

Public Participation in Board Meetings

The board desires citizens of the district to attend its sessions so that they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the schools and that the board may have opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public. All official meetings of the board shall be open to the press and public. Board meetings are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the business of the schools and, therefore, are not public meetings, but meetings held in public.

In order to assure that persons who wish to appear before the board may be heard and, at the same time, conduct its meetings properly and efficiently, the board adopts as policy the following procedures and rules pertaining to public participation at board meetings.

1. Anyone wishing to speak before the board, either as an individual or as a member of a group, should inform the superintendent of the desire to do so and of the topic to be discussed as early as possible, but at least five days before the meeting. This will permit orderly scheduling of public remarks on the meeting.
2. Any individual desiring to speak shall give his or her name, address, and the group, if any, that is represented.
3. The presentation should be as brief as possible. Unless an extension of time is granted a speaker shall be limited to five minutes.
4. Speakers may offer such objective criticisms of school operations and programs as concern them. But in public session, the board will not hear personal complaints of school personnel nor against any person connected with the school system. Other channels provide for board consideration and disposition of legitimate complaints involving individuals.

The board vests in its president or the presiding officer authority to terminate the remarks of any individual when they do not adhere to the rules established above. The board president may waive the five day requirement, in the interest of open communication, if there are no objections from other board members.

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.

Persons appearing before the board are reminded, as a point of information, that members of the board are without authority to act independently as individuals in official matters. Thus, questions may be directed to individual board members, but answers must be deferred pending consideration by the full board.

Date Board Adopted 9/15/1986

Date Board Updated and/or Reviewed 2/21/2022

Legal Reference:Iowa Code §§ 21; 22; 279.8; 279.8B