

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DRAFT School Committee Protocols – January 31 2020

For the purpose of effective governance and enhancing teamwork among members of the School Committee and between members of the administration and the community, the Lincoln School Committee adopts the following operating principles:

The School Committee will:

1. Represent and act impartially for the needs and interests of the students, staff and people of the District when making decisions.
2. Collaborate effectively with the administration to provide leadership in vision, planning, policy making, budget, communications, and advocacy on behalf of the students and District.
3. Partner with the Superintendent to ensure a shared vision and strategy for education within the District. Respect the Superintendent's responsibility to manage the day-to-day operations of the District and to oversee personnel issues. Keep abreast of latest trends in education in order to appropriately select, hire, or evaluate an established educational leader as Superintendent.
4. Conduct business through a set agenda in an effort to complete business within a set timeframe. Allow adequate time for discussion but avoid discussing trivia to maintain a high level of respect and courtesy of all attendee's time. Allow emerging agenda items to be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items.
5. Base discussions on available facts and function as a committee rather than as individuals supporting and upholding the decisions of the majority of the School Committee once a decision is made.
6. Acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting that is held in public, not a public meeting, and make every effort to ensure that Committee meetings are effective and efficient. Welcome community members to attend meetings and participate during public comment.
7. Maintain an open environment where each member is empowered to freely express opinions, concerns, and ideas. Keep an open mind, maintain flexibility and accept that members can change their opinions. Work effectively with other members without trying to dominate or neglect share of work.
8. Respect all members, administration, faculty, staff, and community members and treat everyone with dignity and respect even in times of disagreement.
9. Recognize the importance of trust and proactive communication and agree that there will be no surprises for the Committee or the Superintendent. Bring all concerns, comments or inquiries especially if personal or sensitive in nature to the Chair or Superintendent as well in advance of a meeting as practical.
10. Recognize School Committee members can be viewed as employers and channel all member requests for information, school visits or other school interactions through the Superintendent or School Committee chair to minimize school business interactions.
11. Adhere to the communication procedure which relies on the Chair, Superintendent or designated liaison/designee to accurately represent the positions of the School Committee to the media or other public bodies.
12. Maintain confidentiality of Executive Session.



District Governance Support Project

What Protocols Cover

Who the Board Represents

- The board of directors will represent the needs and interests of all the students in the district.
- We will strive to represent common interests rather than factions. We will make decisions that are best for students in all cases: *all* means *all*.
- We will advocate for the [] Public Schools and public education. We readily accept our roles as ambassadors of the school systems, promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.

How it will do business

- The board ... will conduct its business through a set agenda. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items.
- We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting of the School Committee that is held in public—not a public meeting, and we will make every effort to ensure that the Committee meetings are effective and efficient
- We will base our decisions upon available facts, vote our convictions, avoid bias, and uphold and support the decisions of the majority of the School Committee once a decision is made.

How members treat each other

- The Board will debate the issues, not one another.
- We will build trusting relationships.
- We will respect staff and fellow board members at all times.
- We will work to build trust between and among SC members and the sup by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement

How it will communicate

- The Superintendent and the School Committee recognize the importance of proactive communication and agree that there will be no surprises. If SC members have questions or concerns, they agree to contact the Superintendent well in advance of a meeting.
- SC members will channel requests for information through the superintendent and School Committee Chair rather than directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure that each member has equal access to this information.
- We will recognize a single official “voice” of the board.

How it will improve

- The board will provide continuing education opportunities and support to each other.
- School Committee members agree to participate in formal training organized by the superintendent and the School Committee chairperson
- All new SC members will be assigned a SC mentor and will participate in a SC orientation session.
- We will model continuous learning in our roles as members of the governance team.

What are the limits of power

- It is the responsibility of the Superintendent to oversee the hiring evaluation and handling of personnel issues; it is the responsibility of the Committee to evaluate the Superintendent’s effectiveness in these matters.
- We will recognize that authority rests only with the majority decisions of the SC and will make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that may compromise the School Committee as a whole.
- We will follow the chain of command and direct others to do the same. Personnel complaints and concerns will be directed to the superintendent.
- We will not use our positions for personal or partisan gain.

What happens when things go wrong

- Board members will work together to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding.
- We recognize the importance of honoring our agreed upon [operating principles] and we agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when we get off track.
- We will maintain fidelity to these commitments and will be held accountable by our fellow School Committee members should any one of us fail to live up to these commitments. If a SC members or superintendent violates any of the above mentioned commitments in any way, he/she will be referred to the Chair.

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Third Reading, November 21, 2019

Approved at School Committee Meeting of

For the purpose of effective governance and enhancing teamwork among members of the School Committee and between members of the administration, the Lincoln School Committee adopts the following operating principles:

The School Committee:

1. Votes and acts impartially for the good of the students and as responsible stewards of Town resources. Remembers that schools exist for the benefit of the students and the community.
2. Partners with the administration to ensure a shared vision and strategy for education within the District, and collaboratively works to develop and adopt the District's long range strategic plan and annual priorities. Works with the Superintendent to review and evaluate policies considering the attitudes and aspirations of the communities it serves. Adopts a budget, after examination and review, in order to enable the school system to carry out the Committee's policies and goals. Acts as a responsible steward of the district's educational facilities and resources.
3. Allows the Superintendent to administer the day to day operations of the district and oversee personnel issues. Communicates always in an ethical, honest, straight-forward, open-and-above board manner with the Superintendent, the staff and communities. Keeps abreast of new laws and latest trends in education in order to provide leadership in selecting, hiring and evaluating a competent, established educational leader as Superintendent.
4. Conducts business through a set agenda in an effort to complete business within a reasonable timeframe. Allows adequate time for discussion of important matters but avoids discussing trivia adhering to a high standard of courtesy and respect with attendee's time. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items.
5. Works effectively with other Committee members without trying to dominate the Committee or neglect their share of work. Maintains an open environment, even in times of disagreement, where each member is empowered to freely express opinions, concerns and ideas while remaining flexible and respectful to all attendees and participants.
6. Functions as a Committee rather than as individuals, accepting the will of the majority vote in all cases. Remembers that the majority position is the official position of the Committee and members are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.

7. Acknowledges that a School Committee meeting adheres to open meeting laws and makes every effort to ensure meetings are efficient and effective. Recognizes that while the meeting is held publicly, it is not a meeting open to public discussion and community members are welcome to attend meetings and participate during the public comment period.
8. Channels all communications with or regarding staff members through the Superintendent. Refers questions and concerns received from members of the community directly to the Superintendent who has the authority to address, investigate and resolve matters. Remembers that the Superintendent administers and provides the professional educational leadership and appropriately informs the Committee of progress, obstacles, and concerns.
9. Recognizes the importance of trust and proactive communication and brings concerns, comments or inquiries of a personal or sensitive nature especially if it involves community, family, student, administration or faculty members to the Superintendent prior to open meeting.
10. Respects that Committee members are in essence employers and will be viewed by staff as such and therefore channels member requests for information, school visits or other desired interactions with staff and/or the schools through the Superintendent or the School Committee chair in order to minimize school business disruptions.
11. Represents the Committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support. Provides adequate and direct means for keeping local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school administration informed about the feedback and input from the public. Establishes and adheres to a communication procedure in order to accurately represent the positions of the School Committee to the media or other public bodies typically relying on the Superintendent, Chairperson or designated liaison.
12. Respects 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.

Ref: Policy BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties
Policy BBAA, School Committee Authority
Policy BDD, School Committee-Superintendent Relationship

Adopted at School Committee Meeting of _____