

Policy BEDH Public Participation at Meetings

Issued 6/22

The board values and encourages community involvement. Public participation at board meetings is one of many ways the community may ask questions. The board encourages the citizens of this community to appear and bring before the board any matter directed toward the improvement of the district and the agenda of the board. This policy provides for any individual or group to be heard on a subject pertaining to the policies or administration of the school system.

Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience. All persons who wish to participate will do so through established procedures. These procedures are designed to encourage participation and ensure the orderly management of the meetings. The board is committed to compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) as well as all other federal and state laws which regulate or affect board actions and policy.

Any individual desiring to speak is required to sign in by showing ID and filling out a form that includes the individual's name and address and their specific topic. If the form is not completed in its entirety the speaker will not be invited to speak. The board chair will recognize those who have signed in and wish to speak during public participation. Each speaker will use the microphone provided and will begin their remarks by announcing their name and group, if any group is being represented. The speaker will speak on the stated subject they reported on their form or a relevant agenda item only. Speakers will not be permitted to cede their time to another speaker.

The presentation should be as brief as possible, yet include all information considered important by the speaker. Unless the board chair allows additional time, each speaker will be limited to three minutes.

If one spokesperson has presented a matter, it is not necessary for others to repeat the same ideas, but anyone may speak who has comments to add that are pertinent.

Persons appearing before the board are reminded, as a point of information, that the members of the board are without the authority to act independently as individuals in official matters; thus, questions may be directed to the board, but answers will be deferred pending consideration by the entire board. At the discretion of the board chair, an individual board member may offer a correction statement. The statement is not to be considered the opinion or policy of the entire board. Any board member may request the administration provide an oral response to the questions asked, or statements made, during current public participation or at the next meeting of the board.

In order that the board may conduct the meeting in a civil and professional manner, comments from the public should not include gossip, defamatory words, or abusive and vulgar language. The board reserves the right to terminate any presentation which violates the spirit of the letter of this policy. No political campaigning or commercial solicitations will be permitted during public participation. The board chair or presiding officer may direct or terminate a speaker whose remarks are not consistent with their completed form or who shout, use foul or obscene language, or disrupt the meeting in any way.

Note: For hearing procedures before the board, see [KE](#), Complaints.

Adopted 1973; Revised 11/16/81, 1/21/85, 10/11/04, 5/22/06, 5/21/18, 6/13/22

Legal References:

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

[Section 30-4-10](#), *et seq.* - South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.