

Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee

Location: Lanesborough Town Hall Community Room
83 North Main St, Lanesborough, MA

Date: August 2, 2019

Time: 12 pm

Retreat Agenda:

- I. Call to order
- II. Roles and Responsibilities
 - A. Subcommittee Work
 - B. Policy ([Click here for MGRSD online policy manual](#))
 - C. Finance/Budget
- III. Self-evaluation
- IV. Protocols
- V. School committee goals
- VI. Master calendar
- VII. Mission statement
- VIII. Review Superintendent evaluation process
- IX. Strategic plan
- X. Superintendent goals
- XI. Adjourn

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Overview

Welcome to School Committee service. As a committee member, you will participate in decisions that impact the education of thousands of students. The decisions you make can improve or impair the education these students will receive. How can you be most successful in this role?

You campaigned as an individual, but you will govern as a member of a committee. It is somewhat analogous to trying out for a sports team. You gain a spot on the team because of your individual skills, but the success of the team depends on your being able to use your skills in concert with other team members. Now that you're on the team, you need to figure out how to make your ideas and voice fit into the whole so that the team, not the individual, can be successful. When the team wins, every individual wins – as well as the students you serve.

An important part of making this happen is understanding the role of the superintendent, of the committee and the role of the individual committee member. There are limits to both the authority of committee and to the authority of the individual. There are also limits to the superintendent's authority. It is important that everyone knows what falls into the committee area of responsibility and what falls to the superintendent. The ideal is a balance where the committee doesn't cede its authority to the superintendent, but also doesn't overstep into the role of managing, rather than governing, the district.

Another important part is understanding and observing the protocols for communicating and working together. While the roles are generally clear, they can on occasion be ambiguous. Establishing and following protocols to navigate these grey areas will prevent misunderstandings and will help the team concentrate on its work, rather than waste time debating how the work will get done.

In the big picture, every decision should be made in the best interest of all the children in the district. There will be many times when committee members have different opinions of what that means, but the focus should be on student, not adult, interests. Goals and decisions come from the committee, in collaboration with the superintendent, not from personal agendas.

This doesn't mean you should put aside your ideas or not advocate for what is important to you. It does mean that you need to listen as well as speak, and that you may need to compromise at times. You will need to consider how your positions fit into the goals already in place and the work already in progress in the district. New ideas are often better received when introduced at the right time in the flow of the work rather than disrupting that flow.

You never give up your First Amendment rights to express your opinion, either at the committee table or between meetings. However, just because you can say something doesn't mean you should. All of your colleagues were elected as well and have just as much right to have their viewpoints listened to and considered as you do. If the committee is to be successful, committee members need to develop a level of trust and respect in working with each other and the committee needs to develop a level of trust and respect in working with the superintendent. When the issue is controversial and emotions run high, it is often wise to consider, before speaking or hitting "send," the impact your words or posts or tweets will

have on the ability of the committee to accomplish the work necessary to serve the students in your schools.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEE & SUPERINTENDENT

As you begin your service, it is important to have a basic understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the school committee and of the superintendent.

In the big picture, the overarching responsibility of every school committee is continuous improvement in student achievement. Student achievement encompasses much more than just test scores. Each school district may define student achievement for its students a little bit differently depending on the vision and values of the community. Broadly, it is defined as what you want your students to have accomplished by the time they move on from your schools. Accomplishing this for students means many elements need to be in place: teaching and support staff need to meet student needs, buildings must be adequate to support the education that takes place within them and be well maintained, appropriate educational materials must be available, goals for the district and a budget that supports those goals must exist – the list goes on.

Under Massachusetts laws, there are certain responsibilities and authorities granted specifically to the school committee and others granted specifically to the superintendent. There are, however, many areas where the lines are not always clear. In these areas, individual school committees and superintendents must discuss and agree on what makes the most sense for their district to work smoothly.

JOINT SCHOOL COMMITTEE & SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

District Vision and Goals:

Ultimately, it is a legal responsibility of the school committee to make sure that goals are in place for the district. However, from a practical standpoint, the school committee and superintendent must work together to develop the vision and goals for the district. The school committee is responsible for representing the vision and values of the community and the superintendent is responsible for identifying what is needed (staff, resources, etc.) to get the job done. At goal-setting time, these two perspectives should come together to develop a powerful plan that can move the district forward and create the conditions for continuous improvement in student achievement.

Progress Monitoring:

Once goals are established, both the school committee and superintendent are responsible for monitoring progress toward the goals. Outcomes for goals should be clearly articulated so that effective monitoring can occur. If progress is not being made, the superintendent can alter the plan so that things can stay on track. It is the responsibility of the school committee to monitor progress and hold the superintendent accountable if goals are not being met. It is also the responsibility of the school committee to provide the resources, most often through the budget, for goal implementation.

Communicating With the Public:

As the leaders of the school district, the school committee and the superintendent share responsibility for keeping the public informed of the successes and challenges of the schools. There is also a responsibility to advocate for the needs of the schools and to engage the community in the work of the schools. This requires an outreach to parents, municipal officials and the greater community to understand the vision and expectations that people have for the schools. At times, it is important to keep the appropriate stakeholders informed of events in the schools in a timely manner. Timely, accurate and thorough communication can come from the superintendent, the school committee and often both coordinating the message and facilitating two-way communication with stakeholders.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

In brief, listed below are the responsibilities that belong specifically to the school committee. More detailed information can be found in the appropriate sections.

Setting Goals and Standards:

As stated above, it is ultimately the legal responsibility of the school committee is to ensure that goals are in place to provide for continuous improvement in student achievement. The definition of student achievement encompasses more than just test scores. How it is defined varies in each community and is informed by the values of the community. At goal-setting time, the committee brings the vision and values of the community to the table and combines that with information the superintendent brings about the needs of the staff to accomplish the job. The committee is also responsible for monitoring and evaluating progress toward accomplishment of the goals.

