

PUBLIC INPUT AT SCHOOL BOARD AND BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Board of Education encourages citizens of the Appleton Area School District to attend its meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operations and programs of the schools and so that the Board may have an opportunity to hear the views and concerns of the public regarding educational issues.

A period of public input shall be noticed and scheduled at School Board meetings and Public Hearings, except as otherwise specifically directed by the Board.

Public input is also allowed at Board Subcommittee meetings with respect to items of business on the publicly-noticed agenda.

At other meetings of District governmental bodies that may be required by State Statute or held pursuant to District Policy, written input will be accepted.

Cross References: Policy 170, School Board Meetings
Policy 870, Public Concerns and Complaints

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statutes 19.81, 19.83(2), 19.84(2), 19.85, and 120.43

Adoption Date: September 14, 1987

Amended Dates: January 9, 2012 and March 12, 2018

PUBLIC INPUT AT SCHOOL BOARD AND BOARD SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Procedures

Meetings of the Board may receive information and comments from members of the public on issues or topics.

Please note the following in the Procedures below:

- ✓ School Board meetings are run by the Board President or other presiding officer if the President is absent.
- ✓ Board Subcommittee meetings are run by the Subcommittee Chair or other Subcommittee member if the Chair is absent.
- ✓ Public Hearings are run by the Board President or other presiding officer if the President is absent.
- ✓ Other meetings of District governmental bodies that may be required by State Statute or held pursuant to District Policy are run by a Lead Administrator or another administrator if Lead Administrator is absent.

I. School Board Meetings

A period for public input will be set aside during School Board meetings. No public input will be allowed during Closed Sessions.

Members of the public wishing to speak during the public input period are required to register to speak. Comments may address topics related to District operations and programs and are not limited exclusively to agenda items.

II. Board Subcommittee Meetings

Members of the public wishing to speak at Board Subcommittee meetings are required to register to speak and may only make comments related to items on the meeting agenda. Members of the public wishing to speak will be recognized by the Board Subcommittee Chair as that agenda item is reached.

III. Public Hearings

Members of the public wishing to speak at Public Hearings of the Board (e.g. annual budget discussions) are required to register to speak and may only make comments or request clarification related to specific items included on the agenda and during the public input portion of the hearing.

IV. Other Meetings of District governmental bodies that may be required by State Statute or held pursuant to District Policy

A designated period for public input will not be a part of the agenda for these meetings. Work completed at most of these meetings will ultimately be shared at Board Subcommittee and School Board meetings where public input is allowed. At any time, signed written communication is encouraged and will be accepted by the Lead Administrator of these meetings.

Guidelines for Speaking at School Board and Board Subcommittee Meetings

- Meeting agendas that are subject to the Open Meetings law are available on the District's website (via BoardDocs) before each meeting and hard copies are available at the meeting.
- Members of the public wishing to speak must complete and submit a registration form stating his/her name, address, and topic for comments prior to speaking. If a spokesperson is speaking on behalf of a group, he/she needs to indicate that on the registration form as well.
- The District respectfully requests that speakers refrain from presenting comments at public meetings that introduce complaints or concerns that are directed toward and that identify individual staff members or individual students. As such personnel-related and student-related matters implicate a variety of rights that require careful attention, the District has established a variety of alternative procedures for appropriately addressing such complaints. If a speaker persists in presenting a complaint about an individual staff member's conduct or an individual student's conduct or performance, the District officials who are present at the meeting will not attempt to resolve or respond to the speaker's complaint in that setting. Any person with such a complaint or concern may contact the Office of the Superintendent for information on the most appropriate means of raising or pursuing his/her complaint. Generally, such complaints or concerns should be channeled through the AASD Complaint Procedure (Policy 870 and 870-Rule).
- The Board President or Chair shall recognize all speakers who have registered to speak and will share the Public Input Disclaimer (see Appendix 1). The Board President, Chair, or the Board by motion, may limit (in a viewpoint-neutral manner) the total time allotted for public input or the amount of time allotted to individual topics.

