

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY MANUAL

SOUTHERN BERKSHIRE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT SHEFFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS 01257

This manual contains the official policies of the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee; the major regulations intended to implement policy; and certain reference or "exhibit" documents that relate to policies and/or regulations.

Policy development in a modern, forward-looking school system is a dynamic, ongoing process. New problems, issues, and needs give rise to the continuing need to develop new policies or to revise existing ones. This is why the committee employs the loose-leaf format for this manual. It is easy to keep up to date.

Each person holding a copy of this manual should make a diligent effort to keep it up to date as new policies, regulations, and exhibits are distributed by the central office.

How to Use this Manual

The school department operates according to policies established by the school committee. The committee then appraises the effects of its policies and makes revisions as necessary.

In the interests of harmony, efficiency, uniformity of interpretation, coordination of effort, and in fairness to all concerned, the committee makes this manual available to all who are affected by its policies.

Please Note: All copies of this manual are the property of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District.

How the Manual is organized

The manual is organized in accordance with the classification system developed by the National School Boards Association. This system provides an efficient means of coding, filing, and finding policies and other documents. There are 12 major classifications each assigned an alphabetical code:

- A -- FOUNDATIONS AND BASIC COMMITMENTS
- B -- SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
- C – GENERAL SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
- D – FISCAL MANAGEMENT
- E – SUPPORT SERVICES
- F – FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT
- G – PERSONNEL
- H – NEGOTIATIONS
- I – INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM
- J – STUDENTS
- K – SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS
- L – EDUCATION AGENCY RELATIONS

Sub classification under each heading is based on logical sequence and alphabetical sub coding. For an example of the sub coding system, examine the white pages immediately following the tab for Section AD--Foundations and Basic Commitments.

The white pages that follow the tab for each major section present the classification system, section by section, and serve as the tables of contents for each section or "chapter" of this manual.

How to find a policy: There are two ways to find a policy (or regulation) in the manual:

1. Consider where the policy statement (or regulation) would be filed among the 12 major classifications. Turn to the Table of Contents for that section and glance down the listing until you find the term that most closely fits the topic you are seeking. Use the code letters given for that term to locate the policy you need. The pages are arranged in alphabetical order by code within the section. All pages are coded in their upper right hand corner.
2. Turn to the Code Finder Index at the end of the manual. The code finder is an alphabetical index of all terms used in education. Look up your topic as in any index, find the code, and use the code to locate the correct page in the manual.

What if you can't find the term you are seeking? The code finder index lists more than 1,800 terms, but no index of useful size could include every possibility. If the term you are seeking is not included, look up a synonym or a more general or specific term appropriate to the topic.

What if you can find the term and code, but there is no policy or regulation? This probably means that the school system has no written policy or important regulations in that particular area. All terms used in the classification system appear in the sectional tables of contents and Code Finder Index to accommodate the coding, insertion, and finding of policies or regulations that may be issued later. But there is one other possibility. A brief statement related to the policy you are seeking may be incorporated in a "superior" policy, which covers the area generally. This "superior" policy will be coded under a more general term. To find it, read up the classification system. For example, a policy statement, which relates to all meetings of the school committee, might be filed under "School Board Meetings" (BD) rather than "Regular Board Meetings" (BDA). (Please note: In the classification system and Code Finder Index, read "School Committee" for "School Board".)

Using the signs and symbols. Various signs and symbols are used in connection with the classification system. They are for your use in locating and/or in examining policies. Included are the following:

- R This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a regulation, not a committee policy. The statement appears on a yellow, rather than a white, sheet.
- E Exhibit. This symbol following a code indicates that the statement is a reference document such as a calendar, application form, etc., rather than a policy. Such statements are printed on green paper.

- Also:** Certain policies bear two codes in the upper right hand corner. The second is in parentheses and is preceded by 'Also'. This means that the identical policy (or regulation) is filed under both codes.
- Dates:** Where possible, the original date of adoption/issuance appears immediately following each policy or regulation. In other instances, an approximate adoption or re-approval date is used.
- LEGAL REF.:** Pertinent legal references are given to inform the reader where in state law s/he may find the statutes that relate to a specific policy. Unless otherwise noted, all references direct the reader to the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (cited as M.G.L., Chapter and section).
- CONTRACT REF:** Agreements reached through negotiations with recognized staff organizations have the full force of committee policy. References to negotiated agreements are provided, as appropriate, to direct the reader to statements in these agreements.
- CROSS REF.:** Certain policies and regulations relate to others. Cross-references are provided following many statements to help the reader find all of the related information needed.

About School Committee Policies

Generally, the role of a School Committee is to set policy and the role of the administration is to implement it through regulations. Written policies are the chief means by which a School Committee governs the schools, and regulations are one of the means by which the committee's policies are implemented. The following definitions provide a distinction between these two types of statements:

POLICIES are principles adopted by the School Committee to chart a course of action. They are broad enough to indicate a line of action to be taken by the administration in meeting a number of day-to-day problems while being narrow enough to give the administration clear guidance.

REGULATIONS are detailed directions usually developed by the administration to put policy into practice.

These definitions are serviceable much of the time. They reflect sound theory of governance and administration. But policies and regulations are obviously closely related. They can and do merge, making it difficult to ascertain where one begins and the other ends. For example:

- State and federal governments require school committees to make or officially approve detailed regulations, and procedures in certain areas.

- A School Committee signs contracts and agreements that may contain and interweave policies, regulations, and procedural detail.
- The public, staff, or school committee members may demand that the School Committee itself, not the administration, establish specific regulations and procedures in certain sensitive areas.

The intermingling of policy and regulation in law, in contracts, and in adopted statements of the School Committee that can cause confusion. Sometimes they are not easily separated. Therefore, the separation of policies and regulations in this manual follows several "rules of thumb" in addition to basic theory:

1. When the school system's practice in a particular area is established by law, any informational statement covering the practice is presented as "policy" and is printed on a white page. (A law may, of course, be quoted or referred to in a regulation.)
2. When a school system's practice in a particular area has been established through a negotiated agreement, any statement pertaining to that practice is presented as "policy".
3. Where the School Committee has interwoven regulations with policy and where separation would interfere with their meaning, the entire statement is presented as a policy.
4. Where the School Committee has adopted rules and by-laws concerning its own organizational and operating procedures, these statements appear as policy.

As long as the administration operates within the guidelines of policy adopted by the committee, it may issue regulations without prior committee approval, unless law requires committee action, or unless the committee has specifically asked that certain types of regulations be submitted for committee approval. The School Committee is to be informed of all school system regulations issued by the administration. All such regulations are subject to committee review.

Is the Manual Complete?

No. The manual contains all of the current written policies of the school committee to date. But, the need for putting additional policies in writing, for adopting new or revising existing ones, becomes apparent.

Additionally, state laws; and regulations change. No matter how well conceived and well developed, a policy manual can never be 100% complete and 100% up-to-date. Policy development is a continuing process. From time to time, new policies, regulations, and reference documents will be developed, coded under the classification system, and issued for insertion in the manual. Should the need arise, supplemental sub codes may be added to the classification system to accommodate topics not covered by existing codes.

Order of precedence. School committee policies and regulations, as well as negotiated agreements with staff bargaining units, must be read and interpreted in the light of the Massachusetts General Laws and State regulations. Wherever inconsistencies of interpretation arise, the law and state regulations prevail. A conflict between a local policy or regulation and a negotiated agreement must be interpreted in line with the contract for members of the particular bargaining unit.

Terminology. The masculine, feminine and neuter genders as used in this manual import one another, and the singular shall include the plural whenever applicable.

It is the hope of the Southern Berkshire Regional School Committee is that this collection of policies and regulations will make greater harmony and efficiency possible in all areas of school operations. This will enable the committee to devote more time to its primary duty--the development of long-range policies and planning for the future of the school system.

SECTION B

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

BB	School Committee Legal Status
BBBA/ BBBB	School Committee Member Qualifications/Oath Of Office
BBBC	District Employment Of School Committee Members
BBC	School Committee Member Resignation
BBE	Unexpired Term Fulfillment
BBFA	Board Member Conflict Of Interest
BCA	School Committee Organizational Meeting
BCB	School Committee Officers
BCC	Appointed Committee Officials
BCD	School Committee/Superintendent Relationships
BCE	Subcommittees Of The School Committee
BCFA	School Councils
BDB	Special School Committee Meetings
BDC	Executive Sessions
Bddb	Agenda Format
BDDD	Quorum
BDDE	Rules of Order
BDDG	Minutes
BDDH	Public Participation At School Committee Meetings
BDDI	News Media Service At School Committee Meetings
BDE	Special Procedures For Conducting Hearings
BFA	Policy Development System
BFB	Preliminary Development Of Policies
BFD	Policy Dissemination
BFE	Administration In Policy Absence
BFG	Policy Review And Evaluation – Manual Accuracy Check
BHA	New School Committee Member Orientation
BHB	School Committee Member Development Opportunities
BHD	School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses
BJ	School Committee Memberships

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS

The school committee of the Southern Berkshire Regional School District is the governing board of the school system. Its authority derives from the state legislature, which has made provision for the governance of all school systems and for that of regional districts in particular.

The committee is comprised of ten (10) representatives from the five member towns, as follows:

Four members from the Town of Sheffield, two members from the Town of Egremont, two members from the Town of New Marlborough, one member from the Town of Monterey, and one member from the Town of Alford.

Members serve for terms of two years, until their respective successors are elected and qualified.

Established through Regional Agreement, Sections 1, 2, 2(a), 2(b), 2(f)

LEGAL REFS.: MGL 71:14B, 71:16A

CROSS REFS.: AA, School District Legal Status
BBB, School Committee Elections

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 which elects him and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member shall present to the Committee secretary official certification of having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths, prior to entering on his official duties as a member of the Committee. From their respective town clerks, newly qualified Committee members shall by law receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts statute governing the conduct of Committee meetings in general and executive sessions, particularly.

Established through Regional Agreement, Section 2(b)

LEGAL REFS.: MGL 39:23B, 41:107

DISTRICT EMPLOYMENT OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

A member of the School Committee is ineligible for employment by the Southern Berkshire Regional School District during his or her tenure on the Committee. The individual may be considered for employment one year (12 months) after having rotated off the Committee. In extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent may request that the School Committee consider an exception to this policy.

Adopted: 2/2/2006

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

An existing school committee member who submits his resignation to the appropriate certifying authority terminates his duties at the time of his resignation unless he states in that resignation a specific time at which the resignation will take effect.

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

Established by law

Adopted: 4/27/95

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

UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

If any vacancy occurs among the duly elected members of the committee, it shall be filled within 30 days by appointment by the select board of the town in which the vacancy occurs. The appointee shall serve until the next annual town election, at which time a member shall be elected to serve the remainder of the original unexpired term, if any.

A member appointed to fill an unexpired term is still eligible for election to three consecutive terms.

Established through Regional Agreement, Section 2(e)

CROSS REF.: BBB, School Committee Elections

BOARD MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Members of the school committee of the public schools are subject to the provisions under the "conflict of interest" statute, Chapter 268A of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. (See guidelines as outlined in exhibit, BBFA-E.)

Included in the orientation for new school committee members will be a review of this policy and accompanying exhibits. All school committee members will be expected to remain aware of the provisions of the "conflict of interest" statute throughout their terms of office and to make declarations of conflicts of interest, as appropriate, to the chairperson or to the superintendent. Any member may request an opinion as to his or her actual or prospective conflict of interest by submitting such request with detailed facts to the school committee chairperson who, in turn, will forward same to the district counsel who shall render a written opinion thereon in accordance with Section 22 of Chapter 268A of the General Laws.

It will be also the responsibility of a member having made such a declaration to notify the chairperson or the superintendent in the event circumstances change and such member no longer is in conflict.

All conflict of interest declarations will be recorded in the official meeting minutes and are preferably to be made in writing.

Adopted: 9/7/78

REVISED: 10/4/79; 6/95

CROSS REF.: BBFA-E, Conflict of Interest (Exhibit)

BOARD MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST -- Exhibit

Reference

Members of the school committee of the public schools are subject to the provisions of the "conflict of interest" statute, Chapter 268A of the General Laws of the Commonwealth. The statute prohibits any member of the school committee from:

Receiving or seeking anything of value in return for influence over official actions.¹

Requiring bidders on building or construction contracts to deal with any particular insurance agency.²

Except under provisions for "special municipal employees" representing anyone other than the town in matters involving the town or receiving any compensation other than official salary for matters involving the town.³ Members of the school committee are classified as "special municipal employees".

Participating in any matter in which he/she, his/her partner or his/her immediate family have a financial interest without full disclosure of such financial interest and only with a ruling by the town counsel that such interest is too inconsequential to affect the integrity of his/her service. (Sec. 19)

Having a financial interest in a contract which he/she knows about or has reason to know about, made by any municipal agency of the town.⁴

Accepting any employment which will impair his/her independence of judgment in the exercise of his/her official duties or which will require disclosure of confidential information gained by reason of his/her official position.⁵

Disclosing confidential, official information improperly or to further personal interests.⁵

Using or attempting to use his/her official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for himself/herself or others or giving the appearance of such action.⁵

Giving by his/her conduct reasonable basis for the impression that any person can improperly influence him/her or unduly enjoy his/her favor in the performance of his/her official duties, or that he/she is unduly affected by the kinship, rank position or influence of any party or person.⁵

Pursuing a course of conduct which will raise suspicion among the public that he/she is likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of his/her trust.⁵

Participation of a school committee member in the adoption of a school budget is forbidden under "conflict of interest" laws only with respect to those budget items in

which the employee of the school department of the town, who is a member of the immediate family of the school committee member, has a financial interest (a son or daughter-in-law is considered immediate family). Such school committee member is barred from participating by attendance, vote or presiding in any matter concerning salaries or benefits of any type relative to professional employees, including, of course, teachers in the school district.⁵

¹ General Laws, Ch. 268A, Sec. 2 and 3

² General Laws, Ch. 268A, Sec. 8

³ General Laws, Ch. 268A, Sec. 17

⁴ General Laws, Ch. 268A, Sec. 20

⁵ General Laws, Ch. 268A, Sec. 23

(Also refer to: Letters from District Counsel on Subject -- 6/2/78, 9/25/79;
 Letter from Donovan & O'Connor on Subject -- 6/18/79)

Approved for Inclusion in Manual: 9/7/78

REVISED: 10/4/79; 6/95

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

Annually, within the month of November the School Committee shall hold an organizational meeting at a public place and at a time of its own choosing. As required by the regional agreement, six days' notice of the meeting shall be given by the incumbent secretary of the Committee.

Those elected shall take office immediately, and shall choose a chairman and vice chairman from among the Committee membership by ballot, as the law requires. A secretary and treasurer, who may or may not be members of the Committee, shall also be chosen.

Method of Election

The organization of the Committee shall be the first item of business following the call of the roll. The superintendent shall preside until a chairman has been elected.

The superintendent shall call for nominations for chairman. Nominations shall be made from the floor. For election to office, a nominee must receive a majority vote of the entire Committee membership.

After his/her election, the chairman shall conduct nominations and balloting for the position of vice-chairman followed by nominations and voting on the positions of secretary and treasurer. Other officers (assistant secretary and assistant treasurer) may be chosen at this time.

Any office which becomes vacant during the year shall be filled in the manner prescribed for the annual meeting.

Other Organizational Business

At the first meeting each November, the School Committee also shall consider the appointment of school district counsel, school physician and election of members to all subcommittees.

Established through Regional Agreement, Section 2C as amended 8/21/75

Revised: 9/21/89; 4/22/95; 1/12/2005; 9/3/2009

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:16A

CROSS REF: BCB, School Committee Officers

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

The officers of the School Committee shall be the chairman, the vice-chairman, the secretary and the treasurer, normally elected at the annual organizational meeting of the Committee.

Chairman

The chairman shall be a member of the School Committee who shall have the right to participate in all votes of the Committee.

The duties of the chairman shall be to preside at all Committee meetings and to serve as a ex-officio member of the negotiations committee. The chairman shall see that new Committee members are furnished with copies of the regional school district agreement, district policies and other handbooks and information as needed. The Chairman shall arrange to have all new Committee members briefed regarding pending Committee business. He/she has the authority to call special meetings of the Committee.

Vice-Chairman

The vice-chairman shall be a member of the School Committee who shall perform all duties of the chairman when the latter is absent or incapacitated.

Secretary

The secretary shall when possible attend all Committee meetings; shall keep or cause to have kept an accurate journal of its proceedings; and shall have the care and custody of all records, books and documents of the Committee.

Treasurer

The treasurer shall keep an accurate account of all moneys paid or orders drawn on the treasury by the Committee. He/she shall prepare and submit to the Committee quarterly and annual reports showing (a) all moneys received and the sources; (b) all moneys disbursed and the purposes for which expended; and (c) the balance of the general and special funds of the Committee. The treasurer shall deposit all moneys belonging to the Committee in accordance with Committee instructions and in compliance with state law. He shall attend all meetings of the Committee when required to do so and shall pay money belonging to the Committee only upon warrants signed by a majority of the Committee. He shall be bonded as the law requires.

Adopted 8/21/75

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:16A, 71:52
Regional Agreement, Section 2(c)

CROSS REFS.: BCA, School Committee Organizational Meeting
BD, School Committee Meetings

APPOINTED COMMITTEE OFFICIALS

The superintendent shall be elected by the committee as provided by law and shall serve as secretary and perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent there to, as majority of the committee may direct.

ADOPTION DATE: 4/27/95

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The committee will leave to the superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school system. While the committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

- 1) The superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he will submit the matter to the committee for advice and direction.
- 2) The superintendent will assist the committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the committee all relevant facts, information and reports necessary to keep the committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

ADOPTION: 4/27/95

COMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

In addition to the standing finance subcommittee, policy subcommittee, negotiations subcommittee, buildings & grounds subcommittee and warrant subcommittee, special ad hoc committees composed of School Committee members may be established from time to time by vote of the Committee. Subcommittees should consist of 3 to 5 members.

All members of the School Committee shall have the right to attend any meeting of any ad hoc committee unless five (5) members are already present. Agendas of subcommittee meetings will be sent to School Committee members as far in advance of the meeting as feasible.

Minutes of each subcommittee meeting shall be taken and should reflect the topics covered and the essence of the conversation at the subcommittee meeting. Minutes shall be submitted to the School committee as soon as they are available, but no later than the next scheduled School Committee meeting. Chairpersons will act as spokespersons for their respective subcommittees. Subcommittees only make recommendations; all recommendations of the subcommittees will be made directly to the Committee.

All standing committees shall be dissolved at the end of the Committee's year, concurrent with the annual organization meeting, or they may be dissolved at any time by a vote of the Committee. Study committees shall be dissolved upon the completion of their assignment, or they may be dissolved at any time by a vote of the Committee.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

Revised: 9/30/76; 11/17/77; 4/27/95; 1/12/2005

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

CROSS REFS.: BCA, School Committee Organizational Meeting
BCB, School Committee Officers
HD, School Committee Negotiating Powers and Duties

SCHOOL COUNCILS

The school committee believes that the school is the key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Under this policy, the principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the budget, policies, curriculum, and long-range and short-range goals adopted by the school committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements of the school district.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a school council shall be established in each school to advise the principal in specific areas of school operation. The principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the group pursuant to a representative process approved by the superintendent and school committee.

The following guidelines define the role of the school council:

The school council shall meet regularly with the principal of the school and shall assist in:

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

ADOPTION: 4/27/95

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All business of the school committee shall be transacted at legal regular and special meetings open to the public, duly called and announced. The exception to this, permitted b law, is that the committee may meet in emergency session and conduct a legal meeting despite any informality in, or lack of notice thereof, if all committee members are present.

Closed sessions of the committee shall be held only within the provisions of the law pertaining to "executive sessions."

The committee chairman shall preside at all meetings of the committee. In the event of his inability to preside, the vice-chairman shall perform the duties of the chairman. In the absence or inability to act of both officers, the remaining members shall select a member to act as presiding officer.

Adopted: 8/21/75

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

CROSS REFS.:BCB, School Committee Officers
BD subcategories (all relate to school committee meetings)

SPECIAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

Special meetings are open to the public and the press. Except in emergency situations, members, the public, and the press shall be given at least 48 hours advance notice, as required by law. Ordinarily, special meetings shall be announced at the preceding regular meeting of the committee.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

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

CROSS REF.: BDDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

As provided by Chapter 39, Section 23 B, of the Massachusetts General Laws, any executive session shall not be held until:

1. The Committee shall first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
3. The chairman (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) shall cite the purpose for the executive session.
4. The chairman or presiding member shall state before entering the executive session that the Committee will reconvene after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The Committee shall enter executive session only to deliberate those purposes defined in Chapt. 39, Sec 23B. Records of executive sessions will be kept according to process of Chapt. 39, Sec. 23A and 23B, and MGL Chapter 66, Sec. 10.

Following appointment or election to the School Committee, each member shall be furnished by the Superintendent with an up to date copy of the applicable provisions of the Open Meeting Law. Each such member shall sign a written acknowledgment that he/she has been provided with such a copy. The School Committee chairman will be provided with such information annually.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

Revised: 10/5/89

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

AGENDA FORMAT

The following shall be the order of business at regular meetings of the Committee. The order may be changed by vote of a majority of the members present. All communications (items 3 and 6) shall be directed to and by the chairman of the Committee.

Order of Business

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of minutes and of bills and warrants
3. Communications from the audience / student representatives
4. Discussion topics
5. New/unfinished business
6. Other communications / requests for future agenda items
7. General information
8. Adjournment

Adopted: 8/21/75

Revised: 9/16/76; 10/5/89; 6/8/95

CROSS REF.: BDDC, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

QUORUM

A majority of members of the committee, that is, six members, shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

In the absence of a quorum, the only official action that the committee may take is to adjourn the meeting to another time or date.

Adopted 8/21/75

RULES OF ORDER

Procedure at committee meetings shall normal be informal for the sake of simplicity and to minimize diversion of discussion to procedural questions.

Whenever requests by two members are addressed to the chairman, however, the conduct of meetings shall be governed by the rules of parliamentary procedure laid down by Robert's Rules Order.

Adopted 8/21/75

CROSS REF.: BD, School Committee Meetings

MINUTES

The school committee secretary shall keep, or cause to be kept, complete records of meetings of committee. These minutes shall be kept in an official record book specified for that purpose and kept on file as the official record of school legislation of the district. They shall include:

1. A record of all actions taken by the committee.
2. Resolutions and motions in full; reports and documents relating to a formal motion may be omitted if they are referred to and identified by title and date.
3. A record of the disposition of all matters on which the committee considered, but did not take action.

Copies of the minutes shall be sent to all committee members before the meeting at which the minutes will be approved.

The minutes shall become permanent records of the committee and shall be in the custody of the secretary. (S)he shall make them available to interested citizens upon request.

Adopted 8/21/75

Revised: Date of manual adoption; 4/22/95

NEWS MEDIA SERVICES AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee believes that one of the paramount responsibilities of a school committee is to keep the public informed of its actions. Consequently, the local news media representatives shall be welcome to attend all regular, special, and annual meetings of the committee. A copy of the agenda will be sent in advance of all official committee meetings to members of the working press who request it.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others as it deems advisable, the school committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the committee's policy.

The chairman of the committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the committee, or by others for the committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

Adoption: 4/27/95

POLICY DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The school committee endorses for use in this district the policy development codification, and dissemination system of the National School Board Association (EPS/NSBA).

Adopted through action 9/18/75

PRELIMINARY DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES

Proposals regarding school district policies and operations may originate at any of several sources: a parent, a student, a taxpayer, an employee, a member of the Committee, the superintendent, a consultant, a civic group, etc.

A careful and orderly process shall be used in examining such proposals prior to action upon them by the Committee.

Final action on such proposals, whatever their source, shall be by the Committee in accord with its policy on policy adoption. The Committee shall take action on all matters upon the basis of recommendations presented to it by the superintendent.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

CROSS REFS.: BDDC, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
 BFC, Policy Adoption

POLICY DISSEMINATION

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

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the school system, to members of the Committee, and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all persons in the District.

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

The committee's policy manual shall be considered a public record and shall be open for inspection at the School Committee offices.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: Date of manual adoption

ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE

In cases when action must be taken within the school system where the Committee has provided no guides for administrative action, the superintendent shall have the power to act. His/her decisions, however, shall be subject to review by the Committee.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

POLICY REVIEW AND EVALUATION/MANUAL ACCURACY CHECK

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they may be used consistently as a basis for school Committee action and administrative decision, it shall be the policy of the Committee to review its policies on a continuing basis.

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

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

The Committee directs the superintendent to recall all policy and regulations manuals periodically for purposes of administrative updating and Committee review.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

Through its chairman or designee, the School Committee shall provide new members with copies of the regional agreement, the school district policy manual and other handbooks and information, as needed. New members shall also be briefed by the chairman or designee regarding pending Committee business.

Adopted: 8/21/75

Revised: 10/5/89

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

School Committee members shall be encouraged to participate in meetings and activities of area, state, and national school boards associations, and of other educational groups, and to study and examine the materials received from these organizations.

With Committee approval, travel and convention expenses shall be provided individual members within budgetary limitations to advance their development as School Committee members.

To help members develop understanding of the educational program, the superintendent shall request members of the professional staff to appear before the Committee from time to time to present and discuss new developments in various areas of curriculum and instruction.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

Committee members shall receive no compensation from the District for their services. However, upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the Committee, Committee members may be reimbursed from District funds.

Such expenses may include the cost of attendance of conferences of school boards associations and other professional meetings/visitation when such attendance and expense payment has had prior School Committee approval.

Member towns may pay Committee members compensation and/or expense allowances, according to Massachusetts general laws.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption

Revised: 10/5/89

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The School Committee shall maintain membership in the Massachusetts Association of School Committees.

Through its membership in this organization, it is an indirect member of the National School Boards Association. The Committee and its members shall actively participate in the activities of these organizations insofar as possible.

The district shall hold institutional membership in such other educational associations and groups as approved by the Committee.

Current practice codified 1976

Adopted: date of manual adoption