



**SECTION: COMMUNITY**

**POLICY: 903**

**TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**ORIGINAL:** August 20, 2018

**CURRENT REVISION:** December 13, 2021

**LAST REVIEWED BY THE COMMITTEE:**

**I. PURPOSE**

The Board recognizes the value of 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.

**II. DEFINITIONS**

None.

**III. POLICY**

- A. The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.
- B. To permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for members of the public to comment on matters of concern, official action, or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.
- C. The Board requires that public participants be current residents or taxpayers of this district, or
  - a. anyone representing a group in the community or school district,
  - b. any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board,
  - c. Any current district employee, or
  - d. any parent/guardian of a currently enrolled district student
  - e. any currently enrolled district student o
- D. All individuals, both in-person and virtual, wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their intent with the Board Secretary at the meeting, prior to the public comment section of the meeting, and shall include the name and address of the participant and the topic to be addressed.
  - a. Members of the public who are attending the public meeting in-person in the Board Room wishing to make a public comment should complete a blue speaker's form and submit it to the presiding officer prior to addressing the Board.
  - b. Members of the public who are attending the public meeting virtually, wishing to make a public comment should use the 'raise hand' feature in the Zoom webinar. Both in-person

and virtual participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name and address.

- E. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three minutes' duration.
- F. A maximum of five people may be allowed to speak on each topic.
- G. No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.
- H. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.
- I. It shall be the policy of the Board not to engage in dialogue with or respond to questions from the audience during the meeting. Answers to questions from the public shall be provided after the meeting, within a reasonable timeframe, posted on the public portion of the district's website.
- J. The presiding officer may
  - a. temporarily waive, on a non-precedent setting basis, one or more of the above restrictions if in his or her judgement, circumstances, call for such a waiver,
  - b. interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant,
  - c. request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum,
  - d. request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct
  - e. call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting,
- K. No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.
- L. The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

#### **IV. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY**

The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings.

#### **V. REFERENCES**

65 Pa.C.S.A. 710  
65 Pa.C.S.A. 710.1  
24 P.S. 407  
65 Pa.C.S.A. 701, et seq. and  
Pol. 006