

**Policy BDDH-1: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 03/03/1997 | Last Revised Date: 09/12/2022 | Last Reviewed Date: 09/12/2022

**2023A UPDATE INFORMATION**

The district has totally rewritten this policy rather than approve the changes recommended by MSBA in the 2023A Update.

The board of education and district administration welcome community member engagement and support of the school district. The public is invited to communicate with the board of education and district administration through a variety of avenues, including attendance at all open meetings of the Columbia Board of Education. The process for addressing comments to the board for consideration at meetings is set out below. The school board is aware that board members are elected to serve the public, and the board seeks to conduct its business transparently. The district encourages the public to attend open school board meetings and other public meetings in person and, when available, virtually. In addition, in some instances, members of the public may be provided the opportunity to speak at a school board meeting. As an extension of policy KC, Community Engagement, the board has created the following options for receiving input from community members.

For purposes of this policy, the term "community member" shall mean an individual who resides in the boundaries of the district, a student, a legal parent or guardian of a student, or an employee of the district.

**Written Correspondence Comment**

The board encourages community members to provide comments in writing to the board. Any community member wanting to provide comments to the board before a meeting may send written correspondence to the board and the superintendent or through a web portal set up for that purpose.

Additionally, the public may provide online public comments regarding an action item on the agenda through the agenda posted online. Each agenda shall include instructions for how to provide these online public comments.

**In-Person Public Hearings Comment**

From time to time, the board will schedule a public hearing to receive input on matters of concern to the community, such as setting the district's tax rate. The public will be provided notice of such hearings as required by law. The board will reserve time at its monthly regular meeting to allow community members to address the board subject to the following process:

1. The board shall set aside 30 minutes for public comment.
2. Any community member wishing to speak at the meeting must register their desire to do so by registering in person, online, or by phone no later than noon on the day of the regularly scheduled monthly meeting. If the regularly scheduled meeting is rescheduled to a different time or day, the deadline to sign up shall be specified in the meeting agenda. Each registration shall include the community member's name, relationship to the district, and the agenda item or topic on which the speaker wishes to discuss.
3. No community member will be permitted to speak more than once during the public comment period.
4. The board will establish a uniform time limit of three minutes for each community member registered to speak.

5. Discussion on action items from the posted agenda will be prioritized. The board shall limit the priority of public comments to three comments on the same agenda item to allow the board to hear from community members wishing to speak on other topics. The board shall take comments in the following priority:
  - Agenda Action Items
  - Other items on the agenda
  - Additional comments on the previously discussed action items in the order they were registered
  - General public comments and other items on the agenda in the order they were registered

Speakers will not be denied the opportunity to speak on the basis of their viewpoint. Speakers must follow the expectations in the section titled Conduct at Public Meetings.
6. All speakers state their name and their connection to Columbia Public Schools. All speakers shall state if they are speaking on behalf of a group or other entity.
7. If there is insufficient time for everyone to speak, the board will encourage community members to submit their questions in writing or use the process for putting an item on the agenda.
8. These rules may be suspended from time to time by motion and majority vote of the board.

## Agenda Items

Individuals who wish to have an item placed on the agenda of a regularly scheduled meeting of the board of education shall comply with the following: In accordance with law and the district's community engagement policy, community members may place items on the agenda of a regularly scheduled board meeting as outlined in this policy. The following rules apply to placing an item on the agenda:

1. The individual must be a resident of the school district. Only community members will be permitted to request an item on the agenda.
2. The requested agenda item must be directly related to the governance or operation of the school district. The board will hear community member-initiated agenda items at the next regularly scheduled meeting occurring more than five business days after the board secretary receives the request unless the community member consents to the item being moved to a different board meeting.
3. The resident must meet with the superintendent or designee in an attempt to resolve the issue prior to submitting a written request for the issue to be placed on the regular meeting agenda of the board of education. To schedule the meeting, the resident must submit a written request to the office of the superintendent. Thereafter, the superintendent or designee shall meet with the resident within 20 business days following receipt of the written request. The agenda items must be directly related to the governance or operation of the district and within the board's authority. The board may refuse to hear or delay hearing the item if the board has heard an identical or substantively similar issue in the previous three calendar months or if the community member has previously violated district rules regarding conduct at meetings or on school property.

