

FRAMINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE

MEMBER HANDBOOK



In Pursuit of Educational Excellence for All Students

Adopted: March 25, 2014

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Framingham School Committee

Thank you for serving on the Framingham School Committee! Your commitment to serve the children of Framingham 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 myriad complex issues including setting goals and policy, deciding the budget, negotiating contracts, managing the Superintendent, and advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for our students. You are now a leader whose words and decisions will have a lasting effect on our Framingham community. 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 Framingham schools, and a sincere desire to be a part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

You are expected to work with the other Committee members as part of a unified team despite any differences in experience, education, political affiliation, or background. We welcome your commitment and contributions.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Framingham Public Schools (FPS), a system that understands and values our diversity, is to educate each student to learn and live productively as a critically thinking, responsible citizen in a multicultural, democratic society by providing academically challenging instructional programs taught by highly qualified and diverse staff and supported by comprehensive services in partnership with our entire community.

Policies: JCAA, AD

OVERARCHING GOALS

- The Framingham School District will endeavor to ensure that all schools will have the resources to support consistently high academic performance and achievement for all students.
- The Framingham Public Schools will support a system of instruction that is innovative, rigorous, relevant, and will prepare all students for college and career readiness.
- The Framingham Public Schools will partner with parents, guardians and the entire community to support the academic achievement and social development of all students.
- Framingham Public Schools will be an effectively run organization that values efficiency, professionalism, collaboration, and diversity, and motivates and supports its staff to maximize student learning.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- All students can achieve at a high level.
- All decisions will be data driven and made with the best interests of our students in mind. Major initiatives will have thorough analysis including financial, student achievement, and market comparative data.

- Representatives of major stakeholders will have opportunities to voice opinions and help shape decisions.
- Curricular and extra-curricular opportunities will be fair across the district.
- District employees should feel valued, empowered, and energized in their jobs.
- The School Committee will make every effort to provide the resources and latitude to all district employees to excel in educating the children of Framingham.

FRAMINGHAM SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROTOCOLS

Scope of Authority

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE'S REPRESENTATIVE VOICE: We, the Framingham School Committee, believe that all students can achieve at high levels. We will represent the needs of all students in the district. We will strive to balance the needs of staff, parents and the community to achieve this goal.
2. SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL OPERATIONS: The Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the district, including oversight of the hiring, professional development, evaluation, and resolution of personnel issues of all district staff, with the few exceptions of senior management noted by Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) that include input from us. The Superintendent will advise the School Committee on operation-related matters as needed.
3. SUPERINTENDENT AS PRIMARY SPOKESPERSON FOR THE DISTRICT: The Superintendent is responsible for addressing any important questions and concerns from the school community. These may include issues of curriculum, facilities, personnel, and so forth. The Superintendent is also responsible to ensure we are aware of his/her response.
4. SUPERINTENDENT AS PRIMARY SPOKESPERSON FOR THE STAFF: We expect the Superintendent to represent the staff, having received input from all stakeholders (principals, union leaders, central administration, etc.) before presentations to us for decisions.
5. SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION BY THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE: We are responsible for the evaluation of the Superintendent's effectiveness in his/her leadership over the operations of the district and all other assigned duties.
6. CHAIN OF COMMAND: We will respect the district's chain of command and will expect all others to do the same. In addition, we recognize that single official 'voice' of the School Committee is the Chair or his/her designee.
7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLE IN GOAL SETTING, POLICY, BUDGETS, AND DISTRICT EVALUATION: We are responsible for exercising co-leadership with the Superintendent in the vision, planning, policy making, evaluation, and advocacy for the mission of continuous improvement of student achievement in the district.
8. SCHOOL COMMITTEE ADVOCACY FOR STUDENTS: We will advocate on behalf of the students and the district. We will work for the passage of new laws designed to improve student achievement and public schooling, and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this progress.
9. SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLE IN EVALUATION OF DISTRICT SUCCESS: We are responsible on a regular basis to evaluate the success of the district in achieving realistic goals for student achievement
10. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POSITIVE IMAGE: We will conduct ourselves in a professional manner that reflects positively on our schools, students, and Framingham. We will lead by example and model the values enshrined in our schools and demanded of our students and staff.

Meetings & Agendas

11. **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting of School Committee members held in public, and not a meeting with the public. Under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, these meetings are one of the few formats whereby we can legally deliberate with each other. We therefore need to preserve our ability to speak primarily to each other at these meetings.
12. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:** We encourage and welcome the public to attend and/or view the meetings. As per policy and the Chair's prerogative, the public may comment during the first 15 minutes of regular meetings, and we will take those comments under advisement. We will not typically engage in dialogue with the public in order to maintain effective and efficient meetings. However, topics raised by public participants may be placed on subsequent agendas at the discretion of the Chair and Superintendent.
13. **AGENDAS:** The School Committee Chair will work with the Superintendent to set agendas for each meeting and to plan agenda topics for the upcoming year. The Chair should encourage recommendations for agenda items from other School Committee members and from the public. The content of each meeting agenda will focus and highlight student achievement and be tied to district goals.
14. **STAKEHOLDER REPRESENTATION:** We expect decisions and major initiatives brought before us to have been previously vetted by major stakeholders. The Superintendent should notify us if this is not the case. Stakeholders may include parents, principals, teachers, central office, union leaders, town governmental committees, etc. Stakeholders' agreement is not required, but their input should be requested and considered.
15. **SPEAKING TIME:** In order to promote effective and efficient meetings, presentations should take no more than 20 minutes, with subsequent time allotted for questions and answers. The time may be extended with the Chair's approval.
16. **DATA-BASED DECISIONS:** Decisions will be based upon research, available facts, stakeholder and public input, best practices, and financial considerations.
17. **RATIONALE FOR DECISIONS/TRANSPARENCY:** We will clearly articulate the rationale for decisions to the public in a transparent manner.
18. **THE POWER OF SEVEN:** Only the Committee as a whole has legal authority; no individual member has authority to take unilateral action. When attending other meetings, members may speak for themselves only and not for the School Committee, except when reporting a decision of the School Committee or otherwise authorized by the chair. All members agree to support and uphold the decisions of the majority.
19. **NO SURPRISES:** School Committee members are required to review agenda materials and, to allow for an informed response, are encouraged to notify the Superintendent and/or the Chair of any questions, concerns, or comments, they may have before the meeting. In the background materials supplied to the School Committee each Friday prior to a meeting, the Administration should include a rationale for any decisions that will come before the School Committee for a vote. When these materials are not provided in a timely manner, we may discuss the issue, but we may postpone any relevant votes until we are ready to review and reflect on the background materials.
20. **SUBCOMMITTEES:** We acknowledge the importance of subcommittees and will utilize them to focus in depth on specific topics and to prepare for any presentations, deliberations, and possible actions by us.
21. **CONFIDENTIALITY OF EXECUTIVE SESSIONS:** We will honor the confidentiality of all executive sessions as per Massachusetts General Laws.
22. **ROBERTS RULES:** School Committee Meetings will abide by Robert's Rules of Order.

