

READING SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: April 27, 2005

REVISED: February 25, 2015

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
<p>1. Purpose 65 P.S. 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 for proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.</p>
<p>2. Authority</p>	<p>All regular and special meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. Because the Board wants to hear the viewpoints of citizens throughout the total district, it shall offer suitable time in all meetings for citizens of Reading to be heard.</p>
<p>65 P.S. 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 P.S. 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 P.S. 710.1</p>	<p>The Board shall require that all public comments be made at the beginning of each meeting.</p>
<p>65 P.S. 710.1</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>3. Delegation of Responsibility Pol. 006</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The Board President shall be responsible for recognizing all speakers who shall properly identify themselves for maintaining proper order and strict adherence to set time limits.</p>

4. Guidelines	<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> <p>Individuals shall be allowed to speak before the Board for a period of three (3) minutes per person, during the first one-half hour of any meeting at which the Board is authorized to take action. Individuals allowed to speak before the Board shall not be permitted to yield his/her allotted time to speak to any other person. Time will continue to be allocated at the end of the meeting for additional public input.</p> <p>The Board will provide language interpretation services for persons with limited English language proficiency who wish to speak before the Board. Any person who desires language interpretation services shall notify the Board at least forty-eight (48) hours prior to the scheduled Board meeting. Failure to notify the Board of a need for an interpreter will not result in a denial of permission to address the Board, however forty-eight (48) hours notice is required to ensure the provision of a language interpreter by the Board.</p> <p>One (1) delegate from a group or organization shall be allowed to speak before the Board for a period of five (5) minutes per group or organization, during the first one-half hour of any meeting at which the Board is authorized to take action. Time will continue to be allocated at the end of said meeting for additional public input.</p> <p>Comments and questions at these meetings may deal with any topic related to the Board's conduct of the schools. Comments at special meetings must be related to the call of the meeting.</p> <p>The presiding officer may:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">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.
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<p>PA Statute 65 P.S. 701 et seq</p> <p>Board Policy 006</p>	<p>4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting.</p> <p>Electronic recording devices and cameras, other than those used as official recording devices, shall be permitted at public meetings under guidelines established by the Board.</p> <p>No placards or banners will be permitted within the meeting room.</p> <p><u>News Media At Board Meetings</u></p> <p>The Board firmly believes that one of its many responsibilities as a Board of Education is to keep its public well informed of its actions. Local news media representatives shall always be welcomed to attend all regular and special public meetings of the Board.</p> <p>The Board President is the official spokesperson for the Board concerning official public statements regarding school district concerns and policy. However, any member of the Board can and should exercise his/her right to free speech to report his/her opinions on any educational issue to his/her constituents.</p> <p>The meeting agenda and all pertinent documents shall be distributed to the press and public at the meetings.</p>
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