

# **MASHPEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **Mashpee School Committee Member Guidebook**



The Mashpee School Committee Member Guidebook was adopted on May 15, 2019. The school committee would like to thank the Leicester School Committee, whose member handbook served as a template for this guidebook.

*All students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, or homelessness, have equal access to the general education program and to the full range of co-curricular/enrichment/sports programs offered by the Mashpee Public Schools.*

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***This guidebook serves as an informational overview for school committee members. All members are expected to be familiar with the policies contained in the Mashpee Public Schools Policy Manual. Policy content supersedes information contained herein. This guidebook is a fluid document that may be reviewed/updated periodically.***

## **INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS**

Thank you for serving on the Mashpee School Committee. Your commitment to serve the children of Mashpee 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 a myriad of complex issues including setting goals and policy, deciding the budget, negotiating contracts, evaluating 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 Mashpee 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 the following commitments with the other committee members:

- To provide an exceptional educational experience for all students,
- To become well-versed in public education and the Mashpee schools,
- To be 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.

## **MISSION**

The Mashpee Public School System offers an academic program of sufficient rigor, scope and depth for all students. The overriding goal of this program is to prepare students to be confident and capable lifelong learners who possess a strong sense of community that will be evidenced in each student's contribution to society over a lifetime.

## **VISION**

The vision of the Mashpee Public Schools is that every student, every day, is safe, respected, and ensured to achieve excellence in a personalized learning environment that includes quality teaching, small class sizes, and the use of technology.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATING PROTOCOLS**

- 1) You are expected to attend all meetings prepared not only to vote on agenda items but also to discuss and offer input on items of interest. Preparation includes reading all materials in advance, preparing specific questions, and letting the superintendent know in advance of the meeting if additional information is desired.

- 2) If you are unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the full committee, you will notify the chair. You may choose to remotely participate in a meeting. If you are unable to attend other meetings (e.g. subcommittee, working group, liaison) you will notify the superintendent.
- 3) When determining the agenda for regularly scheduled meetings:
  - Members may suggest additional items to add to any meeting agenda by communicating directly with the chair and superintendent.
  - The chair and superintendent shall collaboratively draft the agenda based upon district needs, input provided at a prior meeting, and requests made by members.
  - The chair shall approve the draft agenda at least two business days prior to the scheduled meeting,
  - The superintendent will be responsible for compiling any necessary supporting materials and posting the agenda in accordance with the Open Meeting Law.
- 4) “No surprises rule”: In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, you will refrain from bringing up topics that are not on the agenda. When possible, a 48-hour notice should be provided to the superintendent for topics that may require research.
- 5) You are expected to check district email at least once every other day and respond to queries in a timely manner.
- 6) You will not speak on behalf of the committee to outside parties unless you have been specifically authorized by the committee to do so.
- 7) Individual committee members must recognize that authority rests only with the majority of the committee, and not with individual members.
- 8) Members will be cognizant of the time constraints of the tasks they take on and will complete such tasks within the timeline determined by the committee.

## **NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION**

A new member will be afforded the committee’s and 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 committee’s functions, policies, and procedures.

Upon election or appointment (where permitted by law), you must be sworn in by the Town Clerk. The Town Clerk will provide information on the online ethics course which must be completed within two weeks. Upon completion, a receipt must be presented to the Town Clerk and a copy sent to the District office.

After taking office, new members will meet with the superintendent and chair to review his/her responsibilities, the committee’s method of operating, and the district’s policies.

Each new member is required to complete at least eight hours of orientation training within one year of joining the committee, which shall include a review of school finance, the Open Meeting Law, public records law, conflict of interest law, and other pertinent information. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees offers a course entitled “Charting the Course,” which will fulfill this requirement. Alternatively, new members can fulfill the requirement at the annual joint MASC/MASS conference each year.

