

Book

Policy Manual

Section

900 Community

Title

Public Participation in Board Meetings

Code

903

Status

Active

Adopted

September 22, 2011

Revised

~~February 10, 2022~~ April 27, 2023

### **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.

### **Authority**

The Board shall adopt policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order

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.[\[2\]](#)

The Board shall require that all public comments related to agenda items be made at the beginning of each meeting and all public comments related to non-agenda items be made at the end of each session.

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.[\[2\]](#)

### **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.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

### **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 public participants be residents or taxpayers of this ~~district~~ District, presenters approved by the Board or Administration, ~~or anyone representing a group in the community or school district~~, ~~any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board~~, any Hazleton Area School dDistrict employee, or any ~~district~~ District student.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, and address, ~~and, if applicable, group affiliation~~ within the Hazleton Area School District.

Public participants shall be limited to three-minute presentations and the three-minute limit shall be strictly enforced. During said three (3) minutes, the speaker shall not be interrupted so long as the discussion relates directly to school matters over which the Board has jurisdiction. The three-minute time limit is continuous and cannot be split up as to time or speakers.

Any questions asked by the speaker during the three (3) minutes shall be reserved for answer by the Board, its members, or its staff at the end of the three-minute period, if they deem a response is necessary. The Board reserves the right to not provide answers at the time of public comment to any questions asked by the public.

In answering any one (1) speaker, the Board, its members or staff shall limit their response to three (3) minutes.

At the discretion of the Board, a person who has spoken once for three (3) minutes at the meeting shall not be permitted to speak again at the same meeting.

The right to speak is personal to each public participant and cannot be deferred or given to another person who has already spoken at the meeting.

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.

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.

Legal

1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710

2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1

3. 24 P.S. 407

4. Pol. 006

65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq