

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

HOLDEN □ PAXTON □ PRINCETON □ RUTLAND □ STERLING

Minutes

Regular Meeting #1332

Monday, September 16, 2019
7:00 PM

Media Center
Wachusett Regional High School
1401 Main Street, Holden

Wachusett Regional School District Committee

Kenneth Mills, Chair	Linda Long-Bellil
Melissa Ayala	Amy Michalowski
Michael Dennis	Karl Ottmar
Maleah Gustafson	Asima Silva
Sherri Haber	Megan Weeks
Robert Imber	Linda Woodland
Matthew Lavoie	

Committee Members Absent:

Christina Smith, Vice-chair	Laura Kirshenbaum
Scott Brown	Sarah LaMountain
Anthony DiFonso	Benjamin Mitchel
Stephen Godbout	Adam Young

Committee Members Participating Remotely:

None

Administration Present:

Darryll McCall, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Berlo, Deputy Superintendent
Daniel Deedy, Director of Business and Finance
Jeff Carlson, Director of Human Resources
Christine Smith, Administrator of Special Education
Rebecca Petersen, Executive Secretary to the Superintendent

Student Representatives Present:

Rianna Massoni-Nesman	Leah Michalowski (7:19 PM)
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Others present, who desired to be recorded as present (see attached Attendance Sheet – attachment 1).

Chair Mills called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM. He announced the meeting was being broadcast live on HCTV and is also streaming.

I. Public Hearing

Heidi Lahey, Holden resident and WREA President, read a prepared statement (attachment 2).

Kimberley McCormack, WREA member, addressed the Committee.

II. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chair Mills opened by thanking District staff, administrators, bus drivers and others for the smooth opening of schools on August 27th.

Chair Mills took time to explain why the September 9, 2019 Special Meeting/executive session had been cancelled, and reported that a Special Meeting of the full Committee will be held, in open session, on Monday, September 23, 2019. He also noted an executive session will be included on the agenda for the September 23, 2019 Special Meeting, in the event the Committee adjourns to executive session.

Chair Mills welcomed MASC Field Executive Tracy Novick to the meeting and invited her to the podium.

7:19 PM Student Representative Michalowski joined the meeting.

Ms. Novick addressed the Committee, making a presentation on the roles and responsibilities of School Committee members (attachments 3 & 4). At the conclusion of Ms. Novick's address, members were given the opportunity to ask questions. Business/Finance Subcommittee Member Long-Bellil took the opportunity to remind all School Committee members that Ms. Novick will be back in the District on Monday, October 21, 2019 at 7:00 PM to again present to the School Committee on *Financial Oversight/School Finance*, and she encouraged all members to attend if able.

Ms. Novick was thanked for her attendance and she left the meeting.

III. Student Representatives' Reports

Chair Mills welcomed back Student Representative Massoni-Nesman and welcomed new Student Representative Michalowski to the table.

Both Student Representatives reintroduced/introduced themselves. Student Representative Massoni-Nesman reported the new freshmen class seems to be settling in smoothly, fall sports are underway, she mentioned both the recently imposed curfew due to EEE and West Nile and the fact the new turf field is not yet ready for use. Lastly, she mentioned plans for Homecoming are underway. Student Representative Michalowski reported on upcoming PSAT and SAT testing, an Addiction Prevention event to take place in the high school auditorium on September 19, 2019, student clubs at the high school are starting, and she also shared reports provided by middle school students at Central Tree Middle School and Chocksett Middle School.

IV. Superintendent's Report

A. Discussion of Report

Superintendent McCall began by reporting on the issues being experienced with the painting of the newly installed turf field. He explained steps that have been taken and that will be taken to get the field in shape for use. Superintendent McCall expressed his appreciation for the patience shown during this project.

Superintendent McCall asked the Student Representatives about the rollout of Chromebooks to all high school student, both the freshman class and the senior class receiving Chromebooks before the start of the school year. Student Representative Massoni-Nesman reported the availability of Chromebooks for all students is a huge advantage, but she also mentioned it is an adjustment.

Superintendent McCall reported on conversations he had with Town Administrators and town Recreation Departments before he implemented the 6:30 PM evening curfew due to EEE. The District will continue to monitor the EEE threat.

Superintendent McCall reported on the very smooth opening of schools, noting that transportation has been almost flawless.

At Member Ottmar's inquiry, Superintendent McCall spoke about the warranty on the new turf field and explained that the painting of the field is planned to be done twice a year.

Member Imber spoke about information shared about the purchase of curriculum materials, which was included in Deputy Superintendent Berlo's report.

Member Gustafson asked the status of the appointment of a Director of Social Emotional Learning, which Superintendent McCall reported he is expecting this appointment to be finalized by the end of the week. Member Gustafson also expressed her appreciation that Special Education staffing will now be included in the Staffing Plan that is being developed.

There was general conversation about class size numbers and classroom space in light of increasing populations, especially in the town of Holden.

Member Woodland suggested that next school year, Grade 1 teachers be asked what differences they observe comparing kindergarten students who attended half-days and kindergarten students who now attend school full days.

When asked, Superintendent McCall gave a brief overview of INTERFACE referral services that will be available to residents of the five Member Towns. Note was made that these services this year are covered by grant funds, but moving forward, the cost will need to be incorporated into the District budget.

Deputy Superintendent Berlo approached the podium and spoke about Actively Learn, which has been piloted at the high school and will be expanded to the middle schools. Student Representative Massoni-Nesman spoke very positively about her experience with Actively Learn.

When asked by Member Imber, Superintendent McCall gave the anticipated timeline for the Staffing Plan being shared with the full School Committee, explaining he expected the document to go to the Management Subcommittee when it meets on October 28, 2019 and then to the full School Committee.

B. Recommendations Requiring Action by the School Committee

There was no action required of the School Committee.

V. Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business brought before the Committee.

VI. Secretary's Report

A. Approval of #1331 Regular Meeting Minutes of the Wachusett Regional School District Committee held on August 19, 2019

Motion: To approve minutes of the regular meeting of the WRSDC held on August 19, 2019.

(R. Imber)
(M. Weeks)

Vote:

In favor:

Kenneth Mills
Melissa Ayala
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Amy Michalowski
Karl Ottmar
Asima Silva
Megan Weeks
Linda Woodland

Opposed:

None

Abstained:

Michael Dennis

The minutes were approved 12-0-1.

VII. Treasurer's Report/Financial Statements

Chair Mills reminded the Committee that if there were questions regarding the Director of Business and Finance's report that Members should contact the Superintendent; if there were questions regarding the Treasurer's Report, Members should contact the Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Management Subcommittee

Chair Mills reported the Management Subcommittee met on September 3, 2019, and will meet next on October 28, 2019. He reported that a standing Management Subcommittee agenda item will be Advocacy Update. He spoke briefly about presentations at full School Committee meetings, hoping recognition of academic excellence can be included at an upcoming meeting. Chair Mills spoke briefly about the structure of the September 23, 2019 Special Meeting of the School Committee. Lastly, he mentioned the School Committee training to be conducted by Tracy Novick on October 21, 2019, beginning at 7:00 PM, and will be held in the Curriculum Center at the District Central Office.

B. Education Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Imber reported this subcommittee met immediately before this School Committee meeting and that WRHS Principal Beando and Director of School Counseling Lauren Clark were at the meeting to discuss Honors, Advanced Placement, and Dual Enrollment offered at the high school. Subcommittee Chair Imber reported this data will be shared with the full School Committee at a future date. Also discussed at the meeting was the elimination of class rank, action taken several years ago. The report from high school administration is this is not disadvantageous to students and there have been few issues since the decision to eliminate class rank was made.

C. Business/Finance Subcommittee

Subcommittee Chair Dennis reported the subcommittee met immediately before this School Committee meeting, and topics discussed included Medicaid reimbursement, the FY20 Revenue shortfall being addressed, and the FY19 budget close. Director Deedy approached the podium and answered questions about Quarter 1 Medicaid reimbursement.

D. Legal Affairs Subcommittee

In Subcommittee Chair Brown's absence, Vice-chair Lavoie reported the subcommittee continues to review the WRSDC By-Laws, and that negotiations with

three of the District bargaining units (ABA PAs, WAA, and Paraprofessionals) will begin soon.

E. Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee

Superintendent Goals and Evaluation Subcommittee Chair Lavoie reported this subcommittee is scheduled to meet on October 3, 2019, with the expectation the Superintendent's 2019-2020 goals will be finalized and ready for approval by the full School Committee.

F. Facilities and Security Subcommittee

In Subcommittee Chair Young's absence, Vice-chair Woodland provided a thorough report of the September 10, 2019 meeting of this subcommittee. The subcommittee is scheduled to meeting on October 7, 2019.

G. Audit Advisory Board (B. Mitchel, Chair)

In Chair Mitchel's absence, no report was made.

Business/Finance Subcommittee Chair Dennis did report the FY19 close is underway and the auditors have been on site at the Central Office to work on the audit.

H. Ad Hoc Subcommittees

I. Building Committees

1. Mountview Building Committee

No report was made.

Superintendent McCall did comment on the condition of the fields at Mountview, noting the water/irrigation system could be an issue.

J. School Council Reports:

Central Tree Middle School (S. Haber), Chocksett Middle School (L. Woodland), Davis Hill Elementary School (K. Mills), Dawson Elementary School (L. Kirshenbaum), Glenwood Elementary School (A. DiFonso), Houghton Elementary School (M. Ayala), Mayo Elementary School (A. Young), Mountview Middle School (S. Brown), Naquag Elementary School (M. Lavoie), Paxton Center School (K. Ottmar), Thomas Prince School (A. Silva), Wachusett Regional High School (L. Long-Bellil/A. Michalowski), Special Education Parent Advisory Council (M. Gustafson), Early Childhood Center (L. Woodland)

Member Gustafson – SEPAC – Thank you extended to Administrator of Special Education Christine Smith for scheduling Meet & Greets.

IX. Public Hearing

No members of the public wished to address the School Committee.

X. New Business

There was no new business brought before the School Committee.

XI. Adjournment

Motion: To adjourn.

(R. Imber)
(M. Weeks)

Vote:

In favor:

Kenneth Mills
Melissa Ayala
Michael Dennis
Maleah Gustafson
Sherrie Haber
Robert Imber
Matthew Lavoie
Linda Long-Bellil
Amy Michalowski
Karl Ottmar
Asima Silva
Megan Weeks
Linda Woodland

Opposed:

None

The motion was unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Darryll McCall, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

DM:rlp

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Sign-in sheets
- Attachment 2 – Statement by Heidi Lahey
- Attachment 3 – School Committee Roles and Responsibilities
- Attachment 4 – MASC Open Meeting Law

Attachment 1

**Regular Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2019**

FOR YOUR INFORMATION AND REVIEW IN ADVANCE OF SPEAKING, PLEASE TAKE A COPY OF THE *GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC HEARING* (printed on light yellow paper).

[illegible]

WACHUSETT REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMITTEE
Regular Meeting
Monday, September 16, 2019

PLEASE **PRINT** YOUR NAME AND YOUR TOWN

[illegible]

Good evening, Heidi Lahey 166 Bullard Street Holden
president of the Wachusett Regional Education
Association, teacher, parent, resident, taxpayer.

Almost four weeks ago, the WREA surveyed the public at Holden Days. We have had a table for four consecutive years, engaging in conversations with parents, students, grandparents and taxpayers about public education. Last year, we decided to survey the public about budget priorities for the school district. The number one priority selected on our survey was free full day kindergarten. I'm thrilled to say that this priority has been met and Wachusett has joined the majority of districts across Massachusetts that offer tuition free full day kindergarten.

WREA decided to repeat our survey again this year, minus the full day K choice. I'm here tonight to briefly share the results with the school committee members and the public at large.

There were 96 surveys completed. Participants voted in a variety of ways. Some ranked the choices, others selected multiple choices without ranking. 47 selected only one or two.

Here are the results.

83 votes for reduced class sizes and caseloads

59 votes for increased art/music/PE

48 votes each for both increased AP class options at HS
and library staff K-8

42 votes for more elective courses

40 votes for more recess time

The top priority as measured by this very informal survey (and I fully own that I am not a professional pollster) was reducing class sizes and caseloads. The second priority is to increase art/music/PE.

Educators are here tonight with class size signs, showing their numbers of students in classes that exceed your school committee policy of 19 children grades k-2, 22 children in grades 3-5, and 23 children for middle and high school classes. Next month, the superintendent will add class size information to his report. Clearly the public supports reducing class size as a budget priority. As this body deliberates and discusses the budget for FY21, we urge you to make measurable progress toward reducing class sizes and caseloads.

School Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Wachusett Regional School Committee
September 13, 2019



Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics

Preamble

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 in addition to that implied above:

- Community responsibility
- Responsibility to school administration
- Relationships to fellow Committee members

