

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS**

The Somerville School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school system has been established. The Somerville School Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The Somerville School 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 Somerville 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 Somerville School Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school system. The Somerville School 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, while seeking the comments of public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically setting performance objectives for the Somerville School Committee itself and evaluating their accomplishment.
2. Setting objectives for performance for each position and function 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.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

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

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

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

When the Somerville School 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 Somerville School 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 School Committees are capable of improvement. The Somerville 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.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS**

Schools are governed by a nine-member School Committee comprised of seven members elected by wards, the Mayor, and the President of the Board of Aldermen, and derive its legal status from the following:

1           General Laws – Chapter 71

Section 37. Duties of the Somerville School Committee. It shall have general charge of all the public schools, including the evening school and evening high schools, and of vocational schools and departments when not otherwise provided for...

“The policy of the Commonwealth from early times has been to establish a board elected directly by the people separate from other governing boards of the several municipalities and to place the control of the public schools within the jurisdiction of that body unhampered as to details of faith...The Somerville School Committee is an independent body entrusted by law with broad powers, important duties and large discretion.”

Rugg, C.J. in Leonard vs. School Committee of Springfield—241 Mass. 325 at 329 (1922)

2           Extracts from the City Charter Relative to the Public Schools

Section 28. The Management and control of the public schools shall be vested in a committee, which shall exercise the powers conferred and discharge the duties imposed by law upon School Committees. The committee shall consist of the mayor and the president of the Board of Aldermen, ex-officials, neither of who shall serve as chairman, and seven other members, elected as follows; one member shall be elected by and from the voters of each ward at each regular municipal ex-officio election to serve for the term of two years next following.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

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

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES**

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

1. Legislative or policymaking. The Somerville School 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 Somerville School Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
3. Provision of financial resources. The Somerville School Committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the Somerville School Committee's policies.
4. Public relations. The Somerville School 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 Somerville School 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.
6. Submit to His/Her Honor the Mayor and the City Government an annual report in accordance with the provisions of the Charter.
7. Approve all bills.
8. Exercise all other powers and perform all the duties set forth in the City Charter and General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY**

### Authority

Because all powers of the Somerville 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 School Committee legally in session.

The Somerville 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 School Committee.

No member of the Somerville School 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 Somerville 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 School Committee sitting in formal session.

### Duties

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

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and Somerville School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of the Somerville 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 city's public schools.
4. To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee or neglect his/her shares 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 Somerville School 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 Somerville School Committee decisions once they are made.
8. To represent the Somerville School 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 Somerville School Committee members.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

In order to serve on the Somerville School Committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the City from which he/she is elected or appointed. The members or members-elect of the Somerville School Committee shall meet on the first Monday of January annually, and be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties as members of the Somerville School Committee as imposed by the statutes of the Commonwealth and the policies of the Somerville School Committee, by an oath administered by the city clerk, or in his/her absence by the assistant City clerk, and each member shall subscribe to this oath by signing his/her name to a copy thereof in a book prepared for this purpose.

Membership on the Somerville School Committee is not limited to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Established by law

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION**

An existing Somerville School Committee member who submits his/her resignation, in writing, to the appropriate certifying authority 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 Somerville School Committee member move out of the city in which he/she holds office, he/she shall be deemed to have vacated his/her office.

Established by law

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT**

City Charter – Section 28

If the vacancy in the office of School Committee persons shall occur one year or more prior to any regular municipal election, the Board of Aldermen shall forthwith order a special election, and the same proceedings shall be had in all respects as be hereinbefore provided for the election of such School Committee person. But, if the vacancy in the office of school committee person shall occur less than one year prior to any regular municipal election, it shall be filled for the remainder of the term by ballot of the remaining members of the School Committee, the member so elected to be a qualified voter of the ward in the representation of which on said School Committee the vacancy exists. (Acts 1904, Chapter 354, accepted by voters November 8, 1904; Special Acts 1919, Chapter 98, accepted by voters November 4, 1919; Acts 1930, Chapter 50, approved February 21, 1930; Acts 1934, Chapter 35, approved March 2, 1935; Acts 1946, Chapter 167, approved March 28.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

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

**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. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

1. This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above: (1) community responsibility; (2) responsibility to school administration; and (3) relationships to fellow School Committee members.

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her community should:

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

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at School Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

A School Committee in his/her relations with his/her fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the School Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the School Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.

