

Greenfield Public Schools School Committee Handbook

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Introduction:

Dear Member,

Thank you for serving our community through this important responsibility you have undertaken as a member of the Greenfield School Committee.

In your role you will work with the other members to ensure this committee's work is meaningful. You will thoughtfully approach issues with sometimes complex and far-reaching effects, including setting goals and policy, monitoring and approving the budget, negotiating contracts, hiring and evaluating the superintendent, and advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for our students. You are a leader whose words and decisions will have a lasting effect. Central to your success will be your ability to create respectful, professional and effective working relationships with your fellow committee members, superintendent, municipal leaders, students, parents, staff and the community at large.

It is expected that you will share a commitment to provide a high-quality education and positive outcomes for all students, a willingness to become well-versed in diverse matters of public education and the Greenfield Schools, and a sincere desire to be a part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

You are expected to work with the rest of the committee as part of a team that respects and values each other's differences in experience, education, political affiliation, background, personality or opinion.

We welcome your commitment and contributions.

The Greenfield School Committee's Operational Goals Policy (BA) serves all members as a guide:

The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school district has been established.

The Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come.

The Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all people more than the average citizen finds necessary. This requires a comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

The School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish those conditions which will support the educational achievement of our students. The Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school district.

The Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking the comments of the public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

Members should begin by familiarizing themselves with this and other policies that govern the committee's powers & duties ([BBA](#)), member authority ([BBAA](#)), and member ethics ([BCA](#)).

Next, understanding your role in governance in relation to the Superintendent's role in operations, is essential.

The committee hires a Superintendent as its executive officer, and as such the Superintendent is responsible for all operations of the school district and for implementing committee policy. The Superintendent seeks guidance from the school

committee when appropriate and provides information to keep the committee informed and able to make sound judgments ([BDD](#)). The committee does not involve itself in matters of day-to-day operations.

Rather, **the committee's main role in relation to school operations is through policy development** ([BG](#)), by which the committee exercises leadership in the functioning of the district. Then, through the study of the effectiveness of our policies, the committee exercises its control over school operation. Members should review procedures for policy adoption ([BGB](#)), policy review & revision ([BGC](#)), and review of regulations ([BGD](#)) to understand how to help the committee act effectively within its scope.

In addition to policy, **the committee's second role is budget.**

The committee acts as trustee of public funds to ensure they are used wisely and that education remains central. The committee engages in thorough advance planning, with community input, in order to develop a budget and guide expenditures to achieve the greatest educational returns ([DBD](#)). The Superintendent serves as budget officer and is responsible for budget preparation, presentation, and administration ([DB](#)).

Our annual process of budget proposal, public hearing and final vote is designed so that all people who wish to be heard are heard ([DBC](#)). Once our proposal goes to the Mayor to consider before proposing a city budget, your opportunity as a school committee member does not end. When you advocate for funding the budget, you carry out our policy ([DBD](#)) that we strive to establish levels of funding that provide high quality education for all our students. Members may advocate with individual city councilors, attend and give public comment at city council meetings, and speak publicly in support of the committee's positions (including our proposed budget). If funding is ultimately inadequate, the committee may have hard decisions to make, so you have good reason for being a strong advocate for our schools, while always being respectful of other city departments.

The Superintendent is ultimately responsible for receiving and accounting for funds and will provide regular statements to the committee to monitor the financial condition of the school department ([DI](#)).

The committee also works collaboratively with the city for capital improvement planning([DJB](#)). Members are encouraged to take part in and invite city councilors to our annual school tour to observe the condition of our buildings first-hand, as well as to ask the Superintendent questions about the health and needs of our facilities. As a school committee member, it is your role to think from the bird's-eye level of governance about long-range planning for our buildings and budgets necessary to having high-quality schools.

The committee's final role is the hiring and oversight of the Superintendent. In hiring, the committee seeks out input from stakeholders in various ways that are open to our own design. Evaluation serves the purpose of helping the Superintendent continually improve their practice. Through evaluation, the committee seeks to:

1. Ensure the efforts of the Superintendent are focused on district goals and the standards of professional practice established by state regulation are met by the Superintendent.
2. Ensure all Committee members and the Superintendent are in agreement and clear on the role of the Superintendent and the immediate priorities among their responsibilities.
3. Provide excellence in administrative leadership of the school district.
4. Develop a respectful and productive working relationship between the School Committee and Superintendent.

