



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District

Developing engaged, well-balanced learners through collaborative, caring relationships

WELLNESS • EQUITY • ENGAGEMENT

Responsibilities and protocols

July 19, 2023

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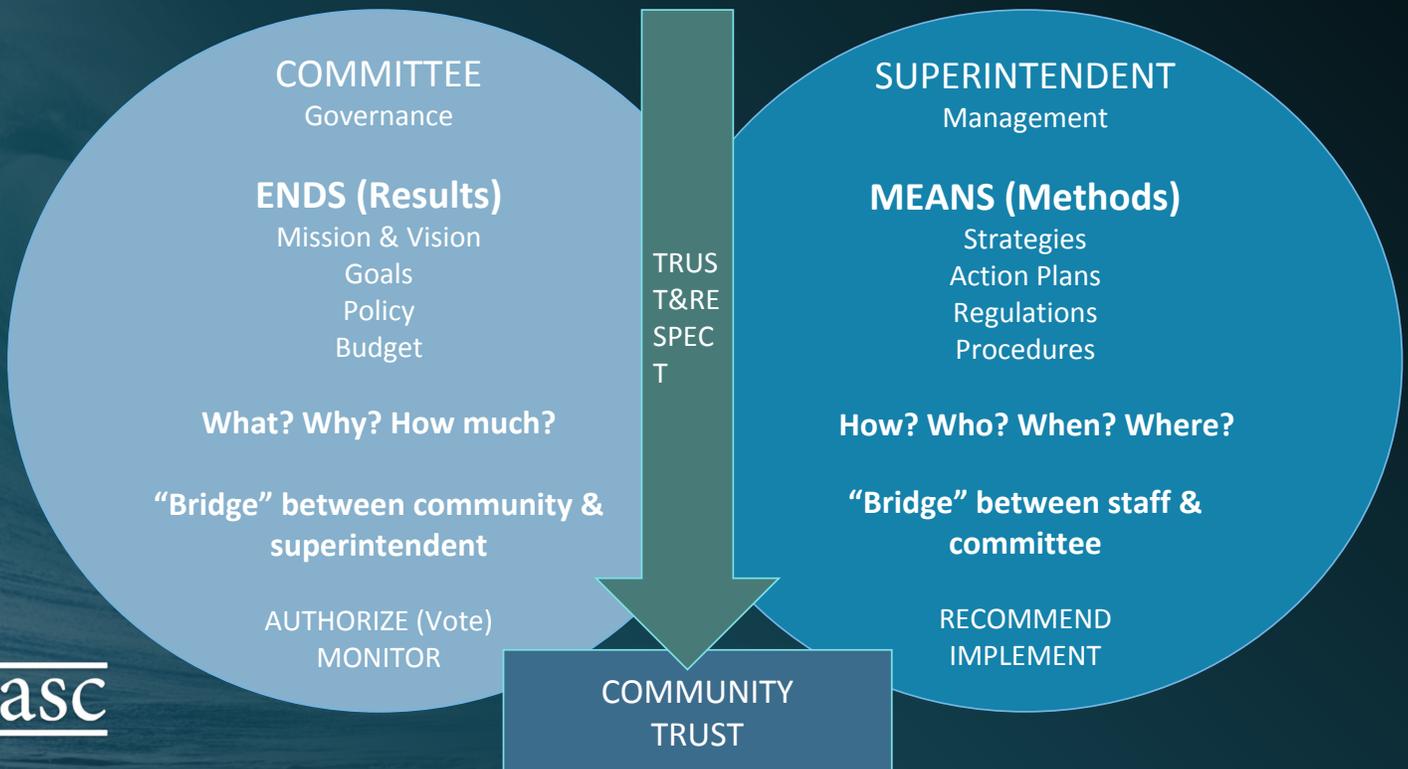
Roles and Responsibilities of the Committee

- Goals
- Policy
- Budget
- Personnel

School Committee purview



Understanding & Respect for Roles



How does this work?

- Sorting out roles in the School Committee realm



How does this work?

Goals

Policy

Budget

Personnel

Why Set Goals?



