Raymond School District Policy - BEDH

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The primary purpose of School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The Board encourages residents to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools. All official meetings of the Board shall be open to the press and public. However, the Board reserves the right to meet and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 91-A:3.

Members of the public shall not speak unless recognized by the Board Chair or other person presiding over the meeting. ("Chair" shall apply to either in this policy.)

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, assure that the Board may conduct its business and meetings properly and efficiently, the Board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at Board meetings.

1. The Board will provide 30 minutes for public comments at the beginning of each Board meeting. This period may be extended by the Chair or his/her designee, unless a Board member objects. If a Board member objects, a majority vote of the Board will be taken to continue. Additionally, the Board may include additional public comment period for specific agenda items with a time limit for public comment specified on the pertinent agenda.

2. Individual speakers will be allotted three minutes per person. Speakers may not relinquish allotted time to another speaker. For specific meetings and/or specific agenda items, the Board may at the outset of the public comment period increase the individual time limit for all speakers.

3. The Chair will recognize speakers on a first come basis.

4. In order to comply with the minute requirements of RSA 91-A:2, II, speakers shall identify themselves clearly for the record.

5. Except as otherwise provided in this policy, members of the public may offer comments on agenda items or upon any other matter of public concern directly relating to the District's school policies, programs and operations. In the interest of preserving individual privacy and due process rights, the Board requires that comments (including complaints) regarding individual employees (other than the Superintendent) or individual students be directed to the Superintendent in accord with the complaint/grievance resolutions processes set forth in School Board Policies KE and KEB. Complaints regarding the Superintendent may be made either during public comment or directed to the School Board Chair.

6. Any comments which do not adhere to the above, or which disrupt the official business of the Board may be ruled out of order by the Chair. Repeated disruption may result in the individual being asked to leave the meeting. Obscene speech, comments threatening bodily harm, or other unprotected speech will not be tolerated.

7. The Board makes most meetings accessible online in real time with meeting links included on the meeting notice. Although the Board will allow public comment remotely, attendance in person in order to offer public comment is highly encouraged. The Board cannot and will not assure that in all cases the technology will/can function adequately. If technological issues arise either before or during the meeting such that the comments are not reasonably audible at the meeting location, the Chair may terminate opportunity for remote public comment, or terminate the speaker's comment period.

8. The Board Chair may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow the above rules of order. Repeated violations or disruptions may result in the intervention of law enforcement, with the potential for criminal charges.

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded that the public comment period is an opportunity for members of the public to provide their input to the Board but is not a question and answer session. Board members are without authority to answer spontaneously on behalf of the Board. Thus, in most instances, Board response, if any, will be deferred pending consideration by the full Board.

With the aim of maintaining focus on the issues in discussion, it is desired that all speakers strive to adhere to ordinary norms of decorum and civility.

Legal References:
RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to the Public
RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions
U.S. Const. 1st Amendment

Adopted:	May 5, 1971
R/R:	9/7/78, 9/21/78, 10/4/79, 4/21/88, 8/6/98, 5/3/01
Revised:	June 6, 2002
Revised:	September 5, 2007
Revised:	August 14, 2019
Revised:	September 21, 2022