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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 of developing goals will involve consideration of the following:

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 attainable goals.
5. Conducting periodic review of performance against these goals.

CROSS REF.: ADA, School District Core Values

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

School Committees derive their authority from the state constitution and laws developed by the legislature. The Education Reform Act of 1993 has redefined the power of School Committees in several areas.

The School Committee has the power to select and to terminate the Superintendent and, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the Associate/Assistant Superintendent, School Business Administrator and school nurses, shall review and approve budgets for public education in the district, and shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education. (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 59, and other sections)

The School Committee also establishes performance standards for all employees, upon recommendation of the Superintendent and subject to seeking public comment and some agreements with the teacher collective bargaining organization, the Weymouth Teachers' Association. (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 38)

The School Committee further employs the Superintendent and fixes his/her compensation, establishes and appoints support positions to the Superintendent such as Assistant or Associate Superintendent in conjunction with the Superintendent, and determines compensation policies. (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 59 and other sections)

Members of the School Committee have authority only when acting as a Committee legally in session. The Committee shall not be bound in anyway by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is in pursuance of specific instruction of the Committee.

A member of the Committee, or the chairman, shall exercise authority outside the Committee meetings or/and assume any responsibility with respect to the schools only when that authority has been specifically delegated to him/her by statute, district policy, or by vote of the Committee. Further, no member has the authority to represent him/herself as acting on behalf of the School Committee unless appointed to that responsibility by the chair or elected to it by a majority of the School Committee.

CROSS REF.: BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The School Committee is the policy-making agency for the schools, with responsibility to take such action as provided by law. It is a Committee of representative citizens who can interpret to the Superintendent the needs and wishes of the townspeople and, in turn, establish policies and goals for the school district. It is responsible for carrying out certain mandatory laws relating to the schools, and for considering and accepting or rejecting permissive legislation.

The School Committee recognizes as its four main functions the following:

- a. Establishing Goals and Policies--that function which plans where the school system is going and what shall be done. It establishes policies that guide the Superintendent and staff in achieving these goals.
- b. Establishing Performance Standards--that function which helps measure how well the goals are being met.
- c. Reviewing and Approving Budgets--that function which provides the means whereby the goals can be reached keeping in mind the local concerns of the electorate and the needs of the students.
- d. Selecting and Employing a Superintendent--that function which brings the leadership to the organization and provides the direct management of all aspects of the system.

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 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 of Weymouth and must take an oath of office as required by law.

After each election, the members will certify to the School Committee Secretary as having taken the oath of office. 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, disability or sexual orientation.

Established by law

LEGAL REFS.: M. G. L. 39:23B; 4 1: 1; 41:107 M.G.L. 76:5 Amended 1993

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION/UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

The School Committee believes that any citizen who seeks election to the Committee should do so with knowledge of and appreciation for the investment in time, effort, and dedication expected of all Committee members and that the citizen's intent to serve reflects his/her intention to serve a full term of office.

If, however, for reasons of health, change of domicile, or any other compelling reason, a member does decide to terminate membership, the Committee requests the earliest possible notification of intent to resign.

Formal resignation is effective upon the filing of written statement with the town clerk who shall notify the remaining members and the executive officers of the Town. The member can make the effective date at a point later than the time of filing.

Filling of Vacancies:

- A) **Runner-Up to Succeed to Office** – If a vacancy shall occur in the office of School Committee member, the vacancy shall be filled in descending order of votes received by the candidate for the office of school committee member at the preceding town election who received the largest number of votes without being elected, provided such person remains eligible and willing to serve and provided such person received votes at least equal to thirty percent of the vote total received by the person receiving the largest number of votes for the office of School Committee member at said election. The town clerk shall certify such candidate to the office of School Committee member to serve for the balance of the then un-expired term, provided, however, if the vacancy occurs during the first eighteen months of the term for which School Committee members are elected the person so chosen shall serve only until the next biennial election at which election the remainder of the term shall be filled by the voters.
- B) **Filling of Vacancies by School Committee** – Whenever a vacancy shall occur in the office of School Committee member and there is no available candidate to fill such vacancy in the manner provided in section (A), the vacancy shall be filled by the remaining members of the School Committee. Persons elected to fill a vacancy by the School Committee shall serve only until the next regular election at which time the vacancy shall be filled by the voters and the person chosen to fill such vacancy shall forthwith be sworn and shall serve for the remainder of the un-expired term in addition to the term for which elected. Persons serving as School Committee members under this section shall not be entitled to have the words “candidate for re-election” printed against their names in the election ballot.

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; and (3) relationships to fellow Committee members.

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

1. Realize that his primary responsibility is to the children
2. Recognize that his 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 Committee activities

A School Committee member in his relations with his 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 professional duties and hold him responsible for acceptable results
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail

A School Committee in his relations with his 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

- A. A School Committee member shall not have any direct personal and pecuniary interest in a contract with the school district, nor shall he/she furnish directly any labor, equipment, or supplies to the district for compensation.