Goal setting is the process by which a school board exercises leadership



If the board doesn't set goals, special interest groups will



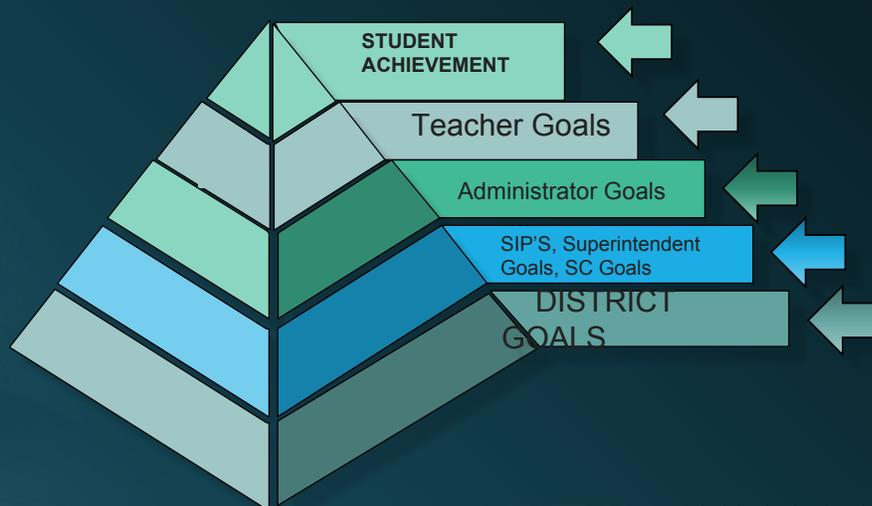
Setting goals enables the board and superintendent to keep the district on a continuous improvement track



Goals let employees and the community know where the district is headed

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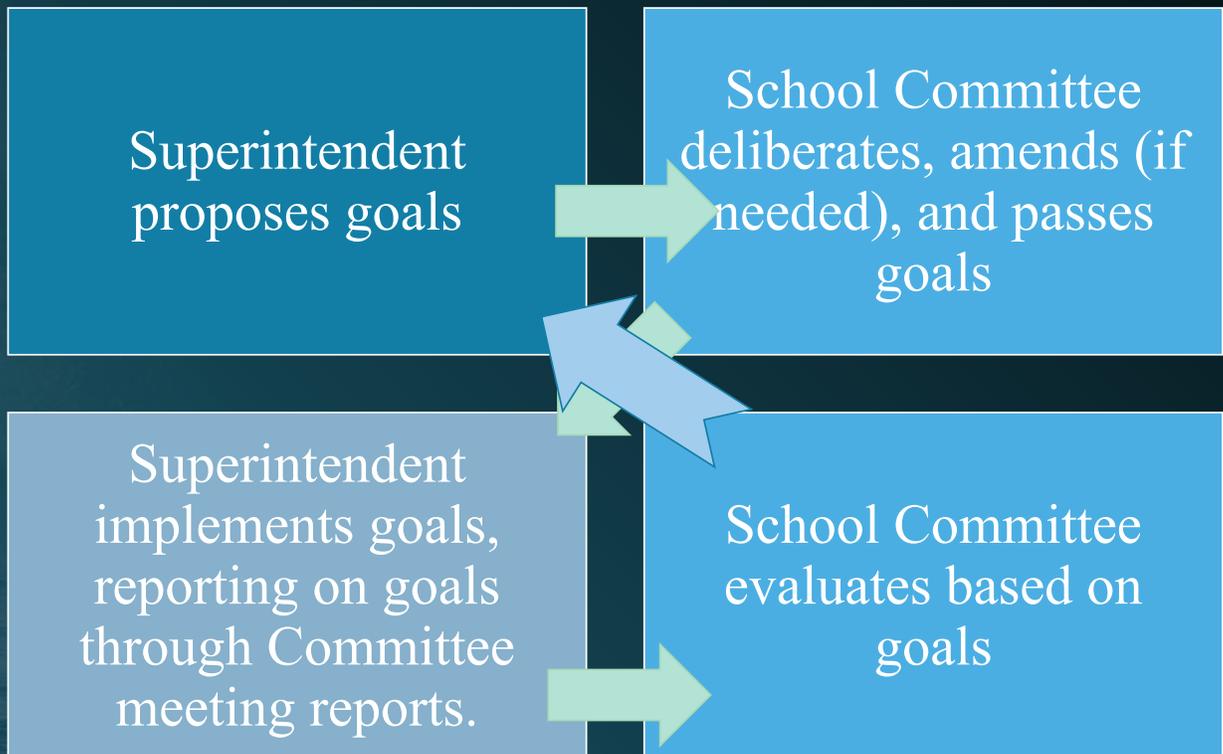
Goal Alignment



NOTE: None of this is in isolation! They build up, and they are in dialogue with one another.

