SECTION B

BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

BA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS**
BAA	**EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES**
BB	**SCHOOL DISTRICT LEGAL STATUS**
BB-E	**DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BY-LAWS**
BBA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES**
BBAA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY**
BBBA/BBBB	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATION/ OATH OF OFFICE**
BBBC	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION**
BBBE	**UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT**
BCA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS**
BDA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING**
BDB	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS**
BDC	**APPOINTED COMMITTEE OFFICIALS**
BDD	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP**
BDE	**SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**
BDF	**ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**
BDFA	**SCHOOL COUNCILS**
BDG	**SCHOOL ATTORNEY**
BE	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
BEC	**EXECUTIVE SESSIONS**

BEDA	**NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
BEDB	**AGENDA FORMAT**
BEDB-E	**ORDER OF BUSINESS AT REGULAR BUSINESS MEETINGS**
BEDD	**RULES OF ORDER**
BEDF	**VOTING METHOD**
BEDG	**MINUTES**
BEDH	**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
BEDH-R	**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**
BEE	**SPECIAL PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING HEARINGS**
BG	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT**
BGB	**POLICY ADOPTION**
BGC	**POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW**
BGD (also CHB)	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF REGULATIONS**
BGE	**POLICY DISSEMINATION**
BGF	**SUSPENSION OF POLICIES**
BHC (also GBD)	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**
BHE	**USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS**
BIA	**NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION**
BIBA	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS**
BID	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES**
BJ	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM**
BK	**SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

BL ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

File: BA
Index

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS

The Dracut School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school system has been established. The committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all people more than the average citizen finds necessary. This requires a comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

The School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish those purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by our students. The committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school system. The committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking the comments of public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically setting performance objectives for the School Committee itself and evaluating their accomplishment.

2. Setting objectives for performance for each position and function in the system.

3. Allowing the people responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.

4. Establish practical and simple goals.

5. Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.

CROSS REF.: ADA School District Goals and Objectives

EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The Dracut School Committee will periodically establish realistic objectives related to committee procedures and relationships. At the end of a specified length of time, the committee will measure its performance against the stated objectives.

The following areas of School Committee operations and relationships are representative of those in which objectives may be set and progress appraised:

1. Communication with the public
2. School Committee - Superintendent relationships
3. School Committee member development and performance
4. Policy development
5. Educational leadership
6. Fiscal management
7. School Committee meetings
8. Performance of subcommittees of the School Committee
9. Interagency and governmental relationships

When the committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and committees are capable of improvement. The School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluation is carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS

State law provides that:

> Every town at its annual meeting shall in every year when the term of office of any incumbent expires, and except when other provision is made by law, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:
>
> . . . Three, five, six, seven or nine members of the School Committee for terms of three years . . .

The Dracut School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although its functions as a duly elected committee of town government, the School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process.

Established by law

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

CROSS REFS.: AA, School District Legal Status
BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties
Dracut Town Charter Article 3, Section 3; Article 6, Section 6; article 7, Section 10,11,12,13

DRACUT SCHOOL COMMITTEE BY-LAWS

1. These by-laws shall take effect immediately upon approval by a majority of the full Committee and shall remain in effect until mended in accordance with Section 14.

2. Regular meetings of the Dracut School Committee shall be held at the location as specified in the posting at 7:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Monday of the month. Other meetings may be called by the Chairman or by a majority of the members upon not less than a forty-eight (48) hour notice to all members; except in an emergency situation.

3. The May meeting shall be regarded as the annual meeting for the organization of the Committee and shall be called by the member with the most continuous service or a majority of the Committee and held not later than (5) days subsequent to the annual Town Election. The annual meeting shall be called to order by the member present who has had the most service on the committee whether continuous or not. The first business shall be the election of the Chairman who shall serve for a term of one (1) year; then the election of a First Vice-Chairman who shall serve during the pleasure of the Committee; then the election of a Second Vice-Chairman who shall service during the pleasure of the Committee; then the by-laws of the Committee shall be ratified.

4. At all meetings, a majority of the full Committee shall constitute a quorum.

5. It shall be the duty of the Chairman to preside at all meetings of the Committee and to perform such other functions that usually evolve upon a Chairman.

6. It shall be the duty of the First Vice-Chairman to perform the duties of the Chairman in the absence of; or at the direction of the Chairman.

