

NYSSBA Policy 1230

() Required
(X) Local
(X) Notice

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education encourages public participation on school related matters at Board meetings, as outlined in this policy. To allow for public participation, a period not to exceed 20 minutes shall be set aside during the first part of each Board meeting for public comment with priority given to comments on items on the meeting's agenda.

Complaints by citizens regarding any facet of the school operation often can be handled more satisfactorily by the administrative officer in charge of the unit closest to the source of the complaint. In most instances; therefore, complaints will be made to the building principal and/or his or her assistant if the matter cannot be resolved 'by the teacher, coach, or other school employee.

If the complaint and related concerns are not resolved at this level to the satisfaction of the complainant, the complaint may be carried to the Superintendent or their assistant. Unresolved complaints at the building level must be reported to the Superintendent by the building principal. The Superintendent may require the statement of the complainant in writing.

The Superintendent may not address anonymous complaints. All other complaints and related concerns that are not resolved at the Superintendent level to the satisfaction of the complainant may be carried to the Board. Unresolved complaints at the Superintendent level must be reported to the Board by the Superintendent. The Board reserves the right to require prior written reports from appropriate parties.

Persons wishing to address the Board shall advise the Board President or the Superintendent of Schools within a reasonable time prior to the start of the public comment period of the meeting. To maintain a first come, first served process, the district may request the name of the speaker. For purposes of following up with speakers later, the district may request the speaker's address, telephone number, or email address. To limit comments to matters which may be properly discussed in public session, the district shall request a brief description of the topic to be addressed. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson.

Presentation should be as brief as possible. No speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than three minutes. Speakers may comment on (1) any matter related to district business; (2) any agenda item; or (3) matters related to agenda items specifically or district matters generally, depending on the public participation section].

The Board will not permit in public session discussion involving individual district personnel or students. Persons wishing to discuss matters involving individual district personnel or students should present their comments and/or concerns to the Superintendent during regular business hours.

All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene language, libelous statements, threats of violence, statements advocating racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

Persons making presentations at a Board meeting will address remarks to the President and may direct questions or comments to Board members or other district officials only upon the approval of the President. Board members and the Superintendent shall have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Board.

Questions and comments from the public concerning matters which are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action. Persons wishing to have matters included on the agenda shall contact the Superintendent in accordance with Policy #2342, 'Agenda Preparation and Dissemination'.

The President shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion and the appropriateness of the subject being presented, as outlined in this policy and applicable provisions of law and regulation, and subject to the Board's parliamentary procedure. The President shall have the right to discontinue any presentation which violates this policy.

Cross-ref: 2342, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination

Ref: *Appeal of Kushner*, 49 EDR 263 (2010) (Boards not required to allow the public to speak)

Matter of Martin, 32 EDR 381 (1992) (Boards need not permit nonresidents to speak)

Appeal of Wittneben, 3 I EDR 375 (1992) (Boards encouraged to permit citizens to speak)

Matter of Kramer, 72 St. Dept. Rep. 1 14 (1951) (boards may put time limits on public speaking)

NYS Department of State, Committee on Open Government, Advisory Opinions OML-AO-#2696 (Jan. 8, 1997), OML-AO-#27 17 (Feb. 27, 1997), OML-AO-#3295 (Apr. 16, 2001), OML-AO-#3518 (Aug. 30, 2002), OML-AO-#4 1.41 (Feb. 24, 2006), OML-AO-#4044 (Sept. 30, 2005), OML-AO-#4292 (Dec. 6, 2006)

Adoption date: November 15, 2021

Parishville-Hopkinton Central School District
Board of Education
Public Participation at Board Meetings

Meetings of the Board of Education are "public meetings" in the sense that they are held in public with the primary purpose of the elected Board members meeting to conduct Board business as charged by law. The Board includes on each agenda a "Questions from Public & Press" section for public comment on agenda items under consideration at that meeting. Public comment is just that, and NOT a discussion with the Board. Civility is expected at all times, and the President has the right to evict any person who does not maintain a civil demeanor.

Please be aware of these "ground rules":

- No complaints or allegations will be allowed in public concerning any staff member or any person connected to the school system.
- Twenty minutes will be allotted for public comment; each speaker is limited to three minutes.
- Speakers must address all comments and questions to the President of the Board.
- All speakers are asked to identify themselves. To be eligible to address the Board, speakers must be residents of Hopkinton or Parishville, be an employee of the school, or be invited by the Board or the Superintendent to speak.
- In the case of a large audience, speakers may be asked to sign up before the meeting so they may be called on most expediently.
- Speakers are asked not to be repetitious of comments already made to the Board in the interest of the most efficient use of time.
- Except in an emergency, the Board will not attempt to decide any question before full examination and an opportunity for the Superintendent to research the matter and make his or her recommendation to the Board.