

## SECTION B

## BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

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**SECTION B  
BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS*****I. School Committee Authority and Operational Goals:*** (Voted 10/6/81, #81-464)

The Brookline School Committee shall operate in accordance with the General Laws of Massachusetts (Ch. 71 and 41) which delegate its authority, and in accordance with any applicable provisions of the Town By-Laws. The Education Reform Act of 1993, Ch. 71, S. 37, specifies this authority as follows:

The School Committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall have the power to select and to terminate the superintendent, shall review and approve budgets for public education in the district, and shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education.

Ch. 71, S. 59, 59B, and 59C describe the authority of the Superintendent, the Principals, and the School Councils. The Superintendent will manage the school system consistent with state law and School Committee policy. The School Committee may establish/appoint the assistant superintendents, but may not unreasonably withhold approval of such appointments. The principals are hired by the Superintendent to manage the schools. The principal of each school, in consultation with the school council established shall adopt educational goals for the schools.

The School Committee shall adopt measures to organize itself, conduct public meetings, hire the most capable staff available and seek to obtain sufficient funding to support its programs from available sources at the town, state and federal levels.

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BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**2. *School Committee Legal Status:*** (Voted 10/6/81, #81-464; 10/26/00, #00-82)

The School Committee shall abide by the statutes regarding the following:

Powers and Duties:

As instruments of the Massachusetts Legislature, the local School Committees derive their authority from the Constitution of Massachusetts, from statutes, and from regulations of the State Board of Education (See Ch. 71, MGL).

School Committee Elections:

The Brookline School Committee has nine members, three of whom stand for election at the Annual Town Election in May. The term of office is three years. The members serve without compensation.

Qualifications:

To be eligible for the office a person must be a resident and registered voter of the Town of Brookline, and may not serve as an employee of the Brookline Public Schools.

Board Member Oath of Office:

Members elected to the School Committee may enter upon his or her official duties on the day after his/her election, upon being sworn in by the Town Clerk. The Oath, from the Town Clerk, reads as follows:

"I do solemnly swear and affirm that I will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties incumbent on me, as a member of the Brookline School Committee, according to the best of my ability and understanding, agreeably to the rules and regulations of the Constitution and the laws of the Commonwealth, and under rules, regulations and by-laws made under authority thereon, so help me God."

School Committee Resignation:

In order to resign, a member must notify the Town Clerk in writing. The resignation will become effective at the date of filing or at such time as may be specified in the letter of resignation. The Town Clerk shall then notify the remaining members of the School Committee and the Selectmen, such notification shall include the effective date of the resignation.

School Committee Member Removal From Office:

In the absence of any Massachusetts statute or Brookline By-Law providing for impeachment, removal, or recall of School Committee Members, School Committee Members shall be removed from office only upon conviction for certain criminal violations. A School Committee member shall be deemed to have vacated the office if he or she removes him or herself from the Town.

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Unexpired Term Fulfillment:

If a vacancy occurs on the School Committee, the remaining members shall give written notice of the vacancy to the Board of Selectmen within one month. After one week's notice, the Selectmen and the School Committee shall fill the vacancy by a roll call vote. The person so appointed or elected shall be a registered voter of the Town and shall serve until the next annual election.

Replacement of Officers

If the School Committee Secretary is informed by the Town Clerk that the Chair or Vice-Chair of the School Committee has resigned or otherwise ceased to be a member of the School Committee, or if the Secretary receives a formal letter of resignation from the Chair or Vice-Chair from that position, the Secretary shall inform the Committee of the vacancy or resignation at its next meeting. As the first item of business at the meeting subsequent to the Secretary's announcement, or the first meeting after the resignation becomes effective, whichever is later, the Committee shall hold an election to fill the vacancy.

If the position of Chair of the School Committee is vacant, the Superintendent shall act as Chair until the completion of the election, as is done during the annual reorganization process. The Vice-Chair may be a candidate for the position of Chair. If the Vice-Chair is elected Chair, or the position of Vice-Chair is vacant, the School Committee shall immediately elect a new Vice-Chair. The Superintendent will continue to chair the meeting until the completion of that election. If only the position of Vice-Chair is vacant, the Chair of the School Committee will preside during the election.

**School Committee Member Code of Conduct (New Policy)**

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

The code of conduct delineates three areas of responsibility of School Committee members: to the community, to school administration, to fellow committee members.

Responsibility to Community

Each member of the School Committee in her/his relations with her/his community should:

- Realize that her/his primary responsibility is to all the children.
- Recognize that her/his basic function is policy-making and not administrative.
- Remember that s/he is one of a team, and should abide by, and carry out, all of the Committee's decisions once they are made.
- Be well-informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a state and local level.
- Remember that s/he represents the entire Brookline community at all times.

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Responsibility to School Administration

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

- Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies that will direct and support administration.
- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command, and refuse to act upon complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- Act only on the recommendation of the chief administrator in all matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging her/his professional duties and hold her/him responsible for acceptable results.
- Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at committee meetings if such solutions fail.

Responsibility to Fellow School Committee Members

A School Committee member in her/his relations to her/his fellow Committee members should:

- Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that s/he alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
- Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions.
- Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of her/his own committee, or from members of other committees who may be seeking help and information on school problems.
- Make decisions only after all facts and viewpoints on a question have been presented and deliberated publicly or, when appropriate, in executive session.
- Commit to professional development related to official responsibilities as a School Committee member, through compliance with requirements of MGL Sec. 71.36A, specifying at least 8 hours of orientation within the first year after initial election or appointment as new School Committee member, and through a mentoring relationship with a fellow School Committee member as determined by the School Committee Chair.

This Code of Conduct is not intended to supersede or modify any provision of an employment contract executed by and between the School Committee and any school department personnel, including the Superintendent. This Code of Conduct does not otherwise exempt School Committee members from performing any act that may otherwise be required by law, such as filing a report pursuant to MGL Ch. 119 Sec. 51A.

**Source: Massachusetts Association of School Committee Policy 5/22/1964**

**Adopted: By Brookline School Committee 1/27/05 #05-18 (New Policy)**

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**School Committee Member Conflict of Interest (Revised Policy)**

The Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, MGL Ch. 268A, governs the conduct of School Committee members and other public officials and employees. This law ensures that the private financial interests and relationships of School Committee members and other public officials do not conflict with their official responsibilities. In addition to acknowledging their obligations and responsibilities under this law, the School Committee specifically recognizes and endorses the following supplemental provisions. No School Committee member shall:

- a. accept other employment which will impair his independence of judgment in the exercise of his official duties.
- b. accept employment or engage in any business or professional activity which will require him to disclose confidential information which he has gained by reason of his official position or authority.
- c. improperly disclose confidential information acquired by him/her in the course of official duties, nor use such information to further personal interests.
- d. use or attempt to use official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions for self or others.
- e. by his/her conduct give reasonable basis for the impression that any person can improperly influence him or unduly enjoy his/her favor in the performance of official duties, or that s/he is unduly affected by the kinship, rank, position or influence of any party or person.
- f. pursue a course of conduct which will raise suspicion among the public that s/he is likely to be engaged in acts that are in violation of trust.

**Adopted: By the Brookline School Committee 1/27/05 #05-19 (Revised from School Committee Member Ethics Policy)**

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**BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****3. Organization of the School Committee:**

(1960, Rules; Voted 4/15/68, #68-131; 12/5/77, #77-487;  
1/23/78, #78-43; 6/18/79, #79-244; 10/6/81, #81-464; 5/3/01, #01-43)

The School Committee adopts the following policies regarding organization of the School Committee. These policies are based upon the document Rules of the School Committee, last revised by vote of the School Committee on October 17, 1960, and conform to existing State statutes and Town By-Laws. These policies will supersede policies previously adopted, and will remain in effect until duly amended in whole or in part by a vote of a majority of the School Committee at a public meeting for which the proposed amendment has been published in the docket.

School Committee Organizational Meeting/Election of Officers:

The School Committee will organize annually following the Town Election in May. The Superintendent of Schools will preside at the organizational meeting until the Chair is elected. A Chair and Vice-Chair will be elected in Open Session by vote of the majority of those members present. No member of the School Committee may serve as Chair for more than two consecutive one-year terms. The Chair will preside at all meetings of the School Committee. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will preside, or in the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Committee may designate a member to be Temporary Chair.

It will be the practice of the School Committee to appoint as its Secretary the person employed as the Assistant to the School Committee. The Secretary will be appointed by vote of the majority of the members present. The Secretary will assume all the duties specified in Chapter 71, Section 36 of the General Laws, and as specified in the job description of the Assistant to the School Committee. It is the responsibility of the Assistant to perform various administrative duties and assignments for the School Committee, coordinate with other personnel of the Brookline Public Schools, produce the docket for official meetings, prepare the official record of the proceedings, and act as a major contact point for the citizens of the community, acting for the School Committee within broad policy guidelines.

School Attorney:

The School Committee will obtain legal counsel for the purpose of collective bargaining and contract management with its several unions. For all other purposes, the School Committee will utilize the services of the Brookline Town Counsel.

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**BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****4. School Committee Meetings:**

(1960, Rules; Voted 12/21/72, #72-424; 4/26/76, #76-175; 11/7/77, #77-464;  
2/5/79, #79-41; 10/29/79, #79-042; 6/17/80, #80-425; 10/6/81, #81-464;  
5/3/01, #01-43; 11/4/10, #10-84)

The School Committee will conduct its regular, special and executive session meetings and other business in accordance with the Open Meeting Law and other statutes relative thereto.

Regular School Committee Meetings:

Unless otherwise determined, the Committee shall meet twice a month, on Thursdays, except during July and August, and at such other times as it may designate. All regular meetings are held in the School Committee Meeting Room in Town Hall, unless otherwise noticed. Subject to the availability of BAT staff, the meetings will be televised by Brookline Access Television. Every effort will be made to adjourn the regular meetings at or before 10:00 PM. Extended meetings (those continuing past 10:00 PM) will terminate by 11:00 PM, unless a majority of the members present votes to continue beyond that hour.

Subject to the notice provisions of the Open Meeting Law, adjourned meetings will be reconvened for the purpose of finishing the docketed business at the earliest date convenient to the majority of members, such time to be announced to the audience, published, and posted. The Committee may at once take up the subject under consideration at the time of adjournment or any other subject on the incomplete docket of the adjourned meeting, so long as it completes the business of the adjourned meeting.

Agenda Preparation and Dissemination:

The School Committee Agenda (Docket) shall be prepared by the Chair (or Vice Chair in the Chair's absence), the Superintendent, and the Assistant to the School Committee, in advance of the meeting. Items which have been deferred for action, scheduled reports, and items raised for inclusion by any member of the School Committee, and brought to the attention of the Assistant no later than the Monday before the meeting, will be included. The typical agenda format is as follows:

1. Administrative Business
  - a. Calendar
  - b. Consent Agenda: Past Record, other items as appropriate
2. Subcommittee Reports
3. Executive Session, if necessary
4. Public Comment
5. Superintendent's Report
6. Presentations/Issue Discussions
7. New Business
8. Adjournment

Any member of the School Committee, with the support of another member, may ask the Chair to change the order of the agenda, and such requests will not be unreasonably denied.

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In the interest of informing the public, the School Committee will seek to ensure the widest possible distribution of its agenda within the limits of available funds. Regular publicity channels include school bulletins, town and school newspapers, and electronic venues. With the exception of emergency meetings, the agenda will be posted at least 48 hours in advance, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, with the Office of the Town Clerk.

