

HAMBURG AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: September 28, 2015

REVISED:

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
1. Purpose	The Board 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 district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.
2. Authority 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710	The Board adopts this policy to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.
65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1	In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.
65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1	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.
3. Delegation of Responsibility SC 407 Pol. 006	The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.
4. Guidelines	Whenever issues identified by the participant are subject to remediation under policies and procedures of the Board, they shall be dealt with in accordance with those policies and procedures and the organizational structure of the district. The Board shall take no action on issues that have not had proper written submission.

If it can be anticipated that a meeting will attract an unusually large attendance from the public, coupled with active public participation in matters on the meeting agenda, school officials shall arrange for a meeting site which will not cause undue inconvenience or denial of access to the proceedings.

Interested parties and news media representatives will at all times maintain proper decorum. They should take all reasonable steps to restrict their activities so that movement about the meeting site will be minimal, and noise levels nondisruptive. News media representatives will not act to encourage those who would seek to disrupt intentionally a duly convened meeting.

The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district.

Individuals desiring to place a matter on the agenda for Board consideration should submit the item in writing to the Superintendent ten (10) days prior to the scheduled meeting.

Individuals wishing to be heard by the Board at a regular or special meeting without prior notification shall be required to register their intent with the Board Secretary prior to the meeting and shall include their name, address, topic to be addressed and group affiliation, if applicable.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.

Each statement made by a participant may be limited to five (5) minutes duration and the time devoted to one (1) topic shall not exceed fifteen (15) minutes.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.

3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
5. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

When possible, the district shall reserve suitable space for news media personnel and the public. In setting such space aside, consideration will be given to the lighting and power needs to function efficiently and responsibly. Placement of microphones, recording devices and cameras shall be accomplished so as to permit full coverage of all meeting activities. They shall be placed in a location to be determined by the Board where their operation will not disrupt the meeting.

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.

No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.

The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be available to the press and public at the meetings.

References:

School Code – 24 P.S. Sec. 407

Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq.

Board Policy – 006