

HEARING OF THE PUBLIC AND CITIZENS' COMMENTS AT SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

All regular, special and emergency meetings of the Commerce Board of Education shall be open to the public in accordance with the provisions of the Oklahoma Open Meetings act.

The board wishes to hear the viewpoints of citizens throughout the district and considers the responsible presentation of these viewpoints vital to the efficient operation of the school system. The board also recognizes its responsibility for the proper governance of the school and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner. The board, therefore, has established procedures providing for limited participation at school board meetings for the citizens of this district.

In accordance with the policy of the board of education, the following guidelines shall govern visitors attending board meetings and public participation in meetings.

1. The board president shall ask all visitors to list their names in the visitor's register.
2. An individual wishing to discuss a topic during the portion of the meeting reserved for citizens' comments must submit the topic to the Superintendent on a specified form (BED-E1). The form must state the nature of the matter to be discussed, the full name of the person or organization making the request, and applicable telephone numbers and addresses. The form must be received in the Superintendent's office at least five (5) days prior to the next regularly scheduled meeting in order to be placed on the agenda. The Superintendent will respond within five (5) days to any inappropriate request.
3. The president of the board shall recognize speakers, maintain proper order, and adhere to time limits established by the board. Specifically, the president may require all proponents of one side of an issue to elect one spokesperson. Repetitive comments by consecutive individuals will not be allowed.
 - A. In an effort to provide the opportunity for public comment with prior notice, adequate time will be allowed for public comments.
 - B. A time limit of five (5) minutes is established for individuals desiring to address the board to make specific comments about an agenda item.
4. School board policies, state law and federal law establish separate and distinct procedures and forums for the resolution of employee grievances, employee, employees, pupil suspensions and appeals, political campaigns, and litigation.
5. To avoid circumvention of those separate proceedings and ensure fairness to all parties concerned, no person will be allowed to address the board regarding the following:
 - A. An issue in a pending lawsuit, complaint, or investigation filed with an outside agency, wherein the District, employee(s) or the Board is a party;
 - B. A pending grievance;
 - C. A pending employee complaint filed with the District or an outside agency;
 - D. A complaint(s) against individual employee(s).

- E. Employee disciplinary action, suspension, or termination; or
- F. A pending pupil suspension or appeal that may reach the Board of Education.

Additionally, no person who, has publicly announced or filed as a candidate for public office, may use the public or open forum section of the Board's meeting as a forum for campaigning.

- 6. Board members and administrative staff will not respond to questions from the public. Proper questions from members of the public may be referred to the Superintendent for later report to the board. The board will not, in most instances, be able to vote on matters brought forward by the public during the time reserved for public participation, if such matters are not specific agenda items. However, where appropriate, such items may be placed on the agenda for the next or a succeeding board meeting.
- 7. The individual dignity of Board members, District employees, students and members of the public should be respected; accordingly, neither Board members, employees, students nor members of the public should be subjected to abuse through the proceedings. The Board president may interrupt and terminate any presentation that is not in accordance with any of the criteria.
- 8. Members of the public **shall not be recognized while the board is conducting its official business.**