

School Board--Methods of Operation**CITIZEN APPEARANCES--BOARD MEETINGS**

Any citizen may address the Board directly concerning any subject that lies within the jurisdiction of the Board in accordance with the procedures stated below.

Individuals who wish to be heard by the Board on a topic which is not on the agenda for the meeting shall be scheduled for an appearance only at the public hearing during the regularly scheduled Board meeting each month. However, citizens who wish to speak to a topic which is on the agenda may be scheduled to appear at any meeting for which such topic is listed as an item.

Citizens scheduled to speak shall be called by the Board Chair at the appropriate time during the meeting. Each individual shall state for the record his or her name, address, (the address may be given orally or in writing, at the speaker's option), organization or persons represented (if any), and whether he or she is being compensated for the appearance. Substitutions for scheduled speakers will not be allowed, except in unusual circumstances determined and approved by majority vote of Board members present at the meeting.

I. Appearances in Reference to Topics on the Consent Agenda or not on the Board Agenda

Except as noted in Section III., IV., and V. below, citizens will be heard on matters on the consent agenda or not on the Board agenda at the regularly scheduled meeting of the Board each month at the public hearing which shall begin no later than approximately 6:30 p.m. The Chair may begin calling speakers who are present immediately following the conclusion of the regular agenda. The public hearing shall not conclude before 4:30 p.m. unless all of the speakers signed up to speak are present and have been given the opportunity to speak.

A. Procedures to be Scheduled under "Scheduled Public Hearings"

1. To be scheduled for appearance under "Scheduled Public Hearings," any citizen who wishes to be heard must present a written request to the Superintendent of Schools or designee not later than 4:30 p.m. of the Monday preceding a regular Wednesday Board meeting. Forms to be used in submitting these requests are available at all Region Offices and the Office of Citizen Information at the School Board Administration Building. The request shall contain the following information:

a. Name, address and telephone number of person who is to appear;

- b. Organization or persons represented (if any), and whether the person to appear is being compensated;
  - c. Topic to be presented;
  - d. Board action requested, if any.
2. The Superintendent of Schools or his/her representative shall acknowledge such request by notifying the individual of the date of meeting and place on the agenda.
  3. The Superintendent of Schools shall provide for the information of each Board member a list of the persons scheduled to speak and, when necessary for full understanding of a given subject, a report from the administration regarding the subject to be presented.
  4. Any one speaker or spokesperson for a group shall be permitted to speak no more than three (3) minutes at the Scheduled Public Hearings no matter how many issues that individual addresses, nor more than a total of ten (10) minutes during the Board meeting, (including time on agenda items and, later, on consent or non-agenda items), except in unusual circumstances determined and approved by unanimous vote of Board members present at the meeting. The total time allotted for the public hearing shall not exceed one and one-half hours. The time limit on the public hearing portion of the regular Board meeting may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.

Any person who feels that the subject matter has not been adequately covered in the time allotted may present additional information in writing.

The following requirements apply to all public speakers:

- a. Citizen's remarks should be directed to the Board as a whole and not to individual Board members.
- b. Those individuals who sign up to speak must limit their remarks to matters that are related to the business of the District. Speakers commenting on agenda items shall confine their comments solely to the agenda item being discussed.
- c. The Chair of the School Board may exercise discretion to notify any speakers that they have gone beyond the subject matter for which they had signed up to address or that they are addressing matters that are not related to the business of the School District or which constitute personal attacks on

individuals. The Chair shall have the authority to prohibit speakers from making personal attacks or from addressing the Board on matters not related to the District, after warning that they must adhere to topics that relate to the business of the Board. The Chair has the discretion to turn off the microphone or to recess the meeting if a speaker persists in addressing irrelevant topics or engaging in personal attacks.

B. Procedures when not Scheduled under "Scheduled Public Hearings"

1. A person in this category seeking consent to speak must submit, either before or during the meeting, a written request to the Board Chair.
2. The request must state the person's name, address, subject and reason for asking emergency handling of the request, reason demonstrating good cause why the 4:30 p.m. Monday deadline was not met, and Board action requested.
3. Board members present at the meeting must vote by a majority for the person to be heard.
4. If such request is approved, the Board Chair shall allot the individual a maximum of three (3) minutes time.

II. Appearances in Reference to Items on Board Agenda

A. Procedures to be Scheduled under "Requests to Speak to Agenda Items"

1. Except as noted in Sections III., IV., and V. below, any person who wishes to address the Board in reference to an item or items on the agenda (other than consent items) may be scheduled under "Requests to Speak to Agenda Items" by presenting a written request in accordance with the procedure outlined in Section I. above. In the case of a special Board meeting, the deadline shall be noon on the last business day preceding the date of the meeting.
2. The total time allotted for all individuals who request to be heard on the same agenda item shall be determined by majority vote of the Board members present at the meeting. Any one speaker or spokesperson for a group shall be permitted to speak no more than two (2) minutes on any one agenda item, nor more than a total of ten (10) minutes during the Board meeting,

including speaking time during a public hearing, regardless of the number of agenda items to be addressed, except in unusual circumstances determined and approved by unanimous vote of Board members present at the meeting. Additional comments may be presented in writing.

B. Procedures when not Scheduled under "Requests to Speak to Agenda Items"

Persons not scheduled in advance to speak to agenda items may request approval of the Board to be heard, as follows:

1. Before or during the meeting, the person must write his/her name, address and number of agenda item in which interested on a slip of paper and hand to the Board Chair before the item is considered by the Board.
2. Receive approval to be heard by a majority vote of Board members present at the meeting and voting.
3. The Chair may designate a particular time prior to Board action on the agenda item for such persons to be heard.
4. If Board approval is granted for the person to be heard, the Chair shall allow a maximum of two (2) minutes. Additional comments may be presented in writing.

III. Public Hearings on Specific Topics

The Board from time to time schedules a meeting which is designed solely as a public hearing on a specific document or proposal which is to be the subject of later Board action, either to comply with State Statutes or to hear citizens on an issue of great public interest. Persons desiring to address the Board at such public hearings shall follow and be governed by the procedures set forth in Section II. above, as for a special Board meeting.

IV. Conference Sessions/Workshops of the Board

Meetings of the Board which are designated as conference sessions or workshops are normally held for the purpose of enabling the Board to receive information and confer with the Superintendent of Schools and his/her staff on issues requiring in-depth consideration and discussion. Citizens may be heard at any conference session or workshop for a specified amount of time that the Board determines in advance of the session or at the beginning of the session.

V. Suspension, Dismissal or other Discipline of Personnel and/or Expulsion or Assignment of Students

Board actions at every stage of proceedings for the suspension, dismissal or other discipline of staff members, and for the expulsion or assignment of specific students, are quasi-judicial in nature, and the Board's decisions in these cases should be free of improper and extraneous comment. Citizens will not be heard in such cases, except in unusual circumstances determined and approved by majority vote of Board members present at the meeting. All aspects of student expulsion proceedings shall be closed to the public pursuant to 1006.07(1)(a) F.S., unless the parents elect to have the hearing held in compliance with the Sunshine Law.

VI. Students Who Request a Hearing before the Board

Any student in the Miami-Dade County Public Schools who wishes a hearing before the Board must comply with the following guidelines:

- A. Follow all procedures as indicated above.
- B. If the time of the student's hearing before the Board is scheduled during his/her school hours, the student must secure the permission of the principal to be absent from classes.

Specific Authority: 1001.41(1)(2); 1001.42(26); 1001.43(10) F.S.  
Law Implemented, Interpreted, or Made Specific: 1001.43(10) F.S.

**History: THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

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