



Chelmsford School Committee Handbook

Adopted January 8, 2019

Revised and Approved March 21, 2023

Chelmsford School Committee Handbook

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I. Introduction and Welcome

Thank you for serving on the Chelmsford School Committee! Your commitment to serve the children of Chelmsford is one of the most important responsibilities you can undertake.

In your role as a School Committee member, you will work with the other members of the Committee on complex issues including setting goals and policy, deciding the budget, negotiating contracts, supervising the Superintendent, and advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for our students. Central to your success as a member of the Committee is your ability to create and maintain effective working relationships with your fellow Committee members, Superintendent, other administrators and school staff, municipal leaders and staff, parents, students, and the community at large.

It is expected that you will share a commitment with the other Committee members to provide an exceptional educational experience for all students, a willingness to become well-versed in public education and the Chelmsford public schools, and a sincere desire to be a part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

You can expect to work with the other School Committee members as part of a team despite any differences. We welcome your commitment and contributions.

II. Mission and Vision

The mission of the School Committee, Superintendent, Administrative Personnel and Staff of the Chelmsford Public Schools is to cultivate inspired, creative, and well-rounded lifelong learners who possess the integrity and self-direction necessary to be contributing community members.

The Chelmsford Public Schools provide all students with multiple pathways to optimize their own potential for academic excellence, leadership, and social and emotional wellness. Teachers work from a rigorous curriculum that is aligned with state standards incorporating the common core, and they use multiple forms of data that informs innovative approaches to teaching. Student success is anchored in the high expectations of teachers who are part of a professional, collaborative culture that demands a continuous focus on instructional improvement. Every student feels safe, cared for, and appropriately challenged and supported in schools that are fully staffed and technologically integrated. Student successes are celebrated within and across schools as well as throughout the broader community. Parents and the community are connected to the daily life of Chelmsford schools through consistent, multidirectional and multi-modal communication, which builds external support for and pride in the district, schools, teachers, and students. As a result of high-quality teaching, meaningful partnerships, and well-resourced schools, students contribute to the Chelmsford community as self-directed, creative, and inspired learners who are ready to tackle contemporary issues.



III. Overview of the Chelmsford School Committee

For the purpose of enhancing teamwork among members of the School Committee and between the School Committee and Administration, we, the members of the Chelmsford School Committee, do hereby publicly commit ourselves to the following operating protocols:

3.1 Who We Represent

The School Committee is responsible to the people of the Town of Chelmsford to represent the needs and interests of all children in the District. It is the School Committee's responsibility to set the tone and promote a positive image for the school system. We accept our roles as ambassadors of the school system, promote support for public education, spread news of the District's successes, and continuously look for ways to improve.

3.2 How We Conduct Business

The Committee will conduct its business through a set agenda. In as much as is possible, all materials relevant to the meeting will be available in advance. Emerging items will be addressed in a future agenda, as is required by the Open Meeting law. We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting held in public, not a public meeting. The School Committee will approach decision making with an open mind. Research, best practice, public input and financial impact will all be taken into consideration. We will uphold and support the decision of the majority of the School Committee once a decision has been made. We will maintain the confidentiality of privileged information and respect the Open Meeting Law. The School Committee will help establish the vision, create policies and ensure accountability to sustain continuous improvements in teaching and learning. The Superintendent and Administration will manage the day-to-day operations of the district. Individual School Committee members do not have authority, only the School Committee as a whole has authority. When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards as liaisons from the School Committee, they will speak as individuals and not for the Committee except when reporting a decision of the majority of the School Committee. We will recognize the importance of working collaboratively with town officials to improve our schools and seek ways to enlist their support for our efforts.

