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File: BA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL 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 more than the average citizen finds necessary. This requires a comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

The school committee's primary responsibility is to establish those purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by 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 a Superintendent to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking the comments of public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

CROSS REF.: ADA School District Goals and Objectives

File: BAA - 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:

- a. Communication with the public
- b. School Committee - Superintendent relationships
- c. School Committee member development and performance
- d. Policy development
- e. Educational leadership
- f. Fiscal management
- g. School Committee meetings
- h. Performance of subcommittees of the School Committee
- i. 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.

File: BB - SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS

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, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:

... Seven members of the School Committee terms of three years ...

The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although its 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.

Established by law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1 and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of school committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts Relating to School Committees

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

File: BBA - 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 policy making. 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 system 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 objectives that will guide the committee and the staff goals and working together for the continuing improvement of the educational program.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of school committees are established throughout the Massachusetts General Laws.

CROSS REF.: BB School Committee Legal Status

File: BBAA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Authority

Because all powers of the school committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the school committee have authority only when acting as a committee legally in session.

The school committee 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 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 the individual committee members may be enumerated as follows:

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and school committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, policies and procedures of this school committee 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 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 committee 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 committee 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.

File: BBBA/BBBB - 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 he/she is 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 his/her official duties as a member of the committee. From the town 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.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23B; 41:1; 41:107
M.G.L. 76:5 Amended 1993

File: BBBC - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

An existing school committee member who submits his/her resignation to the Town Clerk terminates his/her duties at the time of his/her resignation unless he/she states in that resignation a specific time at which the resignation will take effect.

Should a school committee member move out of the town or city which elected him/her to the committee, he/she shall be deemed to have vacated his/her office.

Established by law

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

File: BBBE - UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

When a vacancy on the school committee occurs for any reason, the board of selectmen and the remaining members of the committee share the responsibility for filling it.

As provided in the law, the school committee will notify the selectmen 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 selectmen, 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.

Established by law

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

File: BCA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

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. As an elected public official, a school committee member is expected to adhere to those state laws that apply to school committees since school committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics outlines three areas of a school committee member's responsibility: (1) community responsibility; (2) responsibility to school administration; and (3) relationship to fellow committee members.

1. A school committee member in his/her relations with the community should:

- a) Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children.
- b) Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy-making and not administrative.
- c) Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
- d) Be well informed concerning the duties of a committee member on both a local and state level.
- e) Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times.
- f) Accept the office of committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics" in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from committee activities.

2. A school committee member in his/her relations with the school administration should:

- a) Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies with which to direct and support administration.
- b) Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- c) Act only on the recommendations of the chief administrator in all matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- d) Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
- e) Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail.

3. A school committee member in his/her relations with fellow committee members should:

- a) Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings.
- b) Realize that statements or promises should not be made regarding how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the committee.
- c) Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions.
- d) Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her own committee or other appropriate parties.
- e) Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

File: BDA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The School Committee shall organize annually one week from the Thursday following the annual election of town officers. The organizational meeting shall be called to order by the Vice Chairman or by the senior member of the Committee in that order. Every member shall be duly notified. The Committee will elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairman and may also adopt rules for its proceedings.

1. Nominations for the office of chairman will be made from the floor. The chairman will be elected by a majority 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 chairman will preside, calling for the election of a vice-chairman. The procedure used for their election will be the same as that for electing the chairman.

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.

File: BDB - SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chairman

The chairman 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/she 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 chairman 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 spokesman 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 chairman 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) In his/her discretion, 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-Chairman

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

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

File: BDD - SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The committee 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 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 after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

1. The superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the 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.
2. The superintendent will assist the 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.

File: BDE - SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The School Committee will have no standing committees. It may, however, establish special subcommittees at its annual organizational meeting. 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 subcommittee chairman and its members will be appointed by the committee chairman, subject to approval by the committee.
- 3) The subcommittee will be given a charge as to its functions and duties.
- 4) The subcommittee may make recommendations for committee action, but it may not act for the school committee.
- 5) The committee chairman and superintendent will be ex-officio members of all special subcommittees.
- 6) A subcommittee will be dissolved by the committee upon completion of its assignment, or it may be dissolved by a vote of the committee at any time.

CROSS REF.: BEC Executive Sessions

File: BDF

File: BDF - 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.
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 committee upon recommendation of

the superintendent.

5. Tenure of committee members will be for a maximum one year, 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 purgatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the school committee.

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.

CROSS REF.: JIB Student Involvement in Decision making

File: BDFA - SCHOOL COUNCILS (SITE-BASED MANAGEMENT TEAMS)

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. Involving those people directly affected by any action or decision of the site-based management team in the process of determining that action or decision, strengthens the commitment to those decisions by all involved..

Under this policy, the principal shall have primary responsibility and authority for the management of his/her school. Decisions which 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 School District.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a site-based management team 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 (site-based management team):

The site- based management team shall meet regularly with the principal of the school and shall assist in:

- 1) Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and local policies and standards.
- 2) Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.
- 3) Review of the school building budget.
- 4) Formulation of a school improvement plan that may be implemented only after review and approval by the School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:38Q; 71: 59C

File: BDFA-E-1- SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The principal, in conjunction with the school council (site- based management team) shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. The plan shall be consistent with state and federal laws, school committee policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council (site based management team) and submitted for approval to the Superintendent and the School Committee. The school improvement plan shall include the following:

- 1) General educational goals for the school, consistent with the mission, goals, policies, and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and by the School Committee;
- 2) An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals and local student assessment results;
- 3) An objective assessment of the opinions of the members of the School Committee regarding satisfaction, needs, long-term goals, and short-term objectives;
- 4) A statement of educational objectives for the coming year specifying expected student outcomes and measurable or observable results;
- 5) An action plan to achieve objectives, including anticipated costs and available funding sources;
- 6) Plans for the following:
 - a) Meeting the diverse learning needs of every child;
 - b) Professional development for the school's staff (M.G.L. 71:38Q)
 - c) Training for school council members (M.G.L. 71:38Q)
 - d) Reporting progress and results of customer satisfaction surveys to the administration, School Committee, and local school community;
 - e) Enhancement of parental involvement in the work of the school council, life of the school, safety, discipline, and academic goals;
- 7) Any further subjects as the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
 - a) The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to M.G.L. c. 150E, the collective bargaining law, and;
 - b) The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by School Committee policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A, B, C (Open Meeting Law)
M.G.L. 71:38Q (Staff Development; Training for School Council Members)
M.G.L. 71:59C (School Councils)

File: BDFA-E-2- SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval by June of each year.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on School Committee approval, it is important that the school council (site-based management team) be aware of certain expectations of the School Committee regarding the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the mission of the School District and any goals and policies of the School District.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, School District policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate anticipated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the superintendent and School Committee, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council (site-based management team), and resubmit it for approval. If the School Committee does not review the school improvement plan within 30 days of its receipt by the Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

File: BDFA-E-3 - CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

The principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council (site-based management team). The second co-chair shall be elected annually by the council members at their first meeting of the school year subsequent to the election of new council members. The co-chairs shall be responsible for the agendas for the council meetings.

Meetings:

The school council shall meet regularly during the school year. Meetings shall be at a time agreeable to all council members. At the first meeting of the school year, the council shall set its calendar of regular meetings. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

School councils (site- based management team) shall use consensus as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the principal and Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, chapter 39, sections 23A, B, and C, which stipulate that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings and agendas will be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

Calendars, agendas, and minutes of all school council meetings be posted in a public area of each school and shall be provided to the superintendent and the chairperson of the School Committee in a timely manner.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 39:23A, B, C

File: BDFA-R - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SITE-BASED DECISION MAKING

School Committee Responsibilities:

- 1) Establishing the vision, mission, and goals for the school district,
- 2) Establishing district policies and standards for site-based decision making. The basis for these standards will be federal and state laws, school committee policies, the Common Core of Learning, and curriculum frameworks established by the Commonwealth;
- 3) Advocating to secure adequate resources for the schools;
- 4) Approving annually a budget for the school district, including site-based funding;
- 5) Approving school improvement plans according to M.G.L. 71:59C.

Joint Central Services and School Committee Responsibilities:

- 1) Maintaining a core curriculum for all schools in the school district, with regular review;
- 2) Determining base-staffing rations (FTE/student) for the district based on enrollment;
- 3) Allocating site-based funding to each school based on an enrollment formula.

