



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting

June 17, 2021

7:00 Open Meeting
8:15 p.m. Executive Session

Virtual Public Meeting

To attend: <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

To preregister for Public Participation/Comment (required):

https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3ZFhfv77SoivOYDcFktzRg

(pre-registration must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting)

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
MEETING AGENDA

Administration Building Auditorium
15 Charter Road, Acton

June 17, 2021
7:00 p.m.

8:15 p.m. Executive Session

To view the meeting virtually (no participation): <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

To make a public comment (two options):

1. In-person - please wear a mask if not fully vaccinated
 2. Virtually: https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_3ZFhfv77SoivOYDcFktzRg
(pre-registration required for virtual - must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting)
-

1. **Call to Order (7:00)**

- a. **Chairperson's Welcome** - *Tessa McKinley*
- b. **Public Participation** - in person or virtually (*virtual requires 24 hour preregistration*)
- c. **Superintendent's Update** – *Peter Light*
 - i. Thank You to Kirsten Nelson, Amy French, Jean Tibbetts (*ABRSD Food Services*) and Kathleen Surdan and Nora McMillan (*Neighbor Brigade*)
 - ii. Congratulations to our ABRSD Retirees!
 - iii. Thank You to ABRSC Members Diane Baum and Angie Tso
 - iv. Thank You to Tessa McKinley for 2 years of Service as ABRSC Chairperson

2. **ONGOING BUSINESS (7:30)**

- a. **Superintendent's Annual Summative Review** - *Tessa McKinley (brought to meeting)*
 - i. Motion: Move to Accept the Annual Summative Review for Superintendent Peter Light dated 6/17/20 as presented/amended - **VOTE**
- b. **FY22 ABRHS Handbook** - Second Read - **VOTE** - *Maurin O'Grady*
- c. **Town Meeting Updates** - *John Petersen, Adam Klein (Acton Town Meeting - June 21)*
- d. **Health Insurance Trust Update** - *John Petersen*
- e. **Approval of Meeting Minutes of 6/10/21** - **VOTE** - *Tessa McKinley*
- f. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**
 - i. Building Committee - *Adam Klein*
- b. **FYI**

3. **EXECUTIVE SESSION (8:15)**

To be convened under MGL Chapter 30A section 21(a) purpose 7, to comply with or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements - MGL Chapter 30A, section 22(f) to consider approval and possible release of executive session minutes from previous meetings on: May 21, 2020, June 18, 2020, August 5, 2020, October 1, 2020, November 5, 2020, December 3, 2020, January 21, 2021, February 11, 2021, March 11, 2021, April 1, 2021, May 20, 2021.

4. **Adjourn (8:45)**

Posted on 6/14/21 at 5:00 p.m.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, July 20 ABRSC Workshop at 6:00 p.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

- a. 2020-2021 Update on STEAM Goals - *Deborah Bookis*



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

15 Charter Road Acton, MA 01720
978-264-4700
www.abschools.org

Peter J. Light
Superintendent of Schools

June 17, 2021

To: Members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the partnership of A-B Food Services and the A-B Neighbor Brigade volunteers. Since the Pandemic, our Food Services department provided over 265,000 meals at our curbside meal pick up. We could not have done this without the amazing leadership of Kirsten Nelson, as well as the support of the Acton-Boxborough Neighbor Brigade Co Chapter Leaders Kathleen Surdan and Nora McMillan, and all of the Neighbor Brigade volunteers. Well over 800 activities were fulfilled by 72 volunteers. That is some serious dedication from the volunteers and incredible management and coordination on your parts. These volunteers included:

Vinita Asija	Abby Beilman
Suzanne Berrier	Martha Bethel
Sandra Cartee	Amanda Chatterjee
Lilly Chen	Linda Dallimore
Aga Dresser	Pam Dwyer-Alcaide
Susan Ervais-Bohmiller	Steven Evans
Mandela Franciscano	Katy Frey
Karen Geissert	Randi Gordman
Tina Hamilton	Christine Hanley
Chris Hanlon	Sarah Hennessey
Maribeth Higgins	Kate Hoitt
Lindsey Huang	Neha Iyer
Julie Jannke	Jennifer Jaroch
Robert Kane	Bibiana Knell
Xuan Kong	Alissa Kong
Shelley Lawson	Ross Leav
Song Leav	Rachel Levine
Maira Macdonald	Robert Mackin
Rebecca MacNeill	Laurie Maylander
Joan McCaffrey	Kathy McCullen
Donna McGavick	Nora McMillan
Robert Meinhold	Lauren Morton
Susan Murphy Brager	Vaishnavi Murthy

To develop engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships.



Kim Musto
Debra O'Connell
Diann Oster
Catherine Petrozzino
Rheta Roeber
Lindsay Rosenman
Jax Sater
Linda Schymik
Shubha Shastri
Vincent Song
Kathleen Surdan
Jacob White
Ann Wickham

Barry Nyer
Donna Oliver
Annie Perlov
Suzanne Pieri
Sue Ropiak
Diane Ross
Wendy Schaad
Lopamudra Sen
Jim Snyder-Grant
Xiaole Sun
Karen Vaillancourt
Wendy White
Emma Xiang

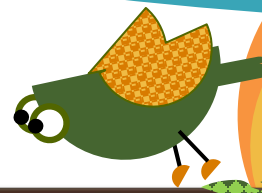
We would also like to acknowledge Amy French and Jean Tibbetts who were in charge of curbside pick up from the Food Service side of things, and Kappy Kelly and Melissa Dempsey who volunteered from the High School. We are so proud of everyone who adapted to the changes in their responsibilities. We can't thank you enough. In recognition of all of your hard work and dedication to our community you are being honored as the "Champions of Change" in Food Services throughout the pandemic. We would like to honor you with this plaque and thank you for being the "Champions of Change".

