

NEWBURYPORT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

NEWBURYPORT, MASSACHUSETTS

**School Committee
Organizational Meeting**

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

7:00PM

SC Packet Checklist: SC Organizational Meeting Agenda January 2, 2024
SC Member Ethics (BCA)
SC Operating Principles & Norms of Interaction (BCC-BCD)
Ethics & Operating Principles Sign-off form

**Newburyport Public Schools
Newburyport, MA**

**School Committee Organizational Meeting
Tuesday, January 2, 2024**

7:00 PM, Council Chambers - City Hall, 60 Pleasant Street, Newburyport, MA 01950

The Mission of the Newburyport Public Schools, the port where tradition and innovation converge, is 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, rigorous educational opportunities; scholarly pursuits; and life-long learning - provide the nurturing environments for emotional, social, and physical growth - understand and embrace their role as global citizens.

Please note: The listing of matters are those reasonably anticipated by the Chair which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. The meeting will be televised locally live on Comcast Channel 9 & streamed via <https://ncmhub.org/share/channel-9/>.

Organizational Meeting Agenda:

1. Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance
2. * Viva-Voce Vote for 2024 Vice-Chair, *Possible Vote*
4. *Viva-Voce Vote for 2024 Designee, and Alternate Designee, to sign Payroll & Vouchers
5. School Committee Member Ethics (BCA) (read & sign off)
6. School Committee Operating Principles & Norms of Interaction (BCC-BCD)(read & sign off)
7. School Committee 2024 Subcommittee Assignments

Adjournment

*Possible Vote

The School Committee reserves the right to call **executive session, as provided under Chapter 30A, Section 21(a)(2), of the General Laws to discuss strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations, collective bargaining and/or potential litigation.

NEW POLICY (Replace BCB)

BCA: SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

The acceptance of a Code of Ethics 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 adherence to those State Laws which apply to School Committees since School Committees are Agencies of the State.

This Code of Ethics delineates three areas of responsibility of school committee members:

1. Community responsibility;
2. Responsibility to school administration; and,
3. Relationship to fellow committee members.

1. A School Committee member in their relations with the community should:

- a) Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.
- b) Recognize that their basic function is to the policy-making and not administrative.
- c) Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
- d) Be well informed concerning the duties of a committee member on both a local and state level.
- e) Remember that they represent the entire community at all times.
- f) Accept the office as a committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from their committee activities.
- g) Remember and make clear that they speak as individuals, and not for the committee as a whole.

2. A School Committee member in their relations with the school administration should:

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

3. A School Committee member in their relations to their fellow committee members should:

- a) Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings.
- b) Realize that statements or promises should not be made regarding how they will vote on matters that will come before the committee.
- c) Uphold the intent of Executive Sessions and respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions.
- d) Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems.
- e) Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

Adopted: May 15, 2023

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATING PRINCIPLES & NORMS OF INTERACTION

Section B: School Committee Governance and Operations	File: BCC-BCD
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The School Committee will:

1. Represent the needs and interests of all students in the district, striving to represent common interests rather than factions. We will make decisions that are best for students in all cases: all means all.
2. Exercise leadership in vision, planning, policy making, evaluation, and advocacy on behalf of the students and district, not in managing the day-to-day operations of the district.
3. We will communicate positively about other school committee members, staff, and the system. As advocates for Newburyport Public Schools and public education, we readily accept our roles promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.
4. Conduct its business through a set agenda. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items, with the exception of items that are time sensitive or require urgent attention.
5. Provide full disclosure. Each member will provide input, encouragement, express concerns and positions rather than withhold information from other members. When a school committee member feels that there has not been full disclosure, an objective process for revisiting the issue will be used.
6. Maintain an open environment where each member is empowered to freely express opinions, concerns, and ideas. School committee members will engage in active listening to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding. We will provide continuing education opportunities and support to each other, striving to build trusting relationships.
7. Keep an open mind and accept that they can change their opinions by recognizing that they are not locked into their initial stated positions.
8. Make decisions on information and not on personalities. School committee members will act with the best information available at the time considering data, the superintendent's recommendations, proposals, and suggestions. School committee members will strive to make the best decisions at the time, without waiting for the perfect decision.
9. Debate the issues, not one another. The school committee will engage in critical and creative thinking, expecting all school committee members to freely offer differing points of view as part of the discussion, prior to making a school committee decision.
10. Be clear about, and stay true to, the role of the school committee. Not take unilateral action. A committee member's authority is derived through the majority of the school committee acting as a whole during an open public meeting. We will reach decisions by consensus, and individual members will publicly abide by those decisions, speaking with one voice, once a vote is taken. We will recognize a single official "voice" of the school committee.
11. Attend meetings on time and well prepared to discuss issues on the agenda, and will be prepared to make decisions, striving for efficient decision making.
12. Strive to have no surprises for the committee or superintendent. Surprises will be the exception. All members will provide and receive the same information in a timely manner.
13. Respect all persons presenting to the school committee.
14. Follow the chain of command and direct others to do the same. Personnel complaints and concerns will be directed to the superintendent.
15. Review and revise operating principles, as needed, as part of the school committee's self-evaluation.

16. Recognize that all communications created and received to our district email accounts are public documents, unless a specific statutory exemption applies.
17. Refrain from reading or sending electronic communications, and remain off of all social media platforms during meetings, in the interest of transparency.

References:

SOURCE: Newburyport School Committee

Version Control

Action	Date
First Reading	7/22/2016
Second Reading	9/6/2016
Adopted	9/6/2016
Revised	5/3/2021

Newburyport School Committee

The School Committee has been given the following policies:

School Committee Member Ethics Policy (BCA)

School Committee Operating Principles & Norms of Interaction Policy (BCC/BCD):

These policies have been reviewed and accepted at the Organizational School Committee meeting held on _____.

Mayor Sean Reardon, Chair

Sarah Hall, Vice Chair

Brian Callahan

Kathleen Shaw

Juliet Walker

Andrew Boger

Breanna Higgins