

**NORTH KINGSTOWN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
POLICY MANUAL**

NSBA # BE

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

PURPOSE:

This policy is established to set forth the considerations essential to the call, scheduling and conduct of all meetings of the North Kingstown School Committee.

PHILOSOPHY:

The North Kingstown School Committee members acknowledge Rhode Island Law and Regulations of the Rhode Island Department of Education as regards the call and scheduling of any and all meetings of the School Committee and the keeping of minutes thereof. Further, and in consideration of its intent to conduct all School Committee matters of business in a manner which is pleasing, fulfilling and satisfying to itself and the citizens of the community, the School Committee sets forth the following policy regarding the call, scheduling and conduct of all meetings. The Committee is confident that these intentions can be fully served while simultaneously fulfilling its role and responsibility to the students, staff and citizens of North Kingstown.

POLICY STATEMENT:

The School Committee affirms that, by this policy, all meetings of the North Kingstown School Committee shall be called, scheduled, formally announced, and the business shall be conducted in a manner that complies with the stipulations of Robert's Rules of Order and policy stipulations as follows:

POLICY STIPULATIONS:

1. Meeting call/notice - Notice for the call of any meeting of the School Committee shall be posted in a timely manner which is in keeping with the standards as set forth by this Policy, State Law and Department of Education Regulation.
 - a. In January of each year the Committee will give written notice of the regular scheduled meetings to include the dates, times and place of all regularly scheduled meetings for that year. Such notice also will be provided to the Secretary of State at the beginning of each calendar year and posted in accordance with State Law and Department of Education Regulation.

Regular meetings of the School Committee shall be scheduled for the second and fourth Tuesday of each month or as otherwise announced sufficiently in advance of the scheduling of a meeting.

 - b. Supplemental written notice of each regular or re-scheduled meeting will be posted in the Central Administration Building and each school building at least 48 hours before the meeting date. Such notice will announce the date, time and place of meeting, as well as provide a statement specifying the nature of the business to be discussed.
 - c. Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed to prohibit the committee from holding special meetings in accordance with its policy and applicable State Law.
 - d. It shall be the responsibility of the Superintendent of Schools and the School Committee to supervise the execution of these stipulations.
 - e. Notices of individual meetings shall also be transmitted electronically to the Secretary of State's office in accordance with State Law and procedures established by the Secretary of State.

2. Meeting Cancellation - In the event that a posted meeting must be cancelled due to a known committed lack of a quorum, the Chairperson shall have the authority to cancel said meeting upon established verification of an assured lack of a quorum for this meeting.

Committee members shall be so notified by telephone as early as possible prior to the meeting call and a record shall be established to designate the intended committee membership status in this regard. Notice of meeting cancellations, time change or location change, shall be posted immediately on the NKSD web site, at the Central Administration Building and at the location where the meeting was to be held. Notice shall also be disseminated through school email communications and given to the Town Hall and Library.

Should it become necessary to cancel a meeting due to inappropriate notice of call, in addition to the notice provided above, the School Committee Clerk will make a record of the reason for the cancellation.

3. Meeting time and location - All meetings of the School Committee shall be adjourned at a time established as no later than 10:00pm if said meeting(s) are to be succeeded by an Executive Session meeting, or 10:30pm if no Executive Session meeting is to be convened. The hour of adjournment of any meeting may be amended by a majority consent of the School Committee members present.
4. Meeting classification and purpose - Meetings of the School Committee shall fall within the following classifications.
- a. Regular meetings - Shall serve the purpose of providing the time required for the Committee to conduct the regular business necessary for the overall operation of the School Department. Such meetings will be scheduled as necessary and shall generally occur on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.
- b. Special meetings of the Committee will be held when such a meeting is deemed necessary. A special meeting may be called by any committee member upon an affirmative vote of a quorum of the Committee. The Committee member requesting the meeting shall identify the topic or topics proposed for the meeting and a vote shall be taken, via telephone or email by the clerk, to determine if a quorum supports holding the meeting. Public notice of such a meeting shall be provided in keeping with State's Open Meeting Law and in accordance with these Policy Stipulations.
- c. Emergency meetings of the Committee may be held upon an affirmative vote of the majority of the members of the Committee to address an unexpected occurrence that requires immediate action to protect students, staff, or the public. If an emergency meeting is called, a meeting notice and agenda shall, as soon as practicable, be posted on the North Kingstown School Department website, disseminated on the school email communications and electronically filed with the Secretary of State. Upon meeting, the Committee shall state for the record and minutes why the matter must be addressed in less than 48 hours and only discuss the issue or issues which created the need for an emergency meeting.
- d. Executive Session meetings may be scheduled by the Committee for the purpose of conducting business only on matters which, under the Open Meetings Act, can be addressed in a closed meeting, with notice of said meeting being posted according to the Policy Stipulations pertaining to regular meetings. Such meeting may be called by the Committee Chairperson upon request of the Superintendent of Schools or any member of the Committee and must serve the purposes for which

Executive Sessions are permitted pursuant to R.I. Gen Laws §42-46-5. Only members of the Committee and those persons specifically invited will be permitted to be in attendance. All confidential materials viewed during Executive Session are to be returned to the clerk at the end of Executive Session, and are not to be taken home by School Committee members at the meeting. Any action taken at an Executive Session meeting must be by majority vote of members present. All eligible voting members must have been present and participated in all discussions and the sharing of information and facts regarding that upon which they are to vote. Furthermore, any vote taken in Executive Session must be disclosed immediately after the Committee reconvenes in open session, provided, however, a vote taken in Executive Session need not be disclosed for the period of time during which its disclosure would jeopardize any strategy, negotiation or investigation undertaken pursuant to discussions conducted under R.I. Gen. Laws §42-46-5(a). Audio or Video taping of Executive Sessions is strictly prohibited due to the confidential and sensitive nature of information discussed during Executive Sessions. Audio only may be permitted during student hearings, however, access to such recordings shall be sealed along with minutes of the meeting when applicable.

5. A Biennial Organizational meeting of the School Committee shall be called for the first Monday in December following the election and certification of elected of town officers.

The order of business for the organization meeting shall comply with the following sequence unless otherwise chanced by a two-thirds vote of members present and voting.

- a. Opening of the meeting by the senior member.
- b. Elections
 1. Chairperson
 2. Vice Chairperson
- c. Appointments
 1. Clerk
 2. Subcommittees

The Chairperson may present appointments at the next regular Committee meeting if so desired.
- d. Designating Signatories
 1. Authorized signatures for federal forms as required by law
 2. Authorized signatures for orders on School Fund
- e. Determining whether dates and times for regular meetings should be changed
- f. Adjournment

After adjournment of this meeting, the School Committee may reconvene in special meeting if it wishes to consider additional matters.

6. Setting the Meeting Agenda - The agenda is the primary means for conducting efficient and productive committee meetings and ensuring transparency, inclusiveness, and compliance in the work of the committee. The agenda is the shared responsibility of the entire committee and the Superintendent. The Committee tasks the Superintendent with the preparation of the meeting agenda for each Committee meeting in advance, in cooperation with the Committee Chairperson and Vice Chairperson. The agenda shall be electronically delivered to each Committee member no later than four (4) days preceding the meeting for which the agenda was prepared.

To promote public participation in and awareness of Committee meetings, each agenda shall be appropriately posted in compliance with the provisions of the Rhode Island Open Meetings Act. To ensure transparency in the business of the School Committee and accountability of Committee members and school officials for the care, control, and management of all public school interests, the

agenda shall, by specific agenda item title, be sufficiently detailed so the public is clear as to what items are on the meeting agenda, what will be discussed and what items may be approved.

Any school committee member who wishes an item for action to be placed on the agenda must submit that item to the Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of the Committee and to the Superintendent, at least fourteen (14) days in advance of the scheduled meeting or seven (7) days in advance for an item for discussion only. Any citizen, parent, student or staff member wishing Committee consideration on any item at a Committee meeting must first have exhausted all available administrative recourses. If such recourses fail to resolve their issue or concern, the item will be considered being placed on a Committee agenda upon written request of the party; said written request must be received by the Superintendent at least fourteen (14) working days prior to the meeting at which the matter is to be considered and shall fully detail the concern or problem, including a statement of requested relief. The Committee reserves the right of placement on the agenda under the heading the Committee deems appropriate.

7. Regular and Work Session Meetings - Each meeting of the School Committee will be a regular Business meeting. A Worksession meeting may be convened by the Committee, when necessary, to hold discussions and allow for public input on any issue put before the Committee. Agendas for these meetings will be noted as Worksessions and posted as such.
8. Voting Method - All voting of the School Committee will be by voice vote, with the possible exception of election of officers, when the Committee, if it so chooses, may vote by ballot.

A quorum of three (3) members will be considered sufficient to convene an appropriately called meeting and conduct the official business of the School Committee. No action of the School Committee shall be valid or binding unless adopted by the affirmative vote of a majority of members of the School Committee that are present.

9. Public Attendance at School Committee Meetings - Members of the public, including delegations or individuals, have the expressed right and are encouraged to attend meetings of the School Committee and to listen to and observe its deliberations.
 - a. Business Meetings: Discussion of agenda items during business sessions will be limited to School Committee members and the Superintendent and/or other support staff as requested by the Superintendent.

A time shall be provided during each meeting of all regular scheduled meetings of the School Committee to allow for citizens' comments. It shall be the intention of the Committee that such a provision shall be for the purpose of creating and maintaining open lines of communication with its public. The Vice-Chairperson will limit the time of presentation to three (3) minutes in order to allow all citizens who want to speak a chance to voice their concerns.

- b. Meeting Minutes: Minutes of the business considered at all meetings of the School Committee shall be kept and available in keeping with State law and regulation. Such minutes shall reflect the date, time and place of the meeting; Committee members present and absent; a record of any votes taken and how each member voted; and appropriate notation of points of consideration relevant to the discussion of each agenda item.

Minutes of School Committee meetings shall be public record and unofficial minutes shall be available at the Office of the Superintendent within thirty-five (35) days of the meeting or at the next regularly scheduled meeting, whichever occurs first. All Executive Session minutes shall be maintained in the Superintendent's Office. School Committee members and others who are authorized to view those minutes shall view them in the Superintendent's Office and return them to the Clerk. Executive Session minutes may not be removed from the Superintendent's Office.

In addition, a record of all votes taken at all meetings of the School Committee, listing how each member voted on each issue, shall be a public record and shall be available, to the public at the Central Administration Building, within two (2) weeks of the date of the vote, except during the period of time in which the disclosure of a vote would jeopardize any strategy, negotiation or investigation undertaken pursuant to discussions conducted under R.I. Gen Laws §42-46-5(a).

c. Work Session Meetings: In the interest of orderly conduct of Committee meetings, the Chairperson will recognize individuals wishing to speak. The Vice-Chairperson will limit the time of presentation to three (3) minutes. Individuals desiring to speak on agenda items may speak, upon recognition, when the Committee considers that item.

Individuals desiring additional information about any item on the agenda should direct such inquiries to the office of the Superintendent prior to the scheduled meeting.

Any oral complaints should be addressed to the appropriate member of the administrative staff and followed through the chain of command to the School Committee if necessary (see Policy BH).

All persons seeking the opportunity to speak at a School Committee Work Session meeting shall address the Chairperson and may direct questions or comments to Committee members or other officers of the school system only upon the approval of the Chairperson. Members of the Committee and the Superintendent may have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Committee. This same procedure will prevail at Business Meetings during **Citizens'** comments.

Since minutes of all meetings of the Committee are maintained, every person who addresses the Committee is requested to state their name and address before speaking to the issue of comment or concern.

Adopted: 1955

Amended: 9/25/02, 2/25/04, 3/8/06, 12/20/06, 9/26/07, 10/23/07, 12/18/07, 5/19/09, 12/8/09, 1/25/11
4/13/12, 4/8/14; 11/18/2014; 5/24/16

Ground Rules for Citizen's Comments

The North Kingstown School Committee is committed to allowing members of the public an opportunity to offer their comments and suggestions.

The School Committee recognizes the importance of remaining open to the receipt of public comment on issues relating to the education of North Kingstown students. Comments from the public very often prove invaluable as the committee discusses specific matters and general issues which come before them during the course of business. The committee's agenda establishes and sets aside a special time for the purpose of receiving such comments and suggestions.

During citizen's comments it is expected that the committee and public observe the following etiquette:

Comments from the public are to be civil, courteous and remain within the scope of School Committee matters.

In consideration of all those in attendance, it is asked that comments are kept to a 3 minute limit.

Lastly, members of the School Committee will recognize that the citizen's comment portion of the agenda is for the public to express their thoughts and concerns and we as committee members will refrain from interrupting speakers during their right to comment. Any person who wishes to make public comments and voice their concerns will be treated equally, with dignity and respect.

Adopted: 5-19-09