Quorum:

Five members shall constitute a quorum to begin the meeting and conduct business.

Rules of Order:

Unless a majority of the Committee has voted to adopt contrary rules, the School Committee operates according to the rules of Parliamentary Practice, as laid down in the most recent edition of Robert's Rules of Order, except for the following rules, previously adopted by the Committee:

1. Motions in Writing:

Except for motions to adjourn, to lay on the table, and for the previous question, which shall be decided without debate, one member may request that any motion or amendment offered shall be put in writing before it is voted upon.

2. Reconsideration:

Motions for reconsideration of actions taken at previous meetings may be made and voted at any subsequent meeting. However, prior to taking a vote on any substitute motion which would alter the action previously taken, the matter will be laid over to the next regular School Committee meeting with notice given to all concerned persons, and the substitute motion will be printed in the docket of said meeting.

3. Referral of Matters to Sub-Committees:

When any matter is presented which should be considered by an existing and appropriate Sub-Committee, the Chair may refer said matter without debate to that Sub-Committee for a report on same by a date certain, when the matter shall be taken up for consideration by the whole Committee.

4. Suspension of Rules of Order:

Any one of the rules or regulations regarding School Committee meeting procedures may be suspended at any meeting by a vote of a majority of the whole Committee, but no action of the Committee, taken without objection, shall thereafter be deemed invalid because the rule was not formally suspended.

5. Amendments or Repeal of Rules of Order:

The rules and regulations regarding School Committee Meeting Procedures may be amended or repealed at any meeting by a vote of the majority of the whole Committee, provided notice of such proposed action is given at a previous meeting, and a written copy of such proposed alteration is provided by the Assistant to the School Committee in the public docket for the meeting at which action is to be taken.

Voting Method:

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The votes shall be by ayes and nays, or in the case of uncertainty by the Chair, the vote shall be by show of hands. At the request of one member, the numbers for and against any question shall be entered upon the record. Any member may have his or her vote recorded by name and with stated reason, if he or she so desires.

Meeting Minutes:

An accurate record of all meetings of the whole Committee shall be kept by the Assistant to the School Committee. The record shall not be considered official until it is approved by the School Committee at a regular meeting.

News Media Services at School Committee Meetings:

The School Committee welcomes the presence of news media persons at its meetings and to this end notifies them of meetings, and allows live coverage by Brookline Access Television.

Audio Taping:

The Assistant to the School Committee is authorized, but not required, to tape record all regular, special and executive session meetings of the School Committee, in order to prepare the record, and hold the tape until the record is approved. Notice of such tape recordings shall be provided by the Chair at the beginning of the meeting. Any tapes of Executive Sessions shall be kept confidential. Members of the public may tape record the proceedings of the regular and special meetings after so informing the chair, who shall announce the fact to all present. The Committee may vote to suspend the taping of an Executive Session at the request of an individual addressing the Executive Session, but with the understanding that the Assistant to the School Committee shall keep a record of said session according to policy established by the School Committee and outlined below under Executive Sessions.

Executive Sessions:

The School Committee will hold Executive Sessions as needed and for the purposes stated in the Open Meeting law. Such meetings will be called only after the School Committee has convened in an Open Session for which notice has been given, the Chair has stated the reason and indicated whether or not the Committee shall reconvene after the Executive Session, and a majority of members have voted to go into Executive Session on a roll call vote recorded by the Assistant to the School Committee. All votes taken in Executive Sessions shall be recorded roll call votes and shall become a part of the record of said Executive Sessions.

The records of the Executive Session shall be stored in the School Committee Office, separate from the regular public records, for perusal by School Committee members and senior staff only, until review by the Chair or Vice Chair at reasonable intervals determines that non-disclosure is no longer warranted because their publication would no longer defeat the lawful purpose of the Executive Session.

**Public Comment and Participation at School Committee Meetings (Revised Policy)**

School Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30, s. 18. In addition, the School Committee believes that the public should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore the Committee has set aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public.

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If the Committee believes that an issue requires a broader dialogue with the public, the Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that issue.

Public Comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between or among citizens and the School Committee. Rather, it is intended to offer citizens an opportunity to express their opinion on issues of School Committee business. While the Committee and/or administrators will not typically respond to citizen comments or questions posed at Public Comment, the Chair, as presiding officer of the meeting, may answer or request an answer to a question if s/he deems it expeditious. Further, should the Chair believe that an issue or question falls outside the purview of the School Committee, s/he may request that citizens direct it to the appropriate person or body so that the matter is given proper consideration.

The following process will govern Public Comment and participation at the School Committee meetings.

Public Comment:

The School Committee will have a 15-minute Public Comment section at each School Committee meeting according to the following guidelines:

M.G.L c. 30, s. 20F provides, in relevant part, that: “No person shall address a public meeting of a governmental body without permission of the Chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the Chair, be silent.” The School Committee Chair will favor those speakers who sign up in advance under the procedure specified below.

1. A sign-up sheet will be available as people enter the meeting, and people will speak in the order in which they sign up, unless more than one person wishes to speak on a single topic, in which case the Chair may call on them together.
2. Any person wishing to speak must identify him or herself by name and address, and specific interest for wishing to speak. The Chair will favor, in no particular order, those speakers who are Brookline residents or, in appropriate circumstances, a Town of Brookline employee, parent, or guardian of a Public Schools of Brookline student, or any Public Schools of Brookline student.
3. There will be a time limit of 5 minutes per person, which will be enforced by the Chair of the meeting. If the number of people wishing to speak exceeds 3, the Chair may, at his/her discretion, limit individual comments to no more than 3 minutes per person. In addition, parents/guardians of children attending the Public Schools of Brookline and Brookline residents shall be given priority.
4. The amount of time allocated for the session will be a maximum of 15 minutes.
5. The session will be held at a regular time agreed to by the School Committee.
6. Discussion of individual personnel issues will be prohibited.

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7. Votes by the School Committee will not be taken during Public Comment.
8. Responses to concerns will be made only by the Superintendent or Chair of the meeting, or other members, at the Chair's discretion.
9. On those issues that can be resolved by directing citizens to the appropriate staff, the Superintendent or Chair will advise the citizen of appropriate steps to take.
10. The Chair of the meeting may terminate any individual's privilege of address for inappropriate conduct or statement.

Participation Regarding Docketed Items:

In addition to the Public Comment section at each meeting, the public is invited to remain for the whole meeting and may be invited to speak on any docketed issue, at the discretion of the Chair. Should the Chair invite comments on docketed items, s/he will request that citizens in attendance who wish to speak signify as such by raising their hand.

**Originally approved: 1/26/93, #93-29. Amended: 4/27/93, #93-115; 9/27/94, # 94-80.**

**Revision approved by Brookline School Committee: 11/3/05, #05-122**

Student Advisory/Representative:

The School Committee recognizes its duty to include the student perspective. Toward this end, there will be a student representative from the High School assigned to participate in School Committee meetings. The Student representative does not have a vote on the Committee, nor will s/he participate in Executive Sessions; however, the Committee welcomes student comments on issues and looks forward to student participation.

Annual Budget Hearing:

The School Committee recognizes its duty to hold an annual budget hearing. To comply with the law and to ensure the greatest possible public participation in the budget process, procedures for this and all other budget meetings shall be followed. The annual budget hearing may be included as part of a regular School Committee meeting or held separately as a special meeting of the School Committee as determined by the School Committee.

Notice of all the Finance Subcommittee meetings shall be publicized and forwarded to relevant groups, including the Board of Selectmen; Advisory Committee Chair and members of the Subcommittee on Schools; PTO Presidents; School Administrators, and press. Notice of the budget hearing, including date, time, and place, as well as place where copies of the budget will be available for examination by interested citizens, shall be publicized at least 7 days in advance through regular publicity channels, including town and school newspapers, public bulletin boards, and electronic venues.

Special Meetings:

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A special meeting may be called by the Chair, at the request in writing of any two members, or by a vote of a majority of the School Committee members. Except in an emergency, at least 48 hours notice, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, of all special meetings shall be given to each member, such notice stating the date, time, and place, as well as the subjects to be considered. At a special meeting, only the subjects for which the meeting was called shall be in order.

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**SECTION B  
BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****5. *School Committee Work Sessions and Retreats:*** (Voted 10/6/81, # 81-464)

The School Committee, or any number of its members alone or together with staff, may conduct informal study or planning sessions, so long as such sessions are not for the purpose of arriving at a decision on any public business within the jurisdiction of the School Committee.

From time to time, the School Committee may also hold social meetings or retreats.

At all such sessions or meetings, the School Committee shall comply with the provisions of the Open Meeting Law (MGL Ch. 39).

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## **SECTION B BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

### **6. School Committee Policy Development (Revised Policy)**

#### **School Committee Role:**

By formulating, adopting, and regularly reviewing written educational policies, the School Committee fulfills its charge of establishing “educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education.” (MGL Ch. 71, S. 37). The responsibility for adopting new policies or changing existing policies rests solely with the School Committee.

#### **Definition of Policies and Regulations:**

Policies are principles adopted by the School Committee to guide the Public Schools of Brookline. Policies should be broad enough to guide the administration in its operations.

Regulations are a set of specific steps developed and utilized by the administration to implement policies of the School Committee.

#### **Policy Review Subcommittee:**

The Chair of the School Committee will assign at least three members of the School Committee to the Policy Review Subcommittee, one of whom shall be assigned to serve as its chair. The role of the Policy Review Subcommittee is to ensure the regular and timely review of the Policy Manual and to develop new policies that are outside of the jurisdiction of other subcommittees.

#### **In the Absence of Policy:**

The School Committee charges the Superintendent with being alert to those areas where policy may be absent and needed in order to run the system effectively. If advance notice of a problem area is not possible, the Superintendent will discuss decisions made in the absence of a written policy with the School Committee and request policy development.

#### **Policy Adoption:**

Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the School Committee (i.e. 5 affirmative votes).

Ordinarily, proposed policies will be presented in the following sequence:

1. Proposals for new policies or policy revisions will be considered by the related School Committee subcommittee, and if appropriate, will be reviewed by Town Counsel’s office, and brought to the School Committee for consideration.
2. Proposals will be placed on the School Committee docket. A copy of the draft policy will be distributed to the School Committee in advance of the meeting and made available to the public at the meeting during which the proposal will be discussed.

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3. Amendments and possible adoption will be considered at a subsequent meeting.

Amendments to any policy are not valid until approved by the School Committee. Policies will become effective immediately after the vote, unless otherwise noted.

**Policy Revision and Review:**

In an effort to keep its written policies up-to-date as a basis for administrative decision-making, the School Committee will conduct policy review on a regular basis. The School Committee charges the Superintendent with being alert to policies that are out of date and that for other reasons appear to need revision outside of the regular review cycle.

**Suspension of Policies:**

In any case where the School Committee determines there is a need to suspend a policy due to extenuating circumstances, and the policy in question has not been established by law or contract, said policy may be temporarily suspended by a 2/3 vote of Committee members present.

**Review of Regulations:**

The School Committee understands that the Superintendent is responsible for issuing school department regulations through which policies of the School Committee are implemented. The School Committee will not vote on regulations, except as required by state law. In some cases, the School Committee may review regulations to ensure consistency with policy, goals, or objectives of the district. The Superintendent will advise the School Committee of major changes to school department regulations.

**Policy Manual Accessibility:**

The Policy Manual of the School Committee is a public document. A hard copy of the manual is available for review in the School Committee office located on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor of Town Hall ((617-730-2430), and in the main branch of the Brookline Public Library on Washington St. It will also be available electronically on the School Committee's web page (<http://www.brookline.k12.ma.us>).

**Adopted: By Brookline School Committee 11/4/04, # 04-101 (Revised Policy)**

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**BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****7. School Committee Member Services:** (Voted 5/3/72, #72-163; 10/6/81, #81-464)School Committee Office Facilities and Services:

The School Committee shall have an office in which all records, files, and reports related to School Committee business shall be maintained under the supervision of the Assistant to the School Committee.

School Committee Member Orientation:

Upon election to the School Committee, members shall be provided with an updated copy of the Policy Manual, a School Committee Handbook, and any relevant materials from the Mass. Association of School Committees.

School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses:

School Committee members shall receive no compensation. Appropriations for out-of-state travel for School Committee members, if any, shall be governed by the following guidelines:

1. In allowing requests for out-of-state travel, first priority will be assigned to a member who has been invited to be a participant by the organization sponsoring the event to which travel is requested.
2. Second priority will be determined on the basis of seniority of the School Committee members requesting out-of-state travel funds.
3. Once a member has received an out-of-state travel allowance, said member shall lose his/her priority status until competitive requests from other members for out-of-state travel funds have been considered.

Appropriations for in-state travel or conference registration fees, if any, shall be governed by the following guidelines:

1. Members elected by the Committee to attend a conference shall have priority.
2. Registration fees for conferences sponsored by organizations to which the School Committee belongs shall be paid on a first-come, first-served basis, so long as available funds remain.

School Committee Memberships and Affiliations:

Subject to the availability of funds, the School Committee will maintain memberships in those organizations through which the Committee obtains useful information, privileges beneficial to the system as a whole, or access to meetings and workshops which assist the members in serving the community. These affiliations will be a matter of public record. Current memberships include the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC).

Insurance:

School Committee members, under Ch. 258, S. 2 shall be individually immune from liability for any injury, loss of personal property, personal injury or death while acting in the scope of the Office. Further under Chapter 258, S. 13, School Committee members are protected from personal financial loss and expense up to \$1 million arising out of any claim, demand, suit or judgment, except for an intentional violation of civil rights of any person under any law, while acting within the scope of the Office.

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**SECTION B  
BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

**8. School Committee Legislative Program:** (Voted 10/6/81, #81-464)

The School Committee intends to take formal positions as appropriate on pending legislation affecting the operation of the schools. The Chair will appoint one or more members of the Committee to keep abreast of such matters and to report to the School Committee as appropriate.

No legislation shall be filed on behalf of the School Committee and no position shall be taken in the name of the School Committee by any member or by the staff without the vote of a majority of members taken at a meeting of the School Committee for which notice was given in the agenda.

**9. Approval of Handbooks and Directives:**

(Voted 3/18/79, #78-107; 6/18/78, #78-212; 9/22/81-#81-509)

All manuals, catalogues, and handbooks or changes thereto shall be reviewed with the School Committee, Superintendent, or Principals as appropriate, prior to final printing and public distribution. Internal catalogues compiled for administrative purposes are an exception.

**10. Electronic Correspondence Between or Among Members (New Policy)**

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between or among themselves via electronic messaging services, including but not limited to electronic mail (Email), Internet web forums, and Internet chat rooms. The reason for caution is that electronic messaging between or among Committee members may inadvertently constitute an illegal public meeting.

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

School Committee members can use electronic messaging between or among members for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used deliberately with the intent of violating the open meeting law.

Under the public records law, electronic messages, including messages that are exchanged between or among public officials, may be considered public records.

**Source: MGL Ch. 39, Sec. 23A, 23B, and 23C; Ch. 4, Sec. 7; Ch. 66, Sec. 10**

**Adopted by Brookline School Committee: 10/20/05 #05-115 (See Attached Joint School/Town Policy on Use of Information Technology Resources, adopted by the School Committee on 2/17/00, which applies to all town and school employees, town officials and School Committee members.)**

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## **SECTION B BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS**

### **11. School Committee/Superintendent Relationship (Revised Policy)**

Those who govern and administer the Commonwealth's public schools must share a vision, a clear purpose, and the ability and courage to lead.

Communication is the centerpiece of effective School Committee-Superintendent relationships, and is the foundation that will nurture a climate conducive to growth. When roles are clear and relationships are sound, communities feel a sense of confidence in their school leadership, which in turn enhances the education of all students in the community.

A School Committee must be responsive to its constituencies in governance, sensitive to the diverse needs of all learners, an advocate for students and learning before the people of the community, and, as such, a vigorous ambassador for public education before all citizens.

Harmonious and productive relationships between the School Committee and Superintendent will flourish if two-way communication is established and maintained. Such teamwork will work to enhance and improve the Commonwealth's schools, enriching the lives of all Brookline students.

#### POLICY

##### *School Committee*

- Establish and periodically review educational goals and policies for the schools in the district, consistent with the requirements of law and the statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education. Policies should be reflective of the fact that the School Committee has oversight of and responsibility for: the school system, the direction in which the system must go, and the criteria for determining if its goals and policies are being met.

##### *Superintendent*

- Develop and inform the Committee of administrative procedures required to implement Committee policies.
- Present policy options, along with specific recommendations, to the School Committee when circumstances require the Committee to adopt new policies or to review existing policies.

#### FINANCE

##### *School Committee*

- Review and approve a budget for education in the district according to a process and timeline developed with the Superintendent.
- Work to ensure that necessary funds are appropriated for the district and that a balance is maintained between needs and resources in the distribution of available monies. Oversee the operation of the annual school budget.

