

Policy 207 PUBLIC HEARINGS

I. PURPOSE

The Northfield School District Board of Education is committed to people, communications, and partnerships, and recognizes the importance of obtaining public input on matters properly before the board during a public hearing. The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to efficiently receive public input.

II. GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

To effectively gather public feedback on relevant issues, the board has established the following policy.

III. PROCEDURES

A. *Public Hearings*

Public hearings are required by law concerning certain issues, including but not limited to, school closings, education district establishment, and agreements for secondary education. Additionally, other public hearings may be held by the board on district matters at the board's discretion.

B. *Notice of Public Hearings*

Public notice for a public hearing, as mandated by law, must be given as outlined in the enabling legislation. For other hearings held in conjunction with a regular meeting, the notice should follow the requirements for a regular meeting. Similarly, for hearings held with a special meeting, the notice should adhere to the requirements for a special meeting, or as otherwise decided by the board.

C. *Public Participation*

The board maintains the right to require that those in attendance at a public hearing indicate their desire to address the board and complete and file with the clerk of the board an appropriate request prior to the commencement of the hearing if the board uses this procedure. Those who wish to address the board must be: residents of the district, owners of businesses or property physically located in the district, parents/guardians, students, or an employee of the district. Any request to address the board after the commencement of the hearing will be granted only at the board's discretion.

1. ***Format of Request.*** The board chair will outline the procedure and process for addressing the board at the beginning of the public hearing. Each speaker will be required to share their first and last name, validate that they are a district stakeholder as outlined in Section IIIC, and, when applicable, the group they represent. The board may require a brief statement of the subject to be covered or the issue to be addressed prior to allowing the speaker to address the board.

2. ***Time Limitation.*** The board retains the discretion to limit the time for each presentation.
3. ***Groups.*** The board retains the discretion to require that any group of persons who desire to address the school board designate one representative or spokesperson. If the board requires designation of a representative or spokesperson, no other person in the group will be recognized to address the board, except as the board otherwise determines.
4. ***Privilege to Speak.*** A board member should direct remarks or questions through the chair. Only those speakers recognized by the chair will be allowed to speak. Comments by others are out of order. Individuals who interfere with or interrupt speakers, the board, or the proceedings may be directed to leave.
5. ***Personal Attacks.*** Personal attacks by anyone addressing the board are unacceptable. Persistence in such remarks by an individual shall terminate that person's privilege to address the board.
6. ***Limitations on Participation.*** Depending upon the number of persons in attendance seeking to be heard, the board reserves the right to establish other limitations and restrictions as necessary to provide an orderly, efficient, and fair opportunity to be heard.

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Adopted: 12.11.2023; Statutory Update: 10.28.2024

Board of Education

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 659

Northfield, Minnesota

Legal References: Minn. Stat. § 123A.15 (Establishing Education Districts)
Minn. Stat. § 123A.30 (Agreements for Secondary Education)
Minn. Stat. § 123B.51 (Schoolhouses and Sites; Uses for School and Nonschool Purposes; Closings)

Cross References: MSBA/MASA Model Policy 206 (Public Participation in School Board Meetings/Complaints about Persons at School Board Meetings and Data Privacy Considerations)