

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) WORKSHOP

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

July 11, 2017
6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:30 p.m. Executive Session
7:00 p.m. (approx.) Business Meeting
7:30 p.m. (approx.) Annual Workshop

AGENDA

1. **Call to Order** (6:30)
2. **EXECUTIVE SESSION**
 - 2.1. *To be convened under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(3) to consider release of minutes of the executive session held on 5/15/17 for strategy with respect to collective bargaining sessions with representatives of the employees of the Acton Boxborough Regional School District (Acton-Boxborough Education Association, Office Support Association, and American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees) regarding health insurance benefits (an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining position of the Board)*
 - 2.2. *To be convened under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(2) to consider release of minutes of the executive session held on 5/2/17 to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel*
 - 2.3. *To be convened under M.G.L. Chapter 30A, §21(a)(1) to consider release of minutes of the executive session held on 4/26/17 to consider the discipline or dismissal of, or to hear complaints or charges brought against a public officer, employee, staff member or individual*
3. **RETURN TO OPEN MEETING**
4. **Chairman's Introduction** – Amy Krishnamurthy
5. **Statement of Warrants**
6. **Policy Subcommittee – Third Read – VOTE** – Brigid Bieber
 - 6.1. Homework Policy, File: IKB
7. **Open Meeting Law Complaint**
 - 7.1. Nitschelm received 6/26/17 – Executive Session minutes of 4/26/17 and 5/2/17
8. **ANNUAL WORKSHOP**
- Dorothy Presser/MA Association of School Committees (MASC) Field Director
 - 8.1. Review ABRSC Operating Protocols
 - 8.2. Subcommittee Structure and Assignments – *(vote at future meeting)*
 - 8.2.1. 2016-2017 Subcommittees and Members

8.3. Discussion of Potential School District / School Committee Areas of Focus for 2017 – 2018

- 8.3.1. Superintendent Search
- 8.3.2. School Building Projects
- 8.3.3. School Start Times
- 8.3.4. High School and Jr High Schedules
- 8.3.5. Updated Homework Policy/Forum
- 8.3.6. Challenge Success/Wellness Committee
- 8.3.7. MTSS
- 8.3.8. Culture and Climate Survey
- 8.3.9. Consolidation of Before/After School Funding
- 8.3.10. New: Long-term Sustainability of Salaries

8.4. Open Meeting Law Q and A

9. **FYI**

- 9.1. Final 2017-2018 School Calendar
(High School Late Starts due MCAS and Jr High Early Dismissals added)
- 9.2. Minutes from School Committee Workshop last year on 6/29/16
- 9.3. Ethics
 - 9.3.1. State Required Ethics Training <http://www.mass.gov/ethics>
 - 9.3.2. School Committee Member Ethics Policy, File: BCA
- 9.4. Committee Member Conflict of Interest Policy, File: BCB
- 9.5. School Committee – Staff Communications Policy, File: BHC, GBD
- 9.6. Remote Participation Policy, File: BEDJA
- 9.7. Community Correspondence 7/7/17

10. **Adjourn**

Next Meetings:

- ABRSC, Tuesday, August 1, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted July 27)
- ABRSC, Thursday, August 24, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted August 18)

ABRSD Homework Policy (6.28.17)

The intent of homework, when assigned, is to support student engagement in the classroom. The term "homework" refers to an assignment or activity that supplements and supports instruction. Homework should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. This can be established through activities and assignments that encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others. Educators will strive to emphasize quality over quantity of homework.

This policy supports balance for our students while still engaging them in deep learning experiences. The District recognizes the need for students and families to have playtime, downtime and family time (PDF) to promote wellness. Social-emotional wellness and balance in the lives of our students leads to better learning. Better balance also allows students to engage in activities of their choice, including independent reading.

Research supports independent choice reading as a powerful tool for learning and wellbeing. When students read for pleasure and hear conversations relating to text, they engage in deep learning. Such powerful activities foster profound academic growth and well-being, according to research. Independent choice reading happens best when schools and families partner together. Encouraging student to be self-motivated readers does not solely rest on the district, but also on families. The District strives to help students become independent readers alongside families. Families play an important role by creating environments that nurture the desire and motivation to read for pleasure. Because research shows that intrinsic motivation is most effective in fostering a lifelong love of reading, the District will not assign independent choice reading.

To ensure all students have equitable access to programs and curricula, the information for any homework assignment should be clear and specific so that the student can complete the assignment independently. Homework assignments should take into consideration individual student differences, needs and available resources. Teachers will follow Individual Education Plans and 504s when planning for homework. Homework should not require the use of materials not readily available in all homes.

Frequency of homework

Grades K-2: Students will have no homework except for an occasional activity that may include other people.

Grades 3-4: Students will occasionally have an assigned activity.

Grades 5-6: Students may expect homework more frequently, Monday through Thursday.

Grades 7-12: Students should expect homework in one or more subjects nightly.

ABRSD Homework Policy (6.28.17)

Vacations K-12

Homework will not be assigned with the expectation that it be worked on and/or completed during any school vacations. Long-term projects assigned before a vacation can not have a due date earlier than the Thursday after a vacation.

Long Weekends K-12

Homework will not be assigned over long weekends, including all holiday and religious long weekends, and those marked by a district-wide closing. When there is no school on Monday, in-class assessments will not be scheduled earlier than the following Wednesday.

Mid-years - high school only

Mid-years - No assessments given or homework during mid-year week, except for homework directly related to exam preparation.

MCAS

Grades 3-8: Nights prior to MCAS testing are homework-free.

High School: Limit homework to twenty minutes per night per course

Religious Holidays

For practices related to religious holidays, please refer to District policy IMD-R located on the district website: <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/policies/section-i>

Homework Policy

First Read for 6/8/17 SC meeting, Proposed Version 6/28/17

File: IKB

The ~~purpose-intent~~ of homework, when assigned, is to support student engagement in the classroom. The term "homework" refers to an assignment ~~or~~ /activity that supplements and ~~or~~ supports class-instruction. Homework should increase in complexity with the maturity of the student. This can be established through activities and assignments that encourage students to investigate for themselves and to work independently as well as with others. Educators will strive to emphasize quality over quantity of homework.

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~~One such activity, which abundant research supports, is independent "choice" reading. This kind of reading has been shown to improve student academic and social and emotional learning. Independent reading of student-chosen text, coupled with hearing stories and conversations, are powerful activities students can engage in that foster their growth and well-being. Independent choice reading is highly encouraged and will not be assigned.~~

Research supports independent choice reading as a powerful tool for learning and wellbeing. When students read for pleasure and hear conversations relating to text, they engage in deep learning. Such powerful activities foster profound academic growth and well-being, according to research. Independent choice reading happens best when schools and families partner together. Encouraging student to be self-motivated readers does not solely rest on the district, but also on families. The District strives to help students become independent readers alongside families. Families play an important role by creating environments that nurture the desire and motivation to read for pleasure. Because research shows that intrinsic motivation is most effective in fostering a lifelong love of reading, the District will not assign independent choice reading.

