

**BYLAW**

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**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS**

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment to 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 of the Board. Public participation shall be permitted only as indicated on the order of business in Board Bylaw No. 9323/9324.

Public participation shall be extended to residents of this district, employees and pupils, persons having a legitimate interest in the actions of this Board, persons representing groups in the community or school district, and representatives of firms eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board. All comments should be directed to the Board President. The Board will not entertain personal complaints from school personnel unless the chain of command has been followed, without satisfaction. Furthermore, the Board cannot respond to any complaints from the public directed at any district employee or student, as the Board must protect each employee and student's right to privacy.

1. Public participation shall be governed by the following rules. Persons wishing to speak:
  - a. Must be recognized by the Board President and preface comments by an announcement of his or her name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate;
  - b. Must limit each statement to five minutes duration. However, the time limit may be extended at the discretion of the Board President;
  - c. Must direct all statements to the Board President; no participant may address or question Board members individually;
  - d. May offer criticisms of such school operations and programs as concern them. But in public session, the Board will not entertain personal complaints against any person connected with the school system from school personnel unless the chain of command has been followed without satisfaction.
2. Statements for the record shall be submitted to the Board of Education Secretary in writing.
3. The Board President may:
  - a. Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy or abusive;

## PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS (Continued)

- b. Interrupt a participant when the statement is personally directed;
  - c. Request any individual 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's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
  - e. 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.
4. The portions of the meeting during which the participation of the public is invited shall be limited to thirty minutes. However, the Board President may grant a reasonable extension if deemed necessary.

### **Legal References:**

N.J.S.A. 2C:33-8  
N.J.S.A. 10:4-12  
N.J.A.C. 6:8-4.3(a)2iii

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**Return to Section Index**

**Return to Main Index**