POP QUIZ

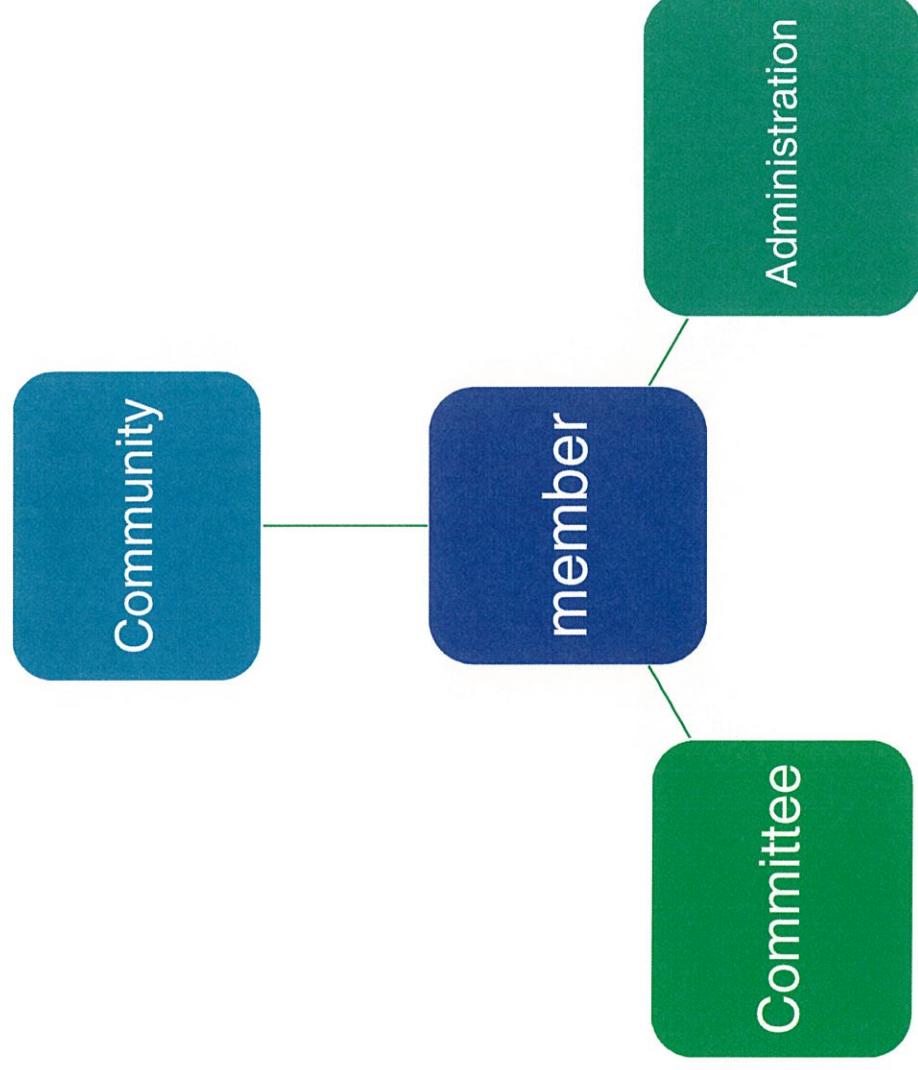
How much authority
does an individual
school committee
member have?

NONE

Unless delegated by
the committee

Only a quorum of the
committee meeting
together in a properly
posted meeting has
any authority.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics



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A School Committee member in their 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 represents 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.

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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 their professional duties and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.

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

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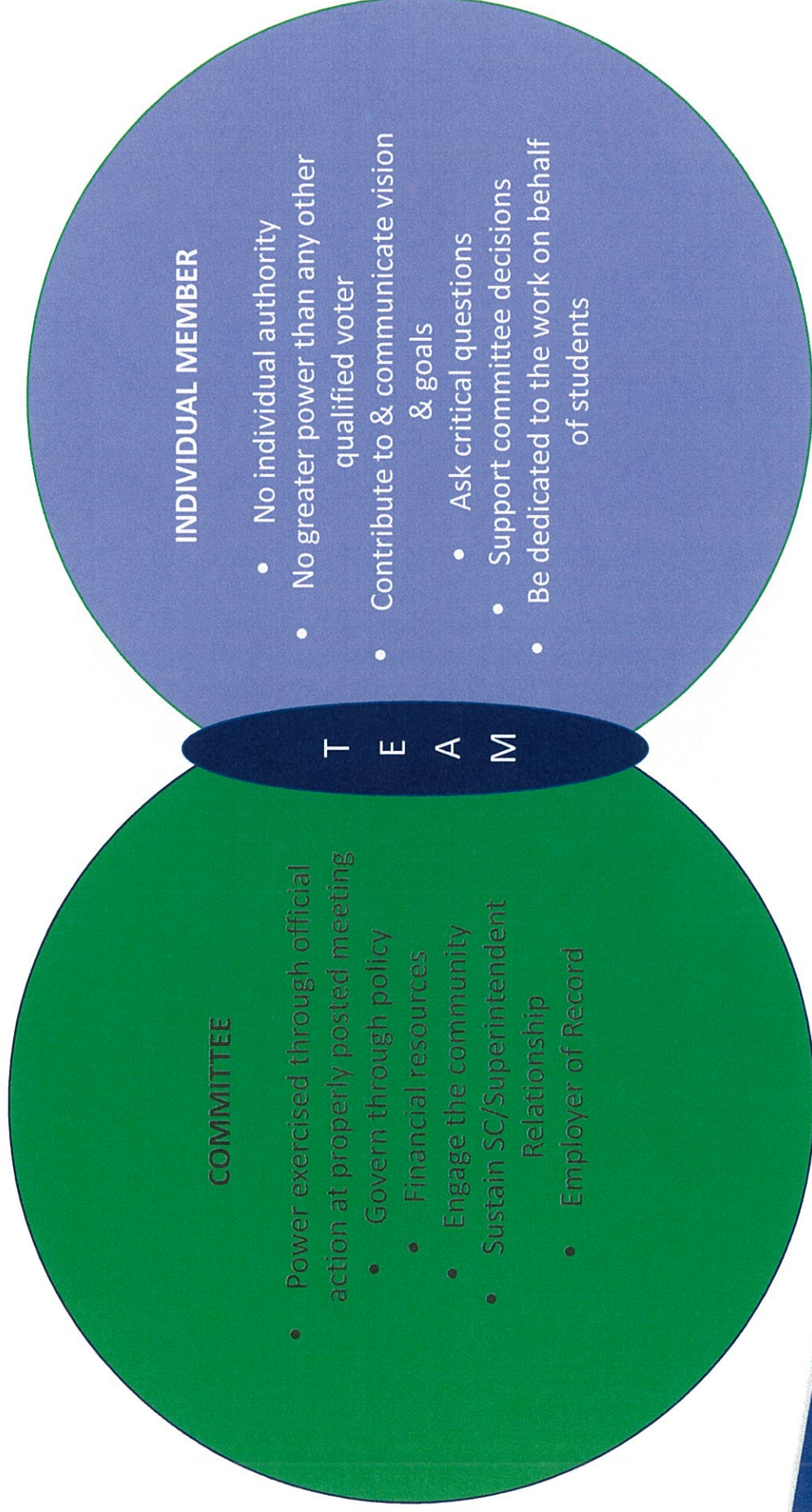
Realize that he/she should not make statements or promises of how they will vote on matters that will come before the Committee.

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.

Understanding & Respect for Roles



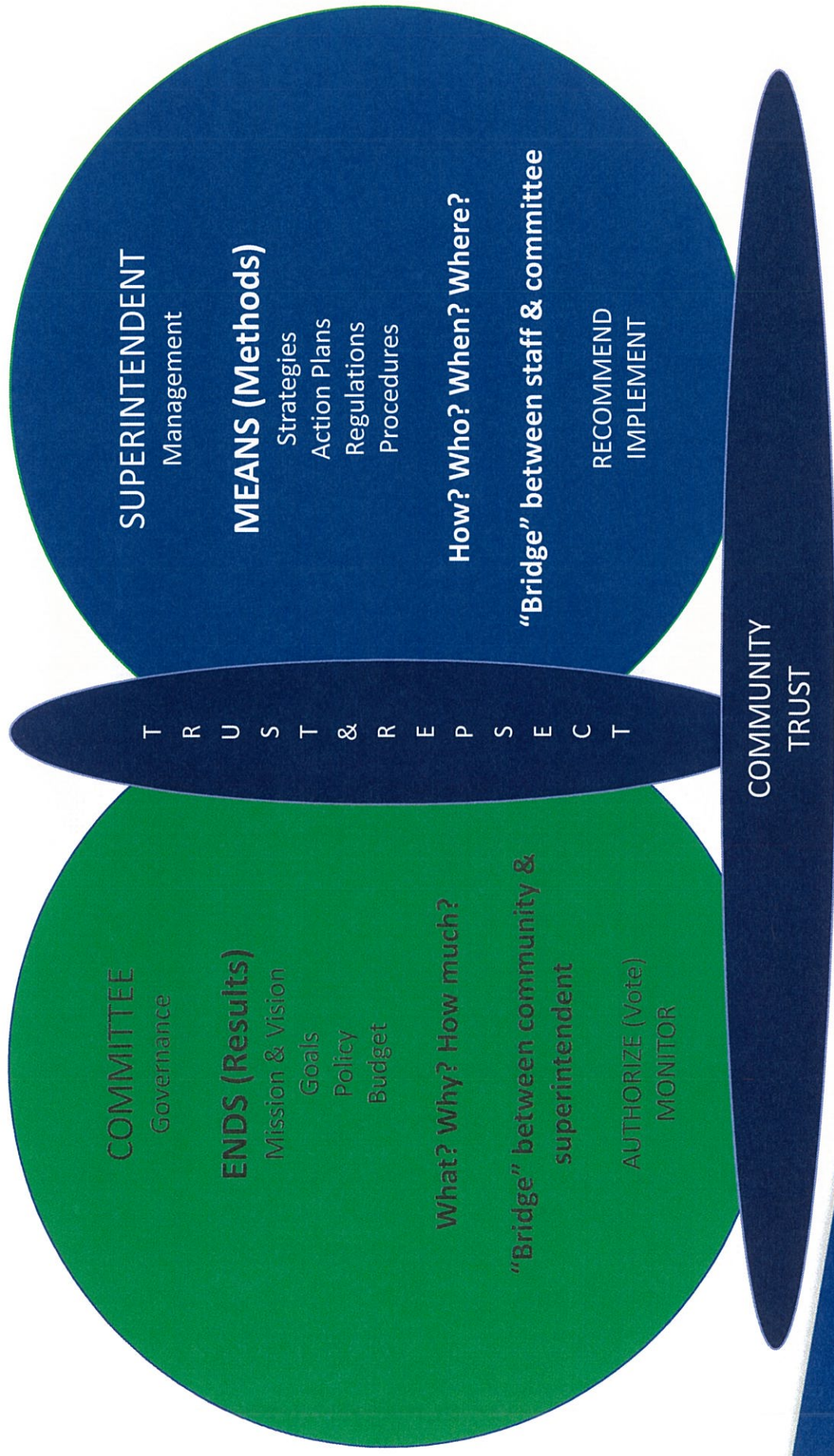
POP QUIZ

How many bosses does
the superintendent have?

ONE

The full committee
meeting in a properly
posted meeting is the
overseeing authority
of the superintendent,
not individual
members of the
committee.

Understanding & Respect for Roles



When the Lines *Blur*?

- The lines are not always clear
- Differences should be discussed and resolved
- Operating Protocols can help

Municipal Legislature for Schools

MGL 71:37

➤ Establish Educational Goals



➤ Enact Policies



➤ Approve & Monitor Budget



➤ Hire & Evaluate Superintendent (And certain other positions)



➤ Employer of Record on Collective Bargaining Agreements

Goal Setting

“The School Committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall....establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of the law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education.”

