TO: Acton Public School Committee members

Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee members

Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee members

FROM: Beth Petr, Secretary to the School Committees

DATE: 11/4/13

RE: PreK – Grade 12 ABRSD policies for FY15

The following policies have been reviewed by the Transitional Policy Subcommittee as well as the Joint APSC/ABRSC Policy Subcommittee and are submitted for a First Reading at the 11/7/13 School Committee meetings:

- 1. School District Legal Status, File: AA
- 2. Acknowledging Religious Holidays, File: ACD
- 3. Acknowledging Religious Holidays Procedures, File: ACD-R
- 4. Smoking on School Premises, File: ADC
- 5. Life-Threatening Allergy, Combining File: ADFA and JLCE
- 6. School Committee Legal Status, File: BB
- 7. School Committee Powers and Duties, File: BBA
- 8. School Committee Member Authority, File: BBAA
- 9. School Committee Member Ethics, File: BCA
- 10. School Committee Annual Organizational Meeting, File: BDA
- 11. School Committee Officers, File: BDB
- 12. Appointed Committee Officials, File: BDC
- 13. School Committee Superintendent Relationship, File: BDD

Behind the policy with changes tracked, is a clean copy of the proposed draft. Current APS/ABRSD policies are found at http://ab.mec.edu/about/policies.shtml. Blanchard School policies are found at http://www.boxboroughschool.org/node/82.

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS

First Reading 11/7/13

The legal basis for public education in the Districts is vested in the will of the people as expressed in the Constitution of Massachusetts and state statutes pertaining to education.

-Under the General Laws of Massachusetts,

"... Every town shall maintain... a sufficient number of schools for the instruction of all children who may legally attend a public school therein."

The public educational system of Acton structurally is a department of the town operated under laws pertaining to education and under regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education. The area served by the Acton Public Schools is coterminous with the Town of Acton.

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District has been created to serve the educational needs of the Towns of Acton and Boxborough for students in grades <u>pre-kindergartenseven</u> through twelve, inclusive.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.:

Constitution of Massachusetts, Part II, Chapter V, Section II

M.G.L. 71:1

Regional Agreement

CROSS REF.:

BB, School Committee Legal Status

Historical Note:

Massachusetts has the oldest public school system in the nation. Dating back to 1647, the laws of the Massachusetts Bay Colony required towns to provide for a program of public

education.

SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS First Reading 11/7/13

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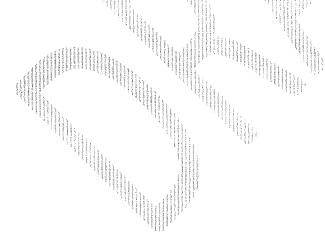
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education.



ACKNOWLEDGING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

First Reading 11/7/13

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District observes the establishment clause of the first amendment to the Constitution which guarantees both the separation of church and state and also the right of an individual to free speech. The School Committees understands that there can be a tension between these two parts of the first amendment. The schools must also respect the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

In addition, we recognize that in any group there are diverse cultural, ethnic, religious and social traditions which should be understood through educational practice. We shall recognize and honor our differences, not ignore them. Students and staff will be encouraged to appreciate and accept ethnic and religious diversity. We shall be respectful of the beliefs and practices of others.

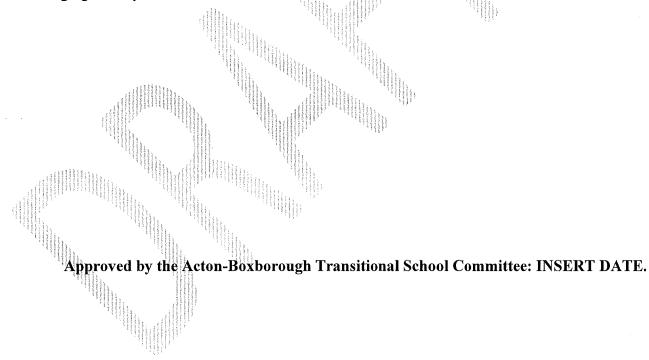
Students in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District will not be penalized for late homework, assignments, quizzes, tests or other educational expectations due to missed school days for religious observances as long as the teacher is notified appropriately and the school work is made up in the timeframe detailed in the procedures belowacknowledging holidays.

ACKNOWLEDGING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS First Reading 11/7/13

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ACKNOWLEDGING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Instructional Practices