[Here](#) is the link to the A-B Neighbor Brigade website.

Curbside meal pick up will continue through July 28th. We hope families will stop by on Wednesday's from 3:30-5:00 each week!

With gratitude,

Peter Light



Please join the
Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
and the
Acton-Boxborough Education Association
in congratulating our

2021 Retirees

Blanchard School

Loretta Crumlish
Patricia Harrison
Susan Mannherz
Cheryl Palano

Carol Huebner

Early Childhood Program
Jennifer Weisberg

Conant School

Robyn Harding (RLP)

Douglas School

Nancy McGurl
Thais Savage

Gates School

Marion Beardsley

McCarthy-Towne

David Krane
Kathleen Cartier
Heidi Kupferman
Heather Wilson

Merriam School

Carolyn Benjamin
Trea Ellis
Mary Pat Gorham
Colm McDermott
Monica Scanlon (RLP)
Karen Sonner (RLP)
Fran Strohm

ABRHS

Larry Dorey
Anthony Ammendolia
Eileen Flannery
Marj Johnson
Judi Painter
Nancy Silva

R.J. Grey Junior High School

Florence Gilfix
Pat Loria

ABRSD Facilities and Transportation

Michael Bontempo
Nancy Durost
Yvonne Haynes-Colaianni
Daniel Kerr
Janis Nichols

ABRSD Community Education

Jennifer Benoit
Lisa Gravelle
Jennifer Gulliver

ABRSD Food Services

Kathie Clifford (Douglas)
Debra DiDuca (Conant)
Linda McCusker (Gates)

ABRSD Human Resources

Karen Coll
Sally Cunningham

ABRSD Student Services

Linda Blanco

Evaluating a superintendent in a normal year is a daunting task. Evaluating a superintendent on his stated goals as we slowly emerge from a world-wide pandemic seems almost unfair. By all accounts, Peter has helped our school district weather the storms brought on by pandemic schooling. The transition from the complete closure at the end of the 2020 school year into the hybrid/remote environment that started this year was nearly seamless. Peter and his team worked tirelessly throughout the summer months to craft a hybrid program that ended up keeping kids in person for 170 days as well as a fully remote program that was universally hailed as a success. It is important to note that although all goals were not met to the extent that I know Peter had hoped, there was significant progress made in every area. It is also important to note in looking back at last year's evaluation, suggestions that were made by committee members for improvement have been largely addressed. The uncertainty related to the current school year began as soon as schools remotely let out in June of 2020. Scientific knowledge about COVID-19 was sparse and although numbers were dropping, we continued to wear masks and social distance. These barriers didn't deter Peter and his team as they immediately dove into planning for the 20-21 school year. Despite a lack of definitive guidance from DESE, they planned to run two simultaneous programs: an in-person option that would begin the year in a hybrid mode and a fully remote option that would remain that way for the entire year. In order to accomplish this structure, they created a 7th elementary school that was made up of teachers and staff from all six elementary programs. The RLP (Remote Learning Program) had a principal and vice principal and about 800 students! Teachers and staff at the junior high and high school were also able to offer schooling remotely to nearly 400 students. The magnitude of accomplishment represented by these two programs in serving our students all year cannot be overstated.

Peter's Student Learning Goal was to support educators and families to implement strategies to increase student engagement through effective synchronous and asynchronous instructional practices. A phrase Peter and I frequently exchanged throughout the year was 'silver linings.' There were many things about the new remote environment that presented challenges to our students, families and teachers but our educators challenged themselves to make remote learning engaging and exciting for many students. We will inevitably be using the lessons learned this year for many years to come as we continue to evaluate our students' engagement. Peter's Professional Practice Goal was to plan for and support leadership transitions across the district. We have successfully hired a new high school principal, a new special education director, a new elementary principal as well as two interim principals to begin next year. Hiring in the middle of a pandemic is no easy feat and I am confident that Peter will facilitate these new educators' transitions into the district. Peter's District Improvement Goals suffered the most during the pandemic as much energy and time was devoted to managing the challenges that constantly arose with changing conditions. Much of our leadership team spent their time contact tracing, managing individual student needs and ensuring compliance with changing state guidance. The goal of using key findings from pandemic schooling to guide future practices will be an ongoing pursuit as we begin to look at school next year. Peter has put equity at the center of his work and despite the pandemic, this was evident in the final report of the district's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Family Advisory Group. Our district has suffered numerous instances of hate over the past year as well as a contentious debate over the mascot. It would be easy to dismiss any efforts as unsuccessful in light of these incidents. Listening to the leaders of this group present, however, it's clear that there has been significant work done in the areas of hiring practices, family engagement, creation of affinity groups, school committee policies, and curriculum support. It is the hope of the committee that these efforts will continue into the next school year! The goal which was most affected by the crazy year of education was to ensure effective evidence-based screening, instruction, and assessment in literacy and mathematics in all

general education classrooms PK-12. While we adopted the i-Ready assessments this year, the need for consistent assessment across grades continues. We have made great strides in our literacy work and there will be a consistent math curriculum in K-8 next year but there is still work to do in ensuring that all of our classrooms are participating in this initiative.

