

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

The board recognizes the importance of citizen participation in school district matters. In order to assure citizens are heard and board meetings are conducted efficiently and in an organized manner, the board will set time aside for citizen participation.

Citizens wishing to make a brief state to express a viewpoint should follow guidelines as outlined in the school board meeting protocol brochure. The presiding officer will recognize these individuals to make their comments during the open forum of a regular meeting.

Citizens wishing to present petitions to the board may also do so at this time. The board, however, will only receive the petitions and not act upon them or their contents.

The ordering process of the board meeting shall not be interfered with or disrupted. Board members may ask questions of speakers after receiving permission from the chair. Only those speakers recognized by the chair shall be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. If disruptive, the individual making the comments or another individual causing disruption may be asked to leave the board meeting.

A public comment shall be limited to regular board meetings and will not be routinely held during special board meetings.

Individuals who have a complaint about employees may bring their complaint to the board only after they have followed board policy addressing citizens' complaints. Students who have a complaint may only bring their complaint to the board after they have followed board policy addressing students' complaints.

Petitions to Place a Topic on the Agenda

Individuals who wish for an item to be placed on the board agenda may submit a valid petition to the board. For a petition to be valid, it must be signed by at least 500 eligible electors of the district, or ten percent of the individuals who voted in the last school election, whichever number is lower.

Upon receiving a valid petition to the board to place a proposal on the next board agenda for public hearing, the board will place the proposal identified in the petition on the agenda of the next regular meeting, or a special meeting held within 30 days of receipt of the petition. The board will provide a sign-up sheet for all individuals who wish to speak on the proposal, and individuals will be called to speak in order of sign-up. The sign-up sheet will require each individual to list their legal name and mailing address. Each speaker will be limited to an amount of time established by the board president that is reasonable and necessary based on the number of speakers signed up. The same time limit will apply to all speakers on the proposal. Each individual will be limited to one opportunity to speak. The board maintains absolute discretion on whether or not to discuss or act on the public comments made on the proposal. If a petition is related to curriculum, the district maintains discretion to determine whether to stop teaching that curriculum until the board holds the public hearing to discuss the curriculum.

The board has a significant interest in maintaining the decorum of its meetings, and it is expected that members of the public and the board will address each other with civility. The orderly process of the board meeting will not be interfered with or disrupted by public comment. Only individuals recognized by the board president will be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. If disruptive, the individual causing disruption may be asked to leave the board meeting. Defamatory comments may be subject to legal action.

Legal Reference: Iowa Code §§ 21; 22; 279.8 (2013).

Cross Reference: 205.1 Board Security and Protection
211.9 Board Meeting Agenda
215 Public Hearings
309 Communication Channels
401.5 Employee Complaints
402.5 Public or Student Complaints about Employees
903 Public Participation in the School District

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