

Regulation

PUBLIC AND EXECUTIVE SESSION

Public Participation

The Mendham Borough 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 at the discretion of the presiding officer.

Additionally, as a general statement of protocol, though the comments by members of the public to the board of Education are welcomed, individuals should attempt to resolve problems and/or complaints through initial contact with appropriate staff or administrators. Such matters should only be brought to the board after all avenues within a chain of command have been exhausted.

Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:

- A. A participant must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface comments by an announcement of his/her name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate;
- B. If in the determination of the president that the public comment portion of the meeting will exceed 30 minutes, each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes' duration;
- C. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard;
- D. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually;
- E. The presiding officer may:
 - 1. Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
 - 2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
 - 3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
 - 4. Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action; and
 - 5. Waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or the efficient administration of the board's business.

Remote Participation in Meetings by Board members

The following procedures and conditions must be satisfied regarding the authorization of board members participating in board or committee meetings remotely through the use of technology:

- A. If a member cannot participate in a board meeting for good reason including but not limited to family emergency, business, or out of area or State travel, the board member shall notify the board president at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. This notice requirement may be waived by the board president, if the member could not reasonably anticipate the difficulty affecting his/her physical

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attendance at the board meeting;

- B. The member shall explain to the president the reasons(s) why the request is being made. The board member shall copy the superintendent on the request;
- C. The member making the request must participate in the entire meeting, not just a portion of the meeting or for a particular vote;
- D. The board president shall determine whether good cause exists and authorize or deny the request to participate remotely;
- E. The board president must notify the board member of his/her determination as soon as is reasonably possible in advance of the meeting;
- F. If the meeting will include a closed session discussion, the board member shall ensure that he/she will be able to participate in the meeting from a location where others cannot hear the discussion;
- G. The president shall only authorize a member to participate remotely when the member commits to giving his/her undivided attention to the meeting and participating in the entire meeting;
- H. The board members and the public physically present at the board or committee meeting must be able to hear the member participating remotely through the communication equipment being used. The member participating remotely must also be able to hear the discussion at the meeting through the equipment. If this is not possible, the request for participation shall be denied.
- I. If at any time during the meeting the remote communication connection is interrupted or becomes unclear or inaudible, the board president may terminate the connection. Repeated attempts to reestablish communication are disruptive to meetings and shall not be permitted. If the connection is terminated, it shall be announced to the public that the connection is terminated and that the board member is no longer in attendance at the meeting. This shall also be entered into the meeting minutes.
- J. No more than two (2) board members at a time shall be permitted to participate in a meeting remotely;
- K. The board president shall not be permitted to participate in a meeting remotely;
- L. Remote participation shall be limited to three times per year per board member not consecutive.

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