

Holbrook Public Schools

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A School Committee Meeting is a meeting of a government body at which members of the body deliberate over public business. We welcome the attendance of members of the school community to view your School Committee as it conducts its regular business meeting.

Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30A Section 20(f) governs public participation at open meetings covering all public bodies.

Chapter 30A:20 [Notice, Remote Participation, Public Participation, Certification]

(f) No person shall address a meeting of a public body without permission of the chair, and all persons shall, at the request of the chair, be silent. No person shall disrupt the proceedings of a meeting of a public body. If, after clear warning from the chair, a person continues to disrupt the proceedings, the chair may order the person to withdraw from the meeting and if the person does not withdraw, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person from the meeting.

The School Committee believes that the school district community should have an opportunity to comment to the Committee on issues that affect the school district and are within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities. Therefore, the Committee has set aside a period of time at each School Committee meeting to hear from the public. In addition, if the Committee believes that an issue requires a dialogue with the school district community, the Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that issue.

In order that all citizens who wish to be heard before the Committee have a chance 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:

1. At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the Committee. The Chairperson shall determine the length of the public participation segment.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. Speakers may not assign their time to another speaker, and in general, extensions of time will not be permitted. However, speakers who require reasonable accommodations on the basis of a speech-related disability or who require language interpretation services may be allotted a total of five (5) minutes to present their material. Speakers must notify the School Committee or designee by telephone or email at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting if they wish to request an extension of time for one of these reasons.
3. Written comments longer than (3) minutes may be presented to the Committee before or after the meeting for the Committee members' review and consideration at an appropriate time.
4. All remarks will be addressed through the Chairperson of the meeting.

5. Topics for public comment are limited to matters that are within the scope of the School Committee's authority. Therefore, any comments involving staff members or students must concern the educational goals, policies, or budget of the Holbrook Public Schools or the performance of the Superintendent. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members or students.
6. The Chair of the meeting may not interrupt speakers who have been recognized to speak, except that the Chair reserves the right to terminate speech which is not Constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats, incitement to imminent lawless conduct, comments that were found by a court of law to be defamatory, and/or sexually explicit comments made to appeal to prurient interests. Verbal comments will also be curtailed once they exceed the time limits outlined in paragraph [2] of this policy and/or to the extent they exceed the scope of the School Committee's authority as outlined in paragraph [5] of this policy.
7. Disclaimer: The public comment period is not a time for debate or response to comments by the School Committee. Comments made during this period do not reflect the views or the positions of the School Committee. Because of constitutional free speech principals, the School Committee does not have the authority to prevent all speech that may be upsetting and/or offensive during public comment.

Source: MASC

Adopted: August 22, 2007

Amended: October 13, 2021, November 15, 2023