update

Kristina Rychlik described the five step cycle of continuous improvement being used. Steps include:

1. Self-Assessment
2. Analysis, Goal Setting and Plan development
3. Plan Implementation and Collection of Evidence
4. Mid-Cycle Goals review – *for discussion tonight*
5. End of Cycle and Summative Evaluation Reports

The goal was to review and discuss Dr. Brand's progress report and evidence. Kristina asked the Committee to provide relevant feedback, ask questions, and make sure they have a clear understanding of progress being made on each goal. Dr. Brand reviewed his reflections on the year so far. He noted that some activities have taken longer than he expected.

Mary Brolin appreciated the material stating that it gives her a lot of information that provides a foundation to write a meaningful evaluation. She pointed out that when working on the goals, other things enrich it. Considering a student learning goal- the sign of a good leader is that when he/she sees productive work from the staff, he/she highlights it. She will add all of this into her summative evaluation. Regarding regionalization, Mary appreciated when Dana Labb presented at School Committee about how it was going at Blanchard. This was very valuable.

Michael Coppolino was thoroughly impressed by Dr. Brand's report. He asked for a more measurable focus on the student learning goal to the extent that the Superintendent has or will put initiatives in place. He would like achievements to be more measurable. He asked for more focus on improvements (such as in special education and ELL) in general student achievement.

Paul Murphy confirmed that the New Superintendent Induction Program is a 3 year program. He echoed Michael's comment about the importance of establishing measurable goals.

Brigid Bieber thought what Dr. Brand put together was great, especially for his first year. She looks forward to seeing what he does next year. Regarding the format being used, she pointed out that a person is measured on the specific goals, but there is nowhere to talk about the day to day regular job and duties. This format makes it awkward to find a spot to comment on the routine performance of the job.

Kristina Rychlik agreed. A lot of what she thinks about Dr. Brand doing, does not fit into the goals. She wondered if there could be a general management goal. Marie Altieri explained that when the Committee does the summative evaluation and report in May and June, they will look at all of the elements as well as the goals together. The Midcycle review/goals reflection is far less formal, and it could be changed to be more flexible next year.

Kristina stated that regarding the first reflections of Goal 1, a delay is understandable given all of the work being done. She thanked Coach Perry Davis for his efforts. Under the regionalization goal, she feels the status is very Blanchard focused. She said that Dr. Brand should be aware of integration issues for all of the schools, not just Blanchard.

When asked if there will be new goals next year, Dr. Brand stated that some goals might continue into the new year, and new goals could also be developed.

Kristina summarized for the Committee that while they shared some comments and questions, there seems to be no real concerns. She encouraged Dr. Brand to "continue on the path that he is on."

9. Leadership Search Update

Dr. Brand described the two search processes. He emphasized how hard it is for all school districts to find leadership candidates. There is a short window of time for districts to look for candidates and run searches. If a window of time is missed, the best candidates are gone. If it is late in the school year, a candidate may be hesitant to leave their district because it leaves that district in a tough position to find a replacement.

1. ABRSD Athletic Director - Steven Martin was recently named the new Athletic Director. Three full days were spent with the three finalists visiting AB. The Athletic Leadership Group of students was very enthusiastic about Mr. Martin. One hundred and twenty written feedback forms were turned in on all three candidates.
2. Pupil Services Director – Marie Altieri agreed with Dr. Brand about the urgency of this search. Marie thanked Andrew Shen for leading the process to this point. Pupil Services leadership is one of the hardest to fill. There were 18 candidates and six were interviewed. Three finalists were selected and one just pulled out, leaving two. She reminded everyone that the Community Forum to meet them is Monday evening.

10. **ABRSD FY16 Budget Update**– *Glenn Brand*

Clare Jeannotte distributed an update of FY16 funding sources. There are still some moving parts to the governor’s budget and this information was not available the last time the School Committee met. These numbers will not be incorporated into the latest version of the budget. The regional transportation rate was just announced at 63%.

Paul Murphy asked if for FY16, the district is projected to be down \$139,220. Clare confirmed that number, but depending on what happens with the house budget and senate, that could change. She suggested that rather than try to amend it, the Committee should wait. Regional bonus aid would be something to advocate for because ABRSD is one of the few regions that it affects significantly. Mary Brolin will draft a letter of support/advocacy for this from the Committee.

11. **Review of FY15 School Committee Leadership Structure** (1 Chair, 2 Vice-Chairs) – Kristina Rychlik

1. Original School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting policy, File: BDA
2. Original School Committee Officers policy, File: BDB

Kristina reviewed the Committee’s discussion last year and asked the members if they wanted to continue having a Vice Chair from Acton and a Vice Chair from Boxborough. (Copies of her letter were on the table.) Brigid thought it was helpful for each town to have a consistent face beside the Chairperson. Kristina said that it was helpful to her as Chairperson, but she could have delegated more to the Acton Vice Chair. Her real concern is that it does not allow for succession planning for leadership. Mary Brolin noted that if succession planning is agreed on, there has to be some flexibility built in because the future is unpredictable for people.

The School Committee agreed that policy BDA should go to the policy subcommittee for review.

12. **Subcommittee Updates**

1. Negotiations

Marie Altieri reported that the Negotiations subcommittee met with some members of the Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) to discuss salary scales prior to the next negotiation round.

2. Budget

Kristina reported that they met on 3/4/15 and Erin Bettez reported on Facilities usage. A sub group is being formed to review this including Brigid Bieber and JD Head.

3. Policy

- i. Curriculum and Instructional Material, File: IGA - SECOND READING – **VOTE** - Maria Neyland (combining policies IGA, IGD, IJ, IJJ and IJK)

Michael Coppolino asked why the parent feedback part of this policy was deleted. Deborah Bookis said it was included before the frameworks that we now have determine what is taught. Parent feedback has not been part of this in recent years. Mary Brolin moved, Kathleen Neville seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve Policy IGA as proposed.

13. **School Committee Member Reports**

1. Acton Board of Selectmen – *Paul Murphy*

The Board voted 4 – 0 to support the ABRSD budget.

2. Boxborough Finance Committee- *Maria Neyland*

The Boxborough School Committee members presented the FY16 budget at Fincom and it all seems favorable. The Fincom has not voted on it yet.

3. Joint PTO/PTSO/PTF Co-Chairs – *Deanne O’Sullivan*

The next meeting is 3/25/15. Deborah Bookis and JD Head will come and speak about the Play Spaces that are on Acton’s Community Preservation Committee list for approval at Acton Town Meeting.

14. **Acton and Boxborough Local Elections** – *Kristina Rychlik*

The League of Women Voters’ Candidates night was held just prior to this meeting.

15. **Superintendent’s Report** – *Glenn Brand*

The Superintendent gave an Acton Community Preservation Committee (CPC) Update. The district asked for funding for 4 outdoor play spaces at \$131,900 and the CPC recommended funding a \$120,000 proposal for Acton Town Meeting. Boxborough just became a CPC town and the school district will pursue that funding next year.

16. **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

1. USDA and DESE Visit ABRHS Cafeteria to Celebrate National School Breakfast Week - Dr. Brand and Marie Altieri enjoyed breakfast at the High School with these representatives when they visited with Food Services Director Kirsten Nelson, Cafeteria Manager Heidi Conley and the Cafeteria staff.
2. *Dr. Jeffrey Bostic on Mental Health Issues in Children & Teens, 4/7/15, JH Auditorium, Cosponsored by AB SpedPAC and ABRSD Pupil Services Department*
3. Dr. Brand stated that he has not forgotten about the interest around sleep/health and wellbeing and their relationship to school start times. He will move forward with a task force very soon. He took feedback regarding the size of the group and who will be part of it.

Mike Coppolino thanked Clare Jeannotte and Dr. Brand for the revolving fund monthly accounting and the transparency that it shows. He has never seen this included in the packet before and appreciates it.

The ABRSC was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meetings – *start 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library*

- 3/30/15 (*change from 3/26/15*)
- 5/7/15

Acton Town Meeting begins April 6, 2015.

Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 11, 2015.



5.0

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Personnel Office
16 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700 x 3209 fax: 978-264-3340
www.abschools.org

Marie Altieri
Director of Personnel and Administrative Services

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
Date: March 25, 2015
Re: School Committee Appointment of Administrator of Special Education

Please see the attached language from the Massachusetts General Laws MGL Chapter 71B, Section 3A which references the School Committee's appointment of an Administrator of Special Education. In the past, our Director of Pupil Services was co-appointed by the School Committee to be the Administrator of Special Education as is required by this statute. When we merged into a single PreK-12 Regional School District, we moved to more than 4,000 students. As you can see in the statute, "Such administrator shall devote full time to the duties involved in supervising the provision of all special education in the school system." As such, our Director of Pupil Services can no longer be co-appointed as the Administer of Special Education. The Director can, however, oversee the Administrator of Special Education. Our current structure includes the Director of Pupil Services as well as Coordinators for Early Childhood, K-6, 7-12, and Out of District. D. Moschos of Mirick O'Connell has advised us that the School Committee can appoint one of our Coordinators to be the legally required dedicated "Administrator of Special Education."

Once Dr. Brand appoints the Director of Pupil Services, we will review our structure and come back to the School Committee with a recommendation for a dedicated Special Education Administrator for you to appoint. We expect this structure to work within our existing positions and budget. We are happy to answer any questions.

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.

PART I ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT**TITLE XII** EDUCATION**CHAPTER 71B** CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**Section 3A** Administrator of special education; duties; joint appointment

Section 3A. (a) A school committee with four thousand or more children enrolled in its school system shall appoint a person to be its administrator of special education. Such administrator shall devote full time to the duties involved in supervising the provision of all special education in the school system.

(b) A school committee with less than four thousand children enrolled in its school system shall appoint a person to be its administrator of special education. Such administrator shall have the duties involved in supervising the provision of all special education in the school system and other duties if the special education duties are not such as to require the devotion of full time.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraphs (a) and (b), the school committee of any city, town, or school district may, to meet its obligations under this section, with the approval of the department, enter into an agreement with any other school committee to jointly appoint an administrator of special education. The department shall promulgate regulations to implement the provisions of this paragraph.



8.

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Marie Altieri

Director of Personnel and Administrative Services

To: Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee
Date: March 25, 2015
Re: Kindergarten Registration 2015

Kindergarten registration was held on January 20 and 21 for siblings and March 10 and 11 for new families. We have a total of 268 students registered at this time. We generally have an average of 25 more students register between now and August, although this can fluctuate. This would give us a class of 293. The projection estimated that we would have 308 students plus 7 staff children. If we have 293 students, we would have 18 or 19 students in each of our classes.

The attached chart will show you the choices by school and the requests for all day kindergarten. We have two kindergartens at Blanchard and Conant, and three kindergartens at each of the other elementary schools. Eight Acton students requested Blanchard, and one Boxborough student requested an Acton elementary school. We will need to have a lottery at Blanchard and Conant. The Boxborough students who requested Blanchard have a home-town guarantee, so the Acton families will be entered into the Blanchard lottery. Gates had two sections of kindergarten for two years, and now they have three. As a result, they did not have as many siblings as the other schools. This has left seats available at Gates for next year. If families who registered for Blanchard or Conant want to change their first choice to Gates, they will not be placed in the lottery.

Based on space and enrollment in all day kindergarten, we will be able to offer two all day kindergartens at McCarthy-Towne, Douglas and Blanchard. We will need to have a lottery for all day kindergarten at Conant and Merriam.

The lottery is scheduled for April 15, and parents will be notified of their school and placement in all day kindergarten by April 21. If any parents want to change their order of preference, they should email Nancy Carbutt at ncarbutt@abschools.org by April 7.

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Count of Those Who Had Special Requests

First Choice	Acton Resds	Boxborough Resds	Staff	Sibling	Retention	Walker	Special Needs	Total
Blanchard/Acton	8		1	3	0	0	0	3
Blanchard/Box		37		21	0	0	0	37
Conant	54	1	0	29	0	3	1	33
Douglas	50	0	0	32	0	0	0	32
Gates	21	0	1	14	0	0	2	16
Towne	41	0	3	26	0	3	1	30
Merriam	48	0	0	32	0	1	3	36
No School	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	222	38	5	157	0	7	7	187

Program	Total
All Day Blanchard	34
All Day Conant	38
All Day Douglas	35
All Day Gates	14
All Day Towne	34
All Day Merriam	35
All Day Sum	190

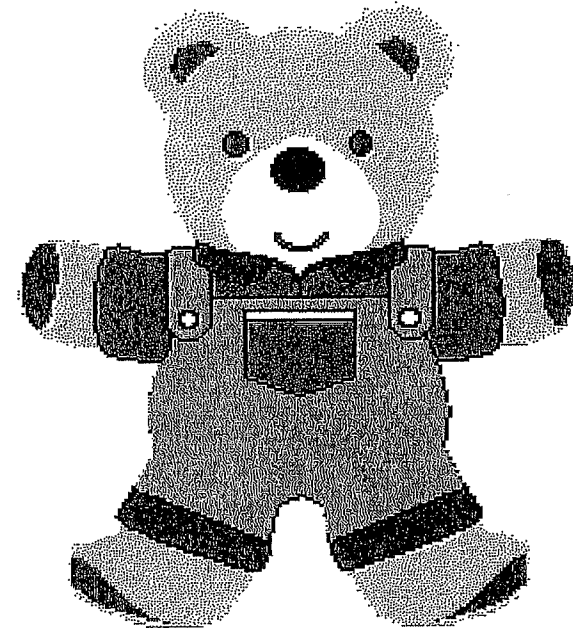
School Choices for All of Incoming Students

Choice	1	2	3	Total
Blanchard	46	4	12	62
Conant	55	19	15	89
Douglas	51	29	52	132
Gates	22	41	24	87
Towne	45	33	15	93
Merriam	49	32	26	107
No School	0	0	0	0
Total	268	158	144	570

School Choices for Those Without Priority

Choice	1	2	3	Total
Blanchard	5	3	9	17
Conant	22	10	6	38
Douglas	19	14	24	57
Gates	6	17	16	39
Towne	13	19	10	42
Merriam	13	18	14	45
No School	0	0	0	0
Total	78	81	79	238

All Students



Class of 2028

Regionalization Financial Benefits Tracking

Working Document

Tracking of Regionalization Staff Savings and Additional Regional Revenue

Regionalization Staff Savings	FY 15	FY 16
Eliminate Superintendent Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 164,625	\$ 168,741
Eliminate Business Manager Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 92,244	\$ 94,550
Eliminate Business Office Secretary Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 22,846	\$ 23,417
Eliminate SPED Secretary Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 22,845	\$ 23,416
Eliminate Contracted Services for SPED Dir at Blanchard	\$ 35,000	\$ 35,875
Eliminate Asst Principal/Add Principal at Blanchard	\$ (61,453)	\$ (62,989)
Eliminate Clerk/Receptionist Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 36,424	\$ 37,335
Eliminate Tech Support (Data Entry) Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 25,000	\$ 25,625
Add 10% Art Teacher Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ (7,872)	\$ (8,196)
Eliminate Phys Ed Teacher Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 47,623	\$ 49,585
Eliminate Cafeteria Manager Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 39,172	\$ 40,151
Eliminate Blanchard ELL Position/Share 50/50 with Douglas'	\$ 17,500	\$ 17,938
Eliminate Tech Specialist/Add Part-time Tech Position at Blanchard	\$ 94,600	\$ 97,000
Total Regionalization Staff Savings	\$ 528,554	\$ 542,447
Additional Regional Revenue	FY 15	FY 16
Lost Chapter 70 Aid due to Regionalization	\$ (156,287)	\$ (160,194)
Additional Grade K-6 Regional Transportation Revenue	\$ 550,589	\$ 520,078
Additional Regional Bonus Aid	\$ 139,000	\$ 111,200
Total Additional Regional Revenue	\$ 533,302	\$ 471,084
Total Financial Benefits without Efficiencies	\$ 1,061,856	\$ 1,013,531

Regionalization Financial Benefits Tracking

Working Document

Tracking of Efforts to Reduce Per Pupil Cost at Blanchard

The Regionalization Study Committee identified the need to bring the per pupil cost (PPC) at Blanchard in line with Acton elementary schools. To track efforts in this area, we include efficiencies that have occurred due to regionalization, as well as decreases due to other reasons such as lower enrollment. To conduct a more appropriate analysis, we will analyze the per pupil costs at each elementary school once FY 15 is closed. Until then, this analysis allows us to estimate progress in this area.

Efficiencies Due to Regionalization Contributing to Lower PPC	FY 15	FY 16
Eliminate SPED Chairperson Position at Blanchard (Salary) (a)	\$ 52,199	\$ 54,350
Eliminate Curriculum Specialist Position at Blanchard (Salary) (b)	\$ 77,491	\$ 80,684
Eliminate Speech & Language Position at Blanchard (Salary) (c)	\$ 52,550	\$ 54,715
Savings in Health Insurance due to Eliminated Positions (a-c)	\$ 42,604	\$ 46,012
Share Behavioral Specialist from Blanchard with Douglas (50/50)	\$ 45,500	\$ 46,638
Reduce/Eliminate Custodian Position at Blanchard (Salary)	\$ 32,683	\$ 67,000
Move SPED Teacher from Blanchard to Douglas	\$ -	\$ 85,000
<i>Total Savings from Regionalization Efficiencies</i>	\$ 303,026	\$ 434,398
Other Decreases Contributing to Lower PPC	FY 15	FY 16
Eliminate 1st Grade Teacher at Blanchard (Salary) (d)	\$ 50,123	\$ 52,188
Eliminate 6th Grade Teacher at Blanchard (Salary) (e)	\$ 59,614	\$ 62,070
Savings in Health Insurance due to Eliminated Positions (d&e)	\$ 32,648	\$ 35,260
Eliminate 2nd Grade Teacher at Blanchard (Salary) (w/health ins)	\$ -	\$ 85,000
<i>Total Savings from Other Decreases</i>	\$ 142,385	\$ 234,518
<i>Total Efforts to Reduce Per Pupil Cost at Blanchard</i>	\$ 445,412	\$ 668,916

Tracking of Regionalization Financial Benefits

Regionalization Financial Oversight Committee

March 30, 2015

Agenda

- Charge of Regional Finance Oversight Committee
- Comparing FY 16 Budget to Regionalization Projections
- Tracking of Financial Benefits
 - Regionalization Staff Savings
 - Additional Regional Revenue
 - Efficiencies Due to Regionalization
 - Decreases in Spending Due to Other Reasons

Regional Finance Oversight Committee

- Committee Members

Role	Acton	Boxborough
Board of Selectmen	Janet Adachi	Vince Amoroso
Finance Committee	Robert Evans	Jim Ham/Amy Burke
School Committee	Michael Coppolino	Mary Brolin

- Supported by:
 - Glenn Brand
 - Clare Jeannotte
 - Marie Altieri

Committee Charged to:

- Assess Annual Budgets Relative to Regionalization Projections
- Review Financial Benefits Due to:
 - Regionalization staff cuts
 - Additional Regionalization Revenues
- Assess Per Pupil Costs Across Elementary Schools
 - Track efficiencies achieved at Blanchard
 - Track other budget decreases at Blanchard
 - Review actual per pupil costs across elementary schools

FY 16 Budget vs Projections:

- Noted Discrepancies Between FY 16 Budget and Projections – FY 16 Budget Higher than Anticipated
- Assessing Drivers of Increased Budget for Annual Town Meeting
 - Identify Drivers
 - Estimate if Regionalization Projections were Off or if Increases are Due to Unanticipated Changes

Regionalization Staff Savings

	FY 15	FY 16
Eliminate Superintendent Position (Salary)	\$ 164,625	\$ 168,741
Eliminate Business Manager Position (Salary)	\$ 92,244	\$ 94,550
Eliminate Business Office Secretary (Salary)	\$ 22,846	\$ 23,417
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Add 10% Art Teacher Position (Salary)	\$ (7,872)	\$ (8,196)
Eliminate Phys Ed Teacher Position (Salary)	\$ 47,623	\$ 49,585
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Eliminate Tech Specialist/Add Part-time Tech	\$ 94,600	\$ 97,000
Total Regionalization Staff Savings	\$ 528,554	\$ 542,447

Additional Regional Revenue

	FY 15	FY 16
Lost Chapter 70 Aid due to Regionalization	\$ (156,287)	\$ (160,194)
Grade K-6 Regional Transportation Revenue	\$ 550,589	\$ 520,078
Regional Bonus Aid	\$ 139,000	\$ 111,200
<i>Total Additional Regional Revenue</i>	<i>\$ 533,302</i>	<i>\$ 471,084</i>

Note: Regional Bonus Aid is at risk in Governor Baker's 2016 proposed budget

Total Financial Benefits w/o Efficiencies

	FY 15	FY 16
Total Regionalization Staff Savings	\$ 528,554	\$ 542,447
Total Additional Regional Revenue	\$ 533,302	\$ 471,084
<i>Total Financial Benefits without Efficiencies</i>	<i>\$ 1,061,856</i>	<i>\$ 1,013,531</i>

Assessing Per Pupil Costs (PPC)

- Blanchard PPC higher, need to align
- When data available, will compare actual PPC across elementary schools
- To estimate now, looking at efficiencies due to regionalization, as well as other decreases

Tracking of Efforts to Reduce Per Pupil Cost at Blanchard: Efficiencies

	FY 15	FY 16
Eliminate SPED Chairperson Position (Salary-a)	\$ 52,199	\$ 54,350
Eliminate Curriculum Special Position (Salary-b)	\$ 77,491	\$ 80,684
Eliminate Speech & Lang Position (Salary-c)	\$ 52,550	\$ 54,715
Savings in HI due to Eliminated Positions (a-c)	\$ 42,604	\$ 46,012
Share Behavioral Specialist w/ Douglas (50/50)	\$ 45,500	\$ 46,638
Reduce/Eliminate Custodian Position (Salary)	\$ 32,683	\$ 67,000
Move SPED Teacher to Douglas	\$ -	\$ 85,000
<i>Total Savings Regionalization Efficiencies</i>	<i>\$ 303,026</i>	<i>\$ 434,398</i>

Tracking of Efforts to Reduce Per Pupil Cost at Blanchard: Other Decreases

	FY 15	FY 16
1 st Grade Blanchard Teacher Salary (c)	\$ 50,123	\$ 52,188
6 th Grade Blanchard Teacher Salary (d)	\$ 59,614	\$ 62,070
Health Insurance Savings (c&d)	\$ 32,648	\$ 35,260
2 nd Grade Blanchard Teacher Salary (w/health ins)	\$ -	\$ 85,000
<i>Total Savings from Other Decreases</i>	<i>\$ 142,385</i>	<i>\$ 234,518</i>

Tracking of Efforts to Reduce Per Pupil Cost at Blanchard: Total

	FY 15	FY 16
Total Savings from Regionalization Efficiencies	\$ 303,026	\$ 434,398
Total Savings from Other Decreases	\$ 142,385	\$ 234,518
<i>Total Efforts to Reduce PPC at Blanchard</i>	<i>\$ 445,412</i>	<i>\$ 668,916</i>

Summary

- Need to assess factors driving FY '16 budget higher than regionalization projections
- Financial benefits due to staff savings and new revenue are on target, although bonus aid at risk
- Efficiencies and other decreases suggest PPC at Blanchard coming in line
- Will need to assess actual per pupil costs with the close of each fiscal year

BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

First Reading 3-30-15

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (hereinafter referred to as “The District”) recognizes that safe learning environments are necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner with respect for differences and strives to provide and maintain safe and supportive learning and working environment for all students and employees. The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior that causes physical or emotional harm and absolutely prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. **This prohibition shall apply to all District employees, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians and students, including conduct between/among all parties.**

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O protects students from student-on-student and staff-on-student bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. In accordance with this state law, bullying and cyber-bullying of the district’s students are prohibited:

- (i) on school grounds, property immediately adjacent to school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district and
- (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying also is prohibited.

M.G.L. c. 71, § 37O defines bullying as “the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that:

- (i) causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim’s property;
- (ii) places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to himself or of damage to his property;
- (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the victim;
- (iv) infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or
- (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.”

Bullying may include conduct such as physical intimidation or assault, including intimidating an individual into taking an action against his/her will; oral or written threats; teasing; putdowns; name-calling; stalking; threatening looks, gestures, or actions; cruel rumors; false accusations; and social isolation.

Cyber-bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71, s. 37O is “bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire,

radio, electromagnetic, photo electronic or photo optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications. Cyber-bullying also includes:

- (i) the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person;
- (ii) the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying; and
- (iii) the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated above in clauses (i) to (v), inclusive, of the definition of bullying.”

Cyber-bullying may include conduct such as sending derogatory, harassing or threatening email messages, instant messages, or text messages; creating websites that ridicule, humiliate, or intimidate others; and posting on websites or disseminating embarrassing or inappropriate pictures or images of others.

Reporting Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

A culture of openness is considered the most effective means for countering bullying behavior. It is the responsibility of each member of the school community: students, staff and parents to report instances of bullying or retaliation, with the understanding that such reports will be listened to and taken seriously.

- a. Any school staff employee that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying or retaliation shall immediately report it to the principal or designee. This includes bullying of a student by another student or by a staff member.
- b. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing.
- c. The District will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school and home community including, but not limited to, an incident reporting form, a voice mailbox, a dedicated mailing address and an email address. Reports of bullying and/or retaliation, reported by students, parents or guardians, or other non-school staff, may be made anonymously but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of these anonymous reports.
- d. Reports by school staff, parents or guardians and others generally should be made to the principal or designee. However, if the principal is the alleged aggressor, the report should be made to the Superintendent. In such circumstances, the Superintendent or designee will be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the report should be made to the School Committee, which shall then be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target.

Responding to Potential Bullying or Retaliation by A Student:

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or designee will take

steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal or designee will take steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary for all parties involved.

The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who has provided information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

1. Investigative Procedures for Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying or retaliation has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying v. peer conflict). Once determined, outreach to the target and family shall occur **concurrently** with a commitment to addressing the needs of the target, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing formative/educational consequences for aggressors.

Steps to be taken should include:

- a. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- b. Identify aggressor(s), target(s), and bystanders
- c. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the target(s).
- d. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus.
- e. Immediately remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- f. Have conversations with all parties.
- g. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation; notice of confidentiality.
- h. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of target(s).
- i. Collection and documentation of data.

Non-Classroom Supervision:

Each school must supervise non-classroom areas. The review and exchange of information regarding non-classroom areas are important to:

- a. Determine “hot spots” that bullying and/or retaliation may more likely occur.
- b. Consider ways of keeping certain groups or students apart during transitions, or building positive collaborations between older and younger students.
- c. Consider adult density in “hot spots” if necessary.

2. Consequences from Findings:

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the District use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(d)(v). Skill building approaches include offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our District's anti-bullying curricula, providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with our counselors and psychologists, implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral support to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals, meeting with parents and guardians to engage parent support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home, adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and making a referral for evaluation.

If the Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in cooperation with the State laws regarding student discipline, govern discipline procedures for eligible students with disabilities protected by these laws.

If the Principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, the student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Consequences for bullying or retaliation should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner. Consequences may be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, is as follows:

- a. Verbal reprimand
- b. Temporary removal from the classroom
- c. Loss of privileges, including before and after school activities
- d. Time-out
- e. Notice to parent
- f. Supervised break times
- g. Detention
- h. In-school suspension
- i. Out-of-school suspension
- j. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- k. Reassignment of classes

- l. Referral to an outside agency
- m. Reassignment to another school or another mode of transportation
- n. Expulsion
- o. Report to law enforcement

In addition, formative activities will be given, which may include:

- a. Reparation to the target (recognizing that direct apology may be contraindicated)
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

3. Notification Obligations:

Notice to another school or district: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations of 603 CMR 49.00, including 49.05 paragraph 4:

“A principal's notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, as set forth in 603 CMR 49.07.”

The Principal or designees will notify the parents/guardians of the acts the District has taken to prevent further acts of bullying and retaliation through consequences and formative activities, as discussed above. Moreover, the school will notify the parents/guardians about the range of services, including, but not limited to, counseling (guidance, adjustment counseling, school psychology intervention) both individually and in group, social groups (social skills building, social pragmatic groups), friendship groups, discussion groups, role-playing groups, etc. that are specifically designed to address issues of bullying and retaliation. These individual and group interventions are designed to teach generalization skills. Staff will be given time to regularly communicate and collaborate with each other to ensure consistent reinforcement of a student's specific skills, adjust the school environment to meet that student's needs, and be notified to prevent any further acts of bullying and retaliation. Specialists will consult with staff to help students becoming targets and/or aggressors. These acts will be discussed openly with the parents/guardians to establish a trusting relationship between home and school.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirement of 603 CMR 49.00.

In making these determinations, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer and the Superintendent or designee. At all times, schools will remain sensitive to the confidentiality of all parties, but may not be able to preserve fully the confidential nature of the allegation.

Responding to Allegations of Bullying by School Staff

Upon receipt of a report of alleged bullying of a student by school staff, the principal/designee will be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target where necessary. If the principal is the alleged aggressor, then the Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for such actions. In the event the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee/designee shall be responsible for such actions.

A staff member who is the subject of a complaint of a serious nature will be informed promptly and will be afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them, in accordance with district policies and procedures, including any applicable collective bargaining agreements.

Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation by staff are consistent with district policies and procedures for investigations of other alleged misconduct by staff. If necessary, the designated school official will consult with legal counsel about such procedures. Investigations may include interviews of staff, students and others as deemed appropriate. School officials will remind individuals (1) that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action and (2) of the importance of being truthful. To the extent practicable given their obligation to investigate and address the allegations at issue, the school officials will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process.

In the event a designated school official determines that the staff member has engaged in bullying of or retaliation against a student, the student's parent/guardian will be notified of what action is being taken to prevent further such acts and to restore the student's sense of safety. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of personnel records, the school official will not report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about any disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.

In the event disciplinary action against an employee is under consideration, appropriate due process will be provided. Any disciplinary action imposed will be based upon facts found by the designated school official and appropriate standards and expectations in light of the employee's role and responsibilities. School officials will develop a method to record confirmed acts of bullying by staff.

School-wide Bullying Prevention and Intervention Program

All Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will include a bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program by providing the necessary funding, training and staff time. Each school is directed to develop or adopt a research based bullying prevention curriculum that includes the major components listed in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention procedures. Additionally, bullying prevention and intervention will include a team approach for the systematic tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the school based Bullying Prevention program

with special emphasis on analyzing incidents for systemic intervention at the school building level and the school system at large.

Each Team will:

- Consist of members appointed by the principal including but not limited to the following constituents: Building Principal or Assistant Principal, Teacher representative(s), Counselor/Psychologist/Special Educator.
- Additional collaboration from Pupil Services administration and/or School Nurse.
- Meet a minimum of two times during the school year.
- By the beginning of the school year:
 - Distribute Policy and procedures to all students, parents, faculty and staff (student handbook, annual written notice, website, employee handbook, etc.)
 - Notify the Superintendent of Schools in writing of their school's compliance with this Policy and submit a copy of the bullying prevention and intervention procedures adopted for each school.
- Yearly, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedures.
- By June of each year, provide a brief annual summary to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with recommendations for building based enhancements/improvements.

The Superintendent or designated representative has operational responsibility for the District's implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy.

See Procedures at JICFB-R

File: JBA, ADA
CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JICFA-E, Hazing

Revised: 12/2/10
Approved:

Existing Policy

11.2.2

File: JICFB

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION POLICY

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (hereinafter referred to as "The District") recognizes that safe learning environments are necessary for students to learn and achieve high academic standards. The District expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner with respect for differences and strives to provide and maintain safe and supportive learning and working environment for all students and employees. The District will not tolerate any unlawful or disruptive behavior that causes physical or emotional harm and absolutely prohibits bullying, cyber-bullying and retaliation. This prohibition shall apply to all District employees, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and students, including conduct between/among all parties.

Bullying behaviors are persistent, pervasive or chronic which intimidate and/or intentionally harm or threaten to harm someone in a physical/emotional manner. Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through electronic, written, verbal, physical acts, either direct or indirect, mental and/or visual, when such intentional behavior substantially interferes with a student's education, threatens the overall educational environment, and/or substantially disrupts the operation of the school. These behaviors include maliciously teasing, taunting, name-calling, sexual remarks, stealing or damaging an individual's possessions, spreading rumors, or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone. This intentional behavior includes but is not limited to harassment, intimidation, and bullying based upon race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, physical appearance, or mental, physical or sensory disability.

The School Committees expect administrators and supervisors to make clear to students and staff that bullying behaviors (as defined above) in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school-sanctioned transportation, or at school-sponsored functions will not be tolerated. The range of disciplinary action includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the following: verbal warnings, written warnings, reprimands, detentions, short-term or long-term suspensions, or expulsions from school as determined by the school administration and/or school committee, subject to applicable procedural requirements. Nothing in this policy is intended to prevent the school administration and/or school committee from taking disciplinary action against a student for conduct that does not meet the definition of bullying or cyber-bullying, as defined above, but nevertheless is inappropriate for the school environment.

Furthermore, the Districts will immediately investigate allegations of bullying, including cyberbullying, intimidation, and/or harassment. The Principal of each building, or his/her designee, will be responsible for responding to all complaints by students alleging harassment, including bullying, in accordance with harassment. If it is determined that bullying has occurred, the Principal and/or designee will: 1) determine what remedial action is required, if any, and 2) determine what responsive actions and/or disciplinary action is necessary. In this regard, schools will remain sensitive to the confidentiality of all parties, but may not be able to preserve fully the confidential nature of the allegation.

All schools in Acton and Acton-Boxborough will include a bullying prevention and intervention plan that is proactive and educational, in keeping with the guidelines published by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The district is committed to supporting each school in their adoption of a school-wide bullying prevention and intervention program by providing the necessary funding, training and staff time. Each school is directed to develop or adopt a research based bullying

File: JICFB

prevention curriculum that include the major components listed in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention procedures. Additionally, bullying prevention and intervention will include a team approach for the systematic tracking, monitoring and evaluation of the school based Bullying Prevention program with special emphasis on analyzing incidents for systemic intervention at the school building level and the school system at large.

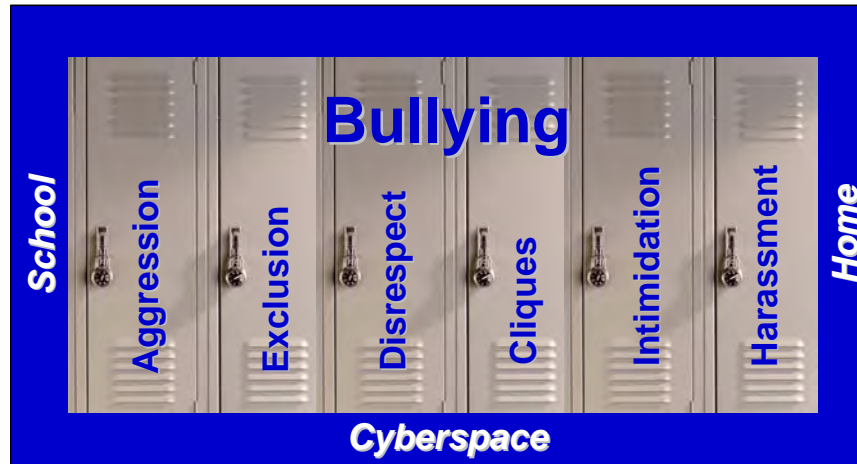
Each Team will:

- Consist of members appointed by the principal including but not limited to the following constituents: Building Principal or Assistant Principal, Teacher representative(s), Counselor/Psychologist/Special Educator.
- Additional collaboration from Pupil Services administration and/or School Nurse.
- Meet a minimum of two times during the school year.
- By the beginning of the school year:
 - Distribute Policy and procedures to all students, parents, faculty and staff (student handbook, annual written notice, website, employee handbook, etc.)
 - Notify the Superintendent of Schools in writing of their school's compliance with this Policy and submit a copy of the bullying prevention and intervention procedures adopted for each school.
- Yearly, monitor and review the effectiveness of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Procedures.
- By June of each year, provide a brief annual summary to the Superintendent of Schools regarding the implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy with recommendations for building based enhancements/improvements.

The Superintendent or designated representative has operational responsibility for the Districts' implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy.

File: JBA, ADA
CROSS REFS.: AC, Nondiscrimination
ACAB, Sexual Harassment
JICFA-E, Hazing

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
16 Charter Road
Acton, MA 01720
Telephone: 978-264-4700



Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

December 2, 2010
Approved March 18, 2011
Updated August 2014 and March 2015

In June 2008, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District established a Bullying Prevention and Intervention Task Force, including parents, guardians, teachers, administrators, counselors, and law enforcement. As a committee, our goal was to ensure ownership for our Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan, reflecting a safe environment built on respect for differences and comprehensive in scope. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan applies to students and school staff, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. This document is posted on the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools website and was distributed to community partners for public access. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan will be reviewed and updated at least biennially, as mandated by M.G.L. c. 71, § 15

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
BULLYING PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PLAN

Statement of Purpose:

The school district expects that all members of the school community will treat each other in a civil manner and with respect for differences.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District is committed to providing all students with a safe learning environment that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. This commitment is an integral part of the District's comprehensive efforts to promote learning, and to prevent and eliminate all forms of bullying and other harmful and disruptive behavior that can impede the learning process.

We recognize that certain students may be more vulnerable to becoming targets of bullying or harassment based on actual or perceived characteristics, including race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, sex, socioeconomic status, homelessness, academic status, gender identity or expression, physical appearance, pregnant or parenting status, sexual orientation, mental, physical, developmental or sensory disability or by association with a person who has or is perceived to have one or more of these characteristics.

Leadership at all levels will play a critical role in the development and implementation of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan ("Plan") in the context of the District, school and community efforts to promote a positive environment (wellness, safety initiatives, demographic study, etc.), through public involvement in developing the Plan, assessing needs and resources, and planning and oversight.

The Plan was developed in consultation and collaboration with teachers, school staff, professional support staff, administrators, community representatives, including parents and/or guardians, and local law enforcement agencies. A task force was developed which represented a wide variety of positions to make our plan representative of all constituencies. The task force provided public notice and a public comment period before adopting the policy voted on by the School Committee.

This Plan was part of the District's blueprint for enhancing capacity to prevent and respond to issues of bullying within the context of our other initiatives listed above. School leaders, with input from home and school, assessed the adequacy of current programs, reviewed current policies and procedures, reviewed available data on bullying and other behavioral incidents, and assessed available resources (and funding) for curricula options, training programs, and behavioral health services. As part of this review, we have set priorities for the review of School Committee policies and subsequent procedures that affect these initiatives that promote a safe environment. Extensive collaboration is done with our community law enforcement agency.

Consequently, this Plan is a comprehensive approach to addressing bullying and cyber bullying, and the District is committed to working with students, staff, families, law enforcement agencies, and the community to prevent issues of violence.

Major components include:

- Development of a community culture that publicly communicates that bullying is unacceptable in any form.
- Commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for vulnerable populations in the school community.
- Commitment to a pro-social, research-based curriculum and/or program that promotes positive peer relations.
- Commitment to addressing the needs of the target concurrently with the on-going investigation and response to the bully.
- Annual discussion of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan with students (no later than October 1st of each year).
- Adequate supervision of students to address bullying prevention and intervention.
- Ongoing training and support of teachers and school staff in the use of proactive and effective strategies for responding to bullying and supporting bystanders and targets.
- Systematic review of the overall bullying prevention and intervention approaches used by the school.

As required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 370, this Plan was initially developed with various constituencies; Acton and Acton-Boxborough administrators, faculty and staff, interested community representatives, students, parents, guardians, and the Acton and Acton-Boxborough School Committees. In consultation with these constituencies, we have established this Plan for preventing, intervening, and responding to incidents of bullying, cyber-bullying, and retaliation. The Principals are responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan at their respective buildings.

Definitions:

In order to work as collaboratively and as effectively as possible, to prevent and intervene on all acts of bullying, it is essential for administrators, faculty, staff, students, parents, guardians, law enforcement agencies, and other interested parties to use common language. The following definitions are provided to facilitate this goal.

Aggressor is a student or a member of a school staff who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation towards a student.

Bullying, as defined in M.G.L. c.71 § 370, is the repeated use by one or more students or a member of a school staff of a written, verbal, or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a target that:

- i. causes physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property;
- ii. places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself or of damage to his or her property;
- iii. creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
- iv. infringes on the rights of the target at school; or
- v. materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Cyber-bullying, is bullying through the use of technology or electronic devices such as telephones, cell phones, computers, and the Internet. It includes, but is not limited to, email, instant messages, text messages, and Internet postings. See M.G.L. c.71 § 370 for the legal definition of cyber-bullying.

Hostile environment, as defined in M.G.L. c. 71 § 370, is a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule, or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of a student's education.

Retaliation is any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.

Staff includes, but is not limited to, educators, administrators, counselors, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to extracurricular activities, support staff, or paraprofessionals.

Target is a student against whom bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.

Relationship to Other Laws:

Consistent with state and federal laws, and the policies of the District, no person shall be discriminated against in admission to a public school of any town or in obtaining the advantages, privilege and courses of study of such public school on account of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, gender identity, disability, ancestry or sexual orientation (Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA, MGL.ch.76, sec.5). Nothing in this Plan prevents the District from taking action to remediate discrimination or harassment based upon a person's membership in a legally protected category under local, state, or federal law, or the District's policies.

Additionally, nothing in this Plan is designed or intended to limit the authority of the school or district to take disciplinary action or other action under M.G.L., c.71, §§ 37H, 37H1/2, 37H3/4, M.G.L. c. 71 §§ 41, 42, 42D, other applicable laws, District policies, or collective bargaining agreements in response to violent, harmful, disruptive or other inappropriate behavior, regardless of whether the Plan covers the behavior.

Bullying behaviors generally are persistent, pervasive or chronic which intimidate and/or intentionally harm or threaten to harm someone in a physical/emotional manner. Bullying is defined as the act of one or more individuals intimidating one or more persons through electronic, written, verbal, physical acts or gestures or any combination thereof, either direct or indirect, mental and/or visual, when such intentional behavior substantially interferes with a student's education, threatens the overall educational environment, and/or substantially disrupts the orderly operation of the school.

These behaviors include physical or emotional harm to the target or damage to the target's property, placing the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself or herself, or of damage to his or her property, creating a hostile environment for the target, or infringing on the rights of the target at school. Specific examples include but are not limited to maliciously teasing, taunting, name-calling, sexual remarks, stealing or damaging an individual's possessions, spreading rumors, or encouraging others to reject or exclude someone. This intentional behavior includes but is not limited to harassment, intimidation, and bullying based upon race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, pregnancy, marital status, physical appearance, or mental, physical or sensory disability. Retaliation is prohibited and includes any form of intimidation, reprisal, or harassment directed against a student who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying. This prohibition shall apply to all District employees, contractors, volunteers, parents/guardians, and students, including conduct between/among all parties.

Peer conflict involves disagreement and oppositional interactions which are situational, immediate, and developmentally appropriate. These latter behaviors, with adult guidance and modeling, assist in developing new skills in social competency, learning personal boundaries and conflict resolution strategies.

As defined in the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy, bullying can be any intentional written, electronic, verbal or physical act or actions against a student, school volunteer or school employee that a reasonable person, under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:

- a. Placing a student, school volunteer or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his or her emotional or physical well-being or damage to his or her property,
- b. Creating a hostile, threatening, humiliating or abusive educational environment due to the pervasiveness or persistence of actions or due to a power differential between the bully and the target,
- c. Interfering with a student, school volunteer or school employee having a safe environment that is necessary to facilitate educational achievement, opportunities or benefits,
- d. Perpetuating bullying by inciting, soliciting or coercing an individual or group to demean, dehumanize, embarrass or cause emotional, psychological or physical harm to another student, school employee, or school volunteer,
- e. Infringing on the rights of the other student, school volunteer or school employee at school, or
- f. Materially and substantially disrupting the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Policies and Procedures for Reporting and Responding to Bullying and Retaliation

A. Planning and Oversight:

The building principal or designee is ultimately responsible for the following tasks under the Plan:

- a. Receiving reports on bullying or retaliation;
- b. Collecting and analyzing school-wide data on bullying to assess the present level of need and measure improved outcomes;
- c. Annually reporting the school's bullying incident data to the Massachusetts DESE and administering a DESE-developed student survey to assess school climate and the prevalence, nature, and severity of bullying in the school at least once every four years beginning with the 2015-2016 school year;
- d. Creating a process for recording and tracking incident reports, and for accessing information related to targets and aggressors;
- e. Implementing the ongoing professional development that is required by law;
- f. Identifying support strategies that respond to the needs of targets and student aggressors;
- g. Choosing and implementing, in partnership with central office administrators, the curricula that the school or district will use;
- h. Amending the student and staff handbooks and codes of conduct to, among other things, make clear that bullying of students by school staff or other students will not be tolerated; and,
- i. Leading the parent or family engagement efforts and drafting parent information materials.

The Director of Technology will be responsible for updating the Acceptable Use Policy.

B. Reporting Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

A culture of openness is considered the most effective means for countering bullying behavior. It is the responsibility of each member of the school community: students, staff and parents to report instances of bullying or retaliation, with the understanding that such reports will be listened to and taken seriously.

- a. Any school staff that has reliable information that would lead a reasonable person to suspect that a person is a target of bullying or retaliation shall immediately report it to the principal or designee. This includes bullying of a student by another student or by a staff member.
- b. Oral reports made by or to a staff member shall be recorded in writing.
- c. The District will make a variety of reporting resources available to the school and home community including, but not limited to, an incident reporting form, a voice mailbox, a dedicated mailing address and an email address. Reports of bullying and/or retaliation, reported by students, parents or guardians, or other non-school staff, may be made anonymously but no disciplinary action will be taken against an alleged aggressor solely on the basis of these anonymous reports.
- d. Reports by school staff, parents or guardians and others generally should be made to the principal or designee. However, if the principal is the alleged aggressor, the report should be made to the Superintendent. In such circumstances, the Superintendent or designee will be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target. If the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the report should be made to the School Committee, which shall then be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target.

C. Responding to Potential Bullying or Retaliation by a Student:

Before fully investigating the allegations of bullying or retaliation, the Principal or designee will take steps to assess the need to restore a sense of safety to the alleged target and/or to protect the alleged target from possible further incidents. Responses to promote safety may include, but not be limited to, creating a personal safety plan; pre-determining seating arrangements for the target and/or the aggressor in the classroom, at lunch, or on the bus; identifying a staff member who will act as a “safe person” for the target; and altering the aggressor’s schedule and access to the target. The Principal or designee will take steps to promote safety during the course of and after the investigation, as necessary for all parties involved.

The Principal or designee will implement appropriate strategies for protecting a student who has reported bullying or retaliation, a student who has witnessed bullying or retaliation, a student who has provided information during an investigation, or a student who has reliable information about a reported act of bullying or retaliation.

1. Investigative Procedures for Potential Bullying or Retaliation:

Each school is required to investigate in a timely manner and determine whether or not bullying or retaliation has occurred. This requires a determination as to the nature of the incident (bullying

v. peer conflict). Once determined, outreach to the target and family shall occur concurrently with a commitment to addressing the needs of the target, identifying and educating bystanders, and providing formative/educational consequences for aggressors.

Steps to be taken should include:

- a. Determine the nature, chronicity, and severity of the presenting situation.
- b. Identify aggressor(s), target(s), and bystanders
- c. Provide a safety and comfort plan for the target(s).
- d. Identify whether or not the bullying has occurred on or off campus.
- e. Immediately remind the alleged student aggressor, target, and witnesses of the importance of the investigation, their obligation to be truthful and that retaliation against someone who reports bullying or provides information during a bullying investigation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- f. Have conversations with all parties.
- g. Inform parents, guardians and all relevant adults of initial investigation; notice of confidentiality.
- h. Establish a timetable for following up with parents, especially parents of target(s).
- i. Collection and documentation of data.

Non-Classroom Supervision:

Each school must supervise non-classroom areas. The review and exchange of information regarding non-classroom areas are important to:

- a. Determine “hot spots” that bullying and/or retaliation may more likely occur.
- b. Consider ways of keeping certain groups or students apart during transitions, or building positive collaborations between older and younger students.
- c. Consider adult density in “hot spots” if necessary.

2. Consequences from Findings:

Upon the principal or designee determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the law requires that the District use a range of responses that balance the need for accountability with the need to teach appropriate behavior M.G.L. c. 71 § 370(d)(v). Skill building approaches include offering individualized skill-building sessions based on our District's anti-bullying curricula, providing relevant educational activities for individual students or groups of students, in consultation with our counselors and psychologists, implementing a range of academic and non-academic positive behavioral support to help students understand pro-social ways to achieve their goals, meeting with parents and guardians to engage parent support and to reinforce the anti-bullying curricula and social skills building activities at home, adopting behavioral plans to include a focus on developing specific social skills, and making a referral for evaluation.

If the Principal or designee decides that disciplinary action is appropriate, the disciplinary action will be determined on the basis of facts found by the Principal or designee, including the nature of the conduct, the age of the student(s) involved, and the need to balance the Plan and with the school's or district's code of conduct.

The federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504, which should be read in cooperation with the State laws regarding student discipline, govern discipline procedures for eligible students with disabilities protected by these laws.

If the Principal or designee determines that a student knowingly made a false allegation of bullying or retaliation, the student may be subject to disciplinary action.

Consequences for bullying or retaliation should be immediately and consistently applied and must be delivered in a non-hostile manner. Consequences may be disagreeable or uncomfortable but should not involve revenge or hostile punishment.

Consequences should consider these specific issues:

- a. Nature, severity, and chronicity of the behavioral impact on the target
- b. Degree of physical, psychological, social harm on the target
- c. Student's age, development and degree of maturity
- d. Surrounding circumstances and context in which the incident(s) occurred
- e. Prior disciplinary history and continuing patterns of behavior
- f. Relationship between and among the parties involved
- g. Context in which the alleged incident(s) occurred
- h. The need to balance accountability with the teaching of appropriate behavior.

The appropriate range of consequences, subject to due process where appropriate, is as follows:

- a. Verbal reprimand
- b. Temporary removal from the classroom
- c. Loss of privileges, including before and after school activities
- d. Time-out
- e. Notice to parent
- f. Supervised break times
- g. Detention
- h. In-school suspension
- i. Out-of-school suspension
- j. Reassignment of seats in lunch, bus, class, etc.
- k. Reassignment of classes

- l. Referral to an outside agency
- m. Reassignment to another school or another mode of transportation
- n. Expulsion
- o. Report to law enforcement

In addition, formative activities will be given, which may include:

- a. Reparation to the target (recognizing that direct apology may be contraindicated)
- b. Completion of curricular based assignment(s)
- c. Meeting with Civil Rights Coordinator
- d. Completion of community service designed to help the aggressor understand and respect differences; written report required by the aggressor
- e. Therapeutic support for both aggressor and targets

3. Notification Obligations:

Notice to another school or district: If an incident of bullying or retaliation involves students from more than one school district, commonwealth charter school, or non-public school, a school administrator shall promptly notify the appropriate administrator of the other school or district so that both may take appropriate action.

Notice to parents or guardians: Upon determining that bullying or retaliation has occurred, the Principal or designee will promptly notify the parents or guardians of the target and the student aggressor of this, and the procedures for responding to it. There may be circumstances in which the Principal or designee contacts parents or guardians prior to any investigation. Notice will be consistent with state regulations of 603 CMR 49.00.

The Principal or designees will notify the parents/guardians of the acts the District has taken to prevent further acts of bullying and retaliation through consequences and formative activities, as discussed above. Moreover, the school will notify the parents/guardians about the range of services, including, but not limited to, counseling (guidance, adjustment counseling, school psychology intervention) both individually and in group, social groups (social skills building, social pragmatic groups), friendship groups, discussion groups, role-playing groups, etc. that are specifically designed to address issues of bullying and retaliation. These individual and group interventions are designed to teach generalization skills. Staff will be given time to regularly communicate and collaborate with each other to ensure consistent reinforcement of a student's specific skills, adjust the school environment to meet that student's needs, and be notified to prevent any further acts of bullying and retaliation. Specialists will consult with staff to help students becoming targets and/or aggressors. These acts will be discussed openly with the parents/guardians to establish a trusting relationship between home and school.

Notice to law enforcement: At any point after receiving a report of bullying or retaliation, including after an investigation, if the Principal or designee has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the student aggressor, the Principal will notify the local law enforcement agency. Notice will be consistent with the requirement of 603 CMR 49.00.

In making these determinations, the Principal will, consistent with the Plan and with applicable school or district policies and procedures, consult with the school resource officer and the Superintendent or designee. At all times, schools will remain sensitive to the confidentiality of all parties, but may not be able to preserve fully the confidential nature of the allegation.

D. Responding to Allegations of Bullying by School Staff

- Upon receipt of a report of alleged bullying of a student by school staff, the principal/designee will be responsible for taking appropriate actions in accordance with this Plan and other applicable district policies and procedures, including providing for the safety of the alleged target where necessary. If the principal is the alleged aggressor, then the Superintendent/designee shall be responsible for such actions. In the event the Superintendent is the alleged aggressor, the School Committee/designee shall be responsible for such actions.
- A staff member who is the subject of a complaint of a serious nature will be informed promptly and will be afforded the opportunity to present the facts as he/she sees them, in accordance with district policies and procedures, including any applicable collective bargaining agreements.
- Procedures for investigating reports of bullying and retaliation by staff are consistent with district policies and procedures for investigations of other alleged misconduct by staff. If necessary, the designated school official will consult with legal counsel about such procedures. Investigations may include interviews of staff, students and others as deemed appropriate. School officials will remind individuals (1) that retaliation is strictly prohibited and will result in disciplinary action and (2) of the importance of being truthful. To the extent practicable given their obligation to investigate and address the allegations at issue, the school officials will maintain confidentiality during the investigative process.
- In the event a designated school official determines that the staff member has engaged in bullying of or retaliation against a student, the student's parent/guardian will be notified of what action is being taken to prevent further such acts and to restore the student's sense of safety. All notice to parents must comply with applicable state and federal privacy laws and regulations. Because of the legal requirements regarding the confidentiality of personnel records, the school official will not report specific information to the target's parent or guardian about any disciplinary action taken unless it involves a "stay away" order or other directive that the target must be aware of in order to report violations.
- In the event disciplinary action against an employee is under consideration, appropriate due process will be provided. Any disciplinary action imposed will be based upon facts found by the designated school official and appropriate standards and expectations in light of the employee's role and responsibilities. School officials will develop a method to record confirmed acts of bullying by staff.

E. Problem Resolution System:

Any parent wishing to file a claim/concern or seeking assistance outside of the school district may do so with the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Problem Resolution System (PRS). Information about the PRS can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa> or individuals may send emails to compliance@doe.mass.edu or may call 781-338-3700. In addition, the Superintendent's office has hard copies of information about the PRS.

Collaboration with Families:

The Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools, in collaboration with parent associations, will offer education programs for parents and guardians that are focused on the parental components of the anti-bullying curricula and any social competency curricula used by the district or individual school.

Each year the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will inform parents or guardians of enrolled students about the anti-bullying curricula that is being used. This notice will include information about the dynamics of bullying, including cyber-bullying and online safety. The schools or district will send parents written notice every year about the student-related sections of the Plan and the school's or district's Internet safety policy. All notices and information made available to parents or guardians will be in hard copy and electronic formats, and will be available in the language(s) most prevalent among parents or guardians. The District will further post the Plan and related information on its website.

Access to Resources and Services:

A key aspect of promoting positive school climates is ensuring that the underlying emotional needs of targets, student aggressors, families, and others are addressed. In this regard, the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will refer families/guardians of targets and student aggressors to a variety of appropriate resources within the District. The Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools utilize school counselors and school psychologists who assist in developing safety plans for students who have been targets of bullying or retaliation, providing social skills programs to prevent bullying, and offering education and/or intervention services for students exhibiting bullying behaviors. The Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools utilize a variety of tools including, but not limited to, behavioral intervention plans, social skills groups, and individually focused curricula. Translators are provided as needed. In some cases, families/guardians of targets and student aggressors will be referred to appropriate counseling services outside the school. The District will have the upmost respect and sensitivity for families of targets and student aggressors and offer help for families to determine the appropriate service for them.

As required by M.G. L. c. 71B, § 3, as amended by Chapter 92 of the Acts of 2010, when the IEP Team determines the student has a disability that affects social skills development or the student may participate in or is vulnerable to bullying, harassment, or teasing because of his/her disability, the Team will consider what should be included in the IEP to develop the student's skills and proficiencies to avoid and respond to bullying, harassment, or teasing. All special education staff is annually trained on this requirement.

All resources are evaluated on design engaging to students, in keeping with the District's core values, and culturally and linguistically appropriate and linked to community service agencies.

Ongoing Academic and Non-Academic Activities for Students:

Bullying prevention curricula will be informed by current research (evidence-based), which, among other things, emphasizes the following approaches:

- a. Using scripts, role plays, and social stories to develop skills;
- b. Empowering students to take action by knowing what to do when they witness other students or school staff engaged in acts of bullying or retaliation, including seeking adult assistance;

- c. Helping students understand the dynamics of bullying and cyber-bullying, including the underlying power imbalance;
- d. Emphasizing cyber-safety, including safe and appropriate use of electronic communication technologies;
- e. Enhancing students' skills for engaging in healthy relationships and respectful verbal and written communications; and,
- f. Engaging students in a safe supportive school environment that is respectful of diversity and difference.

The following approaches are integral to establishing a safe and supportive school environment. These underscore the importance of our bullying intervention and prevention initiatives.

- a. Setting clear expectations for students and establishing school and classroom routines;
- b. Creating safe school and classroom environments for all students, including for students with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender students, and homeless students;
- c. Using appropriate and positive responses and reinforcement, even when students require discipline;
- d. Using positive behavioral supports;
- e. Encouraging adults to develop positive relationships with students;
- f. Modeling, teaching, and rewarding pro-social, healthy, and respectful behaviors;
- g. Using positive approaches to behavioral health, including collaborative problem-solving, conflict resolution training, teamwork, and positive behavioral supports that aid in social and emotional development;
- h. Using the Internet safely; and
- i. Supporting students' interest and participation in non-academic and extracurricular activities, particularly in their areas of strength.

Ongoing Professional Development:

In general, professional development opportunities will establish a common understanding of tools necessary for staff to create a school climate that promotes safety, constructive management for classroom behaviors, civil communication, empathy and respect for differences. Specifically, the District will provide an annual school based bullying prevention and intervention training each year for all employees to include staff duties under the Plan (found also in the District employee handbook and code of conduct), an overview of the steps that the Principal and/or designee will follow upon receipt of a report, and an overview of the bullying prevention curricula to be offered at all grades. All staff members hired after the start of the school year is required to participate in school-based training during the school year in which they are hired.

The content of such on-going professional development will include:

- a. Developmentally appropriate strategies for immediate, effective interventions to prevent and/or stop bullying incidents,
- b. Information regarding the complex interaction and power differential that can take place between and among an aggressor, target, and witness to the bullying,
- c. Research findings including information about specific categories of students who have been shown to be particularly at risk for bullying in the school environment, including, a particular focus of the student on the autism spectrum or students whose disability affects social skill development, information on the incident and nature of cyber-bullying, and internet safety as they relate to cyber-bullying.

- d. Ways to prevent and respond to bullying or retaliation for students with disabilities, which must be considered in the development of the student's Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
- e. Engaging staff and those responsible for the implementation and oversight of the Plan to distinguish between acceptable managerial behaviors designed to correct misconduct, instill accountability in the school setting, etc. and bullying behaviors

For parents and guardians, the District will offer education programs that are focused on the parental components of the bullying prevention curricula and any social competency curricula used by the District or school. The programs will be offered in collaboration with the PTO, School Councils, Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or similar organizations.

13.

**TOWN OF ACTON
2015 ELECTION CALENDAR**

Annual Town Election is March 31, 2015
Annual Town Meeting is April 6, 2015

Last day to obtain nomination papers February 6, 2015

Last day to file nomination papers with Board of Registrars February 10, 2015

Last day to object / withdraw February 26, 2015

Last day to register voters March 11, 2015

Last day to post town warrant March 17, 2015

TOWN OFFICIALS TO BE ELECTED IN 2015 - TERM OF OFFICE

Moderator

1 Member – 1 year term

Acton Board of Selectmen

1 Member- 3 year term

School Committee

2 Members- 3 year term

Trustees Memorial Library

2 Members- 3 year term

Acton Housing Authority

1 Member – 5 years

Water Supply District of Acton

1 Commissioner – 3 year term

1 Moderator – 3 year term

***TRUSTEES --- TO BE ELECTED AT ANNUAL TOWN MEETING
MUST BE NOMINATED AT TOWN MEETING***

Trustees, West Acton Citizen's Library

1 Member – 3 year term

Trustees, Elizabeth White Fund

1 Member– 3 year term

Trustees, New Fireman's Relief Fund Acton

1 Member- 3 year term

Trustees, Charlotte Goodnow Fund

2 Members – 3 year term



BOXBOROUGH TOWN CLERK
29 Middle Road, Boxborough, Massachusetts 01719
Phone: (978) 264-1727 · Fax: (978) 264-3127
emarkiewicz@boxborough-ma.gov

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING/ELECTION CALENDAR 2015

Currently there is only one election planned for 2015—the annual town election.

Annual Town Meeting: Monday, May 11

Annual Town Election: Monday, May 18

January 19: Nomination papers for town offices available in the Town Clerk's office. The following offices will be on the ballot:

- **Moderator**, one-year term: 1 seat
- **Selectman**, three-year term: 2 seats
- **School Committee**, three-year term: 2 seats
- **Planning Board**, three-year term: 2 seats
- **Library Trustees**, three-year term: 2 seats
- **Board of Health**, one-year term: 1 seat
- **Constable**, three-year term: 1 seat

March 30: Last day to file nomination papers with the Board of Registers/Town Clerk in order to be on the ballot for the May 18 Annual Town Election. Papers are due in the Town Clerk's office by 5:00pm. A minimum of 25 signatures is required.

April 21: Last day to register to vote in order to be eligible to vote at Annual Town Meeting and the Annual Town Election. The Town Clerk's office will be open from 9:00am-8:00pm on that day.

May 11: Annual Town Meeting begins at 7:00pm at the Blanchard Memorial School gym.

May 18: Annual Town Election. Polls open at Boxborough Town Hall from 7:00am – 8:00pm.

**ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
ACTON AND BOXBOROUGH, MASSACHUSETTS**



**PROPOSED BUDGET
Academic Year 2015-2016**

Spring 2015

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Glenn A. Brand

2014-2015 Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

- Kristina Rychlik, Chairperson
- Brigid O. Bieber, Vice Chair
- Dennis Bruce, Vice Chair
- Mary Brolin
- Michael Coppolino
- Amy Krishnamurthy
- Maya Minkin
- Paul Murphy
- Kathleen Neville
- Maria Neyland
- Deanne O’Sullivan

FY'16 ABRSD Superintendent's Budget Message

Dear Acton and Boxborough Community Members,

This past year has represented an important time period in the history of public schooling in Acton and Boxborough. On July 1, 2014 the former districts of *Acton Public Schools*, *Boxborough Public Schools* and *Acton-Boxborough Regional School District* became one PreK-12 regionalized school district (ABRSD). I am pleased to be able to provide the citizens of our towns with our budget request as we look ahead to the 2015-16 (FY'16) school year.

The priorities associated with the FY'16 budget center around a number of areas that include:

- Meeting the needs of all of our students, particularly those within the high needs population of our district including English Language Learners, children from low-income families, special education students, and those in need of mental health support/services.
- Meeting the short and long-term fiduciary responsibilities of our expanded district as we look to appropriately provide for employee benefits in terms of retirement savings, other post-employee benefit (OPEB) contributions and necessary health insurance coverage.

The preliminary budget presented to the School Committee in February represented a total of \$80,197,155 or a 4.89% increase over FY'15. This represented the total budgetary needs that the administration believed was required to meet our operational needs without a reduction in services. However, in consideration of the financial challenges facing our towns, the School Committee asked the administration to explore a reduction in spending in an effort to reduce the overall increase. With careful planning, the administration made some difficult recommendations that resulted in revising our FY'16 budget to \$79,749,882, or an increase of 4.31% over FY'15.

The FY'16 total cost increase of 4.31% is driven by four areas almost exclusively: 2.6% due to salary increases that allow us to retain our close to 1,000 full and part-time employees, 1.2% due to employee benefits including OPEB, Middlesex Retirement and health insurance contributions, and a 0.3% increase in Special Education out-of-district tuitions and necessary transportation costs. In addition, the district has factored in a capital study of our existing buildings that represents an increase of 0.1% of the 4.31%.

One of the important storylines of the proposed budget is that our revenue sources are declining from our revised FY'15 budget. A decline of 4.4% in funding sources is projected while the total budget request is rising by 4.31%. The areas of anticipated reduction include State Aid (\$159,695), a decreased use of Excess & Deficiency (E&D) from \$300,000 to \$200,000 and Middlesex Retirement contributions from the towns (\$451,297). In addition to contending with these increases in necessary spending, the decline in revenue further puts pressure on the overall budget.

As your superintendent, it is clear to me that the district has important work ahead in the coming fiscal years. Within the constraints of challenging town resources and a desire to continue to grow our programs for the children and families whom we serve, it is important that the administration continue to review and refine our long-range strategic and financial plan. This plan will need to articulate our vision for the district, the resources we believe are necessary, and the investment in the capital and infrastructure of the system essential to maintain a strong educational experience for our young people. I look forward to continuing this conversation with your School Committee representatives, town leaders and the citizens of Acton and Boxborough.

