

**Baldwin-Whitehall School District**

Book	Policy Manual
Section	900 Community
Title	Public Participation in Board Meetings
Code	903
Status	Active
Adopted	May 10, 2006
Last Revised	May 14, 2014

**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.[\[1\]](#)

**Authority**

The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.[\[2\]](#)

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 offer comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board. Prior to any official action by the Board, a public comment period will be held and any taxpayer or resident wishing to comment on the action item will be allotted three (3) minutes to make their comment. Residents and taxpayers shall have one (1) opportunity during this public comment period to give comment on agenda matters.[\[3\]](#)

At the conclusion of all Discussion, Business and Special Meetings, residents and taxpayers shall have one opportunity to comment on other matters, not just those related to Action items on the agenda. Comments will be limited to three (3) minutes, and the Board may limit the total time allowed for all public comments to a maximum of thirty (30) minutes combined. Persons wishing to comment may only comment one (1) time per meeting on any subject.[\[3\]](#)

Speakers are required to provide their full name and address to the Board.

**Delegation of Responsibility**

Complaints regarding personnel should be referred privately to appropriate District staff, District administrator, or the Board President.[\[4\]](#)

**Guidelines**

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.

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.

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.

All individuals wishing to participate officially in a public Board meeting and have their comments recorded in the official meeting minutes, shall register their intent with the Board Secretary two (2) days in advance of the meeting and shall include the name and address of the participant, topic to be addressed and group affiliation, if applicable, and an outline of comments to be presented.

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.

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. Terminate the speaker's comments if the comments may defame or injure the reputation of another, and/or are disruptive or profane.
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. Waive these rules with the approval of the Board.
7. Speakers may raise questions, make suggestions or offer objective criticism of school operation and program, but the Board will not hear complaints about school personnel or other persons in public session.

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.

- Legal
- [1. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 701 et seq](#)
  - [2. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710](#)
  - [3. 65 Pa. C.S.A. 710.1](#)
  4. Pol. 006