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*Superintendent*

- Develop a timeline and recommend to the School Committee the system's educational goals and annual school budget. Oversee the operation of the annual school budget. Provide periodic updates to the School Committee. Provide early notice of any potential budget overruns.

STAFFING*School Committee*

- Appoint the Superintendent.
- Appoint the deputy and assistant superintendents and legal counsel, upon the recommendations of the Superintendent. Consent to hiring based on the Superintendent's recommendation should not be unreasonably withheld.
- Set compensation for the Superintendent and overall compensation limits for deputy and assistant superintendents, legal counsel, and other employees not engaged in collective bargaining.
- Prescribe additional qualifications for educator positions, beyond basic certification.
- Discipline or terminate the employment of the Superintendent, in accordance with state law and the terms of the contract of employment.

*Superintendent*

- Appoint, discipline, and discharge administrators, principals, and staff not assigned to particular schools.
- Review and approve principals' hires of all teachers, athletic coaches and other personnel assigned to a particular school, consistent with district personnel policies and budgetary restrictions. Initiate or review and approve discipline or discharge of all staff.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING*School Committee*

- Act as employer of school employees for collective bargaining purposes.
- Designate a negotiator or negotiating team. Receive advice from the Superintendent about educational consequences of bargaining positions.

*Superintendent*

- Serve as a resource in collective bargaining.
- Assure adherence to all collective bargaining agreements.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS*School Committee*

- Establish, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent, the performance standards for teachers and other employees of the school district.
- Evaluate the performance of the Superintendent, on the basis of a written job description, a copy of which is attached hereto and incorporated by reference.
- Conduct self-evaluation of the Committee's effectiveness in meeting its stated goals and performing its role in public school governance.

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*Superintendent*

- Assure the evaluation of personnel and provide training for evaluators in harmony with district policy.
- Develop performance standards for all staff that are in keeping with School Committee policy, contractual agreements, and educational goals of the district.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT*School Committee*

- Adopt a professional development plan for principals, teachers, and other staff employed by the district, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.
- Provide and encourage resources for School Committee professional development programs that will enable school leaders to have the knowledge and skills required to provide effective policy leadership for the school system.

*Superintendent*

- Implement the professional development plan adopted by the School Committee for staff.
- Ensure that professional development activities are available to all school department employees.

SCHOOL COUNCILS*School Committee*

- Review and accept an annual school improvement plan for each school in the district, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent.
- Provide and encourage resources for school council professional development programs that will enable council members to have the knowledge and skills required to provide effective educational leadership.

*Superintendent*

- Review with principals the role of school councils and relevant activities.

ADVOCACY*School Committee*

- Engage in advocacy on behalf of students and their schools, and promote the benefits of a public school system to the community.
- Work closely, when appropriate, as liaisons with other governmental agencies and bodies.
- Collaborate with other school committees to let state legislators, members of Congress, and all other appropriate state and federal officials know of local concerns and issues. Collaboration may be accomplished through state and national school committee associations, but may also take place outside of established associations.

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*Superintendent*

- Engage in advocacy on behalf of students and their schools and promote the benefits of a public school system to the community.
- Collaborate with other administrators through national and state professional associations to inform state legislators, members of Congress, and other appropriate state and federal officials on local concerns and issues.
- Work with local and state officials to garner support for a fair and sound school budget that encompasses jointly developed committee-administration goals and priorities.

CURRICULUM*School Committee*

- Ensure development of a process for the review, approval, adoption, and/or revision of instructional materials, including textbooks.

*Superintendent*

- Implement the process for development, continual refinement, and implementation of curriculum, including the review, approval, adoption and/or revision of instructional materials, including textbooks.

- GOVERNANCE

*School Committee*

- Establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district, consistent with the requirement of law and the statewide goals and standards established by the Board of Education.
- Delegate to the Superintendent the responsibilities for all administrative functions.
- Take formal action only as a body, as prescribed by law, and not as individual members.

*Superintendent*

- Serve as the School Committee's chief executive officer and preeminent educational advisory in all efforts of the Committee, to fulfill its school system governance role.
- Serve as a catalyst for the school system's administrative leadership team.
- Propose and initiate a process for long-range and strategic planning that will engage the Committee and the community in positioning the school system for success in ensuing years.
- Ensure that the school system provides equal opportunity for all students and staff.

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COMMUNICATION*School Committee*

- Support the development and promotion of the vision, mission, goals and strategies of the school system.
- Review prior to all School Committee meetings the information provided by the Superintendent and, when possible, communicate any questions or concerns to the Superintendent prior to the meeting to provide an opportunity for a response.
- Consult and confer with the Superintendent on all matters as they arise that concern the school system, and on which the School Committee may take actions.
- Maintain open communication between the community and the schools by scheduling public meetings on a regular basis.
- Support the superintendent in all matters that conform to Committee policy.

*Superintendent*

- Keep all School Committee members informed about school operations and programs.
- Identify and articulate the needs of the school system to the School Committee.
- Develop and promote a plan for achieving the mission, vision, goals, and strategies of the school system.
- Provide all School Committee members with appropriate background information in advance of each Committee meeting.
- Develop and implement a continuing plan for working with the news media.
- Be aware of all aspects of Massachusetts education law and share all amendments with the School Committee in a timely fashion.
- Share responsibility with the School Committee for open communication and honest discourse.
- Maintain open communication between community and the schools.

This policy is not intended to supersede or modify any provision of an employment contract or job description executed by and between the School Committee and the Superintendent.

**Source: Massachusetts Association of School Committees: Roles and Responsibilities for School Committees and Superintendents (undated)**

**Revised and adopted: 12/8/05, #05-130**

**(To be accompanied by Superintendent Job Description, attached.)**

**SECTION B**

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**BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****12. School Committee Subcommittees (New Policy)**

## School Committee Subcommittees

a. Standing SubcommitteesPurpose

The School Committee utilizes standing subcommittees to consider proposals in a smaller venue so as to allow members to delve more deeply into issues than may be possible at full School Committee meetings. The subcommittee structure is an efficient way of allowing for more thorough consideration of policy proposals, reviewing budgets, new program initiatives and other curricular matters. The subcommittees may initiate and investigate any matter relating to their responsibilities. All recommendations of these subcommittees should represent a majority vote where possible. Minority opinions of any subcommittee may also be presented to the full School Committee. In the absence of formal action by the School Committee at a public meeting, no vote or discussion of a standing subcommittee will constitute the establishment of School Committee policy.

Each subcommittee chair may periodically review and update the subcommittee's mission statement when deemed appropriate. All mission statements must be approved by the full School Committee.

All subcommittee mission statements will be posted on the School Committee's website. The following subcommittees currently exist as part of the governance of the Brookline School Committee:

Capital Projects Subcommittee  
 Curriculum Subcommittee  
 Finance Subcommittee  
 Government Relations Subcommittee  
 Negotiations Subcommittee  
 Policy Review Subcommittee

Organization

Each subcommittee should have at least three members, one of whom will be designated as the subcommittee Chair. The Chair of the School Committee, in consultation with members, makes subcommittee assignments and appoints subcommittee chairs on an annual basis. These assignments are for a term of one year. All appointments will be made promptly after each School Committee election. All subcommittee members will be members of the Brookline School Committee.

Any School Committee member may attend any subcommittee meeting at any time. Nevertheless, the voting members of each subcommittee will be limited to those who have been appointed. All subcommittee meetings shall be posted to all School Committee members and to the Superintendent.

Creation/Dissolution of Subcommittees

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Additional subcommittees may be created or existing subcommittees dissolved by a vote of the School Committee at any time.

Subcommittee Administration

The Superintendent and/or his/her designee shall attend subcommittee meetings whenever possible, as non-voting members.

The appointed chair of the subcommittee is responsible for prioritizing issues, setting meeting agendas, dates, and times, and shall be responsible for records of the meetings. Copies of these records will be maintained on file in the School Committee office. The chairs of each standing subcommittee shall be responsible for reporting on the committee's business at the full School Committee meeting.

No vote shall be taken by a subcommittee unless there is a majority of those eligible to vote present. In the case of the 3-person committee, there must be 2 School Committee members present to meet and vote. In the case of a 4-person committee, there must be 3 School Committee members present. In the event of a 5-person or more subcommittee, which would constitute a majority of the School Committee as a whole, that subcommittee may meet as long as it is clearly designated as a subcommittee meeting, and not a full School Committee meeting.

b. Ad Hoc Committees

When the occasion demands, ad hoc committees will be appointed by the Chair of the School Committee. In the event that the ad hoc committee results from an action voted by the School Committee, the member making the motion will be offered the opportunity to serve on the ad hoc committee. The function of the ad hoc committee is to study specific issues, and if appropriate, to make recommendations to the full School Committee for approval. The dates, times, and location of ad hoc committee meetings will be made public and the meetings will be open to all members of the School Committee. In the absence of formal action by the School Committee at a public meeting, no vote or discussion of an ad hoc committee will constitute the establishment of School Committee policy.

Open Meeting Requirements

All meetings of School Committee subcommittees and ad hoc committees are subject to the open meeting law, including a 48-hour posting requirement, with the exception of a legally called Emergency Meeting. Members of the public and the media may be in attendance. The rules governing Public Comment at School Committee meeting shall govern subcommittee meetings.

**New Policy Adopted: 3/23/06, # 06-27**

**SECTION B**

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**BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS****13. School Committee Subcommittee Mission Statements (New)****1.) Policy Review Subcommittee**

The Policy Review Subcommittee's mission is to ensure the regular and timely review of the Policy Manual, the development of new policies that are outside of the jurisdiction of other subcommittees, and the coordination with other subcommittees in connection with the development of new policies under their jurisdiction. Staff included in Policy Review Subcommittee meetings will be the Superintendent, or any other person directly responsible for carrying out the policy being discussed, as designated by the Superintendent. Prior to the presentation of any draft policy, said document will have been reviewed by Town Counsel's office.

**2.) Finance Subcommittee**

The mission of the Finance Subcommittee is to advise the School Committee and the Superintendent on all matters relating to the operating budget, including political considerations related to budget priorities, budgetary appropriations, allocation of available resources to and between the schools, financial accounting, budget transfers, and school policy regarding financial matters, both during the development of the annual budget and throughout the fiscal year. The Finance Subcommittee assists the Superintendent, as necessary and appropriate, in informing the School Committee and the public about school finances, the annual budget, and its implications for the schools and their programs through presentations at meetings and forums. The Finance Subcommittee is responsible for drafting the Finance Subcommittee Calendar and the School Committee's Budget Directives to the Superintendent annually for School Committee approval. During the budget development process, joining the Finance Subcommittee at meetings may be the Superintendent, and any member of the Senior Cabinet (the Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Director of Personnel, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services), the High School Headmaster and School Principals, and other staff from the school and town departments, as appropriate.

**3.) Negotiations Subcommittee**

The mission of the Negotiations Subcommittee is to represent the School Committee in collective bargaining with the School Department's employee unions and/or in negotiations with individual contracted employees. Subcommittee members, in consultation with Public Schools of Brookline staff and counsel, investigate aspects of school practice that have contract implications, and meet as needed, in executive session, with the School Committee for the purpose of defining proposals or positions pertaining to current contract issues or negotiations.

