

School Committee Operating Protocols

Members of the Leicester School Committee work together to “establish a vision and a set of values, to articulate results, and to create the conditions for achieving these results through policy, effective use of resources, community engagement, collaborative relations with the superintendent, and union negotiations” (Walser, 2009, p.7). This work is done consistent with the following protocols:

- 1.) Members will attend all meetings prepared not simply to vote on agenda items, but to discuss and offer input on items of interest. Preparation includes reading all materials in advance, preparing specific questions to pose, and letting the superintendent know of any background you may be asking for at the meeting.
- 2.) If a member is unable to attend a regularly scheduled meeting of the full committee, he or she will notify the chairperson of the school committee.
- 3.) When determining the agenda for regularly scheduled meetings of the school committee:
 - The chair and superintendent shall meet immediately after reorganization to develop an outline of agenda topics by meeting.
 - Each month, committee members shall suggest additional agenda items to add to the next month’s meeting agenda.
 - The superintendent shall draft the agenda based upon additional district needs, the input provided at the last meeting, and any other items suggested by the chair.
 - Ideally, the chairperson and superintendent will meet to finalize the agenda. Alternatively, the chairperson shall approve the drafted agenda at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting,
 - The superintendent will be responsible for compiling supporting materials for agenda items and posting the agenda in accordance with the open meeting law
- 4.) “No surprises rule:” In accordance with the Open Meeting Law, members will refrain from bringing up topics that are not on the agenda or to ask for information on items that may require research (unless the member provides some advance notice to the superintendent of the need for this information). Members should ask for items to be placed on the agenda rather than unexpectedly bringing them during meetings.
- 5.) Members will check district email at least once every other day and respond to queries (for such things as availability for meetings) in a timely manner.
- 6.) Members will not speak on behalf of the school committee to outside parties, unless they are reporting on actions taken by the school committee or have been specifically authorized by the school committee to do so.
- 7.) Individual school committee members should recognize that authority rests only with the majority of the school committee, and not with individual members.

8.) The school committee will meet at least once per quarter (in August, November, February, and May) in a workshop format to evaluate its adherence to these protocols, as well as to discuss any other topics that may be conducive to a workshop setting.

9.) The board recognizes that its responsibilities lie in policy and budget development and not in administration. Communications to administrators and staff should generally flow through the chain of command, from superintendent to administrator to individual staff members.

Walser, N. (2009). The essential school board book. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press.