



**NASHOBA** Regional School Committee

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# **Nashoba Regional School District School Committee Manual**

Adopted: November 8, 2017

Revised Draft: November 27, 2018

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## **DISTRICT MISSION**

The mission of the Nashoba Regional School District is to educate all students to their fullest potential in a safe, caring environment to become critical, creative, reflective thinkers and positive contributors to the global community.

## **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.

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.

Membership on a School Committee is not limited to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or gender identity.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS**

### **Duties of the Chairperson**

The Chairperson 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 Chairperson will:

- Sign the instruments, acts and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee;
- Collaborate with the Superintendent in the building of the Committee's agendas;
- Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings;
- Appoint subcommittees;
- Call special meetings of the Committee as is necessary;
- Act as the public spokesman for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others;
- Conduct School Committee meetings in an orderly fashion.

As the presiding officer at all meetings of the Committee, the Chairperson will:

- Call the meeting to order at the appointed time;
- Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order;
- Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings;
- Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference;

- Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members;
- Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee;
- Answer all parliamentary inquiries;
- Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

### **Duties of the Vice-Chairperson**

The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee will act in the absence of the Chairperson as the presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her by the chair.

### **Duties of the Secretary**

The Secretary will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all School Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town. The Superintendent's Administrative Assistant fulfills this role at regular School Committee meetings. A member of the School Committee is elected each year to serve as Secretary for executive sessions.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY & DUTIES**

### **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. 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 member may be enumerated as follows:

- To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this School Committee and school department;
- To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education;
- To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives and programs of the town's public schools;
- To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee or neglect his or her share of the work;
- 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;
- To vote and act in Committee impartially for the good of the students;
- 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;
- To represent the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support;
- To refer questions and complaints to the Superintendent's Office;
- To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

## **NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION**

Upon election to the SC, new members will meet with the Superintendent and the SC Chairperson for a preliminary orientation to the SC. It is important to have an understanding of the SC's functions, policies and procedures as soon after election as possible. There is a lot to learn, and it will take time to absorb it all. Please also take time to begin reviewing the following materials, which are available at <http://www.nrsd.net/cms/One.aspx?portalId=1159936&pageId=28777260>.

The materials include:

- Selected School Committee Policies:  
SC By-Laws (AAA), SC Powers and Duties (BBA), SC Member Authority (BBAA), SC Member Ethics (BCA) and School Committee Meetings (BE)
- Open Meeting Law Guide
- Summary of the Conflict of Interest Law for Municipal Employees
- Robert's Rules of Order "Cheat Sheet"

Additionally, new SC members are required to complete, within one calendar year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation is required by state law, specifically Massachusetts General Laws, chapter 71, section 36A, as amended on December 24, 2002. Orientation must include the following topics, but it is not limited to a review of these topics:

- School Finance
- Open Meeting Law
- Public Records Law
- Conflict of Interest Law
- Special Education Law
- Collective Bargaining
- School Leadership Standards and Evaluations
- Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members

The Executive Assistant to the Superintendent, will contact you to register you for the Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) workshop, "Charting the Course,"

which fulfills the new SC orientation requirements of the state law. You will need to give a copy of your certificate of completion for "Charting the Course" to your Town Manager and the Superintendent's Executive Assistant.

Available on the District Website ([www.nrsd.net](http://www.nrsd.net)):

- Additional School Committee Policies
- Past, current and proposed District Budgets
- Collective Bargaining Agreement, Unit A
- Collective Bargaining Agreement, Unit C

Student and Staff Handbooks for each school are also available on the district website on each school's webpage. The district schools, and the town and grades they serve, are:

- Center School (Stow, grades PreK-5)
- Hale Middle School (Stow, grades 6-8)
- Florence Sawyer School (Bolton, grades PreK-8)
- Mary Rowlandson Elementary School (Lancaster, grades PreK-5)
- Luther Burbank Middle School (Lancaster, grades 6-8)
- Nashoba Regional High School (located in Bolton, for students from all 3 towns in grades 9-12)

Your orientation will also cover these important topics:

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

You will be given a form called, "New School Committee Member Set Up" that asks for information needed to add you to the District email and list serve. There is also a "Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) Acknowledgement Form." This double-sided document must be completed and submitted with a driver's license or other identification so the district can perform a "CORI Check." This needs to be completed and approved before you visit the schools where you may have unmonitored contact with the students. Please complete both forms and return them to Aleta Masterson in the Office of the Superintendent of Schools.

If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out directly to Chairperson Lorraine Romasco at [lromasco@nrsd.net](mailto:lromasco@nrsd.net)

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **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 convention. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary, the Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members will participate at a given meeting
2. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the travel expense policy for staff members
3. 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

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES**

The School Committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

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

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



## **Personnel Matters**

The Superintendent shall be appointed by vote of the Committee and shall directly report to the Committee as provided by law. S/he will perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties that a majority of the Committee may direct.

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

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

## **Budget Planning**

The Superintendent will have overall responsibility for budget preparation, including the construction of, and adherence to, a budget calendar.

The Budget planning process follows a timeline pattern that recognizes three key time periods. The preliminary budget is presented in December to the School Committee as a starting point in the finalization of the budget. In late January, a budget workshop is held that includes all key school district leaders who review with the School Committee salient points regarding their department and school requests. The Regional District School Committee shall, in accordance with Section 16B of Chapter 71 of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, prepare and adopt a budget and present this budget to each of the Towns comprising the District on or before March 15<sup>th</sup> for the next fiscal year

## **School Committee Budget Responsibilities**

The School Committee reviews and approves the school district budget and then monitors the expenditures thereafter over the course of the fiscal year. They collaboratively establish with administration appropriate reporting processes to aid in that oversight. The School Committee also reviews and signs warrants to authorize appropriate payments, including payroll. Adjustments may need to be made during the course of a fiscal year, as recommended by administration, then reviewed and voted on by School Committee members.

The major portion of income for the operation of the public schools is derived from local property taxes, and the School Committee will work to protect the valid interest of the taxpayers. However, the first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools.

## **Evaluation of the Superintendent**

In 2012, Massachusetts public school systems introduced a new educator evaluation system for teachers, other full-time professional educators, principals, administrators and Superintendents. The Superintendent is responsible for overseeing the evaluations for the administrators and principals. The School Committee is responsible for evaluating the Superintendent.

The Superintendent is formally evaluated once a year and also provides the School Committee with a review of his/her goals at mid-cycle (January/February). The annual goals are the basis for the review. The annual goals are set each year by the Superintendent in partnership with the School Committee.

Throughout the year, the Superintendent gathers evidence of his/her performance based upon the annual goals established prior to the start of the school year. Additionally, School Committee members are responsible for gathering information based on their observations, feedback and other appropriate sources as evidence of the Superintendent's performance. The End of Cycle Summative Evaluation of the Superintendent will occur prior to the election of new School Committee members.

## **Negotiations**

The School Committee is responsible for negotiations with recognized employee bargaining units. However, because of the expertise and time required for negotiations, the Committee may hire a negotiator to bargain in good faith with recognized bargaining units.

The role of School Committee by Mass General Law Chapter 150E is to be the legal representative of management. Union negotiations are arguably one of the two most important roles of the School Committee, the other being to select a highly qualified Superintendent. The School Committee must ensure that the management position is understood and fully represented. Management includes the School Committee, Superintendent, Principals, and all other direct managers within the school system. Each School Committee member signs final union contracts. These signatures carry tremendous responsibility. The signatures confirm that each School Committee member personally supports the final contract as a document that fully represents management, the best interests of student achievement, the best interests of the town, and fairness and equity with labor.

At most, three Committee members should be on the negotiating team to avoid having a quorum. The Committee should select representative agents who are responsible to understand the School Committee's parameters and to keep the full Committee informed of developments. There should never be any surprises between the agents and the full Committee; if there are, it is the School Committee's responsibility to correct that situation.

More information can be found in Mass General Law, Nashoba Regional School District Public School Policy, and Massachusetts Association of School Committees as referenced below:

- Nashoba Regional School District Public Schools Policy Manual- Section H
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees - [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)
- MGL Chapter 150E - Laws related to Collective Bargaining, arbitration, mediation, strikes and work actions, procedures to take in case of a work action, and many other important elements of employee relations.
- MGL Chapter 268A - Conflict of Interest Laws
- MGL Chapter 39, Sections 23A-C - Open Meeting Law
- MGL Chapter 32B Section 19, 21 & 22 - Contributory Group General or Blanket Insurance for persons involved in service to their counties, cities, towns, districts, and their dependents

### **School Committee Self-Evaluation (Policy BAA)**

The School Committee will evaluate its progress in improving performance, and promoting a positive culture that supports the Superintendent, Administrators, Staff, Students, and families.

This is accomplished annually by performing a self-evaluation of performance against goals and protocols which have been previously established. This self-evaluation will inform the developments of future goals and provide the committee with feedback for improving performance. The School Committee will also conduct a mid-year discussion of progress toward goals.

### **NRS D SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROTOCOLS 2016-2017** - Need to be reviewed and updated

The primary objective of the School Committee is to improve student achievement. Members of the School Committee will abide by the following protocols as individuals and as a committee:

- The Superintendent and the School Committee represent the needs and interests of all students in the district and place the students' interests above all others in their decisions, while remaining within the limitations of a voter-approved budget.
- Members of the Committee will make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that relate to the School District. When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards, they will speak as individuals. They may only speak for the Committee when designated to represent the Committee. School Committee members shall recognize that authority rests with the decision of the School Committee.

- School Committee members will establish a vision, create policy, approve a budget and assure accountability to sustain continuous improvement in teaching, learning and facilities.
- Members agree to leave the day-to-day operations, including business transactions, to the Superintendent and staff. It is the School Committee's responsibility to evaluate the Superintendent's effectiveness in these matters.
- School Committee members recognize the Chairperson as the official voice of the School Committee. School Committee members will channel requests for information, reports and data through the School Committee Chair.
- School Committee members will conduct business through a set agenda that is tied to district goals. Emerging items shall be addressed in subsequent meetings through planned agenda items unless it is determined by the School Committee Chairperson that it would be detrimental to delay the issue until a subsequent meeting. Requests to add items to an agenda shall be made to the School Committee Chairperson.
- Recognizing the importance of proactive communication and avoiding surprises, School Committee members will, whenever possible, contact the School Committee Chair in advance of a meeting if they have questions or concerns about an agenda item, or will ask the Chair at least 48 hours prior to a meeting that an item be placed on an agenda.
- School Committee members will attend meetings on time and be well-prepared to discuss agenda items.
- While at meetings, members will stay focused on the agenda items and will not engage in communication outside of the agenda item being discussed. When making decisions, School Committee members will keep an open mind, utilizing the best information available including: research, best practices, public input and financial considerations. Members will debate issues and not each other. Members will analyze carefully and debate fully, whenever necessary, prior to making decisions.
- School Committee members will vote according to their convictions, will avoid bias and will uphold and support the decisions of the majority of the Committee once a decision has been made. Positions will not be used for personal or partisan gain.
- All members will maintain the confidentiality of privileged information and will respect the Open Meeting Law. Violations of the Executive Session portion of the Open Meeting Law will be reported to the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office for investigation.
- Members will refer constituent concerns and complaints, including issues relating to District personnel, to the Superintendent or the School Committee Chair.
- Members recognize the importance of honoring our agreed upon operating protocols and norms, and agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when discussions get off track.

## **Behavior at Public Meetings**

The Chair of the School Committee should be particularly careful in ruling a member out of order, and members should understand the consequences of some of the disturbing behaviors that could diminish their credibility. Some of those behaviors common in public boards include:

1. Returning continuously to a point that has been addressed or dismissed.
2. Vanity time or self-promotion before the audience or a special constituency.
3. Promoting oneself at the expense of other members (For example, a member who insists that, "I'm the only person on this board who cares about children.")
4. Lack of attentiveness to colleagues or speakers by diverting to electronic diversions like computers, cell phones, pads and other devices.
5. Inability to stop talking.

The same standards apply to the public. Additionally, certain behaviors are considered "out of order" based on Robert's Rules of Order. Most frequent of these include:

1. Making a personal or ad-hominem attack against a member or another person.
2. Attacking a member's motives (as opposed to the purpose of a motion).
3. Overt rudeness.
4. Disturbing the assembly, including being disruptive.

