

Monomoy Regional School District

School Committee Handbook

Adopted: _____

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INTRODUCTION

Thank You for serving on the Monomoy Regional School Committee. In your role as a school committee member, you will work with other members of the committee on issues including setting goals and policy, deciding the budget, negotiating contracts, managing the superintendent, and advocating at the local, state, and federal levels for our students.

Central to your success as a member of the committee is your ability to create and maintain effective working relationships with your fellow committee members, superintendent, other administrators and school staff, municipal leaders and staff, parents, students, and the community at large.

It is expected you will share a commitment with the other committee members to provide an exceptional educational experience for all students, a willingness to become well-versed in public education and the Monomoy Schools, and a sincere desire to be a part of a high-functioning governing body that takes the responsibilities of public service seriously.

You can expect to work with the other school committee members as a part of a team despite any differences. We welcome your commitment and contributions.

MONOMOY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT MISSION STATEMENT

Monomoy Regional School District is a community of learners of all ages focused on building knowledge, positive character, and resiliency in a safe, supportive, creative, and challenging environment.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

The agreement between the Towns of Chatham and Harwich with respect to the formation of a regional school district creates a Regional District School Committee (Monomoy Regional School Committee) that will consist of eight (8) members, four (4) of whom reside in Chatham and four (4) of whom reside in Harwich.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS/OATH OF OFFICE

In order to serve on the school committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the town from which he/she is elected or appointed and must take an oath of office as required by law.

Each new member will present to the committee secretary official certification of having sworn the oath before an officer duly qualified to administer oaths prior to entering on his/her official duties as a member of the Committee. From the Town Clerk, newly qualified Committee members, by law, receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

MRSC OPERATING PROTOCOLS (Adopted by MRSC 10-27-2016)

We will follow these Norms and Protocols in the conduct of our business as school committee members

Who We Represent

- We recognize that we represent the needs and interests of ALL in our district.
- We are elected officials representing the communities of both Chatham and Harwich.
- We are ambassadors of the Monomoy Regional School District, promoting support for public education and spreading the news of our success.

How We Conduct Business

- We will strive to hold efficient, effective meetings by conducting meetings through a set agenda.
- We will create a yearly agenda making our district goals a priority, with the understanding that the agenda will evolve as the year progresses.
- We will request future agenda items through the chair.
- We shall arrive at meetings prepared to discuss the agenda items and respectfully participate in discussions.
- We will base our decisions upon all available information, vote our convictions, and avoid bias.
- We recognize, at times, certain topics will necessitate dedicated public forums.
- We recognize school committee meetings are meetings held in the public, not public meetings. We will seek public input at appropriate times during our meetings.
- We will honor and uphold the confidentiality of all discussions during executive sessions.
- We will support the mission statement and strive to ensure accountability by creating and updating policies, creating and overseeing the Monomoy Regional School District budget, requesting periodic presentations related to the Monomoy Regional schools, and evaluating the superintendent's effectiveness in managing the operations of the district.

How We Treat Each Other

- While we encourage debate and differing points of view, we will debate issues, not each other, keeping an open mind regarding all member's opinions and/or positions.
- We will work to build trust between and among school committee members, the superintendent, the staff, and the community by treating everyone with dignity and respect, even in times of disagreement.
- We endeavor to avoid words and actions that create negative impressions of an individual, the school committee, or the district.

How We Communicate

- We recognize the importance of proactive communication.
- We agree to make our best effort to convey any questions and/or concerns to the chair and the superintendent in advance of the meeting.
- We recognize the chair as the official voice of the school committee.
- We shall channel all requests for information through the chair and/or superintendent rather than directly to the staff. The chair and superintendent will ensure each member has equal access to information.

How We Will Improve

- We will be open to continued personal growth by participating in training opportunities.
- We shall assign each new member a mentor who shall be responsible for providing guidance and the necessary school committee documents. (*See Policy BIA*)
- We shall review and revise these operating protocols annually following reorganization.

Our Limits of Power

- We will accept the majority vote on school committee decisions once they are made.
- We will recognize the superintendent's responsibility to supervise and manage the day-to-day operations of the Monomoy Regional School District.
- We shall not use our positions for personal, partisan, or political gain.
- We will refer concerns or complaints to the appropriate individual within the district chain of command.

What If Things Go Wrong?

