

Trenton Board of Education

District Policy

0167- PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

Section: Bylaws

Date Created: May, 2011

Date Edited: August, 2017

The Board of Education recognizes the value of public comment on 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 set aside a portion of every Board meeting, the length of the portion to be determined by the Board, for public comment on any school or school district issue that a member of the public feels may be of concern to the residents of the school district.

As the Board of Education is responsible for decision-making that affects the entire school district, it welcomes comments from the public. Requests to speak can be made online through the District website at www.trenton.k12.nj.us by clicking on *District/Board of Education/Public Participation Request Form*. Members of the public will also be able to sign-up manually in the Board Secretary's Office up to noon of the last business day prior to the Board meeting.

The opportunity for the Board to hear from the public is when the meeting reaches "Public Comment" on the regular meeting agenda. Members of the Trenton community may address the Board on any item of interest. To ensure timely progression through the agenda, comments are limited to no more than three (3) minutes per person. Signing up to speak with the intent of conceding time to another participant is not permitted. Parent or community groups who have a specific concern may present as a group, but no individual speaker will be allotted more than three (3) minutes.

Public participation shall be governed by the following rules:

1. A participant must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface comments by an announcement of his/her name, place of residence, and group affiliation, if appropriate;
2. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes' duration.

3. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic until all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard;
4. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually;
5. The presiding officer may:
 - a. Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant;
 - b. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum;
 - c. 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;
 - d. 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; and
 - e. Waive these rules when necessary for the protection of privacy or the efficient administration of the Board's business.

N.J.S.A. 2C:33-8

N.J.S.A. 10:4-12

Adopted: 16 May 2011

Revised: 28 August 2017