

FOX CHAPEL AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Number	903
Status	Active
Adopted	May 9, 2016
Last Revised	August 13, 2018

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.

Authority

The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.[\[1\]](#)

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.[\[2\]](#)

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.[\[2\]](#)

Delegation of Responsibility

The presiding officer at each open Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of open meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)

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. Each person intending to comment shall provide his/her name, address, group affiliation, and subject of testimony or topic to be addressed on the Sign-in Sheet provided at each open meeting.

Participants must be recognized and granted the floor by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by stating their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.

All individuals or groups shall be limited to one presentation on a given topic per school year. Comments shall be limited to three minutes per speaker. When there are multiple speakers on the same issue, the presiding officer shall indicate the Board's desire that the speakers designate two (2) people to speak for the group.

When the material to be presented is lengthy, speakers are encouraged to provide written comments in support of their spoken commentary for distribution to Board members for study and review. The presiding officer may announce a specific time limit for speakers' comments.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no resident participant may address or question Board members individually.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, irrelevant, intemperate, or deemed to be out of order.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
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.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.

Use of Electronic Devices

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

Guidelines

1. Electronic recording devices, other than those used as official recording devices, cameras, and videocameras, will be permitted at meetings subject to prior knowledge of the Board. Anyone intending to use a recording device should contact either the Coordinator of Communications or the Board Secretary prior to the meeting so that accommodations, as necessary, may be made.

2. Electronic devices may not be used in a manner that will interrupt or intimidate any speaker during a School Board meeting. When recording a segment of the School Board meeting, users may not step beyond the third row from the front of the audience section of the Board room at any time.
3. Reporters/Technicians may not disrupt any School Board meeting. The use of an electronic recording device should not disrupt the orderly transaction of business or the decorum of the meeting.

Failure to comply with these guidelines could result in the presiding officer adjourning the meeting or taking other action to re-establish order or decorum.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

Legal

1. [65 Pa. C.S.A. 710](#)
2. [65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)
3. Pol. 006
4. [24 P.S. 407](#)
- [65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)

Last Modified by Donna Beley on September 6, 2018