

EASTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: December 21, 2006

REVISED: March 27, 2012

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
<p>1. Purpose 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq</p>	<p>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 to conduct the business of the district in an orderly and efficient manner and will therefore require reasonable controls to regular public presentations to the Board.</p>
<p>2. Authority 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710</p>	<p>The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.</p>
<p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p>	<p>The Board shall require that public comment requested at the beginning of the meeting be for comment on agenda items. Public comment at the end of the meeting shall be for general comments.</p>
<p>3. Delegation of Responsibility Pol. 006</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The presiding officer shall be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion, the appropriateness of the subject being presented and the suitability of the time for such a presentation. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.</p>
<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p>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.</p>

The Board requires that public participants be residents or taxpayers of this district or anyone representing a group in the community or school district, any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the Board, any district employee, or any district student.

A person wishing to be heard by the Board shall first be recognized by the presiding officer. S/He shall then identify him/herself and proceed with his/her comments as briefly as the subject permits. Public comment shall be limited to five (5) minutes, unless otherwise specified by the Board. Public comment periods shall generally last for thirty (30) minutes.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard.

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

All members of the public are welcome and encouraged to submit comments and concerns in writing to the Board.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, redundant, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Extend public comment periods beyond the 30-minute limit where there is great public demand.
3. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
4. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
5. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.
6. Modify, for efficiency purposes, the structure and length of comment periods during standing committee meetings with the approval of the Board.
7. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.

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