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SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS	1501

The School Committee desires the public to attend and/or witness its meetings so that community members may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. All regular and special meetings shall be open to the public in accordance with applicable laws and regulation, except that the Committee may conduct executive sessions, when permitted by the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

In addition, the Committee welcomes the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of public stakeholders. In order that all who wish to address the Committee have an opportunity to be heard, and to ensure the ability of the Committee to conduct the District's business in an orderly and expeditious manner, the following rules and procedures shall apply to public participation:

- *At each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, members of the public will be invited to address the Committee. The public participation period shall be opened and closed by appropriate motions of the Committee. The public participation period shall remain open as long as members of the public wish to speak, with a maximum time of thirty (30) minutes. The Committee may extend the length of the public participation period by passing an appropriate motion.*
- *Groups may designate a spokesperson for their group and they are encouraged to do so, but that will not preclude individual members of the group from speaking.*
- *Speakers will be allowed five (5) minutes to present their remarks. Individuals and group representatives who wish to speak must indicate their intent to do so by signing a form provided for such purpose before the meeting in the office of the Superintendent or at the start of the meeting. The Chairperson may limit the amount of time allowed for each speaker to two (2) minutes, based on the number of persons who have signed up to speak. If the number exceeds fifteen (15), the first fifteen (15) individuals or group representatives on the list shall be allowed to speak. The Committee may modify these limits by passing an appropriate motion.*
- *The public shall not address the Committee during the public participation period without the permission of the presiding Chairperson. Minors shall not address the Committee without the consent of their parent or guardian. All speakers shall state and write their name and address for inclusion in the official record.*
- *Speakers may present appropriate written material to the Committee through the presiding Chairperson. Any such material shall be a public record and shall be included in the official records of the Committee.*
- *Speakers shall address their remarks to the Committee through the presiding Chairperson. Speakers shall not address or question individual members or administrators during the public participation period.*
- *It shall be in order for any Committee member to direct questions to the speaker through the Chairperson in order to clarify comments of the speaker.*
- *Public participation is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between members of the public and the Committee. Questions regarding specific operational issues may be referred to the Superintendent for a later response. Questions regarding policy matters may not be answered at the time but may be the subject of later discussion by the Committee. Members of the public who desire the Committee to discuss or debate a particular item or issue should request an agenda item in accordance with applicable policy and/or bylaws of the Committee.*
- *Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs as concern them, but in public session the Committee will not hear personal complaints against any school employee or member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.*
- *Improper conduct 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 and exercise such other powers as are available to the Chairperson, as presiding officer, under the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law.

The Committee shall, when possible, solicit the advice and counsel of citizens in the planning and operation of the schools. Meetings shall be open to the public except when the committee votes to go into Executive Session, as directed by Chapter 303, Acts of 1975, Sections 23A, 23B, and 23C (Open Meeting Law). Any matter may be placed on the agenda for consideration by the Committee by any citizen, subject to the following; except in emergencies, such request(s) shall be in writing and shall be received by the Superintendent of Schools prior to the scheduled meeting. The request(s) shall be accompanied by a written statement to explain the subject matter to be brought before the committee. As stated in the By-Laws of the Melrose School Committee section 1.3.1, Construction: The Agenda for each meeting shall be prepared by the Superintendent under the direction of the Chair (of the School Committee or the appropriate subcommittee Chair). ... If a suggested item is rejected, the Chair shall give reason for such rejection. In the event of rejection, three (3) members of the Committee may request that the Superintendent place the item on the Agenda.

“No person shall address a public meeting of the committee without leave of the presiding officer at such meeting, and all persons shall, at the request of such presiding officer, be silent. If, after warning from the chairperson, a person persists in disorderly behavior, said officer may order him to withdraw from the meeting, and, if he/she does not withdraw, may order a constable or any other person to remove him/her and confine him/her in some convenient place until the meeting is adjourned.”

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