7. It shall be the duty of the Second Vice-Chairman to perform the duties of the Chairman in the absence of; or at the direction of the Chairman or First Vice Chairman.

8. It shall be the duty of the Secretary to attend all meetings of the Committee, keep a record of all its votes and proceedings, and to perform such other functions that usually evolve upon a Secretary.

9. The regular order of business shall be as follows:
   a. Executive session
   b. Pledge of allegiance and Moment of Silence
   c. Approval of minutes
   d. Approval of bills and payrolls
   e. Presentation by Student Representative
   f. Community input

g. Committee reports
h. Community Calendar of Events
i. Superintendent's Informational Items
j. Old business
k. New business
l. Superintendent's informational items
m. Executive session

10. Every motion, in order to be entertained, shall be reduced to writing when so requested by the Chairman or by two members of the Committee.

11. On any motion, a roll call and recorded vote shall be taken if requested by a majority of the Committee. Any single member may have his or her own vote recorded at this request.

12. In the case of a motion and amendments involving amounts for periods of time, that involving the largest amount or the longest period of time shall be put first.

13. These by-laws may be suspended only by affirmative vote or four-fifths (4/5) of the full Committee.

14. These by-laws may be amended by a four-fifths (4/5) of the full Committee, provided notice, and a copy of the proposed amendments is given to the Committee at a prior meeting held not less than seven (7) days before the meeting at which the proposed actions are to be taken.

15. The conduct of the meetings not regulated by statute or by these by-laws shall be determined by parliamentary rules as stated in Robert's Rules of Order.

16. Discussions at School Committee Meetings shall be limited to matters pertaining to school affairs.

17. All new employees in the Dracut School Department may be extended an invitation to meet informally with the School Committee so that the members may have an opportunity to extend a personal welcome and best wishes.

18. All bids requested by the Dracut Public School System must be returned to the Dracut Public School System sealed. The person authorized to open bids shall be the Chairman of the Dracut School Committee or any other member designated by the Chairman. Said bids may be opened at a formal meeting of the Dracut School Committee or at another convenient time provided the Superintendent of Schools and/or the Superintendent's designee(s) are present.

Approved: May 12, 2008

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

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

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

1. Legislative or policymaking. The committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.

2. Appraisal. The committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.

3. Provision of financial resources. The committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the committee's policies.

4. Public relations. The committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.

5. Educational planning and evaluation. The committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the school district.

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

CROSS REF.: BB School Committee Legal Status

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Authority

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

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

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

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

Duties

The duties and obligations of the individual committee member may be enumerated as follows:

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and School Committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this School Committee and school department.

2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.

3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the town's public schools.

4. To work effectively with other committee members without trying either to dominate the committee or neglect his/her share of the work.

5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.

6. To vote and act in committee impartially for the good of the students.

7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.

8. To represent the committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.

9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.

10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE

In order to serve on the Dracut School Committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the town from which he/she is elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member will present to the committee secretary official certification of having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths prior to entering on his/her official duties as a member of the committee. From the town clerk, newly qualified committee members--by law--receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

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

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

An existing Dracut School Committee member who submits his/her resignation to the appropriate certifying authority terminates his/her duties at the time of his/her resignation unless he/she states in that resignation a specific time at which the resignation will take effect.

Should a School Committee member move out of the town or city, which elected him/her to the committee, he/she shall be deemed to have vacated his/her office.

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

UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

When a vacancy on the Dracut School Committee occurs for any reason, the board of selectmen and the remaining members of the committee share the responsibility for filling it.

As provided in the law, the School Committee will notify the selectmen that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. The Dracut Board of Selectman shall cause notice of the vacancy to be posted for 10 days to give voters of the town an opportunity to state their candidacy. The town governing bodies shall meet no less then 14 days from the date notice is posted to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For election to fill a vacancy, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of the officers entitled to vote. The person so elected will fill the seat on the committee until the next town election, at which time a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term, if any.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 41:11

CROSS REF.: Dracut Town Charter Article 7, Section 12

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/her relations with his/her community should:

1. Realize that his/her primary responsibility is to the children
2. Recognize that his/her basic function is to be policy making and not administrative
3. Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of a committee member on both a local and state level
5. Remember that he/she represents the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office as a committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from his/her committee activities

A School Committee member in his/her relations with his/her school administration should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies which will direct and support the administration
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration
3. Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results
4. Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail

A School Committee in his/her relations with his/her fellow committee members should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that he/she alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings
2. Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how he/she will vote on matters that will come before the committee
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.