Setting the District Budget:

This is both part of the policy parameter and the fulfillment of the “fiduciary responsibility” of a public elected board. The school committee approves the district budget (subject to confirmation by the municipality’s legislative authority), determines line items, sets policy issues that are linked to the budget, and modifies line items (i.e., transfers) during the year. Part of the budgetary process and fiduciary responsibility is review and approval of warrants to ensure payment of district expenses and payroll.

Policy:

The school committee sets policy for the school district. Policy is a very broad term and includes, but is not limited to:

- By-Laws and/or Rules of Order for the School Committee
- District Policy Manual,
- Collective bargaining agreements,
- Policy contained in meeting minutes,
- Strategic plans,
- Some elements of student handbooks
- Budget
- Municipal Charters

- Regional Agreements

Personnel:

The school committee has a variety of responsibilities related to personnel in several areas.

Hire the Superintendent of Schools:

The School Committee hires, contracts with, evaluates and makes other employment decisions relative to the superintendent.

Employee Approvals:

The School Committee has powers of advice and consent over a limited number of additional personnel, subject to the recommendation of the superintendent. This means that the superintendent oversees the hiring process and brings a qualified candidate to the school committee for its approval. As long as the candidate is qualified to fill the position, consent should not be withheld. These positions include:

- Deputy, Associate and Assistant Superintendents
- Special Education Director
- School Business Officer
- Legal Counsel
- Physicians, Nurses and Attendance Officers

The school committee sets the parameters for compensation of employees not subject to collective bargaining, including individuals who report to the superintendent, principals, and others. This includes salary ranges for the position and benefits other than salary, such as vacation and sick time, tuition reimbursement, etc.

The school committee is the employer of record for all collective bargaining agreements. The language in collective bargaining agreements rises to the level of policy. In addition to committing financial resources of the district, the language in agreements can either further or hinder accomplishment of district goals.

SUPERINTENDENT RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Superintendent is the educational leader of the district. This encompasses a wide array of responsibilities, including aligning the efforts of faculty and staff to the vision of the district, developing relationships to garner support for the schools, communicating with stakeholders and other specific responsibilities outlined below:

Oversee day-to-day management of the district:

The superintendent oversees the fiscal, physical and personnel aspects of district operations.

Hire administrative staff; approve faculty hiring:

The Superintendent is responsible for hiring the personnel for the district and ensuring that each employee is properly supervised and evaluated. Building principals have site-based autonomy to hire the staff within their building, with the approval of the superintendent.

Recommend policy, budget and goals to the school committee:

As the educational leader of the district, the superintendent is responsible for recommending the necessary policies, budget and goals to the school committee that will advance the vision and engender continuous improvement in student achievement in the district.

Implement policy, budget and goals once decided upon by school committee:

Once the school committee has deliberated on the superintendent's recommendations and voted a course of action, it falls to the superintendent to implement the decisions made by the committee.

CONCLUSION

One necessary component of success for the school committee, and ultimately the schools, is the trust of the community. This happens most easily when the school committee and the superintendent work harmoniously together. Progress is often not made in the midst of conflict because energy is expended on the conflict rather than on moving forward. When instances occur where the roles are not clearly defined, it is important to discuss expectations and agree on how to work together. The students in your schools depend on the leaders being able to work together and focus the work on continuous improvement in student achievement.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

The Education Reform Act of 1993 strengthened the requirement for accountability in the delivery of education to our students. To that end, the law now calls for the superintendent of schools to "cause the evaluation" of every employee in the school system.

But who is to evaluate the school committee, if not the school committee itself? While it is true that as individuals, members of the committee are "evaluated" when they stand for re-election or reappointment there is no prescribed agency, no prescribed vehicle for the school committee, as a body, to be evaluated -except by the body itself!

Why do a self-evaluation? While there are many potential benefits, there are two essential questions that could be answered. They are:

- 1. Is the committee doing the right things?**
- 2. Are the "right things" being done the "right way"?**

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees has developed this package to serve as a guide to members who wish to conduct a self-evaluation. The guide is more of a process than an instrument. Self-evaluation by the school committee can yield significant insights and improvement in the total operation of the committee. It can also demonstrate to the entire organization the committee's affirmation of, and commitment to, improvement and accountability in the continuing implementation of Education Reform.

As always, the Association is ready to assist you whatever your needs may be. Please call our office to talk to a staff member or to set up an on-site visit with a Field Director.

The Process for Conducting a Self-Evaluation

The process for performing a self-evaluation is a three-step process:

- 1. Planning the evaluation**
- 2. Completing the evaluation**
- 3. Processing the data**

Planning the evaluation requires the committee to reach agreement on areas of evaluation. This can include, but is certainly not limited to, the following areas of concern:

- governance
- operations
- member relations
- committee/superintendent relations
- strategic planning
- community relations
- fiscal management
- conduct of school committee meetings

A list of specific items that you may want to consider in each category is listed in the appendix to this document.

At this point it is important to note that while the process for the evaluation of the superintendent calls for clear, measurable goals; the committee need not restrict itself to that specifically for this process. Much of what the committee needs to address are the more subjective and *qualitative* factors in areas such as group dynamics that are such an integral part of a school committee's effectiveness.

Once the committee has met (with or without the help of a facilitator) to decide on what categories will be incorporated into the evaluation, they can begin to choose the *descriptors* within each category (See appendix) . This important step may involve a considerable amount of discussion. Try not to "split hairs" and have too many variations of the same point. Later in the process, you should recognize that one of the key benefits of self-evaluation is the actual discussion among committee members as you review the results. Once you have settled on the categories and descriptors, you are ready to complete the self-evaluation.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

When establishing a deadline for completing the evaluation, it is important to give each member enough time so they won't feel rushed. It is common for each evaluation to be anonymous. Designate someone to collect the forms and do a composite scoring.

