



2019-2020 School Committee Operating Protocols

The primary objective of the School Committee is continuous improvement in overall student achievement. Members of the School Committee will abide by the following protocols as individuals and as a committee:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. School Committee members will work with the superintendent to establish a vision, create policy, approve a budget and assure accountability to sustain continuous improvement in teaching, learning and facilities.
4. 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 pursuant to the DESE's Model System for Educator Evaluation.
5. 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.
6. Members recognize that the Chair presides over the meeting, facilitates discussion and enforces the rule that only the speaker recognized by the chair has the floor.
7. 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. At each regular School Committee meeting, the agenda will include "Items to be considered for next or future agendas." Requests to add items to an agenda shall be made to the School Committee Chairperson, who with the superintendent, will determine the suitability for the agenda – if an item is not suitable for the agenda, a reason will be provided.

8. 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. The decision to place such an item on the agenda will be at the discretion of the SC chair, in consultation with the superintendent. If an item is not suitable for the agenda, a reason will be provided.
9. School Committee members will attend meetings on time and be well-prepared to discuss agenda items. Members who are unable to attend a meeting shall notify the Chair in a timely fashion. A quorum of 5 members is required in order for the School Committee to meet.
10. While at meetings, members will stay focused on the agenda items and will not engage in communication outside of the agenda item being discussed and will limit discussion solely to 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.
11. 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. Prior to bringing an item to a vote, the chair will poll the committee to see if members have sufficient information to make an informed decision. If the majority of members indicate in the affirmative, the vote will proceed.
12. Members will refer constituent concerns and complaints to the Superintendent or the School Committee Chair.
13. 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
14. Members recognize the importance of honoring our agreed upon operating protocols and norms, and agree to take responsibility for reminding one another (through the chair) when discussions get off track, personal or redundant.

Approved by NRSC 9/11/19