

Book	School Board Policies
Section	100 Series: Board of Education
Title	Public Comment Periods During Board Meetings
Code	187
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While the public has the right to attend School Board meetings that have not been convened in a closed session, individuals or groups generally do not have a right to be included on a Board meeting agenda or a right to enter into the discussions or deliberations of the Board. However, without affecting the Board's discretion to authorize other forms of input or participation during Board meetings from persons who are not Board members, the Board expressly authorizes limited public participation during duly-noticed public comment periods as follows:

1. The District Administrator and Board President shall ensure that the agenda and public notice of at least one regular Board meeting each month includes a period for public comment. During a public comment period noticed under this paragraph, interested persons may briefly address the Board on topics that are reasonably germane to some aspect of the District's policies, practices, programs, or operations, regardless of whether the speaker's topic is otherwise noticed as a specific subject matter of the meeting in question.
2. Subject to any more specific decision or directive of the Board, the President has discretion to include a period of public comment on the agenda and public notice of additional Board meetings. In exercising such discretion, the President may specify on the public notice of the meeting that speaker comments during the public comment period will be limited to topics that are sufficiently germane to the noticed subject matter of the meeting in question.

When a public comment period is expressly included on the public notice of a Board meeting and there is sufficient interest in addressing the Board, the period shall either include at least 5 individual speakers or extend for 15 actual minutes, whichever limitation permits the greater total number of speakers. However, the Board may extend the total duration of a noticed public comment period at any meeting by a majority vote.

The District Administrator, or his/her designee, will implement a viewpoint-neutral speaker registration process that establishes an order for speaking in the event that the interest in appearing before the Board at any meeting may exceed the time that is allocated for the public comment period. Each speaker, upon being recognized by the presiding officer, will state his/her name and identify his/her connection to the District and to any group they are representing in connection with their remarks. Each speaker's presentation is normally limited to a maximum of three minutes. However, a speaker's time may be extended with Board approval provided that a similar extension is granted to other speakers who request a similar extension at the same meeting. Any individual may speak only once during the public comment period at any meeting.

The purpose of the public comment period is to present information to the Board. Speakers should not expect an immediate response or reaction to their comments. If time or other limitations preclude an interested person from addressing the Board at a specific meeting, the person may submit written information to the Board and/or attempt to utilize a public comment period at a future meeting. Further:

1. If a speaker raises a topic during a public comment period that was not among the publicly-noticed subject matter of the meeting, the extent of any response to the speaker and his/her remarks shall be limited in accordance with applicable law.
2. During a public comment period, Board members will not engage in a substantive discussion of or otherwise attempt to investigate or reach a resolution of complaints or grievances regarding the conduct of individual staff members or individual students.

Subject to an appeal to the Board that is made by a Board member, the presiding officer of the Board meeting shall have the authority to conduct and maintain proper order in connection with any authorized public comment period, including the authority to (1) recognize speakers; (2) enforce established time limits; (3) request that speakers voluntarily redirect specific complaints and grievances to more appropriate District procedures; and (4) 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, whose comments are repetitive of that person's previous comments, or whose conduct is disruptive and impedes the Board's ability to conduct its business in an orderly and timely fashion.

This policy and any rules and/or procedures that may be adopted related to the administration of public comment periods under this policy are not intended to apply to the following:

1. A meeting or any portion of a meeting that constitutes a formal public hearing.
2. Instances where the Board seeks or accepts input from a person who is not a Board member in order to resolve a formal or informal point of information that arises during the Board's discussion of an agenda item.
3. Meetings of any standing or ad hoc committee of the Board. In the absence of more specific direction established by the Board, a committee may choose to include or exclude, and appropriately limit, periods of public comment at the meetings of the committee. At a minimum, any such public comment periods shall be restricted to subject matter reasonably in the domain of the committee's charge, and the Board strongly encourages committees to limit the scope of any such public comments to noticed subject matter of the meeting.

**Legal References:**

**Wisconsin Statutes:**

[Section 19.81](#) [state policy on open meetings]

[Section 19.83\(2\)](#) [discussion during period of public comment]

[Section 19.84\(2\)](#) [public notice of board meetings, including public comment period]

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

WASB Reference: [SP4, 3/3/2016](#)

Cross References

Former Policy OP-6