



Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) Monthly Update – February 2017

Increasing awareness of and involvement in issues affecting our schools and towns

The School Committee generally meets the first and third Thursdays of each month in the RJ Grey Junior High Library. Our meetings are open to the public and broadcast on Actontv.org. Our next regularly scheduled meetings are Thursday, March 16th and April 27th at 7 p.m. (due to Acton Town Meeting starting April 3rd). Some of our recent and upcoming discussions include:

Elementary Thursday Early Release Schedule for Next Year

- On February 2nd a schedule with an elementary early release every Thursday starting September 2017 was approved.
- In addition to these early release days, with teachers required to work every Thursday afternoon, the school day will start 20 minutes earlier every day. Current dismissal times would remain the same.
- See 2017-18 calendar: <http://www.abschools.org/district/calendar>

FY '18 Budget Update

- At the Annual School Budget Hearing on February 16th, the School Committee voted to approve the \$86 million budget for next year.
- Key areas of interest for this budget include:
 - The need to resurface Leary Field;
 - Additional English language learner and psychologist support at the Elementary level, and a planned expansion of the strings ensemble to 4th grade;
 - A restructuring of the Junior High Leadership Team; and
 - The gradual addition of assistant coaches for varsity athletic teams and additional social worker support at the high school.
- Presentation slides and supporting materials can be found at <http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>
- The final decision on the school budget is made when citizens vote on their town's assessment at the Acton and Boxborough Town Meetings. Please save the date, depending on your residence: Acton, Monday April 3rd and Boxborough, Monday, May 8th.

Challenge Success and School Schedules & Start Times

- As a part of the district's ongoing work with the Stanford-based organization Challenge Success, our High School is continuing its efforts in evaluating various schedule options for the future.
 - A modified schedule with fewer, longer class periods per day could prove beneficial in reducing student transitions within the day, and longer class periods could allow for more project-based work and alternative assessments. In addition, students would be less likely to have homework in every subject each night, and faculty would have additional time for collaboration.
 - A presentation by Principal JoAnn Campbell covering work done to date and plans leading up to a pilot year in 2018-19 can be found in the February 16th school committee packet at:
<http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>.

Aligning Mathematics Teaching and Learning

- District Mathematics Leaders presented their plans for "Aligning Mathematics Teaching and Learning" to the Committee on February 16th.
- Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, two changes will be implemented:
 - The test to "place out" of 7th grade mathematics will be eliminated,
 - Mathematics and science at grade 9 will now be "decoupled," meaning that high school placement in leveled science courses can occur independently of placement in leveled mathematics courses.
- A detailed presentation describing the rationale for these decisions can be found in the February 16th school committee packet at:
<http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/meetings-agendas-packets-and-minutes>

Acton-Boxborough Regional School District (ABRSD) Master Planning Process

- The School Committee has begun the process of soliciting feedback from the public regarding the final Master Plan report, and specifically on 7 possible building options. The District Master Plan Review Committee, a group of committee and community members, has been formed and can be reached at ABBuilding@abschools.org.
- The District was recently notified that the Douglas School has been invited into the MA School Building Authority's Eligibility Period for potential financial support from the State for a building project.
- A number of community meetings will be held during March and April in both Acton and Boxborough, leading up to a presentation at the School Committee meeting on June 8, 2017 and Fall Town Meetings in both towns.
- <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>

Annual Town Elections

- Acton town elections are March 28th; four people are running for three open School Committee positions, including three incumbents.
- Boxborough town elections are May 16th.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR:

March 16, 2017, 7:00 PM

Acton Boxborough Regional School Committee Meeting
Jr High Library

March 20, 2017, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Public Forum for Input on the Potential School Building Options
Sargent Memorial Library, Boxborough

Tuesday, March 28th - polls open 7AM – 8PM

Acton Town Elections

March 29, 2017, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Public Forum for Input on the Potential School Building Options
R.J. Grey Junior High School Library

April 3, 2017, 7:00 PM (*Acton Registered Voters*)

Acton Town Meeting begins
AB Regional High School Auditorium
Presentation and vote on next year's school budget assessments and other town business
(Boxborough Town Meeting begins May 8)

April 5, 2017, 7:00 - 8:30 PM

Presenter: Dr. David Miele
Topic: *Academic Mindsets: Their Role in Learning, Parenting, and Teaching*
Audience: Grades PK-12
Location: RJ Grey Auditorium

Earlier School Committee Monthly Updates are available online:

<http://www.abschools.org/school-committee/school-committee-monthly-updates>

Any questions? Please contact Kristina Rychlik, krychlik@abschools.org