



BOARD SUSPENDS SECOND COMMENT PERIOD AT PUBLIC MEETINGS

March 9, 2023

Kelowna, BC – After recent discriminatory comments made by the public at board meetings and on social media, The Board of Education suspended the second public question/comment period at public board meetings to ensure a safe working environment for staff, students, and trustees.

"We received reports from staff and students that recent comments at meetings made them feel unsafe," said Lee-Ann Tiede, Chairperson of the Board of Education. "We welcome public input, but we have to provide a safe and respectful workplace. The second comment period became a platform for some members of the public to make discriminatory comments and disrupt the business of the Board."

The Board also banned recording on personal devices during public meetings. Public board meetings will continue to be broadcast on Zoom, and there are still multiple ways for the public to bring forward concerns that are not on meeting agendas by contacting the Board of Education through [the school district website](#).

"We remain committed to safe and inclusive places for people to learn and work," said Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO. "Public schools continue to support SOGI learning and foster inclusive spaces for 2SLGBTQ+ people because all students and staff must be safe so they can learn and work. We do not tolerate bullying or harassment of any kind in our schools, and we will not give space for members of the public to harass staff, students, or trustees with intolerance towards marginalized communities."

The first 15-minute public question/comment period for comments on agenda items will continue as usual. The suspension of the second question and comment period is effective as of the March 8 Board meeting until such time as *Policy 135 – School Board Operation* is reviewed and revised by the Policy Committee.

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For comments, please contact:

Lee-Ann Tiede, Chairperson of the Board of Education, 250-258-3556

Kevin Kaardal, Superintendent of Schools/CEO, 250-470-3245



**Central Okanagan
Public Schools**

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