

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: BEDH
School Board First Read: April 5, 2023 School Board Second Read/Adoption: April 5, 2023 School Board Annual Review: March 20, 2024	Page 1 of 1 Category: Recommended

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

The primary purpose of the Oyster River Cooperative School Board meetings is to conduct the business of the Board as it relates to school policies, programs and operations. The public is encouraged to attend all public meetings of the Board. However, the public is not allowed to participate in public Board meetings except during public comments. The Board will allow public comments at regular public meetings and workshops.

Public comments can be limited by the Chairperson in order to accomplish the agenda in a timely manner. For the School Board to conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, and in order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the Board may be heard, it is expected that the following will guide public comments at Board meetings:

1. Consistent with RSA 91-A:3, Policy BEDB-Agenda Preparation & Format, and the laws pertaining to student and family privacy rights, the Board will not place any matter on the public agenda that is to be properly discussed in a non-public session. Complaints regarding district staff will be directed to the Superintendent.
2. Consistent with RSA 189:74, public comment can happen anytime within 30 minutes of the start of public comment, even after the Board has moved on to other topics. Additionally, the required 30-minute minimum only applies to the first public comment period at any meeting if more than one comment period is on the agenda.
3. All speakers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene, slanderous, defamatory or violent statements will be considered out of order and will not be tolerated. The Board Chairperson may terminate the speaker's privilege of address if the speaker does not follow this rule of order.
4. Individuals who may speak during Public Comment include, residents of the District, students, and parents or guardians of students who attend District schools and students. Other Non-residents who wish to speak will be required to receive authorization from the Board Chair prior to the meeting.
5. Speakers may not delegate others to speak on their behalf or "give" time to other speakers.
6. Consistent with RSA 189:74: I and in the interest of protecting personally identifiable information ("PII") as well as other confidential information, comments (including complaints) regarding individual students, volunteers, or employees (other than the Superintendent) should be directed to the Superintendent or otherwise as provided under the complaint/grievance resolution processes set forth in Board Policy KEB-Public Complaints about School Personnel, Employees, Students or Administration to the School Board.

This policy affects public access to the Board and the public's Right to Know. To protect that right, this policy requires a public hearing before it may be revised. Further, this policy may not be suspended except by a two-thirds vote at a public meeting. The Board must always fully comply with the letter and spirit of the Right-to-Know law that may not be suspended. This policy will be reviewed by the Board and all standing advisory committees annually before the end of April to ensure full awareness and compliance.

Legal Reference:

- RSA 91-A:2, Meetings Open to Public
- RSA 91-A:3, Non-Public Sessions

Cross Reference:

- BEDH-R & R1 – Public Comment Procedure & Sign-in Form
- BEA – Regular Board Meetings
- BEC – Non-Public Sessions
- BEDB – Agenda Preparation and Format
- KEB – Complaints about School Personnel