- A good education acknowledges the importance of studying <u>about religion</u>. This study would include such learning activities as an analysis of the role of religion in culture and an appreciation of its importance in order to reach a balanced understanding of civilization and society.
- 2. The treatment of religion in the schools will meet the Supreme Court's constitutional boundaries set forth in the three-part test of <u>Lemon v. Kurtzman</u>: (1) the activity must have a secular purpose, (2) the principal or primary effect of the activity must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, (3) the activity avoids excessive governmental entanglement with religion.
- 3. Teachers will be sensitive and knowledgeable about the diversity of religious beliefs of the students in their classes. Instructional practices will balance religious beliefs so that all students will feel included; no student will be asked to participate in class activities associated with religion if unwilling, or if a parent expresses unwillingness. Parents/Guardians and/or students should notify the School District teacher of such a request.
- Community resources and personnel should be used whenever possible by the schools when activities related to religious holidays are planned and implemented.
- 5. The Sechool Districtsystem calendar(s) will indicate post the DESE list of religious holidays affecting a significant portion of our population. The Sechool Districtsystem calendar(s) will indicate holidays that will have an impact upon student participation in school activities.
- 6. Students will be accommodated if they request of the teacher that they be excused from participating in activities involving religion and/or if they are unable to participate in regular activities due to religious observances. Written parent permission should accompany such student requests.
- 7. The sSchool District will use the standard grievance procedure to resolve differences resulting from the implementation of these guidelines (e.g., appeal to teacher, to Pprincipal, Superintendent, to the School Ceommittee).

Homework and Tests

8. Students' observance of a religious holiday may have an impact on their preparing work for the next school day. Students will not be expected to complete daily homework assigned the evening before, or the day of the religious holiday. Assignments and tests should be made up in a time span that is reasonable to both students and teachers. Typically for every day of a religious holiday there should be an opportunity for at least one makeup day. In addition, teachers will not give tests-assessments or introduce major new concepts and/or applications on the religious holiday itself. However, long-term assignments may be expected to be due the day before or the day after the religious holiday.

Curriculum Content

9. As part of a study about the role religion plays in history, culture and the arts, teachers may use religious symbols, art, and music as well as literature drawn from a religious tradition.

Sports and Extra-Curricular Activities

10. School sports, tryouts and extra-curricular activities should be scheduled so that students will be accommodated if unable to participate due to their observance of a religious holiday.

Activities, Displays and Exhibits

11. Holiday displays and exhibits in classrooms and schools will be designed to help students appreciate the variety and value of religious traditions in the world. These displays shall not be solely focused on one or two specific holidays. Activities must have an instructional purpose. The principale effect of the activity must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion.

Programs and Observances Related to a Religious Holiday

12. Programs (assemblies, plays or other activities) conducted during any religious holidays should be evaluated as to their purpose and effect. Their presentation, content, theme or timing must be secular/educational.

The Use of Religious Music

13. Music programs should be planned in accordance with the music curriculum objectives. (See also 2, 3, and 6 above.) Music instruction and performance will be designed to help students appreciate the variety and value of cultural and religious traditions in the world.

LEGAL REF.: All Collective Bargaining Agreement	EGAL REF.:	All Collective Bargaining Agreeme	nts
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File: ACD-R

ACKNOWLEDGING RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS First Reading for Policy 11/7/13

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- 2. The treatment of religion in the schools will meet the Supreme Court's constitutional boundaries set forth in the three-part test of Lemon v. Kurtzman: (1) the activity must have a secular purpose, (2) the principal or primary effect of the activity must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion, (3) the activity avoids excessive governmental entanglement with religion.
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LEGAL REF.:

All Collective Bargaining Agreements



File: ADC

SMOKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES

First Reading 11/7/13

Use of any tobacco products within the school buildings, school facilities, or on school grounds or school buses by any individual, including school personnel and students, is prohibited at all times.

A staff member determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action.

A student determined to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to the student discipline code.

This policy shall be promulgated to all staff and students in appropriate handbook(s) and publications.

Signs shall be posted in all school buildings informing the general public of the District $\underline{\ }s^2$ policy and requirements of state law.

LEGAL REF:

M.G.L. 71:37H

File: ADC

SMOKING ON SCHOOL PREMISES First Reading 11/7/13

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LEGAL REF:

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Combining Files: ADFA FILE: JLCE

Comment [MB15]: (ADFA, and ADFA-R are not present in the Blanchard policy manual. Perhaps they need to be located elsewhere?)

ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS AND ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL $\underline{\text{DISTRICTS}}$ LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

First Reading 11/7/13

The Acton Public Schools and the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District are is committed to promoting actions, behaviors and learning that create a healthy and safe environment for students and staff with life-threatening allergies. Pursuant to Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulations, the Districts shall strive to provide and maintain a safe and secure environment for students with diagnosed life- threatening food allergies. * A comprehensive approach to compliance with the policy requires, but is not limited to, a focused effort by parents/guardians, students (when developmentally appropriate), school staff, school physicians and bus/van transportation personnel. The Districts will support procedures that include, but are not limited to; education, training, emergency plans and procedures. The major goals of these procedures are to reduce the risk of exposure to allergens during the school day that could trigger life-threatening responses and to optimize emergency responses in the event that life-threatening reactions do occur.

