

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE (ABRSC)  
MEETING APPROVED MINUTES

Virtual Public Zoom Webinar Meeting

September 3, 2020

To attend the open meeting: <https://abschools.zoom.us/j/95248771505>

7:00 p.m.

To call in: 312 626 6799

Live streaming: <http://actontv.org/on-demand/livestream/government>

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Members Present: Evelyn Abayaah-Issah, Diane Baum, Kyra Cook, Adam Klein, Ginny Kremer (audio only), Tessa McKinley, John Petersen, Nora Shine, Angie Tso (8:30 p.m.), Yebin Wang

Members Absent: Amy Krishnamurthy

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

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1. The ABRSC was called to order by Chairperson Tessa McKinley at 7:03 p.m. She noted that the meeting was being conducted both in person and remotely via a Zoom webinar and that members Kyra Cook, Ginny Kremer, Nora Shine, Angie Tso and Yebin Wang were participating via zoom. The remaining members were in the auditorium for the meeting. Per Remote Participation policy, BEDJA, all votes were done by roll call. The meeting was being taped by Acton TV.
2. **Chairperson's Welcome –**  
Tessa McKinley was thanked with flowers for serving as Chairperson last year and for continuing to serve a second year. John Petersen shared some kind words from the Committee and thanked Tessa's family as well for all the time she has devoted to the community and the district.
3. **Public Participation – none**
4. **Superintendent's Update**  
Mr. Light shared his update which will be emailed to families tomorrow. Particularly exciting news is the extension to the USDA program that will continue to provide free breakfast and lunch now until December 31<sup>st</sup> (or until funds run out) for all students, regardless if they attend school fully remote or in an alternative school setting.

Members asked if an elective that needs to be in person would be cancelled if there was a snow day and the class was being taught remotely as a result. Mr. Light explained that some learning activities cannot be done fully, such as a lab. In such a case, the teacher would still teach remotely but do a different lesson and do the lab another day. Another question was whether a teacher could live stream a class. Mr. Light explained that there is a different pedagogy when teaching in person vs remotely. It is not just about turning the camera on. Streaming into a room would not allow things like small group work for example. Some people are wondering by children can't experience classes just like the School

Committee is doing – some people in the room and others participating via zoom. Tessa explained how much effort it takes to run a hybrid meeting (without even delivering content, like a teacher has to). She has to be sure that everyone in person and those on zoom are being paid attention to. While she is running the meeting, Mr. Light is running the zoom and Adam Klein is helping with the public participation. This would be a tremendous effort for a teacher with a class of children.

## 5. PRESENTATIONS

### 5.1 Transition to School 2020-2021: Teaching and Learning

Deborah Bookis and Dawn Bentley began the presentation stating that the most defining feature of the upcoming school year is “uncertainty”. They discussed the Elements for Learning, Approaching Unfinished Teaching and Learning, Teaching in New Environments, and Anti-Racist Professional Learning and Work. Members appreciated the very thorough and informative presentation.

Comments from the Committee included:

- Q: How does the feedback component happen in a remote setting?
- A: There are lots of different tools to gather feedback (slides 16 and 29), although you don't want to use too many. It should be streamlined so teachers know how to use the tools properly. An advantage of zoom is video conferencing with small groups that you cannot do with a classroom of 25 kids.
- Q: People will appreciate seeing how well the extra days of PL have been used to improve the educational effort. Regarding the end of the school year, like every year, members will want to know how much students have learned, compared to other districts and compared to last year. When will you return to School Committee with measurements of learning?
- A: Assessments were in place from last year that will be a baseline for measuring this year. With smaller groups of students, there may be a chance to go deeper with students in some areas. There could be some great outcomes. We also need to look at things with a social emotional lens. Mr. Light added that the idea of a metric so we know as a district how we did is important, but this year the metric will be how each student did and did they maximize their learning. We have not had universal screening across the district before. This will be helpful this year. He hopes to identify which students need more support or more material. The focus will be on the individual child.
- Q: With 1,000 staff members, it doesn't seem like a very high percentage in total attended the summer learning opportunities.
- A: Of our 1,000 staff members, only 500 are certified staff. Of those, 75-100 are not teachers. Approximately 65% of our teachers participated this summer. For some courses, those who attended are leaders who will then share the experience with their colleagues. Summer tech camp is a choice. More tech camp is offered next week as well.
- Q: Regarding the parent education piece, we have condensed our curriculum and chosen what is essential for this year. Will parents be told what the new sequence will look like, and what has been left out? A member suggested that informing parents about what will not be included this year may help them decide if a particular item is important for their child.

- A: Deborah Bookis explained that parents should be informed about the process that the Administration went through and overviews can be shared but details should come from the schools. The same standards are taught at all of our schools, but they do have individual styles. The same critical standards will be taught whether in hybrid or remote learning. In person project opportunities will probably be done with in person learners but not with remote learners at this time.

## 5.2 FY21 Staffing & Budget Update – Marie Altieri

### 5.2.1 Staffing Update, memo, slides (*also see Descriptions in FYI*)

Hiring began in February and continues to this day. It is expected that 63 new teachers will have been hired, the most in 20 years. Twenty of them are one year positions. Nineteen teachers retired June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Previously 16 retirees was our highest number. We have 509 total teachers with 12% of them new to AB this year.