File: BCA

4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her own School Committee or from members of other committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, 5/22/64

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

File: BCBA

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

No member shall be eligible for candidacy for any teaching position or any other position within the jurisdiction of the School Committee, the salary for which is payable from the City Treasury, during the term for which he/she is elected.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**

City Charter:

The School Committee shall meet on the first Monday of January in each year and organize by the election by ballot of one of its members as chairperson.

The School Committee shall be the judge of the election and qualifications of its members, and shall, from time to time, make rules for its proceedings.

After the members of the School Committee have been sworn in, there shall then be an election of two of the members to the position of chairperson and vice chairperson respectively. The oldest in age of the members present shall preside until the chairperson is elected and shall read the credentials of new members. The chairperson and vice chairperson shall be elected by ballot, and the Superintendent of Schools shall serve as the secretary of the School Committee in accordance with the provisions of the city charter.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS**

### Somerville School Committee Chairman or Chairwoman (chairperson)

The chairman of the Somerville 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. The Chairperson will perform those duties that are consistent with the office and as required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. Duties required by the Committee include:

1. Provide leadership to the Somerville School Committee ensuring that activities of the Somerville School Committee are carried out in a professional and timely manner.
2. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between School Committee meetings.
3. Be the public spokesman for the Somerville School Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others
4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
5. Chair the Long Range Subcommittee
6. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
7. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Somerville School Committee's agendas.
8. As presiding officer at all meetings of the Somerville School Committee, the chairman will call the meeting to order at the appointed time and enforce the Somerville School Committee's procedure relating to the order of business and rules regarding the conduct of meetings and with parliamentary procedure
9. Conduct new member orientation.
10. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Somerville School Committee.
11. Work with the Superintendent to develop an annual calendar of standing meeting for the Committee in an attempt to limit conflicts with other pertinent school activities.
12. Will review the calendar monthly and make an effort to inform the public in a timely manner of upcoming events.
13. Ensure that, goals and objectives of the Somerville School Committee are reviewed and adopted by June 30<sup>th</sup> of the 1<sup>st</sup> term.
14. Conduct an annual meeting to review subcommittee achievements and progress toward goals and objectives.

15. Compile a year-end report, which includes year-end summaries from subcommittee chair people, an appended master list of perspective objectives, and recommendations for the next year's goals and objectives for the School Committee and the district.

#### Somerville School Committee Vice-Chairperson

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

In the absence of both the chairperson and vice-chairperson the senior member in service shall preside.

#### Somerville School Committee Secretary

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

#### Standing Subcommittee Chairperson

1. Coordinate meeting schedule with subcommittee members. Organize the activities of the subcommittee and ensure appropriate, fair and adequate involvement and participation of other Somerville School Committee members, school personnel, and the community.
2. Ensure that the subcommittee maintains a listing of perspective objectives and submits a recommendation to the full Committee for action.
3. Receive requests for agenda items and publish a post according to procedure. Develop meeting agendas that are consistent with the overall goals and objectives of the Committee and may include issues requiring immediate attention.
4. Plan and conduct meetings that are organized, purposeful, and productive and include representation of those involved in or affected by discussions, decisions and recommendations.
5. Presides over all subcommittee meetings and serves as the facilitator and recorder. The responsibility of presider may be delegated to another member of the subcommittee. The responsibility of facilitator may be delegated to either another member of the Somerville School Committee or to any other person with the appropriate skills. If the latter is chosen, the subcommittee chairperson must be present or must have temporarily relinquished chairpersonship to another subcommittee member in his/her absence, who must be present.
6. Delegate responsibilities for completing tasks and other activities of the subcommittees to other members or school personnel, parents, students and other members of the community as appropriate and allowable.

7. Work with the Superintendent or Central Office appointee and develop an annual calendar of activities and discussion for the subcommittee based on established Committee goals and objectives.
8. Review the calendar monthly and provide the chairperson and Superintendent with changes and cancellations in the most timely manner possible.
9. Work with school management and administration through the Superintendent or the appropriate person assigned by the Superintendent to acquire and distribute information that supports well researched and informed decision making prior to any meetings.
10. Inform the entire Somerville School Committee of motions, new opportunities, issues and other matters relevant to the area covered by the subcommittee through meetings and/or monthly reporting consistent with a format defined by the Somerville School Committee.