Instructional Leadership

By many measures, Peter was proficient in his approach to Instructional Leadership. With the constantly changing conditions due to COVID as well as moving targets from the state, Peter and his team put together an incredibly consistent year of educational programming for the students of our district. Many members noted the creation from the ground up of an entirely remote instructional option. The 800 students at the elementary level became part of a program that truly developed as a community of learners despite their distance from each other. Seeing photos of their end of the year meet-up was testament to the connections that the staff were able to create and maintain with their students through a screen! Teachers were given access to lots of professional learning related to remote teaching and as with our in-person staff, were able to evolve and grow with their students as the year wore on. The presentations we received as a school committee from the World Languages department at the high school as well as the presentations around literacy and mathematics instruction at the elementary level make it clear that the district is moving in a positive direction to address not only inequity of access and gaps in learning but consistency across the district. Areas for improvement were consistently noted by members. As the newly adopted District Strategy is implemented, it is clear that an area of growth that needs to be addressed is in consistent instruction and assessment across school programs and buildings. We also need to do more work in achieving consistency of data-informed decision making. With the implementation of a system of tiered support at the elementary schools, it is hoped that many of these issues will be addressed in the coming year.

Management and Operations

As one member put it: "COVID presented significant operational challenges this year and Peter's performance really shined." Peter received many exemplary marks in this area. While six members rated Peter as proficient in this area, five members rated his performance as exemplary. Members noted the remarkable consistency of our educational programs despite the changing mandates from the state. Not only was Peter able to deploy his incredibly competent team to manage the various aspects of our COVID response, he was able to effectively hire new leaders at the high school and McCarthy-Towne as well as a special education director. Peter is remarkably good at utilizing the strengths of his administrative team and this is apparent in the significant progress he made in achieving his goals despite the worldwide pandemic. One of Peter's greatest strengths is his management of the budget. Starting last summer, Peter and his team were able to accurately predict the PPE and technology needs that would face the district and effectively use grant money to meet these needs while protecting our budget. What started as an initiative to begin the use of 1:1 devices at the high school became a full implementation at grades 9-12 with the purchase of new chromebooks for all students. As budget season concluded, Peter's desire to implement MTSS across the district was apparent as he came up with alternate funding solutions when his initial proposal was met with resistance. His flexibility and commitment to the district's vision make him exemplary in this area of his job.

Family and Community Engagement

The majority of the committee felt that Peter was proficient in the areas of family and community engagement although four members felt his performance was exemplary. He received many exemplary marks on several of the indicators. One member put it nicely: “This was a year of strongly voiced opinions from the community, with disparate and even opposing demands. Peter is highly skilled in the art of listening. While he did not waiver when decisions were necessary, he also demonstrated that he sees the value in communicating openly about his decision making process. I have observed a sincerity that allows for trust, and this has been invaluable in a year when trust was paramount.” Throughout the many challenges our district faced from mascot changes to zoom bombing to the constantly changing conditions due to the pandemic, Peter maintained consistent, high quality communications with the community. We continued the practice of SC Chair and Superintendent coffees but they were held as webinars as opposed to in-person meetings. Peter provided regular updates about COVID related changes to school schedules and procedures and wasn't afraid to note that sometimes we just didn't know what was coming down the pike. Peter was also steadfast in his approach to maintaining diversity, equity and inclusion as the central focus of the district's ongoing work. Last year this was identified as an area for growth and Peter did not disappoint in his commitment to using this lens to shape our district's work. There was one member that would like to see Peter take into account more community input into the district's strategy going forward. This member noted a discrepancy between the desires of some community members and the direction taken by the newly adopted strategy. Other members felt that Peter's engagement with the DEI Family advisory group as well as the input he sought from both the School Committee and the district leaders was sufficient in shaping the adopted strategy.

Professional Culture

Peter received high marks for his work on professional culture and was rated proficient by the majority of the committee. One member summed up the feelings of the majority of our members. “Peter is not the first Superintendent in Acton-Boxborough committed to growing school communities and a district culture where diversity--whether cultural, ethnic, racial or based on gender or sexual identity, language or ability--is treasured as one of our best assets and forms the basis of a sense of belonging for students and families, but he may be the first to succeed at it. When our communities engaged in difficult conversations, Peter continuously reminded us that *what we own is our response to bias and injustices and the opportunity to become more inclusive* that these moments make possible (1/21). The high value he places on open dialogue was evident in the central role he played in bringing Visions, Inc. To our towns and in times when he expressed his disappointment when our processes failed to *create an environment where stakeholders seek to understand an alternative position rather than reinforce their own* (10/16). He worked with leadership teams to refine district strategic objectives and goals that strengthen our pursuit of inclusivity, equity and engagement and brought this vision into the public sector as well. He aligned Acton-Boxborough's annual school improvement plan processes with district-wide strategic objectives for the first time in our history. He supported equity-driven policies and built consensus for a multi-tiered system of supports so that we can become a more inclusive school system with a shared vision for high standards of achievement for all. This foundational work has begun to build momentum for change. I believe that Peter's work in the aggregate has enabled many to expand their sense of what it means to be an individual in an increasingly diverse community; this kind of self-inquiry or

revisioning of Self is perhaps the first step toward equity in its most authentic, more permanent sense. Though we were at times caught this year in cycles of dysfunction (due to the pandemic and national and community tensions), I credit Peter's patient, consistent and thoughtful leadership as a major contributor to setting us back on the course of building the meaningful partnerships that are at the root of improving and entrenching an inclusive school culture. It takes a village."