In the event that a Committee member is employed by a corporation or business or has a secondary interest in a corporation or business which furnishes goods or services to the school district, the Committee member shall declare his/her interest in his/her place of employment might conflict, and to avoid the appearances of conflict of interest even though such conflict may not exist. Further, School Committee members during their tenure may not request assistance of students or staff of the Weymouth Public Schools in projects which result in personal gain.

Materials prepared by its staff for use in the instructional program of the Weymouth Public Schools are not to be used outside of the district without the express, written consent of the Weymouth School Committee.

- B. The school district shall neither employ a member of the immediate family of the Superintendent, central office administrator, or Committee member, nor assign a member of the immediate family of the Principal as an employee at the Principal's school unless written notice is given to the School Committee at least two weeks in advance. (M.G.L. Ch. 71, Sec. 67)

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. Chapter 268
Weymouth Town Charter; Article 4, section 3

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

The School Committee is constituted of seven members. Six of these members shall be elected by and from the voters of the town at large. The mayor shall serve, by virtue of office, as the seventh member of the School Committee with all of the same powers and duties as the members elected by the voters as School Committee members.

As soon as practical after the School Committee members-elect have been qualified following each biennial town election, as provided in policy file BBBB, the School Committee shall organize by electing one of its members to serve as School Committee Chair and one of its members to serve as School Committee Vice-Chair until the next town election.

LEGAL REF. Weymouth Town Charter Section 4-2

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chair

The School Committee Chair shall preside at all meetings of the School Committee, regulate its proceedings and shall decide all questions of order. The Chair shall appoint all members of all Committees of the School Committee, whether special or standing. The Chair shall have the same powers to vote upon measures coming before the School Committee as any other member of the Committee. The Chair shall perform such other duties consistent with the office as may be provided by charter, by ordinance, by policy or by other vote of the School Committee. These duties include:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee
2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Committee's agendas
3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings
4. Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary
5. Be public spokesman for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
6. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

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

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order.
3. Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chair

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

A Secretary shall be elected with duties as stipulated in BEDG.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:36
 Weymouth Town Charter Section 4-2 (b)

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

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 Chair may establish subcommittees, whether special or standing, at its 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 School Committee Chair.
2. The subcommittee chairman and its members will be appointed by the Chair.
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 School Committee Chair and Superintendent will be ex-officio members of all subcommittees of the School Committee.
6. A subcommittee will be dissolved by the Committee Chair upon completion of its assignment, or it may be dissolved by a vote of the Committee at any time.

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

REF.: Weymouth Town Charter Section 4-2 (b)

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 IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan or progress report on the current 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.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:59C

SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan or progress report on the current plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval annually.

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 improvement plan is not reviewed by the School Committee within 30 days of its receipt by the Committee, the plan shall be deemed to have been approved.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 71:59C

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 principal shall establish the procedures by which parent representatives will be elected to the school council in elections held by the local parent council. (MGL Ch 71 Section 59C)

The school council shall meet regularly 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.

Consensus shall be used by school councils as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Roberts Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Section 23 A, B, and C, which stipulates 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 Principal shall maintain agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Principal shall provide copies of these materials to members of the School Committee for information if requested.

SCHOOL ATTORNEY

A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school district is made by the Superintendent or by such persons specifically authorized by him. It may occur as a standard operating practice or as a result of formal Committee direction. The School Committee Chair may also seek legal advice or assistance as a result of formal Committee action.

For most matters, legal advice will be sought from the Town Solicitor, but the Committee may also employ legal counsel for the general purposes of the Committee and may expend moneys, therefore, from funds appropriated by the Town for school purposes. The Committee may also employ legal counsel in connection with collective bargaining with employee organizations and contract management.

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

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

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

The Committee may call for an executive session at any time during a regular meeting. The procedure is for the presiding officer to cite the purpose of the executive session and if the Committee will reconvene after the executive session.

An executive session is declared when a majority of the members have voted to go into an executive session and--the vote of each member is recorded on a roll call vote and entered into the minutes.

Executive sessions may be held only for the following types of purposes, here simply stated.

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual.
2. The discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual.
3. **Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.**
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
8. And to consider and interview applicants for employment (The only position that the School Committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of Superintendent) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental affect in obtaining qualified applicants.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.

(In the first two cases listed, an open meeting will be held if the individual involved so requests.)

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session. The committee will review executive session minutes for possible declassification at least once each year.

CROSS REF.: BDE, Subcommittees of the School Committee
BE, School Committee Meetings

MEETING PROCEDURES

The Weymouth School Committee shall conduct meetings according to *Robert's Rules of Order*, a manual on parliamentary procedure.

