

GENDER NEUTRAL SINGLE-OCCUPANCY BATHROOMS

All single-occupancy bathroom facilities in the district are designated as gender neutral. Signs designating gender neutral single-occupancy bathrooms must be posted on the wall next to the door of that bathroom facility.

A “single-occupancy bathroom” is as defined in Public Buildings Law §145(d) as “a bathroom intended for use by no more than one occupant at a time or for family or assisted use and which has a door for entry into and egress from the bathroom that may be locked by the occupant to ensure privacy.”

The Superintendent of Schools or designee is directed to post appropriate signage to implement this policy consistent with applicable laws. Handbooks, directional signs, memos, safety plans, and maps will also be updated as necessary.

Ref: Education Law §409-m (single-occupancy bathrooms designated gender neutral)
Public Buildings Law §145(d)

Adoption date:
March 18, 2021

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS

The Board of Education encourages public comment on school-related matters at Board meetings, as outlined in this policy. To allow members of the public to address the Board, a period not to exceed 30 minutes will be set aside during the first part of each Board meeting for public comment, with priority given to comments on items on the meeting's agenda. A second 30-minute time period will be set aside at the end of each Board meeting for public comment on matters pertaining to the district but not on the agenda. These periods may be extended by a majority vote of the Board.

Persons wishing to address the Board will advise the Board Clerk within a reasonable time prior to the start of the public comment period of the meeting. The request will be made in writing on a form provided by the district. To maintain a first-come, first-served process, the district will request anyone wishing to speak sign-in on the attendance form, providing their name and checking whether they wish to speak or not. Those wishing to speak will be called in the order of sign-in on the form. For purposes of following up with speakers later, the district may request, the speaker's preferred contact information such as home address, telephone number, or email address. To limit comments to matters which may be properly discussed in public sessions, the board will request a brief description of the topic to be addressed. Any group or organization wishing to address the Board must identify a single spokesperson. The Board President may limit the number of repetitive comments to keep within the time limit for the public comment period.

Presentation should be as brief as possible. No speaker will be permitted to speak for longer than 3 minutes. Speakers may not give unused time to other speakers. Speakers may comment on any matter related to district business.

The Board will not permit in public session discussion involving individual district personnel or students. Persons wishing to discuss matters involving individual district personnel or students should present their comments and/or concerns to the Superintendent during regular business hours.

All speakers and observers are to conduct themselves in a civil manner. Obscene language, defamatory statements, threats of violence, statements advocating racial, religious, or other forms of prejudice will not be tolerated.

Persons making presentations at a Board meeting will address remarks to the President and may direct questions or comments to Board members or other district officials only upon the approval of the President. Board members and the Superintendent have the privilege of asking questions of any person who addresses the Board but commenters should not expect to engage in discussion with the Board. However, the Board may correct comments that are not accurate and may refer to an existing policy when it answers a question.

Questions and comments from the public concerning matters which are not on the agenda will be taken under consideration and referred to the Superintendent for appropriate action. Persons wishing to have matters included on the agenda will contact the Superintendent in accordance with Policy 2342, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination.

The President will be responsible for the orderly conduct of the meeting and will rule on such matters as the time to be allowed for public discussion and the appropriateness of the subject being presented, as outlined in this policy and applicable provisions of law and regulation, and subject to the Board's parliamentary procedure. If there is disagreement about whether a speaker's topic falls within the topics permitted for public comment, the whole board will vote on the issue.

The President will remind speakers whose presentations are inconsistent with this policy of the rules for public comment. For speakers that continue to violate this policy, the President may discontinue the presentation or call for a brief recess of the meeting. The President may order the removal of speakers from the speakers' area, or from the meeting in general, or may close the public comment period.

For members of the public who are unwilling or unable to speak during public comment periods, including when these periods are closed, they may submit comments to the Board in writing, to the following address: Board Clerk, Gardner-Dickson School, 25 East Avenue, Troy, NY 12180. You can email the Board at BoardofEducation@wynantskillufsd.org. Complaints from the public are addressed in Board policy 1400.

All individuals at Board meetings are expected to abide by the rules for Public Conduct on School Property as set forth in the district's Code of Conduct. At board meetings, speakers and observers may not engage in behavior that disrupts the meeting, such as shouting, interrupting others, blocking the free movement of others, or obstructing the views of others. In the event of such disruption, the President will remind those in attendance of the rules under this policy. Any Board member may request a brief recess of the meeting. The President may order the removal of those who are a threat to the safety of others or who disrupt the orderly conduct of the meeting. If appropriate, law enforcement may be called to remove disruptive individuals.

