

Haverhill School Committee
Policy BEDH

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT COMMITTEE MEETINGS

School Committee Meeting Discussion with Citizens of the Community

1. Any citizen may request that an item which is of interest to him/her be placed on the agenda for a particular meeting. Such request should be in writing and should be received by the Superintendent of Schools at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. Such request should contain background statements which would explain scope and intent of the agenda item.
2. Any citizen who wishes to speak on an agenda item after publication of the agenda can indicate his/her wish to speak to the Committee about that item by notifying the Superintendent of Schools any time prior to the meeting, at which time the Superintendent will notify the chairperson of the intent of the speaker.
3. Any citizen who has not had the opportunity to review the agenda in advance of the meeting may upon request to the Chairperson be heard once on a topic on the agenda. The citizen shall limit his/her talk to no more than five minutes except by majority consent of the Committee members present.
4. No person shall present orally or discuss at any meeting the School Committee complaints against individual members of the School Committee or of the Haverhill Public Schools until such time as charges or complaints shall be presented to the School Committee in writing and shall be signed by the person or persons making the complaint.
5. It shall be in order for any School Committee member to direct questions to the speaker through the Chairperson in order to clarify the discussion.
6. A group of citizens appearing at a meeting to express favor or opposition to a particular agenda item should designate one member of the group as spokesperson to be heard on the topic under discussion. Other members of the group may be heard if they feel that they can contribute additional information regarding the topic under discussion.
7. At the beginning of each meeting the public shall be invited to make general comments concerning issues not related to the agenda using the following structure:
 - a. When they arrive at the meeting, individuals wishing to speak will put their name on a list held by the secretary
 - b. A "Public Comment" item will come just before consensus on the agenda
 - c. Comments by members of the public will be limited to 3 to 5 minutes, based on the number of people signed up to talk
 - d. The maximum length of time for an individual to speak during the Public Comment portion will be 5 minutes

- e. Topics for public comment should be relative to the responsibility of the School Committee: policy, curriculum, budget, health and safety, superintendent performance and goals
- f. The presiding officer will do everything in his or her power to assure that public comment does not stray into areas of discipline of students and staff, derogatory comments about others, and complaints about operations, procedures and personnel over which the School Committee does not have control.