

File: BDA-E - SCHOOL COMMITTEE NORMS AND STANDARDS

We, the Arlington School Committee, acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a meeting of School Committee members that is held in public and not a public meeting and that we will make every effort to ensure that meetings are effective and efficient To that end, we acknowledge the importance of subcommittees and we and the Superintendent agree to utilize them to focus on specific topics in-depth and to prepare for presentation, deliberation, and possible action by the School Committee.

We, the Arlington School Committee, set forth these Standards and Norms that we will all commit to abide by as individuals and as a Committee:

1. Represent the needs and interests of all students in the district.
2. Exercise leadership in vision, planning, policy making, evaluation, and advocacy on behalf of the students and district, not in managing the day-to-day operations of the district.
3. Conduct our business through a set agenda. Emerging items will be addressed in subsequent meetings through agenda items.
4. Provide full disclosure. Each member will provide input, encouragement, express concerns and positions rather than withhold information from other members. When a Committee member feels that there has not been full disclosure, an objective process for revisiting the issue will be used.
5. Maintain an open environment where each member is empowered to freely express opinions, concerns, and ideas. Committee members will work together to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding.
6. Keep an open mind and accept that they can change their opinions by recognizing that they are not locked into their initial stated positions.
7. Make decisions on information and not on personalities. Committee members will act with the best information available at the time considering data, the superintendent's recommendations, proposals, and suggestions. Committee members will strive to make the best decision at the time.
8. Debate the issues, not one another. The Committee will engage in critical thinking, expecting all Committee members to freely offer differing points of view as part of the discussion, prior to making a board decision.
9. Not take unilateral action. A Committee member's authority is derived only through a majority decision of the Committee acting as a whole during an open, public meeting.
10. Attend meetings well prepared to discuss issues on the agenda and will be prepared to make decisions, striving for efficient decision making.
11. Strive to have no surprises for the committee or superintendent. All members will receive the same information on all topics in a timely manner.
12. Strive to reach decisions by consensus. Discuss with respect, disagree without acrimony. When consensus is not possible, all members will publicly abide by the majority decision.
13. Understand and respect the chain of command as it concerns roles and responsibilities and direct others to do the same.
14. Review and revise our standards and norms, as needed, as part of the committee's self-evaluation.