



Roger León  
Superintendent

# Newark Board of Education

Where Passion Meets Progress

## Rules and Procedures for Public Participation at Open Meetings

Welcome to a public meeting of the Newark Public Schools under the Open Public Meetings Act of 1975, also known as the “Sunshine Law.” The District hopes that you will find this meeting informative and instructive, and that citizens are afforded an opportunity to better understand and appreciate the District’s operation and functions.

Under the Sunshine Law, the District must provide notice of all open meetings to allow citizens to attend and observe the deliberations of the District. However, the District believes that citizens should also be afforded an opportunity to comment upon District policies which affect them, and welcomes the opportunity to hear the concerns, wishes, and ideas of the public.

In order to ensure that members of the public who wish to appear before the Board of Education may be heard, while at the same time preserving the proper efficient conduct of the meetings, the District has adopted the rules and procedures for public participation at open meetings as set forth below.

### Implementing Procedures

#### 1. Time of Meeting

All regular meetings will commence at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise specified. All business meetings will commence at 6:00 p.m. unless otherwise specified.

The Office of Board Relations will notify each Board Member and the public of the date and time of all Board Meetings annually. Notification for special meetings shall be provided in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act. A schedule of monthly meeting dates for all Board Meetings will be listed each month in the agenda and on the District website.

#### 2. Public Participation at Open Meetings

All Board meetings, unless otherwise advertised, will be open to the public.

Any materials or information that a member of the public wishes to share with the Superintendent, staff and Board Members must be given to the Office of Board Relations representative for distribution.

Public participation at a Board Business Meeting will be limited to **30** minutes. Public participation at a Board Public Meeting will be limited to **90** minutes. These time allotments may be extended for an additional 15 minutes, by the Board President, at his/her discretion. All speakers, regardless of whether he or she represents an organization, will be allotted no more than three minutes for comment unless an exception applies.

Individuals desiring to speak at any Board Regular Meeting (including those representing organizations) must register with the Office of Board Relations, in writing, by 4:00 p.m., five calendar days prior to the day of the meeting, with his/her name address, telephone number and a description of the subject to be addressed.

Individuals desiring to speak at any Board Business Meeting must sign up as a speaker on the night of the meeting to speak on a “first come, first serve” basis.



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The subject matter of public comment shall be limited to matters of public concern.

An individual who registered to speak cannot give his/her time to another individual.

Speakers must be present when their names are called.

The Board President is responsible for maintaining a respectful environment during public participation so that public comments can be heard and considered by the Board. The President, therefore, may interrupt or terminate any individual's speaking privilege if the speaker's comments are excessively loud, disruptive, obscene, or otherwise in violation of applicable law. Further, an individual may be cautioned that a personally directed statement may be slanderous or defaming and that the individual may be liable for his/her statement.

### **3. Purpose of Public Comment**

Public participation at board meetings is intended to allow individual members of the public to address the Board on issues of public concern, and not intended as a forum for extended conversation or two-way dialogue with the Board members or District officials. The Board President, Superintendent or designee may respond to questions either at the end of the session, or at a later time.

It shall be the responsibility of the Board President to maintain order and efficient process during public participation at Board meetings, especially so that the full time allotment for public comment is given over to the speakers from the public.

### **4. Guidelines for Board Meetings**

#### **Time/Speakers**

- Time limits for all speakers will be adhered to.
- There will be no sharing or granting of speaking time to others.
- Speakers must be present when their name is called.
- All speakers will be required to give their names and addresses.
- The public participation portion of the meeting will be limited to one hour and thirty minutes.

#### **Decorum**

Examples of unacceptable behavior that will not be permitted include, but are not limited to, naming District employees and engaging in personal attacks, racial slurs, excessive loudness, calling out, yelling, generally disruptive behavior, attempting to disrupt meeting or inciting others to do so.

#### **Board Member Response to Public Comment**

Public participation at board meetings is intended to allow individual members of the public the opportunity to address the Board and administration on issues of public concern and not as a forum for two-way dialogue with board members. The Superintendent or designee, or the Board President, may respond to questions either at the end of the public participation session, or responses may be provided at a later time.



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### Procedures

The Superintendent or Board President may interrupt any speaker or terminate any individual's speaking privilege if the speaker's comments are disruptive or obscene.

An individual may be cautioned that a personally directed statement may be slanderous or defaming and that the individual may be liable for his/her statements.

Attempts to hijack or filibuster the proceedings, repeated interrupting or badgering the Board President or District officials, repetitive and truculent speech, or other disregard for the rules of decorum will not be tolerated and may subject the individual or group to removal from the meeting.

If necessary, the board meeting will be adjourned.