

# SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSVILLE BOARD POLICY

## OPERATING PROCEDURES

### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

187

Public participation is welcomed and encouraged. **Although not required, the Board may** ~~A-designated~~ a public comment time **to** ~~allows~~-district residents an opportunity to make public comments to the school board at the School District's monthly or special meetings. These meetings however are not public forums/hearings, and ground rules are established for such public comment in order to ensure that the orderly conduct of business is maintained.

#### Registrant Responsibilities

Any person who wishes to address the Board during a noticed period of public comment at a School Board meeting shall register to speak prior to the start of the meeting in accordance with specified Registration Procedures (Policy 187-Rule).

Each registrant shall adhere to established procedures for the public comment period:

1. Retain all liability for his/her comments and conduct (i.e., the public comment period does not offer any speaker any exemption from legal liability or from other lawful consequences that may result from the speaker's comments or conduct).
2. Wait to speak until he/she has been recognized by the presiding officer. When addressing the District Board, stand and state his/her name.
3. Limit the duration of his/her comments to a maximum of five (5) minutes as defined in Board Policy 187 Rule.
4. Conduct and comments that are obscene, threatening, harassing, defamatory or disorderly will not be allowed. The Board President reserves the right to stop unprofessional discussion.
5. Repetitive appearances before the Board (or a committee) in which the same registrant, or persons acting in concert, present substantially the same information will not be allowed.
6. Engaging in political advocacy with respect to candidates for any elective office will not be allowed.
7. Present their remarks verbally without the use of supporting material that requires any set-up/take-down time or any advance coordination with District multi-media systems (the registrant may provide copies of supplemental written materials to the Board/District).
8. Except where a person registers under established procedures as the spokesperson for a group or where it is permitted as a reasonable accommodation for an individual with special needs, no individual may present his/her public comments by proxy.

Deviation from these parameters may occur upon the consent of the majority of the Board.

#### Responsibilities of the Presiding Officer and Board

To promote the lawful, orderly and efficient progress of each meeting, the presiding officer of the meeting shall have the authority to enforce the requirements of this policy and he/she shall conduct any period of public comment according to established procedures. The presiding officer may call any registrant (or other attendee) to order and direct the individual to cease conduct which violates any applicable law, policy or procedure. If necessary, the presiding officer may terminate a registrant's comments and/or contact law enforcement for assistance in maintaining order or safety.

When the Board receives public comments on topics/issues that are not otherwise part of the publicly-noticed meeting agenda, the Board will normally receive but not respond to the comments. However, in exceptional cases, an individual Board member or the District Administrator may briefly respond to the registrant (e.g., to ask a clarifying question or to provide a brief clarification or correction of information that was presented by the registrant). The Board may, by motion or unanimous consent, refer an off-agenda topic/issue that is raised by a registrant to a future agenda or for follow-up by the administration. However, the Board members shall not engage in any extensive discussion or debate on any such topic/issue, and the Board shall not take any action addressing the merits of any such topic/issue.

If a member of the public requests to be recognized to speak to an agenda item during any Board meeting at which there is no publicly-noticed period of public comment, the Board shall determine by showing of unanimous consent whether to grant or deny the request. The decision to grant or deny any such request shall not be based on the viewpoint of the proposed speaker, and the decision should consider the extent to which the Board will likewise respond to other similar requests that may be made at that meeting. Such a request shall be denied at any meeting at which there was a scheduled period of public comment and any registrant was denied the opportunity to address the Board due to time constraints.

~~*1<sup>st</sup> Reading:* *July 14, 2014*~~  
~~*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Approval:* *August 11, 2014*~~  
~~*1<sup>st</sup> Reading of Updates:* *June 12, 2017*~~  
~~*2<sup>nd</sup> Reading/Approval* *July 10, 2017*~~  
*First Reading:* *May 11, 2020*  
*Second Reading/Approval:* *May 20, 2020*