Overall, the committee expressed sincere gratitude that we have Peter at the helm. He has demonstrated true leadership through what was arguably the most difficult year that any of us have ever faced in education. We are excited to have extended Peter's contract and look forward to continuing this work together. For these reasons, the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee hereby gives the rating of **PROFICIENT** to Peter Light, Superintendent of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District on the indicators of Instructional Leadership, Management & Operations, Family & Community Engagement and Professional Culture, as well as **PROFICIENT** as an overall rating.

Respectfully submitted,

Tessa McKinley

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Chairperson

June 17, 2021

TO: Superintendent Peter Light and ABRSD School Committee
FROM: Maurin O’Grady, ABRHS Associate Principal
RE: Proposed Changes/Edits to the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Student Handbook for the 2021-2022 School Year
DATE: First Reading at Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee meeting on 6/10/21 and VOTE at meeting on 6/17/21

Suggested changes, additions, and/or deletions are underlined, with page number noted. The handbook is found at <http://abrhs.abschools.org/students>.

1. Update to World Language Honor Society Requirements (pg. 28)

Students must be: in the sophomore, junior, or senior class; currently enrolled in Level III or higher in French, Spanish, Latin, or Chinese; enrolled in a language at Acton-Boxborough for the past six quarters; enrolled at the Honors Level; have an average grade of 90 or higher in the language for the past six quarters; and, have an overall current Grade Point Average of 3.0 or higher. In addition to earning academic achievement in the language, each student must complete a minimum of 10 hours of community service each year. Students must complete an application form, available from language teachers, after the close of the second term. **Deadlines are firm.**

Reasoning:

The service hours extend your passion for learning the language/sharing your knowledge beyond the classroom and connect with the wider global world and by doing so will make being a part of the Language Honor Society more meaningful.

2. Writing Center (pg 12)

Library Writing Center

~~The Writing Center, located in the library, is open every day during school hours, and after school Mon-Thurs or as posted. Tutors are available to assist with writing assignments from any area of the curriculum, and at any stage in the writing process; from brainstorming to final revisions. Tutors will listen to students’ questions and concerns about their writing and work to target these areas. Students may schedule an appointment by signing up at the Writing Center, or dropping in if there is a tutor available. Students should come with a copy of the assignment and any work they have done on the assignment (notes, research, rough draft, etc.). If you are interested in becoming a student tutor, please contact Mrs. McDonald in the library.~~

Reasoning:

The Library Writing Center is no longer going to be available due to restructuring of the library staff. Increase in ASC opportunities will supplement Writing Center Services.

3. Remove Reference to SADD (pg 17)

~~—SADD reminds us to be safe and cautious drivers!~~

Reasoning:

SADD is no longer a program at ABRHS.

4. After Hours (pg 9)

The school does not provide supervision for students after school hours unless they are participating in a school-sponsored activity or event. Therefore, when the school day is over and after school obligations and activities are completed, students are not to loiter in the high school or on high school grounds. If a student needs to stay after school for a later activity we ask that they wait in ~~either the Student Center West or~~ the front lobby.

Reasoning:

Students are able to see if their ride is here to pick them up from the front lobby. It is also a centralized location.

5. Changing Clothes for Physical Education (pg 24)

All students are expected to be prepared for class, to be on time and participate to the best of their ability. All students ~~must~~ are encouraged to change into appropriate clothing (sneakers, shorts or sweatpants, tee-shirt or sweatshirt) for each Physical Education class.

Reasoning:

To accommodate students who are uncomfortable changing in locker rooms without a grade penalty. Proper footwear will be required.

6. Changes to the Format of Graduation Requirements

Graduation Requirements

~~In order to receive an Acton-Boxborough Regional High School diploma, students must:~~

- ~~● Earn 100 credits.~~
- ~~● Receive a “competency determination” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education based on performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.~~

~~In addition, students must earn passing grades in the following areas of study:~~

- ~~● Four years of English~~
- ~~● Three years of social studies (two of which must be U.S. History I and II)~~
- ~~● Two years of science (one of which must be biology) [Three years of science beginning with Class of 2025]~~
- ~~● Two years of mathematics [Three years of mathematics beginning with Class of~~

~~2025]~~

- ~~[Two years of World Language beginning with Class of 2025]~~
- ~~Fitness for Living (AB's integrated health and physical education course is taken by all 9th graders)~~
- ~~Three semesters of physical education over the course of the next three years (grades 10, 11, 12)~~
- ~~The equivalent of a one-semester daily course (2.5 credits) in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Communication Arts or Industrial Arts.~~
- ~~One additional year of an academic elective—English, social studies, math, science, or a world language.~~

The Class of 2022, 2023, 2024

In order to receive an Acton-Boxborough Regional High School diploma, students must:

- Earn 100 credits.
- Receive a “competency determination” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education based on performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.