After such meeting, if the issue is not resolved or if the superintendent or designee fails to meet with the resident within the 20 business days following receipt of the written request, the resident may submit a written request to the board secretary asking that the issue be placed on the regular meeting agenda of the board of education. If such written request is received by the board secretary at least five business days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board of education, the issue will be placed as an item on the agenda for such meeting, and the citizen will be afforded the opportunity to present the issue to the board of education as specified herein. If the board secretary receives the written request fewer than five business days before the next regularly scheduled meeting

of the board of education, the issue will be placed on the agenda for the subsequent regularly scheduled meeting of the board, at which time the resident will be afforded the opportunity to present the issue to the board as specified herein. The citizen and the district may consent to the issue being placed on a meeting agenda other than the one specified herein above.

4. The requesting district resident will be authorized to present the agenda item. No other presenters will be authorized. A maximum of three minutes shall be allocated for the presentation of the requested agenda item. The community member or community members requesting to place an item on the agenda must first meet with the superintendent or designee to attempt to resolve the issue unless the superintendent or designee waives such a meeting.
5. The board of education may refuse to hear or may delay hearing a requested agenda item if the board has heard an identical or substantially similar issue in the previous three calendar months if the resident has previously violated the district's rule regarding conduct at meetings or on school property. The meeting with the superintendent or designee will take place within 20 business days of the superintendent or designee receiving a written request to meet.
6. The board of education may delay hearing an agenda item if more than three resident-initiated agenda items are scheduled for the same board meeting. If the hearing of a resident's agenda item is delayed, the resident may submit written materials to the office of the superintendent for distribution to the board of education as an alternate method of communicating with the board. If the superintendent or designee waives the meeting or does not meet with the community member or community members within 20 business days, or if the community member(s) is not satisfied with the meeting's outcome, the community member(s) may submit a written request to the board secretary to add the item to the board agenda.
7. The process established herein cannot be utilized to avoid compliance with grievance, complaint and/or other resolution processes and procedures of the school district. Residents will be required to comply with the appropriate statutes, rules, regulations, processes and procedures for resolution of grievances and complaints. The board secretary will include the item on the next regularly scheduled board meeting's agenda, subject to the rules listed below, if the community member(s) submits the request to the board secretary at least five days before the meeting. Otherwise, the board secretary will place the item on the agenda for the next subsequent regularly scheduled meeting.
8. The board may delay hearing an agenda item if more than three community member-initiated agenda items are scheduled for the same board meeting. The delayed agenda item will be moved to the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board. If the community member's agenda item is delayed, the community member may submit written materials to the superintendent for distribution to the board as an alternative method of communicating with the board.
9. The board secretary shall place the topic and the community member(s) name on the agenda as a separately designated item.
10. The requesting community member(s) will be authorized to present the agenda item. No other presenters will be authorized, except as requested by the board. A maximum of five minutes shall be allocated for the presentation of the requested agenda item, unless the board president allots more time for the discussion. Only community member(s) who met with or requested to meet with the superintendent or designee will be allowed to speak during this time. If more than one community member is to speak on the issue, the community members may determine how time is allocated between multiple speakers. The board president will encourage the community members to appoint a spokesperson or communicate their concerns through other means.
11. Board members may ask the community member(s) questions, seek additional information from the superintendent or designee, or otherwise discuss the topic.
12. The process to place an item on the agenda shall not be used to avoid compliance with grievance,

complaint, or other resolution processes and procedures of the school district. Community members are required to comply with the appropriate statutes, rules, regulations, processes, and procedures for resolution of grievances and complaints.

### **Grievance through Established Policy Policies and Procedures**

Public comment and requesting items on the agenda cannot be used to avoid compliance with grievance, complaint, or other resolution processes and procedures of the school district. Community members are required to comply with the appropriate statutes, rules, regulations, processes, and procedures for resolution of grievances and complaints. The board will not receive comments, agenda items, or disciplinary matters that are or should be the subject of an administrative review or decision that the board will or could be involved.

The district has established several policies and procedures to assist students, legal parents and guardians, staff, and the public in bringing concerns or grievances to the district. The board encourages the public to use these policies and procedures before bringing concerns to the board and may refer the public to these processes prior to taking action.

