

BEDH – 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 nonpublic 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:

1. The Board agenda shall include “Scheduled Guests” as a regular agenda item. The Board encourages all guests to request being placed on the agenda. However, the Board at its discretion may acknowledge other guests in attendance for public comment.
2. Members of the public may offer comments on agenda items only. The Board will not entertain comments on items that do not appear on the agenda. Requests to address the Board on matters not on the agenda must be presented to the Superintendent and must set forth the specifics of the subject to be addressed. When appropriate, the Board may place such requests on the agenda. The Board at its discretion may also limit the amount of time set aside for public comment.
3. Consistent with RSA 91-A:3, Policy BEDB, and the laws pertaining to student and family privacy rights, the Board will not place any matter on the public agenda that is to be properly discussed in a nonpublic session. Complaints regarding individual employees, personnel or students will be directed to the Superintendent in accord with Policies KE and KEB.
4. All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, libelous, defamatory, or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. The Board Chairperson may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow this rule of order.

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.

Persons appearing before the Board are also reminded that the Board follows a chain of command in which to resolve issues. The public is advised to contact the teacher, school principal, and Superintendent to resolve issues at the lowest level if possible. If this chain does not resolve the issue, the public is advised to be placed on the agenda.

Statutory/Regulatory/Policy/Handbook Cross References

ESB Policy BEDB (Public Participation at Board Meetings)

ESB Policy KE (Public Complaints)

ESB Policy KEB (Public Complaints about School Personnel, Employees, Students or

Administration)
RSA 91-A:3 (Public Records and Meetings: Nonpublic Sessions)
Handbook (None)

APPROVED: July 17, 2008

PREVIOUS POLICY: April 26, 1982 “Public Participation at School Board Meetings”