

Public Comment at School Committee Meetings Policy

The Barrington School Committee encourages a robust and open dialog with students, parents, educators, and other community members. The purpose of this policy is to set forth general rules to guide public input during the two opportunities for public comment during regular School Committee meetings, as well as opportunities for dialog during work sessions and community forums.

Work Sessions and Community Forums During such meetings, opportunities for active listening and two-way conversation and engagement are included in the agenda.

Regular Business Meetings The Rhode Island Open Meetings Act recognizes a public body's ability to hold an optional Open Forum/Public Comment period of a meeting and may be for informational purposes only. The School Committee, by law, may not engage in substantive discussions nor respond to comments initiated by a member of the public if the topic is not listed as an agenda item at the meeting. The School Committee may, however, refer the matter to the Superintendent and/or may consider the topic as a future agenda item. The School Committee and members of the administration may respond to public feedback relative to items on the agenda during the meeting.

As the Superintendent has responsibility for the overall management and operations of the schools, feedback relative to the operational function of the District may be referred directly to the Superintendent for a response.

Legal Ref: General Laws of Rhode Island, §
42-46-1,2,5 Revised 11/03/2005 Amended 1/5/2017

First Read/Amended 3/14/2019
Second Read/Approved 3/28/2019

Protocol for Public Discussion at Regular Business School Committee Meetings In the spirit of transparency, compliance with the Open Meetings Act, and efficient meeting management, the following guidelines are provided for reference:

1. Members of the public may have up to three minutes to speak on any issue(s). The purpose of this public comment period is to enable members of the public to express their thoughts and concerns and is for informational purposes only. The Chairperson, with the consent of the Committee, may limit the length of the public comment period in order to facilitate the business of the School Committee.
2. The School Committee welcomes civil and respectful comments that are clear and concise with the purpose of informing its deliberations and mission.
3. Large groups of people addressing the same topic are encouraged to consolidate their remarks or select a spokesperson to provide testimony.
4. Participants are asked to:
 - A. Prior to entering the School Committee meeting, please sign the document for public comment indicating full name, address, and topic for discussion.
 - B. Please approach the podium and microphone and identify themselves by stating their name and address.
 - C. Please be respectful of those individuals with differing views
 - D. Avoid questions or comments regarding individual personnel issues.
 - E. Avoid any comments to the School Committee that breach the privacy or other rights of students, parents, or school district employees. Such comments will be ruled out of order by the School Committee Chairperson.
 - F. Avoid any comments which may result in an imminent threat or disrupt the orderly and fair progress of discussion. Such comments will be ruled out of order by the School Committee Chairperson.
5. The School Committee Chairperson will be responsible for maintaining proper order and adhering to time limits.
6. School Committee members pledge to listen respectfully to all public comments without interrupting or engaging in conversation or debate.

First Read: 3/14/2019

Second

Read/Approval:

3/28/2019