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| Book | Policy Manual |
| Section | 900 Community |
| Title | Public Participation in Board Meetings |
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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 establish guidelines 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 require that all public comments be made as per policy 006.[\[4\]](#)

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.[\[2\]](#)

When an item is added to the agenda after the public comment period has ended, the Board shall offer a further public comment opportunity limited to the added item(s).[\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)

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

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.

To permit community members to be heard, and at the same time to conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the Board establishes the following procedures for persons wishing to speak before the Board:

1. At the beginning of each formal meeting of the Board, there will be a period of up to twenty (20) minutes set aside for public participation. Citizens may address the Board on items of school business.
2. A citizen who wishes to have the Board place an item on the formal or workshop agenda for consideration at a meeting will make that request in writing to the board secretary. To be considered, the request must be received three (3) days preceding the meeting.
3. Speakers may offer objective criticism of school operations and programs, but the Board cannot hear concerns about items covered under the Executive Session of the Sunshine Laws.
4. The Board President will exercise equitable, reasonable judgment in determining time limits in relation to the number of persons to speak on an agenda item.
5. From time to time, the School Board may schedule a public hearing on any matter of concern to the community, including the annual budget.
6. Persons who desire a hearing before the Board will present their request in writing to the general superintendent or Board President. The superintendent will confer with the petitioner and President of the Board and schedule the hearing at the earliest possible mutually convenient date. A written statement of the matter to be discussed will be sent to Board members before the meeting.
7. If an immediate response to a question raised by a member of the public is possible, the President may reply or ask the superintendent or a Board committee chairperson to do so. Otherwise, questions will be referred to the superintendent and/or the appropriate Board committee for investigation and later written or oral response.

All meetings of the Board shall be presided over by the President or presiding officer, with the primary purpose of conducting the business of the Board in a responsible and expeditious manner according to Robert's Rules of Order. The President will have authority to regulate and limit public participation within the provisions of this policy. The Board may determine to limit or alter this authority by majority vote. However, no person shall address a open meeting of the Board without permission of the presiding officer at such meeting, and all persons shall, at the request of such presiding officer, be silent.

Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at open meetings under guidelines established by the Board. [\[6\]](#)

The Board will designate the front row of the public seating area for those citizens desiring to

audio or video tape for the purposes of providing a venue free of distraction and/or conflict. This will not preclude individuals from audio or video taping from any seat in the public meeting.

Should the video coverage become disruptive to the normal conduct of the meeting, in any fashion, the Board president shall have the right to require the videotaping immediately cease.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be distributed to the press and public at the meetings.[\[Z\]](#)

Legal

[1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710](#)

[2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)

[3. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 712.1](#)

4. Pol. 006

[5. 24 P.S. 407](#)

[6. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 711](#)

[7. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 709](#)

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

Pol. 906