

Medway Public Schools  
Medway, MA

## **SCHOOL COMMITTEE POLICY**

Policy #90

### **Public Participation at School Committee Meetings**

The Medway School Committee welcomes public comment and participation at school committee meetings, according to the parameters described below. School committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 39, s. 23B. The school committee has set aside a period of time at each meeting to hear from members of the public. If a particular issue arises during public participation that warrants an extended discussion, the chairperson may defer such discussion or refer the matter to the superintendent and/or a committee member.

When possible, individuals are encouraged to seek information or action from the teacher or the principal first. If the parties cannot resolve the issue at the building level then they should contact the superintendent before bringing their concern to the committee.

#### **Public Comment:**

Public comment is not for purpose of debate between the speaker and school committee members. Rather, it is intended to offer citizens an opportunity to express their opinions on issues related to school committee business. While the committee and/or administrators will not typically respond to comments or questions posed in public comment, the chair may answer or request that the citizen direct the issue to the appropriate person or body for a response. By law, "no person shall address a public meeting of a governmental body without permission of the presiding officer at such meeting, and all persons shall, at the request of such presiding officer, be silent."

#### **Public Comment Guidelines:**

1. Members of the public who wish to speak should identify themselves by name, address, and reason for speaking. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. The chairperson may permit extension of this time limit.
2. 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 person's privilege of address.
3. All remarks will be addressed through the chairperson of the meeting.
4. In public session, the 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.

5. Written comments longer than three (3) minutes may be presented to the committee before or after the meeting for the committee members to review and consider at an appropriate time.

**Participation Regarding Agenda Items:**

In addition to the public comment section at each meeting, the public is invited to remain for the whole meeting and may be invited to speak on any agenda item, at the discretion of the chair. Should the chair invite such comments, citizens who wish to speak should signify interest by raising their hands.

First Reading: **December 6, 2013**

Adopted: **January 16, 2014**

Revised: **April 28, 2016**