



MARBLEHEAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Marblehead School Committee

9 Widger Road,
Marblehead, MA 01945
phone: 781.639.3140 x10114
email: schoolcommittee@marbleheadschoools.org

Sarah Fox Committee Member	Brian Ota Committee Member	Jennifer Schaeffner Chairman	Alison Taylor Vice-Chairman	Al Williams Secretary
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June 6, 2025

Marblehead School Committee Operating Protocols

As elected members of the Marblehead School Committee, alongside our Superintendent, our primary goal is continuous improvement to maximize student achievement. Our key objectives are effective governance and ensuring that our students are fully prepared for college, careers, and life. Members of the Marblehead School Committee will abide by the following protocols as individuals and as a committee:

I: In our Governance:

1. We represent the needs and interests of all students in the district, prioritizing these needs in our decision-making. We are committed to creating opportunities for community members to share their insights, helping us better understand the needs of our students, families, and staff.
2. We will foster an environment of trust, respect, and inclusiveness, modeling this in our interactions with one another, administration, staff, students, town officials, and members of the public.
3. The Superintendent is responsible for the day-to-day management and operations of the district. Per Massachusetts law, the School Committee sets policies for the district, approves the budget, and evaluates the Superintendent's effectiveness through the setting of goals and regular evaluation process.
4. School Committee members will recognize that their purview exists when a quorum of the Committee meets in accordance with the Open Meeting Laws, and not as individual members. We understand decisions are codified when a quorum of the Committee is present and derives from majority decisions made during open, properly posted public meetings.
5. We will operate respectfully and in compliance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, while maintaining confidentiality regarding Executive Sessions.

II: In our Operations:

6. We will exercise leadership in vision, planning, policymaking, evaluation, accountability, and advocacy on behalf of all students and the district while respecting the authority of the Superintendent and district administration to manage daily operations.
7. We acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a business meeting that is held in public- not a meeting with the public.
8. Members are encouraged to attend meetings punctually. Those unable to attend a meeting should inform the Chair promptly.
9. We will strive to ensure that meetings are effective and efficient by being well-prepared, conducting business through a clear agenda, and addressing emerging items in subsequent meetings.
10. We agree that discussions will be limited to the agenda, and items will not be added unless the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair determine that delaying the issue until the next meeting would be detrimental.
11. Business will be conducted through a clearly defined agenda that informs the public promptly about what will be discussed at the meeting. Each meeting's packet will be available online the day of the meeting and may include supporting documents for the agenda items.
12. The School Committee encourages community members to attend our meetings and speak on issues within our scope. To ensure everyone has an equitable opportunity to be heard, each speaker will be limited to three minutes. While school district policy allows for a total of fifteen minutes for public comments, this time may be extended at the Chair's discretion.
13. We will keep an open mind and aim to make decisions by consensus, using the best information available at the time. We will consider facts, research, best practices, public input, and recommendations from the Superintendent and other members. Members will arrive at the table informed and ready to discuss issues, but will not make statements of definitive decisions prior to deliberation.
14. We encourage critical thinking and expect all Committee members to respectfully share their individual viewpoints as part of the discussion before reaching a decision.



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15. The Superintendent will share an annual planning calendar with School Committee members. If a member wishes to add an item to an upcoming agenda, they are encouraged to communicate their request promptly.

16. We acknowledge the importance of subcommittees; the School Committee and the Superintendent will utilize them to focus on a specific topic in-depth and to prepare for presentation, deliberation, and possible action by the full School Committee.

III: In our Communications:

17. We emphasize proactive communication to avoid surprises for the School Committee and the Superintendent and enable efficient deliberations. Committee members should contact the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair well in advance of meetings for significant questions or concerns.

18. School Committee members acknowledge the Chair as the official voice of official spokesperson for the Committee and the Superintendent is the spokesperson for the District. The Chair will represent the School Committee in an official capacity when directed to do so by a majority of the members.

19. Requests for information should be directed through the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair, not directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure equal access to responses for all members.

20. Members of the public can contact the School Committee via email at schoolcommittee@marbleheadschoools.org. Remember, these emails are part of the public record, and the Chair will respond on behalf of the Committee when possible. Individual members may respond directly, but will keep these protocols in mind when communicating about items that may come before the Committee.

21. A positive tone is essential for our school system. Trust among School Committee members, the Superintendent, and administration should be maintained through dignity and respect, allowing open expression of opinions and concerns.

22. Committee members will also refer community questions beyond their purview to the Superintendent or other appropriate staff member. The Superintendent or their designee will investigate and provide necessary information for responses.

IV: In our Professional Development:

23. School Committee members will engage in formal training organized by the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair, conducted by recognized organizations such as the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS).

24. All new School Committee members will attend an orientation session in addition to completing the state required ethics training and Charting the Course. If requested, a mentor will be assigned to support them.

25. The School Committee will allocate time each year for self-evaluation to assess their progress in adhering to agreed-upon norms and beliefs and goals.

26. We recognize the importance of honoring our established norms and beliefs and agree to hold each other accountable when we deviate from them.