

Public Participation

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT MEETINGS

Code BEDH Issued 12/06

Purpose: To establish the basic structure for public participation in board meetings.

All official meetings of the board will be open to the press and public. However, the board reserves the right to meet for work sessions and to adjourn or recess a meeting at any time to discuss such matters as are properly considered in executive sessions.

The board desires citizens of the district to attend its sessions so that they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools and that the board may have opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the board may be heard, and, at the same time, conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation in board meetings.

- Anyone wishing to speak before the board, representing either him/herself or a group, should inform the superintendent in writing of his/her desire to do so and his/her topic as early as possible, but at least five days before the meeting. This will permit orderly scheduling of remarks on the meeting agenda.
- Any individual desiring to speak will give his/her name, address and the group, if any, that he/she is representing.
- His/Her presentation should be as brief as possible. Unless an extension of time is granted, a speaker will limit him/herself to five minutes.
- Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of school operations and programs as concerns them. But in public session, the board will not hear personal complaints about school personnel or complaints against any person connected with the school system. Other channels provide for board consideration and disposition of legitimate complaints involving individuals.
- The board will not permit profane or vulgar language or personal abuse against any person.

The board vests in its chairman or other presiding officer authority to terminate the remarks of any individual when he/she does not adhere to the rules established in this policy.

Persons appearing before the board are reminded, as a point of information, that members of the board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters; thus, questions may be directed to the board members, but answers must be deferred pending consideration by the board.

In order to provide even further citizen input, the board will designate up to 15 minutes at the beginning of each regularly scheduled monthly meeting for public input. Citizens of the district may address the board without a prior formal request to be included on the agenda. Citizens who wish to provide this input must complete form BEDH-E and submit it to the chairman, either in advance of the meeting or on the evening of the meeting. Forms are available from the superintendent in advance or at the meeting. The board will limit input to five minutes per speaker.

The chairman will read the following statement before each public participation segment where a presentation is being made.

Public input should be in the form of suggestions, information or comments pertaining to programs, schools or the school district. Based upon legal advice of our counsel, comments should not be made, either complimentary or critical, naming any student, school employee, administrator or board member as these matters are personnel matters that require an executive session. Speakers' comments will be received only as board information.

Adopted 12/13/76; Revised 11/20/89, 7/21/97, 10/21/02, 12/18/06

Legal references:

A. S.C. Code, 1976, as amended:

1. Section 30-4-10, et seq. - South Carolina Freedom of Information Act.