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SCHOOL COMMITTEE GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS
(8000 SERIES)

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Belmont - none

MASC - BCA

School Committee Member Ethics

(Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics)

Preamble

The acceptance of a code of ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of School Committees under the Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of a School Committee member binds the individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to School Committees, since School Committees are agencies of the state.

This code of ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members in addition to that implied above:

1. Community responsibility
2. Responsibility to school administration
3. Relationships to fellow Committee members

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

1. Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.
2. Recognize that their basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that they are 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 they represent 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 their Committee activities.

A School Committee member in their relations with their 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 their professional duties and hold them 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 their relations with their fellow Committee members should:

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

REFERENCE: Massachusetts Association of School Committees, 5/22/64 – Reviewed 2022

**Belmont -
MASC - BDD
School Committee Superintendent Relationship**

The Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within their scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school district. 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 may seek guidance from the Committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, the Superintendent 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.

**Belmont -
MASC - BDE
Subcommittees of the School Committee and Liaisons**

The School Committee shall appoint members to subcommittees of the School Committee following the annual organizational meeting, for a period of one year. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for Committee action. A “working group” will be considered by the same standards as a subcommittee.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the Committee.
2. The subcommittee members shall organize officers at their first meeting.
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. All subcommittees of the School Committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

The Chair may appoint School Committee members or designees of the School Committee to town committees as representatives or liaisons to the School Committee, as appropriate to the goals of the Committee and the related charge of the town committees. Such appointment may be taken up as a vote of the School Committee.

LEGAL REFERENCE:
M.G.L. 30A:18-25

CROSS REFERENCE:
BEC, Executive Sessions

**Belmont -
MASC - BEC
Executive Sessions**

All meetings of the 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 Chair (or, in their absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
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 Chair 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, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the Committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
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 by a preliminary screening committee (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 effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

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 School Committee Chair and the Superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The School Committee Chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the School Committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes.

When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the School Committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

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

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. 30A:21; 30A:22

CROSS REFERENCES:

BDE, Subcommittees of the School Committee
BE, School Committee Meetings
KEB, Public Complaints about School Personnel

**Belmont -
MASC - BEDF
Voting Method**

Open meeting

Votes of the School Committee will be taken by voice vote or a hand count and shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded. No vote taken at an open session shall be by secret ballot.

A majority of the School Committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. Unless otherwise provided by law or this policy, action by the School Committee requires a majority vote of all members present and voting.

A unanimous vote will be required to suspend parliamentary rules of order.

Executive Session

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

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions. Any votes taken to ratify employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements shall be taken in open session.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. 30A:18-25; 71:42; 71:50

CROSS REFERENCES:

BEC – Executive Session

BE – School Committee Meetings

**Belmont -
MASC - BEDG
Minutes**

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

Minutes will include:

1. The date, time, place, the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting, a summary of each subject, and a list of documents and exhibits used at the meeting,
2. 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.
3. 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. Minutes of all meetings shall be created and approved in a timely manner which is defined in regulation as within the next 3 meetings of the body or within 30 days, whichever is later.

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 REFERENCES:

M.G.L. 30A:22; 66:10; 940 CMR 29.00

CROSS REFERENCES:

KDB, Public's Right to Know

BEC, Executive Session

**Belmont -
MASC - BGD
School Committee Review of Procedures**

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue procedures 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 procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school district whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the District, but it will revise or veto such procedures only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not officially approve procedures 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 procedure 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 Dept. of Elementary and Secondary 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 REFERENCES:

M.G.L. 71:37H

**Belmont -
MASC - BHC
School Committee - Staff Communications**

The 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 for 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.

**Belmont - 8005
MASC - BHE
Internal Communications**

School Committee members shall not use any method of communication to a quorum of members to discuss matters that require public discussion at an open meeting. Any message that can be considered an invitation to reply in any medium and would amount to deliberation on business that must occur only at official meetings is prohibited. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially without the knowledge and intent of the original author.

School Committee members may use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times or dates or to distribute materials, correspondence, or reports so that members can prepare individually for upcoming meetings. Email sent or received by School Committee members on district related issues is subject to the public records law, is a public record, and is discoverable, subject to the exemptions of the Massachusetts Public Records law. Confidentiality should not be assumed, and therefore confidential and sensitive material should not be communicated via email.