In addition, students must earn passing grades in the following areas of study:

- Four years of English
- Three years of social studies (two of which must be U.S. History I and II)
- Two years of science (one of which must be biology)
- Two years of mathematics
- Fitness for Living (AB's integrated health and physical education course is taken by all 9th graders)
- Three semesters of physical education over the course of the next three years (grades 10, 11, 12)
- Arts Requirement: The equivalent of a one-semester daily course (2.5 credits) in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Communication Arts or Industrial Arts.
- One additional year of an ~~academic elective—English, social studies, math, science, or a world language.~~

The Class of 2025

In order to receive an Acton-Boxborough Regional High School diploma, students must:

- Earn 100 credits.
- Receive a “competency determination” by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education based on performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.

In addition, students must earn passing grades in the following areas of study:

- Four years of English
- Three years of social studies (two of which must be U.S. History I and II)
- Three years of science (one of which must be biology)
- Three years of mathematics
- Two years of World Language
- Fitness for Living (AB's integrated health and physical education course is

taken by all 9th graders)

- Three semesters of physical education over the course of the next three years (grades 10, 11, 12)
- Arts Requirement: The equivalent of a one-semester daily course (2.5 credits) in Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Communication Arts or Industrial Arts.
- One additional year of an ~~academic elective—English, social studies, math, science, or a world language.~~

Reasoning:

Beginning with the Class of 2025, students will be required to complete three years of science, three years of mathematics, and two years of a world language. This formatting change makes the requirements easier to read

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)
DRAFT MINUTES

Administration Building Auditorium
15 Charter Road, Acton

June 10, 2021
7:00 p.m.

To *view* the meeting virtually (no participation): <https://www.youtube.com/actontv1>

To make a public comment (two options):

1. In-person - please wear a mask if not fully vaccinated
2. Virtually: https://abschools.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_5TIZ-zBATHmANF2nyzugmA
(pre-registration required for virtual - must be submitted 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting)

Members Present: Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (7:38 p.m.), Amy Krishnamurthy, Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang

Members Absent: none

Others: Marie Altieri, Dawn Bentley, Deborah Bookis, Peter Light, Beth Petr, Dave Verdolino, Debbie Dixon

1. The ABRSC was called to order at 7:04 p.m. by Chairperson Tessa McKinley.

She stated that the meeting was being conducted remotely via Zoom per Remote Participation policy, BEDJA. The following members were in attendance in the auditorium: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (came later), Amy Krishnamurthy, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso, Yebin Wang and herself.

In an ongoing effort to make meetings as secure as possible, members of the public were instructed to view the meeting using Acton tv's youtube channel (found at the top of the agenda) or attend in person. Those who wished to comment during the meeting, were asked to register 24 hours prior to the start of the meeting using the link also found at the top of the agenda, or attend in person. The procedures are posted with Public Participation policy BEDH. This meeting was recorded and posted on Acton TV's website at actontv.org.

- a. **Chairperson's Welcome** - *Tessa McKinley*
- b. **ABRHS Student Rep Update** – none
- c. **Public Participation** – *none*
- d. **Superintendent's Update** – *Peter Light*
 - i. Larry Dorey, David Krane and Debbie Dixon were thanked for their years of service to the District and presented with a small token of appreciation.
 - ii. For additional updates from Mr. Light, see <https://sites.google.com/abschools.org/abtransitiontoschool/superintendents-updates>

2. PRESENTATIONS

a. **Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) Update**

Amanda Bailey and Carrie Weaver presented the Spring Update. At last night's meeting, Amanda and Abe Gutierrez were elected as Chairs for next year. The SEPAC's mission is "to ensure understanding, respect, support and the appropriate education of all children in our community". Under state law, the SPEDPAC's duties include: "advising the district on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities and meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school district's special education programs." Diane Baum was thanked for her "years of dedication to the SEPAC, tireless advocacy around literacy instruction, and on behalf of students with dyslexia."

b. **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) Family Advisory**

Dawn Bentley, Lucienne Schmidt (, Maria Veronica Barnes (Curriculum), Nannette Wright (Hiring Practices), Jane Archer (Family Engagement) and Heidi Koelz (Police/District Interactions) presented on the important work done by this impressive new Advisory group. Due to the pandemic, they were forced to take a break just as they were getting started and could only meet virtually. Lucienne thanked all who were involved.

Comments and Questions from the Committee:

- Tessa said that when she and Dawn were asked to share this work at a recent MASC conference, it was remarkable to be able to share all of this impressive work. It made her really proud of the district.
- Especially with Covid, it was amazing that members really dug into the right things.
- In response to a question, Nannette said that in order to hire more people of color, we have to open a wide net to get the qualified people that we are looking for. Advertising in the local area doesn't give you the diversity needed. Sources like the black colleges and other organizations are important.
- How the job description is written is also key. There is a lot of research regarding unintended bias when writing advertisement. A diverse set of thoughts must be used when evaluating an application to ensure no bias.
- Retention is essential. Bringing candidates in the door is the first step, but good onboarding is key so these staff members will encourage their friends.
- The budget reflects our values. Regarding retention, funds should be set aside to support things like transportation and a support system for staff in the future. The affinity group for people of color that was started this year is a great example.
- So much work has been accomplished by this group! Do the group members feel that way? Several members admitted that it was hard to wait for answers sometimes. "You can't just put all the great ideas into play right away." That was a frustration coming from the corporate world to the public school environment.
- Members appreciated the administration's support. While some short term ideas were proposed, it was frustrating that resources were not available for implementation because budgets were done. Programs will need to be reviewed and some things will have to be prioritized and let go to make way for some of the new proposals. Mr. Light agreed that there were many great ideas from this group. A member described it as "very long term work".
- The Advisory Group was very diverse, speaking different languages, but also coming from a number of different educational environments. A key challenge for a lot of immigrant parents is that they don't know who to ask or where to go, when they have a question. "What is the Central Office?" was an example.

