



Title: **Public Participation in Board Meetings**

Code: 903

Book: Policy Manual

Section: 900 Community

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.

This policy is intended to comply with the Pennsylvania Open Meetings Act, as amended. To the extent that this policy fails to comply with the Act, the policy will be deemed to have been automatically amended so as to comply with the Act. [\[1\]](#)

Authority

The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order. [\[2\]](#)

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 before the Board prior to official action by the Board. [\[3\]](#)

The Board shall require that public comments be made prior to each official action of the Board.

The Board shall require that all public comments be made at the beginning of each meeting.

Members of the public shall not have the right to raise items of new business for either voting or discussion when such items are not listed on the agenda.

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.[\[3\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members 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, anyone having registered a legitimate interest in a contemplated action of the Board, anyone representing a group in the community or school district, other than the CGEA which is recognized below, any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, a representative of the CGEA as per contractual agreement, or any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their intent with the Board Secretary ten (10) days in advance of the meeting and shall include the name and address of the participant, topic to be addressed and group affiliation, if applicable, or those individuals need to sign in to speak prior to the start of each Board meeting, indicating the above referenced information.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.

Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes' duration or less.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

The portion of the meeting during which the public is invited to speak shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes.

Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.

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

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

Adopted: **February 28, 2006**

Last Revised: **March 19, 2019**

Legal References:

- [1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)
 - [2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710](#)
 - [3. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)
 - [4. 24 P.S. 407](#)
 - 5. Pol. 006
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