

## PUBLIC 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 residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. 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, the Board may conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings:

- 30 minutes will be set aside at the start of each meeting as a public comment period to allow citizens to address the Board. The purpose of the Board receiving public comment during the limited public comment period is to allow citizens to communicate information or concerns that are within the jurisdiction and authority of the Board only, but not to comment about specific personnel, individual employment, student, and/or other matters which are within the primary jurisdiction and authority of the Superintendent and/or other administrators in the District, per Policies CB, CCB, GBD, and RSA 194-C:5. Each individual will be allowed to speak once on a topic. **This limitation does not encompass comments regarding the Superintendent or the Superintendent's performance as that position is directly within the jurisdiction and authority of the Board. However, as other members of the School Administrative office and building administrators are supervised by the Superintendent, comments about such personnel must be directed to the Superintendent.**
- Speakers will be allotted four (4) minutes per person.
- Both the 4-minute and overall 30-minute periods may be extended by a majority vote of the Board. The Board is not obligated to respond to any public comments.
- All comments, whether positive or negative, regarding individual employees and personnel, **other than the Superintendent**, or students will not be permitted and will be directed to the Superintendent in accordance with the District's grievance and complaint processes set forth in Policies KL and KLD.

- The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions RSA 91-A:3.
- The Chair or presiding officer shall decline to receive public comment on any matter which has not been properly addressed through the proper administrative channels in accordance with Policies KL and KLD, which is reserved for nonpublic session, which may compromise the duty of the Board to provide a third-party with a fair hearing, or which may compromise the right of an employee, student, or other party to be present or to require that the matter be discussed in nonpublic session.
- The Chair or presiding officer shall terminate the speaking privileges of any individual when they do not adhere to the policies established herein, when the comments are obscene, vulgar or which threaten or incite violence, or when the comments are non-germane to the business of the Board.
- There will be no public forum at special Board meetings. Additionally, the Board expressly reserves the right to cancel any public comment period prior to any Board meeting, **but shall not do so based on the viewpoint of potential speakers.**

#### Non-Public Session

- By law and Policy BEDH, the Board has the discretion to enter into nonpublic session when the matter being raised relates to the discipline, dismissal, promotion, compensation or investigation of any public employee; or, when the matter, if discussed in public, would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person, other than a member of the Board. It is solely up to the Board to elect to enter nonpublic session pursuant to RSA 91-A.

#### Ground rules:

- a. The Chairman of the Board conducts public comment.
- b. The Chairman will call upon those wishing to be heard.
- c. The Board will take no decisions during public comment.

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, questions may be directed to individual Board members, but answers must be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

Legal Reference

RSA 91-A:2  
RSA 91-A:J

*Meetings Open to Public  
Non-Public Sessions*

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