

Book	POLICY MANUAL
Section	100 SCHOOL BOARD OPERATIONS
Title	PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS
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The School Board and administration of the District recognize the value and importance of public input in Board meetings. This policy establishes procedures for public participation at all regular School Board meetings and at special School Board meetings for which such participation is on the agenda. In addition, the public is invited to attend and observe open sessions of the School Board and its committees.

For purposes of this policy, qualified participants include residents of the District, employees of the District and parents/guardians of children enrolled in the District.

Procedures for Public Participation in School Board Meetings

1. There is a Public Participation time of up to 30 total minutes for resident comments early in the meeting. This time period may be extended by a simple majority vote of the School Board.
2. Each participant called on by the School Board President (or presiding officer) will approach the microphone and identify him/herself by name, address, his/her relationship to the District, and the nature of his/her remarks. He/she will then have the balance of up to three minutes to address the School Board.
3. Based on the participant's identifying information and his/her actual comments, the School Board Clerk or his/her designee will include each participant's name, address, his/her relationship to the District, and the comment/subject provided on the Participant Comment Card described below in the official School Board minutes.
4. Public Participation is not for the purposes of engaging others in a debate. Wisconsin open meetings law makes it inadvisable for the School Board to discuss or act on issues not on the agenda. Employees or members of the public with complaints should reference and follow specific policies for complaints as these procedures guarantee that complaints will be handled in a fair and responsive manner. These policies are available on the District website and on request.

Participant Responsibilities

1. Qualified participants (residents, employees, and parents of the District) desiring to address the School Board should obtain and complete a Participant Comment Card or form in the room where the meeting is being held. Completed comment cards are to be turned in to the School Board President prior to the start of the meeting. If it is determined that a participant is not qualified, that person will not be allowed to address the School Board.
2. Comments may involve agenda items or matters not on the agenda, but relevant to the authority of the School Board. Priority will be given to requests to speak to agenda items. Cards will be accepted until the official opening of the meeting. Participants submitting comment cards will be called upon to speak in the order the cards were submitted. The School Board President will determine if residents who turn in cards after the start of the meeting will be allowed to speak.
3. Each participant is expected to be respectful of School Board members, District employees, the meeting audience, and the views of others.
4. If a participant makes inappropriate remarks regarding members of the School Board or any District employee or anyone whomsoever, the President is empowered to ask, though not compel, the participant to stop and utilize appropriate complaint procedures.
5. Participants should respect the time of all meeting attendees by not simply repeating the comments of a previous participant.

School Board President Responsibilities

1. The School Board President will be responsible for maintaining proper order and adhering to time limits.
2. The School Board President will recognize participants using the completed and submitted Participant Comment Cards and convey participant responsibilities with the announcement provided below.
3. The School Board President will be aware that First Amendment rights, as recognized by courts of law, provide wide latitude for allowing participant remarks unhindered.
4. The School Board President may terminate the remarks of any individual who does not adhere to established rules and procedures for public participation, who speaks in a threatening or profane manner, or whose conduct is disruptive and impedes the School Board's ability to conduct its business in an orderly and timely fashion.

Responding to Participants' Comments

1. School Board members will listen respectfully to all participants' comments and will not engage in debate concerning a participant's remarks and cannot legally take immediate action on any issue participants may raise, though issues pertinent to an agenda item could be discussed when the agenda item is before the School Board. Questions or comments regarding individual personnel issues are not to be discussed in open session, and are not appropriate for Public Participation.
2. In response to resident's comments, the School Board may, with unanimous consent or approval by a majority of the School Board present:
 - a. Request that the resident submit his/her concerns in writing for distribution to all School Board members.
 - b. Refer the matter to the Superintendent and/or School Board President.
 - c. Refer the matter to a committee of the School Board or a future meeting of the School Board.

Legal

[Section 19.82 \[definitions under the open meetings law\]](#)

[Section 19.84 \[public notice of meetings\]](#)

[Section 19.85 \[exemptions to open meetings\]](#)

[Section 19.89 \[exclusion of school board members from meetings\]](#)

Cross References

Policy 521.1 Staff Communication and Lines of Responsibility

Policy 870 Public Complaints