

School Board

Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board

A Board of Education meeting is often referred to a “meeting in public,” “not a public meeting.” Generally speaking, this means that the Board of Education meeting is not a public, “town hall” type of meeting where active debate, questions, and conversation are exchanged between the public and the Board of Education members. The intention of this is not to close off communication with the public, but to ensure that the Board of Education is effectively and efficiently conducting business on behalf of the district and making progress toward its goals while adhering to the open meeting laws of the state.

Public Participation

Although this is a meeting of the Board of Education, not a public meeting, the Board recognizes the value of active community participation. A specific time is set aside for public participation at each meeting to comment or make statements for the Board’s consideration that were not covered on the agenda. This portion of the meeting is called “Public Comment” on the agenda.

We believe that effective dialogue can occur only in an atmosphere of mutual respect. We invite members of the public to share this commitment with us and respectfully request that anyone wishing to speak during “Public Comment” keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Before the start of the meeting, individuals should complete the public participation form and submit it to the presiding officer or designee.
- Speakers should address the Board President or the Board as a whole, not the audience.
- Those wishing to address the Board should keep their remarks to a reasonable time. Ordinarily, comments shall be limited to five (5) minutes. In unusual circumstances, and when an individual has made a request in advance to speak for a longer period of time, the individual may be allowed to speak for more than five minutes.
- The Board President may lengthen or shorten an individual’s opportunity to speak. The President may also deny an individual if the individual has previously addressed the Board on the same subject within the past 2 months.
- Speakers should observe the Board President’s decision to determine procedural matters regarding public participation not otherwise covered in Board policy.
- Speakers will conduct oneself with civility and respect toward others and otherwise abide by Board policy, 8:30, *Visitors to and Conduct on School Property*. The use of specific individuals’ names, slanderous or derogatory comments about anyone cannot be permitted. The Board President or designee has the right and may declare out of order a speaker and terminate any remarks which are not relevant or which have been previously addressed on the same subject. Complaints against school personnel or students may not be expressed during the open meeting. Such concerns should be submitted in writing to the Board and aired in a closed session, if so determined by the Board.

Specific Issues Raised at Board Meetings

If issues raised during Public Participation require answers to questions, gathering information, or further discussion, the Board may refer the matter to the superintendent. They may also set a later time to meet with constituents. Whenever possible, you are encouraged to seek information or action

first from the teacher or principal before bringing that concern to the Board. Going directly to the source of the problem will, in many cases, clear up misunderstandings and bring the desired result. If the issue cannot be resolved at the school level, please contact the superintendent. The Board encourages citizen and staff input through participation on a variety of committees.

LEGAL REF.: 5 ILCS 120/2.06.

105 ILCS 5/10-6 and 5/10-16.

CROSS REF.: 2:220 (School Board Meeting Procedure), 8:10 (Connection with the Community), 8:30 (Visitors to and Conduct on School Property)

ADOPTED: April 22, 2015