

Fern Ridge School District 28J

Code: BDDH
Adopted:

Public Comment at Board Meetings

{HB 2560 (2021) goes into effect on January 1, 2022, and requires that districts provide the same opportunity for public comment to those attending virtually as is provided to those attending in person. We recommend that districts review current public comment practices and adopt policy language that meets the law and the desired district practice.}

All Board meetings, with the exception of executive sessions, will be open to the public. The Board invites the district's community members to attend Board meetings to become acquainted with the programs and operations of the district. The public has a right to attend public meetings held in open session, and may be invited to share comments, ideas and opinions with the Board during designated times on the agenda. The Board may conduct a meeting without public comment.

Individuals with hearing, vision or speech impairments will be given an equal opportunity to participate in Board meetings and submit written comments to the Board. Individuals requesting assistance, aids or accommodations are encouraged to notify the district at least 48 hours prior to the Board meeting with the request, consistent with Board policy BD/BDA – Board Meetings.

Procedures for Oral Public Comment

The Board establishes the following procedures for public comment at Board meetings held in open session. The information will be accessible and available to all patrons accessing or attending such a Board meeting.

1. Public comment is limited to its designated place on the agenda and while time allows, not to exceed a total of 30 minutes for all commenters.
2. A person wishing to provide public comment, if an opportunity is provided by the Board during a meeting open to the public, will complete and submit the Intent to Speak form to the Board secretary prior to the Board meeting as described in BDDH-AR.¹ A request to give public comment in-person or electronically does not guarantee time will be available.
3. A person speaking during the public comment portion of the meeting may comment on topics on the agenda, as well as topics not on the published agenda.
4. A person speaking during the public comment portion of the meeting should state their name, whether they are a resident of the district, and, if speaking for an organization, the name of the organization. In the interest of time, and to allow more voices to be heard, a spokesperson should be designated to represent a group with a common purpose.
5. A person giving public comment is limited to an established time limit of three minutes. Statements should be brief and concise. The Board chair has discretion to waive time limits or extend the overall

¹ When in-person attendees are allowed to provide oral comment, virtual attendees will be afforded the same opportunity.

time allotted for public comment. Additional time will be allocated in a fair and equitable manner. If a person has more comments than time allows or is unable to comment due to time constraints, the person is encouraged to submit additional written comments to the Board through the district office as directed.

6. Inquiries from the public during the designated portion of the agenda will not generally be responded to immediately by the Board chair and may be referred to the superintendent for reply at a later date. The Board will not respond to inquiries that are expected to be addressed during another designated portion of the agenda.

The Board will not hear public comment at Board work sessions.

While topics raised during the public comment portion will be heard, they usually will not be responded to. They may be considered for inclusion as agenda items at future Board meetings.

Procedures for Written Comment

Members of the public may submit written comments or materials to the Board at any time at the district office, by mail or by email to msmith@fernridge.k12.or.us. Materials or comments submitted at least 72 hours in advance of a Board meeting will be provided to the Board before the Board meeting, but will not be read at the Board meeting. Written materials or comments submitted may not warrant action by the Board.

Comments Regarding Staff Members

A person speaking during the designated portion of the agenda for public comment may offer objective criticism of district operations and programs. The Board will not hear comments regarding any individual district staff member. The Board chair will direct the visitor to the procedures in Board policy KL - Public Complaints for consideration of a legitimate complaint involving a staff member. Any association contract governing the employee's rights will be followed. A commendation involving a staff member should be sent to the superintendent, who will forward it to the employee, a supervisor and the Board.

END OF POLICY

Legal Reference(s):

ORS 165.535
ORS 165.540

ORS 192.610 - 192.690
ORS 332.057

ORS 332.107

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12213 (2018); 29 C.F.R. Part 1630 (2020); 28 C.F.R. Part 35 (2020).

Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act of 2008, 42 U.S.C. §§ 12101-12133 (2018).

Baca v. Moreno Valley Unified Sch. Dist., 936 F. Supp. 719 (C.D. Cal. 1996).

Leventhal v. Vista Unified Sch. Dist., 973 F. Supp. 951 (S.D. Cal. 1997).

Oregon House Bill 2560 (2021).