## **COMMUNICATION** – [Section will be updated based on recommendations from the Communication Sub-Committee](#)

### **Communication with District Personnel and the Schools**

Members will be mindful of how their decisions affect the work and effectiveness of the staff. The relationship between School Committee and district personnel is indirect. The Superintendent will serve as the liaison between School Committee and district staff. The Committee may also use surveys, meetings, and other forms of communication to gather and assess feedback from staff.

The schools must create opportunities for stakeholders within, and external to, the system to interact and build relationships. School Committee members are welcome to attend events at the schools as a member of the public. School Committee members may not visit a school in their official role as a member of School Committee without informing the Superintendent and school principal before scheduling the visit. Members do not have the authority to direct, criticize, or discipline staff members. It is important for School Committee members to communicate concerns with the Superintendent, who will then take responsibility for any subsequent responses with specific schools and personnel.

### **Communication with students**

The School Committee benefits from hearing the opinion of students on issues affecting their education and the overall social, intellectual, and extracurricular climate of the schools.

Students may address the School Committee by speaking at the beginning of our public meetings, or by asking the NRSD Student Representatives to the School Committee, teachers, principals, and/or other school personnel to speak on their behalf.

### **Communication with parents, guardians, families, and community**

In our deliberations, the Committee will strive to listen to a wide range of feedback from the full spectrum of communal stakeholders-including parents, families, and guardians of our students. Community members and leaders may offer feedback to the School Committee in many ways: asking to speak directly at the beginning of our public meetings and outreach to individual Committee members. We greatly value public input and continuously seek ways to maintain and improve effective communication. Our preferred method of communication is email so that questions and/or requests can be accurately shared with the Superintendent for resolution. It is important to realize that any correspondence received by a School Committee member becomes a public record and may be called for review at any time.

Members will ensure that decisions and actions are performed in a public and transparent manner-with the sole exception of the topics that legally permit and require School Committee to adjourn to executive session. These exceptions aside, the public will always be informed of Committee decisions and the rationale.

### **Communication with outside institutions**

School Committee members may be called upon to represent the district to outside institutions, such as agencies, community organizations, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and other school systems. In such a capacity, the member will be mindful to represent the School Committee as a whole. Additionally, it is important to report in a timely manner to the rest of the Committee and the community during our public meetings on the content of those meetings and future actions.

### **Social Media**

Elected officials have an unrestricted right to use their personal internet or e-mail accounts to establish blogs, social media sites, or other vehicles, however, they should be mindful that:

- All communication made electronically in your capacity as a public official is considered public even when you are using your personal e-mail account or blog. This includes responding to constituents with your personal, rather than public, e-mail account.
- Using social media to mobilize opposition to your colleagues or to undermine their credibility, while allowable under the principles of free speech, may undermine your ability to serve effectively with them on the board.
- While public figures like elected officials, including the School Committee, are subject to the

criticism and attack in various forms of media, most of the school district employees are not public figures and comments constituting libel or slander could result in action against the public office holder. (In addition to elected officials, the Superintendent is a public figure.)

School Committee members must be prepared to deal with the consequences of their blogs, Facebook pages, letters to editors, or other items distributed electronically.

## **SUB-COMMITTEES, ADVISORIES AND LIAISONS**

### **Sub-Committees of the School Committee**


The School Committee will have no standing committees. It may, however, establish special subcommittees and advisory committees at its annual organizational meeting. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for Committee action. Each subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties from the chair. The subcommittee may make recommendations for Committee action, but it may not act for the School Committee. The School Committee Chairperson and Superintendent are *ex-officio* members of all special subcommittees. Upon completion of their assignments, all ad-hoc subcommittees are dissolved. Ad-hoc subcommittees may also be dissolved by a vote of the Committee at any time. Sub-committees and ad-hoc committees are subject to rules and regulations related to Massachusetts Open Meeting Law and the School Committee's protocols and policies.

**NRSD School Year 2018-2019 Sub-Committees, Advisories and Liaisons:**

Warrant and Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create FY19 calendar of meeting dates and key topics</li> <li>• Review bi-weekly warrant, recommend for SC approval</li> <li>• Review Budget/Actual expenditures monthly, review SC agreed upon reports as needed, elevate areas for discussion to SC</li> <li>• Recommend list of new, proposed NRSD specific reports to SC for adoption</li> <li>• Approve each meeting’s minutes at next scheduled meeting</li> </ul>
Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create FY19 calendar of meeting dates and key topics</li> <li>• Support Superintendent in developing annual goals</li> <li>• Guide SC in Superintendent mid-cycle and year-end evaluations</li> <li>• Recommend Superintendent’s annual compensation change</li> <li>• Review job descriptions and salary ranges; recommend for SC approval</li> <li>• Prior to new school year, revise SC manual and present as recommendation to SC</li> <li>• Review job descriptions and salary recommendation for new positions including substantive changes to existing positions for recommendation o Superintendent.</li> <li>• Approve each meeting’s minutes at next scheduled meeting</li> </ul>
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create FY19 calendar of meeting dates and key topics</li> <li>• Continue NRSD Policy suite review with MASC and recommend for SC adoption</li> <li>• Champion new NRSD-specific policies as recommended with guidance from MASC</li> <li>• Serve as NRSC liaison to MASC for policy revisions due to regulatory/legislative changes</li> <li>• Approve each meeting’s minutes at next scheduled meeting</li> </ul>
Audit Advisory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate as defined by the District By-laws</li> <li>• Provide regular updates to SC as required</li> </ul>
Collective Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent NRSD on Units A &amp; C contract negotiations</li> <li>• Provide updates to SC as appropriate</li> </ul>
NRHS Facility Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elect a SC representative as NRSD Facility Committee Chair</li> <li>• Verify identify steps/requirements with MSBA</li> <li>• Create/place ad in local papers to recruit community representatives including relevant background/experience</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assemble cross-towns group of community representatives to support potential go-forward (2 per town); include NRHS admin representative</li> <li>• Provide go/no-go recommendation on NRSD SOI submission with MSBA to SC (October, 2017 SC meeting)</li> <li>• Create succinct presentation identifying go/no-go, costs and timeline. Present draft to SC. Upon SC approval deliver to each community</li> </ul>
Mabel Hale Fund Liaison (Stow)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support as defined by the conditions of the fund</li> </ul>
NRSD School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council Liaison (SEPAC) Liaison*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend SEPAC meetings</li> <li>• Participation limited to observer versus involvement at-the-table; provide updates to SC</li> </ul>
Technology Liaison	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend Technology meetings</li> <li>• Participation limited to observer versus involvement at-the-table; provide updates to SC</li> </ul>

 Indicates sub-committees, advisories and liaison roles that are inactive for current school year

\*The Nashoba Regional School District Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is mandated by Massachusetts Law. F-SEPAC is run by volunteer parents and is a district-wide resource and support to parents and guardians of children with special needs.

MGL, Section 71B, Section 3 states:

The school committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources. Each year, the School Committee appoints an SEPAC Liaison.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

The NRSD School Committee typically holds its public meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month when school is in session. [School Committee meetings for the upcoming school year are published on the District website in the spring.](#)

An Executive Session is customarily held at the conclusion of the public meeting; however, at the Chairperson's discretion, Executive Session can be held before the regular meetings as well. In case of conflict, the Committee will reschedule any meeting based on the availability of the members.

In addition to its meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month, the School Committee holds special meetings throughout the year. These meetings include a goal setting workshop in June, a budget workshop schedule on a Saturday in January, and additional meetings during budget preparation season (January-March) as needed. School Committee members are also invited to participate in Tri-Town meetings, typically three or four each year, where school committee items are placed on the agenda of a joint meeting of the towns' select boards.

The School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. Regular meeting: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly;
2. Special meeting: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics;
3. Executive Sessions: Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when allowed by law:
  - 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.
  - Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
  - Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
  - The deployment of security personnel or devices.
  - Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
  - Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
  - To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
  - 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.

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

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

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE AGENDAS ~~FORMAT~~**

The Chairperson of the School Committee, collaborating with the Superintendent, 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.