Central Services Responsibilities:

- 1) Supporting site-based decision making;
- 2) Examining the bylaws of each council and working with each school team to insure that the bylaws comply with federal and state laws, regulations and district policy;
- 3) Providing information, data, staff development, school council training, technical assistance, and an estimate of site-based funds for the coming year to school based personnel and the school council so that they can make informed data-driven decisions;
- 4) Coordinating the adoption of instructional materials, staff development. and an outcomes assessment program usable at the district and school levels;
- 5) Reporting these outcomes to the public and using student achievement data in the evaluation of the program;
- 6) Evaluating annually each school's improvement plan prior to School Committee review at the end of the plan

School Council's Responsibilities

In the Council's role as advisor to the principal, the council shall advise in:

- 1) Adopting educational goals for the school that are consistent with district policies and standards;
- 2) Creating a unified effort and commitment to implement school and district goals;
- 3) Identifying and prioritizing educational and other needs "of the school using data-driven decision-making";
- 4) Determining how site-based funds will be utilized on an annual basis;
- 5) Determining which instructional materials best meet the unique needs of the individual schools. Within the standards and parameters determined by the Superintendent and the Walpole Policy on Adoption of instructional Materials;
- 6) Formulating the annual school improvement plan, to be implemented after review and approval of the School Committee;
- 7) Operating a school council that actively involves' staff, parents students, and other community members in the decision-making; actively consults members outside the council to assess desires of the larger school community, structures the school improvement plan to meet those needs, and reports back to the community on progress toward goals;
- 8) Reporting annually to the school committee regarding progress toward goals and use of site-based management funds;
- 9) Electing representative to serve on committees for selection of site administrators;
- 10) Preparing school handbooks (student, staff, parent) as appropriate and reviewing them annually;
- 11) Fulfilling all other responsibilities specifically delegated to the school council by the school committee.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:59C

File: BDG - SCHOOL ATTORNEY

The School Committee may use the services provided by the town counsel. The committee and the superintendent may seek his/her services to counsel and represent the school system at various times.

However, because the complexity of school department operations often requires specialized legal services, the committee may also retain an attorney or law firm to provide additional legal services.

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 him/her. He/she 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.

A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school system will be made by the committee. The superintendent may also take such action at the direction of the committee.

Many types of legal assistance are routine and do not require specific committee approval or prior notice. However, when the superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, he/she will advise the committee and seek either initial or continuing authorization for such service.

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

File: BE - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Regular Meetings

Regular meetings of the Committee will normally be held on the second and fourth Thursday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the place specified in the notice or voted by the Committee. The Committee may, at its discretion, discontinue meetings or change the dates of meetings.

Special Meetings

Special meetings of the Committee shall be held whenever called by the Chairman or upon written request submitted to the Vice-Chairman by any two members. The notice of such meetings shall state the special matter or matters to be considered. At such meetings only the business for which the meeting was called shall be in order, except that if all members are present they may by unanimous vote take any lawful action.

The Vice-Chairman and/or Superintendent shall give to every member of the Committee at least forty-eight hours notice of each meeting. Such notices shall be addressed to each member's legal residence, or if he/she shall have instructed the Vice-Chairman to use some other address, to that address. A member shall be deemed to have been duly notified if he/she is present at the meeting.

Place of Meetings

All meetings of the committee shall be determined Committee at its prior meeting except in emergency situations in which case the Chairman may designate the place of the meeting.

Every meeting of the school committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A; 39:23B; 39:23C

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

File: BEC - 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 chairman (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose of 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 chairman 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) The discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual.
- 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 or federal grant-in-aid requirements.
- 8) And to consider and interview applicants for employment (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 affect in obtaining qualified applicants.
- 9) To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.

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

The School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes periodically for possible declassification 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.

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.

SOURCE: MASC

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

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.: 39:23B; 39:23B

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

File: BEDA - NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours advance notice will be given for any meeting of the school committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A; 39:23B

CROSS REFS.: BE School Committee Meetings

File: BEDB - AGENDA FORMAT

The superintendent, conferring with the chairman of the school committee, will arrange the order of items on meeting agendas so that the committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the committee, or to expedite committee business.

Items of business may be suggested by any school committee member, staff member, or citizen. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the chairman of the committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the superintendent.

The agenda will also provide time for any citizen to speak briefly before the school committee, in the discretion of the chairman.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to school committee members three days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the press.

File: BEDB-E - AGENDA FORMAT

At regular meetings the order of business shall be as follows unless the Committee shall by majority vote otherwise direct:

- 1) Citizen Comments
- 2) Approval of Minutes of previous meeting
- 3) Communications
- 4) Superintendent's Report
- 5) New Business
- 6) Old Business
- 7) Subcommittee Reports
- 8) Executive Session (if necessary)
- 9) Adjournment

File: BEDD

File: BEDD - RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the committee's approved policies and regulations.

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

File: BEDF - VOTING METHOD

Except on procedural matters, all votes of the school committee will be taken by a show of hands and nays will be recorded in the minutes; if the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded.

All actions will require a majority vote of all members present and voting except as state law, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, or policies of this committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the school committee will constitute a quorum.

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

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23B; 71:42; 71:50

File: BEDFA - VOTING

The Committee shall not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of any individual Committee member or employee of the Committee except when such statement or action is in pursuance of special instructions by the Committee.

Disqualification for Voting

No member shall have any pecuniary interest either directly or indirectly in any contract for the erection of buildings, or for heating, ventilation, furnishing, or repairing the same, or shall be in any manner connected with the furnishing of supplies.

No member shall be permitted to vote on contracts by employee groups in which a member of the immediate family has an interest (Chapter 268A, Sect.1).

Committee members have authority only when acting as a body regularly in session.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 268A:1

File: BEDG - MINUTES

The minutes of a school committee meeting constitute the written record of committee actions. The Vice-Chairman of the school committee will be responsible for reporting in the minutes all actions taken by the committee.

Minutes will include:

1. A statement on the nature of the meeting (regular or special), the time, the place, and the approval of the last regular and each subsequent special meeting.
2. Names of the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting.
3. 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.
4. 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. 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. 39:23B; 66:10

CROSS REFS.: KDB Public Right to Know

File: BEDH - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the school committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The school committee desires citizens of the district to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the committee have a chance and to insure the ability of the committee to conduct the district's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

- 1) At the start of each regularly scheduled school committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the committee. The length of the public participation segment shall be determined by the chairman.
- 2) Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding chairman may permit extension of this time limit.
- 3) Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the chairman may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
- 4) All remarks will be addressed through the chairman of the meeting.
- 5) Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
- 6) Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the committee before or after the meeting for the committee members review and consideration at an appropriate time.

File: BEE - 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 chairman 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.

File: BG - EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY ON POLICIES

The Walpole School Committee believes that its purpose and objectives can best be realized when the program of education is directed through written committee policies based on National and State laws and standards and on the needs of the community.

These policies will be evaluated periodically and, as an instrument of guidance for public education in Walpole, will be amended or rewritten as often as is necessary to insure that the Walpole Public Schools are meeting the needs of the students.

File: BGB - POLICY ADOPTION

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the school committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the school committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as an agenda item to the committee in the following sequence:

- 1) Information item -- distribution with agenda
- 2) Discussion item -- first reading of proposed policy or policies; response from superintendent; report from any advisory committee assigned responsibility in the area; committee discussion and directions for any redrafting
- 3) Action item -- discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the action stage will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the committee so directs.

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.

File: BGC - POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they can be used consistently as a basis for school committee action and administrative decision, the committee will review its policies on a regular basis.

The committee will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff and will weigh the results. It will rely on the school staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies it has adopted.

The superintendent is given the continuing task of calling to the committee's attention all policies that are out of date or for other reason appear to need revision.

The school committee directs the superintendent to periodically recall all policy and regulations manuals for administrative updating and committee review.

File. BGD - (also CHB) - SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS

It is expected that the superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue regulations implementing 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 may review the regulations developed by the superintendent for the school system prior to their issuance, but it will revise or veto such regulations only when, in the committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the committee.

The committee will not officially approve regulations except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a regulation to have the committee's advance approval.

Before issuance, regulations will be properly titled and coded as appropriate to subject and in conformance with the codification system selected by the committee. Those officially approved by the committee will be so marked; all others appearing in the manual will be considered approved provided they are in accordance with the accompanying committee policy.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes, shall be filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for information purposes only. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the school committee.

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

File: BGE - POLICY DISSEMINATION

The superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the committee and the regulations needed to put them into effect.

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the school system, to members of the committee, and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all persons in the community. A policy concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to those groups prior to the policy's effective date.

All policy manuals distributed to anyone will remain the property of the committee and will be considered as "on loan" to anyone, or any organization, in whose possession they might be at any time. They are subject to recall at any time deemed necessary for purposes of updating.

The school committee's policy manual will be considered a public record and will be available for inspection at the superintendent's office.

File: BGF - 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 two-thirds 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.

File BHC (also GBD) - 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.

“The Education Reform Act of 1993 dictates that not all issues can be brought before the school committee. In some instance, the authority rests with the superintendent, while in others, the school committee is the final arbitrator. Please consult with Central Office to determine the appropriate approach. In general, while matters of discipline and instruction are the purview of the superintendent, matters of policy and philosophy are the purview of the school committee.”

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.

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.

File: BHD - SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE PUBLIC

It is the responsibility and desire of the Committee, elected by the citizens of Walpole, that two-way channels of communication be kept open at all times between the school system and the public. The Committee will continuously attempt to create and maintain schools that reflect the educational interests of pupils and will do its best to respond to the public's wishes and keep the people informed of the affairs of the school system.

Distribution of Information Regarding Ballot Questions

The School Committee may grant permission through their agent, the Superintendent of Schools, to an individual or group to distribute ballot question material on school property.

Any "leaflets, stickers or other campaign material" must be informational in nature and not a solicitation for funding. All such material will be reviewed by the Superintendent.

If permission is granted to one group, equal access will be provided to allow those on the other side of the issue to similarly distribute materials.

(Reference: Opinion of May 21, 2001 by Office of Campaign & Political Finance to Ronald Fucile, Town Clerk, Town of Walpole. M.G.L. c. 55)

**File: BHE - ELECTRONIC MESSAGING POLICY FOR SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MEMBERS**
effective 2/26/2001

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves and other elected and appointed state and town officials via electronic messaging services. It is recommended that School Committee members use their massed.net accounts for school communication only.

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 and other elected and appointed state and town officials 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, including members of other elected and appointed state and town boards and committees, 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 be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee and other elected and appointed state and town officials. These copies shall be printed and retained in the central office in the same fashion as any other School Committee records. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 4:7; 39:23B; 66:10

File: BHE-R - WALPOLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACCEPTABLE INTERNET USE BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Acceptable Uses

Acceptable uses of the Walpole Public Schools' networked educational resources include, but are not limited to, information/resource sharing and materials that:

- Achieve and support district and school goals.
- Reflect academic honesty, and high ethical and moral responsibility.
- Show restraint in the consumption of shared resources.
- Promote innovation and educational excellence through research, worldwide resource sharing and communication.
- Demonstrate respect for intellectual property and ownership of data.

Unacceptable Uses

The following uses of the Walpole Public Schools' networked educational resources are not permitted:

- Accessing, sending, or displaying offensive, obscene, sexually explicit, defamatory, or harassing messages or materials, from school, or from home to school.
- Trespassing in another's folders, work or files.
- Plagiarizing, i.e., taking material created by others and presenting it as one's own.
- Sharing your password with anyone or using another person's password.
- Damaging computers, systems, or networks.
- Tampering with, making changes to, or altering system folders or files.
- Uploading or creating computer viruses.
- Violating copyright laws and illegal distribution of software.
- Intentionally wasting limited resources.
- Using school resources for personal, commercial, political or religious purposes.
- Sharing written or graphic information that identifies specific students using e-mail or the Internet.
- Revealing any personal addresses, phone numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers or other private information of any individual.

Network Etiquette (“Netiquette”)

The goal of network etiquette is to encourage the efficient use of a shared resource. School Committee Members are expected to learn and to abide by generally accepted rules of network etiquette, as well as the rules of school decorum. These include, but are not limited to:

- Being polite.
- Using appropriate language.
- ..
- Adhering to the general rules and standards for professional behavior and communications.

User Agreement

As a user of the Walpole Public Schools' Computer network, I have read, understand, and agree to comply with the Walpole Public Schools' Acceptable Use Policy. I agree that inappropriate use or behavior may result in loss of use, disciplinary action and/or legal action.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

File: BIA - NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

In accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law C. 71, s. 36A as amended on December 24, 2002, each new School Committee member elected to the Walpole School Committee is required to complete, within 1 year of their election or appointment, at least 8 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, 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 or appointment as possible. Each new member shall be given 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 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 to be necessary.

The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify policies and/or procedures that involve:

- 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 REFS.: M.G.L. 71:36A

File: BIBA - SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the school committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate school committee conferences and workshops. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

- 1) Information on School Committee Conferences and workshops will be made available to School Committee Members.
- 2) Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to attend a given meeting.
- 3) Reimbursement to committee members for their travel expenses will accord with the travel expense policy for staff members.
- 4) 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 REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5

File: BID - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the committee, members may be reimbursed from school funds.

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

File: BJ - 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 will 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.
- 3) The committee will annually designate a person--who may or may not be a member of the committee--to serve as its legislative representative. This person will be authorized to speak on the committee's behalf with respect to legislation being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature or the United States Congress or their respective committees. In all dealings with individual elected representatives, the Legislature or Congress, the committee's representative will be bound by the official positions taken by the school committee.

File: BK - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The committee will maintain memberships in the national, state and regional school committees (boards) associations and take an active part in the activities of these groups.

It may also maintain institutional memberships in other educational organizations, which the executive officer and committee find to be of benefit to members and personnel.

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