

ABINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

POLICY MANUAL

GOVERNANCE and OPERATIONS

MASC Ref: Section B

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A. GOALS AND EVALUATIONS

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL GOALS

The Abington School Committee is responsible to the residents of Abington for whose benefit the school system has been established. The Abington School Committee's current decisions will influence the course of education in our schools for years to come. The Abington School Committee and each of its members must look to the future and to the needs of all students and the school community. This requires a comprehensive perspective and long-range planning in addition to attention to immediate problems.

The Abington School Committee's primary responsibility is to establish policies and approve programs that will maximize the educational achievement of all students. The Abington School Committee is charged with accomplishing this while also being responsible for the effective management of resources available to the school system. The Abington School Committee must fulfill these responsibilities by functioning primarily as a legislative body to formulate and adopt policy, by selecting a Superintendent to implement policy, and by evaluating the results. It must carry out its functions openly, while seeking the comments of residents, students, and staff in its decision-making processes.

In accordance with these principles, the technique will involve:

1. Periodically set performance goals for the Abington School Committee and evaluating their accomplishment.
2. Allowing the individuals responsible for carrying out objectives to have a role in setting them.
3. Establish practical and straightforward goals.
4. Conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals.

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MASC Ref.: BA

2. EVALUATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES

The Abington School Committee will periodically establish objectives related to Abington School Committee procedures and relationships. At the end of a specified length of time, the Abington School Committee will measure its performance against the stated objectives.

The following areas of Abington School Committee operations and relationships are representative of those in which objectives may be set and progress appraised:

1. Communication with the residents of Abington
2. School Committee and Superintendent relationship
3. Policy development

4. Educational leadership
5. Fiscal management
6. School Committee meetings
7. School Committee member development and performance
8. Performance of sub-committees of the School Committee

When the Abington School Committee has completed its self-evaluation, the members will discuss the results in detail and formulate a new series of objectives. At the same time, the Abington School Committee will set an approximate date on which the next evaluation will be conducted.

Implied in the concept of self-evaluation is an assumption that members and sub-committees are capable of improvement. The Abington School Committee believes that its performance will be improved if evaluations are carried out systematically in accordance with good planning, conscientious follow-through, and careful assessment of results.

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MASC Ref.: BAA

B. AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGAL STATUS

State law provides that:

Every town at its annual meeting shall in every year when the term of office of any incumbent expires, and except when other provision is made by law, choose by ballot from its registered voters the following town officers for the following terms of office:

. . .five members of the School Committee for terms of three years . . .

The Abington School Committee is the governing board of the town's public school system. Although it functions as a duly elected committee of town government, the Abington School Committee has, unlike other town boards, autonomous and absolute authority within limitations established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to carry out the educational policies of the state and guide the educational process.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1 and 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts.

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MASC Ref.: BB

2. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POWERS AND DUTIES

The Abington 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 procedures and to employ Superintendent to implement its directions for the proper education of the students of Abington.

The Abington School Committee takes a broad view of its functions. It sees them as:

1. **Establishing District Policy** The Abington School Committee is responsible for the development and approval of policy as guides for administrative action and for employing a Superintendent who will implement its policies.
2. **Appraisal**. The Abington School Committee is responsible for evaluating the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation.
3. **Review and Approval of the Budget**. The Abington School Committee is responsible for the adoption of an annual budget that will enable the school system to carry out the Abington School Committee's policies.
4. **Community Relations**. The Abington School Committee is responsible for providing appropriate and direct communication channels to keep the residents of Abington

informed about the school system and for keeping itself and the school administration and staff informed about the needs and requests of the residents.

5. **Establishing Goals and Objectives.** The Abington School Committee is responsible for adopting goals and objectives that will guide the Abington Public Schools for the administration and continuing improvement of the educational programs provided by the School District.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:37 specifically, but powers and duties of School Committees are established throughout the General Laws of Massachusetts.

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MASC Ref: BBA

3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS & OATH OF OFFICE

In order to serve on the Abington School Committee, an individual must be a registered voter in the Town of Abington 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 Abington School 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 Abington School Committee.

From the Town Clerk, newly qualified Abington School Committee members, by law, receive, and sign a receipt for, a copy of the Massachusetts open meeting law governing the conduct of Abington School Committee meetings in general and executive sessions in particular.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:1; 41:107

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MASC Ref.: BBB

4. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER AUTHORITY

Because all powers of the Abington School Committee derived from state laws are granted in terms of action as a group, members of the Abington School Committee have authority only when acting as a School Committee legally in session.

The Abington School Committee will not be bound in any way by a statement or action on the part of an individual member except when such statement or action is a result of specific instructions of the Abington School Committee.

No member of the Abington School Committee, by virtue of his/her office, will exercise any administrative responsibility with respect to the schools or command the services of any school or

Town employee.