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Sorting out roles in goals



How does this work?

Goals
Policy
Budget
Personnel

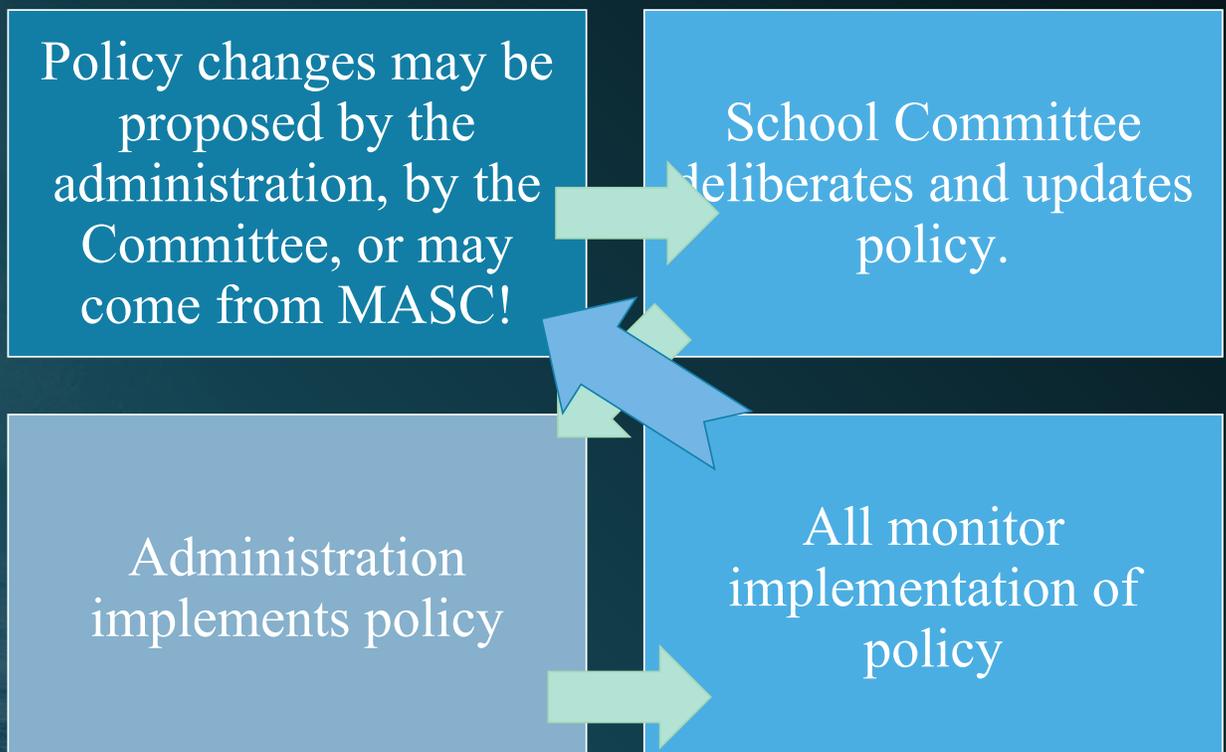
Policy....

- Uses clear statements to set forth the purposes and prescribes, in general terms, the organization and programs of a school district.
- Creates a framework within which the Superintendent and staff can discharge duties with positive direction.
- Is adopted by the Committee.



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Sorting out roles in policy



How does this work?

Goals
Policy
Budget
Personnel

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Budget

- School finance
- Fiscal policy
- Final budget proposal
- Monitor
 - Ensure accuracy
 - Cost centers
 - Transfers
 - Warrants



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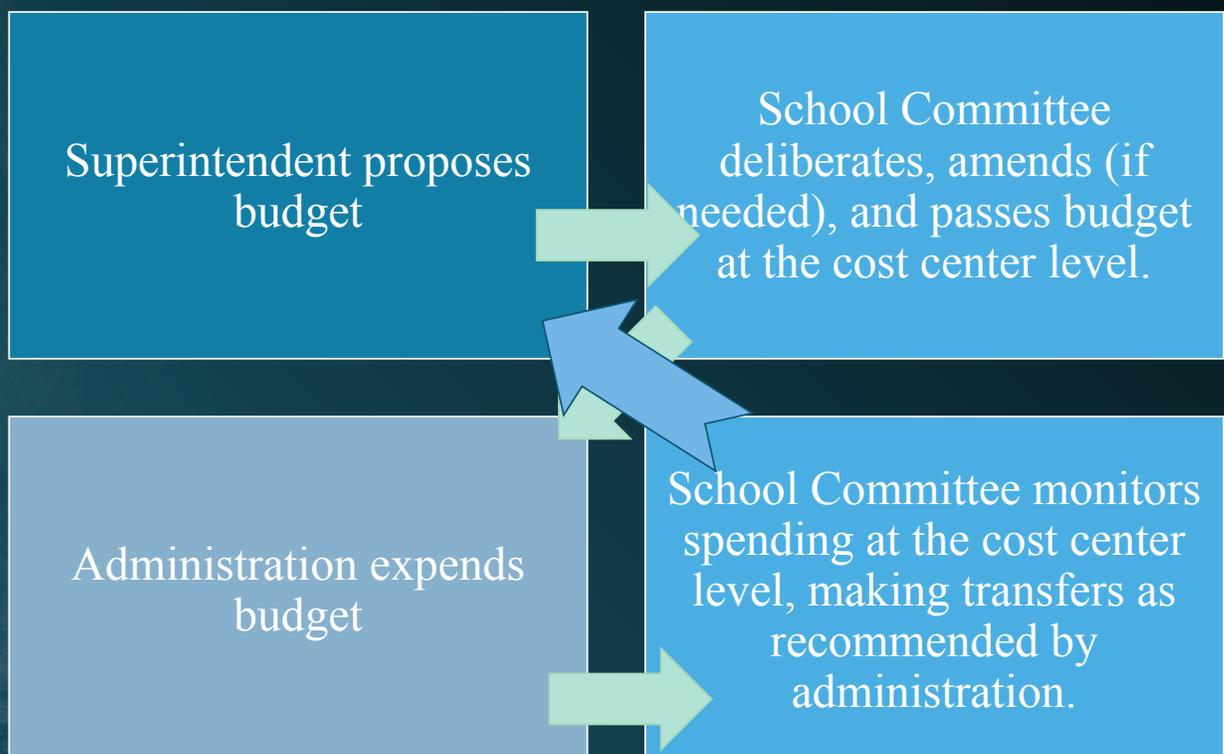
When it comes to budget and the School Committee, **two things are true:**

- The fiscal oversight of the district is under the purview of the Committee. Money is one of the authorities of the Committee.
- All funds, regardless of revenue source, must be allocated by the School Committee in order to be expended.

- The day-to-day management of the budget, the actual expenditure of funds, and the decision of expenditures within cost centers is under the purview of the superintendent.

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Sorting out roles in budget



How does this work?

Goals
Policy
Budget
Personnel

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Personnel

SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Hire & contract with Superintendent

Hire & retain Legal Counsel

Advise and Consent:

Assistant Superintendent
School Business Manager
Director of Special Education
Physicians, Nurses, Attendance Officer