Upon taking office, each new member will be given access to:

- The school committee policy manual: <https://www.mpspk12.org/Domain/36>
- This guidebook
- The Open Meeting Law
- Robert's Rules of Order
- MASC member resources (<https://www.masc.org/>)
- Ethics/conflict of interest regulations
- The district's annual budget
- Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- Student and staff handbooks
- Other relevant materials at the discretion of the chair and/or superintendent. The superintendent will also clarify policies related to:
  - ❑ 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 will be provided with an individual district email account. You are expected to use this account for all email correspondence as a school committee member.

At each new member's first official committee meeting, the chair will assign a more senior member to serve as the new member's mentor. During the first year, a mentor will answer questions about the member's new role and provide any needed support.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **Chair**

The chair retains the right to vote upon all measures coming before the committee, to offer resolutions, and to discuss questions. The chair will not be required to relinquish the gavel should he/she wish to express an opinion. The chair will perform those duties that are consistent with the office and those required by law, state regulations, and this committee, including, but not limited to:

- Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements at the will of the committee;
- Develop committee agendas with the superintendent;
- Confer with the superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between committee meetings;
- Appoint members to subcommittees established by the committee, if there are no volunteers;
- Call special/emergency meetings of the committee, as necessary;
- Be the public spokesperson for the committee, except when the chair specifically delegates this responsibility to others;
- Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all committee meetings; and
- Seek legal counsel advice upon request of the school committee.

During all meetings, as presiding officer, 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, public participation at meetings, 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 parliamentary inquiries; and
- Call motions for a vote, stating clearly the vote and result.

### **Vice Chair**

The vice chair of the committee will act in the absence of the chair as the presiding officer of the committee and will perform other duties as may be delegated/assigned to him/her.

### **Secretary**

The secretary will keep an accurate journal of all 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. Unless clearly indicated otherwise, it shall be assumed that the secretary will delegate such responsibilities to the superintendent's designated recording secretary. Additionally, the secretary shall serve as presiding officer of the committee in the event that both the chair and vice chair are absent, provided a quorum is present.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The school committee is committed to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education. All members are encouraged to utilize the services and resources provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the National School Board Association (NSBA), and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Opportunities for professional development include:

- MASC Annual Conference in Hyannis during November
- Miscellaneous MASC workshops and classes
- NSBA Advocacy Institute programs
- NSBA Annual Conference

In advance of registering for professional development, each member will communicate his/her plans with the committee. Registration fees for conferences and workshops will be paid by the District. Members will be reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred attending conferences and workshops, in accordance with the District's travel reimbursement policy. In the event that a member is unable to attend an event that has already been paid for, the member will be responsible for those costs, provided that an alternate arrangement cannot be made.

## **REPRESENTATIVE OPPORTUNITIES**

Individual members of the school committee have the opportunity to represent the committee and the district at various functions, including the following:

- MASC Day on the Hill
- Mashpee Middle-High School graduation
- Town meetings
- School council meetings
- Massachusetts or Federal Legislature
- Other town/school functions that you would not otherwise attend

Unless specifically designated by a vote of the committee, individual members may not speak on behalf of the committee except to offer congratulations or thanks to an individual or organization.

## BEING AN EFFECTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

As a committee member, there are eight key areas of commitment as developed by the NSBA 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, and convey any related questions to the superintendent in advance, if possible.
- **Focus on the students.** Every decision that is made and every action that is taken must serve the best interest 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 its operations.

## BUDGET

The school committee develops its annual goals, budget guidelines, and budget calendar. The school department then develops its capital and operating budgets--a process that begins approximately eighteen months in advance of the start of the fiscal year for the budget. The budget process is collaborative and public and engages the school committee, Town Manager, Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Capital Improvement Committee, school councils, school staff, and the citizens of Mashpee--providing the administration with a roadmap to develop and refine the annual budget. The Mashpee Public Schools' Business Administrator is responsible for coordinating, developing, and monitoring the annual budget process. The superintendent is tasked with developing a budget that advances the District in concert with the outlined policy objectives. The school committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the budget for incorporation into the Town of Mashpee budget.

### Major Steps/Timeline followed in Budget Development:

- ❑ **Eighteen months prior to the start of a fiscal year:**
  - ❑ School committee establishes budget goals and priorities
  - ❑ Each school principal builds his/her needs-based operating budget
  - ❑ Director of Special Education builds his/her budget
  - ❑ District Leadership Team assesses personnel resources and needs
  - ❑ Business Administrator compiles all budget components
- ❑ **Late Spring/Early Summer:** The school committee's finance working group reviews superintendent's draft budget.

- ❑ **Late Summer/Fall:** School committee reviews superintendent's recommended budget.
- ❑ **Late September:** Superintendent's recommended budget is entered into MUNIS (per Town Manager's schedule)
- ❑ **December:** School budget summary is published in the Mashpee Enterprise and posted on District's website (not less than 7 or more than 14 days before public hearing)
- ❑ **Early January:** Public Hearing is held on the school committee's recommended budget
- ❑ **Mid-January:** School committee votes on Budget (Public Meeting)
- ❑ **Mid-January (after vote):** The school committee's budget is due to Town Manager
- ❑ **February/March:** School Budget is presented to the Finance Committee (as scheduled)
- ❑ **May:** Annual Town Meeting

## **Mashpee Charter (6.2)--School Committee Budget**

### **Public Hearing**

At least twenty-one days before the meeting at which the school committee is scheduled to vote on its final budget request, the school committee shall cause to be published in a local newspaper a general summary of its proposed budget which shall include a consolidated report of proposed expenditures by educational level and program. The summary shall specifically indicate any major variations from the current budget and the reasons for such changes. The notice shall further indicate the times and places at which complete copies of the proposed budget are available for examination by the public, and it shall indicate the date, time and place, (not less than seven nor more than fourteen days following such publication), when a public hearing will be held by the school committee on the proposed budget. The school committee shall not take its final vote on its proposed budget until all persons who desire to be heard concerning the budget proposal have had a reasonable opportunity to be heard.

### **Submission to the Town Manager**

The proposed budget adopted by the school committee shall be submitted to the Town Manager at least twenty-one days before the date the Town Manager is required to submit a proposed town budget to the Finance Committee, to allow the Town Manager sufficient time within which to consider the effect the school department's requested appropriation will have upon the total town operating budget the Town Manager is required to submit to the Finance Committee under this article. The action of the school committee in adopting the proposed budget, following the public hearing, shall be summarized and the results of a roll call vote taken on each amendment to the proposed budget as may be offered shall be recorded.

## **SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATION**

One of the most important responsibilities of the school committee is to evaluate the superintendent, which, by law, is a very public process. The school committee uses the DESE approved evaluation tool and process for the superintendent's evaluation.

The evaluation process begins in August, when the school committee meets in a workshop setting to discuss the superintendent's goals for the year. The superintendent will present a set of proposed goals, which the committee can discuss and modify. The goals that are ultimately voted upon at the September meeting should be mutually agreeable to both the school committee and the superintendent.

Throughout the year, the superintendent will accumulate evidence, which may be electronic, toward the accomplishment of his/her goals. Other forms of evidence include but are not limited to:

- Reports and research prepared by the superintendent for committee review
- Involvement in the collective bargaining process



- Fulfillment of professional duties
- Relationship with municipal officials
- Interaction with the public

Committee members should not use hearsay and/or gossip as evidence of performance. Members should seek clarification through the superintendent should such a situation arise.

In April of each year, the superintendent will give a presentation on the status of his/her goals. Using this data, as well as other evidence as listed above, each member will individually complete a final evaluation report using an online tool (e.g. Teach Point) and submit it to the chair, via the “share” button. The chair, or a designee, will compile all reports into a final summative evaluation, which will be signed by the chair and placed in the superintendent’s personnel file. The final summative evaluation will be voted on by the school committee at the meeting immediately preceding the annual town election. At this time, the committee will also publicly discuss the results of the evaluation and the rationale behind the results.