MGL 71:37



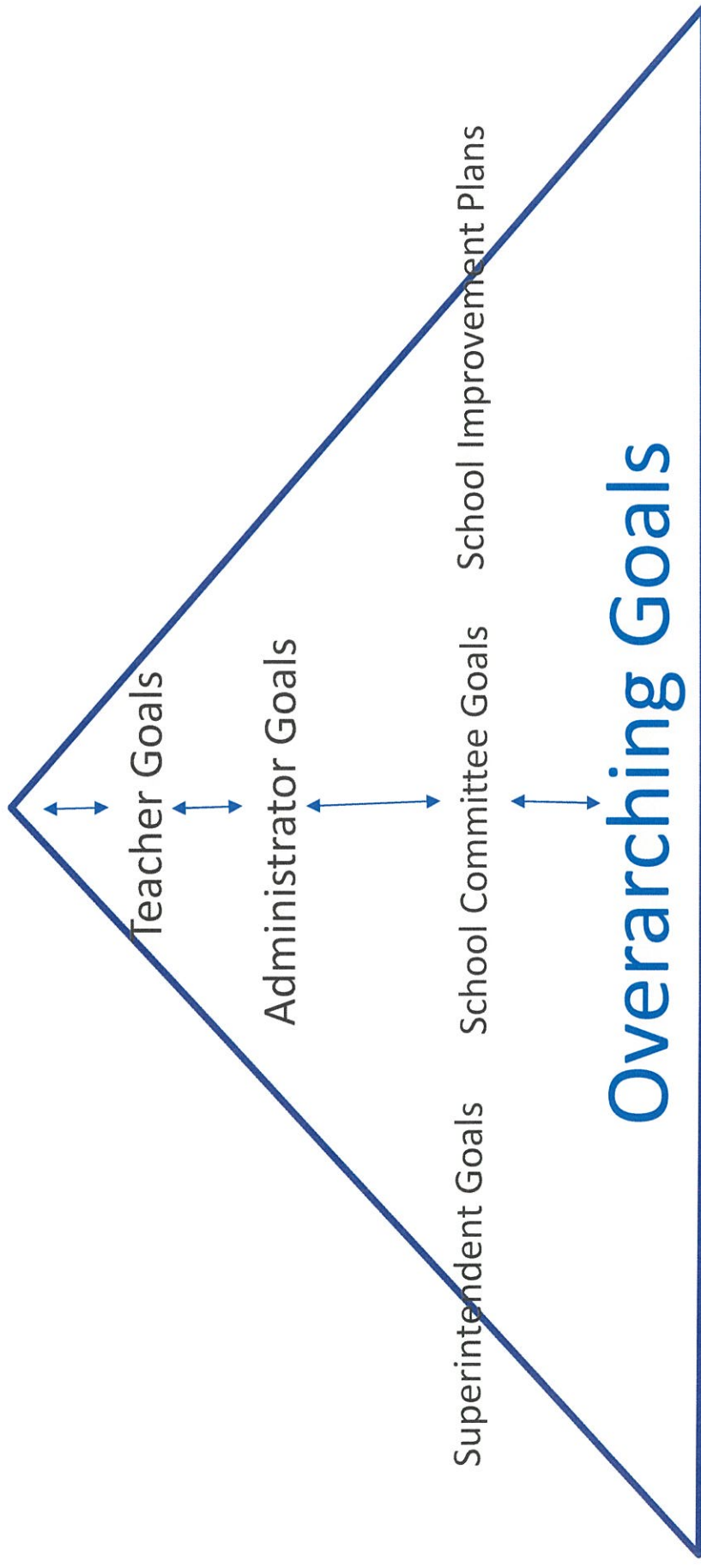
POP QUIZ

What is the goal of any committee?

**Student
achievement!**

Goal Alignment

Student Achievement



Policy

“The School Committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall....establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of the law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education.”

MGL 71:37



POP QUIZ

Where can one find
policy as established by
the school committee?

MANY places!
(see next slide)

POLICY IS FOUND EVERYWHERE – NOT JUST IN YOUR POLICY MANUAL

- District Policy Manual
- Student Handbooks
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Strategic Plans
- Official Goals and Objectives, Mission and Vision Statements
- School Committee Minutes (Motions, Orders)
- Grant Applications (e.g., Race to the Top)
- Legal Documents Filed For You by Counsel
- Directives of the Superintendent
- Past Practices
- Regional Agreements
- Town Charters
- Budget



Personnel

“The School Committee
...shall employ a
superintendent of schools
and fix his compensation. A
superintendent...shall
manage the system in a
fashion consistent with state
law and the policy
determinations of that
school committee.

MGL 71:59



Personnel

School Committee

- Hire & contract with Superintendent
- Hire & retain legal counsel
- “Advise & Consent” on:
 - Associate/Assistant Superintendent
 - School Business Manager
 - Special Education Director
 - Physicians, Nurses, Attendance Officers
- Set district personnel policy
 - Job Descriptions
 - Number of Positions funded
- Establish “compensation” for principals and others not set by collective bargaining
- Employer of record for Collective Bargaining Agreements

Superintendent

- Hired by and reports to School Committee
- Chief Educational/Administrative Officer with Executive Authority
- Management of the Schools
- **Authority for Personnel**
- Supervises Principals
 - “Site Based Managers”
- Implements District Policy
- Initiates Budget Proposal
- Manages Budget approved by School Committee

Budget

The vote of the legislative body of a city or town shall establish the total appropriation for the support of the public schools, but may not limit the authority of the school committee to determine expenditures within the total appropriation.

MGL 71:34



POP QUIZ

When during the year
does the School
Committee oversee the
budget?

ALL year long!

Budgeting is **not** a once-a-year job.

Reviewing and signing warrants
Quarterly financial reporting
Reviewing implementation of goals
through spending
Asking questions as needed

**Public transparency of public spending comes
through the School Committee.**

Per DOR opinion 94-660, “only the school committee has the authority to transfer amounts between line items (allocations) in its budget and cannot delegate this authority to any other municipal board or officer”

From Candidate to Colleague

Candidate

- There are no rules
- No allegiance to the Committee or administration
- Role is always clear
- Knowledge and experience are limited

Committee Member

- No authority as individual
- Must work with others
- Always have “hat” on
- More need to understand complex issues
- Must weigh competing concerns
- No expectations of privacy with constituents

From Candidate to Colleague

How does MY Committee work?

- Operating Protocols
- Respect for and from colleagues
- Chain of Communication
- Meeting Agendas
- Ongoing goals and issues

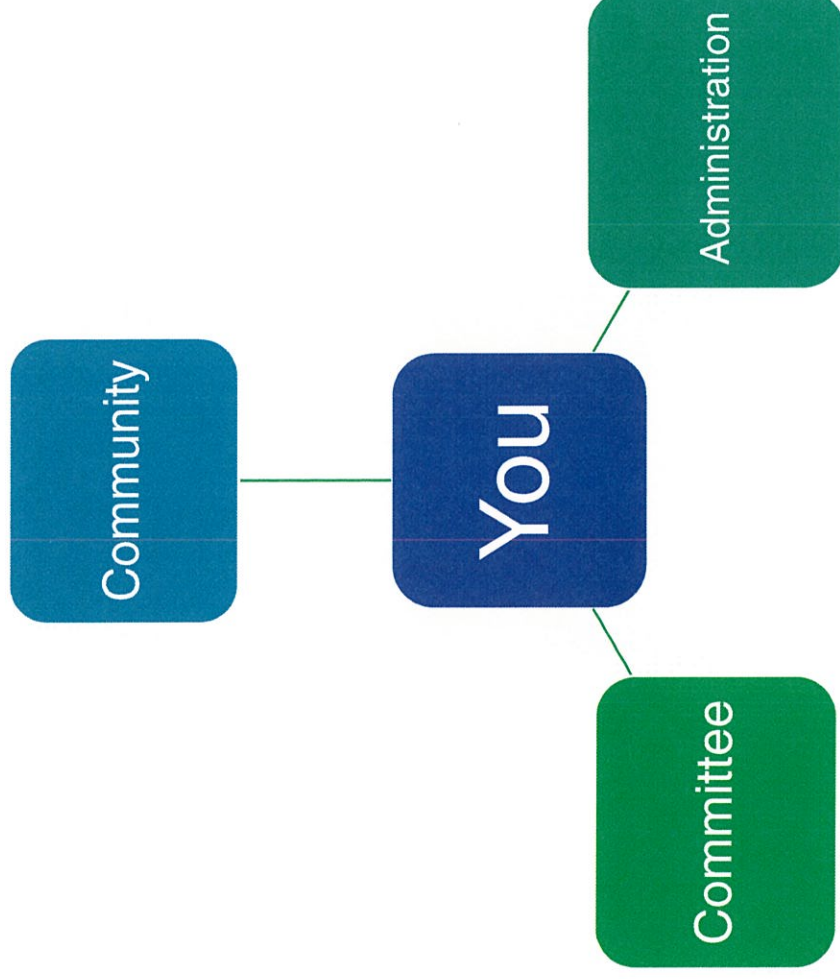
Never forget the OPEN MEETING LAW!



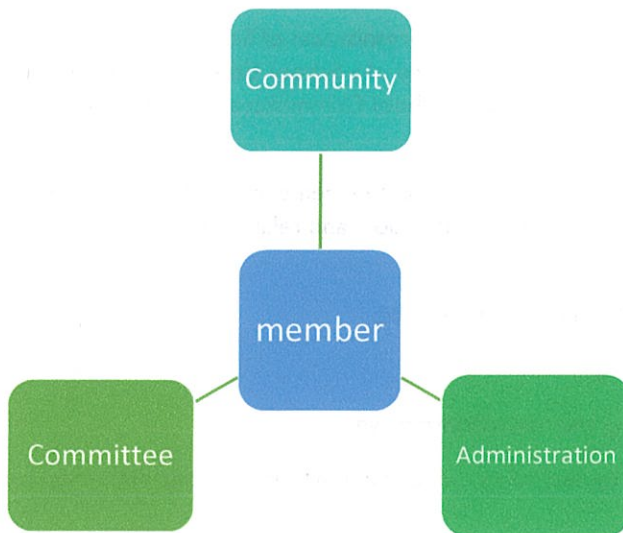
Keep in mind:

- The oversight of the school district is done by the body of the School Committee, not by individual members.
- The Committee is a governance board which must work as a single entity, even with disagreement.
- The Committee has the responsibility of policing itself to ensure that it is functioning as intended.

Massachusetts Association of School Committees Code of Ethics



Further questions?
Tracy Novick, tnovick@masc.org



The superintendent has a
SINGLE boss:

The School Committee
AS A BODY

meeting in a properly posted
public session

As the municipal legislature for schools,
School Committees:

- ESTABLISH DISTRICT GOALS
- ENACT POLICIES
- APPROVE AND MONITOR THE BUDGET
- HIRE AND EVALUATE THE SUPERINTENDENT

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responsibility of policing itself to
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Student Achievement



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