The evaluation cycle, procedure and goals are set through agreement between the committee and Superintendent and in accordance with state regulations ([CBI](#)). Members should be mindful that school superintendent is one of few roles in which someone's performance evaluation at work is conducted in an open meeting with the

public, and to act fairly by sticking to the agreed-upon procedure and goals, while holding respectful accountability at the forefront.

You should now have a good basic framework for understanding your role as a school committee member.

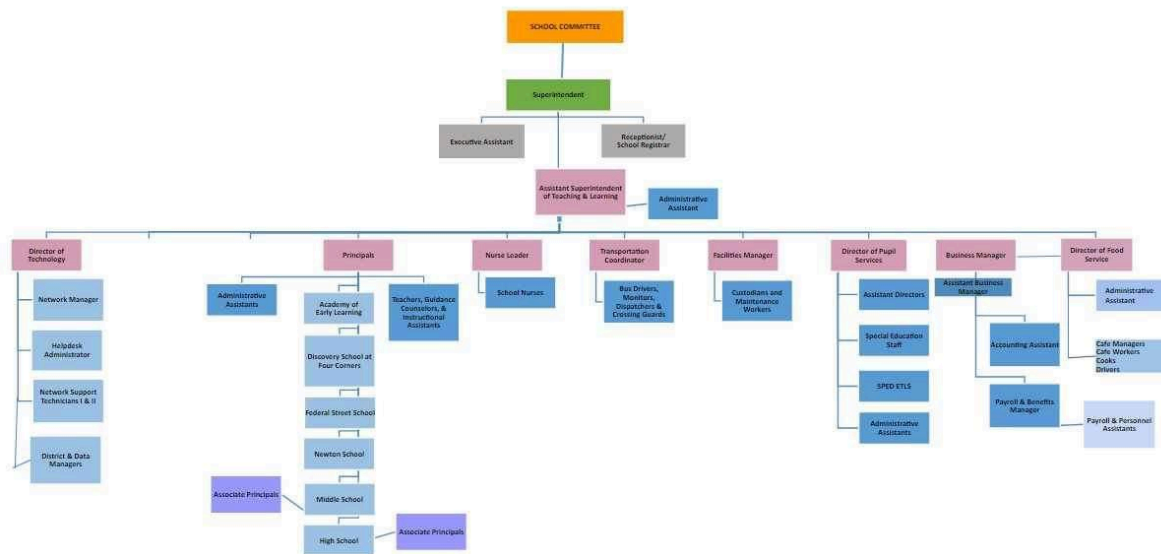
In the following sections of this handbook, you will find information about committee organization, operations, and norms, as well as guidance on how to be the most effective member you can be.

Members should feel free, always, to reach out to the chair and/or the superintendent with questions.

On behalf of the Greenfield School Committee, we wish you an outstanding and successful term of service.

Good luck!

Org Chart



Statement of inclusion:

Greenfield Public Schools is a place where all students are supported on their path to success. We support students by honoring the uniqueness of each individual, embracing diverse backgrounds, values, and points of view to build a strong, inclusive community. Advancing the Greenfield Public Schools mission requires a collective responsibility and effort from students, staff, parents and community, and the School Committee - our entire learning community

Greenfield Public Schools recognize that the best education occurs in schools comprised of students, teachers, and families drawn from a diverse socio-economic backgrounds, cultures, races, religions, and sexual orientations. GPS also recognizes that a diverse school alone is not enough. We seek to build on this commitment by striving to create a truly inclusive school: one where all students are welcomed and supported.

The School Committee and its members strive to model these values in our actions. The work of bringing DEI to life and ensuring that it is reflected in our education and cocurricular programming is our responsibility - it is perpetual, not only a project to be completed or a program to be implemented. Equity and inclusion are beliefs and actions that we must uphold with integrity every day and continuously challenge ourselves to embody, sustain and improve upon for the benefit of everyone in our diverse learning community.

Greenfield Public Schools regularly engages in continuous learning so that we can identify, examine, and confront our language, practices, procedures, and policies that directly or indirectly promote or sustain inequitable outcomes and deficit thinking so that we may remove them.

GPS District mission statement:

“The Greenfield Public School District is a place where every child is supported on their path to success.”

We are a public school district located in western Massachusetts serving preschool through high school students. We have six schools and over 1450 students enrolled. Our preschool is the Academy of Early Learning. Our three elementary schools are Newton School, Federal Street School, and Discovery School at Four Corners serving grades K-4. Greenfield Middle School serves grades 5-7 and Greenfield High School serves grades 8-12.

Our district is committed to providing students with high-quality instructional programs geared to meet the needs of all students and ensure their success.

School Committee Member Code of Conduct:

These obligations and commitments shall be assumed by all members of the School Committee.

This Code of Conduct sets forth a standard of conduct for the Greenfield Public School Committee under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. As an elected public official, a School Committee member has taken an oath to adhere to all federal laws, the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the charter of the city of Greenfield.

This Code of Conduct outlines three general areas of a member's responsibility: Community responsibility; responsibility to District Administration; and relationship to fellow School Committee members, and other persons appearing before the School Committee.

Community Responsibility:

1. A member in their relations with the School Community should realize that their primary responsibility is to all Greenfield Public Schools and School Committee members to represent the community at all times. Recognize that their function is policy making and not administrative. Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by all School Committee decisions once they are made.
2. Be well informed concerning the duties of a School Committee member on both state and local issues within Greenfield.

3. Accept the office of School Committee member as a means of unselfish public service.

Responsibility To Greenfield Public School District Administration): A member in their relations with the Administration should establish and update through the Committee sound, clearly defined policies with which to govern and support the Administration.

1. Recognize and support the District Administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside of the school district.
2. Refer all complaints to the Superintendent for solutions and only pursue satisfactory results through the frameworks of the School Committee structure if such solutions fail.
3. Request assistance and information from School staff only through the Superintendent.

Relationship To Fellow School Committee Members and Other Persons: A member in their relations with fellow School Committee members and other persons shall:

1. Accept differences of opinion as building blocks of our democratic process.
2. Always treat other members, the Administration, other city officials, and employees with personal respect and act in a civil manner towards them.
3. Concentrate all dialogue on the issue and refrain from personal criticism.
4. Conduct themselves to maintain public confidence in their local government and in their performance of the public trust.
5. Recognize that committee action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the School Committee outside such meetings.
6. Unless specifically exempted (e.g. Executive Session), conduct the business of the public in a manner that promotes open and transparent government and maintains full compliance with the Open Meeting Law (MGL Chapter 39, Section 23B)

7. Uphold the confidentiality of executive sessions and documents presented during same, and respect the privileged communications that exist in executive sessions.
8. Not withhold pertinent information on municipal matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own School Committee or from members of other bodies who may be seeking help and information on problems.
9. Not make statements or promises of how you will vote on matters that will come before the full School Committee until you have had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a public meeting of the School Committee.
10. Cooperate with the Chair of the School Committee in the conduct of meetings.
11. Never publicly criticize an employee of the city. Concerns about staff performance should only be made to the Superintendent through private conversation.
12. Treat persons who appear before the School Committee with respect, and dignity and in a manner free from discrimination, abuse, and harassment.
13. Act in a civil and professional manner at all School Committee meetings.
14. Speak in a civil manner and not harass or bully residents, business owners, other School Committee members, the Superintendent, school administration, and employees, either in person, in writing, or on social media.
15. Conduct official business in such a manner as to give the clear impression that they cannot be improperly influenced in the performance of their official duties

Enforcement of Code of Conduct:

1. The School Committee shall enforce the Code of Conduct.
2. Any School Committee member violating the Code of Conduct may be subject to public censure by the School Committee.
3. During a meeting, after an initial warning, a member who acts in an inappropriate manner is unruly, or disorderly may be removed from a meeting by a majority vote of the remaining members.

The Greenfield School Committee uses Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedure. Members are encouraged to obtain their own copy and be especially mindful of the rules on decorum. Specifically, members shall refrain from using names where possible and otherwise refer to each other by their official titles, refrain from maligning other members' motives or other personal affronts, and confine their comments to the nature or consequences of the measure under debate.

How to make a complaint:

If a member wishes to make a complaint about another member, they should first contact the Chair. Let the Chair know what is going on and that you want to make a complaint. If it is possible for the Chair to facilitate a communication between parties you should consider that possibility.

If a complaint is the chosen way forward the member must write their complaint and submit it to the Chair. The Chair will notify the member(s) identified in the complaint and will consult with the legal counsel on the required steps to move forward.

Articulated consequences:

If a complaint is made by a member about another member, this complaint will be heard in executive session and there are possible consequences.

In the complaint an action might be identified by the complainant. If it seems appropriate the member identified in the complaint may decide to perform the action to make restitution.