Adopted:

Revised: December 1, 2009

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

File: BDC

## **APPOINTED COMMITTEE OFFICIALS**

The Superintendent shall be elected by the Somerville School Committee as provided by law and shall serve as secretary in accordance with provision of the City Charter and perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent there to, as a majority of the Somerville School Committee may direct.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The School Committee Chair 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.

### **Overall responsibilities**

Each Standing Sub-Committee of the Somerville School Committee will establish, review and assess perspective annual goals and objectives; research, review and assess topics, programs and issues which require policy or service direction or approval by the Somerville School Committee; make recommendations on the effectiveness and efficiency of existing programs for consideration of continued support; review effectiveness and appropriateness of related policies; and will make a recommendation for action or disposition to the full Somerville School Committee on such matters, as it pertains to specific areas outlined.

### **Specific Areas Covered**

#### **Finance & Facilities Sub-Committee**

- The Finance and Facilities Sub-Committee is responsible for making recommendations for School Committee action relative to budgetary development, management, and oversight.

#### **Educational Programs Sub-Committee**

- The Educational Programs Sub-Committee is responsible for assessing annual goals and objectives relative to student achievement.

On a regular basis, the Superintendent of Schools will arrange for program and department reports to the Educational Programs Sub-Committee.

#### **Rules Management**

- Policies and procedures regarding Somerville School Committee rights, responsibilities, organization, governance and operations; school personnel rights, responsibilities, organization, governance and operations; student, parent, community and other rights and responsibilities; school district organization, governance and operations; and general philosophies and rules in such areas as EEO, Affirmative Action, conduct, drug and smoke free workplaces, dress codes, gifts, school admission, and attendance.

#### **Voting Members**

- A quorum of voting members is required in order to take a vote on a motion to be brought before the full body.
- Chairperson who is a member of the Somerville School Committee and will be assigned by the Committee Chairperson may participate, make motions, and vote
- Vice Chairperson who is a member of the Somerville School Committee will take over in the absence of the Chairperson, may participate, make motions, and vote.

- The voting members of a subcommittee may not represent a quorum of the Somerville School Committee.

All subcommittees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

SOURCE: MASC  
LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:18-25](#)  
CROSS REFS.: [BEC](#), Executive Sessions

Adopted: March 23, 1997

Revised: December 1, 2009

Revised: April 23, 2012

Revised: March 2013

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING FOR LONG RANGE PLANNING**

The Somerville School Committee, in recognition of the importance of Long Range Planning in the continuous improvement of the Somerville Public Schools, student learning and the advancement of the educational process, will meet in extraordinary session to address multiyear long range goals.

- The chair of the School Committee will chair the School Committee meeting for Long Range Planning.
- All members of the School Committee, in attendance, will vote on all motions brought before the Long Range Planning Committee.
- All business at the School Committee Meeting for Long Range Planning will be conducted in a similar fashion to a regular School Committee meeting.
- A quorum will be a majority of those present with a minimum of five (5).

All subcommittees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the Somerville 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 Somerville 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 Somerville 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 Somerville 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 Somerville School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
  - c. The resources the Somerville School Committee will provide.
  - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
  - e. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.
8. The Somerville 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 Somerville School Committee.

The Somerville School 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 Somerville School Committee.

All Advisory Committees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Adopted: January 1996  
Reviewed: October 2008  
Revised: January 2013

## **SCHOOL COUNCILS**

The Somerville 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 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 Somerville 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 school council shall determine membership 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 Somerville 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 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 Superintendent and the School Committee.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The principal, in conjunction 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 approval to the Superintendent and the Somerville School Committee. The plan should be drafted with the following in mind:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the Somerville School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
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 Chapter 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.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the principal to the Superintendent and the Somerville School Committee for review and approval by February 1st of each year.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on School Committee approval, it is important that the school council 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 Somerville 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, and resubmit it for approval. If the school improvement plan is not reviewed by the School Committee within 30 days of its receipt by the School Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS**

The principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

Consensus shall be used by school councils 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, Sections 23 A, B, and C, which stipulates that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings 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.

The Superintendent shall receive agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the Somerville School Committee for information.

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## **SCHOOL ATTORNEY**

The Somerville School Committee may use the services provided by the city solicitor. The Somerville School 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 Somerville School Committee may also retain an attorney or law firm to provide additional legal services.

