

USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, School Committee Members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic messaging services including, but not limited to, electronic mail (e-mail), Internet web forums and Internet chat rooms.

Under the Open Meeting Law, deliberations by a quorum of members constitute 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 Committees have supervision, control, or jurisdiction. A quorum may be arrived at sequentially using electronic messaging without knowledge and intent by the author.

School Committee members should use electronic messaging 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.

Under the Public Records Law, electronic messages between public officials may be considered public records and therefore are subject to the record retention requirements of that law. Accordingly, in order to be sure e-mail communications between and among School Committee members are captured and retained through the Districts' electronic archiving system:

- The District will establish individual e-mail accounts for each school committee member;
- School Committee members will make every effort to utilize the District e-mail address exclusively for sending and receiving any and all school committee related communications including, but not limited to, communications to and from other school committee members, members of the District's staff and administration and members of the public; and
- Effective 3/15/12, School Committee Members will not forward their District e-mail to any other third party e-mail accounts, as this may impact the Districts' ability to capture School Committee related e-mails for record retention purposes.
- In any case where it is impractical or impossible for a School Committee member to utilize their District e-mail address to send an e-mail, and the member utilizes a private e-mail account, the School Committee Member will provide an electronic copy of the School Committee related e-mail to the District e-mail "shell address" as soon as practical.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 4:7; 39-23A, 23B; 66:10

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