

2152 (BEDH) Public Participation at Board Meetings 2152 (BEDH)

The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to District policies, budget, programs, and operations. The School Board encourages citizens to attend its sessions so they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools and so the Board may have an opportunity to hear the thoughts of the public related to items on the agenda. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA 91-A:3. In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, it may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the following rules shall pertain to public participation at Board meetings.

1. The Board will hear public comments related to items on the agenda at the beginning of each regular board meeting. All public comment periods will be a maximum of thirty (30) minutes, provided there are people who wish to speak. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. Excluding the first and final comment periods, the Board may include an additional public comment period for specific agenda items.
2. Individual speakers will be allotted (3) three minutes. Speakers may not relinquish allotted time to another speaker. For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the Board may at the outset of the public comment period increase the individual time limit for all speakers
3. Only those individuals recognized by the Chair will be allowed to speak
4. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, any individual recognized to speak shall give his or her name, address, and the group, if any, he or she is representing.
5. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, the board will hear public comments on non-agenda items related to the School District if a final comment period is provided by the Board.
6. No public comment periods will include question and answer.
7. In the interest of preserving individual privacy and due process rights, the Board requests that comments (including complaints) regarding individual employees (other than the Superintendent) or individual students be directed to the Superintendent in accord with the complaint/grievance resolution processes set forth in School Board Policy 2422. The Board will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor complaints against any person connected with the school system.
8. Any comments which do not adhere to the above, or which disrupt the official business of the Board may be ruled out of order by the Chair.

The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow the above rules of order. Repeated violations or disruptions may result in the individual being asked to leave the meeting location. Failure to comply with such a request could result in a meeting recess and a request for law enforcement assistance to remove the individual.

Persons appearing before the Board should note the members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, comments may be directed to individual Board members, but responses will likely be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

Legal Reference: RSA 189:74

Revised: 12/2003, 10/2019, 5/16/2022, 10/3/2022