



POLICY

BYLAWS

**Haddonfield
Board of Education**

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Public Participation in Board Meetings

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 assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board and be heard, and at the same time, to conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings.

1. A fifteen minute public comment period will ordinarily be reserved near the beginning of each Board meeting, excluding executive sessions, to permit citizens to address any appropriate topics. Dependent upon the nature of the agenda topic, the public may be invited by the Board to offer additional comments at a later part of the meeting. The Board President will clearly indicate to the public at beginning of the citizen's comment period whether or not there will be an opportunity for additional public comment later in the meeting.
2. The public comment period may be extended beyond fifteen minutes at the discretion of the President. However, to permit adequate deliberation for regular agenda matters, the total time devoted to public comment periods may last no more than one hour.
3. When recognized, each individual desiring to speak shall give his or her name, address and the group, if any, that is represented. The presentation should be as brief as possible. Unless an extension of time is granted, a speaker shall be limited to three minutes.
4. Speakers may offer criticisms of school operations, school programming and actions taken by administration and other staff members regarding operations and programs, as concern them. Although the Board will generally not limit what topics a member of the public may wish to talk about in public session, the Board will not, based upon privacy rights, permit public discussion of complaints against any individual staff members. Such complaints may be appropriately brought to the Board through other avenues of communication. In this manner, the Board's duty in safeguarding the rights and reputations of its employees from potentially erroneous comment in a public venue will be carried out.
5. The portion of the meeting during which the participation of the public is invited shall be limited to sixty minutes and will be concluded by 11:00 pm.
6. The presiding officer may:



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- a. Interrupt, warn, and/or terminate a participant's statement, question, or inquiry when it is too lengthy;
- b. Interrupt and/or warn a participant when the statement, question, or inquiry 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.

N.J.S.A. 2C:33-8

N.J.S.A. 10:4-12

Adopted: 10/18/2007

BOE Revised Date: 9/27/2018

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