

Harrisburg School District 7

Code: **BDDH**
Adopted: 5/11/98
Readopted: 3/09/09; 2/12/18
Orig. Code(s): BDDH

Public Comment at Board Meetings

All Board meetings, with the exception of executive sessions, will be held in the public. The Board invites district community members to attend Board meetings to become acquainted with the program and operation of the district.

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 auxiliary¹ aids and services.

Auxiliary aids and services for persons with disabilities will be available at no charge to the individual. All auxiliary aides and/or service requests must be made with appropriate advance notice. Should the Board demonstrate such request would result in a fundamental alteration in the service, program or activity or in undue financial and administrative burdens, an alternative, equally effective means of communication will be used.

Audience²

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

Request for an Item on the Agenda

A member of the public may request the superintendent consider placing an item on the agenda of a regular Board meeting. This request should be made in writing and presented to the superintendent for consideration at least 10 working days prior to the scheduled meeting.

The Board is a governing body of the district and oversees issues dealing primarily with teaching and learning. The Board has delegated the day-to-day operation of the district responsibilities to the superintendent to administer. Not all issues are heard by the Board.

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

²Audience members should not expect to dialog or debate issues with the Board members.

Procedures for Public Comment at Meetings

The Board will establish procedures for public comment in open meetings. The purpose of these procedures will be to inform the public how to effectively participate in Board meetings for 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 Board meeting.

1. Discussion or presentation concerning a published agenda item is limited to its designated place on the agenda, unless otherwise authorized by the Board chair.
2. 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.
3. Any person who is invited by the Board 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.
4. Statements by members of the public should be brief and concise. The Board chair may use discretion to establish a time limit on discussion or oral presentation by visitors. The Board requests that comments add information or perspectives that have not already been mentioned and that patrons refrain from repeating similar points.
5. Questions asked by the public, when possible, will be answered by the Board chair or referred to the superintendent for reply. Questions requiring investigation may, at the discretion of the Board chair, be referred to the superintendent for response at a later time.
6. 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 or sign-in sheet, 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 the 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 will be taken in response to a petition before the next regular meeting. Petitions will be referred to the superintendent for consideration and recommendation.

Comments Regarding Staff Members

Speakers may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs. The Board will not hear comments regarding any individual district staff member. The Board chair will direct the visitor to the procedures in Board policy KL - Public Complaints for Board consideration of a legitimate complaint involving a staff member. The association contract governing the employee rights will be followed. A commendation involving a staff member should be sent to the superintendent who will forward it to the employee, his/her supervisor and the Board.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

[ORS 165.535](#)
[ORS 165.540](#)

[ORS 192.610 to -192.690](#)

[ORS 332.057](#)

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2017); 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2017); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2017).

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008.

Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. Dist., 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

Leventhal v. Vista Unified Sch. Dist., 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).

Cross Reference(s):

BDDA - Notification of Board Meetings

BDDC - Board Meeting Agenda

KC - Community Involvement in Decision Making

KLD - Public Complaints about District Personnel