A chart showing the number of “Candidates of Color” that have been hired was of interest to the Committee. Marie looks forward to continuing our work on this high priority area. Many of our educators will be participating in affinity groups this year which will be great way to support our staff. Members discussed the class sizes. Instruction is different when done remotely so the higher average class size shown on the spreadsheet should be acceptable for these classes, although not optimal. It noted that the Kindergarten projection was for 330 students. Today we have 292 Kindergarteners. Marie thanked Marlene Dow and all of her staff for their hard work.

### 5.2.2. Acton Boxborough Education Association (ABEA) Covid-19 Letter of Agreement – **VOTE** – Marie Altieri

Marie described the recent process as very collaborative and emotional. She really appreciated the teaching staff’s leadership and time spent working on this Agreement. Tessa echoed Marie’s comments and gratitude to the teachers.

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** that we approve the Memorandum of Agreement between the ABRSC and the ABEA containing the 38 points in the packet with gratitude to our teachers.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

Tessa noted that Ginny Kremer was participating in the meeting with only audio so she was not voting.

Mr. Light also thanked our teachers on behalf of the administration. He noted that the news is full of reports about how contentious the issue of whether or not people should return to school in person has become. He has spoken with over 200 of our teachers recently and they overwhelmingly have talked about wanting to see the kids and welcome them back. We are very fortunate. He stated that, “The unity of our District’s voice has been incredible.” Mr. Light also thanked all of the administrators – Marie, Deborah, Dawn and Dave, for the extraordinary level of work and detail that they have put into this. Mr. Light shared a conversation he had with a group of teachers that talked about the level of trust

in this district between teachers and administrators. This trust is key and it's due to the Association, teachers, and everyone who have worked so hard. Tessa also thanked everyone and added that she feels proud of the work they are doing and that it is led by the School Committee.

## 6. ONGOING BUSINESS

### 6.1. Approval of ABRSC Meeting Minutes of 8/5/20 – **VOTE** – Tessa McKinley

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** to approve the minutes as written.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

### 6.2. Budget – Dave Verdolino

6.2.1. Recommendation to Approve Decrease in ABRHS Senior Parking Fee from \$200 to \$100 for FY21 – **VOTE**

This change was requested by High School Principal Larry Dorey. These funds pay for some of the campus security staff.

Diane Baum moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** to set the High School student parking fee at \$100 for the 2020-2021 school year.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

6.2.2. Recommendation to Set the Imprest Balance of the Student Activity Checking Accounts for FY21 – **VOTE**

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** to set the imprest balance of the Student Activity checking accounts for the 2020-2021 school year, consistent with the prior year, as follows: Senior High School \$35,000, Junior High School \$25,000, and Blanchard Elementary \$5,000.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

### 6.3. Subcommittee and Member Reports

6.3.1. Budget – Adam Klein (*met on 8/31/20*) (*oral*)

Meetings will be on Mondays at 11 with the schedule to be determined. Members reviewed material and talked about budget updates for this year. No one knows what next year will be like, so they will have to see how events unfold.

6.3.2. Policy – Diane Baum (*met on 9/1/20*)

6.3.2.1. Recommendation to Revise **Prohibition of Harassment**, File: ACAB/JBA/GBA – Second Read - **VOTE** (*next meeting*)

New procedures ACAB/JBA/GBA -R included FYI

Diane reported that both policies were discussed at the last subcommittee meeting but Harassment is being reviewed by our attorneys again so it will not be voted on at this meeting. Good discussion was held regarding what is policy and what is procedure, as well as using legal language vs readable language. Members felt that legal text should be preserved but policy text must be readable, with an eye toward equity.

6.3.2.2. Recommendation to Establish **Masks/Face Coverings** (new), File: EBCFA - Second Read – **VOTE** (procedures EBCFA-R included FYI

If the administration changes the procedures during the year, the Committee might receive the change as an fyi, or the administration could discuss with School Committee if the changes were substantial. The Committee does not vote on procedures, although they may give an opinion on them. If procedures are inconsistent with the policy, the policy would have to be revised.

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously, **VOTED by roll call:** to approve the new Masks/Face Coverings policy EBCFA as proposed.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

7. **Recommendation to Accept Donation of N-95 Masks for ABRSD Staff – VOTE**

Marie Altieri explained that this is the same donor that gave so many masks to the community this spring. This donation was of 4,000 KN95 masks for our 1,000 employees.

Adam Klein moved, John Petersen seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** to accept this extremely generous and thoughtful donation of 4,000 masks for our staff valued at \$40,000 in memory of Edward D. McClure, with generosity. It was agreed that we are a very lucky district to be the recipient of such thoughtfulness.

(YES: Abayaah-Issah, Baum, Cook, Klein, McKinley, Petersen, Shine, Wang)

8. **Statement of Warrants and Recommendation to Approve – VOTE – (next meeting)**

9. **FYI**

John Petersen will present at the Acton Board of Health meeting on September 14 regarding testing waste water for the Covid-19 virus. This is a first step in a potential process.

10. **Adjourn**

John Petersen moved, Adam Klein seconded and it was unanimously,

**VOTED by roll call:** that the ABRSC adjourn at 9:34 p.m.

**FYI (For Your Information)**

8.1. FY21 New Certified Staff Descriptions

8.2. FY21 Family Communication Map -

[https://www.abschools.org/families/district\\_communication\\_map](https://www.abschools.org/families/district_communication_map)

8.3 This Month in the Division of Open Government, August 2020

Respectfully submitted,  
Beth Petr

List of Documents Used: See agenda

NEXT MEETING: September 17 – 7:00 p.m.