



Book	Policy Manual
Section	0000 Bylaws
Title	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS
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0169.1 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

The School Board recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of allowing members of the public to express themselves on school matters of community interest.

Members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a proposition before the Board.

The opportunity to be heard need not occur at the same meeting at which the Board takes official action on the proposition if the opportunity occurs at a meeting that is during the decision-making process and is within reasonable proximity in time before the meeting at which the Board takes the official action. This policy does not prohibit the Board from maintaining orderly conduct or proper decorum in a public meeting.

The opportunity to be heard is subject to policies adopted by the Board as follows:

A. Guidelines regarding the amount of time an individual has to address the Board:

Each statement made by a member of the public as a scheduled speaker shall be limited to five (5) minutes duration. Persons will be recognized in the order in which the requests were received.

Each statement made by a member of the public as an unscheduled speaker shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration. Persons will be recognized in the order in which the requests were received.

Three (3) minutes for any person addressing the Board at a public hearing.

B. Procedures for allowing representatives of groups or factions on a proposition to address the Board:

Rather than all members of groups or factions for or against a proposition addressing the Board at meetings in which a large number of individuals wish to be heard, the Board encourages representatives of such groups or factions to address the proposition in their representative capacity.

C. Procedures or forms for an individual to use to inform the Board of a desire to be heard:

1. Scheduled Speakers:

Any person desiring to be placed on the agenda of a Board meeting shall complete and file with the Superintendent, by 12 pm at least eight (8) working days prior to the meeting at which the person wishes to speak, a scheduled speaker request form. The request shall be in such form as the Board shall periodically prescribe, and shall contain the following information:

- The name and address of the person making the request.
- The organization or group, if any, represented.
- Content of the information to be presented – if written material is to be passed out, a copy of such material shall accompany the request.
- Specific action desired of the Board.

The Superintendent may respond orally or in writing to any person filing a request to be placed on the agenda. In the event the agenda for the next regular meeting is unduly long, the Superintendent shall place the presentation request on the agenda for the following regular meeting. If any question should arise in regard to the granting of a request, the Superintendent and the Board Chair shall confer and make a decision.

2. Unscheduled Speakers:

Persons who have not scheduled an appearance and who wish to address the Board at a meeting shall complete and file an unscheduled speaker request form with the Board Secretary prior to the start of the Business Portion of the meeting.

- If the request is to address an item on the meeting agenda, the Chair may recognize the speaker during the Business Portion of the meeting, when the item comes before the Board.
- If the request is to address a subject not on the agenda, the Chair may recognize the speaker after the conclusion of the Business Portion of the meeting, or may refer the matter to the Superintendent.
- The Chair or the Board by majority consent of the members present may limit the total amount of time allotted for presentations by unscheduled speakers.

3. Public Hearings:

An item on the agenda that is subject to a public hearing shall not be addressed until the advertised time for the hearing. The Chair will open each public hearing on the agenda separately and will ask anyone who wishes to speak to come forward, one at a time.

The presiding officer of each Board meeting at which public participation is permitted shall administer the rules of the Board for its conduct.

The presiding officer shall be guided by the following rules:

- A. Public participation shall be permitted as indicated on the order of business and before the Board takes official position on any action item under consideration.
- B. Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and will be requested to preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation, if and when appropriate.
- C. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually. Staff members shall not be expected to answer questions from the audience unless called upon by the Board Chairman or the Superintendent.
- D. Statements Concerning Identified Individuals

Except during special recognitions of achievements or honors, student names may not be used by any speaker except a parent or guardian of the student.

In accordance with F.S. 770.03, any statement concerning an identified individual other than the speaker or his/her child must be submitted to the Superintendent in writing a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours prior to the Board meeting. Statements made at the meeting must follow the submitted statement verbatim. The Board will not permit anyone to speak concerning an identified individual unless the speaker has submitted a statement in advance and will end the presentation if the speaker deviates from the submitted text.

- E. Grievances. Any and all grievances or complaints must be filed and processed in accordance with the School Board's policies and procedures and state and federal law. This includes, but is not limited to, grievance complaints filed under Policy 2260 (for nonstudents, nonemployees), Policy 5517 (for students), and Policy 1362, Policy 3362, and Policy 4362 (for personnel); complaints arising under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act filed under the complaint procedures outlined in the District's Section 504 Manual; complaints arising under the Individuals with Disabilities Act ("IDEA") filed in accordance with the IDEA; bullying and harassment complaints filed in accordance with Policy 2260.01; and complaints against personnel filed in accordance with the procedures outlined in F.S. 1012.31(3)(a).
- F. Video recording and Broadcasting. The Opening Section and Business Portion of regular, regular workshop, and special meetings of the Board may be video recorded and broadcast to the public.

G. Disruptive Behavior

It is unlawful to knowingly disrupt or interfere with a Board meeting and that any such action may result in a misdemeanor offense of the second degree. This includes individuals who advise, counsel, or instruct students or Board employees on techniques for disrupting a Board meeting.

The presiding officer may:

1. interrupt, warn, 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 that person's conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting;
4. call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

No Board action shall be taken on requests made during public discussion unless the Board declares the matter to be an emergency in accordance with current law. Any other requests that the Board chooses to take action on shall be placed on an agenda for a subsequent meeting.

The requirement for public comment on action items does not apply to:

- A. an official act that must be taken to deal with an emergency situation affecting the public health, welfare, or safety, if compliance with the requirements would cause an unreasonable delay in the ability of the Board to act;
- B. an official act involving no more than a ministerial act, including, but not limited to, approval of minutes and ceremonial proclamations;
- C. a meeting that is exempt from F.S. 286.011 (the Public Meetings Law); or
- D. a meeting at which the Board is sitting in its quasi-judicial capacity.