

## **SECTION B**

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## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS**

The School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish those purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by all of our students. The Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school system. The Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically setting performance objectives for the School Committee, itself, and evaluating its accomplishments.
2. Setting job descriptions for positions in the system.
3. Allowing the people responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.
4. Establish practical and simple goals.
5. Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.

The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school system has been established. The Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all people. School Committee members should consider comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

## **EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**

The School Committee will periodically establish realistic objectives related to Committee procedures and relationships. At the end of a specified length of time, the Committee will measure its performance against the stated objectives.

The following areas of School Committee operations and relationships are representative of those in which objectives may be set and progress appraised:

1. Communication with the public;
2. School Committee - Superintendent relationships;
3. School Committee member development and performance;
4. Policy development;
5. Fiscal management;
6. School Committee meetings;
7. Performance of subcommittees of the School Committee; and
8. Interagency and governmental relationships

When the Committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the Committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and committees are capable of improvement. The School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS AND AUTHORITY**

The School Committee is the governing body of the Masconomet Regional School District and exercises its authority in posted public meetings where a quorum is present. The authority of the Masconomet Regional School Committee is derived from the General Laws of the Commonwealth, which assigns to the School Committee as a whole general charge of all public schools.

The School Committees possess all powers and duties conferred upon them by state law. The Committee alone may determine policies, approve a budget, and employ a Superintendent to implement their directions for the education of the students of the Masconomet Regional School District.

In addition, specific powers are assigned to the Masconomet Regional School Committee by provisions of the General Laws which pertain to specific functions and duties related to education. Because the School Committee's powers are derived from the state legislature and not from the governing authorities of the town, the members of the Committee, in the exercise and performance of their powers and duties, act as public officers and not solely as agents of the town. The School Committee has 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.

The Masconomet Regional School Committee consists of eleven (11) members, representing the towns of Boxford, Middleton and Topsfield as defined in the Regional Agreement.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 41:1 and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees  
                          are established throughout the Massachusetts General Law  
                          M.G.L. 71:14B; 71:16A  
                          Regional Agreement

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES**

The School Committee has all the powers conferred upon it 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 its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

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

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

### **Personnel Matters**

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

The School Committee shall appoint, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant/Associate/Deputy Superintendent(s), School Business Administrator, Special Education Administrator, School Physician, School Nurses and Supervisor of Attendance.. Such positions shall not report directly to the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC July 2016

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37](#) specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the Massachusetts General Laws.  
M.G.L. 71:16-71:16I

CROSS REF.: [BB](#), School Committee Legal Status  
BDG, School Attorney

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AUTHORITY**

Members of the School Committee shall have authority only when acting as a School Committee meeting legally in public or executive session. The School Committee shall not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action pursuant to specific instruction of the School Committee.

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.

The School Committee 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 Committee sitting in formal session.

### DUTIES

The duties and obligations of an individual School Committee member include:

1. To become familiar with the School Committee's powers and duties as expressed in the State's school laws, regulations of the State Department of Education, and in the Masconomet Regional School District policies, rules, and regulations;
2. To have knowledge of educational aims and objectives of the system;
3. To work effectively with other School Committee members;
4. To respect the views of other School Committee members;
5. To respect the decisions of the Committee;
6. To vote and act in the School Committee meetings for the good of the District and its students;
  
7. To represent the School Committee and the District to the public in such a way as to promote both interest and support;
8. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities;
9. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.



## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE**

In order to serve on the School Committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the town from which they are elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member will present to the Committee secretary official certification of having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths prior to entering on their official duties as a member of the Committee.

