

Policy BEDH Public Participation at Meetings

Issued 8/21

The public is cordially invited to attend board meetings to become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the district. The board conducts meetings for the purpose of carrying on the official business of the district. The meetings are not public hearing meetings but are meetings held in public. Public participation will be permitted only as indicated on the agenda and at the discretion of the board.

In order that the board may conduct the meeting in a civil and professional manner, comments from the public should not include gossip, defamatory words, or abusive and vulgar language. The board reserves the right to terminate any presentation which does not adhere to the guidelines set forth in this policy.

Orderly conduct of a meeting does not permit spontaneous discussion from the audience. All persons who wish to participate must do so through established procedures. These procedures are designed to encourage participation and ensure the orderly management of the meetings. The board is committed to compliance with the South Carolina Freedom of Information Act as well as all other federal and state laws which regulate or affect board actions and policy.

Agenda Items

Only the board or the superintendent may place items on the agenda during the advanced planning stage of the meeting. Staff, any citizen or group of citizens, as well as an organization, may submit in writing to the board or superintendent suggestions for issues that might be brought before the board. All agendas of regular board meetings will also provide a time for citizen input.

Citizens' Comments

The board may provide a specified period of time for comments from any citizen, group representative, staff members, parent/legal guardian, or student regarding any topic over which the board has jurisdiction. If the board determines there is not sufficient time at a meeting for public comments, the comment period may be deferred to the next scheduled meeting or to a special called meeting. The board will allow each individual to speak for no more than five (5) minutes. The board will not act on citizens' comments at that time but will take them under advisement and then determine how the requests should be addressed.

All persons who wish to comment during the citizens' comments period will fill out the appropriate form provided by the board before the meeting begins. The chair of the board will introduce speakers who have signed up on the appropriate form and invite them to address the board. The chair reserves the right to limit discussion of same topic issues in an effort to provide individuals the opportunity to be heard on a variety of topics.

The board will not permit any expression of personal complaints about individual staff members or any other person connected with the district during public session. Specific student or staff member issues should be handled through the appropriate procedures as indicated in district policy.

Presentations for unsolicited services will not be permitted. Companies or businesses offering services of possible interest to the district should send information to the district office for distribution to the appropriate district officials.

The board may provide factual information or recite existing policy in response to inquiries, but the board will not deliberate or decide matters regarding any subject not included on the agenda.

Cf. [BEDB](#)

Adopted 9/82; Revised 12/1/92, 11/15/05, 8/3/21

Legal References:

S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, as amended:

