

Watertown School Committee Operating Protocols [DRAFT]

As elected members of the Watertown School Committee, we commit to the following principles in the conduct of our business. We will:

Support the educational mission of the district and the well-being of all students:

- Work with the Superintendent and community to establish an educational vision and goals for the Watertown Public Schools;
- Establish policies and ensure accountability to sustain continuous improvement in teaching and learning, leaving the day-to-day operations of the district to the Superintendent and staff;
- Represent the interests of the community to support teaching and learning for all students in the district.

Demonstrate professional and collegial relations with one another:

- Maintain trust and mutual respect between and among School Committee members, the Superintendent and the administration by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement;
- Base decisions on available facts, vote our convictions, avoid bias, and uphold the decisions of the majority of the School Committee once a decision is made;
- Recognize that authority rests only with majority decisions of the School Committee and that individual members cannot take unilateral action representing the School Committee;
- Acknowledge that a School Committee meeting is a business meeting held in public and will make every effort to ensure that meetings are effective and efficient.

Dedicate ourselves to establishing and maintaining effective communication:

- Channel requests for information, reports and data through the Superintendent and the School Committee Chair rather than directly to staff. The Superintendent will ensure that each member has equal access to this information in a timely manner;
- Recognize the importance of proactive communication by contacting the Superintendent in advance of a meeting if the member is aware of significant questions or concerns on an agenda item;
- Maintain the confidentiality of privileged information, including executive sessions, and respect the Open Meetings Law;
- Recognize that communications from the Superintendent to School Committee members are confidential unless otherwise stated by the Superintendent;
- Recognize that the School Committee Chair or designee speaks on behalf of the School Committee to other public bodies, the media, or individuals who reach out to the body as a whole;
- Refer constituent concerns and complaints to the appropriate person within the district's chain of communication;
- Use social media as a means of communication, but not Committee deliberation;
- Recognize the importance of working collaboratively with town officials to improve our schools and actively seek ways to enlist their support for our efforts.