Belmont Charter School

Belmont Charter School Board of Directors

Public Comment Policy

Purpose

The Belmont Charter School Board of Directors values the participation of parents, students, staff, and members of the community. Public comment provides an opportunity for individuals to express their views on matters within the Board's authority and responsibility. The Board encourages respectful, constructive dialogue that supports transparency, accountability, and the continued success of Belmont Charter School.

Scope

Public comments are intended to address matters related to the governance, operations, educational programs, policies, or other business of Belmont Charter School that are within the authority of the Board of Directors.

Public Comment Registration

To ensure an orderly meeting process, individuals wishing to provide public comment must register in advance.

- Requests to speak must be submitted no later than **72 hours prior** to the scheduled Board meeting.
- Requests should be emailed to **information@belmontcharternetwork.org**.
- Individuals should include:
    - Full name
    - Organization or affiliation (if applicable)
    - Contact information
    - Topic or agenda item to be addressed
- Public comments will be heard during the designated Public Comment portion of the meeting agenda.

Time Limits

- Each speaker will be allotted **up to three (3) minutes** to present their comments, unless otherwise determined by the Board President.
- The Board President may adjust individual speaking times or establish an overall time limit for the Public Comment period based on the number of registered speakers and the meeting agenda.
- Speakers may not transfer their allotted time to another individual.

Content of Public Comments

Public comments should:

- Be relevant to matters within the Board's authority.
- Be respectful, constructive, and presented in a civil manner.
- Focus on school governance, policies, educational programs, operations, or other matters affecting Belmont Charter School.

Belmont Charter School

The following topics are **not appropriate** for public comment during Board meetings:

- Individual personnel matters or employee performance.
- Individual student matters protected by federal or state privacy laws.
- Confidential matters.
- Pending litigation or legal matters.
- Complaints that have established administrative procedures for resolution.
- Commercial solicitations or political campaign activities.

Individuals wishing to address personnel, student, or confidential matters should utilize the appropriate administrative process outside of the public meeting.

Standards of Conduct

All speakers are expected to conduct themselves in a respectful and professional manner.

The following conduct is prohibited:

- Personal attacks against Board members, employees, students, or members of the public.
- Profane, obscene, threatening, or discriminatory language.
- Harassing, intimidating, or disruptive behavior.
- Interrupting Board members, staff, or other speakers.
- Conduct that disrupts the orderly operation of the meeting.

The Board President serves as the presiding officer and is responsible for maintaining decorum throughout the meeting.

Group Presentations

When multiple individuals wish to address the same topic, the Board encourages the group to designate a spokesperson or coordinate remarks to avoid repetitive testimony and promote efficient use of meeting time.

Board Response

The Board generally will not engage in discussion or respond to public comments during the meeting.

When appropriate, comments may be:

- Referred to the Chief Executive Officer or appropriate administrative staff for review;
- Assigned for follow-up in accordance with established Board or administrative procedures; or
- Considered during future Board deliberations when relevant to Board business.

The absence of an immediate response should not be interpreted as agreement or disagreement with the comments presented.

Enforcement

The Board President may take appropriate action to ensure compliance with this policy and maintain the orderly conduct of Board meetings.

Such action may include:

- Issuing a warning;
- Requesting that a speaker limit remarks to the topic at hand;
- Ending a speaker's allotted time if the policy is violated;
- Recessing the meeting if necessary to restore order; or
- Requesting the removal of any individual whose conduct substantially disrupts the meeting in accordance with applicable law.

Compliance with Law

This policy shall be administered in a manner consistent with the Pennsylvania Sunshine Act, applicable provisions of the Pennsylvania School Code, the Pennsylvania Charter School Law, and all other applicable federal and state laws governing public meetings and freedom of expression.

Policy Review

The Belmont Charter School Board of Directors reserves the right to amend or revise this policy at any time to ensure compliance with applicable laws and to promote effective governance.

Adopted by: Belmont Charter School Board of Directors
Effective Date: 8/26/26
Policy Owner: Board of Directors