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**4.) Government Relations Subcommittee**

The mission of the Government Relations Subcommittee is to assess developments in education policy issues at the state and federal levels, and to make recommendations to the full School Committee on appropriate action or advocacy. School Committee advocacy is based on the goal of improving and enhancing the quality of education received by Brookline students, while strengthening public education in all districts. Senior staff members are routinely consulted in the conduct of the subcommittee's work. In order to advocate effectively, the subcommittee may, as appropriate, develop and recommend to the full School Committee legislative priorities, formal resolutions, position papers, or correspondence about pending legislation or regulations which affect the operations of the public schools. Such recommendations are subject to the endorsement of the full School Committee and will require a vote.

**5.) Capital Projects Subcommittee**

The Capital Projects Subcommittee is charged with oversight of the facilities of the school department. This oversight includes the construction, renovation and maintenance of all Brookline Public School buildings. The subcommittee participates in the process of formulating the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP).

**6.) Curriculum Subcommittee**

The Curriculum Subcommittee consists of the Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning (non-voting member) and School Committee members. The Curriculum Subcommittee chair is a designated School Committee member who, along with the Deputy Superintendent, will create an agenda for meetings for the following purposes:

1. To discuss issues related to teaching and learning, including those related to curriculum, instruction and assessment, professional development, and student life.
2. To make policy recommendations as necessary to the School Committee regarding current programs, new initiatives, or other relevant issues.

**New Statements Approved: 4/6/06, #06-37**

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## SECTION B BOARD GOVERNANCE AND OPERATIONS

### 14. Advisory Committees

#### Introduction

The School Committee encourages citizen and staff input to enrich the information available for Public Schools of Brookline (PSB) decision-making. The objective of this policy is to clarify roles and responsibilities of Advisory Committees (AC) created by the School Committee (SC) for the purposes of providing certain input, and further, to distinguish between the roles of these advisory committees and those of citizen *advocacy* groups.

The intent of this policy is also to ensure that the mission, governance, and contributions of any Advisory Committee (AC) are, and remain, specific, clear, and relevant throughout the life of a committee. This policy applies to new and existing Advisory Committees, including those established by the Superintendent at the direction of the SC.

Accordingly, each PSB Advisory Committee in existence as of the date of adoption of this policy will adjust its governance to conform to this policy no later than September 30, 2007, or will be considered to have been reorganized as a Citizen Advocacy Group, or disbanded.

#### **Definitions**

*Advisory Committee (AC):* An advisory committee is a committee created by a vote of the School Committee. Except when statutorily required, the School Committee establishes no permanent advisory committees. The School Committee may wish, or be required, to appoint an advisory committee in order to ensure citizen, staff, or expert input in a particular area.<sup>1</sup> These committees are designed to provide input, community feedback, and advice to SC or PSB management in connection with a specific area of the PSB's function. Members are appointed by and serve at the specific request of the PSB.

*Citizen Advocacy Group<sup>2</sup>:* A citizen advocacy group forms independently of the SC, or may comprise members of a previous AC that has passed its sunset date. As such, these are self-perpetuating groups independent of the Brookline School Committee or PSB, and are composed and named as they see fit. Citizens with a particular interest or expertise are

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<sup>1</sup> The Wellness Committee is a good example of a statutorily-mandated advisory committee that nonetheless fits the definition for Advisory Committees under this policy.

<sup>2</sup> *Citizen Groups with Legal Mandate:* School Councils and certain Parent Advisory Committees (e.g. SEPAC) are created and/or governed according to Massachusetts law that establishes parameters for membership and defines the nature of their contributions to the functioning of the schools. These groups are outside the purview of this policy.

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encouraged to form groups to gather information and advocate for programs or programmatic changes in the Brookline Public Schools. While the SC recognizes that citizen input regarding the conduct and offerings of the PSB can improve the school system and may increase the community's confidence in the quality of a Brookline education, such groups do not receive any charge or imprimatur from the Brookline School Committee and are not, therefore, governed by this policy.

### **Formation, Membership, and Terms of Advisory Committees**

No matter what its name or initial origins, any committee formed by a vote or at the direction of the SC for the purpose of generating citizen input shall be subject to this policy.

When the SC creates an AC, the SC will provide:

1. a written, specific charge describing the role and scope of authority of the AC;
2. a sunset or renewal date (generally not to exceed three years);
3. criteria and mechanism for selecting an AC Chair and members<sup>3</sup>;
4. the number of members, designed to create an effective working group, and
5. clear guidelines for both formal and informal reporting of the minutes and activities of the AC.

### **Governance and Responsibilities**

1. *The Chair* of the AC will be responsible for working with the PSB to set and disseminate meeting dates, meeting agendas and related material, and for ensuring compliance with the Open Meeting Law.
2. The Chair of the AC will ensure that all members of the AC have had an opportunity to read and understand the charge and relevant policies that define the parameters of their work.<sup>4</sup>
3. Advisory Committees play an important advisory role, but decision-making authority with regard to PSB business rests with the SC or the Superintendent. While AC votes to establish consensus on its own discussions or issues may be appropriate, votes on SC matters and/or administrative decisions (including, but not limited to, curriculum, scheduling, financing, administrative structure, and pedagogy) are not binding on the SC or the PSB.

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<sup>3</sup> The SC and the Committee Chair will make every reasonable attempt to ensure that the membership of an Advisory Committee is broadly representative of racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and gender groups.

<sup>4</sup> The SC will provide all AC members serving on a committee formed by the SC a copy of the Commonwealth's Open Meeting Law (MGL Ch. 39 Sec. 23B).

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**Public Information**

1. The Superintendent/SC will list all Advisory Committees on the PSB's website, along with the charge, members, and member contact information.
  
2. Any committee formed by, or at the direction of, the School Committee is subject to Open Meeting requirements regarding public notice, access, and record-keeping. Committees formed by the Superintendent or his/her designee for his/her own purposes exclusive of SC business do not fall under this policy and may or may not be subject to the Open Meeting statute.

**New Policy Adopted: 3/15/07 # 07-20**