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MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Directors
DATE: August 3, 2021
FROM: Deborah Rumbaugh
RE: Policy 1430 Audience Participation
TYPE: School Board Discussion

It is recommended that the district update policy 1430 Audience Participation to include additional detailed language specific to audience participation at board meetings.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board approve updated Policy 1430 Audience Participation for a Second Reading.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in its meetings. To permit fair and orderly expression of public comment, the board will provide a period of time at the meeting during which visitors may address the board on any topic. The public may also provide input to the board or district administrators outside of meetings by means of written correspondence. ~~near the end of the meeting after the consent agenda during which visitors may present to the board. If possible, such presentations should be scheduled in advance.~~

~~The board will also allow individuals to express an opinion prior to board action on agenda items that the board determines require or will benefit from public comment. Written and oral comments will be accepted by the board before the adoption or amendment of policies. Individuals wishing to be heard by the board will first be recognized by the president.~~

~~Individuals, after identifying themselves, will proceed to make comments within the time limits established by the board. Any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the board shall also be entitled to express an opinion. The president may interrupt or terminate an individual's statement when it is too lengthy. The board as a whole shall have the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.~~

The Board will provide one (1) period of up to ~~fifteen (15) thirty (30)~~ minutes during its regular meetings during which the public may comment. If an entire ~~fifteen (15) thirty (30)~~ minutes has been used, the board president may provide additional time for public comment. The board is not obligated to provide ~~to provide~~ additional public comment time to accommodate everyone in attendance who wishes to speak. Any structure the board imposes will be content neutral. The president of the board may limit the total amount of time dedicated to public comment at any meeting.

If the number of speakers exceeds the thirty (30) minute limit the board president (or acting president) may choose to:

- Provide additional time, per policy
- Ask for speaker comment on topics or perspectives not already addressed in the preceding 30 minutes
- Conclude the public comment session and place those who did not speak as first speakers at the next board meeting

Individuals wishing to be heard by the board shall complete, sign and submit a **Comments from Citizens** form and email to scsdinfo@stanwood.wednet.edu or mail to the Administration & Resource Center, 26920 Pioneer Hwy, Stanwood WA 98292, prior to the meeting; or, you may bring the form with you and provide to the recording secretary before the meeting starts. The form is also available in the boardroom for completion and submission to the recording secretary prior to the meeting.

The board president may recognize individuals on a first come, first served basis determined by the order of Comments from Citizens forms submitted to the board, and the president may determine another priority method that better meets the board's needs. The president will make an effort to order comments so that a variety of topics are heard, if there are a variety of topics included in the Comments from Citizens forms, especially if there are more forms than time permits in that meeting's published agenda. After being recognized by the board president, individuals will proceed to make comments, limiting themselves to three (3) minutes.

The board requires that those addressing the board be residents or employees of the district or the representative of such residents or employees, parents or guardians of students enrolled in district schools, or employees of businesses located within the district. Persons not meeting these requirements may request an exception to these requirements from the board president by prior application to the superintendent at least twenty-four (24) hours prior to the start of the

meeting. Any representative of a firm eligible to bid on materials or services solicited by the district shall also be entitled to comment.

The board president, or acting president, may terminate an individual's statement when time has passed and may interrupt a speaker to require the same standard of civility that the board imposes on itself (Policy 5161, Civility in the Workplace). Examples of uncivil comments include comments that:

- Are libelous or slanderous;
- Are an unwarranted invasion of privacy;
- Are obscene or indecent pursuant to the Federal Communications Act or any rule or regulation of the Federal Communications Commission;
- Violate school district policy or procedure related to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or discrimination;
- Incite an unlawful act on school premises or violate a lawful school regulation; or
- Create a material and substantial disruption of the orderly operation of the board meeting.

The board as a whole shall have the final decision on the appropriateness of such rulings and can maintain order by removing those who are disruptive or uncivil. The board's decision making authority applies to members of the audience as well as speakers. However, the board recognizes the distinction between uncivil discourse, which it will not tolerate, and comments about the board, district, and/or staff that are negative yet still civil in nature and will exercise its authority to maintain order in a content neutral manner.

In addition to the public comment time, the board will identify the agenda items that require or would benefit from opportunity for public comment and provide those opportunities as part of the meeting agenda before taking final action. Individuals or groups who wish to present to the board on an agenda item are encouraged to request and schedule such presentation in advance. Opportunity for public comment – both oral and written – is required before the board adopts or amends a policy that is not expressly or by implication authorized under state or federal law, but which will promote the education of K-12 students, or will promote the effective, efficient, or safe management and operation of the district.

Individuals with disabilities who may need a modification to participate in a meeting should contact the superintendent's office no later than three days before a regular meeting and as soon as possible in advance of a special meeting so that arrangements for the modification can be made.

Cross References:

Policy 1400 Meeting Conduct, Order of Business and Quorum

Legal References:

RCW 42.30.030 Meetings declared open and public
RCW 42.30.050 Interruptions –Procedures
42 U.S.C. 12101-12213 Americans with Disabilities Act

Adoption Date: 05.08.01
Stanwood-Camano School District
Revised: 05.13.16; 06.07.16; 12.18.18;