4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of his/her own committee or from members of other committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

File: BDA
Index

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

For the purpose of organizing, the Dracut School Committee, at the May meeting to be called either by the member with the most continuous service or a majority of the Dracut School Committee not less then 5 days subsequent to the annual town election following the first Monday in May at 7:00 PM, shall elect from its membership a Chairperson who shall serve a term of 1 year; a First Vice-Chairperson who shall serve at the pleasure of the Dracut School Committee; and a Second Vice-Chairperson who shall serve at the pleasure of the Dracut School Committee. The Dracut School Committee shall annually elect a recording secretary who shall not need to be a member of the Dracut School Committee. The Dracut School Committee shall annually ratify the by-laws of the Committee at this meeting. The reorganization meeting shall be called to order and presided over by the member with most service on the Dracut School Committee whether continuous or not until a chairperson has been elected.

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

1. Nominations for the office of Chairperson will be made from the floor. The Chairperson will be elected by a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.

2. Upon election, the new Chairperson will preside, calling for the election on a First Vice-Chairperson, second Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary, in that order. The chairperson shall then cal for ratification of the by-laws.

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

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

CROSS REF.: Dracut School Committee By-laws

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chairman

The Chairperson of the Dracut School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chairperson will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out 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. Appoint subcommittees, subject to committee approval
5. Call special meetings of the committee as found necessary
6. Be public spokesperson for the committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the committee, the Chairperson 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 First Vice-Chairperson

The First Vice-Chairperson of the committee will act in the absence of the Chairperson as presiding officer of the committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Duties of the Second Vice-Chairperson

The Second Vice-Chairperson of the committee will act in the absence of the Chairperson and First Vice-Chairperson as presiding officer of the committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Secretary

The secretary will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all committee meetings; will comply with state law and committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

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

APPOINTED COMMITTEE OFFICIALS

The Superintendent shall be elected by the committee as provided by law and perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent there to, as majority of the committee may direct.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school system. While the committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

1. The Superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he/she will submit the matter to the committee for advice and direction.

2. The Superintendent will assist the committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the committee all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

File: BDE
Index

SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the committee.

2. The subcommittee Chairperson and its members will be appointed by the committee Chairperson, subject to approval by the committee.

3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.

4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for committee action, but it may not act for the School Committee.

5. The committee Chairperson and Superintendent will be ex-officio members of all special subcommittees.

6. A subcommittee will be dissolved by the committee upon completion of its assignment, or it may be dissolved by a vote of the committee at any time.

CROSS REF.: BEC, Executive Sessions

ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of advisory committees to the School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the Massachusetts General Laws.

1. Advisory committees may be created by the School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall advisory committee to the School Committee.

2. If an advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.

3. The composition of task forces and any other advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.

4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.

5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is re-appointed.

6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:

   a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.

   b. The assignment the School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.

   c. The resources the School Committee will provide.

   d. The approximate dates on which the School Committee wishes to receive major reports.

   e. School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the School Committee as a whole, individual School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.

   f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.

7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.

8. The School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of an advisory committee must be submitted to the School Committee.

The committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

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

SCHOOL COUNCILS

This policy as adopted by the Dracut School Committee is intended definitional and procedurally to be consistent with the M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 59C; and which provides for the formulation of School Councils in all public elementary and secondary schools in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The formulation of School Councils recognizes that site-based decision-making places the individual school building at the very center of instructional and curricular planning, the definition of educational goals, and the formulation plus implementation of school improvement plans.

In turn, School Councils can serve to enhance the quality of site-based decisions, because of the significantly expanded participatory involvement of various segments of the school community in the process: Teachers, Parents, Senior High School Students, and Non-School/Non-Parent Members.

Dracut School Committee in this policy expresses its support of the fundamental purposes, objectives, and goals which underlie the statutory establishment of School Councils as a pragmatic means to improve the instructional experiences being made available to students enrolled at all grade-levels of the Dracut Public Schools.

The Dracut School Committee recognizes that there is an organizational need to confine the size of a School Council to manageable dimensions; and that this imposes derivative constraints upon giving every individual who desires to represent a particular segment of the school community any guaranteed opportunity to serve on a School Council.

With this above-cited consideration in mind, the Dracut School Committee urges every individual and group involved in the formulation of a School Council to be reminded of the extenuating need to ensure that a School Council shall be broadly representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school building and the community-at-large.

The Dracut School Committee, in consonance with the provisions of Chapter 71, Section 59C, recognizes that the Principal, except as otherwise provided within this applicable statute, "shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of, and forming, the School Council pursuant to a representative process pre-approved by the Superintendent of Schools and the Dracut School Committee".

The Dracut School Committee, in consonance with the provisions of Chapter 71, Section 59C, recognizes that the Principal shall be responsible for convening the first meeting of the School Council

no later than forty (40) calendar-days after the first day of school, at which meeting a Co-Chair shall be selected to serve in correlation with the Principal who is statutorily and definitional prescribed as one of the Co-Chairs of the School Council.

Dracut School Committee, in consonance with the statutory provisions of Chapter 71, Section 59C, shall expect that School Councils function within the next-following parameters:

(A) ... The School Councils shall meet regularly with the Principal.

(B) ... The School Council shall assist the Principal in the identification of the educational needs of the students who attend this school building.

(C)… The School Council shall assist the Principal in the review of the annual school budget as it relates to this school building.

(D) ... The School Council shall assist the Principal in the formulation of a school improvement plan.

(E)... The Principal, in consultation with the School Council, shall adopt educational goals for the school; and these must be consistent with the particular educational goals and standards including student performance standards; once they have been published by the State Board of Education.

(F)... The above-cited educational goals must also be consistent with any locally defined/established educational policies; as effected by the Dracut School Committee.

(G)... The Principal and School Council shall then assess the educational needs of the school within the frame-of-reference of these previously referenced educational goals.

It is a prescribed expectation of the Dracut School Committee within this Policy that every School Council, in defining and sponsoring a school improvement plan, will carefully and as precisely as possible define any budgetary implications which would derive from the Board's sanction of any or all segments of a proffered plan.

MEMBERSHIP

The Dracut School Committee requires that every School Council's membership shall conform to the particular ratios between Professional Staffing Personnel, Parents, Senior High School Students, and "Other Persons"; as duly defined within the (M.G.L. Educational Reform Act of 1993), Chapter 71, Section 59C.

The Dracut School Committee within this policy recognizes that the recruitment/selection of non-school community members to serve on a School Council generates opportunities to provide the Council with:

1. Linkages to resource people with the capability to establish vital contacts with community-service organizations, social-service agencies, and business/industry groups;

2. Specialists with technical expertise, knowledge abilities, and proficiencies;

3. Pertinent contacts and outreaches to particular individuals within civic groups and organizations that comprise the larger context of the non-parent community.

In this regard, the Dracut School Committee recognizes that any particular school which has contacts with the community-at-large through the presence of pertinent volunteer and/or partnership programs that involve interactions with "non-parents" from the areas of higher education, business, industry, cultural groups, human-service agencies, or any other Institutions or formally organized groups can invite these aforesaid people to designate their desired representatives who should be given consideration by the Principal to serve on a School Council.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Dracut School Committee requires that the organizational structure of a School Council has been pre-approved definitional by the committee and the Superintendent.

Any subsequent change or modification in a previously accepted Organizational Plan for a School Council must be processed for approval through the Dracut School Committee and the Superintendent before any actual implementation is effected.

TERMS OF OFFICE

Although the statutory language is "silent" in regard to the terms of office for School Council Members, -- the Dracut School Committee respectfully recommends that council

Members serve two (2) - year terms which will be staggered in order to provide for desired continuity; except in the special instance of the student member at the Dracut Senior High School who would serve for a one (1) - year term, but who would then be eligible for subsequent re-election.

In order to initiate the first year of the Student Councils commencing in 1993, the Dracut School Committee would respectfully recommend that one teacher be designated or elected to fill a one (1) - year term; and one teacher for a two (2) - year term.

As above-cited, an identical designation or election in regard to the length of service for parents on the School Council would be respectfully recommended by the Dracut School Committee to prevail; with the staggered terms reflecting those particular parents who would be scheduled to have children in that particular school throughout their longevity of sanctioned service.

The "Other Persons" or Community-At-Large individuals who serve on a School Council and who have been selected/recruited by the Principal would be recommended by the School Committee to serve for a one (1) - year term; but would be eligible to serve additional years, If so requested by the Principal.

At the first-convened meeting of a School Council, a member will be elected to serve a Co-Chair with the Principal.

All School Council meetings are to be conducted In accordance with the requirements of the Open Meeting Law in Massachusetts.

As a part of this policy, the Dracut School Committee respectfully designates that the Co-Chairs of each School Council should prepare an agenda for each scheduled meeting, and that this aforesaid agenda should be sent to all School Council Members and be posted in the faculty room and in the school-building's main lobby at a time which is deemed to be a reasonable interval before the next-scheduled meeting date.

Notices of all posted meetings and agendas shall be transmitted to the Superintendent of Schools who will, in turn, keep Dracut School Committee members advised accordingly.

Each School Council shall make every reasonable effort to keep any parent/teacher organization, parent advisory committee, or any other school-system advisory group, which is associated with the school building fully informed about meeting dates and prescribed agendas.

In this regard, the Co-Chairs of every School Council should make certain that the posting of meeting dates is designated on local public-access cablevision.

The Superintendent of Schools, any Dracut School Committee member, any staffing employee of the Dracut Public Schools, any parent, any student, any member of the School Council, any Dracut citizen, or any recognized organizational entity to have a particular item desiring to have Included on an Agenda may request such inclusion to either of the Co-Chairs at a reasonable interval of time prior to the scheduled meeting; and as determined by the two (2) Co-Chairs.

The two (2) Co-Chairs will be ultimately responsible for deciding whether or not any such submitted items are to be included on their Agenda.

Minutes of each School Council meeting will be prepared by a School Council member who has been so-designated by the Co-Chairs; and these aforesaid official records of School Council proceeding will be kept on file at each school building.

In order to encourage extended levels of involvement and participation, each School Council is respectfully requested by the School Committee to set aside an appropriate allocation of time at the beginning of each School Council meeting for public input.

Since School Council meetings are subject to the provisions of Sections 23A, 23B, and 23C of Chapter 39 of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, It is accordingly requisite that School Councils accomplish the next-following considerations:

(1) Hold all meetings in public and allow anyone in attendance to audio-tape and/or video-tape the proceedings as long as it is not disruptive to the meeting;

(2) Post a notice of each School Council meeting at the Dracut Town Hall at least 48 hours prior to the meeting;

(3) Keep minutes which indicate the date, time, place, members present and absent, and the actions taken;

(4) Adhere to a quorum, defined as a majority.

Although the Dracut School Committee and the Superintendent recognize and accept the principle which is duly expressed in the (M.G.L. Educational Reform Act of 1993), Chapter 71, Section 59C, that each School Council exists for the specific purpose and objective to assist the Principal in the overseeing, accommodation, and resolution of diverse functions and activities associated with the school, --- it shall nevertheless be an integral part of this policy to expect that each Principal will subscribe to the ensuing commitments:

The benefits derivative to an individual Principal from the assistance being rendered by the School Council Members imply a reciprocity on the Principal's part that such assistance is most meaningfully and substantively forthcoming when the school-building leadership reflects the next-following characteristics:

(a)... A willingness to listen attentively to School Council members;

(b)… An openness of manner, attitude, and personal style to solicit and to accommodate the input of all School Council members;

(c)... An openness to the potential of being persuaded or influenced by others on any issues, which are being addressed to the Principal by the School Council.

(d)... A willingness to modify one's perceptions and convictions on the basis of well-articulated and well-documented, and well-presented arguments by School Council members;

(e).. An understanding by the Principal that although the statutory language contains such words as "assist" or "consult with" the Principal,--- Ch.71, Section 59C clearly envisions that School Councils will contribute to decisions by Principal to whom the applicable statute has now given increased responsibilities and obligations for the operational management of their schools.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE RELATIONSHIPS TO SCHOOL COUNCIL

This policy adopted by the Dracut School Committee recognizes the explicit overseeing role of School Committees in regard to School Councils and that Dracut School Committee has a responsibility to:

1. Set district-wide performance standards and educational policies that school improvement plans must take into account;

2. Review and approve school improvement plans as submitted by School Councils;

3. Approve a representative process for the election of parent members of a School Council in those particular instances in which there is no "locally recognized parent-teacher organization" to conduct an election.