From the Municipal or District Clerk, newly qualified Committee members, by law, receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of Committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

Newly qualified Committee members shall, by law, receive and sign a receipt for, within 30 days of taking office, a copy of the Massachusetts Ethics Commission's Summary of the Conflict of Interest laws. As municipal employees, all School Committee members shall receive a copy of said summary annually. All School Committee members shall, within 30 days of taking office, and every 2 years thereafter, complete the Massachusetts Ethics Commission's online training program. Upon completion of the online training program, members shall provide notice of such completion to be retained for 6 years by the Municipal or District Clerk.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:20](#); [41:1](#); [41:107](#); [76:5](#); 268A:27-28;

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION**

A current School Committee member who submits a resignation to the appropriate certifying authority terminates School Committee duties at the time of such resignation unless a later time is stated in the resignation.

Should a School Committee member move out of the town or District in which he or she holds office, that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

LEGAL REFS.:       M.G.L. 41:2; 41:109

## **UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT**

When a vacancy on the School Committee occurs for any reason, the Select Board and the remaining members of the Committee from the town concerned share the responsibility for filling it.

As provided in the law, the School Committee, after it has been notified by the respective Town Clerk, will notify the Select Board of the town concerned that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After one week's notice has been given by the Committee to the Select Board, so that voters of the town may have the opportunity to state their candidacy, the two governing bodies will meet to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For election to fill a vacancy, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of the officers entitled to vote. The person so elected will fill the seat on the Committee until the next town election, at which time a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term, if any.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:11  
Regional Agreement

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS**

Because School Committees are agencies of the state, the oath of office of a School Committee member binds that individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees. The acceptance of a code of ethics, therefore, implies an understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Service on the Masconomet Regional School Committee entails additional ethical obligations, above and beyond the strictly legal. This code of ethics delineates three additional areas of responsibility of Masconomet Regional School Committee members: (1) community responsibility; (2) responsibility to school administration; and (3) relationships to fellow Committee members.

School Committee members in their relations with the community should:

1. Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that their basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that they are members 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 they represent 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 Committee activities.
7. Serve as effective and positive representatives of public education in general, and of the Masconomet Regional School District in particular.

School Committee members in their relations with school administrators 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.

3. Make no unnecessary demands of those administrators.
4. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
5. Refer significant complaints to the administrative staff for solution, and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.
6. Refrain from surprising or otherwise attempting to embarrass members of the administrative staff in public settings.
7. Refrain from seeking any type of special consideration for their own children, family members, or friends (or for the children of family members or friends) from any members of the faculty or administration.

School Committee members in their relations with their fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that no individual member can bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that they should not make statements or promises about how they will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions, and respect the privileged communications that occur in executive sessions.
4. Respect the privacy of internal discussions that are conducted on the assumption of privacy.
5. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems.
6. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

CROSS REFS:       AA, School District Legal Status  
                      BB, School Committee Legal Status and Authority  
                      BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

For the purpose of organizing, the School Committee, at its first regular meeting following the District's annual elections, will elect from its membership a Chair, and a Vice-Chair, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are no longer members of the School Committee, the senior member (years served) will act as the Chair Pro-Tem.

A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum. The election will proceed as follows:

1. Nominations for the office of Chair will be made from the floor. The Chair will be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.
2. Upon election, the new Chair will preside, calling for the election of a Vice-Chair. The procedure used for this election will be the same as that for electing the Chair.

Any vacancy among the officers occurring between organizational meetings will be filled by a member elected by the School Committee. The election will be conducted as described above. Following election of officers at its organizational meeting, the School Committee may proceed into such regular or special business as scheduled on the agenda.

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

### Duties of the Chair

The Chair 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. They will perform those duties that are consistent with their office and those required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chair 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 Chair 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-Chair**

The Vice-Chair of the Committee will act in the absence of the Chair as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to them.

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



## **DISTRICT TREASURER**

### **Expenditure and Management of Funds**

The School Committee shall appoint a District Treasurer for fixed timeframe. The Treasurer shall give and maintain bond for faithful performance of duties of the District Treasurer.

The Treasurer shall receive and take charge of all money belonging to the District and shall pay any bill of the District, which shall have been approved by the School Committee. The Treasurer shall be responsible for the investment of available cash. The Treasurer will furnish the School Committee a semi-annual report and will carry out the duties of the position in accordance with Chapter 71, 16A, the official job description, and other pertinent statutes. The Treasurer will work in close cooperation with the School Committee, but will report directly to the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE / SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONS**

The School Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as executive officer and as professional leader of the school system. While the Committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas only after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

The Superintendent may ask guidance from the School Committee 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 Committee for advice and direction.

The Superintendent will assist the School Committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the Committee all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the Committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

For its part, the School Committee will consult with the Superintendent on all matters concerning the school system. It will delegate to him/her responsibility for all executive functions, refrain from handling any administrative details, and give to the Superintendent authority commensurate with his or her responsibilities. The Committee will support the Superintendent in actions which conform to proper professional standards and the policies of the Committee, and assist his/her office in defending established lines of authority and channels of communication.

CROSS REFS.:       BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties  
                      BCA, School Committee Member Ethics

## **SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The School Committee shall appoint members to subcommittees at their annual organizational meeting for a period of one year. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for Committee action.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the Committee.
2. The Committee Chair, subject to approval by the Committee, will appoint the subcommittee chair and its members.
3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.
4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for Committee action, but it may not act for the School Committee.
5. All subcommittees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

## **TASK FORCE/ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.
2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.
3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.
4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.
5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.
6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
  - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
  - b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
  - c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
  - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
  - e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
  - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.
8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee.

9. Advisory committees created under this policy are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

The Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REF.: JIB, Student Involvement in Decision-making

## **SCHOOL COUNCILS AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

The School Committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school- based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the School Council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions that are made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum, and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the School Committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the Masconomet Regional School District.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a School Council shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of school operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of, and forming the group, pursuant to a representative process approved by the Superintendent and School Committee.

The following guidelines define the role of the School Council.

The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal of the school and shall

1. Assist in the identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school;
2. Make recommendations for the development, implementation, and assessment of the curriculum accommodation plan;
3. Assist in the review of the school building budget; and
4. Assist in the formulation of an annual School Improvement Plan.

The Principal, in consultation with the School Council, shall be responsible for preparing a written School Improvement Plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the School Council and submitted for review by the Superintendent and approval by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS:        M.G.L. 71:59C

## **SCHOOL ATTORNEY**

Because the complexity of school district operations often requires specialized legal services, the Committee may retain an attorney or law firm to provide legal services, including (for example) assistance with labor relations. At the discretion of the Committee, any such relationship with an individual lawyer or law firm will be reviewed on an annual basis.

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Committee to advise the School Committee and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to them. They will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law, to enable him/her to offer the necessary legal advice.

Both the Superintendent and the chair are authorized to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school system.

When the Superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, he or she will advise the Committee, and seek either initial or continuing authorization for purchasing such services.

LEGAL REFS:       M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

## **MEETING PROCEDURES**

The School Committee will conduct its business in open session except as otherwise provided by law. The public will be encouraged to attend School Committee meetings. The Committee will endeavor to keep the public informed concerning the business of the District.

Meetings will be held on a regularly scheduled basis throughout the year. The time and place of regular School Committee meetings will be established by a vote of the School Committee at its first meeting after elections have taken place in all member towns. Changes in subsequent meeting dates will occur as situations dictate. Special meetings may be called as necessary to consider specific topics.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REFS.: BEC, Executive Sessions  
BEDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings



## **EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

All meetings of the School Committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The Chair (or, in their absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
4. The Chair or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the Committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The Committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the Committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
8. And to consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the School Committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of Superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.

9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

(In the first case, an open meeting will be held if the individual involved so requests.)

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

The School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The School Committee Chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the School Committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes.

