

Public Comment

By Texas state law, public school operation is divided between the school board and superintendent. The school board is comprised of elected officials and some their responsibilities include hiring the superintendent, adopting a budget, working with the superintendent to develop and adopt local policy and district goals, and act arbiters at the final level in the grievance process. Some of the superintendent's responsibilities are the day to day operations of the district, implementing state and local policies, and preparing a budget. In other words the school board determines the "what" and the superintendent is responsible for the "how".

With a few exceptions, the Texas Open Meetings Act requires that all school board meetings are to be held in public. The agenda must be posted at least 72 hours in advance so that the public may know what will be discussed and be able to attend the meeting if so desired. Only those items on the agenda may be discussed by the Board. Consequently, this is a meeting of the school board that is held in public and is not a public forum or meeting for which the public is allowed to participate. The school board is not required to hear comments from the public but has designated a limited portion of its regular meeting time as "public comment" in order to hear citizen concerns. Consequently, the Pampa Independent School District Board of Trustees has developed the following rules and procedures for public comment:

- 1) If there is a complaint about personnel or the operations of the district then a grievance should be filed in accordance with board policy. The presiding officer shall refer the person to the appropriate complaint policies, which can be found online at [www.pampaisd.net/district/school board/policy](http://www.pampaisd.net/district/school%20board/policy) online. Consequently, the board will not address these complaints in the public comment portion of the meeting.
- 2) The board will not answer any questions or engage in any discussion with those making public comment. The presiding officer may choose to furnish specific factual information or recite board policy in response to any inquiries.
- 3) If more than 5 persons wish to comment about the same topic, then the board will ask that such persons select a spokesman to present their views during the public comment portion.
- 4) A maximum of 15 minutes will be allowed for public comment
- 5) A time limit of 3 minutes will be allowed for each speaker. Time cannot be reserved by one speaker and then "given" to another in order to increase the 3 minute time limit.

The board shall not tolerate disruption of the meeting from members of the audience. If, after at least one warning, any person continues to disrupt the meeting, the presiding officer may seek assistance from law enforcement to have that person removed.