



**Austin Independent School District
District Advisory Bodies
Communications and Visitor Guidelines**

Communications

At the beginning of each regular meeting of a district advisory body, time will be provided for public comments. In order to ensure sufficient time for the advisory body to complete its business, the total time provided for public comments may be limited, and the time provided to individual speakers may also be limited. (Although this may vary from group to group, the total time is usually 10-15 minutes, and speakers are usually allowed 2-3 minutes each.) Speakers may be asked to sit in a designated area until called upon by the presiding officer to speak.

Persons wishing to provide public comments will be asked to fill out a speaker card. Persons wishing to speak must acknowledge on the speaker card that they have read these guidelines. Persons will be called upon to speak in the order speaker cards were received.

If persons who have signed up to speak do not have an opportunity to do so because time runs out, they may provide written comments on the card provided. In addition, any person may provide written comments without signing up to speak.

- The presiding officer will announce, *“This is the time the [name of advisory body] has dedicated to receive public comments. Do we have anyone who has signed up to speak?”*
- If not, the presiding officer will proceed to the next item on the agenda. If someone has signed up to speak, the presiding officer will make the following statements:
 1. *“Speakers will be provided [number, normally two to three] minutes to address the [name of advisory body] on any issue directly related to its work.”*
 2. *“There will be no dialogue between speakers and the members, however, we will be listening carefully. In some cases, a speaker may be asked for clarification.”*
 3. *“After public comments have concluded, speakers are welcome to remain, but no further opportunities to address the advisory body will be provided during the meeting.”*

Visitors

All regular meetings of district advisory bodies are open to the public, and visitors are welcome. (Committee meetings and retreats are not open to the public.) Visitors are considered anyone present who are not members or ex officer members of the advisory body. This includes persons who may be attending on behalf of a member. Visitors will be asked to sign the attendance sheet, and asked to read these guidelines.

Visitors may be asked to sit in a designated area. Visitors who do not wish to sign up to speak under public comments are also welcome to provide written comments on the card provided. If officially part of an agenda item, visitors may be asked to present information and participate in discussion related specifically to that agenda item. Otherwise, visitors are observers and may not actively participate in the meeting.

The staff coordinators of the advisory body will ensure that a reasonable number of additional handouts are available for visitors.