

# Policy Guide



Policy No. 903

Section COMMUNITY

Title PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

Adopted AUGUST 21, 1989

Last Revised AUGUST 15, 2023

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 903 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS</b></p> <p><b>Section 1</b></p> <p><b><u>Purpose</u></b></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><b>Section 2</b></p> <p><b><u>Authority</u></b></p> <p>The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and 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 citizens to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation which are or may be before the Board prior to official action by the Board.</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>65 Pa. C.S.A. 710</p> <p>65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1, 712.1</p> <p>65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1</p>
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	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>POLICY NO. 903</b> <b>PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS</b></p> <p>If the public comment period is deferred, voting on items related to those comments must also be deferred till after the public has been given an opportunity to comment on that matter.</p> <p>When an item is added to the agenda after the public comment period has ended, the Board shall offer a further public comment opportunity limited to the added item(s).</p> <p><b><u>Delegation of Responsibility</u></b></p> <p>The presiding officer at each open Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of open meetings. Where the presiding officer’s ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those school directors present and voting.</p> <p>The presiding officer shall allow for public comment on any topic before any Board business takes place at a public Board meeting and at the conclusion of all Board business at all public Board meetings.</p>	<p>65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1, 712.1</p> <p>SC 407 Pol. 006</p>
<p><b>Section 3</b></p>	<p><b><u>Guidelines</u></b></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> <p>Any member of the public present at an open meeting of the Board may address the Board in accordance with the Board rules as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A member of the public may address the Board during the Public Comment time on the agenda.</li> <li>2. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, borough of residence, and group affiliation, if applicable.</li> </ol>	
<p><b>Section 4</b></p>		

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

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 in the removal of a disorderly person when the person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at open meetings under guidelines established by the Board.

65 Pa. C.S.A. 711

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

65 Pa. C.S.A. 709

Previously Revised: April 24, 2014; August 19, 2010; August 18, 2005; March 19, 2001

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 407

Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 709, 710, 710.1, 711, 712.2

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