

HAMILTON-WENHAM REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT  
WENHAM, MA

B2010

GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

General

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. These meetings are business meetings held in public settings. The public is excluded from valid executive sessions pursuant to the Open Meeting Law.

The School Committee will generally set aside a period of time at each regular meeting to hear from the public about issues that affect the District and are within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities. Special meetings will generally not include such period of time unless specifically called to solicit public input.

If the School Committee believes that an issue requires a dialogue with the District community, the School Committee may schedule a separate public hearing on that open issue.

The School Committee welcomes individuals in the District to attend its open meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and programs of our local public schools. However, pursuant to M.G.L. Chapter 30A Section 20(f), an individual is not permitted to disrupt a meeting of a public body and at the request of the chair, all members of the public shall remain silent. If, after clear warning, person continues to be disruptive, the chair may order the individual to leave the meeting and, if the person does not leave, the chair may authorize a constable or other officer to remove the person.

Written Request to Make a Presentation Before the School Committee

Any individual, who wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item that is within the scope of the Committee's responsibilities, may request that item 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 that explain the scope and intent of the agenda item. The Chair of the Committee and the Superintendent 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 where to place an item on the agenda and all parameters to be required of the presenter.

If a group of individual's wishes to make a presentation to the School Committee on an item that is within the scope of the School Committee's responsibilities, it should designate one member of the group to act as the spokesperson and follow the above procedure.

Policy Review: 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: March 6, 2014  
2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: March 20, 2014

Policy Adopted: March 20, 2014

Vote: 6-0-0-3

Chairperson, HWRSD School Committee: Roger Kuebel  
(Original Signature on file in the Superintendent's Office)

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Public Comment

1. Public comment shall be for a period of not more than 20 minutes and shall generally follow the opening of the meeting. It is within the Chairman's authority to recognize one spokesperson for each group who wishes to speak. The School Committee reserves the right to rearrange its agenda to accommodate scheduled presenters.
2. Individuals wishing to speak before the Committee shall identify themselves by name and address and shall speak for no longer than 3 minutes unless specifically authorized by the Chair. No person may speak more than once without permission of the Chair. All persons shall speak to the full Committee through the Chair and shall not address individual members of the School Committee or administrators.
3. Individuals may address topics on the agenda, items specified for public comment, or items within the scope of responsibility of the School Committee. The Chair shall rule out of order any individual who fails to honor the guidelines or who addresses a matter inappropriate for public comment.
4. Any Committee member may direct questions to the speaker through the Chair in order to clarify comments of the speaker.
5. Individuals may offer such objective criticisms of the school operations and programs that concern them, but in public session the School Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community. Under most circumstances, administrative channels are the proper means for disposition of legitimate complaints involving staff members.

SOURCE: MASC

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