School Committee Partnerships

23. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PARTNERSHIPS: We will work collegially and collaboratively with the Superintendent, other school and community boards and committees, district staff, community members, and each other. We will build trusting relationships, keep open appropriate lines of communication, and treat all with dignity and respect.

School Committee Professional Development

24. SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: We will model continuous learning and development to enhance our proficiency as members of the district's governance team.

25. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF EVALUATION: We are responsible to regularly measure our own performance and effectiveness in support of student achievement.

What Happens When Things Go Wrong

26. WHEN MEMBERS/SUPERINTENDENT DO NOT FOLLOW PROTOCOLS: If a School Committee member or the Superintendent violates any of the above mentioned commitments, we will take the responsibility to remind one another of these principles.

Policies: BD, BBAA, BEDB, BIBA

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

A new member is to be afforded the Committee's and the staff's fullest measures of courtesy and cooperation. Committee and staff shall make every effort to assist the new member to become fully informed about the School Committee's functions, policies, procedures and problems.

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 can be printed and brought to the Town Clerk's Office.

New members will meet with the Chairperson, Administrative Assistant, 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. 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.

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 (MGL Chapter 71 Section 36A).

The School Committee and Superintendent shall assist each new member with understanding the Committee's functions, policies and procedures. Each new member shall be given 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

These materials can be found on-line or a physical copy can be requested. The Resources & References section at the end of this document contains links to the above materials and more, except for handbooks. On-line copies of the handbooks can be found on the website of each school.

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

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36A

Policy: BIA

ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE

Chair

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

- Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Committee.
- Develop School Committee agendas with the Superintendent.
- Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Committee meetings.
- Appoint subcommittees, subject to Committee approval.
- Call special meetings of the Committee as found necessary.
- Be the public spokesperson for the Committee at all times except when the chair specifically delegates this responsibility to others.
- Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Committee meetings.

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

- 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 the impact of a motion if it is unclear to members.
- Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Committee.
- Answer all parliamentary inquiries.

- Put motions to a vote, stating clearly the vote and result.

Vice Chair

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

Clerk

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

Policy: BDB

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

In order for the School Committee to perform as a high-functioning professional organization, all of its members must be well-informed about the Framingham Schools, Committee governance and educational best practices. The School Committee continuously seeks to identify and provide professional development opportunities for its members. All members are encouraged to participate in these learning opportunities. School Committee members will be reimbursed for reasonable expenses for professional development.

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

REPRESENTATIVE OPPORTUNITIES

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

These opportunities also offer you a chance to learn and network.

Some of the functions that you may attend as a representative are:

- MASC Day on the Hill
- Step up to Excellence New Student Welcome and Graduation Events
- Resiliency for Life Luncheon
- Suburban Coalition meetings and Legislative Breakfast
- Thayer Campus Graduation
- Framingham High School Graduation

- Youth Public Safety Academy sponsored by the Middlesex Sheriff's Office
- Sage I-Night
- Salute to Framingham
- Phoenix Program events
- Building PTOs and Town-Wide PTO events
- Town Meetings
- Liaison opportunities to each School Building, F-SEPAC and B-PAC

BEING AN EFFECTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

As a committee member, there are eight key areas of commitment as developed by the National School Boards Association and published in "Key Work of School Boards":

- **Vision:** Establishing a clear vision of student achievement as the top priority of the school board, staff, and community
- **Standards:** Setting clear standards for student performance
- **Assessment:** Establishing an assessment process that measures success at regular intervals
- **Accountability:** Establishing a strong accountability process
- **Alignment:** Aligning resources to focus on students meeting the standards
- **Climate:** Creating a positive climate for student success
- **Collaborative Relationships:** Building collaborative relationships with political and business leaders, with a focus on developing a consensus for student success as a top community priority
- **Continuous Improvement:** Committing to continuous improvement for student achievement

School Committees have certain legal, fiduciary and collegial responsibilities. Certain skills and characteristics are required to be present in effective school committees and committee members:

- **Be prepared for the meeting.** Do your homework, review the agenda in advance and come prepared to the meeting with questions.
- **Focus on the students.** Every decision that is made and every action that is taken must serve the best interests of the students.
- **Respect your fellow members.** State your opinions, agreements, and disagreements respectfully.
- **Represent the community.** Your responsibility is to represent the community as a whole.
- **Monitor, do not manage.** Your job is to oversee the strategic direction of the entire district not to manage the operations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Goals

The School Committee is a goal-driven body whose ultimate desire is to effectively use its resources to provide the best education possible for our students. It is important that the goals provide the School Committee, the employees of the district, parents, students, community, and any other stakeholders the vision and direction to deliver a great education to our students.