*At the June SC goal-setting workshop, the SC Chair will present a draft Planning Calendar for the upcoming school year, which includes those items that require annual review and/or presentations. Such items include but are not limited to department reports and reports of assessment data. At each SC meeting, under "Items to be considered for Next Agenda," the chair and the superintendent will ask the committee to review the items on the Planning Calendar and recommend additions or changes to upcoming agendas. A sample planning calendar can be found in the Appendix*

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 Chairperson 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 may provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee for a limited time of three minutes unless otherwise noted by the Chairperson in accordance with district policy.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members three to five (3-5) days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting. If the distribution of the agenda and supporting materials is not possible within the time constraint referenced above, the Chairperson of the School Committee shall have the discretion to waive this requirement in the best interests of the Committee.

Agendas are posted on the district website.

## **SAMPLE AGENDA:**

- I. Call to order
- II. Citizens' Comments ([see Public participation at School Committee Meetings](#))
- III. Student Representative Report (A designated NRHS student will report on activities with a focus to high school activities, but may include other school events.)
- IV. Superintendent's Report (The Superintendent reports on current school-district items for the purpose of information dissemination only.)
- V. School Committee Chair Updates (The School Committee Chairman will report on appropriate school committee items for the purpose of information dissemination only.)
- VI. New Business (New Business items constitute items requiring first time presentation to School Committee for discussion, decisions, or votes on motions.)
- VII. Old Business (Old Business items are items that have been previously presented to the School Committee and for various reasons become returning items for follow-up discussion.)
- VIII. Sub-Committee Reports – [The chair of each sub-committee will provide a brief summary of their meeting if one was held since the previous School Committee meeting.](#)
- IX. Correspondence (The item of Correspondence refers to any appropriate correspondence of note that the School committee and/or public needs to be made aware of, nad/or requires specific follow-up.)
- X. Consent Agenda ( The Consent Agenda allows for a process whereby the proposed agenda may be approved in one action, for any/all items, rather than filing motions on each item separately.)
- XI. Items to be considered for Next Agenda ([see School Committee Agenda, page 17](#))
- XII. Adjourn

## **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 encourages citizens of the District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with district operations and programs of our local public schools. Citizens may wish to share their comments with the Committee publicly. In doing so, they must abide by the following:

1. During each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee. The Chairperson shall determine the length of the public participation segment.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present material which must be related to an agenda item of that meeting. The Chair may extend the time allotted.
3. Non agenda items may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair.
4. 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 Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
5. All remarks will be addressed to the Chair.
6. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the committee will not hear 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.

[https://www.nrsd.net/school\\_committee/policies/section\\_b\\_-\\_governance\\_and\\_operations](https://www.nrsd.net/school_committee/policies/section_b_-_governance_and_operations)

### **Open Meeting Law**

There are four main sections under the Open Meeting Law:

- Open Meeting Law
- Public Participation
- Remote Participation
- Executive Session

School Committee meetings are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, MGL c30A, §19 and must be open to the public. The statute defines a meeting as “a deliberation by public body with respect to any matter within the body’s jurisdiction.”

the School Committee, as a public body, must provide notice to the public at least 48 hours in advance, except in emergencies, but excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays.

### **Minutes of Meetings**

The Massachusetts Open Meeting Law was revised in 2010 and provided more clarity on meeting minutes. In brief, minutes must now contain a summary of matters discussed where previously the minutes needed mention only the subjects raised, motions made, and actions taken.

School committees vary in terms of the level of detail in minutes. Most currently provide a brief summary that is sufficient to meet the standard that a citizen-reader will be able to understand what was discussed. It is not necessary, nor expected, that minutes will be verbatim transcripts, report on every school committee member’s comments, or summarize every public comment made during public comment period. School Committee Secretaries are encouraged to create minutes sufficient for a lay person to capture the sense of the meeting and all actions taken.

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 review of executive session minutes shall take place at least as often as annually. Each year, the Chair or his/her designee will forward the executive session minutes of the previous calendar year to the School Attorney. Upon consideration of the School Attorney's

recommendation, the School Committee will vote to release the executive session minutes of the previous calendar year in conformity with Massachusetts General Law, c.30A sec.22.

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## **Appendix**

[By-Laws](#)

[2018-2019 Meeting Calendar](#)

[2018-2019 School Calendar](#)

[NRSD ORGANIZATIONAL CHART](#)

[Sample Planning Calendar](#)

**Central Office Departments and Staff**

**Glossary\***

**School Committee Members FAQ\***

- To be developed by PSC