

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Series 200

Policy Title: Public Participation in Board Meetings

Code No. 213.00

The board recognizes the importance of citizen participation in school district matters. In order to assure citizens are heard and board meetings are conducted efficiently and in an organized manner, the board will set aside a specific time for public comment, either at a specific time during the meeting or during the discussion of agenda items.

Citizens wishing to address the board on a certain agenda item must notify the Board Secretary prior to the board meeting. The board president will recognize these individuals to make their comments at the appropriate time during public comment. Citizens wishing to present petitions to the board may do so at this time. However, the board will only receive the petitions and not act upon them or their contents. The board has the discretion to limit the amount of time set aside for public participation.

Normally, speakers will be limited to five (5) minutes. However, the board president may modify this time limit, if deemed appropriate or necessary. Public comment is a time set aside for community input, but the board will not discuss or take any action on any matter during public comment.

A public comment shall be limited to regular board meetings and will not be routinely held during special board meetings.

The board has a significant interest in maintaining the decorum of its meetings, and it is expected that members of the public and the board will address each other with civility. The orderly process of the board meeting will not be interfered with or disrupted by public comment. Only individuals recognized by the board president will be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. If disruptive, the individual causing disruption may be asked to leave the board meeting. Defamatory comments may be subject to legal action.

Legal Reference:

Iowa Code §§ 21; 22; 279.8

Cross Reference:

205 Board Member Liability
210.08 Board Meeting Agenda
214 Public Hearings
307 Communication Channels
401.04 Employee Complaints
402.05 Public Complaints About Employees
502.04 Student Complaints and Grievances

Approved: January 11, 2016

Reviewed: March 16, 2020

Revised: March 16, 2020

GENERAL COMPLAINTS BY CITIZENS

The board recognizes that concerns regarding the operation of the school district will arise. The board further believes that constructive criticism can assist in improving the quality of the education program and in meeting individual student needs more effectively. The board also places trust in its employees and desires to support their actions in a manner which frees them from unnecessary or unwarranted criticism and complaints.

Procedures for dealing with complaints concerning programs or practices should be governed by the following principles:

- where action/investigation is desired by the complainant, or where it seems appropriate, the matter should be handled as near the source as possible;
- complaints should both be investigated and, if possible, resolved expeditiously;
- complaints should be dealt with courteously and in a constructive manner; and,
- individuals directly affected by the complaint should have an opportunity to respond.

Specific procedures for handling complaints may be established in policies. The board, consistent with its board policy-making role, will deal with complaints concerning specific schools, programs or procedures only after the usual channels have been exhausted. Complaints regarding employees or complaints by students will follow the more specific policies on those issues.

When a complaint requiring attention is received by the board or a board member it will be referred to the superintendent. After all of the channels have been exhausted, the complainant may appeal to the board by requesting a place on the board agenda or during the public audience portion of the board meeting. If the complainant appeals to the board, the appeal will be in writing, will be signed and will explain the process followed by the complainant prior to the appeal of the board. It is within the board's discretion to determine whether to hear the complaint.