



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720

978-264-4700

www.abschools.org

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting

October 5, 2023 Executive Session 7:00 p.m./ Open Meeting 7:45 p.m.

Administration Building Auditorium To view only: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

APPROVED OPEN MINUTES

Members Present: Ben Bloomenthal, Tori Campbell, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (7:02), Vikram Parikh, Leela Ramachandran, Yanxin Schmidt, Andrew Schwartz (7:03 pm via zoom, not at open meeting), Rebeccah Wilson

Members Absent: Liz Fowlks, Lakshmi Kaja,

Others: Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr

1. **CALL TO ORDER (7:00)**

The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Chairperson Adam Klein.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Adam stated the need to meet in Executive Session pursuant to MGL Ch 30A, sec. 21(a) Purpose 2: to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non union personnel, or to conduct contract negotiations with nonunion personnel. The Committee would return to Open Meeting at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Tori Campbell moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED by Roll Call: to enter executive session for the reason given.

(YES: Bloomenthal, Campbell, Klein, Kremer, Parikh, Ramachandran, Schmidt, Wilson)

OPEN MEETING

The Committee returned to open session at 8:00 p.m. Members of the public were invited to watch the meeting online using Acton tv's youtube channel. Adam stated that the meeting was being recorded and would be posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

2. **CHAIRPERSON'S WELCOME - Adam Klein**

a. **Public Participation**

Members of the public were invited to speak for up to 3 minutes with a maximum of 20 minutes total for public participation. Adam reminded the public that this would be the only time they will be invited to address the committee so they should come forward for items both on and off the agenda.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Meeting Agenda Item Summary

Several students expressed concern about the poor condition of the High School and Junior High's tennis courts. Pictures showed large cracks with grass growing on the courts, despite being told improvements would be made last Fall. The courts are also used by Acton and Boxborough residents of all ages. More than 250 signatures were collected on a petition. In honor of Coco Gauff's recent US Women's Open win, \$3M is being offered by the USTA to refurbish tennis courts. The students urged the administration to apply for this aid and offered to help with the application.

b. **Superintendent's Update - *Peter Light***

Mr. Light spoke about: Belonging in the Classroom, AB Resource Center & United Way Resource Fair, National Principals Month, High School Course Level Information, DiwaliFest - October 8, ADL Walk Against Hate - October 15, and upcoming Community Coffees with the Superintendent and Committee Chair.

Sophia Roy was welcomed to the meeting. She is one of two fellows interning with the District while she completes her doctoral program in Education at Harvard .

3. **GUESTS & PRESENTATIONS**

a. **[Multilingual Education Update](#) - *Maryann Young, Coordinator of Multilingual Education***

AB continues to see a dramatic increase of multilingual students in our schools. We currently have 381 multilingual learners, an increase of 145 students (62%) since September 2022. Many of these students are arriving from Brazil, Central and South America, and Russia which represents a new trend in our population. Our two largest minority languages are Portuguese and Spanish, however, AB is a very diverse district with 50+ different languages spoken within our multilingual learner population. The majority of the multilingual learners (MLs) arrive at only the beginning levels of English proficiency. We currently have fourteen English Language Development (ELD) Teachers who are part of the Multilingual Education Department. Three of these teachers were added last year.

Ms. Young noted that the new AB Resource Center helps a lot with the wraparound support that many teachers were doing on their own for students. When asked how much the State funds for Multilingual Education, Ms. Young replied that most funding is coming out of our local budget. This is a national issue and some communities are moving faster than others to address it. She and Mr. Light have discussed how hard it is for students whose education has been interrupted, especially at the secondary level. Some students don't see a pathway toward graduation. This leads the administration to think about what kinds of programs our High School should offer, such as workforce development and vocational training, that could help students successfully graduate and find employment. Ms. Young was thanked for an excellent presentation.



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4. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

- a. School Committee Communication Goal Update - *Adam Klein*
Oktoberfest was rescheduled to Oct 14. Members were asked to sign up for a School Committee table at the event. Adam will do the set up. Next activity will be summaries of votes to help answer questions from the public.

- b. Subcommittee and Member Reports
 - i. Policy Subcommittee - *Leela Ramachandran*
A meeting calendar was set with options for future discussions. Next meeting is Oct 17 at 7:30 AM.

 - ii. Health Insurance Trust (HIT) - *Yanxin Schmidt*
HIT members voted to contract with Aetna for administration of Medicare Advantage, or Medicare Part C health insurance. This move will expand the level of services to our subscribers, lower individual costs and lower costs to the trust. The change will save the town of Acton, the Health Insurance Trust and its subscribers approximately \$466,000.

 - iii. Budget Subcommittee - *Rebecca Wilson*
The schedule for creating the FY25 budget, and guidelines for Budget Subcommittee priorities for the difficult budget year ahead were discussed. A lot of work is being done to investigate all aspects of the budget, and connect with leadership in both towns. Members are focused on maintaining the obligations to all students in the district, as well as ensuring transparency and fiscal responsibility in the budgeting efforts. They are “committed to doing right by all stakeholders (which includes the students and families, staff, AND taxpayers)”. Next meeting is Oct 16 at 3:30pm on zoom.

FY25 Draft Budget Development Schedule -

Mr. Light reviewed the draft noting that dates were included for Budget Subcommittee meetings as well as School Committee meetings so everyone knows what to expect. He stressed that “we know the revenue sources are woefully inadequate” and that this can’t be said strongly enough. This budget will require some really significant work on everyone’s part. Members were asked to share comments on the draft with Rebecca or Mr. Light. The schedule will be brought back to the School Committee to finalize. The Leadership Team is sharing it with the principals now. An attempt is being made to roll expenses earlier this year so they are as accurate as early numbers can be. That process has started. Adam noted that the vote shown on Nov 2 may need more time. Feedback is needed sooner rather than later to keep the process moving.



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting Agenda Item Summary

- c. Consent Agenda/Action Items - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*
 - i. Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 9/21/23
 - ii. Approval of New JH Student Activity Club: Dungeons & Dragons
Tori Campbell moved, Yanxin Schmidt seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the consent agenda.

- d. Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve 9-21-23 & 10-5-23 - **VOTE** - *Adam Klein*
Rebecca Wilson moved, Ben Bloomenthal seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the warrants dated 9/21/23 (see memo language).
Ben Bloomenthal moved, Rebecca Wilson seconded, and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve the warrants dated 10/5/23 (see memo language).

FYI

- [CASE First Quarter Report](#), September 2023
- Adam asked members to complete the information that Julie LaLumiere would be sending regarding the High School Radio Station.

5. **ADJOURN**

Ben Bloomenthal moved, Vikram Parikh seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to adjourn the ABRSC at 9:04 p.m

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents used: Agenda, Agenda Item Summary Pages, Multilingual Learner Education Update memo from M. Young 9/28/23, Presentation Slides from M. Young, Draft minutes of ABRSC meeting on 9/21/23 from B. Petr, New RJGJHS Club Memo - Dungeons and Dragons Club from J. Marcotte 9/22/23, Warrants Memos from S. Matthews dated 9/21/23 and 10/5/23, CASE First Quarter Report dated September 2023

NEXT MEETINGS: October 19 & November 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Admin Building Auditorium