

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The school board is acutely aware that board members are elected to serve the public, and the board seeks to conduct its business transparently. The district encourages the public to attend open school board meetings and other public meetings in person and, when available, virtually. In addition, there are some instances where members of the public may be provided the opportunity to speak at a school board meeting. As an extension of policy KC, Community Engagement, the board has created the following options for receiving input from students, employees and community members.

Grievance Policies and Procedures

The district has established several policies and procedures to assist students, parents/guardians, staff and the public in bringing concerns or grievances to the district. The board strongly encourages the public to utilize these policies and procedures before bringing concerns to the board and may refer the public to these processes prior to taking action.

These policies include, but are not limited to:

- AC, Prohibition against Illegal Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation
- ACA, Sexual Harassment under Title IX
- DA, Fiscal Responsibility
- GBM, Staff Grievances
- IGBCA, Programs for Homeless Students
- IGBE, Students in Foster Care
- JGD, Student Suspension and Expulsion
- KL, Public Concerns and Complaints
- KLA, Concerns and Complaints Regarding Federal Programs
- KLB, Public Complaints about the Curriculum and Instruction or Media Materials

There are additional legal processes created by law to address concerns about accommodating students with disabilities or concerns about a student's special education program.

Agenda Items

In accordance with law and the district's community engagement policy, district residents may place items on the agenda of a regularly scheduled board meeting as outlined in this policy. The agenda items must be directly related to the governance or operation of the district. The board will not hear resident-initiated agenda items at meetings other than the board's regularly scheduled meeting unless the board president grants an exception.

Residents who wish to place an item on the agenda must first meet with the superintendent or designee to attempt to resolve the issue unless the superintendent or designee waives such a meeting. The meeting will take place within 20 business days of the superintendent or designee receiving a written request to meet. If the superintendent or designee waives the meeting or does not meet with the resident within 20 business days, or if the resident is not satisfied with the meeting's outcome, the resident may submit a written request to the board secretary to add the item to the board agenda.

The board secretary will include the items on the next regularly scheduled board meeting's agenda, subject to the rules listed below, if the resident submits the request to the board secretary at least five days prior to the meeting. Otherwise, the board secretary will place the item on the agenda for the subsequent regularly scheduled meeting.

Rules

1. The board may move an agenda item to a different meeting with the consent of the resident.
2. The board may refuse to hear or delay hearing an agenda item if:
 - The board has heard an identical or substantially similar agenda items in the previous three calendar months; or
 - The resident has previously violated district rules regarding conduct at meetings or on district property.
3. The board may delay the hearing of a requested item if more than three resident-initiated agenda items are scheduled for the same meeting. The delayed agenda items will be moved to the next regularly scheduled meeting. If a resident's item is delayed for this reason, the resident will be provided an alternate method of communication with the board, such as submitting written comments.
4. The board president will make the decision on whether to delay or refuse an agenda item, in accordance with policy, and will communicate that decision to the resident and the other board members.
5. The board will place the agenda item in open or closed session in accordance with law and district policy.
6. The board will allow the resident five minutes to present their issue to the board unless the board president allots more time to the discussion.
7. Only resident(s) who met with or requested to meet with the superintendent or designee will be allowed to speak during this time.
8. If more than one resident seeks to speak on the same item at the same meeting, the board president, at their discretion, will determine the total time that will be devoted to the item and how the time will be shared between the residents. The board president will encourage residents to appoint a spokesperson or communicate their concerns through other means. If the board must limit the number of speakers, it will assign priority based on the order in which the requests were received.
9. The board may discuss the public business content of presented agenda items but is not required to decide any matter of public business or formulate any public policy as a result of the discussion. Unless unusual circumstances dictate, the board will not take action on an item presented by an individual or group at that particular meeting.

Public Hearings

From time to time, the board will schedule a public hearing to receive input on matters of community concern, such as setting the district's tax rate. The district will provide notice of these hearings as required by law and as determined necessary to inform the public.

Public Comment

All meetings of the Board will be presided over by the board president with the primary purpose of conducting the business of the Board in a responsible and expeditious manner. Unless unusual circumstances dictate otherwise, the Board will not make a decision on an issue(s) presented by an individual or group during that particular meeting. The Board reserves the right to waive formalities in emergency situations within the limitations of state statutes.

The board president will have the authority to regulate and limit public participation. A Board meeting is a meeting rather than a public forum. Participation by members of the audience will be limited to the period for public comments unless by a majority vote of the Board, the meeting is open to public forum. The presiding officer will not be expected to recognize people in the audience unless they have been placed on the agenda as provided for in Board policy.

The board will specifically designate time for district residents to provide public comments at regular meetings of the board. The following rules will apply to the public comment portion of the meeting:

1. The board establishes a time limit of up to thirty minutes for the public comment period. With discretion, the board president may extend this period.
2. No individual will be permitted to speak more than once during this period.
3. The board establishes a uniform time limit of three minutes for each speaker.
4. Discussion will be limited to items from the posted agenda.
5. All speakers must be residents of the district and provide their name prior to speaking. Proof of residency may be required upon request.
6. If there is insufficient time for everyone to speak, the board will encourage participants to submit their questions in writing or utilize the process for putting an item on the agenda.

Adopted: April 5, 1982
Revised: December 3, 1990
Revised: June 30, 2008
Revised: June 26, 2023

Cross Refs: GBM, Staff Grievances
IGCD, Virtual Courses
IGCDA, MOCAP Virtual Courses
KC, Community Involvement in Decision Making
KK, Visitors to District Property/Events
KL, Public Concerns and Complaints
KLB, Public Complaints about the Curriculum and Instructional or Media Materials

Legal Refs: §§ 162.058, 610.010, 030 RSMo.

Fort Zumwalt School District, O'Fallon, Missouri