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Somerville School Committee to advise the Somerville 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 Somerville School 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 Chair on behalf of the Somerville School Committee. The Superintendent may also take such action on behalf of the Committee.

Adoption Date: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

Revised: November 2010

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

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Somerville School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Somerville School Committee. The listing of items is those reasonably anticipated by the Chair to be discussed at the meeting. Not all items may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

All meetings of the Somerville School Committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

All School Committee meetings are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting**:

The Somerville School Committee normally meets twice each month, excepting July and August, on the first and third Mondays at 7:00 o'clock in the evening.

2. **Special meeting**:

Special meetings of the Somerville School Committee shall be called by the secretary either by the direction of the chairperson or upon receipt by the secretary of a written request of three members of the Somerville School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:18-25](#)

CROSS REFS.: [BEC](#), Executive Sessions

[BEDA](#), Notification of School Committee Meetings

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

Revised: December 2012

## 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 Chairperson (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 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 Chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the
  - i. 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. 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.

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

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

Revised: October 15, 2012

## **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 City clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **AGENDA FORMAT**

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chair of the School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meeting agendas so that the School 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 School Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as the agenda is rearranged by the Chair of the School Committee; for example, for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the School Committee, or to expedite School Committee business.

Items of business may be suggested by any School Committee member, staff member, or any individual. School Committee members are encouraged to submit agenda items for future discussion by the School Committee during a Regular School Committee Meeting under New Business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chair of the School Committee. If a member wants an item on the agenda and is not successful at placing it before the School Committee, that member may ask the majority of those present to add it, despite objections of the Chair. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent, as Secretary of the School Committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members at least 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.

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: September 17, 2008

Reviewed: October 20, 2008

Reviewed: September 14, 2017

## **AGENDA FORMAT**

At all regular meetings of the School Committee, business shall proceed in the following order:

1. Call to Order
2. Awards and Citations
3. Student Advisory Council
4. Approval of Minutes
5. Public Comment (20 Minute Limit)
6. Report of Superintendent
  - A. Personnel Report
  - B. District Report
7. Report of Subcommittees
8. Unfinished Business
9. New Business
10. Expanded Public Comment
11. Communications
12. Items from Board Members
13. Adjournment

<p>When there is no business under an agenda item, the chair may delete that agenda item from the meeting agenda to assure that the posted agenda accurately reflects the agenda to be followed at the meeting.</p>
---

Adopted: January 1996

Amended: September 17, 2008

Reviewed: January 2013

Reviewed: September 12, 2017

Amended: October 2017

## **RULES OF ORDER**

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

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

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **VOTING METHOD**

### 1. Suspension of Rules

No rule or regulation of the School Committee shall be suspended except by the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all of the members, unless otherwise specified in these rules.

### 2. Amendments

No amendment shall be made to the rules unless proposed in writing at a meeting of the School Committee and referred to the Committee on Rules. Upon recommendation of the said Rules Committee, the amendment may be adopted at a subsequent meeting only by a majority vote of the whole number of members of the School Committee.

### 3. Quorum

Five members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may vote to call the roll, record the names of absentees, and adjourn to a fixed date. Five votes shall be necessary for the election of any officer or employee of the School Committee.

### 4. Parliamentary Procedure

The conduct of the meetings and business of the School Committee shall be according to the Robert Rules of Order, except as otherwise provided in these rules.

### 5. Method of Voting

Action shall, unless otherwise ordered, be by voice vote; but at the request of any member of the School Committee shall be polled and the vote of each member upon any question shall be entered upon the record.

### 6. Presentation of Orders

Orders presented under New Business shall be in writing. Advisability orders may be considered at the meeting at which they are presented. Those orders dealing with matters requiring immediate attention may be considered at that meeting. All matters shall be referred by the Chairman to the proper Standing Committee.

### 7. Motions

Motions may be made from the floor orally at any time.

### 8. Majority Vote

The affirmative vote of a majority of the members present and voting shall be necessary to pass any vote, order, or resolution, including motions to adjourn, to lay on the table, for the previous question, to postpone to a definite date, to commit or recommit.

### 9. Orders of Motions

If a question be under debate, the only motions in order shall be (1) to adjourn, (2) to suspend the rules, (3) to lay on the table, (4) for the previous question, (5) to postpone to a definite date, (6) to commit or recommit, (7) to amend, (8) to postpone indefinitely, which motions shall have precedence in the order named.

10. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn shall always be in order except when a member has the floor, or a question has been put and not decided.

11. No Debate on Certain Motions

Motions to adjourn, to lay on the table, to take from the table, or for the previous question shall be decided without debate.

12. Reconsideration

The action of the School Committee on any question may be reconsidered at the same meeting or the next meeting by a majority vote. Whenever any order, ordinance, resolution, petition, memorial, remonstrance or other subject shall have been finally rejected by vote of the School Committee, no measure embodying substantially the same subject matter shall be acted upon by the Committee, any School Committee member or other person within six months of the date of its prior rejection.

13. Deferment of Action

Any order or resolution of the School Committee may be passed through all of its stages of legislation at one meeting, provided that no member of said School Committee objects thereto; but if no member of said School Committee objects thereto; but if one or more members object, the measure shall be postponed for that meeting; and if when it is next brought up three or more members object to its passage at that meeting, a second postponement of at least one week shall take place. When a Section 22 has been placed on a motion, that motion must be acted upon word for word in its entirety when it is taken up again. This section shall not apply in the case of nomination or elections.

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

Adopted: December 1, 2008

## MINUTES

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

Adopted:

Revised: January 18, 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

Amended: February 2014

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENT 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 Somerville School Committee desires residents of the district to attend its meetings so that they may better understand the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the School Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all residents who wish to be heard before the School Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the School 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 School Committee. The length of the Public Comment will ordinarily be 20 minutes in length, unless otherwise determined by the Chair or a majority of School Committee. The School Committee reserves the right to rearrange its agenda to accommodate scheduled presenters.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit. Additionally, the Chair may limit comments to two (2) minutes based on the number of individuals signed up to speak. A group of residents appearing at a meeting to express favor or opposition to a particular agenda item is encouraged to designate one member of the group as a spokesperson to be heard on the topic. Other members of the group may be heard if they feel they can contribute additional information regarding the topic.
3. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a person continues to disrupt the meeting after a clear warning, the Chair has authority to order that person to leave and authorities may be called (per Massachusetts' Open Meeting Law).
4. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.
5. The School Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community in public session. Individuals may address topics on the agenda or items within the School Committee's scope of responsibility. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
6. Written comments may be presented to the School Committee before or after the meeting for the School Committee members' review and consideration at an appropriate time.
7. The public also will be encouraged to submit their comments in writing either by e-mail or by faxing or mailing such comments to the Executive Secretary to the School Committee.

8. At any meeting where a member of the public chooses to participate in Public Comment, the Chair may, at his or her discretion, recite Paragraphs 2-7 herein, to clarify the process and procedure of public comment.
9. Public Comment, as defined herein, shall not take place at subcommittee meetings or at public retreats of the School Committee, where no matter being discussed may be finally considered, in that no votes may be taken. However, public participation at subcommittees may be entertained at the discretion of the Chair of the subcommittee. Written comments will be accepted and made part of the record of the meeting. The opportunity for the public to make oral comments on items discussed at committee meetings or at public retreats shall be at the regular or special meetings at which the item is being be considered for action by the School Committee.
10. Procedures will be periodically established and reviewed they the School Committee.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

Reviewed: January 2013

Amended: November 6, 2017

**GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Public Comment is open to all Somerville residents. Before each meeting a sign-up sheet will be placed on the podium. People interested in speaking are required to sign-up by 7pm with their name and the topic on which they wish to speak. At the beginning of Public Comment, the Chair will verbally confirm the list before welcoming the first speaker to the podium. People are encouraged, though not required to give contact information, as this will assist with follow-up, if necessary.
2. Speakers are allotted 3 minutes each to speak, though depending on the number of speakers, the Chair has the discretion to limit comment to two minutes.
3. Public Comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between citizens and the Committee. It is a resident's opportunity to express his/her opinion on issues of School Committee business. Public comment is intended for the SC to receive input from the public, but not as a method to receive specific requests which should be channeled through school and district leadership, or individually to a School Committee member. To this end, Members of the Committee will not reply to public comment in the course of a meeting, though individual members may follow-up, and items from Public Comment may be taken up in future meetings. The Committee and/or administrators will not be prepared to directly respond to citizen questions posed in this forum.
4. Public Comment is a matter of public record. Speakers should be aware that all meetings of the School Committee are filmed live on Public Access and are recorded for future viewing. Public Comments will also be made part of the minutes of the meeting. Submission of a written copy of your comments is encouraged. Comments without a written submission will be summarized in the official minutes.
5. To ensure multiple opinions on a given topic are heard, or for other reasons, the Chair may call on speakers outside of the order of the sign-up sheet.
6. Public Comment is not an opportunity to speak about specific employees of SPS in any way that they can be identified. Any attempt to do so will be immediately ruled out of order by the Chair and speakers will not be allowed to continue.
7. Interpretation services in the District's identified target languages of Spanish, Portuguese and Haitian Creole will be available whenever possible. Residents are expected to give at least 3 business days' notice if they will need interpretation services. To request an interpreter, residents should contact the Executive Secretary at 617-629-5211.

