

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

The School Committee endorses the concept that community participation in the affairs of the schools is essential if the school system and the community are to maintain mutual confidence and respect and work together to improve the quality of education for students. Therefore, the School Committee, directly and through its administrative and instructional staff, intends that positive efforts are to be extended to identify both the desires of the community and the degree of willingness of its members to participate and will be responsive through its actions to both.

Two-way communication is to be fostered through (1) system-wide and local school public information programs, and (2) solicitation and receipt of community counsel through formal advisory committees (system-wide and for each school) and through informal means as well. Residents who are specially qualified because of interest, training, experience, or personal characteristics shall be encouraged to assume an active role in school affairs. From time to time, such persons may be invited by the School Committee to serve as advisors individually and in groups in such areas as the following:

- A. Clarifying general ideas and attitudes held by residents in regard to the schools;
- B. Developing School Committee policies under which the school system is to be managed;
- C. Establishing administrative arrangements and regulations designed to help implement these policies;
- D. Determining the purposes of courses of study and special services to be provided for students;
- E. Evaluating the extent to which these purposes are being achieved by present policies; and
- F. Solving a specific problem or set of closely related problems about which a decision must be made.

It will be the policy that new educational programs, proposed new construction, and/or innovations in educational methods will be discussed in public at regular School Committee meetings and/or with local citizen groups or selected committees.

Moreover, parent involvement (help, support, communication) is encouraged through both traditional and nontraditional methods

such as "room parents," volunteers in classrooms, parent-teacher conferences, participation in parent-teacher organizations, surveys/questionnaires, use of technology to keep in touch with school activities and suggestions, questions and concerns submitted through appropriate available channels.

While striving to obtain community involvement in decision making, it is recognized that it is the ultimate responsibility of the elected School Committee to provide lay governance of the schools as prescribed in law. Further, the School Committee recognizes in its staff the professional expertise inherent in its training, experience and commitment. Thus, the School Committee and staff shall use their best judgment in arriving at decisions. Substantial weight is to be given to the advice, information and desires expressed by individuals and community groups interested in the schools, especially from those individuals and groups invited to advise regarding selected issues, but also from unsolicited comment as well.

Legal Reference: TITLE 20A MRSA SEC. 1001 ET SEQ.

Cross Reference: BDF - ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL  
COMMITTEE

Adopted: DECEMBER 4, 1997