

MORRISVILLE BOROUGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

SECTION: COMMUNITY

TITLE: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN
BOARD MEETINGS

ADOPTED: November 14, 2007

REVISED:

903. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETINGS	
<p>1. Purpose 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq</p>	<p>The Board recognizes the value to school governance of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in Board meetings. The Board also recognizes its responsibility for proper governance of the district and the need to conduct its business in an orderly and efficient manner.</p>
<p>2. Authority 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710</p>	<p>The Board shall establish guidelines to govern public participation in Board meetings necessary to conduct its meeting and to maintain order.</p>
<p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p>	<p>In order to permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the Board shall provide an opportunity at each open meeting of the Board for residents and taxpayers to comment on matters of concern, official action or deliberation before the Board prior to official action by the Board.</p>
<p>65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 710.1</p>	<p>There will be one public comment session at the beginning of each business meeting. If there is new business that is not on the agenda and will be voted on, the Board will hold another public comment session prior to the vote. The public comments at these supplementary sessions will be limited to the new business that will be voted on.</p>
<p>3. Delegation of Responsibility Pol. 006</p>	<p>The presiding officer at each public Board meeting shall follow Board policy for the conduct of public meetings. Where his/her ruling is disputed, it may be overruled by a majority of those Board members present and voting.</p>
<p>4. Guidelines</p>	<p>Whenever issues identified by the participant are subject to remediation under policies and procedures of the Board, they shall be dealt with in accordance with those policies and procedures and the organizational structure of the district.</p> <p>In order to give priority to individuals who come to public meetings prepared to address the Board, a sign-up form will be available before each business meeting. All persons wishing to participate in a public Board meeting shall register their</p>

intent with the Board Secretary in advance of the meeting and include the name and address of the participant, group affiliation if appropriate, and topic to be addressed. The Board Secretary shall collect the sign-up form immediately prior to the business meeting and give it to the Board President or chairperson.

Participants must be recognized by the presiding officer and must preface their comments by an announcement of their name, address, and group affiliation if applicable.

Each visitor will be allowed a maximum of three (3) minutes to present his or her statement before the Board. Each visitor is responsible for the use of his or her allotted time.

No participant may speak more than once on the same topic, unless all others who wish to speak on that topic have been heard, and only with permission from the presiding officer.

All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer; no participant may address or question Board members individually.

Certain topics are not appropriate for, and, therefore cannot be open to, sessions of the Board. These include, but are not limited to: student discipline, personnel issues, contractual problems and other topics that could result in litigation. Furthermore comments that include obscenities, personal attacks, abusive language, and business not germane to the business of the School District of the Borough of Morrisville will not be tolerated.

The presiding officer may:

1. Interrupt or terminate a participant's statement when the statement is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant.
2. Request any individual to leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum.
3. Request the assistance of law enforcement officers to remove a disorderly person when his/her conduct interferes with the orderly progress of the meeting.
4. Call a recess or adjourn to another time when the lack of public decorum interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action.

The public session will last no longer than forty-five (45) minutes. Priority to address the Board will be afforded based on the order in which visitors indicated their intent on the sign-up form. Exceptions to these time limits can be made by the President or chairperson based on special circumstances, following consultation with the Board.

References:

Sunshine Act – 65 Pa. C.S.A. Sec. 701 et seq.

Board Policy – 006