- Having served on the School Committee for 6 years, Diane Baum complimented members on “this very strong work” and said that it was an honor to have this presentation from the Group. She noted that a group at DESE recently put out an emergency issue of teacher licenses and because they offered some flexibility the percentage of minority teachers was 9% - a 4 fold increase in who they attracted due to a different approach.
- We all need to become more educated about how our School Resource Officers work. Diane advocated for a Restorative Justice model.
- Regarding the curriculum piece, Deb Bookis reported that the DEI Group proposal was shared with the teachers and they will be considering it this summer. They were very thankful for the work.
- The sub chairs were thanked for their extensive work and excellent presentation, on top of all of their other work and families.
- We know everyone will do some good and bad things. We can't change history, but we can go forward. How do you teach children this? Maria Veronica replied that critical thinking is involved and having Social Emotional curriculum that allows children to understand that something in history is true but doesn't have to happen again.

Members of the DEI Advisory Group were thanked again for their impressive work and a very informative presentation.

3. NEW BUSINESS

a. **FY22 ABRHS Handbook** - First Read

Maurin O'Grady reviewed the proposed six changes to the handbook. A member thanked her for removing the PE requirement to change clothes (#5), as it is difficult for some kids. In response to a question, Maurin said that requiring students to wait in the lobby after hours (#4) should not affect traffic in the circle because it is after dismissal. Larry Dorey added that there are some larger handbook items that need to be looked at in the future. Committees will be formed soon to start addressing them. These include the Attendance policy, Assessment, and Discipline. These are items that need to be studied before being addressed. This will be back at the next meeting on June 17 for a vote.

b. **MSBA Statement of Interest (SOI): Conant - VOTE- Peter Light**

This SOI has been submitted annually for the past few years. When Dore and Whittier did their study, Gates and Douglas were highest priority but Conant also had significant needs. The enrollment numbers were updated with minor changes and some of the minor repairs have been done. In past we have submitted Accelerated Repair paperwork for Blanchard but the MSBA is not considering these repairs any more so we will pause on that.

Adam Klein moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: “Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on June 10, 2021, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee of Acton and Boxborough, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated June 25, 2021 for the Luther Conant Elementary School located at 80 Taylor Road Acton MA, 01720 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future [Insert a description of the priority(s) checked off on the Statement of Interest Form and a brief description

of the deficiency described therein for each priority] for Priority 2 which is the elimination of existing overcrowding, Priority 5 which is the replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility, and Priority 7 which includes the replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.

and hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.”

c. **FY22 School Committee Meeting Calendar - VOTE - Tessa McKinley**

Members preferred the evening Budget Meeting, as was done this year, compared to the traditional Budget Saturday. Mr. Light explained that the MASS conference in November, is the best and only real way for School Committee members to have access to professional development for their work.

Adam Klein moved, Ginny Kremer seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the meetings as posted in the packet with the option of an evening Budget meeting.

4. **ONGOING BUSINESS**

a. **Policy - Diane Baum**

i. Evaluation of the Instructional Program, File: IL - Second Read – **VOTE**

No feedback was received on this.

Amy Krishnamurthy moved, Nora Shine seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve IL. (Evelyn was briefly out of the room during this vote.)

ii. Public Gifts to the Schools, File: KCD - Second Read – **VOTE**

This draft has gone through several versions and has been shared with many stakeholders, some more than once. It has been well vetted and Diane is very proud of it. She keeps thinking of a triad of the PTOs, Principals and Leadership. They all need to imbed equity conversations in these decisions and this policy will help.

Kyra Cook moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the Public Gifts to Schools policy KCD.

iii. Policy Subcommittee FY21 Report

Diane reviewed this year’s progress on the policies and thanked all members who participated in the many robust discussions. Equity was the theme of the most significant policies addressed. Diane was thanked for her “heavy lifting” and leadership as chair of this subcommittee.

b. **Town Meeting Updates - John Petersen, Adam Klein**

The slides and message were in the packet. Tessa invited all Committee members to attend both Town Meetings, as was the custom before Covid.

c. **Consent Agenda - VOTE - Tessa McKinley**

i. Approval of Meeting Minutes of 5/20/21

ii. Recommendation to Approve Gift of \$836.45 from the MA Cultural Council to Blanchard for band equipment

- iii. Recommendation to Approve Gift of \$2,100 from the AB-PTSO and \$4,000 from the Society for Science and the Public (Regeneron Science Talent Search) to the High School

Kyra Cook moved, Diane Baum seconded and it was unanimously.