When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the School Committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

Established by law and Committee policy

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:21; 30A:22

CROSS REFS.: BDE, Subcommittees of the School Committee  
BE, School Committee Meetings  
KEB, Public Complaints about School Personnel

## **NOTICE OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours (not to include Saturday, Sunday, or holidays) advance notice will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. This comprises both notification of Committee and subcommittee members and notification of the public.

All regular and special meetings will be announced and posted publicly according to statute. Masconomet will post all meeting notices on the Masconomet Regional School District web site, [www.masconomet.org](http://www.masconomet.org).

The only exception to the procedures outlined above is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 30A:20B, 30A:20C, see also 940 CMR 29.03(4)

## **AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION**

The Superintendent shall supervise the preparation of all agendas for the meetings of the School Committee. In doing so, the Superintendent shall consult with the School Committee Chairperson. Placement of items of business on the agenda may be suggested by any School Committee member, staff member, student, or citizen of the District. The inclusion of items suggested shall be at the discretion of the Chair in consultation with the Superintendent.

Anyone wanting to submit an agenda item must do so in writing not later than 4:00 p.m. the Wednesday preceding a regular business meeting. The agenda for each business meeting shall be completed not later than the close of business the Friday preceding the time set for a regular business meeting. The appropriate items of business shall include suggested resolutions and adequate supporting material. This agenda, together with supporting materials, shall be distributed to School Committee members sufficiently prior to the meeting to permit them to give items of business careful consideration. The agenda and appropriate materials shall also be made available to the press, representatives of the community, staff, student organizations, and to others upon request.

CROSS REF:           BEDH, Public Comment at School Committee Meeting

## **QUORUM**

The quorum necessary to hold a School Committee meeting shall be a majority of the total number of member seats on the School Committee, in accordance with the regional agreement among the towns, whether or not each of those seats is currently filled by a town representative.

CROSS REF:           The Regional Agreement

## **RULES OF ORDER**

The School Committee shall observe Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, except that the Chairman may participate and have a vote on all matters before the School Committee or except as otherwise provided by law.

In accordance with Robert's Rules, Revised the Committee may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.

A consent agenda may be presented by the chair at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed shall be adopted by majority vote of a motion to adopt the consent agenda. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda at the discretion of the Chair.

## **VOTING METHOD**

### **Open meeting**

Votes of the School Committee will be taken by voice vote or a hand count and shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded. No vote taken at an open session shall be by secret ballot.

A two-thirds vote will be required to suspend parliamentary rules of order.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25; 71:42; 71:50

## MINUTES

The minutes of a School Committee meeting constitute the written record of Committee actions; they are legal evidence of what the action was. Therefore, the secretary of the School Committee will be responsible for reporting in the minutes all actions taken by the Committee.

Minutes will include:

1. The date, time, place, the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting, a summary of each subject, and a list of documents and exhibits used at the meeting,
2. A complete record of official actions taken by the Committee relative to the Superintendent's recommendations, to communications, and to all business transacted. Resolutions and motions will be given in their exact wording, accompanied by the names of members moving and seconding and a record of the results of the vote. Reports and documents relating to a formal motion may be omitted if they are referred to and identified by title and date.
3. Notation of formal adjournment.

Copies of the minutes will be sent to all Committee members at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at which the minutes are to be approved. Minutes of all meetings shall be created and approved in a timely manner which is defined in regulation as within the next 3 meetings of the body or within 30 days, whichever is later.

The approved minutes will become permanent records of the Committee. Minutes of public meetings and minutes of executive sessions that have been declassified will be in the custody of the Superintendent who will make them available to interested citizens upon request.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:22; 66:10; 940 CMR 29.00

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public's Right to Know; BEC, Executive Session



## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

A School Committee Meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school district community to view the School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting. All meetings of the School Committee are in accordance with the open meeting law.

The School Committee believes that the school district community should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore, the Committee sets aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public. In addition, if the Committee believes that an issue requires a dialogue with the school district community, the Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that issue.