Yours in education,
Glenn A. Brand, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Proposed FY'16 Budget Summary by Character Code**

	FY'16			
	FY'15 Revised Budget	Recommended Budget as Approved 2-12-15	\$ Increase (Decrease) FY'15 to FY'16	% Increase (Decrease) FY'15 to FY'16
Salaries, Teaching - 01	31,924,482	33,078,855	1,154,373	3.6%
Salaries, Principals - 02	2,109,446	2,188,065	78,619	3.7%
Salaries, Central Administration - 03	1,048,045	1,068,125	20,080	1.9%
Salaries, Support Staff - 04	8,464,011	9,040,355	576,344	6.8%
Salaries, Athletics - 05	511,539	520,643	9,104	1.8%
Salaries, Buildings - 06	709,164	719,691	10,527	1.5%
Salaries, Custodial - 07	1,495,839	1,471,234	(24,605)	-1.6%
Salaries, Home Instruction - 08	17,044	20,000	2,956	17.3%
Salaries, Miscellaneous Pupil Services - 09	1,411,089	1,499,675	88,586	6.3%
Salaries, Subs Miscellaneous - 11	186,093	222,781	36,688	19.7%
Salaries, Subs Instructional - 12	524,516	530,508	5,992	1.1%
Salaries, Overtime - 13	242,855	242,855	-	0.0%
Stipends, Curriculum/Instruction - 14	117,775	168,283	50,508	42.9%
Fringe, Course Reimbursement - 15	56,000	56,000	-	0.0%
Fringe, Health Insurance - 16	7,842,791	8,343,695	500,904	6.4%
Fringe, Health Insurance, Retiree - 17	904,093	924,241	20,148	2.2%
Fringe, Life/Disability Insurance - 18	28,583	38,000	9,417	32.9%
Fringe, Unemployment Insurance - 19	25,000	25,000	-	0.0%
Fringe, Workers Compensation - 20	339,446	348,412	8,966	2.6%
Fringe, Middlesex County Ret. System - 21	1,756,208	1,961,424	205,216	11.7%
Fringe, Medicare - 22	817,453	846,064	28,611	3.5%
Contributions, OPEB Trust Fund - 23	506,000	700,000	194,000	38.3%
Instruction Supplies - 24	916,556	1,116,075	199,519	21.8%
Instruction Textbooks - 25	262,195	278,710	16,515	6.3%
Instructional, Library - 26	57,725	59,435	1,710	3.0%
Other, Capital Outlay - 27	552,629	335,459	(217,170)	-39.3%
Other, Debt Service - 29	1,847,734	1,920,743	73,009	4.0%
Other, Property/Casualty - 30	98,924	106,369	7,445	7.5%
Other, Maint Buildings/Grounds - 31	582,748	715,048	132,300	22.7%
Other, Maintenance Equipment - 32	209,906	146,470	(63,436)	-30.2%
Other, Legal Service - 34	128,650	150,000	21,350	16.6%
Other, Admin Supplies - 35	812,976	808,198	(4,778)	-0.6%
Other, Athletic Supplies - 36	53,666	53,666	-	0.0%
Other, Custodial Supplies - 37	145,984	157,984	12,000	8.2%
Other, Sped Transportation - 38	1,340,411	1,528,647	188,236	14.0%
Other, Student Transportation - 39	937,937	938,300	363	0.0%
Other, Travel, Conferences - 40	90,149	89,186	(963)	-1.1%
Other, Sped Tuition - 41	5,213,514	5,269,951	56,437	1.1%
Other, Utilities - 42	1,730,472	1,630,499	(99,973)	-5.8%
Other, Telephone - 43	148,285	144,045	(4,240)	-2.9%
Other, Sewer - 44	287,191	287,191	-	0.0%
GRAND TOTAL	\$76,455,124	\$79,749,882	\$3,294,758	4.3%

TABLE 6 - 2/12/15
ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Analysis of Assessments
Projected State Aid Numbers
School Year 2015-2016
Voted by School Committee 2/12/15

	TOTAL BUDGET 2015-2016	ACTON 84.58% 83.22%	BOXBOROUGH 15.42% 16.78%
OPERATING EXPENDITURES			
OPERATING BUDGET	\$76,958,939	\$65,091,871	\$11,867,068
OPEB TRUST FUND CONTRIBUTION	\$700,000	\$592,060	\$107,940
LOWER FIELDS CONSTRUCTION DEBT SERVICE	\$118,118	\$104,204	\$13,914
CAPITAL OUTLAY - BUILDINGS	\$170,200	\$143,955	\$26,245
TOTAL INSIDE DEBT LIMIT	\$77,947,257	\$65,932,089	\$12,015,168
EXPENDITURES OUTSIDE DEBT LIMIT (PREVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED BY REGION:)			
CONSTRUCTION DEBT SERVICE (FOR JHS & SHS/AUTHORIZED OUTSIDE PROP 2 1/2)	\$382,164	\$337,145	\$45,019
SH CONSTRUCTION/RENOVATION	\$1,420,461	\$1,253,131	\$167,330
TOTAL OUTSIDE DEBT LIMIT	\$1,802,625	\$1,590,276	\$212,349
GROSS EXPENDITURE BUDGET-PAID BY ABRSD	\$79,749,882	\$67,522,365	\$12,227,517
SHARE OF DEBT SERVICE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS- PAID BY TOWNS	939,792	794,876	144,916
TOTAL REGIONAL DISTRICT EXPENDITURES	80,689,674	68,317,242	12,372,433
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES:			
CHAPTER 70 BASE AID	\$14,393,376	\$12,173,917	\$2,219,459
CHOICE/CHARTER SCHOOL ASSESSMENT	(\$546,513)	(\$462,241)	(\$84,272)
CHARTER SCHOOL AID	\$26,761	\$22,634	\$4,127
REGIONAL SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION (Cherry Sheet)	\$1,266,283	\$1,071,022	\$195,261
REGIONAL BONUS AID	\$111,200	\$94,053	\$17,147
TRANSFER FROM PREMIUM ON LOAN-JHS	\$7,526	\$6,365	\$1,161
TRANSFER FROM OPEB TRUST FUND	\$0	\$0	\$0
TRANSFER FROM RESERVES (Excess & Deficiency)	\$200,000	\$169,160	\$30,840
TOTAL OTHER FINANCING SOURCES	\$15,458,633	\$13,074,912	\$2,383,721
TOWN ASSESSMENTS- BEFORE APPENDIX A & IMA	\$65,231,041	\$55,242,330	\$9,988,712

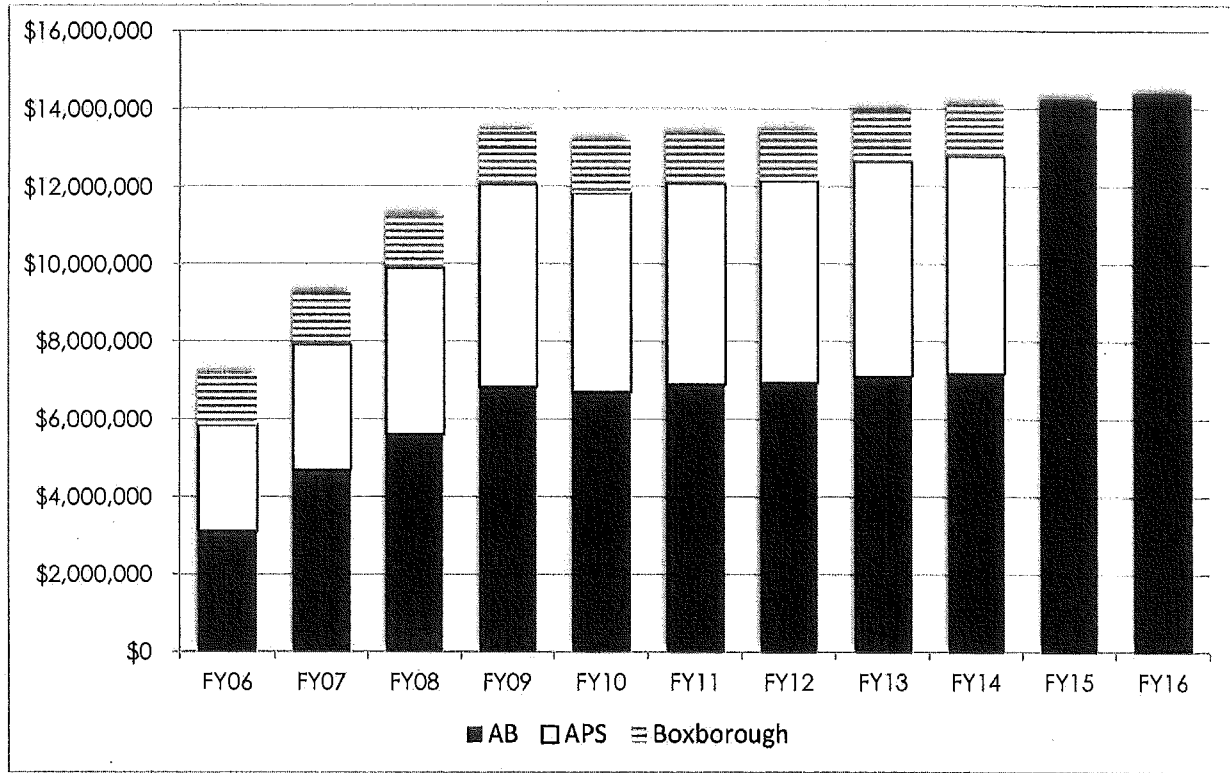
Calculation of Final Assessments Per Appendix A to Revised Regional Agreement - FY16

	TOTAL	ACTON	BOXBOROUGH
Projected Total Benefit Amount	\$1,873,119		
Base Budgets	\$64,533,396	\$53,398,447	\$11,134,949
Benefit Percentage Shares		87.5%	12.5%
Share of Benefits	\$1,873,119	\$1,638,979	\$234,140
Reduce Base Budgets By Benefit Shares	\$62,660,277	\$51,759,468	\$10,900,809
Recalculated Assessment Percentages Based On Benefit Shares Applied To Base Budget	100.00%	82.60%	17.40%
Input Table 6 Result From FY16 Actual Budget (includes elementary debt paid by towns)	\$65,231,041	\$55,242,330	\$9,988,712
Assessment Percentages With Actual Budget		84.69%	15.31%
Shift In Percentage Shares		2.08%	-2.08%
Final Assessment AT FIXED ASSESSMENT % PER APPENDIX A	\$65,231,041	\$53,883,004	\$11,348,037
LESS DEBT PAID DIRECT BY TOWN- PER IMA Section 6	(939,792)	(711,996)	(227,797)
Amount due from each town	\$64,291,249	\$53,171,009	\$11,120,240

FY16 Shift: (\$1,359,325)

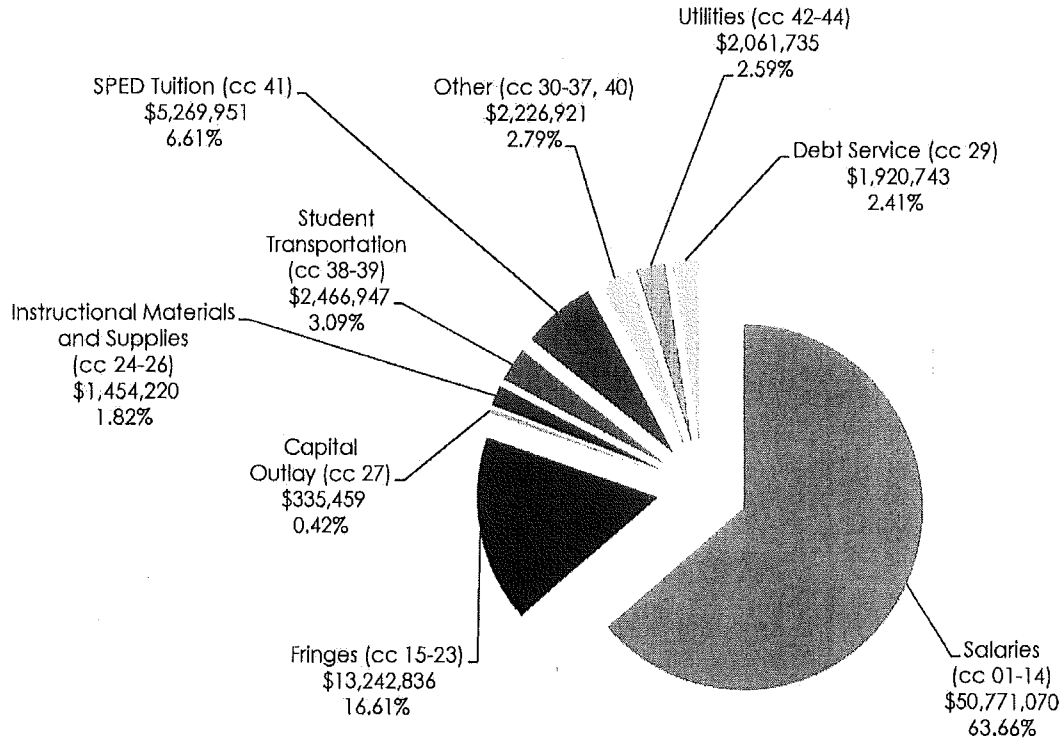
FY15 Voted Assessments	\$60,284,722	\$49,690,145	\$10,594,577
increase	4,006,527	3,480,864	525,663
%	6.6%	7.0%	5.0%
FY15 additional assessment MCRS	\$451,297	\$384,255	\$67,042
ADJUSTED FY15 TOTAL TOWN PAYMENTS	\$60,736,019	\$50,074,400	\$10,661,619
increase	3,555,230	3,096,609	458,621
%	5.9%	6.2%	4.3%

History of Chapter 70 State Aid FY'06-FY'16



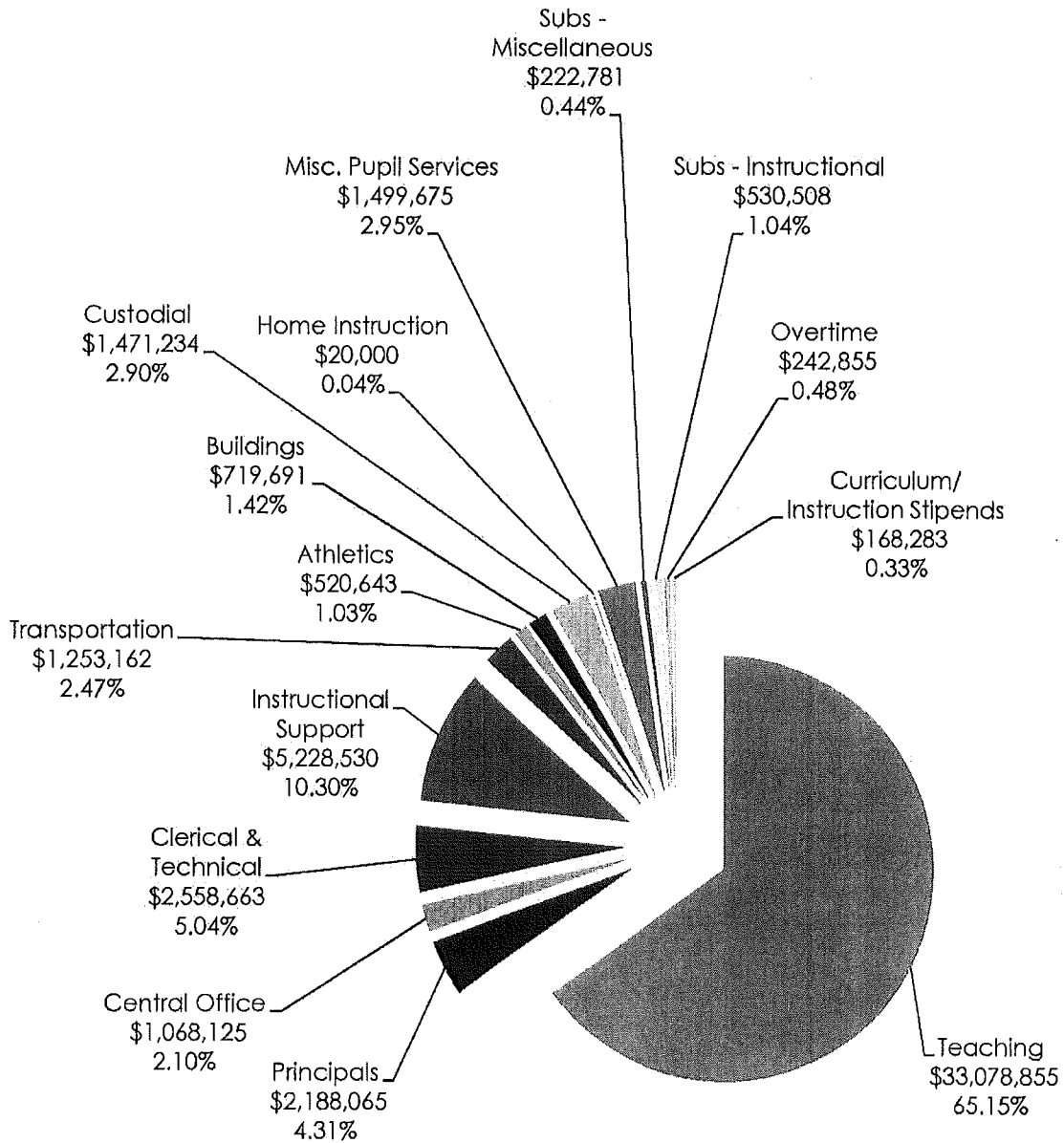
	FY'06	FY'07	FY'08	FY'09	FY'10	FY'11	FY'12	FY'13	FY'14	FY'15	FY'16
AB	\$3,138,512	\$4,715,036	\$5,625,428	\$6,852,830	\$6,715,773	\$6,931,919	\$6,969,133	\$7,124,122	\$7,198,422	\$14,254,476	\$14,393,376
APS	\$2,723,714	\$3,214,302	\$4,283,795	\$5,228,141	\$5,123,578	\$5,160,527	\$5,188,231	\$5,537,500	\$5,596,025	\$0	\$0
BPS	\$1,318,163	\$1,344,663	\$1,370,363	\$1,394,863	\$1,366,966	\$1,287,108	\$1,294,018	\$1,310,578	\$1,320,503	\$0	\$0

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Budget Categories - FY '16



Total Budget: \$ 79,749,882

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Personnel Breakdown - FY'16**



**Per Pupil Expenditures 2013-2014
Comparable School Districts**

As reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education
Ranking is out of 308 districts

# 44	Concord/Concord-Carlisle Combined	\$18,454
# 62	Bedford	\$17,385
# 68	Dedham	\$16,910
# 91	Sudbury/Lincoln-Sudbury Combined	\$15,723
#101	Westwood	\$15,380
#117	Westborough	\$14,881
#124	Wilmington	\$14,664
	State Average	\$14,547
#136	Canton	\$14,366
#153	Acton/Boxborough/AB Combined	\$14,149
#182	Milton	\$13,499
#256	Winchester	\$12,579
#258	Westford	\$12,526
#291	Hingham	\$11,676

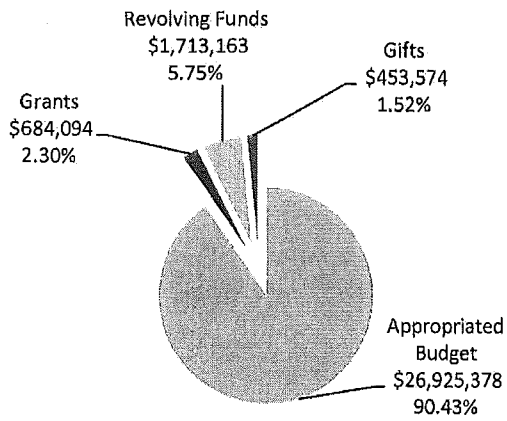
**Statewide Class Size Rankings from Highest to Lowest
Comparable School Districts**

As reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education
Ranking is out of 326 districts

		Average Class Size
#11	Acton/Boxborough/AB Combined	21.5
#44	Sudbury/Lincoln-Sudbury Combined	20
#65	Westwood	19.6
#67	Canton	19.5
#88	Westford	19.1
#95	Milton	19
#97	Winchester	19
#100	Hingham	18.9
#108	Wilmington	18.8
	State Average	18.1
#163	Concord/Concord-Carlisle Combined	17.8
#192	Westborough	17.3
#219	Dedham	16.7
#278	Bedford	14.8

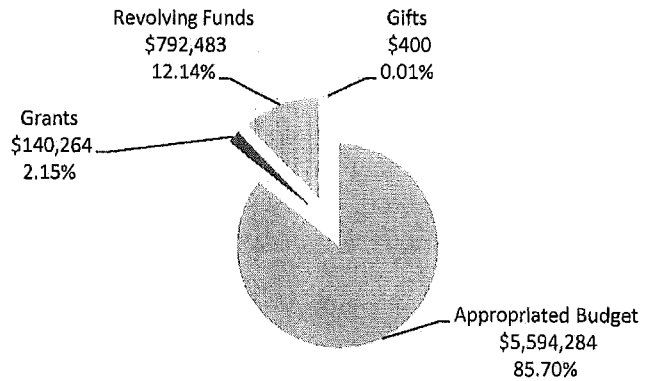
Total Expenditures - FY'14

The following charts represent the total expenditures from appropriated and non-appropriated sources from the last complete fiscal year for each of the three school districts: APS, BPS, and ABRSD



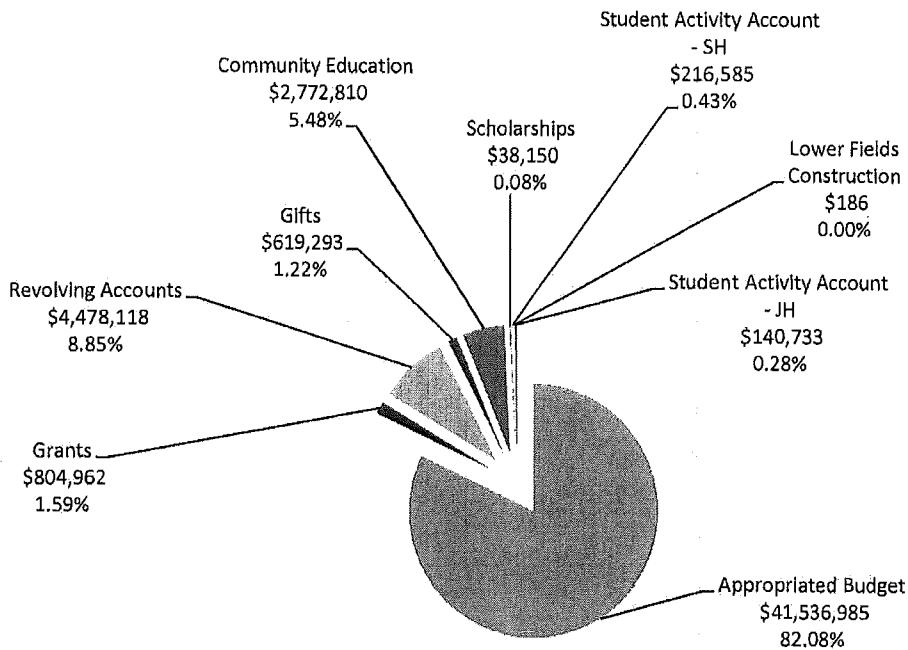
Acton Public Schools

APS Total: \$29,776,209



Boxborough Public Schools

BPS Total: \$6,527,431



**Acton Boxborough
Regional School District**

ABRSD Total: \$50,607,822

**Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools
Grant Awards - FY'15**

Grant #	FY '15 ABRSD Grants	Award Amount
140	Title II Part A Teacher Quality	\$61,914
180	Title III	\$31,143
240	SPED Entitlement IDEA	\$1,201,508
262	Early Childhood/SPED	\$24,005
274	SPED Program Improvement	\$45,904
298	Early Childhood SPED Program Improvement	\$8,000
305	Title I	\$167,855
632	Academic Support	\$4,488
	Essential School Health Services	<u>\$69,700</u>
	Total	\$1,614,517

Funding Period: September 2014 - August 2015

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Students, Staff, Class Size
FY'14 - FY'16**

Number of Students

<u>Grade</u>	<u>13-14</u>	<u>14-15</u>	Projected
			<u>15-16</u>
Preschool	48	59	59
K	327	320	308
1	359	347	335
2	382	367	350
3	433	395	371
4	439	440	389
5	428	440	436
6	429	436	441
O.D.SPED K-6	<u>31</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>21</u>
Total	2876	2832	2710
"School Choice"/tuition students included >	69	51	54
7	468	428	432
8	463	479	430
O.D.SPED 7-8	<u>10</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>12</u>
Totals	941	924	874
"School Choice"/tuition students included >	16	12	10
9	475	457	470
10	486	479	450
11	482	486	471
12	517	483	472
O.D.SPED 9-12	<u>41</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>56</u>
Totals	2001	1955	1919
"School Choice"/tuition students included >	32	32	30
	5818	5711	5503

**Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
Students, Staff, Class Size (Continued)**

Number of Certified Staff

			Projected
<u>Grade</u>	<u>13-14</u>	<u>14-15</u>	<u>15-16</u>
K-6	219.42	216.46	215.56
JH	73.80	73.80	74.80
HS	152.05	152.75	152.75
System Wide	<u>10.10</u>	<u>8.00</u>	<u>8.00</u>
Totals	455.37	451.01	451.11
<i>Funded by "school choice" Included</i>	<i>2.8 FTE</i>	<i>4.8 FTE</i>	<i>4.8 FTE</i>

Number of Non-Certified Staff

			Projected
<u>Grade</u>	<u>13-14</u>	<u>14-15</u>	<u>15-16</u>
K-6	136.23	139.92	145.08
JH	25.22	22.26	23.30
HS	42.30	42.30	43.56
System Wide	<u>73.90</u>	<u>79.05</u>	<u>79.05</u>
	277.65	283.53	290.99

Class Size Information*

Class Size Average	<u>14-15</u>
Elementary	22.50
JH	21.96
HS	21.30

Class Size Range	
Elementary	18 to 25
JH	13 to 31
HS	2 to 61

Number of Classes Below 20/Above 25	
Elementary	7/0
JH	36/18
HS	146/71

* Class size information for 15-16 can only be determined once students are assigned

School Highlights

Blanchard

- PTF sponsored an author visit by Newbery Medal winner, Grace Lin, and is hosting its annual Teacher Appreciation Luncheon.
- Several students are exhibiting art in Boston in celebration of Youth Art Month.
- Blanchard hosted its annual Ashley Jee Memorial Children's Hospital Blood Drive.
- Blanchard was visited by Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Matt Malone.
- The Popcorn Players presented their children's musical, *Grunch*.
- Advanced Band performed at the 2015 MICCA Concert Festival.
- Pre-K and Kindergarten participated in the *Read Across America* Community Reading program.
- Grade 1 enjoyed a visit from Drumlin Farm and learned about animals and how they adapt.
- Grade 2 hosted their annual Animal Research Project presentation.
- Grade 3 hosted their annual Biography Day, Flag Day program, and learned to play recorders.
- Grade 4 attended the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Youth Concerts at Symphony Hall in Boston.
- Grade 5 completed their new outdoor classroom and are preparing for the Cape Cod field trip.
- Grade 6 conducted their annual Prototype Convention and sold many student-made inventions.

Conant

- Community service projects included valentines for the elderly, a food drive for Acton Community Supper, school supplies for India collection, toy drive for Toys for Tots, and new socks for homeless shelters.
- Visiting Author Jeannie Brett presented to grades K-3.
- Visiting Author Jarrett Krosoczka presented to grades 3-6.
- The PTO brought in several enrichment activities for the entire school.
- Many grades presented curriculum-related plays to parents and friends.
- Sixth graders attended Sargent Camp, an outdoor adventure/learning experience.
- Nature Walks (including Indoor Nature Walks due to the severe winter) continued for all grades.

Douglas

The Douglas School implemented "Exhibitionary Learning."

- Kindergartners produced online videos interviewing Douglas Helpers.
- 1st graders predicted weather, produced weather videos, and explored extreme weather.
- 2nd graders are working to save monarch butterflies, encourage trashless lunches, and raise money and awareness for childhood cancer.
- 3rd graders are exploring the school wetlands and producing wetland guides.
- 4th graders explored how perception affects map making, as well as building incredible storage units for their classroom.
- 5th graders explored how colonies move from survival to society, as well as how Shakespeare can have a great legacy and remain mysterious to many people.
- 6th graders performed *The Emperors New Clothes*, acted as anthropologists of Ancient Mesopotamia, and held a word court of overused words.
- The entire community is working to empower women in Kenya by raising funds to buy goats.

Gates

- Student Council Community Service Projects: Household Goods Recycling Ministry, Gates Giving Trees, and Acton Food Pantry
- Winter chorus, band concerts, and a Seasonal Sing-a-Long

- Kindergarten Medieval Feast
- “One School, One Story” program; Gates families read the book, *Sydney & Simon Full STEAM Ahead!* by Paul A. Reynolds
- PTO-sponsored events: Fall Family Social, Dances of the World, Ice Cream Social, Nature Walks, and Activity Day
- Gates Talent Show
- Celebrate the Arts Night!

McCarthy-Towne

- A Project School of Teachers College, Columbia University
- Student field trips to: Seacoast Science Center, Rye, NH; Mechanics Hall, Worcester; Shelburne Farm; Drumlin Farm; Mt. Wachusett; Plimoth Plantation and Mayflower II; Camp Merrowvista; Hosmer House; Old Boxborough School House; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Outward Bound, Thompson Island; Lowell Mills; North End and Paul Revere House; Fenway Park
- In-house field trips: N.E. Aquarium Tide Pool Presentation, Owl Presentation, Museum of Science SkyLab, and an Archaeological Dig
- Community service projects: Trick-or-Treat for UNICEF; Bread Spoons Project; Acton Food Pantry food drive; Cradles to Crayons clothing drive
- Literacy Night for parents of incoming kindergarten and rising 1st grade students
- PTSO sponsored: Improv Boston assembly

Merriam

- Student-led conferences were held in all grades.
- Fifth annual Staff/PTO basketball game was a huge success.
- Annual Literacy Week Celebration included “Storybook Character Dress-up Day” and a family literacy evening.
- “Health and Wellness” was the topic for our Theme Day. Yoga and Zumba teachers came in to work with our students.
- Sixth graders performed portions of their musical on Kindergarten Night.

R. J. Grey Junior High

- Silent Reading initiative is in its 2nd year: all students/staff are invited to read for 20 minutes every day.
- New student clubs such as *Origami Club, Fly Tying, Yoga, Badminton, RC Flyers, and Bollywood*
- “Everyday Leader” student recognition continues with lunches with Principal Shen for 7th and 8th graders selected by staff.
- Theatre program includes the spring and fall play productions and the musical *Once on This Island, Junior*.
- “Poetry Fridays” program continues with a bi-monthly poetry reading during morning announcements by students and staff.
- Two presentations were offered to the Acton and Boxborough community: “Broadcasting Happiness” with Michelle Gielan and “The Pressured Child” with Michael Thompson, both in conjunction with the AB PTSO and other community agencies.
- Eight Chromebook carts were introduced – one for each team – as part of the school’s continued efforts to engage students through a digital platform.

Acton Boxborough Regional High School

- Community Service Awards were presented to 789 students, totaling over 80,000 hours of service performed during 2014.
- Twenty seniors were named semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program; 18 became finalists. One student was a candidate in the Special Scholarship Competition, and one student was a finalist in the National Achievement Scholarship.
- As part of the Career Exploration Program, 30 students completed job shadowing experiences. Over 130 seniors have applied for the Senior Internship program in May.
- A-B's Quiz Bowl Team qualified again for WGBH's High School Quiz Show. The matches will be aired on WGBH throughout the spring and can then be found on WGBH's website. The Team also earned spots in the 2015 Partnership for Academic Competition Excellence (PACE) National Tournament in Washington, D.C., and the 2015 National Academic Quiz Tournament (NAQT) in Chicago this spring.
- Four students received Gold Keys in the annual Boston Globe Scholastics Art Awards competition. Portfolio art students participated in the annual Creeley Foundation Broadside Project.
- Visual Arts students took part in the following: "Elections" at the Acton Library; a show at the State Transportation; the Youth Art Month Shows at the Worcester Art Museum and at the State Transportation Building, Boston; "Things" at the Sargent Memorial Library, Boxborough; "Students Make Their Mark" at the Acton Memorial Library.
- Art All-State affords high school juniors the opportunity to work with a team of their peers and practice arts to collaboratively create large-scale installation art. High school art teachers throughout the state may nominate two students from their schools for Art All-State. Typically both Acton-Boxborough students who are nominated are accepted.
- The Performing Arts Department held a number of successful performances. The Chorus will tour Spain and France over the April vacation. We had 14 student musicians accepted to the MMEA Eastern District Music Festival; six of these students were also accepted to the MMEA All-State Music Festival. The Jazz Band will hold its 5th annual Swing Night on April 10th. The Band commissioned a new composition by composer Timothy Miles and will premiere the piece at the spring concert, with Mr. Miles conducting.
- Proscenium Circus' fall play, *You Can't Take It With You*, was followed by the musical, *Sweet Charity*. An AB senior won first prize at the MA Educational Theater Guild's (METG) audition monologue competition. AB's entry into METG's short-play competition is *Air Raid*. The season will be rounded out by the Competitive Class plays and the Festival of 10-Minute Plays. Twelve young playwrights will take part in the Boston Playwright's Theater playwriting workshop, New Voices.
- In October, ABRHS' French students welcomed a group of students from the Collège Lycée St-Exupéry. The group attended classes at AB, toured Boston and other areas of interest, and were generously hosted by their AB exchange students and their families. The AB students involved look forward to visiting the French students in April!
- The Acton-Boxborough Rotary Club and the ABRHS National Honor Society hosted a Veterans Day Breakfast for local veterans, raising close to \$3,000.
- This year represents a record year for the National Speech and Debate with 11 students qualifying for nationals.

Central Administration

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

School Administration

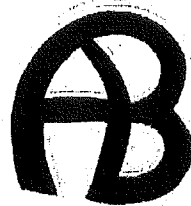
JoAnn Campbell, Principal, AB Regional High School
Andrew Shen, Principal, R.J. Grey Junior High School
Dana F. Labb, Principal, Blanchard School
Damian J. Sugrue, Principal, Conant School
Christopher Whitbeck, Principal, Douglas School
Lynne Newman, Principal, Gates School
David Krane, Principal, McCarthy-Towne School
Edward Kaufman, Principal, Merriam School

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, disability, age, active military/veteran status, ancestry, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, employment policies, and other administered programs and activities. In addition, students who are homeless or of limited English-speaking ability are protected from discrimination in accessing the course of study and other opportunities available through the schools.

Any person having inquiries or complaints concerning the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District's compliance with Title VI, Title IX, Section 504, ADA or MGL ch. 76, sec.5 is directed to contact the Director of Pupil Services, Administration Building, 15 Charter Road, Acton, MA, telephone number 978-264-4700, x3265, who has been designated by the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to coordinate the District's efforts to comply with these laws, or write to the Office for Civil Rights, J. F. Kennedy Federal Building, Room 1875, Boston, MA 02203, or the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Office of Program Quality Assurance Services, 75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148.

**Acton-Boxborough
Regional School District**



Our Mission

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

As A Community, We Value:

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

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

EDUCATION REPORT

September 2013 – August 2014

INTRODUCTION

The 2013-14 school year was a landmark year in that it was the last year that the regional district would serve Acton and Boxborough students only in the 7th – 12th grades. Despite the considerable attention that was paid to gearing up for the transition to the fully-regionalized PreK - 12 district, the focus by staff and administration within the system remained on seeking to achieve our mission of helping prepare students as life-long learners, critical thinkers and productive citizens of our society.

ENROLLMENT

The October 1, 2013 elementary school enrollment decreased by 34 students, from 2498 to 2464. Of the total number enrolled, 24 were special education students attending “out-of-district” schools – an increase of one student from the previous October 1. Kindergarten enrollment increased by 15 students, from 273 to 288. There were no school choice students at the elementary level.

The junior high school enrollment for October 1 decreased by thirty-one students, from 973 to 942, with sixteen school choice students. Eleven were special education students attending out-of-district schools.

The high school enrollment decreased from 2,022 to 2,001, a difference of 21 students. There were 47 school choice students at the high school – an increase of eight students from the previous year. Of the total number enrolled, forty-one were special education students attending out-of-district schools.

PERSONNEL

Staffing changes for the 2013-14 school year were affected by the June 2013 retirement of ten Acton Public and six Acton-Boxborough Regional teachers. Leaves of absence for three APS teachers and three ABRSD teachers were granted, and four APS and eight AB resignations were received. The 14.9 APS and 16.2 ABRSD full-time-equivalent new teachers who were hired filled these vacancies and additional openings. The drop in enrollment at Acton Public Schools allowed the School Committee to reduce a full elementary section (from 15 to 14 classrooms in first grade).

CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

Summer Leadership Institute

Our districts' mission statement has guided our Summer Leadership Institutes and work for the past several years:

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

We began in 2010 to articulate what effective instruction “looked like” and most importantly began thinking about what students would be doing and saying, emphasizing the shift from solely focusing on what teachers do and say during instruction. That school year we also wrote academic learning goals for all grades and disciplines – what we wanted students to know and be able to do by the end of the school year – to help guide conversations among educators and administrators about instructional practices and outcomes. In 2011-2012, we focused on the process of formative assessment and the importance of providing students feedback on their learning. Last year's Summer Leadership Institute was all about the new educator evaluation process . . . aptly titled *How Do We Know We're Learning?* We focused on goal setting, conversations and feedback.

During those years, we also established some structures and began some initiatives to support this important work and remain focused on creating and sustaining a culture of reflection and collaboration:

- The Teacher to Teacher Program provides the opportunity to visit and observe a colleague in or out of district.
- Scheduling allows for greater collaboration among educators and between educators and administrators.
- Administrator visits to student learning settings have increased.
- Protocol Trainings and Critical Friends Groups began.

The districts invited Dr. Yong Zhao to attend the 2013 Summer Leadership Institute to share his perspective on what it means to be a lifelong learner, critical thinker, and productive citizen of our diverse community and global society.

With such a national and state focus on standardized learning and testing, Dr. Zhao brought an alternative view to homogenous learning and the value of these tests. An internationally known scholar, author, and speaker, Dr. Zhao has established himself as one of the most compelling voices in education today with an emphasis on developing students to be creative, resourceful thinkers with an entrepreneurial spirit. He argues that our country's current focus on standardized learning and testing is counterproductive to developing the skills, strategies, levels of engagement, and attitudes students will need for our ever-changing world. His message and work with us helped shape our thinking as we began to reconcile and balance the imposing demands of federal and state mandates with our districts' core values and the furthering of our vision for teaching and learning. It also provided the context for work on Goal Two of the Long-Range Strategic Plan: *Prepare*

students by providing them with the knowledge and intellectual and reflective skills they will need to thrive in an increasingly complex world, and two corresponding strategies:

- Determine classroom-based authentic assessments of student learning.
- Begin to create opportunities for students to monitor their own progress.

This work also coincided with the requirements of Phase Two of the new Educator Evaluation Plan; namely, District Determined Measures (DDMs).

Educator Evaluation Process: Focus on District Determined Measures

The next phase of the new Educator Evaluation Process required districts to create or identify and then pilot two measures of student learning gains to be used to inform an Impact on Student Learning Rating in 2016 for every certified staff member. MCAS growth measures and ACCESS growth measures are applicable for some educators as one of the two measures. Districts were charged to create or identify District Determined Measures (DDMs) to complete the process. Most educators were able to use direct measures, which assess student growth in a specific area over time using baseline and end data. Given the nature of their work, some educators were able to choose indirect measures, which measure the conditions for learning or the consequences of learning. The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools approached this work with two guiding principles: keep the work as close to the educator as possible and keep it meaningful and manageable. The majority of department meetings, professional learning days, and collaborative time were spent creating, reviewing, calibrating and recording these DDMs.

Summer Professional Learning, 2013

During this very short summer, our campus was incredibly busy with professional learning opportunities, ranging from Research and Development projects to a four-day Institute facilitated by Teachers College.

Research and Development

Over eighty educators worked collaboratively on over forty-one 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. This summer, projects ranged from creating *Demonstration Texts for the Learning Progressions in Three Types of Writing, K-12* to *Developing a Family and Community Literacy Website*, *Incorporating Technology Learning Goals into the Study Skills Curriculum*, and *Program Development for the Bridges Program*.

Technology: Google Drive in the Humanities

Google Drive offers opportunities to increase formative assessments, as well as efficiency in the classroom. This workshop addressed the need for a more effective writing process. Google Drive allows students to write more, which is the most important element to improving student writing. Also, students receive more immediate feedback from the teacher, which allows for more effective instruction.

Data Wise

A workshop based on the book entitled, *Data Wise: A Step-by Step Guide to Using Assessment Results to Improve Teaching and Learning* by Boudett, City and Murnane, was offered to the district leadership group. The workshop focused on examining evidence of student learning in all forms and then using that information as a catalyst for department or school conversations about student learning and fostering collaboration.

6 Traits of Writing, K-8

This three-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 Common Core Standards, teaching students to become self-assessors, assessing student papers using the six trait rubric, applying mentor texts to teach genre and skill, and implementing mini-lessons as a part of the writer's workshop.

Columbia University Teachers College, Homegrown Institute: Growing Readers Workshop

Building on Kathy Collins' *Overview of Growing Readers' Workshop* offering in summer 2012, Columbia University Teachers College facilitated a four-day Institute: *Growing Readers Workshop*, on our campus. 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.

Over fifty K-6 educators focused their work together from 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.

Professional Learning Day

Professional Learning Day, November 5, 2013, was planned and organized by individual schools and/or departments to support the learning and work of their respective goals. Below are the brief summaries from the schools and departments of the Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District.

The Gates and Conant school faculties met together at the Conant School. The focus of the day was to explore informational writing across the curriculum. Materials from Lucy

Calkins, the Common Core, and a variety of web-based resources were utilized to provide background information.

Douglas School analyzed the results of their school vision survey and engaged in discussion to identify what they believe and how they want to approach education. They then applied this thinking to crafting curricular experiences that might lead to harnessing student creativity and passion.

McCarthy-Towne, using the Charrette protocol, spent the morning assessing their End-of-the-Year Summary Reporting document. The afternoon was spent taking a closer look, as a whole school, at Read Aloud and Purposeful Talk and the implications for instruction across the grade levels.

In light of their upcoming 20th anniversary, Merriam examined their school philosophy and the structures and strategies they use to implement that philosophy. They also took a close look at their new “End-of-Year Document,” reviewing how to make the completion and delivery of the document to staff and parents as consistent as possible.

RJ Grey used the morning to develop and refine the common assessments that they anticipate using next year as District Determined Measures (DDMs). In the afternoon, they continued their emphasis on integrating technology into the curriculum – both as an instructional tool and as a skill for students to learn.

At ABRHS, the morning was dedicated to mental health education and awareness. Faculty and staff heard presentations from members of the counseling department, as well as an interview with a former student who shared his experiences as a high school student struggling with depression. During the afternoon session, faculty met by departments with consultant Deb Merriam to continue work on District Determined Measures of Student Growth (DDMs). Groups were able to ask clarifying questions about the construction of DDMs, and Ms. Merriam provided models for alternative measures of student growth beyond the test/quiz form of assessment.

The Visual Arts, Performing Arts, and Physical Education and Health Departments also worked on identifying and creating DDMs. Both Acton and Acton-Boxborough nurses attended Northeastern University’s School Health Institute program: *An Update for School Nurses*. This well-attended school nurse program included the following topics and discussion: critical thinking, lice policy and procedures, adolescent reproductive health, the SANE (Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner) program, latest trends in tuberculosis response, the

American with Disabilities 504 implementation, community gang updates, and most currently, a flu update: H7N9. The high school nurses also attended the early morning counseling presentation on Mental Health and Wellness.

The EDTech Operations divided into two groups. One group went to an Apple Tech Update conference to learn about iOS7, iPad Management, and the new Volume Voucher Program; the second group stayed on campus to support district-wide break out sessions on technology and to begin renovations on the old Cisco lab at the High School.

The Acton Public Schools preschool staff participated in three professional learning workshops: “Facilitating Language Use for Preschool-aged Students,” “How Motor Skill Development Affects Participation During Preschool Activities,” and “The Process of Regionalization and the Direct Effect on Preschool Programming.”

Acton and Acton-Boxborough support staff attended a full-day workshop in behavioral safety, presented by Quality Behavior Solutions, Inc. The Community Education Extended Day Staff attended a daylong workshop covering several key aspects of the Safety-Care curriculum.

Curriculum Work

With the guidance of a literacy consultant, the writing standards were unpacked for each K-6 grade level, and new rubrics, teacher assessment tools, demonstration texts, writing prompts, and curricular integration maps were created. Additionally, a webpage was created to provide writing resources for all teachers, K-12. Future additions include: exemplars, student checklists, learning progressions, mentor text sets, and condensed versions of rubrics for student use.

