

Policy BCAF: Public Comments at Board Meetings

Status: DRAFT

Original Adopted Date: 11/15/2021 | **Last Reviewed Date:** 03/17/2022

PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS

This school board encourages the public to express to the school board its viewpoints on issues vital to the operation of the school district. In order to conduct board business in an orderly, efficient manner and to allow public input into board meetings, the board authorizes a "Public Comments" item on its agenda for its regular board meetings.

DEFINITION

Public comments are an opportunity for members of the general public to briefly express their ideas, concerns, and suggestions to the school board on matters of individual or community interest.

LIMITATIONS

Public comments at normal board meetings shall be limited to three (3) minutes per individual or group. Public comments at special board meetings must be related to the call of the meeting.

To be placed on the agenda for Public Comments of a regular board meeting, groups or individuals shall submit a request via email or hand carry a written request to come before the board to the office of the superintendent before noon the day of a regular board meeting. Any request not meeting this timeline will be held until the next regular meeting of the board.

In order to address comments to the board, individuals must sign-in at the designated board meeting prior to the designated start time. Individuals will be allowed to address the board in the order of request received. The school board will allow a maximum of 30 minutes on the agenda for public comments; the first ten (10) people requesting to address the board will be given three (3) minutes each to comment to the board. The superintendent may deny requests due to time constraints or by rationale stated in Policy BCBI.

The public comments time is not a forum for in-depth discussion of issues with the board, nor is it a public discussion. Rather, it is a time that the public may use to make the board aware of matters related to student achievement and school operations. The board will not debate any issues raised through public comments, other than to decide if any issues brought before the board through the public comments require further consideration. If the board deems that an issue has arisen that requires investigation and possible board action, the board shall direct the superintendent to investigate the matter and to report back to the board at a subsequent board meeting.

Issues requiring more than three (3) minutes and possibly requiring board action or response should be addressed through the process outlined in Policy BCBI, Public Participation at Board Meetings.

The Board will not hear any complaints or grievances from staff members until the individual or group has followed the chain of command outlined in the district's organizational chart in trying to resolve the issue. Every attempt should be made to resolve the problem(s) at the lowest level prior to elevating to the board.

PARAMETERS

The public is reminded that issues protected by privacy laws (student discipline and school personnel, for example) cannot be discussed in open session and are therefore not suitable items for public comments. Remarks of this nature and personal remarks will be ruled out of order by the board chair. Further, the board reserves the right to "make and enforce rules and regulations for the conduct of persons attending its meetings." Sec. 25-41-9

DISRUPTION OF THE BOARD MEETING

The chairman of the school board shall ask anyone causing a disturbance at the school board to leave the meeting. Anyone failing to abide by the chairman's request and continuing to disturb the board meeting will be arrested and possibly fined. Sec. 37-11-23.

This Mississippi Public School Accreditation Standard for this policy Standard 12.