- We will work together to restate and clarify discussions in order to strive for understanding.
- We recognize the importance of our operating protocols and take responsibility for reminding one another when necessary.
- If a school committee member allegedly violates any of these protocols, they will be referred to the chair (or in the case of the chair, referred to the vice chair) for attempted mediation of the dispute.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Chair:

The chairperson of the school committee has the same powers as any other member of the committee to vote upon all measures coming before it, to offer resolutions and to discuss questions. He/she will perform those duties that are consistent with his/her office and those required by law, state regulations, and this committee. In carrying out these responsibilities, the chairperson will:

- Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the committee.
- Consult with the superintendent in the planning of the committee's agendas.
- Confer with the superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between committee meetings.
- Appoint subcommittees, subject to committee approval.
- Call special meetings of the committee as found necessary.
- Be public spokesperson for the committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
- Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the committee, the chairperson will:

- Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
- Announce the business to come before the committee in its proper order.
- Enforce the committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
- Recognize persons who desire to speak and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.

- Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
- Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the committee.
- Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
- Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Vice Chair:

The vice-chairperson of the committee will act in the absence of the chairperson as presiding officer of the committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Secretary:

The committee shall elect a secretary who may or may not be a member of the committee's membership. The secretary will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all committee meetings; will comply with state law and committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY AND DUTIES

Authority:

Because all powers of the school committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the school committee have authority only when acting as a committee legally in session. The school committee will not be bound in any way by any statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the committee. No member of the committee, by virtue of his/her office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school employee. The school committee will function as a body and all policy decisions and other matters, as required by law, will be settled by an official vote of the committee sitting in formal session.

Duties:

The duties and obligations of the individual committee member may be enumerated, in no particular order, as follows:

1. To become familiar with the General Laws of the Commonwealth relating to education and school committee operations, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, policies and procedures of this school committee and school department.
2. To keep abreast of new laws and the latest trends in education.
3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the towns' public schools.
4. To work effectively with other committee members without trying either to dominate the committee or neglect his/her share of the work.
5. To respect the privileged communication that exists in executive sessions by maintaining strict confidentiality on matters discussed in these sessions, except that which becomes part of the public record, once it has been approved for release.
6. To vote and act in committee impartially for the good of the students.
7. To accept the will of the majority vote in all cases, and to remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all committee decisions once they are made.
8. To represent the committee and the schools to the public in a way that promotes interest and support.
9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school authorities.
10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for school committee members.

NEW SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ORIENTATION

In accordance with the requirements of Massachusetts General Law Chapter 71, Section 36A as amended on December 24th, 2002, each new school committee member elected to the Monomoy Regional School Committee is required to complete, within one year of their election or appointment, at least eight hours of orientation training. This orientation shall include, but is not limited to, a review of school finance, the Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, Conflict of Interest Law, Special Education Law, Collective Bargaining, School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and the Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The school committee and superintendent shall assist each new member to understand the committee's functions, policies and procedures of the committee as soon after election as possible. Each new member shall be given the following materials:

- A copy of the school committee policy manual
- A copy of the Open Meeting Law
- A copy of the Conflict of Interest Regulations
- A copy of the district's budget
- Collective bargaining agreements and contracts
- Student and staff handbooks

Each new member shall also receive any other materials the chair and/or the superintendent determine to be necessary.

The chair and/or superintendent shall also clarify policy:

- arranging visits to schools or administrative offices
- requesting information regarding school district operations
- responding to community requests/complaints concerning staff or programs
- handling confidential information

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new committee members. Their expenses at these meetings or workshops will be reimbursed in accordance with established school committee policy.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

In keeping with its stated position on the need for continuing in-service training and development for its members, the committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate school committee conferences, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. A notice of school committee conferences, conventions and workshops shall be given by the committee secretary and/or the Superintendent. The committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school system. At least annually, the committee will identify those new ideas or procedures and/or cost benefits that can be ascribed to participation at such meetings.

2. Where practicable, funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. The committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting by a vote of the committee.
3. Reimbursement to committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the district's travel expense *Policy BID*.
4. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations, and materials acquired at the meeting.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The school committee has all the powers conferred upon it by state law and must perform those duties mandated by the state. These include the responsibility and right to determine policies and practices and to employ a staff to implement its directions for the proper education of the children of the community.

The committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

- Legislative or policymaking. The committee is responsible for the development of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a superintendent who will implement its policies.
- Appraisal. The committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
- Provision of financial resources. The committee is responsible for adoption of a budget that will enable the school system to carry out the committee's policies.
- Public relations. The committee is responsible for providing adequate and direct means for keeping the local citizenry informed about the schools and for keeping itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public.
- Educational planning and evaluation. The committee is responsible for establishing educational goals and policies that will guide the committee and staff for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the school district.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

The acceptance of a Code of Ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization of school committees under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Oath of Office of a School Committee member binds that individual member to adherence to those state laws which apply to school committees, which are recognized as agencies of the state.

This Code of Ethics delineates three areas of responsibility for school committee members, in addition to those implied above. Each school committee member, by nature of the elected office, is responsible to: the communities of Chatham and Harwich; the school administration; and fellow committee members.

In regard to the communities of Chatham and Harwich, each school committee member should:

- realize the school committee's primary responsibility is to the children who attend Monomoy Regional School District;
- recognize the basic function of the school committee is as a policy making body;

- remember to abide by and carry out all committee decisions once they are made;
- be well informed regarding the duties of a committee member on both a local and state level;
- remember to represent the entire community at all times; and
- accept the office of a committee member as a means of unselfish service without intent to "play politics," or to benefit personally from committee activities.

In individual interactions with the school district's administration, each school committee member should:

- give the superintendent of schools full responsibility to carry out the professional duties of the position, and hold the superintendent responsible for acceptable results;
- endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the administration;
- recognize and support the administrative chain of command; and refer all complaints to the proper administrative staff for solution,
- with the school committee acting as the source of last appeal in the process, if necessary.

In regard to a good working relationship with fellow school committee members, each member should:

- recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that the member alone cannot bind the committee outside of such meetings;
- realize that one should not make statements or promises of action on how one will vote on matters that will come before the committee;
- uphold the intent of executive session and respect the privileged communications that exist in executive session;
- not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of the school committee or from member of committees who may be seeking help or information on school issues; and
- make decisions only after all of the facts on a question have been presented and discussed.

COMMITTEE MEMBER CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

A committee member shall not have any direct or indirect financial interest in a contract with the school system, nor shall he/she furnish directly any labor, equipment, or supplies to the system. All elected and appointed school committee members are subject to Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Law, Chapter 268 A of the Mass. General Laws. Each committee member will complete the online ethics training provided by the State Ethics Commission, and submit a copy of the certificate of completion to their respective Town Clerk.

In the event a committee member is employed by a corporation or business or has a secondary interest in a corporation or business which furnishes goods or services to the school system, the committee member shall declare his/her secondary interest and refrain from debating or voting upon the question of contracting with the company.

It is not the intent of this policy to prevent the system from contracting with corporations or businesses because a committee member is an employee of the firm. The policy is designed to prevent placing a committee member in a position where his/her interest in the public schools and his/her interest in his/her place of employment (or other indirect interest) might conflict and to avoid appearances of conflict of interest even though such conflict may not exist.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE – SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The committee will leave to the superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as executive officer or as professional leader of the school system. While the committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning general policy or expenditures of funds, it will normally proceed in these areas after receiving recommendations from its executive officer. Further:

- The superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make exceptions to an established policy, he/she will submit the matter to the committee for advice and direction.
- The superintendent will assist the committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the committee all relevant facts, information, and reports necessary to keep the committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

EVALUATION OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

The committee and the superintendent shall develop a plan cooperatively whereby the committee shall evaluate annually the work of the superintendent. The plan shall include annual objectives and general goals.

An evaluation plan shall be undertaken with the view that it is both a means for ensuring good professional service for the school district and a method whereby the superintendent can grow in the position.

The evaluation will include annual objectives set and agreed upon by the superintendent and school committee before the end of September of the year in which the superintendent will be evaluated in accordance with DESE regulations.

SUBCOMMITTEES, LIAISONS, and REPRESENTAIVES

The committee shall appoint members to subcommittees at their annual organizational meeting for a period of one year. These subcommittees may be created for a specific purpose and to make recommendations for committee action.

1. The subcommittee will be established through action of the committee.
2. The committee chairperson, subject to approval by the committee, will appoint the subcommittee chairperson and its members.
3. The subcommittee will be provided with a list of its functions and duties.
4. The subcommittee may make recommendations for committee action, but it may not act for the school committee.
5. All subcommittees of the committee are subject to the provisions of the Open Meeting Law.

Standing Subcommittees: A small group of the school committee (less than a quorum) tasked with bringing recommendations for committee action.

- Budget/Finance
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Negotiations
- Policy

Standing Representatives: A school committee member who is a member of a larger committee requiring school committee representation.

- Westgate Foundation
- District Wellness Committee
- Sick Bank
- Cape Cod Collaborative
- Building Committee

Standing Liaison Positions: A school committee member who is responsible for being the communication link between the MRSC and another group or committee.

- Special Education PAC
- Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee
- Legislation

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS and AGENDA FORMAT

Regular business meetings of the school committee are usually scheduled for the second and fourth Thursday of each month. Meetings normally commence at 6:30pm in the Monomoy Regional High School Library. If the second or fourth Thursday fall on a holiday or during a school vacation, the meeting will be scheduled at a different time mutually agreed upon by the committee.

Executive sessions will generally take place following regularly scheduled meetings, though they may take place prior to the meeting if necessary.

Full committee workshops are also scheduled on occasion at a time mutually agreed upon by the committee.

The superintendent, conferring with the chairperson of the school committee, will arrange the order of items on meetings agendas so that the committee can accomplish its business as expeditiously as possible. The particular order may vary from meeting to meeting in keeping with the business at hand.

The committee will follow the order of business established by the agenda unless the order is altered by agreement of the members present for the convenience of visitors, individuals appearing before the committee, or to expedite committee business.

Any school committee member, staff member, or citizen may suggest items of business. The inclusion of such items, however, will be at the discretion of the chairperson of the committee. A staff member who wishes to have a topic scheduled on the agenda should submit the request through the superintendent.

The agenda will also provide for time when any citizen who wishes may speak briefly before the school committee.

The agenda, together with supporting materials, will be distributed to school committee members three days prior to the meeting to permit adequate time to prepare for the meeting.

Agendas will be posted 48 hours in advance and will include the topics the chairperson reasonably anticipates will be discussed at the meeting.

EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All meetings of the school committee are open to attendance by the public and media representatives. However, the committee has the right to convene in a closed executive session when it meets the following procedural conditions imposed by state law:

1. The committee will first convene in an open session for which due notice has been given.
2. The chairperson (or, in his/her absence, the presiding member) will state the purpose for the executive session by stating all subjects that may be revealed without compromising the purpose for which the executive session was called.
3. A majority of the members must vote to enter the executive session, with the vote taken by roll call and recorded in the official minutes.
4. The chairperson or presiding member will state before entering the executive session whether the committee will reconvene in open session after the executive session.

The law puts specific limitations on the purposes for which executive sessions may be convened. The committee may enter executive sessions only to deliberate:

1. The reputation, character, physical condition or mental health, rather than the professional competence, of a single individual, or the discipline or dismissal, including the hearing of charges against, a member of the committee, a school department employee or student, or other individual. The individual has certain rights enumerated in the law including requiring the committee to hold an open session should the individual so request.
2. Strategy with respect to non-union negotiations or to conduct collective bargaining sessions with non-union personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect. Collective bargaining may also be conducted.
4. The deployment of security personnel or devices.
5. Allegations of criminal misconduct or to discuss the filing of criminal complaints.
6. Transactions of real estate, if an open meeting might be detrimental to the negotiating position of the committee or another party.
7. To comply with the provisions of any general or specific law of federal grant-in-aid requirements.
8. And to consider and interview applicants for employment by a preliminary screening committee (The only position that the school committee would be involved in that might qualify would be for the position of superintendent.) This exemption only applies if it can be determined that an open meeting will have a detrimental effect in obtaining qualified applicants. This shall not apply to applicants who have passed a prior preliminary screening.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information conducted by a governmental body as an energy supplier.

(In the first case, an open meeting will be held if the individual involved so requests.)

Accurate records of the proceedings conducted in executive session will be kept and may remain secret only so long as their publication would defeat the purpose of the session.

The school committee chair and the superintendent will review executive session minutes for possible declassification on, at least, a quarterly basis and, if necessary, will consult with legal counsel. The

school committee chair will bring minutes recommended for declassification to the school committee for a vote either as part of a consent agenda or for individual action. In either case, there shall be an announcement of the declassification of minutes. When a specific set of executive session minutes, not yet declassified, is requested by a member of the public, the school committee shall render a decision on declassification at its next meeting or within 30 days after the request, whichever occurs first.

All votes taken in executive session will be recorded roll call votes, and will become part of the minutes of executive sessions.

Established by law and committee policy

RULES OF ORDER

Except as otherwise provided by law, by regulation of the state Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, or by special policies of this committee, meetings of the school committee shall be conducted in accordance with *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*.

PROCEDURES – QUORUM AND VOTING METHOD

Quorum

A quorum to conduct business shall consist of five (5) members, with no fewer than two members being present from each of the member towns. A number less than the majority may vote to adjourn, but shall not take any other action.

Any action voted by the committee which directly and specifically affects the elementary school(s) in only one town will require that three of the four members of the committee from the town in which the affected elementary school(s) is/are located vote in support of that action.

Voting Method

On all issues requiring a vote of the Monomoy Regional District School Committee, a simple majority vote (i.e., no fewer than 3.5 of the six (6) votes as spoken to in Section I, subsection B) shall be required to pass all motions, except as specified elsewhere in this Agreement, or as required by statute.

Because of the disparity in the population of the two towns, each of the four (4) committee members from Harwich will have one full vote, on all matters and each of the four (4) committee members from Chatham will have 50% of a vote on all matters, for a total of six (6) votes. For a motion which requires a majority vote to pass, a majority (i.e., greater than 50%) of the six (6) votes (which must be no fewer than 3.5 votes) must be cast in the affirmative and at least one committee member from each of the two towns must vote in the affirmative. For the passage of a motion requiring a two-thirds vote (such as the passage of the annual budget), at least two thirds (i.e., no fewer than 4 votes) of the six (6) total votes must be cast in the affirmative. Should a shift in the respective populations of the member towns, based on the most recent decennial federal census figures, cause an impermissible disparity based on one-person, one-vote principles, the committee will act to address the disparity via the amendment process.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE – STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The committee desires to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The basic line of communication will, however, be through the superintendent.

Staff Communications to the Committee

All communications or reports to the committee, or any member of the Committee from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members shall be submitted through the superintendent. This necessary procedure shall not be construed as denying the right of any employee to appeal to the committee from administrative decisions on important matters, provided that the superintendent shall have been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe at first hand the committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the superintendent, and the superintendent will employ all such media as are appropriate to keep staff fully informed of the committee's problems, concerns and actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms in their capacity as a school committee member will inform the superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits shall be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by committee members will be carried on only under committee authorization and with the full knowledge of staff, including the superintendent, principals and other supervisors.

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, deliberation by a quorum of members constitutes 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 committee has 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. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the school committee chairperson, in consultation with the superintendent of schools, shall annually designate a member of the central

office staff who shall be copied on all electronic correspondence between and among members of the school committee.

These copies shall be printed and retained in the central office in the same fashion as any other school committee records. School committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

HOW TO RESPOND TO CONSTITUENT COMPLAINTS – PUBLIC COMPLAINTS

Although no member of the community will be denied the right to bring their complaints to the committee, they will be referred through the proper administrative channels for solution before investigation or action by the committee. Exceptions will be made when the complaints concern committee actions or committee operations only.

The committee believes that complaints are best handled and resolved as close to their origin as possible, and that the professional staff should be given every opportunity to consider the issues and attempt to resolve the problem prior to involvement by the committee. Therefore, the proper channeling of complaints involving instruction, discipline or learning materials will be as follows:

1. Teacher
2. School building administrator
3. Superintendent
4. School Committee

If a complaint, which was presented to the committee and referred back through the proper channels, is adjusted before it comes back to the school committee, a report of the disposition of the matter will be made to the committee and then placed in the official files.

Matters referred to the superintendent and/or school committee must be in writing and should be specific in terms of the action desired. Complaints about school personnel will be investigated fully and fairly. However, before any such complaint is investigated, the complainant must submit his/her complaint in writing. Anonymous complaints will be disregarded.

The committee expects the professional staff to receive complaints courteously and to make a proper reply to the complainant.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

If a school committee member wishes to resign from the committee prior to the expiration of that individual's term of office, said resignation must be filed with the Town Clerk in the town he/she represents in written form with a copy to the school committee. Once a school committee member submits a letter of resignation to the Town Clerk of the town he/she represents, said individual's duties as a committee member are terminated, unless a specific date has been stated in the notification for that resignation to take effect.

A school committee term of office shall be deemed vacated should an existing member move out of the Town of Chatham or Harwich prior to the expiration of that term.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Monomoy Regional Agreement https://www.monomoy.edu/cms/lib/MA02212658/Centricity/Domain/116/Regionalization_Agreement_Signed_Document_1.pdf
- Monomoy Regional School Committee Policy Manual <https://www.monomoy.edu/domain/117>
- Budget Information <https://www.monomoy.edu/site/Default.aspx?PageID=362>
- Open Meeting Law <https://www.mass.gov/the-open-meeting-law>