

Public Participation in Board Meetings

All Board meetings, with the exception of executive sessions, shall be open to the public. The Board invites district citizens to attend Board meetings to become acquainted with the program and operation of the district. Members of the public also are encouraged to share their ideas and opinions with the Board when appropriate.

It is the intent of the Board to ensure communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. Individuals with hearing, vision or speech impairments shall be given an equal opportunity to participate in Board meetings. Primary consideration shall be given to requests of qualified individuals with disabilities in selecting appropriate auxiliary aids¹ and services.

Auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities shall be available at no charge to the individual.

If requested to do so at least 48 hours before a meeting held in public, the Board shall provide an interpreter for hearing-impaired persons.

All auxiliary aids and/or service requests must be made with appropriate advance notice. Should the Board demonstrate such requests would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens, alternative, equally effective means of communication shall be used.

Audience

During an open session of a Board meeting, members of the public are specifically invited to present concerns during the designated portion of the agenda. At the discretion of the chair, further public participation may be allowed.

Request for an Item on the Agenda

A member of the public may request the superintendent place an item of concern on the agenda of a regular Board meeting. This request should be made in writing and presented to the superintendent for consideration at least five working days prior to the scheduled meeting.

Procedures for Public Participation in Meetings

The Board shall establish procedures for public participation in open meetings. The purpose of these procedures shall be to inform the public how to effectively participate in Board meetings for the best

¹Auxiliary aids include, but are not limited to, such services and devices as qualified interpreters, assistive listening systems, note takers, readers, taped texts, Brailled materials and large print.

interests of the individual, the district and the patrons. The information shall be easily accessible and available to all patrons attending a public Board meeting.

Discussion or presentation concerning a published agenda item is limited to its designated place on the agenda, unless otherwise authorized by the chair.

A visitor speaking during the meeting may introduce a topic not on the published agenda. The Board, at its discretion, may require that a proposal, inquiry or request be submitted in writing, and reserves the right to refer the matter to the administration for action or study.

Any person who is invited by the chair to speak to the Board during a meeting should state his/her name and address and, if speaking for an organization, the name and identity of the organization. A spokesperson should be designated to represent a group with a common purpose.

In order that time may be provided for all who desire to speak, remarks shall be limited to five minutes per speaker unless this time limit is expressly waived by the Board chair. The Board chair may also shorten the time when there are a great number of people to be heard or limit the number of speakers who are presenting the same view on an issue. The Board chair may defer subjects to another meeting when regular business limits the time available for comments from the audience.

Questions asked by the public, when possible, shall be answered immediately by the chair or referred to staff members for reply. Questions requiring investigation may, at the discretion of the chair, be referred to the superintendent for response at a later time.

At the discretion of the Board chair, anyone wishing to speak before the Board, either as an individual or as a member of a group, on any agenda item or other topic, may do so by providing the Board secretary with a completed registration card prior to the Board meeting in order to allow the chair to provide adequate time for each agenda item.

The Board chair should be alert to see that all visitors have been acknowledged and thanked for their presence and especially for any contributed comments on agenda issues. Similar courtesy should be extended to members of staff who have been in attendance. Their return for future meetings should be welcomed.

Petitions

Petitions may be accepted at any Board meeting. No action shall be taken in response to a petition before the next regular meeting. Petitions shall be referred to the superintendent for consideration and recommendation.

Criticisms of Staff Members

Speakers may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs, but the Board shall not hear complaints concerning individual district personnel. The chair shall direct the visitor to the appropriate means for Board consideration and disposition of legitimate complaints involving individuals.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 165.535](#)

[ORS 192.610 - 192.690](#)

[ORS 165.540](#)

[ORS 332.057](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213; 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2006); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2006).