

## Swampscott School Committee Operating Protocols 2016-2017

As elected members of the Swampscott School Committee we represent the educational and developmental needs and interests of all students in the district. We place their interests above all else in the decisions we make in order to ensure that the students of the district receive the best education possible. In accepting this role we hold the pursuit of that goal as our sacred duty. To that end we hereby commit to the following in the conduct of our business.

### How We Govern

- We acknowledge that a school committee meeting is a meeting of the School Committee that is held in public – not a public meeting.
- We shall conduct business through planned agenda items unless it is determined by the School Committee Chairperson that it would be detrimental to delay the issue until a subsequent meeting. Requests to add items to an agenda shall be made to the Superintendent or School Committee Chairperson in accordance with the law.
- We shall strive to make each meeting effective and efficient giving each member an equal opportunity to express their views and opinions and to relay their input in a concise and topic-focused manner. No member should monopolize the discussion. All remarks must be directed through the Chair. Remarks must be courteous in language and deportment.
- We shall make decisions based on information and not on personalities after considering data, the Superintendent's recommendations, proposals, and suggestions. We will vote our convictions, avoid bias, and uphold and support the decision of the majority of the Committee once a decision is made. We will explain the reason for our votes.
- We shall attend meetings well-prepared to discuss issues on the agenda and to participate in efficient decision-making.
- We shall ensure that we do not breach the open meeting laws by deliberating outside of duly convened meetings of the committee.

- Public comment at meetings may be made on items not on the agenda, or otherwise at the discretion of the Chairperson.
- We shall respect the confidentiality of Executive Sessions and privileged information.
- Our actions shall be consistent with the core values of the district and be consistent with our vision of a professional organization.

### How We Treat Each Other

- We shall debate the issues keeping an open mind to other members' opinions and/or positions.
- We shall exhibit professional conduct and behavior.
- We shall work to build trust between and among School Committee members, the Superintendent and the Administration by treating everyone with dignity and respect even in times of disagreement.

### How We Communicate

- We shall recognize the importance of proactive communication. If School Committee members have questions or concerns, they agree to contact the Superintendent, and/or Chairperson, well in advance of a meeting. They agree there will be no surprises.
- We shall channel requests for information through the Superintendent or School Committee Chairperson rather than directly to district staff.
- We shall provide full disclosure of information and not withhold information from other members.
- We recognize the Chairperson, or his/her designee, as the official voice of the School Committee.
- The Superintendent and School Committee recognize the importance of working collaboratively with town officials to

improve our schools and we shall actively seek ways to enlist their support for our efforts. Town officials shall channel requests for information through the Chairperson for consideration by the School Committee.

### How We Will Improve

- All new School Committee members will attend an MASC orientation session as soon as practicable, but within one year of being elected.
- All members will be open to continued personal growth through participating in training opportunities.
- We shall revisit operating protocol annually through an annual workshop.
- We shall develop and maintain a district new member orientation program.

### Limits of Our Authority

- We shall exercise leadership in vision, planning, policy, budgeting, evaluation of the Superintendent of Schools, and advocacy of the district, consistent with the law and our policies.
- We shall recognize that it is the Superintendent's responsibility to oversee personnel issues and to manage the day-to-day operations of the district and it is the School Committee's responsibility to evaluate the Superintendent's effectiveness in these matters.
- We shall recognize that authority rests only with the majority decision of the School Committee and we shall not make any independent commitments or take any independent actions that may compromise the School Committee as a whole.
- We shall follow the chain of command and direct others to do the same. Complaints and concerns regarding personnel will be directed to the Superintendent.
- We shall not use our position for personal or partisan gain.

- We shall refer all important questions or concerns received from members of the community to the Superintendent. The Superintendent, not any School Committee member, has the authority to investigate. The Superintendent shall provide committee members with his/her response. It is not the role of the school committee to resolve individual issues.

### When Things Go Wrong

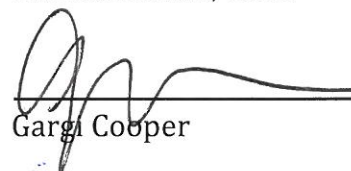
- We shall work together to clarify and restate discussions in order to strive for full understanding
- We will recognize the importance of honoring our agreed upon operating protocols and agree to take responsibility for reminding one another when we get off track.
- We shall maintain fidelity to these commitments and will be held accountable by our fellow School Committee members should any of us fail to live up to these commitments. If a School Committee member or Superintendent violates any of these operating protocols he/she will be referred to the Chairperson, or in the case of the Chairperson, to the Vice-Chairperson.



Carin Marshall, Chair



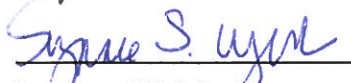
Amy O'Connor, Vice-Chair



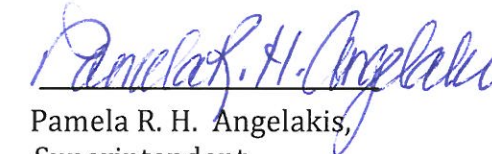
Gargi Cooper



Ted Delano



Suzanne Wright



Pamela R. H. Angelakis,  
Superintendent