

PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The School Committee encourages citizens of the District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have this opportunity and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly manner, the following rules and procedures are adopted.

NOTE: The following procedures are consistent with Section 9-18 of the Fall River City Charter regarding Public Comment Rules or Policy as they pertain to public bodies such as the school committee.

The Charter states: "The School Committee shall develop and adopt rules or policy addressing public comment. The rules or policy shall require that public meeting comment periods appear on meeting agendas for all regular and special meetings. Public comment shall not be limited to items on the agenda for any regular meeting, providing the issues or concerns raised, are within the jurisdiction of the school committee. Public comment at any special meeting shall be limited to items on the meeting agenda."

Procedures

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee. Speakers will sign up at the podium before the meeting commences, where a copy of these procedures will be made available to them. The Chairperson will determine the length of the public participation segment.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. All remarks will be addressed through the presiding Chairperson the meeting. The Chairperson may permit extension of this time limit.
3. Topics for discussion must be limited to school related issues, and not conflict with procedure #5.
4. Improper comments and remarks will not be allowed. Defamatory or abusive remarks are always out of order. If a speaker persists in improper conduct or remarks, the Chairperson may terminate that individual's privilege of address.
5. Speakers may offer objective criticisms or concerns regarding school operations or programs, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel, nor against any member of the school community. Administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.
7. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members' review and consideration at an appropriate time.