

**IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
EMPLOYEE AND STAFF COMMENTS AND PARTICIPATION
DURING BOARD MEETINGS**

Limit on Participation

Employees and Staff are invited and encouraged to participate and offer comments to the Board during its regularly scheduled Board meetings. Participation is limited to the portion of the meeting that may be designated for employee and staff comment. At all other times during a Board meeting, employees and staff shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless requested by the presiding officer.

Public Comment

At regular meetings where employee and staff comment is on the agenda, the Board shall allot three (3) minutes to hear employees or staff members who desire to make comments to the Board both generally or on specific agenda items. Employees and staff who wish to participate in this portion of the meeting shall sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins and shall indicate the topic about which they wish to speak.

Each employee or staff person who sign up shall be allowed to address the Board one time for no more than three (3) minutes. Delegations of more than five persons are encouraged to appoint one person to present their views before the Board.

All persons shall address their questions to the presiding officer. A person may not relinquish his or her time to another person during the meeting.

Employees and staff should not use this forum to speak about students, or personnel matters that should be addressed through the grievance process. The presiding officer or designee shall determine whether a person addressing the Board has attempted to solve a matter administratively through resolution channels established by policy. If not, the person shall be referred to the appropriate policy to seek resolution.

Board's Response

The Board may furnish specific factual information or recite existing policy in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or decide regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

Disruption

Disruption of a Board meeting by any employee, staff person, or other member of the public shall not be tolerated. If, after at least one warning from the presiding officer, any person continues to disrupt the meeting by his or her words or actions, the presiding officer may request assistance from law enforcement officials to have the person removed from the meeting.

Recording Devices

Any individuals wishing to use audio and/or video tape recorders, cassette recorders, or other recording devices to record a Board meeting must notify Jessica Hess (jessica.hess@ideapublicschols.org) before the start of the meeting. The individual will sign a log indicating the type of recording device to be used and will then be given an opportunity to set up such equipment prior to the start of the meeting.

Cameras shall be placed in inconspicuous corners of the meeting room, toward the rear, so as to permit an unobstructed view by the camera. No artificial lighting may be used. Cameras or other recording devices will be placed no closer than five (5) feet from the speaker's table.

Under no conditions shall a Board meeting be impeded or delayed as a result of the use of a recording device or camera, including but not limited to requests to change a tape or tape operator, to examine any defective or inoperative equipment, or to have a speaker repeat his or her statement.

United States Constitution

IDEA Public Schools shall take no action abridging the freedom of speech or the right of people to petition the Board for redress of grievances. *U.S. Const. Amend. I, XIV.*

The Board may confine its meetings to specified subject matter, and may hold non-public sessions to transact business. When the Board sits in public meetings to conduct public business and hear the views of citizens, it may not discriminate between speakers on the basis of the content of their speech or the message it conveys. *Rosenberger v. Rector & Visitors of Univ. of Virginia, 515 U.S. 819 (1995); City of Madison v. Wis. Emp. Rel. Comm'n, 429 U.S. 167 (1976); Pickering v. Bd. of Educ., 391 U.S. 563 (1968).*

The Board may create a limited public forum for the purpose of hearing comments from the public, so long as:

1. The Board does not discriminate against speech on the basis of viewpoint;
2. Any restrictions are reasonable in light of the purpose served by the forum; and
3. The Board provides alternative paths for expressing categories of protected speech that are excluded from the forum.

Fairchild v. Liberty Indep. Sch. Dist., 597 F.3d 747 (5th Cir. 2010).

Texas Constitution

Citizens shall have the right, in a peaceable manner, to assemble together for their common good and to apply to those invested with the powers of government for redress of grievances or other purposes, by petition, address, or remonstrance. *Tex. Const. Art. I, Sec. 27.*

Public Comment

So long as the requirements of the Open Meetings Act are satisfied and the right of citizens to apply to the Board for redress of their grievances is not abridged, the Board need not provide a public forum for every citizen wishing to express an opinion on a matter. Reasonable restraints on the number, length, and frequency of presentations are permissible. The Board may limit the total amount of time for public comments generally, may limit the amount of time for each speaker with respect to specific agenda items, and may encourage groups of persons it will hear on a particular subject to designate a spokesperson, but may not require groups to consolidate with respect to specific agenda items. The Board may adopt other regulations and procedures for comments so long as the regulation does not abridge constitutionally guaranteed rights of freedom of speech and to petition, nor unfairly discriminate among views seeking expression. *Att'y Gen. Op. H-188 (1973).*

Limit on Participation

Audience participation at a Board meeting is limited to the portion of the meeting designated for that purpose or for specific agenda items as permitted by law and

procedures established by the Board. At all other times during a Board meeting, the audience shall not enter into discussion or debate on matters being considered by the Board, unless requested by the presiding officer.

Public Comment

At regular meetings, the Board shall allot 20 minutes to hear persons who desire to make comments to the Board generally during public comment, and shall allot time to hear persons who desire to make comments to the Board both generally or on specific agenda items. Persons who wish to participate in this portion of the meeting shall sign up with the presiding officer or designee before the meeting begins, and shall indicate the topic about which they wish to speak.

Each person who signs up shall be allowed to address the Board one time for no more than 3 minutes. Delegations of more than five persons are encouraged to appoint one person to present their views before the Board.

Board's Response

Specific factual information or recitation of existing policy may be furnished in response to inquiries, but the Board shall not deliberate or decide regarding any subject that is not included on the agenda posted with notice of the meeting.

Complaints and Concerns

The presiding officer or designee shall determine whether a person addressing the Board has attempted to solve a matter administratively through resolution channels established by policy. If not, the person shall be referred to the appropriate policy (see list below) to seek resolution:

Employee complaints: Board Policy (Employee Complaints and Grievances – General).

Student or parent complaint: Board Policy PG (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances – General).

Complaints alleging discrimination, harassment, and/or retaliation: Board Policy PG- (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation); Board Policy PG- (Freedom from Discrimination, Harassment, and Retaliation); Board Policy PG- (Sexual Harassment).

Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, or educational placement of a student with a disability within the scope of Section 504: Board Policy (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances), subject to the time limitations referenced in Board Policy PG- (Equal Educational Opportunity).

Complaints concerning identification, evaluation, educational placement, or discipline of a student with a disability within the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Board Policy PG (Equal Educational Opportunity) and Board Policy PG (Parent and Student Complaints and Grievances).

Public complaints: Board Policy PG- (Public Complaints).

Disruption

The Board shall not tolerate disruption of the meeting by members of the audience. If, after at least one warning from the presiding officer, any person continues to disrupt the meeting by his or her words or actions, the presiding officer may request assistance from law enforcement officials to have the person removed from the meeting.

The Board encourages constructive feedback and criticism and shall not prohibit public criticism of the Board as a body corporate, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program or service. This does not limit or apply to any form of criticism or disruptive act that may be otherwise prohibited by law.

**IDEA PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD MEETING – AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION SIGN-UP SHEET**

Any person wishing to address the Board about a topic related to IDEA Public Schools business during the period reserved for public comment at a Board meeting or where public comment is permitted for specific agenda items must sign up to be heard, in accordance with Board Policy.

1. If the Board posts an agenda item for Public Comments or Citizens to be Heard, the period reserved for general public comment at a Board meeting will be limited to a total of 20 minutes. Separately, the Board shall allow public comment on specific agenda items where a member of the public desires to speak to an item on the agenda. The Board may permit comments on a specific agenda item either before or during the board's consideration of the item.
2. Each participant will be limited to 3 minutes to make comments to the Board either during general public comment or specific to an item on the agenda.
3. To facilitate an orderly meeting and respecting all participants' time, any group of five or more persons is encouraged to appoint one person to present the group's views to the Board and will be limited to 3 minutes to make comments to the Board.
4. Under the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Board is not permitted to discuss or act upon any issues that are not posted on the agenda for tonight's meeting. This means that Board members are unable to deliberate, ask you questions, provide you with a response, or take any action related to your comments.
5. The Board has adopted complaint policies that are designed to secure, at the lowest possible administrative level, a prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and concerns. Each of these processes provides that, if a resolution cannot be achieved administratively, the person may appeal the administrative decision to the Board as a properly posted agenda item. For further information on those policies, please contact Martin Winchester, Chief Human Assets Officer. If the subject of your comment involves a pending grievance, please continue to seek resolution through the grievance process and address the Board only at the appropriate stage of that process.
6. Under the Texas Open Meetings Act, the Board may exercise its authority to discuss certain subject matters in closed session, including matters involving individual IDEA Public Schools staff members and individual students. If your comment concerns one of these subjects, please address your concern through the complaint policies described above.
7. Please be aware that rules of decorum will be enforced during the public comment period. Personal attacks, name-calling, and rude or slanderous remarks will not be tolerated. Each participant is legally responsible for the content and consequences of his or her own statements. However, the Board welcomes input and constructive criticism, including criticism of any act, omission, policy, procedure, program or service.
8. The Board shall not tolerate disruption of the meeting by members of the audience. If any person disrupts the meeting by his or her words or actions, the presiding officer, or the Superintendent or designee may request assistance from law enforcement officials to have the person removed from the meeting and from the premises where the meeting is being held.
9. Any individuals wishing to use audio and/or video tape recorders, cassette recorders, or other recording devices to record a Board meeting must notify Jessica Hess, Chief of Staff before the start of the meeting. The individual will sign a log indicating the type of recording device to be used and will then be given an opportunity to set up such equipment prior to the start of the meeting. Cameras shall be placed in inconspicuous corners of the meeting room, toward the rear, so as to permit an unobstructed view by the camera. No artificial lighting may be used. Cameras or other recording devices will be placed no closer than five (5) feet from the speaker's table. Under no conditions shall a Board meeting be impeded or delayed as a result of the use of a recording device or camera, including but not limited to requests to change a tape or tape operator, to examine any defective or inoperative equipment, or to have a speaker repeat his or her statement.
10. Members of the news media and their equipment shall remain in a specified area in the Board meeting site.

Please fill in the information requested below if you wish to address the Board during the public comment period:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Topic: _____