

ANNUAL SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOALS

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 purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by 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 public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

Goals will be discussed in the spring/summer of the preceding year and voted on in the fall. The results will be reviewed at the end of the school year. During the course of the year, the School Committee will periodically review progress toward each goal at its regularly scheduled meetings.

Goals will be filed in the Superintendent's office and will be accessible to the community at large.

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 1985

Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 30, 1989

Revised and Approved at School Committee Meeting of January 7, 2004

Revised at School Committee Meeting of November 7, 2019

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

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

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

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

When the Committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the Committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and Committees are capable of improvement. The School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS

The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school district. Although it functions as a duly elected Committee of town government, the School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process. The School Committee should nevertheless strive to work cooperatively with the other town boards and officials to ensure that the educational program reflects the values of the town residents and represents the wise use of town resources.

The School Committee shall consist of five members elected by the voters of Lincoln for three-year terms beginning in April. Every third year, one member is elected; in other years, two members are elected.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1; 71:37

Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 14, 1982
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of October 30, 1989
Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 11, 2018

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The State delegates much of its authority to the local School Committee, holding it responsible for the performance of all duties mandated by the state, and for meeting the needs of its communities of Lincoln, Hanscom Air Force Base and Boston-Lincoln METCO.

The School Committee is the local governing body responsible both to the State and to its local constituencies for operating the public schools.

The School Committee takes a broad view of its functions:

1. Policymaking and Appraisal: The Committee, in partnership with the administration, is responsible for the development and adoption of the district's long-range strategic plan and the establishment of annual priorities. Policies will be in written form and will be continually reviewed and revised when necessary. In its adoption of these policies, the Committee will consider the attitudes and aspirations of the communities it serves. The Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
2. Educational Planning: The Committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committee and the administration in continued improvement of the educational programs provided by the Lincoln Public Schools. The School Committee is responsible for adoption of annual district goals to promote and foster the implementation of its policies. The responsibility for the implementation of policies and the achievement of annual goals is delegated to the Superintendent of Schools.
3. Provision of Financial Resources: The Committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the Committee's policies.
4. Facilities: The School Committee acts as a responsible steward of the district's educational facilities and resources.
5. Hiring and Evaluation of the Superintendent: The Committee is responsible for the hiring of the superintendent, and for the evaluation of the superintendent in accordance with state laws. The School Committee shall appoint, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant/Associate/Deputy Superintendent(s), School Business Administrator, Special Education Administrator, School Physician, School Nurses, and Supervisor of Attendance. Such positions shall not report directly to the School Committee.
6. Public Relations: The Committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school administration informed about feedback and input from the public.
7. The Committee will keep itself informed of pending legislation and actively communicate its concerns and make its position known to elected representatives at both the state and national level.

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

CROSS REF.: BB, School Committee Legal Status

Lincoln Public Schools

Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 14, 1982.
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984
Revised at School Committee Meeting of November 13, 1989
Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 2016

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

The School Committee has the authority to act when a quorum is present at the duly called regular or special meeting that has been posted in accordance with the laws of the Commonwealth. School Committee members exercise the authority and responsibility of their positions only when the Committee is in legal session. The School Committee will not be bound in any way by a statement or action on the part of an individual School Committee member except when such statement or action is in pursuance of special instructions by the Committee. No member of the Committee, by virtue of their office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.

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

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this School Committee and School Department.
2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.
3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the town's public schools.
4. To work effectively with other Committee members without trying either to dominate the Committee or neglect their share of the work.
5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.
6. To vote and act in Committee impartially for the good of the students, and as responsible stewards of Town resources.
7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
8. To represent the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.
9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
10. To comply with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' Code of Ethics as the standard for appropriate behavior.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23A, B, C; 71:37

CROSS REF.: BCA, School Committee Member Ethics
KEC , Public Complaints

Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 14, 1982
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of November 13, 1989
Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 21, 2016

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESIGNATION AND FILLING OF A VACANCY

A current School Committee member who submits a resignation to the Town Clerk terminates School Committee duties at the time of such resignation unless a later time is stated in the resignation. Should a School Committee member move out of the town of Lincoln, that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

When a vacancy on the School Committee occurs for any reason, the Select Board and the remaining members of the Committee share the responsibility for filling it.