Processing the data can often be more effective when the committee uses a facilitator. Many of the issues and examples that will be used by members in the discussion can involve personalities and interpersonal dynamics and an objective non-member can be an invaluable aid in keeping the dialogue on-track and focused.

Remember that a key benefit, apart from the "report card" that results from the processing of data, is the enlightening (and non-threatening) discussion of issues that would never have been "agenda items" on their own. To this end, try and choose a setting that is comfortable and informal. While the meeting must be an open meeting, it must be set up for the benefit of committee members to have an honest and productive dialogue. Limit the discussion to the participants.

There are two ways to look at the scoring. The most obvious way is to find the areas where there is strong agreement. If there is strong agreement that improvement is needed in a particular area, then this should become part of your new "action plan." If there is agreement that something is working, then keep up the good work!

The other way to view the scoring is to look for areas where there is no strong agreement. If half the committee believes the committee does a great job on the budget, and half the committee believes that there is room for improvement, then an area for discussion has been identified. It is in these discussions that members can learn about each other, find ways to reach common ground, and develop a plan to move forward together. The most important thing is not to let the report hang in the air - use it to develop your own "professional development plan" for the school committee. Ask your facilitator or one of your members to draft a synopsis of your discussion, and initiate plans to put into action the ideas generated in the process, or to develop a plan for the committee to receive training.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION

Scoring is done as follows:

1-Strongly agree

2-Agree

3-Disagree

4-Don't know

Governance

The school committee is a governing body, charged with setting the educational goals and objectives for the school system, adopting policies that enable the administration to achieve these goals and objectives, adopting a budget to provide necessary resources, the hiring and evaluation of the superintendent, and the ongoing review and evaluation of the school system's performance in fulfilling its mission.

1. The committee's policies are clear and up-to-date. _____
2. The committee has adopted a mission statement. _____
3. The committee regularly evaluates its progress relative to the goals and objectives that have been adopted. _____
4. The committee refrains from involvement in the administration of the school system. _____
5. The committee members take part in educational workshops and conferences to help them make informed decisions. _____

Operations

Any group or team functions best when the norms, rules and dynamics are spelled out, easily understood, and agreed upon. Aside from certain Massachusetts General Laws and Robert's Rules of Order, the school committee generally develops its own ways of doing things. City charters and town by-laws may also provide direction for the committee. The more that is discussed up front, the smoother the process for making decisions can be.

1. Roles of committee officers are defined in committee policy and understood by all members. _____
2. New members receive introductory training and orientation when they join the committee. _____
3. Procedures and protocols for committee operations are published and understood. _____

Member Relations

Group dynamics and teamwork are an extremely important part of school committee success. Members can have strong opinions on issues yet still remain open-minded and willing to work out differences. How committee members treat each other goes a long way in affecting the ultimate success of the committee as a whole and as individuals.

1. Members treat each other with courtesy and respect. _____
2. All members are encouraged to voice opinions and take positions on issues. _____
3. Members respect the will of the majority and support decisions once they are made. _____
4. Members share pertinent information with each other to prevent surprises and promote informed decision making. _____
5. Members "do their homework" and come prepared to make decisions. _____
6. Members understand the role of the individual as part of the whole group. _____

1-Strongly agree

2-Agree

3-Disagree

4-Don't know

Committee/Superintendent Relations

The superintendent is a critical member of the management team, implementing school committee policies and leading the school system in the direction set by the school committee. The relationship between the committee and the superintendent is an area that deserves the utmost attention and care.

1. The committee regularly evaluates the superintendent using a mutually agreed-upon process. _____

2. The types and frequency of communications are agreed to in advance. _____

3. The superintendent is accessible to committee members. _____

4. Committee members contact the superintendent when seeking information. _____

5. The superintendent informs the committee of major personnel decisions. _____

6. The superintendent and committee treat each other with mutual respect and professionalism. _____

7. Both the committee and the superintendent operate on a "no-surprises" model. _____

1-Strongly agree

2-Agree

3-Disagree

4-Don't know

Strategic Planning and Fiscal Management

The school committee is accountable to the community for the responsible management of the school system's finances. It is also responsible for providing the resources necessary to enable the school system to perform its mission. Solid planning is needed to maximize short-term and long-term allocation of resources.

- 1. A long term, strategic plan exists and is regularly reviewed. _____
- 2. All constituencies of the school district are involved in the strategic planning process. _____
- 3. The budget process is documented and published. _____
- 4. Budgets are developed based on needs, from the "bottom-up." _____
- 5. The committee, as a group, presents and advocates the budget to the community. _____
- 6. The committee receives regular reports with budget and financial status for the school system. _____

Community Relations

The school committee is the chief advocate for students in the community. As such, it needs to strive for a positive relationship between the community and the school system. The perception of the school system's quality impacts nearly all facets of the system, and is an integral component of school committee success in advocacy.

- 1. The committee has a public relations plan for the school system. _____
- 2. The committee encourages the inclusion of community member in as much decision making as possible. _____
- 3. The committee works cooperatively with other branches of municipal government. _____
- 4. The school system regularly reports its own progress and accomplishments. _____

1-Strongly agree 2-Agree 3-Disagree 4-Don't know

Conduct of Meetings

The quality of school committee meetings affects not only the quality of committee decisions and committee credibility, but also the level of confidence the community has in the committee. School committee decisions can be made only at these meetings, which often provide the public its only "window" into the school system. The meeting agenda is planned jointly by the committee chairman and the superintendent, and must be adhered to by the committee.

1. Committee members receive sufficient information far enough in advance to prepare for meetings. _____
2. Public input is welcomed, and is done according to an established policy. _____
3. Full and sufficient debate is allowed. _____
4. Discussion is focused on issues, not personalities. _____
5. The physical setting is conducive to productive discussion and decision making. _____
6. Meetings are frequent enough to prevent overcrowded agendas. _____

1-Strongly agree

2-Agree

3-Disagree

4-Don't know

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Operating Protocols

As a school committee member, you must manage numerous relationships and handle communications from a wide variety of sources. The relationships include the superintendent, staff members, parent and community members and colleagues on the committee. Communication and information can come from any these sources at any time, not just at meetings. And, while the committee can only act as a body, your opinion is sought on a myriad of topics between meetings. To further the complexity, you may or may not be in agreement with your colleagues philosophically or share their viewpoints on certain issues.

In this environment, how can positive things happen? How can you, your colleagues and the superintendent all work together to benefit the students in your district?

Developing and adopting Operating Protocols can be part of the answer. Operating Protocols (or Norms) are a set of agreements outlining how people will work together. Making progress and accomplishing your goals is much easier when everyone -committee members and the superintendent - has a common understanding of how you will function as a team. And, if issues of trust exist, agreeing to and following a set of Operating Protocols helps build trust because everyone knows what they can expect from their fellow team members.

Protocols can benefit the governance team – the school committee and the superintendent - and by extension, the entire district. Protocols can help develop better working relationships among committee members and with the superintendent by setting clear expectations. They can serve to articulate what is working well so that these practices continue. They can help increase the efficiency of committee meetings because expectations for how meetings are structured and run are clear to all. When a team has clear expectations on how it will work together, the team can spend its time and energy on actually addressing the issues at hand rather than getting caught up in procedure.

A good relationship among the governance team is critical to making progress. When the relationship falters, progress is slowed or stopped. Time and energy is focused on the conflict rather than the work at hand. The entire staff and community are affected by the relationship of the governance team. When things are humming along smoothly at the top, everyone feels more settled and able to concentrate on their job. Faculty and staff in particular get the signal that decisions affecting their work were thoughtfully made. The community is likely to be much more supportive of the schools when it observes that the team leading the district is cohesive and focused on the schools and the students.

DEVELOPING OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Operating Protocols are unique to the team that establishes them. Because every group is different, each one must decide what is important to them, what works best in communicating with each other and what guidelines are acceptable to them. No one can simply prescribe a set of protocols because if members of the team don't feel comfortable and aren't willing to follow them, they simply won't work.

Operating Protocols are typically developed in a workshop setting, often with a facilitator, where members have the opportunity to engage in a self-evaluation. They can discuss expectations for communications and interactions. They can determine what works well and what areas need improvement or clarification. From this discussion, a set of Operating Protocols can be drafted for approval by the governance team. Once they are finalized, the committee can commit to the protocols by voting to adopt them and signing the document. Many committees post their protocols on the website to let the community know the commitment they have made to working effectively together.

When developing Operating Protocols, it is wise to remember that sometimes less is more. If the list of protocols is too long, they can become too cumbersome to be meaningful. Sometimes, the various protocols overlap or even be in conflict with each other. A good rule of thumb is to keep the document to one page.

At times, people question the wisdom of implementing Operating Protocols because they feel the protocols are an attempt to control behavior. This is precisely why Operating Protocols should be created by the team that will use them. When everyone has a voice in developing them, everyone feels more ownership and commitment to follow them.

Protocols can sometimes be seen as a way for the majority to control the minority, as a way to control information or a way to stifle dissent. When protocols work well, they actually prevent these things from happening. They help facilitate the flow of information and allow spirited, principled disagreement to take place in productive discussions.

When Operating Protocols are developed, it is important to include the superintendent as a member of the team. Since so much of committee operations and communication includes, and often originates with, the superintendent, his or her role must be made clear.

PROTOCOLS, NOT POLICY

Because Protocols are unique to the team that developed them and meant to apply only to that particular team, they stand apart from policy. They should be reviewed periodically and adjusted as needed. When the governance team changes, either after an election or when a new superintendent begins his/her tenure, the Protocols should be reviewed to ensure that all members of the new team have the opportunity for input. In other words, Protocols should be more flexible than policy.

Operating Protocols can serve as a tool for self-evaluation. A central question to consider in a self-evaluation is: "Are we doing what we said we would do?" Evaluating the team's performance against the Protocols it has committed to will show team members the areas where they are doing well and the areas where improvement is needed.

CONCLUSION

Operating Protocols can facilitate the governing work of the school committee in several ways. They can set clear expectations for how that work will take place. They can allow for productive discussions that lead to well-thought decisions on the part of the committee. They can serve as a tool for self-evaluation and continuous improvement of the governance team. They can help build trust among team members and can help build the trust of the community for the schools.

WHAT PROTOCOLS COVER AND SAMPLE PROTOCOLS

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.

Mount Greylock Regional School District School Committee Protocols

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the School Committee and between our School Committee and administration, we, the members of the Mount Greylock Regional School Committee, do hereby publicly commit ourselves collectively and individually to the following operating protocols:

1. The School Committee will represent the needs and interests of all the students in our district.
2. The School Committee will lead by example and work to build trust. We agree to avoid words and actions that create a negative impression of an individual, the School Committee, or the district. While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will speak with care and respect to each other, staff, students, and members of the community.
3. Surprises to the School Committee or the Superintendent will be the exception, not the rule. We agree to ask the School Committee Chair to place an item on the agenda instead of bringing it up unexpectedly at a meeting. We will consider agenda requests from members of the community, and they should be directed to the chair.
4. Maintaining focus on Student Achievement, the School Committee will help to establish the vision and goals for the district, create policies, and ensure accountability. The Committee will work to advise and approve a budget with careful consideration of educational goals and priorities in a timely manner. The Superintendent will manage the schools and staff.
5. The School Committee will speak to the issues on the agenda following Robert's Rules of Order. Members will fully participate in the discussion and have their opinion known and factored into decisions. The Chair may make a motion, although it is preferred that motions originate with the other members as often as possible. Facts and information needed from the administration will be referred to the Superintendent.
6. Direct communication between staff and members of the School Committee are discouraged. School Committee requests of staff are to be directed through the Superintendent.
7. All personnel complaints and criticisms received by the School Committee or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent or School Committee Chair. The School Committee Chair will inform the Superintendent of complaints raised in a timely manner. School Committee members will not attempt to handle personnel issues individually or outside the scope of the School Committee's responsibility.
8. The School Committee will encourage others to follow the district Chain of Communication policy.

9. The School Committee will consider research, best practice, public input and financial impacts in their decision making, and as much as possible explain the reasoning behind decisions. School Committee members will act in a transparent matter, recognizing that all email correspondence between committee members and members of other municipal boards is a matter of public record and should be copied or forwarded to the district office manager.

10. When executive sessions are held, all participants will honor the confidentiality of the discussions.

11. Individual School Committee members do not have authority. Only the School Committee as a whole has authority. Individual School Committee members will not take unilateral action, or take action that impedes the work of the Committee. Individuals will support the majority position of the Committee once an official vote has been taken and a Committee position is set by the majority.

12. The Chair shall be the official spokesperson for the committee in dealing with the media and with the public. The chair may delegate other committee members to speak on behalf of the committee. The Chair or delegate will represent decisions, votes, and official positions of the committee, and not his/her own views. When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards, they will clearly state when they are speaking as individuals and when they are speaking on behalf of the committee.

13. The School Committee will set S.M.A.R.T. goals for itself and evaluate progress on these goals annually.

14. [[While remote participation in School Committee meetings is permitted as voted by the School Committee and allowed by the Open Meeting Law, use of remote participation options is discouraged when avoidable and should not be a regular occurrence.]]

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

GOALS

Having clear goals, and putting a high priority on meeting the goals, is one characteristic of a highly effective school board. Establishing district goals is also a legal responsibility of the school committee. Goal setting is done most successfully when it is accomplished in concert with the superintendent. At goal setting time, the school committee brings the vision and values of the community to the table and the superintendent identifies what is needed to get the job done. These two elements come together at the committee table to establish a vision and goals for the district.

Before goals are determined, the school committee must establish a clear mission and vision. A mission defines why the organization exists. This is why many district mission statements look very similar – in essence, districts all exist for the same reason – to educate the students in the district. A vision describes the future you want to create. Vision statements vary from district to district, reflecting differing community values. Once a vision and mission are established, goals become the path to realizing the vision.

The former practice of a detailed strategic plan that articulates a very rigid set of goals has faded in popularity. These plans were often not flexible enough to adapt to changes and contained too many goals to be realistic. Instead, many districts now develop a “District Strategy.” In different places, this may be called the District Improvement Plan or even the Strategic Plan. The District Strategy still looks out a number of years. However, it is much more flexible to take into account changing needs and changing circumstances.

The District Strategy is developed with input from many different stakeholders on what they see as the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities the schools are facing. It also requires a thorough look at data to understand what areas need improvement and what the issues might be that are standing in the way of improving. Exactly how the District Strategy is created differs from district to district. In some, the superintendent might take the lead and keep the committee informed of progress. In others, the school committee leads the process. The process should be worked out as planning begins so that the school committee is assured that its voice is reflected as the plan develops. No matter what process is used to draft the Strategy, ultimately it is the school committee that would formally vote to adopt the plan and goals to be implemented.

Once a District Strategy is developed and approved, several elements must be in place to help assure success. First of all, the goals must be aligned throughout the district. This means that the superintendent’s goals, the administrator goals, school improvement goals and teacher goals all support the district strategy.

In addition, goals must be monitored to ensure progress. Goals puts a frame around and give structure to the school committee’s work. The committee has the responsibility to establish goals. Once established a major focus of the committee’s work becomes monitoring progress toward the goals through presentations at school committee meetings. The school committee holds the superintendent accountable for progress through the superintendent evaluation process. The superintendent is also monitoring goals and is better able to make or recommend changes in the implementation if the goal is not being met through the defined actions.

Once a broad District Strategy is defined and implementation begins, the school committee and superintendent can develop a cycle to make sure that the plan is being implemented, monitored, evaluated and adjusted as necessary.

GOAL SETTING CYCLE

A District Strategy generally looks out 3-5 years and contains a relatively small number, usually 3-5, broad, integrated goals. Each year, more specific goals are set that describe actions in more detail that will bring the district closer to realizing the district strategy. These are referred to as SMART (Specific, Strategic, Measurable, Action-Oriented, Realistic, Results-oriented and Tracked) Goals. SMART goals also have key actions and benchmarks – what will happen and when it will happen by. This makes the monitoring function much easier because the committee can hear presentations throughout the goal implementation cycle to monitor progress based on the benchmarks.

Many school committees and superintendents plan for the next school year's SMART goals sometime in the late spring or summer. Often, a workshop or retreat - at least annually - will allow time for the school committee and superintendent to have these in-depth discussions and for everyone to have ample input to reach consensus. A workshop often takes place in a less formal setting than a regular business meeting, allowing for a more free-flowing dialogue. While it is a posted public meeting, it need not be a time when decisions are finalized, but rather where information is exchanged that will lead to a formal decision at a later time.

While having the discussion on SMART goals, one important factor to consider is the desired outcome. Making sure everyone is clear on the positive change that will occur when the goal is realized will help everyone understand how to determine when the goal has been reached. It will help inform the data to collect and what presentations will be beneficial in measuring progress. Perhaps most importantly, a good discussion on desired outcomes will help ensure that everyone has the same understanding of what the goal is intended to achieve.

Once goals are finalized, a year-long agenda can be developed. Developing a year-long agenda gives the school committee and superintendent the opportunity to decide what presentations they would like to schedule that would help the committee and the community understand how the goals are being implemented and the resulting progress. It can also help the committee be aware of the developing next steps to implement the District Strategy and understand the resources and support that will be needed to do so. A year-long agenda would include presentations that help the school committee monitor both progress and results.

As the end of the cycle approaches, it is time to summarize the progress and start planning for the next cycle. Most often, the superintendent's evaluation is part of this process. This is the time for the superintendent and committee to assess the progress made on the goals and establish a new set of SMART goals for the upcoming cycle.

Below are some sample District Strategies and SMART goals. You will also find some questions to help guide the development of a SMART goal.

SAMPLE DISTRICT STRATEGIES

Hamilton-Wenham: http://www.hwschools.net/uploaded/District/Documents_PDF's/13-14/M_E_and_Strategic_Blueprint_Document_2-3.pdf

Melrose: <http://melroseschools.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/MelroseStrategyOverviewFY16.pdf>

Consolidated Districts of Orange, Petersham and R.C. Mahar:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0Bxf7iMytNBRudVhvS3ZEUGIBVE0wbzU1VldSS2Z3Qkx2R0hF/view>

SAMPLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE SMART GOALS

1. By June 20XX, the School Committee will have reviewed and approved district policies in order to articulate support for a rigorous, challenging, and innovative learning environment aligned with community standards as measured by agenda items, meeting minutes and policy revisions.
 - *Identify policies related to teaching and learning by September and set out a plan for their review.*
 - *Review and revise teaching and learning policies by June*

2. By June 20XX, the School Committee will review, fund and adopt the district's professional development plan so that the district can continue to develop highly qualified educators, as well as expand professional development offerings that are aligned with both the district Strategy Overview and the identified needs of staff as measured by agenda items, meeting minutes and budget documents.
 - *The SC will continuously review the Strategy Overview to understand the needs of the district by June, October and April*
 - *The SC will assign a liaison to the PD Committee by July.*
 - *The SC liaison to the PD Committee will work with the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning to develop a report showing how the efficiency and effectiveness of professional development can be evaluated in the district by December.*
 - *The SC will evaluate the use of PD resources based on the report of efficiency and effectiveness by March.*

3. By June, the School Committee will have developed and implemented a proactive communication plan that celebrates the successes of the district and that engages the public in open conversations regarding the district's challenges as measured by agenda items, meeting minutes, and increased attendance of liaisons at district and city events.
 - *The SC will establish a Communications subcommittee by September.*
 - *The Communications subcommittee will report back to the committee with an action plan by December.*
 - *The SC will review the use of liaisons and their role in communications by September.*

4. By June, the Public Schools will have developed, approved, and advocated for a sound budget that will support the goals of the district to improve teaching and learning and raise student achievement as measured by agenda items, meeting minutes and budget documents.
 - *The SC will engage in public discussion regarding the anticipated needs of the district by December.*
 - *The SC will review the budget setting process and approve changes as needed by December.*
 - *The SC will develop an FYXX budget that advocates for appropriate funding to meet the future resources necessary for strategic, long range planning of the district by April.*
 - *The SC will advocate with the community, the Board of Selectmen and State Representatives for the support of improved funding for the schools*

QUESTIONS TO ANSWER IN DEVELOPING A SMART GOAL

1. **Why** is this topic/focus important?
STRATEGIC, RELEVANT

2. **What/who** will benefit and how?
SPECIFIC, RIGOROUS, RESULTS-FOCUSED

3. **When** will I achieve this goal?
REALISTIC, TIMED

4. **How** will I know the goal has been achieved?
MEASURABLE

5. **How** will I demonstrate progress toward this goal?
ACTION-ORIENTED, TRACKED

Proposed based on Goal Setting
Workshop

MGRSD School Committee Goals

2017-2018

1. District Leadership

Achieve a positive vote for regionalization on Nov 14, 2017.

- Secure the endorsement of all 3 School Committees
- Provide public communication of the benefits to Lanesborough
- Strengthening and upping the activity of the School Council profile and its role in the school
- Publicize the strengths of a Lanesborough Elementary School education

2. Communication

Work to enhance a positive public perception of the Lanesborough Elementary School to the community.

- Continue to review and update policies and procedures; strive to get them on line
- With the Superintendent/Principal, work to update and maintain the school's website
- Work with the Board of Selectmen to establish and implement a maintenance plan and determine its fiscal responsibility
- Incorporate the PTO, PAC, and School Council into School Committee agendas to foster two-way communication

3. Educational Leadership

Provide a rigorous and supportive learning environment for the students of Lanesborough Elementary School.

- Periodically review student enrollment and student service needs to determine how best to structure the budget to be in support of student needs and achievement
- Work with the Superintendent and Business Consultant to provide for technology as identified by the principal as needed to advance the curriculum
- Provide for necessary professional development for the staff as determined by the principal to maintain rigor and to meet ESSA guidelines

- Work with the Superintendent, Director of Pupil Services & Principal to identify and provide quality before and after school programming for students
- Work with the Superintendent, Director of Pupil Service and Principal to make pre-K equally available and accessible to all Lanesborough children
- Work with the Superintendent, Business Consultant and Principal to meet physical activity requirements in all grades through physical education and structured recess
- Provide support to the Principal and Director of Pupil Services in exploring ways to accomplish greater 7th grade readiness in Lanesborough students

4. School Committee and Superintendent Relations

Work collaboratively and effectively with the Superintendent in order to keep moving the District forward on all levels in a positive and constructive manner.

- The Chair and the Superintendent will meet and collaborate monthly
- The Superintendent will report out monthly on areas of concern or interest in the District. The School Committee will provide feedback on the information reported.
- The School Committee and Superintendent will collaborate and complete a strategic plan.

**MOUNT GREYLOCK RSD
SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**2019-2020 MASTER CALENDAR
Agenda Items**

August	Thurs, Aug. 8, 2019	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Master Calendar Approval Student/Parent Handbook Capital Gift Update	MGRS Building Project Update	Annual Appoint Treasurer & Assistant Treasurer Authorize Treasurer to Borrow	Policy Review School Committee Goals
September	Thurs, Sept 12, 2019	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
FY19 Budget Wrap-up / FY20 Update Grant Updates	Summer Programming Review/Update Strategic Plan	Special Education/ELL/Title I Updates Superintendent's Goals	Student Activity Accounts Staffing / FTE Updates
October	Thurs, Oct 10, 2019	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Homeschooling FY20 First Quarter Budget Update	Enrollment Update Review of Executive Session Minutes for Declassification	School Calendar Discussion	School Improvement Plans
November	Thurs, Nov 14, 2019	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
School Committee Reorganization Year End Budget Review	Appoint District Secretary FY21 Budget Timeline & Priority Review	MCAS & Accountability Report DESE/EOY Report	Superintendent's Academic Achievement Award
December	Thurs, Dec 12, 2019	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Program of Studies	Mid-Year School Committee Review	Preliminary FY21 Budget Discussion	Annual Meeting with Town Selectmen
January	Thurs, Jan 9, 2020	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Discussion of FY21 Budget / Preliminary Figures	FY20 Second Quarter Budget Review Pre-K Child Find Process	Renzi Award Announcement (WES) Pre-K Tuition Discussion	Superintendent Mid-Cycle Review
February	Thurs, Feb 13, 2020	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Discussion of FY21 Budget	School Choice Discussion	Preliminary 20-21 School Calendar Discussion	
March	Thurs, March 12, 2020	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
FY21 Budget – VOTE	School Choice Recommendation – VOTE	2020-2021 School Calendar - VOTE	
April	Thurs, April 9, 2020	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Review of Executive Session Minutes for Declassification	Superintendent Evaluation Process	Annual Plan of Professional Development Activities	
May	Thurs, May 14, 2020	6 pm	MGRS Room A109
Third Quarter FY20 Budget Update	Retreat Planning	Summer Programming	Special Education/ELL/Title I Updates
June	Thurs, June 11, 2020	6 pm	MGRS
Preliminary Fourth Quarter Budget Report FY21 Tentative Staffing Updates	Line Item Transfer Authority		Superintendent Evaluation - VOTE
Summer	DATE TBD	TIME TBD	LOCATION TBD
School Committee Goals	2020-2021 Master Calendar	School Committee Self Evaluation	

DRAFT

Strategic Planning Goal Setting

April 27, 2019



Mission Statement

CURRENT MISSION STATEMENT:

Lanesborough Elementary School & Williamstown Elementary School: To inspire in all students a love of learning and to challenge them to grow in heart and mind.

PROPOSED MISSION STATEMENT based on the Greylock Way:

Mount Greylock Regional School strives to create an environment where the characteristics of responsibility, integrity and perseverance are fostered and practiced by all.



Vision Statement

CURRENT

Lanesborough Elementary School - We are a community of creative, engaged learners who embrace the challenges of a rapidly changing world. We cultivate a love of learning in a nurturing academic environment that equips our students for life's opportunities.

Williamstown Elementary School - We are a community of learners who work collaboratively in a safe and enriching environment. Our students are confident, caring, and competent individuals prepared to contribute to their world.

IN DEVELOPMENT

Mount Greylock Regional School -



Core Beliefs

At Mount Greylock, we believe,

- A high quality learning environment recognizes and supports the unique abilities of each individual.
- Learning fosters responsibility to oneself and others.
- All members of the educational community deserve an environment that is safe and respects diversity.
- There is value in students participating in decisions related to their education.
- An effective educational experience instills a responsible work ethic and a love of learning.
- Open and responsible communication is essential in an educational environment.



Goal 1 - SOCIAL EMOTIONAL

By assessing all current resources, will address the social-emotional needs of the whole child within the school and community based services



Objectives:

- **SCHOOL BASED SUPPORTS**
 - Social Workers
 - School Nurses
 - Guidance Counselors
 - Pre-referral form - WORKING ON FORM REVISIONS
- **SCHOOL BASED CURRICULUM**
 - Botvin Life Skills Curriculum
 - Second Step
 - Steps to Respect - Bullying components
 - Choose to Be Nice
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORTS**
 - Elizabeth Freeman Center
 - District Attorney's Office
 - Shirley Edgerton & Kim Boland
 - Berkshire Empathy Awareness
 - Brien Center
 - Safe and supportive schools -
 - Local therapists and pediatrician



Resources

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf>

<https://www.panoramaed.com/social-emotional-learning>

https://www.masc.org/images/events/2017/jtc/downloads/136_Ashland-Presentation.pdf

<https://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/Documents/Navigating-Social-and-Emotional-Learning-from-the-Inside-Out.pdf>



Goal 2- PUBLIC RELATIONS

Goal 1: Improve Community Engagement

Goal 2: Improve efficiency of communications



Objectives: Goal 1

Increase community/regional participation at school events/meetings

Restructuring weekly newsletters to include key events

Concerts, musicals, sporting events

Joining committees (ex. school committees, student groups, PTO, school council)

Widen the scope of the *Greylock Echo*

Podcasts – different groups can report upon different district events

Junior reporters from both elementary schools (5th/6th grade)



Objective Goal 2:

Create regional email newsletter similar to individual Friday school blasts to parents AND students.

Families that prefer communication via paper/mail can register with Guidance/Main Office. These families should receive a monthly paper newsletter/summary.

Magnets with important phone numbers as a way to provide parents resources for immediate inquiries.

Increase administrative meetings to a weekly basis

Dedicated time at the beginning of school committee meetings for student-centered achievements/activity

Principals can give school-based assessments/achievements at the beginning of school committee meetings

Funnel on website to easily direct parents to answers for FAQs, key information, academic/athletic timeline

Academic/art departments present at class registration forums



Objectives:

- DISTRICT LEVEL
 - Monthly communication needed
- SCHOOL BASED
 - Update School Profile or create where necessary
 - WES- Weekly electronic newsletter
 - LES - Monthly newsletter
 - [MGRS](#)- Friday blast of news from the website and calendar items --> designed to draw people to website
 - Targeted robo-emails and robo-calls
 - MG Guidance mailings and [website](#)
 - Greylock Echo
- WEBSITE
 - Overhaul needed to be user friendly
- SOCIAL MEDIA
 - What do we use? how effective is it?
 - WES- Twitter & Instagram - Instagram 523 followers, Twitter 230 followers
 - LES - Instagram and Facebook PTO Page
 - [MG - Twitter](#) - 540 followers; Facebook for MGPTO and Friends of the Arts



Resources



Goal 3 - Inclusion - Diversity

To create a respectful, inclusive school environment where students, staff and community members recognize and appreciate the diverse attributes and identities of each other.



Objectives:

Student Objective 1: Increase student learning opportunities and engagement to emphasize the value and importance of inclusiveness in enhancing curricular and co-curricular activities.

Staff Objective 2: Evaluate to revise or expand curricular content and instructional approaches for the inclusion of diverse perspectives, cultures and social economic experiences.

Community Objective 3: Foster, create and encourage diverse, cross-cultural experiences and promote positive dialogue among community members.



Resources

- FACULTY/STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
 - Kelly Heck
 - Shirley Edgerton and Kim Boland
 - The Elizabeth Freeman Center - Regi Wingo and Rudi Bach
 - Lynn Lyons
 - Rob Kinzer - bullying and social media issues
 - Kelly Heck - LGBTQ+
- STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
 - [World of Difference](#) Anti-Defamation League
 - The Elizabeth Freeman Center - Regi Wingo and Rudi Bach
 - [Curating a Culture of Respect](#) - Clark Art, MassMoCA, WCMA
 - Berkshire Empathy Awareness (WES)
 - [Williams College Community Matters](#) programming for 9th graders
 - Gender Sexuality Alliance + Greylock Multicultural Student Union (co-curricular programming)
- FAMILY/COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS
 - Ty Allen Jackson
 - Rob Kinzer - bullying and social media
 - Lynn Lyons
 - Kelly Heck - LGBTQ+



Goal 4 - Vaping/Substance Abuse

Reduce substance abuse to protect the health, safety, and quality of life for children in th Mount Greylock Regional School District

**Substance abuse refers to any chemical substance (natural or man-made) that is utilized for the primary purpose to alter one's mental state.*

This would include marijuana and any of its derivatives, tobacco-based products, electronic cigarettes and associated devices, alcohol, pharmaceuticals



Objectives:

Objective 1: To increase the number of students who do not engage in substance abuse

Objective 1.1: To increase the proportion of 7-8th graders who never engaged in substance abuse

Objective 1.2: To increase the proportion of high-schoolers who never engaged in substance abuse

Objective 2: To decrease the number of students who engage in substance abuse

Objective 3: To increase the number of students who perceive a great risk associated with and disapprove of substance abuse

Sub-Aim 1: To increase the proportion of students who perceive a greater risk and disapprove of using E-cigs and marijuana

Sub-Aim 2: To increase the proportion of students who perceive a greater risk of and disapprove of consuming alcoholic beverages (include binge-drinking)

Sub-Aim 3: To increase the proportion of students who perceive a greater risk of using and disapprove of prescription medication misuse



Resources

<http://makesmokinghistory.org/dangers-of-vaping/schools/>

<https://www.mass.gov/orgs/department-of-public-health>

<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

<https://real-prevention.com/kir-high-school/>



Goal 5 - School Climate/Culture

To promote a positive school climate



Objectives:

1.1 To begin rebuilding relationships amongst teachers, staff and administrators to create a highly engaged and motivated learning community.

1.2 To build a greater sense of community amongst students from various communities and backgrounds by encouraging and inspiring collaboration and respect.



Resources:



Facts About Us....

Low student-teacher ratios

Low out of district placements

Advanced Placement options

Opportunity for Vocational training via collaboration with McCann

1:1 devices grades 3-12

Shakespeare programming at all three schools

Response to Intervention services in elementary schools



Concerns.....

APPROPRIATE SURVEYS ROUTINELY ADMINISTERED

DATA RESPONSES

REPRESENTATION FROM ALL THREE SCHOOLS AND TOWNS

TECHNOLOGY NEEDS

BUILDING MAINTENANCE NEEDS

RECRUITMENT/RETENTION

RESOURCES WITHIN NORTH COUNTY

VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL ALIGNMENT

SUPPLEMENTAL INTERVENTION RESOURCES

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM (truancy rates are low, but chronic absenteeism, which include excused and unexcused absences is higher than we want)

ENGAGEMENT