Disciplinary Literacy, Year One

In 2010-2011, the Teaching and Learning Committee, comprised of twenty-one educators and administrators and focused on Literacy, had four distinct outcomes:

- Become knowledgeable about literacy in the 21st century.
- Summarize that information in a working definition of “literacy” that could guide future work.
- Follow the DESE *Guidelines for Developing an Effective District Literacy Action Plan*, which included looking at our current practices and key supports.
- Prioritize our district list of practice and support needs, gather input from constituent groups, and develop district Literacy goals.

ABRSD Working Literacy Definition

"A literate person is one who, throughout life, deepens her knowledge and develops her potential through:

- Reading and writing,
- Listening and viewing,
- Speaking and presenting,
- Thinking critically, creating and innovating.

“A literate person deciphers meaning and expresses ideas through a range of media.

“A literate person effectively communicates her insight and/or knowledge.

“A literate person transfers learning to new situations in her own life and in the life of the community and the world.”

– Julie Meltzer and Susan Ziemba (with modifications)

Two of the six goals identified by the committee provided the basis for the grades seven through twelve Disciplinary Literacy work during the 2013-14 school year:

1. Align curriculum and instruction with the new MA ELA and Literacy Framework (K-12).
2. Increase classroom literacy instruction for students receiving support (9-12).

Disciplinary Literacy involves learning to read, write, reason and think in a discipline while simultaneously learning the key concepts and core ideas of that discipline. Thirty educators from RJ Grey Junior High School and ABRHS, along with administrators and representing the science, social studies, English, academic support and special education departments, committed to working with *AdLit* consultants for two years to develop a knowledge base for how to implement disciplinary literacy in the classroom and schools. This commitment included seven full days of professional learning, continuous work on inquiry projects, and beginning to observe each other's literacy work in the classroom.

Long-Range Strategic Plan

During the spring of 2014, the Long-Range Strategic Planning Committee was reconvened with new additional members. The goal was to provide an update on the progress made to date on each of the five goals and to write a new goal: *Ensure that the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District supports the whole child and 21st century teaching and learning by offering safe, inspiring, accessible, diverse, and sustainable environments while maintaining the value of taxpayer investment.*

To read the LRSP update, go to this website: <http://www.abschools.org/district/mission-and-values>.

Outdoor Learning Play Spaces

During the spring of 2014, the Acton Public Schools applied for and received a Community Preservation Committee Grant to fund the design of outdoor learning play spaces at the elementary schools. Based on research (see below), the district identified the following health benefits for students:

- Being physically active outdoors and in nature can improve children's health.¹
- Greater access to green views and green environments yields better cognitive functioning; more proactive, more effective patterns of life functioning; more self-discipline and more impulse control; greater mental health overall; and greater resilience in response to stressful life events.²
- Less access to nature is linked to exacerbated attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder symptoms, more sadness, and higher rates of clinical depression.²

¹McCurdy, L. E., Winterbottom, K. E., Mehta, S. S., & Roberts, J. R. (2010). Using nature and outdoor activity to improve children's health. *Current Problems in Pediatric and Adolescent Health Care*, 40(5), 102-117.

²Kuo, Frances E. (Ming), (2010) Parks and Other Green Environments: Essential Components of a Healthy Human Habitat, National Recreation and Parks Association

The district also recognized a need for expanded self-directed recreational opportunities outdoors (e.g., at recess) in order give students:

- More choices in their activities.
- More play opportunities in which children make their own decisions.
- More opportunities to interact with nature-based activities in a setting more natural than a lawn or playing field.
- More options for students who are less interested in competitive games and sports.

We are appreciative of the CPC's decision to fund this request and to provide us with the opportunity to move one step closer to seeing this initiative come to fruition.

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The five elementary schools – Conant, Douglas, Gates, McCarthy-Towne, and Merriam – have the following in common every year.

- Each has a School Council, as required by the Educational Reform Act of 1993.
- Vital parent involvement plays an active role in the life of each school. These parents sponsor numerous assembly programs that enrich their school's cultural and aesthetic life with musicians, storytellers, and other performers. They raise funds for schoolwide projects; provide volunteers for many in- and out-of-class activities, tasks, and services; staff the "Safe Arrival" hotlines; and sponsor school newsletters and other activities.
- A number of whole-school events take place, such as orientation programs for kindergarten parents and children as the school year begins, back-to-school night open houses in the fall, and a Memorial Day program in the spring.
- Students use computers, technology, associated software, and the Internet in various ways: to supplement the writing/composing process, to enrich or extend learning experiences in each curricular area, to strengthen the learning of concepts and practice of skills via the Internet.
- The faculty participates in professional learning through one or more of these activities: pursuit of formal course work, involvement in systemwide curriculum and instruction review and improvement projects, participation in the districtwide Professional Learning Day, and attendance at professional conferences and workshops. In addition, many teachers work with student teachers. Through their actions, every year the faculty shows that they are truly committed to the concept of being life-long learners.
- Each school has a reception or event to celebrate and honor the parents and volunteers who assist them during the school year.

In 2013-14, the Elementary Schools...

- Began to plan for regionalization by including Boxborough teachers and administrators in curriculum meetings and discussions.
- Expanded math and reading assessments in order to better understand and support the individual learning needs of students.

- Continued to implement the Massachusetts (Common Core) curriculum standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics through classroom instruction, professional learning offerings, and R&Ds.
- Extended teachers' knowledge about the importance of including science and engineering practices into our upcoming science curriculum revisions.
- Continued partnerships/school visits/field trips with local businesses in support of science education through our School Business Partnership Program.

... Partnered with Parent Involvement Project (PIP) Programs

The Acton-Boxborough PIP organization continued to offer high-quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning experiences for Acton and Boxborough families. An AB PIP STEM event is curriculum-centered and “hands-on”; activities happen outside of the school day and include parents and students as partners and participants in the activities.

- A major PIP event, *Discover STEM* (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), is a “reverse science fair” that takes place every other year. It is a showcase of engineers, scientists, technology professionals, and AB students who specialize in engineering, robotics, green energy and banking technology. Exhibitors are paired with ABRHS students who act as “explainers” and activity facilitators. *Discover STEM* was held in the fall of 2013.
- Other annual PIP events included the Acton and Boxborough 4th-grade Star Party, 3rd- and 5th-grade Market Math events at Roche Brothers, and Family Domino/Games Night. AB PIP continues to promote the “Acton, Naturally” nature guide, co-developed by the Acton Schools and the Town of Acton. These custom guides are available at the HS bookstore.

...Partnered with The Discovery Museums

In return for the use of space at the Administrative Building as a distribution center for the Museums' *Traveling Science Workshop* Program, the Discovery Museums continued to offer a series of three free outreach programs. Each of our elementary schools has taken advantage of these *Traveling Science Workshops*.

This is the last year that we will report on the Acton Public Schools, since the K-12 regionalization with Boxborough went into effect on July 1, 2014.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOLS

R. J. Grey Junior High School

R. J. Grey welcomed a total of 931 students, 481 7th graders and 450 8th graders, based on October 1, 2013 enrollment numbers for the start of the 2013-2014 school year.

We were fortunate to welcome several new colleagues: Rebecca Mazonson, 8th-grade Social Studies Teacher; Erin McGovern, 7th-grade World Language; Valery Glod, Special Education; Matt Wirzburger, 8th-grade World Language.

Teaming, the fundamental core of RJ Grey, enables staff to create a strong web of support to enhance student success: a large school becomes a smaller school. After re-organizing our teams, we started this year with four teams per grade level and five core academic teachers on each team (English, Social Studies, Math, Science and World Language). The team model allows for consistent communication among teachers; issues can be addressed early, and students have an opportunity to develop close relationships with their teachers, as well as with a familiar peer group. Our team model is directly in support of our newly crafted district mission statement: To prepare all students to attain their full potential as lifelong learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

Seventh graders participate in an “exploratory program” that consists of Study Skills, Art, Music, and Minuteman Technology Lab I, each of which meets every other day for half the year. Exploratory courses for the eighth graders include Art, Minuteman Technology Lab II, Drama, and Computer Literacy; these classes last for one-half of the year. In addition to the core curriculum, students can elect to participate in band, chorus or a sports & fitness elective.

Students also take classes in Physical Education/Health. This year, a restructuring led us to combine our Physical Education, Health and Life Skills classes under one department head, Beth Viscardi. This allows these classes to share students on a rotating basis, while combined as one department for enhanced communication and shared curriculum delivery. Some highlights in Health this year were the 7th-grade food group commercials and 8th-grade “Smoothie Challenge,” which resulted in the winning recipe being made and sold in the RJ Cafe.

This year, we were able to secure a new set of Mac computers, as well as new furniture, for our RJ Grey library. As a result, students now have access to multi-purpose learning commons with “pods” complete with state-of-the-art technology, group meeting spaces, and quiet areas for individual study. Also, one of our 7th-grade math teachers, Lynne Kondracki, took part in the Innovative Learning Program, which awarded her classroom iPads and Chromebooks to aid in teaching and the use of technology. This allowed her to pilot a flipped classroom model.

In an effort to reduce daily stress and incorporate reading as a daily practice during the school day, this year we began our Silent Reading Initiative. By making a few adjustments in our daily block schedule, we were able to incorporate a 20-minute period every day when the entire school population participates in silent reading. Students and staff alike look forward to this time during their day when they can take some time to jump into their favorite book.

Additionally, continuing our emphasis on reading in 2013-2014, we saw the RJ Grey Student/Teacher Book Club continue as a school tradition. Four books were read throughout the year, and book discussions were scheduled in the evening and after school.

During the last meeting of the year, the 12-member club welcomed a local author for questions and discussion. Poetry Fridays continued, as members of our student and staff community read a selected poem during the morning announcements.

In October 2013, RJ Grey (as well as the high school and elementary schools) received the results of the state-mandated MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) tests from the previous spring. We continue to be proud that our students' scores compared favorably with the top-performing schools in the state. This is a result of the high quality of teachers and teaching, an excellent curriculum, fine students, and the supportive families who make education a priority for their children. In addition, we piloted the PARCC in two 7th-grade classrooms in English Language Arts and Literacy, as well as two 8th-grade classrooms in Mathematics.

We continue our commitment to the partnership between school and home by leveraging our technology, using daily emails, monthly online articles, Grey Matters, Twitter and weekly communication notifications to keep our school community informed with up-to-date information. The School Council, consisting of four parents, two staff members, and the principal, also addressed a wide variety of relevant issues and made recommendations to the administration that were very helpful. The School Council continued to have a strong voice in the development of the school and the overall school climate. An active P.T.S.O. organization (for families in grades seven through twelve) planned, organized, and assisted with many events at RJ Grey. The P.T.S.O. also sponsored evening programs designed to provide information about the schools.

For many students, learning and connecting with members of the RJ Grey community took place through our extracurricular programs. The interscholastic athletic program included teams in cross-country, soccer, field hockey, basketball, softball, track, and baseball. All participants on these teams paid an activity fee that helped to support these programs. The intramural program was available to all students, meeting either before or after school. These intramurals included basketball, lacrosse, and strength training. In addition to the on-going after-school activities, which included the Ski Club, Jazz Band, Speech and Debate Team, Chess/Board Games Club, Math Counts, ASHA, Technology and Engineering Club and the Yearbook, we had several new, student-initiated after-school clubs – Ping Pong, Yo-Yo, Take Action, and Anime.

Through the involvement of the Student Council, students connect with each other in a number of ways. This group helped to plan school-wide activities, dances, selling Candy-Grams and other service learning projects. In addition, several teams organized community service projects to support local organizations, such as the Coat Drive (hundreds of coats were collected and distributed to families in need), holiday Toys for Tots collection, fall clean-up day at several recreational areas in Acton, as well as an extremely successful food fund drive to support the Acton Food Pantry.

The school musical, *WILLY WONKA, Jr.*, was performed in March and included over 90 students in the cast, crew and student production, as well as the volunteer work of 45 parents. The fall play was a production of *Snow Angel* that had over 40 students

participating, and a spring production of One Act Scenes involved 60 students. For the 8th-grade Drama elective, a performance on middle school bullying was performed.

In June of 2014, the second annual *Arts Happening* took place. This was a collaborative event that included work from the disciplines of Drama, Music and Visual Art. The event was designed to give students an opportunity to display artistic works (visual, musical, and dramatic) in a non-competitive, communal environment. On-going happenings included performances, creation of musical 'portraits,' a collaborative art experience for participants, and a soup dinner fundraiser to support the local Acton Food Pantry

Our "RJ Grey Cares" initiative continued this year; 100% of the funds collected from our staff was distributed to student families who are faced with financial hardship. Some examples of what this fund pays for are holiday gifts, winter clothing and school supplies. We are thankful for the amazing generosity we continue to see from our colleagues.

Special events during the school year included Halloween Dress-Up Day, the Thanksgiving Assembly, Blue and Gold Day (school spirit day), pajama and hat days, a weekend day ski trip to Waterville Valley, the end-of-year seventh-grade trip to Kimball's, the eighth-grade day at Canobie Lake Park, and the Student Recognition Assembly. Our student recognition program, "Everyday Leaders," continued. Twice per trimester, R. J. Grey teachers nominated students who demonstrated daily acts of kindness, enthusiasm, and respectfulness towards peers and teachers throughout the year. These students were treated to a pizza lunch with Principal Shen.

We held our 13th annual Project Wellness Day, a day-long conference for seventh-grade students and a parent or guardian, designed to empower parents and teenagers in addressing the variety of issues faced by today's families and to develop, maintain, or improve adult-teenager open communication. This event brought seventh-grade students and adult family members together at Merrimack College on March 19, 2014 to learn ways to communicate with each other about difficult issues and sensitive topics, ranging from time management to nutrition to navigating relationships. This year we added several new classes, including "Zumba," "How to Be a Good Sports Parent," and "Parenting Our Kids in a Plugged-In World." Approximately 850 students, family members, and staff participated in this event. We were able to fully automate the registration process this year, cutting down on our paper mailings and making it easier for families to access information.

At the end of 2014, we said goodbye to six retiring staff members: Marcia Charter, Betsy Bollier, Ann Decker, Amanda Finizio, Allen Warner, and Dot Keyworth.

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School

Post Secondary Education: The ABRHS Class of 2014 was comprised of 505 students; of these, 90% enrolled at four-year schools, while 8% continued their education at two-year colleges, prep and technical schools.

Standardized Test Results: Average SAT scores for the 2014 senior class again exceeded those of state and national populations. A decrease from 96% to 93% of seniors took the

SATs, well above the state average of 80%. Our average combined score for the SAT was 1909, which is 412 points higher than the average combined Massachusetts score of 1497.

National Merit Scholarship Competition: Twelve members of the Class of 2014 achieved semi-finalist recognition; eighty-eight others received letters of commendation.

National Honor Society: One hundred and four members of the Class of 2015 were inducted into the NHS in April 2014.

National Latin Exam: National Latin Exam results: 25 Gold (Summa cum laude); nine Silver (Maxima cum laude); five Bronze (Magna cum laude); one cum laude; twelve perfect scores (ten at Level 1 and two at Level II).

Academic Decathlon Team: During the 2013-2014 season, the team of nine regulars and eleven alternates won the Massachusetts State Championship for the 22nd time in the past 23 years. A total of forty Massachusetts high schools competed. In addition, the team placed 9th overall in the country at the USAD National Championship.

Mathematics Team and Competitive Activities: In the 2013-2014 season, the AB math team finished first in the monthly competition in the Massachusetts Mathematics League. The team continued on to the state competition run by the Massachusetts Association of Mathematics Leagues in April 2014 and placed second among large schools in Massachusetts. They then competed in the New England Association of Mathematics Leagues Competition in May 2014 and placed third among large schools in New England.

In addition to the team competition, six students were finalists in the Massachusetts Mathematics Olympiad exam –Niket Gowravaram, Nihal Gowravaram, Josh Xiong, Akshay Karthik, Steven Jin , and Andrew Li. In the National AMC, ten students placed in the top 10% nationwide, and five of these –Niket Gowravaram, Andrew Li, Josh Xiong, Kenneth Wang and Nihal Gowravaram – advanced to the 3rd level of this competition: the USAMO (United States of America Mathematics Olympiad).

Speech and Debate: The team, composed of over ninety students from grades 9-12, competes in nine local and several regional invitational tournaments during the season from October to April. Students compete in a variety of events: Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas Debate; Student Congress; Play, Prose and Poetry Reading; Duo Interpretation; Declamation; Original Oratory, Group Discussion, Dramatic and Humorous Interpretation; Impromptu and Extemporaneous Speaking. Belonging to the Massachusetts Forensics League and the Boston Catholic Forensics League, the team is matched against schools across the state and consistently places students in the final rounds. Students can earn qualifying bids to represent AB at the State Championships in March/April through their participation at local tournaments. 2013-2014 was a record-setting year in terms of the number of students we sent to States; results included the champion in Congressional Debate, team 3rd place at State Debates and several other finalists. The team's top competitors also compete at Harvard University's Speech and Debate Invitational, the National Speech and Debate Association's National Qualifying Tournament, and the qualifier for the Catholic Forensics League's National Tournament. In 2013-2014, five of our students earned the right to represent our local leagues at the two season ending

national tournaments. Finally, an AB student (Kathryn Larkin) was named District Student of the Year for 2014 and earned an Academic American award from the National Speech and Debate Association.

Athletics: During the 2013-2014 school year, participation in athletics remained consistent, with over 1,800 students in grades 7-12 participating.

League Championships were won by boys' cross country, field hockey, football, girls' soccer, girls' ice hockey, girls' alpine ski, girls' indoor track, girls' Nordic ski, boys' Nordic ski, baseball, boys' lacrosse, boys' tennis, girls' spring track.

During the fall athletic season, Jessica Crowley in girls' swim was the 100 yard State Breast Stroke Champion. Leah Carderelli was named 1st team All American and Eleana Carderelli 2nd team All American in field hockey. Alex Spangler was selected as All New England in girls' soccer.

In the winter, Corbin Miles in boys' swimming was the 50 meter State Champion and State Meet record holder, and the boys' Nordic ski team finished 2nd at the State Championship meet.

In the spring, boys' lacrosse won the Division 1 State Championship. Hunter Arnold and JT Kelly (boys' lacrosse) were both named 1st team All Americans.

Numerous AB student-athletes received All Scholastic honors from the Globe and Herald newspapers.

Proscenium Circus: This student drama group at the high school functions as a teaching and working theater. In addition to offering outstanding professional instruction in technical theater, acting, movement, scenic design, scenic painting, voice, directing, dance, costume design, hair and makeup, stage management, set construction, lighting and sound and house management, "PC" produces three main stage shows throughout the year, as well as over twenty smaller productions. The productions for the 2013-2014 year included the fall play, *The Tempest*, the musical, *Footloose*, and the student-written Competitive State Play finalist, *Paper Stars*. Rounding out the year were the student-directed class plays and the two-night Festival of student-directed 10-Minute Plays. As a part of the Proscenium Circus, the improv troupe "Chuckle Sandwich" performed for two successful nights; in addition, fifteen new plays written by AB students as part of a Young Playwright's Forum were work-shopped in the black box theater. Thirteen AB Playwrights participated in the Boston College Playwright's Forum in which professional actors and directors read or produced their plays at a professional theater in Boston. The year ended with the appointment of a new drama teacher and PC advisor, Michael Lopez.

PLADD (Peer Leaders Against Destructive Decisions): PLADD is a merger of Peer Leadership and Students Against Destructive Decisions. PLADD students facilitated DARE alcohol/drug awareness programs at most of the elementary schools. ABRHS students, along with a DARE officer, fielded questions on issues of drug/alcohol use, social culture of the high school, and general issues of adolescent development. PLADD conducted a variety of awareness and fundraising activities throughout the 2013-2014 school year.

The School Newspaper: *The Spectrum*, published five times during the school year, includes articles and photography of interest to the ABRHS community. Its staff of approximately forty students complete all tasks involved in producing the paper, including writing, editing, photography, layout, and copy editing. *The Spectrum* is entirely financially self-supporting through advertising and contributions from the PTSO.

Student Council: The Student Council meets weekly to plan all-school activities and to review school policies directly affecting the student body. Money raised by these activities is donated to charity or used to purchase items that enhance student life at the high school. Five representatives are elected from each class. Any member of the student body is welcome to attend Student Council meetings. If a student decides to participate on a regular basis, he or she can become a walk-on member.

"Window Seat": Acton-Boxborough Regional High School's Art and Literary Magazine annually publishes three issues of student poetry, prose, lyrics, essays, narratives, translations, and various forms of art. Club members and student leaders write, edit, design, print, publicize, and distribute the magazine on their own. Every week, members write creatively in a workshop setting to generate submissions for the magazine; however, the magazine also welcomes and encourages students not participating in the club to submit their writing for publication. Together with writers, art students also meet every week to create original art or illustrations for specific pieces of writing for the magazine. "Window Seat" students also work in conjunction with the Robert Creeley Foundation to publish work from the annual Robert Creeley poetry award-winning poet and the Helen Creeley student poetry prizewinners, a competition for student poets that awards the winning students a cash prize and the honor to be an opening reader for the Robert Creeley award-winning poet. Poems submitted for the competition are often published in the magazine's spring issue, along with artwork generated by the Foundation's Broadside Project. Students in officers' positions in "Window Seat" gain leadership experience in collaboration, design, publishing, marketing, finance, fundraising and publicity. To supplement the budget allotted by the school, students conduct fundraising in the local area. Students also established and maintained a web presence for the magazine at wseat.wordpress.com and on Tumblr. Meetings are held weekly on Thursdays; layout and magazine design sessions occur three times yearly.

Harvard Model Congress: Seven juniors represented ABRHS at this four-day government simulation. The Acton League of Women voters generously underwrote their participation. Those representing were Bridget Ashton, Ianka Bhatia, Emma Hardimon, Richa Lagu, Katie Larkin, Adiba Mamoon, and Annalise McDonald.

Career Exploration Activities: Beginning in November, over 120 students made one-day job shadowing visits to a variety of work sites. This program owes its success to the support of the Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce School-Business Partnership Committee and to parents and other local residents willing to host students. At three Career Speaker events during the year, career speakers talked to groups of students interested in their fields of work; over 175 students attended each of the three events. In 2014, 97 members of the senior class completed three-week full-time internships at the end of the school year. Other career exploration activities included the Senior Seminar course, the Work Study

program, speakers who visited classrooms, and a website listing employment opportunities.