The Superintendent will consult with the Chair of the Committee in the development of a meeting's agenda. The agenda for a regularly Scheduled meeting shall be considered closed at noon on the Monday preceding a Thursday meeting of the Committee. A supplementary agenda for matters requiring timely attention will close at noon on the Wednesday preceding a Thursday meeting. Where possible and respective of "business days" only, this schedule will be maintained regardless of the day of a Committee meeting.

Except in an emergency situation, the agenda for a meeting shall be posted at the Administration Building, Town Hall, and each school in the district. The building Principal is expected, where possible, to display this document for public inspection at the front door of each school. The agenda will also be posted on the Weymouth Public Schools website. The President of the Weymouth Teachers' Association will be provided with a copy of the agenda to all open meetings of the School Committee, copies of materials relevant to an item scheduled for consideration, and copies of minutes of open meetings whenever practical.

All meetings of the Weymouth School Committee are open to the public unless otherwise designated as noted in policy file BEC. The Committee invites all interested citizens to attend meetings.

No person shall address a School Committee meeting without the permission of the Chair of the Committee, and all persons, at the request of the Chair shall be silent. If, after a warning from the chair, a person persists in disorderly behavior, the Chair may order that person to leave. Failure to comply will result in the chair ordering a constable or other person to remove the individual from the meeting room. (M.G.L. Ch. 39, Sec. 23C)

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

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

CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings

AGENDA FORMAT

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chair of the School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meetings agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the Committee, or to expedite Committee business.

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

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members three days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the press.

QUOROM AND VOTING METHOD

A majority (4) of the Committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. All voting may be done by a voice vote: a motion is declared lost unless approved by a majority of members present and voting.

All votes taken to enter or exit executive session must be taken as a roll call vote.

The policy of the Weymouth School Committee is to approve all contracts by a roll call vote.

RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the Committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the Committee's approved policies and regulations.

In accordance with *Robert's Rules*, the Committee may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.

MINUTES

The School Committee elects a member to be secretary. It is the duty of the secretary to keep a permanent record of its meetings, setting forth the date, time, place, members present or absent, and action taken at each meeting including executive session. The record book shall be kept in the safe at the Superintendent's office. The minutes of the preceding School Committee meeting will appear as the first agenda item for the School Committee approval during the next meeting. When approved, the minutes will be signed by the Secretary of the School Committee. The record of each meeting shall become a public record as soon as it has been accepted, and be available to the public; provided, however, that the record of any executive session remains confidential as long as publication may defeat the lawful purposes of the executive session. (M.G.L. Ch. 39, Sec. 23)

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 39:23B; 66:10

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public's Right to Know

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee desires citizens of the district to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to insure the ability of the Committee to conduct the district's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

- Each meeting agenda will include a section for public comment. Parties wishing to address the Committee on matters germane to the interests of the school system should send a request, in writing, to the Superintendent of Schools at least one week before the next regularly scheduled meeting. Included in the request should be the name of the party wishing to address the Committee and the topic which is to be addressed. The topic and the speaker's name will appear as an agenda item.
- In addition, during the conduct of the meeting, the Chair of the Committee may recognize any member of the public who wishes to be heard on a matter that is under discussion. Topics must be limited to those items listed on the School Committee meeting agenda for that evening. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit.
- Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address as stated in policy file BED.
- All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.
- Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
- Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members review and consideration at an appropriate time.

SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others as it deems advisable, the School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements and seek to publicize the meeting in all local media.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all persons an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy.

The Chair of the Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, citizens must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic. To assure that all who wish get a chance to speak, the Chair will recognize persons who have not commented previously during the hearing before recognizing persons who wish to remark a second time.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The School Committee will develop policies and put them in writing so that they may serve as guides for the discretionary action of those to whom it delegates authority.

The formulation and adoption of these written policies will constitute the basic method by which the School Committee will exercise its leadership in providing for the successful and efficient functioning of the school system. Through the study and evaluation of reports concerning the execution of its policies, the School Committee will exercise its control over school operation.

The School Committee accepts the definition of policy set forth by the National School Boards Association:

Policies are principles adopted by a School Committee to chart a course of action. They tell what is wanted; they may include why and how much. Policies should be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be followed by the administration in meeting day-to-day problems, yet be specific enough to give clear guidance.

The policies of the School Committee are framed, and are meant to be interpreted, in terms of state law, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and other regulatory agencies of the various levels of government.

POLICY ADOPTION

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the School Committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as an agenda item to the Committee in the following sequence:

1. First Reading -- reading of proposed policy or policies; Report from any Advisory Committee assigned responsibility in the area; Committee discussion, questions, and directions for redrafting.
2. Second Reading -- Public input; Committee discussion and directions for any redrafting
3. Third Reading -- discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the third reading will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the Committee so directs.

The School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation. If a date is not set, the policy becomes effective immediately upon adoption.

