



Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code	903 Vol IV 2021
Status	Active
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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 adopts this policy 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 at the beginning of the meeting for agenda items. The public may comment on non-agenda items at the end of the meeting.

If the Board determines there is not sufficient time at the beginning of the meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next regular meeting, or to a special meeting occurring before the next board meeting.[\[2\]](#) No Board action will be taken on issues identified in the sign-in sheet.

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 the 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, any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, any district employee or any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in an open Board meeting shall register their intent on the sign-in sheet prior to the meeting being called to order. The information on the sign-in sheet shall include the name of the individual & group affiliation (if applicable); the address of the participant; and the topic to be addressed.

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

Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to 3 minutes duration.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address school directors individually. The time of public comment is meant as a time to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation which are or may be before the Board. This time is meant for individuals to be heard and is not meant to be a time for decisions or actions by the Board. School directors are not required to respond to any statements.

The presiding officer may interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant, request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum, request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when the person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting and may call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

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.[\[6\]](#)

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.[\[7\]](#)

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. 24 P.S. 407](#)

5. Pol. 006

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

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

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

Pol. 906