

## **Newburyport School Committee Norms**

To promote and achieve the mission and our responsibilities under Massachusetts Law and School Committee policies, the Newburyport School Committee adopts the following norms for the conduct of its business, in furtherance of the Mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, to ensure each student achieves intellectual and personal excellence and is equipped for life experiences through a system distinguished by students, staff, and community who: practice kindness and perseverance; celebrate each unique individual; value creativity, experiential and rigorous educational opportunities, scholarly pursuits, and life-long learning; provide nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth; and understand and embrace their role as global citizens.

1. The School Committee will lead by example and act to maintain trust and mutual respect among School Committee members, the Superintendent, District staff, students and the community; and to that end, will treat everyone- district staff, the school community, and including fellow members of the Committee with dignity and respect, both in manner and tone, even in times of disagreement.
2. School Committee members will refrain from reading or sending texts in the room where the School Committee is meeting; we will refrain from use of all social media and live posting on the internet during meetings, in the interest of transparency; remaining attentive to the work of the meeting and conduct ourselves in a respectful manner while in a meeting.
3. Surprises to the School Committee and the Superintendent are not a useful strategy for promoting reasonable discussion of issues. To facilitate orderly and productive meetings, members will ask the Chair or their designee to add an item to the Agenda no later than the Thursday before the next School Committee meeting is scheduled. Any supportive documentation or communications will be provided at that time as well.
4. The School Committee recognizes that communications received from the public, as well as District staff are public documents, unless a specific statutory exemption applies. Communications intended to be addressed during a meeting, will be handled as such and provided to the Chair and Superintendent on the Thursday prior to the meeting for including on the agenda and in the Committee packet pursuant to #3, above.
4. The School Committee will speak to the issues on the Agenda, focusing on the issues presented and not personalities. During deliberation, the Committee will consider data, research, best practices, public input and financial matters in its decision-making. Requests for information relative to agenda items will be directed by the Committee of the whole to the Superintendent, who shall provide that information as soon as possible, with the goal being no later than the next meeting of the School Committee. The Committee understands that in emergency situations, all information may not be readily available and that will not prevent the Committee from acting or making a decision that is in the best interest of students and the District.
6. The School Committee recognizes that the Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer responsible for the day-to-day operations of the District and advises the School Committee

on items that come before it. The School Committee will follow the District Chain of Command policy and encourage others to do so. All requests for information, reports and data relative to items before the Committee will be requested as a Committee a whole, and channeled through the Superintendent to appropriate staff. Constituent concerns will be referred to the Superintendent who will, in turn, refer to other staff, as appropriate.

7. School Committee members, in their communications with the community, should remember and make clear that they speak as individuals, and not for the Committee as a whole. Individual School Committee members do not possess individual authority to bind the Committee or District. The Committee may only act through majority vote in a duly held meeting. As such no individual School Committee member will take action, that has not been authorized by the Committee as a whole.
8. When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards as liaisons from the School Committee, they will be speaking as individuals and not for the Committee, except when reporting a decision of the majority of the School Committee.
8. When Executive Sessions are held, Committee members will honor the confidentiality of the session. Occasionally, the Committee will be provided with confidential information. Confidential material will be clearly labeled as such. Members will respect the confidentiality of such documents and information.
11. The School Committee and the Superintendent shall work together to facilitate goal setting for the District and to create measures of accountability for achieving such goals.

In signing this statement, we affirm and agree to practice these principles and norms in the coming school year.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_