Speaker Responsibilities at School Board and Board Subcommittee Meetings

- A speaker should be as brief as possible and only speak once during the period for public input. Unless additional time is granted, a speaker shall limit his/her presentation to a maximum of three minutes. A timer will be used.
- A group spokesperson may speak for up to five minutes on behalf of a group present at the meeting as indicated on the registration form. A timer will be used.
- Individuals or groups requiring greater length of time should communicate in writing. Written correspondence to Board members may be directed to the Board through its Executive Assistant or directly to their home addresses.
- A speaker's comments are limited to the public input period (e.g., either during the designated public input period during a School Board meeting or Public Hearing, or during a portion of the topic-specific discussion that occurs at a Board Subcommittee meeting).
- During periods of public input that are not limited to the meeting's agenda topics, a speaker's comments still must be reasonably germane to some aspect of the school district's policies, practices, programs, or operations.
- A speaker should not be unduly repetitious. For example, a speaker who attends multiple meetings should only sign up to speak if presenting new or additional information.
- A speaker retains all liability for his/her comments and conduct (i.e., the public input 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).

187-Rule (cont.)

- A speaker shall avoid conduct that is disorderly or speech that is obscene, threatening, harassing, or defamatory.
- A speaker should avoid engaging in political advocacy with respect to candidates for any elected office. Political advocacy related to specific candidates for office is not sufficiently germane to the meetings or to the public responsibilities of the bodies.
- No individual may present his/her verbal public input by proxy except as permitted as a reasonable accommodation for an individual with special needs. A person who is unable to attend a meeting in person may submit written comments to the District.

Authority and Responsibility of the Board President or Chair

To promote the lawful, orderly, and efficient progress of each meeting, the Board President or Chair shall have the authority to enforce the requirements of this policy and he/she shall conduct any period of public input according to established procedures.

- The Board President or Chair may call any registrant (or other attendee) to order and direct the individual to cease conduct, which violates any applicable law, policy, or procedure.
- The Board President or Chair may terminate remarks of any individual who does not adhere to established rules, whose comments are unduly repetitive of previous comments, who makes comments that are obscene, threatening, harassing, or defamatory, or whose conduct is otherwise disorderly.
- If necessary, the Board President or Chair may contact law enforcement for assistance in maintaining order or safety.

School Board Meetings

When the School Board receives public input on topics/issues that are not part of the publicly-noticed meeting agenda, Board members shall not engage in any extensive discussion or debate on any such topic/issue, and shall not take any action addressing the merits of any such topic/issue. However, in exceptional cases, the Board President, a Board member who has been recognized by the Chair, or the Superintendent 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 President, Chair, or the Board by motion may refer an off-agenda topic/issue that is raised by a registrant to a future agenda or for follow-up by the administration.

Cross References: Policy 170, School Board Meetings
Policy 870, Public Concerns and Complaints

Legal References: Wisconsin State Statutes 19.81, 19.83(2), 19.84(2), 19.85, and 120.43

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Appendix 1

Public Input Disclaimer

The School Board welcomes public input. We thank you for being here. Your opinions and ideas are important to us. However, there are a few cautions we want to share with you.

The School Board respectfully requests that speakers refrain from presenting comments at public meetings that introduce complaints or concerns that are directed toward and that identify individual staff members or individual students. As such personnel-related and student-related matters implicate a variety of rights that require careful attention, the District has established a variety of alternative procedures for appropriately addressing such complaints. If a speaker persists in presenting a complaint about an individual staff member's conduct or an individual student's conduct or performance, the District officials who are present at the meeting will not attempt to resolve or respond to the speaker's complaint in that setting. Any person with such a complaint or concern may contact the Office of the Superintendent for information on the most appropriate means of raising or pursuing his/her complaint. Generally, such complaints or concerns should be channeled through the AASD Complaint Procedure (Policy 870 and 870-Rule). False statements or stigmatizing charges may subject the individual making such statements to legal repercussions, including, but not limited to, defamation claims. Conduct that is disorderly or any speech that is obscene, threatening, harassing, or defamatory is not permitted.

Again, we appreciate your input and support for our efforts to create the best learning environment for our students.