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda.

d. **Subcommittee and Member Reports**

- i. Building Committee - Adam Klein

At the meeting last night it was reported that the building is relatively on budget and schedule. \$26M of work has been submitted for reimbursement and we've received 49% reimbursement, which is great benefit from the state. A discussion of whether we would need the second borrowing is starting. The Project Manager says it is still too early to decide. It is possible, but there is still a way to go. The School Committee was reminded that the primary decision maker in that case would be the Building Committee.

- ii. Acton Leadership Group - Boxborough Leadership Forum Updates -

John Petersen reported that the Fincom recommended that the ALG Plan be modified regarding the Fire Station by reducing the tax rate and it was agreed.

- iii. Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve - **VOTE** - *T. McKinley*

Tessa McKinley moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the warrants, see motion language on memo.

It was agreed that warrants will continue to be approved electronically so members can review them prior to the meetings.

b. **FYI**

Mr. Light congratulated the retirees, adding that the quality of our schools is built on the staff that work with our kids. He is very grateful to all.

He also is working on our second Annual Report to be mailed to all homes this summer.

The focus of this Report will be the pandemic. Andrew Shen will coordinate the project.

5. **Adjourned**

At 9:22 p.m. Adam Klein moved, Nora Shine seconded and it was unanimously

VOTED to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda

NEXT MEETINGS:

Next Thursday, June 17 ABRSC at 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, July 20 ABRSC Workshop at 7:00 p.m.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION (FYI)

- a. Boxborough Town Meeting is June 12. Acton Town Meeting is June 21.
- b. Congratulations to our 2021 ABRSD Retirees!
- c. 2021-2022 ABRSD School Calendar (dismissal times updated for JH and HS)
- d. [This Month in the Division of Open Government, May 2021](#) - [Open Meeting Law Guidebook](#)



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

Deborah E. Bookis, Ed.D.
Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning

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

TO: Peter Light, Superintendent of Schools
FROM: Deborah Bookis, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning
DATE: June 2021
RE: 2020-2021 Update on STEAM Goals

While the 2020-2021 school year presented many challenges, it also provided previously unimagined opportunities to use digital tools for learning, collaboration, and sharing with a wider audience - all of which are components of our STEAM Framework. Educator and student increased use of these tools will support STEAM learning in future years. It's certainly one of the positive outcomes from an unprecedented year!

The District was most fortunate to receive a donation from the Telephone Pioneers of America. They donated \$9,259 to the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District to honor two retired Acton-Boxborough teachers and Don MacKenzie when he was president of the Pioneers. They requested that these funds be used to support STEAM curriculum and STEAM related initiatives. The following seven proposals were received by the STEAM Steering Committee. All of them will be funded using this generous donation.

- Integrating Movement, Active Play, and Coding
This STEAM project based on Unruly Splats provides a unique opportunity to integrate computer science with PE class by combining coding with playful learning and physical movement. Providing the Splats devices and coding platform to McCarthy-Towne and Merriam students will allow them to actively and collaboratively engage in age-appropriate coding that aligns with MA DESE computer science standards. The elementary STEAM and Digital Literacy coaches will identify and develop Splats lessons and collaborate with PE teachers on implementation during PE classes, while also exploring additional opportunities for integration in music, SEL, and STE learning.
- Gr 2 STEAM Project for Force and Motion Investigation
A team consisting of classroom teachers, an ELL teacher and a special educator will work together to develop a S.T.E.A.M, experience for second grade students that will serve as a culminating project to their force and motion unit of study. The students will design and build a toy that moves. Their design will be inspired by a kindergarten client assigned to them. They will also design and make a media commercial or poster advertisement selling their toy product. Their toys will be presented to their kindergarten clients as well as their families in a ToyExpo.
- Coding Together: Collaboration and Communication with the iRobot Root Coding Robots
The iRobot Root Coding robot will be introduced to the 8th Grade Digital Literacy coding unit in order to build, expand, and strengthen students' communication and collaboration skills. Students will work together to code the robot in a variety of ways including making music, drawing, navigating mazes, and even climbing up walls! Students will work together to assess the challenge or task, plan and carry out a coding solution by creating algorithms and programs, debug if necessary, and report their findings. Having hands-on machines, like the iRobot Root, can be an educational and engaging way to introduce coding to 8th grade students and help tie their learning to real-world applications of robots and coding.

