

UNITED SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: October 13, 2008

REVISED: December 9, 2008

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
<p>1. Purpose 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>2. Authority 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710</p> <p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p> <p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p>	<p>The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The Board shall require that all public comments be made at the beginning of each meeting.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>3. Delegation of Responsibility Pol. 006</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p>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.</p>

The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district or:

1. Anyone having registered a legitimate interest in a contemplated action of the Board.
2. Anyone representing a group in the community or school district.
3. Any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board.
4. Any district employee.
5. Any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their intent with the Board Secretary five (5) 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.

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 five (5) minutes duration.

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

Speakers may offer objective criticism of school operation and programs, but if the matter is determined by the Board to be only appropriate for Executive Session, then an Executive Session will be held under the guidelines of the Sunshine Law.

If an immediate response to a question raised by a member of the public is possible, the President may reply or ask the superintendent or a Board committee chairperson to do so. Otherwise, questions will be referred to the superintendent and/or the appropriate Board committee for investigation and later written or oral response.

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.
5. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

The portion of the meeting during which participation of 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.

References:

Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq.

Board Policy – 006

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