



**Nauset Public Schools**  
**School Committee**  
**Handbook**



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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for serving on the [Nauset Regional](#), [Brewster](#), [Orleans](#), [Eastham](#) or [Wellfleet](#) School Committee. Your commitment to serve the children of the Nauset Public Schools is an important undertaking. As a school committee member, you will work with other members of the committee on issues including setting goals and policy, deciding the budget, negotiating contracts, and advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for our students.

Massachusetts General Law [Section 37 of Chapter 71](#) defines the role of a school committee member as follows:

*The school committee in each city and town and each regional school district shall have the power to select and to terminate the superintendent, shall review and approve budgets for public education in the district, and shall establish educational goals and policies for the schools in the district consistent with the requirements of law and statewide goals and standards established by the board of education. The school committee in each city, town and regional school district may select a superintendent jointly with other school committees and the superintendent shall serve as the superintendent of all of the districts that selected \*him/her/them.*

It is expected that you will share a commitment with other committee members to provide an exceptional educational experience for all students, a willingness to become well-versed in public education and the Nauset Public Schools, and a desire to be a part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

This handbook is intended to serve as a brief guide and support document for Nauset Public Schools School Committee members. For additional information please refer to the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's "*Charting the Course: An Orientation Program for Massachusetts School Committee Members.*"

Your success as a member of the committee, and ultimately the success of the committee, is your ability to create and maintain effective working relationships with your fellow committee members, superintendent, other administrators and school staff, municipal leaders and staff, parents, students, and the community at large. These relationships are pivotal to a high functioning school district.

You can expect to work with the other school committee members as a part of a team despite any differences. We welcome your commitment, contributions, and input.

- \*the wording of the law has not been updated. Nauset recognizes that the superintendent to be chosen by Nauset is not restricted to a male candidate

## **NAUSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS SCHOOL COMMITTEES ORGANIZATION:**

The Nauset Public Schools comprises membership from its four communities - Orleans, Brewster, Eastham and Wellfleet. Each community has its own elementary school with a supporting, separate school committee. These four school committees meet as needed during the year to collaborate as a single governing body referred to as Union #54.

The middle and high school are supported by a single school committee referred to as the Nauset Regional School Committee.

All of these committees collectively collaborate for common purposes as a governing unit referred to as the Nauset Joint School Committee.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATING PROTOCOLS**

Nauset Public Schools will adhere to the following norms and protocols in the conduct of our business as school committee members:

### **Who We Represent:**

The Nauset Public Schools committee members are responsible to the people within our specific communities to represent the needs and interests of all Nauset children. We are elected officials representing the communities of Brewster, Orleans, Eastham & Wellfleet. We are ambassadors of the Nauset Public Schools, promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our schools' and District's success.

### **How We Conduct Business:**

- Nauset Public Schools acknowledges that school committee meetings are not public meetings, but they are meetings that are held in public. We will seek public input at appropriate times during our meetings.
- Nauset School Committees strive to hold efficient, effective meetings by conducting meetings through set agendas.
- We will honor and uphold the confidentiality of all discussions held during Executive Sessions.
- Possible, future agenda items are discussed at the end of each meeting through the chair.
- We anticipate arriving at meetings prepared to discuss the agenda items and respectfully participating in discussions.

- Our decisions will be based upon all available information. We will monitor ourselves for bias and vote our convictions.
- We acknowledge that certain topics will necessitate dedicated public forums.
- We will support the [Nauset Mission Statement](#) and strive to ensure accountability by creating and updating policies, creating and overseeing the Nauset Public Schools budgets, requesting periodic presentations related to the Nauset Public Schools, and evaluating the superintendent's effectiveness in managing the operations of the district.

### **How We Treat Each Other:**

While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will debate issues, not each other, while keeping an open mind and respecting the opinions and/or positions of all members. We will work to build trust between and among school committee members, the superintendent, the staff, and the community by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement.

