

BE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND THE OPEN MEETING LAW

The business of a school committee is conducted at its official meetings. Selection to serve as a member of the Committee confers no privilege or authority on the individual members, except to attend meetings of the Committee, to propose action, to debate all proposals, and to vote. The Committee has all powers and duties as defined by Massachusetts General Law. It is only at a duly called and advertised meeting that its members can act as a Committee or exercise any of their powers. The Chairperson is the spokesperson for the Committee.

All aspects of Committee meetings, including notice, maintenance and publication of minutes, meeting in open or executive session, and the proper modes of School Committee deliberation and decision-making, are governed by the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25. The Massachusetts Attorney General's Office has the statutory authority to enforce the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Committee meetings will be conducted according to the Open Meeting Law. Proper notice will be provided of Committee meetings and proposed agenda items. All Committee meetings shall be open to the public and the press, unless the Committee votes to convene in executive session for a reason permitted by the Open Meeting Law. Minutes of all Committee meetings will be made, kept and disseminated as required by Committee policy and state law.

All Committee members will comply with the provisions of the law and the guidance and decisions of the Attorney General's Office with regard to their communications with other members of the Committee so that all deliberations of the Committee take place during Committee meetings.

Members of the Committee shall comply with the requirements of the standards of conduct imposed by the state Conflict of Interest Law, M.G.L. c. 268A, Section 23 (c)(2), and shall not improperly disclose materials or data within the exemptions to the definition of public records as defined by section seven of chapter four of the Massachusetts General Laws, which materials or data were acquired in the course of the Committee member's official duties, including but not limited to materials and information related to executive sessions of Committee meetings.

Between meetings, the Superintendent-Director is the highest authority in the school district, but is obliged to act in conformity with policies established by the Committee and state law. Everything

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REVIEW:

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the Committee does is accomplished in its meetings. Therefore, the manner in which meetings are conducted and action taken at meetings are of utmost importance. If meetings are carried on in an efficient, orderly manner, this will do much to gain the confidence of the public and school personnel.

CROSS REFS: School Committee Bylaws (BBA) Article VI, Section 2
BEC
BEDA
Attorney General's website at www.mass.gov/orgs/office-of-attorney-general-maura-healey.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. c. 30A, § 18-25 and c. 268A, Section 23 (c)(2).

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