Any email sent by School Committee members to or from the Belmont Public Schools server is subject to the district's record retention policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A: 1825
 66
 4: 7, clause 26
 MA Attorney General's Open Meeting Law Guide, March 2011
 www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/Government/OML_Guide_032411.pdf

**Belmont -
MASC - BIA
New School Committee Member Orientation**

In accordance with the requirements of law, each new School Committee member elected to the School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation shall include, but is not limited to, a review of School Finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Ethics/Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the Committee's functions, policies, and procedures of the Committee as soon after election as possible. Each new member shall be given or provided direct online access to the following materials:

- A. A copy of the School Committee policy manual
- B. A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- C. A copy of the Ethics/Conflict of Interest Regulations
- D. A copy of the district's budget
- E. Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- F. Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the Chair and/or the Superintendent determine.

The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify policy:

- A. Arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- B. Requesting information regarding school district operations
- C. Responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- D. Handling confidential information

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established School Committee policy.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. [71:36A](#)

CROSS REFERENCES:

BBBA/BBBB School Committee Member Qualifications/Oath of Office

Belmont -

MASC - BIBA

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, 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. The School Committee will be made aware of School Committee conferences, conventions, and workshops. The Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school district.
2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis and determined at the discretion of the chair.
3. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the travel reimbursement policy.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. [40:5](#)

CROSS REFERENCES:

[BID](#), School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses

[DKC](#), Expense Reimbursements

**Belmont -
MASC - BID
School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses**

Members of the School Committee are not compensated for their services. 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 the member's 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 REFERENCES:

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

CROSS REFERENCES:

BIBA, School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops

**Belmont -
MASC - BJ
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.

References:

BDB. School Committee Officers

Belmont - 8000
MASC - BA
School Committee Operational Goals

The Belmont School Committee is elected by the community to provide leadership and community member oversight of the Belmont Public Schools.

The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the Belmont Public Schools have been established. The Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all people more than the average resident finds necessary.

As elected officials, members of the School Committee recognize their responsibility to listen to comments and suggestions from the residents of Belmont, as well as members of the school community who reside elsewhere. 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 district. 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 the 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. Establishing practical goals.
5. Conducting a periodic review of performance against these goals.

References:

MGL 71: 37 Powers and Duties of School Committees

Belmont - 8001

MASC - BB

School Committee Legal Status

The School Committee is the governing board of the municipality of Belmont's Public Schools. Although it functions as a duly elected Committee of municipal government, the School Committee has, unlike other municipal 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.

The Belmont School Committee, pursuant to the Bylaws of the Town of Belmont, is composed of six (6) members nominated and elected at large by the voters of Belmont for overlapping terms of three (3) years. In addition, the chair of the Student Advisory Committee elected annually at Belmont High School, is an ex officio, nonvoting member of the School Committee pursuant to M G L c. 71 section 38M.

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 REFERENCES:

AA, School District Legal Status

BBA, School Committee Powers and Duties

Belmont - 8001/8004

MASC - BBBA/BBBB

School Committee Member Qualifications and Oath of Office

Any registered voter in the Town of Belmont is eligible to hold the office of School Committee member 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 their official duties as a member of the Committee.

From the Municipal or District 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.

As elected public officials School Committee members are classified as “Municipal Employees” for purposes of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 268A, the State’s Conflict of Interest Law, and are bound by the provisions of that statute.

Newly qualified Committee members shall, by law, receive and sign a receipt for, within 30 days of taking office, a copy of the Massachusetts Ethics Commission’s Summary of the Conflict of Interest laws.

As municipal employees, all School Committee members shall receive a copy of said summary annually. All School Committee members shall, within 30 days of taking office, and every 2 years thereafter, complete the Massachusetts Ethics Commission’s online training program. Upon completion of the online training program, members shall provide notice of such completion to be retained for 6 years by the Municipal or District Clerk.

LEGAL REFERENCE:

M.G.L. 30A:20; 41:1; 41:107; 76:5; 268A:27-28;

**Belmont - 8001
MASC - BBBC
School Committee Member Resignation**

A School Committee member may resign by delivering a written resignation to the Town Clerk with copies to the Chairperson of the School Committee and the Superintendent. Such resignation is effective upon receipt unless some other date, not to exceed 60 days from the date of submission, is specified. A School Committee member who moves from Belmont, resigns, becomes incapacitated or otherwise becomes disqualified during such member's term is deemed to have vacated the office.