### **How We Communicate:**

We agree to make our best effort to convey any questions and/or concerns to the chair and the superintendent in advance of the meeting. We recognize the chair as the official voice of the school committee and shall channel all requests for information through the chair and/or superintendent rather than directly to staff. All communication must be dealt with in a timely manner.

### **How We Stay Current:**

Nauset Public Schools Committees remain committed to ongoing personal growth by participating in professional training opportunities when possible. All members are encouraged to utilize the services and resources of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), the National School Board Association (NSBA), and the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The Nauset Public Schools is committed to the principles of continuous improvement and ongoing education.

### **Limits of Power:**

- 1) We will accept the majority vote on school committee decisions once voted upon.
- 2) We acknowledge that individual school committee members do not have authority; only the school committee as a whole has authority.
- 3) When school committee members attend meetings of other boards or committees, they speak as individuals and not for the Committee, unless otherwise designated.
- 4) We will recognize the superintendent's responsibility to supervise and manage the day-to-day operations of the Nauset Public Schools.
- 5) We shall not use our positions for personal, partisan, or political gain.
- 6) We will refer concerns or complaints to the appropriate individual within the district chain of command.

# **NAUSET PUBLIC SCHOOLS MISSION STATEMENT, VISION, CORE VALUES AND GOALS**

## **Mission Statement:**

Nauset Public Schools exists to educate each student to the highest attainable levels of academic excellence, social responsibility, and cultural awareness. We prepare each student to succeed in an ever-changing world by providing a rigorous academic program that integrates social-emotional learning and global awareness.

## **Vision:**

Nauset Public Schools' vision is to be an exemplary public school district. We will continue to set standards of teaching practice at optimum levels of effectiveness. We will provide enriching, diverse, and innovative opportunities to prepare students to be lifelong, self-directed and contributing members of society. By learning how to think critically, problem-solve, and collaborate with others, students will be able to reflect on their learning, set goals for themselves, and persevere when facing obstacles in a complex world. We will foster a global perspective through authentic learning experiences, expansion of the traditional classroom beyond the walls of the schools, and the development of education partnerships and opportunities across the community, the United States, and countries worldwide.

## **Core Values:**

Nauset Public Schools believes that education should inspire a passion for learning. We believe that:

- 1) Every child matters
- 2) Every child is unique
- 3) Every child deserves to feel safe

## **Goals:**

### **GOAL 1: 21st Century Skills**

*Enable students to practice and apply 21st Century Skills throughout the PK-12 curriculum to acquire deeper learning and be prepared for our ever-changing world.*

### **GOAL 2: Global Citizenship**

*Develop the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal competencies fundamental to global citizenship and cultural proficiency as well as the ecological understanding and skills needed to sustain our environment.*

### GOAL 3: Social-Emotional Learning

*Facilitate students' and adults' development of the skills needed to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.*

### GOAL 4: Professional Development

*Provide ongoing professional development that supports the Strategic Plan by expanding teachers' application of interdisciplinary, authentic, research-based, and innovative teaching strategies.*

### GOAL 5: Community Schools

*Create partnerships between the school and the community at large where all members of the community can come together to learn, to teach, and to share ideas.*

## **School Committee Operational Goals:**

[\*\(Policy BA\)\*](#)

The School Committee is responsible to the people for whose benefit the school district has been established. The Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of the community with consideration and purpose. This requires long-range planning, attention to immediate problems and a comprehensive perspective.

The School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish those purposes, programs, and procedures that will best produce the educational achievement needed by our students. The Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for wise management of resources available to the school district. The Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting an executive officer to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking and considering the comments of the public, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the process will involve:

- Periodically setting performance objectives for the School Committee itself and evaluating their accomplishment.
- Setting objectives for performance for each position and function in the system.
- Allowing the people responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.
- Establishing practical and simple goals.
- Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.



## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE ROLES**

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY AND DUTIES:**

*(Policy BBAA)*

#### Authority:

All powers of the school committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group. Therefore, members of the school committee have authority only when acting as a committee legally in session. The school committee will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the committee. No member of the committee, by virtue of his/her/their office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee. The school committee will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the committee sitting in formal session.

#### Duties:

The duties and obligations of the individual committee member may be enumerated, in no particular order, as follows:

- To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and school committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this school committee and school department.
- To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.
- To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the towns' public schools.
- To work effectively with other committee members without trying either to dominate the committee or neglect his/her/their share of the work.
- To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.
- To vote and act in committee impartially for the good of the students.
- To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he/she/they is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
- To represent the committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.
- To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
- To comply with the accepted code of ethics for school committee members.

## **NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION:**

*(Policy BIA)*

In accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 36A as amended on December 24, 2002, each new school committee member elected to a Nauset Public Schools School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation shall include, but is not limited to, a review of school finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The school committees and superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the functions, policies and procedures of their specific committee, as soon after election as possible.

Each new member shall be given the following materials:

- A copy of the school committee policy manual
- A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- A copy of the Conflict of Interest Regulations
- A copy of the District's budget
- Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the chair and/or the superintendent determine to be necessary.

The chair and/or superintendent shall also clarify policy:

- arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- requesting information regarding school district operations
- responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- handling confidential information

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established school committee policy.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE:**

*(Policy BBBA/BBBB)*

In order to serve on one of the Nauset Public Schools' committees, an individual must be a registered voter in the town from which he/she/they is elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each community Town Clerk will inform the committee secretary of official certification of new members having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths prior to entering on his/her/their official duties as a member of the Committee.

From the Town Clerk, newly qualified school committee members, by law, receive and sign a receipt for a copy of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law which governs the conduct of committee members, in general, and executive sessions, in particular.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS:**

*(Policy BDB)*

### **Chair:**

The chairperson of the school committee has the same powers as any other member of the committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she/they will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her/their office and those required by law, state regulations, and this committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson will:

- Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the committee.
- Consult with the superintendent in the planning of the committee's agendas.
- Confer with the superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between committee meetings.
- Appoint subcommittees, subject to committee approval.
- Call special meetings of the committee as deemed necessary.
- Be the public spokesperson for the committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
- Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the committee, the chairperson will:

- Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
- Announce the business to come before the committee in its proper order.
- Enforce the committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
- Recognize persons who desire to speak and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
- Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
- Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the committee.
- Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
- Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

## **Vice Chair:**

The vice-chairperson of the committee will act in the absence of the chairperson as presiding officer of the committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her/them.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS:**

*(Policy BCA)*

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 committees since school committees are agencies of the state.

The Nauset Schools' Code is divided into three areas of responsibility:

**RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITY** - A School Committee member, in his/her/their relations with their community should:

- Realize that the member's primary responsibility is to the children.
- Recognize that the member's basic function is policy-making and not administrative.
- Remember that the member is 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 state and local level.
- Remember that the member represents the entire community at all times.
- Accept the office of a Committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to "play politics," in any sense of the word, or to benefit personally from the member's Committee activities.

**RELATIONSHIP WITH ADMINISTRATORS** - A School Committee member, in their relations with their school administration should:

- Endeavor to establish sound, clearly-defined policies which will direct and support administration.
- Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act upon complaints as an individual outside the administration.
- Act only on recommendations of the chief administrator in all matters of employment or dismissal of school personnel.
- Give the chief administrator full responsibility for discharging their professional duties, and hold the administrator responsible for acceptable results.
- Refer all complaints to the administrative staff for solution and only discuss them at Committee meetings if such solutions fail.

RELATIONSHIP WITH MEMBERS - A School Committee member, in their relations with fellow Committee members should:

- Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that they alone cannot bind the Committee outside of such meetings.
- Realize that they 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 communication 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 and information on school problems.
- Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

### **COMMITTEE MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST:**

*(Policy BCB)*

Whenever matters relative to the wages, hours or conditions of employment of a School Committee member's immediate family (spouse, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, child, brother, sister, brother-in-law, sister-in-law) are discussed by the School Committee, the School Committee member is in a conflict situation and should not participate. *Graham v. McGrail, Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, April, 1976.*

To resolve such a conflict, the School Committee agrees to abide by the following provisions:

- a. A School Committee member who has immediate family employed by the school district shall not serve on any School Committee negotiations subcommittee that collectively bargains with any employee group which negotiates hours, wages, or conditions of employment for the immediate family member.
- b. Whenever a School Committee discusses hours, wages or conditions of employment, individual School Committee members should leave the room during the discussion if members of their immediate family are members of the bargaining group being discussed or stand to reap the benefits of the bargaining group being discussed.
- c. When School Committee action is called for to ratify a collective bargaining agreement, School Committee members with members of their immediate family either in the bargaining unit or receiving the benefits of the bargaining unit, should not participate in any discussion or vote on the final document.
- d. School Committee members should refrain from voting on those sections of any school budget involving the salaries or fringe benefits of any group of employees where the School Committee member has any member of the immediate family employed, but may vote on the final adoption of the entire budget.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE DUTIES**

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES:**

*(Policy BBA)*

The school committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

- Legislative or policy-making. The committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a superintendent who will implement its policies.
- Appraisal. The committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
- Provision of financial resources. The committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school district to carry out the committee's policies.
- Public relations. The committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
- Educational planning and evaluation. The committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the school district.

### **EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT:**

*(Policy CBI)*

Through evaluation of the Superintendent, the Union #54 School Committees and the Nauset Regional School Committee will strive to accomplish the following:

- Clarify for the Superintendent his/her/their/their role in the school district as seen by the School Committees.
- Clarify for all Committee members the role of the superintendent in light of his/her/their job description and the immediate priorities among his/her/their responsibilities as agreed upon by the Committee and the Superintendent.
- Develop harmonious working relationships between the School Committees and the Superintendent.
- Provide administrative leadership of excellence for the school district.

The School Committees will periodically develop with the Superintendent a set of performance objectives based on the needs of the school district and in accordance with evaluation procedures developed by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Educator

Evaluation Regulations. The Superintendent's performance will be reviewed in accordance with these specified goals. Additional objectives may be established at intervals agreed upon with the Superintendent.

## **RULES OF ORDER**

### **SUBCOMMITTEES, LIAISONS, and REPRESENTATIVES:**

*(Policy BDA, BDE and BDEA)*

The committee shall appoint members to subcommittees at their annual organizational meeting for a period of one year. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for committee action.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the committee.
2. The committee chairperson, subject to approval by the committee, will appoint the subcommittee chairperson and its members.
3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.
4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for committee action, but it may not act for the school committee.
5. All subcommittees of the committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

### **WRITTEN CHARGES TO SUBCOMMITTEES**

When a subcommittee is formed, the actual charge shall be stated in writing. The authority for the work is based on the vote of the School Committee(s) of jurisdiction. It is understood that the subcommittee will stay within the guidelines set forth in writing by vote of the Committee. The charge to the subcommittee shall be reread prior to the recommendation.

The Superintendent shall be apprised of all subcommittee findings at the earliest convenience. The final recommendation shall at all times include the Superintendent's recommendation, as well as reflect the opinion of all subcommittee members in the event the findings are less than unanimous.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

*(Policy BE)*

The School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows

1. **Regular meeting**: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly
2. **Special meeting**: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings

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

Except as otherwise noted, the Nauset Regional School Committee and each town School Committee shall meet at least once monthly with all such meetings to be at a date, time and place designated by the Committee(s).

Special meetings and/or emergency meetings may be called by the Superintendent of Schools in accordance with the statutes. Notice of all regular and special or emergency meetings shall be posted on the Nauset Public Schools website calendar and on the various Town website calendars. Advance notice of such meetings will be given to all Committee members via email.

