

NEWPORT SCHOOL BOARD

BEDH

*Category: Recommended
See Also BEDB, KE, & KEB*

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 residents to attend Board meetings so 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 of 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, assure that the Board may conduct its business and 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 1 hour to hear public comments at the beginning of each regular Board meeting. At the beginning of the meeting, this may be extended by a majority vote of the board to accommodate the number of speakers indicated on the sign-up sheet.
2. Individual speakers during public comment will be allotted 5 minutes per person, with an additional one minute for rebuttal if discussed by the board. However, the Board Chair may choose to acknowledge the public to comment on a specific agenda item at their discretion.
3. 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.
4. The Chair will recognize speakers as listed on the sign-up sheet.
5. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.

6. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, members of the public may offer comments on agenda items or upon any other matters of public concern directly relating to the District's school policies, programs, and operations.
7. Any comments which do not adhere to the above, or which disrupt the official business of the Board may be ruled out of order by the Chair. Repeated disruptions may result in the individual being asked to leave the meeting. Comments threatening bodily harm, or other unprotected speech will not be tolerated.
8. 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.

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 References:

RSA 91-A:2 Meetings Open to the Public

RSA 91-A:3 Non-public Sessions

U.S. Const., 1st Amendment

History:

Adopted by the Newport School Board 7/10/89

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Newport School Board 2nd Reading & Approval 11/15/18

Newport School Board 1st Reading 4/24/19

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