The Abington 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 Abington School Committee sitting in formal session.

Duties

The duties and obligations of the individual Abington School Committee member may be enumerated 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 District.
2. To keep abreast of new laws, regulations and the latest trends in education.
3. To have a general knowledge of the goals, objectives, and programs of the School District.
4. To work effectively with other School Committee members without trying either to dominate the Abington School Committee or neglect his/her share of the work.
5. To respect the privileged communication which 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 to be released.
6. To vote and act with impartiality in the best interest 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 Abington School Committee decisions once they are made.
8. To represent the Abington School Committee and the School District in a way that promotes interest and support.
9. To refer questions and complaints to the proper school administrator, School Committee Chair, or legal authority.
10. To comply with the accepted code of ethics for School Committee members.

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MASC Ref.: BBAA

5. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER RESIGNATION

An Abington School Committee member who submits his/her resignation terminates school committee duties at the time of such resignation unless a later time is stated in the resignation letter.

Should an Abington School Committee member move out of the town that member shall be deemed to have vacated the office.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 41:2; 41:109

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BBBC

6. UNEXPIRED TERM FULFILLMENT

When a vacancy on the Abington School Committee occurs for any reason, the Board of Selectmen and the remaining members of the Abington School Committee share the responsibility for filling the vacancy.

As provided in the law and Town Charter, the Abington School Committee will notify the Board of Selectmen that a vacancy has been created within 30 days after it has occurred. After two week's notice has been given by the Abington School Committee to the Board of Selectmen, so that voters of the town may have the opportunity to state their candidacy, the two governing bodies will meet to fill the vacancy by roll call vote.

For election to fill a vacancy, a candidate must receive a majority of the votes of the members entitled to vote. The person so elected will fill the seat on the Abington School Committee until the next town election, at which time a member will be elected to serve the remainder of the term, if any.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 41.11

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BBBE

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER COMPENSATION AND EXPENSES

The Abington School Committee shall serve without compensation. No member of a School Committee shall be eligible for the position of teacher, administrator or Superintendent for a period of at least 12 months from the date of last servicing as a member of the Abington School Committee.

Upon submitting vouchers and supporting bills for expenses incurred in carrying out specific services previously authorized by the School Committee, members may be reimbursed from school funds.

Reimbursable expenses may include the cost of attendance at conferences of School Committee associations and other professional meetings or visitations when such attendance and expense payment has had prior Abington School Committee approval.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BID

8. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBER ETHICS

The acceptance of a Code of Ethics implies the understanding of the basic organization importance of the Abington School Committees responsibilities under the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The oath of office of an Abington School Committee member binds the individual to adherence to those state laws which apply to school committees since school committees are agencies of the state.

As Abington School Committee members carrying a high degree of responsibility to our community, our Superintendent, school administration and staff, and our fellow Abington School Committee members, we subscribe to the following Code of Ethics.

In our relations with our community, each of us should:

1. Realize that our responsibility is to the students of Abington Public Schools and to the residents of the Town of Abington.
2. Recognize that our basic function is policy making and not administrative.
3. Remember that he/she is one of a team and must abide by, and carry out, all Abington School Committee decisions once they are voted upon and approved.
4. Be well informed concerning the duties of Abington School Committee members on both a local and state level.
5. Remember that we represent the entire community at all times.
6. Accept the office as an Abington School Committee member as a means of unselfish service with no intent to benefit personally from our Abington School Committee activities.
7. Make decisions which are both educationally and financially responsible.
8. Recognize and assume responsibility for encouraging and contributing to an atmosphere of cooperation and open communication between and among the Abington School Committee and administrators, teachers, students, parents, and residents.

In our relations with our Superintendent, school administrators and staff, we should:

1. Endeavor to establish sound, clearly defined policies which will direct and support the District.
2. Recognize and support the administrative chain of command and refuse to act on complaints as an individual outside the administration.
3. Give the Superintendent full responsibility for discharging his/her responsibilities, financial and administrative support to do so and hold him/her responsible for acceptable results.
4. Refer all complaints to the Superintendent for resolution and only discuss them at Abington School Committee meetings if such efforts fail.

In our relations with our fellow Abington School Committee members we should:

1. Recognize that action at official meetings is binding and that a member alone cannot bind the Abington School Committee outside of such meetings.
2. Realize that a member should not make statements or promises of how they will vote on matters that will come before the Abington School Committee.
3. Uphold the intent of executive sessions and respect the privileged communications that exists in executive sessions.
4. Not withhold pertinent information on school matters or personnel problems, either from members of the Abington School Committee or from members of other Town Committees who may be seeking help or information on school matters.
5. Make decisions only after all facts on a matter have been presented and discussed.
6. Refuse to take part in irregular and/or secret meetings at which only part of the membership is present in violation of the open meeting laws.
7. Be aware that what we say publicly may be taken as the opinion of the entire Abington School Committee or school district and refrain from making public statements representing the Abington School Committee on issues under discussion before a School Committee decision has been reached.
8. Subordinate personal differences in order that actions of the Abington School Committee may be effective and refrain from making disparaging statements regarding School Committee decisions with which you disagree.
9. Recognize a responsibility to make all new members feel welcome and to be sure they understand their new responsibilities and that they have the materials they need.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BCA

C. MEETINGS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Abington School Committee will transact all business at official meetings of the Abington School Committee. These may be either regular or special meetings, defined as follows:

1. **Regular meeting**: the usual official legal action meeting, held regularly.
2. **Special meeting**: an official legal action meeting called between scheduled regular meetings to consider specific topics.

Every meeting of the Abington School Committee, regular or special, will be open to the public unless an executive session is held in accordance with state law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:18-25

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BE

2. REMOTE PARTICIPATION

The Abington School Committee strongly recommends that members physically attend all posted meetings whenever possible. The Abington School Committee acknowledges their responsibility to ensure that remote participation is not used in any way that defeats the purposes of the Open Meeting Law, namely promoting transparency with regard to deliberations and decisions on which District policy is based.

The Abington School Committee recognizes that extenuating circumstances such as personal illness, personal disability, emergency, military service or geographical distance may prevent a member from physical attendance at an open meeting. Remote participation for executive session is not allowed under this policy. Members of the Abington School Committee may utilize remote participation in open meetings subject to the following procedures and restrictions:

1. A quorum of the Committee must be physically present at the meeting location. Members who participate remotely shall not be deemed to be absent.
2. A Committee member who wishes to participate remotely must, as soon as reasonably possible prior to a meeting, notify the Chair or, in the absence of the Chair, the person chairing the meeting, his/her intention to do so and the reason and facts supporting the request.
3. The Chair must announce at the beginning of the meeting the name of the member(s) participating remotely, the reason for the remote participation and the means of remote participation.

4. The acceptable means of remote participation is conference telephone or any other technology that is available that enables the remote participant and all Committee members and visitors present to be clearly audible to one another.
 - a. If video technology is used, the remote participant must be clearly visible to all persons present at the meeting location.
 - b. The Chair or, in the Chair's absence, the person authorized to chair the meeting shall make the determination on the means of participation.
5. All votes taken in open meeting must be roll call votes and recorded in the minutes.

The Committee minutes where a member participated remotely shall reflect the following:

1. Means by which remote participation was delivered,
2. Beginning time for remote participation,
3. Technical difficulties noted,
4. Interruption in the remote participation, if applicable, and
5. Time of interruption or disconnection of remote participation, if applicable.

At the Chair's discretion discussion may be suspended in the event of any technical difficulties or disconnection by the remote participation of member(s).

Legal Ref.: 940 CMR 29.10; M.G.L. Chapter 30A, Chapter 39: Section 23A and 23B

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

3. EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

All meetings of the Abington School Committee are open to attendance by the public. 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 Chair (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 Chair 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. 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. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.
3. Strategy with respect to collective bargaining, or litigation, if an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigation position of the Committee and the chair so declares.
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. To consider and interview applicants for employment (The only position that the Abington 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.
9. To meet or confer with a mediator and/or attorney with respect to any litigation or public business.
10. To discuss trade secrets or confidential, competitively-sensitive or other proprietary information.

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 Committee will review executive session minutes for possible declassification at least once each year.

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.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:21

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BEC

3. NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

As required by law, a minimum of 48 hours advance notice, excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays, will be given for any meeting of the Abington School Committee, including all subcommittee meetings. The only exception permitted is in case of emergency, which the law defines as "a sudden, generally unexpected occurrence or set of circumstances demanding immediate action." Notice of emergency must be posted as soon as reasonably possible prior to the meeting.

Notification of the dates, times, and places of regular meetings will be accomplished by periodic publication of the schedule for the ensuing months. Notification of a change in a regular meeting time or place and notification of a special meeting will be filed with the town clerk at least 48 hours in advance, as required by law.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:20

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BEDA

4. AGENDA FORMAT

The Superintendent and the Chair shall, for every meeting except emergencies, be responsible for the preparation and distribution of the agenda and whenever practical, written material which is to be part of a scheduled report shall be delivered to the Abington School Committee members at least 48 hours prior to the meeting.

The Superintendent shall establish the necessary administrative procedures to provide Abington School Committee members, staff members, and citizens the opportunity to submit items to be considered for inclusion on meeting agendas.

The Superintendent shall establish the necessary procedures for adequately publishing the meeting-topics.

All on-going Committees and advisory groups shall have the opportunity for a regularly scheduled reporting time on the agenda, such time to be worked out with the Chair and Superintendent.

Except for emergency matters, no item will be considered for inclusion on the agenda of any meeting unless so requested; such request being made to the Chair and Superintendent or his/her representative five business days prior to the scheduled meeting by:

1. Submitting correspondence, e.g., a letter or written report, to be read at the meeting;
2. Submitting a request to the Chair and Superintendent no later than five business days prior to the meeting to be included on the agenda;
3. Being recognized by the Chair during the meeting.

Agendas shall be filled with the Town Clerk and posted on the Abington School District website.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:20

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BEDB

5. RULES OF ORDER

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised will govern the proceedings of the Abington School Committee, except when those rules are in conflict with the Committee's approved policies and regulations.

In accordance with Robert's Rules, the Committee may suspend parliamentary rules of order by a two-thirds vote.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BEDD

6. VOTING METHOD

Except on procedural matters, all votes of the Abington School Committee will be taken by a call of the roll and the ayes and nays will be recorded in the minutes; if the vote is unanimous only that fact need be recorded.

All actions will require a majority vote of all members present and voting except as state law, *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, or policies of this Committee require a larger majority. A majority of the members of the Abington School Committee will constitute a quorum.

A two-thirds vote will be required to suspend parliamentary rules of order.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:20-21

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BEDF

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE SUSPENSION OF POLICIES

The operation of any section or sections of Abington School Committee policies not established by law or contract may be temporarily suspended by a two-thirds vote of Committee members present at any regular or special meeting. Any action to suspend policy must be reviewed at the next scheduled meeting and will be so noted on the agenda for that meeting.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BGF

8. MINUTES

The minutes of an Abington School Committee meeting constitute the written record of Committee actions; they are legal evidence of what the action was. Therefore, the secretary of the Abington School Committee will be responsible for reporting in the minutes all actions taken by the Committee.

Minutes will include:

1. A statement on the nature of the meeting (regular or special), the time, the place, and the approval of the last regular and each subsequent special meeting.
2. Names of the members present or absent, annotated as to arrival and departure times, if during the meeting.
3. A complete record of official actions taken by the Committee relative to the Superintendent's recommendations, to communications, and to all business transacted. Resolutions and motions will be given in their exact wording, accompanied by the names of members moving and seconding and a record of the results of the vote. Reports and documents relating to a formal motion may be omitted if they are referred to and identified by title and date.
4. Notation of formal adjournment.

Copies of the minutes will be sent to all Committee members at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting at which the minutes are to be approved.

The approved minutes will become permanent records of the Committee. Minutes of public meetings and minutes of executive sessions that have been declassified will be in the custody of the Superintendent who will make them available to interested citizens upon request. Approved minutes will be posted on the school website.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 30A:22

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BEDG

9. SCHOOL COMMITTEE OFFICERS

Duties of the Chair

The Chair of the Abington School Committee has the same powers as any other member of the School 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 School Committee.

In carrying out these responsibilities, the Chair will:

1. Sign the instruments, acts, and orders necessary to carry out state requirements and the will of the Abington School Committee.
2. Consult with the Superintendent in the planning of the Abington School Committee's agendas.
3. Confer with the Superintendent on crucial matters that may occur between Abington School Committee meetings.
4. Appoint sub-committees, subject to Abington School Committee approval.
5. Call special meetings of the Abington School Committee as found necessary.
6. Be the public spokesperson for the Abington School Committee at all times except as this responsibility is specifically delegated to others.
7. Be responsible for the orderly conduct of all Abington School Committee meetings.

As presiding officer at all meetings of the Abington School Committee, the Chair will:

1. Call the meeting to order at the appointed time.
2. Announce the business to come before the Abington School Committee in its proper order.
3. Enforce the Abington School Committee's policies relating to the order of business and the conduct of meetings.
4. Recognize persons who desire to speak, and protect the speaker who has the floor from disturbance or interference.
5. Explain what the effect of a motion would be if this is not clear to members.
6. Restrict discussion to the question when a motion is before the Abington School Committee.
7. Answer all parliamentary inquiries.
8. Put motions to a vote, stating definitely and clearly the vote and result thereof.

Duties of the Vice-Chair

The Vice-Chair of the Abington School Committee will act in the absence of the Chair as presiding officer of the Abington School Committee and will perform such other duties as may be delegated or assigned to him/her.

Duties of the Secretary

The Secretary will keep or cause to be kept an accurate journal of all Abington School Committee meetings; will comply with state law and Abington School Committee policy regarding notification of meetings; and will render such reports as may be required by the state or the town.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BDB

10. CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS AT OFFICIAL MEETINGS

Official Abington School Committee business shall only be conducted at meetings attended by three or more members of the Abington School Committee.

The Abington School Committee Chair shall preside over all meetings; in his/her absence, the Vice-Chair shall preside. In the event neither the Chair nor the Vice-Chair is present, the remaining three members shall vote to appoint a temporary Chair.

The Chair shall rule on the appropriateness of discussion. His/her decisions may be appealed by any Committee member to the entire Committee. *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*, shall govern the procedures to be followed when motions or actions are under consideration during any meeting.

As all communication during an official meeting are public, according to the open meeting laws, any form of communication, electronic or otherwise, outside the meeting should not occur.

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MASC Ref: BEDDC

11. SCHOOL COMMITTEE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING

For the purpose of organizing, the Abington School Committee, at its first regular meeting following the Town's annual elections, but not later than May 15th, will elect from its membership a Chair, Vice-Chair and Secretary, all of whom will hold their respective offices for a term of one year or until a successor is elected.

A majority of the members of the Abington School Committee will constitute a quorum. The election will proceed as follows:

1. Nominations for the office of Chair will be made by the members. The Chair will be elected by

a majority roll-call vote of the members present and voting. If no nominee receives a majority vote, the election will be declared null and void and nominations will be reopened.

2. Upon election, the new Chair will preside, calling for the election of the Vice-Chair and Secretary. The procedure used for election will be the same as that for electing the Chair.

Any vacancy among the officers occurring between organizational meetings will be filled by a member elected by the Abington School Committee. The election will be conducted as described above.

Following election of officers at its organizational meeting, the Abington School Committee may proceed into such regular or special business as scheduled on the agenda.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDA

12. SUB-COMMITTEES OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The Abington School Committee may establish sub-committees as needed.

1. A sub-committee will be established by the Chair with a vote of the Abington School Committee.
2. The Abington School Committee Chair, subject to approval by the Abington School Committee, will appoint the sub-committee chair and its members.
3. The Abington School Committee will create a list of its functions and duties.
4. A sub-committee may make recommendations for Abington School Committee action, but it may not act for the Abington School Committee.
5. Sub-committee meetings must be posted and minutes kept.
6. A sub-committee will be dissolved by the Abington School Committee upon completion of its assignment, or it may be dissolved by a vote of the Abington School Committee at any time.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L 30A

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDE

13. CONDUCT AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERINTENDENT AT OFFICIAL MEETINGS

The Superintendent, or his/her designee, shall be present at all official meetings except at the Abington School Committee's discretion, or when the conduct and/or salary of the Superintendent are to be discussed.

The administration shall not be expected to reply to any matter which has not been properly placed on the agenda. Instead, the Superintendent may be instructed to prepare an appropriate response to be scheduled at a future meeting within a reasonable period of time.

Minutes of each regular meeting and executive session shall be kept under the supervision of the Superintendent of Schools.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the Abington School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Abington School Committee desires residents of the Abington Public Schools to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the residents.

In order that all residents who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the Abington Public Schools business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled Abington School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee during the visitor's portion of the agenda. The Chair shall determine the length of the public participation segment.
2. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material. The Chair may permit extension of this time limit. Prepared written remarks must be presented to the Abington School Committee at the time of the presentation so that they may be attached to the minutes of the meeting at the Committee's discretion. Remarks or questions related to an agenda item shall be deferred until that specific agenda item has been taken up.
3. All questions posed to the Abington School Committee during the visitor's section that cannot be answered during the meeting will be answered subsequent to the meeting in a timely manner.
4. The Chair may allow questions from the audience after presentations or discussions on those items listed on the Abington School Committee meeting agenda for that evening.
5. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
6. All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting.
7. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as

concern them, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 30A:20

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

15. CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEES TO THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

The following general policies will govern the appointment and functioning of citizen advisory committees to the Abington School Committee other than the student advisory committee, which is governed by the terms of the General Laws of Massachusetts.

1. Citizen advisory committees may be created by the Abington School Committee to serve as task forces for special purposes or to provide continuing consultation in a particular area of activity. However, there will be no standing overall citizen advisory committee to the Abington School Committee.
2. If a citizen advisory committee is required by state or federal law, its composition and appointment will meet all the guidelines established for that particular type of committee.
3. The composition of task forces and any other citizen advisory committees will be broadly representative and take into consideration the specific tasks assigned to the committee. Members of the professional staff may be appointed to the committee as members or consultants, as found desirable.
4. Appointments to such committees will be made by the Abington School Committee; appointment of staff members to such committees will be made by the Abington School Committee upon recommendation of the Superintendent.
5. Tenure of committee members will be one year only unless the member is reappointed.
6. Each committee will be clearly instructed as to:
 - a. The length of time each member is being asked to serve.
 - b. The assignment the Abington School Committee wishes the committee to fulfill and the extent and limitations of its responsibilities.
 - c. The resources the Abington School Committee will provide.
 - d. The approximate dates on which the Abington School Committee wishes to receive major reports.
 - e. Abington School Committee policies governing citizens, committees and the relationship of these committees to the Abington School Committee as a whole, individual Abington School Committee members, the Superintendent, and other members of the professional staff.
 - f. Responsibilities for the release of information to the press.

7. Recommendations of committees will be based upon research and fact.
8. The Abington School Committee possesses certain legal powers and prerogatives that cannot be delegated or surrendered to others. Therefore, all recommendations of a citizen advisory committee must be submitted to the Abington School Committee.

The Abington School Committee will have the sole power to dissolve any of its citizen advisory committees and will reserve the right to exercise this power at any time during the life of any committee.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

16. PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING PUBLIC HEARINGS

In conducting all public hearings required by law, and others, as it deems advisable, the Abington School Committee will:

1. Give due and public notice in line with statutory requirements.
2. Make available printed information on the topic of the hearing.
3. Give all an equal opportunity to be heard in accordance with the Committee's policy. The Chair of the School Committee will preside at the hearing.

The public will be informed at the beginning of the hearing the particular procedure that will be followed in regard to questions, remarks, rebuttals, and any time limitations or other rules that must be followed to give everyone an opportunity to be heard.

In conformance with customary hearing procedures, statements and supporting information will be presented first by the Committee, or by others for the Committee; to comment, visitors must be recognized by the Chair, and all remarks must be addressed to the Chair and be germane to the topic.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BEE

D. POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DEVELOPMENT

The Abington School Committee will develop policies and put them in writing so that they may serve as guides for the discretionary action of those to whom it delegates authority.

The formulation and adoption of these written policies will constitute the basic method by which the Abington School Committee will exercise its leadership in providing for the successful and efficient functioning of the District.

The Abington School Committee accepts the definition of policy set forth by the National School Boards Association:

Policies are principles adopted by a School Committee to chart a course of action. They tell what is wanted; they may include why and how much. Policies should be broad enough to indicate a line of action to be followed by the administration in meeting day-to-day problems, yet be specific enough to give clear guidance.

The policies of the Abington School Committee are framed, and are meant to be interpreted, in terms of state law, regulations of the Massachusetts Board of Education, and other regulatory agencies of the various levels of government.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BG

2. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY ADOPTION

Adoption of new policies or changing existing policies is solely the responsibility of the Abington School Committee. Policies will be adopted and/or amended only by the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the Abington School Committee when such action has been scheduled on the agenda of a regular or special meeting.

To permit time for the study of all policies or amendments to policies and to provide an opportunity for interested parties to react, proposed policies or amendments will be presented as an agenda item to the Committee in the following sequence:

1. Information item - distribution with agenda
2. Discussion item - first reading of proposed policy or policies; report from the Superintendent; report from any Sub-Committee assigned responsibility in the area; Committee discussion and directions for any redrafting
3. Action item - discussion, adoption or rejection.

Amendments to the policy at the action stage will not require repetition of the sequence, unless the

Committee so directs. The Abington School Committee will vote to approve all policies following the second reading.

The Abington School Committee may dispense with the above sequence to meet emergency conditions.

Policies will be effective upon the date set by the Abington School Committee. This date will ensure that affected persons have an opportunity to become familiar with the requirements of the new policy prior to its implementation.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BGB

3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY REVISION AND REVIEW

In an effort to keep its written policies up to date so that they can be used consistently as a basis for Abington School Committee action and administrative decision, the Abington School Committee will review all District policies on a regular basis. It is the intent of the Abington School Committee that no policy will go more than three years without a review.

The Abington School Committee in consultation with the Superintendent will evaluate how the policies have been executed by the District staff and will assess the results. It will rely on the District staff, students, and the community for providing evidence of the effect of the policies it has adopted.

The Superintendent is given the responsibility of notifying the Committee's when policies are out of date or for other reason appear to need revision.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BGC

4. SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue procedures implementing policies of the Abington School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee may review the procedures developed by the Superintendent for the District whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives, but it will revise or reject such procedures only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not approve procedures except as required by state law, or in cases when strong community attitudes or possible student or staff reaction make it necessary or advisable

for a procedure to have the Committee's approval.

Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under the General Laws of Massachusetts, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." (Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes shall be filed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education for information purposes only.) Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. All changes to these handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the Abington School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37H, 37H1/2, 37H3/4

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BGD

5. SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent is directed to establish and maintain an orderly plan for preserving and making accessible the policies adopted by the Abington School Committee and the regulations needed to put them into effect.

Accessibility is to extend at least to all employees of the school system, to members of the Committee, and, insofar as conveniently possible, to all persons in the community. A policy concerning a particular group or groups in the schools will be distributed to those groups as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Abington School Committee's policy manual will be considered a public record and will be available for inspection at the Superintendent's office.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BGE

E. OPERATIONS AND COMMUNICATION

1. SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND SUPERINTENDENT RELATIONSHIP

The Abington School Committee will leave to the Superintendent all matters of decision and administration that come within his/her scope as chief executive officer of the school system. While the Abington School Committee reserves to itself the ultimate decision of all matters concerning policy and annual budget, it will normally proceed in these areas receiving recommendations from the Superintendent.

The Superintendent will have the privilege of asking guidance from the Abington School Committee with respect to matters of operation whenever appropriate. If it is necessary to make an exception to an established policy, he/she will submit the matter to the Abington School Committee for advice, direction and approval.

The Superintendent will assist the Abington School Committee in reaching sound judgments and establishing policies, and will place before the Abington School Committee all relevant facts, information and reports necessary to keep the Abington School Committee adequately informed of situations or business at hand.

The Abington School Committee and Superintendent will establish annual goals and objectives to advance the mission of the District.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDD

2. SCHOOL COUNCILS

The Abington School Committee believes that the school is a key unit for educational improvement and change and that successful school improvement is best accomplished through a school-based decision-making process. The Principal shall have primary responsibility for the management of the school. By involving those directly affected by any action or decision of the school council in the process of determining that action or decision, it helps to strengthen the commitment to those decisions by those most affected by its implementation.

Decisions which are made at the school level must be aligned with the policies, curriculum, budget and goals adopted by the Abington School Committee. In addition, decisions must comply with any state and federal laws and regulations and with any negotiated agreements and contracts of the District.

As enacted by the state legislature in the Education Reform Act of 1993, a school council shall be established in each school to advise the Principal in specific areas of school operation. The Principal, except as specifically defined in the law, shall have the responsibility for defining the composition of and forming the group pursuant to a representative process in conformity with guidelines established by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The following guidelines define the role of the school council:

The School Council shall meet regularly with the Principal of the school and shall assist in:

1. Adoption of educational goals for the school that are consistent with state and District policies.
2. Identification of the educational needs of the students attending the school.
3. Review and advocate for the school building budget.
4. School improvement plans may be implemented only after annual review and approval by the Superintendent.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:59C; 69:1I

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BDFa

3. CONDUCT OF SCHOOL COUNCIL BUSINESS

The Principal shall, by law, serve as co-chair of the council. The second co-chair will be elected annually by the council members at its first meeting of the school year subsequent to the elections of new council members. The co-chairs will be responsible for the preparation of the agenda for the council meetings.

The school council shall meet at least once monthly during the school year. Meetings will be held outside of school hours. At its first meeting of the school year, the council will set its calendar of regular meetings for the year. Where circumstances warrant, the council may choose to call additional meetings.

School councils shall use consensus as the primary method to resolve issues and to formulate recommendations. Votes by majority may be taken at the discretion of the Principal and Robert's Rules of Order shall prevail if there are questions of procedure.

All meetings of the school council shall conform to the Open Meeting Law, Section 20, which stipulates that all meetings be open to the public, that meetings be posted at least 48 hours in advance, and that minutes of the meeting shall be maintained as required. The scope of the school council does not require, and therefore does not qualify for, executive session.

The Superintendent shall receive electronic copies of agendas and minutes of all school council meetings. The Superintendent shall provide copies of these materials to members of the Abington School Committee for information, upon request.

School principals will provide a report, at least annually, on School Council activities and on School Improvement Plans.

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. 30A:20; 71:59C; 69:1I

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDFE-E-3

4. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Principal, in conjunction with the school council, shall be responsible for preparing a written school improvement plan annually. This plan shall be written with the advice of the school council and submitted for approval to the Superintendent. The plan should be drafted with the following considerations:

1. The educational goals for the school consistent with the goals and standards, including student performance standards, as adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education and by the Abington School Committee.
2. An assessment of the needs of the school in light of the proposed educational goals.
3. The means to address student performance.
4. Professional development for the school's professional staff.
5. The enhancement of parental involvement in the life of the school, safety, and discipline.
6. The development of means for meeting the diverse learning needs of every child.
7. Any further subjects as the Principal, in consultation with the school council, shall consider appropriate, except that:
 - a. The council shall have no authority over matters that are subject to Chapter 150E, the collective bargaining law or budget approval.
 - b. The council may not expand the scope of its authority beyond that established in law or expressly granted by Abington School Committee policy.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:59C; 69:1I

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDFE-E-1

5. SUBMISSION AND APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The written school improvement plan shall be submitted by the Principal to the Superintendent for review and approval annually.

The school improvement plan should:

1. Focus on improvement of student learning.
2. Specify expected student outcomes and measurable/observable results.
3. Align with the mission, goals and policies of the School District.
4. Be consistent with state and federal law, Abington Public Schools policy, established curriculum and negotiated agreements.
5. Clearly identify actions to be taken on how changes will be implemented.
6. Include a plan on how to solicit community support for the changes being developed.
7. Indicate estimated costs and available funding sources.
8. Delineate the method of evaluating and reporting progress and results.

If the school improvement plan is not approved by the Superintendent and Abington School Committee, it shall be returned to the Principal with specific comments as to the reason(s). The Principal shall revise the plan in cooperation with the school council, and resubmit it for approval.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:59C; 69:11

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDFA-E-2

6. SCHOOL ATTORNEY

The complexity of school department operations often require specialized legal services, the Abington School Committee may also retain an attorney(s) or law firm(s) to provide legal services.

It will be the duty of the counsel for the Abington School Committee to advise the Abington School Committee and the Superintendent on the specific legal problems submitted to him/her. He/she will attend meetings upon request and will be sufficiently familiar with Abington School Committee policies, practices, and actions under these policies, and with requirements of the school law to enable him/her to offer the necessary legal advice.

A decision to seek legal advice or assistance on behalf of the school system will be made by the Abington School Committee via the Chair. The Superintendent may also take such action at the direction of the Abington School Committee.

Many types of legal assistance are routine and do not require specific Abington School Committee approval or prior notice. However, when the Superintendent concludes that unusual types or amounts of professional legal service may be required, he/she will advise the Abington School

Committee and seek either initial or continuing authorization for such service.

The Abington School Committee may use the services provided by the town counsel. The Abington School Committee and the Superintendent may seek his/her services to counsel and represent the school system at various times.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 71:37E; 71:37F

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BDG

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE AND STAFF COMMUNICATION

The Abington School Committee strives 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 School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from Principals, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances.

School Committee Communications to Staff

All official Committee communications will be directed to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's actions.

Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the Principals of the school. Such visits will 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.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BHC

8. USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, Abington School Committee members shall exercise caution when communicating between and among themselves via electronic communication services including, but not limited to, text messaging, 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.

Abington School Committee members should use electronic communication between and among members only for housekeeping purposes such as requesting or communicating agenda items, meeting times, or meeting dates. Electronic communication should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Law.

Under the Public Records Law, electronic communication between public officials may be considered public records. Therefore, in order to ensure compliance, the Abington School Committee will follow the E-mail Retention Policy for the District. Abington School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L.4:7; 30A:20; 66:10

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref: BHE

F. TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

1. 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 Abington School Committee member elected to the Abington 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:

- Review of School Finance,
- Open Meeting Law,
- Public Records Law,
- Conflict of Interest Law,
- Special Education Law,
- Collective Bargaining,
- School Leadership Standards and Evaluations, and
- Roles and Responsibilities of School Committee Members.

The Abington 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 informed of their need to be knowledgeable concerning the following:

- A. Abington Public School Policies
- B. District's Budget
- C. Student and Staff Handbooks
- D. Collective Bargaining Agreements and Contracts
- E. Massachusetts Open Meeting Law
- F. Massachusetts Conflict of Interest Regulations

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

Whether appointed or elected, new members should be advised that they are also members of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, Inc. (MASC) and should be encouraged to utilize the services and resources MASC provides by attending meetings or workshops specifically designed for new Committee members.

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. 71:36A

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BIA

2. SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

The Abington School Committee members are encouraged to maintain memberships in recognized School Committee (boards) associations.

It may also maintain institutional memberships in other educational organizations, which the Committee and Superintendent find to be of benefit to members and personnel.

The materials and benefits of institutional memberships may be distributed and used to the best advantage of the Committee and the staff.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BK

3. SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the Abington School 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. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.
2. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate may be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014

MASC Ref.: BIBA

4. SCHOOL COMMITTEE LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM

The Abington School Committee, as an agent of the state, must operate within the bounds of state and federal laws affecting public education. If the Committee is to meet its responsibilities to the residents and students of this community, it must work for the passage of new laws designed to advance the cause of good schools and for the repeal or modification of existing laws that impede this cause.

To this end:

1. The Committee should keep itself informed of pending legislation and actively communicate its concerns and make its position known to elected representatives at both the

state and federal level.

2. The Committee, through the legislative liaison, will work with its legislative representatives (both state and federal), with the MASC, and other concerned groups in developing an annual, as well as a long-range, legislative program.
3. The Committee will annually designate a person--who may or may not be a member of the Committee--to serve as its legislative liaison. This person will be authorized to speak on the Committee's behalf with respect to legislation being considered by the Massachusetts Legislature or the United States Congress or their respective committees. In all dealings with individual elected representatives, the Legislature or Congress, the Committee's representative will be bound by the official positions taken by the Abington School Committee.

Policy adopted: November 25, 2014
MASC Ref.: BJ