The School Committee uses the Overarching Goals to provide the broad direction that it is moving the district. These goals will usually take more than one year to accomplish and should take into account the needs of the school system, the District's Mission Statement, and the Guiding Principles. These three elements should be aligned and bound together through the Overarching Goals.

The Superintendent should create a Strategic Plan to accomplish the Overarching Goals, 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.

Our School Committee and Superintendent will convene annually at our summer retreat to work together as a team to review the Overarching Goals and Strategic Plan, and to develop annual goals. We use the SMART goal format (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound) to ensure progress is made each year.

Budget Cycle

The budget cycle begins with each Responsibility Center (RC) submitting its proposed budget request for the coming fiscal year, usually in the fall. The Director of Finance will then meet with each RC Manager to review their budget request. The Superintendent receives a draft budget from the Business Office in December. This begins the formal, public portion of the budget process. The Superintendent convenes a Budget Forum in December for the School Committee and identifies, in broad terms, the goals of the upcoming budget. In January, the Superintendent conducts a Budget Workshop for the School Committee. Several of the larger RC's, including all the schools, present an overview of their budget requests to the School Committee in February. The School Committee holds a public hearing on the draft budget in March, followed by another Budget Workshop for final modifications. The School Committee then adopts the Superintendent's budget for presentation to Town Meeting in April. Prior to Town Meeting, the School Committee will meet with various Town Boards and Committees charged with advising Town Meeting on all Town budgets. These meetings begin as early as January and continue until the start of Town Meeting, usually in April.

Sample Budget Calendar (FY 2015)

October 28	Preliminary Budget Meetings and Document
November 1	Distribution
November 15	Preliminary budget requests due from Schools
November 20	Preliminary budget requests due from Departments
December 12	Superintendent's Budget Forum
January 14	Budget Workshop for School Committee
February 4	Budget presentations at School Committee meeting
February 25	Budget presentations at School Committee meeting
March 4	Public Hearing on Budget
March 11	Budget Workshop for Finance Subcommittee
March 18	School Committee approves Budget

April Budget Review with Town Boards and Committees

April Town Meeting

Superintendent Evaluation

The Superintendent is formally evaluated once a year and may also receive an informal evaluation at six months. The annual goals are the basis for the review. The annual goals are set each year by the School Committee in partnership with the Superintendent.

Starting in 2012, Massachusetts public school systems introduced a new educator evaluation system for teachers, other full-time professional educators, principals, administrators and superintendents. The Superintendent is responsible for overseeing the evaluations for the administrators and principals. The School Committee is responsible for evaluating the Superintendent.

Throughout the year, the Superintendent gathers evidence of his/her performance based upon the annual goals established prior to the start of the school 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 our review.
- Recommendations from the Superintendent on any range of subjects.
- Personnel recommendations.
- Involvement in the collective bargaining negotiations.
- Advice and counsel to committee members who seek assistance.
- The quality of the budget proposed by the Superintendent and the appropriate linkages to district goals and needs.
- Fulfillment of professional duties (e.g. presenting the budget in a timely manner; ensuring that all educators have been evaluated as the law requires; filling all necessary positions; etc.).
- Performance at School Committee meetings at which the Superintendent makes recommendations, addresses questions, speaks to the Committee or to the public, and reflects the values of the district.
- Relationship with municipal officials.
- Interaction with the public.
- District morale that can be linked appropriately to the Superintendent's leadership.

The MASC strongly urges School Committee members to use the local School Improvement Plans (SIP) as evidence of performance. By reviewing the SIPs closely, members can determine a school's success, improvement, alignment with district goals, and contributions toward overall district success. The School Committee is authorized under the law to review these plans. The Superintendent may approve them. However, we need to ensure that the Superintendent's approval of these plans reflects the overall district goals and that the Superintendent is using the SIP process to promote teaching, learning, and student success. It is important to realize that gathering evidence can be a specific challenge for School Committee members because a Superintendent's work is often performed in an administrative and/or confidential setting to which we do not have access.

In Framingham, the School Committee begins the Superintendent's formal review process at the end of February when the Superintendent gives each member of the School Committee a book of evidence showing performance in accomplishing the annual goals. The members of the School Committee will have until the end of March to write their individual evaluations. These evaluations are then consolidated into a

summative evaluation by the Chair or his/her designee. This should be completed by May. In the past, both the Chair and convener of the Policy Subcommittee have created the summative evaluation.

The summative evaluation is usually offered to the Superintendent and School Committee privately for comments and discussions. At this time, however, substantial changes to the summative evaluation may only occur by discussion at a public meeting. The School Committee must then present the summative evaluation at a public meeting and vote to accept it. If the School Committee does not vote to accept the document, then changes must be made to the evaluation and the School Committee must vote again. Also in June, the Superintendent is expected to begin discussions of the annual goals for the next year. The goals should be determined over the summer and voted in September.

The reason for writing the evaluations in March is two-fold. The first reason is that it fits the budget process. Having the Superintendent reflect on the progress made towards the goals in January and February helps s/he develop the budget.

The other reason is more logistical. The elections are in April. Doing the evaluation in March allows the members of the School Committee that have worked with the Superintendent for the entire year the opportunity to offer their feedback. New members who join the School Committee in April, need not to participate in the evaluation process as one of their first official acts as they have little or no experience as School Committee members with the Superintendent.

The mid-term or six month evaluation is done at the behest of the Committee. This does not require any particular form or presentation to the public. It is an opportunity for the School Committee and Superintendent to reflect on the first six months of the evaluation period and make any changes to actions or expectations.

Related Policy: CBI

LEGAL REFS: MGL, c.30A, s.21; MGL, c.30A, s.22(e)

Negotiations

Negotiations are an opportunity for management and labor to meet formally at the start of a contract cycle to discuss any work concerns. If both parties feel heard, the actual contract negotiation will likely end up focusing on only a few contract changes. If not, both parties may become distracted, or focus on other issues other than student achievement. Concluding negotiations fairly and swiftly is always preferable for management and labor.

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 School Committee must ensure that the management position is understood and fully represented. Management includes the School Committee, Superintendent, Principals, and all other direct managers within the school system. Each School Committee member signs the final union contracts. These signatures carry tremendous responsibility. The signatures confirm that each School Committee member personally supports the final contract as a document that fully represents management, the best interests of student achievement, the best interests of the town, and fairness and equity with labor.

At most, three Committee members should be on the negotiating team to avoid having a quorum. The Committee should select representative agents who are responsible to understand the School Committee's parameters and to keep the full Committee informed of developments. There should never be any surprises between the agents and the full Committee; if there are, it is the School Committee's responsibility to correct that situation. Historically in FPS, management representation has been led by the

Chief Human Resources Officer. The Superintendent, School Committee Attorney and a School Committee member are also on the negotiating team.

Negotiations are typically considered successful if talks conclude quickly and both parties walk away 'equally unhappy.' School Committees must balance the need for speedy contracts with the cost of the contract. The sum of all contracts and benefits exceeds 85% of the total school district budget.

Negotiations with the various unions will not cover employee health insurance benefits. Framingham has accepted MGL Chapter 32B (Sections 19, 21, 22) that allows municipalities to collectively bargain health insurance benefits for all employees through a single bargaining collective. Each employee union in Framingham sends a representative to form the "Public Employee Coalition" (PEC). An additional person is added to the PEC to represent retirees. The PEC bargains all health insurance with the municipal negotiating team for both municipal and school employees.

In FPS, there are currently 7 unions, the teachers being the largest. Currently, the same representative from the MTA represents three of the unions: teachers/nurses, aides, and secretaries. Current unions in FPS include:

1. Framingham Teachers Association (approximately 800 teachers in the district)
2. Framingham Teacher Aides (approximately 180 employees in the district)
3. Framingham Secretaries (approximately 60 in the district, half full-year and half 10-month)
4. Framingham Custodians & Maintenance (approximately 60 in the district)
5. Framingham Food Services (negotiated 100% based on the revolving fund of the Food Service Program; approximately 50 in the district, many part-time)
6. Framingham Title 1 Teachers (currently negotiated 100% based on the Title 1 grant; approximately 15 in the district)
7. Framingham Administrators Association (approximately 30 employees)

By law, the Framingham Town Manager and/or his/her designee, and each School Committee member is allowed a vote on all district contracts. The most recent contracts can either be obtained from the FPS website under the School Committee Budget tab (http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/hr_contracts.cfm) or the district's Human Resources Department.

The remainder of the district employees either have their own individual contracts (typically Principals and other senior Central Office positions not in the FAA), or confidential positions as employees at will. Terms of non-union employees are articulated in the FPS Policies Section G – Personnel. Non-union personnel constitute approximately 200 employees in the district.

More information can be found in Mass General Law, Framingham Public School Policy, and Massachusetts Association of School Committees as referenced below:

- **Framingham Public Schools Policy Manual- Section H – Negotiations –**
<http://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/Z2Browser2.html?showset=framinghamset>
- **Massachusetts Association of School Committees –** www.masc.org
- **MGL Chapter 150E** – Laws related to Collective Bargaining, arbitration, mediation, strikes and work actions, procedures to take in case of a work action, and many other important elements of employee relations.
- **MGL Chapter 268A** – Conflict of Interest Laws
- **MGL Chapter 39, Sections 23A-C** – Open Meeting Law

- **MGL Chapter 32B Section 19, 21 & 22** – Contributory Group General or Blanket Insurance for persons involved in service to their counties, cities, towns, districts, and their dependents

School Committee Self-Evaluation (Policy BAA)

In order to be a more effective and efficient organization, the School Committee will annually perform a self-evaluation in February and present the results at the first meeting/workshop in March. It will show us what we are doing optimally and what needs improving. We will use the MASC self-evaluation document, and review progress on our annual overarching goals and our protocols. At our annual summer retreat, the School Committee will evaluate our progress in improving performance, and promoting a positive culture that supports our Superintendent, Administrators, Staff, Students, and Parents.

Hiring Responsibilities

The School Committee is responsible for appointing the following personnel:

- Superintendent
- Assistant or Associate Superintendents (upon recommendation of the Superintendent)
- School Business Administrator, Administrator of Special Education, School Physicians, Registered Nurses, Supervisor of Attendance, and School Counsel

From: MASC Charting the Course

MGL c. 71, § 37, § 41, § 53, § 59

MGL c 71B, §3A

MGL c76, §19

SUBCOMMITTEES & LIAISONS

Subcommittees of the School Committee may be appointed by the Chair or the Committee itself. Subcommittees are either standing or temporary. The duties of temporary subcommittees shall be outlined at the time of appointment, and the subcommittee shall be considered dissolved when its final report is made and accepted. By policy, the only standing subcommittees of the School Committee shall be the Policy Subcommittee and the Finance Subcommittee.

Policy BDE

Finance Subcommittee

The Finance Subcommittee is one of two standing committees (by policy) of the School Committee. Its primary tasks include discussion of budget reporting formats; in-depth budget discussion; preparation of Town Meeting budget materials; and preparation of monthly budget updates for the School Committee. Administration liaisons to the Subcommittee include the Superintendent, Chief Finance Officer and the Assistant Director of Finance. The Finance Subcommittee meets monthly (or as needed) from September through June.

Policy Subcommittee

One of the primary tasks of the Framingham School Committee is to set the policies of the district. The Policy Subcommittee is the second standing subcommittee, comprised of three members that work with the administration to develop and recommend district policies. The convener and two additional members are chosen by the Chair.

Policies are referred to the subcommittee for study, in accordance with policy BGB, after being placed on an open meeting agenda and approved for referral by a full Committee vote. When a policy is referred for

study, the Subcommittee will meet, usually with the appropriate district administrators, to develop or amend the policy. The goal of this process is to develop a policy that reflects best educational and governance practices and can be effectively implemented by the Framingham school administrators and staff.

