

EAST STROUDSBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: August 19, 2002

REVISED:

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
<p>1. Purpose 65 P.S. 701 et seq</p>	<p>The Board welcomes the attendance of the public at its meetings. The Board encourages public participation and 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 school district and the need for orderly meetings at which to conduct its business in an efficient manner.</p>
<p>2. Authority 65 P.S. 71004 65 P.S. 71004.1, <u>712.1</u> 65 P.S. 71004.1</p>	<p>The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.</p> <p>In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each openpublic meeting of the Board for residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation <u>which are or may be</u> before the Board prior to official action by the Board.</p> <p>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.</p> <p><u>When an item is added to the agenda after the public comment period has ended, the Board shall offer a further public comment opportunity limited to the added item.</u></p>
<p>3. Delegation of Responsibility <u>SC 407</u> Pol. 006</p>	<p>The presiding officer is responsible for the orderly and efficient conduct of the meeting and will rule on the time and suitability of presentations to the School Board.</p> <p>The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/herthe presiding officer's ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board membersschool directors present and voting.</p>
<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p>When public participation is identified during the meeting agenda, the presiding officer will invite comments from visitorsresidents or taxpayers of the district.</p> <p>Public participation is invited early in the meeting. Comments about agenda items or</p>

<p><u>65 Pa. C.S.A. 711</u></p> <p><u>65 Pa. C.S.A. 709</u></p>	<p>matters that the School Board may consider are limited to approximately three (3) minutes.</p> <p>All meetings of the East Stroudsburg Area School District are, by law, open to the public. A single exception to this is when the Board meets in executive session to consider collective bargaining negotiations, personnel considerations, confidential student matters, items involving real estate property and legal issues.</p> <p>The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this school district or a representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board.</p> <p>All statements should be directed to the Board shall be directed to the presiding officer, no participant may address or question school directors individually.</p> <p>The public participation segment of the meeting is for citizen comments – not for question-answer discussion or debate. The Board is not obligated to respond, comment or vote on issues arising from public participation. Groups should identify a single spokesperson so that repetition is avoided. Citizens should state their name, <u>township</u>, organization, if any, and present their concerns or statements.</p> <p>The presiding officer may interrupt or terminate a participant’s statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant, request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum, request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting, call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting, and/or waive these rules with the approval of the Board.</p> <p>Electronic recording devices and cameras, in addition to those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.</p> <p>No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.</p> <p><u>The meeting agenda shall be available to the press and public at the public meetings. All pertinent accompanying documents will be posted on the district website.</u></p> <p><u>Public Concern</u></p> <p>Members of the public should first consider whether their problem deserves the attention of the entire Board, administrative staff members, and the assembled public. A contact to a school administrator can usually satisfy most concerns.</p>
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Appeals to the Board are appropriate if the Superintendent has been unable to resolve a problem. Not all issues may be deemed appropriate for public discussion. The Board may request written correspondence or a private session.

References:

24 P.S. 407

65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq., 710, 710.1 712.1, 709, 711

Pol. 006, 906