

## **Policy 1210**

### **Public Participation at Board Meetings**

The Board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on District matters. At each meeting of the Board, the President or the presiding Board officer shall welcome all visitors to the Board meeting.

In order to permit the fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide a period for public participation at every regularly scheduled public meeting of the Board or any special meeting, and publish rules to govern public participation at public meetings. The agenda shall include a designated time for public comment. The Board shall schedule a time for public comment at the beginning of the meeting and may allow public comment at a particular agenda item and/or at the end of the meeting. The President or presiding officer may also accept public comment at other parts of the agenda with the approval of the Board.

The President or presiding officer of each Board meeting at which public participation is permitted shall administer the rules for conducting the public comment agenda item. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those present and voting.

The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

1. Members of the public must be physically present at the meeting to participate during designated times for public comment.
2. The public participation portion of the meeting shall be limited to one-half hour. An exception shall be made so that no one's right to address the Board will be denied. In those exceptional circumstances, the Board shall set a time limit for public comment that will take into consideration the public's right to address the Board.
3. Each person shall be allowed to speak for up to 3 minutes, except where the number of speakers exceeds the time limit. In those instances, either the Board President may reduce the 3 minute limit to a 2 minute limit for each speaker or the Board may waive the one-half hour time limit and establish a longer period.
4. No person shall be allowed to address the Board more than 1 time in a given meeting until and unless all other persons wishing to address the Board have been given the opportunity to speak.

5. Each person wishing to address the Board should complete a public participation form prior to the public comment agenda item. Each person addressing the Board shall be required to identify himself/herself by name. If the person is representing an organization or group, the person should indicate whether the comments or presentation represents the official view of the organization or group.
6. If a delegation is present to address the Board, the delegation may select up to 5 representatives to speak on its behalf, for a total of not more than fifteen (15) minutes.
7. All written statements should be given to the Board Secretary so that copies may be made available to all Board members. All written statements and documents presented to the Board by an individual or group during the meeting are considered public documents.
8. Individuals addressing the Board should take into consideration the rules of common courtesy. The public participation portion of the meeting cannot be used to make personal attacks against a Board member, District employee, or student. To ensure due process and respect for individual rights, the District maintains a formal process for handling complaints against individuals. A problem involving an individual or specific incident is best handled through administrative channels. For assistance, please contact the Superintendent's office.
9. Board members may question speakers after being recognized by the Board President, but are not obligated to answer questions or make statements or commitments in response to issues raised by the public. In general, such issues will be referred to the Superintendent for investigation, study, and recommendation or designated as future agenda items for Board consideration.
10. All statements shall be directed to the Board President or presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually.
11. The presiding officer may:
  - A. Interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
  - B. Require any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.

- C. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
- D. Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.
- E. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board when necessary for the protection of privacy or the administration of the Board's business.

LEGAL REF: MCL 15.263(4) (5) (6); 380.1808

ADOPTED: May 7, 2008

AMENDED: December 11, 2013