

Section 900 Community Title- Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code 903
Status Under Review
Adopted December 20, 1993
Last Revised February 24, 2020

Purpose

In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board will provide a period for public comment at business meetings of the Board.[\[1\]](#)

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, 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 which are or may be before the Board prior to official action by the Board.[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

The Board shall allow two (2) types of comments in all official meetings: in-person comments and comments submitted in writing or verbally using a virtual meeting platform:

- 1. In-person comment: A comment made by an individual who is physically present at an official meeting. The ability of an individual to make an in-person comment is governed by the guidelines below.**
- 2. Virtual comment when using a virtual meeting platform: A comment made by an individual virtually present at an official meeting. The ability of an individual to make a virtual comment is governed by the guidelines below.**

Delegation of Responsibility

The presiding officer at each open Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of open meetings. Where the presiding officer's ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those school directors present and voting.[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

Guidelines

The presiding officer at each business meeting of the Board shall conduct a period of public comment in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Public participation shall be permitted only as indicated on the order of business in the Procedures of this Board.
2. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if appropriate.
3. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.
4. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Comments on agenda items only shall be limited to three and one-half (3-1/2) minutes. This time limit per speaker shall include the speaker's speaking time and any response by the administration or School Board Directors to questions posed by the speaker.

Speakers posing questions to the administration or to the Board should pose their questions at the end of their comments and will be considered to have relinquished their speaking time when they have finished posing their questions.

The Board, by affirmative vote, may agree to waive these time limitations. No speaker shall speak more than once per item. Questions asked may not be answered immediately, but will be attended to in a prompt manner within a week of the meeting.

5. Public Comment – General

The Public Comment section of the Board meeting shall take place after the business of the Board has been conducted. Those taxpayers or residents wishing to speak shall call the Board Secretary to procure speaking time and shall be limited to three (3) minutes each. Persons who signed up with the Secretary to speak will be allowed to speak before the public at large is entertained.

Any speaker during the Public Comment section of the meeting, after his/her allotted time has been exhausted, may speak again after all other speakers have had an opportunity to speak; the time limit shall again be three (3) minutes.

No person shall be permitted to speak more than twice during the Public Comment section of the meeting unless the Board, by affirmative vote, agrees to waive this requirement. After 11:30 p.m., no person shall be heard who has already spoken once during the Public Comment section of the meeting, unless the Board, by affirmative vote, agrees to waive this requirement.

6. Time Keeping

The Board Secretary or presiding officer's designee shall keep the time during public comments, and his/her ruling on the time taken by a speaker shall be final and not subject to appeal. Speakers shall be warned when thirty (30) seconds are remaining to their allotted time.

7. 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 in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting; call 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; **waive these rules with the approval of the Board when constraints such as time occur.**
8. Electronic recording devices and cameras other than those used as official recording devices will be permitted at meetings under rules provided by the Board, after notification of the Board.
9. No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room or on school grounds without prior approval.
10. Prior to any period of public comment, the Board may limit the time for each individual speaker.

Legal

[1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)

[24 P.S. 407](#)

[65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)

Pol. 006