## **NEGOTIATIONS**

### **Superintendent’s Contract**

The superintendent is hired by the school committee, who is responsible for negotiating and approving an employment contract between the school department and the superintendent. Under the open meeting law, such negotiations and preparations for negotiations are permitted to take place in executive session, provided that the final vote of approval by the school committee is done in open session.

Generally, the superintendent will initiate contract renewal negotiations in writing to the chair of the committee. Upon receipt of such notification, the chair will work with the superintendent to determine a suitable timeline for both parties, and will schedule an executive session for the school committee to discuss strategy with respect to the impending negotiations. All members of the committee will participate in negotiations; however, Negotiations Subcommittee members shall be considered to be the primary negotiators. Members shall discuss negotiation norms and procedures prior to actual negotiations to ensure that all members are aware of expectations. As with all executive sessions, members should respect the confidential nature of the negotiations.

### **Collective Bargaining**

Employees of the Mashpee School Department are represented by three different labor unions:

- Unit A--Teaching staff
- Unit B--Administrators (excluding school principals)
- Unit C--Paraprofessionals and Clerical, excluding non-union clerical

Negotiations are an opportunity for management and labor to meet formally at the start of a contract cycle to discuss any work concerns. Concluding negotiations fairly and swiftly is always preferable for both management and labor. The role of the school committee under MGL Chapter 150E is to be the legal representative of management. Union negotiations are arguably one of the most important roles of the school committee.

At most, two committee members should be on the negotiations subcommittee to avoid having a quorum. The appointment of two members to the negotiations subcommittee (and an alternate) is accomplished during the committee’s annual reorganization meeting in May. Members of the negotiations subcommittee should be aware of town of Mashpee guidelines and are responsible for understanding the school committee’s parameters. It is expected that the full committee is kept informed of developments, as appropriate. There should never be any surprises between the negotiations subcommittee and the full committee. Historically, union negotiations

are led by the superintendent with school committee members and other district administrators serving on the negotiating team.

Upon receipt of notification from each labor union, the chair will place an executive session on the agenda of a regular school committee meeting to discuss parameters and strategy with respect to the impending negotiations. The negotiating team will then meet with representatives from the labor union to negotiate the contract. Though the timeline is not defined by law, the school committee generally will vote to approve the final contract following successful ratification from the union’s membership.

The remainder of district employees have individual contracts. The superintendent is responsible for recommending contract changes for these individuals to the school committee for approval.

**SCHOOL COMMITTEE SELF-EVALUATION**

In order to be a more effective and efficient organization, the school committee will annually perform a self-evaluation using the MASC self-evaluation tool and considering the progress made on annual goals and present the results at a regularly scheduled meeting. The evaluation will determine what is being done optimally and what needs improvement.

**HIRING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The school committee is responsible for appointing the superintendent. The school committee shall also appoint the following positions, upon the recommendation of the superintendent:

- Assistant Superintendent
- School Business Administrator
- Director of Special Education
- School Nurses
- School Physician
- District Legal Counsel

It should be noted that with the exception of the superintendent, the committee does not have the authority to decide whether or not to renew the contracts of these individuals – once they are hired, they are considered district employees who report directly to the superintendent.

**SUBCOMMITTEES, LIAISONS, AND WORKING GROUPS**

<b>Standing Subcommittees 2 members &amp; an alternate</b>	<b>Liaisons 1 member &amp; an alternate</b>	<b>Working Groups 2 members &amp; an alternate</b>
Curriculum	Cape Cod Collaborative Board	Finance
Negotiations	Capital Improvement Planning Committee	Outreach/Engagement
Policy	Boosters	Committee Efficiency/Effectiveness
Superintendent Evaluation	Health Advisory Board	
	Indian Education Parent Committee	
	Planning & Construction Committee	
	SPED Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC)	
	Sick Bank	
	Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe	
	Mashpee Substance Use Task Force	
	Town of Mashpee Finance Committee	
	Town of Mashpee Board of Selectmen	

The school committee has four standing subcommittees: curriculum, negotiations, policy, and superintendent evaluation. Two committee members (and an alternate) are voted to be members of each subcommittee.

