

PUBLIC COMMENT AT SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETINGS

All regular and special meetings of the School Committee shall be open to the public. Executive sessions will be held only as prescribed by the statutes of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The Somerville School Committee desires residents of the district to attend its meetings so that they may better understand the operations and the programs of our local public schools. In addition, the School Committee would like the opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order that all residents who wish to be heard before the School Committee have a chance and to ensure the ability of the School Committee to conduct the district's business in an orderly manner, rules and procedures have been adopted.

At the start of each regularly scheduled School Committee meeting, individuals or group representatives will be invited to address the School Committee. The length of the public comment will ordinarily be 20 minutes, unless otherwise determined by the Chair or a majority of School Committee. At the start of public comment, the Chair shall read the following script:

1. Welcome and thank you to those who have signed up for public comment.
2. Speakers will be allowed three (3) minutes to present their material. However, the Chair may limit comments to two (2) minutes based on the number of individuals signed up to speak.
3. Remarks should be respectful, professional, and addressed through the Chair. If a speaker persists in improper remarks, the Chair may terminate that individual's right to continue.
4. Public comment is not a discussion, debate, or dialogue between residents and the Committee. Members of the Committee will not reply to public comment in the course of the meeting, though individual members may follow-up, and items from Public Comment may be taken up in future meetings.
5. The School Committee will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any member of the school community in public session. Individuals may address topics on the agenda or items within the School Committee's scope of responsibility such as the district budget, goals, and policies, or role of the Superintendent.

7. The public is encouraged to submit comments in writing for inclusion in the public record.

Public comment shall not take place at subcommittee meetings or at public retreats of the School Committee, where no matter being discussed may be finally considered, in that no votes may be taken. Written comments will be accepted and made part of the record of the meeting. The opportunity for the public to make oral comments on items discussed at committee meetings or at public retreats shall be at the regular or special meetings at which the item is being be considered for action by the School Committee.

Procedures will be periodically established and reviewed by the School Committee.

Adopted: January 1996

Revised: October 2008

Revised: January 2013

Amended: November 6, 2017

Amended: June 10, 2019