

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Number	903
Status	Active
Legal	4. Pol. 006 5. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq 6. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710 7. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1
Adopted	October 21, 2002

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.[\[5\]](#)

Authority

The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.[\[6\]](#)

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.[\[7\]](#)

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

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.[\[7\]](#)

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.[\[4\]](#)

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 those wishing to address the Board be residents, taxpayers of this District, representing a group in the community or District, any District employee, or any District student.

Any person or group wishing to address the Board shall register their intent in a written request with the Superintendent at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting. The letter shall include the following information:

1. Name and address of the person making the request.
2. Organization or group being represented.
3. Topic to be addressed.
4. Specific questions to be asked or the desired action of the Board.

The Superintendent shall respond in writing to any such person or group requesting the opportunity to address the Board informing them as to the date of the meeting and placement on the agenda.

The Superintendent will inform all Board members of the request, investigate the subject matter and provide Board members with any information regarding the subject of discussion.

Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to five (5) minutes. The presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to extend the time period based on the number of requests made to address the same issue. No subject shall be allotted more than thirty (30) minutes at any Board meeting.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.

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

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 his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting, and call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

The Board also provides an opportunity for individuals and/or delegations to address the Board at each regular or special meeting on an item on the meeting agenda without prior notification. At the discretion of the Board President, a maximum time limit may be set for each individual and/or delegation to speak at any meeting. The individual must state his/her name and address for the record prior to any comment.

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.