

	<p>AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION</p>	<p>Board Procedure 1430BP</p> <p>July 20, 2021</p> <p>Page 1 of 4</p>
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This procedure outlines the rules and requirements for members of the public wishing to speak at a regular Board meeting or at a public hearing.

The School Board shall encourage and accommodate public participation in regular Board meetings. The Board will hear from the public in the Public Testimony section of each regular Board meeting. A maximum of twenty (20) speakers will be heard; each speaker can speak for not more than two (2) minutes. However, in the event that thirty five (35) or more public testimony requests are received prior to the scheduled start time of the Board meeting, an additional five (5) speaking slots will be made available for that meeting only, for a total of twenty five (25) speakers.

The Board meeting agenda is posted to the District's website three days in advance of regular Board meetings, giving members of the public an opportunity to review what items are on the agenda.

Regular Board meetings are generally held on Wednesdays but are occasionally scheduled on other days (e.g. due to holidays or school breaks). For regular Board meetings held on Wednesdays, public testimony sign-ups will be accepted and testimony slots will be filled as follows:

- Sign-ups for public testimony will begin at 8:00am the Monday before the regular meeting and will continue until the 20 (or 25) slots on the speakers list are filled. To sign up, speakers must give their full name and contact information and state the agenda item or other topic on which they wish to speak.
- Speakers must sign up for themselves, with the exception of students signed up by a parent or guardian and individuals who may need an accommodation for the public testimony sign-up process, including those with disabilities or those requiring language interpretation services.
- At noon on the day before the Board meeting, public testimony slots will be filled according the following priority levels on a first-come, first-served basis within each level:
  1. Individuals speaking to action items on the agenda (including items on the consent agenda)
  2. Individuals speaking to introduction items on the agenda

### 3. Individuals giving comments of a general nature

- Sign-ups received after noon on the day before the meeting will be added to the end of the list on a first-come, first-served basis.
- Notwithstanding the above, the first speaking slot at each regular Board meeting will generally be held for a student from a district high school. All district high schools are provided a slot each year, assigned by the Board Office. On occasion, multiple speaking slots may be held for students from different district high schools in order to accommodate all district high schools over the course of each school year.
- Current district students who sign up through the above process before noon on the day before the meeting, identify themselves as students, and are among the 20 (or 25) speakers on the speakers list, will be placed immediately following the assigned student speaking slot(s).
- Elected officials who would like to speak at a regular Board meeting may contact the Board Office to request to speak during the Superintendent Comments portion of the agenda.
- A waiting list will be created if there are more speakers than speaking slots. The wait list will be ordered chronologically. The final public testimony list will be posted to the District's web site by close of business the Tuesday before the meeting.

When regular Board meetings are held on days other than Wednesdays, the above timeline for public testimony sign-ups and the filling of testimony slots may be adjusted by the School Board Office accordingly. If adjusted, the revised timeline will be included on the relevant regular Board meeting agenda.

#### Guidelines of testimony in this part of the meeting are:

1. Speakers should only state their full name for the record when starting their testimony—speakers need not state their contact information during the meeting.
2. Speakers will be allowed a maximum of two (2) minutes. Speakers may appear in person and cede their time when they are called to the podium to testify. In this instance the total amount of time allowed shall not exceed two (2) minutes for the combined number of speakers—time shall not be restarted after the new speaker begins.
3. In order to maximize opportunities for others to address the Board, each speaker is allowed only one speaking slot per meeting.
4. The majority of the speaker's time should be spent on the topic the speaker has indicated they wish to speak about.
5. Board Directors are not obligated to respond to questions or challenges made during the public comment period, and Directors' silence will not be deemed to signal agreement or endorsement of the speaker's remarks.
6. The Board President may:
  - a. Call the speaker to order or terminate the speaker's statement once the allotted time has passed;

- b. Interrupt a speaker to require the same standard of civility that the Board expects of itself. Examples of uncivil comments that will justify interruption of a speaker's remarks include those that:
        - Are defamatory;
        - Are an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
        - Are obscene or indecent;
        - Are "fighting words," i.e., words that are directed at an individual to incite an immediate and hostile reaction, such as through racial slurs;
        - Violate District policy or procedure related to harassment, intimidation, bullying or discrimination;
        - Incite an unlawful act on District or school premises; or
        - Create a material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the Board meeting;
      - c. Request that the speaker leave the meeting if they refuse to come to order;
      - d. Request any individual to leave the meeting if they do not observe reasonable decorum;
      - e. Request the assistance of District security or law enforcement in the removal of a disorderly person who has previously been asked to leave and refused the request;
      - f. Call for a recess or adjournment to another time or location when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.
7. The Board as a whole has the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings and can maintain order by removing those who are disruptive. However, the Board recognizes the distinction between uncivil discourse, which is not permitted, and comments that are negative but still civil in nature, and will exercise its authority to maintain order in a content-neutral manner.

## **Public Hearings**

For topics of special public interest or as required by law, the Board may schedule special hearings to receive additional public testimony. The Board President shall designate a time limit for public presentations. Speakers may sign up at the public hearing to present oral testimony and may be required to give their full name, address, and relationship to Seattle Public Schools and to designate whether they are testifying for or against the agenda item, and will be given the opportunity to submit written testimony. Speakers should only state their full name for the record when starting their testimony—speakers need not state their address, email or telephone number during the meeting.

Testimony will be taken on a first-come, first-serve basis according to the sign-up sheet at the public hearing. Speakers will be given a maximum of three (3) minutes to speak. Persons who do not testify are encouraged to submit their

written testimony to the Board Office, which will make it available to the full Board.

Board Procedure 1430BP

Approved: June 2011

Revised: July 2021 (per Policy No. 1310); July 2020; April 2018; June 2016; October 2014;  
December 2012; March 2012

Cross Reference: Policy Nos. 1400; 1430; 6000; 6882