



School Board Procedure 1430P – AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

This procedure outlines the rules and requirements for members of the public wishing to speak at a regular Board meeting or at a public hearing.

The School Board shall encourage and accommodate public participation in regular Board meetings. The Board will hear from the public in the *Scheduled Communications* section of each regular Board meeting. A maximum of twenty (20) speakers will be heard; each speaker can speak for not more than two (2) minutes. Speakers who need language interpretation will receive an additional two (2) minutes, for a total of four (4) minutes, to allow for interpretation.

Signing up to Speak

1. Individuals wishing to address the Board may sign up by contacting the Office of the Superintendent at (206) 631-3070 or by completing the form on our website. Sign up begins at 9:00 a.m. on the Monday of the week of a Board meeting; sign up closes at 9:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting.
2. Individuals must sign up for themselves, with the exception of students signed up by a parent or guardian and individuals who may need an accommodation for the public testimony sign-up process, including those with disabilities or those requiring language interpretation services.
3. If more than 20 people sign up a wait list will be created.
4. Speakers must provide their full name, phone number, email, and the topic on which they want to speak. Speakers are encouraged to indicate their relationship (e.g., student, family member, employee) to the District when signing up.

Order of Speakers

The purpose of testimony is to allow members of the public to provide input and feedback on the work of the Board and the district. Speakers will be assigned to speak based on the following priority order:

1. Individuals speaking to *Action* items on the agenda (including the consent agenda).
2. Individuals speaking to *Introduction* items on the agenda.
3. Individuals speaking to other topics related to Highline Public Schools.

Within each priority ranking, the speakers will be ordered on the agenda in the order in which they sign up. The final agenda, including the order of speakers and whether there

is a waitlist, will be posted online by noon the day of the meeting. If speakers sign up after 9:00 a.m. on the day of the meeting, they will be listed on the agenda in the order they called, regardless of topic.

Guidelines for Testimony

1. Speakers should state their full name for the record when starting their testimony and are encouraged to indicate their relationship to the District.
2. Speakers will be allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes. A speaker who appears in person may cede all or part of their time to another person present at the meeting. The total amount of time will not exceed 2 minutes. The clock will not be restarted when the second speaker begins speaking.
 - Speakers needing interpretation will be given four (4) minutes to speak.
3. Each speaker is allowed to speak only once during the meeting, regardless of whether they signed up for a speaking spot or it was ceded to them.
4. The majority of a speaker's time should be spent on the topic they indicated when they signed up to speak.
5. Public Testimony is an opportunity to share information with the Board. Board Directors do not respond to questions or comments made during the public comment period. Directors' silence will not be deemed to signal agreement or endorsement of the speaker's remarks.

Expectations for Testimony

Those testifying are encouraged to remember that School Board meetings are business meetings for the Board and are recorded and archived. Speakers must adhere to the same level of civility that the Board expects of itself. Speakers who fail to do so, or who speak beyond their allotted time, may be interrupted and their speaking time terminated. Examples of incivility include remarks that:

- Are personally directed towards students, staff, or others;
- Are defamatory;
- Are an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- Are abusive, obscene, or indecent;
- Are irrelevant, meaning they do not pertain to the work of the Board or District;
- Are "fighting words," i.e., words that are directed at an individual to incite an immediate and hostile reaction, such as through racial slurs;
- Violate District policy or procedure related to harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination;
- Incite an unlawful act on District or school premises; or
- Create a material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the Board meeting.

The School Board President

The Board President is authorized to interrupt or terminate the speaking time of someone not adhering to these procedural requirements. In addition, the Board President may:

- Request that the speaker leave the meeting if they refuse to come to order;
- Request any individual to leave the meeting if they do not observe reasonable decorum;
- Request the assistance of District security in the removal of a disorderly person who has previously been asked to leave and refused the request;
- Call for a recess or adjournment to another time or location when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

The Board as a whole has the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings and can maintain order by removing those who are disruptive. The Board recognizes the distinction between uncivil discourse, which is not permitted, and comments that are negative but still civil in nature and will exercise its authority to maintain order in a content-neutral manner.

Highline School District 401
Adopted by the School Board: 1.23
Revised by the School Board: