

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 provide a period for public comment at every public meeting.

Public participation shall be permitted only as indicated on the order of business in Board Bylaw No. 0164 (Conduct of Board Meetings).

Public participation shall be extended to residents of this district, persons having a legitimate interest in the actions of this Board, persons representing groups in the community or school district, representatives of firms eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, and employees and pupils of this district, except when the issue addressed by the participant is subject to remediation by an alternate method provided for in policies or contracts of the Board.

Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:

1. after being recognized by the President, the individual shall stand and give his or her name and address;
2. all questions, statements, or inquiries must be directed to the President of the Board of Education or his/her designee. . Any questions or inquiries directed by a participant to another Board member shall be redirected to the presiding officer who shall determine if such question, statement or inquiry shall be addressed by the presiding officer on behalf of the Board or by the individual Board member;
3. no participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wished to speak on that topic have been heard;
4. discussion directed at other members of the audience will not be permitted; public criticism of individual staff members will not be permitted;

BYLAWS
0167
Public Participation in Board Meetings

Page 2 of 2

5. the Board or committee reserves the right to adjourn the meeting any time the public does not accept directions from the President of the meeting;
6. recording devices may be used by the public and the Board or committee may announce this as a point of information;
7. photographers and television camera operators are permitted if in the judgment of the President their activities do not interrupt or detract from the orderly conduct of the meeting;
8. The President may:
 - a. interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's question, statement, or inquiry when the statement is too lengthy;
 - b. interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's question, statement, or inquiry when the statement 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;
 - 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.

If the Board is conducting a virtual board meeting, pursuant to Board Policy 0170, sufficient mechanisms shall be provided to ensure that the rights of the public to view and participate in the Board meeting and the right to submit public comments to the Board during the designated portions of the meeting agenda are maintained, to the greatest extent practicable.

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

Board Policy 0170 – Virtual Board Meetings

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