Senior Community Service Day: On Friday, May 2, the Class of 2014 organized the 20th annual Senior Community Service Day. The day began with the faculty and administration treating the students to a wonderful breakfast at the school. Then the students spent the day volunteering in and around Acton and Boxborough. All 500 students could be seen all over the community in matching T-shirts raking leaves, clearing paths and planting gardens.

Community Service Activities: The school's "Accept the Challenge Program" encourages every student to become involved in some way in volunteer activities – during the school year, during the summer, or both. Unlike surrounding communities, A-B does not have a community service graduation requirement; even so, community service is a strong part of the culture at A-B. During the school's fourteenth annual Community Service Awards Night on January 20, 2014, we celebrated the students' accomplishments and recognized that our students volunteer over 80,000 hours every year.

Energy and Resource Conservation: ABRHS continues to make gains in energy and resource conservation. Electricity consumption decreased another 12% in FY2014, resulting in both cost savings and a reduced environmental footprint for the school. This reduction is due to efficiency projects in both lighting and mechanical equipment, as well as a strong commitment to energy conservation by faculty and staff. The Resource Force student team is actively engaged in highlighting energy conservation and is beginning an innovative "circuit-level metering" project this year, looking at highly granular electricity data for the high school.

The high school also has a strong commitment to recycling and composting. In the cafeteria, students sort out compostables and recyclables from their lunch stuff with coaching from their peers at two student-managed sorting stations. The result is that compostables and recyclables now compose 75% of the stream from the cafeteria, leading to a dramatic reduction in solid waste. In addition, the kitchen is capturing recyclables and compostables. Sawdust from the woodshop and greasy pizza boxes also go into the compostables! Recycling in classrooms and offices is managed with a weekly pick-up by the student Recycling Club.

PUPIL SERVICES

Early Childhood Services

The Carol P. Huebner Preschool, formerly the Acton Public Schools Preschool, continued to provide a local integrated learning environment for all children. Students with identified special education needs and those who are developing typically are educated side-by-side, meeting required IDEA regulations pertaining to inclusion in the least restrictive environment. Half and full-day services are provided to children from three to five years old, across six sessions (two full-day and four half-day, meeting four days per week). More than 100 students were enrolled in the program by the end of the 2013-2014 school year.

As the Acton and Boxborough Public Schools prepared to regionalize for the 2014-2015 school year, staff members worked together to join the two exceptional early childhood programs from Acton and Boxborough. Staff from both programs toured each other's schools and met together to begin building relationships. Under the direction of Acton's Pupil Services Director and Boxborough's Special Education Coordinator, an Early Childhood Program Improvement grant was written to provide professional development opportunities for staff from both programs. An early childhood specialist provided two days of team building activities in June to begin the process of unifying our two exceptional programs.

Special Education

The special education department is a dedicated staff of special educators, speech/language specialists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and behavioral specialists. Specialists and trained assistants address student needs, both in the general education classrooms and within special education settings.

Pupil Services continues to reach out to parents with the ongoing goal of supporting an open dialogue between parents/guardians and school personnel. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (Sped PAC) is an integral part of the Pupil Services organization. Sped PAC meets regularly with the Special Education Administration staff to offer suggestions and parent input on a wide variety of issues, as well as to offer support to parents/guardians regarding resources and family supports. In addition to support, Sped PAC provides parents with information regarding special education regulations, home activities, social/recreational opportunities, parent speakers, and guidance related to student transitions.

At the elementary level, Special Educators worked closely with the Blanchard Special Educators to build relationships to assist in the regionalization process. Each Special Educator was paired with a cohort to collaborate and observe each other's programs. This collaboration helped to establish relationships in preparation for a unification of the districts.

For the last three years Pupil Services has partnered with Community Education to continue providing an integrated summer program for students with social needs. Students in this program have had an opportunity to join with typical peers for high interest courses, such as cake decorating, art, crime scene investigation and ukulele.

The Elementary Special Educators researched and investigated a variety of assistive technological supports. With the purchase of the Lexia online reading program, students are developing and improving their decoding, vocabulary, and fluency skills, both at home and at school. Chrome books were purchased for several learning centers, allowing students to use a variety of programs to assist in the process of writing.

Special Education regulations require students to be educated in the least restrictive environment, alongside typical peers. To ensure a continuum of services in the public school setting, program design and development is essential. During the 2013-2014 school year, a continuum of services was provided to address students with Autism Spectrum

Disorder at the high school level. The Bridges Program at the high school completes the continuum of services from preschool through graduation for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The Bridges Program provided an inclusive opportunity for students to further develop social skills, life skills, executive functioning skills and employability skills while accessing the richness of academics provided within an inclusive public school setting. Program and Curriculum development occurred in the summer of 2013 in consultation with Aspire: Mass General Hospital.

Students at the secondary level begin to focus on essential and mandated post-secondary transitional planning activities to prepare them for life after high school. Transitional supports included services provided by a recently approved .4 Transition Coordinator and a Transition Counselor at the high school. Additional supports related to transition include job placement, job coaching and internship opportunities. The Transition Coordinator worked with special education students to develop transitional activities and areas of vocational and educational interests.

Special educators at the junior high school level dedicated part of their summer to Just Words Training, a Wilson Reading program intended to support small group reading instruction. As students matriculate from the elementary level to the secondary level, it is important to continue to receive specialized instruction and to develop skills in the areas of reading and written language.

Counseling and Psychological Services

Counseling departments in all schools continue to place the highest value on creating an environment that is not only safe but also nurturing for every student to learn, achieve and succeed.

During the 2013-14 school year, students in grades 6, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 participated in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey through Emerson Hospital. Results will be shared with the district and the community during the 2014-2015 school year.

At the secondary level, clinicians worked with adolescents to anticipate daily student stressors that might contribute to potential problems and crises. The counseling department refers students and their families to appropriate agencies as needs are determined. Daily issues that arise for students include, but are not limited to, attendance issues, stress management, and a wide range of mental health issues. Due to an increase in staffing, counselor caseloads have been reduced, allowing staff more time to support students, families and colleagues. In order to promote continued high academic achievement and support for students, counselors assist students in the college planning and application process, as well as other post-secondary planning activities. The goal is to ensure students have a plan after graduation with coordinated personal goals.

Specific to the high school, the counseling department has created a Student Support Team (SST) that compliments the work of the state-mandated Child Study and Student Assistance Teams. These teams allow for counselors, psychologists, nurses, alternative program staff, special educators and administrators to meet regularly to discuss at-risk students and to promote a safe school culture. In addition, effective communication and a strong sense of

collaboration between the school resource officers and school officials continue to be critical components of our commitment to safe schools. Our school resource officers continue to provide professional networking and liaison support. The school resource officers work closely with building principals and administrators and develop personal relationships with students and faculty to ensure a visible presence within all schools. In addition, the school resource officers provide the district with crisis intervention and consultation.

During the 2013-2014 school year, counselors and psychologists focused on training and support for faculty regarding mental health issues. This training included sharing data and trends related to adolescent mental health, as well as identification of warning signs related to depression and suicidality. Teachers were taught how to respond if they had concerns regarding students. In addition, a trauma specialist made faculty aware of the impact of trauma on the educational experience. Seminars were held for faculty to provide education on the process of supporting students returning from hospitalizations, as well as to provide supports and accommodations that may be required for students struggling with mental health issues such as anxiety or depression. Students were also part of the training and awareness. Signs of Suicide (SOS) curriculum was provided to students within small instructional groups.

At the elementary level, all schools worked on common protocols related to mental health and ways to support students and teachers in their work with students. Counselors and psychologists worked with students within their classrooms to identify signs of stress and anxiety and to teach strategies for students to manage these emotions. In this work, it is important for students to have the ability to identify these feelings and learn ways to cope with them so they can be successful academically, emotionally and physically. Counselors and psychologists also worked to establish a protocol for mandated reporting of concerns related to possible child abuse and neglect. Counselors and psychologists spent considerable time learning about local agencies, such as the Acton Town Social Worker and others in the community who may provide outside supports and resources for families.

Health and Nursing

The district has successfully met the requirements for continued involvement with the DPH (Department of Public Health) Essential School Health Services Grant (ESHS). This grant was renewed and continued to provide financial assistance to the district for the purpose of staffing, direct care, nurse leadership, and professional learning.

During the 2013-2014 school year, the ABRSD and APS nurses included the Blanchard Elementary School nurse in their regular group meetings to facilitate and support the regionalization process.

The Nursing Procedure Manual content was updated and converted to Google Docs to allow for more ease as a reference tool and to support the need to keep information current and relevant. Nurses in the district then presented at a statewide nurse leader conference on this process.

To support students and staff, the nurses worked on restructuring school district paperwork related to field trips, designed to reflect medical implications reflective of DPH medial delegation rules and nurse practice.

To continue to adhere to OSHA mandates, staff participated in the e-learning modules for Life-Threatening Allergies and Blood Borne Pathogens and took an accompanying quiz for each module. This on-line training allows for all staff to be trained across the district with the ability to track compliance and the possible need for additional training.

In addition, school nurses provided support by organizing flu clinics for staff members, updating head lice procedures to assure alignment with the American Academy of Pediatrics and National Association of School Nursing best practices -- for implementation in the Fall of 2014, as well as obtaining EpiPens through a grant program for administration in the case of anaphylactic reaction.

English Learner Education

The English Learner Education (ELE) program continues to address the increasing number of students requiring support from the ELE program. This previously identified trend in increasing numbers of students continued throughout the 2013-2014 school year. The program added .6 additional staffing to increase to three full-time elementary teachers and one teaching assistant. The high school and junior high school share one ELE teachers.

Regulatory requirements related to the RETELL initiative were addressed through the first district-sponsored SEI endorsement course for teachers at Acton Public Schools.

Approximately 23 teachers were trained throughout the school year. Presentations were provided across the district to educate staff about the RETELL Initiative and requirements for SEI endorsement related to teacher licensure renewal. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) asked Acton-Boxborough to host two teacher courses for the 2014-2015 school year. In addition to teachers, administrators will begin training during the 2014-2015 school year as well.

Acton Public Schools continued to be considered a moderate incidence district due to the increasing number of students requiring ELE support. The district continued to be eligible for federal funding through the Title III Grant. This grant supplements programming for ELL students, parent engagement and professional development. Through this grant a parent English as a Second Language (ESL) beginner class was offered at the library during school hours. The Title III Grant also provided summer school programs for students for a second summer. This program expanded to include three classes and to allow incoming first grade students to attend. Over 70 students participated in the summer program. A Title III Community Resource Fair was held in March for ELE families, with support from community participants such as PTOs, the Hudson-Maynard Adult Education Program, Community Education, and also the high school counseling office, the Latino Family network, and the Acton Public Library.

The ELE staff began a yearlong professional development workshop to create progress reports that reflected new WIDA standards. In addition, ELE curriculum development was started as mandated by DESE. To support regionalization, the Blanchard ELE teacher

participated in workshops with staff from Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District.

In the spring of 2014, the data management software, ELlevation, was purchased for ELE programs. This software was partially funded by the Title III Grant. The chairpersons for ELE and EdTech worked with the ELLevations technical department to set up interfaces and prepare for data transfer.

In the upcoming year, regionalization and the continued growth trend in the ELL population will continue to be the focus of determining programmatic and staffing needs related to this trend. In addition, training related to RETELL will be offered for some members of the secondary staff and administration.

Conclusion

Pupil Services continued to provide trainings and e-learning modules to address regulatory requirements, as well as to educate staff on state mandates related to professional responsibilities. In addition to federal and state regulatory mandates related to areas within Pupil Services, state mandates have required all staff to address the implementation of the teacher evaluation system, the development of District Determined Measures, and RETELL initiative requirements. While these mandates are extensive and demanding, the focus of our work in Pupil Services continues to be the health, safety and well being of our students.

PERFORMING ARTS

At the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School, the band and chorus programs continued to flourish as they performed in and around our community, and elsewhere. In addition to marching in our own Acton Memorial Day Parade, the band marched in a number of parades outside of our community, including the Marlborough Labor Day Parade, the Boston Columbus Day Parade, and the Quincy Christmas Parade (where they took 1st place overall). The ABRHS Band traveled to Ireland, where they marched in both Limerick, taking "Best International Band," and the Dublin St. Patrick's Day Parade, taking "Best Youth Band." The band also earned a Gold Medal rating at the Marching Band state finals. The choral department put on an outstanding talent show, traditionally known as "Cabaret." Fifteen of our student musicians from band, chorus and orchestra were selected to perform at the MMEA Eastern District Festival held in January; eleven of them earned All-State recommendations. Our Madrigal Singers put on a Madrigal Dinner for the community, at which they performed a renaissance-style dinner theater. [See the High School entry for information about Proscenium Circus.]

At the R. J. Grey Junior High School, the eighth-grade band and chorus each participated in the Great East Music Festival, held at West Springfield High School in May. The chorus earned a Platinum Medal and the band earned a Gold Medal for their outstanding performances. The JHS musical, "Willy Wonka, Jr." had a terrific run of performances with a huge cast of approximately eighty students involved. Thirteen students were selected to perform in the concert band, orchestra or chorus at the MMEA Eastern Junior District

Music Festival held in March. The seventh- and eighth-grade band marched in the Boxborough Memorial Day Parade.

At the elementary schools, the Beginning and Advanced Bands performed very well in their Winter and Spring Concerts. The bands also performed at each school's Memorial Day assembly, along with songs and poems performed by individual classes. The Gates School's chorus sang in a Pan Choral Concert with members of the junior high and high school choruses. The combined Acton Elementary School Band marched in the Acton Memorial Day Parade.

VISUAL ARTS

Throughout the school year, student efforts and accomplishments in the Visual Arts program were exhibited in each of the seven schools and the High School Administrative Conference Room, as well as off-site venues. Student artwork appeared in various school newsletters, and drawings by kindergarten students graced the cover of the Kindergarten Handbook.

In the highly competitive Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards, ABRSD received a total of 53 state-level awards. These awards included: 9 Gold Key Awards, 23 Silver Key Awards, and 21 Honorable Mention Awards. The Gold Key student work was exhibited at Boston City Hall during March. Award-winning students were recognized at an awards ceremony at Hancock Hall in Boston. Student work receiving Gold Key Awards was sent to New York for the National Scholastics judging.

Senior students in the ABRHS Portfolio class prepared and exhibited their artwork in a show entitled, "Elections," which was held at the Acton Memorial Library in April. AB Portfolio class students participated in a fifth year of an interdisciplinary unit of study between the English and Visual Arts departments. Collaboration included multi-grade levels of students in English and Visual Arts classes working together and connecting with the community-based Robert Creeley Foundation. Portfolio students created broadside designs to accompany 2014 Creeley Foundation Award Winning Poet Mary Ruefle's work. One student's artwork was chosen for the broadside design, which was printed in a limited edition.

The work of Acton-Boxborough Photography students was included in a photography show, "Summer Pictures," at the State Transportation Building in Boston, sponsored by the Massachusetts Education Association. High school students had the opportunity to participate in Photo Club and in Art Club, each of which met after school one afternoon a week throughout the year. The annual museum field trip for art students was to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston in February.

High school art students as well as their art teachers created miniature works of art (art card format) that were sold during lunches at the high school to raise funds for Red Cross disaster relief. There is a scrolling presentation of artwork of high school students on a large monitor in the ABRHS Library. One hundred images of student artwork are displayed

in this virtual museum. Photography students created a limited edition calendar showcasing their photos that was sold in the school store.

During March and April, Acton and Acton-Boxborough student artwork was exhibited in the annual Youth Art Month Show at the State Transportation Building in Boston. Fifty-one APS/AB student works were included. There was an opening reception in March for students, their families, and art teachers in the second floor gallery of the Transportation Building. All seven schools were represented in this show.

An exhibit of representative student artwork from each of the seven schools was on display at the Acton Senior Center during the month of May. The work of thirty-one students was included in this exhibit. An opening reception was held for students, parents and teachers.

K-12 Visual Arts staff developed and piloted District Determined Measures for Visual Arts courses. The Visual Arts Director was one of 12 National Art Education Association delegates who traveled to Myanmar, visiting schools to research the role the arts play in the general community, as well as the place the arts have in education. The director was one of seven delegates from this trip who made a presentation at the National Art Education Conference in San Diego, CA, in the spring. The director also made a presentation at this conference comparing art education in India and Myanmar with art education in Acton.

The Visual Arts Director was one of a team of ten art educators from across the US who developed Model Cornerstone Assessments for the newly published National Visual Arts Standards. These assessments are available on the NAEA website, along with the new National Standards.

For the second year the two RJG art teachers collaborated with RJG music and drama teachers to implement an “Arts Happening” evening in May that was very successful, with many community members attending. The RJG art teachers also continue to pilot student use of iPads for research and creating artwork in Art 1 and Art II classes. The eighth grade art teacher piloted the flipped classroom format for her Art II classes.

Elementary art teachers organized on-site art shows, field trips and artist visits. There was a K-6 Art Show at Gates School in May; an Art Cars Exhibit by Douglas grade 5 art students in the Douglas School Lobby, also in May; an exhibit of mask paintings by grade 5 students at Douglas, based on student observations of masks and other African artifacts on loan from the Gallery of African Art in Clinton; and Art Shows at both McCarthy-Towne and Merriam Schools in the spring.

EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY

The EDTech department continues to enhance our teaching and learning environment by providing flexible technology tools for students and staff. This year, our main focus was to implement more technology in the classroom to support our updated educational technology learning goals and to provide real-time access to technology for our students when needed most. Using our Google Apps for Education “ABschools” domain, schools

were able to quickly implement cost-effective chromebooks into their teaching and learning environment with great success. Teachers have now identified ABSchools as their primary 21st-century toolkit as the Google Apps suite supports so many facets of student learning, including student writing, project-based activities that incorporate creativity and collaboration, information/research projects, digital portfolios, and more. With these tools, students can capture and analyze data using “Forms” and “Sheets,” they can collaborate and write for authentic audiences on “Docs,” and they can present their photos and movie presentations on “Sites.”

Continuing our goal to encourage and support more technology in the classroom, EDTech has developed a new program called the “Innovative Learning Program” or ILP. Developed in a way that supports a “bottoms-up” approach, the department established this initiative by seeking proposals from teachers and staff that focused on innovating their teaching and learning through the use of technology in the classroom. To be accepted into the program, teachers defined clear learning goals with specific measures of success. We had 18 teachers accepted to the program with an almost 50/50 ratio of teachers using ChromeBooks and teachers using tablets, some of those being Kindles. These “micro-pilots” provided the EDTech team with time to test administrative management of these new technologies and to plan for districtwide rollouts.

As we now have ABSchools available to students from grades 4-12, the instructional technology group is continuing to work on a complete overhaul of the Digital Citizenship curriculum. We recognize that with more of our teachers and students using technology in their learning, it’s vitally important to make sure all of our students are learning to respect and protect themselves *and* each other while online. It’s vitally important to make sure our students are learning the importance of appropriate online use, the idea of promoting a positive footprint, and having a place by which they can develop these essential life skills.

Highlighting the department’s continued ability to upgrade technology services within our operational budget, we continue to utilize two Internet Service providers to support our expanding bandwidth needs. Our 10GB backbone connection supports our security cameras, data center, and wireless network, and we’ve continued consolidating servers through virtualization.

Finally, the department would like to highlight the successful completion of the PARCC field tests. We performed the online field tests with specifically designated classrooms within the McCarthy-Towne, Merriam, Gates, and Conant schools with both the ChromeBook and/or MacBook Pro computers. The initial administrative setup of this new assessment took time to complete, with specific requirements needing to be met, but the department is now able to plan accordingly for future online assessments. For instance, while we have 100% wireless network coverage in all of our buildings, we did find areas of saturation in which there were simply too many devices trying to connect to an older model access point. As a result, we will be looking to phase in new model access points to meet these needs in the near future.

SUMMER SCHOOL

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Summer School serviced 484 students; 85% were residents of Acton or Boxborough and 15% were students from other school districts. Per usual, there was a lengthy wait-list for Physical Education.

Chris Clinton, who had directed the summer school program, resigned in the winter of 2014. Steven Martin and Maurin O'Grady were co-directors of the 2014 summer school session. Another change to the program included the addition of an Integrated Engineering course. As in summer of 2013, the elementary school program did not run in 2014.

As in previous years, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Summer School is a self-funding program. Tuition receipts allow us to continue offering first-rate summer educational programming for students in Acton, Boxborough, and several other communities.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Community Education office is located in the Administration Building, 15 Charter Road, Acton. Its staff organizes, staffs, and directs the following programs and activities.

Day and Evening Classes: Each year, Community Ed. offers 2,000+ classes for children, teens and adults. Classes and other programs are posted on the Community Ed. website: <http://abce.abschools.org> and advertised in *INTERACTION*, the course catalog that is mailed four times a year to over 21,000 area homes. More than 10,000 students enroll in classes annually. Community Ed. began taking online registrations in January 2014.

Extended Day: Serving more than 348 Acton families, Extended Day offers quality before- and after-school care for 447 children in grades K-6. Community Ed. runs a program at the Administration Building, as well as school-based programs at Conant, Gates, and McCarthy-Towne Schools.

All-Day Kindergarten Program: Community Ed. administers the business affairs of the All-Day Kindergarten program at each elementary school.

Summer Day Program: Located at the Administration Building, this program offers weeklong sessions to 80+ children per week in grades K-6. Activities include: Arts and Crafts, Music and Drama, Cooperative Games, Red Cross Swim Lessons, Free Swim, and Special Events.

Vacation Week Programs: During February and April school vacations, Community Ed. runs childcare programs that include field trips and enrichment activities. Community Ed. also offers one-day programs on the school districts' "no school" days (e.g. staff professional days, Veterans Day, Columbus Day) to assist parents who need childcare.

Youth Winter Basketball League: Over a 12-week period, more than 800 boys and girls in grades 3-12 participate in weekly practices and league play. The league is staffed by more than 150 paid and volunteer coaches, timers, and referees.

Driver Education: Community Ed. runs a Registry-approved driving school, offering classroom instruction and on-road training to 300+ students annually. It offers Saturday license test exams in partnership with the RMV and has expanded the number of weeklong accelerated classes offered.

Pool & Field House Programs: Located at ABRHS, the Pool & Field House Program provides the public with opportunities to use the high school pool and field house on the weekends. In addition to open swim and gym, Community Ed. runs a full program of children's swim lessons, a youth swim team, master's competitive swimming, morning and evening lap swim, and water exercise classes.

