

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

All official meetings of the Harpursville Central School Board shall be open to the public. All official actions of the Board must be taken openly and the deliberations leading to Board action shall likewise be conducted openly, except as they concern personnel matters or acquisition of property.

The Board reserves the right to meet in an executive session on appropriate matters from time to time but no action shall be taken in such sessions (refer to policy #9362).

The public and all employees are invited and encouraged to attend any or all meetings of the Harpursville Central School Board except executive sessions. The Board recognizes its responsibility to conduct all business in an orderly and efficient manner and may, therefore, require reasonable controls outlined in this policy to regulate public presentations to the Board.

The Board of Education encourages public comment on school related matters at Board meetings, as outlined in this policy. To allow members of the public to address the Board, a period not to exceed 30 minutes will be set aside during each Board meeting for public comments on items on the meeting's agenda. Presentation should be as brief as possible. No speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than three minutes. No individual speakers may not give unused time to other speakers.

A second 20-minute time period will be set aside at the end of each Board meeting for public comment on matters pertaining to the district but not on the agenda. All speakers must follow the time limits outlined later in this policy. Anyone wishing to address the board on a matter not on the board agenda, must notify the District office 48 hours ahead of the scheduled meeting time. Without such prior notice, the matter will be considered for a future meeting

Persons wishing to address the Board regarding an agenda item will advise the District Clerk within a minimum of 24-hour notice prior to the start of the scheduled meeting. To ensure that the comments are those that can be properly discussed in an open meeting, the board will request a brief description of the topic to be addressed. The request must include the topic that you wish to speak on and the board agenda item that it pertains to.

For purposes of following up with speakers later, the district may request the speaker's preferred contact information such as home address, telephone number, or email address, or speak with them in person. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. The Board President may limit the number of repetitive comments to keep within time limit for the public comment period.

For some matters, it may be necessary for the Board and the Superintendent to conduct research. In those cases the Board President will let the speaker know that "we will take your matter under consideration and will ask the Superintendent to follow up with you within 5 days.

The Board will not permit, in public session, discussion involving individual district personnel or students. Persons wishing to discuss matters involving individual district personnel or students should present their comments and/or concerns to the Superintendent during regular business hours.

All speakers and observers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene language, defamatory statements, threats of violence, statements advocating racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

Persons making presentations at a Board meeting will address remarks to the President and may direct questions or comments to Board members or other district officials only upon the approval of the President. The Board President and the Superintendent have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Board, but commenters should not expect to engage in discussion with the Board. However, the Board may correct comments that are not accurate, and may refer to an existing policy when it answers a question.

The President will be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and will rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion and the appropriateness of the subject being presented, as outlined in this policy and applicable provisions of law and regulation, and subject to the Board's parliamentary procedure. If there is disagreement about whether a speaker's topic falls within the topics permitted for public comment, the whole board will vote on the issue.

The President will remind speakers whose presentations are inconsistent with this policy of the rules for public comment. For speakers that continue to violate this policy, the President may discontinue the presentation or call for a brief recess of the meeting. The President may order the removal of speakers from the speakers' area, or from the meeting in general, or may close the public comment period.

For members of the public who are unwilling or unable to speak during public comment periods, including when these periods are closed, they may submit comments to the Board in writing, to the following address: District Clerk PO Box 147 Harpursville, NY 13787.

All individuals at Board meetings are expected to abide by the rules for Public Conduct on School Property as set forth in the district's Code of Conduct. At board meetings, speakers and observers may not engage in behavior that disrupts the meeting, such as shouting, interrupting others, blocking the free movement of others, or obstructing the views of others. In the event of such disruption, the President will remind those in attendance of the rules under this policy. Any Board member may request a brief recess of the meeting. The President may order the removal of those who are a threat to the safety of others or who disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting. If appropriate, law enforcement may be called to remove disruptive individuals.

Adoption date: April 17, 2023