

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

0167 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of such comment, the Board shall set aside a portion of every Board meeting, the length of the portion to be determined by the Board, for public comment on any school or school district issue that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the school district.

The presiding officer will start each public comment period with a statement on the purpose of public comment and the rules governing it. Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:

1. Any person desiring to address the Board of Education at any regular meeting of the Board may speak at either of the two periods designated on the agenda for Hearings of Individuals and Delegations. **Members of the public desiring to address the Board must sign in prior to the start of the meeting by completing the form provided at the back of the meeting room or online. The presiding officer will call on participants at the appropriate time.**
 - a. **First public comment period:** ~~Agenda Items Only: In order to address the Board during the first public comment period, members of the public must sign in prior to the start of the meeting by completing the form provided at the back of the meeting room. The presiding officer will call signed-in participants forward at the appropriate time.~~ **Members of the public wishing to address the Board on agenda items will have priority in the first public comment period.**
 - b. **Second public comment period:** ~~Non-Agenda/Other Items: In order to address the Board during the second public comment period, members of the public must indicate their interest in speaking by raising their hands and awaiting recognition by the presiding officer, who will indicate the appropriate moment to come forward.~~ **The second public comment period will be**



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utilized for public comments not heard during the first public comment period.

2. A participant must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface comments by an announcement of ~~his or her~~ **their** name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate.
3. ~~Each statement made by a participant is limited to three (3) minutes, although the presiding officer shall retain discretion with regard to time allotment. Participants are encouraged to provide written copies of their statements or additional information to the Board secretary for distribution to the Board.~~
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4. The first public comment period may be limited to one ~~half~~ hour **and the second public comment period may be limited to thirty minutes. The first and second public comment period may be for** ~~or~~ a longer time period that a majority of the Board, including the presiding officer, judges as sufficient for the presentation of public comments. In exercising its judgment under this policy, the Board shall be mindful of the value of public comment being heard to the maximum reasonable degree before Board action takes place. In setting a time limit, a Board majority may also empower the presiding officer to alter the order of speakers from the order in which they have signed up for the first public comment period, either for the purpose of hearing a diversity of topics or ensuring that speakers wishing to comment on Board action have the opportunity to do so before action takes place, as long as doing so is compatible with all perspectives being heard and is necessary for the effective conduct of the meeting. ~~The second public comment period shall have no time limit other than the three-minute requirement of paragraph 4, unless a majority of the Board, including the presiding officer, votes to impose a time limit of one hour or more on the basis that doing so is necessary for the effective conduct of the meeting. It is understood that the~~ **The** presiding officer may alter the order of speakers in order to allow students or individuals with special needs; to speak first.
4. Each statement made by a participant is limited to three (3) minutes, although the presiding officer shall retain discretion with regard to time allotment. **In the event it appears that the first public comment period may exceed one hour or that the second comment period may exceed thirty minutes, the presiding officer may limit each statement made**



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by a participant to two (2) minutes' duration. The presiding officer or designee will set the time limit and recognize members of the public who want to speak either in person or online. Participants are encouraged to provide written copies of their statements or additional information to the Board secretary for distribution to the Board.;

- ~~5.~~ The second public comment period shall have no time limit other than the three-minute requirement of paragraph 4, unless a majority of the Board, including the presiding officer, votes to impose a time limit of one hour or more on the basis that doing so is necessary for the effective conduct of the meeting.
- 5 6. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard;
- 6 7. Participants may not cede their time to others;
- 7 8. All statements, questions, or inquiries shall be directed to the presiding officer and any questions or inquiries directed by a participant to another Board member shall be redirected to the presiding officer who shall determine if such statement, question, or inquiry shall be addressed by the presiding officer on behalf of the Board or by the individual Board member;
- 8 9. The presiding officer may:
 - a. Interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's statement, question, or inquiry when it is too lengthy;
 - b. Interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's statement, question, or inquiry is abusive, obscene, or may be defamatory;
 - c. Request any person to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
 - d. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person prevents or disrupts a meeting with an act that obstructs or interferes with a meeting;



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- e. Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting; and
- f. Waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or to maintain an orderly operation of the Board meeting.

N.J.S.A. 2C:33-8
N.J.S.A. 10:4-12

Adopted: 12 January 2009
Revised: 19 August 2019