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Frequency of homework (~~Specific implementation can be found in individual school handbooks and/or websites~~)

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<http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/policies/section-i>



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
 Office of the Attorney General
 One Ashburton Place
 Boston, Massachusetts 02108

OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT FORM

Instructions for completing the Open Meeting Law Complaint Form

The Attorney General's Division of Open Government interprets and enforces the Open Meeting Law, Chapter 30A of the Massachusetts General Laws. Below is the procedure for filing and responding to an Open Meeting Law complaint.

Instructions for filing a complaint:

- o Fill out the attached two-page form completely and sign it. File the complaint with the public body within 30 days of the alleged violation. If the violation was not reasonably discoverable at the time it occurred, you must file the complaint within 30 days of the date the violation was reasonably discoverable. A violation that occurs during an open session of a meeting is reasonably discoverable on the date of the meeting.
- o To file the complaint:
 - o For a local or municipal public body, you must submit a copy of the complaint to the chair of the public body AND to the municipal clerk.
 - o For all other public bodies, you must submit a copy of the complaint to the chair of the public body.
 - o Complaints may be filed by mail, email, or by hand. Please retain a copy for your records.
- o If the public body does not respond within 14 business days and does not request an extension to respond, contact the Division for further assistance.

Instructions for a public body that receives a complaint:

- o The chair must disseminate the complaint to the members of the public body.
- o The public body must meet to review the complaint within 14 business days (usually 20-22 calendar days).
- o After review, but within 14 business days, the public body must respond to the complaint in writing and must send the Attorney General a copy of the complaint and a description of any action the public body has taken to address it. At the same time, the body must send the complainant a copy of its response. The public body may delegate this responsibility to its counsel or a staff member, but only after it has met to review the complaint.
- o If a public body requires more time to review the complaint and respond, it may request an extension of time for good cause by contacting the Division of Open Government.

Once the public body has responded to the complaint:

- o If you are not satisfied with that the public body's response to your complaint, you may file a copy of the complaint with the Division by mail, e-mail, or by hand, but only once you have waited for 30 days after filing the complaint with the public body.
- o When you file your complaint with the Division, please include the complaint form and all documentation relevant to the alleged violation. You may wish to attach a cover letter explaining why the public body's response does not adequately address your complaint.
- o The Division will not review complaints filed with us more than 90 days after the violation, unless we granted an extension to the public body or you can demonstrate good cause for the delay.

If you have questions concerning the Open Meeting Law complaint process, we encourage you to contact the Division of Open Government by phone at (617) 963-2540 or by e-mail at openmeeting@state.ma.us.



OPEN MEETING LAW COMPLAINT FORM

Office of the Attorney General
One Ashburton Place
Boston, MA 02108

Received
6/26/17
Due 14 days by
7/17/17

Please note that all fields are required unless otherwise noted.

Your Contact Information:

First Name: Allen Last Name: Nitschelm

Address: 9 Marian Rd.

City: Acton State: MA Zip Code: 01720

Phone Number: 9786214207 Ext. _____

Email: allen@thehomesteader.com

Organization or Media Affiliation (if any): ActonForum.com

Are you filing the complaint in your capacity as an individual, representative of an organization, or media?

(For statistical purposes only)

Individual Organization Media

Public Body that is the subject of this complaint:

City/Town County Regional/District State

Name of Public Body (including city/town, county or region, if applicable): Acton Boxborough Regional School District (SC)

Specific person(s), if any, you allege committed the violation: _____

Date of alleged violation: 4/26 and 5/2/17

Description of alleged violation:

Describe the alleged violation that this complaint is about. If you believe the alleged violation was intentional, please say so and include the reasons supporting your belief.

Note: This text field has a maximum of 3000 characters.

A request was made on May 22, 2017 by Acton Forum for several documents. (The school has asked for some extra time on some of our requests which we have agreed to.) But our request for two Executive Session minutes on April 26, 2017 and May 2, 2017 have been denied.

The separation agreement with Dr. Brand was approved in an open meeting of the SC recently. Because the "purpose" of the ES has been fulfilled, there would appear to be no reason to withhold the ES minutes in their entirety.

In addition, the length of the meetings would indicate that other issues outside the stated purpose were discussed in executive session which should have been discussed in open session. The release of the minutes will shed light on the appropriateness of these closed-door meetings and the public statements issued subsequently.

What action do you want the public body to take in response to your complaint?

Note: This text field has a maximum of 500 characters.

Release the two ES minutes of April 26, 2017 and May 2, 2017 immediately.

Review, sign, and submit your complaint

I. Disclosure of Your Complaint.

Public Record. Under most circumstances, your complaint, and any documents submitted with your complaint, is considered a public record and will be available to any member of the public upon request.

Publication to Website. As part of the Open Data Initiative, the AGO will publish to its website certain information regarding your complaint, including your name and the name of the public body. The AGO will not publish your contact information.

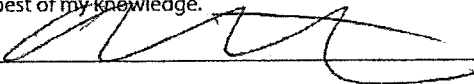
II. Consulting With a Private Attorney.

The AGO cannot give you legal advice and is not able to be your private attorney, but represents the public interest. If you have any questions concerning your individual legal rights or responsibilities you should contact a private attorney.

III. Submit Your Complaint to the Public Body.

The complaint must be filed first with the public body. If you have any questions, please contact the Division of Open Government by calling (617) 963-2540 or by email to openmeeting@state.ma.us.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I have read and understood the provisions above and certify that the information I have provided is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: 

Date: 6/26/17

For Use by Public Body Date Received by Public Body For Use By AGO Date Received by AGO



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

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Operating Protocols

voted 9/17/15

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee recognizes the importance of our work to our students, families, staff and the communities of Acton and Boxborough. We strive to advocate for the Acton-Boxborough Public Schools and the support of public education, and view our roles as ambassadors of the District. Thus, we have formally established the following operating protocols to follow in our dealings with the Superintendent, Staff/Administration, and the general public.

The School Committee has established policies in the areas of School Committee Powers and Duties (BBA), School Committee-Superintendent Relationship (BDD), School Committee-Staff Communications (BHC), School Committee Member Ethics (BCA) and School Committee Member Authority (BBAA)¹. These outline the expected and appropriate roles of the School Committee and highlight duties, responsibilities and, importantly, the limits of those responsibilities in carrying out our work. All members shall be familiar with these policies and follow them while encouraging their fellow members to do the same.

The School Committee has high expectations for behavior at its meetings, in order to conduct our business in a professional, respectful, thoughtful and efficient manner.

We believe that School Committee members should be empowered to freely express their opinions, concerns and ideas in a climate of trust and mutual respect. While we don't expect to always agree, we do expect that we should always acknowledge the value of each individual member's contributions and work to disagree without being disagreeable. Effective yet efficient debate by members will help us to use our meeting time wisely.

¹ The letters in parentheses reference school committee policies available online at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/policies> .

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.