CROSS REF: ADF - Wellness Police	APPROVED: *Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulation 105 CMR by/Procedures March 26, 2009

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulation 105 CMR 210.000

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee: INSERT DATE.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

LEGAL REF:

Combining Files: ADFA FILE: JLCE

ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGY POLICY

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LEGAL REF:

*Massachusetts Department of Public Health regulation 105 CMR 210.000

CROSS REF:

ADF - Wellness Policy/Procedures March 26, 2009

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS First Reading 11/7/13

State law provides that:

Every town at its annual meeting shall in every year when the term of office of any incumbent expires, and except when other provision is made by law or by charter, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:

. . Three <u>or more</u> , five, six, seven or nine members of the School Committee for terms of not more than three years . . .

The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although it functions as a duly elected Committee of town government, the School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process.

Regional school districts are created in accordance with state law and the regional agreement approved by the member towns. The Regional District School Committee consists of elevennine members, sevensix from the Town of Acton and fourthree from the Town of Boxborough. At the annual town elections, the Town of Acton shall elect two or three members to the Committee, and the Town of Boxborough shall elect one or two members to the Committee, each to serve three-year terms. Established by law

LEGAL REFS.:

M.G.L. 41:1, 71:14B, 71:16A and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts Relating to School Committees

Regional Agreement between the towns of Acton and Boxborough, MA

CROSS REFS.:

AA, School District Legal Status

BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS First Reading 11/7/13

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CROSS REFS.:

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

First Reading 11/7/13

The School Committees <u>have-has</u> all the powers conferred upon <u>them-it</u> by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement <u>their-its</u> directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The Committees takes a broad view of their its functions. It sees them as:

- 1. <u>Legislative or policymaking</u>. The Committee is are responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
- 2. <u>Appraisal</u>. The Committee is are responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of their policies and their implementation.
- 3. <u>Provision of financial resources</u>. The Committee is are responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the Committee's policies.
- 4. <u>Public relations</u>. The Committee_is are-responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping themselves and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
- 5. Educational planning and evaluation. The Committee is are—responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committees and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School Districts.

LEGAL REF .:

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CROSS REF.:

BB, School Committee Legal Status

File: BBA

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CROSS REF.:

BB, School Committee Legal Status

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

First Reading 11/7/13

Authority

- Because all powers of the School Committees derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the School Committees have authority only when acting as a Committee legally in session.
- The School Committees will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the Committees.
- No member of the Committees, by virtue of his/her office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.
- The School Committees will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the Committees sitting in formal session.

Duties

The duties and obligations of the individual Committee member may be enumerated as follows:

- To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of these School Committees and School Department.
- 2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.
- 3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the town's public schools.
- 4. To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee(s) or neglect his/her share of the work.
- 5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.
- 6. To vote and act in Committees impartially for the good of the students.
- 7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
- 8. To represent the Committees and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.
- 9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
- 10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee: INSERT DATE.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

File: BBAA

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No member of the Committee, by virtue of his/her office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS (Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics) First Reading 11/7/13

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.
- 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

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File: BDA

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING First Reading 11/7/13

The annual organization meeting for the Acton Public School Committee shall be held each year on the third Thursday of the first month following the completion of the Acton annual town meeting. At this meeting, the Committee shall organize by electing one of its members as chairperson, another as vice-chairperson and a secretary who does not need to be a member. At this meeting, the Committee shall also fix the time for holding its regular meetings.

The annual organization meeting for the Acton-Boxborough Regional District School Committee shall be held each year on the first Thursday of the first month following the completion of the Acton and Boxborough annual town meetings. At this meeting, the Committee shall organize by electing one of its members as chairperson, another as vice-chairperson, and a secretary who does not need to be a member. At this meeting, the Committee shall also fix the time for holding its regular meetings.

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNUAL ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING First Reading 11/7/13

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SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

First Reading 11/7/13

Duties of the Chairperson

The chairperson of the School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the Committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/Sshe will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson will:

- 1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
- 2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Committee's agendas.
- 3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
- 4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
- 5. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
- 6. Be public spokesperson for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
- 7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Committee, the chairperson will:

- 1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
- 2. Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order.
- 3. Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
- 4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
- 5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
- 6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
- 7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
- 8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The vice-chairperson of the Committee will act in the absence of the chairperson as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Acton Public Schools and Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee: INSERT DATE.

File: BDB

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS First Reading 11/7/13

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LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36



File: BDC

APPOINTED COMMITTEE OFFICIALS

First Reading 11/7/13

The Superintendent shall be appointed by the Committees as provided by law and shall perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent there-to, as a majority of the Committee may direct.

The School Committees shall elect a Secretary to:

- keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal record of all Committee meetings; will
 comply with state law and Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will
 render such reports as may be required by the state or the towns.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:36

File: BDC

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LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:36

Approved by the Acton-Boxborough Transitional School Committee: INSERT DATE.

File: BDD

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP First Reading 11/7/13

The Committees will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school <u>districtsystems</u>. While the Committees reserves to themselves the right to make the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds. If hey will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from their executive officer. Further:

- 1. The Superintendent will have the privilege of askingask for guidance from the Committees with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he/she will submit the matter to the Committees for advice and direction.
- 2. The Superintendent will assist the Committees in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the Committees all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the Committees adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

File: BDD

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