



SOUTH WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOLS
Independent School District 833
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TIME, PLACE, AND MANNER RESTRICTIONS AND PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS AND **PUBLIC COMMENTS TO THE BOARD**

- I. Welcome.** The School Board welcomes input from community members, including letters, emails, and phone calls. For those who prefer to address the School Board directly, the School Board typically sets aside up to thirty minutes for **comments to the Board public comment** at regular School Board business meetings, but not at workshop sessions or special meetings. Time for comments to the Board at regular School Board meetings are not a requirement of the law; it is something the School Board chooses to provide. The School Board would like to provide the community with some general information about **comments to the Board public comment sessions**, including the purpose of **a comments to the Board public comment** sessions, the procedures that apply, and prohibited conduct.
- II. Purpose.** The purpose of a **comments to the board** period is to give community members an opportunity to provide input directly to the School Board about issues that fall within the School Board's authority. To fulfill this purpose, comments must be directed to the School Board. Public comment is not a time for citizens to speak to the community or to the audience. For this reason, public comment sessions will not be recorded or livestreamed.
- III. Written Request to Speak.** Individuals who want to speak during a public comment session must submit a written request to speak before 3:00 p.m. on the day of the School Board meeting. Requests must be submitted from the link in the posted agenda which is normally posted by 5 pm the Friday before the next School Board meeting.

 - The written request must state: (1) the individual's name, (2) the individual's home address, (3) whether the individual has a child attending school in the district, (4) whether the individual is employed by the district, (5) **an email address or phone number**, and (6) the agenda item, if any, that the individual wishes to discuss during the public comment period.
 - In the event that more than ten individuals submit a written request to speak during the public comment session, the School Board will give first priority to (1) parents or students of the district, (2) individuals who reside in the district, or (3) are employed by the district. The School Board will give second priority to individuals

who wish to address a specific item that is on the agenda for that meeting. After these priorities have been applied, any remaining openings to speak – up to the total of ten individuals – will be determined by lottery.

- IV. Speakers Must Be Recognized.** The School Board Chair will call speakers to the microphone and will recognize one speaker at a time. Only those individuals who have been recognized by the School Board Chair will be allowed to speak during the comments to the board **public comment** period. The School Board Chair will rule out of order individuals who have not been recognized.
- V. Time Limits.** The public comment period will be held open for up to thirty (30) minutes in total. This time limit is necessary to ensure that the School Board is able to conduct its business during the meeting in an orderly, efficient, and timely fashion. Each speaker is permitted to speak for up to three (3) minutes in total. One speaker may not give time to another speaker. Any person who does not get a chance to speak is encouraged to submit written comments to the School Board. Email addresses for School Board members are listed on the district's website.
- VI. Cumulative Presentations.** Speakers are encouraged to avoid repeating comments that other speakers have made. Redundant presentations are not helpful and can deprive other individuals of the opportunity to speak during the public comment session. The School Board will allow up to three (3) speakers per topic.
- VII. Prohibited Conduct.** The following conduct is prohibited during a public-School Board meeting, including during the comments to the board period:
- Speakers may not discuss or disclose any private educational data on any current or former student as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 13.32. As a result, speakers may not identify any current or former student during public comment. The only exception is that a parent who is speaking may choose to discuss private educational data on his or her own child.
 - Speakers may not make allegations, charges, or complaints against any student or employee. If a person wishes to make an allegation or to file a charge or complaint against a student or employee, the person should make the allegation, charge, or complaint to the Superintendent in writing or in a private meeting, or to the individual designated in District policy to receive the allegation, charge, or complaint.
 - Speakers may not make comments or gestures that are threatening, profane, lewd, vulgar, obscene, harassing, or abusive.
 - Speakers may not make comments that would violate federal or state law, including laws protecting the privacy rights of an individual.

- Speakers may not campaign for or against a political candidate during any part of a public-school board meeting.
- Speakers may not promote or advertise products that are for sale or purchase unless the Board has invited the speaker to present on the product as an agenda item.
- Members of the public may not engage in conduct that materially and substantially disrupts any part of a School Board meeting, or that otherwise impedes the School Board's ability to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient fashion. The following are examples of conduct that is materially and substantially disruptive or that otherwise impedes the School Board's ability to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient fashion:
 - Making comments that incite violence;
 - Making comments that reasonably instill fear;
 - Interrupting a speaker who has been recognized by the School Board Chair;
 - Making comments from the audience when the person making comments has not been recognized by the School Board Chair;
 - Interrupting the School Board Chair or any other School Board member or school official who is speaking;
 - Holding up a sign or displaying a banner, regardless of the content of the sign or banner;
 - Clapping, cheering, booing, vocalizing approval, or vocalizing disapproval for a speaker during the speaker's presentation, unless a School Board member or school official is presenting an award to a person or is describing an honor or award that a person received;
 - Addressing the audience rather than the School Board;
 - Bringing a weapon into the meeting room or onto school property, except as allowed under Minnesota law;
 - Violating room capacity requirements; and
 - Violating any law or District policy.

VIII. Violations. If a speaker violates any of established procedure or engages in any prohibited conduct, the Board Chair will rule the speaker out of order.

- If the speaker is presenting to the School Board, the Board Chair may require the speaker to immediately end his or her presentation.
- If the speaker persists in violating any procedure or rule, the speaker will be directed to leave the premises and not to return, a no trespass order may be issued, and a referral may be made to law enforcement.
- If repeated disruptions occur during the public comment period, the School Board Chair may call a recess and order that the room be cleared until the meeting resumes.
- If repeated disruptions occur, any School Board member may make a motion to immediately end the public comment period. If the motion passes, citizens may use alternative avenues of communication to share their views with the School Board, including written communications.
- If repeated disruptions occur during multiple meetings, the School Board may vote to suspend public comment at meetings and to require that all public comments be in writing.

IX. Disorderly Conduct. The District will refer potential incidents of disorderly conduct to law enforcement. Minnesota Statutes section 609.72 states:

- Whoever does any of the following in a public or private place . . . knowing, or having reasonable grounds to know that it will, or will tend to, alarm, anger or disturb others or provoke an assault or breach of the peace, is guilty of disorderly conduct, which is a misdemeanor: (3) engages in offensive, obscene, abusive, boisterous, or noisy conduct or in offensive, obscene, or abusive language tending reasonably to arouse alarm, anger, or resentment in others.

X. Superintendent Response After Comments to the Board ~~Public Comment~~.

Following public comments, the School Board Chair may ask the Superintendent or a designee to respond or provide clarifying information to the School Board. As a general matter, the School Board will not act on any comments that were made during a meeting and do not relate directly to an agenda item for the meeting.

XI. Use of School Property. All property of the district, including District parking lots and other grounds, are school property. Individuals or groups may not use school property for any purpose that has not been authorized by the district. Any use of school property must comply with District Policy 902 and all administrative procedures related to that policy.

Created: August 11, 2021
Review: April 22, 2022