As provided in the law, the School Committee will notify the Select Board that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After one week's notice has been given by the Select Board, so that voters of the town may have the opportunity to state their candidacy, the two governing bodies will meet to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For election to fill a vacancy, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of the officers entitled to vote. The person so appointed will fill the seat on the Committee until the next town election, at which time a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term, if any.

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS
(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

A School Committee member in their relations with their community should:

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

A School Committee member in their relations with their school administration should:

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

A School Committee in their relations with their fellow Committee members should:

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

executive sessions.

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

BOARD ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The School Committee shall organize annually by election of a Chairperson from among its membership at its first meeting following the Annual Town Election. The current Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson of the School Committee shall call the meeting to order and preside until a Chairperson is elected. In the event the Chair and Vice-Chair are no longer members of the School Committee, the senior member (years served) will act as the Chair Pro-Tem. Nominations shall be made by Committee members. The Chairperson will be elected by a majority vote, and upon election, shall name a Vice-Chairperson. The School Committee shall follow the same respective procedures in the event of a vacancy in the position of the Chairperson or the Vice-Chairperson.

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of September 28, 1981

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of March 4, 1985

Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 22, 1990

Revised at School Committee Meeting of June 12, 2014

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of January 28, 2021

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chairperson:

The Chairperson of the School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the Committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. They will perform those duties that are consistent with the office and those required by law, state regulations and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chair will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts and order necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
2. Be familiar with parliamentary procedures as they apply to Committee operations.
3. Collaborate with the Superintendent on the drawing of the agenda and the preparation for the School Committee meeting, and facilitate the School Committee by providing background material needed to arrive at a decision. The Chair may assign to the Vice-Chair particular duties as the Chair sees fit. The Chair should include on the agenda items requested by School Committee members.
4. Appoint School Committee subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
5. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
6. Be the official spokesperson for the Committee and ensure that any statement made to the press or to the public represents the position of the Committee
7. Represent the Committee on public occasions or delegate such to other members.
8. Maintain contact with other agencies, including Lincoln town boards, METCO, the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional HS School Committee and Hanscom Air Force Base.
9. Provide the leadership that brings individual School Committee members together as an effective policy-making board.
10. Be a facilitator, a guide, to help the Committee crystallize a position and to arrive at informed conclusions.
11. Help the Superintendent understand what the School Committee will need in order to arrive at informed decisions.
12. Communicate the consensus thinking of the School Committee to the Superintendent.
13. Not necessarily have been a Vice-Chair . The Vice-Chair fills the role of the Chair when the Chair is absent.
14. Help to initiate new members of the School Committee by appointing mentors, scheduling process workshops, and with the Superintendent's help, familiarize new members with procedures and process guidelines for School Committee members.

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

1. Start Committee meetings on time and bring them to an expeditious conclusion.
2. Conduct the meeting with the degree of firmness and decorum dictated by the situation. (A general discussion might be better handled informally while a debate or controversial issue would require firmer control by the Chair.)

3. Provide opportunities for each member to present opinions while tactfully preventing any member from monopolizing the meeting.
4. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members; restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
5. Puts motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and the result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chair of the Committee will act in the absence of the Chair as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to them. .

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

Note: The School Committee shall authorize the hire of a Clerk. The Clerk will keep an accurate journal of all Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Committee policy regarding the recording of minutes.

The treasurer of the town serves as the treasurer of the School Committee.

Approved at School Committee Meeting of March 18, 1985

Revised at School Committee Meeting of January 22, 1990

Revised at School Committee Meeting of July 23, 2014

HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE REPRESENTATION ON THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Lincoln School Committee, in addition to its regular members, may have one, two or three non-voting delegates as representatives of the Hanscom community. The Hanscom Air Force Base Education Liaison may serve as one of the non-voting delegates. The delegates will participate in all Committee functions, and discuss matters in all sessions, with the exception of Executive Sessions. The delegates will have the opportunity to cast non-binding votes on all motions before the Committee. Each delegate may serve a renewable term of three years. As a delegate's term expires, the School Committee or Superintendent will consult with the Base Commander about Hanscom representation on the School Committee.

The role of the Hanscom Representative is to represent the interests of the residents of Hanscom Air Force Base in the operation of the Lincoln Public Schools, including these specifically related to the relationship between the Lincoln School Committee and the Hanscom schools:

1. To represent the interests of the Hanscom community in School Committee discussions.
2. To express their views on matters before the School Committee.
3. To facilitate communication between the Lincoln and Hanscom schools.
4. To facilitate communication between the parents of Hanscom and the Lincoln School Committee.
5. To attend school events as representatives of the Lincoln School Committee.
6. To ensure the equitable allocation of resources between the campuses.
7. To keep the Education Liaison or Base Commander informed on the proceedings of the Lincoln School Committee related to the operation of the Hanscom schools.
8. To communicate when necessary with the Superintendent of Schools regarding matters related to the operation of the schools.
9. To abide by the policies and procedures of the Lincoln School Committee in the performance of their duties as Hanscom Representatives.

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of September 8, 1980

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of September 14, 1981

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Added Lincoln METCO Representation at School Committee Meeting of October 29, 1990

Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 26, 2017

LINCOLN METCO REPRESENTATION ON THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Lincoln School Committee, in addition to its regular voting members and Hanscom Representatives, will have a non-voting delegate representative of the METCO community on the Lincoln School Committee. This delegate shall be a willing volunteer solicited from among parents/guardians of students currently in the METCO program and appointed by agreement of the School Committee. The delegate will participate in all Committee functions , and discuss matters in all sessions with the exception of Executive Sessions. Each delegate may serve a renewable term of three years. As a delegate's term expires, the School Committee, at its discretion, can ask the delegate to continue to serve if they are willing and able. In the event of a vacancy , the School Committee or Administration will notify the Lincoln METCO Parent Board and/or METCO Director in order to identify another willing volunteer.

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of September 8, 1980

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of September 14, 1981

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Added Lincoln METCO Representation at School Committee Meeting of October 29, 1990

Revised at School Committee Meeting of June 12, 2014

SCHOOL COMMITTEE – SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within their scope as executive officer and professional leader of the school district. 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 may seek guidance from the Committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, they 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.

Additionally, the responsibilities of the Superintendent, in a cooperative climate with the Committee, are identified as:

School Committee	Superintendent
1. To select a competent, established educational leader as Superintendent.	To administer effectively and provide the professional, educational leadership necessary.
2. To serve as a policymaking body.	To recommend sound policy and implement policies by formulating and enforcing rules and regulations.
3. To ensure that there is a shared vision and strategy for education within the District, and collaboratively work to define this as part of the District Strategic Plan.	To craft, evolve, and execute the District Strategic Plan, collaboratively with the School Committee and appropriate people and communities within the District.
4. To allow the Superintendent to administer the schools.	To appropriately inform the Committee of progress, obstacles, and concerns.
5. To be aware of and approve significant changes to curriculum.	To craft and share with the School Committee significant changes to the curriculum.
6. To exercise sound judgment in business affairs of the school corporation.	To keep the Committee informed on financial matters, do sound long-range planning, and keep current expenditures within the approved budget.

School Committee	Superintendent
7. To deal always in an ethical, honest, straight-forward, open-and-above-board manner with the Superintendent, the staff, and communities.	To deal always in an honest, professional, straight-forward, open-and-above-board manner with the Committee, the staff, and the communities.
8. To provide within budget limitations necessary personnel.	To present personnel needs to the Committee.
9. To approve an organizational staffing model for the administration.	To make assignments for each position and fulfill the organizational staffing model.
10. To take legal action required by law.	To recommend to the Committee all action required by law.
11. To examine and approve an annual budget.	To recommend an annual budget with necessary supporting data.
12. To function as a Committee rather than as individuals.	To deal with the Committee as a whole rather than individual members.
13. To carry on communications with staff members through the Superintendent.	To see that the staff can have necessary communication through the Superintendent with the Committee.
14. To hold the Superintendent accountable for results.	To accept responsibility for results.
15. To remember that schools exist for the benefit of the students and the community.	To remember that schools exist for the benefit of the students and the community.

Approved at School Committee Meeting of June 14, 1982
 Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984
 Revised at School Committee Meeting of February 5, 1990
 Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 11, 2018

BOARD SUBCOMMITTEES

In addition to preparing for and attending the regular meetings of the School Committee, the members may take on additional responsibilities, including delegated tasks such as contract negotiations, membership in School Committee subcommittees, liaison roles on other committees, or participation in committees convened by members of the District administrative team.

It is the job of the Chairperson to identify these responsibilities at the beginning of the school year. The Committee will discuss the division of responsibilities in an open meeting. As additional responsibilities arise in the course of the year, the Committee will continue to discuss the assignment of responsibilities in open meetings.

At any time, the School Committee may create a subcommittee. The Committee will provide clear expectations about the purpose of the assignment, the tasks involved, the timeline, the resources available, the parameters for reporting back to the full Committee, and the composition of the subcommittee, whose members may include one or more members of the Committee, staff members, and town residents. Subcommittees may request additional members if it deems necessary.

The School Committee Chairperson, subcommittee chairperson and/or the Superintendent will establish guidelines and answer questions that arise regarding the procedure for public comments, availability of office assistance, interaction with the faculty, use of office supplies and equipment, and the expenditure of district funds.

Subcommittees shall not possess any decision-making powers unless such power is granted in advance by unanimous vote of the full Committee (i.e. negotiations). All subcommittees are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law. This means that the subcommittees should hold all meetings in open session, posted as required, and recorded in minutes.

When it has completed its task, the subcommittee will report back to the School Committee in the agreed upon manner (written report, presentation offering information or a recommendation, etc.). Based on the input of the subcommittee, the School Committee will determine how the information or recommendations will be used. It shall not be considered a conflict of interest for any School Committee member who has been on a subcommittee to participate subsequently in Committee discussions about whether to accept the subcommittee and about any actions to be taken consequent to its findings. The subcommittee will be dissolved at the discretion of the School Committee, or when the assigned task is completed.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A: 18-25.

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of September 14, 1981

Revised at School Committee Meeting of March 4, 1985

Revised at School Committee Meeting of November 9, 2017

ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.
2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.
3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.
4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.
5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.
6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
 - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
 - b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
 - c. The resources the School Committee will provide.
 - d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
 - e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
 - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.
7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.
8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee

9. Advisory committees created under this policy are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

The Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public pursuant to the Open Meeting Law M.G.L. Chapter 30A:18-25. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by that statute.

The following types of meetings are held:

1. Regular Meetings: The usual official open meeting of the Committee. Meeting dates will be announced in advance.
2. Special Meetings: An official open meeting occasionally calling a hearing or other special purpose. No action shall be taken at such a meeting except that related to the call of the meeting.
3. Executive Session: An official but private meeting of the School Committee conducted for the purpose of discussing matters pertaining to collective bargaining and decisions affecting individuals, ensuring all provisions of the executive session laws are met. Such sessions shall be held only in conjunction with an open meeting with the exception that the School Committee may, if necessary, recess during an open meeting to hold an executive session. See FILE; BEC - Executive Session
4. Forum: A meeting called to provide information to School Committee members. No deliberations leading toward a decision will take place.
5. Public Hearings: Public hearings are held as required by law or as deemed advisable by the School Committee. The Chair will inform the public at the beginning of the hearing of the procedures to be followed to allow everyone the opportunity to be heard.

CROSS REF: BEC – Executive Sessions

BEDA – Notification of School Committee Meetings

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All meetings of the School Committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The Chair (or, in their absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
4. The Chair or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the Committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The Committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the Committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
8. To consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the school committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of Superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. And to discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

As referenced in Open Meeting Law, the School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The School Committee Chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the School Committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes.

When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the School Committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:21](#); [30A:22](#)
CROSS REFS.: [BDE](#), Subcommittees of the School Committee
[BE](#), School Committee Meetings
KED, Public Complaints about School Personnel

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of October 26, 2017

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours' notice (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) will be given to both School Committee members and the public for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months in accordance with the posting practices of the Town of Lincoln. The agenda or notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the Town Clerk at least 48 hours in advance, (excluding Saturdays Sundays and legal holidays) as required by law. It shall be the duty of the School Committee or its designee to supervise the execution of this policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G. L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of September 14, 1981

Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984

Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 8, 2015

AGENDA PREPARATION

The School Committee Chairperson, in consultation with the Superintendent, shall establish the agenda for each School Committee meeting. The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it chooses to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committee, or to expedite Committee business.

Typical agenda topics include: Member Reports, Public Comment, Consent Agenda, Time Scheduled Appointments, Superintendent's Report, Curriculum, Facilities and Financial, Policy, Old Business, New Business, and approval of past Meeting Minutes.

In order to make it possible for the School Committee to conduct its business as efficiently as possible, all necessary memoranda and information should be submitted in writing for inclusion in the School Committee meeting packet at least one week before the meeting. The agenda and supporting materials should be distributed to School Committee members no less than three business days prior to the meeting (but the School Committee will accept and discuss materials after that time under special circumstances) to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Any School Committee member, staff member or citizen may suggest items of business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee.

Except in unusual circumstances, no vote is to be taken by the School Committee on an item that was not placed on the formal agenda in advance.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the public in accordance with Open Meeting Law.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 39:23B (Open Meeting Law)

CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings

Adopted by School Committee on September 22, 1975
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of September 28, 1981
Reaffirmed at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 1984
Revised at School Committee Meeting of June 12, 2014
Revised at School Committee Meeting of December 17, 2020

VOTING METHOD

Open meeting

Votes of the School Committee will be taken by voice vote or a hand count and shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded. No vote taken at an open session shall be by secret ballot.

All actions will require a majority vote, that is three voting members from Lincoln, except as state law, or policies of this Committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the School Committee, that is three voting members from Lincoln will constitute a quorum.

Executive Session

A majority of the members of the School Committee must vote to enter into executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions. Any votes taken to ratify employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements shall be taken in open session.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25; 71:42; 71:50

PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee encourages citizens to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee wishes to extend the opportunity to hear the thoughts and ideas of the public regarding the operations and the programs of the public school system.

1. At the commencement of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, any individual or group representative will be invited to address the Committee. The length of the public participation segment shall be no longer than fifteen (15) minutes unless otherwise determined by the Chair. Prior to the beginning of the meeting, speakers should give their names and the issues they wish to discuss to the School Committee Chair who will recognize them in the same order as submitted. The Chair may then recognize other members of the audience.
2. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material, additional time being extended at the discretion of the presiding Chair.
3. Speakers are expected to abide by the District Core Values, which include valuing open, honest and respectful communication that leads to greater understanding and creative solutions to complex problems.
4. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate a speaker's time if the speech is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless conduct, or contains obscenities.
5. Topics for discussion may include those items listed on the School Committee Meeting Agenda for that evening, or any school related matters with the proviso that the School Committee will ensure that proper channels of communication by the public through the teaching staff and administration will be observed.
6. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.
7. Speakers may offer criticism of the schools' operation and/or programs, but in public session, the Committee will not entertain personal complaints regarding school personnel or other members of the school community over whom they do not have supervisory authority. Complaints involving staff members must follow administrative channels.
8. Written comments may be presented to the School Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members' review and consideration at an appropriate time.
9. All matters will be taken under advisement by the School Committee. Committee members will not engage in debate with speakers over issues presented except for workshop/forums that are

structured for this purpose. Committee members may choose to comment on issues raised. Administrative staff may be called upon to correct any factual errors in statements made.

REMOTE PARTICIPATION POLICY
HOLD 5/9/2022 - will likely need updating when law is made permanent

1. PURPOSE STATEMENT

The office of the Attorney General amended the *Open Meeting Law* regulations at 940 CMR 29.00 to allow members of public bodies, in limited circumstances, to participate remotely in meetings. While all members of Town Boards should try to attend meetings in person, the new regulations seek to promote greater participation in government meetings by allowing members to participate remotely when certain specific circumstances prevent them from being physically present.

The intent of this policy is to establish clear guidelines on the practice of remote participation by Town Boards under the *Open Meeting Law*, M.G.L. c.30A, §§18-25.

2. ENABLING AUTHORITY – 940 CMR 29.10(8)

A municipality may adopt a policy that prohibits or further restricts the use of remote participation by public bodies within its jurisdiction.

3. ADOPTION OF REMOTE PARTICIPATION

In accordance with 940 CMR 29.10(2)(a), the Select Board , on October 7, 2013, voted to authorize the adoption of 940 CMR 29.10 so that remote participation is permitted in the Town. In accordance with 940 CMR 29.10(3), the Select Board may revoke its adoption of 940 CMR 29.10 by simple majority vote at any time. The Board intends to consult with the Town boards and committees after one year to assess the efficacy of the program.

This policy and 940 CMR 29.10 shall apply to all Town boards, committees, commissions, sub-committees and working groups (“Town Boards”) regardless of whether such Town Boards are appointed or elected. Where the Remote Participation Policy is more stringent than 940 CMR 29.10, the Policy shall control.

Pursuant to 940 CMR 29.10(8), each Town board and committee shall have the discretion to opt-out and may elect to not make remote participation at meetings an option for its membership. The determination as to whether a board or committee shall opt-out shall be made by majority vote of the board/committee.

4. MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION

No member of a Town Board shall participate in a meeting remotely unless the following requirements are met:

- a. Members of the Town Board who participate remotely and all persons present at the meeting locations shall be clearly audible to each other.

- b. A quorum of the Town Board, including the chair or the person authorized to chair the meeting, shall be physically present at the meeting locations in accordance with M.G.L. c.30A, §20(d); and
- c. Members of the Town Board who participate remotely must have access to the same materials being used at the meeting location.

5. PERMISSIBLE REASONS FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION

It is the express desire of the Select Board that remote participation in meetings be an infrequent event, for both individual board members and Town Boards as a whole. Chairs of Town Boards are encouraged to interpret these rules in a strict fashion and to continue to induce all members to attend meetings in person as a general rule, due to the inherent benefits of physical presence in a meetings. Chairs are encouraged to inform their colleagues that remote participation will not be permitted simply as a matter of convenience.

A member of a Town Board shall be permitted to participate remotely in a meeting if the person chairing the meeting determines that one or more of the following factors makes the member's physical attendance unreasonably difficult yet still leaves that member able to actively participate in the meeting:

- a. personal illness;
- b. personal disability;
- c. family or other emergencies;
- d. military service; or
- e. significant geographic distance.

Any determination by the person chairing the meeting to allow or not to allow remote participation shall be final and shall not be appealable.

6. TECHNOLOGY

- a. During the initial one-year trial period, the Town will make best efforts to have telephone and video conferencing equipment available at its primary meeting locations.
- b. The Town will make best efforts to allow any other technology that enables the remote participant and all persons at the meeting location to be clearly audible to one another.

Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate any Town Board member who requires TTY service, video relay service, or other form of adaptive telecommunications.

- c. The focus of the chair should always be on maintaining the flow of the meeting. If the chair determines that technical difficulties are inhibiting the progress of the meeting, the chair may elect to terminate the participation of the remote member. If technical difficulties arise resulting in the loss of connection with the remote participant, that participant's attendance shall be terminated. The meeting should not be interrupted while any attempt to restore the connection is made.

- d. Each individual Town Board that anticipates using remote participation shall determine which of the acceptable methods may be used by its members.

7. PROCEDURES FOR REMOTE PARTICIPATION

- a. Any member of a Town Board who wishes to participate remotely shall, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the person chairing the meeting, of his or her desire to do so and the reason for and facts supporting his or her request.
- b. If the person chairing the meeting approves the request for remote participation, he or she shall make any necessary arrangements with IT personnel to ensure that the required equipment is available. If the required equipment is not available from the IT Department or another source, then the person chairing the meeting shall deny the request for remote participation.
- c. At the start of the meeting, the chair shall announce the name of any member who will be participating remotely and the reason under 940 CMR 29.10(5) for his or her remote participation. This information shall be recorded in the minutes.
- d. All votes taken during any meeting in which a member participates remotely shall be by roll call vote.
- e. Remote participants shall preserve the confidentiality of executive session. Certain media, such as speakerphone, can inadvertently be heard by people not party to the executive session discussions. The remote participant shall state at the start of any executive session that no other person is present and/or able to hear the discussion at the meeting location unless the presence of that person is approved by a simple majority vote of the Town Board.
- f. The Town shall not be responsible for the reimbursement of any out-of-pocket costs associated with the remote participation of Town Board members.
- g. Members participating remotely are cautioned that the same obligations of consideration apply as in any physical meeting. Remote participants should direct all their attention to the meeting, and should make their decisions based upon the same information as is available to all other participants in the meeting. The remote participant shall also state at the beginning of any meeting, that no other person is in proximity and could exert undue influence on the participant, in either executive or public session, and shall inform the chair if that situation changes.

Adopted at the School Committee Meeting of November 7, 2013

POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW

The School Committee sets and approves the policies by which the administration manages the schools on a daily basis. The formulation and adoption of these written policies will constitute the basic method by which the School Committee will exercise its leadership in providing for the successful and efficient functioning of the school district. The School Committee will provide oversight of school operations through the study and evaluation of reports concerning the execution of its policies. New policies will be determined through recommendations made by the Superintendent, administrative team and/or the School Committee.

Policies may be added, amended, or deleted, as permitted by state laws or regulations, at any regular meeting by a majority vote of the School Committee after appearing on two separate agendas. Policies that are determined to be in conflict with applicable state or federal statutes will be revised as required. The School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they can be used consistently as a basis for School Committee action and administrative decision, the Committee will review its policies on a regular basis.

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

Approved at School Committee Meeting of August 22, 1985
Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 26, 1987
Revised at School Committee Meeting of October 11, 2018

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue procedures implementing policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

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

The Committee will not officially approve procedures except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a procedure to have the Committee's advance approval.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "the school district's policies pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students." The Superintendent shall ensure that said publication includes the School Committee's policies on the standards of conduct for staff and students. Additionally, the Superintendent shall ensure that the codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes, shall be filed with the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education for information purposes only and that any school-specific discipline codes are consistent with the policies of the School Committee, including its policies on student conduct. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC

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

NOTE: It is important to point out that a School Committee is required to approve many regulations -- either by law (one example is cited above) or the dictates of good judgment.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

SOURCE: MASC

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

In accordance with the requirements of law, each new School Committee member elected to the School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation, provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, shall include, but is not limited to, a review of School Finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

Additionally, the School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the functions, policies and procedures of the Committee as soon after election as possible. Each new member shall be given or provided direct online access to the following materials:

- A. New School Committee welcome letter
- B. A copy of the School Committee policy manual
- C. A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- D. A copy of the Ethics/Conflict of Interest Regulations
- E. A copy of Selected General Laws for School Committees and School Personnel
- F. A copy of the district's budget
- G. Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- H. Student and staff handbooks

The Chairperson and/or Superintendent shall also clarify expectations around:

- A. arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- B. requesting information regarding school district operations
- C. responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- D. handling confidential information

The School Committee may convene special workshops for the primary purpose of orienting the new member to their responsibilities, to the Committee's method of operation, and to school policies and problems. Additionally, whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:36A](#)

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of November 9, 2017