



Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code	903
Status	Active
Adopted	May 16, 2019
Last Reviewed	May 16, 2019

Purpose

The Board encourages the residents of the North East School District to come before the Board to present their petitions, inquiries, or other communications of interest to the North East School District. 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.

Board meetings are primarily for the conduct of School District business. The Board cannot tolerate the disruption of the prime purpose. This objective must be weighed against the concept of public participation. It is the maintenance of this delicate balance that is the Board's intent in this policy.

Authority

The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order. [\[1\]](#)

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. [\[2\]](#)

Time shall be set aside near the beginning of each meeting agenda for public comment regarding only items listed on the agenda for that meeting. Additional time shall be offered near the end of each public meeting for public comment regarding issues or concerns unrelated to the set meeting agenda.

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

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, 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 district employee, or any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their intent with the Board Secretary seventy-two (72) hours prior to the meeting and shall include the name and address of the participant, topic to be addressed and group affiliation, if applicable, in order to be included on the printed meeting agenda.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, topic of discussion and group affiliation if applicable.

In case of groups of two or more, the Board President has the right to ask that just one representative act as spokesman for the group; thus only the representative would be given the opportunity to be heard.

Time limitations for the presentations will be five (5) minutes for those on the agenda and three (3) minutes for those who were not on the agenda.

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:

1. Declare any persons out of order if they stray from the topic, become obscene, loud or abusive, or become slanderous.
2. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
3. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
4. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
5. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
6. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

The meeting agenda 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](#)