

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

Library  
R.J. Grey Junior High School

April 30, 2015  
7:00 p.m. ABRSC School Choice Public Hearing  
7:15 p.m. ABRSC Business Meeting  
Followed by ABRSC Executive Session

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*Members Present:* Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Michael Coppolino, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin, Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O'Sullivan, Kristina Rychlik  
*Members Absent:* none  
*Others:* Marie Altieri, Deborah Bookis, Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

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The ABRSC was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Kristina Rychlik, Chairperson.

**1. Chairman's Introduction**

Kristina Rychlik welcomed the new Acton School Committee member, Diane Baum.

**2. The ABRSD SCHOOL CHOICE PUBLIC HEARING was called to order at 7:05 p.m.**

1. Enrollment Update: Kindergarten Lottery and Possible School Choice Options
2. School Choice Hearing Memo, 4/24/15
3. Participation in School Choice Program 2015-2016 –**VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Marie Altieri began by stating that the School Choice hearing is a legal requirement per MA General Law Chapter 76, Section 12B. She presented on enrollment and stated that 70% of our families requested all day kindergarten. This is a big increase. She also noted that at this time, there appears to be 44 students in next year's kindergarten at Blanchard and this will grow when they move to first grade. The Committee discussed how to balance the class sizes at all of the elementary schools, particularly given that families are entitled to attend a school in the town they live in. If more Boxborough families register at this grade level, they are entitled to attend Blanchard.

Roger Hatch (at DESE) has confirmed that the district cannot specify that we will only accept siblings, but can specify how many seats and at what grades they will be at. Dana Labb explained the planning that would have to go on. He feels that it is a little late to ask families to change their plans about schools. He would love to welcome more students to Blanchard but needs time to prepare for them. Deanne O'Sullivan pointed out that if something is not done, Boxborough would have 20 students per kindergarten class with a possibility of going to 22 or more. Marie stated that, although this would be a big change at Blanchard, Acton has had classes of higher than this over the years.

Marie said that the Administration's preference is to offer one seat in 9<sup>th</sup> grade or to advertise that the district might take students in kindergarten now because once school ends it will be too late. She does not want School Committee to consider adding another kindergarten at this time. That decision could be made at the June 11 meeting, if necessary. The Committee discussed many options. Maria Neyland stated that this is not the first time that Blanchard has had 20 kids in a class. Every time the Boxborough School Committee voted for choice though, they never had to add a teacher and always agreed to fill empty spaces only, not add staff. Regarding the High

School, she noted that as choice students are brought in, they will end up at the High School and may take away opportunities for local students. She wants just one seat open in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Mary Brolin agreed with Maria, but stated that the conversation now is when is the tipping point because the numbers were going down at Blanchard, but with this scenario, they will eventually go up. The Committee agreed that this was a bigger conversation than just kindergarten.

Kristina Rychlik agreed about the complexities, noting the hybrid model at Conant and Blanchard, the increasing demand for all day kindergarten, the half day curriculum, what is best for children and what is feasible financially. She suggested considering the hybrid model as a pilot and planing a discussion about it this summer. Paul Murphy agreed.

Deborah Bookis explained that a group of our educators (called “Ready to Learn”) has been convened to explore these topics more fully. They will come back to the School Committee with their results to help in decisionmaking. Glenn pointed out that JD Head and the Space Committee are also looking at the practical aspect of all day kindergarten and its programming.

There was no comment from the public.

Paul Murphy moved, Kathleen Neville seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to continue in the School Choice program and limit openings to one seat in 9<sup>th</sup> grade at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School for FY16.

### **3. ABRSC BUSINESS MEETING**

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

1. The minutes of the meeting on 3/30/15 were approved.
2. Warrant #15-020 dated 4/2/15 in the amount of \$3,172,434.29, #15-021 dated 4/16/15 in the amount of \$3,219,455.37 and #15-022 dated 4/30/15 in the amount of \$3,271,631.27 were signed by the Committee.

#### **5. Public Participation - none**

#### **6. Acton and Boxborough Local Election/Town Meeting Updates – Kristina Rychlik**

1. Acton Town Meeting slides, 4/6/15
2. Statement read at Acton Town Meeting from the Regional Financial Oversight Committee (RFOC) by Mike Coppolino
3. Boxborough Town Meeting begins on May 11 – all SC members will attend and Brigid will present the budget.

Mike Coppolino reviewed the RFOC statement that was read at the Acton Town Meeting. He will read the same statement at Boxborough Town Meeting. This subcommittee meets for five years, so they will continue. Kristina Rychlik reported that almost 20 kids used the babysitting for the first night of Town Meeting and just a couple of them used it the second night. It is recommended that this service continue next year.

