

SCHOOL BOARD

2:230 Public Participation at School Board Meetings and Petitions to the Board

During each regular and special open meeting of the Board, any person may comment to, or ask questions of, the Board, subject to the reasonable constraints established and recorded in this policy's guidelines. The Board listens to both comments and questions during public participation. Responses to public comments are most often managed through policy 3:30, Chain of Command. To preserve sufficient time for the Board to conduct its business, any person appearing before the Board is expected to follow all of these guidelines. As indicated below, the Board President has the authority to shorten the timeframe for comments and to make other procedural changes as he or she deems necessary.

Prelude to Public Comments

The following prelude to the public comments sessions will be read by the Board President toward the beginning of each meeting and will be enforced within the provisions of this policy.

Every board meeting has two opportunities for public comments. The first session of public comments, at the beginning of the meeting, is strictly for items that appear on this meeting's agenda for discussion or action. The second session of public comments, at the end of the meeting, is for other communication that is not necessarily on the board's agenda.

In order to speak at this meeting, members of the public must complete a card with their name and topic and turn it in prior to the beginning of the first segment of public comments. If you wish to speak, and have not yet turned in a card, now is your final opportunity.

The Board of Education will take all comments under consideration and respond, if necessary, in a timely manner. We ask that your comments address the board of education, and not the audience. We will limit your comments to 5 minutes. (Or, replace that sentence with the altered time limits based on the number of speakers)

Participants are expected to conduct themselves with civility and respect, and follow the guidelines outlined in Board Policy 8:30, "Visitors to and Conduct on School Property." Further information about public participation in Board of Education meetings can be found in Board Policy 2:230.

Do we have all of the cards for tonight's public comments sessions?

Session 1: Is there anyone wishing to speak to specific items listed under discussion or action on tonight's agenda?

Later in the meeting...

Session 2: Is there anyone wishing to speak to topics not necessarily on tonight's agenda?

Public Comments Cards

For anyone wishing to speak, a public comments card must be fully completed with the required information and turned in to an administrator or board member prior to the beginning of the first session of public comments. The card must include the speaker's full name, the topic of the comment(s), and whether the topic is addressing a specific agenda item from the current meeting's agenda under action items or discussion. Speakers whose card is turned in late will not be included in that evening's meeting, but may be included at the next board meeting.

Proxy Speakers

A member of the public may ask that a person speak on his or her behalf under the following requirements: 1) The member of the public must be physically present at the meeting and be at the podium while comments are read, and 2) The proxy speaker may not speak more than one time during each of the two public comments sessions.

Time Limitations

Ordinarily, the time limit for each speaker will be 5 minutes. However, the board president may limit the time further if there are many speakers. The board president may also limit the total time allotted to public comments during each of the two sessions. If multiple individuals wish to address the Board on the same subject, the group is encouraged to appoint a spokesperson who will speak for the group. For this purpose, the time limit may be extended. A person wishing to speak at both sessions of public comments is limited to 3 minutes per session.

Written Communications

Written correspondence or petitions may be presented to the board, and copies will be given to all members by the next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Written communications will not be read aloud by board members during the meeting.

Board Responses

The public comments sessions are not a time for dialogue with the Board, and the Board will not respond to speakers during the meeting. However, if a response is necessary, the speaker will receive communications from the proper administrator, or from the Board, within a reasonable timeframe.

The Board President's Authority

The Board President presides over the meeting and over the public comments sessions. He or She has the authority to make decisions regarding time limitations and to enforce the civil and respectful conduct as indicated in Board Policy 8:30 and others. The Board President may stop a speaker, warn a speaker, and prevent a speaker from

continuing to speak. The Board President also presides over the conduct of the audience. He or She may warn the audience, may exclude members of the audience from remaining at the board meeting, and may call a recess of the board to enforce any necessary action. He or She has the authority to determine procedural matters not otherwise covered in this, and other, policies.

Board Meeting Conduct and Enforcement

Board Policy 8:30, "Visitors to and Conduct on School Property" is the primary board policy that informs the public on acceptable conduct at a board meeting. Although the Freedom of Speech affords citizens a great deal of latitude in their speech, the policy communicates that, "The School District expects mutual respect, civility, and orderly conduct among all people on school property or at a school event." In addition, the policy also prohibits:

- 1) Physical assault, threats, harassment, an intimidation.
- 2) Vulgar or obscene language.
- 3) Disruption or interference of the meeting.
- 4) Disobedience of a school official.
- 5) Use of school premises at any time for purposes other than those that are lawful and authorized by the Board.

Any person who engages in conduct prohibited by this policy may be ejected from school property. That person is also subject to being denied admission to school events or meetings for up to one calendar year. The process for denial and hearing provisions are outlined in Board Policy 8:30.

LEGAL REF.:

[105 ILCS 5/10-6](#) and [5/10-16](#).

[5 ILCS 120/2.06](#), Open Meetings Act.

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

Adopted: January 16, 2024