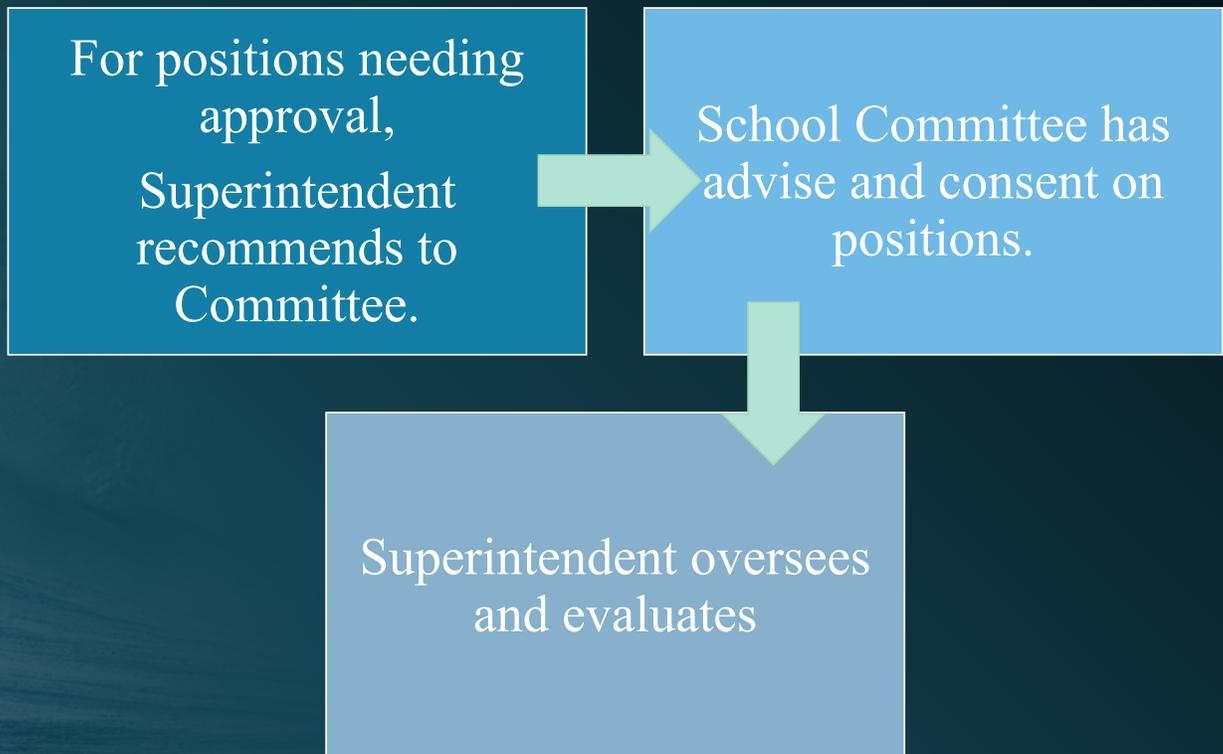
Establish personnel policy
Establish "compensation"
Employer of Record



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Sorting out roles in personnel

MOST HIRING UNDER THE PURVIEW OF THE SUPERINTENDENT!



Sorting out roles in personnel

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING = PURVIEW OF COMMITTEE AS EMPLOYER OF RECORD!





Member Code of Ethics



School Committee Member Ethics
Massachusetts Association of School
Committees Code of Ethics

A School Committee member in his/her relations with their community should:

Realize that their primary responsibility is to the children.

Recognize that their basic function is to be policy making and not administrative.

Remember that they are one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Committee decisions once they are made.

Be well informed concerning the duties of a Committee member on both a local and state level.

Remember that they represent the entire community at all times.

Accept the office as a Committee member as means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from their Committee activities.

Note what this means:

- Your first responsibility is to the students.
- You have no position that is beyond that of MEMBER of the Committee. It does not exist apart from that.
- You know that you have other roles, but to the district staff, your Committee membership is always what they will see first. Always be mindful of that.
- Any administrative responsibility or decision must be redirected to the administration.

School Committee member in their relations with school administration should:

Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration.

Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.

Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging his/her professional duties and hold them responsible for acceptable results.

Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

School Committee Member
Ethics

Massachusetts Association of School
Committees Code of Ethics

Note what this means:

- Act only as a member of the committee.
- Act via agreed upon protocols in communicating with the superintendent, other administrators, and other staff.
- Work with other members through deliberation if reports or information is needed for the community.
- Stay within the policy/budget/goals/evaluation position.
- Refer members of the public to the appropriate district contact.

School Committee in his/her relations with their fellow Committee members should:

Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings

Realize that they should not make statements or promises of how they will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.

Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.

Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of their own Committee or from members of other Committees who may be seeking help or information on school problems

Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

School Committee Member Ethics

Massachusetts Association of School
Committees Code of Ethics

Note what this means:

- Act as a member of the Committee even when in the minority position.
- Do your part to ensure the business of the district can be conducted in meetings (stay on task, defer to the Chair in running the meeting, redirect as needed)
- Recognize that decisions are made in Committee meetings as a result of deliberation.
- Share information and knowledge with other members to strengthen the Committee, and thus the district, as a whole.
- Make decisions only after all information is shared and matters are deliberated.

