

Vernonia School District 47J

Code: **BDDH**
Adopted: 3/13/08
Orig. Code(s): BDDH

Public Participation in Board Meetings

All meetings of the Board, with the exception of executive sessions, will be open to the public. The Board invites citizens of the district to attend Board meetings so that they may become acquainted with the program and operation of the schools. Members of the public are also 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 will be given an equal opportunity to participate in Board meetings. Primary consideration will be given to requests of qualified individuals with disabilities in selecting appropriate auxiliary aids¹ and services.

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

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 will be used.

Audience

During an open session of a Board meeting, members of the public are specifically invited to present concerns during the portion of the agenda so designated. 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 to 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

Procedures will be established for the participation in meetings of the Board open to the public. The purpose of these procedures will be to inform the public as to how to effectively participate in a Board meeting in the best interests of the individual, the district and the patrons. The information will be easily accessible and available to all patrons attending a public meeting of the Board.

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.

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 for study.

Any person who is invited by the chair to speak to the Board at a meeting should state his or her name and residence and, if speaking for an organization, the name and identity of the organization. A group of people with a common purpose should designate a spokesman to speak for the group.

Statements by members of the public should be brief and concise. The chair may exercise discretion to establish a time limit on discussion or oral presentation by a visitor on any topic.

Questions asked by the public will, when possible, be answered immediately by the chair or referred to other Board members or staff members present 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 complete 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 meeting of the Board. No action will be taken in response to a petition before the next regular meeting. Petitions will be referred to the superintendent for consideration and recommendation of appropriate action.

Criticisms of Staff Members

Speakers may offer objective criticism of school operations and programs, but the Board will not hear personal complaints concerning school personnel nor against any person connected with the school system. The chair will 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 165.540](#)

[ORS 192.610 - 192.690](#)
[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).