Fitness Center: Community Ed. has a team of volunteers who supervise public drop-in times at the Fitness Center, located at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School.

Scheduling Use of School Fields: Little League, Softball, Pop Warner, Youth Lacrosse, and Youth Soccer, as well as individuals, businesses, and community organizations, receive permits for school field use through Community Ed. Fees charged are returned to the school district to support the facilities.

Scheduling Use of School Buildings: Use of the seven school buildings outside of school hours is scheduled through Community Ed.

Snack Shack at Lower Fields: Community Ed. operates the snack shack at the new bathrooms/concessions facility at the Lower Fields.

Community Education receives no funding from the school districts or towns and runs all programs on a self-sustaining basis. Moneys are returned to the districts to use for space and equipment. For more information about Community Education and the programs that it offers, call (978) 266-2525.

FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

The districts are strong leaders in energy efficiency, cutting costs for Acton and Boxborough taxpayers, greening up school footprints, and receiving national recognition. Electricity use has been cut by 28% below our benchmark of five years ago, with a 17% cut in energy use overall. This success is due to (1) an energy conservation program that has received national awards with strong engagement by staff, faculty and students and (2) major lighting and mechanical upgrades with grant funding.

Five percent of the districts' electricity use is supplied by the three solar arrays on school roofs (280 kW total); the districts are exploring additional solar capacity. In addition, 20% of the electricity purchased from NSTAR is certified from renewable sources. The districts' use of conventional electricity has been cut by almost 50% over benchmark, given the combination of conservation, efficiency and renewable sources.

ABRSD implemented a \$300,000 energy efficiency upgrade at the high school in FY2014, with more than half of the funding coming from utility incentives and a payback of less than two years. These projects included upgrades to the HVAC system and high-efficiency lighting. In June, the Acton Public and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools were awarded \$286,000 in DOER grant funding and utility incentives for four more energy efficiency projects: (1) new high-efficiency boilers at RJ Grey; (2) LED exterior lighting at Conant, Gates and Douglas; (3) tying exhaust fans to building management software at RJ Grey; and (4) working with granular data to boost energy efficiency at ABRHS and RJ Grey. As this report goes to press, the new boilers have been installed and the other projects are underway.

Compostables and recyclables are captured in several of our cafeterias now (and all kitchens) with the active support of students coaching their peers on how to sort their stuff. This program is in place at ABRHS, as well as McCarthy-Towne and Merriam, with Conant now getting underway. This has led to cost savings and a dramatic reduction in solid waste, as compostables and recyclables make up 80% of the waste stream from the cafeterias and kitchens. In addition, single stream recycling is in place in all of our offices and classrooms with support from student teams.

Student Green Teams are active in all of our schools, helping to promote energy conservation and/or recycling and composting. We welcome and encourage the engagement of our students in helping to build a culture of conservation in our schools. Several of our schools received national and state awards this year for excellence in energy conservation and energy education from the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED), including an all-expenses paid trip for ten participants to the national award ceremony in Washington, DC.

To go along with the annual maintenance and repair of the schools' physical plant, the Facilities Department is also responsible for capital construction projects on our school properties. This past year we were able to complete a total reconstruction of the Richard E. Dow Track. This project would not have been completed without significant financial support from many members of our community. Thank you to the individuals involved in raising the funds and the community at large for supporting the project.

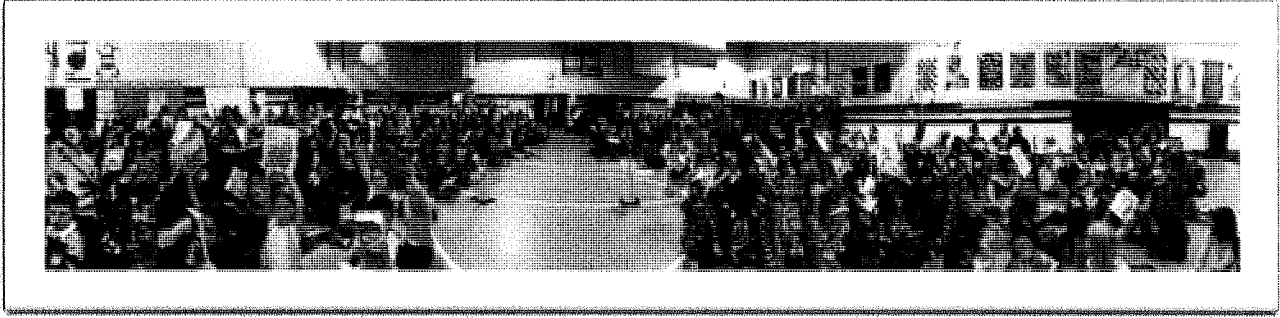
IN CONCLUSION

This report provides a glimpse into the work of our PreK – grade 12 school district. It is a system that is comprised of many individuals who are dedicated to the overall well being of our children. While each day the district relies on the deep commitment of faculty, staff and administration to collectively serve the students of Acton and Boxborough, our accomplishments are also reflective of incredible partnerships with our supportive communities. This includes everyone who volunteers in our classrooms, attends our theatrical performances, cheers enthusiastically at our games and events, and serves on our many committees, including our School Committee.

Our system achieves tremendous results according to many metrics and within many areas, both inside and outside of the classroom. But beyond metrics, rankings, and the post-secondary institutions or careers that our students might go on to attend or pursue, we will continue to see the most success when students are well prepared for the world before them and 'AB' continues to be a strong, caring, collaborative community dedicated to maintaining the best public educational system we can provide for the children of Acton and Boxborough.

Glenn Brand
Superintendent of Schools
On Behalf of the School Committees
January 2015

BLANCHARD MEMORIAL SCHOOL



Students proudly presenting their books at Blanchard's Community meeting

Welcome to Blanchard! It has certainly been a year of many 'firsts'. Upon my first day on July 1st, I became the first principal of the newly regionalized Blanchard Memorial School. In a few short months, I will welcome the first graduating class of the new Acton-Boxborough Blanchard Memorial School! My core values include the pursuit of lifelong education, facilitating open and honest communication, encouraging collegial and respectful relationships, and advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves. I have depended on these guiding principles to support a smooth transition for families, students and staff.

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." Blanchard's STARR values, Support, Teamwork, Attitude, Respect, and Responsibility, continue to reflect our mission and core beliefs. When I attended the Boxborough Master Planning meeting on November 19th, I gained greater understanding of Boxborough. Blanchard is still very much the core of the town and we are committed to maintaining the strong relationships and sense of close-knit community that is reflected by our greater community of Boxborough.

Dr. Karen Tower continues in her role as Assistant Principal, and we have worked hard to develop a shared vision. Our work is grounded together in a Co-Leadership model. We stand united in our STARR Values, dedicated to using data to inform instruction, developing curriculum, improving evaluation and assisting in assessment.

On December 2nd, Blanchard Memorial School hosted a special visitor. Secretary of Education, Matt Malone, noted the warm, welcoming and clean building. He mentioned our forward thinking math, literacy, and science programs, our outdoor classroom and Response to Intervention (RTI), which offers individual attention and creates options for students. He called our music program "a gem" and mentioned that our caring, strong teachers were also reasons why "Blanchard is in the top 20% of the state".

There are currently 432 students in grades Pre-K through 6. Blanchard also provides classes for two CASE Collaborative programs. Our students continue to receive the added benefits of Art, Music, Physical Education/Health and Library/Technology classes. One hundred five students in grades Pre-K through Six attend Extended Day in the morning and afternoon programs. Extended Day children

participate in arts and crafts, nature and science activities, games, cooking, and sports. Additionally, students have access to the computer lab. Extended Day sponsors enrichment classes and field trips on days that school is not regularly in session.

We have a caring and devoted faculty and staff that include master teachers and hard-working custodians who are passionate about making your children central to their work. This year, there are eleven educators at Blanchard whose combined service totals 237 dedicated years. In addition, the staff and school have received many honors for their work. This fall, the entire Grade Six Team presented at the Massachusetts Computer Using Educators (MassCUE) at Lesley University. Kate McMillan presented at Lesley University and at the National Council for Teachers of English in Washington D.C. and will present to the Central Mass Reading Council in March. Kate McMillan has also been awarded a substantial STARS Residency grant from the Massachusetts Cultural Council for her application entitled "Using Art to Investigate Historical Culture". Also, included in the study were Jason Diman, Janet LaVigne, Nancy Melbourne, Peggy Harvey, Deb McLean, Kristin Kilcommins and Courtney Stevens. Courtney Stevens received an Acton-Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) New Teacher grant for Words Their Way Curriculum Development in Grade Four. The Hall at Patriots Place and Raytheon awarded Jason Diman \$1000 for being selected as a runner-up for STEM Elementary Teacher of the Year. Eileen Barnett and Deb McLean will present at the National Art Education Conference in New Orleans this spring. Chris Baird received the town's Spirit of Giving Award at the annual Boxborough tree lighting ceremony. The iPad Grant proposal submitted to Littleton Electric by Blanchard was accepted and we received twelve iPads to complete our classroom set. The staff had a successful Google Apps and Digital Citizenship training and several teachers participated in an optional Professional Learning opportunity on creating classroom webpages.

This year, we enthusiastically welcomed several new staff members: Kristen Pawl, Office Clerk; Erica Daigneault, Speech Language Pathologist; Tim Lundy, Technology Assistant; Regina Fitek, Math Assistant; Theresa Laquerre, English Learner Educator; Chiuling Campo, General Education Para-Professional; Danielle Fredericks, Special Education Para-Professional; Maia Proujanski-Bell, Reading Assistant; Vidya Sampathkumar, General Education Paraprofessional; Katlyn Gauthier, Speech Language Pathologist Assistant; Beth Rivet, Guidance Intern; Latha Murthy Lunch and Recess Aide; Sunitha Paravasthu, General Education Paraprofessional.

We are completing our first year using our new K-6 Math In Focus (Singapore Math) Common Core aligned curriculum. We continue to measure students' achievement with Assessing Math Concepts in kindergarten through second grade. In Language Arts, we continue with the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Benchmark Assessment Systems (BAS), supplementing with a leveled reading library to support instruction. Writing has been adjusted to include the rubrics created by Acton-Boxborough teachers with specificity to each genre of writing and aligned with the Common Core.

For the 2013-2014 MCAS, Blanchard was awarded progress and performance index extra credit points for narrowing proficiency gaps in ELA and Math as well as warnings and failures by more than 10% in ELA. We made gains in our 'High Needs' population, which we attribute to our inclusion and co-teaching model and Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Response to Intervention. Our

growth percentile for all students has been on an increasing trend for High to Very High growth and on a decreasing trend for Very Low to- Low growth since 2008 in both Math and ELA.

Blanchard continues to embed Response to Intervention into the daily schedule. This 30-minute block allows staff an opportunity to work closely with a custom grouping of students. After the assessments are scored, the staff meets for Data Days to review the assessments, achievement, learning needs, and to inform teacher instruction. It is important to know that we base decisions on students' needs and achievement on several assessments to obtain a comprehensive learning profile of our students. This determines whether or not a child requires enrichment (Tier 1), re-teaching or review (Tier 2) or a more intensive intervention of skills and concepts (Tier 3).

Community is important to us. We continue to meet as an entire school during themed monthly Community Meetings. Some themes to date: Introduction of staff and STARR Values, UNITY day, Veterans Day and literacy celebrations. We maintain an important relationship with the Parent Teachers and Friends (PTF) Organization, who in addition to donating their time and talent have always offered enrichment opportunities for our children. On November 25th, Newbery honored author and illustrator, Grace Lin, visited our school thanks to the coordinated efforts of the PTF and our Librarian, Connie Long. In December, Grade Six welcomed Boxborough citizens to the Senior Breakfast and concert. STARR Buddies continue to meet once a month to do a shared activity to promote our STARR values and develop a sense of community within our school. Also, staff members participate in the Blanchard Buddy program, where a secret "Buddy" provides surprises each month for their "Buddy".

We work hard as a community to maintain relationships through various contributions. The following are some highlights of student, family and faculty contributions: Staff raised over \$200 in the Ice Bucket Challenge towards ALS research; families and staff members donated 24 pairs of jeans to Rosie's Place, in coordination with our Guidance Counselor, Gail Walsh; we collected 67 coats for Coats for Kids in conjunction with Anton's Cleaners; Grade Six collected 117 pairs of socks, 52 sets of mittens and 7 scarves and hats for the Acton Food Pantry; 170 candy grams were created and delivered to the Bedford Veterans Hospital as part of the Sweets for Soldiers campaign; 160 canned goods were donated during our 'Souperbowl'; 70 board games and snacks were collected for Transitions shelter at Fort Devens and we are currently collecting blankets for Buddy Dog. Blanchard will host its annual Ashley Jee Memorial Children's Hospital Blood Drive again this year.

Other recent grade level events to note:

Pre-K and Kindergarten students participated in Read Across America day.

Grade One enjoyed a visit from Drumlin Farm and learned about animals and how they adapt.

Grade Two hosted their annual Animal Research Project presentation.

Grade Three hosted their annual Biography Day.

Grade Four attended the Boston Symphony Orchestra's Youth Concerts at Symphony Hall in Boston.

Grade Five will continue to embark on their annual Cape Cod spring trip tradition by utilizing Nature's Classroom.

Grade 6 students campaigned for causes that were meaningful to them by writing persuasive essays, creating power point presentations, and fulfilling the mission of the cause through fundraising or

donating goods all via a project called, “Stand Up For”.

With respect to Regionalization, thirteen members that make up the Blanchard Memorial School Representative Team meet monthly to discuss progress and speak with the Superintendent, Glenn Brand. We are committed to providing the best service possible to students and families, negotiating complex scheduling creatively and adjusting our practice to maximize efficiency and flexibility. Staff has adjusted well to the large-scale change and adapted to changes in scheduling, and welcomed the opportunity to connect with a greater network of educators. We want to ensure that the levels of services for all of our students with a variety of needs and learning styles are not limited, so they may better compete in a global society. This includes access to and mastery of evolving technologies and the ability for our teachers to practice quality instruction. All of our classrooms are equipped with Smart Boards and ceiling mounted projectors, and have access to iPad and laptop carts, chrome books and our technology lab. This spring, the district technology department will be making extensive improvements to the computer lab and adding additional chrome book carts for students. Regionalization has offered many wonderful opportunities for staff, including a variety of professional learning opportunities with a multitude of interests as well as access to helpful curriculum coordinators who unpack state initiatives to help ease the workload. Central office staff members are regular fixtures at Blanchard and have presented at staff meetings to help us negotiate student impact ratings through District Determined Measures (DDMs), technology changes and upgrades and Sheltered English Instruction (SEI). Our ongoing relationship with the Town of Boxborough including, the DPW, Police and Fire Departments as well as the Sargent Memorial Library adds to the ease of transition. With the help of the district, we have increased safety and security with improved playground surfacing, LED automatic lighting, signs, door locks and entry point cameras.

In planning for the future of our students, the Blanchard School Council is reviewing the current School Improvement Plan. We have created a draft for a new goal around the health and well being of staff and students by paying specific attention to anxiety and stress management. Blanchard recognizes the need to establish a pipeline of support for students as they mature and matriculate and wants to align with the first goal of the Acton-Boxborough Long Range Strategic Plan and the first value in the district mission statement: *As a community, we value: An environment that promotes social development and emotional and physical well-being for the entire school community.* We are establishing and strengthening programs that can be approached school wide so that we may systematically embed positive intervention systems into our school day.

The 2014-2015 School Council Members are:

Mr. John Fallon	Community Representative
Ms. Patty Harrison	Faculty Representative
Ms. Maribeth Higgins	Faculty Representative
Ms. Susan Kenyon	Parent Representative
Ms. Kirsty Kerin	Parent Representative
Ms. Connie Long	Faculty Representative
Mr. Dana Labb	Principal/Co-Chair
Ms. Tessa McKinley	Parent Representative/Co-Secretary

Ms. Mary Pavlik	Community Representative/Co-Chair
Ms. Tracey Sierra	Parent Representative
Dr. Karen Tower	Assistant Principal/Co-Secretary

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 backpack monthly newsletter from the school and PTF with articles, information and a calendar. *The Bulldog Bulletin* is a weekly digital notice to staff and the *Blanchard Buzz* is a day-to-day blog of school community happenings. Our website, located at <http://blanchard.abcschools.org/> is a constant source of news that includes videos and documents. For those with a shorter attention span, you can also follow us on twitter at: <https://twitter.com/BlanchardMem>.

Learning is enhanced through the support of the Blanchard PTF, room parents, classroom volunteers, the Blanchard Band Parent Organization (BBPO), Destination Imagination club and Popcorn Players –who all add to the spirit of community. The Blanchard Memorial School chorus and band programs continue to be popular for students in Grades four, five and six. Chorus has 95 students and band has 90 students in the program. Both programs share their musical talents twice a year with winter and spring concerts as well as during various events at school and community meetings. Advanced Band performs at the 2015 MICCA Concert Festival on March 28th. In April, the Popcorn Players present their children’s musical, *Grunch*.

We believe that the bond between home and school produces student success. The exemplary school must be seen as a community resource that provides unique learning space and risk-taking opportunities for all. This was evident as I reviewed prior parent and teacher surveys upon my arrival to Blanchard. There is a theme and that theme is ‘close knit community’. We are working hard to maintain that through adapting social media, forming monthly Community Coffee meetings, and daily, weekly and monthly regular communication to keep the doors of dialogue open.

Our doors are open to you and we welcome families and the greater community to our Blanchard family.

Respectfully submitted,
Dana F. Labb
Principal

BLANCHARD PARENTS, TEACHERS AND FRIENDS (PTF)

Submitted by Kathy Luce, President

The Blanchard PTF is a 501c3 volunteer-run organization. Our funding comes from donations made by Blanchard families and other fundraisers. We have two primary roles. The first is to enhance the learning environment by funding educational, arts and science enrichment activities, equipment purchases, and professional development not supported by the school budget. The second is to serve as a liaison between home, school and community. The PTF strives to accomplish this by maintaining strong communication channels, including our website and presence on social media; our joint newsletter with

the Principal, *The Paw Print*; frequent emails and flyers to parents and guardians and general PTF meetings held throughout the year.

The PTF also recognizes the importance of sponsoring social events that promote community spirit and provide a safe and fun environment for Blanchard families to enjoy. Among these events are the annual Fall Festival, Bingo/Shopping Night, Movie Night, Dance Party, Mother's Day Table and Cultural Fair. The PTF also sponsors the annual Teacher and Staff Appreciation Luncheon, when Blanchard families take part in preparing a lunch to express their thanks for everything the staff and teachers do for their children.

The PTF Board is very appreciative for the many hours our co-chairs and event volunteers put in to make our programs so successful. We welcome people to learn more about our organization at www.blanchardptf.org.

Would you like to go to Acton Town Meeting but cannot find a sitter?

Bring your school-aged kids with you and let them enjoy a

FAMILY FRIENDLY MOVIE NIGHT

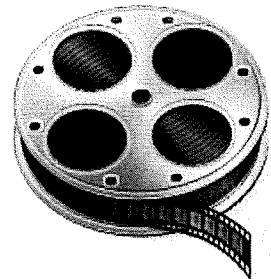
while you attend Acton Town Meeting

Monday (4/6) and Tuesday (4/7)

6:30 pm until 9:00 pm

Lower Gym at the AB Regional High School

- ◆ Parents need to RSVP to Alycen Nigro (alycen.nigro@gmail.com) by **Monday (4/6) at noon** indicating the nights and spots needed.
- ◆ A release waiver will be required for each child. This waiver will be emailed to you when you reserve your spot and should be presented to the chaperones upon drop off.
- ◆ Parents who have reserved spots are welcome to drop their school aged children off at the Movie Night starting at 6:30 pm before heading down the hall to attend Town Meeting.
- ◆ The children will be chaperoned by adult volunteers (all CORI checked) including school district teachers, administrators and parents. In addition, high school volunteers will be on hand to help out.
- ◆ Recreation activities will also be available for the children's use in the gym.
- ◆ Food will not be served but children are welcome to bring a water bottle.



For questions or to reserve a spot, contact: Alycen Nigro (alycen.nigro@gmail.com)

This event is sponsored by the Town of Acton, the Acton Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD), the League of Women Voters (LWV), the Acton Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) and the local PTOs.

Dear Parents and Guardians –

March 2015

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC), along with our district’s administrative team, has worked hard for many months developing and refining our budget plan for next school year, 2015-16, also known as FY’16.

The final step in this process is for voters in our two towns to vote to approve their portion of that budget, called their town’s assessment. I’d like to inform you of a few key dates, and ask that you mark your calendars in order to ensure that you are an informed voter.

Wednesday, March 18th at 7:30 p.m. in the R.J. Grey Junior High Library, Superintendent Glenn Brand will be holding a community meeting to discuss two timely matters as they relate to the School District. The first is the 2015-16 school year budget and the second is his report of findings that is a part of his entry into the school district. The meeting is open to all parents/guardians and community members.

Budget information may be found at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes> under the 2/12/15 meeting starting on page 8.

Dr. Brand's Entry Plan Findings Report may be found at <http://www.abschools.org/superintendent/entryplan>.

Tuesday, March 31st marks Election Day for Acton Town Officials. The only contested race this year is for the School Committee, with three people running for two three-year positions.

Monday, April 6th marks the beginning of Acton Town Meeting. Please join us!

The first night begins at 7:00 p.m. in the High School Auditorium, and the ABRSD Assessment (the Acton portion of our regional PreK-Grade 12 school budget) is Article #6.

I’d like to point out that there are a number of services being provided in order to encourage attendance, including free door-to-door rides from the Acton MinuteVan, and free babysitting (at a family-friendly movie night) for school-aged children.

The babysitting is being jointly sponsored by the Town of Acton, the League of Women Voters – Acton Area, the Acton Boxborough Regional School District, the Acton Boxborough Education Association and the PTOs. More information will be available from those groups separately as well as printed in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant mailed to homes.

Monday, May 11th marks the beginning of Boxborough Town Meeting. More information will be forthcoming closer to that date.

Monday, May 18th marks Election Day for Boxborough Town Officials. More information will be forthcoming closer to that date.

Please consider attending these upcoming events as you plan your spring calendars.

Many thanks for your interest in and support of our schools,

Kristina Rychlik
Chairwoman
Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee