



School District Governance Association of New Hampshire

Model Policy approved Mar. 7, 2022

Public Input at Board Meetings

Policy Code(s): BEDH

Policy Text	Annotation
<p>In order to enhance transparency and accountability, the Board encourages citizens of the District to attend its public sessions to become better acquainted with the governance, finances, operations, and performance of the schools, and so that the Board may have opportunity to hear directly from the public.</p>	<p>Transparency and accountability are where it's at.</p>
<p>All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public.</p>	<p>Meetings open to the public. Note that non-public sessions occur as part of a public meeting. The vote to enter non-public session occurs in public, and vote to seal minutes occurs after returning to public session. Best practice is that any vote to act on the matters discussed in non-public should be taken after returning to public session.</p>
<p>A portion of each Board meeting shall be set aside for members of the public to address the Board. Any person desiring to speak will come forward, clearly state their name and town when recognized, and give their comments, which shall not exceed 5 minutes. The Board reserves the right to limit the total time for public input. The Board shall enable equal opportunity to speak. If needed, the Board shall put in place a procedure to enable equal opportunity to speak.</p>	<p>Procedure for public input</p>
<p>The Board vests in its Chairperson authority to extend the period of public input, and to terminate the input of any person, while respecting the free speech rights of the public.</p>	<p>Chairperson has latitude to deviate from the procedure. Members of the public speaking at public comment enjoy first amendment rights, including the right to strongly criticize public officials. A public body incurs legal liability by unduly curtailing those rights.</p>
<p>The Chairperson shall recognize any Board member who wishes to address the Chairperson in response to public input.</p>	<p>Board members have a right to respond to public input, and to ask questions about public input.</p>
<p>References</p>	
<p>RSA 91-A:3</p>	