We agree that individual School Committee members have no independent authority, only the committee as a whole has authority. When representing the Committee at meetings of other boards or groups, individual members must speak as individuals except when reporting a decision of the majority of the Committee.

The School Committee welcomes respectful, thoughtful input from the public in shaping Committee decisions; however, while our meetings are open to the public; they are not public meetings. Public participation is subject to Chapter 30A section 20g of the Massachusetts General Law and our School Committee Policy BEDH. We expect the public to follow our policy on public participation and allow the Chair the authority to enforce this policy.

Matters of concern by parents and guardians should be addressed by following the Parent Communication Map available at abschools.org. Town or community concerns that are within our purview will be addressed when appropriate and necessary, but not prematurely.

We strive to make our meetings as efficient as possible (beginning no earlier than 7:00 p.m. and ending no later than 10:00 p.m.) in order to be sensitive to the time commitments of staff, committee members and the public. This may entail:

- Adding meetings in order to address topics requiring lengthy discussion;
- Limiting the number of agenda items at a particular meeting;
- Delaying discussion on certain issues;
- Discouraging the use of the addendum to our meeting packets for more than short, routine matters or minor updates.

We aim to avoid surprises at our meetings and will work to maintain focus on our goals and priorities. Questions and concerns should be communicated as early as possible before a meeting. Except in emergency situations, the School Committee will refrain from addressing issues that have not been previously brought to the attention of the Chair and/or Superintendent.

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.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee 2016-2017
Subcommittees & Assignments
(Voted 8/8/16)

CASE Board Member	Glenn Brand
EDCO School Committee Leadership Liaison/Round Table	Diane Baum, Eileen Zhang
EDCO Board Member (voting member)	Glenn Brand
EDCO Advisory Member (non voting member)	Diane Baum
Legislative Issues & Initiatives Subcommittee (for Rep. Atkins'/Rep. Benson's/Sen. Eldridge's Districts)	Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville
Health Insurance Trust Representative	Mary Brolin
Superintendent's Wellness Task Force/Advisory Comm	Kathleen Neville, XXXX
Superintendent's Safety Task Force	Maria Neyland, Maya Minkin, Amy Krishnamurthy
Community Outreach/ PTSO Liaison	Kristina Rychlik, Kathleen Neville, Deanne O'Sullivan, Diane Baum, Eileen Zhang
Special Education Parent Advisory Comm Liaison	Diane Baum, Kathleen Neville
Warrant Signature Subcommittee	Deanne O'Sullivan, Paul Murphy, Kristina Rychlik, Maria Neyland, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy
Policy Subcommittee	Brigid Bieber, Maria Neyland, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin, Kathleen Neville
Negotiations Subcommittee	Maria Neyland, Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy
Acton Leadership Group (ALG) Representatives	Amy Krishnamurthy, Paul Murphy
Acton Board of Selectmen Liaison	Eileen Zhang, Paul Murphy
Acton Finance Committee Liaison	Deanne O'Sullivan, Amy Krishnamurthy
OPEB Task Force	Diane Baum, Mary Brolin
OPEB Trust Fund Board of Advisors	ABRSC Chairperson, Mary Brolin
Boxborough Leadership Forum (BLF) Representatives	Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Maria Neyland, Kathleen Neville
Boxborough Board of Selectmen Liaison	Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber
Boxborough Finance Committee Liaison	Mary Brolin
Regionalization Financial Oversight Committee	Chairperson Mary Brolin, Kristina Rychlik
Danny's Place Youth Services Advisory Board	Amy Krishnamurthy
Budget and Capital Planning Subcommittee	Brigid Bieber, Deanne O'Sullivan, Chairperson Maria Neyland, Kristina Rychlik, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy
MMT Liaison/SC rep to Acton MMT Working Group	Diane Baum
Future School Needs and Planning Capital Working Group	Paul Murphy, Maria, Neyland, Kristina Rychlik Brigid Bieber, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin
Town of Acton Capital Improvement Planning Comm	Kristina Rychlik

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
SCHOOL CALENDAR, 2017-2018

Bold Underlined Dates = No School Days / ELEMENTARY EARLY DISMISSAL IS EVERY THURSDAY AFTERNOON

Sept.	M	T	W	T	F
	28	29	30	31	<u>1</u>
	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	18	19	20	<u>21</u>	22
	25	26	27	28	29

Teachers' mtgs – Aug 30 & 31
 Schools Open – Sept 5
 Labor Day – Sept 1 & 4
 Rosh Hashana – Sept 21
 School Days - 18

Oct.	M	T	W	T	F
	2	3	4	5	6
	<u>9</u>	10	11	12	13
	16	17	18	19	20
	23	24	25	26	27
	30	31			

*Indigenous Peoples' Day – Oct 9
 **7-12 Early Dis for Prof L. – Oct 12
 School Days – 21

Nov.	M	T	W	T	F
			1	2	3
	6	<u>7</u>	8	9	<u>10</u>
	13	14	15	16	17
	20	21	22	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>
	27	28	29	30	

Prof. Day – Nov 7 (no school/students)
 Veterans Day - Nov 10 due to Sat holiday
 Half Day – Nov 22
 Thanksgiving Recess - Nov 23&24
 School Days - 18

Dec.	M	T	W	T	F
					1
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	18	19	20	21	22
	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>

Jr High Early Dis for Confs – 14, 19
 Winter Recess - Dec. 25 – Jan 1
 School Days - 16

Jan.	M	T	W	T	F
	<u>1</u>	2	3	4	5
	8	9	10	11	12
	<u>15</u>	16	17	18	19
	22	23	24	25	26
	29	30	31		

Schools Open - Jan 2
JH Early Dis – 5 (confs are Jan 4)
 Martin Luther King Day - Jan 15
 School Days - 21

Feb.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>
	26	27	28		

**7-12 Early Dis for Prof L. – Feb 8
 Presidents' Day - Feb 19
 Winter Recess - Feb 19-23
 School Days – 15

Mar.	M	T	W	T	F
				1	2
	5	6	7	8	9
	12	13	14	15	16
	19	20	21	22	23
	26	27	28	29	<u>30</u>

HS Late Start **only for students NOT taking MCAS - Mar 27, 28, 29**
 Good Friday – March 30
 School Days - 21

Apr.	M	T	W	T	F
	2	3	4	5	6
	9	10	11	12	13
	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>
	23	24	25	26	27
	30				

****7-12 Early Dis for Prof L. – Apr 5**
 Patriots Day – Apr 16
 Spring Recess - Apr 16-20
 School Days - 16

May	M	T	W	T	F
		1	2	3	4
	7	8	9	10	11
	14	15	16	17	18
	21	22	23	24	25
	<u>28</u>	29	30	31	

HS Late Start **only for students NOT taking MCAS- May 23 and 24**
 Memorial Day - May 28
 School Days - 22

June	M	T	W	T	F
					1
	4	5	6	7	8
	11	12	13	14	15
	<u>18</u>	19	20	21	22

Graduation – June 1
 Last day – June 18 (no snow days)
 (June 25 if 5 snow days used)
 School Days – 12
Total Days = 180

Note: See <http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/2017.htm> for some major religious holidays. Yom Kippur = Saturday, 9/30/17
 * This legal holiday is Columbus Day
 ** Professional Learning for JH/HS Staff Early Dismissal

No School and Delayed Opening Announcements air on TV Channels 4, 5 and 7 and radio stations WBZ and WEIM. See postings at <http://abschools.org>
 Acton Town Meeting begins April 2, 2018. Boxborough Meeting begins May 14, 2018.

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee Meetings are held twice a month. See <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee> for more information.

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC) WORKSHOP
MINUTES (approved 8/8/16)

Library
R.J. Grey Junior High School

Wednesday, June 29, 2016
6:00 p.m. Dinner
6:30 p.m. School Committee Workshop

Members Present: Diane Baum, Brigid Bieber, Mary Brolin, Amy Krishnamurthy, Maya Minkin (6:45), Paul Murphy, Kathleen Neville, Maria Neyland, Deanne O’Sullivan (6:50), Kristina Rychlik, Eileen Zhang

Members Absent: none

Others: Glenn Brand, Beth Petr

The ABRSC was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chairperson Mary Brolin.

1. Statement of Warrants

The warrants were read by the Chairperson (see attachment) and circulated to the Committee for their review and signatures.

2. Recommendation to Accept Grant from the Acton Boxborough United Way (ABUW) to A-B Community Education Summer Day Program – VOTE – Glenn Brand

Katie Neville moved, Paul Murphy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the grant from ABUW to the AB Community Education Summer Day Program.

3. Policy Subcommittee – Consent Agenda (8 policies) – Second Read – VOTE – Brigid Bieber

- 3.1. Prohibition of Harassment, File: ACAB, JBA, GBA
- 3.2. Evaluation of the Superintendent, File: CBI
- 3.3. Staff Conduct, File: GBEB
- 3.4. Fingerprint-Based Criminal History Record Information Checks, File: ADDB
- 3.5. Drug Free Workplace, File: GBEC
- 3.6. Administration of Medication to Students, File: JLCD
- 3.7. Alcohol, Tobacco and Drug Use by Students Prohibited, File: JICH
- 3.8. Retirement of Facilities, File: FCB –HOLD

Mary Brolin read the names of the policies and a Hold was requested for Retirement of Facilities, File: FCB.

Maria Neyland moved, Amy Krishnamurthy seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to approve the consent agenda of 7 policies as proposed.

Regarding the Retirement of Facilities policy, Kristina Rychlik asked why the last sentence in the second paragraph was deleted. Brigid Bieber said that it is redundant with the sentence before it so it is not needed.

Maria Neyland moved, Katie Neville seconded and it was unanimously,

VOTED: to accept the Retirement of Facilities policy as proposed.

4. Review of Last Year’s Workshop

The Committee briefly reviewed the minutes of the School Committee Workshop on 7/22/15.

5. Discussion of Potential School Committee Areas of Focus for 2016-2017

Mary Brolin began the discussion by stating that the objective for the workshop was to agree on overall goals for the School Committee for the new year. She reminded Committee members that the workshop was not to resolve or work on these issues, just to consider whether they should be part of the goals.

5.1. FY16 Goals (How did we do?) – *Mary Brolin*

5.1.1. Professional Practice Goal #1

Kristina Rychlik was thanked for her commitment last year to having the Committee complete the MASC's District Governance Program. This goal was fully achieved and it was agreed that the Program made the Committee more efficient and effective.

5.1.2. District Improvement Goal #1

The Committee felt they did well in beginning to address capital needs of the District and will add to this goal for the new year. Clear and consistent communication to the public will be key to success. It was suggested that "talking points" be distributed to Committee members as important issues come up.

5.1.3. District Improvement Goal #2

Community engagement was addressed through a revision of the School Committee section of the website and the PTO Co-chairs meetings, but more could always be done. There was some confusion about roles/expectations for the SC liaisons to the schools. Combining the Outreach subcommittee and the PTO Co-chairs activity might be beneficial. Distributing meeting agendas sooner would be helpful. The Committee considered the value of having principals attend School Committee meetings, given all of the other demands on their time. Outreach is an important goal to continue working on, particularly around the Capital and Wellness topics.

5.1.4. Student Learning Goal #1

The Committee felt this goal was met fairly well although the new Long Range Strategic Plan is needed.

5.2. Preliminary Superintendent's FY17 Goals – *Glenn Brand*

Dr. Brand reviewed his preliminary plans for FY17 goals and welcomed comments from the Committee.

Diane Baum wondered why the child study team's involvement in the Student Learning Goal last year was not included again. Dr. Brand has just received the end of year report from the child study team, and will be sharing it with the Committee soon. With Dawn Bentley and Pam Smith starting next week, he will have members of the two working groups present the findings to Dawn and Pam and see how they want to proceed. He did not include this item in his preliminary goals because he intends to include it in the work of the leadership team. Several members agreed that they hope there will be follow up on this item this year.

Mary Brolin asked where the Capital Study work is included. She is concerned that if Dr. Brand adds all of these pieces to last year's goals, there will be too much to accomplish successfully. Mary asked the Superintendent to consider, "To what end? If you collect all of this data, what will you do with it?"

Kristina Rychlik advocated for increased focus on the needs of the Junior High and High School. She agrees with Dr. Brand's focus but feels much of the past 3 years has been on elementary school issues. Amy Krishnamurthy would like to see Wellness goals, including the school start time discussion. Mary Brolin noted that "School Climate" could include Wellness.

Brigid Bieber noted that there are many questions and items being discussed that would go into the Long Range Strategic Plan (LRSP). Although that document is not complete yet, it would be the guiding document for much of what was being discussed.

The Committee discussed how the culture affects learning. Dr. Brand plans to do an Administration survey and broaden it to the entire community. He envisions the development of a survey tool that will be used in all of our schools with a report at the end for all families, staff and School Committee to view. Mary Brolin stressed that the survey needs to lead to an action, not just a gathering of data. Maria Neyland spoke strongly in favor of a survey like this because it would give families a voice. She also asked that students be included in the survey, and not just the usual student groups. The Committee agreed that culture does affect learning.

Dr. Brand believes that by the end of next school year, the survey could be done and the data gathered. Paul Murphy stressed that he really wants the next phase to be implementation of the results, not just a gathering of data. He would like a goal that continues for two years, if that is what it takes to complete.

Maria Neyland spoke in favor of a goal that helps to “manage” the six elementary schools, given the diversity among them. Kristina Rychlik said that it would be easy to expand this District Improvement goal to include the Junior High and High School. Mary Brolin noted that this document will be converted into SMART Goals in the future.

5.3. Demographic Survey/Educational Values Update – *Kristina Rychlik*

3 years ago, Mike Coppolino wanted to redo this survey but there was not enough time. This was at the same time as the bus passing changes were being discussed and many parents spoke up about their expectations of the district. Boston College provided the draft in the packet material based on the last discussions. Kristina feels it is “bland” and is unsure the administration will get what they are looking for the way it is proposed. It does not hit on some of the main issues of concern last year.