Cross-ref: 1400, Complaints from the Public
2342, Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
5300, Code of Conduct

Ref: *Appeal of Kushner*, 49 EDR 263 (2010) (boards not required to allow the public to speak)
Matter of Martin, 32 EDR 381 (1992) (boards need not permit nonresidents to speak)
Appeal of Wittneben, 31 EDR 375 (1992) (boards encouraged to permit citizens to speak)

Matter of Kramer, 72 St. Dept. Rep. 114 (1951) (boards may put time limits on public speaking)

NYS Department of State, Committee on Open Government, Advisory Opinions
OML-AO-#2696 (1/8/1997), OML-AO-#2717 (2/27/1997), OML-AO-#3295
(4/16/2001), OML-AO-#3518 (8/30/2002), OML-AO-#4024 (8/23/2005),
OML-AO-#4044 (9/30/2005), OML-AO-#4141 (2/24/2006), OML-AO-#4292
(12/6/2006), OML-AO-#4573 (3/3/2008), OML-AO-#5296 (6/12/2012),
OML-AO-#5607 (2/22/2019)

Original Adoption Date: October 16, 1997

1st Revision Date: June 16, 2016

2nd Revision Date: TBD

PUBLIC COMMENT AT BOARD MEETINGS EXHIBIT*Pre-Public Comment Period Script
Suggested Language for Board Presidents*

Ladies and gentlemen, we are about to convene into the public comment period of our meeting. Although state law does not require us to hold a public comment period, we have chosen to do so because we believe it is crucial for us to hear from our community members about their concerns and issues.

Having said that, please note that the Board is here to listen. The public comment period is not designed to be a discussion. Accordingly, please do not expect the Board to respond to your concerns and questions tonight. This is because we take your concerns and questions seriously and want to have sufficient time to process and research issues, if need be. We will, however, respond to your questions and concerns at a future meeting, or have the proper staff member get back to you at the appropriate time.

I also want to point out that under state and federal privacy laws we are unable to entertain any comments or questions about school personnel. Please know, however, that we take personnel concerns very seriously. On these matters, we would ask you to go through the appropriate administrative channels.

Finally, we recognize that right now our nation and our community are polarized on a number of issues. That said, we want our school board meetings to serve as an example to our students that members of our school board and members of our community can deal with controversial issues in a civil manner and demonstrate mutual respect for one another. In that spirit, we will insist that all speakers and members of the audience maintain civility and respect for any divergent views that others possess. We ask that speakers please address their comments to the Board directly, rather than the audience. Speakers may address any district-related topic of concern. In the unlikely event the meeting becomes unruly, the Board will recess the meeting and return once order has been restored. Finally, I want to remind everyone that you may submit written comments to the Board in lieu of speaking during the public comment period, if you so choose.

The Board will now entertain public comments for 30 minutes. Each individual speaker is allotted 3 minutes. The individual time limits will be enforced so that as many members of the public who wish to speak may be allowed to do so.

Adoption date:

AGENDA PREPARATION AND DISSEMINATION

The Superintendent will prepare the agenda for each Board meeting according to the order of business, to facilitate orderly and efficient meetings, and to allow Board members sufficient preparation time.

Items of business may be suggested by any Board member, district employee, parent, student, or other member of the public, and must relate directly to district business. The inclusion of items suggested by district employees, parents, students, or other members of the public is at the discretion of the Superintendent, subject to the approval of the Board President.

Persons suggesting items of business must submit the item to the Superintendent at least two days prior to a regular meeting and two days prior to a special meeting. Items will not be added to the agenda later than these time periods unless the item is of an emergency nature and authorized by the Superintendent in consultation with the Board President.

The agenda will specify whether the item is an action item, a consent item, a discussion item or an information item.

Availability of Agenda and Supporting Materials

The agenda and any supporting materials will be distributed to board members seven days in advance of the board meeting to permit careful consideration of items of business. The agenda, and supporting material to be discussed at the board meeting that is permissible to be released to the public, will be posted on the district's website, and made available upon request to the District Clerk, to the extent practicable, twenty-four hours before the meeting. In addition, the agenda will be released to the news media including local newspapers, radio stations and television stations in advance of the meeting.

The District Clerk is responsible for ensuring that the agenda is available to the public and the media.

Cross-ref: 2350, Board Meeting Procedures

Ref: Public Officers Law §103(e)

Adoption date: August 1998

1st Revision Date: November 17, 2016

2nd Revision Date:TBD