

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

Objective: To describe the role of the School Committee, its responsibilities, and its obligations under the law.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Historical Basis for School Committees and School Governance Structure
- II. MA Education Reform Act of 1993 and Impact on Roles and Responsibilities
 - A. Legal Responsibilities of School Committees
 - B. School Committees in Public Education
 1. School Committees and Superintendents
 2. School Committees and Policy
 3. Function of Policy in School Governance
 4. The Process for Making and Implementing Policy
 - a) Where Policy is Made and Found
- III. School Committee Meetings
 - A. Robert's Rules of Order
 - B. Basic Information on Open Meeting Law

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- MASC Publication on Policy
- MASC Publication on Open Speech/Rights and Responsibilities
- Mass. Dept. of Education Advisory on School Governance
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Massachusetts General Laws Related to Education

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

ETHICS

Objective: To detail the ethical problems or issues and conflicts of interest that School Committee members may confront.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Conflict of Interest and Ethics Statutes
 - A. Understanding the Ethics Laws
 - B. The Chain of Family Members Representing Conflicts of Interest
 - C. Working with the Ethics Commission
 - D. Avoiding Violations

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- Chart on Conflict of Interest
- List of Contact Numbers
- Massachusetts General Laws Related to Education
- Publications from Ethics Commission

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

OPEN MEETING LAW

Objective: To explain the critical elements of the Open Meeting Law including when and how to utilize executive session.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Appropriate Calling of Meetings: Proper Procedure
- II. Executive Sessions
 - A. Allowed Circumstances
- III. Avoiding Violations of Law
 - A. Virtual Violations
 - B. Electronic Communication and Telephone Violations
 - C. Strategies to Avoid Violations

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- Publication on Open Meeting Law
- Checklist for Open Meeting Law
- Robert's Rules of Order Check List

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

PUBLIC RECORDS LAW

Objective: To understand what a public record is, and how public records affect School Committee matters.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Public Records Law
 - A. What Documents Become Public Records
 - B. Freedom of Information Act
 - C. Confidential Records
 - D. Personnel Documents

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- Public Records Law Handout

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Objective: To explain the collective bargaining process, terms, parties, and legal obligations.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Introduction to Chapter 150E – the Massachusetts Collective Bargaining Law
 - A. Key Definitions and Explanations
 - B. Basics of the Law
 1. Who may/must bargain?
 2. What is bargainable?
 3. Who represents whom?

- II. The Collective Bargaining Process
 - A. Strategies for Bargaining
 1. Traditional bargaining
 2. Interest-based bargaining
 3. Other alternative models

 - B. Milestones in the Collective Bargaining Process
 - C. “Impact” Bargaining
 - D. Fact Finding
 - E. Mediation

- III. Contract Administration
 - A. Grievance Process
 - B. Arbitration

- IV. Dos and Don’ts of Collective Bargaining
 - A. Good and Bad Practice
 - B. Unfair Labor Practices

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

SCHOOL FINANCE

Objective: To describe how public schools are financed and how district budgets are developed and implemented.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Sources of School Funding
 - A. Local Funding Sources
 - B. State Funding Sources
 - C. Federal Funding Sources
 - D. Other Sources

- II. Budget Process and Procedures: Identifying the Resources
 - A. Foundation Budget Concept
 - B. Process for State and Federal Aid Distribution
 - C. Choice and Charter Reimbursements and Losses

- III. The Budget Cycle
 - A. State and Federal Budget Cycle
 - B. Municipal Budget Process
 1. Proposition 2 ½ and Local Revenues

- IV. Preparing the School District Budget
 - A. Preparation of the Budget Recommendation for the School Committee
 - B. Deliberation and Related Policy Making
 - C. Presenting the Budget for Municipal Approval

- V. Implementing the Budget
 - A. Role of the Superintendent vs. Role of the School Committee
 - B. Line Item Transfers

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

SPECIAL EDUCATION LAW

Objective: To identify the key elements of law and policy of the Special Education system that relate to clients and their parents

What You Will Learn:

- I. The Legal Basis of Special Education Law and Policy
 - A. Special Education Law
 - B. Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
- II. Key Definitions and Explanations
 - A. Education Plans (State and Federal)
- III. Financing Special Education
 - A. IDEA – Federal Funding
 - B. Massachusetts Funding Model
 1. “Circuit Breaker” Program
 2. In-District vs. Out-of-District Funding
- IV. Role of the School Committee: Policy Making and Special Education
 - A. Critical Issues – Budget, Staffing, Policy
 - B. Disciplinary Policies
 - C. Due Process

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- Massachusetts General Laws Related to Education
- Mass. Dept. of Education Publications
- Federal No Child Left Behind Provisions

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP STANDARDS AND EVALUATIONS

Objective: To assist School Committee members in identifying the characteristics of and standards for school leadership and to understand goal setting, the linkage of goals and objectives to evaluations, and the importance of effective evaluation instruments.

What You Will Learn:

- I. Leadership in the Community
 - A. The School Committee Member as a Leader
- II. Profile of the Superintendent and Other School Leaders
 - A. Developing the Job Description
 - B. Setting Goals and Objectives
- III. Evaluation and Assessment of Superintendent
 - A. Linking the Superintendent's Contract with Goals & Objectives
 - B. Goal Setting
 - C. Informal and Formal Evaluation
- IV. Confronting the Leadership Crisis: Cultivating and Developing Leaders
- V. Superintendent Search Process

Questions and Answers

Cases for Review and Discussion

Resources and Publications:

- MASC Sample Superintendent Evaluation
- List of Positions for Which School Committee Confirmation is Required
- Massachusetts General Laws Related to Education

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

ORIENTATION CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS

Objective: To assist School Committee members by providing various documents, as well as additional links and resources, that will assist them in their duties.

Contents:

- MASC Staff
- MASC Standing Committees
- MASC Academy of School Leadership Training Documents
- Internet Links of Interest
- 2009 M*I*S*C Report Introduction
- Frequently Asked Questions and Answers
- What You Can Do To Get the Most out of Your Meetings
- Parliamentary Motions Guide
- Parliamentary Procedure Summarized
- Guidelines for Public Comment
- 603 CMR 41.00 – Regional School Districts
- *“Freedom of Speech”* Handout
- School Committee Hiring Requirements
- Authority, Responsibility and Actions of the School Committee
- Levy Limits: A Primer on Prop 2 ½ (Mass. Dept. of Revenue)
- Interpretive Bulletin - Use of Governmental Resources for Political Purposes (Mass. Office of Campaign and Political Finance)
- Interpretive Bulletin – Activities of Public Officials in Support of or Opposition to Ballot Questions (Mass. Office of Campaign and Political Finance)