The Dracut School Committee, as part of this policy recognizes its optional rights and prerogatives to take the next-following initiatives and actions from time-to-time in regard to School Councils:

(a)... To define the review process that will govern submitted school improvement plans;
To set targets, if deemed necessary, for racial or ethnic representation on School Councils;

(d)... To recommend the terms of office for School Council members; To define other procedural guidelines for School Councils in reference to participatory and inclusive decision-making; although It would be recognized that such guidelines should not Impede the statutory obligations of a School Council to fulfill any of Its mandated functions;

(e)... To define any additional elements or components, which the School Committee believes from time-to-time, should be addressed to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of a school improvement plan.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Dracut School Committee in this policy recognizes that the (M.G.L. Educational Reform Act of 1993) provides that each School improvement plan shall be submitted to the Dracut School Committee for review and approval every year; and if said school improvement plan is not reviewed by the School Committee within 30 calendar days of the date on which the Dracut School Committee received the plan, it shall be deemed to have been approved.

The Dracut School Committee in this policy recognizes that the (M.G.L. Educational Reform Act of 1993) gives the School Committee final authority either to approve or to disapprove submitted individual school improvement plans; and correlatively that the School Committee has the prerogative to publish and disseminate a set of School Committee expectations in regard to the content and format of such school improvement plans this regard, the School Committee in this policy enunciates the following considerations in reference to school improvement plans:

A. The Principal and School Council should formulate a school improvement plan, which is designed to advance the attainment of the previously cited Educational Goals.

B. The school improvement plan should be defined to address the resolution of any educational needs, which have been appropriately identified.

C. The School improvement plan should be designed to improve student performance.

D… The school improvement plan may include an assessment of the impact of class sizes in the school upon student performance.

E. The school improvement plan may consider the assessment of student-to-teacher ratios.

F. The school improvement plan may consider any pertinent "other factors" which are deemed as related to student performance.

G. The school improvement plan may consider the role of any supportive adult resources, which may Impact on student performance.

H. The school improvement plan may a scheduled plan for the reduction of class sizes within the school.

I. The school improvement plan shall address professional development training for staffing personnel within the school; and including School Council Members.

J. The school improvement plan shall address the projected allocations and purposes of any professional development funds in the annual school budget.

K. The school improvement plan shall address the enhancement of parental involvement in the daily life of the school.

L. The school improvement plan shall address considerations associated with safety and discipline in the school.

M. The school improvement plan shall address the establishment of welcoming school environment for students; and which would be characterized by tolerance and respect for all groups.

N. The school improvement plan shall address extracurricular/co-curricular activities in the school.

O. The school improvement plan shall address the specific means to accommodate the diverse learning needs of as many students as possible (...and including those particular students with special needs and who may be currently assigned to separate curricular programs) within the regular curricular programs at the school.

P. The school improvement plan shall address any such further topics, as the Principal, in consultation with the School Council, shall consider as "appropriate" for the welfare of the students in the school.

Q. If the school contains language minority students, - the professional development plan shall specify how such Improvement plan will address the need for training associated with second language acquisition and also the need for the schools being able to work effectively with a culturally or linguistically diverse student population.

R. Each school improvement plan shall be submitted to the School Committee for review and approval every single year.

S. If said school improvement plan Is not reviewed by the School Committee within thirty (30) calendar days of the Dracut School Committee having received said school improvement plan, --- it shall then be deemed to have been approved by the School Committee.

T. Nothing within this policy shall prevent the Dracut School Committee from granting to a School Council in the area of educational policy; provided, however that School Councils shall not have, or be given, any authority over particular matters which are subject to the collective bargaining statute (Chapter 150E of the General Laws, Section 59D).

SCHOOL ATTORNEY

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

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

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

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

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

The only people authorized to place a call to the School Board Attorney would be the School Board Members, the Superintendent of Schools and the Administrator of Business Services.

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Dracut 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

All meetings of the Dracut School Committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.

2. The Chairperson (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session.

3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.

