

## **File: BEDH - PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

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

The School Committee desires and encourages 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 the opportunity to hear 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 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 the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals will sign in for an opportunity to speak during public comment. A second public comment period may be added to the end of the agenda at the discretion of the Chair. The public comment segment shall not normally exceed 15 minutes, unless extended at the discretion of the Chair. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner.
2. Speakers should normally be residents of Sandwich or be the parent or guardian of a student attending Sandwich Public Schools. Non-residents may be permitted to speak at public comment at the discretion of the chair.
3. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and address. In extenuating circumstances, this time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Chair.
4. All remarks will be addressed to the Chair. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee primarily concerns the review and approval of the budget of the district's public schools, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools.
5. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of School Committee authority. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
6. Improper conduct and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
7. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the Sandwich School Committee.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [30A: 18-25](#)

CROSS REFS: [BE](#), SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

[BEC](#), EXECUTIVE SESSIONS

[BEDA](#), NOTIFICATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Updated and approved by the Sandwich School Committee on April 26, 2023