The member may also choose to resign from the committee, or the committee may vote to censure the member.

Public Calendar Outline:

Year Long Agenda

Budget Calendar

Below is an overview of the yearly calendar for Greenfield Public Schools. This will provide you with a basic understanding of when certain events and items are likely to come before the School Committee. It is not a comprehensive calendar. For a more detailed calendar, please see the current Academic Year calendar and District Events calendar.

Greenfield School Committee meets on the second Wednesday of every month at 6pm.

[GPS 2024-25 Academic Year Calendar](#)

[GPS District Events Calendar](#)

GPS Calendar Overview

| | |
|-----------|--|
| July | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent evaluation • School Committee self-evaluation |
| August | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Superintendent presents goals for the coming school year • School Committee presents goals for the coming school year • Convocation |
| September | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee approves annual budget development calendar for the upcoming fiscal year |
| October | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee approves capital improvement requests |
| November | |
| December | |
| January | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year check-in on Superintendent goals • Mid-year review of progress on strategic plan • Mid-year check-in on School Committee goals • Annual school tour (open to School Committee and City Council members)* |
| February | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual budget hearing (late February-early March) |
| March | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Committee approves proposed budget |
| April | |
| May | |
| June | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year review of Superintendent goals |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of year review of progress on strategic plan • Graduation |
|--|--|

* January has been the month that School Tours have historically occurred, but this date can be jointly negotiated with the district administration and School Committee. City Councilors are invited, but not required, to attend.

School Committee Goals

Goal setting process is currently being reviewed and will be updated annually.

Academic dashboard

Insert the three year findings from Superintendent presentation (Eliz)

List of important personnel for the School Committee:

Legal Counsel Dupree Law Offices (413) 562-3301

****always speak to the chair before contacting our legal counsel as per policy****

Superintendent Karin Patenaude karp1@gpsk12.org

Asst. Superintendent Stephen Sullivan

MASC contact is our field director Liz Lafond (413) 250-1506

llafond@masc.org

Our state legislators:

State representatives

Natalie Blais (413) 362-9453 Natalie.Blais@mahouse.gov

Susannah Whipps (617) 722-2090 Susannah.Whipps@mahouse.gov

State Senator

Jo Comerford (617) 722-1532

jo@jocomerford.org

House of Representatives
Jim McGovern
josh@jimmgovern.com

Committee Organization

Committee Organization

Each year, the committee holds an organizational meeting and elects a chair, vice-chair, and secretary ([BDA](#)). Public comment precedes the election of officers at this meeting. During it, members are encouraged to speak to what they want to see from the officer in each role, and nominate and speak in support of whichever member they wish.

Members can quite effectively speak in favor of whichever candidate they think is best suited to the role without making any inappropriately negative or personal statements against other nominees that will damage the ability of the committee to work as a team, and are encouraged to keep their comments professional and appropriate.

The Chairperson of the committee has the same powers as other members, along with additional responsibilities to the committee. These include consulting with the Superintendent in planning committee agendas and on crucial matters that occur between meetings, appointing subcommittees (subject to committee approval) and making Chairperson assignments, calling special meetings, being the committee spokesperson and representing the committee at city council and other meetings, keeping committee meetings orderly, and being the committee liaison to legal consultants. As presiding officer, the Chair will call the meeting to order, announce business, enforce our policies on the order of business and conduct of meetings, managing public comment, explaining the effect of a motion if it is not clear to members, restricting discussion to the question, answering parliamentary questions or appointing a Parliamentarian, putting motions to a vote and clearly stating the result, ensuring committee business is handled timely, and conducting meetings with professional courtesy and fairness. Members are encouraged to read the [MASC guide to the Role of the Chair](#) for a thorough understanding of what it means to be “the servant of the assembly”.

The role of the Vice-Chair is quite simple in our committee, and is to act in the absence of the presiding officer in the absence of the Chair, and to perform other duties as delegated by the Chair or assigned by the committee. Members may encounter other committees in which the Vice-Chair serves as the presiding officer because the Mayor there serves as Chair. In Greenfield, the Mayor is a voting member of the committee but may not serve as Chair, and therefore our Chair is the presiding officer.

The committee employs a recording secretary responsible for keeping an accurate record of committee proceedings. In the recording secretary is unavailable, the Secretary of the school committee is responsible for capturing minutes, as well as other duties delegated by the Chair or assigned by the committee. The Secretary ensures guidelines of the Attorney General are met, takes and records roll call votes and the entering/exiting of executive sessions when required.

List of Subcommittees and their functions:

There are currently 3 standing subcommittees of the Greenfield School Committee:

Budget & Finance Subcommittee Function: Oversees the development, review, and approval of the school district's budget.

Duties:

- Analyze superintendent's budget proposals and ensure alignment with district priorities and goals.
- Identify areas for potential cost savings or reallocation of resources.
- Collaborate with superintendent and stakeholders.
- Make recommendations to the full school committee regarding budgetary decisions.
- Promote fiscal responsibility and transparency within the district.

Policy & Program Subcommittee: Reviews and develops district-wide policies to ensure alignment with legal requirements, district goals, and community needs.

Duties: ● Consider stakeholder feedback and collaborate with district administrators to draft and revise district policies.

- Conduct thorough reviews of existing policies to assess effectiveness and relevance.
- Recommend policy revisions or updates to the full school committee based on changes in laws, regulations, or emerging issues.
- Foster transparency and accountability in the policy development and review process, soliciting input from the community and other stakeholders.

Executive Subcommittee: Provide leadership and oversight for the school committee, serving as a smaller decision-making body to address urgent matters and facilitate efficient operations.

Duties:

- **Agenda Setting:** Collaborate with the committee chair to set meeting agendas, ensuring that important topics are addressed and meetings are productive.
- **Strategic Planning:** Engage in strategic planning activities to identify goals and priorities for the committee.

- Committee Operations: Oversee administrative tasks related to committee operations, such as maintaining records and ensuring compliance with legal requirements.

The committee may create an additional subcommittee at any time in accordance with policy ([BDE](#)). The committee currently has 2 ad hoc subcommittees:

Reenvisioning Our School Facilities Subcommittee

School Committee Handbook Subcommittee: Develops a comprehensive handbook that outlines the processes and methods necessary for school committee members to perform their roles effectively.

Duties

- Focus the handbook entirely on School Committee roles and responsibilities.
- Outline roles, responsibilities, and operating procedures for committee members.
- Identify current district policies related to the School Committee and School Committee functioning and provide operating procedures on how those policies will be implemented.
- Provide guidance on School Committee meeting protocols, ethics standards, and communication practices.
- Ensure the handbook reflects current legal requirements and School Committee best practices.

The committee also appoints individual members to several important roles:

Collaborative for Educational Services

City Planning & Construction

Legislative Representative

MASC Division V Representative

District Wellness Committee

Union Negotiations

Important Links

District Website <https://gpsk12.org/>

MASC website <https://www.masc.org/>

MGL Title XII

<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter76/Section1>

School Partnerships:

Strings for Kids <https://musicaltoolbox.com/>

Musica Franklin. <https://www.musicafranklin.org/>

The Learning Knoll. <https://www.girlsclubofgreenfield.org/>

The YMCA. <https://your-y.org/>

Greenfield Education Association

Acronyms

CASEL: Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning

CEP: The Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal service option for schools and school districts in low-income areas. CEP allows the nation's highest poverty schools and districts to serve breakfast and lunch at no cost to all enrolled students without collecting household applications.

CKLA: Core Knowledge Language Arts

DESE: Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DILT:

EL: English Learners

ELA: English Language Arts

ESSER: Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief Fund

E team: Executive team

HQIM: high quality instructional materials

IA: Instructional Assistant

ILT: Instructional Learning Technology

MERT: Emergency Response Team?

MSBA: Massachusetts School Building Authority

MTRS: Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System

MTSS: Multi Tiered Systems of Support

PD: professional development

RTI: Response to Intervention

SE; Socio Economic Disadvantage

SEL: Social and Emotional Learning

SPED: Special Education

SSOS: Statewide Systems of Support

SST: Student Support Team

SOA: Student Opportunity Act

SWD: Students with Disabilities

TITLE I. A Title 1 school is a school that receives federal funding to support students from low-income families, aiming to improve their academic achievement and provide a high-quality education.

TITLE IX Title IX is a federal civil rights law that prohibits sex-based discrimination in education programs or activities that receive federal financial assistance. It was passed as part of the Education Amendments of 1972 and applies to charter schools, for-profit schools, libraries, museums, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and education agencies.

UNIT A: The bargaining unit designation for Greenfield Public Schools Educators who belong to the union (classroom teacher).

UNIT C: The bargaining unit designation for Greenfield Public Schools Educators who belong to the union (paraeducators, instructional assistants).

How to be a school committee member

Members often have questions about school committee operating protocols. Below are basics to guide you in preparing for and participating in meetings, developing yourself professionally as a school committee member, and communicating appropriately and effectively.

Meetings

1) Meetings take place on the second Wednesday of the month at 6PM. The location occasionally varies and is listed on the posted agenda. The agenda and materials will be posted at least 48 hours before the meeting. Preparation includes reading all materials in advance, preparing questions, and if possible letting the Superintendent know of any background you may be asking for at the meeting. Members will receive the agenda and materials by email at least 48 hours before meetings, however sometimes additional materials are presented at the meeting, therefore you may wish to arrive early to review them first.

2) The committee uses Robert's Rules of Order for parliamentary procedure. Members are encouraged to obtain a copy and familiarize themselves with it.

2) If you are unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the full committee, you should notify the Chair. Members are permitted to be absent 3 times per year and may be subject to censure if they are absent more. If as a member of a subcommittee, you are unable to attend a meeting, you should notify the Chair of the sub-committee.

3) When determining the agenda for regular meetings of the school committee:

- The chair and superintendent shall utilize the school committee's annual calendar to develop agenda topics by meeting, with additional topics as needed.
- Members may suggest additional agenda items to add to the next month's meeting agenda by emailing the chair. If the member and the chair disagree about whether the item should be taken up by the school committee, then the chair will add an item to the agenda in which the committee will vote on whether or not to take it up.
- The superintendent shall draft the agenda based upon additional district needs, the input provided at the last meeting, and any other items requested by the chair.
- Ideally, the Chair and Superintendent will meet to finalize the agenda. Alternatively, the Chair will approve the drafted agenda at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.

- The Superintendent will be responsible for compiling supporting materials for agenda items and posting the agenda in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.

4) In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, members will refrain from bringing up topics that are not on the agenda during meetings. Members should ask for items to be placed on the agenda rather than unexpectedly bringing them during a meeting. Members may attend meetings of a subcommittee they are not assigned to at the discretion of the Chair (see policy [BDE](#)).

6) Members must not speak on behalf of the committee to outside parties, unless they are reporting on actions of the committee or have been authorized by the committee to speak as a representative (see policy [BBAA](#)). Individual school committee members will recognize that authority rests with the majority of the school committee, and not with individual members.

8) Members of the public may speak during public comment according to committee policy ([BEDH and BEDH-E](#)). Members should listen respectfully during public comment and refrain from responding, as public comment is not a discussion forum. The committee can and does conduct more conversational forums with the public, such as listening sessions and appointing advisory councils (see policy [BDE](#)), as needed.

8) The school committee and subcommittees may meet in a workshop setting for special topics that are more suited to this, for example trainings and committee self-evaluation.

9) In between meetings: To ensure efficient scheduling of subcommittee and special meetings, members should check district email regularly and respond to queries in a timely manner. Members should use electronic messaging only for housekeeping purposes and refrain from deliberation on committee business outside of meetings (policy BHE). Members must be mindful of when they are (or might be) communicating with a quorum and ensure they avoid discussion of topics under the committee's purview at those times. Members should be particularly mindful when posting on social media, a venue in which multiple members may be present, and refrain from discussing committee business in this context.

11) Members must refrain from discussing items from executive sessions outside of those sessions until after the minutes from such meetings are approved by the committee to be declassified(see policy [BEC](#)).

Professional Development & Committee Improvement

1) Members are strongly encouraged to participate in professional development. It is essential that you develop your knowledge about school committee leadership and pertinent issues in education in order for you to provide the most valuable service. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) offers numerous opportunities (see <https://www.masc.org/events>). Chief among them:

- * All members must complete 8 hours of orientation training within 1 year of election/appointment (policy [BIA](#)). The MASC Charting the Course training covers all required topics and is offered multiples times a year.
- * The MASC New Members page (<https://www.masc.org/new-members>) offers an excellent primer. Here you will find information about your role and responsibilities, frequently asked questions, and a listserv for members across the state.
- * The MASC and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (M.A.S.S.) annual joint conference occurs in November every year and offers 3 days of engaging workshops and expert speakers on the most pressing issues in education today, alongside opportunities to meet and gain insight from peers.
- * MASC offers an annual Summer Institute in July offering workshops on timely topics and training in school committee leadership. Members may register for part or all of both conferences.
- * Many of the MASC's workshops are available by [recording](#). All members are strongly encouraged to attend/view these fundamental workshops:
 - * 70 Minutes on Chapter 70
 - * Effective Meetings
 - * Role of the Chair

Funds for our training are budgeted for annually (policy [BIBA](#)). The committee may also choose to amend these budgeted funds as needed. Travel expenses are reimbursed in accordance with the policy for staff. If you are interested in attending a training:

- Email the Chair and Superintendent indicating what training you want to attend.
- If you are registering for an MASC event, you may select the “bill my district” option, provide that sufficient budgeted funds remain available.

- After you attend, send a copy of your name badge or program to the Superintendent's assistant to document your attendance.
- If you are seeking reimbursement for a fee you paid yourself or other expenses such as lodging, submit to the Superintendent's assistant a copy of your bank/credit card statement (all other items redacted) showing your expense.
- If you are seeking reimbursement for mileage, show your route on a map with the total mileage requested.

2) Members are reminded that state, county, and municipal employees (including ourselves) are required to meet the [Conflict of Interest Law Education Requirements](#). Members who maintain a campaign fund should keep abreast of [campaign finance reporting requirements](#).

2) The school committee conducts a self-evaluation each year. In accordance with our policy ([BAA](#)), members will discuss the results in detail and use them to formulate a new series of objectives. Objectives may be set in areas such as:

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

Communication

Communication is likely to be your most powerful tool and also your biggest challenge as a school committee member. Members often have questions about how to balance the need to get things done with the need to keep our deliberations open to the public, about when to communicate with the Superintendent, and about how to respond to constituents in various circumstances.

With each other: Members are encouraged to develop collegial relationships with each other while respecting the Open Meeting Law (OML). Within 2 weeks of your election/appointment, you must complete training in the [OML](#); you will receive email about this to ensure your certification is complete. The purpose of the law is “to ensure transparency in the deliberations on which public policy is based.” To begin with, you must be cognizant of when you are communicating with a quorum (a majority of the voting members) of the committee. Members are encouraged to communicate and work together while refraining from deliberating on committee business with a quorum outside an open meeting, which requires good judgment and discernment. If you become aware of a violation of OML, it behooves the committee to report it ourselves, and members are therefore encouraged to bring such concerns to the Chair. Upon a violation being investigated by the Secretary of State, the committee will have opportunity to propose a remedy. The balance is this: Get to know your fellow committee members, work together to support mutual aims and ideals, within your obligations to provide transparency to the public.

With the Superintendent: Members are encouraged to contact the Superintendent with any questions or concerns. Members may email, call and/or meet with the Superintendent as needed, while being mindful of our policy on the School Committee-Superintendent Relationship ([BDD](#)) and of the Superintendent’s very busy schedule.

With staff: The committee wants to have input from and a good relationship with staff AND maintain boundaries in which the Superintendent (not the committee) is the administrator. It is our policy ([BHC](#) and [GBD](#)) that staff communications to/from the committee must go through the Superintendent. Staff are expected to use the proper procedure for complaints and grievances; these procedures include an avenue for staff to appeal important administrative decisions to the committee. Likewise, all official communications to staff must be by the Superintendent and not by any member of the committee. If a staff member contacts you about a personnel issue, it should be forwarded to the Superintendent, who will ensure the staff member is aware of the structures set up for addressing their concerns and their obligations around using them. Staff are very welcome to attend school committee meetings and may also make public comment about issues before the committee, while being mindful of district policy. Staff who are represented by a union may also utilize their organizational leadership to communicate their views as a group.

Visits: You may, with committee approval, make visits to our schools as an expression of general interest in school affairs. Members should inform the Superintendent of their visits and arrange them through the Principal of the school. In order to make visits efficient and also to help communicate the needs of our schools, the school committee holds an annual group tour of all our schools for committee members and city councilors. This tour is led by the Superintendent and each building Principal is available during their school's portion to answer questions and discuss their needs.

With students: The committee takes into consideration student opinion on policies that affect their programs, activities, privileges and other related topics (policy [JIB](#)). Students are welcome at committee meetings and to speak at public comment. State law also provides for a Student Advisory Committee, the chair of which serves as a non-voting member of the school committee. Each month, the school committee receives a report from our student representatives, which also provides members an opportunity to ask them questions.

With parents: The committee seeks positive relationships with parents, and has established policies ([KBA](#) and [KBE](#)) toward that end. As a school committee member, you should be responsive and respectful when communicating with parents, always. If a parent contacts you with a complaint about a staff member, you should immediately refer their complaint to the Superintendent (policy [KEB](#) and [KEB-R](#)); see policy for more information about complaint procedures and circumstances under which a formal hearing may be held by the committee.

With members of the public: The committee has established policies toward productive relationships with the community (see policy [KA](#), [KA-1](#) and [KCB](#)). Our policy expressly encourages dialogue, involvement and the community's advocacy for its public schools. Members and staff must give substantial weight to advice from individuals and community groups interested in the schools, while still using our judgment in decisions. Our policy also supports volunteerism in school programs, recognition programs for our staff & students, and community service by our staff & students. If a member of the public contacts you with a complaint about a member of the staff, follow the same procedure as above (policy [KEB](#) and [KEB-R](#)).

With legislators: The school committee's legislative program (policy [BJ](#)) aims to support vigorous work as a committee toward laws that advance good schools.

The committee tasks itself with keeping informed of pending legislation and actively communicating concerns/positions to legislators. The committee also tasks itself with working with legislators, MASC and other concerned groups in developing an annual and long-range legislative program. When interacting with legislators, members must bear in mind that individual members may speak only for themselves, not for the committee, except for when authorized by the committee. At our organizational meeting, the committee appoints a legislative representative to bring legislative issues to the our attention and represent the committee's positions to legislators. The committee also appoints a representative to our MASC division and may appoint a delegate to the MASC Delegate Assembly, through which we may introduce and vote on resolutions that often result in the filing of legislation or establishment of official positions by MASC. All members are encouraged to attend MASC's annual Day on the Hill where you will receive training and experience lobbying for the committee's positions and MASC [legislative priorities](#).

How to chair a meeting

Each member will at some point be asked to chair a meeting. It is good practice to pay attention to how that is done so you will be ready when your time comes.

If you are chairing a meeting remotely or using the virtual space for public comment you will need the confidential login credentials which you will receive from the Executive Assistant.

Make sure the time and date is accurate on the meeting agenda and when it is time to begin the meeting check to see who is present and if there are any members of the public attending. Record the meeting to the Cloud.

Call the meeting to order. State the date and time and ask if anyone is recording. Take roll call and then proceed with the agenda.

After adjournment please end the recording.

Evaluations

The School Committee is responsible for conducting regular evaluations of its own operations as well as the performance of the Superintendent.

School Committee Self-Evaluation:

The School Committee is responsible for setting annual goals for itself. [Policy BAA](#) provides a non-exhaustive overview of the topics that may be considered as part of a School Committee self-evaluation. Annually, usually during the July meeting, members will convene to review the work of the prior academic year, thoroughly and honestly assessing the Committee's performance and progress toward its goals, as well as the goals of the district. Based on this review the Committee will create a new set of goals for the coming year. In January, the Committee will conduct a mid-year check-in to ensure that progress is being made toward goals and to adjust as necessary.

Superintendent Evaluation:

[Policy CBI](#) provides an overview of the intent and process behind Superintendent evaluation. Evaluating the Superintendent is a collaborative process between the School Committee, the public, and the Superintendent themselves. In addition to School Committee policy, the Superintendent evaluation process is governed by [Massachusetts law](#), and often utilizes [DESE-supported materials for evaluating administrators](#)

Superintendent evaluations are conducted annually, usually on the same schedule as School Committee self-evaluation, with a period of summative review and goal-setting to be accomplished at the July and August School Committee meetings and a formative mid-year check-in to occur at the January School Committee meeting.

Bringing Forward Resolutions

One of our duties is advocacy at the state and national level. This means being on top of current legislation and knowing which bills could help our students. If you wish to advocate for a specific bill or policy you may submit a resolution to the full committee. The process for doing so is this. Prepare your resolution by giving it a date and title.

Explain the reason and add an action you wish to have taken if the resolution passes.

From time to time you may receive requests from constituents to bring forward a resolution.

Follow the same procedure.

Reimbursement for professional development

Occasionally you will travel for professional development or events. Please keep all receipts and make a note of your mileage. When it is time to request reimbursement you will need

- Mileage and a map of your route

- Proof of attendance such as a photo of your name tag, certificate, or materials
- Receipts from hotel accommodations
- Any receipts for meals that took place during the event

Once you have completed your trip collect all these things and send them to the Executive Assistant to the Superintendent for reimbursement.

This handbook will be evaluated annually.