3.3 How We Communicate

We will work together to build trust between School Committee members, the Superintendent and Administrators by treating everyone with dignity and respect. The Superintendent and the School Committee recognize the importance of proactive communication and agree there will be no surprises during an open meeting. If School Committee members have questions or concerns, they agree to contact the Superintendent or Chair in advance of the meeting. Personnel complaints and criticisms received by the School Committee, or its individual members will be directed to the Superintendent. The School Committee will encourage others to follow the District Chain of Command policy. We will clearly define success and accountability for the School Committee, Superintendent, staff and students. We will revise our protocols as needed as part of the Committee's self-evaluation.



IV. New Member Information (SC Policy Reference [BIA](#))

4.1 Overview

Upon election or appointment, the new member needs to be sworn in by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will provide information on the on-line Ethics course, which needs to be completed within two weeks. After completing the course, a receipt is to be printed and provided to the Town Clerk's Office.

New members will meet with the Chairperson and Superintendent of Schools for the primary purpose of introducing the new member to his or her responsibilities to the Committee's method of operating and to the district's policies and issues.

Each new School Committee member is required to complete at least eight hours of orientation training within one year of joining the Committee. Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) offers a course titled: "Charting the Course: An Orientation Program for New and Veteran School Leaders". Attendance at the Charting the Course program meets the eight hours orientation requirement for new school committee members. This orientation shall include a review of School Finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members, and any other appropriate information.

Each new member will receive the Chelmsford School Committee Member Handbook and any other materials the Chair and/or Superintendent determine to be necessary.

The School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member with understanding the Committee's functions, policies and procedures. Upon request each new member shall be provided access to:

- The School Committee Policy Manual
- The Open Meeting Law
- The Conflict-of-Interest Regulations
- The District's Budget
- Collective Bargaining Agreements and Contracts
- Student and Staff Handbooks
- Other relevant materials at the discretion of the Committee Chair or Superintendent

The Chair and/or Superintendent shall also clarify such policies as:

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

Each new member should be advised of all memberships and resources available to them as a School Committee member.



4.2 Organization of the Committee (SC Policy Reference [BDB](#))

1. Chairperson

The Chairperson shall preside at all meetings of the School Committee and shall perform other duties as directed by law, State Department of Education regulations, and by the Committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson shall:

- Sign any documents necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
- Consult with the superintendent in the planning of Committee agendas.
- Confer with the superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
- Appoint any subcommittees of the School Committee, subject to Committee approval.
- Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary, subject to legal notification requirements.
- Be public spokesperson for the Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
- Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Committee, the chairperson shall:

- Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
- Announce the business to come before the Committee in its proper order.
- Enforce the Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
- Recognize persons who desire to speak and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
- Explain what the effect of a motion would be if it is not clear to every member.
- Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
- Answer all parliamentary inquiries, referring questions of legality to the appropriate legal authority.
- Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof. The chairperson shall have the right, as other Committee members have, to offer resolutions, discuss questions, and to vote.

2. Vice Chairperson

Duties assigned to the vice-chairperson, will receive guidance from and assist the chairperson in performance of the chairperson's enumerated duties. The vice-chairperson will act as chairperson in the chairperson's absence.

3. Secretary

The secretary will be responsible for taking the minutes of all executive sessions. The Secretary will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of the minutes for all regular and special meetings.



4.3 Subcommittee and Liaison Positions (SC Policy Reference [BDE](#), [BDF](#), [BDFA](#))

Subcommittees of the School Committee may be appointed by the Chair or the Committee itself and will typically have 2 members.

Subcommittees:

- Policy Subcommittee
- Facilities/Maintenance
- Finance/Budget
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Contract Negotiations
- Administrators, Teachers/Nurses, Professional Support/Secretaries, Custodians, Food Service

Liaison Positions:

- School Organizations
 - PTO Liaisons
 - Byam School Association, Center School PTO, CHIPS PTO, Harrington PTO, South Row PTO, McCarthy PTO, Parker PTO, Chelmsford High PTO, Council of Schools
- SEPAC
- Wellness Committee
- Other Organizations
 - CHS Alumni Association
 - CHS Boosters
 - Chelmsford Business Association
 - Chelmsford Friends of Music
 - MASC
- Town Boards
 - Board of Selectman
 - Finance Committee
 - Capital Planning Committee
 - Planning Board
 - Economic Development
 - Turf Fields
 - Recycling
- Legislative Outreach
 - State Elected Officials
 - Federal Elected Officials

4.4 Professional Development Opportunities (Policy Reference [BIBA](#), [BK](#))

All members are encouraged to utilize the services and resources that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the National School Board Association (NSBA), and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provide by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for school committee members. The School Committee is committed, both individually and as an organization, to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education.



Some opportunities for professional development include:

- MASC Annual Conference in Hyannis during November
- MASC workshops and classes
- National Advocacy Institute programs
- National School Boards Association Conference and Workshops

4.5 Representative Opportunities (Policy Reference [BJ](#))

As a member of the School Committee, you may have the opportunity to represent the Committee at various functions. It is important to remember that you represent only yourself at these functions; you may not speak on behalf of the Committee (unless predetermined by the Committee). Nonetheless, your comportment and comments will reflect upon the Committee as a whole.

These functions may include but are not limited to:

- MASC Day on the Hill
- Chelmsford High School graduation
- Various PTO and SEPAC events
- Town Meetings and town-wide events

4.6 Roles and Responsibilities of a School Committee (Policy Reference [BBA](#), [BBAA](#), [BCA](#), [BDD](#))

1. Goals (Policy Reference [BA](#), [BAA](#), [CN](#))

The School Committee is a goal driven body whose charge it is to effectively use its resources to provide the best education possible for all students.

The Superintendent, with input from district staff and community members, is responsible for the creation of a Strategic Plan every three to five years to establish a set of Overarching Goals for the district and should work with the Committee to ensure the realization of these goals.

Each year the School Committee and Superintendent will develop annual goals to accomplish the Overarching Goals. The annual goals should be guided by the Strategic Plan. Most of the annual goals will become the responsibility of the Superintendent to implement, which the School Committee will monitor and oversee. Sometimes the implementation of a goal (such as hiring a Superintendent or negotiating contracts with bargaining collectives) will be the responsibility of the Committee, and it is incumbent upon the Chair or his/her designee to ensure that this goal is accomplished.

The school committee will also endeavor to create and work toward several professional practice goals to build on and improve procedures, practices and collaborations between schools committee members and at school committee meetings.

Goals set by both the Superintendent and the School Committee will follow the SMART goal format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Timebound) to ensure progress is made each year. These goals will be evaluated at the end of each school year to determine how well they were addressed and as a starting point for establishing new goals for the subsequent year.



A School Committee self-evaluation will also be completed by the full committee at the end of the school year to evaluate operational procedures and practices of the Committee. Implied in the concept of evaluation is an assumption that individuals and Committees are capable of improvement. This self-evaluation will then form the basis for setting new professional practice goals for the subsequent year.

2. Budget (Policy Reference [DA](#), [DB](#), [DBC](#), [DBF](#), [DBG](#), [DBJ](#), [DGA](#))

The Budget calendar is prepared by the Superintendent in conjunction with the district Business Manager and given to the School Committee during the fall of the prior fiscal year. In subsequent months budget requests are prepared and submitted by principals and administrators and then reviewed by the Superintendent and Business Manager. In January/February the Superintendent and Business Manager will present an overview of the proposed Operating Budget for the coming Fiscal year. This begins the formal public portion of the budget process. A detailed budget presentation will follow, and a meeting of the Budget/Finance subcommittee will be held if deemed necessary. The School Committee will hold a public meeting on the budget in February/March and the Committee vote on the proposed budget after hearing from all stakeholders within the district.

During the course of the fiscal year, committee members will be required to sign payroll warrants and accounts payable **warrants** to allow for the release of checks on a rotating basis established by the Director of Business and Finance. New Committee members will meet with the Superintendent and Chairperson at the beginning of their term to review the procedures and responsibilities of this process. (See Appendix A - Procedures for Signing the warrant)

3. Policy (Policy Reference [BG](#), [BGB](#), [BGC](#), [BGE](#), [BGF](#), [CH](#), [CHD](#))

The formulation and adoption of written policies 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.

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

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

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 decisions, the Committee will review, and if necessary, revise its policies on a regular basis.

4. Superintendent Evaluation (Policy reference [CBI](#))

The Superintendent will meet with the School Committee at least once each year for the purpose of discussing the district goals and objectives and the Superintendent's job description and performance, as well as the working relationship between the Superintendent and the Committee.



Throughout the year, the Superintendent will provide evidence of his/her performance based upon the annual goals established at the start of the year. Additionally, school committee members are responsible for gathering information based on their observations, feedback and other appropriate sources as evidence of the Superintendent's performance including but not limited to:

- Evidence of instructional leadership and links to student achievement
- Reports and research prepared by the Superintendent for review by the Committee
- Recommendations from the Superintendent on any range of subjects
- Personnel recommendations
- Involvement in collective bargaining negotiations
- Advice and counsel to Committee members when requested
- The quality of the budget proposed by the Superintendent and the appropriate linkage to District goals and needs
- Fulfillment of professional duties (i.e. Timely preparation and presentation of the budget, ensuring that all educators are evaluated as required by law, filling all necessary positions, etc.)
- Performance at School Committee meetings where he/she makes recommendations, addresses questions, speaks to the Committee or the public, and reflects the values of the district
- Relationship with municipal officials
- Interactions with the public
- District morale which can be linked appropriately to the Superintendent's leadership

The Superintendent of Schools shall be evaluated in accordance with the standards and procedures mandated by the DESE under the educator evaluation regulations [603 CMR 35.00](#).

The evaluation will be publicly shared at a posted scheduled school committee meeting.

5. *Negotiations* (Policy reference [HA](#), [HB](#), [HF](#))

The role of School Committee by Mass General Law Chapter 150E is to be the legal representative of management. Union negotiations are arguably one of the two most important roles of the School Committee, the other being to select a highly qualified Superintendent. The negotiating team is comprised of the Superintendent, School Committee Attorney and two members of the School Committee. By law, the Chelmsford Town Manager along with each School Committee member is allowed a vote on all district contracts. The Chelmsford Public Schools have five units for negotiation: - Administrators, Teachers/Nurses, Professional Support/Secretaries, Custodians, Food Service workers. The school committee will also negotiate with the Superintendent to establish or renew his/her contract. At the discretion of the chair, a two-person negotiating subcommittee may be appointed to conduct negotiations with the superintendent on behalf of the committee or negotiations may take place with the entire committee.



6. *Hiring Responsibilities* (Policy Reference [BBA](#))

The School Committee is responsible for appointing the following personnel:

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent (upon recommendation of the Superintendent)
- School Business Administrator
- Director of Student Services, School Physician, Registered Nurses

4.7 Communication (Policy Reference [KDB](#))

As an elected official representing the Chelmsford public schools, each member of the school committee commits to actively seeking input from a variety of stakeholders, to listening carefully to all viewpoints, and to maintaining a broad understanding of the important issues confronting the schools and the town at large. We uphold the value of clear, timely, and honest communication with relevant constituencies. We are eager to hear communal voices, and, in turn, we resolve to communicate publicly our decisions, actions, and rationales. Our goal is to maintain an open, two-way system of communication with the community while following the protocols outlined in earlier sections of this handbook. We also commit to ongoing assessment of our communication systems and to continuous improvement.

1. *Communication with District Personnel Members* (Policy Reference [BHC](#), [CCB](#))

In communicating with staff employed in the district committee members should always remain cognizant that they possess no authority outside of the authority of the full school committee. Any feedback received from district personnel that relates to district operations should be relayed to the appropriate administrative authority, usually the person's immediate supervisor. When this is unclear, the concerns should be communicated to the superintendent. Unless otherwise indicated by the superintendent, members should not discuss specific concerns of staff members during a school committee meeting.

2. *Communication with Students*

The primary objective of the school committee is to establish policies that ensure the academic achievement of all students. The school committee benefits from hearing the opinion of students on issues affecting their education and the overall social, intellectual, and extracurricular climate of the schools. Students may address the school committee by speaking during the public input portions of School Committee meetings, or by asking the school committee student representatives to speak on their behalf. We value the input of our students.

3. *Communication with Municipal Leaders* (Policy Reference [KLG](#), [KLJ](#), [CLK](#))

Chelmsford has a rich tradition of service by elected and appointed committees, boards, officials, administrators, and their staff. The school committee is eager to work together with community leaders in the service of public education. We affirm the importance of maintaining a productive, collegial, and efficient working relationship with all municipal leaders in the pursuit of excellence in our schools. We may not always agree on our respective priorities, but the school committee commits to collaboration, to explaining carefully our decisions, and to resolving disagreements in a harmonious and respectful manner.



4. *Communication with Parents, Guardians, Families, and Community Members* (Policy Reference [KA](#))

Communications with all stakeholders in the district are encouraged to maintain a healthy dialogue with members of the community to keep people up to date on the committee's actions. We will ensure that our decisions and actions are performed in a public and transparent manner – with the sole exception of the topics that legally permit and require school committee to adjourn to executive session. These exceptions aside, the public will always be informed of committee decisions and the rationale.

5. *How to Respond to Constituent Complaints* (Policy Reference [GBK](#), [KE](#))

The School Committee's policy with regard to the handling of complaints from the public is clearly defined in policy KE. While members of the community, including parents and students have the right to contact elected, school committee members often lack the authority to resolve problems brought to their attention. When addressing complaints from constituents Committee members should direct them to the proper chain of command to best handle and address their complaints as close to their origins as possible. The proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

- 1) Teacher
- 2) School Building Administrator
- 3) Superintendent
- 4) School Committee

The Committee expects that the professional staff that receives complaints will address them courteously and make a proper reply to the complainant.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigate, the complainant must submit their complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

V. School Committee Meetings

5.1 Schedule of Meetings (Policy Reference [BEDA](#))

Regular meetings are usually scheduled the first and third Tuesday of every month from September through June. If the third Tuesday falls during a vacation week, the meeting will be adjusted appropriately.

5.2 Agenda Format (Policy Reference [BEDB](#), [BEDBA](#))

Every school committee meeting has an agenda that:

- Serves as the steering mechanism for each meeting.
- Enables logical organization and preparation for each meeting.
- Informs committee members of the items and issues to be discussed.
- Provides guidelines necessary for the conduct of the meeting in an efficient, well organized, and effective manner.
- Is kept on file, as per law, and can be cited as the record of what transpired.



- Serves as the basis for the preparation of the minutes.
- Allows the superintendent to assure that items and matters to be reported and acted upon will be brought to the committee's attention.

The School Committee Chair and Superintendent work together to develop the agenda for each School Committee meeting. The number of items on the agenda needs to be considered as it may adversely affect the length of the meeting. The time needed for each item on the agenda is estimated to ensure a reasonable meeting length with enough time allocated to discuss each item. Ideally, School Committee agendas are designed so that the meeting is dedicated to focused, informed discussion on student achievement, progress towards the educational goals, and priorities of our district. Meeting agendas, along with the necessary documents and materials, are emailed to School Committee members.

