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Hermon School Department

Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

In order to provide for full and open communication between the Public and the School Committee, the School Committee authorizes several avenues for the exchange of information, ideas and opinions. All of the following operate within the framework of the School Committee's scheduled meetings.

1. Written correspondence may be directed to the School Committee through the superintendent/chairperson for consideration at a meeting.
2. During a School Committee meeting, members of the community may speak with time limitations on matters of immediate concern within the jurisdiction of the committee. The open forum period will be listed on the agenda. The following guidelines shall apply to public participation at School Committee meetings:
 - A. Citizens and employees of the Hermon School Department are welcome to participate as provided in this Policy. Others may be recognized to speak at the chair's discretion. Individual employees and or/employee groups will not be permitted to discuss matters for which complaint or grievance procedures are provided.
 - B. The chair may limit the time allotted for comments on a particular topic as well as the time each individual may speak.
 - C. In the event of a sizable audience the chair may require persons interested in speaking to sign up so they may be called on in a fair and consistent manner.
 - D. During the time set aside for public participation, the chair will be responsible for recognizing all speakers, who must identify themselves as they begin talking.

E. Speakers are not permitted to share gossip, make Defamatory comments or use abusive or vulgar language.

F. All speakers are to address the chair and direct questions or comments to particular School Committee members or the superintendent only with approval of the chair. Requests for information or concerns that require further research may be referred to the superintendent to be addressed at a later time.

G. Members of the School Committee and the superintendent may ask questions of any person who addresses the School Committee but are expected to refrain from arguing or debating issues. Questions must be addressed through the chair.

H. No complaints or allegations will be allowed at School Committee meetings concerning any person employed by the school department or against particular students.

I. In order to make efficient use of meeting time, the School Committee discourages duplication or repetition of comments to the School Committee. The School Committee requests that groups or organizations be represented by designated spokespersons.

J. The chair has the authority to stop any presentation that violates these guidelines or the privacy rights of others.

K. Persons who disrupt the meeting may be asked to leave, and the chair may request law enforcement assistance as necessary to restore order.

3. A citizen who wishes to have an item placed on the agenda will present the request in writing to the superintendent/ chairperson. To be considered, the request must be received by noon on the Thursday preceding the meeting.
4. All speakers must observe rules of common etiquette. The School Committee will allow ten minutes for deliberation. Personalities or complaints about specific individuals must not be injected. A speaker in violation of these rules may be required to leave in order to permit the orderly consideration of the matters for which the meeting was called.
5. Except in an emergency, the School Committee will not attempt to decide upon any question before full examination and an opportunity for the superintendent to research the matter and make his/her recommendation to the School Committee.