

A recommended policy to consider.

Community Relations

Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings

The regular and special meetings of the Board of Education are open to the public and representatives of the press except that a part of any meeting may be designated an executive session as provided by law. (See 9324 for details)

The Board of Education welcomes the participation of interested organizations and individuals. Advance announcement of all regular and special meetings of the Board of Education is made through posting the agenda on the district website, through notices to newspapers, and directly to citizens and community and professional organizations who specifically request such notification. A reasonable charge may be made for those persons or organizations requesting advance announcements of meetings and agenda backup materials.

Board meetings are meetings held in public and are not open hearings. Once the Board moves into the regular agenda, the public may participate as allowed by the Chairperson and with the following restrictions:

1. Questions and/or comments are to be restricted to the specific agenda item being discussed;
2. Board members shall be recognized first for comments and/or questions;
3. The Board Chairperson may restrict questions and/or comments by the public;
4. The Chairperson may, at his/her discretion, curtail public discussion at any time.

Any citizen may appear before the Board to express his/her opinion concerning the district's educational program. The Board encourages members of the public to address complaints concerning individual District personnel through the proper chain of command. The Board agenda provides opportunities for comments and questions from persons attending the meeting. Persons wishing to address the Board should give their names and addresses.

Board Relations with Community Organizations

It is the intention of the Board of Education to cooperate fully with appropriate officials, Boards, committees, or other agencies of the town, and with organized groups of interested citizens of the town. Any such individual or group requesting a meeting with the Board of Education should present its request to the Chairperson of the Board, or the Superintendent, in ample time to allow for proper preparation of agenda items, notification of Board members, and establishment of a mutually agreeable meeting time and place.

(cf. 1312 - Public Complaints)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

1-225 Meetings of government agents to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions.

1-226 Broadcasting or photographing meetings.

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Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes (continued)

19a-342 Smoking in public meetings in rooms of public buildings is prohibited.

1-227 Mailing of notice of meetings to persons filing written request. Fees.

1-230 Regular meetings are to be held pursuant to regulations, ordinances, or resolutions.

1-232 Conduct of meetings.

1-206 Denial of access to public records or meetings.

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy adopted:

rev 1/15

rev 5/25

A recommended regulation to consider.

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Participation by the general public in debate at regular meetings of matters before the Board of Education shall be permitted. Public participation shall be subject to the provision enumerated below. On issues that appear to arouse strong public interest, the Board should, whenever possible, schedule a special meeting limited to that subject. In order to limit or close debate on any subject, a majority vote of those Board members in attendance will be required.

1. Everyone is requested to address the Chair for recognition.
2. Each speaker must state his/her name and address.
3. All speakers must observe rules of common etiquette. Personalities are not to be injected. Anyone violating this rule will be denied the floor unless waived by the Chairperson or a majority of the Board; each speaker shall limit his/her remarks to five (5) minutes.
4. Each speaker is limited to a maximum of five minutes. A speaker will not be recognized for a second time unless time remains after all have been heard. Speakers are requested to avoid repetition.
5. Each speaker must concern himself/herself with the topic under discussion. Anyone digressing from the topic will be ruled out of order.
6. A speaker who violates these rules may be ejected from the room, and an officer will be present at all meetings that threaten to become contentious for this purpose.
7. Following each vote on a motion, the Chairperson will announce the board's decision and its import.
8. It is requested that no one read lengthy statements. Written statements and materials should be made available in advance for distribution to Board members.
9. Speakers shall state their positions on the subject being discussed. Those who have questions shall, whenever possible, submit them in writing in advance of the meeting.
10. Speakers are asked to express themselves civilly, with due respect for the dignity and privacy of others affected by their comments. While it is not the Board's intent to stifle public comment, speakers should be aware that if their statements violate the rights of others under the law of defamation or invasion of privacy, the speaker may be held legally responsible. Speakers unsure of the legal ramifications of what they are about to say are urged to consult first with their legal advisor.

Regulation approved:

rev 10/10

rev 5/25