

CENTENNIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: October 9, 2018

REVISED:

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
1. 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.
2. Authority 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710	The Board shall adopt policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.
65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1	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.
65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1	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.
3. Delegation of Responsibility SC 407 Pol. 006	The Presiding Officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.
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. Residents who have detailed and involved inquiries are encouraged to contact the administration during the working day. Interviews and meetings will be arranged whereby the issues can be discussed in depth without duly delaying the public Board meeting. The Presiding Officer may declare that any inquiry should more properly be resolved by a personal meeting of the resident with a member of the administration.

The following guidelines shall govern resident participation at Board meetings.

1. During a Worksession/Regular Business meeting, residents may address the Board during the Community Comments section that takes place at the beginning and the end of the meeting.
2. During the Committee of the Whole meeting, residents are welcome to comment on agenda items at the point in which the agenda item is being discussed by the Board. The Presiding Officer will oversee the comments.
3. A resident's comments are limited to three (3) minutes per person. This period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.
4. Should any resident require more time than the three (3) minutes allotted, contact with the Superintendent should be made in advance of the meeting. The resident cannot yield his/her three (3) minutes to another resident to extend time beyond three (3) minutes. A resident may not yield his/her three (3) minutes to a non-resident without prior approval from Administration or consent of the Presiding Officer.
5. Issues may not be presented once they have been covered as part of the agenda or as part of an earlier residents' participation section.
6. Residents who desire to address the Board must complete the Resident Participation Card provided at the meeting. Residents are limited to one resident participation card per topic. Residents may not submit multiple resident participation cards to extend their time beyond three (3) minutes.
7. Any resident desiring to be heard shall approach the microphone after being recognized by the Presiding Officer.
8. All residents shall identify themselves by name and place of residence.
9. All questions to the Board or the administration shall be directed to the Presiding Officer who shall ask administration or a Board member to respond for the Board. The Presiding Officer may also refer an issue to the administration or appropriate Board committee for investigation and have them report at a future Board meeting.
10. There shall be no polling of the Board upon any non-agenda issue during the sessions open to District residents.

The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this District.

If nonresidents wish to bring an issue to the attention of the Board, they should write a letter to the Board President, care of the Office of the Superintendent, expressing their concern. This letter will be distributed to all Board members.

If there is a departure from these guidelines, the Presiding Officer may:

1. Limit or suspend the Community Comments period of the meeting.
2. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
3. Declare a speaker out of order and take away his/her floor privileges.
4. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
5. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
6. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
7. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

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

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room without prior approval of the Superintendent.

The meeting agenda shall be available to the press and public at the meetings. All pertinent documents relating to the Board agenda shall be accessible through the District website.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 407

Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq.

Board Policy – 006