The Committee considered whether to wait until the LRSP is completed to be sure the Plan coincides with the survey. Eileen Zhang would really like this survey to be done. She considers most of the points to be excellent and they could help make some policy changes for our community and schools. Deanne O’Sullivan would like the survey to be more specific. She wants to be able to answer it based on various ages of children.

It is possible that the tool that Dr. Brand referred to, could be linked to this one. The Committee must be aware of the timing of all of the surveys being planned. The end goal is to support the School Committee in outreach and communication and revising future policies. The original survey confirmed that student stress should be a focus and that was helpful.

5.4. Comparative Communities Subcommittee Report – *Diane Baum*

Mike Coppolino’s idea of looking at similar high performing communities that spend less than AB was the original focus. Diane feels that much of the information available is too detailed to use and she asked for guidance from the Committee. Mary Brolin suggested that the data could go to the budget subcommittee and that could wrap up this subcommittee. Alternatively, Diane could present a report to School Committee in the fall, after the subcommittee members have collected and analyzed their data.

A number of issues make comparing this data difficult, including how school choice makes our transportation very expensive. Kristina Rychlik emphasized that the Committee knows

and understands this aspect of our district. She suggested that the out of district transportation costs could be more valuable to look at. Mary Brolin reminded the Committee that the purpose is to think about how to use this discussion to create a goal around the topic, or not.

5.5. New District Strategic Plan Process Update –*Glenn Brand*

Almost 400 responses to the recent survey were received. Dr. Brand is engaging the District Leadership Team in analyzing the results. Social and emotional wellness continues to be a concern. The next step is to ask how these issues percolate to the teachers at the various school levels and through the subjects. Dr. Brand invited School Committee members to attend the Leadership Institute on August 10th and 11th to be part of that discussion. He will share the agenda with them when it is final.

Deborah Bookis, Sinnika Garry and Lynn Laramie have been helping Dr. Brand with updating the Long Range Strategic Plan. He will be expanding this planning group to include the school communities and wider community this fall. Dr. Brand confirmed that the School Committee will not have the LRSP to guide them in creating their goals this year.

5.6. Recommendation from Wellness Committee – School Start Times – *Glenn Brand (see presentation at ABRSC meeting on 6/9/16)*

Three reports came out of these 3 subgroups. Kirsty Kerrin will bring them together in one document. Dr. Brand asked for the School Committee's thoughts on this topic so he can decide on the next step.

5.7. ABRSD Capital Planning Effort

<http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>

Dr. Brand appreciated the comments on the importance of clear communication around the Capital Planning Effort. Not much new is happening at this time. The groups are continuing to work, with Dore and Whittier honing in on the enrollment projections done by NESDEC and the Ashtons. The priority is Phase 1 of the project and the Capital Improvement Plan. With JD Head and the Working Group, priorities are being identified and will be part of the FY18 budget process. A strategy will then be needed to address a multi-year plan. Although, the full study will not be done until November, the Capital Improvement Plan must be created. The Future School Needs group will meet in late July.

5.8. Elementary School Per Pupil Costs – *Mary Brolin*

5.8.1. Regional Financial Oversight Committee Analysis

Mary Brolin will provide the correct table to replace the one in the packet. It might have only gone out to the Budget Subcommittee. The Committee discussed the disparity that can be created when some schools have their own after school programs. Mary Brolin noted that this topic is within School Committee's purview of budget and policy. Paul Murphy believed that Dr. Mills had addressed this issue during his tenure. Other members felt he had only partially addressed the topic.

5.9. Preliminary FY17 ABRSC Goals – *Mary Brolin (SEE FY16 GOALS)*

Mary asked the Committee to consider how they work together and if there were any suggestions for how they can work more effectively. It was suggested that perhaps members could all read and discuss a specific book, or that a speaker could be found for a specific topic.

District Improvement Goals:

Mary Brolin advocated for keeping the capital needs and community engagement goals for FY17. It was suggested that capital needs should be included every year, as part of the School Committee and Superintendent's responsibilities. Mary agreed but explained that the

Committee does not seem to have this area down well enough so that it is routinized. Some items in this category will be routine and some will be special projects. A comment was made that the District needs to change people's attitudes around capital needs planning and that it may not be a goal. Maria Neyland pointed out that the District now has a plan and fine tuning it should be an ongoing job. Getting the report in November is a goal that will be done. Deanne O'Sullivan asked for milestones in this area to help reach the goals.

Capital Needs could be considered both Outreach and Budget, or it could be its own goal. Capital has been on the front burner for one year. Paul Murphy noted that there is a formula that districts should be setting aside a percentage for capital needs and AB has not done this.

The Committee agreed that the same budget goal would be included with the addition of, "... to support the long range Capital plans of the District."

Some members want a community education goal (see District Goal #2) that includes engaging the community around capital planning. Examples would include: ALICE training, handbooks, and revisiting some of previous goals, such as front door locks on the school buildings.

Regarding the demographic survey, the Committee felt if they could look at the data that results and make it useable, than it could be part of a goal. If it was not usable, it could be ok not to include it. Brigid Bieber felt it could come off as a goal and an action plan could be to complete the survey, and then use the results to inform the goal setting instead.

Regarding the Comparative Community work, it was agreed that it should go to Budget Subcommittee at this time.

Amy Krishnamurthy advocated that Wellness is important enough that it should be a measureable goal for the School Committee. The Committee discussed how this would fall under the Outreach subcommittee. For any decisions, such as changing school start times, coordinated outreach would be essential to success. Maria Neyland agreed that discussion and decisionmaking needs to be done concurrently with outreach, as was done during regionalization. Talking points need to be consistent and clear for all members.

Brigid Bieber noted that school start times are getting a lot of press statewide. There is opportunity for the District to be a leader and do outreach to other communities. This Wellness piece will go under Community Outreach working with the Administration.

When asked where the elementary school budget piece fits in the School Committee goals, Kristina Rychlik suggested that the Superintendent could handle this and address all of the various pieces including technology, curriculum and fundraising. Mary Brolin stated that at some point, there is a role for the budget and policy subcommittees to be involved but perhaps it is not the time to make this a Committee goal yet. Maria Neyland felt that it is important for the Committee to support Dr. Brand and his efforts around this. She advocated for it to be a district-wide activity. Because it encroaches on budget and policy, she would like to see it somewhere in a goal or be a goal. Thus, the SC will have a goal that supports the Superintendent with appropriate policy and budget work as he clarifies the organizational structure of the District's schools.

6. **2016-2017 Subcommittee Structure and Assignments** – *Mary Brolin (vote at next meeting)*
 - 6.1. 2015-2016 Subcommittees and Members
 - 6.2. Draft ideas for 2016-2017

The Committee discussed membership of the subcommittees and assignments to other positions. It was agreed that the PTSO Liaisons could be moved under the Community Outreach Subcommittee. The Legislative Issues subcommittee was more clearly defined as a support for issues that the School Committee wants to focus on, not an effort to find more opportunities for the Committee to consider. The Boxborough BOS Vocational Education Advisory Committee is no longer active.

