



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

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Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee

Operating Protocols

voted 9/17/15

The Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee recognizes the importance of our work to our students, families, staff and the communities of Acton and Boxborough. We strive to advocate for the Acton-Boxborough Public Schools and the support of public education, and view our roles as ambassadors of the District. Thus, we have formally established the following operating protocols to follow in our dealings with the Superintendent, Staff/Administration, and the general public.

The School Committee has established policies in the areas of School Committee Powers and Duties (BBA), School Committee-Superintendent Relationship (BDD), School Committee-Staff Communications (BHC), School Committee Member Ethics (BCA) and School Committee Member Authority (BBAA)¹. These outline the expected and appropriate roles of the School Committee and highlight duties, responsibilities and, importantly, the limits of those responsibilities in carrying out our work. All members shall be familiar with these policies and follow them while encouraging their fellow members to do the same.

The School Committee has high expectations for behavior at its meetings, in order to conduct our business in a professional, respectful, thoughtful and efficient manner.

We believe that School Committee members should be empowered to freely express their opinions, concerns and ideas in a climate of trust and mutual respect. While we don't expect to always agree, we do expect that we should always acknowledge the value of each individual member's contributions and work to disagree without being disagreeable. Effective yet efficient debate by members will help us to use our meeting time wisely.

¹ The letters in parentheses reference school committee policies available online at https://www.abschools.org/school_committee/policies.

Our Mission is to prepare all students to attain their full potential as life-long learners, critical thinkers, and productive citizens of our diverse community and global society.

We agree that individual School Committee members have no independent authority, only the committee as a whole has authority. When representing the Committee at meetings of other boards or groups, individual members must speak as individuals except when reporting a decision of the majority of the Committee.

The School Committee welcomes respectful, thoughtful input from the public in shaping Committee decisions; however, while our meetings are open to the public; they are not public meetings. Public participation is subject to Chapter 30A [section 20g](#) of the Massachusetts General Law and our School Committee Policy [BEDH](#). We expect the public to follow our policy on public participation and allow the Chair the authority to enforce this policy.

Matters of concern by parents and guardians should be addressed by following the [Parent Communication Map](#) available at abschools.org. Town or community concerns that are within our purview will be addressed when appropriate and necessary, but not prematurely.

We strive to make our meetings as efficient as possible (beginning no earlier than 7:00 p.m. and ending no later than 10:00 p.m.) in order to be sensitive to the time commitments of staff, committee members and the public. This may entail:

- Adding meetings in order to address topics requiring lengthy discussion;
- Limiting the number of agenda items at a particular meeting;
- Delaying discussion on certain issues;
- Discouraging the use of the addendum to our meeting packets for more than short, routine matters or minor updates.

We aim to avoid surprises at our meetings and will work to maintain focus on our goals and priorities. Questions and concerns should be communicated as early as possible before a meeting. Except in emergency situations, the School Committee will refrain from addressing issues that have not been previously brought to the attention of the Chair and/or Superintendent.

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