LEGAL REFERENCE:
M.G.L. 41:2; 41:109
Belmont town by-law

Belmont - 8001
MASC - BBBE
Unexpired Term Fulfillment

A vacancy on the School Committee is filled by the remaining members of the School Committee and the Belmont Board of Selectmen in accordance with the provisions of MGL 41:11.

As provided in the law, the School Committee will notify the Select Board that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After one week's notice has been given by the Committee to the Select Board, so that voters of the municipality may have the opportunity to state their candidacy, the two governing bodies will meet to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For an 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 REFERENCE:
M.G.L. 41:11

Belmont - 8002

MASC - BBA

School Committee Powers and Duties

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

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

1. **Legislative or policymaking**. The Committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing and evaluating 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 district to carry out the Committee's policies and goals.
4. **Public relations**. The Committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local residents 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, in concert with the community, students and staff, a common vision for the Belmont Public Schools focused on learning and achievement responsive to the needs of all students, and 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.

Personnel Matters

The Superintendent shall be appointed by vote of the Committee and shall directly report to the Committee as provided by law and perform all the duties that are prescribed by law and such other duties, not inconsistent thereto, as a majority of the Committee may direct.

The School Committee shall appoint, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, Assistant/Associate/Deputy Superintendent(s), School Business Administrator, Special Education Administrator, School Physician, School Nurses, and Supervisor of Attendance. Such positions shall not report directly to the School Committee.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

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

M.G.L. 37E, 37F, 38, 59

Internal Reference: Administration: Superintendent [8002]

CROSS REFERENCES:

BB, School Committee Legal Status

BDG, School Attorney

Belmont -1002/ 8003
MASC - BBAA
School Committee Member Responsibilities

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 their 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 Responsibilities

The responsibilities 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 understand the mission and vision of the Belmont Public Schools and (8003, #1) have a general working knowledge of the goals, objectives, policies and programs of the district.
4. To take collective responsibility for building unity and creating a positive organizational culture;
5. To work effectively with other Committees, recognizing and respecting differences of perspective and style on the School Committee and among staff, students, parents, and the community.
6. 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.

7. To vote and act in Committee impartially for the good of all students.
8. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.
9. To communicate a common vision.
10. To operate openly, with trust and integrity.
11. To act in a dignified and professional manner, treating everyone with civility and respect.
12. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
13. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members and the orientation requirements of MGL 71:36A; and participate in professional development and commit the time and energy necessary to be an informed and effective leader.

Ref: MGL 71:37 Powers and Duties of School Committees

Cross Reference:

KEB (1018) Complaint Procedure

BDB Officers, Chairperson

Belmont - 8001/8004

MASC - BBBA/BBBB

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**Belmont -
MASC - BHC
School Committee - Staff Communications**

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**Belmont - 8005
MASC - BHE
Internal Communications**

School Committee members shall not use any method of communication to a quorum of members to discuss matters that require public discussion at an open meeting. Any message that can be considered an invitation to reply in any medium and would amount to deliberation on business that must occur only at official meetings is prohibited. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially without the knowledge and intent of the original author.

School Committee members may use electronic messaging between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times or dates or to distribute materials, correspondence, or reports so that members can prepare individually for upcoming meetings. Email sent or received by School Committee members on district related issues is subject to the public records law, is a public record, and is discoverable, subject to the exemptions of the Massachusetts Public Records law. Confidentiality should not be assumed, and therefore confidential and sensitive material should not be communicated via email.

Any email sent by School Committee members to or from the Belmont Public Schools server is subject to the district's record retention policy.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A: 1825
 66
 4: 7, clause 26
 MA Attorney General's Open Meeting Law Guide, March 2011
 www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/Government/OML_Guide_032411.pdf

Belmont - 8006/8011
MASC BDB
School Committee Officers

The officers of the School Committee are a Chair and a Secretary.

Election

The Chair and Secretary are elected by the School Committee by majority vote at the organizational meeting. If the School Committee fails to elect a Chair and/or Secretary at the organizational meeting, the members filling these positions pro tempore shall exercise all duties of their respective offices from one meeting to the next until new officers are duly elected.

