

*Arlington School Committee
Standing Subcommittee: Policies and Procedures
Wednesday, October 23, 2019
5:00 PM*

*Arlington High School School Committee Room 869 Massachusetts Avenue, 6th
Floor Arlington, MA*

DRAFT MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 5:05 p.m.

Present: Paul Schlichtman, subcommittee chair
Jane Morgan, subcommittee member
Jennifer Susse, school committee member
Kathleen Bodie, Superintendent.

Absent: Kirsi Allison-Ampe

On a **motion** by Ms. Morgan, **seconded** by Mr. Schlichtman, the minutes of March 19, 2019 were **approved**. (2-0)

Mr. Schlichtman noted that Dr. Allison-Ampe was absent, as she broke her wrist in a cycling accident.

School Committee Meetings – File BEA and BEDB, Presentations to the School Committee

There was a discussion of the length of presentations made to the school committee. The discussion centered around the length of some presentations to the committee. Posted meetings are the only opportunities for committee members to deliberate, and meetings should be structured to permit discussion and deliberation. It was noted that Town Meeting restricts a speaker's time to seven minutes, and a 15-minute restriction without a suspension of the rules could be a reasonable requirement for committee meetings.

The discussion also focused on the role of presentations as a tool to inform the public, as the meetings are televised. Consequentially, the quality of presentations and PowerPoints need to reflect best practices and said the National Conference of State Legislatures has a series of guidelines for effective presentations.

Mr. Schlichtman said he would prepare proposed revisions to File BEDB that would reflect the discussion and present it at the next meeting.

School Committee Policy Questions – submitted by Jennifer Susse

BDFA- SCHOOL COUNCILS
Policy states:.

At least once per year, the School Committee shall facilitate the provision of training for all interested School Council members, said training to be provided by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees or a comparable training provider.

Does this happen? Should we revise this paragraph? The superintendent said she would check with principals, and bring back a recommendation at a subsequent meeting.

The policy also states, “The School Council shall meet regularly during the school year.” There was discussion regarding the possible clarification or “regularly,” and the superintendent said she would discuss meeting schedules with principals and bring back a recommendation to the subcommittee.

BEA – REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The policy requires the committee to schedule 20 meetings for each school year. This policy was written to solve conflicts under the prior policy which set meetings on the second and fourth Thursday of the month. Discussion focused on the difficulty of scheduling 20 meetings. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of reducing the number of required meetings to 18 or 19. It was noted that the committee has the authority to cancel scheduled meetings and schedule special meetings.

On a **motion** by Mr. Schlichtman, **seconded** by Ms. Morgan, it was **voted** to submit for first reading to the full school committee an amended File BEA, changing the number of scheduled meetings from 20 to 19. (2-0)

BEDH: PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

BEDH-E GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Current policy requires a 20-minute public comment agenda item. The current practice is to schedule 10 minutes. Should the policy be changed to define the public comment period as not exceeding 20 minutes, but not requiring a 20 minute agenda item?

BEDH and BEDH-E are inconsistent regarding topics permitted to be discussed during public comment. The subcommittee favored removing the restriction to topics on the agenda, and making the language consistent with BEDH-E. The committee also looked to specify in BEDH that the committee could ask clarifying questions, as stated in BEDH-E, and clarifying the response to topics brought forth in public comment. Mr. Schlichtman will write a proposal for amending BEDH and BEDH-E, and will present recommendations at the next meeting.

BGD – SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

The subcommittee discussed the review and approval of student handbooks. The superintendent will research regulations and report back to the subcommittee. It was suggested that the committee might want to vote to receive handbooks at a meeting in May, and approve any changes to handbooks as they are made.

BGE – POLICY DISSEMINATION

This policy requires a calendar of actions required by various policies to be kept and maintained, Policy language does not require the calendar to be posted online, but the subcommittee agreed it would be a good idea to have the calendar on the district website.

CBI – EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A clause requiring the superintendent to submit a written report outlining progress on goals was not included in the current version of CBI. Discussion during policy revisions focused on the need to have evaluation procedures in the superintendent's contract, not in the policy manual. No change in the policy is recommended.

FAB – ATHLETIC FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

Discussion focused on eliminating this policy, as most facilities are not under the jurisdiction of the school committee. The school department makes recommendations through the town's capital budget.

FB – FACILITIES PLANNING ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS

The subcommittee discussed the requirements of reporting on capacity numbers for elementary schools. The subcommittee and superintendent came to consensus that a more detailed report should be provided annually.

GDB – SUPPORT STAFF CONTRACTS AND COMPENSATION PLANS

Provisions of this policy are fulfilled during the annual budget process and in collective bargaining. No change recommended.

JIB – STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

This policy is aligned with state law.

JICE – STUDENT PUBLICATIONS

The superintendent will discuss this policy with appropriate staff for the purpose of making recommendations.

JJ – CO-CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The subcommittee supports the policy, and will be looking for the report (required by June 1 of each year).

JJD – STUDENT ACTIVITY FEES

Policy requires the committee to reexamine fee structure every three years. The subcommittee supports retaining the current policy.

KFD – SURPLUS SPACE POLICY FOR EXTENDED DAY PROGRAMS

The subcommittee recommends the full committee refer KFD to the Community Relations subcommittee.

KF-E - FEE STRUCTURE FOR RENTAL OF SCHOOL BUILDING SPACE

The subcommittee discussed the following paragraph, and recommended its removal from the current policy.

The Schedule of refundable damage deposits, the energy charge rates, and applications for rental will be reviewed by the Business Office by March 15 (originally May 15) of each year to be approved by the School Committee.

IHB – SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAMS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

The policy requires a report on the progress the district is making on special education district goals. The subcommittee discussed the possibility of adding a date for this report.

On a **motion** by Ms. Morgan, **seconded** by Mr. Schlichtman, it was **voted** to adjourn 6:52.

Chair's recommended revision for discussion and approval at next subcommittee meeting

File: BEDB - AGENDA FORMAT/PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

An agenda shall be provided for all regular, special, adjourned and planning meetings.

A tentative agenda for each regular meeting shall be determined by the chairperson in collaboration with the Superintendent. It shall be submitted to the administrative assistant of the Committee for preparation and delivery to the members, notice to the press, and posting on bulletin boards of all schools. The agenda and supporting materials, as gathered by the Superintendent, shall be sent to Committee members two workdays preceding the School Committee meeting, no later than 4:00 p.m., except for emergencies. Any items received by the administrative assistant later than 4:00 p.m. two workdays preceding the School Committee meeting shall be held and heard the following meeting, except for emergencies.

In addition, the administrative assistant shall provide the following to the Arlington Public Schools Direct of Technology to be posted on the website:

- School Committee agendas, posted with a disclaimer that the agenda is tentative and may be subject to change up until the time of the meeting
- School Committee minutes, motions and appropriate back up material
- Subcommittee agendas, posted with a disclaimer that the agenda is tentative and may be subject to change up until the time of the meeting
- Subcommittee minutes, motion and appropriate back up material

The following shall be included, but not limited to, items of business to be considered at each regular meeting:

- Public Comment
- Consent Agenda
- Superintendent's report
- Report of subcommittees and announcements

The Committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda except as it votes to rearrange the order for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the committee, or to expedite committee business.

Items of business may be suggested by any School Committee member, staff member, or ~~citizen~~ **resident of the town**. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the Superintendent. ~~Citizens~~ **Individuals** may submit such requests to the school committee chair through the Committee's administrative secretary.

Copies of the final agenda shall be available to spectators at all open session meetings for which an agenda is required.

School committee members are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law, limiting opportunities for members to deliberate with each other. In order to facilitate deliberation

and discussions, reports and presentations directed at the Committee shall not extend 15 minutes, unless the rules are suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present. Written reports may be received by a vote of the Committee and entered into the record of the meeting, and shall not be read aloud at the meeting. All presentations shall be consistent with the high instructional standards of the Arlington Public Schools, and PowerPoints shall be crafted in a manner consistent with best practices.

Whenever possible the materials for the meeting will be made available online to the public at the start of the meeting.

All published agendas shall contain the following language:

“Massachusetts law requires all open session meetings of public bodies to be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. If you need reasonable accommodations in order to participate in the meeting, contact the Administrative Assistant to the Arlington School Committee [Insert Name/Contact Information] in advance of the meeting.”

Consent Agenda

Items that are considered to be routine shall be placed on the Consent Agenda and shall be enacted by one motion. The Agenda shall have an asterisk (*) next to each item placed on the Consent Agenda. There shall be no separate discussion of items placed on the Consent Agenda unless a member of the School Committee so requests, in which event the item shall be considered in its normal sequence on the agenda. Any one member of the committee may remove an item from the Consent Agenda for discussion. Items that may be placed on the consent Agenda may include but are not limited to the following: a) minutes of previous meetings, b) changes to the policy manual (second reading), c) field trips, d) warrant approvals, and e) other items that deemed to be routine by the Chair.

For the benefit of the public, the Chair will read the following paragraph and the list of items included in the Consent Agenda:

"All items are considered to be routine and will be enacted by one motion. There will be no separate discussion of these items unless a member of the Committee so requests, in which event the item will be considered in its normal sequence on the agenda. "

CONTRACT REFERENCE: AEA (Unit A&B)

CROSS REF: [BEDH](#), Public Participation **Comment** at School Committee Meetings

Chair's recommended revision for discussion and approval at next subcommittee meeting

File: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires ~~citizens~~ **residents** of the ~~District~~ **town** to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that ~~all citizens~~ **individuals** who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee. The length of the public comment period shall ~~be~~ **extend to but shall not exceed** 20 minutes unless the Chair chooses to extend the time.

2. Speakers shall identify themselves and will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit.

~~3. Topics for discussion must be limited to those items listed on the School Committee meeting agenda for that evening.~~

3. Although a public body may consider an unanticipated topic that was not listed in the meeting notice, the Attorney General strongly encourages public bodies to postpone discussion and action on topics that are controversial or may be of particular interest to the public if those topics were not listed in the meeting notice. Committee members may ask clarifying questions through the chair, but discussion or action should be facilitated by using a motion to refer a topic to the appropriate subcommittee, or requesting a topic to be placed on a subsequent agenda.

4. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address.

5. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.

6. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.

7. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members' review and consideration at an appropriate time. **Written comments presented to the Committee shall be included in the official record of the meeting.**

Chair's recommended revision for discussion and approval at next subcommittee meeting

File: BEDH-E - GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

A School Committee Meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school district community to view your School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter [30A Section 20](#)(f) governs public participation at open meetings covering all public bodies.

Chapter 30A:20 [Notice, Remote Participation, Public Participation, Certification]

(f) No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting.

The School Committee believes that the school district community should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore the Committee has set aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public. In addition, if the Committee believes that an issue requires a dialogue with the school district community, the Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that issue.

Any ~~citizen~~ **person** who wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item which is of interest to him/her and within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities may request to be placed on the agenda for a particular meeting. Such request should be in writing and should be received by the Superintendent of Schools at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. Such request should contain background statements which would explain the scope and intent of the agenda item. The Chair of the Committee works with the Superintendent to formulate the meeting agendas. Together they will determine whether or not to place an item on the agenda and if the item is to be taken up they will also determine when to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter.

Here are the general rules for the Committee's public comment period:

1. Public Comment ~~shall be for a period of 20 minutes and~~ shall generally follow the opening of the meeting. The Committee reserves the right to rearrange its agenda to accommodate scheduled presenters.
2. Any ~~citizen~~ **person** wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address and shall speak for no longer than 3 minutes. No ~~citizen~~ **person** may speak more than once without permission of the Chair. All ~~citizen~~ **persons** shall speak to the full Committee through the Chair and shall not address individual members or administrators.
3. Individuals may address topics on the agenda, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. The Chair shall rule

out of order any individual who fails to honor the guidelines or who addresses a matter inappropriate for public comment.

4. Any Committee member may direct questions to the speaker through the Chair in order to clarify comments of the speaker.

Presented to full school committee for first reading, November 14

File: BEA - REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The School Committee shall schedule ~~20~~ **19** Regular Meetings during each school year. Regular meetings shall be scheduled on Thursday evenings, with specific dates to be set by a vote of the Committee at the time of the adoption of the annual school calendar.

The approved School Committee calendar shall be distributed to all Principals and administrators with instructions that every effort shall be made to avoid scheduling evening events on School Committee meeting nights.

Regular Meetings shall begin promptly at 6:30 p.m. and adjourn by 10:00 p.m., unless the rules are suspended by a two-thirds vote of the members present. A time shall be set by majority vote of the Committee members present for completion of the business.

Chair's recommended revision for discussion and approval at next subcommittee meeting

File: BE - SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The meeting is the vehicle through which the School Committee must, as a unit, determine its course and make decisions in the exercise of its authority and responsibility. The Committee recognizes the value of an informed community and encourages attendance at its meetings.

Meetings of the Committee shall be classified as follows:

- organizational
- regular
- special
- adjourned
- emergency
- public hearing

Time and Place

All regular, special, and adjourned meetings and public hearings shall begin at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise voted by the Committee.

Meetings shall take place at the School Committee Room on the 6th floor, Fusco Building, Arlington High School, unless otherwise voted by the School Committee or unless an emergency requires otherwise, in which case the Chairperson and/or the Superintendent shall make appropriate arrangements.

All open session meetings of the Committee shall be accessible to members of the public, including those with disabilities. The Chairperson and/or Superintendent shall ensure that meeting are held in handicap accessible locations.

Every meeting of the School Committee will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

Adjourned Meetings

An adjourned meeting shall be held only for the purpose of completing the business of a previous meeting's agenda, if the pending items of business cannot be added to the agenda of the next regular meeting. The **date and** time for an adjourned meeting shall be determined by a majority vote of the Committee members present at the time of adjournment of the unfinished meeting. **An adjourned meeting shall be posted as though it is a new meeting. A new meeting notice shall be posted 48 hours in advance.**

~~The administrative secretary will attempt to notify any member who was absent when the decision was made regarding the adjourned meeting.~~

Emergency Meetings

An emergency meeting may be called only under the most extreme conditions, when it is impossible for a Committee decision to be delayed the 48 hours required for a special meeting. Such a meeting may be called only by the Chairperson or Superintendent after consultation with legal counsel.

Every possible effort shall be made by the Chairperson and/or secretary to notify every member of the Committee.

Any decisions made at an emergency meeting shall be entered into the minutes of the next regular meeting.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A:18-25](#); [66:17C](#)

CROSS REFS.: [BDA](#), School Committee Organizational Meeting

[BE](#) subcodes (all relate to School Committee Meetings)

[BEC](#), Executive Sessions

[BEDA](#), Notification of School Committee Meetings

Recommended for deletion (First Reading) following vote at next subcommittee meeting

File: FAB - ATHLETIC FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT NEEDS

In order to ensure equity in athletic programs, the Athletic Director shall compile annually a report on the improvement needs of the various athletic facilities used by the Arlington High School athletic program.

This report will include information on the condition and needs of field, rinks, courts, etc. and associated amenities, as reported by coaches, with consideration of input from participants, parents and others familiar with the facilities. The report shall be made available to Town officials and shall be available to the public.