#### **7. Leadership Update – Glenn Brand**

1. Recommendation to Approve ABRSD Director of Finance and Business Manager – Clare Jeannotte was not at the meeting due to a conflict. It was a year ago that she was voted in as interim Business Manager. Brigid Bieber said that she is thrilled that Clare will stay with the district and that she has done a great job. Kristina and Mike agreed enthusiastically.

Brigid Bieber moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED**: to approve Clare Jeannotte as the ABRSD Director of Finance and Business Manager.

2. Pupil Services Director memo, 4/7/15  
Glenn Brand described his difficult decision to look for an interim Pupil Services Director for next year. He will lead a new search in the fall for a permanent person. He noted that between 10 – 12 searches for similar positions are taking place now, so we are late. Glenn recommends Mary Emmons as the dedicated Director of Special Education, a new requirement due to full regionalization. Glenn will provide a job description for this position at the next meeting. Paul Murphy appreciated the step back in the process because he felt like it had been rushed.
3. Special Education Leadership and Supervision Restructuring Proposal, 4/21/15  
Because full regionalization meant the district had more than 4000 students, this new position became required per MA General Law. Glenn reviewed the chart on the last page about how the restructuring would change, noting that 7.0 FTEs are in the roles currently, and this proposal is still 7.0 FTE with some different tasks. Two benefits are:  
1. Transitional coordination at the High School  
2. Educational team leadership at the Junior High and High School. Increased transitional coordination involves the ODP program, including a plan for 3 or 4 Out of District students to be brought in next year. There is a growth in this program.

Mike Coppolino stated that the majority of this proposal is excellent but he questioned the need for the transition coordinator. He asked what percentage increase in the students would require this. Dr. Brand thought 10 – 12 more students have been added, and it does not feel like the current level of support is correct for what is needed now. He will provide a job description at the next meeting. Paul Murphy noted that last year there was concern about the caseloads of the Special Education coordinators specifically in grades 6-8 with 120 cases for one person. He hopes this issue is addressed now and relief is given to those coordinators. Dr. Campbell, Mr. Shen, Ms. Emmons and Marie Altieri have all been involved in this discussion with the Superintendent.

Dr. Brand explained that the Educational Team Leader (ETL) at the JH was a new position in the FY16 Budget as a 1.0. The change here since the budget was approved is .6 FTE to a 1.0 FTE at the High School. This is done by leveraging funds resulting from the retirement of a staff member.

Nancy Sherburne spoke from the audience. The Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SpEd PAC) is happy that the district has made a plan for the preK-12 Coordinator with a district this size and the creativity used to make it happen. There are still some parent questions about what level positions require search committees compared to when they are appointed. Marie Altieri considers it as someone in the 7-12 coordinator position is being transitioned to a PreK-12 position. A job description for the 7-12 coordinator will be provided at the next meeting. Marie said that the Administration is hoping this change will improve the building based consistency of services. Before regionalization, there were two districts and two people coordinating them. This change will be evaluated over the year to see how well it is working.

4. Recommendation to Approve PreK – 12 Special Education Administrator – **VOTE**  
This appointment is done by the School Committee.

Brigid Bieber moved, Maria Neyland seconded, and it was unanimously,

**VOTED**: to appoint Mary Emmons as the Director of PreK – 12 Special Education.

The Superintendent thanked Mary Emmons for all of her hard work as the Acting Director of Pupil Services this past year.

**8. Annual Superintendent’s Evaluation Process – Kristina Rychlik**

1. Memo with links
2. Slides from presentation on 10/16/14
3. Spring 2015 timeline (FY15 Committee members only)

Public comment on the Superintendent’s performance may be sent to Kristina Rychlik by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

**9. ABRSD FY15/16 Budget Updates– Glenn Brand**

Dr. Brand reported that the anticipated revenue and expenses have not changed since the last meeting. Ending the year is expected to be very tight with a shortfall of \$100,000 approximately. Spending has been controlled. The amount of E and D of \$300,000 will be preserved, also we have more money in circuit breaker than budgeted for. This can be rolled over into the next fiscal year as a budget tool. The Quarter 3 Update for FY15 will be at the next meeting. Regarding FY16, Dr. Brand said that Rep. Benson has been working on the regional bonus aid of \$111,000 that was cancelled and now it looks like it might be back in.

**10. Recommendation to Approve FY16 Education Cooperative (TEC) Bid – VOTE – Glenn Brand (next meeting)**

**11. Subcommittee Updates**

**1. Outreach –**

Kristina Rychlik described the communications done this year. The monthly updates last year were mainly done for regionalization. Kristina thanked Kathleen Neville for her work on the revamped website. Katheen reviewed the model. A number of School Committee members have submitted photos and bios.

**2. Policy –**

**i. Bullying Prevention and Intervention, File: JICFB – SECOND READING - VOTE**

1. Proposed policy
2. Current policy and Current Plan/Procedures, File: JICFB-R

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

**VOTED**: to approve the revised Bullying Prevention and Intervention policy as proposed.

**ii. Small Necessities Leave Act, File: GCCCA/GDCCA – FIRST READING**

**iii. Family and Medical Leave, File: GCCC/GDCC – FIRST READING**

Marie Altieri noted that these policies were written a year ago and the change is to remove “Acton Public Schools” from it. A member requested that “son or daughter” be changed to “child”.

**iv. School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting, File: BDA – FIRST READING**

It was suggested that “and elections” be added at the end of the first sentence.

**v. School Committee Officers, File: BDB - FIRST READING**

**vi. Elementary Bus Passes, File: EEAAA Discussion of policy and procedures -**

Maria Neyland spoke for the policy subcommittee asking the School Committee to specify what information they wanted the Administration to provide for the next School Committee meeting. It is important that there be time for the issues to be considered, a proposal be created, and the public to give input before any vote is taken.

The Committee requested the number of children who participate in bus passing and some detail of the subsets around passes being used for playdates to homes, daycares and businesses. This would include the cost administratively in dollars and time for bus passes, and the amount of time children who are not bus passing have to be on the bus because of the passes. Most important is a legal opinion on the bus passing service particularly passing to businesses from a child's school. Dr. Brand will have this information for the next meeting on May 21.

3. **Budget – VOTE** on new subcommittee member to replace Dennis Bruce  
The next budget subcommittee meeting is May 6 at 7:45 a.m. for the budget process post mortem.  
Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,  
**VOTED:** that Deanne O'Sullivan replace Dennis Bruce on the subcommittee through the end of June.

## 12. School Committee Member Reports *(oral)*

1. Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) – Brigid Bieber reported that BLF met last night and went through the warrant for Town Meeting.
2. Health Insurance Trust (HIT)– Mary Brolin reported that HIT voted final rates and some contracts.
3. Acton Finance Committee – Kristina Rychlik will present on May 26 with the Q3 report
4. Acton Board of Selectmen - Paul Murphy reported that Katie Green is new BOS Chair. BOS is looking for suggestions on the job description for the new position of Land Use Director.
5. Acton-Boxborough SpedPAC – Paul Murphy reported that the group met a couple of weeks ago, and they appreciate the care that the district is taking with the job searches. Some members participated in the APPL institute with Mary Emmons and Glenn Brand. They will develop a team action plan for coordination between the PAC and the Administration.

## 13. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Brand reported that the new ABCconnector newsletter was just distributed electronically. He hopes to do this 4 or 5 times a year. Amy Bisiewicz and her department are revamping the website and hope to have it completed by early June. Tomorrow is Senior Community Service Day.

## 14. FY16 School Committee Meetings – *Kristina Rychlik*

1. Workshop in July?
2. Business Meeting in August?
3. Twice monthly starting in September, one in April and one in May?

The Committee agreed they want to do their workshop in July, a business meeting in August and continue the twice monthly meetings with only one in April and one in May.

## 15. Recommendation to Accept Proposed Gift of Blanchard School Playground Swing Set from the Blanchard Parent-Teacher-Friends (PTF) Organization – **VOTE** – *Glenn Brand*

Release of liability was a condition of this grant and why it is being voted tonight by the Committee. Paul Murphy moved, Mike Coppolino seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED:** to accept the proposed gift of the Blanchard School playground swing set from the Blanchard Parent-Teacher-Friends (PTF) Organization with gratitude.

**16. FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

**ABRSC EXECUTIVE SESSION** at 9:01 p.m.

At 9:01 p.m., Kristina Rychlik moved and Brigid Bieber seconded to enter executive session “pursuant to MGL chapter 30A, section 21 (a)(7), to comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law. This is to comply with the Massachusetts Right of Privacy Law (MGL chapter 214, section 1B) and the Massachusetts Public Records Law (MGL chapter 4, section 7 (26)(c).” to approve minutes. An open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the Board. The Committee voted by roll call: YES: Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Minkin, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik.

Kristina Rychlik moved and Brigid Bieber seconded to enter executive session for strategy with respect to collective bargaining. An open meeting could be detrimental to the bargaining position of the Committee. The Committee voted by roll call: YES: Baum, Bieber, Brolin, Coppolino, Krishnamurthy, Minkin, Murphy, Neville, Neyland, O’Sullivan, Rychlik. The Chair stated that the Committee would return to open meeting for the sole purpose of adjourning.

The ABRSC was adjourned at 10:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda