

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS

The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school system 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 system. 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.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically setting performance objectives for the School Committee itself and evaluating their accomplishment.
2. Setting objectives for performance for each position and function in the system.
3. Allowing the people responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.
4. Establish practical and simple goals.
5. Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.

CROSS REF.: ADA, School District Goals and Objectives

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

State law provides that:

Every town at its annual meeting shall in every year when the term of office of any incumbent expires, and except when other provision is made by law, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:

. . . Three, five, six, seven or nine members of the School Committee for terms of three years . . .

The School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. 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.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1 and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts Relating to School Committees

CROSS REFS.: AA, School District Legal Status
BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The School Committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The Committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

1. **Legislative or policymaking.** The Committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
2. **Appraisal.** The Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
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. **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 staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
5. **Educational planning and evaluation.** The Committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the Committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School District.

LEGAL REF.: 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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Authority

Because all powers of the School Committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the School Committee have authority only when acting as a Committee legally in session.

The School Committee will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the Committee.

No member of the Committee, by virtue of his/her office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee.

The School Committee will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the Committee sitting in formal session.

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 his/her 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.
7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he/she is 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 accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

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 from which he/she is elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member will 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/her official duties as a member of the Committee. From the Town Clerk, newly qualified Committee members, by law, receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of Committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

Membership on a School Committee is not limited to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or sexual orientation.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23B; 41:1; 41:107
M.G.L. 76:5 Amended 1993

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

A current School Committee member who submits a resignation to the appropriate certifying authority 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 or District in which he or she holds office, that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

Established by law

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

UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

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

As provided in the law, the School Committee will notify the Selectmen that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After one week's notice has been given by the Committee to the Selectmen, 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 elected 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 his/her relations with his/her community should:

1. Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the education of the children.
2. Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that he/she is 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 he/she represents 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 his/her Committee activities.

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her 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 his/her professional duties and hold him/her 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 member in his/her relations with his/her fellow Committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.
4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her 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.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

It is the responsibility of individual School Committee members to declare any conflict of interest as required by M.G.L. 268A, s.6. If a member has a question about whether a conflict exists, he/she may request an opinion from Town Council as provided for in M.G.L. 268A pp. 19.

Once a member has disqualified him/herself from participation in a matter before the Committee he/she will:

Not receive any additional material on the matter.

Not discuss the matter with other Committee members.

Leave the room if the discussion is in progress and the nature of the discussion warrants the action.

The Superintendent of Schools shall inform the School Committee, through the Chairman, of any matter which presents facts, legal issues, or strategies involving other matters from which a member has disqualified him/herself from participating. the Chairman and member(s) shall discuss the matter and the member(s) shall decide whether he/she will participate. In the event the Chairman has disqualified him/herself, the Superintendent shall inform the Vice Chairman. In the Chairman and Vice Chairman are both involved, the Superintendent will inform the rest of the Committee.

A two (2) week written notice by the Superintendent of Schools must be given to the School Committee before:

A member of the immediate family of the Superintendent of Schools, a Central Office Administrator, or School Committee member, is employed.

A member of the immediate family of the Principal is assigned to the Principal's school..

"Immediate Family" includes: spouse, parent, children, brothers and sisters.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 268A:19; 268A:23

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

For the purpose of organizing, the School Committee, at its first regular meeting following the District's annual elections, will elect from its membership a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and a Secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum. The election will proceed as follows:

1. Nominations for the office of Chairperson will be made from the floor. The Chairperson will be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.
2. Upon election, the new Chairperson will preside, calling for the election of a Vice-Chairperson and Secretary, in order. The procedure used for their election will be the same as that for electing the Chairperson.

Any vacancy among the officers occurring between organizational meetings will be filled by a member elected by the School Committee. The election will be conducted as described above.

Following election of officers at its organizational meeting, the School Committee may proceed into such regular or special business as scheduled on the agenda.

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. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chairperson will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out the State's requirements and the will of the Committee.
2. Consult with the Superintendent and Vice-Chair in the planning of the Committee agendas.
3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
5. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary, in consult with Vice-Chair.
6. Be public spokesperson for the Committee at all official town and board meetings except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.
8. Communicate with the chairs of all town boards and committees and Town Manager, as found necessary.
9. Along with the Superintendent, conduct New Member Orientation training.

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

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Conduct the business of the Committee in accordance with the properly posted agenda.
3. Facilitate and frame discussions of the Committee and ensure fair and equitable opportunities to speak.
4. Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
5. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
6. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
7. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chairperson

The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee will act in the absence of the Chairperson as presiding officer of the Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Vice-Chairperson will:

1. Act in absence of the Chairperson.
2. Assist the Chair in setting the agenda for Committee meetings.
3. Consult with the Chair to set special meetings of the Committee.
4. Attend meetings with the Chair, along with the chairs of all town boards and committees and Town Manager, as appropriate.

Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary will keep, or cause to be kept, an accurate journal of all Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or town. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Secretary will:

1. Take minutes of regular and special meetings when a clerk is not available.
2. Take minutes of all executive session meetings.
3. Submit all signed and approved minutes to the Superintendent's Administrative Secretary for filing and distribution to appropriate departments and the Town Clerk.
4. Perform any other duties assigned by the Committee.

Note: The Treasurer of the town serves as the treasurer of the School Committee.

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

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 a majority of the Committee may direct.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her 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/she 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.

SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The School Committee will have no standing committees. It may, however, establish special subcommittees at its annual organizational meeting. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for Committee action.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the Committee.
2. The Committee Chairperson, subject to approval by the Committee, will appoint the subcommittee chairperson and its members.
3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.
4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for Committee action, but it may not act for the School Committee.
5. The Committee Chairperson and Superintendent will be ex-officio members of all special subcommittees.
6. A subcommittee will be dissolved by the Committee upon completion of its assignment, or it may be dissolved by a vote of the Committee at any time.

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

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.

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.

CROSS REF.: JIB, Student Involvement in Decision-making

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 by the School Committee.

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

SCHOOL COUNCIL PROCESS

School Councils shall be formed for the purpose of providing a forum for discussion and advice to the Principal on matters specified herein as they relate to the achievement of the school's mission.

The following process is proposed for the election of members to School Councils under MGL C71 S 53 of the Education Reform Act.

1. Principal* will determine the number of Council members prior to the election process subject to the following:
 - 1.1 The number of parents of children who attend the school will equal the number of teachers plus the Principal.

The number of other persons may not exceed one half (50%) of the Council's membership. Other persons may not be parents or teachers of students at the school. Other persons may be drawn from municipal government, business and labor organizations, institutions of higher education, human services agencies or other interested groups. Interested other persons shall be solicited by the Principal through the media, personal contact and other means.

Two (2) students from the Student Council at Uxbridge High School shall serve on the Council.
2. Election
 - 2.1 Teachers shall be elected by secret ballot by the teachers assigned to the building on a day set by the Principal. All interested candidates will have their names on the ballot. Teachers include all staff covered by the Unit A Contract. A teacher will vote in the building where the Principal serves as his/her primary supervisor. Teacher participation is voluntary.
 - 2.2 The parents will be selected by the Parent Advisory Groups at Blanchard, Taft and Whittin through a process established by that group. At Uxbridge High School the parents will be elected by ballot by the parents of all students for the current school year. Parents already elected to School Councils will remain as members.
 - 2.3 Students will be elected by the Student Council by secret ballot on a date set by the Principal. All interested Student Council members will be on the ballot.
 - 2.4 All votes will be tabulated with seats to be filled by the highest number of votes received.
3. Organization
 - 3.1 The Principal shall serve as Co-Chair. The other Co-Chair shall be elected by the Council by majority vote after other persons have been selected and are in attendance. Other persons shall be elected by a nomination and voting by teachers, parents, Principal and the students on the Council.

The term *Principal as used here includes the Director of the Early Childhood Center.

- 3.2 The Councils shall review existing School Council by-laws and make such amendments to the operational procedures as the Council deems appropriate.
 - 3.3 The decision making process shall be one member one vote, majority rule on all decisions made by the Council.
4. Duties And Responsibilities
 - 4.1 The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal. A meeting schedule shall be set each school year at the first meeting which shall be held no later than forty (40) days after the first day of school that year.
 - 4.2 The Council shall adopt a school improvement plan. The plan shall be consistent with the goals and standards of the . system's strategic plan. The plan shall include an assessment of class size, (see exception under 5.2) personnel resources, professional development for the staff, school budget, parent involvement in the school, school climate, instructional strategies, curriculum, inclusion, and other matters as the Principal or Council may request. This plan shall be submitted no later than August 1 each year for School Committee approval.
 - 4.3 The Council shall review annually the proposed school budget.
5. Other
 - 5.1 The Council shall be subject to the Open Meeting Law MGL C39 and meetings shall be posted and conducted accordingly. All members shall receive from the Principal and review this statute at the first meeting.
 - 5.2 The Council shall have no authority over matters of collective bargaining, unless such authority has been granted under the terms of a contract(s).
 - 5.3 The Council may be granted additional authority by School Committee policy.
 - 5.4 Each Council will be provided with training requested by the Council and funded from the school's professional development budget. The funding may not exceed 5% of the budget set for the school in the Unit A contract.
 - 5.5 The approved minutes of each School Council meeting shall be attached to the Principal's monthly report. The Superintendent of Schools shall review these for the purpose of ensuring Council decisions are not in conflict with statutes, regulations, policies or contracts.
 - 5.6 All documents produced by the Council are public records.

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

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council and submitted for approval to the Superintendent and the School Committee. The plan should be drafted with the following in mind:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
7. Any further subjects as the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
 - a. The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to Chapter 150E, the collective bargaining law, and
 - b. The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by School Committee policy.

SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval by February 1st of each year.

Because the implementation of the plan is dependent on School Committee approval, it is important that the school council be aware of certain expectations of the School Committee regarding the school improvement plan. The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the mission of the School District and any goals and policies of the School District.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, School District policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate anticipated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the Superintendent and School Committee, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council, and resubmit it for approval. If the School Committee does not review the school improvement plan within 30 days of its receipt by the Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

School councils shall use consensus as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Sections 23 A, B, and C, which stipulate that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

The Superintendent shall receive agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the School Committee for information.

SCHOOL ATTORNEY

The School Committee may use the services provided by the town counsel. The Committee and the Superintendent may seek his/her services to counsel and represent the school system at various times.

However, because the complexity of school department operations often requires specialized legal services, the Committee may also retain an attorney or law firm to provide additional legal services.

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Committee to advise the School Committee and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to him. He/she will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law to enable him/her to offer the necessary legal advice.

A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school system will be made by the Committee. The Superintendent may also take such action at the direction of the Committee.

Many types of legal assistance are routine and do not require specific Committee approval or prior notice. However, when the Superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, he/she will advise the Committee and seek either initial or continuing authorization for such service.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

NOTE: Town or city charters often state that the town counsel or city solicitor will provide certain services for the School Committee. References to such sections(s) of a charter should be added to the legal references. In addition, it is important that a School Committee establish guidelines for access to legal counsel by individual members. In most cases this is allowed only with prior approval of the whole Committee.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting**: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly
2. **Special meeting**: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Every meeting of the School Committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

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

CROSS REFS.: BEC, Executive Sessions
BEDA, Notification of School Committee Meetings