

January 10, 2022

The North Middlesex Regional School District School Committee places the following policy on the table for public review. Should you wish to comment about the policy, please email your comments to info@nmrsd.org

Thank you.

FILE: BEDH

Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

All regular and special meetings of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions, which are closed meetings, will be held only as prescribed by the Statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The NMRSD School Committee desires individuals to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the Committee would like the opportunity to hear from the public.

Regular school committee meetings are for conducting the business of the district and in order to balance the needs of full agendas with the desire to fully engage with interested residents, we make available the following options for public communication:

1. The North Middlesex Regional School District Committee welcomes public comment on matters within its purview. Accordingly, the Committee makes available a maximum 15-minute period at its regular meetings for individuals in the audience to address the Committee for no longer than three (3) minutes per person. Only district residents may participate in public comment. The exceptions to the foregoing are:
 - a. Officials of any of the three-member towns of the district who do not reside in the district and who have official responsibility for matters in those towns
 - b. Parents/guardians who live out of district but have children who attend NMRSD.

Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between individuals and the School Committee. It is an individual's opportunity to express an opinion on issues within the School Committee's authority. Where this is not a discussion, Committee members may direct questions to the speaker through the Chair in order to clarify comments of the speaker only.

For speaking during a regular school committee meeting public comment, the following rules and procedures are adopted:

- a. It is encouraged that any citizen wishing to speak at public comment email the request and statement to info@nmrsd.org prior to the meeting. Otherwise, individuals can sign in at the beginning of the regular meeting for an opportunity to speak during public comment. The public comment segment shall not exceed 15 minutes. All speakers are encouraged to present their remarks in a respectful manner
- b. Speakers will be allowed up to three (3) minutes to present their material and must begin their comments by stating their name and city/town. The presiding Chair may permit extension of this time limit, in extenuating circumstances.
- c. Topics for discussion should be limited to those items within the School Committee's scope of authority. The authority of the School Committee

primarily concerns the review and approval of the school district budget, the performance of the Superintendent, and the educational goals and policies of the district's public schools. Comments and complaints regarding school personnel (apart from the Superintendent) or students are generally prohibited unless those comments and complaints concern matters within the scope of School Committee authority.

- d. The Chair of the meeting, after a warning, reserves the right to terminate speech which is not constitutionally protected because it constitutes true threats that are likely to provoke a violent reaction and cause a breach of the peace, or incitement to imminent lawless conduct, or contains obscenities.
 - e. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the presiding Chair before or after the meeting (all correspondence may be sent to info@nmrsd.org). All remarks will be addressed through the Chair of the meeting. Comments made during the public comment portion of the meeting do not necessarily reflect the views or positions of the North Middlesex Regional School Committee.
 - f. Any comments made that require answers will be referred to a subcommittee, administration or other appropriate individual along with a time frame for follow up. Discussion among the school committee on the topic would be restricted to procedural tasks.
2. The school committee acknowledges that regular meetings do not always allow for longer discussions with residents due to the breadth of items discussed at a typical meeting. NMRSD School Committee subcommittee meetings are a great avenue for longer and in-depth discussions about agenda items. Residents are encouraged to attend subcommittee meetings and to help ensure a greater time allowance, it is recommended that residents request their interests be placed on a subcommittee agenda. Standing Subcommittees available for public participation include:
- a. Finance
 - b. Policy

Additionally, the school committee has liaisons for the purposes of gathering information for the school committee and relaying school committee positions, with whom you may contact in the following areas:

- a. Equity Advisory
 - b. Facilities
 - c. Food Service
 - d. Safety
 - e. Technology
3. Any citizen who wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item which is of interest to them and within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities may request to be placed on the agenda for a particular meeting. Such a request should be in writing and should be received by the Superintendent of Schools (info@nmrsd.org) at least one week prior to the date

of the meeting. Such a request should contain background statements which would explain the scope and intent of the agenda item. The Chair of the Committee works with the Superintendent to formulate the meeting agendas. Together they will determine whether or not to place an item on the agenda and if the item is to be taken up they will also determine when to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter.

All correspondence may be sent to info@nmrsd.org.

Adopted by the NMRSD School Committee:

February 11, 2019

Five-Year Review Cycle: 10/20/2021

Informational Review: 12/20/2021

NMRSD First Vote: 01/10/2022

NMRSD Adoption:
