

## **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, except as otherwise provided by law. 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, that 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. Two public input sessions will be held—one near the beginning and one near the end of the meeting. Each session will normally be 15 minutes but may be adjusted at the discretion of the Chair or by majority vote of the Board.
2. Each speaker is limited to three (3) minutes. Speakers representing the same group or topic are encouraged to select a spokesperson. The Chair may adjust time limits depending on the number of speakers and length of the agenda.
3. Public comment should relate to district matters, policies, procedures, or governance. The Board does not permit discussion of individual personnel, students, or other confidential matters in public session, in accordance with RSA 91-A and FERPA. Complaints of this nature will be directed to the Superintendent.
4. All comments must be civil, respectful, and appropriate for a public setting. Personal attacks, profanity, or inflammatory remarks will not be tolerated. The Board Chair may rule a speaker out of order or end their time if norms are violated. Applause, clapping, or verbal disruptions are discouraged.
5. Speakers must sign in before the meeting or prior to the public input portion and state their name and role (e.g., parent, resident, staff). Public input is limited to those physically present at the meeting.
6. 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.
7. The Board does not engage in discussion or answer questions during public comment. The Superintendent may be asked to follow up on specific concerns after the meeting.

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8. Community members may submit written comments to the Board through the Superintendent's office. Written submissions will be shared with all Board members.
9. Public input is not a debate or dialogue; it is one way the Board receives feedback. Board business continues after public input, and members may use public feedback to inform future discussions or agenda items.

### **District Policy History:**

**First Reading:** December 18, 2008

**Second Reading/Adopted:** January 8, 2009

**Amended:** June 30, 2011; November 2, 2017; August 7, 2025

**Adopted:** September 11, 2025

**Legal References Disclaimer:** *These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.*

NH Case Law & Lower Court Orders		Description
117 N.H. 573 (1977)		<a href="#">State v. Dominic</a>
130 N.H. 688 (1988)		<a href="#">State v. Comley</a>
NH Statutes		Description
RSA 189:65, VII & VII-a		<a href="#">Definitions (Student and Teacher personally identifiable information)</a>
RSA 189:74		<a href="#">School Board Public Comment Period</a>
RSA 644:2		<a href="#">Disturbing the Peace</a>
RSA 91-A:2		<a href="#">Meetings Open to Public</a>
RSA 91-A:3		<a href="#">Non-Public Sessions</a>
Federal Statutes		Description
1st Amendment		<a href="#">U.S. Const.</a>