

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPATION AT A MEETING

The following are guidelines for public comment in addressing the board

- 1) Participant(s) who wish to address the board must indicate by signing their name and address on the sign-up sheet with a brief description regarding the issue they wish to address;
- 2) If several individuals are concerned with the same issue and share the same opinion, it is requested that the group select a spokesperson to represent the group;
- 3) Board chair will recognize one (1) speaker at a time and will rule out of order other speakers who are not recognized. Only those speakers recognized by the chair will be allowed to speak; comments by others are out of order. Individuals who interfere with or interrupt speakers, the school board, or the proceedings may be directed to leave;
- 4) Depending upon the number of persons in attendance seeking to be heard, the Board reserves the right to impose such other limitations and restrictions as necessary in order to present an orderly, efficient and fair opportunity for those persons to be heard;
Participant(s) addressing the board will be limited to a three (3) minute presentation unless extended by the board chair;
- 5) The board may elect to hear participant(s) in any order or sequence and is not limited by the arrangement shown on the sign-up sheets. No participant(s) may speak more than once on the same topic unless allowed by the board chair;
- 6) Matters discussed before the board, which may compromise confidentiality or privacy shall not be discussed in public.
- 7) Board chair shall promptly rule out of order any discussion by any individual including school board members, that would violate the provisions of State or federal law, board policy, or the statutory rights of privacy of an individual;
- 8) All statements shall be directed to the board chair and no person may address or question a board member individually;
- 9) Public participation is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between members of the public and the board; the board will not respond to comments made during the public participation period unless it is necessary to ask a clarifying questions, correct a factual error, or provide specific factual information in answer to a direct question;
- 10) Members of the public who want the board to discuss a particular item



or issue should request an agenda item in accordance with applicable policy of the board;

- 11) The board chair may:
 - a. interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant(s) statement if too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene or irrelevant;
 - b. request any participant(s) to leave the meeting when the participant(s) do not observe reasonable decorum;
 - c. request the assistance of law enforcement in the removal of a disorderly person;
 - d. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting
 - e. waive these rules.
- 12) Citizens may not address the board on the same issue with the same information more than once in a three (3) month period. Pertinent new information must be presented in order for the citizen to readdress the board.
- 13) Questions regarding specific operational issues may be referred to the appropriate administrator for a post meeting response;
- 14) Questions regarding policy matters may not be answered at the time, but may be the subject of later discussion by the board;
- 15) The board may decide not to receive public comments when:
 - a. public comment was received on the issue at one or more previous school board meetings or public hearings and additional opportunity for comment is not considered necessary;
 - b. decision not to receive public comment was annotated prior to the meeting due to the volume or nature of the business on the agenda;

Except as previously noted in board policy, all other public body meetings, such as an advisory committee to the board, will not have a period of time devoted to public comment. The public is invited to attend these other public body meetings but will not be allocated time for recognition for public comment.

Legal References:

RSA 91-A:3, *Access to Governmental Records and Meetings: Nonpublic Sessions*
Policy BEDB, *Agenda Preparation for School Board Meetings*