Tenure

The officers of the School Committee each hold office until the next organizational meeting unless a shorter period is specified by the terms of election or an individual's resignation or other condition of disqualification.

Chairperson

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

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the School Committee;
2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the School Committee's agendas;
3. Confer with the Superintendent on issues that may occur between School Committee meetings;
4. Appoint subcommittees, subject to School Committee approval;
5. Call special meetings of the School Committee as necessary;
6. Be a public spokesperson and public correspondent for the School Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others; and

7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all School Committee meetings.

At all meetings of the School Committee, the presiding officer will:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time;
2. Insure that agenda items are taken up in an orderly manner;
3. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and insure that the speaker who has the floor may speak, free from disturbance or interference;
4. Respond directly to public inquiries, referring to a member of the School Committee or Administration for clarification or response when appropriate;
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 School Committee;
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries; and
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Secretary

The Secretary will:

1. Keep or cause to be kept a permanent record book in which all votes, orders, and proceedings are recorded;
2. Comply with state law and School Committee policy regarding notification of meetings;
3. Render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.
4. In the absence of the Chair, assume the duties of the Chair. A Secretary Pro Tempore shall be elected by a majority of members present.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. 71:36, 66:5A

Ref: 1006-BEDH Public Comment at School Committee Meetings

Belmont - 8006
MASC - BDA
School Committee Organizational Meeting

The Organization Meeting will be the first meeting of the School Committee following the annual town election. The most senior member of the School Committee present shall preside as Chairperson Pro Tempore, and the next most senior member shall serve as Secretary Pro Tempore. At this meeting officers are elected, and policies are adopted.

For the purpose of organizing, the School Committee will elect from its membership a Chair, and Secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. A member need not serve as a prior officer or member to be nominated and elected to an officer position in the Organizational Meeting.

In the event the Chair or Secretary are no longer members of the School Committee, the senior member (years served) will act as the Chair Pro-Tempore.

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

1. The outgoing chair will turn over the meeting to the most senior member of the School Committee present, who will conduct the election of the incoming Chair.
2. Nominations for the office of Chair will be made from the floor. The Chair 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.
3. Upon election, the new Chair will preside, calling for the election of a Secretary. The procedure used for their election will be the same as that for electing the Chair.

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.

Meetings

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

Regular Meetings

The usual official meetings, held during the school year according to a schedule determined by the Superintendent and the Chairperson and provided to all School Committee members prior to the commencement of the year. All regular meetings of the School Committee (typically held on Tuesdays at 7:30 pm) are open to the public and the media.

Special Meeting

An official meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Emergency Meeting

A meeting held in response to a situation which requires prompt action to prevent imminent disruption or harm to the system. An emergency meeting may be held without complying with the notice provisions for regular meetings. Notice shall be posted as far in advance as is practicable. All other requirements for regular meetings will be observed.

Adjourned Meeting

A meeting deferred or suspended by majority vote of the School Committee to a later time and place which shall be specified in an order of adjournment. Notice of such adjournment shall be posted within 24 hours after the time of adjournment and 48 hours in advance of the date to which the meeting is deferred.

Organizational Meeting

The first meeting of the School Committee following the annual town election. The most senior member of the School Committee present shall preside as Chairperson Pro Tempore, and the next most senior member shall serve as Secretary Pro Tempore. At this meeting officers are elected and policies are adopted.

Public Hearings

A meeting of the School Committee to obtain public testimony or comment. A public hearing may occur as part of a regular or special meeting, or it may be the sole purpose of a special meeting, with no other matters addressed. If a public hearing

is held pursuant to state law, all statutory requirements for notice and conduct of the hearing shall be met.

Executive Session

A meeting of the School Committee closed to the public conducted only to discuss confidential matters as specified by law. An executive session may be held at any time during any meeting in accordance with law. The School Committee shall state in open session the matters to be discussed in executive session and whether it will return to open session. In the executive session, the School Committee may consider only those matters covered in its statement.

Legal References:

MGL: 71, 38N, 37, 23A, B & C

Notice

Notice of all School Committee meetings, including meetings of subcommittees, shall be posted in the offices of the Superintendent and the Town Clerk at least forty eight (48) hours prior to the meeting, unless otherwise provided by law, and shall conform to statutory requirements for posting of notice.

