



Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code	903
Status	Active
Adopted	June 15, 2020

### **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 shall adopt 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, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board 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 allow public comment on agenda items or other matters of concern at the beginning of each meeting. Before taking official action on a matter which is not on the agenda, an opportunity shall be provided for public comment on that matter. Attendees at the Board meeting shall be requested to sign in prior to the public meeting and may indicate their request to address the Board on the sign-in sheet.

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.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

Complaints about individual students or staff members, or criticism or remarks about problems involving such individuals, must first be brought to the attention of the Superintendent or other appropriate staff member in accordance with the procedures set forth in the Board policy on public complaints. First-time discussion of such matters is not permitted during the public comment period. This is necessary to allow the administration an opportunity to investigate, verify the facts and

resolve such matters in a way that safeguards confidential information and the privacy of those concerned. If the required administrative complaint procedures have been exhausted without resolving the problem, the Board may allow comment at an appropriate Board meeting, in accordance with Board policy.[5]

## **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 any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board.

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 during the public comment period shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration, unless otherwise approved by the presiding officer.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard, and only with permission from the presiding officer.

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

The presiding officer shall be responsible for maintaining proper decorum and adhering to established time limits. Questions of fact asked by the public may, when appropriate, be answered by the Superintendent or other administrator. Questions requiring investigation shall be referred to the appropriate administrator for later reporting to the Board.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

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 and posted on the district web site two (2) days prior to a regularly scheduled Board meeting.

Legal

1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710
2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1
3. 24 P.S. 407
4. Pol. 006
5. Pol. 906
- 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq