

Danvers Public Schools
Danvers School Committee Operating Protocols

As members of the Danvers School Committee, we accept the high honor and trust that has been placed in us to ensure that Danvers students receive the best education possible. To that end, we hereby commit to the following in the conduct of our business.

Role

The Danvers School Committee will work towards continuous improvement in teaching and learning by:

- Clearly defining success in district goal setting
- Assuring accountability in the Superintendent evaluation process
- Developing policies that support our vision
- Advocating for the interests, needs, and achievement of all students in our district

School Committee members understand that only the School Committee as a whole has authority; individual members may not act unilaterally. While debate and principled dissent are encouraged, all School Committee members are expected to support and uphold the decision of the majority once a vote is taken and treat other members with respect regardless of their opinion.

Town Collaboration

The School Committee recognizes the importance of working collaboratively with town officials to improve our schools and will actively seek ways to enlist their support for our efforts.

Conduct

School Committee members are expected to be familiar with and adhere to School Committee Policy, Open Meeting Laws and School Committee Member Ethics.

Agendas

School Committee meetings are business meetings held in public, not public meetings. We will strive to hold efficient, effective meetings by:

- Creating a yearly agenda based on district goals, with the understanding that the agenda will evolve as each year progresses
- Beginning meetings with The Pledge of Allegiance and Danvers Public Schools Mission Statement

- Holding Public Comment during meetings to hear from the community. The Chair should monitor these comments and set the expectations of 3 minutes to speak and if additional speakers would like to speak on the same subject-they should not repeat the same content. The Chair may allow or not allow public comments at his/her discretion
 - School Committee members typically should not respond to public comments as it is not a back-and-forth discussion
- Conducting business through a set agenda with suggested times per item
- Planning meetings to not extend beyond 2 ½ hours
- Expecting that presentations will be at most 10 minutes (including student speakers), unless presenters get permission for extended time from chair or his/her designee in advance. This should be clearly communicated to guest speakers in advance of their presentations so expectations and presentations can be set appropriately
- Soliciting committee input on future agenda items at each meeting

Meetings

School Committee members are expected to:

- Arrive well-prepared, early and ready to speak to agenda items
- If going to be absent from scheduled meetings, let the chair know as soon as possible
- Follow Roberts Rules of Order
- Speak only when acknowledged by the chair; do not engage in side conversations
- Report to the Committee on any meetings or events attended as an appointed liaison/representative of the School Committee. Reports should be brief and focus on information that directly impacts Danvers schools, staff, families, and students.
- Keep comments succinct and on topic
- Encourage critical thinking and thoughtful debate
- Listen actively and keep an open mind
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Respect staff and fellow committee members at all times
- Turn off all technology during meeting, unless using a small, unobtrusive screen (i.e. district issued Chromebook) for agenda and packet

Decision-Making

School Committee members will arrive at decisions based on:

- The needs, interests, and achievement of all students in the district
- Data, research, public input, financial impacts, Superintendent's recommendation, and recognized best practices.

Information Requests

School Committee members are encouraged to request information they feel they need in order to carry out their responsibilities. Requests should be made to the Superintendent, Chair well before meetings, to allow time for research. The Superintendent will ensure that all information is distributed equally and consistently to all School Committee members in a timely manner. Under no circumstances should a School Committee member ask staff members for information or action without going through the Superintendent and Chair.

Communication

In order to promote consistency of communication, only the School Committee Chair and/or his/her designee shall have the authority to speak for the School Committee to other public bodies, the media, or individuals who reach out to the body as a whole. When School Committee members attend meetings of other committees or boards as School Committee liaisons or as individuals, they will speak as individuals and not for the Committee, except when reporting on a decision of the majority of the School Committee. All email communication conducted as a School Committee member should be done to

Communication (continued)

and from an official Danvers Public Schools email address, so that email records can be legally collected and stored. Any email received in the capacity of a School Committee member should be forwarded to the Superintendent, Chair for response.

Group Emails

Periodically the School Committee receives emails addressed to the entire School Committee. In these circumstances, the individual committee members may respond individually if they choose to, however the Chair (at a minimum) should respond to each email. If the concern is more of an operational nature, the Superintendent should respond in addition to the Chair. If the Superintendent is not included on the email, it should be forwarded to the Superintendent for their reference.