Each notice of meeting shall specify that reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities are available upon request. An individual requesting disability-related accommodation or modification in order to participate at the meeting should contact the Superintendent's office within a reasonable time in advance of the meeting, describing the accommodation needed and providing contact information. Last minute requests will be honored to the extent practicable.

Legal Reference:
MGL 37:23B

Quorum

A majority of the School Committee constitutes a quorum for the transaction of business. Unless otherwise provided by law or this policy, action by the School Committee requires a majority vote of all members present and voting.

Belmont - 8010

MASC - BEDB

Agenda/Meeting Materials

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chairperson of the School Committee, will arrange the order of agenda items so that the School 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 School Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda to the extent practicable. The order of business may be rearranged for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the School Committee, or to expedite School Committee business.

Any School Committee member or a member of the Belmont Public School Community who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit a request to the Superintendent or 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 inclusion and scheduling of such items will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the School Committee, in consultation with the Superintendent. The agenda will also provide time for members of the Belmont Public School Community to speak briefly before the School Committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members on the Friday prior to a regularly scheduled meeting.

Agendas will be posted on the Belmont Public Schools' web site.

CROSS REFERENCES:

BEDH: Public Participation

Belmont - 8011

MASC - BEDD

Conduct of Meetings

School Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the rules of parliamentary procedure as set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, as periodically revised, and the School Committee's own policies. In the event of a conflict, the School Committee's internal policies and procedures control. The School Committee, by unanimous consent, may suspend the rules in appropriate circumstances.

Public Participation

All meetings of the School Committee, including subcommittee meetings, are open to the public, unless they are duly convened executive sessions.

Meetings must be held in accessible locations. With reasonable advance notice, appropriate disability-related accommodation will be provided for individuals requesting such accommodation from the Superintendent's office.

The School Committee shall make time available for public participation at meetings in accordance with guidelines established by the School Committee. A copy of these guidelines is available at the Superintendent's office, on the Belmont Public Schools' website and at each School Committee meeting.

The School Committee will not address complaints regarding school personnel except in the manner provided for in the Community Relations section of these policies.

Employees have the right to attend School Committee meetings in the same manner as all other member of the Belmont Public School community.

Legal Reference:

MGL C 37 §§23 A & B

Internal Reference: Community Relations, Public Participation (1006)

Community Relations, Complaint procedure (1018)

Belmont - 8013
MASC - BG
Policy Development and Adoption

The School Committee is solely responsible for developing or changing the policies of the Belmont Public Schools to reflect the district's vision and goals and to provide guidelines for School Committee action and administrative decisions. These policies shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Adoption and Amendment

The Superintendent or designee shall present drafts or suggestions for new policy and policy revisions when changes in law occur or when specific needs arise. All drafts must be distributed to School Committee members in writing and placed on the agenda for a regular meeting for first reading and discussion. Comments from the Superintendent and reports of any advisory committee established to review or comment on the proposal shall be considered.

Prior to adoption, policies shall normally be given two readings by the School Committee. At its second reading, the policy may be adopted by a majority vote of all members of the School Committee. The School Committee may waive the second reading or may require additional readings.

Policies will be effective on the date determined by the School Committee, which will be set to ensure that those affected have sufficient time to become familiar with them prior to implementation.

Review and Evaluation

The School Committee will conduct periodic reviews of its policies to keep them up to date. The School Committee may utilize the expertise of external providers for unique reviews of policy. The Superintendent shall inform the School Committee of any policies that are out of date or appear to need revision for other reasons.

Dissemination

A copy of the Belmont Public Schools policy manual will be provided to each School Committee member and will be available in the Superintendent's office and website, and in the main office and website of each school building. All copies of the manual remain the property of the Belmont School Committee and are subject to recall at any time.

The Superintendent, or designee, is responsible for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the School Committee and any procedures developed to implement them.

Suspension

The operation of any provision of Belmont Public School policy not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended, for a specified purpose and for a specified time, by a majority vote of School Committee members present at any official meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

The Superintendent may suspend all or part of any policy or administrative procedure when it conflicts with state or federal law or regulations. The Superintendent will report the suspension to the School Committee. Suspension shall be valid until the policy or procedure is rescinded, amended or reaffirmed.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

M.G.L. c. 71:37, 37H

CROSS REFERENCES:

CHB School Committee Review of Regulations