These policies include, but are not limited to:

AC, Prohibition against Illegal Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

ACA, Sexual Harassment under Title IX

DA, Fiscal Responsibility

GBM, Staff Grievances

IGBCA, Programs for Homeless Students

IGBE, Students in Foster Care

JGD, Student Suspension and Expulsion

KL, Public Concerns and Complaints

KLA, Concerns and Complaints Regarding Federal Programs

KLB, Public Questions, Comments or Concerns Regarding District Instructional/Media/Library Materials

There are additional legal processes created by law to address concerns about accommodating students with disabilities or concerns about a student's special education program.

### **Public Comment**

The board of education shall designate and set aside a specific period of time for public comments at each regularly scheduled meeting of the board of education. This comment period will take place prior to any board discussion and vote. Any response to a concern identified during a public comment will be facilitated by the district administration. The following guidelines will be applied to the public comment portion of the regularly scheduled meeting:

1. Members of the public may comment at the board's regular meeting during the designated public comment period established by the board of education. Members of the public who wish to comment shall register in advance through the process identified by the school district and shall be limited to speaking on the topics specified through registration. A total of 30 minutes will be allotted for individuals to speak during the public comment period of a regularly scheduled board meeting.
2. Members of the public addressing action items will be permitted the first opportunity to speak. If time remains in the designated comment period, individuals registered for comment on school-related matters will be provided time to speak. The total comment period will not exceed 30 minutes.

3. Each person desiring to be heard should, when recognized by the president, step to the podium, speak into the microphone, and first state their name before commenting. No speaker substitutions will be allowed. Individuals who register may speak or may opt to forego the opportunity. In order to facilitate broader engagement, any individual who provides public comment at any regularly scheduled board meeting in two consecutive calendar months shall not be permitted to provide general school-related comment at a regularly scheduled board meeting during the next subsequent calendar month.
4. Comments by any one person are limited to three minutes, and each person will only be allowed to comment once during a regularly scheduled board meeting.
5. Only comments that are addressed to the subject matter designated during a registration will be received.
6. No community member may comment on disciplinary matters, personnel matters, or matters that are unrelated to district business. The board president shall rule such comments out of order.
7. No community member may comment on disciplinary matters, personnel matters, or matters that are unrelated to district business. The board president shall rule such comments out of order.
8. Disruptions from the floor may be ruled out of order. Any disruptive persons may be asked to leave the room.
9. Community members are encouraged to provide the board with a written copy of their comments and any other supporting documents.

## Conduct at Public Meetings

The president may rule out of order any comments that are not addressed to the subject matter designated during registration. The president shall rule out of order all comments that are irrelevant, repetitious or derogatory of persons, businesses or organizations. The board will not receive comments on disciplinary or other matters that are, or should be, the subject of preliminary administrative review and decision if the board will or could be involved, at any level, as a hearing panel or reviewing authority. The president shall rule such comments out of order. Any person who is continuously called out of order by the president, who disrupts the board meeting or who, having been admonished by the president, continues to make remarks that are derogatory of persons, businesses or organizations, shall leave the board meeting room on direction of the president. Any person refusing to leave the board meeting room when so directed by the president may be removed by an officer of the law. An order to leave the meeting room may be appealed to the board as a whole.

1. No community member may comment on disciplinary matters, personnel matters, or matters that are unrelated to district business. The board president shall rule such comments out of order.
2. Disruptions from the floor may be ruled out of order. Any disruptive persons may be asked to leave the room.
3. Community members are encouraged to provide the board with a written copy of their comments and any other supporting documents.

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**Policy Reference Disclaimer:** These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

### State References

§§ 162.058, 610.010-.030, RSMo.

### Description

[State Statute](#)

### Cross References

GBM

### Description

[STAFF GRIEVANCES](#)

HA

[NEGOTIATIONS WITH EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES](#)

**Cross References**

IGCD

IGCDA

KC

KK

KL

**Description**

[VIRTUAL COURSES](#)

[FULL-TIME MOCAP VIRTUAL COURSES](#)

[COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT](#)

[VISITORS TO DISTRICT PROPERTY AND EVENTS](#)

[PUBLIC CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS](#)