

## **PUBLIC COMMENT AND PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations.

The Board encourages citizens of the District to attend its sessions so that they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools and so that the Board may have opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. 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 Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings.

### Rules of Order

1. The Board will provide a maximum of fifteen minutes to hear public comments at the beginning of each regular Board meeting. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.

Individual speakers will be allotted three minutes per person. 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.

2. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.

3. Any individual desiring to speak shall give his or her name, address, and the group, if any, that is represented.

4. The Chair will recognize speakers on a first come basis.

5. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, members of the public may offer comments on agenda items or upon any other matter of public concern directly relating to the District's school policies, programs and operations. 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 Policies KE and/or KEB. Complaints regarding the Superintendent, may be made either during public comment, or directed to the School Board Chair as described in Board Policy KEB.

6. Any comments which do not adhere to the above, or which disrupt the official business

**PUBLIC COMMENT AND PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

of the Board may be ruled out of order by the Chair. Repeated disruption may result in the individual being asked to leave the meeting. Obscene speech, comments threatening bodily harm, or other unprotected speech will not be tolerated.

7. 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 intervention of law enforcement, with the potential for criminal charges.

The Board vests in its Chairperson or other presiding officer authority to terminate the remarks of any individuals when they do not adhere to the rules established above as to content or time limitation.

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, in most instances, any board response will be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

With the aim of maintaining focus on the issues in discussion, it is desired that all speakers strive to adhere to ordinary norms of decorum and civility.

**Legal Reference:**

*RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to Public*

*RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions*

*U.S. Const., 1st Amendment*

Adopted: May 2000  
Reviewed: June 1, 2010  
Discussion: June 8, 2010  
Revised: June 22, 2010  
Approved by the NHSBA: August 2011  
Reviewed: April 16, 2019  
Discussion: April 30, 2019  
Revised: May 13, 2019  
1<sup>st</sup> Reading: May 28, 2019  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: June 11, 2019  
Approved: June 11, 2019