Members will serve as liaisons to outside groups. Liaisons to the following groups are determined by vote at the committee's reorganization meeting each year: Cape Cod Collaborative Board, Capital Improvement Planning Committee, Boosters, Health Advisory Board, Indian Education Parent Committee, Planning and Construction Committee, Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC), Sick Bank, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, Mashpee Substance Use Task Force, Town Finance Committee, and the Board of Selectmen. Outside groups may be added or deleted from this list.

The school committee may have working groups tied to its goals--Finance, Outreach/Engagement, Efficiency/Effectiveness. Two members and an alternate are voted to be members of each working group. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager also participate as members of these working groups.

Ad-hoc committees may be formed from time to time to perform certain tasks, study a particular issue, or make a specific recommendation. Examples of such committees include search committees for any of the positions over which the school committee has hiring authority or committees to work on a specific goal or project of the school committee.

### **Health Advisory Liaison**

The Health Advisory Liaison reports to the committee the activities of the district health advisory team and provides recommendations to the committee on policies that improve student and staff wellness across the district.

### **Capital Improvement Planning (CIP) Committee Liaison**

The Committee will annually designate a member of the Committee or the superintendent to serve on the Town of Mashpee CIP Committee. The designated voting member attends and participates in meetings of this group, reports back to the school committee, and provides recommendations with regard to district capital needs.

### **Board of Selectmen Liaison and Finance Committee Liaison**

A member of the school committee shall serve as liaison to the Mashpee Board of Selectmen, and another member shall serve as the liaison to the Mashpee Finance Committee. Each liaison should periodically review agendas for the board and attend any meetings that may have implications for the school department. The Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee shall each be notified of its school committee liaison in order to give members a point of contact on the school committee. The liaisons are not regular contributors to the Board of Selectmen meetings or to the Finance Committee meetings and will bring back school-related questions posed by the Board of Selectmen or Finance Committee to the school committee for discussion and response.

### **Legislative Representative**

The school committee legislative representative stays abreast of all legislation which may have an impact, whether positive or negative, on the school district. The representative advocates on behalf of the committee (when appropriate) to Mashpee's legislative delegation, and may testify on behalf of the committee in support or opposition to legislation before various House, Senate, and Joint legislative committees. Prior to January of every odd-numbered year, the representative may assist with the drafting of bills that would benefit the school district to be filed by Mashpee's legislative delegation. The Committee will annually designate a person--who may or may not be a member of the Committee--to serve as its legislative representative. This person will be authorized to speak on the Committee's behalf with respect to legislation being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature or the United States Congress or their respective committees. In all dealings with individual elected representatives, the Legislature or Congress, the Committee's legislative representative will be bound by the official positions taken by the school committee. When possible, the legislative representative will attend the annual MASC Day on the Hill.

### **MASC Delegate**

At an October school committee meeting and prior to the MASC annual business meeting, the MASC delegate will be chosen by vote. The MASC delegate is the school committee's elected representative at MASC's annual business meeting.

It is expected that each committee member serves in multiple positions as described in this section.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

### **Schedule of Meetings**

Regular meetings are scheduled at least monthly on a Wednesday by mutual agreement of the committee. Meetings normally commence at 5:30 pm. School committee meetings will not take place at the same time as a town meeting, and will not take place on the day of an election.

Executive sessions will generally take place following regularly scheduled meetings, though they may take place prior to the meeting, if necessary, or at another date and time that is mutually agreeable to the members. Retreats will take place on a schedule that is mutually agreeable to the committee.

### **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

A typical school committee agenda may consist of:

- Call to Order/Pledge of Allegiance
- Showcase/Special Presentation
- Public Comment
- Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe
- Report of the Student Representative
- Approval of minutes
- Report of the Business Manager
- Report of the Superintendent
- Specifically Assigned/Unfinished business
- New business
- Subcommittee/Liaison/Working Group Reports
- Items the chair did not reasonably know in advance
- Executive session (if necessary)
- Adjournment

The school committee chair and superintendent work together to develop the agenda for each school committee meeting. Committee members will be provided with an opportunity to propose agenda items to the chair in advance of the agenda being finalized. The number of items on the agenda needs to be considered as it may adversely affect the length of the meeting. When there is only one school committee meeting scheduled during a month, the target meeting length is two hours. When there are two school committee meetings scheduled during a month, the target meeting length is one hour. 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 supporting documents and materials, are generally distributed to school committee members via district e-mail by the Monday prior to the meeting.

## **ORGANIZATION**

At the first meeting following the town's annual election, the chair will call the meeting to order. The first item on the agenda will be to elect from its membership a chair, vice chair, and secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected. Once the chair is elected, the newly-elected chair will take control of the meeting. In the event the chair or vice-chair are no longer members of the school committee, the senior member (years served) will act as the chair pro-tem.

### **Organization Protocol**

1. Prior to the annual organization of the school committee in May each year, the members of the committee (including any newly elected members) will be provided by the superintendent with access to an Organization--Position Interest Chart enabling the members to select which of the following, if any, that he/she is interested in and wants to be considered for the coming elected term (May to May):
  - a. Elected positions (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary)
  - b. Standing Sub-Committees (Curriculum, Negotiations, Policy, Superintendent Evaluation)
  - c. Liaison/representative assignments (per current listing)
2. Each Committee member will submit in confidence his/her completed Organization--Position Interest Chart to the superintendent by 2:00 p.m. on the day that the school committee has scheduled its organization meeting.
3. The superintendent will then prepare a consolidated Organization--Position Interest Chart reflecting the individual interests submitted by each committee member.
4. After the opening of the school committee meeting scheduled for organization and before any other business or action, the superintendent will distribute the consolidated Organization--Position Interest Chart to each of the committee members.
5. The Chair will ask for the consolidated Organization--Position Interest Chart to be accepted by unanimous consent by the committee members.
6. If a member obtains an elected position, he/she cannot serve in two elected positions, and his/her name will be withdrawn from consideration for any other elected positions.
7. If there are multiple individuals seeking the same elected position, names will be randomly drawn to determine the order in which each individual will speak to the committee.
8. Each individual for the Chair position will be given time to speak to the committee regarding his/her candidacy.
9. Once each candidate has had a chance to speak, the current Chair will then ask the committee to roll-call vote to elect a new Chair by each member naming the candidate of his/her choice.
10. The newly elected Chair will then repeat the process (steps 6 - 8) to complete the remaining elected positions.

11. The newly elected Chair will then lead the committee in determining sub-committee members and liaison assignments, and will determine these if the committee members collectively are unable to reach a consensus.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

All meetings of the school committee are open to the public and media. However, the committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session for one of the ten purposes delineated by law. These ten purposes are:

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 on the committee's bargaining position. Collective bargaining negotiations may also be conducted in executive session if a quorum of the committee is present.
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 comparatively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.
11. To address a Level III Grievance from the Association

When meeting in executive session, the committee should follow the procedures outlined under the "Procedures--Quorum and Voting" section of this guidebook (Pages 15-16).

Executive session minutes may be held from disclosure to the public as long as publication may defeat the lawful purpose of the executive session, but no longer. A vote during the executive session is required to withhold minutes. In the event of such an occurrence, the committee will periodically review withheld executive session minutes and will release them at such time as the committee sees fit.

## **LEVEL III GRIEVANCE**

A "grievance" is defined as a written complaint by the Association, or a member thereof, based upon an alleged violation of any specific provision(s) of the Collective Bargaining Agreement. A Level I grievance is addressed by the building principal. A Level II grievance is addressed by the superintendent. A Level III grievance is addressed by the school committee in an executive session.

Only the Association may forward a grievance at Level III. The Association may present a Level III grievance in writing to the school committee within (10) school days of receipt of the superintendent's answer or date on which said answer is due, whichever occurs first, to a grievance at Level II. The committee will hold an executive session with the grievant and/or the Association, within (10) school

days of receiving the written complaint. The purpose of the executive session will be to discuss the grievance. The grievant will present the issue(s) to the school committee. The school committee, in private, will then discuss the issue and decide whether to support the grievance or deny the grievance. The school committee's decision is announced by the Chair. Level III does not apply to any grievance arising out of a decision made by the superintendent or principal under authority delegated to the superintendent or principal under the Education Reform Act of 1993. In the event of such a grievance, the Association may proceed directly from Level II to Level IV.

## **OPEN MEETING LAW**

The following section briefly overviews the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, however school committee members are encouraged to read the law in its entirety for a more complete understanding.

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 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 with the body’s jurisdiction
- The communication does not fall within an exception listed in the law (see below) 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 may not deliberate at such gatherings
  - ❑ Meetings of quasi-judicial boards or commissions held solely to make decisions in an adjudicatory proceedings are not subject to the open meeting law
  - ❑ 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 in the town hall where it is conspicuously visible to the public at all hours. Meeting agendas and minutes are also posted on the school committee’s web page.

## **PROCEDURES – QUORUM AND VOTING**

A quorum of the Mashpee School Committee is three members.

The committee operates under Robert’s Rules of Order, unless otherwise specified. The chair shall serve as committee parliamentarian, and shall decide all questions of parliamentary procedure.

### **Executive Session Procedures**

- The committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
- The chair (or presiding member) will state the purpose of the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
- A majority of the members of the school committee must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.

- All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions. Any votes taken to ratify employment contracts or collective bargaining agreements shall be taken in open session.
- The chair or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the committee will reconvene in open session following the executive session.

### **Open Meeting Procedures**

Chair (or presiding officer) states the question at hand.

- A motion is made relative to the question, and a second is made.
- Chair allows for discussion of the question and the motion made.
- Members can make amendments to the original motion, provided that there is a sufficient second.
- Votes will be taken by voice vote or a hand count and shall be recorded in the minutes. If the vote is unanimous, only that fact need be recorded. No vote taken in an open session shall be by secret ballot. Any member may ask that a vote be taken by roll call. Such request will be honored unless there is objection from any member of the committee, in which case the chair will call for a voice vote to decide whether a roll call vote will be allowed on the main motion. For a voice vote, any member can request that their vote be recorded by name in the official meeting minutes.
- A roll call vote is required to enter executive session and for all votes taken during a meeting in which a member is participating remotely.
- All actions require a majority vote of all members present and voting except as state law, Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, or policies of this Committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the school committee will constitute a quorum.
- A two-thirds vote will be required to suspend parliamentary rules of order.

### **COMMUNICATION**

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

All email correspondence as a school committee member is subject to a public records request. Each member is expected to use his/her district-issued email account for all email correspondence as a school committee member.

Any communication warranting a committee response (e.g. media, municipal leader) received by a school committee member in his/her official capacity shall be forwarded to the Chair for the committee's official response. A member may speak individually as a school committee member as long as the member emphasizes that he/she is not speaking on behalf of the committee.

Communication from the superintendent to the school committee outside of an open meeting or executive session (e.g. in person, email, text message, telephone call) shall be for informational purposes only--not for discussion among committee members.

### **Communication with District Personnel**

Members should always remain cognizant that they possess no authority outside of the authority of the full school committee when communicating with district staff. The committee does, however, value the input of district personnel, and members are encouraged to regularly communicate with district personnel to gather input



on the committee's decisions and actions. Additionally, staff members will not suffer any negative repercussions from communicating with members of the school committee.

