

## Watertown School District 14-4

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN BOARD MEETING**

All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public. All actions of the Board shall be taken openly and the deliberations leading to Board action shall likewise be conducted openly. The public is invited to attend Board meetings and will be given limited time to voice opinions or concerns.

This policy applies only to regularly scheduled school board meetings held in open session. Matters addressed in executive session pursuant to SDCL 1-25-2 are not open to the public. Complaints against school employees or students, and complaints related to sexual harassment or bullying, must be addressed according to specific School District policies before being addressed by the Board.

When a complaint against a school employee or a student is brought to the Board during the public forum, the Board President will direct the person bringing the complaint to the applicable complaint procedure to protect the rights of the person(s) bringing the complaint and the rights of the person against whom the complaint is made.

Persons making references about a specific school employee or employees, or a specific student or students during the public forum should be mindful that based upon what the person says during the public forum, the employee(s) or student(s) about whom the comments are made may have legal recourse against the person voicing the complaint.

Persons speaking during the public forum at a school board meeting shall not cause public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm to the school board or any person, and shall not engage in threatening behavior, make unreasonable noise, be disruptive, boisterous, argumentative, or threatening, shall not make comments which are disrespectful to one or more persons, and shall not use profanity.

The time designated for public forum will be noted on the agenda as Public Input on Agenda/Non-Agenda Items.

In order to assure that the Board may conduct its meetings in a respectful and efficient manner, the procedure for public participation at regularly scheduled monthly school board meetings is as follows:

1. Agenda and Non-Agenda Items:

- a. The individual desiring to speak must come up to the table designated for speaking at the time indicated on the agenda as Public Input on Agenda/Non-Agenda Items.
- b. The Board President will ask the individual to state their name for the purpose of board minutes.
- c. A speaker shall be granted up to 5 minutes to present comments to the Board.
- d. Should a number of persons wish to address the Board on the same agenda item, or should the comments become repetitious, the Board President, in the President's sole discretion, may shorten the time for comments to two minutes per person in order that persons wishing to address the Board may be heard and still allow the school board sufficient time to conduct its agenda business.

2. Authority of Board President:

The Board President may terminate the right of a person to speak at a school board meeting should the person cause public inconvenience, annoyance, or alarm to the school board or any person, engage in threatening behavior, make unreasonable noise, disturb or be disruptive of an official school board meeting, or when comments are disrespectful to one or more persons, boisterous, argumentative, threatening, or contain profanity.

If deemed necessary by the Board President, the President may contact local law enforcement to have a person removed from the school board meeting as it is a violation of law for a person to intentionally cause or create a risk of serious public inconvenience, annoyance, alarm or disturbance at a school board meeting.

Policy

Adopted: 12/96

Revised: 10/13/08; 10/23