



## **Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee (ABRSC) Monthly Update – January 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 meeting is Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7 p.m. Some of our recent and upcoming discussions include:

### ***Elementary Schools' Thursday Early Release Schedule Update***

- On January 12<sup>th</sup> a proposal was shared to move to an elementary early release every Thursday starting next school year. Teachers will be required to stay at school on Thursday afternoons for scheduled activities.
- In addition to moving to every Thursday as an early release day, the school day would start 20 minutes earlier every day. Current dismissal times would remain the same.
- *Why this change?*
  - Parents and staff have expressed ongoing concern with the logistical difficulties of our current inconsistent schedule (alternating Thursday early release, plus additional days for conferences).
  - We are not currently meeting MA state time on learning requirements.
  - Current time available for teacher professional learning is inadequate; substitutes are often needed to cover for programs held during the school day.
- *Benefits of this proposal include:*
  - A consistent schedule of early release days on Thursdays
  - An additional 34 hours of time on learning, allowing us to meet the state requirement
  - The consistent implementation of fall and spring conferences across all of our elementary schools
  - More time for professional development for our teachers:
    - 10 Thursdays for building-based grade level teams
    - 7 Thursdays for building-based professional learning
    - 6 or more Thursdays for fall and spring conferences and end of year progress reports
    - The remaining Thursdays will be used for district-wide professional development or grade level meetings

- Teachers will spend more time with their students, as these additional Thursdays will provide opportunities for meetings and professional development currently happening during the school day.
- This proposal will be voted on by the School Committee at their meeting on February 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### ***FY '18 Budget Planning***

- District budget presentations were made to the School Committee in December and January, with a final comprehensive presentation on January 21<sup>st</sup> at the ABRSD Budget Saturday meeting. Watch the video at: <http://actontv.org/on-demand/post-video/school-committee-budget-meeting-12117>
- Key areas of interest for FY'18 include:
  - The need to resurface Leary Field;
  - Additional special education, English language learner and psychologist support at the Elementary level, and a planned expansion of the strings ensemble to 4<sup>th</sup> grade;
  - A restructuring of the Junior High Leadership Team; and
  - The 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 School Committee held a preliminary vote on January 21<sup>st</sup> to support the budget as recommended.
- The required Annual School Budget Hearing will be at the School Committee meeting on February 16<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library.
- The final decision on the school budget is made when citizens vote their town's assessment at the Acton and Boxborough Town Meetings in April and May.

### ***2017-2018 School District Calendar***

- The School Committee voted to approve the 2017-2018 district calendar on December 15<sup>th</sup>. School will start for students on September 5, 2017 and there will no school on Rosh Hashanah and Good Friday. The calendar can be found online at <http://www.abschools.org/district/calendar>

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

- The School Committee has begun the process of soliciting feedback to the final Master Plan report through the formation of the District Master Plan Review Committee, a group of school committee and community members. This group can be emailed at [ABBuilding@abschools.org](mailto:ABBuilding@abschools.org)
- Stay tuned for ways for your voice to be heard. We will need to gauge community support in the coming months of various proposed options, some of which would necessitate a change to our current grade configuration and/or number and/or location of our schools.
- For more information, visit: <http://www.abschools.org/district/school-capital-and-space-planning>

**FOR YOUR CALENDAR:**

***Family Learning Series Speakers:***

**January 25, 2017, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Presenter: Pamela Katz Ressler

Topic: *Moving from MindFULL to Mindful*

Audience: Parents of grades PK-12

Location: RJ Grey Auditorium

**February 6, 2017, 7:00-8:30 p.m.**

Presenter: Dr. Josephine Kim

Topic: "Let's Talk! Bridging the Cultural Gap Between You and Your Child"

Audience: Parent/Guardians of grades 6-12 are encouraged to attend with their child(ren)

Location: ABRHS Auditorium

**February 13, 2017, 7:00 - 8:30 PM**

Presenter: Chris Herren

Topic: *Substance Abuse*

Audience: Parent/Guardians of grades 6-12 and students ages 13 and up

Location: ABRHS Auditorium

***FY18 ABRSD Annual Budget Hearing***

Thursday, February 16, 2017

7:00 p.m. in the Jr High Library

*Any questions? Please contact Kristina Rychlik, [krychlik@abschools.org](mailto:krychlik@abschools.org)*