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# Blanchard Feasibility Subcommittee Presentation & Recommendations

January 13, 2010

Presented to: Blanchard School Committee



# Sub Committee Members

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- Maria Neyland, Chair, Boxborough School Committee
- Scott Lukas , Vice Chair, Boxborough School Committee
- Gail Welch, Parent Representative
- Sue Giaconia, Parent Representative
- Mac Reid, Community Representative
- Becky Neville, Board of Selectmen, Representative
- Gary Kushner, Finance Committee Representative
- Lauren Grady, Teacher Representative
- Rob Guilmette, Teacher Representative
- Sandy Daigneault, Director of Pupil Services
- Curt Bates, Superintendent/Curriculum Director



# Our Charter

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- Established in April 2009 by the Boxborough School Committee
- Gather information about a variety of administrative options for the future of the Blanchard School district



# Background

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- Boxborough School Committee reviewed the administrative structure 5 years ago.
  - Resulted in the current administrative structure
- Over the past 5 years, changes have impacted our school community:
  - Enrollment has declined
  - Federal and state reporting requirements have increased
  - The financial outlook continues to be difficult



# Our Recommendations

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- Further study of the following is recommended by our subcommittee:
  - School Union
  - Regionalization
  - Current Model

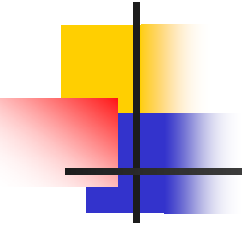


# Public Input

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Two Public Forums were held and a few emails were received. Approximately 50 people in total attended the forums and comments included:

- Desire to know why the School Committee is reviewing the School structure
- Favor current model
- Need to have enough budget savings to justify changing the admin model
- An interest in the School Union model if a change needs to be made (School Committee retains local control)
- Little interest in regionalizing with Acton
- Concern if 2/3 of Town budget is an educational assessment
- Concern over losing local School Committee



# Unionization

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# What is a School Union?

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- A governance structure for the school systems in two or more towns
  - Requires a vote of School Committee
- Shares Central Office staff
  - Typically Superintendent, Business Mgr, Sped Director, Food Service Director, IT Director, Administrative Staff
- Provides for a local school committee for each town
- Local School Committees have responsibility for governance of their own school district



# Input From School Unions In MA

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- We interviewed:
  - Williamstown-Lanesborough
  - Tri-Town (Middleton, Boxford, Topsfield)
- By all accounts:
  - Budget savings realized
  - No difference in administration commitment to schools
  - More than 2 towns can become unmanageable due to number of meetings
  - Towns maintain local control over elementary schools



# Advantages

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- Opportunity to cost share “system-wide” staff positions and purchasing
- Elementary schools retain their own principals
- Teachers and school staff hired/managed by principal
- Town maintains local control



# Disadvantages

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- Identifying a willing district
- Central Office staff not in building on a full time basis
- Extra School Committee meetings for school committee members and school administration



# Analysis

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- Three potential School Unions evaluated
  - Similar sized districts
  - Towns within reasonable distance
    - Carlisle, Lincoln, Littleton
- Assumptions
  - Based on 2009 enrollments
  - 20% salary increase for administrators' expanded roles
  - Addition of Asst Supt/Curriculum Director
  - Stipends for Building Leads (Sped, Business Mgr, Food Svc)
  - No change in Clerical Support
- Potential salary savings range from \$117K - \$216K depending on district; Potential savings from bulk purchasing of supplies is minimal.
- All potential savings would be based on a negotiated Union Agreement



# K-12 Regionalization with Acton

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# K-12 Regionalization with Acton

## Potential Advantages

- Current Acton/AB model has produced an excellent educational system at a reasonable cost
- Shared services of district level personnel i.e. Curriculum, IT Services, Facilities Director and purchasing power.
- Expanded professional development opportunities
- Could provide flexibility regarding enrollment, buildings, and staffing
- State reporting, grants, payroll, accounts under one system
- Potential budgetary savings in Administrative consolidations (i.e. Superintendent, Sped Director and Business Manager)



# K-12 Regionalization with Acton

## Potential Disadvantages

- 2/3 of Boxborough's town budget would be an educational assessment
- Potential loss of on-site services and programs, such as Librarian, IT Specialist, Math support, Reading support and Specials
- Potential increase in class size
- Potential loss of site-based autonomy, decision-making
- Loss of local School Committee control
- Weighted voting on the Regional Board. The current formula allows for Acton votes to count 2 Acton to 1 Boxborough



# Current Model

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# Superintendent/Curriculum Director

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## Advantages

- Already in place
- Manageable in terms of time and scope of positions/roles
- Maintains the educational leadership focus of the Superintendent
- Maintains two people (this person and the principal) focused on the classroom content and teacher evaluation

## Disadvantages

- Overlapping responsibilities
- Superintendent could be sought out for building based issues
- Superintendent can evaluate staff although responsibility for hiring/firing lies with principal
- May create unreasonably large evaluation role for the principal



# Shared Services

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- The subcommittee recommends working with other Town departments to identify potential areas for sharing services



# Questions/Discussion

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