

ATTLEBORO PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Attleboro, Massachusetts

File: BHE

USE OF ELECTRONIC MESSAGING BY SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As elected public officials, Attleboro 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.

E-mails and faxes to other board members by themselves generally do not implicate Open Meeting Laws. The mere exchange of ideas and information between two board members is not the conduct of public business. It is not the deliberative process that Open Meeting Laws demand be available to public scrutiny.

Electronic messaging should not be used to discuss Committee matters that require public discussion under the Open Meeting Laws. Simultaneous or serial communications generally will implicate Open Meeting Laws. These communications begin to form the give-and-take that characterizes the deliberative process and should be done in an open forum. Public business usually includes the adoption of any proposed policy, resolution, rule or other formal action, and any deliberative activities on those matters. A quorum may be arrived at by 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. School Committee members who do not have a computer or access to these messages shall be provided copies on a timely basis.

Source: MASC

Legal References:

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE APPROVED – MAY 22, 2006