POLICY COMPLIANCE

All employees of the Weymouth Public Schools are responsible for complying with policies adopted by the Weymouth School Committee.

POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW

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

The Committee will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the school staff and will weigh the results. It will rely on the school staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies it has adopted.

The Superintendent is given the continuing commission of calling to the Committee's attention all policies that are out of date or for other reason appear to need revision.

The School Committee directs the Superintendent to periodically recall all policy and regulations manuals for administrative updating and Committee review.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS

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

The Committee may review the regulations developed by the Superintendent for the school system prior to their issuance, but it will revise or veto such regulations only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

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

Before issuance, regulations will be properly titled and coded as appropriate to subject and in conformance with the codification system selected by the Committee. Those officially approved by the Committee will be so marked; all others appearing in the manual will be considered approved provided they are in accordance with the accompanying Committee policy.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." (Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Education for information purposes only.) Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be submitted in May for review and approval by the School Committee.

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

POLICY DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Committee and the regulations needed to put them into effect.

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the school system, to members of the Committee, and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all persons in the community. A policy concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to those groups prior to the policy's effective date.

All policy manuals distributed to anyone will remain the property of the Committee and will be considered as "on loan" to anyone, or any organization, in whose possession they might be at any time. They are subject to recall at any time deemed necessary for purposes of updating.

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

SUSPENSION OF POLICIES

The operation of any section or sections of School Committee policies not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of Committee members present at any regular or special meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and will be so noted on the agenda for that meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The Weymouth School Committee values communication between itself and the staff and feels that it should be conducted essentially through the Superintendent.

All written communications or reports to the Committee from Principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the Superintendent.

All official communications, policies and directives of staff interest and concern will be channeled to staff through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will utilize all available means of communication to keep staff fully informed of Committee positions, concerns, and actions.

Individual Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms for information-gathering purposes, will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for same through the Principal of the school. Visits by School Committee members to schools shall be regarded as informal and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members to schools will be carried on only under School Committee authorization and with the full knowledge of the Superintendent and Principals.

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

The School Committee and Superintendent will assist each newly elected member to understand the Committee's functions, policies and procedures.

In discussions with new members, the Chair and/or Superintendent will clarify procedures that involve:

1. How a community member (parent, teacher, etc.) may make a request of the Committee; appropriate responses/actions of an individual School Committee member when a request is presented directly to him or her.
2. How School Committee members may make arrangements to visit schools, and the protocol associated with such visits.
3. How the School Committee members, assigned certain tasks or investigating certain problems, may request information or services of the school staff.
4. How the School Committee receives and examines complaints relating to personnel.
5. How and why executive sessions may be held; what is considered privileged information.

Each newly elected member will be given a copy of the School Committee's policy and regulations manual and selected materials on School Committees, including the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' handbook for members and the General Laws of Education Relating to School Committees.

New members will be encouraged to attend meetings or workshops specifically designed for new School Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings will be reimbursed in accordance with established policy.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the School Committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate School Committee conferences, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. A calendar of School Committee conferences, conventions and workshops will be maintained by the Committee secretary. The Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school system. At least annually, the Committee will identify those new ideas or procedures and/or cost benefits that can be ascribed to participation at such meetings.
2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.
3. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the travel expense policy for staff members.
4. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

School Committee members shall receive such salary for their services as may from time to time be set by ordinance. No ordinance increasing the salary of school Committee members shall be effective unless it shall have been adopted during the first eighteen months of the term for which town councilors are elected and it provides that such salary is to take effect upon the organization of town government following the next municipal election.

Subject to appropriation and to prior authorization, the School Committee members shall be entitled to reimbursement of their actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:52
 Weymouth Town Charter Section 4-4

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The School Committee, as an agent of the state, must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. If the Committee is to meet its responsibilities to the residents and students of this community, it must work vigorously for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of good schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.

To this end:

1. The Committee will keep itself informed of pending legislation and actively communicate its concerns and make its position known to elected representatives at both the state and national level.
2. The Committee will work with its legislative representatives (both state and federal), with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and other concerned groups in developing an annual, as well as a long-range, legislative program. One of the major objectives of the Committee's legislative program will be to seek full funding for all state and federally mandated programs.
3. The Committee will annually designate a person, who may or may not be a member of the Committee, to serve as its legislative representative. This person will be authorized to speak on the Committee's behalf with respect to legislation being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature or the United States Congress or their respective Committees. In all dealings with individual elected representatives, the Legislature or Congress, the Committee's representative will be bound by the official positions taken by the school Committee.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The Committee will maintain memberships in the national, state and regional school committee (boards) associations and take an active part in the activities of these groups.

It may also maintain institutional memberships in other educational organizations, which the executive officer and Committee find to be of benefit to members and personnel.

The materials and benefits of institutional memberships will be distributed and used to the best advantage of the Committee and the staff.