

# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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These procedures apply to periods of public comment that are included on the public notice of a regular or special meeting of the Board. A District committee may also use these procedures for any public comment periods at its meetings, or the committee may establish its own procedures provided that the procedures are lawful and consistent with applicable Board policy and with any specific directives issued by the Board.

## **Placement of Periods of Public Comment on the Agenda**

At any Board meeting at which there is a publicly-noticed period of public comment, the period of public comment shall be listed on the agenda prior to other substantive agenda items, except for any minor and routine items of business that generally open such a meeting (e.g., approval of the minutes of a previous meeting).

## **Registration Procedures**

Starting no earlier than 30 minutes prior to the time that the meeting in question is scheduled to convene, persons interested in providing comments to the Board in connection with the meeting may register to (1) provide a written comment to the Board; and/or (2) address the Board as a speaker. There is no opportunity to pre-register as a speaker at an earlier time.

The District shall provide a registration form, which shall be numbered and which shall require the registrant:

- a. To specify his/her name, municipality of residence, and relationship to the district (e.g., parent, taxpayer, student, employee, other);
- b. To indicate whether he/she wishes to provide a written comment to the Board (space shall be provided on the form) or wishes to address the Board as a speaker;
- c. To specify the topic(s) he/she intends to address and whether his/her comments pertain to one or more of the noticed agenda items of the meeting, or to some other topic/issue; and
- d. To specify whether he/she is acting as a designated spokesperson for a group of three or more named individuals who are also present at the meeting.

At the registrant's option, he/she may provide a contact telephone number or an email address.

Registration shall be considered closed when the meeting is called to order.

## **Procedures for Recognizing Registrants**

Where the number of registrants at any meeting exceeds 10, the presiding officer will either (1) recognize and permit comments from a minimum of 10 individual registrants; or (2) hold a public comment session lasting at least 30 minutes in length, whichever method yields the greatest number of speakers. After allowing this initial group of speakers, the presiding officer will identify to the Board the approximate number of remaining registrants, and the Board by motion and at its discretion may:

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- a. Elect to permit all remaining registrants to present their comments at that point in the meeting;
- b. Close the public comment session and direct all remaining registrants to either return at a future meeting or submit written comments to the District Administrator who will ensure that they are circulated to the members of the Board;
- c. Extend the public comment session for a definite period (e.g., another 30 minutes), with or without giving priority to individuals who have registered to speak to an item on the agenda of the meeting in question;
- d. Defer all further public comments until a later point in the meeting; or
- e. Take such other action as the Board determines best meets its needs to conduct its official business; provided, however, that the Board will attempt to be clear as to whether any registrant who does not have an opportunity to address the Board at the outset of the meeting should have an expectation of being able to present his/her verbal comments at a later point should they decide to remain at the meeting.

The presiding officer or his/her designee shall recognize registrants in the number order of their written registrations. Upon being recognized, each registrant will approach the podium or microphone, state his/her name, municipality of residence, and relationship to the district (or, if none, their reason for their interest in speaking), and proceed to the substance of his/her remarks. If a registrant is not present at the time he/she is recognized by the presiding officer, he/she forfeits the opportunity to address the Board at that meeting.

As one exception to these procedures, the presiding officer (or the Board by motion) may give first priority to any student registrants, regardless of the numerical order of the students' actual registration. However, if any such priority is granted, the Board shall still recognize and hear the comments of at least the first 10 registrants by their numbered order during the initial public comment period of the meeting.

## **Time Limits**

The standard allotted time for a public comment shall be a maximum of three minutes per individual speaker. However, after the first 10 registrants have addressed the Board, the Board may designate by motion or by a showing of unanimous consent a maximum of two minutes per individual speaker.

Where any registrant is acting as a designated spokesperson for a group of three or more named individuals who are also present at the meeting, the group spokesperson's otherwise allotted time will be extended by two minutes.

To the extent any registrant addresses the Board for less than his/her maximum allotted time, the registrant is not permitted to reserve the remainder or donate his/her remaining time to another speaker.

Where the presiding officer (or the Board by motion) determines that the result would be equitable to other registrants (e.g., where there are fewer than 10 total registrants and/or where

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the same courtesy is extended to all other similarly-situated registrants at the same meeting), the presiding officer (or Board) may grant a discretionary extension of the otherwise applicable time limitation, but in no case longer than two additional minutes.

The presiding officer of the meeting (or the Board by motion), may take such steps as are necessary to ensure that no person or group of people violates the intent of the time limitations in the manner in which they present their comments.

## **Requests for Accommodations**

If a person who intends to address the Board at an upcoming meeting wishes to request a reasonable accommodation that will better enable that individual to have meaningful access to the public comment forum, he/she may make that request by contacting the office of the District Administrator in advance of the meeting. Advance notice of at least one full business day is usually a sufficient period of time for the District to consider and respond such a request.

**Adoption Date: 11/13/17**