



Austin Independent School District District Advisory Bodies Communications and Visitor Requirements

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 requirements. Persons will be called upon to speak usually in the order speaker cards were received. However, in cases of large numbers of persons wishing to speak, cards may be drawn randomly, at the discretion of the committee coordinator.

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.”*

Note: Speakers and visitors are expected to provide comments in a respectful manner. If the presiding officer deems a speaker or visitor to be disrespectful, that person may be warned or asked to cease any further comment or behavior. Noncompliance may result in ejection from the meeting.

Visitors

All regular meetings* of district advisory bodies are open to the public, and visitors are welcome. Visitors are considered anyone present who are not members or ex officio 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 requirements.

Visitors will 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.

*Any other plenary meetings (i.e., when a quorum may be present) of advisory bodies – such as special meetings or retreats – are also open to the public; however, opportunity for public comment may not be provided, at the discretion of committee leaders. Subcommittee meetings (which do not constitute a quorum) may not be open to the public, at the discretion of committee leaders. If subcommittee meetings are open to the public, opportunity for public comment may not be provided, at the discretion of committee leaders.