Additionally, notice of all Nauset Regional School Committee meetings shall be posted in advance in each town hall in the district and notice of each elementary School Committee meeting shall be posted in advance in the town hall of the town represented by the elementary Committee.

All School Committees of the district reserve the right to cancel or omit any scheduled School Committee meeting. Notice of such cancellation shall be posted on the Nauset Public Schools website calendar as well as the Town Website Calendar(s).

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND AGENDA FORMAT:**

*([Policy BEDA](#) and [BEDB](#))*

### **MEETINGS**

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) will be given for any meeting of the School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action."

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

### **AGENDA FORMAT**

The Superintendent, conferring with the Chairperson of the School Committee, will arrange the order of items on meeting agendas so that the Committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

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.

Any School Committee member, staff member, or citizen may suggest items of business. 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.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the School Committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to School Committee members no less than three business days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted and made available to the press.

## **EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

*(Policy BEC)*

All meetings of the school committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The chairperson (or, in his/her/their absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
4. The chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened.

The committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.

8. And to consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the school committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive, or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

The school committee chair and the superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The school committee chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the school committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes. When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the school committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first. All votes taken at an executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMMUNICATIONS**

### **SCHOOL COMMITTEE – STAFF COMMUNICATIONS:**

*([Policy BHC](#), [GBK](#), and [CCB](#))*

The committee desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the superintendent.

#### **Staff Communications to the Committee**

All communications or reports from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members to the committee or any of its subcommittees will be submitted to the chair, the superintendent, and, where applicable, the principal. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the committee regarding administrative decisions (except regarding matters that are outside the committee's legal authority) providing the superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal, and that it is processed according to the committee's policy on complaints. In such a case, the appeal is to be made to the full school committee, through the chair, and not to the individual members of the committee.

Staff members are also reminded that committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe at first hand the committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

### Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives pertaining to staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent. The superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the committee's concerns, decisions and actions. The committee and its subcommittees are encouraged to formally engage staff around important budget and policy issues.

### Visits to Schools

Individual school committee members are encouraged to visit schools, making arrangements through the principals of the various schools. Such visits are informal expressions of interest in school affairs, and not "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes.

### **USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS:**

[\*\(Policy BHE\)\*](#)

As elected public officials, School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via any electronic messaging service. Under the Public Records Law, electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records.

Under the Open Meeting Law deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes a meeting. Deliberation is defined as movement toward a decision including but not limited to the sharing of an opinion regarding business over which the Committee has supervision, control, or jurisdiction.

School Committee members shall use electronic messaging, including but not limited to electronic mail (e-mail), Internet Web forums, listservs, instant messaging, and live chat, between and among members, only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

The School Committee chairperson, in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools, shall annually designate a member of the central office staff who shall be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the School Committee.

## **HOW TO RESPOND TO CONSTITUENT COMPLAINTS – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS:**

*(Policy KE)*

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for resolution prior to investigation or action by the committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern committee actions or committee operations only.

The committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the committee and referred through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the school committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the superintendent and/or school committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his/her/their complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

The committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS**

*(Policy BIBA)*

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the School Committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate School Committee conferences, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. The clerk will maintain a calendar of School Committee conferences, conventions and workshops. The Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school district. At least annually, the Committee

will identify those new ideas or procedures and/or cost benefits that can be ascribed to participation at such meetings.

2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.

3. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the District travel reimbursement policy.

4. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE RESIGNATION**

[\*\(Policy BBBC\)\*](#)

A current School Committee member who submits a resignation to the appropriate certifying authority terminates School Committee duties at the time of such resignation unless a later time is stated in the resignation.

Should a School Committee member move out of the town or District in which he or she holds office, that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

### **BUDGET PLANNING, APPROVAL AND MONITORING**

The Budget is more than just a financial instrument. It requires the school committee and all involved in the budget process to ensure sound practices for achieving the educational goals and objectives of the District. The major portion of the income for the operation of the public schools is derived from local property taxes, and the school committee will attempt to protect the valid interests of the taxpayers. However, the first priority in the development of the annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools. This prioritization will be incorporated into all aspects of the District management and school committee decision-making.

Public school budgeting is regulated by and controlled by legislation, state regulation, and local school committee policy. In a regional district such as Nauset, town charters also play a role. Preparation of the annual budget will be scheduled in stages throughout the year, with attention to certain deadlines established by law and charter.

School Committee members are advised to view the following Policies for further particulars of the Budget Process for the Nauset Public Schools. [DA](#), [DB-1](#), [DBC](#), [DBC-1](#), [DBD](#), [DBG](#), [DBK](#).

The Superintendent will serve as the budget officer and will have overall responsibility for budget preparation. The Superintendent may delegate portions of this responsibility to staff members. The school committee and administration will agree upon cost centers involved. Adoption of all revenue sources are subject to adoption by the school committee.

The school committee functions as the public oversight for the use of public funds. Financial responsibility occurs throughout the year and budgets are reviewed regularly.

The authority to allocate funds within the District's budget belongs to the school committee. During the year, revisions to the Budget may be made from time to time by the school committee, upon recommendation of the superintendent. All requests for transfers between cost centers must be recommended by the superintendent and submitted to the school committee for approval at a regular business meeting.

## **WARRANTS**

The school committee is the head of the school department for purposes of approving bills and payrolls. Warrants are the District's bills. A copy of each warrant will be sent to all members of the school committee. The school committee reviews and signs warrants to authorize appropriate payments, including payroll. Warrants need to be signed and returned in a timely manner by a designated minimum number of members of each school committee.

## **NEGOTIATIONS**

### **Superintendent's Contract**

The superintendent is hired by the school committee, which is, by law, the legal representative of management. Part of that process requires the school committee to negotiate and approve an employment contract between the school committee and the superintendent. For this purpose, the Chair of Union #54 and the Chair of the Nauset Regional School Committee are responsible for the negotiation of this contract. Under the Open Meeting Law, preparations for and the actual negotiations take place in executive session, and the final vote of approval by the Joint School Committee is done in open session.

## **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING WITH RECOGNIZED BARGAINING UNITS**

The School Committee is the "employer of record" of school employees for collective bargaining purposes. Therefore, school committee members are responsible for negotiating with the designated members of the bargaining units to achieve a contract approved by the parties. The School Committee representatives are one from each Union #54 school committees and two from the Nauset Regional Committee.

## **HIRING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The school committee is responsible for hiring the Superintendent.

The school committee may be requested to approve/restructure and/or add positions at the request of the Superintendent.



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- Open Meeting Law <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>

## **APPENDIX A - RELATED SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICIES**

1. [Policy BA](#)
2. [Policy BBAA](#)
3. [Policy BIA](#)
4. [Policy BBBA](#)
5. [Policy BBBB](#)
6. [Policy BDB](#)
7. [Policy BCA](#)
8. [Policy BCB](#)
9. [Policy BBA](#)
10. [Policy CBI](#)
11. [Policy BDA](#)
12. [Policy BDE](#)
13. [Policy BDEA](#)
14. [Policy BE](#)
15. [Policy BEC](#)
16. [Policy BHC](#)
17. [Policy GBK](#)
18. [Policy CCB](#)
19. [Policy BHE](#)
20. [Policy KE](#)
21. [Policy BIBA](#)
22. [Policy BBBC](#)

## **LINKS:**

- [Nauset Public Schools Online Policy Manual](#)
- [Nauset Public Schools Channels of Communication](#)
- [Open Meeting Law Guide](#)
- [Executive Session Quick Reference Guide](#)
- [NRSC Weighted Vote - 2021-2022](#)
- [Roberts Rules of Order FAQ](#)
- [Nauset Public Schools Strategic Plan](#)
- [Budget – Glossary of Terms](#)

**ADOPTED by the Nauset Regional School Committee and Union 54 4-27-2022**