

# FERNDALE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN  
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: MARCH 18, 1981

REVISED: APRIL 20, 2005  
FEBRUARY 21, 2007  
OCTOBER 19, 2016

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 adopts this 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.
Pol. 006	The Board shall require that public comments be made only as indicated on the order of business as established in Board policy.
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.  The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district.

	<p>Staff members are not guaranteed an audience with the Board by virtue of their employment with the district. Chain of command protocol must be followed.</p> <p>All persons wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their intent in writing with the Board Secretary or Superintendent at least five (5) days in advance of the meeting and include the name and address of the participant, group affiliation, if applicable, and topic to be addressed. Advanced notification for inclusion on the agenda will provide an opportunity for the Board to take official action on the topic, if deemed necessary.</p> <p>Participants without advanced notification may be permitted to address the Board during the public comment period; however, no official action will be taken at the meeting.</p> <p>Participants speaking at a meeting must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.</p> <p>Statements made by a participant shall be limited to no longer than ten (10) minutes duration.</p> <p>All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.</p> <p>The presiding officer may:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant, or otherwise inappropriate.</li><li>2. Demand any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.</li><li>3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.</li><li>4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.</li><li>5. Restrict, reduce, or eliminate the ability to address the Board if the matters being addressed are redundant as to matters previously addressed, or are otherwise irrelevant.</li></ol> <p>Specific members of the audience may be asked, by the Superintendent or Board President, to participate in a particular discussion.</p>
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Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings provided that notice is given to the Superintendent in advance in writing of the proposed use provided the party being recorded consents to the recording by the party seeking to do the recording, it being provided that this "exception" does not apply to recording by the District at public meetings, at which meetings participation shall consent to recording by District.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room or on school grounds without prior approval of the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee, which approval may be withheld if the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee determines the content to be offensive or otherwise inappropriate.

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

Notice that the meetings are being recorded by the District shall be conspicuously posted at the entrances of the Board meetings.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 407

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

Board Policy – 006