The School Committee recognizes its responsibility to conduct the business of the District in an orderly and efficient manner and will therefore require reasonable controls to regulate public presentation to the School Committee. A member of the audience wishing to be heard by the School Committee shall first be recognized by the Chair and then shall identify himself/herself and proceed to comment as briefly as the subject permits.

Any citizen who wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item which is of interest to him/her and within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities may request to be placed on the agenda for a particular meeting. Such request should be in writing and submitted to the Superintendent of Schools at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. The request should contain background statements to explain the scope and intent of the agenda item. The Chair of the Committee and the Superintendent will determine whether or not to place an item on the agenda. If the item is to be taken up, they will also determine when to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter.

The School Committee Chair is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion, the appropriateness of the subject being presented and the suitability of the time for such a presentation. The School Committee as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.

## **BROADCASTING/RECORDING OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The School Committee seeks to meet the needs of the community and to better educate citizens about the schools by broadcasting School Committee meetings whenever possible.

Photographic and electronic audio and video broadcasting and recording devices may be used at regular and special School Committee meetings legally open to the public according to the following guidelines:

1. Photographs, broadcasting, and recordings of meetings are permitted only when all parties involved have been informed that cameras, broadcasting, and/or recording devices will be used; and
2. Persons operating cameras, broadcasting, and/or recording devices must do so with a minimum of disruption to those present at the meeting. Specifically, the view between Committee members and the audience must not be obstructed, interviews must not be conducted during the meeting, and no commentary is to be given.

LEGAL REF: MGL 30A:20(f)

## **SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS**

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others, as it deems advisable, the School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy.

The Chair of the Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the Chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

Adoption of new policies, review and/or changing existing policies, is solely the responsibility of the School Committee. The formulation and adoption of these written policies shall constitute the basic method by which the School Committee shall exercise its leadership in the operation of the District school system.

Proposals for new policies, or changes to existing policies, must be initiated in writing or verbally at an official meeting of the School Committee by any member, by any citizen of the District, or by any employee of the District. The policy proposals must be referred to the policy subcommittee of the School Committee for detailed study prior to full School Committee discussion of the proposal. The procedure stated in this paragraph may be waived by majority vote of the School Committee.

The formal adoption of policies shall be recorded in the minutes of the School Committee. Only those written statements so adopted and so recorded shall be regarded as official School Committee policy.

## **POLICY ADOPTION**

New policies will be presented as information at a School Committee meeting and will not be acted upon until a later meeting. Thus, time shall be given to permit further study and to give opportunity for interested parties to react. However, temporary approval may be granted by the School Committee in lieu of formal policy regarding emergency matters or special events which will take place before a formal policy, if necessary, is enacted.

Policies of the School Committee may be adopted, amended or deleted by a majority vote of the members present at two successive regular meetings, or by a unanimous vote of the entire School Committee at any meeting. Amendments to policies may be voted at the same meeting at which they are introduced.

The School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.

## **POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW**

A cooperatively developed School Committee policy manual is fundamental to good School Committee-staff relationships. Written policies shall be reviewed regularly, shall be made available to all the school personnel, and shall be used consistently by the School Committee as the basis for its actions. The School Committee will use an established cycle to ensure that policies are regularly reviewed.

In reviewing policies, the Committee will rely on school staff, students and the community for providing feedback on the effect of the policies it has adopted. The Superintendent will recommend that the Committee review any policies that are out-of-date or for other reasons appear in need of revision.

Any policy which is being reaffirmed, amended or eliminated as a result of the review process will be approved in accordance with Policy BGB.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES**

The Superintendent and administrative staff are charged with issuing procedures as needed to implement policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee will not formally approve procedures except 1) as required by state law, or 2) requested to do so by the Superintendent, or 3) upon referral from a school site council when procedures are thought to deviate from existing school policy. The Committee may review the procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school system when they appear to be inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district. It will revise or veto such procedures, however, only when in the judgment of a majority of the Committee those procedures are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish the district's rules and procedures pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students. Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes, shall be filed with the Department of Education for information purposes only. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:37H

## **POLICY DISSEMINATION**

The Superintendent shall be directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for the preservation and accessibility of the policies adopted by the School Committee and the administrative rules and regulations needed to put them into effect.

The School Committee's official policy manual will be considered a public record and will be available for inspection at the Superintendent's office. An electronic copy of the Policy Manual will be maintained on the school website. A member of the public may request a hard copy of the Policy Manual at the district established cost of duplication.



## **SUSPENSION OF POLICIES**

The operation of any section or sections of School Committee policies not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended by a unanimous vote of Committee members present at any regular or special meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and will be so noted on the agenda for that meeting.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

### **Staff Communications to the School Committee**

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

### **School Committee Communications to Staff**

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

### **Visits to Schools**

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

## **USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including but not limited to electronic mail (email), internet web forums, and internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision including but not limited to the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the committee has supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the School Committee chairperson, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, shall annually designate a member of the central office staff who shall receive copies of all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee. All School Committee related email must be copied to the District Secretary. These copies shall be retained in the central office. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis if so requested.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 30A:18, 23B; 66:10

## **NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION**

In accordance with the requirements of law, each new School Committee member elected to the School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation shall include, but is not limited to, a review of School Finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Ethics/Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the Committee's functions, policies and procedures of the Committee as soon after election as possible. Each new member shall be given or provided direct online access to the following materials:

- A. A copy of the School Committee policy manual
- B. A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- C. A copy of the Ethics/Conflict of Interest Regulations
- D. A copy of the district's budget
- E. Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- F. Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the Chair and/or the Superintendent determine. The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify policy:

- A. Arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- B. Requesting information regarding school district operations
- C. Responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- D. Handling confidential information

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established School Committee policy.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:36A](#)

CROSS REF.: BBBA/BBBB School Committee Member Qualifications/Oath of Office

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS**

The School Committee encourages its members to participate in appropriate School Committee conferences, workshops, and conventions, as part of a larger emphasis on providing training and development for its members. Recognizing that public dollars and the time of individual members are limited, therefore, the Committee observes the following principles and procedures:

1. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When cost is a serious constraint, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting. Conversely, if a member or members have the opportunity to attend an out-of-state conference at little or no cost to the taxpayer, they are encouraged to do so. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will accord with the travel expense policy for staff members.
2. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations, and materials acquired at the meeting.

LEGAL REF:           M.G.L. 40:5

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES**

The members of the School Committee shall serve without compensation. No member of the School Committee shall be eligible for employment in the Masconomet Regional School District, or in any collaborative or other regional programs in which the Masconomet Regional School District participates.

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, members may be reimbursed from funds budgeted for that purpose, so long as the expense is approved in advance by the School Committee chair.

Reimbursable expenses may include the cost of attendance at conferences of school committee associations and other professional meetings or visitations, when such attendance and expense payment has had prior School Committee approval.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:52

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**

The School Committee, as an agent of the state, must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. If the Committee is to meet its responsibilities to the residents and students of this community, it must work vigorously for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of good schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.

To this end:

1. The Committee will keep itself informed of pending legislation and actively communicate its concerns and make its position known to elected representatives at both the state and national level.
2. The Committee may work with its legislative representatives (both state and federal), with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and other concerned groups in developing an annual, as well as a long-range, legislative program. One of the major objectives of the Committee's legislative program will be to seek full funding for all state and federally mandated programs.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

The Committee may maintain memberships in the national, state, and regional School Committees (boards) associations and (within the constraints of time and budget) take an active part in the activities of these groups.

It may also maintain institutional memberships in other educational organizations which the Superintendent or the Committee finds to be of benefit to members and personnel.

The materials and benefits of institutional memberships will be disseminated and used to the best advantage of the Committee and the staff.