Any feedback received from district personnel that relates to district operations shall be relayed to the superintendent. Unless otherwise indicated by the superintendent, members should not discuss specific concerns of staff members during a school committee meeting.

### **Communication with Students**

The primary objective of the school committee is to establish policies that ensure the academic achievement of all students. The school committee benefits from hearing the opinion of students on issues affecting their education and the overall social, intellectual, and extracurricular climate of the schools. Students may address the school committee by speaking during the "Public Comment" section of its public meetings, or by asking the school committee student representative to speak on their behalf. The Committee values the input of its students.

### **Communication with Parents, Guardians, Families, and Community**

Members are encouraged to maintain a healthy dialogue with members of the community to keep people up to date on the committee's actions. The committee recognizes that individual members each have access to distinct networks of constituents, and members should frequently utilize these networks as communication opportunities. Communication mediums such as social media, e-mails, newsletters, blogs, and newspaper articles are all effective means of communicating with constituents. Members should be sure to clarify that certain methods of communication, especially social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc) are done on behalf of the member only and are not necessarily representative of the full school committee.

The Committee ensures that its decisions and actions are performed in a public and transparent manner – with the sole exception of the topics that legally permit and require the school committee to adjourn to executive session. These exceptions aside, the public will always be informed of committee decisions and the rationale.

## **HOW TO RESPOND TO CONSTITUENT COMPLAINTS**

The school committee's policy with regard to the handling of complaints from the public is clearly defined in policy KE. While members of the community, including parents and students have the right to contact elected officials as unambiguously stated in both the state and federal constitutions, school committee members often lack the authority to resolve problems brought to their attention.

Parents may 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 the principal.

Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded. Matters referred to the superintendent and/or school committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired.

Committee members are strongly encouraged to refer parents to the appropriate administrative authority, starting with the staff member closest to the concern. For example, if a parent contacts a committee member with a concern about a teacher, the member should encourage the parent to discuss the situation with the teacher. If they already have, the member should refer them to the principal. If they have already spoken with the principal, the member should refer them to the superintendent. In any event, the member should notify the superintendent of the nature of the complaint.

The superintendent will keep the committee member abreast of any developments that may arise through dealing with the complaint, to the extent permitted by law.

If a member receives a complaint about the superintendent, he/she shall inform the Chair, and they will discuss the situation with the superintendent. Any additional discussion will occur by the full committee and superintendent in the appropriate format (e.g. Executive Session).

## **USEFUL RESOURCES**

Mashpee Public Schools website: <https://www.mpspk12.org/>

Mashpee Public Schools policy manual: <https://www.mpspk12.org/Domain/36>

Town of Mashpee website: <https://www.mashpeema.gov/>

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

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

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

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

Mass. General Laws: <https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws>

Mass. Legislature: <https://malegislature.gov/>

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

Mass. School Building Authority: <http://www.massschoolbuildings.org>

National School Boards Association: <http://www.nsba.org>

## **ACRONYMS**

CCC -- Cape Cod Collaborative

CIP--Capital Improvement Planning

CPI – Composite Performance Index

DESE – Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

ELE – English Language Education

EL-- English Learner

ESSA--Every Student Succeeds Act

ESY--Extended School Year

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

FY – Fiscal Year (July 1 – June 30)

IEP – Individualized Education Program

IDEA – Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

MPS – Mashpee Public Schools

MASC – Massachusetts Association of School Committees

MASS -- Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

MCAS – Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MOU – Memorandum of Understanding

MOA – Memorandum of Agreement

MSBA – Massachusetts School Building Authority

NCLB – No Child Left Behind

NEASC – New England Association of Schools and Colleges

NESDEC – New England School Development Council

NSBA – National School Boards Association

RFP – Request for Proposal

SEL -- Social/Emotional Learning

SEPAC – Special Education Parent Advisory Council

SOI – Statement of Interest

STEM – Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics

SY - School Year