

## 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 ~~citizens of the District~~ residents to attend ~~its sessions~~ Board meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools and so that the Board may have opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public. 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 to discuss such matters as are properly considered in non-public session in accordance with RSA 91-A:3. The Board also reserves the right to enter non-public session at any time, in accordance with the provisions of RSA 91-A:3.

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard and, at the same time, ~~it may 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 first 20 minutes will be set aside for citizens to address the Board. The Board will provide a maximum of fifteen minutes to hear public comments at the beginning of each regular Board meeting. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.~~ The Board will provide a maximum of 20 minutes for public comments at the beginning of each regular 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. Any individual desiring to speak shall be recognized by the Chairperson and shall give his or her name, address, and the group, if any, that is represented.~~ 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 presentation should be as brief as possible. Written remarks are encouraged.~~ 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. Speakers may offer comments on such school operations and programs as concern them. In public session, however, the Board will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor complaints against any person connected with the school system. Other channels are provided for Board consideration and disposition of legitimate complaints involving individuals, which should be referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action.~~ 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 requests 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. ~~At the discretion of the Board Chairperson, the Board may allow public input in conjunction with agenda items.~~ 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 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.

~~The Board vests in its Chairperson or other presiding officer authority to terminate the remarks of any individuals when they do not adhere to the rules established above as to content or time limitation.~~

Persons appearing before the Board are reminded, ~~as a point of information,~~ that members of the Board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. ~~Thus, answers to any questions must be deferred pending consideration by the Superintendent and the full Board.~~ Thus, in most instances, any Board response 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.

*Statutory Legal References:*

*RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to the Public*

*RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions*

*U.S. Const. 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment*

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