4. The Chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

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.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

Established by law and Committee policy

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

CROSS REFS.: BDE, Subcommittee of the School Committee
BE, School Committee Meetings
KEB, Public Complaints about School Personnel

NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours advance notice will be given for any meeting of the Dracut 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.

Special meetings of the Dracut school Committee shall be held on the call of the chairperson or by the a majority of the members of the Dracut School committee by written notice delivered to the residence or place of business of each member at least 48 hours in advance of the time set. Notice shall be posted on town bulletin boards.

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

CROSS REF.: BE, School Committee Meetings
Dracut Town Charter Article 7, Section 10

AGENDA FORMAT

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chairperson of the Dracut 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 Chairperson 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 will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee.

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.

AGENDA FORMAT

At regular meetings, the following will be the customary order of business:

1. Executive Session
2. Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence
3. Approval of minutes
4. Approval of bills and payrolls
5. Presentation by Student Representative.
6. Community input
7. Committee reports
8. Superintendent's Informational Items
9. Old Business
10. New Business
11. Executive session (as necessary).

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.

File: BEDF
Index

VOTING METHOD

Except on procedural matters, all votes of the Dracut School Committee will be taken by a call of the roll and the ayes and nays will be recorded in the minutes; if the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded.

All actions will require a majority vote of all members present and voting except as state law, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, or policies of this committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the School Committee will constitute a quorum.

CROSS REF.: Dracut Town Charter Article 7, Section 10
Dracut School Committee By-laws

MINUTES

The minutes of a Dracut School Committee meeting constitute the written record of committee actions; they are legal evidence of what the action was. Therefore, the secretary of the School Committee will be responsible for reporting in the minutes all actions taken by the committee.

Minutes will include:

1. A statement on the nature of the meeting (regular or special), the time, the place, and the approval of the last regular and each subsequent special meeting.

2. Names of the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting.

3. A complete record of official actions taken by the committee relative to the Superintendent's recommendations, to communications, and to all business transacted. Resolutions and motions will be given in their exact wording, accompanied by the names of members moving and seconding and a record of the results of the vote. Reports and documents relating to a formal motion may be omitted if they are referred to and identified by title and date.

4. Notation of formal adjournment.

Copies of the minutes will be sent to all committee members at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at which the minutes are to be approved.

The approved minutes will become permanent records of the committee. Minutes of public meetings and minutes of executive sessions that have been declassified will be in the custody of the Superintendent who will make them available to interested citizens upon request.

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

CROSS REF.: KDB, Public Right To Know

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the Dracut School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

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.

File: BEDH-R
Index

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. Community members who wish to address the School Committee may do so during a specified period of Community Input placed at the beginning of the agenda for each meeting.

2. A maximum period of 30 minutes will be designated for Community Input per meeting.

3. Speakers will be asked to limit their comments to 5-10 minutes in duration. If a number of speakers wish to address the school Committee, the Chair may limit each to 3 minutes speaking time.

4. Speakers will be asked to sign a Speaker's List, which will be available from the Chair or the Committee's secretary 10 minutes prior to the commencement of each meeting. Speakers will be asked to sign their names, addresses, and question or topic to be discussed.

5. The Chair reserves the right to recognize speakers representing opposing sides of an issue in order to hear a balanced perspective.

6. All speakers will address their comments to the Chair, and not to individual Committee members.

7. The Committee will hear, but not discuss or act on an item, which is not on the agenda. All requests will be considered for placement on a future agenda.

8. Speakers are asked not to repeat what another speaker may have stated in order that all issues or concerns may be heard.

9. Speakers are reminded that they may request placement on the agenda through the Superintendent's Office 7 days prior to a meeting.

10. Speakers are asked to conduct themselves in an orderly manner. Those who fail to do so may be asked to leave the room.

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 Chairperson 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 Dracut 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 Dracut 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. Information item -- distribution with agenda

2. Discussion item -- first reading of proposed policy or policies; response from Superintendent; report from any advisory committee assigned responsibility in the area; committee discussion and directions for any redrafting

3. Action item -- discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the action stage 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.

File: BGC
Index

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 Dracut 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 whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the district, 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.

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 reviewed and approved annually 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.

File: BHC (also GBD)
Index

SCHOOL COMMITTEE-STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The Dracut School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the committee or any of its subcommittees from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the committee from administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first hand the committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as “inspections” or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by committee members will be carried on only under committee authorization.

USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including but not limited to electronic mail (e-mail), internet web forums, and internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision including but not limited to the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the committee has supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss committee maters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the School Committee chairperson, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, shall annually designate a member of the central office staff who shall be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee. These copies shall be printed and retained in the central office in the same fashion as any other School Committee records. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L 4:7; 39:23A, 23B; 66:10

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

The Dracut 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 Chairperson 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.

General Responsibilities and School Committee Relations

1. A personal copy of all school committee policies and administrative rules of the district.
2. A school committee organization chart (officers, standing and ad hoc committees, if any, and so forth).
3. An explanation of how school committee meetings are conducted, including an outline of parliamentary procedures.
4. An explanation of the authority and responsibilities of the committee, superintendent, administrators and individual committee members.

Reference materials forwarded by the Superintendent of Schools:

- A personal copy of the Dracut Public Schools Policies and Procedures Manual.
- A school committee organization chart with sub-committee group listing.
- A copy of the Dracut School Committee By-Laws.
- Massachusetts General Laws

- Roberts Rules of Order
- Open Meeting Law
- Handbook for Massachusetts School Committee Members
- Roles and Responsibilities of School Committees and Superintendents
- A copy of School Committee minutes from January – May of year person is elected.

School Finance

1. A copy of the district's budget. (An explanation of how, when and by whom it is prepared; how education needs are translated into a dollars and cents plan, where the money goes and how the money is spent).
2. An explanation of the funding process for the school district.

Reference materials forwarded by the Superintendent of Schools:

- A copy of the Dracut Public Schools budget.
- Superintendent's Town Report for applicable year.
- School Committee's Town Report for applicable year.

Curriculum and Instruction

1. A copy of the school district's written statement of educational philosophy.
2. An explanation of the curriculum standards required by state law and implemented by the rules of the Massachusetts Department of Education.
3. The district's technology plan, outlining what instructional technology is needed and how the district plans to acquire it.

Reference materials forwarded by the Superintendent of Schools:

- A copy of the Dracut Public Schools Mission Statement.
- Individual School Improvement Plans.
- Individual School Teacher and Student Handbooks.

Administration and Staff

1. An organizational chart of the school district's management structure.
2. A copy of the district's collective bargaining agreements, if any, and a brief history of recent collective bargaining activities in the district.
3. Meet with administrators and principals as requested.

Reference materials forwarded by the Superintendent of Schools:

- Dracut Public Schools Organizational Chart.
- Dracut Public Schools Goals for applicable school year.

School District Facilities

1. A list showing the number, location and condition of schools and other buildings owned or operated by the district.

Miscellaneous

Reference Materials forwarded by the Superintendent of Schools:

- A copy of the Town of Dracut – Town Charter.
- A copy of the Town of Dracut By-Laws.
- A copy of current student enrollment.
- A copy of the school calendar for current and previous year.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the Dracut 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 accord 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

File: BID
Index

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

The Dracut School Committee shall serve without compensation, except that a member of a School Committee of a city, town, regional school district or superintendency union may be compensated for his/her services by a majority vote of the city council in a city having a Plan D or Plan E charter; in a city not having a Plan D or Plan E charter by vote of the city council, subject to the provisions of the charter of such a city; in a town by a majority vote at a town meeting; and in a regional school district or school superintendency by a majority vote of the voting member towns authorized at their respective town meetings, the amount of such compensation, in each case, to be set by the respective cities, towns or groups of towns. No member of a School Committee in any town shall be eligible to the position of teacher, or Superintendent of public schools therein, or in any union school or superintendency union or district in which his/her town participates.

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the committee, members may be reimbursed from school funds.

Reimbursable expenses may include the cost of attendance at conferences of School Committee associations and other professional meetings or visitations when such attendance and expense payment has had prior School Committee approval.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 40:5; 71:52

SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Dracut 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 Committees (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.

File: BL
Index

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Dracut School Committee welcomes community members and school personnel to all posted School Committee meetings.

Adequate seating will be arranged to accommodate an audience that will be directly in front of the School Committee dais.

Should there be an overflow number of persons attending a School Committee meeting, additional seating will be sought in order to accommodate a larger crowd.

This arrangement will ensure the appropriate decorum attributable to a public meeting of elected officials.

Accepted: December 21, 2004