CROSS REF.: [JJ-E](#), Co-Curricular and Extracurricular Activities

Recommended for amendment (First Reading) following vote at next subcommittee meeting

File: KF-E - FEE STRUCTURE FOR RENTAL OF SCHOOL BUILDING SPACE

Due to the increasing cost and the need to maintain the school buildings, the following classifications apply when determining fees:

Group 1: Arlington Public School and Town related business. (Examples include but are not necessarily limited to, school run clubs and activities, School Committee meetings, advisory committee meetings, sports team meetings, community education, PTO meetings.) No usage/energy fee. Custodial fees apply only when no custodian is already scheduled to be on duty, except as otherwise specified by contract.

Group 2: Non-profit groups, or events, which bear some connection to the mission of the Arlington Public Schools. One-half of the usage/energy fee. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply.

Group 3: Commercial entities and other groups not affiliated with the Arlington Public Schools. (Examples include, but are not limited to, private dance companies, community college evening course). Full usage/energy fee. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply.

Group 4: *Long-Term Rentals (180 days or more) explicitly for the after school care of students. One-Quarter of the usage fee. Energy fees apply. Refundable damage deposits required for rooms and equipment used. Custodial fees apply. (~~*180 days or more~~)

All groups must be in compliance with federal and state laws of non-discrimination and all other applicable statutes.

~~The Schedule of refundable damage deposits, the energy charge rates, and applications for rental will be reviewed by the Business Office by **March 15 (originally May 15)** of each year to be approved by the School Committee.~~

The Superintendent shall have sole final discretion over classification decisions.

Appendix

National Conference of State Legislatures Tips for Making Effective PowerPoint Presentations

<http://www.ncsl.org/legislators-staff/legislative-staff/legislative-staff-coordinating-committee/tips-for-making-effective-powerpoint-presentations.aspx>

- Use the slide master feature to create a consistent and simple design template. It is fine to vary the content presentation (i.e., bulleted list, 2-column text, text & image), but be consistent with other elements such as font, colors, and background.
- Simplify and limit the number of words on each screen. Use key phrases and include only essential information.
- Limit punctuation and avoid putting words in all capital letters. Empty space on the slide will enhance readability.
- Use contrasting colors for text and background. Light text on a dark background is best. Patterned backgrounds can reduce readability of text.
- Avoid the use of flashy transitions such as text fly-ins. These features may seem impressive at first, but are distracting and get old quickly.
- Overuse of special effects such as animation and sounds may make your presentation “cutesy” and could negatively impact your credibility.
- Use good quality images that reinforce and complement your message. Ensure that your image maintains its impact and resolution when projected on a larger screen.
- If you use builds (lines of text appearing each time you click the mouse), have content appear on the screen in a consistent, simple manner; from the top or left is best. Only “build” screens when necessary to make your point because builds can slow your presentation.
- Limit the number of slides. Presenters who constantly “flip” to the next slide are likely to lose their audience. A good rule of thumb is one slide per minute.
- Learn to navigate your presentation in a non-linear fashion. PowerPoint allows the presenter to jump ahead or back without having to page through all the interim slides.
- Know how to and practice moving forward AND backward within your presentation. Audiences often ask to see the previous screen again.
- If possible, view your slides on the screen you’ll be using for your presentation. Make sure slides are readable from the back row seats. Text and graphical images should be large enough to read, but not so large as to appear “loud.”
- Have a Plan B in the event of technical difficulties. Remember that transparencies and handouts will not show animation or other special effects.
- Practice with someone who has never seen your presentation. Ask them for honest feedback about colors, content, and any effects or graphical images you’ve included.

- Do not read from your slides. The content of your slides is for the audience, not for the presenter.
- Do not speak to your slides. Many presenters face the direction of their presentation rather than their audience.
- Do not apologize for anything in your presentation. If you believe something will be hard to read or understand, don't use it.
- When possible, run your presentation from the hard disk rather than a floppy disk. Running from a floppy disk may slow your presentation.

The Seven Deadly Sins of PowerPoint Presentations

By Joseph Sommerville

It's not surprising PowerPoint© slideshows have become the norm for visuals in most business presentations. Slideshows are quick to produce, easy to update and effective to inject visual interest into the presentation. However, slideshows can also spell disaster even for experienced presenters. The key to success is to make certain your slide show is a visual aid and not a visual distraction. For the best results, avoid these common "seven deadly sins" of PowerPoint© presentations.

1. **Slide Transitions And Sound Effects:** Transitions and sound effects can become the focus of attention, which in turn distracts the audience. Worse yet, when a presentation containing several effects and transitions runs on a computer much slower than the one on which it was created, the result is a sluggish, almost comical when viewed. Such gimmicks rarely enhance the message you're trying to communicate. Unless you are presenting at a science fiction convention, leave out the laser-guided text! Leave the fade-ins, fade-outs, wipes, blinds, dissolves, checkerboards, cuts, covers and splits to Hollywood filmmakers. Even "builds" (lines of text appearing each time you click the mouse) can be distracting. Focus on your message, not the technology..
2. **Standard Clipart:** Death to screen beans! PowerPoint© is now so widely used the clipart included with it has become a "visual cliché." It shows a lack of creativity and a tired adherence to a standard form. First, make certain that you need graphical images to enhance your message. If you do, use your own scanned photographs or better-quality graphics from companies such as PhotoDisc (www.photodisc.com) or Hemera's Photo Objects (www.hemera.com). Screen captures can add realism when presenting information about a Website or computer program. Two popular screen capture programs are Snagit (www.techsmith.com) for Windows and Snapz Pro (www.ambrosiasw.com) for Macintosh. Both are available as shareware.
3. **Presentation Templates:** Another visual cliché. Templates force you to fit your original ideas into someone else's pre-packaged mold. The templates often contain distracting backgrounds and poor color combinations. Select a good book on Web graphics and apply the same principles to your slides. Create your own distinctive look or use your company logo in a corner of the screen.
4. **Text-Heavy Slides:** Projected slides are a good medium for depicting an idea graphically or providing an overview. Slides are a poor medium for detail and reading. Avoid paragraphs, quotations and even complete sentences. Limit your slides to five lines of text and use words and phrases to make your points. The audience will be able to digest and retain key points

more easily. Don't use your slides as speaker's notes or to simply project an outline of your presentation.

5. **The “Me” Paradigm:** Presenters often scan a table or graphical image directly from their existing print corporate material and include it in their slide show presentations. The results are almost always sub-optimal. Print visuals are usually meant to be seen from 8-12 inches rather than viewed from several feet. Typically, these images are too small, too detailed and too textual for an effective visual presentation. The same is true for font size; 12 point font is adequate when the text is in front of you. In a slideshow, aim for a minimum of 40 point font. Remember the audience and move the circle from “me” to “we.” Make certain all elements of any particular slide are large enough to be seen easily. Size really does matter.
6. **Reading:** A verbal presentation should focus on interactive speaking and listening, not reading by the speaker or the audience. The demands of spoken and written language differ significantly. Spoken language is shorter, less formal and more direct. Reading text ruins a presentation. A related point has to do with handouts for the audience. One of your goals as a presenter is to capture and hold the audience's attention. If you distribute materials before your presentation, your audience will be reading the handouts rather than listening to you. Often, parts of an effective presentation depend on creating suspense to engage the audience. If the audience can read everything you're going to say, that element is lost.
7. **Faith in Technology:** You never know when an equipment malfunction or incompatible interfaces will force you to give your presentation on another computer. Be prepared by having a back-up of your presentation on a CD-ROM. Better yet is a compact-flash memory card with an adapter for the PCMCIA slot in your notebook. With it, you can still make last-minute changes. It's also a good idea to prepare a few color transparencies of your key slides. In the worst-case scenario, none of the technology works and you have no visuals to present. You should still be able to give an excellent presentation if you focus on the message. Always familiarize yourself with the presentation, practice it and be ready to engage the audience regardless of the technology that is available. It's almost a lost art.

Joseph Sommerville has earned the title “The Presentation Expert” for helping professionals design, develop and deliver more effective presentations. He is the principal of Peak Communication Performance, a Houston-based firm working worldwide to help professionals develop skills in strategic communication.

Tips for Effective PowerPoint Presentations

Fonts

- Select a single sans-serif fonts such as Arial or Helvetica. Avoid serif fonts such as Times New Roman or Palatino because these fonts are sometimes more difficult to read.
- Use no font size smaller than 24 point.
- Use the same font for all your headlines.
- Select a font for body copy and another for headlines.
- Use bold and different sizes of those fonts for captions and subheadings.
- Add a fourth font for page numbers or as a secondary body font for sidebars.
- Don't use more than four fonts in any one publication.
- Clearly label each screen. Use a larger font (35-45 points) or different color for the title.
- Use larger fonts to indicate importance.
- Use different colors, sizes and styles (e.g., bold) for impact.
- Avoid italicized fonts as these are difficult to read quickly.
- Avoid long sentences.
- Avoid abbreviations and acronyms.
- Limit punctuation marks.
- No more than 6-8 words per line
- For bullet points, use the 6 x 6 Rule. One thought per line with no more than 6 words per line and no more than 6 lines per slide
- Use dark text on light background or light text on dark background. However, dark backgrounds sometimes make it difficult for some people to read the text.
- Do not use all caps except for titles.
- Put repeating elements (like page numbers) in the same location on each page of a multi-page document.
- To test the font, stand six feet from the monitor and see if you can read the slide.

Design and Graphical Images

- Use design templates.
- Standardize position, colors, and styles.
- Include only necessary information.
- Limit the information to essentials.
- Content should be self-evident
- Use colors that contrast and compliment.
- Too many slides can lose your audience.
- Keep the background consistent and subtle.

- Limit the number of transitions used. It is often better to use only one so the audience knows what to expect.
- Use a single style of dingbat for bullets throughout the page.
- Use the same graphical rule at the top of all pages in a multi-page document.
- Use one or two large images rather than several small images.
- Prioritize images instead of a barrage of images for competing attention.
- Make images all the same size.
- Use the same border.
- Arrange images vertically or horizontally.
- Use only enough text when using charts or graphical images to explain the chart or graph and clearly label the image.
- Keep the design clean and uncluttered. Leave empty space around the text and graphical images.
- Use quality clipart and use it sparingly. A graphical image should relate to and enhance the topic of the slide.
- Try to use the same style graphical image throughout the presentation (e.g., cartoon, photographs)
- Limit the number of graphical images on each slide.
- Repetition of an image reinforces the message. Tie the number of copies of an image to the numbers in your text.
- Resize, recolor, reverse to turn one image into many. Use duplicates of varying sizes, colors, and orientations to multiply the usefulness of a single clip art image.
- Make a single image stand out with dramatic contrast. Use color to make a dramatic change to a single copy of your clip art.
- Check all images on a projection screen before the actual presentation.
- Avoid flashy images and noisy animation effects unless it relates directly to the slide.

Color

- Limit the number of colors on a single screen.
- Bright colors make small objects and thin lines stand out. However, some vibrant colors are difficult to read when projected.
- Use no more than four colors on one chart.
- Check all colors on a projection screen before the actual presentation. Colors may project differently than what appears on the monitor.

General Presentation

- Plan carefully.
- Do your research.
- Know your audience.

- Time your presentation.
- Speak comfortably and clearly.
- Check the spelling and grammar.
- Do not read the presentation. Practice the presentation so you can speak from bullet points. The text should be a cue for the presenter rather than a message for the viewer.
- Give a brief overview at the start. Then present the information. Finally review important points.
- It is often more effective to have bulleted points appear one at a time so the audience listens to the presenter rather than reading the screen.
- Use a wireless mouse or pick up the wired mouse so you can move around as you speak.
- If sound effects are used, wait until the sound has finished to speak.
- If the content is complex, print the slides so the audience can take notes.
- Do not turn your back on the audience. Try to position the monitor so you can speak from it.