When a policy is ready for recommendation to the full Committee, it will be discussed over the course of two meetings. This is to ensure that the public has an opportunity to review and comment on the policy. In the first meeting, the Policy Subcommittee convener should discuss the reason for the policy and/or changes. After the full Committee's discussion, a first vote on the policy may be taken. If the vote passes, the policy should be put on an agenda for the next meeting. If the second vote passes, the policy will take effect after the next meeting.

After the first reading, even if the policy passes the vote, minor changes may be requested by the other members of the School Committee. The Policy Subcommittee convener must ensure that those changes are made either by having the document edited (for typos), or by reconvening the Subcommittee before the next vote of the entire School Committee to resolve the comments.

If the School Committee does not pass the policy on either vote, the Policy Subcommittee should reconvene to address the School Committee's concerns and return the policy to the full Committee for a first vote.

If a situation arises that is not covered by any policy, the Superintendent has the legal authority to address and resolve the situation as he or she finds necessary. The situation may be referred to the Policy Subcommittee at the next meeting of the full School Committee.

Academic Data Dashboard

The purpose of the Academic Data Dashboard is to answer the question, *How Do We Define Success in the Framingham Public Schools?* Annualized data are used to monitor the districts' accomplishments in various aspects of student achievement. The Dashboard should be a constantly evolving instrument, changing to meet the Committee's needs and understanding of the district.

The Committee's role in evolving the Dashboard is to request the type of information the Committee needs to assess how well the district is accomplishing its mission. These questions may be based on the Overarching Goals, specific programs or initiatives, or other areas the Committee needs to monitor closely.

The Administration's role is to work with the Committee to determine the appropriate statistics and measures to provide the Committee with the information requested.

Currently, the Academic Data Dashboard is comprised of three members and the liaison to the administration, the Assistant Superintendent.

Buildings & Grounds/Capital Budget Subcommittee

The Buildings & Grounds/Capital Budget Subcommittee meets periodically to review plans and proposals and to advise the Buildings & Grounds Department on facilities planning, capital projects, and related issues. The Subcommittee usually does the initial vetting of Capital Budget Requests that are later submitted to the Town in October. The Subcommittee will also attend meetings of the Town Capital Budget Committee and other Town Committees that address capital budget development. The Subcommittee is staffed by the Director of Buildings & Grounds as well as the Chief Operating Officer.

District Wellness Committee

In the spring 2013, the district formed a 4-year collaboration with the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a program founded by the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation. The Alliance's

goals are to stop the nationwide increase in childhood obesity and to inspire our students to develop lifelong healthy habits. Each school in the district signed a commitment to work with the Alliance to promote wellness initiatives. Each school formed wellness teams. A District Wellness Team with representation from each school as well as several community participants was also formed.

Framingham Bilingual Parent Advisory Council Liaison

The Framingham Bilingual Parent Advisory Council (F-BEPAC) is created and led by parents whose children attend Bilingual Education Programs within the Framingham Public Schools. F-BEPAC promotes the education and integration of students who speak different languages with a focus on ensuring quality of education, socialization, and cultural interaction. F-BEPAC seeks to serve as a united voice for students who are learning English as a second language and their parents. Each year, the School Committee appoints an F-BEPAC Liaison.

Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council Liaison

The Framingham Special Education Parent Advisory Council (F-SEPAC) is mandated by Massachusetts Law. F-SEPAC is run by volunteer parents and is a district-wide resource and support to parents and guardians of children with special needs.

MGL, Section 71B, Section 3 states:

The school committee of any city, town, or school district shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties. The parent advisory council duties shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities; meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs. The parent advisory council shall establish by-laws regarding officers and operational procedures. In the course of its duties under this section, the parent advisory council shall receive assistance from the school committee without charge, upon reasonable notice, and subject to the availability of staff and resources. Each year, the School Committee appoints an F-SEPAC Liaison.

MASC Legislative Liaison

The School Committee's Legislative Liaison is the School Committee's representative to the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). The MASC Legislative Liaison informs the School Committee of any legislative updates that can affect our district; advocates to local and state authority on behalf of legislation that will enhance education in the Framingham Public Schools; and meets regularly with Framingham's legislative delegation.

The MASC Legislative Liaison participates in lobbying efforts at the State House; stays informed on district data to support legislation; provides oral and written testimony at public hearings on proposed legislation; and attends the annual MASC Day on the Hill. The MASC Legislative Liaison helps write resolutions for the annual MASC Delegate Assembly and, if elected, attends the MASC Delegate Assembly as a voting delegate. The MASC Legislative Liaison works with fellow School Committee colleagues and community members to advocate effectively for public education in Framingham.

Real Property Committee

The Real Property Committee shall consider all matters relating to the acquisition, transfer, or disposition of real property, or any interest therein, by the Town. The Committee shall make recommendations to the Town Meeting or any Town board, officer, commission or committee relative to such matters. A member of the School Committee is appointed by the Chair to serve as representative to this Committee as per

Town By-Law. The Real Property Committee meets as needed during the year, normally prior to Town Meetings to review any articles relevant to its purpose.

Suburban Coalition Liaison

The Suburban Coalition is a group of communities that focus on issues in MetroWest. The differences between this group and most other affiliations of the Framingham School Committee are that the Coalition addresses both educational and municipal issues and is completely run by volunteers. The group has excellent access to key legislators as well as to people and groups that influence decision makers such as Mass Budget and the Massachusetts Budget Foundation. The Coalition holds one main lobby event each year - a breakfast at the State House in April. It will also hold two or three educational meetings with a presentation by Mass Budget for example, or the Massachusetts Budget Foundation followed by a panel discussion that includes legislators. Outside of the larger meetings, the Suburban Coalition will hold member meetings early in the year to develop its annual agenda, and the officers will lobby the legislature to act on its proposals.

