

Reading Public Schools **School Committee Operating Protocols**

As members of the Reading School Committee, we accept the high honor and trust that has been placed in us to ensure that Reading students receive the best education possible. To that end, we hereby commit to the following in the conduct of our business.

Role

The School Committee will work towards continuous improvement in teaching and learning by:

- Clearly defining aspirational and SMART goals for the district in collaboration with the Superintendent
- Assuring accountability in the Superintendent evaluation process
- Developing policies that support our vision
- Advocating for the needs, interests, and achievement of all students in our district
- Identifying and advocating for the appropriate resources to advance the mission and vision of the Reading Public Schools
- Staying informed and engaged on educational trends at the state and national level

School Committee members understand that only the School Committee as a whole has authority; individual members may not act unilaterally. While debate and principled dissent are encouraged, all School Committee members are expected to support and uphold the decision of the majority once a vote is taken.

The School Committee recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with town officials, residents, and other stakeholders to improve our schools and will actively seek ways to enlist their support for our efforts.

Conduct

School Committee members are expected to be familiar with and adhere to School Committee Policy BCA, School Committee Member Ethics.

Agendas

School Committee meetings are business meetings held in public, not public meetings. We will strive to hold efficient, effective meetings by:

- Assuring that appropriate workshop style sessions are scheduled for three year and annual goals where the School Committee and Superintendent together with appropriate district leadership can collaborate
- Creating a yearly agenda based on district goals, with the understanding that the agenda will evolve as each year progresses and mindful of the municipal board, committee and liaison commitments
- Beginning meetings with a reading of the Reading Public School's Mission, Vision, or District Goals to focus all our discussions and deliberations
- Conducting business through a set agenda
- Planning meetings to not extend beyond 2 ½ hours
- Expecting that presentations will be 20 minutes or less, unless presenters get permission for extended time from chair or his/her designee in advance
- Respectfully soliciting public input, per School Committee Policy BEDH

Meetings

School Committee members are expected to:

- Arrive well-prepared and ready to speak to agenda items
- Follow Roberts Rules of Order

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- Speak only when acknowledged by the chair; not engage in side conversations
- Report to the Committee on any meetings or events attended as an appointed liaison/representative of the School Committee. Reports are for the purpose of informing fellow committee members. Reports should be brief and focus on information that directly impacts Reading schools, staff, families, and students.
- Keep comments succinct and on topic
- Encourage critical thinking and thoughtful debate
- Listen actively and keep an open mind
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Respect community members, staff and fellow committee members at all times
- Usage of technology should be consistent with the purpose of the meeting and respectful

Decision-Making

School Committee members will arrive at decisions based on:

- The needs, interests, and achievement of all students in the district
- Superintendent's recommendation, along with qualitative and quantitative data, research, public input, financial impacts, and recognized best practices.

Information Requests

School Committee members are encouraged to request information they feel they need in order to carry out their responsibilities. Requests should be made to the Superintendent and Chair well before meetings, to allow time for research. The Superintendent will ensure that all information is distributed equally and consistently to all School Committee members in a timely manner.

Except as otherwise provided by Law and Policy, including Policy GBD, under no circumstances should a Committee member ask staff members for information or action without going through the Superintendent and Chair.

Communication

In order to promote consistency of communication, only the School Committee Chair and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to speak for the School Committee to other public bodies, the media, or individuals who reach out to the body as a whole.

When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards as School Committee liaisons or as individuals, they will speak as individuals and not for the Committee, except when reporting on a decision of the majority of the School Committee.

All email communication conducted as a School Committee member should be done to and from an official Reading Public Schools email address, so that email records can be legally collected and stored. Any email received in the capacity of a School Committee member should be forwarded to the Superintendent and Chair for response. All emails and responses will be added to the next available School Committee packet. School Committee members are expected to be familiar with School Committee Policy BHE, Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members.

This document is provided to members annually at a SC meeting as soon as practical after the annual election.
Reviewed by MASC Field Director and Reading School Committee (9/2016)
Reviewed and updated by Reading School Committee in alignment with MASC Field Director (7/2019)
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