

Administrative Guideline

School City of Hammond Public Participation and Comment

SCH recognizes the value and importance of public input from its community members. For that reason, and in compliance with federal regulation and state statute, SCH establishes a Public Comment Policy and its corresponding Procedures to inform the Board about substantial Issues impacting the school district or our student population. The Board permits fair and orderly public participation at its public meetings.

Public Comment is not designed or intended to address personal grievances or provide a remedy to individuals in dispute with the School City of Hammond. All comments made during any public participation meeting is subject to the following rules/procedures for which public participation is permitted. The SCH Chair or Presiding Officer shall administer this policy/procedure as follows.

- A. Any member of the public having a legitimate interest in the actions of the Board may participate during the public portion of any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting and must register on the public comment sign-up sheet available before the start of the hearing/forum/meeting. Individuals must provide their name and physical address to be able to participate.
- B. Participants must be recognized by the Chair or Presiding Officer before providing comments and must preface their comments by the announcement of their name and address.
- C. Comments made by the public participant at any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting shall be limited to three (3) minutes in duration and cannot be relinquished to another participant.
- D. All comments shall be directed to the Board as a whole; no individual shall address or question the Board or staff members individually.
- E. Public Comment is not intended, nor is the Board or its staff required, to provide any answer or response to any participant.
- F. Disruptive discussions between public comment participants and members of the audience at any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting will **not** be allowed.
- G. Participants providing public comment will be courteous and respectful in their language, presentation and behavior exhibiting high level of professionalism and integrity. Use of language intended to humiliate, disgrace, demean or mock SCH or its members or staff and will **not** be tolerated.
- H. Following the completion of an individual's public comments any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting he/she will be seated with no further debate, dialogue, or comment.
- I. At any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting, the SCH Chair or Presiding Officer may:
 - Interrupt, warn or terminate a person's comments, request an individual to leave, request the assistance of security or law enforcement officers, call for a recess or an adjournment when:
 - i. His/her statement exceeds (3) three-minute public comment duration of time, is personally directed at an individual.
 - ii. Is abusive, obscene, or irrelevant or
 - iii. disregards any part of this policy/procedure.

- J. Video recordings are permitted, however, the individual owning and/or operating the recorder must comply with the following condition:
 - a. No obstructions are created between the Board and the audience.
 - b. No interviews are conducted during the Board meeting.
 - c. No commentary is made that would distract with the Board or members of the audience.
 - d. Recording shall in no way be used or edited to change the context of the recording or alter its nature.
- K. Violation of any part of this policy and its rules/procedures at any SCH public hearing/forum/meeting may result in the enforcement of the following by the SCH Chair or Presiding Officer:
 - a. 1st violation – Verbal warning
 - b. 2nd violation - Written Warning
 - c. 3rd violation - One (1) month suspension of SCH public comment privilege
 - d. 4th violation – Six (6) month suspension of SCH public comment privilege
 - e. 5th violation – Once (1) year suspension of SCH public comment privilege
 - f. 6th violation – Five (5) year suspension of SCH public comment privilege
 - g. 7th violation – Lifetime ban of SCH public comment privilege.

All violations will be documented in writing for SCH records/files and a written copy of the warning will be provided to the individual following receipt of said warning. Any of the above document's violations, shall be accrued and remain valid for a period of four (4) years from the date of the most recent violation.