The Education Cooperative (TEC) Board of Directors

The Education Cooperative (TEC) has been working diligently to improve education in communities throughout Massachusetts since 1980. Over the years, TEC has evolved and increased their services to provide efficient and cost-effective solutions that suit the ever-changing needs of its member districts and the education community as a whole. TEC's services include: professional development & licensure, a continuum of special education programs, internship opportunities, cooperative purchasing, alternative schools, an online academy, and other resources that enhance the goals of educators, administrators, and students.

The TEC Board of Directors consists of Superintendents and School Committee members drawn from affiliate towns and cities. Meetings are the 3rd or 4th Friday morning of August, September, November, January, March, May, and June. The meetings are held from 8:15 – 9:45 am in the TEC Office at 1112 High Street, Dedham. The School Committee Member's network meeting immediately follows the Board Meeting. The Framingham School Committee representative is a voting member.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Schedule of Meetings

Regular meetings are usually scheduled the first and third Tuesday of every month from September through June. Meetings normally commence at 7:00 PM if an executive session is scheduled, however, the meeting will commence at 7:30 PM. If the third Tuesday falls during a vacation week, the meeting will be scheduled for the next week.

According to the Town Bylaws, all meetings of all Town boards and committees, elected and appointed, shall commence no earlier than 7:00 p.m., or no earlier than 6:30 p.m. when Town Meeting is in session except in emergency situations and for executive sessions. This provision shall not apply to any subcommittee, task force or working group of an elected or appointed board, so long as the subcommittee, task force or working group is not comprised of a quorum of members of the elected or appointing board.

Agenda Format

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 following is the outline of the agenda:

- Call to Order
- Meeting with the Public
- Announcements/Recognitions
- Discussion Items
- Action Items
- Superintendent's Report
- Approval of Minutes
- Reports of Committees
- Member Reports
- Bills and Payroll
- Adjournment

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 distributed to School Committee members as packets delivered on Friday afternoons/evenings that are referred to as the Friday packet.

SAMPLE AGENDA FORMAT

- | | | |
|-------|----------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| I. | <u>Meeting with the Public</u> | 7:00-7:15* |
| II. | <u>Framingham High School – Student Advisory Committee</u> | 7:15-7:25 |
| III. | <u>Announcement/Recognitions</u> | 7:25-7:30 |
| IV. | <u>School Committee – Overarching Goals</u> | 7:30-7:55 |
| V. | <u>Discussion Items</u> | 7:55-8:15 |
| VI. | <u>Superintendent’s Report</u> | 8:15-8:25 |
| VII. | <u>Action Items</u> | 8:25-8:55 |
| | A. <u>Suburban Coalition Membership – Fiscal Year 2014</u> | |
| | B. <u>February Meeting Date Change</u> | |
| | C. <u>Approval of Minutes</u> | |
| VIII. | <u>Reports of Committees</u> | 8:55-9:05 |
| | A. Academic Data Dashboard – Ms. Phalen | |
| | B. Buildings & Grounds/Capital Budget Subcommittee – Mr. Miles | |
| | C. District Wellness Committee – Ms. Hugo | |
| | D. Finance Subcommittee – Ms. Hugo | |
| | E. Policy Subcommittee – Mr. Limeri | |
| | F. Real Property – Mr. Miles | |
| | G. MASC Legislative Liaison – Ms. Hugo | |
| | H. Suburban Coalition – Mr. Limeri | |
| | I. TEC Board of Directors – Ms. Connolly | |
| | J. School Committee Handbook Task Force – Ms. Connolly | |
| | K. District Governance Support Project – Ms. Hugo | |
| | L. Member Reports – School Committee | |
| IX. | <u>Member Reports</u> | 9:05-9:10 |
| X. | <u>Bills and Payroll</u> | 9:10 |
| XI. | <u>Adjournment</u> | 9:15 |

**These times are approximate to be used only as guidelines.*

Types of Meetings

Regular

The Committee regularly uses two types of meetings. The first meeting of the month is a business meeting for official legal actions and presentations. This meeting is televised on the public television channels. The second meeting of the month is usually a workshop that allows the Committee to do a “deep dive” into one or two topics. These meeting is not usually televised. They are opportunities for the Committee to engage in long, detailed discussions.

Special

An official legal action meeting maybe called between regular meetings to consider specific topics. These meetings typically include a summer retreat that lasts at least a day.

Reorganization Meeting

At the first meeting following the Town’s annual election, the School Committee will elect from its membership a Chair, Vice Chair and Clerk, 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 and is typically held the day after the election. Since town elections are usually held on Tuesdays, the Reorganization Meeting is Wednesday, the next day.

Policy BDA

Executive Sessions

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:

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. 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.

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

1. The Committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The Chairperson (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session 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 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.

The review of executive session minutes shall take place at least as often as annually. Each year, the Chair or his/her designee will forward the executive session minutes of the previous calendar year to the School Attorney for review by January 31. Upon consideration of the School Attorney's recommendation, the School Committee will vote by March 31 to release the executive session minutes of the previous calendar year in conformity with Massachusetts General Law.

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.

Established by law and Committee policy

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

CROSS REFS.: BDE, Subcommittees of the School Committee

Policy BEC: Executive Sessions

Policy BE: School Committee Meetings

Policy BEDG: Minutes

Policy KEB: Public Complaints about School Personnel

How to Get Ready

The line between the Superintendent and the School Committee is clear regarding administration. After setting policy and the overarching goals and high level budget, it is the responsibility of the Superintendent to manage the operations of the district however he/she believes best for student achievement. The School Committee's role is to monitor the operations of the district.

One of the best ways to monitor is to prepare appropriate questions prior to each School Committee meeting and upon receipt of the final agenda. Like a good interviewer, developing good questions takes time and insight. Within Open Meeting Laws, members can confer with each other on the development of questions. Consider questions which are open ended (not easily answered with a yes/no) and lend depth and clarity to the issues.

Some guidelines can be found at www.rightquestion.org or through the MASC. Per FPS Protocols, both the Superintendent and the School Committee try to not surprise each other during the meeting. Thus, the Superintendent strives to share presentations with School Committee members in our Friday packages prior to each meeting, and School Committee members try to share our anticipated questions with the Superintendent (typically by brief e-mail) prior to School Committee meetings or workshops. By sharing

presentations and potential questions before hand, each side can be prepared for a constructive discussion during the meeting.

Procedures – Quorum & Voting (Policy BEDF)

Open Meeting Law

The following sections briefly overview the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law; however, School Committee members are encouraged to read the law 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.L. 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; and
- 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, 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 Memorial Building where it is conspicuously visible to the public at all hours. As a public body, the School Committee agenda must be legible, easily understandable, and contain the date, time and place of the meeting, and a list of topics as of the time the notice is filed in which the chair reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting.

We are required to create and maintain accurate minutes of all meeting, including executive sessions. Our 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 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.

Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

We encourage and welcome the public to attend and/or view the meeting. As per policy and the Chair's prerogative, the public may comment during the first 15 minutes of regular meetings and we will take those comments under advisement. Speakers will be allowed 3 minutes each. We will not typically engage in dialogue with the public in order to maintain effective and efficient meetings. However, topics raised by public participants may be placed on subsequent agendas at the discretion of the Chair and Superintendent.

Related Policies: BEDB, BEDH

COMMUNICATION

As an elected official representing the public schools of Framingham, each member of 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.

Communication with District Personnel and the Schools

An effective and efficient school system requires channels of communication between school personnel and the School Committee. We will consider and incorporate the input of district staff, when relevant, in our decisions and actions. We will also be mindful of how our decisions affect the work and effectiveness of the staff. The relationship between School Committee and district personnel is indirect, as per our institutional structure. The Superintendent will serve as the liaison between School Committee and district staff. But we may also use surveys, meetings, and other forms of communication to gather and assess feedback from staff.

The schools must create opportunities for stakeholders within, and external to, the system to interact and build relationships. School Committee members are welcome to attend events at the schools as a member of the public. But School Committee members agree to not visit a school in their official role as a member of School Committee without informing the Superintendent and school principal before scheduling the visit. We must remember that we do not have responsibility for the day-to-day operation of the schools. Nor do we have the authority to direct, criticize, or discipline staff members. It is important for School Committee members to communicate concerns with the Superintendent, who will then take responsibility for any subsequent responses with specific schools and personnel.

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 at the beginning of our public meetings, or by asking the FHS Student Representatives to the School Committee, teachers, principals, and/or other school personnel to speak on their behalf. We value the input of our students.

Communication with Parents, Guardians, Families, and Community

Framingham is a large, complex, and diverse community that includes residential areas of varying composition, large and small businesses, corporate offices, social services, a large service sector, health care facilities, and institutions of higher education. In our deliberations, we will strive to listen to a wide range of feedback from the full spectrum of communal stakeholders—including, of course, the parents, families, and guardians of our students. Community members and leaders may offer feedback to the School Committee in many ways: asking to speak directly at the beginning of our public meetings, through e-mail and the postal service, phoning the School Committee office, and periodic surveys and other meetings administered by the Committee. We greatly value public input and continuously seek ways of maintaining and improving effective communication.

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.

Communication with Municipal Leaders

Framingham 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. The School Committee will communicate in an open, constructive, and respectful manner with municipal offices and representatives. 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. We do not all need to speak with one voice. Indeed, divergence of opinion often leads to productive reflection and innovation. But we are one community.

Communication with Outside Institutions

School Committee members may be called upon formally and informally to represent the district to outside institutions, such as agencies, community organizations, Massachusetts Association of School Committees, and other school systems. In such a capacity, the member will be careful to make certain to represent the School Committee as a whole. Additionally, it is important to report a timely manner to the rest of the Committee and the community during our public meetings on the content of those meetings and future actions.

How to Respond to Constituent Complaints

Members of the community, including parents and students have the right to contact elected officials as unambiguously stated in both the state and federal constitutions. However, School Committee members – like any other elected official – often lack the authority to resolve problems brought to their attention.

Parents frequently raise concerns about the schools to members of the Committee. These concerns may relate to individual school department personnel who are under the authority of the superintendent or principal.

MASC strongly recommends that School Committee members refer parents who pose questions and concerns to the most appropriate school officials, including the superintendent. In personnel matters and many school administrative issues, the School Committee lacks the authority to intervene directly. None the less, parents and the public are likely to follow-up with their elected officials if they are not satisfied. This presents a daunting and sensitive situation.

MASC urges superintendents to follow-up with School Committee members who refer matters and questions to their attention, to acknowledge that they are working on the problem and to provide whatever information is appropriate. Often a simple statement will suffice such as; “I have spoken with Terry Jones, the parent you referred, and I am taking care of the situation.” Or, “I have spoken with Terry Jones and we are working to resolve the problem.”

It is also possible that the Superintendent must respond with, “Thank you for the referral. I am addressing it now, but it is a confidential matter and I cannot discuss it. But be assured, I am giving it my attention.”

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Useful Links

The following websites offer information and resources and are active as of March 2013:

Framingham Public Schools (FPS) Website: <http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/>

Who should I call if I have questions (note this is the “Parent Call List & FAQs” in the right navigation pane of the FPS Website): http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/district_docs/Questions.pdf

Framingham Public School Budget Documents: http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/sc_budget.cfm

Framingham Public Schools Policy Manual:

<http://z2policy.ctspublish.com/masc/Z2Browser2.html?showset=framinghamset>

Framingham Public School Employee Contracts: http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/hr_contracts.cfm

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/>

Harvard Graduate School of Education – Policy & Leadership Site: <http://www.gse.harvard.edu/>

The Education Cooperative (TEC): <http://www.tec-coop.org/>

Suburban Coalition: <http://subcoal.wordpress.com/test-page-1/>

Massachusetts Association of School Committees: <http://www.masc.org>

Open Meeting Law: <http://www.mass.gov/ago/government-resources/open-meeting-law>

Massachusetts Ethics Commission: <http://www.mass.gov/ethics>

Massachusetts General Laws: <http://www.malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws>

Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center: <http://www.massbudget.org/>

Bureau of Special Education Appeals: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/hearings-and-appeals/bureau-of-special-education-appeals-bsea/>

Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents: <http://www.massupt.org/>

DESE - District Analysis, Review & Assistance Tools (DART): <http://www.mas.edu/apa/dart>

Acronyms

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress

BOE – Board of Education

CPI – Composite Performance Index
CTEi – Center for Technical Education *Innovation*
DESE – Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
DSAC – District & School Assistance Center
DESE – Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
ELL – English Language Learners
FCCLA – Family Career & Community Leaders of America
FCSN – Federation for Children with Special Needs
FTE – Full-time Equivalent
FY – Fiscal Year
IEP – Individualized Education Program
IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
FEF – Framingham Education Foundation
FPS – Framingham Public Schools
MASC – Massachusetts Association of School Committees
MCAS – Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
MEOE – Massachusetts Executive Office of Education
MSBA – Massachusetts School Building Authority
MUNIS – Accounting and budgeting software system
NCLB – No Child Left Behind
NEASC – New England Association of Schools and Colleges
NSBA – National School Boards Association
PARCC – Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers
RTTT – Race-To-The-Top
SOAR – Superintendent’s Outstanding Achievement Recognition
SOI – Statement of Interest
STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

Glossary

at-large: a term used to describe an elected official not representing a specific region/area but the area as a whole.

Bargaining unit: a group of workers organized to negotiate collectively with the employer on wages, hours, and working conditions.

By-law: a rule adopted by an organization (e.g., school council) for managing its internal affairs.

Collaboration: the act of working together towards a common goal or set of goals.

Collective bargaining: negotiation between the representatives of organized workers and their employer to determine wages, hours, and working conditions.

Consensus: a view or decision reached by a group as a whole or by majority will.

Constituent: a person who authorizes another to act in his or her behalf.

Education Reform Act: the 1993 Massachusetts law that establishes public school reform through statewide educational standards and accountability, equitable funding, and innovations such as school councils.

Ex-officio: by virtue of office or position.

Majority rule: a policy by which decisions binding on a group are made by more than half the votes.

Needs assessment: an analysis or evaluation of the needs of students and staff.

Open meeting law: the Massachusetts law that requires governmental bodies to conduct their deliberations and decisions-making in public, except in specific limited circumstances.

Parity: equality in status and/or number.

Professional development: the organized and planned development of a staff member's skills and abilities.

PTA (Parent Teacher Association): an established voluntary child advocacy organization that operates at the local, state, and national level.

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization): a school based voluntary group of parents and teachers formed to promote mutual understanding and increase the effectiveness of the educational program.

Quorum: the minimum number of officers and members of a committee or an organization who must be present for valid transaction of business.

School and District Accountability System: a method of tracking the progress of every school and every district in improving the performance of its students in relation to state standards.

School governance: management of the decisions concerning one or more schools.

School improvement plan: a written plan to address needs, advance goals, and improve the performance of students in a school. G.L. c. 71, s.59C lists the elements of a school improvement plan.

Statute: a law enacted by a legislative body.

Work-to-rule: type of job action in which employees in a bargaining unit do not accept any duties or responsibilities outside of their contractual work schedule.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOL COMMITTEES

STRONG SUPERINTENDENT – SCHOOL COMMITTEE COLLABORATION – understanding roles and responsibilities; sharing common goals; and establishing a common purpose, sending a consistent message

CLEARLY DEFINED ROLES IN PROMOTING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – when hiring and evaluating a good superintendent, making budget and fiscal oversight a priority, making policy, in collective bargaining

VARIED, PURPOSEFUL MEETINGS – including meetings built around goals, identifying key data, providing new information, giving useful academic presentations, and in such formats as working sessions and retreats

GOAL SETTING – for both long-term and short range district goals and benchmarks along the way

SCHOOL COMMITTEE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – including new member orientation, skill building, public policy, emerging hot issues, communications strategies, and the ongoing work to improve student achievement

SELF GOVERNANCE – wherein board members deal with their outlier member behaviors and where the school committee promotes the concept of principled dissent and thoughtful debate over argumentativeness and control

HIRING AND SUPPORTING AN EFFECTIVE SUPERINTENDENT – including giving clear goals, using a good evaluation instrument, and allowing the superintendent to demonstrate how (s)he addresses student achievement

ROUTINE USE OF DATA – including working with data rather than anecdotes and incorporating the thoughtful use of information in new areas

SETTING ACHIEVEMENT RELATED POLICIES – in such areas as class size, curriculum and curriculum milestones, graduation and promotion standards, and other requirements beyond what the law requires

SHARED LEADERSHIP AMONG SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ENCOURAGING LEADERSHIP AMONG SUPERINTENDENT’S SUBORDINATES

AN ENGAGED SCHOOL COMMITTEE CHAIR – Mentor to superintendent and members, mediator of disputes, community role model and positive image for the community

ALIGNED SUBCOMMITTEES – to coordinate work between meetings and to make good use of member talents in areas like policy making, budgeting, accountability and student achievement, and collective bargaining

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING FOR STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT – including teacher evaluation.

The Framingham School Committee Member Handbook was adopted by The Framingham School Committee on March 25, 2014. Members of the School Committee are: Beverly Hugo, Chair; David Miles, Vice Chair; Carol Phalen, Clerk; Heather Connolly, Andy Limeri, Dr. Eric Silverman, and Donald C. Taggart III. The School Committee would like to thank everyone who assisted with the Framingham School Committee Member Handbook especially: Ann Greenberg, Nancy Piasecki, Amy Kane and Nancy Walser of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees District Governance Support Program.