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

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

- Integrating Statistics with explorations in Visual Arts and Science (EVAS)
Recognizing the need for mathematical literacy in science research, students in the Explorations and Visual Arts and Science elective at the high school will pursue questions that excite and engage them. They will develop statistical tools to evaluate data from which they collected in the field and lab. Later, they will represent quantitative relationships from their data using both traditional graphs and non-traditional artistic methods.
- Library of Things Collection
One of the defining factors of a successful library is its ability to change and shift to meet the needs of those it serves over time. The library is not just about getting a book to read (although we will always help you with that!) or finding good resources for projects. It's about finding what you may not be able to access otherwise. Maker kits allow students to access different kinds of materials to explore personal interests and needs that can help support them as people and students. They can try out knitting or crochet, cross-stitch or origami. Students might choose to take out a button making kit to make buttons to support their club/activity, or decide to do a podcast for a project, whether it's curricular or extra-curricular. This Library of Things Collection will grow and evolve with the needs of our school community, and will help us support our students in every aspect of their lives.
- Making a Makerspace at ABRHS
Imagine if all students were provided access every day to a place where they could create, innovate and collaborate to make digital or physical products of their choice? Creating a Makerspace for ABRHS students will allow every student consistent access to a welcoming space where they can showcase their hands-on creativity and collaborate with other students from all backgrounds as they engage in design thinking and develop a maker mindset. The Makerspace will also promote social emotional learning by creating an innovative and engaging environment for all students where they can have fun and use their imaginations while learning new skills that may not be developed in the traditional academic context. Adding a Makerspace to ABRHS will provide our students endless possibilities as they create, tinker and innovate while they simultaneously develop critical thinking and other important skills that they will carry with them as they leave high school.
- The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind: Interdisciplinary Project
This is a cross-curricular activity that brought in all the different subjects through the Transition Program at the high school. Using the text, The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind, the students were able to dive into African culture and history, build Wind Turbines, and tie in their understanding of power energy. This project culminated in the Transition students meeting other students from the Malawi Children's Mission and learning about their school and their lives. We would like to make this project a bigger part of the Transition program by having more Wind Turbines for use, as well as creating a showcase for the ABRHS community. This proposal is only a start for this project; we would like to see this grow into something that encompasses more data literacy and social justice work through the understanding of African history and culture.

Some progress was also made this year towards our Medium Term Goals for 2020-2023 - our Learning, Building Capacity, and Implementing Goals. The following describes our efforts towards these medium term goals.

Goal #1: Begin showcasing student projects

The first set of artwork from the new high school interdisciplinary class, Explorations in Visual Arts & Science (EVAS), was displayed in Student Center South. For this first project students were given sample sets of data to display. These included data on World Happiness, Covid 19, Carbon Emissions, voting patterns and ease of voting access. A [slideshow](#) was also created so that those who could not attend in person could experience the exhibit.



Goal #2: Identify/Improve/Create STEAM projects for grade PK-6

- PK STEAM - Boat Explorations!

The Carol Huebner Early Childhood Program classes at the Boxborough site took their innovation to the waters! Using their scientific thinking skills and a variety of recyclable materials - containers, papers, tubes, tape, paper clips and more - students created floating vessels to test their sink and float theories. From water basins in our outdoor courtyard to the stream that flows beneath the bridge on the beautiful campus, students celebrated the fleet's voyage. In the water basins, students experimented with a variety of textures, weights and compositions of chosen materials only to discover some floated while others sank. So ... it was back to the drawing board to formulate new designs and hypotheses based on the results of their experiments. In the stream, students were delighted with the movement of the water which took their boats downward, managing around branches, over rocks and through leafy vegetation. Nothing could be more delightful than seeing their invention -born from their innovation, problem-solving, designing and engineering-immense from under the bridge to come into port.





- Created 6th grade Climate Change STEAM Project
- Created 5th grade Human Impact on Ecosystems STEAM project
- Integrating Movement, Active Play, and Coding (see STEAM Proposal above)
- Gr 2 STEAM Project for Force and Motion Investigation (see STEAM Proposal above)

Goal #3: Assess current projects using STEAM Framework

This year the high school Visual Arts and Science departments teamed up to offer the district’s first specially designed STEAM elective: Explorations in Visual Arts and Science. In this course students learned how to collect and analyze data and then conducted their own original research in a subject of their choosing. At the same time they experimented with a variety of two and three dimensional art forms, and then produced two types of art in response to their research: a piece of data art that directly communicated their data in an innovative and visually appealing way, and a more open ended response that addressed the larger moral, political, and/or philosophical implications of their research. Their final artistic products were evaluated [using this rubric](#) inspired by the district’s STEAM Framework.

Goal #4: Provide Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and UDL 2.0 professional learning for all PK-12 Educators

- 6 hour CAST Elementary UDL workshop planned for the fall of 2021 on early release Wednesdays
- UDL CAST workshop for JH/HS scheduled for early release Mondays: October 18, Nov. 1, Dec. 13, 2021

Goal #5: Identify gaps in STEAM learning/implement strategies

- The high school STE department conducted a grade 9-12 course review; to be presented to the SC in the fall of 2021

Goal #6: Continue to create opportunities for collaboration at JH and HS

- Coding Together: Collaboration and Communication with the iRobot Root Coding Robots (see STEAM Proposal above)
- Making a Makerspace at ABRHS (see STEAM Proposal above)
- Library of Things Collection (see STEAM Proposal above)
- Integrating Statistics with explorations in Visual Arts and Science (EVAS)

Goal #7: Begin to create STEAM Labs at Elementary Schools

- Part of new twin school design for Gates and Douglas
- Making a Makerspace at ABRHS (see STEAM Proposal above)
- Library of Things Collection (see STEAM Proposal above)

Goal #8: Review funding and resources needed to support STEAM at all levels

- Continued assessment of personnel via the MTSS framework and the operating budget

Goal #9: Additional STEAM Coaches at Elementary

- Hired STEAM Coach for the PDB (2020-21)

Given the constraints of this year, we were not able to focus on the following three goals.

Goal #10: Alignment with Teaching All Students Standard - N/A

Goal #11: Continued alignment with Frameworks and Standards aligned with STEAM projects - N/A

Goal #12: Continue to establish a network of local and state indiv/organizations/partners to promote STEAM learning - N/A