Adopted: November 20, 2017

## **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 School 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 School Committee, or by others for the School 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 speak a second time.

1. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding chairman may permit extension of this time limit.
2. 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.
3. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the School 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.
4. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the School Committee before or after the meeting for the School Committee members review and consideration at an appropriate time.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

The School Committee will develop policies and put them in writing so that they may serve as guides for the discretionary action of those to whom it delegates authority.

The formulation and adoption of these written policies will constitute the basic method by which the School Committee will exercise its leadership in providing for the successful and efficient functioning of the school system. Through the study and evaluation of reports concerning the execution of its policies, the School Committee will exercise its control over school operation.

The School Committee accepts the definition of policy set forth by the National School Boards Association:

Policies are principles adopted by a School Committee to chart a course of action. They tell what is wanted; they may include why and how much. Policies should be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be followed by the administration in meeting day-to-day problems, yet be specific enough to give clear guidance.

The policies of the School Committee are framed, and are meant to be interpreted, in terms of state law, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and other regulatory agencies of the various levels of government.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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 School 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; School 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 School 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.

Where no penalty is provided for infractions of these policies, the School Committee shall, after careful consideration of the facts involved, use its discretion in dealing with each infraction.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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 School Committee will review its policies on a regular basis.

The School 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 commission 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 School Committee review.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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 School Committee.

The School Committee may review the regulations developed by the Superintendent for the school system whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district, but it will revise or veto such regulations only when, in the committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the School Committee.

The School 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.

### 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 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.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

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

## **POLICY DISSEMINATION**

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the School 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 School 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 School 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.

All employees connected with the public schools are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the provisions of these policies, and especially that portion of them that relates to their school duties, to observe and enforce them faithfully. A copy of the policies of the School Committee shall be kept in each school office available to staff.

The School Committee's policy manual will be considered a public record and will be available for inspection at the Superintendent's office.

Adopted: January 1996

Revised: December 1, 2008

## **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 School 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.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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 School 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 School Committee from administrative decisions, 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 School Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe firsthand 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.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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 (e-mail), 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 be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee, or the district shall provide district e-mail addresses, which are archived. 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.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.4:7; 30A:18-25, 23B; 66:10

Approved by School Committee: April 23, 2012

## **NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION**

The School Committee and Superintendent will assist each newly elected member to understand the committee's functions, policies and procedures.

A yearly training session will clarify procedures that involve:

1. Appropriate responses/actions of an individual School Committee member when a request is presented directly to him/her from a community member (parent, teacher, etc.).
2. How School Committee members may make arrangements to visit schools, and the protocol associated with such visits.
3. How the School Committee members, assigned certain tasks or investigating certain problems, may request information or services of the school staff.
4. How the School Committee receives and examines complaints relating to personnel.
5. How and why executive sessions may be held; what is considered privileged information.

Each newly elected member will be given a copy of the School Committee's policy and regulations manual and selected materials on School Committees, including the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' handbook for members and the General Laws of Education Relating to School Committees.

New members will be encouraged to attend meetings or workshops specifically designed for new School Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings will be reimbursed in accordance with established policy.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **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, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the School Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. A calendar of School Committee conferences, conventions and workshops will be maintained by the School Committee secretary. The School Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school system. At least annually, the School Committee will identify those new ideas or procedures and/or cost benefits that can be ascribed to participation at such meetings.
2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the School Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.
3. Reimbursement to School 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 School Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.
5. Yearly training will be provided on local procedures and policies.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5

## **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 School 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:

- A. The School 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.
- B. The School 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.
- C. The School 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, Chairperson, and Vice-Chairperson.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

The School 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 School 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 School Committee and the staff.

Adopted: January 1996

Reviewed: October 2008