

BEDH - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee welcomes public comment.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority. To ensure compliance with the Open Meeting Law, privacy laws, and other legal obligations, the Committee will not engage with a speaker or with one another in deliberation on comments as they are presented during Public Comment. At its discretion, the Committee may schedule issues raised by a speaker for deliberation at a future meeting.

Pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A Section 20 (g) "no person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting."

To ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

1. At each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will be invited for an opportunity to speak during The Public Comment section on the agenda. The total length of Public Comment will typically be limited to 20 minutes, however at the discretion of the chair the length may be adjusted. All speakers are required to present their remarks in a respectful manner.
2. Speakers are only permitted to address the Chair of the Committee when speaking. Each speaker will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present and must begin their comments by stating their name, address, and city/town. The Chair may permit extension of this time limit at their discretion. The Chair may favor, in no particular order, those speakers who are parents or guardians of Douglas students, Douglas residents, or, in appropriate circumstances, a Town of Douglas employee.

3. Topics raised during the Public Comment period shall be limited to items that are within the School Committee's authority. Areas that are within the School Committee's authority are: Douglas Public Schools' educational goals, policies, budget, and the performance of the Superintendent.

4. The Committee will not hear personal comments or complaints made against individual school personnel or members of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for addressing these issues.

5. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to end a person's privilege of address if the speaker is deemed to be using threatening language, breaching the peace, inciting lawless conduct or is using obscenities.

Approved:

10/18/2021 Second Reading