

FREEPORT AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: August 9, 2017

REVISED: September 9, 2021
[October 14, 2021](#)

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

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 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 which are or may be before the Board prior to official action by the Board.^{[2][3]}

[The Board shall require that all public comments on agenda items be made at the beginning of each meeting and will provide the opportunity for public comment on other matters of concern at the conclusion of each meeting.](#)

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]

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).^{[2][3]}

**Delegation of
Responsibility**

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.^{[4][5]}

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.

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The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district or any district employee or any district student.

All individuals wishing to participate in an open Board meeting shall register their intent with the Board Secretary by filling out the form provided at the beginning of the meeting and having it ready at the time the presiding officer calls for collection of the completed forms.

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

Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to five (5) minutes' duration.

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 school directors individually.

The presiding officer may

- interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.

- request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.

- request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when the person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.

- call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

- waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

The portion of the meeting during which the public is invited to speak shall be limited to thirty (30) minutes.

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.^[6]

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

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The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.^[7]

Legal References:

1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710
 2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1
 3. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 712.1
 4. 24 P.S. 407
 5. Pol. 006
 6. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 711
 7. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 709
- 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 *et seq.*
Pol. 906