7. School Committee Business Items

7.1. New State Public Records Laws, effective 1/1/17

<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prenotice.htm>

Beth Petr asked the Committee to review the update from the State found in the packet.

7.2. abrsc@abschools.org -

Dr. Brand asked if the School Committee email shell should include the Deputy/Assistant Superintendents and Finance Director, in addition to Superintendent and Executive Assistant (who are currently included). This could facilitate answering questions from the public. Originally, these administrators were included but they were removed about 6 years ago at the Committee's request. The Committee discussed concern that the public would think they are emailing the School Committee, when in fact they are also emailing the Superintendent and other Administrators, even if an explanation is added to the website. Maria Neyland, Brigid Bieber, Kristina Rychlik and Maya Minkin advocated for not revising the email shell and the Committee agreed. The Chair and Superintendent will continue to forward emails to Administrators as appropriate.

7.3. Student Involvement in Decision-making Policy, File: JIB

Dr. Brand spoke to Dr. Campbell about her thoughts regarding the High School student representatives to the School Committee. In the past, the Superintendent and sometimes the School Committee Chairperson would meet with the students the week of the first meeting of each month to discuss the agenda. Students would attend meetings once a month. Maya Minkin expressed interest in meeting with the students. (She is also the SC liaison to the High School.) This item will be on the August meeting agenda. Reference to M.G.L. 71:38M was made.

8. FYI

8.1. Ethics

8.1.1. State Required Ethics Training <http://www.mass.gov/ethics>

8.1.2. School Committee Member Ethics Policy, File: BCA

8.2. Committee Member Conflict of Interest Policy, File: BCB

8.3. School Committee – Staff Communications Policy, File: BHC, GBD

The ABRSC adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: see agenda, list of warrants

Next Meetings:

ABRSC, Monday, August 8, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted August 2)

ABRSC, Thursday, September 1, 7:00 p.m. in the Junior High Library (packet posted August 26)

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)**

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her community should:

1. Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.
5. Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office as a Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from his/her Committee activities.

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee in his/her relations with his/her fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.

File: BCA

4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, 5/22/64

Approved 11/21/13

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COMMITTEE MEMBER CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The conduct of School Committee members where a possible conflict of interest exists is regulated by Chapter 268A of the Massachusetts General Laws. The conflict of interest law seeks to prevent conflicts between private interests and public duties, foster integrity in public service, and promote the public's trust and confidence in that service by placing restrictions on what municipal employees (defined to include School Committee members) may do on the job, after hours, and after leaving public service.

Each year, School Committee members must be given a summary of the conflict of interest law prepared by the State Ethics Commission and every two years, they must complete an online training program prepared by the Commission.

It is incumbent upon the School Committee Members to be familiar with the conflict of interest laws. Questions regarding the laws and how they are applied should be directed to the Massachusetts State Ethics Commission.

Some examples of situations in which conflicts of interest arise:

1. A member of the School Committee member's immediate family is an employee of the school district

In general, if a member of the School Committee is a member of the immediate family (the member's spouse and their parents, children, brothers and sisters) of a person in the employ of the schools, the member of the School Committee may not participate in any way in a matter which may affect the financial interest (wages, hours or conditions of employment) of such employee of the schools, except that the member of the School Committee may vote on a consolidated budget which includes an appropriation for salaries or other benefits for the group to which the member of the immediate family belongs so long as the School Committee member has no participation of any kind in the discussion or approval of that portion of the budget.

The School Committee member may vote on other line items that do not affect the financial interest of a family member and the whole budget, including salaries, once the following procedure has been followed: the board must identify the budget line item that includes the family member's salary and vote on it separately. The School Committee member must abstain from the line item's discussion and vote. After all such conflicts are dealt with through this line item procedure, the board may then vote on the budget as a whole package, with all members participating in the final vote to approve the "bottom line."

Further, a member of the School Committee may not participate in a grievance proceeding affecting a member of the immediate family, negotiations concerning employees in the bargaining unit which represents a family member, executive sessions concerning negotiating

strategies with that particular unit, or other matter directly affecting or involving the member of the immediate family who is an employee of the schools.

Finally, the member of the School Committee should leave the room whenever an issue involving a member of the immediate family arises.

Reference is made to Graham v. McGrail, 370 Mass. 133 (1976), for guidance with respect to the conduct of a School Committee member, a member of whose immediate family is employed by the school system.

2. A School Committee Member's child is on a sports team and the School Committee is voting on fees which affect that sports team

The Commission has created several regulatory exemptions permitting municipal employees to participate in particular matters notwithstanding the presence of a financial interest in certain very specific situations when permitting them to do so advances a public purpose. There is an exemption permitting school committee members to participate in setting school fees that will affect their own children if they make a prior written disclosure.

3. A School Committee Member is a Board Member or employee of an organization that rents space from the District

A School Committee member may not participate in any particular matter in which he or a member of his immediate family (parents, children, siblings, spouse, and spouse's parents, children, and siblings) has a financial interest. He also may not participate in any particular matter in which a prospective employer, or **a business organization of which he is a director, officer, trustee, or employee has a financial interest.** Participation includes discussing as well as voting on a matter, and delegating a matter to someone else.

A financial interest may create a conflict of interest whether it is large or small, and positive or negative. In other words, it does not matter if a lot of money is involved or only a little. It also does not matter if you are putting money into your pocket or taking it out. If you, your immediate family, your business, or your employer have or has a financial interest in a matter, you may not participate. The financial interest must be direct and immediate or reasonably foreseeable to create a conflict. Financial interests which are remote, speculative or not sufficiently identifiable do not create conflicts.

CROSS REFS: BCA, School Committee Member Ethics
 BIA, New School Committee Member Orientation

Approved: 5/19/16

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District



Advisory 05-01: The Standards of Conduct

This Advisory explains the provisions of the Standards of Conduct contained in Section 23 of G.L. c. 268A, the conflict of interest law. The Standards of Conduct provide a general code of ethics for all public employees when faced with the overlap of private interests and official responsibilities. Conflict of interest law violations under Section 23 may be created when a public employee's personal interests or relationships overlap with his or her public obligations and may result in penalties of up to \$2,000 per violation. The term "public employee" includes both elected and appointed state, county and municipal employees, whether paid or unpaid. Unpaid volunteer board members as well as, in some instances, consultants and contractors are considered public employees for purposes of the conflict of interest law.

I. UNWARRANTED PRIVILEGES (G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2))

Public employees are prohibited from, knowingly or with reason to know, using or attempting to use their official positions to secure for themselves or others unwarranted privileges of substantial value that are not properly available to similarly situated individuals. "Substantial value" has been set at \$50 or more by the courts and the Ethics Commission. In some instances, "substantial value" may not be readily ascertainable, such as when a public employee uses his or her position to get preferential treatment, to secure a special benefit or to retaliate against someone. In such cases, the Ethics Commission will view the totality of the circumstances to determine whether the substantial value threshold has been met. "Similarly situated individuals" can mean, in various situations, other people, businesses or entities in the city, town, state or county who are not necessarily public employees.

Using public equipment and resources for personal business is using an official position to obtain an unwarranted privilege of substantial value not properly available to others. Thus, the use of public resources valued at \$50 or more for personal, private or political purposes violates the conflict of interest law. In addition, public employees may not use the "inherently coercive authority" of their position to seek anything of substantial value.

Example: A manager may not use official time, his staff or the supplies or equipment available to him in his office in order to write books.

Example: An elected official may not invoke his position to seek preferential treatment from police officers during a traffic stop.

Example: A public employee may not generally solicit donations for a private or charitable organization from individuals with whom he conducts official business.

II. "APPEARANCES" OF CONFLICTS (G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3))

Public employees must avoid conduct that creates a reasonable impression that any person may improperly influence them or unduly enjoy their official favor, or that they are likely to act (or fail to act) because of kinship, rank, position or undue influence of any party or person. A reasonable impression of favoritism or bias may arise when a public employee, knowingly or with reason to know, acts on matters affecting the interest, whether financial or non-financial, of a friend, a business associate or a relative other than an immediate family member or a non-financial interest of an immediate family member. ⁽¹⁾

The conflict of interest law allows public employees to act on matters, even if it creates the appearance of a conflict, if they openly admit all the facts surrounding the appearance of bias prior to any official action. Specifically, the conflict of interest law states that if a reasonable person having knowledge of the relevant circumstances would conclude that a public employee might be improperly influenced, the public employee can dispel this impression of favoritism by disclosing all the facts that would lead to such a conclusion. For example, it may be necessary for a public employee to disclose a personal relationship with someone appearing before his or her board.

Appointed employees must make such disclosures in writing to their appointing authority (the person or board who appointed them to their job). This disclosure must be kept available for public inspection. An elected employee's public disclosure must be made in writing and filed with the city or town clerk. These public disclosures must be made prior to any official participation or action. In addition, the Commission advises public employees to make an oral disclosure for inclusion in the meeting minutes. Occasionally, an appearance of a conflict of interest arises for the first time during a public meeting. In that case, a public employee should make an oral disclosure at the meeting and file a written disclosure as soon as possible thereafter. Alternatively, instead of filing a written disclosure under Section 23(b)(3), a public employee may simply abstain from participating, i.e. debating, voting or otherwise being involved, in a matter that creates an appearance of a conflict.

Once a public disclosure has been made, the public employee may participate in the matter notwithstanding the "appearance" of a conflict. When public employees do act on matters affecting individuals with whom they have a private relationship, they must act objectively and be careful not to use their official position to secure any unwarranted privilege or benefit for that person.

Example: An elected planning board member participates in the planning board's consideration of a subdivision plan submitted by a contractor who previously built the planning board member's house. Her participation in the planning board's consideration would create a reasonable basis for the impression that the contractor might unduly enjoy the planning board member's favor in the performance of her official duties. To dispel this appearance of bias, the planning board member must disclose in writing her private business relationship with the contractor and file the disclosure with the town clerk before participating. She may then participate in the board's consideration of the subdivision plan, including voting on the plan.

Example: The longtime friend of the head of a state agency applies for a job in the agency. If the agency head gets involved in the hiring process, it would appear to a reasonable person that he might be biased in favor of his friend. To dispel the appearance of favoritism, the agency head must disclose his private friendship with the job applicant in writing to his appointing official. The appointing official may then determine whether further steps should be taken to avoid the appearance of a conflict (e.g., instruct the agency head not to participate in the hiring and delegate the matter to another employee).

III. DEALINGS WITH SUBORDINATES (G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(2))

The inherently exploitable nature of the relationship between superior and subordinate requires formal safeguards to protect against even accidental or unintended coercion or undue pressure by the superior. Section 23 of the conflict of interest law prohibits both actual exertion of undue influence and also the appearance of acting in anything but a completely objective manner. Therefore, persons in supervisory positions may not ask their subordinates to work for them in a private capacity or to contribute to any private interest or organization. In such situations, the subordinate employee may feel coerced even if there is no such intent on the part of the supervisor, and it would be impossible to avoid the "appearance" of impropriety in such situations. The limitations of Section 23 also apply to a public employee dealing with vendors and other individuals that the employee regulates.

Example: A public employee is doing substantial renovations on his home, and he knows that his administrative assistant and his brother do roofing work on the side. The public employee may not ask his assistant to re-shingle the roof, even if he is willing to pay a fair market wage for the work. If, however, the solicitation is made by the subordinate, either directly or through advertisement, rather than the superior, private employment of the subordinate by the superior may be permissible if the proper public disclosures are made to the superior's appointing official. Individuals considering such arrangements should contact the Ethics Commission's Legal Division for specific advice.

IV. INHERENTLY INCOMPATIBLE ACTIVITIES (G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(1))

A public employee is prohibited from, knowingly or with reason to know, accepting other employment involving compensation of substantial value (\$50 or more), the responsibilities of which are inherently incompatible with the responsibilities of his or her public office. For example, a public employee who is acting as a mediator would violate the conflict of interest law by working privately for a union when he was simultaneously involved in mediating a labor dispute with the same union.

V. USE OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION (G.L. c. 268A, § 23(c))

No current or former officer or employee of a state, county or municipal agency may, knowingly or with reason to know:

- accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity that will require disclosure of confidential information the employee has gained by reason of his or her position or authority; nor
- improperly disclose material or data that are not considered public records, when an employee acquired such information in the course of his or her official duties; nor
- use such confidential information to further his or her personal interests.

Example: A former employee of the town personnel office sets up her own employment placement service and uses confidential information from the town's personnel records to prepare a client list for use in her private business. This violates Section 23 because she would be using confidential information acquired in the course of her official duties to further her personal interests, and also because she would be using her official position to secure for herself an unwarranted privilege not properly available to similarly situated individuals (i.e., other placement services).

For more information about the state conflict of interest and financial disclosure laws (G.L. c. 268A & c. 268B), including the subjects discussed in this Advisory, please contact:

State Ethics Commission (Ethics Comm.)
One Ashburton Place, Room 619
Boston, MA 02108
[\(617\) 371-9500](tel:6173719500)

ISSUED: March 1987 [as a Fact Sheet]

REVISED: January 28, 1991

REVISED: December 31, 1992

REVISED: February 3, 2005 [as an Advisory]

^{1/} The conflict of interest law (in Sections 6, 11 and 19) expressly prohibits public employees from acting on any matter that affects the financial interest of themselves, their immediate family members or businesses for which they serve as an employee, partner, officer, director or trustee. "Immediate family" is defined in the law as the employee and his or her spouse and each of their parents, children, brothers and sisters. The public disclosure process is not available for elected public employees when faced with matters affecting these groups - the officials must abstain from participating in the matter. Public employees who are appointed or hired to their jobs should contact the Ethics Commission or consult its "Advisory 86-02: Nepotism" before taking any action on such matters.

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**DISCLOSURE OF APPEARANCE OF CONFLICT OF INTEREST
AS REQUIRED BY G. L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3)**

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE INFORMATION	
Name of public employee:	
Title or Position:	
Agency/Department:	
Agency address:	
Office Phone:	
Office E-mail:	
	<p>In my capacity as a state, county or municipal employee, I am expected to take certain actions in the performance of my official duties. Under the circumstances, a reasonable person could conclude that a person or organization could unduly enjoy my favor or improperly influence me when I perform my official duties, or that I am likely to act or fail to act as a result of kinship, rank, position or undue influence of a party or person.</p> <p>I am filing this disclosure to disclose the facts about this relationship or affiliation and to dispel the appearance of a conflict of interest.</p>
APPEARANCE OF FAVORITISM OR INFLUENCE	
Describe the issue that is coming before you for action or decision.	
What responsibility do you have for taking action or making a decision?	
Explain your relationship or affiliation to the person or organization.	
How do your official actions or decision matter to the person or organization?	

Optional: Additional facts – e.g., why there is a low risk of undue favoritism or improper influence.	
If you cannot confirm this statement, you should recuse yourself.	WRITE AN X TO CONFIRM THE STATEMENT BELOW. <input type="checkbox"/> Taking into account the facts that I have disclosed above, I feel that I can perform my official duties objectively and fairly.
Employee signature:	
Date:	

Attach additional pages if necessary.

Not elected to your public position – file with your appointing authority.

Elected state or county employees – file with the State Ethics Commission.

Members of the General Court – file with the House or Senate clerk or the State Ethics Commission.

Elected municipal employee – file with the City Clerk or Town Clerk.

Elected regional school committee member – file with the clerk or secretary of the committee.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication with the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

Approved on: 12/12/13.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION

The School Committee recognizes the need for members occasionally to be physically absent from School Committee Meetings and therefore adopts the following policy to govern members' remote participation in School Committee Meetings.

Minimum Requirements for Remote Participation

- (a) A quorum of the School Committee, including the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person authorized to chair the meeting, shall be physically present at the meeting location.
- (b) Members who participate remotely and all persons present at the meeting location shall be clearly audible to each other.
- (c) Members who participate remotely may vote and shall not be deemed absent for the purposes of M.G.L. c. 39, sec. 23D.

Permissible Reasons for Remote Participation

The School Committee Chair, or in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, must determine that one or more of the following factors makes the School Committee member's physical attendance unreasonably difficult:

- (a) Personal illness;
- (b) Personal disability;
- (c) Emergency;
- (d) Military service; or
- (e) Geographic distance.

Technology

- (a) The following media are acceptable methods for remote participation. Remote participation by any other means is not permitted. Accommodations shall be made for any public body member who requires TTY service, video relay service, or other form of adaptive telecommunications.
 - (i) telephone, internet, or satellite enabled audio or video conferencing,
 - (ii) any other technology that enables the remote participant and all persons present at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another.
- (b) When video technology is in use, the remote participant shall be clearly visible to all persons present in the meeting location.
- (c) The School Committee Member who is absent from the Meeting will notify the District Administration with as much advance notice as possible and will work with the District Administration to establish the appropriate technology to effect the School Committee Member's remote participation.
- (d) The chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, may decide how to address technical difficulties that arise as a result of utilizing remote participation, but is encouraged, wherever possible, to suspend discussion while reasonable efforts are made to correct any problem that interferes with a remote participant's ability to hear or be heard clearly by all persons present at

the meeting location. If technical difficulties result in a remote participant being disconnected from the meeting, that fact and the time at which the disconnection occurred shall be noted in the meeting minutes.

(e) The costs attributable to equipment or service relating to the District's ability to communicate with the remote participant will be born by the District. The personal costs of the participant attributable to equipment or service relating to the remote participant's ability to communicate with the District will be born by the participant. If the costs associated with remote participation become prohibitive, the School Committee will reevaluate its policy on remote participation.

Procedures for Remote Participation

(a) Any member of the School Committee who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, of his or her desire to do so and the reason for and facts supporting his or her request.

(b) At the start of the meeting, the chair shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely and the reason under 940 CMR 29.10(5) for his or her remote participation. This information shall also be recorded in the meeting minutes.

(c) All votes taken during any meeting in which a member participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.

(d) A member participating remotely may participate in an executive session, but shall state at the start of any such session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the remote location, unless presence of that person is approved by a simple majority vote of the public body.

(e) When feasible, the chair or, in the chair's absence, the person chairing the meeting, shall distribute to remote participants, in advance of the meeting, copies of any documents or exhibits that he or she reasonably anticipates will be used during the meeting. If used during the meeting, such documents shall be part of the official record of the meeting, and shall be listed in the meeting minutes and retained in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 22.

LEGAL REFERENCES: M.G.L. c. 30A, sec. 25 (a) and (b), MASS 940 CMR 29.00

Approved 3/22/12 and 6/25/15

July 7, 2017

Dear Members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee,

We have been watching and listening to the difficult conversations that you have been engaged in for the last month and more as you reported to the community about Superintendent Brand's departure and now decide how to move forward with new leadership. Many of us appreciate how difficult it is to conduct these employment discussions in the public eye, and know that you are doing your best to share information with our communities and at the same time protect the privacy of past, current and potential employees of the district.

We wanted you to know that we are here to support you in your decisions, and believe that with your collective wisdom you will work together to conduct a fair and transparent process, and listen to all sectors of the community as you decide on a process. We believe it is important that you move forward confidently and deliberately to choose interim and/or permanent leadership so that the communities will know that our students, staff, taxpayers and school district are in good hands.

A part of a search process in the past has included focus groups with community members, and we hope that you will make this part of your process. In our opinion, it would be important to be sure that you are receiving feedback from all facets of our communities, and that all stakeholders have an opportunity to weigh in on the qualities and characteristics of a new superintendent.

Many of us have been long-time volunteers in our towns, and have invested substantially in the public school district. Even though we may or may not currently have children in the schools, we hope that you will consider our voices along with others as you determine what is in the best interests of our two towns.

Many thanks to each of you for your service, and thank you for listening.

Linda Ahern
Mary Ann Ashton
Susan Bak
Harvey Berliner
Jo-Ann Berry
Joe Biggins
Simon Bunyard
Jennifer Campbell
Jonathan Chinitz
Chris Couch
Jan Couch
Hugh Fortmiller
Heather Harer

Jim Harer
Jeanne Kangas
Adam Klein
Paulina Knibbe
Catherine Longwell
Andy Magee
Lauren Rosenzweig
Morton
Bill Mullin
Sarah Murphy
Becky Neville
John Neyland
Maria Neyland

Marilyn Peterson
Christine Phillips
Sahana Purohit
Mac Reid
Lees Stuntz
Astrid Trostorff