

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Number	903
Status	Active
Adopted	August 13, 2018

Purpose

The Board recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in Board meetings. The Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.

Authority

The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.[\[1\]](#)

In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, all regular and special meetings of the Board, except for executive sessions, shall be open to the public and a suitable time shall be offered for residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.[\[2\]](#)

The Board shall accept public comment on agenda items at the beginning of the meeting, rather than before the vote on each individual agenda item. The presiding officer will ask for public comment following the Call of Order/Pledge of Allegiance. No participant may speak more than once during this public comment period. The comment period shall be limited to five (5) minutes per individual, and ten (10) minutes per topic.

If the Board determines there is not sufficient time at a meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular meeting or to a special meeting occurring before the next regular meeting.[\[2\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

Guidelines

Whenever issues identified by the participant are subject to remediation under policies and procedures of the Board, they shall be dealt with in accordance with those policies and procedures and the organizational structure of the district.

The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district or anyone representing a group in the community or school district, any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, any district employee or any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in a public Board meeting may register their intent with the Superintendent and/or Board Secretary in advance of the meeting and shall include the name and address of the participant, topic to be addressed and group affiliation, if applicable.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.

Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to five (5) minutes' duration.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.

The presiding officer may interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant; request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum; request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting; call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting; or waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

The portion of the meeting during which the public is invited to speak shall be limited to ten (10) minutes total per topic, per public comment period.

Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

Legal

1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710
2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1
3. 24 P.S. 407
4. Pol. 006
- 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq

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