

## Community Relations

### Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings

Following is a board-adopted regulation with respect to public participation during a school Board meeting:

All official meetings of the Board of Education, except executive sessions, shall be open to the public and opportunities shall be offered for members of the public to present statements at regular sessions:

1. One ten minute period will be provided for public presentations at the beginning of the meeting.
2. Another ten minute period will be provided for additional public presentations toward the end of the meeting.

In both instances, participants may present written or oral statements or requests. The Board would appreciate receiving copies of any written statements. These statements or requests must be limited to three minutes.

Unless an answer to a question is provided in the Board's written policies or in established regulations, the Board will not respond to the request at the same meeting, nor will it take action on a proposed recommendation, but shall defer the item to a later meeting or to a committee.

Members of the public will not be recognized by the Chairperson as the Board conducts its official business except when the Board schedules in advance an interim public discussion period on a particular agenda item.

The Board suggests some guidelines that may be helpful:

1. Each person wishing to speak should limit his/her remarks to three (3) minutes.
2. If there are many citizens desiring to speak on the same subject, they will be asked to limit their presentation so that each different subject be given fair presentation time.
3. Citizens should not expect an immediate reply from the Board since this is a time for citizens to be heard and not the time for decisions to be made.

If the board feels that there is need to discuss the citizen's matter of interest further, it may place the matter on the agenda for a future meeting or refer to a committee.

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### Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings (continued)

Any citizen wishing to be placed on the agenda at a regular Board meeting is to notify the Superintendent of Schools by the Wednesday preceding the Board meeting.

(cf. 9325.5 - Public Participation at Board Meetings)

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

1-225 Meetings of government agents to be public. Recording of votes. Schedule and agenda of meetings to be filed. Notice of special meetings. Executive sessions.

1-226 Broadcasting or photographing meetings.

19a-342 Smoking in public meetings in rooms of public building prohibited.

1-227 Mailing of notice of meetings to persons filing written request. Fees.

1-230 Regular meetings to be held pursuant to regulation, ordinance or resolution.

1-232 Conduct of meetings.

1-206 Denial of access to public records or meetings.

10-238 Petition for hearing by board of education.

Policy adopted: January 13, 2003

EAST HAMPTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
East Hampton, Connecticut

## **Community Relations**

### **Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings**

The existing Board of Education Policy 9325.2 and Regulation 1120 were developed to enhance the possibility of receiving pertinent information concerning agenda items from East Hampton citizens attending scheduled Board of Education meetings. The Policy provides two opportunities during each scheduled Board of Education meeting for individuals to participate during the “Audience of Citizens” agenda format.

The Regulation provides the Board of Education Chairperson and Board members broad guidelines to follow regarding the management of the “Audience of Citizens” section of the agenda.

The following statements are provided by the Board of Education Sub-committee on Policy concerning Regulation #1120 Community Relations, Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings.

1. Each person should limit their remarks to approximately three minutes. However, the ten minute period established for “Audience of Citizens” statements can be extended, at the discretion of the Board Chairperson, if the discussion is of benefit to the Board’s business. Each “Audience of Citizens” speaker will be provided one opportunity to speak unless recognized at the discretion of the Board Chairperson for a second statement.
2. Should the Board believe that an “Audience of Citizens” could be beneficial to Board business to be reviewed later in the agenda, the Board may move to provide such an opportunity. When such an adjustment occurs, unless otherwise stipulated, the “Audience of Citizens” will occur first, followed by Board discussion concerning the specific agenda item.
3. The “Audience of Citizens” portion of the agenda was not intended as a time to dialogue with the citizens. The Board is not to respond to any request not to take action on any citizen request. However, this agenda item was established to build positive communication channels. It was not constructed to create citizen frustration and discontent.

Therefore, if a question can be answered factually, in a reasonable manner (i.e. the Board policy is or the Board’s decision was...) then an answer should be provided by the Board Chairperson or his/her designee.

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### Public Participation at Board of Education Meetings (continued)

If the response to a citizen's question, statement or inquiry has not been decided yet by the Board or would require a subjective, personal opinion "type" of answer from Board members then the Board has four choices.

- Make a statement such as:  
"We are sorry but the Board has not yet formulated an opinion on that topic."
- Make a motion:  
Move to place the topic on the next Board Meeting's agenda
- Make a motion:  
Move to request that the appropriate Board Sub-committee review the topic and provide a report to the full Board at a later day.
- Choose not to respond.