

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. Meetings are closed to the public only during executive “closed” sessions, which shall be held only for the purposes specified in the Open Meetings Act. All decisions, however, are taken in public meeting.

The public is invited and urged to attend Board meetings. The Board encourages responsible comments, in writing or orally, by all members of the audience.

Meetings of the Board are conducted for the purpose of carrying on the business of the schools; and although held in public, the public shall not be active participants in the deliberations and action of the Board. The Board or Superintendent and his or her staff will not, as a rule, answer questions from the public during public commentary. The questioner’s name, address and telephone number shall be taken for a later personal reply. Previously stated Board policies or administrative rules and regulations may, however, be explained. A Board member may, with the President’s permission, ask questions of a speaker. No dialogue shall occur. The Board may, however, at its discretion allow discussion on specific agenda items if the majority of the Board determines it appropriate.

The Board recognizes its responsibility to conduct the business of the District in an orderly and efficient manner and will, therefore, require reasonable controls to regulate public presentations to the Board. The Board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.

There are two places on the agenda specially identified for citizens’ items of information and inquiry. At the beginning of each meeting up to thirty (30) minutes will be made available. At this time any individual shall be permitted to speak to any topic listed on the agenda, or to any other topic that is related to the South Lyon School District’s operation. Time limits shall be placed on individual speakers, normally two to five minutes, in order to allow for wide citizen participation while permitting an adequate amount of time for the Board to conduct its business. The President is responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and shall rule on all such matters. However, the limitations may not be used in such a manner as to deprive a person from his/her right to comment to the Board. This thirty (30) minute period may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.

Public participation at the end of the meeting will be limited to fifteen (15) minutes. At this time comments should be short (approximately one (1) minute) to give ample opportunity for all citizens to comment.

The following guidelines for public comment have been developed to assist in the orderly and efficient conduct of Board meetings:

1. Speakers must remain respectful while sharing comments.
2. Speakers must not use inappropriate language or make slanderous remarks.
3. Names of students shall not be used in public comments.
4. While board members may ask administration a question related to a particular public comment, this is not meant to open a dialogue with the public speaker. The speaker shall not engage in discussion with board members or administration.
5. For efficient use of time, speakers are asked not to repeat a comment which has been made previously. All public comments are taken seriously and receive deliberate consideration by the Board. If you are in agreement with a prior speaker, please just indicate that you agree.
6. As outlined above, there are time limits for each of the two public comment opportunities on the Board meeting agenda. At any time, if the business to be conducted combined with the number of speakers wishing to share comments dictates the need to enforce time limits, the board president, or his/her designee, may enforce the limits. These would be applied to all those speaking during public comments according to the guidelines outlined in this policy.

In the event that a speaker breaks any of these rules, the board president, or his/her designee, may ask the speaker to step down from the podium.

Any citizen of the District may write a letter to the Superintendent of Schools or the President of the Board of Education requesting a particular matter or subject be placed on the agenda. The Superintendent or President must have received the letter at least five (5) days before the next scheduled regular Board meeting. The letter must indicate the item, reason for wanting it on the agenda and some information about it. The Superintendent in consultation with the President will determine whether such a requested item is appropriate to be placed on the agenda and, if so, at what meeting. If the President and Superintendent determine that the item is not an appropriate agenda item, the item shall be placed on the agenda if the majority of the Board so determines.

Citizens have the right to criticize or register complaints against Board members or school personnel as long as the complaints or criticisms are related to the way

the person is doing his/her job. However, such criticisms and complaints are not appropriate if they involve an unwarranted invasion of privacy of the individual.

Actions brought up at the public comment section on which the Board might be requested to act shall be referred for study and perhaps considered as an agenda item for a future meeting, unless, of course, it is something that is of extreme emergency.

Tape or video recordings are permitted subject to the following conditions:

- A. No obstructions are created between the Board and the audience.
- B. No interviews are conducted in the meeting room while the Board is in session.
- C. No commentary, adjustment of equipment, or positioning of operators is made that would distract with the Board or members of the audience while the Board is in session.

The person operating the recorder should contact the Superintendent, or his/her designee, prior to the Board meeting to review possible placement of the equipment.

Approved:
LEGAL REFERENCE: MCL 380.1808

*Adopted July 18, 1983
Revised October 6, 2008
Revised June 15, 2013
Revised October 5, 2015*