Protocols as of October 2021

As elected members of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School Committee and ambassadors of the District, we are advocates for our schools and supporters of public education. We pledge to conduct our business in a professional, respectful, thoughtful and efficient manner, and commit to the following protocols in our work with the Superintendent, the Staff/Administration and the general public. We will:

Support the educational welfare and well-being of ALL students in a positive district climate and culture

- Work collaboratively to support the adopted vision and mission of the School District.
- Create policies, develop budgets and ensure administrative accountability to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning.
- Support the Superintendent and staff and hold them accountable for their implementation of policies and operations that are inclusive and equitable.
- Prioritize student needs and interests above all else in the decisions we make.
- Work from a unified vision which defines success and accountability for the Committee, Superintendent, staff and students.
- Commit to the work of being an actively anti-racist community.

Demonstrate professional and collegial relations at all times

- Empower School Committee members to freely express their opinions, concerns and ideas in a climate of trust and mutual respect, even in times of disagreement.
- Be aware of our own unconscious biases, and actively work to value the diversity of lived perspectives that make up our communities.
- Base our decisions on available facts, vote our convictions, and strive to take anti-racist action.
- Once a decision is made, all members will uphold and support the Committee's decision.
- Recognize that authority rests only with majority decisions of the Committee and make no independent commitments or take any independent actions that may compromise the Committee as a whole.
- Debate respectfully, effectively and efficiently so that meeting time is used wisely, being mindful of our large committee.

Dedicate ourselves to establishing and maintaining effective communication

- Channel requests for information, reports and data through the Superintendent and the Chair rather than directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure that each member has equal access to this information in a timely manner and that information will be shared to the extent possible.
- Welcome respectful, thoughtful input from the public and the School Committee in shaping Committee decisions.

- While our meetings are open to the public, and we invite and encourage all citizens to join us, they are not public meetings. Public participation is subject to MA General Law Chapter 30A Section 20g and our School Committee policy BEDH.
- Address questions and concerns in the most efficient manner, by directing parent/guardians to the appropriate person within the district chain of communication via the Parent Communication Map found on abschools.org.
- Communicate questions/concerns as soon as possible, ideally before a meeting.
- Refrain from addressing issues that have not been previously brought to the attention of the Chair and/or Superintendent, except in emergency situations.
- Strive to make our meetings as efficient as possible:

- Add meetings to address topics requiring lengthy discussion.
- Recognize that discussion on certain issues may be delayed.
- Limit the number of agenda items in order to keep meetings to a reasonable time frame.
- Discourage use of meeting packet addendum items.
- Come to meetings prepared by reviewing materials thoroughly ahead of the meeting.

All members are familiar with the Committee's Policy Section B: *School Board Governance and Operations* (posted on abschools.org) and agree to follow the policies and encourage fellow members to do the same.



On protocols

Before the meeting:

- Developing & placing items on agenda
- Getting questions answered before the meeting
- Receiving supporting material before the meeting





At the meeting:

- Room layout
- Structure of agenda
- Length of meetings
- Deliberation at meetings
- Public input at meetings



At the meeting (cont):

- Staff presentations
- Technology devices at meeting table
- Bringing up new ideas
- Springing surprise items or questions
- Allowing majority to set direction for the district
- Personal agendas and vanity projects
- Open meeting law understanding/adherence



Between meeting:

- Individual members requesting information/action from Superintendent
- Individual members requesting action from Superintendent
- Individual members requesting information/action directly from staff
- Individual members requesting action from staff



Between meeting (cont.):

- Board/superintendent communication between meetings
- Board member use of social media
- Board member communication between meetings
- Board member role in public
- Handling emails & other communication from constituents
- Chain of communications
- Handling confidential information
- School visits



Between meeting (cont.):

- Handling e-mails & other communications from constituents
- Chain of communications
- Handling confidential information



Moving forward:

- Is there a change in process needed?
- Is there a need for changed/updated written procedures?
- What else is needed for the Committee and administration to function as a governance team?



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