5.3 Types of Meetings (Policy Reference [BE](#), [BEC](#))

The Committee regularly uses four types of meetings:

1. **Regular:** An open meeting for official legal actions, presentations. This meeting is televised.
2. **Special:** An official legal action meeting may be called between regular meetings to consider specific topics. These meetings typically include a school committee retreat. **Reorganization:** At the first meeting following the Town's annual election, the School Committee will elect from its membership a Chair, Vice Chair and Secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. This meeting contains a full agenda.
3. **Reorganization:** At the first meeting after the town's annual election, the school committee elects from its membership a chair, vice chair, and secretary, all of whom hold their offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. This meeting contains a full agenda.
4. **Executive Session:** All meetings of the School Committee are open to the public and media. However, the Committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when allowed by law. These reasons are limited to:
 - 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.
 - Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with nonunion personnel.
 - Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
 - The deployment of security personnel or devices.
 - Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
 - Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
 - To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.



- 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.
- 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.

When meeting in executive session, the Committee should follow these procedures:

- The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
- The Chairperson (or, in his/her 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.
- 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.
- The Chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the Committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session. 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.

5.4 Effective Committee Members

Effective committee members are:

- *Prepared* for the meeting.
- *Focused* on the students.
- *Respectful* of fellow members.
- *Represent* the community.
- *Monitor* not manage.

5.5 Procedures - Quorum & Voting Open Meeting Law

School Committee members should familiarize themselves with the Open Meeting Law and are encouraged to read it in its entirety for a more complete understanding. There are four main sections under the Open Meeting law:

- Open Meeting Law
- Public Participation
- Remote Participation
- Executive Session

School committee meetings are subject to the Massachusetts Open Meeting law, [M.G.1.c.30A, §19](#) and must be open to the public. The statute defines a meeting as "a deliberation by a public body with respect to any matter within the body's jurisdiction."



A deliberation is an oral or written communication through any medium, between or among a quorum of members of a public body. A quorum is a simple majority of the members. Whether or not a communication constitutes a meeting subject to the law depends on four factors:

- The communication must be between members of a public body.
- The communication must constitute a deliberation.
- The communication involves a matter within the body's jurisdiction.
- The communication does not fall within an exception listed in the law.

There are five exceptions to the definition of a meeting under the Open Meeting Law:

- Members of a public body may conduct an on-site inspection of a project or program; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings.
- Members of a public body may attend a conference, training program or event; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings.
- Members of a public body may attend a meeting of another public body provided that they communicate only by open participation; however, they cannot deliberate at such gatherings.
- Meetings of quasi-judicial boards or commissions held solely to make decisions in an adjudicatory proceeding are not subject to the Open Meeting Law; and,
- Town Meetings are not subject to the Open Meeting Law.

The School Committee, as a public body, must provide notice to the public at least 48 hours in advance of their meeting, except in emergencies, but excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays. The agenda for the meeting is sent to the Town Clerk, who posts it on the web and in the Town Hall where it is conspicuously visible to the public at all hours.

The School Committee is required to create and maintain accurate minutes of all meeting, including executive sessions. Minutes, exhibits and other materials must be approved in a timely manner and existing minutes must be made available to the public within 10 days or upon request regardless of if they have been approved. However, any documentation involving the performance evaluation of an individual's professional competence or used in deliberation about employment or appointment of individuals, are not subject to the disclosure requirement of the Open Meeting Law.



VI. Appendices

6.1 Appendix A

Warrant Signing Procedure

One of the primary responsibilities of the school committee is to approve and monitor the school department budget. One of the ways this is achieved is through the approval of school department expenditures through a review and signing of payroll and expense warrants. To assure that this task is carried out properly and efficiently the following are some guidelines to consider.

Who Must Sign The Warrant And When

Per school committee policy, three members of the school committee will be assigned to examine and sign warrants on a rotating basis. Through a provision under M.G.l. c. [41](#) & [46](#) adopted by the committee on April 22, 2020, only one school committee member signature is required on the warrant, although all members scheduled to sign the warrant are encouraged to come in and examine the warrant and add their signature. At the start of each school year a schedule of when the warrants will be ready for signatures and who will be responsible will be prepared by the business manager. In most instances, warrants will be available bi-weekly and the members who are responsible for signing will rotate. E-mail reminders will be sent to the members whose turn it is to sign when the warrant is ready to sign in the business office.

It is the expectation that school committee members will come in to review and sign-off on the warrant in a timely manner so that it may be sent to the Town Accountant's office for payment. *If none of the school committee members scheduled to sign the warrant can get in to sign in a timely manner, they should contact other school committee members who are not scheduled to sign the warrant to see if they would be available to do it for them.*

What To Look For

The purpose of reviewing the warrant is to make sure that money is being spent on school department related expenditures, that expenses are being charged to the correct accounts, that the balances in the accounts being charged are sufficient to cover the expenses, and that expenses are being charged to the proper fiscal year budget.

When you come in to sign the warrant there will be a cover sheet listing all the warrant batches to be signed off on. Make sure that the number of the batch you are signing matches the number on the sheet and that the total expense of the batch matches the total on the sheet. It is best practice to look through the whole batch first to see if you have any questions, and then sign off on the packet and check it off on the cover sheet if no issues are found.

Some of the things to look for as you are examining each batch include:

- Inspect the individual items listed to make sure they are appropriate expenses to be charged to the school department.
- Inspect the dates of the bills in the packet to make sure they are being billed to the proper fiscal year budget.



- Make sure that the proper accounts are listed for the expenditure. For example, if a warrant batch contains heating bills, they should be charged to the proper utility accounts. Often there will be a mix of bills in the packet so there may be multiple accounts listed on the summary page.
- In looking over the accounts being charged, look to see if there is enough money in the account to cover the bills.
- Make sure the totals listed on the different pages of the batch match up to the amounts being charged to each account.

If you have any questions about an expenditure, bring it to the attention of the director of business and finance or one of the business office staff for clarification. If you don't get what you feel is a proper explanation, do not sign the warrant batch and notify the committee chair of your concerns.

6.2 Appendix B

Acronyms

- CPS – Chelmsford Public Schools
- DESE - Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
- ELL- English Language Learners
- ESP – Education Support Professional
- FCSN - Federation for Children with Special Needs
- FTE- Full-time Equivalent
- FY- Fiscal Year
- IEP- Individualized Education Program
- IDEA -Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
- MASC- Massachusetts Association of School Committees
- MCAS- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
- MEOE- Massachusetts Executive Office of Education
- MSBA- Massachusetts School Building Authority
- MTRS – Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System
- MTSS - Massachusetts Tiered System of Support
- NCLB- No Child Left Behind
- NEASC-New England Association of Schools and Colleges
- NSBA- National School Boards Association
- OPEB – Other Post-Employment Benefits
- PARCC- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers
- RTTT- Race-To-The-Top
- SEI – Sheltered English Immersion
- SEL – Social Emotional Learning
- SEPAC – Special Education Parent Action Council
- SOI- Statement of Interest
- STEM- Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics



6.3 Appendix C

New School Committee Member Checklist

- Get sworn in by the Town Clerk/Receive folder with Open Meeting Law, Campaign Finance Reporting, Ethics Training information
- Attend re-organization meeting after swearing in ceremony
- Complete online state ethics training
 - After completing the ethics class give a copy of the certificate to the Town Clerk and the Superintendent's secretary.
- Obtain computer, e-mail address from IT Department.
- Join Massachusetts Association of School Committees.
- Register for Charting the Course with MASC
 - After completing the class give a copy of the certificate to the Town Clerk and the Superintendent's secretary.
- Obtain and review the School Committee Handbook
- Receive training for warrant signing from the Director of Finance and Business
- Review District Policy Manual
- Arrange to meet with Superintendent and/or Chair to review schedules and procedures for school committee meetings
- Review Liaison assignments with Chair
- Obtain copies of and review the following documents.
 - a. Current budget
 - b. Collective bargaining agreements
 - c. Strategic plan
 - d. Student handbook
 - e. Employee handbook
 - f. Administrative contracts
 - g. District goals
 - h. Superintendent goals
 - i. School committee goals

