



Finance Committee  
Gim P. Hom, Chairman

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Town of Acton  
Finance Committee  
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Senator Pamela P. Resor  
Room 410  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Cory Atkins  
Room 163  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Representative James Eldridge  
Room 33  
State House  
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Legislators:

The town of Acton is having a special joint meeting with the Finance Committee, Board of Selectmen, and Acton School Committee on Tuesday, September 16, at 7:30PM Acton Town Hall Room 204. We are requesting your attendance at this very important meeting to discuss the Minuteman Regional High School assessment to Acton.

As the attached spreadsheet based on DOE data shows, Acton's assessment from Minuteman went up in FY04 by \$147,842 with an increased enrollment of four students. Similarly, Lancaster's assessment went up by \$255,937 with an increased enrollment of six students. In contrast, Arlington's assessment went down by \$282,219 yet their enrollment increased by six students. Sudbury's enrollment increased by three students and their assessment went down by \$97,788. While SPED costs have not been considered in this analysis, the SPED costs do not explain the magnitude of the discrepancies in assessment among towns. We understand that part of the change was caused by the use of a different assessment methodology. But how do you explain the lower FY04 state mandated Minimum Contribution per pupil for Sudbury and Weston - towns clearly with higher median income than Acton?

The increase in Acton's assessment above our FY04 plan by over \$135,000 compounds the difficulties Acton faces as we work through our FY04 budgets and begin to plan for FY05. As you are no doubt aware, the economic and fiscal projections for the next few years are not pretty. This increase places an added burden on the town, has forced us to dig deeper into our cash reserves, and will force us to make other budget cuts. In addition, we are concerned about what the future holds and we cannot tolerate any budgetary surprises for FY05, as our plan calls for very tight fiscal management.

At this special meeting, the Board and Committee members will seek answers to these questions:

1. Why did the Legislature change the Minuteman assessment system **after** the district was approved by the towns?
2. When the towns approved the Minuteman Agreement, the basis for that agreement was that operating costs "shall be apportioned to the member towns on the basis of

each town's respective pupil enrollment in the regional district school". Given that that this is longer the case, is the agreement still binding?

3. What is the basis and what is the mathematic formula, in complete detail, for the dollar amounts for the minimum contribution? Why do Sudbury and Weston, towns with higher median income than Acton, have a lower minimum contribution per pupil?
4. What is definition and usage for Foundation budget and Net Minimum contribution?
5. Why doesn't the minimum contribution count against a town's total assessment as with a telephone plan?
6. What remedies are available? Can the minimum contribution assessments be changed and reduced or appealed?
7. What will be done to ensure that the equality of future assessments?

I have included two attachments. One shows the minimum assessment per pupil as set by the House Ways and Means formula. The second attachment shows the FY04 assessments for the towns in the Minuteman District.

In addressing these questions, it may be helpful to have a member of the Department of Education and House Ways and Means staff person responsible for the Minimum Net Contribution calculation attend.

We hope you will attend this meeting and address the above questions from our Board and Committee members. Please RSVP to Christine Joyce at 978-264-9611.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by telephone or by email.

Sincerely,

Jo-Ann Berry  
Chairperson, Acton-Boxboro Reg School Committee  
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Final FY04 Chapter 70 Aid and Net School Spending Requirements

- Advance Notice: Regional Districts

830 - MINUTEMAN  OR [Download File](#)

830 - MINUTEMAN

Member City & Town	<b>B</b> FY04 Foundation Enrollment	FY04 Foundation Budget	<b>A</b> FY04 Net Minimum Contribution	Minimum/Pupil = $A/B$
2 ACTON	41	464,494	501,272	12,226
10 ARLINGTON	140	1,584,045	965,245	6,895
26 BELMONT	27	309,663	391,059	14,484
34 BOLTON	15	166,742	172,947	11,530
37 BOXBOROUGH	11	119,101	20,086	1,826
51 CARLISLE	7	83,371	53,765	7,681
67 CONCORD	12	131,011	229,706	19,142
78 DOVER	2	23,820	30,174	15,087
147 LANCASTER	34	381,124	454,637	13,372
155 LEXINGTON	43	488,315	517,628	12,038
157 LINCOLN	7	83,371	70,970	10,139
199 NEEDHAM	22	250,112	159,545	7,252
286 STOW	51	571,685	467,925	9,175
288 SUDBURY	20	226,292	109,159	5,458
315 WAYLAND	9	107,191	83,072	9,230
330 WESTON	2	23,820	9,242	4,621
999 District Total	443	5,014,157	4,236,432	<del>9,668,990</del> <b>6,200,022</b>

Forms the base for local assessments  
 06/23/03  
 Minimum/Pupil = A/B

1. The variation is indefensible and far out of proportion to "equalization".
2. Multi-year averaging could soften enrollment shifts, but that is not the problem here.
3. The Weston base 4621/pupil; Lancaster 13,372 !!  
 This state management context is distorted, divisive, and wrong. It creates negative reactions. Hardly the proper government gift to give youngsters in schools.  
 Bm Fitzgerald

**FY04 Chapter 70 FY04 Summary, Minuteman Regional High School**

Lea	Member City/Town	FY03 Foundation Enrollment	FY04 Foundation Enrollment	FY03 Net Minimum Contribution	FY04 Net Minimum Contribution	FY03 Assessment	FY04 Assessment	FY03-04 Change	FY04 Assessment	\$/pupil	Pupil Change
2	<b>ACTON</b>	37	41	457,629	501,272	771,713	919,555	147,842	919,555	22,428	4
10	ARLINGTON	134	140	1,131,407	965,245	2,290,362	2,008,143	(282,219)	2,008,143	14,344	6
26	BELMONT	28	27	378,885	391,059	504,519	597,063	92,544	597,063	22,113	(1)
34	BOLTON	12	15	139,770	172,947	269,898	351,435	81,537	351,435	23,429	3
37	BOXBOROUGH	11	11	50,710	20,086	204,165	121,596	(82,569)	121,596	11,054	0
51	CARLISLE	6	7	40,099	53,765	87,297	112,646	25,349	112,646	16,092	1
67	CONCORD	16	12	226,195	229,706	269,249	325,906	56,657	325,906	27,159	(4)
78	DOVER	3	2	35,176	30,174	61,324	50,625	(10,699)	50,625	25,313	(1)
147	LANCASTER	28	34	435,675	454,637	511,722	767,659	255,937	767,659	22,578	6
155	LEXINGTON	41	43	457,705	517,628	843,567	901,353	57,786	901,353	20,962	2
157	LINCINN	6	7	65,838	70,970	104,672	135,028	30,356	135,028	19,290	1
199	NEEDHAM	24	22	170,342	159,545	434,994	343,559	(91,435)	343,559	15,616	(2)
286	STOW	49	51	561,969	467,925	793,982	839,901	45,919	839,901	16,469	2
288	SUDBURY	17	20	111,489	109,159	378,920	281,132	(97,788)	281,132	14,057	3
315	WAYLAND	4	9	21,656	83,072	86,998	178,450	91,452	178,450	19,828	5
330	WESTON	3	2	25,529	9,242	67,951	31,817	(36,134)	31,817	15,909	(1)
<b>999</b>	<b>District Total</b>	419	443		4,236,432	7,681,333	7,965,868		7,965,868		24